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Exploring Protagonist Characterization in *Assassin's Creed III* (2012): A Transitivity Analysis

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Abstract

Numerous studies suggest that transitivity system is applicable to examine characters in traditional literatures such as novels or short stories. Today, videogame is considered as a modern literary work by offering interactive and innovative way to deliver the narrative. The present study investigates the characterization of Connor Kenway – the protagonist of Assassin's Creed III (2012) videogame, using transitivity system. This study aims to examine the identified process types in terms of their contributions to Connor's characterization. This study employs Creswell (2018) descriptive qualitative method involving textual analysis of the dialogues in the videogame. The dialogues were transcribed and analyzed following the concepts of Systemic Functional Linguistics on transitivity system. The study applies purposeful sampling technique, in which the data are categorized into three groups; dialogues spoken by Connor himself, the supporting characters, and the villain characters. Focusing on the use of transitivity system, the analysis found that the identified transitivity processes uniquely construe the portrayal of Connor's complex characterization. Firstly, he is portrayed as a vengeful man. Secondly, he is portrayed as an intelligent man with high cognitive abilities. Thirdly, he is portrayed as a hero and savior according to the supporting characters while also as a criminal and savage according to the villain characters. Fourthly, he is portrayed as a man with cautious nature. Lastly, he is portrayed as a useful informant. The result of this study suggests that transitivity system is a versatile tool for examining the portrayal of characterization in videogames

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Introduction

Characters play an important role in literary work, as they reflect complex point of views through the social interactions which portrayed by the author. They have internal and external aspects of personality which are gradually exposed through the interplays with other characters as the story progresses. These

interplays primarily realized through the activity of exchanging meanings and significations in the form of dialogues between the characters (Rashid, 2016 p.1). The method of portraying characters through their dialogues is an example of indirect characterization. Indirect characterization is a literary device revealing a character's depiction, both in terms of appearance and personality, without explicitly stating them; which typically demonstrated through the character's actions, speech, thoughts and how other characters reacted to them (Ellis, 2022).

This highlights the role of language in the form of dialogues, which is pivotal for elaborating the characters who are important in delivering the narrative aspects of a literary work. Gee (2005) argued that language that is presented in literary work enables the characters not only to communicate, but also to show their identity. In fact, language is used so that people are recognized as taking on certain identity or roles, which is imparted by how a speaker/writer configure and choose on what they are saying/writing. The choice of language can also embody other's identity (Isti'anah, 2019 p. 223). Halliday (2014) expressed that language enables us to construct meaning using specific choice of words particularly about social identity, as well as to construe other's personality based on our own perspective. As Bloor and Bloor (2004) said, "When people use language, meanings are constructed." (Syed et al., 2021 p. 57).

Current advancement in the Linguistics field have given the opportunity for scholars to view language to be functional, as if language selection is based on the context of its use (Dwiprasetyo et al, 2022). This laid the foundation for Halliday (1985) to propose *Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)*. Halliday pioneered the idea that language has the functions as a set of resources to achieve meaning for construing reality and experience. This is described by Halliday (2014) as the three *metafunctions* of language: *ideational function*, *interpersonal function*, and *textual function* (Van, 2020). Eggins (2004, p.12) added that ideational function is mainly concerned in how we represent the experience of the world through language; a theory of human experience (Prakoso, 2022). The study of ideational function employs a system called *transitivity* which enables scholars to explicate the pattern of lexico-grammatical choices in clauses (Gebhard & Accurso, 2020). Transitivity system is mainly utilized to examine and reflect the patterns of clauses with regards to explaining how a being construe the world according to the inner, outer, and in between experiences (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014).

In theory, transitivity system involves analyzing the relationship between the components of the *participant*, *process*, and *circumstance* within a clause; in which the sequence itself reflects the representation of events, actions, or existences of a person/thing in a text (Halliday, 2014). Fowler (1991) argued that transitivity becomes the foundation of representation, as it is the way clause is analyzed to investigate events and situations as being of certain types (Zhang, 2017). Matthiesen (2004) explained that there are six major processes; *material process*, *mental process*, *relational process*, *behavioral process*, *verbal process*, *existential process*.

Material process expresses action or change, which are acted out by the participant. (Haliday, 2014). *Mental process* expresses the sequence of events close to mind and psychology such as cognition, perception, desideration, and emotion (Siahaan, 2021). *Relational process* realizes experiences is related with another, under the processes of *Identifying* and *attributive*. *Behavioral process* typically involves simultaneous human physical and psychological behavior – a sort mix of action and emotion (Simpson, 2004). Verbal process represents the action covering the exchange of message and meaning (Rashid, 2016). *Existential process* represents existence of being, a thing, or something that happens (Halliday, 2014).

As characters' dialogues possess a significant role in literary works, using transitivity analysis may shed light towards the process of characterization. Therefore, Simpson (2004) argued that transitivity system may help revealing the explanation of why specific structure and word are favored in establishing characterization on account to his/her perspective and experience about the world (Salayo et al., 2019).

