THE INFLUENCE OF AMNESIA AFFECTS THE PERSONALITY OF SENTO KIRYU IN THE FILM OF KAMEN RIDER BUILD

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the linguistic identitiy shifts of Sento Kiryu, the protagonist of Kamen Rider Build (2017), focusing on the impact of amnesia on his speech and communication style. Using qualitative discourse analysis approach, the study examines how His pragmatic language evolves throughout the series, reflecting His identity crisis and eventual self-acceptance. The findings indicate that Sento's amnesia results in a noticeable increase in politeness, indirectness, and cooperative speech behaviors, which contrasts sharply with His former self, Takumi Katsuragi, who exhibited a more assertive and impersonal communication style. This research contributes to the study of fictional character linguistics and identity formation, offering insights into how memory loss influences speech patterns and self-perception.

Keywords: Amnesia, speech, language, personality

INTRODUCTION

Amnesia is a cognitive disorder characterized by memory loss that can be caused by various factors, including brain injury, psychological trauma, infections, and neurological diseases (Kopelman, 2002). This condition significantly impacts an individual's ability to recall past events or form new memories, affecting daily life. One specific type of amnesia, known as "Retrograde Amnesia," involves the loss of pre-existing memories before the onset of the disorder. This form of amnesia primarily affects episodic and autobiographical memory, causing fragmented recollections of past events and making it difficult for individuals to remember their past selves. Retrograde amnesia is often depicted in various media narratives, including television series. One such example is the Japanese television series *Kamen Rider Build* (2017), where the protagonist, Sento Kiryu, experiences memory loss, which plays a crucial role in his character development.

Several studies have examined amnesia in different contexts, including its neurological basis (Squire, 1987), psychological impact (Schacter, 1996), and representation in media. Research has explored how amnesia affects identity reconstruction and cognitive rehabilitation (Huppert & Piercy, 1978), as well as its narrative function in

storytelling. While previous studies have primarily focused on real-world cases or general media portrayals, this research extends the discussion by analyzing how *Kamen Rider Build* incorporates retrograde amnesia within its storyline, specifically in relation to the protagonist's character transformation. This study differentiates itself by exploring how amnesia functions as both a narrative device and a mechanism for character identity reconstruction.

The purpose of this research is to analyze how retrograde amnesia is depicted in *Kamen Rider Build*, particularly in shaping the protagonist's identity and moral development. This study employs a qualitative content analysis approach, examining key episodes where memory loss influences the character's decisions and interactions. The research also considers the psychological and philosophical implications of amnesia within the narrative framework, assessing how it contributes to character development and viewer engagement.

The methodology involves a textual analysis of selected episodes of *Kamen Rider Build*, focusing on dialogue, character interactions, and narrative progression. A psychoanalytic and pragmatic approach is used to interpret how amnesia affects the protagonist's sense of self and social relationships. This study aims to contribute to the broader discussion of memory, identity, and storytelling in media representations of cognitive disorders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Amnesia in Media

"Amnesia is a common trope in Literature and Media, often used to create suspense and intrigue. In the context Kamen Rider Build, Sento's amnesia serves as a narrative mechanism that allows growth. One of the examples are in films, such as The Eternal Sunshine of The Spotless mind (2004), 50 first dates (2004), lists up a long tradition of movies featuring amnesiac characters. Previous studies have examined the portrayal of amnesia in various media, highlighting its role in character development and the psychological implications of memory loss."

"Amnesia not only frequently results in a loss of identity in different movies. It also commonly causes a complete personality change. This can just mean a character becomes more extroverted or introverted, but usually it involves a complete shift in values and behaviour. Thus a startling number of originally "bad" characters become "good" after the onset of their amnesia. In *Crime Doctor* (1943) a shady criminal becomes a leading criminal psychologist; the "claw hammer killer" becomes a nice guy in *Murder by Night* (1989) (or does he?), and in one of the earliest cinematic examples a roguish cad becomes a valued parish priest in *The Victory of Conscience* (1915). Goldie Hawn's rich spoilt socialite transforms into a loving mother to Kurt Russell's unruly brood when she falls from her yacht in *Overboard* (1987), and even Tom the cat forgets himself and makes up with Jerry the mouse after his head injury in *Nit-Witty Kitty* (1951). Sadly, this transformation doesn't always last. Occasionally in the movies, amnesia results in a personality change for the worse." (Sallie Baxendale 2004).

