



Flouting Maxims and Pragmatic Equivalence in the English– Indonesian Translation of “Assassin’s Creed: Shadows”

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Abstract

This study explores how characters in Assassin’s Creed: Shadows deliberately flout Grice’s conversational maxims and how these subtle pragmatic strategies are carried over into Indonesian translation. The research aims to show not only why these flouts occur in the game’s dialogue, but also how their implied meanings (are maintained?) survive when transferred into another language. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the study examined 25 utterances that intentionally break the maxims of Quality, Quantity, Relevance, and Manner, focusing on how each line functions within its original gameplay situation. The analysis reveals that maxim flouting plays an important role in shaping the story: it conveys sarcasm, tension, power dynamics, narrative suspense, and emotional undercurrents that are not directly spoken. The findings also show that these effects remain clear in the Indonesian version through communicative equivalence, allowing the same implications to be understood by players across languages. Overall, this study highlights that maxim flouting in video games is more than a stylistic choice; it is a narrative and cross-cultural communicative tool that helps maintain the story’s intent and emotional weight in translation.

Keywords: *flouting maxims, pragmatics, translation equivalence, videogame*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana karakter dalam Assassin’s Creed: Shadows secara sengaja melanggar maksim percakapan Grice dan bagaimana strategi pragmatik halus ini diterapkan dalam terjemahan Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menunjukkan tidak hanya mengapa pelanggaran ini terjadi dalam dialog permainan, tetapi juga bagaimana makna tersiratnya (apakah tetap terjaga?) bertahan saat diterjemahkan ke bahasa lain. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis 25 ucapan yang secara sengaja melanggar prinsip-prinsip Kualitas, Kuantitas, Relevansi, dan Cara, dengan fokus pada bagaimana setiap kalimat berfungsi dalam situasi permainan aslinya. Analisis menunjukkan bahwa pelanggaran prinsip-prinsip ini memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk cerita: ia menyampaikan sarkasme, ketegangan, dinamika kekuasaan, ketegangan naratif, dan aliran emosi yang tidak diungkapkan secara langsung. Temuan juga menunjukkan bahwa efek-efek ini tetap jelas dalam versi Indonesia melalui kesetaraan komunikatif, memungkinkan implikasi yang sama dipahami oleh pemain lintas bahasa. Secara keseluruhan, studi ini menyoroti bahwa pelanggaran prinsip dalam video game lebih dari sekadar pilihan gaya; ia merupakan alat naratif dan komunikatif lintas budaya yang membantu mempertahankan niat dan bobot emosional cerita dalam terjemahan.

Kata kunci: *melanggar prinsip-prinsip, pragmatisme, kesetaraan terjemahan, video game*

Introduction

Meaning in interaction is often constructed not only through what speakers explicitly say, but also through what they deliberately leave unsaid. In many communicative situations, speakers rely on implied meaning to express emotions, attitudes, and intentions indirectly. Such meanings emerge when interlocutors assume cooperation and attempt to interpret utterances that appear incomplete, exaggerated, irrelevant, or ambiguous. This phenomenon lies at the core of pragmatics, where meaning is understood as the product of inference rather than literal wording alone.

Grice's Cooperative Principle provides a foundational framework for explaining how implied meaning operates in conversation. According to Grice (1975), effective communication is guided by the maxims of Quantity, Quality, Relevance, and Manner. While these maxims facilitate mutual understanding, speakers may intentionally flout them to generate implicatures without abandoning cooperation. Through maxim flouting, speakers can convey irony, sarcasm, emotional tension, or indirect evaluation while maintaining plausible deniability. As a result, flouting maxims functions not as conversational failure, but as a strategic communicative device that enriches meaning beyond explicit expression.

In contemporary digital media, video games have emerged as complex narrative environments in which dialogue plays a crucial role in shaping character identity, emotional engagement, and ideological positioning. Unlike spontaneous everyday conversation, video game dialogue is carefully scripted and context-dependent, making pragmatic choices such as maxim flouting a deliberate narrative strategy. In narrative-driven games, characters often rely on vagueness, exaggeration, indirection, or metaphor to convey fear, authority, tension, or moral conflict, thereby enhancing immersion and emotional resonance for players.

