Formalism and Power of Language: Unravelling the Narratology of Final Fantasy XVI

Agung Prasetyo Wibowo[1*], Ichwan Suyudi[2], SF Luthfie Arguby Purnomo[3], Hendro Firmawan[4], Ahmad Juma Khatib[5]

[1]*Gunadarma University, Jakarta, Indonesia. Email: agungpw@staff.gunadarma.ac.id*
[2]*Universitas Gadjah Mada, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Email: ichwan.suyudi@gmail.com*
[3]*UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta, Surakarta, Indonesia. Email: luthfiearguby@iain-surakarta.ac.id*
[4]*Gunadarma University, Jakarta, Indonesia. Email: hendro_firmawan@staff.gunadarma.ac.id*
[5]*Gunadarma University, Jakarta, Indonesia. Email: aj.khatib84@gmail.com*
*Corresponding author

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Using the framework of formalist analysis, this study examines how language serves as a source of power in shaping the narrative depth, character development, and thematic exploration of Final Fantasy XVI. This research involves analyzing various types of language, from dialogue and narration to symbolism, metaphor, and simile. The research methodology employed is qualitative analysis, allowing for an in-depth examination of the linguistic complexities present in the game through textual analysis and content analysis. By thematically dissecting language and applying techniques from formalist linguistics, such as Deixis Analysis, the study aims to determine how game creators purposefully use linguistic techniques to construct emotional connotations and expressive effects. Additionally, it explores how witty dialogues between characters contribute to the development of story-related themes. This study reveals how the linguistic fabric of Final Fantasy XVI functions as an effective tool in crafting an engaging and powerful story. It draws players deeper into the game's world and evokes their sympathies for the various forces at play. Furthermore, the research highlights the intentional use of linguistic devices to enhance narrative immersion and emotional impact, showcasing the intricate interplay between language and storytelling in video games. Through this analysis, the study underscores the significance of linguistic elements in video game narratives, providing insights into how language can be manipulated to create compelling and immersive experiences for players.

Keywords: Final fantasy XVI; Formalism; Narratology; Power of language; Video game study

1. Introduction

Video games have now become a multi-layered and complex cultural medium that entertains people of all ages. The technology of video gaming has advanced far enough to be compared to movies, cartoons and books in their capacity to tell an engaging story, to be well presented and directed (Rudis and Poštić, 2018). While video games may tap on the entertainment side, primarily aiming to entertain players, they may profoundly impact multi-literacy development. Ebandi and Ahmadi (2022) even successfully conduct research how the narrative provides insights into how playing video games results in multi-literacy development and impacts the native video gamer's cognition, affection, language learning, and cultural knowledge.

Traditional non-interactive media can be either linear or branched out, but choosing paths and controlling the outcome is reserved exclusively for video games. By interacting with video games, a user makes himself an active participant in interactive storytelling. Playing Video Games is a form of interactive entertainment. Similar to theatrical performances or movies, video games combine a lot of different things to come up with utterly engaging experiences for players. Formalism vs. the power of language are two key elements that enrich and lift up the play environment which is at the center of this immersive experience.

Formalism is a branch of literary theory and criticism that takes issue with the structure of a literary work. It seems therefore that external factors are dispensed with. Formalism ignores concerns of cultural, political or authorial intent, and social influence. Formalism emerged in Russia during the early 20th century under the leadership of critics like Viktor Shklovsky and Roman Jakobson. Their primary objective was to analyse the processes by which language creates meaning, and they maintained the view that the structural attributes of a text had more importance than its content (Kalinin, 2017). Formalism in video games refers to the fundamental framework, regulations, and mechanisms that dictate how players engage with the virtual environment. It determines the obstacles that players encounter, the benefits they get, and the tempo of the gaming. The formalistic aspects are carefully designed to instil a feeling of control, motivating players to investigate and become skilled in the virtual world (Vught, 2022). Through a comprehension of formalism, game creators may carefully use diverse components, such as language, to enhance the player's experience.

The power of language is in its capacity to generate significance, elicit emotions, and influence, as Pratchett (2007) contended that "The power of language is the ability to construct alternate realities." In the realm of video games, language serves as more than just a method of communication; it is a potent instrument that moulds the emotional and intellectual terrain of the gaming encounter. The game's universe and characters are enriched by the meticulously constructed conversations and the ambient noises that create the ambience. This adds depth, nuance and emotional impact which language can never provide. Through any means, be it with an intriguing storyline, realistic dialogue or a rich soundscape, language is the medium that allows players full entry into the constantly changing gamer's journey. Understanding the cognitive effects of language in video games is crucial, as it gives us insight into how linguistic clues influence problem solving, decision making and memory retention. By observing the way games that are popular with players skilfully use language as a means of communication, we can identify how well-wrought language imparts cognitive benefits to players, shaping their way of thinking and what they see.

Square Enix's Final Fantasy XVI, the latest instalment in this prestigious series of games, demonstrates how video games have matured to become a fine art form masterfully appealing to a huge international market. The sixteenth main instalment in the Final Fantasy series, Final Fantasy XVI. It was released for the PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X/S platforms in 2023. In a sense, this three-dimensional gaming sensation owes to the intricate interplay of formalism and the power in language that are also elements that enhance and transform the game landscape.

While it is important to acknowledge that it is worth emphasizing that "not all games are of the same quality and not all games are mere forms of entertainment" (Liontas, 2022). According to Liontas (2022), certain games are most suitable for

entertainment, some for cognitive development, and others for social interactions and competition. One role of the language used in Final Fantasy XVI is to serve as a means for conveying information, but its significance goes far beyond this, forming a rich web of emotion and intellect. Character exchanges are enriched with complexity, dramatic soundtracks are crafted, and unfolding events are brought to life, allowing players to fully immerse themselves in the fantasy universe. This study examines the mutually beneficial connection between formalism and language in video games, emphasising how creators use language to strengthen formalistic aspects, hence influencing player conduct and fostering emotional involvement. Expanding upon prior research, namely Sabariyanto's examination of "The Great Gatsby" (Sabariyanto, 2018), which focuses on fundamental aspects such as plot, character, and place, our objective is to uncover the crucial influence of language in forming the totality of a narrative.