Personality

Personality is a fundamental aspect of human psychology that shapes an individual's behavior, emotions, and interactions with their environment. It is a complex, multifaceted construct that has been studied in psychology, philosophy, and neuroscience. Personality also refers to the patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors that distinguished one individual from another. It encompasses enduring traits and characteristics that influence how a person responds to different situations over time.

From a linguistic standpoint, Sento's speech patterns shifted due to his amnesia, making Him more cooperative and polite in comparison to His former self. This transformation aligns with Leech's Politeness maxims, as we examined how Sento's interactions with others reflect changes in conversational implicature. Finally, by using psychoanalytic theory, particularly Freudian and Lacanian concepts, we analyze how Sento's repressed memories and subconscious guilt shaped his evolving identity.

Further examining the psychoanalytic approach, amnesia disrupts the continuity of a "self", necessitating reconstruction. Freud's concept of id, ego, and superego can be applied to understand Sento's internal struggle. His initial persona, as shaped by His current environment, aligns with the ego's adaptive nature, while resurfacing of His past identity represents an intrusion of the repressed self.

This research is to be expected yielding satisfying result to provide an insight on how amnesia can affect behavior for a character, and how said character is viewed by others in the series.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research methodology

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the linguistic and psychological aspects of Sento Kiryu's dialogues in Kamen Rider Build episode 1. A qualitative method is suitable because it allows for an in-depth exploration of character interactions and implicit meanings behind their speech, focusing on how politeness strategies reflect psychological states.

Data Collection

The primary data consists of dialogues from Episode 1 of Kamen Rider Build, obtained through close reading of English subtitles and verified against fan transcripts for accuracy. The episode was watched multiple times to ensure an accurate representations of verbal exchanges, tone, and context. Any ambiguities in translations were cross-referenced with the original Japanese dialogue where it is necessary.

Analytical framework

The analysis is structured around two key theoretical perspectives:

1. Pragmatic Analysis – Using Grice's Cooperative Principle (quantity, quality, relation and manner), along with Brown and Levinson's Theory, (positive politeness and negative politeness), the analysis was made to further read into Sento's intentions.

2. Psychoanalytic Interpretation – Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory, particularly such as repression, unconscious motivations, is applied to interpret Sento Kiryu's language use reflects his internal conflicts and psychological struggles.

Data Analysis Procedure

The research follows these steps:

1. Selection of Key Dialogues – instances where Sento Kityu interacts with others are transcribed and categorized. Special attention is given to emotionally significant moments.

2. Application of Maxims – Each dialogue is analyzed to determine the presence or absence of politeness strategies, noting any violations or unique patters.

3. Psychoanalytic interpretations – Identified politeness strategies are further examined through a psychoanalytic lens to understand unconscious influences on speech, such as surpressed emotions or internalized conflicts.

4. Cross validation – Findings are compared against other instances in the episode to established consistency in linguistic behavior.

This structured methodology ensures comprehensive and systematic analysis of Sento Kiryu's dialogues, providing insights into his psychological state through linguistic examination.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Personality Shifts in Kiryu Sento's Speech Patterns.

1.1. Speech Changes.

In this part, it will be focusing on changes in His Speech, what changed in Sento Kiryu, the former Takumi Katsuragi, after having His amnesia? for example, how did He react when given a new item to be experiment on?

And what languages did He use after the changes? Did He also gain new habits or behavior? Did it also affect the people surrounding him?