Characterization is the process of developing the portrayal of a character in

literature. Jones (1968) explained that characterization is the way authors establish their characters, in order to play out the given role in their story. Characterization can be in the form of dialogues revealing actions, emotions, thoughts, and other aspects which ultimately project the nature and qualities of the character (Maulida, 2022). Characterization is divided into two: *direct characterization* and *indirect characterization* (Johnson & Arp, 2017). Roberts & Zweig (2011) explicated that the first type is carried out by the authors through direct descriptions and expositions, whereas the second type is carried out by the characters themselves through revealing what they do and what they say in their dialogues (Hastuti, 2023).

Concerning transitivity analysis in literary works, several studies had been conducted previously. Some of the studies suggest that transitivity analysis provides linguistic evidence to support the interpretation of character's portrayal in a more objective way (Nguyen, 2012; Rashid, 2016). Transitivity system is also proven to be useful in terms of reconstructing characterization in literary works as in the study that is conducted by Nurhayati (2018). Her study highlighted the importance of the prominent process type in describing and depicting the characterization of the working women as the protagonists of *'I Stand Here Ironing'* by Tillie Lerner Olsen (1961). Another study that focuses on analyzing a specific character using transitivity system was conducted by Mahmood et al. (2020), in which the study incorporates corpus-based approach as the tool for examining the protagonist's characterization of *'The Stone Woman'* novel – Nilopher. Although slightly different in terms of the aim of the study, Boukari et al. (2018) investigated the prominent process type that is occurring in Gabriel Okara's novel *The Voice*. This extends further the versatility of transitivity analysis which can also be used for analyzing data from more than one character.

While studies regarding transitivity analysis of literary characters have been studied many times by researchers, many are lacking variety in terms of the type literary works which become the data source. The majority of previous conducted studies have only been concerned with analyzing characters that are present in novels, short stories, and films. Moreover, what is considered to be a literary work nowadays is not limited to conventional books or films; it has becoming diverse and is rapidly expanding which new forms of media can also be treated as one – take for instance, narratives in videogames. Although it has been a subject for debate amongst scholars, whether or not videogame is a new form of literature, Saptanto (2021) wrote that the existence of narrative elements in a videogame has created a new paradigm in which it can be considered as a modern literary work and the product of modern popular culture. Somerdin (2016) explained that the narrativity of video games differ from traditional literatures, as it offers greater immersive characteristics through interactive control over the dialogue choices and decisions which may shape overall experience of the narrative.

In terms of study of videogames related to Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), Lowien (2016) analyzed '*Watch Dogs*' using semiotic approach to examine linguistic and visual semiotic depictions of value positions. His study is focused more on investigating the feasibility of videogames as multimodal texts for teaching purposes. Law (2023) conducted a study of '*Final Fantasy VII Remake* Intergrade' videogame in SFL perspective, which is aimed to analyze the possibility of ecological framings presented in the game. The study used transitivity as the tool for analyzing the representation of ecological frameworks conveyed through the dialogues from the game. Furthermore, Lowien (2016) expressed that the irony of SFL - which has been adopted widely in text analysis, is that it is rarely associated directly with digital/videogames (Law, 2023). Thus, this research attempts to investigate the portrayal of Assassin's Creed III (2012) characterization as one of the aspects of narrative in literary work, with the hope to fill the gap between videogames and traditional literary works by applying transitivity system as a tool for examining language use in videogame dialogues. And most importantly, to give contribution to the broader field of Linguistics as well as its sub-discipline of Systemic Functional Linguistics.

This research aims to apply transitivity system in analyzing a videogame protagonist character from Assassin's Creed III (2012). The game has been documented as the seventh the

best-selling videogame title released by Ubisoft with the estimated total of 12 million copies sold worldwide. Mazanko (2024) wrote that one of the reasons behind the game's success is due to the protagonist of the game – Connor Kenway, is considered as an interesting protagonist character with a Native American background during the fictionalized version of the War of American Independence.

Following the theoretical framework of transitivity system proposed by Halliday (1985), this study is aimed to examine how the characterization of the protagonist in Assassin's Creed III (2012) – Connor Kenway, is developed using transitivity system. This study is mainly concerned in investigating the characterization of the main protagonist of Assassin's Creed III (2012) by examining the identified process types related to him.

Methodology

The nature of this study is qualitative, as mainly focusing on the investigation of the phenomenon of language use. In the context of this study, the examined subject exercise language for narrative purposes within the space of fictionalized world. As language is perceived as the device for constructing meaning and construing reality into units of sign, the study regarding it requires patterning and classifying. Creswell (2018) explained that qualitative design allows researcher to observe subjects in identifying patterns or themes. This is aligned with the transitivity system that is used for analysis.

This study employs purposive sampling technique. According to Lopez and Whitehead (2013), the technique involves collecting data from pre-selected sources with relevant criteria towards the aim of the study. The data that is examined in this research are in form of dialogues taken from Assassin's Creed III (2012) videogame, including of all the dialogues spoken by the protagonist – Connor Kenway, the supporting characters, and the villain characters from the beginning of the main story until the end. The three categories of transcribed dialogues were purposely selected and collected manually using Microsoft Word by following the criteria in which all of them must feature Connor as the focused participant. Furthermore, the distinction between supporting characters and villain characters is based on their role towards Connor as the main protagonist; those who are considered supporting his endeavor, and those who are considered hindering him in which typically associated with the role of a villain or antagonist character. This is done to ensure that this study has gathered enough data so that the result of analysis is complete and thorough in terms of explaining how Connor is represented by broader characters with different roles.