When such pragmatically loaded dialogue is translated, additional challenges arise. This study does not treat translation as an independent object of analysis, but rather as a testing ground to examine whether pragmatic meanings generated through maxim flouting survive across languages. In cases where speakers intentionally flout conversational maxims, what is implied often carries greater communicative weight than what is explicitly stated. Translating such utterances therefore requires more than lexical accuracy; it demands sensitivity to pragmatic force, emotional nuance, and narrative intent.

Previous studies have shown that maxim flouting functions as a strategic communicative tool across various media, including political discourse, films, and animated narratives. These studies consistently demonstrate that flouting is used to express power relations, emotional tension, humor, and ideological stance. However, most existing research remains monolingual and focuses primarily on identifying types of maxim flouting rather than examining how the implied meanings are preserved when dialogue is translated into another language. Moreover, studies that integrate pragmatics and translation tend to focus on machine translation, leaving professional game localization practices underexplored.

Addressing these gaps, this study investigates how maxim flouting functions pragmatically in video game dialogue and how the implied meanings it generates are preserved in Indonesian translation. Using selected dialogues from *Assassin's Creed*:

Shadows, this study applies Grice's framework of maxim flouting and Hatim and Mason's notion of communicative equivalence to demonstrate how pragmatic force, emotional tension, and narrative meaning are transferred across languages. By focusing on an open-world, narrative-driven video game, this study contributes to pragmatic research by highlighting maxim flouting as both a narrative strategy and a cross-linguistic communicative phenomenon.

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to examine how conversational maxims are flouted in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows* (2025). Guided by Silverman's (2017) qualitative principles, the analysis does not begin with a fixed hypothesis but with the question, "What is happening in this interaction?" The data consist of 25 utterances selected from key narrative moments in the game. These utterances were chosen through purposive sampling based on two criteria: (1) the line clearly shows a flouting of one of Grice's maxims, and (2) the utterance appears in a meaningful narrative situation such as conflict, ideological tension, or emotionally charged scenes. All data were taken from recorded gameplay sessions using screen-capture tools to ensure accuracy.

Data collection was conducted in three stages: recording relevant missions and cutscenes, transcribing the dialogues in both English (SL) and Indonesian (TL) using the official subtitles, and identifying maxim flouting by examining the conversational context and the speaker's intention. The analysis followed a multi-step coding process. First, each utterance was classified according to the maxim being flouted. Second, contextual coding was applied to understand the surrounding scene, character relationship, and pragmatic intent. Third, the English and Indonesian versions were compared using Hatim and Mason's (1997) model of communicative equivalence to determine whether the pragmatic force, such as sarcasm, indirect criticism, or tension preserved in translation. Finally, the findings were interpreted to show how maxim flouting contributes to narrative construction and cross-cultural meaning transfer.

To strengthen reliability, the researcher repeatedly reviewed and re-coded all scenes to reduce misinterpretation. Coding decisions were cross-checked with a peer reviewer who has expertise in pragmatics and translation. In addition, the transcripts were validated against official game subtitles to ensure linguistic accuracy. These procedures collectively enhance the credibility and dependability of the study's methodological process.

Result and Discussion

This section presents the main findings of the study based on the analysis of 25 utterances containing maxim flouting in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows*. The results focus on the distribution of flouted maxims and the observable characteristics of how each type appears in the game's narrative dialogue below:

Table 1. Types of Flouting Maxim Found in Assassin's Creed: Shadows

Type of Flouting Maxim	Frequency	Percentage
Quantity	2	8%
Quality	14	56%
Relation	4	4%
Manner	5	20%
Total	25	100%

As shown in Table 1, the Maxim of Quality is the most frequently flouted type, accounting for more than half of the data. Flouting of the Maxim of Manner and Relevance appears with moderate frequency, while flouting of the Maxim of Quantity occurs least frequently in the dataset.

Each type of maxim flouting displays distinct linguistic characteristics in the game dialogue. Flouting of the Maxim of Quality is commonly realized through exaggerated, ironic, or non-literal statements. Flouting of the Maxim of Manner appears in utterances that employ metaphorical language or indirect expressions. Flouting of the Maxim of Relevance is characterized by topic shifts or responses that do not directly address the preceding question. Meanwhile, flouting of the Maxim of Quantity is observed in utterances that provide minimal or deliberately insufficient information. These flouting strategies occur across various narrative situations, including confrontational dialogue, emotionally charged exchanges, and interactions involving unequal power relations between characters.