Rokhmansyah (2015) examines the process by which factual elements are transformed to create the narrative structure inside a book. This research uses Russian Formalism to reveal how the factual elements that underpin the fabula are creatively reconstructed to produce the suzette. The use of genuine events as the basis for the underlying structure of the narrative demonstrates how literary works function as condensed representations of history, made unfamiliar in order to have a fictitious impact. In contrast, Sulistyorini (2007) uses a formalism method to examine how the protagonist confronts issues. Throughout the book, the main character skilfully overcomes every difficulty encountered, resulting in a gratifying conclusion. The research concludes that the narrator's obsession with deceased Rebecca is the main source of conflict in the novel, which drives its story line and finally comes to a happy end.

Many scholars have talked about how language affects video games. Nitsche (2010) argues that language is an essential element in the video game experience. He writes that language in video games has numerous functions which go beyond providing information. It is used to encourage a sense of total commitment, tell tales and express feeling. The way in which this language deviates from those of conventional art forms is a point that Aarseth (1997) argues about video games. He argues that video games are not only interactive stories, but also have the qualities of interactive poetry in his writing. Aarseth's theoretical framework lets you understand the use of language in video games. He argues that video games are an artistic form which employs language to create a new sort of experience for the player. Prima (2019) studied that the use of language variations in online games are determined by several factors such as time, place, and situation that results in the emergence of the practice of power. On other work, Toh (2023) explain how narrative games focus on the plot, character interactions, and sometimes have story variations depending on how the player interacts with them which adopts user experience approaches, such as interviews, think-aloud protocol, and grounded theory, to examine the player experience of commercial narrative games. By analyzing the player experience, they extract a series of principles from these patterns of interaction that game designers can utilize when creating narrative games.

This research endeavours to point out that formalism and language are intertwined foundations upon which the potency and influence of video games rest. By uncovering the intricacies of their dynamic interplay, game developers and enthusiasts can further elevate the art of interactive storytelling, pushing the boundaries of creativity and player engagement within this iconic and ever-evolving RPG franchise. Thus, this research could explore three questions: 1) How is the

formalism portrayed in Final Fantasy XVI?; 2) How is the narratology indicating the functions of language in the meaning and making process as seen from the game?; and 3) How the power of language reinforces and accentuate formalistic elements in Final Fantasy XVI that signify the meaning that the game elements attempt to deliver was made in tandem with the analysis of ergodic literature?

This research focuses on the formalism and language in Final Fantasy XVI, particularly emphasizing the collaboration as a novel aspect. The research gap lies in the lack of exploration into how the formalism is portrayed in the game, the role of language in reinforcing formalistic elements, and the definition of characters through formalism and language. In the field of linguistics and literature, this research offers a unique contribution by delving into the intersection of formalism, language, and video game narrative. While previous studies may have touched on aspects of conventional narrative analysis, the specific emphasis on collaboration sets this research apart. Understanding how collaboration shapes the artistic merit of the game provides valuable insights into the evolving landscape of video game storytelling. This research addresses a gap by recognizing the significance of language and formalistic elements in character development, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of video games as a new medium for artistic expression in literature. It expands the scope of literary and linguistic analysis to include interactive digital narratives, paving the way for future studies in this emerging field.

Formalism as a literary theory posits that the primary objective of literature is to embody literariness. Consequently, it is acknowledged as a defiance of the literary comprehension prevailing since the 1900s. It is suggested that a literary work should be studied as text-oriented (Görmez and Beyoğlu, 2022). Furthermore, it is asserted that all previous researches utilizing formalism as a literary theory exclusively focused only on text-based literary works (Abdullah, Mahmood, & Ali, 2022; Effe, 2020; Safikhani, 2018; Manshur, 2019; Leporati, 2019; Bogdanov & Karcz, 2005; Tucker, 2018; Debnár, 2018; Kahan, 2018; Gallagher, 2020; Otter, 2020; Pratiwi, 2022). Thus, this research aims to make a significant contribution to the foundational theory for further research about formalism and the power of languages, particularly in video games, which has never been discussed before. Ultimately, the collaboration becomes the main difference from all previous research and becomes the main novelty of this research as it can help us to better understand the game's artistic merit and its unique contribution to the new medium of literature which is called video game.

Literature Review

In literary analysis, on the other hand, formalism rooted in Saussurean linguistics fosters this microscopic study of a text's internal parts (Hambali et al., 2023). Nevertheless, Aarseth's concept of ergodic literature goes beyond the boundaries built by formalist thinking in 1997 (Aarseth. By insisting on interactivity and active participation by readers in the making of the story (Aarseth, 1997; Monfort & Bogost, 2020; Laure-Ryan, 2014), ergodic literature attempts to counteract reading's passive nature. Formalism is only interested in the parts of a literary work, such as phonetics and word form. Ergodic literature builds on this analysis by considering how readers read between the lines within each part (Levinson, 2017; Fry, 2019; Eagleton, 2021; Hambali et al., 2023)). In Aarseth's scheme of things, literature is not a static structure but rather an interactive system whereby the very act of reading becomes an integral part in creating new works. (Aarseth 1997) In this sense it goes beyond formalism's

belief that a harmony exists between form and content to include the symbiotic relationship found in ergodic literature (Vught, 2022). Forming a new meaning In an era where readers themselves actively participate in the construction of narrative, this crude divide between fabula and *sjuzet* (Bennett, 2004) takes on new implications. Combined, these analyses provide a lens capable of looking at the linguistic, poetic and structural elements as well as allowing for reader engagement in shaping literary experience (Aarseth, 1997; Bennett, 2004; Hambali et al., 2023; Vught, 2022).