This study applies the transitivity system proposed by Halliday (1985), which is mainly used for examining the relationship between the sequence of participant, process, and circumstance. This study aims to utilize transitivity system for analyzing the dialogues spoken by three subjects: Connor Kenway, the supporting characters, and the villain characters, in order to examine how certain lexico-grammatical structure realize the characterization of Connor as the main protagonist. Following that, the first step of data analysis in this research is applying transitivity system to analyze all of the collected dialogue clauses by tagging them manually using Microsoft Word. The second step is determining the number of transitivity processes occurrences in the entirety of the tagged characters' dialogue by using a concordance tool such as *AntConc* version 4.2.4. The last step is to interpret and describe the result of identified types of transitivity processes in examining whether or not they contribute to the development of Connor's characterization.

Results and Discussion

The total number of clauses featuring Connor – the protagonist of Assassin's Creed III (2012), as the main participant is 803. This number includes the clauses that are spoken by Connor himself with the total of 279 clauses, by supporting characters with the total of 359 clauses, as well as by villain characters with the total of 165 clauses.

Regarding the identified process types related to Connor as the main participant, this research has found that material process is the most dominant type in all of the categories. The process occurs in 444 clauses in total. This is definitely higher compared to other processes.

The data suggests that the second most-occurring process is mental process which is 156 clauses in total. The third position is relational process in which the total is 101 clauses. Both verbal and behavioral processes occur in 59 clauses and 43 clauses respectively. Therefore, the percentage of material process is 55%, mental is 20%, relational is 13%, verbal is 7%, and behavioral is 5%. Table 1 represents the summary of process types related to Connor.

The result of data analysis has also shown how processes related to Connor is differently perceived according to different character roles. This correlates with the ideational metafunction of language concerning experiential and logical meaning, in which Butt et al. described that people communicate their messages through language according to their own experience and understanding of the reality (2000, as cited from Mulyati et al., 2021). Therefore, the number of process types can be varied according to different sources. The following are pie charts showing the percentage of occurring process types in separate dialogue categories:

Chart 1.Percentage Spread of Transitivity Processes in Connor's Dialogues

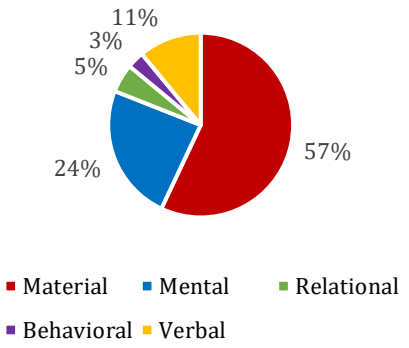


Chart 2. Percentage Spread of Transitivity Processes in Supporting Characters' Dialogues

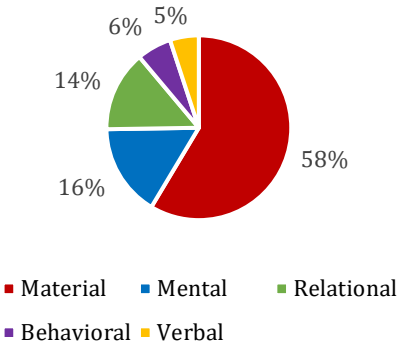
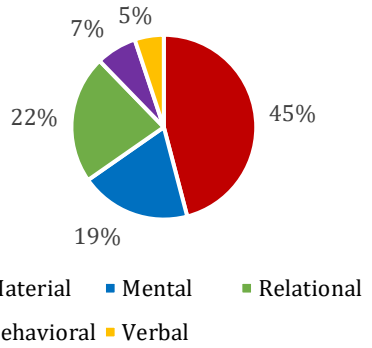


Chart 3. Percentage Spread of Transitivity Processes in Villain Characters' Dialogues



Based on charts above, there is an agreement between the results of analyzed dialogues; material process is dominant. When it comes to other processes related to the role of Connor as the main participant in clauses, the results are varied. In terms of mental process, Connor perceive himself more as a senser (24%) than either supporting characters (16%) or villain characters (19%), In terms of relational process, villain characters tend to relate Connor with attributes or identities more (22%) compared to the rest (5% and 14%). Verbal processes that are related to Connor occur more often in his own dialogues (11%), but equally not in both the supporting characters dialogues (5%) and in the villain characters dialogue (5%). Behavioral process is considered to be the least in number of occurrences according to Connor's dialogue (3%), but it falls higher in comparison to verbal process within the other categories of dialogues (6% and 7%).

1. Material Process

The result of analysis suggest that Connor is portrayed more as an *actor: doer* type of character throughout the game based on the higher occurrences of *material: doing* over *material: happening* in the analyzed clauses. Table 2 presents both material process of doing and happening that are found from analyzing the data.

Further analyzing dialogues for the material process also provides another interesting result in terms of the specific verb group related to Connor as the actor. This group consist of action verbs such as *find, kill, do, destroy, stop, fight, help, meet, make,* and *save*. Table 3 presents the process group which is sorted according to their total number of occurrences.

As seen in Table 3, the verb *find* is the highest of all, with the total of 43 clauses, which is followed by *kill* at the second position, with the total of 28 clauses. This embodies how Connor's characterization is portrayed in terms of his physical actions.