In addition to identifying types of maxim flouting, the analysis also observes how the implied meanings generated in the source language are rendered in Indonesian translation. Across the dataset, most utterances maintain their pragmatic force, although variations in clarity and explicitness are observed in some translated lines. A small number of utterances show partial shifts in pragmatic emphasis, while the core interactional intent remains recognizable. A more detailed examination of these patterns is presented in the Discussion through selected representative examples:

Flouting Maxim of Quantity

According to Grice (1975), flouting the maxim of quantity occurs when a speaker intentionally provides either too little or too much information. This deliberate departure from the expected amount of information encourages the hearer to infer an implied meaning beyond the literal utterance. Rather than causing misunderstanding, this type of flouting functions as a pragmatic strategy to convey deeper intentions,

emotions, or attitudes within a specific context. Flouting the maxim of quantity often functions to generate implicature through the deliberate provision of insufficient or excessive information. In translation, this pragmatic effect must be preserved to achieve equivalence. According to Hatim and Mason (1997), equivalence is not limited to lexical accuracy but extends to communicative and pragmatic meaning. Therefore, when an utterance flouts the maxim of quantity in the source language, the target language version should maintain a similar level of informational imbalance to ensure that the intended implicature remains accessible to the target audience.

Emotional Tension of Fear

Source Language:

Naoe: There was a man in armour. A Samurai?

He came up behind me. I was careless

Tomiko: What did he look like?

Naoe: It was pale... Like an onryo (Ghost). I think Father grabbed it from him.

Target Language:

Naoe: *Ada seorang pria, berbaju besi. Seorang Samurai?. Dia muncul dibelakangku. Aku ceroboh.*

Tomiko: *Seperti apa rupanya?*

Naoe: *Warnanya pucat. Seperti onryo (Hantu) Kurasa ayah mengambil darinya.*

Equivalence: Achieved

This instance demonstrates how flouting of the Maxim of Quantity functions to convey emotional tension of fear in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows*. Naoe's response, "It was pale... like an onryo. I think Father grabbed it from him," does not provide sufficient descriptive information to answer Tomiko's question adequately. Instead of offering clear physical details about the figure, Naoe relies on ellipsis and a vague supernatural comparison. This deliberate under-informativeness constitutes a flouting of the Maxim of Quantity, as the speaker withholds expected information while still assuming cooperative communication.

The implicature generated through this flouting reflects psychological disturbance and fear rather than mere uncertainty. Naoe's hesitation and reliance on the image of an *onryo*, a vengeful or restless spirit in Japanese cultural belief, suggest that the encounter was traumatic and emotionally overwhelming. By avoiding concrete details, Naoe indirectly communicates that the experience cannot be easily verbalized. In this way, the flouting of Quantity functions as a narrative strategy to externalize fear and emotional shock, transferring Naoe's anxiety to the player and intensifying narrative immersion.

From a translational perspective, this pragmatic effect is successfully preserved in the Indonesian version, indicating that equivalence is achieved. The translation maintains under-informativeness and uncertainty through expressions such as "kurasa" and the retention of the supernatural reference *onryo*, supported by the

explanatory gloss (*hantu*). Importantly, this addition does not eliminate ambiguity but merely ensures cultural accessibility for Indonesian players. As a result, the emotional implicature of fear and hesitation remains interpretable in the target language.

Therefore, this data exemplifies emotional tension of fear because the speaker's fear is conveyed implicitly through vagueness and hesitation rather than explicit emotional labeling. At the same time, the achieved equivalence demonstrates that the pragmatic force of maxim flouting, specifically fear and psychological disturbance, can be preserved across languages through communicative equivalence. This finding supports the broader argument that flouting of conversational maxims in video game dialogue operates as a cross-cultural narrative strategy rather than as a communicative failure.

Source Language:

Sandayu: She gave it to you.

Nagato: So, I could protect if they came.

