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Abstract

Despite the ubiquitous use of digital games, there is lack of scholarship on the use of framing in the narrative of digital games. Like other media, the games inevitably frame the issues in their narrative. Digital games are multifaceted where gameplay dynamics and narrative elements coalesce and create an immersive experience for the player. Owing to this interactive nature, a holistic operational analytical model, combining Nygren et al. (2022) and Entman (2018) approach for frame analysis has been adapted. The study investigated the functions of framing at the level of words, phrases and sentences as well as analysed game mechanics, rules, aesthetics, story, and characterization for framing. The results revealed that through framing the narrative of the games gained a distinct perspective and exhibited explicit ideological standings. This paper highlights that digital games are a rich site of inquiry for rhetorical methods and communication processes inherent to this digital artifact.

Keywords: Digital Games, Frame Analysis, Framing Functions, Operational Facets, Narrative

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Abstract

Despite the ubiquitous use of digital games, there is lack of scholarship on the use of framing in the narrative of digital games. Like other media, the games inevitably frame the issues in their narrative. Digital games are multifaceted where gameplay dynamics and narrative elements coalesce and create an immersive experience for the player. Owing to this interactive nature, a holistic operational analytical model, combining Nygren et al (2022) and Entman (2018) approach for frame analysis has been adapted. The study investigated the functions of framing at the level of words, phrases and sentences as well as analysed game mechanics, rules, aesthetics, story, and characterization for framing. The results revealed that through framing the narrative of the games gained a distinct perspective and exhibited explicit ideological standings. This paper highlights that digital games are a rich site of inquiry for rhetorical methods and communication processes inherent to this digital artifact.

Keywords: [Digital Games](#), [Frame Analysis](#), [Framing Functions](#), [Operational Facets](#), [Narrative](#)

Introduction

Digital video games have undoubtedly evolved into a widespread form of entertainment and cultural experience with more than 3.32 billion active players worldwide which amounts to approximately fifty percent of the population worldwide. This pervasive practice and popularity of games across varied demographics and regions demonstrates their suitability for academic inquiry. However, there are fewer analytical and methodological

endeavors in linguistics and communication studies to investigate this digital artifact.

Earlier studies about games in linguistics include: Linguistic analysis of toxic behavior (Kwak & Blackburn 2015), discourse Analysis and video games (Gee 2014), gender representation at the lexical level in games via corpus linguistics (Heritage 2020), use of digital games as educational tools (Martinez & Méndez 2008), social discourse of video games (Latorre, 2015) and religion and hegemony in video games (Trattner 2017) are some



of the significant studies conducted in the field of Linguistics.

Frame analysis is more commonly used as an analytical tool in media studies, specifically news media. Digital games have not been approached through frame analysis which can shed light on how this highly expressive yet ignored media has the potential to present topics/views and issues in specific ways. This paper will examine the various dimensions of the narrative of the selected game. Through the operational model (Entman, 2018 & Nygren et al., 2022) the study will investigate framing at the micro (words/phrases/sentences) and macro level of text (game mechanics, aesthetics, storyline, and characters).

Of Framing and Frame Analysis

Both frames and frame analysis are the ways to explore how an event/issue/topic is organized and show the process media present social reality. Goffman (1974) introduced frames as a way to organize experiences in news media. Entman (1993, 2018) considered framing as a way to describe the power of a communicating text. Accordingly, frame analysis describes the way the transfer of communication (of information) exerts influence over human consciousness.

Tankard et al. (1991) hold frames as the main organizing idea of the process of news coverage which renders context and puts forth the issue through selection, emphasis, and elaboration. The process of framing entails selection and salience. Entman (1993, p. 54) considers, "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation,

and/or treatment recommendation for the item described".

Entman refers to the dominant frame of the "Cold War" in U.S. news. These cold war frames emphasize particular foreign incidents, for example, present civil wars as conflicts, recognize communist rebels as the source of conflict, provide moral evaluation (atheistic aggression), and recommend certain remedies, in this case, the United States lending support to the opposing side.