Turning to the realm of video games, formalist inquiries widen their scope and take into consideration those structural elements common throughout gameplay mechanics or design. Jakobson & Halle (2015) used comprehensive form/structure analysis as a basic instrument for understanding the complex tendencies of video game narrative. In this regard, they required examination into individual elements such as point of view and texture in addition to tension between these concepts; simile including comparison with an absurd situation or something that is more familiar to the player; parallelism which was There's more. The eloquence of language in video games does not begin and end with written text communication but spreads to spoken dialogue, voice acting, audio cues that accompany events on screen and even visual symbolism used throughout the game world. Aarseth (1997), Smith (2020) and Nitsche (2010), stress that as an effective weapon in the gamers 'ordnance array language plays a major role in creating immersion--in drawing players into participating or watching. It is helpful with telling stories or developing characters; it serves to give out essential information when needed using written words scrolling.

Video games, due to their media status as software, are primarily treated the same as other software types in their localization quality assessment. Thereby, the assessment components revolve around linguistic, functional/operational and cosmetic elements of the software (Wibowo, et.al , 2019). Moreover, narratology, especially in the work of Gerard Genette, is a branch of literary theory aiming to examine how stories are told and meanings produced (Bal, 1985). This interdisciplinary approach encompasses an array of elements within narratives, such as character, plot, setting, and theme, delving into the intricacies of narrative creation, communication, and interpretation by readers and viewers alike (Rimmon-Kenan, Narrative Fiction, 2002; Panggabean & Rangkuti, 2020). As narrative media, including novels, films, and video games, continues to gain popularity, narratology has evolved rapidly. This growth, Pavel (2014) notes is a result of the ever greater need to understand how narrative works and functions in different media. Basically, narratology is a conduit for research. By examining the structure and interpretation of stories, it adds to our comprehension of how the dynamics behind storytelling can take shape in any number of different media.

2. Research Method

This is a qualitative study articulated in descriptive fashion. The data taken from Square Enix's Final Fantasy XVI are in textual, visual, and operative forms. Textual data refer to the dialogues and narrations in verbal forms, visual data to the scenes and images, and operative data to how the gameplay of the game. The data were analyzed by employing the analysis technique by Spradley (2016). Four phases were taken in employing Spradleyan techniques of analysis namely domain, taxonomy, componential, and cultural theme.

In the first phase, the theory of formalism by Jakobson (2015) was applied. Through the implementation, the six functions of language namely referential, poetic, emotive,

conative, phatic, and metalingual were revealed. In the second phase, taxonomy, these six functions, then, were connected with the theory of narratology by Rimmon-Kenan (2002) to indicate how the six functions of language contribute to the meaning making process as seen from the game. In the third phase, componential analysis, how the language functions that signify the meaning that the game elements attempt to deliver was made in tandem with the analysis of ergodic literature by Aarseth (1997). Through the implementation of the theory of ergodic literature, constructed to address games as literary works, it was expected that meaning related to the narratives, meaning related to the mechanics of the games, and how the narrative and mechanical meaning work together might be revealed. As the meaning revealed, cultural theme analysis phase, commenced. In this last phase, the uniqueness of meaning of Final Fantasy XVI could be signified and from which a comprehension on how formalism and meaning making work differently in game as an ergodic literature might be captured.

3. Findings

The study of formalism and the power of language in Final Fantasy XVI could provide valuable insights into the game's artistic merit and its unique contribution to the video game medium. The study could also help us to better understand the role of language in video games and its potential to create meaning, evoke emotions, and persuade.

3.1. Form/structure.

"The Hero with a Thousand Faces" (Campbell, 1949) introduces the concept of the monomyth or the hero's journey—a universal narrative structure found in myths and stories across cultures. This structure outlines the stages a hero typically goes through in a transformative journey. Campbell explores the concept of the hero's journey, a universal narrative pattern that he argues is present in myths and stories from various cultures throughout history. He examines how this narrative structure reflects fundamental human experiences and psychological archetypes.

Final Fantasy XVI employs a semi-linear and semi-open world structure, featuring a single playable character named Clive. The narrative unfolds across three distinct periods of Clive's life: his Teens, Twenties, and Thirties. In the realm of Valisthea, magic permeates all things. Powerful beings known as Eikons are present everywhere. The story is basically about Clive Rosfield, who's the guardian for Joshua Rosfield (the Dominant of the Phoenix Eikon).

Figure 1. Clive Rosflied of Final Fantasy XVI.

Source: www.square-enix-games.com

Later, after Clive is taken into slavery (following the fall of his kingdom), he engages in battle with an outlaw minstrel called Cidolfus Telamon. This leads him to a struggle between nations known as Valisthea and which shrouds mysterious Eikon

secrets. During his teenage years, Clive is Joshua's guardian all along. He receives powers from the fire Eikon Phoenix. Then, an ambush by Sanbreque soldiers leads to tragedy and the unleashing of formidable Eikons. Clive's life changes dramatically as he lives on with his still-young parents and Jill.

In the course of his travails, Clive is betrayed and enslaved a number of times before facing off against several Eika. He allies himself with all kinds of partners, forging a team-up with Cid and getting powers from other Eikons. It's not long before he crosses swords in some fearsome battles against powerful foes such as Bened Frankenstein (Benedetta). The story develops such that as Clive becomes Ifrit, this transformation turns into first a source of internal conflict and then the impetus to pursue truth.

Together with Jill and Cid, Clive sets out to destroy Mothercrystals that cause suffering for all of Valisthea. Other worldly forces, such as the entity Ultima (who wants to possess Clive) further stand in their way. The story is propelled toward an explosive showdown in Ultima's sky fortress when Joshua lives through Ifrit and the mysteries are revealed of how the sunken civilization came to be, as well as where Ultima herself--and ultimately, the Mothercrystals that power them all who controls our star will take over hears. Finally, Ultima has to face Clive and his friends--sacrifice leads to battle which in turn creates revelations. The story's climax is a sacrifice and transformation, and Clive 'fate remains uncertain. Valisthea's future glance reveals a magicless world. This tie-ups the loose ends to present a metafictional completion of the story line. In Final Fantasy XVI, the intricate interplay of characters, Eikons, and the magical elements of Valisthea shapes a complex narrative journey filled with conflict, sacrifice, and the unraveling of profound mysteries.