Target Language:

Sandayu: *Dia memberikannya padamu.*

Nagato: *Agar aku bisa melindunginya jika mereka datang.*

Equivalence: Achieved

This data illustrates another manifestation of emotional tension of fear through flouting of the Maxim of Quantity in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows*. Nagato's utterance, "*So, I could protect if they came,*" is structurally incomplete and under-informative. He does not explicitly mention whom he intends to protect, nor does he clarify the identity of "they." This deliberate lack of information constitutes a flouting of the Maxim of Quantity, as the speaker withholds details that would normally be expected in a cooperative response.

The implicature generated through this under-informativeness reflects anticipatory fear and emotional restraint rather than ignorance. Unlike Naoe's fear, which emerges from a traumatic past encounter, Nagato's fear is oriented toward a potential future threat. By avoiding explicit reference to the danger or the person at risk, Nagato indirectly communicates that the situation is sensitive and potentially dangerous to articulate openly. This strategic vagueness creates emotional tension by suggesting imminent threat without verbalizing it, allowing fear to surface through what remains unsaid.

From a narrative perspective, this flouting of Quantity functions to intensify suspense and psychological pressure. The absence of concrete details forces the listener, and the player to infer the seriousness of the threat from contextual cues rather than explicit explanation. Fear is thus conveyed implicitly, reinforcing the atmosphere of uncertainty and danger within the storyline.

In the Indonesian translation, the pragmatic force of this utterance is largely preserved, indicating that equivalence is achieved. The addition of the object marker "*-nya*" in "*melindunginya*" slightly increases explicitness, yet it does not resolve the central ambiguity regarding the identity of the threat. The continued use of "*mereka*"

maintains vagueness and anticipatory tension. As a result, the emotional implicature of fear and vigilance remains accessible to Indonesian players.

Therefore, this data exemplifies emotional tension of fear because fear is communicated through deliberate under-informativeness and incomplete expression rather than explicit emotional declaration. The achieved equivalence further demonstrates that the pragmatic force of maxim flouting, specifically, anticipatory fear, can be preserved across languages through communicative equivalence. This finding reinforces the broader argument that flouting of conversational maxims in video game dialogue operates as a cross-cultural narrative strategy rather than a communicative failure.

Flouting Maxim of Quality

According to Grice (1975), flouting the maxim of quality occurs when a speaker deliberately states something that is not literally true in order to convey an implied meaning, such as irony or sarcasm. In translation, preserving this implicature is crucial for achieving equivalence. Hatim and Mason (1997) argue that equivalence involves maintaining communicative and pragmatic effects rather than factual accuracy alone. Therefore, when flouting of the maxim of quality appears in the source language, the target language should reproduce a similar non-literal expression to ensure that the intended evaluative or ironic meaning remains accessible to the target audience.

Sarcasm

Source Language:

Valignano: I should have left you at the port or floating at sea, where we found you.

Target Language:

Valignano: Aku seharusnya meninggalkanmu di pelabuhan atau hanyut di laut saat kami menemukanmu.

Flouted maxim: Quality

Equivalence: Achieved

This data illustrates the use of sarcasm through flouting of the Maxim of Quality in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows*. Valignano's utterance, "*I should have left you at the port or floating at sea, where we found you,*" is clearly not intended to be interpreted as a truthful or factual statement. The speaker does not genuinely propose abandoning the interlocutor at sea. Instead, the utterance deliberately presents an exaggerated and implausible scenario, which constitutes a flouting of the Maxim of Quality. By producing an utterance that is knowingly untrue, Valignano invites the listener to infer an implied meaning beyond the literal content.

The implicature generated through this flouting conveys sarcasm, hostility, and emotional aggression. Rather than expressing anger directly, Valignano uses hyperbole to communicate rejection and contempt toward the addressee. The reference to abandonment at sea functions as a rhetorical device that intensifies the emotional impact of the utterance and reinforces hierarchical power relations. Through sarcasm,

Valignano asserts dominance and positions the interlocutor as a burden, thereby transforming a non-literal statement into a strong expression of authority and disdain.