Entman outlines four distinct functions of frames. The first function of the frame is to identify the problem while the second function diagnoses the cause of the problem. The next two functions are evaluative and prescriptive that is morally evaluating the problem and recommending solutions for it. Entman further discusses that a single sentence may perform single or multiple functions while a few other sentences may not perform any of these functions. The example of the Cold War frame suggests four locations of frames in the process of communication. Communicator or Sender---Text---Receiver---Culture. In this process of framing the sender knowingly or unknowingly frames the communication guided through schemata or frames which are the principal organizers of their belief system. The frames are manifested through the absence or presence of keywords, phrases, and sentences in the text which foster or reinforce a particular judgment about the issue.

Frames and frame analysis have been approached in varying ways. These approaches differ slightly owing to the philosophic paradigms governing these studies. These studies are based on qualitative or quantitative content analysis. The details of these studies are given in the following.

Table 1

Frame Analysis Approaches

Researchers	Frame Analysis Models	Research Objectives
1. Gamson & Modigliani (1989)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Five framing devices; metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depiction, and visual images. Three reasoning devices; roots, consequences, and appeal to principles 	The internal structure of the Media package

	Researchers	Frame Analysis Models	Research Objectives
2	Iyengar, (1990)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Thematic frames 2. Episodic frames <p>Eight-dimensional coding of the news frame method</p>	Episodic and thematic frames in media discourse
3	Swenson (1990)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Gender of writer ii) Placement of news iii) choice of terms for the referral of pro-choice groups. v) choice of terms referring to pro-life groups. v) rights of women/fetuses. vi) Moral orientation) vii) Discussion when life begins. viii) Terms to refer to fetus <p>Selection and Salience</p>	Newspaper discourse on abortion
4	Entman (1993)	<p>Framing functions: i) Defining problems. ii) Diagnosing cause. iii) Making moral judgments. iv) recommending solutions</p>	Strength of communicating text
5	Smetko & Valkenburg (2000)	<p>Prominent frames: i) Conflict frame ii) Human interest frame iii) Economic consequences iv) Morality frame v) Responsibility frame</p>	Prevalent frames in news media

Digital games are emerging media forms and are widely used across the globe. Nygren et al. (2022) consider that digital video games are developed to communicate certain meanings and viewpoints. Digital games, like other media forms, offer framings of the topic they intend to communicate about. However, Nygren et al. (2022) refer to the considerable lack of applicability of this methodological stance to digital games. Nygren et al suggest framing in games to involve game elements namely aesthetic to narrative components of games which include the main story, characters, game mechanics, and rules. Nygren et al conducted a study to investigate how the interplay of framing and game design can be effectively used in simulating the challenges and complexities of biodiversity offsetting programs which were developed to resolve nature conservation issues in digital games. The study emphasized the use of games to inform stakeholders to a novel environmental policy tool, and their effectiveness to disseminate research on issues of natural conservations and likewise. Nygren et al point out the crucial role of various design elements which

includes the aesthetics of the game, characters, storyline, mechanics, and rules to communicate intended frames in digital games.

This body of research is set to investigate the use of framing in digital video games. The key focus of the study is to investigate how games incorporate framing for their text organization The study will also find out how words/phrases and sentences frame the issue. Another aspect of the study will be exploring various operational facets that are involved in the process of framing.

Operational Model for Frame Analysis

This operational model for frame analysis includes Entman (1993, 2018) and Nygren et al (2022) frame analysis techniques. The adapted analytical approach will identify how frames are ingrained and manifested in the overall narrative of the selected titles. This model has two distinct yet interconnected components which provides a more holistic approach to frame analysis. The narrative manifestation of digital games is not restricted to the exchange of dialogues or voiceovers. It also

involves story, characters, aesthetics and most importantly the rules and mechanics of the game also contribute to the construction of meaning in the narrative of games. Therefore, the first part of this analytical model will analyze framing at the level of words/phrases/sentences whereas the second component of this model will involve identifying the operational facets of frames and analyzing the process of framing through the story, characters, the aesthetic and rules and mechanics of the selected titles.

As illustrated in Table II, the first part will analyze the functions of frames in the chosen titles. The first function of defining the issue involves the action performed by the causal agent and its outcomes while the second function establishes the source of the problem. The third function morally evaluates and may even refer to the solution of the problem. The second component of this analytical model involves the operational facets through which the frames are operationalized in the narrative of the selected title.