According to Table 4, in terms of the secondary participant affected by *find* verbs that are carried out by Connor, the analysis has also found that Charles Lee becomes the highest occurring goal/scope which is followed by others such as John Pitcairn, Thomas Hickey, Haytham Kenway, William Johnson, and Benjamin Church. These names are the members of the Templar Order, who play the role as the villain characters in the story of Assassin's Creed III (2012). Concerning The Patriots who play the role as the supporting characters, Sam Addams becomes highest goal/scope extended by *find* verb. Furthermore, Table 5 suggests that *kill* verb extends only to the members of the Templar Order and not to The Patriots.

2. Mental Process

Using transitivity system to investigate the characterization of Connor in terms of mental process has shown that Connor uses his cognition more often in the game as presented in Table 6. On the opposite, he is not portrayed very much in terms of perception process, as he is rarely involving his perceptive senses to process unfolding phenomena within the game. Thus, based on the data, Connor is depicted more as a thinker type of character instead of a perceiver type.

The group that is related to the mental process of Connor includes cognitive words such as: *think, know,* and *understand*; words showing a desire such as; *need, want,* and *dream*; words related to perception such as; *see, look,* and *listen*; and words expressing emotions such as; *like, feel,* and *sorry*.

3. Relational Process

The data analysis in this research has found 53 clauses containing attributive process and 48 clauses containing identifying process as presented in Table 7, which makes up for 101 total clauses of relational process. This may shed another aspect of Connor's characterization in terms of relational process by assigning identities and attributes.

In achieving a solid and complete analysis of Connor's characterization concerning relational process, the research has identified the list of assigned attributes and signified values towards Connor as *carrier/token* type of participant. According to the supporting characters, the attributes and values tend to sound positively when assigned and signified to Connor. These can be seen in the Table 8 However, according to the villain characters, the attributes and values which are assigned and signified towards Connor tend to sound negatively. These are presented in Table 9.

4. Behavioral Process

In terms of behavioral process, this research is able to found numbers of behaviors that are tied to Connor as the *behaver* in the analyzed clauses. Table 10 includes behaviors related to Connor based on their number of occurrences. Judging by the number of *careful* and *wait* behaviors occurring in 7 clauses and 6 clauses respectively, Connor as a protagonist character is related to the behavioral processes of waiting and being careful.

5. Verbal Process

Gerot & Wignell (1994) wrote that verbal process commonly has the function of *(i) reporting* and *(ii) quoting* message, which they also provided the table of verbal groups belong

to each of the functions. However, Connor does not only construct clauses of verbal process limited to reporting and quoting as there are many unmapped functions expressing specific needs such as *requesting*, *demanding*, *proposing*, and *promising*. Therefore, this research includes additional functions associated with the specific needs that Connor delivers through the verbal process all of the analyzed dialogues.

Table 11 contains the numbers of verbal process clauses that are associated with Connor as the speaker. It suggests that Connor's verbal process is dominated by the function of informing message to a receiver, in which occurs in 22 times in 61 total clauses. Aside from that, Connor also conduct the exchange of message with others in order to express the verbal function of demanding. These evidences support the idea that Connor prioritize informing others, as well as demanding something from others when partaking in a verbal process.

Following the characterization theory as the foundation in pursuing the interest of investigating the portrayal of Connor's characterization, along with using transitivity system to identify the actions *(processes)* that are bound to him in the dialogues; this research has come up with several interesting points to discuss.

1. A Man with Vengeful Ambitions

The central theme of Assassin's Creed game franchise often introduces a story where the main characters are driven by the desire to take revenge towards the villains. In this third installment of the game – Assassin's Creed III (2012), the tradition of the theme persists and is seemingly amplified by the protagonist, Connor Kenway. Connor's story is a tragic one, for he witnessed the main villain – Charles Lee, leading an attack to his village which resulted in the death of his mother. He witnessed his mother's demise in front of his eyes when he was still a boy, which drives him vengeful ever since towards Lee as the perpetrator and the man he deems responsible. To his irony, Charles lee is a member of the Templars Order who serve as the right-hand man of Connor's biological father, Haytham who is the grandmaster of the Colonial Templar Order. Due to this, he knows that in fulfilling his desire for vengeance, he must find and kill all the members of the Templars Order including William Johnson, John Pitcairn, Thomas Hickey, Charles Lee, and his own father – Haytham Kenway.

Based on the Table 3, the high number of *find* verbs indicates that; when realizing his outer experiential meaning, Connor's action is set towards 'searching' or 'seeking' another participant that he deems important in his life. In the story, the Templars are the ones causing him grief of losing his mother during childhood, especially Charles Lee. His name is assigned as the goal/scope related to *find* verb more often than the other members of the Templars. Also, Connor often assign Sam Addams as the goal/scope related to the *find* verb, because in the story he is considered as an ally from The Patriots movement who Connor believe to be helpful for tracking down all members of the Templar Order. Thus, his life's journey is driven by the desire to find Charles Lee as his primary target before the rest of the Templars group and Sam Addams as the man he seeks when needing a help.

