COMMUNICATION CONTESTATION BETWEEN GENSHIN IMPACT ENTHUSIASTS AND SONIC FRONTIER ON TWITTER ACCOUNT @NIKOLAVALENT

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Abstract. In the current digital era, fan communities of video games wield significant influence within the entertainment industry. This phenomenon encompasses not only positive support but also frequently involves intense communication contestation among fans of various games. One noteworthy case that has garnered attention is the rivalry between Genshin Impact and Sonic Frontier enthusiasts. Verbal conflicts between these two fan groups have evolved into heated debates across various social media platforms, online forums, and social networks. This research adopts a qualitative approach to explore and analyze the communication contestation between Genshin Impact and Sonic Frontier fans. We employ two primary theoretical frameworks: Grice's conversational maxims analysis and Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis model to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics of these conversations and their implications on the identities and self-perceptions of the fans. Our research findings reveal that contestation escalates when violations of the maxims of attitude are present in the conversations. Furthermore, the study also identifies attempts to construct a social narrative suggesting that fans of both games have deviant sexual interests. These findings reflect the complexity of online communication within video game fan communities and its relevance in understanding shifts in identity and social constructions in the digital era.

Keywords: contestation of communication; grice's maxim; critical discourse analysis; twitter

I. INTRODUCTION

Twitter, introduced in March 2006 by its founders Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams, originally started as a microblogging service, allowing users to send text-based messages limited to a mere 140 characters. Subsequently, in 2017, the character limit was expanded to 280 characters. This platform provides a plethora of features to facilitate user interaction, including the ability to create and share tweets, retweet content, mention other users using the "@" symbol followed by their usernames, employ hashtags (#) for categorization, send direct messages (DMs), and reply to other users' tweets. This research focuses on the utilization of Twitter's reply feature since it can unveil the intricacies of user interactions. Through the reply feature, users can provide responses or comments in various formats, including text, images, or videos. Furthermore, this feature serves as a conduit for the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that, as discussed by previous scholars [1], digital conversations can occasionally turn into toxic debates, indicating the presence of communication contestation among various parties. Bayu Aji Sastra Jendra's study related to the gaming community on TikTok also revealed that discourse disparities in TikTok content sometimes involve content aimed at undermining other games [2]. This research is centered on the examination of communication contestation occurring through Twitter's reply feature, with a specific focus on the contestation among enthusiasts of two video games, Genshin Impact and Sonic Frontier, in response to tweets posted by the Twitter account @NikolaValent. These tweets were reactions from @NikolaValent to the announcement of the winners of the Player Voice awards at the prominent video game awards event, The Game Awards. The contestation between fans of these two games had its inception during the third round of voting for The Game Awards on December 6, 2022. Despite efforts made by The Game Awards organizers to amend the voting system to mitigate tensions between the two fan groups, the dispute reignited following the announcement of award winners on December 9, 2022, by the Twitter account @TheGameAwards. Enthusiasts of both games continued to engage in heated exchanges, including responses directed at the Twitter account @NikolaValent. The Twitter account @NikolaValent received responses from 29 different Twitter users, encompassing various types of posts. Subsequently, these responses elicited further replies from various other Twitter users, thereby creating a chain of responses comprising a total of 149 tweets. This chain of responses was subsequently categorized into 56 distinct conversation threads. From these 56 conversation threads, the researchers conducted an initial observation and data filtering process, resulting in the selection of only 8 conversations for further examination. The selection of these 8 conversations was based on the criteria of having the highest number of reply to chains within each conversation.

The analysis of communication contestation in this study will involve a deeper understanding of response content, arguments, and debates among Genshin Impact and Sonic Frontier enthusiasts. The research will consider the role of text and the interactions between Twitter users in shaping the dynamics of communication contestation. In the context of communication contestation between Genshin Impact and Sonic Frontier enthusiasts on the Twitter account @NikolaValent, this research aims to enhance our understanding of fan interactions in the realm of social media. It seeks to shed light on the communication conflicts that occur among fans and how they express their group identity within the digital environment. Additionally, this study will provide insights into how Twitter serves as a significant platform for fans to engage in communication contestation. Through an analysis of posts and responses on the Twitter account, the research will unveil the ways in which fans utilize textual expressions to convey their perspectives.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative approach based on Grice's maxims of conversation, encompassing the principles of quantity, quality, relation, and manner in the analysis of communication. Furthermore, Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis model will be utilized to comprehend the roles of readers and writers in constructing media narratives. Grice posits that everyday conversations are collaborative efforts in which speakers and listeners participate with shared guidelines. According to Grice, this principle of cooperation encompasses four maxims: quantity, quality, relation, and manner, expecting conversation participants to contribute appropriately to the communication's needs and goals at the appropriate time. When conversations involve competition, dynamics can shift, especially in virtual contexts. Grice's four maxims aid in identifying behaviors and intentions expressed by internet users based on their communication styles. The maxim of quantity is a conversational principle that requires speakers to provide adequate information, neither excessive nor insufficient, to align with the conversation's needs and goals. The maxim of quality underscores the importance of honesty and truthfulness in conveying information to maintain conversational fluency. Conversation participants are expected to provide accurate and trustworthy information. The maxim of relation considers the relevance of information to the conversation topic and maintains the connection between the subject and the conversational context. Conversation participants are expected to provide information relevant to the discussed topic.