Table 2

Functions of Frames (Entman, 1993 & 2018)	Operational Facets for Framing (Nygren et al, 2022)
Defining the issue	Game Aesthetics
Diagnosing the cause of the issue	Game Mechanics and Rules
Morally evaluating the issue	Characters
Offering remedies	Storyline

Research Methodology

This paper conducts a qualitative analysis of two games via two paradigms: close reading and textual analysis. The classic humanities methodology of close reading provides a thorough observation of any work involving meticulous, immersive, and repeated viewing. It also includes systematic and careful notation of details followed by a detailed description leading to a nuanced understanding of the selected text (Bizzocchi & Tanenbaum, 2011, 2012). Gadamer (2006) considers close reading to be a classical hermeneutic technique. Similarly, textual analysis of games, as Krzywinska pointed

out that such analysis of game involves, "story and representational gambits" in addition to "code, rules, and mechanics [that are] intrinsic to the creation of games as 'readable' textual artifacts" (Krzywinska, 2015, p. 24). The present study will use close reading and textual analysis to conduct an in-depth analysis of the framing process. This paper has used a purposive sampling technique to gather the data which consisted of two popular titles. The unit of analysis for this study is words, sentences, stories, characters, and game rules of the selected games. The details of the selected titles are given in Table no III.

Table 3

Data Description

Title	Publisher & Developer	Date of Release	Genre	Platform	No Of missions
Call of Duty: Black Ops II	Published by Activision and developed by Treyarch	2012	First Person Shooter	PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, and Microsoft Windows	12
Call of Duty: World War II	Published by Activision and developed by Sledgehammer	2017	First Person Shooter	PlayStation4, Xbox One and Microsoft Windows,	13

These titles are first-person shooter games and are played in single-player mode, however, these titles can also be played online with multiple players. This paper is limited to single-player mode.

Research Procedure

The study followed a systematic procedure to ensure research validity. After the collection of the selected titles data collection procedure was devised by the researcher and executed in the following steps.

- Step I: Playing and recording each title completely.
- Step II: Making systematic entries in a research journal.
- Step IV: These entries were matched with video recordings of the titles to ensure accuracy.
- Step V: Transcript files were created for each game.
- Step VI: Lists of words/phrases/sentences were made to identify common frames.
- Step VII: Characters, story, game aesthetics, and gameplay were analyzed for framing.
- Step VII: To ensure the research's credibility and validate the research findings both

personal reflection and peer debriefing were included in this process.

Overview of the Selected Titles

The first title Call of Duty: World War II (COD: WWII) is a first-person shooter game. The game is about World War II and uses various real locations in Europe. The game offers twelve campaigns which take place from the year 1944 to 1945). The playable (main) character and his squamates of the First Infantry Division battle against Allied forces on the western front. The second game Call of Duty: Black Ops II (COD: BO II) is a sequel to Black Ops and its story stretches from 1986 to 2025. Both father and son, Alex and David Mason, along with their teammates were exemplary military operators working against global terrorism and preventing a new cold war.

Analysis

As outlined in the research procedure, the study used close reading and textual analysis for frame analysis. With the help of multiple gameplay sessions and subsequent recordings of gameplay, transcript files were created followed by lists of words, phrases, and sentences to identify common frames for both titles.

Table 4

List of Frames in COD: WW II and COD: BO II

Frames in COD: WW II	Frames in COD: BO II
American and Allied framed as the savior of humanity	American military force and CIA operatives were framed as noble, exemplary, and heroic.
Germans were framed as aggressors and oppressors.	American military forces and Navy Seal officers can sacrifice their lives for their country.
American soldiers as heroes of the world	American military forces can avert the threat of global terrorism
Germans were framed as perpetrators of war crimes	American military forces help other countries to eliminate rebellion
Allied soldiers were framed as exemplars of humanitarian values and constant defenders of human rights.	Only alliance with America can resolve the threat to global peace
Allied were portrayed as resistant war heroes whereas Axis was framed as fascist and tyrannical	Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Russia were framed as partners in terrorism
	The new Cold War and world peace can be

maintained only if China allies with America.