> [I *(actor)* will **find** *(material)* Church *(goal)* for you *(circ: cause: behalf)*]
>
> [I *(actor)* can **find** you *(Charles Lee) (goal)*]
>
> [I *(actor)* must **find** him *(William Johnson)*]

In addition to *find*, *kill* becomes the second highest material process which is identified during the transitivity analysis of Connor. This leads to an interesting viewpoint, where it complements his 'seeking' or 'searching' characterization provided by the high number of *find* verbs which are related to him by extending the other thing which he desires to inflict towards the Templars as the goal/scope of the clauses. In other words, Connor wants to *find* the Templars to *kill* them.

Furthermore, related to *kill*, Charles Lee is mostly assigned as the goal/scope. This reflects Connor's hatred towards him and strengthens his vengeful characterization due to the loss of his mother as well as the destruction of his village which Lee inflicted.

> [I *(actor)* have **slain** *(material)* Johnson and Pitcairn *(goal)* both]

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[I *(actor)* will **kill** *(material)* Charles Lee *(goal)* myself *(circ: manner: quality)*]

[I *(actor)* will **silence** *(material)* him *(goal)* forever *(circ: extent)*]

Other material processes tend to resonate in meaning with *kill* when it comes to Charles Lee and the Templars as the affected participant. For instance, these processes cover *destroy (16 clauses)*, *fight (14 clauses)*, and *stop (15 clauses)*. This signifies that Connor's ambition is not only fixated to seek revenge through killing the Templars. Instead, he wants to oppose them from anything they wish to do.

Interestingly, on the contrary to being heavily associated with actions of *finding* and *killing* which implies a sense of vengeance towards the Templars as the villain in the story, Connor also performs a relatively small number of verbs which are not showing his revenge obsession. These processes include *do, help* and *save*. Although occurring only in some occasions, these processes picture the other side of Connor's characterization in which he can be helpful towards the people whom he considers ally or friend.

[You *(actor)* have **done** *(material)* your duty *(goal)* as we asked]

[I *(actor)* merely *(circ: manner: degree)* **lend support** *(material)* to the patriots *(recipient)*]

[You *(actor)* must **help** *(material)* us *(goal)*]

[I *(actor)* must **save** *(material)* him (George Washington) *(goal)* from the Templar's Plot *(circ: cause)*]

[You *(actor)* **saved** *(material)* my life *(goal)*]

Backed up by the results obtained from transitivity analysis and the context of Connor's life, the identified material processes are enough to establish a strong piece of evidence supporting the idea that Connor's actions are heavily driven by the ambition to *find*, *kill*, and *stop* the people who are responsible for his mother's death. Thus, making the first part of his characterization to be developed and shaped as a man with vengeful ambitions.

2. An Intelligent Man with High Cognitive Skills

According to the story of the game, Connor is a protagonist who was born and raised in a native American tribe *(kanienkehaka)* in which he did not receive formal education, as since younger age, he dedicates himself to train under Achilles to become an assassin. Despite that, the result of the transitivity analysis suggests that Connor is depicted as an intelligent character, based on the high number of mental cognition process occurred in the analyzed clauses. The word intelligent itself comes from *intelligence*, which according to Sternberg (2019), it can be defined as the ability that is related to problem-solving using appropriate cognitive skills (as cited from Sari, et al. 2020). Major cognitive skills which are construed by Connor in the form of mental processes mainly include *think, know,* and *understand*.

Thinking scores the highest among the rest which belongs in the category of mental cognition. This represents his nature to think first in solving problems during his journey to hunt down and stop the Templars from achieving their ultimate goal. For instance, the clauses below express his tendency to think over the issue related to what is being dealt on with by him at the moment. Instead of relying on his intuition alone, he shows the capacity to calculate and make sound judgements in regards to the outcomes and possibilities of his actions.

[I *(senser)* **think** *(mental)* you should continue on *(phenomenon)*]

[I *(senser)* **believe** *(mental)* we shall not go *(phenomenon)*]

[I *(senser)* **believe** *(mental)* there is a chance for peace *(phenomenon)*]

[I *(senser)* **thought** *(mental)* the Templars had eyes and ears everywhere *(phenomenon)*]

Aside from that, Connor also construes his intelligence capability through the processes of *know* and *understand*. These signify that, despite lacking in formal education, Connor possesses certain knowledge concerning the

things which he does, and the things which may be helpful in his revenge pursuit.

> [I *(senser)* **know** *(mental)* that to truly be free of Templar's Influence all of them must be dealt with *(phenomenon)*]
>
> [I *(senser)* **know** *(mental)* that the people wish to be free and that men like Washington fight to make it so *(phenomenon)*]
>
> [when you first came to me *(circ: time)*, you *(senser)* **understood** *(mental)* what had to be done *(phenomenon)*]
>
> [I *(senser)* **understand** *(mental)* that it's hard to live in two worlds at the same time *(phenomenon)*]

The notion that Connor is a highly cognitive person is further solidified and supported by the evidence expressed by some clauses stated by other characters in the relational process structure.

> [He *(token)* is *(rel-identifying)* **smart** *(value)*]
>
> [You *(token)* are *(rel-identifying)* **a fast learner** *(value)*]

Therefore, concerning mental process and relational process related to Connor, this research has revealed a part of his characterization. His character is depicted as a protagonist with the capacity to employ his cognitive skill in supporting his endeavor as his journey unfolds. Contradicting to his background as a native-born who were not formally educated earlier in his life, Connor is somehow possessing knowledge which often help him to solve problems or to understand the things around him. Thus, making his second characterization to be portrayed as an intelligent man.