From a narrative perspective, this sarcastic flouting of the Maxim of Quality serves to heighten interpersonal conflict and dramatize power imbalance between characters. Sarcasm allows the character to articulate hostility without explicit confrontation, creating layered meaning that players must interpret pragmatically. This aligns with pragmatic theories that view sarcasm as a cooperative strategy, where meaning is recovered through implicature rather than literal truth.

In the Indonesian translation, the pragmatic force of sarcasm is successfully preserved, indicating that equivalence is achieved. The phrase “*hanyut di laut*” effectively maintains the extremity and cruelty implied by “*floating at sea*,” ensuring that the utterance remains clearly exaggerated and hostile. The translation does not mitigate the threat or soften the tone, allowing Indonesian players to infer the same sarcastic and aggressive intent as in the source language.

Therefore, this data exemplifies sarcasm because the speaker deliberately violates the Maxim of Quality to express criticism and dominance through non-literal language. The achieved equivalence demonstrates that sarcastic implicature, as a form of pragmatic meaning, can be preserved across languages through communicative equivalence. This finding further supports the argument that maxim flouting in video game dialogue functions as a narrative and interpersonal strategy rather than a communicative failure.

Source Language:

Nobunaga: But your servant, Diogo, stays. He may get prove useful to me.

Valignano: Very well. Though he is good for little more than bearing your sandals.

Target Language:

Nobunaga: *Tapi orangmu, Diogo, tetap disini. Ia mungkin berguna bagiku.*

Valignano: *Baiklah. Meskipun ia lebih dari sekedar bantalan sandal anda.*

Flouted maxim: Quality

Equivalence: Achieved

This data demonstrates another instance of sarcasm realized through flouting of the Maxim of Quality in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows*. Valignano's utterance, “*Though he is good for little more than bearing your sandals*,” is deliberately exaggerated and clearly not intended as a truthful assessment of Diogo's abilities. Diogo is evidently more than a mere sandal-bearer, yet Valignano intentionally reduces his value to a menial and degrading role. This intentional untruthfulness constitutes a flouting of the Maxim of Quality, as the speaker produces a statement that violates factual accuracy while still expecting the listener to infer the implied meaning.

The implicature generated through this flouting conveys sarcasm, humiliation, and restrained defiance. On the surface, Valignano appears to comply with Nobunaga's command by agreeing that Diogo may stay. However, the sarcastic remark simultaneously undermines Nobunaga's authority by mocking the usefulness

attributed to Diogo. This creates a layered power dynamic in which Nobunaga exercises political dominance, while Valignano employs sarcasm as a subtle form of resistance and emotional expression. The flouting of the Maxim of Quality thus functions as a pragmatic strategy to negotiate power and express contempt without direct confrontation.

From a narrative perspective, this sarcastic utterance contributes to character development and interpersonal tension. Sarcasm allows Valignano to maintain a semblance of politeness while embedding hostility and humiliation within his response. This aligns with pragmatic theories that view sarcasm as a cooperative but indirect communicative act, where meaning is recovered through implicature rather than literal interpretation.

In the Indonesian translation, the pragmatic force of sarcasm is effectively preserved, indicating that equivalence is achieved. The phrase “*lebih dari sekadar bantalan sandal Anda*” successfully retains the degrading imagery and ironic tone of the source utterance. The translation does not soften the insult or reinterpret the exaggeration, enabling Indonesian players to perceive the same sense of mockery, humiliation, and interpersonal tension conveyed in the original dialogue.

Therefore, this data exemplifies sarcasm because the speaker deliberately flouts the Maxim of Quality to convey contempt and resistance through non-literal language. The achieved equivalence further demonstrates that sarcastic implicature can be maintained across languages through communicative equivalence. This finding reinforces the argument that flouting of conversational maxims in video game dialogue functions as a narrative and interpersonal strategy rather than as a communicative failure.

Flouting Maxim of Relation

According to Grice (1975), flouting the maxim of relation occurs when a speaker deliberately provides an apparently irrelevant response in order to convey an implied meaning. Rather than causing confusion, this strategic irrelevance prompts the hearer to interpret the utterance within a broader contextual framework. In translation, maintaining this pragmatic function is essential for equivalence. Hatim and Mason (1997) argue that equivalence involves preserving communicative intent and contextual meaning. Therefore, when flouting of relation occurs in the source language, the target language should retain a similar form of contextual deviation to ensure that the intended implicature remains accessible to the target audience.