Selection and Saliency

The first title COD: WWII was the heroic journey of the protagonist and his squamates who were part of the First Infantry Division during the Second World War. The gameplay of the first title spanned over twelve deadly missions against Axis forces to regain the Allied territories. This title presented the World War two as the main event. The title reflected the bravery of American soldiers, specifically emphasized the nobility of their cause, and framed them as the heroic savior of humanity. Simultaneously it highlighted the determination and strength of Allied forces against the tyranny of the Axis. The title took the American perspective and focussed on their bravery while presenting Germans and Axis as ruthless oppressors. Through selection and saliency, the first title clearly put forward the positive projection of American soldiers and Allied forces and emphasized the determination and bravery that reinforced a narrative that positioned them as champions of peace and freedom. The common frames listed in Table number four illustrate selection and saliency more emphatically. The text of the first title placed American soldiers on a high pedestal and were referred to as the one who separated the world from darkness (Col Davis in D-Day mission). Similarly the passion of American soldiers was highlighted in the mission Hill 493 and Death Factory, "No mission too difficult. No sacrifice too great. Duty first" while discussing their plan to engage in deadly combat with Germans.

The second title also exhibited framing through selection and saliency. While it emphasized the unwavering determination and exemplary risk-taking endeavors of American military forces (CIA and Navy Seal) to protect not only their country as well as the world against terrorism it downplays the role of other superpowers. The narrative of the game distinctly positions American military forces in a heroic role while highlighting the vulnerability of countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Russia

to help those working against global peace and harmony.

Functions of Frames

Entman (1993 & 2018) frame analysis involves defining, diagnosing, making moral judgments, and suggesting remedies as the four functions of framing. The common frames used in the text reflected a positive representation of the Allied and a negative framing of the Axis and Germans. The first two functions were performed simultaneously in the text which identified German aggression and tyranny as the source of the problem which led to the invasion of Allied territories. Through the text of dialogues, speeches, and voiceovers the selected title identified German aggression as the problem. The use of words like "Hitler War Machine", "unmatched ferocity" and "Nazi onslaught" in the war declaration address before the invasion of Normandy Beaches were a few illustrations of identifying Germans and the Axis as the source of the conflict and defining them as a risk which can jeopardize global stability. The next function of diagnosing the cause of the problem was also evident in the text. The data showed that it considered the totalitarian and militaristic ideologies of German and Axis forces as the cause of the problem. The text exhibited many instances reiterating the German invasion and their brutality which led the world into darkness. The Nazi's atrocities were presented as the cause of threat to humanity, resulting in massacre and tyranny. The relentless killing of soldiers and war prisoners was mentioned. The data shows that the Germans and Axis were morally judged and called evil and tyrannical, and their invasion had the entire Europe and jeopardized the peace of the world. The Allied resolution to war against the ferocity and onslaught of German forces was justified in the text who were later also presented as warmongers who rejoiced in killing civilians and war prisoners. The following table illustrates some instances of the functions of frames as identified in the text of the selected title.

Table 5

Functions of Frames

Defining and identifying the problem	Making Moral Judgement	Suggesting the Remedies
With Unmatched ferocity, Hitler's War Machine launched its blitzkrieg against Western Europe.	Terrorized evil	A struggle to preserve our civilization and to set free a suffering humanity.
unmatched ferocity Nazi onslaught	Tyrannical	rollback the German aggression
Nazis had no mercy	Terrorized Europe	Vive la resistance
Terrorized Europe	They had 'em livin' worse than animals	Nothing has ever stopped us, nothing ever will! t.
They'd slaughtered the weakest.	Nazis had murdered our boys in cold blood.	
	German oppression No one likes the Russians, huh?	Uncle Sam
The Russians wanna give us one last display of brute force... Let's give them one last display of courage.	It's Uncle Woods, son. He'd do it for me...	the beginning of a new era
China has lost control, and they've asked for our help	We got civilians!	Time for JSOC to step up
	They're just kids	The only way they'll find out is if they take us down. You know that ain't gonna happen
	You fight bravely, American	

Similarly, the frames that were evoked for American soldiers and covert operators illustrate the framing of American soldiers as manifestations of valor, courage, and selflessness in the second selected game. The soldiers were members of the CIA and JSOC (Navy Seals) who restored world peace and averted global catastrophes. The text provided positive and nobler frames for them and

were presented as the defenders of freedom and peace.