3. A Hero and Savior to His Friends; A Criminal and Savage to His Enemies

The presence of supporting characters adds depth into Connor's journey in the story of Assassin's Creed III (2012). Not to mention that they also serve the role in helping Connor to achieve his goal, in which he considers them as friends or allies. As for the villain characters, they mainly play the role in giving Connor obstacles and problems to deal with, oftentimes in the form of causing harm and grief towards those he cares much. Moreover, another role which these two types of characters have is to enhance Connor's characterization by giving their perspective about him as the protagonist of the game.

In theory relational process in transitivity system realizes the relationships between two entities, through the process of what can be seen as signifying identities or assigning attributes (Gerot & Wignell, 1994; Simpson, 2004, as cited in Faizin et al, 2022). The result of transitivity analysis regarding the relational process in this research shows that there are opposing attributes and identities related to Connor based on two different perspectives; from the supporting characters, and from the villain characters.

Table 8 above represents how Connor is seen through the eyes of the supporting characters, which mainly consisting of positive attributes/values that are assigned/signified to him. For instance, during the event when Connor is told by a foreseeing entity named Juno that his destiny is to join the Assassins Order, she expresses her opinion towards him by saying that he is an important person.

> [You *(token)* are *(rel-identifying)* **an important child** *(value)* in more ways than you will ever know *(circ: manner: degree)*]

What Juno said about his destiny convinces Connor to join the Assassins, for she knows that, later in his life, he will help The Patriots to achieve independence of America from the British Colonial rule, and save important people like George Washington, John Hancock, and Samuel Addams from being murdered as a part of the Templar's plot.

True to her, Connor's pursuit in taking revenge towards the members of the Templars order resulted in destroying their plan to aid the British Redcoats so that they can win the war with The Patriots during the Battle of Bunker Hill, by killing a high-ranking Templar military officer named John Pitcairn. This motivates The Patriots to think of him as a hero.

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[This man (Connor) *(token)* is *(rel-identifying)* **a hero** *(value)*]

Later in his life, Connor saves several men who are important to the American independence during the Continental Congress from a group of Templar agents disguised as a counterfeiting ring led by Thomas Hickey. By killing Hickey, Connor prevents their plan and becomes the savior to John Hancock, Samuel Addams, and George Washington. His action rewarded him to be considered as a savior by the supporting characters.

[You *(token)* are *(rel-identifying)* **the one who saved** Sam and John *(value)* at Lexington *(circ: place)*]

[You *(token)* are *(rel-identifying)* once more **our savior** *(value)*]

In terms of the rest of positive attributes/values which are associated with Connor, the supporting characters provide the portrayal of his characterization as a humble, smart, brave, and noble person; as well as a man who is doing the right thing.

[As **humble** *(value)* as he *(token)* is *(rel-identifying)* **brave** *(value)*]

[He *(token)* is *(rel-identifying)* **smart** *(value)*]

[You *(token)* are *(rel-identifying)* **a fast learner** *(value)*]

[You *(carrier)* are *(rel-attributive)* **right** as well *(attribute)*]

On the contrary to the supporting characters, the characterization of Connor is portrayed differently according to the villain characters. He is seen to be assigned with negative attributes and to be signified with negative values as presented in the Table 9.

During Connor's initial life prior to becoming an assassin, the Templars consisting of Charles Lee, Thomas Hickey, John Pitcairn, and Benjamin Church abducted him while playing hide-and-seek in the forest near his village. They interrogated him to tell where is the village located, so they can recover a valuable artifact hidden beneath the grounds of the village. During this, Lee and his group expresses their disdain towards Connor who is a native American boy. They denote him as a speck of dust, savage, oblivious, and an animal due to being born from a mohawk tribe.

[He *(token)* is *(rel-identifying)* a **savage** *(token)*]

[You *(token)* are *(rel-identifying)* **a speck of dust** *(token)*]

[You and your ilk *(carrier)* are *(rel-attributive)* living in the dirt like **animals** *(attribute)*]

[You and your ilk *(carrier)* are *(rel-attributive)* **oblivious** *(attribute)*]

When Connor has reached adulthood and become a fully-fledged assassin, the villain characters regarded him as a mad criminal whose actions are blinded by the desire to take revenge and the foolishness due to following the teachings of the Assassins Order. To the Templar Order, their ultimate goal of achieving total control of America is justified and true, which makes them think that the Assassin Order who are constantly demolishing and meddling into their plan is plainly mad and ignorant.

[You *(token)* are *(rel-identifying)* just some **blind fool** *(value)*]

[You *(token)* are *(rel-identifying)* **mad** *(value)* as a march hare *(circ: manner: comparison)*]

[A criminal *(carrier)* is *(rel-attributive)* **wanted** *(attribute)* in connection with the massacre *(circ: matter)*]

[He *(token)* is *(rel-attributive)* the **killer** *(value)*]

The portrayal of Connor's characterization as the protagonist in terms of relational process differs according to two sources. Despite being involved in killing and assassinating, the supporting characters depict Connor positively as he is believed to be acting for the good cause. In contrast, the villain characters depict him negatively by pointing out his criminal nature, which to them, is driven by a lost cause of vengeance and the foolishness of the Assassin's

teachings. Therefore, this research has shown an interesting duality in Connor's characterization concerning the relational process, in which he is portrayed as a hero and a savior to those who support him, as well as a criminal and a savage to those who are opposing him.