Social Tension

Source Language:

Naoe: You're not telling me everything. I can see it on your face. What was is Hattori Hanzo Letter.

Nagato: The world is at many wars, Naoe. Not just the one Oda Nobunaga fights.

Target Language:

Naoe: *Kau tak bilang apapun padaku. Aku bisa melihatnya diwajahmu. Apa isi surat Hattori Hanzo?*

Nagato: *Dunia sedang dilanda banyak perang, Naoe. Bukan hanya perang yang dilawan Oda Nobunaga*

Equivalence: Achieved

This data exemplifies social tension realized through flouting of the Maxim of Relevance in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows*. In this exchange, Naoe directly confronts Nagato and demands specific information regarding the contents of Hattori Hanzo's letter. However, instead of responding to the question, Nagato deliberately shifts the topic by stating, "*The world is at many wars, Naoe. Not just the one Oda Nobunaga fights.*" This response does not address the requested information and therefore constitutes a flouting of the Maxim of Relevance. The irrelevance is intentional rather than accidental, as the speaker avoids the topic while maintaining the appearance of cooperative communication.

The implicature generated through this flouting reflects social and political tension rather than emotional fear alone. By redirecting the conversation to a broader geopolitical context, Nagato implicitly signals that the letter contains sensitive or dangerous information that cannot be disclosed openly. This avoidance strategy allows him to conceal specific details while simultaneously emphasizing the gravity of the situation. The shift from a personal inquiry to a global political statement elevates the importance of the letter and suggests its connection to wider conflicts and power struggles.

From a narrative perspective, this flouting of Relevance functions as a strategy to construct political suspense and interpersonal distance between the characters. The indirectness reinforces the hierarchical and ideological constraints governing the interaction: Nagato positions himself as a gatekeeper of information, while Naoe is excluded from full knowledge. Social tension thus emerges from unequal access to information and the inability to communicate transparently within a politically charged context.

In the Indonesian translation, the pragmatic force of this social tension is successfully preserved, indicating that equivalence is achieved. The translator maintains the topic shift without supplying additional clarification or restoring relevance. The utterance "*Dunia sedang dilanda banyak perang*" continues to function as an evasive response, allowing Indonesian players to infer the same concealment, caution, and political sensitivity present in the source language. As a result, the implicature of withheld information and underlying social conflict remains intact.

Therefore, this data exemplifies social tension because the conflict arises from strategic avoidance and unequal power relations rather than overt emotional expression. The achieved equivalence demonstrates that the pragmatic force of flouting the Maxim of Relevance, specifically the negotiation of sensitive political information, can be preserved across languages through communicative equivalence. This finding further supports the argument that maxim flouting in video game dialogue operates as a narrative and social strategy rather than a communicative failure.

Source Language:

Frois: Did you see how Lord Nobunaga looked
At Diogo? Could it be he has never met a black man?

Target Language:

Frois: *Apa kau melihat bagaimana Lord
Nobunaga melihat Diogo? Mungkinkah dia belum pernah bertemu orang kulit
hitam?*

Equivalence: Achieved

This data presents social tension through flouting of the Maxim of Relevance in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows*, particularly in relation to racial identity and othering. Frois initially comments on Nobunaga's unusual gaze toward Diogo, which invites an explanation grounded in the immediate political or interpersonal context. However, instead of offering a relevant clarification, Frois abruptly shifts the topic to racial speculation by asking, "*Could it be he has never met a black man?*" This response does not directly explain Nobunaga's behavior in a cooperative manner and therefore constitutes a deliberate flouting of the Maxim of Relevance.

The implicature generated through this topic shift reflects underlying social tension rooted in racial difference. By reframing Nobunaga's gaze as racial curiosity rather than political calculation or authority, Frois indirectly introduces race as a socially sensitive interpretive lens. This move suggests that Diogo's racial identity is perceived as an anomaly within the social setting, thereby highlighting unspoken discomfort, curiosity, and power imbalance. The tension does not arise from explicit confrontation, but from the indirect way racial difference is invoked to explain social behavior.