3.2.   Texture

Texture, Guerin says (2010), means the fullness and multiplicity of a literary work created by an artist's choice to bring together intense imagery with living metaphors. This use of the term "texture" suggests how image, symbol and metaphor can together add significant depth and richness to a work. The end effect upon readers or audience members alike is an experience layered in many directions at once. This implies that Guerin's writings should probably focus on how the interweaving of imagery and metaphor adds depth to the texture of a literary work. From the selection of words, with their sharp visual and sensory details to evocative figurative comparisons, all combine together into a narrative full of richness and texture.

From Final Fantasy XVI, where texture is rendered in the flesh to give depth and meaning to the game world's design, characters and themes. These creative factors make players interact with the game on both an intellectual and emotional plane, allowing them to understand what lay beyond in law of Valisthea.

Here are some examples of how imagery, symbols and metaphors are brought to life in the game: (1) *The Sword as a Symbol of Destiny.* Clive's sword (Figure 2), a prominent symbol throughout the game, represents his destiny and the weight of his responsibilities. The imagery of the sword, often depicted in cutscenes and artwork, serves as a metaphor for the burdens he carries and the choices he must make. it is also often used to represent power, justice, and revenge. For example, Clive wields a sword in the game, which symbolizes his quest for power and revenge. The sword is used to create a sense of action and adventure in the game, but it also serves as a reminder of the violence and bloodshed that can come with power; (2) *Eikons as Symbols of Power and Conflict.* The Eikons (Figure 3), powerful summonable entities, symbolize both the raw power of the world and the conflicts

that arise from their manipulation. Their existence serves as a metaphor for the consequences of wielding immense power and the ethical dilemmas associated with it. They are represented by different animals and elements, and they each have their own unique powers. The Eikons can also be seen as a metaphor for the natural world, and they represent the power and beauty of nature. However, they can also be seen as a threat, as they can be used for destructive purposes; (3) *Mothercrystals*. The mother crystals (Figure 4) are a powerful magical artifact that is said to be the source of the earth's power. It is located in the several realms, and it is guarded by the eikons. The *mothercrystals* can be seen as a metaphor for religion and power. It represents the power of faith, but it can also be seen as a symbol of oppression and control; (4) Birds. The bird is a recurring symbol in Final Fantasy XVI, and it is often used to represent freedom, hope, and change. For example, Clive's mother was said to have the ability to transform into a bird, which symbolizes her freedom and her ability to escape from her troubles. The bird is also associated with the Eikon Phoenix, who is a powerful fire bird that is said to represent rebirth. The bird is used to create a sense of hope and possibility in the game, but it also serves as a reminder that change is always possible.
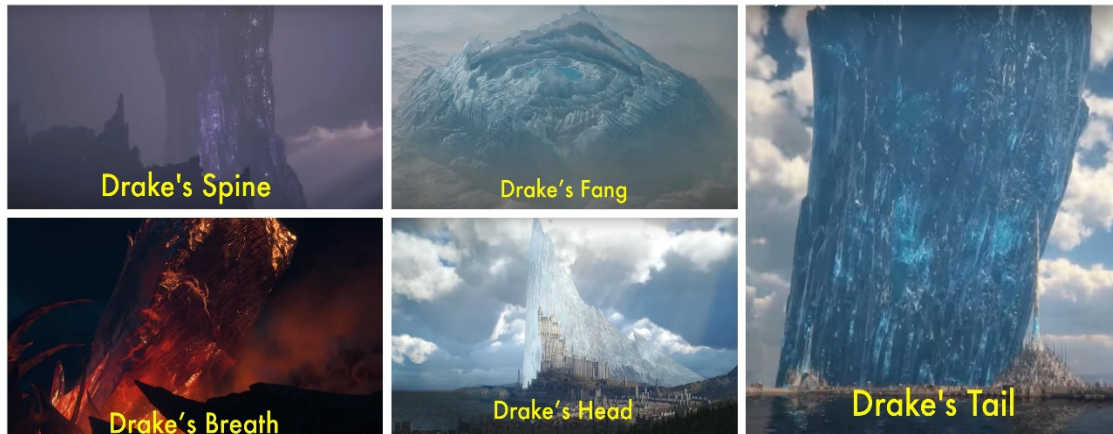
Figure 2. Clive's Sword

Source: www.square-enix-games.com

Figure 3. All Eikons in FFXVI
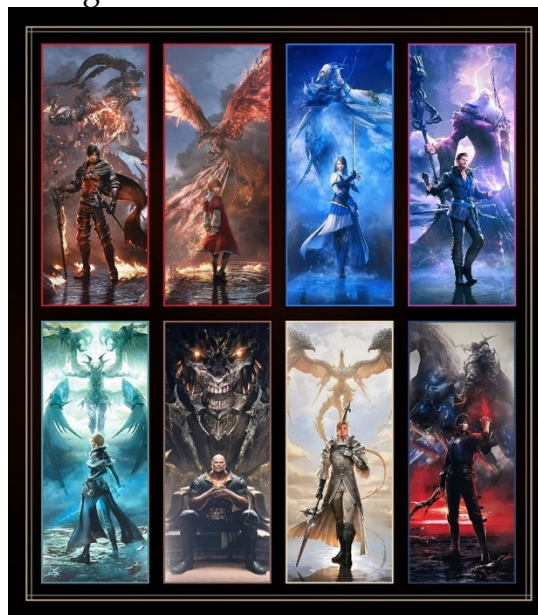
Source: *finalfaninsider.com*

Figure 4. All Mothercrystals in Valisthea.

(Source: www.square-enix-games.com)

Figure 5. Phoenix Eikons

(Source: www.square-enix-games.com)

3.3.   Point of view

Point of view in narrative is a useful angle from which to observe, listen in on or smell the story's settings and characters as well (Al-Alami, 2019). The point of view and perspective from which the story is told are integral components that bring a sense of realism to Final Fantasy XVI's immersive, character-driven narrative. The author employs various narrative techniques to make known characters 'thoughts, feelings and the developing situation.