4. A Man with Cautious Nature

In the game franchise, The Assassins is generally portrayed as an organization consisting of deadly killers who are sworn to oppose the Templars with each individual is capable to conduct efficient assassination using a variety of tools and weapons. The most recognizable weapon for killing their targets is the *hidden blade* wielded on their wrists, which often used to dispose their enemies by surprise. However, the deadliest tool an assassin must have, according to Achilles as the grandmaster of the Assassin Order and Connor's mentor, is their stealth ability in performing covert operations.

> [Assassins *(behaver)* are meant to be **quiet** and **precise** *(behavioral)*]

These are the teachings which Connor always follow during his journey as an Assassin, which many times guide him towards the success of taking the lives of his enemies. Due to that, Connor who has spent years of his life training under Achilles' guidance, embraces the quietness and precision nature of an assassin into how he normally behaves.

> [Be **careful** *(behavioral)* not to run up on them (British Soldiers) *(circ: matter)*, Connor *(behaver)*]
>
> [I *(behaver)* must **tread carefully** *(behavioral)*]
>
> [We *(behaver)* **wait** *(behavioral)* for the signal *(circ: matter)*]
>
> [You *(behaver)* could **wait** *(behavioral)* for us to thin their ranks *(circ: matter)*]

Analyzing Connor's behavior through the dialogues of the characters using transitivity system has shown that *careful* and *wait* processes occurs more often than other behavioral processes. Furthermore, both *careful* and *wait* behaviors construe his tendency to act cautiously when executing a covert mission in order to increase his chance to be successful in assassinating the members of the Templars. Therefore, based on the result of the transitivity analysis in terms of behavioral process, Connor is portrayed as a man with cautious nature.

5. A Useful Informant to both the Assassin Order and The Patriots

Connor's endeavor in fulfilling his vengeful ambitions towards the Templars is impossible to do by himself alone. To overcome that, he seeks guidance and aid from the people who support him. On many occasions, The Patriots – which are rebelling against the British rule in gaining independence for America, lend their hands to Connor in his hunt for the Templars. In the story of the game, the British Military during the War of American Independence is heavily backed up by the Templars in its financing and military logistics. More so, both Connor and The Patriots view the Templars as a threat to each own motive, making them as natural allies which is necessary to work together. Oftentimes, the aid that Connor receive from them is in the form of information concerning the members of the Templar Order, which is extremely valuable for him. In return, Connor repays the favor to them by becoming a trusted informant in revealing the British Military war plans which are schemed by the Templars. In addition to that, Connor also informs back to Achilles as his mentor assassin when being asked about his progress and duty in eliminating the members of the Templar Order.

> [I *(sayer)* **told** *(verbal)* him (Achilles) *(receiver)* of Charles Lee and my promise to him *(verbiage)*]
>
> [I *(sayer)* have to **tell** *(verbal)* him (George Washington) *(receiver)* about the truth *(verbiage)*]
>
> [I *(sayer)* have resolved to **share** *(verbal)* everything I know of the Templars and their plots *(verbiage)* to Washington *(receiver)*]
>
> [**Tell** *(verbal)* me of your latest exploits *(verbiage)*, Connor *(sayer)*]

Based on the excerpts above and the numbers of *verbal: inform* processes found, Connor is portrayed as a useful informant for the Assassin Order and The Patriots.

Further discussion regarding the investigation of Connor's characterization using transitivity system has highlighted the role of language in videogame dialogues. This research provides solid evidence that; examining dialogues in a videogame by following the perspective of SFL in transitivity analysis, enables scholars to determine the representation of its characters based on the theory of characterization. In this research, the analyzed dialogues realize the function of establishing the characterization of Connor by projecting what he does, he thinks, he feels, he behaves, and how he is perceived by other characters in the story of Assassin's Creed III (2012). This research solidifies the versatility of transitivity system proposed by Halliday (1985) as a tool that can be used for the pursuit of literature study, based on the fact that it is capable to discover the relationship of the lexico-grammatical structures of clauses in the dialogues with their functions of projecting the characterization of Connor Kenway.

The findings of this research complement what has been found in previous studies. Boukari, et al. (2018) suggested that the dominance of *material process* realized by the male characters in literature reflects men's perpetual need for always taking an action. This correlates with Connor Kenway as a male character who is depicted to take actions of vengeance towards his enemies. Mahmood, et al. (2020) and Nurhayati (2018) agreed that *mental process* realized the inner aspect of literary characters such as their thoughts and emotions, in which Connor realizes his thought process more than his own emotions. Syed, et al (2021) expressed that *relational* and *behavioral processes* help portraying characters' qualities vividly by relating them with specific attributes or identity, as well as describing their behaviors. This research found that Connor is shown to have complex portrayal of his qualities, and described to be a cautious person. Lastly, Salayo, et al (2019) highlighted the role of *verbal process* in expressing character's personality, in which Connor tends to project his informant personality.