Lastly, the maxim of manner underscores the importance of conveying messages politely, clearly, and in accordance with social norms to prevent conflicts during conversations. This maxim prioritizes the use of appropriate language, respect for others, and efforts to avoid confrontation **[3]**. In addition to Grice's maxims of conversation, this study also employs discourse analysis theory to provide a comprehensive data analysis perspective in understanding how language is used in social contexts. Since this research

aims to uncover conversations among fans to comprehend communication nuances within those conversations, the chosen discourse analysis model is critical discourse analysis. The selection of critical discourse analysis as the analytical model in this study is based on its emphasis on aspects such as representation, domination, resistance, and negotiation within discourse. Consequently, it can analyze how language is utilized to construct meaning and reinforce power relations among fans **[4]**. More specifically, this research utilizes Sara Mills' developed model of critical discourse analysis, which focuses on examining the roles of actors, readers, and writers in texts. Through Sara Mills' analytical model, the researcher will analyze the positioning of subjects and objects to understand how an event is interpreted from diverse perspectives. It involves identifying who serves as the narrator or subject conveying the event, who becomes the object or the one being narrated in the story, and whether each individual and group in society has the opportunity to express their selves, ideas, or existence, or if their ideas and existence are reflected through stories crafted by other individuals or groups [5].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Violations of Grice's Maxims of Conversation

Within the conversations that unfold between Genshin Impact and Sonic Frontier fans, various forms of violations of Grice's maxims of conversation can be observed. In the first maxim, namely the maxim of quantity, fans often provide excessive information in their responses to other posts. One such instance can be seen in the response from the Twitter account @kitsuneamira to a post by @NikolaValent:

> *"It's so fucking funny because a cursory glance at sites like sankaku or pixiv will show that the adults get way more attention than the children. Alas, they don't want to hear the truth."* - (@kitsuneamira)

The tweet shared by user @kitsuneamira also violates the sub-maxim of quantity, which emphasizes the importance of not over-conveying a message. A similar situation occurs in the response posted by user @thechildesimp, who uses sarcasm to exaggerate their message:

> *"so ur invalidating my abuse because of my fictional ship??? Also nothing wrong with childe x traveler, they're both adults btw in case u are playing the game with ur eyes closed"* – (@thechildesimp).

However, in the conversations under investigation, almost all tweets that violate the maxim of quantity still receive responses from users who adhere to the maxim of quantity. Furthermore, there are no responses criticizing users for providing irrelevant or excessive information. In the second maxim, which is the maxim of quality, this research reveals that violations frequently occur in almost every sequence of conversations examined. Within tweets that violate the maxim of quality, there are attempts to label or stereotype other fan groups, as seen in the response by @thechildesimp below:

> *"says the community that makes underage furry porn art"* - (@thechildesimp)

In the response above, the Twitter account @thechildesimp labels Sonic Frontier fans as a community that frequently creates pornographic content featuring underage Sonic Frontier game characters. This post also violates the sub-maxim of quality, specifically the requirement for providing evidence, as @thechildesimp fails to attach any references that could substantiate their claim. Several responses in the analyzed conversation threads also contain violations of the maxim of relation, although not as frequently as violations of the other three maxims. Violations of the maxim of relation manifest as topic shifts. For instance, @NikolaValent initiates the conversation with a label related to pedophilia, which is then responded to by @thechildesimp acknowledging their status as a survivor of child abuse. This subsequently transitions into a discussion about the height of characters in the Genshin Impact game.