The textual manifestations of the four functions through words, phrases, and sentences were frequently carried out in the second title. The narrative distinctly identifies a Nicaraguan drug dealer Menendez and his populist movement as a problem; however, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and

Russia were shown as vulnerable allies and threats to global peace. Menendez was referred to as the most dangerous terrorist since Osama Bin Laden" in the mission Pyrrhic Victory, however, coalition and backing of the above-mentioned countries were equally highlighted. The antagonist was provided assistance from people belonging to Panama, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Russia. For example, after faking Menendez's death his reappearance and alliance with Panama when Woods, an important playable character, recalls, "about a year later, he shows up in Panama with that piece of shit Noriega". Similarly, the campaigns FOB Spectre emphasized that the possible development of alliance of these groups with Russia may result in global instability as SG Section says, "If Russia caves in and joins SDC, they'd be the largest military force on the planet. This is precisely what Menendez wants, setting up the superpowers to wipe each other out. Right now, Iran and India are both under threat. SDC's making their move. Time for JSOC to step up". The text framed Russians as a brute force and created animosity and negative sentiments for them. The second protagonist asserts, "No one likes the Russians, huh"? With the help of framing, the text identified them as a source of unrest and partners in a global catastrophe.

Afghan mujahidin and Pakistan intelligence agency ISI were presented as vulnerable allies of antagonists who planned to conduct a cyber attack and cripple the economies of leading countries and wage a new cold war, Section who is a close friend of the hero and member of the covert team says, "Menendez's network... All countries getting fucked by the new Cold War".

Framing tends to be evaluative and prescriptive in nature. Not only the problem and cause are identified but it is morally judged and solutions to the issue are also proposed. The text illustrated both functions throughout the second title. It morally uplifted the American forces and possible allies with an emphasis on the heroic abilities of these soldiers and labeled them as the guardian of humanity with a proud assertion, "You fight bravely, American" in another campaign. The text also emphasizes the impossibility of defeat of this regime and their soldiers and claims are made with the assertion, "The only way they'll find out is if they take us down. You know that ain't gonna

happen". There was a recurrence of positive framing for American Military forces who sacrificed their lives for the sake of their service to the country. Unlike the ruthless antagonist and his allies, the American soldiers were shown respecting, and caring for civilians of their opponent countries and sympathetic towards kids to be used in civil wars and rebellion. Another function of the framing is to provide solutions and make recommendations. To avert the threat of global terrorism and the new Cold War, these soldiers were framed as the only viable solution. It was through an alliance with America that global conflicts could be countered, any other alliance was doomed to fail as Admiral Brigg proudly claims, "SDC is finished, Secretary Petraeus. America and China joining forces truly marks the beginning of a new era".

The fourth function of the frame was maintained and asserted emphatically when any other solution except alliance with the American military doom to fail was repeatedly insisted in the text. The Organization of Asian Countries (SDC) which worked to combat global threats failed to counter the wave of terrorism. While motivating his military team Briggs reiterates American military strength and says, "This is the beginning of the end of the SDC, people. You keep this up, and they will be finished".

Operational Facets of Framing

At the macro level, the frames can be activated through the story, characters, game aesthetics, rules, and mechanics of games. Apart from the textual framing through words, sentences, and phrases, frames were activated via game story, gameplay, and game aesthetics. Both titles were analyzed to find out how these sites could be used for framing in these selected titles.

The storyline of both titles displayed positive framing for the American military. The story of the first title begins with the invasion of Normandy beaches and occupied European territories by Allied forces with an emphasis on the heroic and brave adventures of American soldiers (protagonists and their squamates). These successful adventures span the story of twelve missions. The story of COD: WWII narrated the unshakable bond of camaraderie of ordinary soldiers striving for freedom against the threat of

tyranny. Each mission told the story of the iconic bravery of an American soldier, the protagonist, and his teammates confronting the grim realities of war. The American soldiers were framed, resilient, determined, and selfless. The various events in the story highlighted the sacrifices and risk-taking actions of American soldiers to take back invaded territories, protect civilians, and save their brothers-in-arms. Daniels, the main playable character, and his team while advancing in Germany found civilians hiding in a building decided to disregard the risk only to save innocent humans, and took them to a secure place. While emphasizing the humane and sympathetic nature of American and allied soldiers, the Germans were presented as merciless oppressors who rejoiced in killing innocent children and war prisoners. In Mission Liberation, the French resistance fighter after getting caught was mockingly informed about her child being killed while the murderer Axis militant recalled the event. The overall story of the first title created a distinctly positive American perspective and downplayed the Axis.