Conclusion

By applying transitivity system proposed by Halliday (1985), this research has identified five types of processes in the groups of dialogues related to Connor Kenway – the protagonist of Assassin's Creed III (2012) as the main participant. These include *material, mental, relational, behavioral,* and *verbal processes*. Moreover, Connor is more likely associated with the *actor: doer* type of participant than with others such as *senser, carrier/token, sayer,* and *behaver* due to the high occurrences of material process over other processes.

The result of this research provides the answer for the main question. Each type of processes provides unique pieces of Connor's characterization as the protagonist of Assassin's Creed III (2012). In regards to the *material process*, the first piece of Connor's characterization is portrayed as a man with vengeful ambitions due to his actions embedded in clauses with *find* and *kill* verbs that are aimed towards the Templars as the villain who he thinks responsible for the destruction of his village and the death of his mother. Identified *mental process* and *relational process* related to Connor construes the second piece of his characterization, in which he is portrayed as an intelligent man with high cognitive skills due to his interpretation from other characters' clauses expressing both relational process and *mental: cognitive* process including *think, know,* and *understand*. Interestingly, the identified *relational process* in analyzed clauses with Connor as the *carrier/token* reveals the third piece of Connor's characterization to be divided into two; (1) a hero and savior according to the supporting characters, due to mainly being associated with heroic and other positive *attributes/values*; (2) a criminal and savage according to the villain characters, due to being associated to crime and savagery as well as other negative *attributes/values*. The identified *verbal process* provides the fourth piece of Connor's characterization, in which he is portrayed as a useful informant to both the Assassin Order and The Patriots due to the occurrences of *verbal: inform* process in the clauses featuring Connor as a *sayer*. Lastly, the identified *behavioral process* provides the fifth piece of Connor's characterization which

portrays him as a man with cautious nature, due to the fact that *careful* and *wait* behaviors are often expressed by Connor in construing how he behaves. Based on these five pieces of characterization, this research firmly believes that the process types identified as a result of transitivity analysis do contribute to the overall characterization of Connor Kenway as the protagonist of Assassin's Creed III (2012). This research has also highlighted the versatility of the transitivity system theorized by Halliday (1985), which is proven as a capable tool of analysis for investigating the representation of characterization in videogames with innovative interactivity in delivering the narrative elements that differs from traditional literary works. Lastly, this research suggest that future studies should apply transitivity system to examine video games that have dialogue choices and decisions to open more interesting opportunity in exploring characterization.

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Appendix

Table 1. Summary of Identified Transitivity Process Types in All Analyzed Dialogues

No	Process Types	Frequency	Percentage
1	Material	444	55%
2	Mental	156	20%
3	Relational	101	13%
4	Verbal	59	7%
5	Behavioral	43	5%
6	Existential	0	0%
Total		**803**	**100%**

Table 2. Summary of Material Process Subtype

No	Material Process	Frequency
1	Material: Doing	353
2	Material: Happening	89
Total		444

Table 3. Material Process Group

No	Material Process	Freq
1	find	43
2	kill	28
3	do	24
4	destroy	16
5	stop	15
6	fight	14
7	help	13
8	meet	10
9	make	8
10	save	7

Table 4. Summary of Characters as Goal/Scope Affected by Find Process

Process	Goal/Scope	Freq
Find	**Templar Order**	
	Charles Lee	6
	John Pitcairn	4
	Thomas Hickey	3
	Haytham Kenway	3

	William Johnson	2
	Benjamin Church	2
	The Patriots	
	Sam Addams	5
	Israel Putnam	2
	Achilles	1
	Mason Weems	1
	John Hancock	1

Table 5. Summary of Characters as Goal/Scope Affected by Kill Process

Process	Goal/Scope	Freq
Kill	Charles Lee	7
	John Pitcairn	5
	Haytham Kenway	4
	William Johnson	2
	Thomas Hickey	1
	Benjamin Church	1

Table 6. Summary of Mental Process Subtype

No	Mental Process Subtype	Frequency
1	Mental: Cognition	77
2	Mental: Desideration	35
3	Mental: Emotion	25
4	Mental: Perception	19
Total		156

Table 7. Summary of Relational Process Subtype

No	Relational Process Subtype	Frequency
1	Relational: Attributive	53
2	Relational: Identifying	48
Total		101

Table 8. Attributes/Values Related to Connor According to the Supporting Characters

Carrier/Token	Attribute/Value
Connor	Smart, spirited, important child, fast learner, humble, brave, hero, savior, honest, noble, right

Table 9. Attributes/Values Related to Connor According to the Villain Characters

Carrier/Token	Attribute/Value
Connor	Savage, a speck of dust, ignorant, mad, a fool, little lap dog, troublemaker, swine, thief, scoundrel, killer, naïve, inconsistent, corrupted, animal, criminal, wrong, brute, hasty

Table 10. Summary of Behavioral Process

No	Behavioral Process	Frequency
1	careful	7
2	wait	6
3	worry	3

Table 11. Summary of Verbal Process Subtype

No	Verbal Process Subtype	Frequency
1	Verbal: Inform	22
2	Verbal: Demand	9
3	Verbal: Explain	8
4	Verbal: Express	6
5	Verbal: Admit	5
7	Verbal: Promise	4
6	Verbal: Propose	3
8	Verbal: Question	2
Total		59