From a narrative perspective, this flouting of Relevance functions to expose latent social conflict and processes of othering without overtly addressing them. The indirectness allows the dialogue to surface racial tension while maintaining plausible deniability, which aligns with the historical and political sensitivity surrounding race and hierarchy in the game's setting. Social tension thus emerges through implication rather than direct accusation, inviting players to interpret the broader ideological implications of the exchange.

In the Indonesian translation, the pragmatic force of this social tension is successfully preserved, indicating that equivalence is achieved. The translator retains the speculative question "*Mungkinkah dia belum pernah bertemu orang kulit hitam?*" without mitigation or reinterpretation. As a result, the same irrelevance and indirect racial framing remain accessible to Indonesian audiences, allowing the implicature of otherness and social unease to be inferred in a similar way.

Therefore, this data exemplifies social tension because conflict is constructed through indirect reference to racial identity rather than explicit discourse. The achieved equivalence demonstrates that the pragmatic force of flouting the Maxim of Relevance, specifically the expression of racial othering and social unease, can be preserved across languages through communicative equivalence. This finding further supports the

argument that maxim flouting in video game dialogue functions as a narrative strategy for negotiating sensitive social issues rather than as a communicative failure.

Flouting Maxim of Manner

According to Grice (1975), flouting the maxim of manner occurs when a speaker deliberately employs ambiguity, indirectness, or lack of clarity to convey an implied meaning. Rather than causing confusion, this strategic obscurity invites the hearer to interpret the utterance beyond its surface structure. In translation, preserving this pragmatic function is essential for achieving equivalence. Hatim and Mason (1997) emphasize that equivalence involves maintaining stylistic and communicative effects. Therefore, when flouting of the maxim of manner occurs in the source language, the target language should retain a comparable level of ambiguity or indirectness to ensure that the intended implicature remains intact.

Narrative Suspense

Source Language:

Nobunaga: Can you feel the breeze, Yasuke?. It fans the total destruction of Iga. A most Perfect night. Ready to finish them off?

Yasuke: At your command, my Lord

Target Language:

Nobunaga: *Bisakah kau merasakan anginnya,*

Yasuke? Angin itu mengipasi kehancuran total Iga. Malam yang paling sempurna. Siap untuk mengabisinya?

Yasuke: Sesuai perintahmu tuan Nobunaga

Flouted Maxim: Manner

Equivalence: Achieved

This data exemplifies narrative suspense realized through flouting of the Maxim of Manner in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows*. In this exchange, Nobunaga does not issue a direct military command. Instead, he employs poetic and metaphorical expressions such as “the breeze,” “it fans the total destruction of Iga,” and “a most perfect night.” This indirect and aestheticized language obscures the intended action, constituting a flouting of the Maxim of Manner, which requires speakers to be clear, direct, and unambiguous.

The implicature generated through this flouting is an indirect yet unmistakable command to initiate mass violence. By avoiding explicit imperatives, Nobunaga transforms an act of destruction into something natural and even beautiful. This metaphorical framing delays explicit confirmation of the attack while simultaneously making its inevitability clear. As a result, suspense is created not by uncertainty about *what* will happen, but by the deliberate postponement of *how* and *when* it will occur. Narrative tension thus emerges from the gap between poetic description and impending action.

From a narrative perspective, this flouting of the Maxim of Manner functions to heighten suspense and reinforce ideological power. Nobunaga's authority is portrayed as absolute: he does not need to articulate his command clearly because his subordinate, Yasuke, immediately understands and complies. Yasuke's response, "*At your command, my Lord,*" confirms that the implicature has been successfully interpreted, demonstrating that the obscured message remains pragmatically effective. This interaction reinforces hierarchical dominance while sustaining anticipation of the violent outcome.

In the Indonesian translation, the pragmatic force of narrative suspense is successfully preserved, indicating that equivalence is achieved. The translator retains the metaphorical structure through expressions such as "*angin itu mengipasi kehancuran total Iga*" and "*malam yang paling sempurna,*" rather than converting the utterance into a direct order. By maintaining poetic ambiguity, the translation preserves both the suspense and the ideological framing of violence present in the source language.