Similarly, the characters of Allied forces and the American soldiers specifically were described favorably. The protagonist and his teammates were presented as the epitome of bravery, selflessness, and unwavering strength. The narrative showed both the playable and non-playable characters of Allied forces extraordinarily brave as Zussman, a close friend of protagonist Daniel, badly wounded in the first mission, showed his scarred body as a souvenir while eagerly rejoining without fully recovering the wounds in the next mission. Through the character of the protagonist, the American soldiers are given a nobler frame. Daniels, an embodiment of the high ideal of brotherhood and friendship, disapproving of his discharge papers, tore them into pieces and vowed to find his friend Zussman in hostile German territories. While the characters of American and Allied forces were framed positively, the Axis were

negatively projected with emphasis on their indulgence in war crimes.

Another way of activating the respective frames was game mechanics and game rules which are considered the core of any gameplay. During the mission of The Rhine, the game mechanics evoked a nobler frame by restricting the actions of the protagonist. The protagonist (player) was forced to accept the surrender and display humanity and honor in warfare. If the protagonist chooses to kill the retreating soldier, the ongoing mission fails, and the gameplay restarts from the previous checkpoint. At this point, the game mechanics urged the protagonist through an on-screen message: *killing unarmed combatants will not be tolerated*. Here the game instilled a nobler frame for the American soldier and stopped him from indulging in war crimes like the German soldiers who were presented as delighting in war crimes.

One of the dominant frames was brotherhood and camaraderie ship. The design of game mechanics and rules was connected to this frame at the basic level. The squamates were assigned certain squad abilities and were placed in close proximity to the protagonist. For instance, Zussman has to provide a first aid kit in case the protagonist gets hurt. Similarly, the game design placed Pierson in close proximity to indicate the safer route and presence of the enemy. It was through game mechanics that the relationship between the squamate was essentially established and retained.

The aesthetics of any title involves the elements of look, sound, and feel. Not only did the graphics, animation, and visuals of the first title create a first-hand experience of the horrific Second World War but it also managed to develop the desired frames. For instance, the selected visual captures the display of brutality by the Axis forces against Allied forces. The visuals and graphics highlight the animosity of Axis forces.

Figure 1.



It was through the protagonist and his team that the savage realities of war were unveiled. However, real life like animation and graphics captured the grim horrors inflicted by the Axis forces. Similarly, the inclusion of visuals that clearly depict the horrors of war crimes and German atrocities distinctly evoked a negative framing for the Axis. Apart from visuals, the use of sound was also significant in developing and sustaining the environment of the game. The use of multiple ranges of sounds such as voiceovers, speeches, commentary, music, explosions, gunshots, and

marching footsteps contributed to creating not only an immersive experience of gameplay but also an effective way to strengthen the perspective of the selected title. For instance, the inclusion of the famous D-Day prayer of President Roosevelt in the opening scene through a radio broadcast coupled with mounting music and the sound of explosions creates a realistic war experience in addition to reinforcing framing and calling for the testament of valor in challenging war times. of display of bravery in the later events to

Figure 2

Operation Cobra



The fundamental premise of the story was the capabilities of the American soldiers to avert global catastrophes. Both the storyline and characterization worked to stimulate and reinforce the desired frames. Both protagonists, the father and the son along with their team never hesitated to sacrifice their lives while working as covert operators for the CIA.

The main story of the selected title is about the abilities of the American military forces to avert threats of global riots and catastrophes. The story of the selected title revolved around the playable character David whose father and his team had already risked their lives as CIA operators for their country. The antagonist launched Cordis Die, a popular movement that had two billion members worldwide and managed to get support from numerous organizations around the globe. The storyline of the second title was instrumental in activating the intended frames. The negative framing of countries like Russia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan was evident through the turn of events in the game. The ISI in Pakistan, the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, the dictator Noriega in Panama, and

various Russian allies were shown his partners, and their alliance contributed to achieving his targets. It was the storyline and the series of events that evoked and activated a nobler frame for American military forces. The game included various events that were significant for the progression of the plot as well as showcased the readiness to risk and sacrifice their lives for their country and teammates. For instance, Mason, the first protagonist after retiring from the CIA and struggling to restore his ties with his son David in the mission Pyrrhic Victory, however, readily consented to rescue his old teammate and friend while ignoring the risks and threats he might encounter in Panama.