Here are some additional examples of the point of view and perspective of narration in the game: (1) *First-Person Monologue*. During pivotal scenes the game will shift to a first-person view, plunging players into Clive's mind. Through monologues the players walk directly in Clive's head and understand his perspective, fears and motives at a profound level; (2) *Third-Person Limited*. Most of the game's story is told from a third-person limited perspective, in which we observe Clive interact with others and experience things through his point of view. From this perspective, players can experience the world through Clive's eyes. It allows a nuanced look into his development without limiting it to just one character's view; (3) *Shifted Narrator*. In certain cutscenes or story segments, the narrative perspective may shift to a different character, offering unique insights into their motivations and experiences. For

example, a chapter might be presented from Joshua's perspective, shedding light on her enigmatic nature and goals.

Final Fantasy XVI's different point of view and perspective of narration form a complex experience that goes beyond the traditional multilinear interpretation. On top of being able to enjoy characters on an interpersonal level, playing allows you to tear apart hidden layers within Valisthea, thereby interacting with it fondly from every possible angle.

3.4. Tension

In terms of storytelling, tension is a situation in which conflicting elements create an emotional or psychological burden. It is this foreboding, anticipation and uncertainty that keeps readers or viewers riveted to the end of a story.

Irony and paradox are two of the literary devices that contribute to creating tension in a narrative, according to Guerin (2010) and Culler (2017). Maurice Guerin says that irony and paradox can readily be used to create tension in a story. Irony and paradox appeal to the audience because they are unexpected. The latter peaks peoples 'curiosity, causing them to ask questions spontaneously when an assumption is contradicted. When readers or watchers are faced with irony or paradox, they enter the story's complexities--experience a deeper emotional response and want to figure out what it all means.

As part of the art of storytelling, ironies and paradoxes help build up a work's richness in terms both literary and emotional. It encourages active interpretation and reflection, which make the story more interesting and memorable for the audience. Here are some examples of irony in Final Fantasy XVI: (1) The title itself, Final Fantasy XVI, is in fact ironic. The game is set in a world on the verge of annihilation, but the title confirms that there will be a happy ending. It is ironic, then, that the game actually turns out rather dark and bloody. In the end, there will not be a happy ending for the characters; (2) Clive's pursuit of revenge is another example. Clive thinks that revenge will bring him peace, but it ends up taking him to the dark side. This is ironic, because revenge has typically been regarded as a destructive power which might destroy the person; (3) Valisthea is divided into six regions ruled over by different Eikons. This division is for promoting peace and harmony, but ultimately it leads to conflict and war. This is ironic because the division of Valisthea supposedly prevents war, but it actually breeds conflict.

Here are four examples of paradox in Final Fantasy XVI dialogue: (1) "*The only way to win is to give up*". Clive Rosfield says this line. It seems paradoxical, for it means that you have to lose in order to win. It is a very hard concept to understand, but it lies at the heart of this game; (2) "*The only way to find yourself is to lose yourself*". This is a line spoken by Joshua Rosfield in the game. It is a paradox because it suggests that in order to find your true self, you must first lose your sense of self. This is a concept that is explored in the game's story, as Joshua learns more about himself and his relationship with Clive; (3) "*The only thing that is constant is change*". It is a line said in the game by Joshua Rosfield. But it is a paradox. In order to find yourself, you must lose your sense of self-hood. It is a concept which is developed in the game story, where Joshua gradually comes to understand himself and his relationship with Clive. It is a paradox, for it says that the only thing constant about life is change. In the game's story itself, the characters needed to adapt with an ever-changing Valisthea; (4) "*The only way to defeat the darkness is with light*". This is a line spoken by Clive Rosfield in the

game. It is paradoxical, for it implies that the only way to combat evil with good. This is an idea that the game's story explores, with Clive and his comrades fighting against the darkness of Eikons and dominants.

3.5.   Simile.

Similes is a clear comparison, and it frequently uses comparative terms like or as (Dancygier, 2014). With the depth, vividness and relativity it adds to descriptions and interactions in game dialogue. It can greatly enrich language. Here's how similes can make game dialogue more interesting: (1) "*His eyes were like two burning coals*" This simile compares Clive's eyes to burning coals, which suggests that they are filled with anger and rage; (2) "*The Eikon Ifrit was like a raging inferno*" This is a line spoken by Jill Warrick in the game. It compares the Eikon Ifrit to a raging inferno, which suggests that it is powerful and destructive; (3) The land was like a charred battlefield, littered with the bodies of the dead." - This is a line spoken by Benedikta Haight in the game. It compares the land to a charred battlefield, which suggests that it has been destroyed by war; (4) "*The future was as dark as night*". This simile compares the future to night, which suggests that it is uncertain and full of danger; (5) His heart was as heavy as lead. - This is a line spoken by Clive Rosfield in the game. It compares Clive's heart to lead, which suggests that he is feeling sadness and despair.

3.6.   Parallelism.

The Duplication of the same words, sentences, or phrases in a text (Al-Ameedi & Razzaq, 2017). Parallelism adds depth to the dialogue in video games, enriching character development and strengthening interactivity. Parallel structures can be used differently by different characters, reflecting their personalities and backgrounds. This distinction makes characters richer and lets players empathize at a deeper level. Parallelism can also make the dialogue sound more poetic, philosophical or forceful.

This heightens the sensuality of dialogue and lends a touch of grandeur to significant moments; (1) "*I will fight for what is right, no matter the cost. I will protect those who cannot protect themselves*" - This line from Clive Rosfield uses parallelism to create a sense of determination and resolve. Joshua declares his determination to risk everything for what's right. This parallelism highlights Joshua's determination and makes his words more powerful; (2) "*The Ultima is corrupt and evil. They must be stopped, no matter what it takes*".- This line uses parallelism to give a sense of urgency and danger. Joshua is saying that the Ultima threatens Valisthea, and it has to be stopped. The parallelism plays up the sense of urgency in Joshua's words and makes them much more believable; (3) "*I will avenge my brother's death. I will destroy those who killed him*" - Primeval rage Parallel structure makes this line from Clive Rosfield sound angry and determined Clive says he will avenge the death of his brother, no matter what it takes. The parallelism strengthens Clive's anger and determination, making his words more credible; (4) "*I will not rest until I have found the truth. I will not stop until I have brought those responsible to justice*"- A line by Jill Warrick makes use of parallelism to create a feeling that is determined and firm. Jill is saying that even if she puts her own life at risk, she will find the truth behind what has transpired in Valisthea. The parallelism highlights Jill's determination and makes her words more forceful; (5) "*The Eikons are a force for good or evil, depending on the person who controls them. They are a powerful weapon, but they can also be a destructive force*" - This line from Benedikta Haight uses parallelism to create a sense of balance and duality. The Eikons are said to be servants of either good or evil, depending on the man who uses them. This parallelism means