Therefore, this data exemplifies narrative suspense because crucial narrative information, namely the command to attack, is communicated indirectly through metaphor and ambiguity rather than explicit instruction. The achieved equivalence demonstrates that the pragmatic force of flouting the Maxim of Manner, particularly the creation of suspense and anticipation, can be preserved across languages through communicative equivalence. This finding further supports the argument that maxim flouting in video game dialogue operates as a narrative strategy that structures tension and authority rather than as a communicative failure.

Source Language:

Unknown Woman: She's like a cat with a gold coin. She has no idea what she carries.

Target Language:

Wanita tidak ketahu: Dia seperti kucing yang membawa koin emas. Dia tidak tau apa yang dia bawa.

Flouted maxim: Manner

Equivalence: Achieved

This data illustrates narrative suspense through flouting of the Maxim of Manner in *Assassin's Creed: Shadows*. The utterance "*She's like a cat with a gold coin*" employs metaphorical language rather than explicit explanation, deliberately obscuring the significance of the object being carried. Instead of directly identifying what the woman possesses or why it matters, the speaker relies on figurative expression. This indirectness constitutes a flouting of the Maxim of Manner, as the message is intentionally delivered in a non-transparent and interpretive form.

The implicature generated through this flouting conveys hidden danger and dramatic irony. By comparing the woman to "*a cat with a gold coin,*" the speaker implies innocence and ignorance, while simultaneously suggesting that the object is valuable and potentially dangerous. This creates suspense because the audience becomes aware of the threat embedded in the situation, whereas the character herself

remains unaware of the risk she carries. Narrative tension thus arises from the asymmetry of knowledge between the audience and the character.

From a narrative perspective, this flouting of the Maxim of Manner functions as a strategy to delay revelation and intensify anticipation. The metaphor allows critical information to be withheld without halting the narrative flow, encouraging players to anticipate future consequences. Suspense is not generated through immediate action, but through the controlled distribution of information and the suggestion of imminent danger.

In the Indonesian translation, the pragmatic force of narrative suspense is effectively preserved, indicating that equivalence is achieved. The metaphor “*seperti kucing yang membawa koin emas*” is retained without replacement by a literal explanation. By maintaining figurative ambiguity, the translation ensures that Indonesian players are prompted to infer the same hidden significance and impending threat as in the source language. The added clarification “*Dia tidak tahu apa yang dia bawa*” reinforces the dramatic irony without eliminating suspense.

Therefore, this data exemplifies narrative suspense because crucial narrative information is communicated indirectly through metaphor and obscurity rather than explicit disclosure. The achieved equivalence demonstrates that the pragmatic force of flouting the Maxim of Manner, specifically the creation of suspense through withheld information, can be preserved across languages through communicative equivalence. This finding further supports the broader argument that maxim flouting in video game dialogue operates as a narrative strategy that structures anticipation and engagement rather than as a communicative failure.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the flouting of Grice’s conversational maxims in *Assassin’s Creed: Shadows* functions as a deliberate pragmatic and narrative strategy rather than a communicative failure. Based on the analysis of 25 selected utterances, the findings show that characters systematically exploit maxim flouting to convey emotional tension, negotiate power relations, manage sensitive social issues, and construct narrative suspense. The Maxim of Quality is flouted most frequently, primarily to express sarcasm and ideological dominance, followed by the Maxims of Manner, Relevance, and Quantity, which are used to generate suspense, social tension, and fear through indirectness and ambiguity.

Importantly, this study demonstrates that the pragmatic force generated through maxim flouting is successfully preserved in the Indonesian translation. Using Hatim and Mason’s (1997) concept of communicative equivalence, the analysis shows that implicatures related to fear, sarcasm, social conflict, and suspense remain interpretable in the target language, even when translations are lexically close to the source text. This indicates that effective game localization depends not on literal accuracy alone, but on the preservation of pragmatic meaning and narrative function.

These findings contribute to pragmatics by reaffirming maxim flouting as an intentional communicative strategy in fictional dialogue, and to translation studies by highlighting the central role of pragmatic equivalence in cross-cultural meaning

transfer. However, the study is limited to a small dataset and to English-Indonesian translation in narrative cutscenes. Future research may expand the dataset to include interactive gameplay dialogue, additional languages, or player reception studies to further explore how pragmatic meaning is processed in video game discourse.

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