While the main story activated nobler frames for Americans, several events were focused on showcasing Russian involvement in accomplishing the sinister crimes and achieving the goals of Cordis Die. The characters were pivotal in triggering the positive frames associated with the American soldiers. The playable and non-playable characters of the protagonist and his team exhibited valor and gallantry. The characters of

David and his father Mason were developed to showcase their readiness to risk their lives for the service of their country. Mason forsaking his family life for his friend Woods, and Hudson (a non-playable character) sacrificing his life for young David were a few instances to reflect both major and minor characters to reinforce the desired frames. Similarly, the character of Farid and Harper (teammates of David) willingly gave their lives to ensure the safety of their country.

The game mechanics and rules also activated and sustained the intended frames in the second title. The game mechanics rarely provided any chance for the protagonist (player) to drift away from the desired frames. For instance, after finding his captured team-mate and friend Woods, the protagonist had to lift the wounded friend and fight against the Cuban forces. Any effort of not carrying the injured teammate resulted in the restriction of movement through game mechanics. The protagonist had to indulge in an intense fight while holding him and displaying bravery. Similarly, there was not any choice for the antagonist to spare the targets whereas the protagonist often made moral choices to spare the enemy. For instance, during the mission, *Suffer with Me*, the protagonist is allowed to spare the enemy and reflect the strength of the character.

The data analysis also revealed that the second title used the game aesthetics to stimulate the desired frames. The visual appearance of the protagonist and the antagonist retained throughout the title reflected the strength of their characters. For example, the physically strong and muscular body of David, the main protagonist, reflects the preparedness for the rigidity of military operations and possession of physical strength for endurance. The display of a range of weapons, the uniform, the tactical vests, and the gears used for the JSOC team members were aligned with the professionalism and readiness of their characters and the intended frames. Similarly, the physically strong build of the antagonist's body and a prominent scar on his face rendered him a fearsome strength. These details instantiated the frame for the ruthless and intense hostility that paralleled the negative framing. Moreover, the graphics of intense battlegrounds, the animation of technologically advanced drones, optical concealment, the shock charge, state of art weapons, and modern vehicles reflected the

strength of the hostile enemy as well as the readiness of fearless American personnel. The sounds of explosives, weapons, and fire created an immersive experience for players as well as prepared grounds for breathtaking fights between the unyielding American military forces and evil forces. The collective impact of the look feel and sound produced in tense situations which emphasized the bravery and resilience of military troops and their commitment to the cause.

Conclusion

The study conducted a frame analysis of two popular games COD: WWII and COD: BOII. The study was based on a qualitative paradigm and used close reading and textual analysis to investigate framing at the micro and macro levels of text. For this purpose, an operational model comprising (Entman, 1993 and Nygren et al., 2022) approach of framing was adopted to analyze the multifaceted digital games. For microtextual analysis, the framing function approach of Entman was used to explore framing through words, phrases, and sentences. Keeping in view the role of game plays the frame analysis at the macro level was conducted which included the game aesthetics, game mechanics, and rules. The findings of this paper revealed that the selected games used framing to acquire distinct perspectives. Apart from giving an immersive and real-life experience of the Second World War as well as technologically advanced futuristic wars, both titles reflected the process of framing at work. Through selection and salience, these titles emphasized the glory of American military forces and acquired a positive perspective on the American military forces. The textual manifestations of these frames were evident through the use of certain words, phrases, and sentences that emphasized the particular point of view. For instance, Germans were frequently referred to as tyrannical, evil, and oppressors in the first title. The second title also revealed the framing of Russia and other marginal countries like Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Panama as vulnerable partners to global terrorism. The storyline and the characters, both major and minor, supported and strengthened these clearly defined frames. Moreover, the game mechanics and rules also contributed to the process of framing. The interplay of rules and mechanics stimulated and strengthened the frames that were established

through words, phrases, and sentences. The synergy between visuals, sound, and graphics also reinforced the process of framing.

The study revealed that digital games have the potential to present viewpoints. As the study was limited to the analysis of frames, future studies could identify the underlying ideologies of this

communicative strategy. Furthermore, this research also points out that game mechanics and rules should be further explored for their communicative functions. The study also suggests using digital games in the field of linguistics as case studies to conduct linguistic analysis, both qualitative and quantitative.

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