that the Eikons are a much richer and highly complex concept; (6) *"The future is uncertain, but it is ours to shape. We can choose to be the victims of our circumstances, or we can choose to be the masters of our own destiny"* – Cid uses this parallelism in order to come across as hopeful and optimistic. He says that although the future is uncertain, it will be ours to make. It's this parallelism that allows emphasis on the power of choice, and makes players feel like they can make a difference in the world.

4.   Discussion

In the enchanting realm of Final Fantasy XVI, language emerges as a formidable tool, intricately woven to elicit beauty, mystery, and power. Beyond a mere means of communication, language becomes a narrative force, shaping the very essence of the gaming experience. The ramifications of this linguistic finesse are profound and multifaceted: (1) Eloquent Dialogues: The game features eloquently written dialogues that evoke a sense of beauty and elegance. The use of poetic language, rich descriptions, and evocative expressions enhances the game's narrative, creating a captivating and immersive experience; (2) Mystical Vocabulary: Final Fantasy XVI incorporates a mystical vocabulary that adds an air of mystery to the game. The use of fantastical terms, unique names for locations, spells, and creatures, contributes to the sense of exploring a magical realm filled with secrets waiting to be unravelled; (3) Ancient and Arcane Texts: The inclusion of ancient texts, scrolls, and enigmatic inscriptions throughout the game adds an aura of mystery and intrigue. Players encounter ancient languages and symbols, uncovering hidden knowledge that contributes to the game's sense of depth and enigma; (4) Magical Incantations: Also contributing to the power within this game is its use of magical incantations and spells. The incantations, which are often given in an old or even archaic language, generate a feeling of mystique and absorb the idea that one can gather magic powers; (5) Intriguing Lore and Legends: The lore and legends that permeate Final Fantasy XVI are meticulously crafted, making it seem as if there is a mystery at every turn. Ancient tales and myths, allowing players to also experience a sense of wonder at the world; (6) Powerful Declarations and Monologues: the weight of powerful declarations and monologues is not limited to character dynamics. These language prodigies are driving forces, guiding the unfolding of events and planning out Valisthea's fate. The players are not just passive observers. They are present to see momentous that resound with a solemn sense of power and destiny; (7) Nuances and Dialects: Incorporating cultural nuances and dialects is not just a world-building flourish. That is a deliberate effort to give it an air of authenticity. Instead of trudging across a generic wasteland, players are wandering through an intricate tapestry woven together by the variety of cultures. The 'So what' is a richer game environment immersion. Immersion is not just visual; it also includes language and culture.

Linguistically, Final Fantasy XVI's language creates an air of beauty through eloquent dialogue, the mysteriousness of mesmeric words and ancient scripture (ancient texts) laden with stories about death and free will; a sense of power in which everything from magical incantations that open your mouth for you to powerful declarations resounding across realms is illustrated These linguistic features aid in creating the game's pull and sense of immersion, making playing final fantasy 16 feel like a trip wrought with wonder, mystery, and mastery over an entrancing virtual world. The opening scene of the game is a beautiful and lyrical passage that

foreshadows what will follow. The language is lyrical and evocative, which adds to the mystique.

Characters in the game are also distinguished by their tongues. The characters, with their stiff and stylized language, leave behind the confines of usual gaming personalities. They are not just avatars. Rather, they embody a code of discipline and honour. But 'why' are clear, conscious efforts have been made to take gaming protagonists out of the realm of cliché and make them symbols representing virtue and duty. Take Clive Rosfield; he is a quiet, reserved character and his language reflects this. He talks in such short, simple sentences that he uses the word like to hedge his bets. In this way, Clive's language creates the effect of his vulnerable nature and insufficient self-assurance.

Language is also used in telling the game's story. Such as the language used in games by characters to attack what is fixed and established. It helps to make the game seem more realistic, and it also imbues audiences with a feeling of hope for future.

Language is a key factor in the design of Final Fantasy XVI's world, characters and story. Language in the game is not only beautiful and lyrical, it also helps make you feel more immersed. With its use of formalism and the force of words, Final Fantasy XVI develops a game that is beautiful to behold as well as gripping emotionally.

The formalism and the use of language in Final Fantasy XVI define the game's characters in a number of ways: (1) The characters' names: The names of the characters in Final Fantasy XVI are all very formal and poetic, reflecting their roles as warriors or leaders. Take for instance, the protagonist Clive Rosfield's name which means glory of rose field. The other major characters also bear names associated with power, strength and honour -- Joshua Rosfild, Jill Warrick and Hugo Kupka respectively; (2) The characters' speech patterns: The denizens of Final Fantasy XVI are brought up like this and thus speak in a highly formal and stylized tone. They even speak in an extremely formal manner with archaic words and phrases. This formality keeps the characters at a distance from the player, and they seem larger than real life people; (3) The characters' actions: Ritualism and etiquette. The characters in Final Fantasy XVI act extremely formally, because they adhere closely to a code of honour. Case in point-- when he is not fighting, Clive still dons his full battle gear. And he never yells, and always speaks very politely. This formality reinforces the characters 'sense of duty and responsibility.