"i'm literally a csa survivor shut up :)" - (@thechildesimp)

"Being a csa survivor doesn't mean you can't also be a pedo. And I want you to take a good look at the traveler and then tell me that they are an adult" - (@Jonathanprimm3)

"do u even play genshin? and yes they're adults. as a short adult myself, i can confirm. i'm 150cm and lumine/female traveler is like 156cm. anyways, i'm tired of talking to shitheads like u. u putting me on the same level as my abuser makes me sick to my stomach /gen" -(@thechildesimp)

"First of I do. And second let's compare the traveler to a character that's obviously not an adult. As you can see he is either slightly taller or the same size as Bennett but it is hard to tell because of the hair." - (@Jonathanprimm3)

In the quote above, it is evident that violations of the maxim of relation do not deter other Twitter users from attempting to establish communication by altering the conversation topic in response to previous remarks. The research findings also indicate that violations of the maxim of manner are the most commonly occurring type of maxim violations among the four Gricean maxims. Every conversation analyzed exhibits violations of the maxim of manner, with the highest number of violations occurring in the second conversation, as summarized in the table below:

Table 1. Violations of the Maxim of Applicability in Conversation Series 2

Tweet	Maxim of Attitude			
	Clarity in Expression	No Ambiguity	Concise	Orderly
says the community that makes underage furry porn art (@thechildesimp)	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Violated
Says the genshin fan (PICT CHILD PORN) (@Jonathanprimm3)	Violated	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Violated
i'm literally a csa survivor shut up :) (@thechildesimp)	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Violated
Uploads cannot be accessed				
so ur invalidating my abuse because of my fictional ship??? also nothing wrong with childe x traveler, they're both adults btw in case u are playing the game with ur eyes closed (@thechildesimp)	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Violated	Violated
Being a csa survivor doesn't mean you can't also be a pedo. And I want you to take a good look at the traveler and then tell me that they are an adult (@Jonathanprimm3)	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Violated
do u even play genshin? and yes they're adults. as a short adult myself, i can confirm. i'm 150cm and lumine/female traveler is like 156cm. anyways, i'm tired of talking to shitheads like u. u putting me on the same level as my abuser makes me sick to my stomach (@thechildesimp)	Fulfilled	Fulfilled	Violated	Violated
First of I do. And second let's compare the traveler to a character that's obviously not an adult. As you can see he is either slightly taller or the same size as Bennett but it is hard to tell because of the hair. (@Jonathanprimm3)	Fulfilled	Violated	Fulfilled	Fulfilled
ok?? 🔇 i'm blocking u now i don't want ped0s in my mentions (@thechildesimp)	Fulfilled	Violated	Fulfilled	Violated

From the table above, it can be observed that the majority of posts violating communication norms employ vulgar language and sarcasm. Some tweets also fail to convey the message clearly and at times are overly complex. Violations of these maxims escalate tension in communication as they provoke emotions within the opposing groups.

Subject-Object Positioning of Sexual Interest Disorder

In the communication battle between Genshin Impact and Sonic Frontier fans, the most frequently debated topic is the disorder of sexual interest. The fans engaged in this conversation aim to assert that they do not have a sexual interest disorder while describing individuals with different sexual interests as objects of this debate. Using the discourse analysis framework developed by Sara Mills, the researcher found that fans position themselves as normal subjects while portraying other fans as objects with sexual interest disorders.

Fans upload tweets containing claims that other fans have social interest disorders and attempt to influence public opinion by providing reasons why other fans are considered to have sexual disorders, even though these reasons are merely opinions without strong evidence. This is evident in conversation 1, conversation 2, and conversation 8, where Sonic Frontier fans try to convince that Genshin Impact fans are pedophiles, while Genshin Impact fans try to convince that Sonic Frontier fans are furries. Genshin Impact fans appear to be more open to the counterarguments presented by Sonic Frontier fans, while Sonic Frontier fans are more adamant in defending their arguments and even provide incorrect information about pedophilia. For instance, @Jonathanprimm3 claims that pedophilia is a sexual interest in short individuals, whereas the actual definition is a sexual interest in underage individuals, unrelated to height. Such misunderstandings can blur the understanding of pedophilia and impact the social interactions of individuals with different sexual interests.

IV. CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that in the communication contest between Genshin Impact and Sonic Frontier fans, there are ongoing violations of Grice's maxims. Responses to these violations can be categorized into three groups: responses with violations, responses adhering to maxims, and conversation terminations. The most common violations of Grice's maxims are violations of the maxim of attitude, with Twitter users employing negative statements, irony, sarcasm, and labeling. Additionally, there are misunderstandings about individuals' sexual interests that can have negative consequences. This communication contest also highlights the focus on topics unrelated to both games, namely sexual interest disorders such as pedophilia and furries. Both fan groups position themselves as subjects and negatively portray the sexual interests of the other group. This suggests that the communication contest goes beyond the debate about the two games and creates misunderstandings and disagreements related to more sensitive issues. Subsequent researchers are encouraged to delve deeper, conduct further investigations, or expand research into the communication contests that frequently occur between groups. This is because the likelihood of communication contests in social media user interactions remains significant. Therefore, the hope is that future researchers can examine this topic from different perspectives, whether by studying the same object or with different research objects.

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