Compared with earlier studies, such as Sabariyanto's on "The Great Gatsby" (2018), exclusively about basic literary elements like plot line tracking and characters, this research is more unique. However, this work is aiming to reveal the pivotal role of language in determining and moulding the storyline for Final Fantasy XVI. While exploring this topic, this research are not limited by traditional literary bounds; rather this research takes it outside into where video games belong--on screen! This also differs from Rokhmansyah's study (2015) which employing a formalistic approach based on the Russian Formalists to examine the transformation of factual elements into an organized book structure. In contrast, this research adopts similar tools towards understanding how language and portions captured by formative components can represent a change from the more conventional literary concerns and takes advantage of gaming's unique storytelling possibilities. In addition, this research also refers to the notion of ergodic literature which recognizes that players can themselves change the

nature and shape of their experiences. It extends the discussion beyond traditional literary criticism, and it is inherent to the nature of gaming.

Previous scholars like Nitsche (2010) and Aarseth (1997), for example, had spoken about the relationship between language of video games. On this issue, this research is distinguishing in bringing formalism and ergodic literature into it. A final form of literature. This confirms that within the vast space covered by gaming today, we can create our own version of story. It provides a synthesis between language and formal elements with player interaction in order to deliver an immersive narrative experience unlike any other. Fundamentally speaking, this research muddies the new waters of video games as a powerful and innovative medium for art.

Formalism is a critical lens through which is examining the structure, language, and stylistic elements of the game. Understanding how formalism is portrayed helps illuminate the intentional choices made in crafting the game world. In this research the findings could reveal the deliberate efforts to create a game that transcends traditional narratives. If successful, Final Fantasy XVI might be recognized not just for its gameplay but for its artistic and literary merits. This research finds out that the result finding gives significant proof that formalism successfully enough to transcends Final Fantasy XVI as a new medium of storytelling.

The next research question is that Narratology provides insight into the narrative structure, and language is a fundamental tool in conveying that structure. This question delves into how language functions within the narrative, shedding light on its role in shaping the player's experience. Understanding the functions of language in the game's narrative could showcase the nuanced ways games can be a form of storytelling. It positions Final Fantasy XVI not just as a game but as an immersive narrative experience.

Finally for the last research question, this question links formalism, the power of language, and ergodic literature, aiming to uncover the synergy between these elements. Ergodic literature involves nontrivial effort from the reader—applying this concept to gaming adds layers to the player's involvement. If successful, the study could position Final Fantasy XVI as a dynamic form of literature where player agency, formalism, and the power of language converge. The 'so what' here is recognizing games as a legitimate and powerful narrative medium.

In essence, this research is a deep dive into the artistic and literary dimensions of Final Fantasy XVI. The findings prove insightful, they could contribute to the broader conversation about the potential of video games as a sophisticated form of storytelling and art. It is about recognizing and appreciating the thought and craftsmanship behind the gaming experience, elevating it to more than just entertainment.

5. Conclusion

This research can deepen our perception and admiration for the function of formalism and narratology in literature and video games. Through an investigation of formalism's roots and major terms, the researcher offers a glimpse into how literary works are closely crafted through both linguistic, poetic and structural elements (Hambali et al., 2023; Vught, 2022; Bennett, 2004). This understanding develops readers 'interpretative skills and their appreciation of the artistic aspects of literature.

The research conceived on formalism broadens its area of feasibility so that it encompasses the games environment. It shows how the structural and functional

elements affect gameplay, mechanics, and design (Jakobson & Halle, 2015). As an integral part of video games, language goes beyond textual communication and is a means to create immersive experiences and impart information. In this way, the research adds to a further understanding of the formalistic mechanisms that underlie interactive storytelling (Nitsche, 2010; Aarseth, 1997).

An additional aspect to the research contribution is exploration of narratology, the study of narrative in video game. Grasping the various ways in which stories are told, created and received becomes less an addendum to narratology than a further enrichment of the field (Bal 1985; Rimmon-Kenan 2002; Panggabean & Rangkuti 2020; Pavel 2014). This transdisciplinary approach brings a richer understanding of the dynamics of storytelling, focusing on the structure and possibilities for interpretation. In sum, this research adds to the dialogue in terms of traditional literature and emerging forms of narrative media by focusing attention on complex processes involved in storytelling--whether they take place between two covers or inside the interactive world of video games. Finally, these results may serve as a theoretical underpinning for using formalism and narratology in video games or other forms of narrative media.

References

Al-Ameedi, R. T., & Razzaq N. M. (2017). Aspects of Political Language and Parallelism. *Journal of Education and Practice, 8*(34), 185-200.

Aarseth, E. J. (1997). *Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature.* Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Abdullah, M., Mahmood, A., & Ali, S. (2022). Formalism as a Linguistics Theory: a Comparative Stylistic Analysis of Poetic Literature. *Journal of Positive School Psychology, 6*(8), 10792-10799.

Al-Alami, S. (2019). Point of View in Narrative. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 9*(8), 911-916. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0908.03

Bal, M. (1985). *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative.* Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Bennett, T. (2004). *Formalism and Marxism.* Abingdon: Routledge.

Bhandari., P. (2023, June 22). *What Is Qualitative Research? | Methods & Examples.* Retrieved from www.scribbr.com: https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/qualitative-research/

Bogdanov, A., & Karcz, A. (2005). The Polish Formalist School and Russian Formalism. *Slavic and East European Journal, 49*(3), 509. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/20058317.

Campbell, J. (1949). *The hero with a thousand faces.* Pantheon Books.

Culler, J. (2017). *Theory of the Lyric.* Harvard University Press.

Dancygier, B. &. (2014). *Figurative Language.* CUP.

Debnár, M. (2018). FORMALISM AND DIGITAL RESEARCH OF LITERATURE. *Digital Age in Semiotics & Communication, 1*(1), 113-120. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.33919/dasc.18.1.8.

Eagleton, T. (2021). Formalism and its others: A response to Susan Wolfson. *Journal of Comparative Literature, 68*(2), 321-340.

Ebadi, S., & Ahmadi, R. (2022). A Native Video Gamer's Journey Toward Multi-literacy Development: A Narrative Inquiry. *Journal of Language, Identity & Education.* doi:10.1080/15348458.2022.2029450

Effe, A. (2020). Postcolonial criticism and cognitive literary studies: A new formalist approach to Antjie Krog's Country of My Skull. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing, 56*(1), 97-109. doi:10.1080/17449855.2019.1702084

Fry, P. (2019). Formalism now. *Modern Literary Criticism, 78*(3), 210-228.

Gallagher, C. (2020). Formalism and Time. *Modern Language Quarterly, 61*(1), 229-251. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/00267929-61-1-229.

Görmez, A., & Beyoğlu, S. G. (2022). The Basis of Formalism and Its Limitations. *Kafkas Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*(30), 443 - 456. doi:doi.org/10.56597/kausbed.1148797

Guerin, W. L. (2010). *A handbook of critical approaches to literature.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Hambali, G., Masadi, M. A., Rohman, M. N., Rizki, G., & Aliyah, A. (2023). Forms, Techniques, and Meanings in Abu Al-Aswad Al-Duali's Poems. *Proceedings of the 4th Annual International Conference on Language, Literature and Media (AICOLLIM)* (pp. 59-69). Malang: Atlantis Press. doi:10.2991/978-2-38476-002-2_7

Jakobson, R., & Halle, M. (2015). *Fundamentals of Language.* Creative Media Partners.

Kahan, B. (2018). Shy Formalism. *Journal of Modern Literature, 41*(2), 178-182. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.2979/jmodelite.41.2.13.

Kalinin, I. (2017). Viktor Shklovsky vs . Roman Jakobson.Poetic Language or Poetic Function of Language. *ENTHYMEMA, 19*, 342–351. doi:https://doi.org/10.13130/2037-2426/9427

Kuckartz, U. (2014). *Qualitative Text Analysis: A Guide to Methods, Practice & Using Software.* New York: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Laure-Ryan, M. (2014). Narration in Various Media. In P. Hühn, J. Pier, W. Schmid , & J. Schöne, *Living Handbook of Narratology.* Walter de Gruyter.

Leporati, M. (2019). New Formalism in the Classroom: Re-Forming Epic Poetry in Wordsworth and Blake. *Humanities, 8*(2), 100-110.

Levinson, M. (2017). The new formalism. *Journal of Literary Studies, 45*(2), 123-145.

Liontas, J. (2022). Let the Games Begin! Harnessing the Power of Gaming in Language Education. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research, 10*(2), 1-16.

Manshur, F. M. (2019). Kajian Teori Formalism dan Strukturalism. *Sasdaya: Gadjah Mada Journal of Humanities, 3*(1), 79-94. doi:https://doi.org/10.22146/sasdayajournal.43888

Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative Content Analysis. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung, 1*(2).

Montfort , N., & Bogost, I. (2020). *Racing the Beam: The Atari Video Computer System.* The MIT Press.

Nitsche, M. (2010). Games as Structures for Mediated Performances. In M. L. Stephan Günzel, *Logic and Structure of the Computer Game* (pp. 110-129).

Otter, S. (2020). A Different Formalism. *Novel: A Forum on Fiction, 43*(2), 350-353. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1215/00295132-2010-012.

Panggabean, D. S., & Rangkuti, R. (2020). The Basic Concept of Narratology and Narrative. *Language Circle: Journal of Language and Literature, 14*(2).

Pavel, T. G. (2014). Gerald Prince and Narrative Studies. *Narrative, 22*(3), 298-303.

Pratchett, T. (2007). *The Wee Free Men.* New York: HarperCollins.

Pratiwi, M. A. (2022). *Formalism Analysis in Cecilia Ahern's Novel.* Malang: Thesis.

Prima, R. B. (2019). Register and Power in Indonesian Online Game (A Sosiolinguistic Studies). *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-ilmu Humaniora, 18*(2), 193-207. doi:10.24036/humanus.v18i2.107169

Purbo, Z., Hidayat, N., & Wahyuni, S. (2022). Defamiliarization: A Formalism Study on How Words Can Create. *International Journal of Research in Education, 2*(1), 1-8. doi:https://doi.org/10.26877/ijre.v2i1.9749

Rimmon-Kenan, S. (2002). *Narrative Fiction.* Routledge.

Rokhmansyah, A. (2015). RDE baru sebagai landasan fabula dalam novel Entrok karya Okky Madasari: Kajian formalisme Rusia. *CaLLs (Journal of Culture Arts Literature and Linguistics)*, 39-51. doi:10.30872/calls.v1i1.708

Rudis, D., & Poštić, S. (2018). Influence of Video Games on The Acquisition of The English Language. *Verbum, 8*, 112–128. doi:10.15388/Verb.2017.8.11354.

Sabariyanto. (2018). *Structural Analysis of F. Fitzgerald's.* Surakarta: Skripsi.

Safikhani, R. (2018). Language formalism analysis of Bijan Najdi's stories. *European Journal of Literature, Language and Linguistics Studies, 2*(4), 1-14. doi:0.5281/zenodo.1309022

Smith, A. R. (2020). Ludic Formalism: Analyzing Structural Elements in Video Games. *Journal of Digital Aesthetics, 32*(4), 221-238.

Spradley, J. A. (2016). *Participant Observation.* Waveland Press, Inc.

Sulistyorini, H. (2007). A Formalism approach on Daphne Du Maurier's Rebecca. *LITE: Journal Bahasa, Sastra, dan Budaya, 3*(1), 33-40. doi:https://doi.org/10.33633/lite.v3i1.611

Tenny, S., Brannan, J. M., & Brannan, G. D. (2022, September 18). *Qualitative Study*. Retrieved from StatPearls Publishing: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK470395/

Toh, W. (2023). The Player Experience and Design Implications of Narrative Games. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction, 39*(13), 2742-2769.

Tucker, H. (2018). Formalism. *Victorian Literature and Culture, 46*(3-4), 702-705. doi:https://doi.org/10.1017/S106015031800061X

Wibowo, A. P., Nababan, M., Santosa, R., & Kristina, D. (2019). Reconfiguring Localization Quality Assessment for Video Games. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research, 10*(3), 346-363.

Yoshida, N. (Producer), Maehiro, K. (Writer), Takai, H., & Maehiro, K. (Directors). (2023). *Final Fantasy XVI* [Motion Picture]. Japan.