In the scene bellow, Sento's reaction for a successful experiment, granting Him a new item, caused Him to get over-excited, which showed Him visibly letting out childish and unprofessional words of emotions, his body language spoke louder as well, rather than keeping it to Himself and saying "good, the experiment was a success" in which Takumi and other scientists in the series are portrayed with. This indicated the first change in His character, both in psychological and behavior wise.
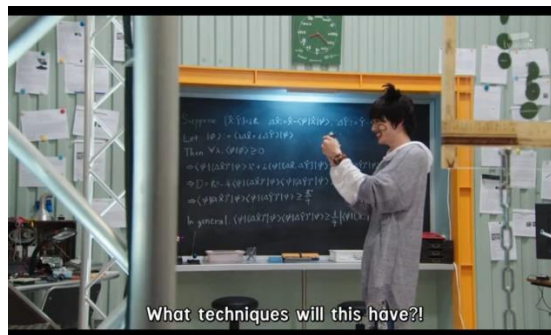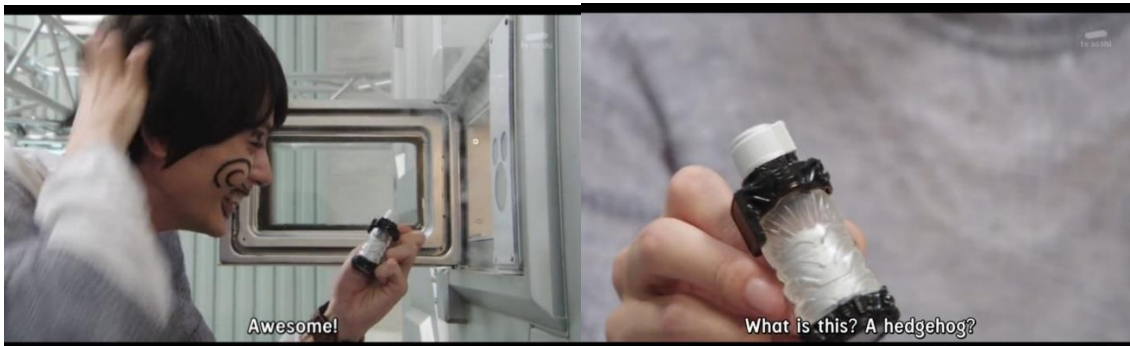
Even the word "Awesome" was never used by Takumi, the change of use of linguistics in His character has already been apparent. Even though His passion hasn't gone away, his bad habits of getting too into His research stuck with Him, for example, breaking into over-explaining, and gushing over His inventions. Which break the politeness maxim of modesty, and that He just needed to keep those words for Himself, rather than showing off. With Grice's cooperative principle, quantity, quality, relation and manner, Sento's dialogue checks all of the boxes perfectly. He doesn't withheld information, telling the truth, staying relevant to the topic, and delivered it with clear clarity, while also being respectful.
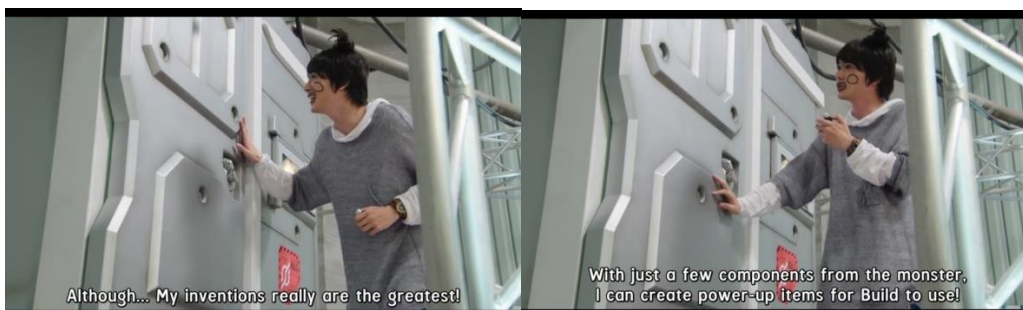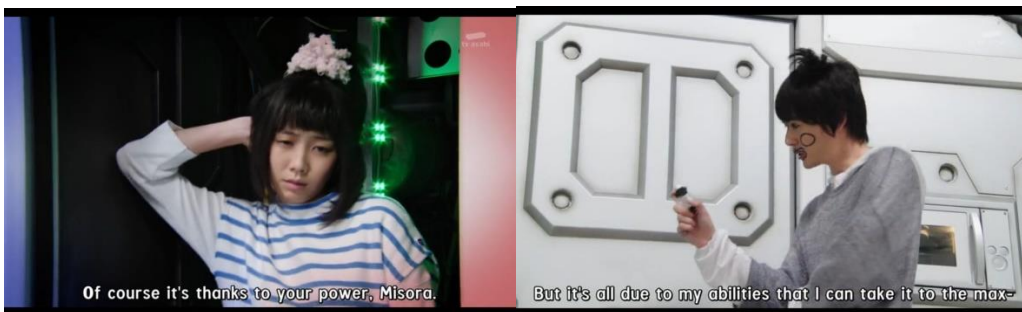
Of course, despite Him breaking the maxim of modesty, praising Himself more than anyone else, He also, someway, fulfilled the approbation maxim, by thanking Misora on Her efforts in a role of His experiments, this further highlight that even though He had pride in His work, He still thanked the ones who helped Him with it.

Another case, he curses, which again, doesn't seem professional. With also, playing along with Soichi's teasing. This respones aligns with Brown and Levinson's Theory, He shifts from positive politeness (friendly banter) to negative politeness (distancing language). Responding with an answer as lighthearted as the other played. This indicated that Sento isn't all serious all the time, another contrast associating with Takumi Katsuragi. The way He talked in the beginning scene up until now, it showed how Sento now has an identity of His own. Someone with a sense of individuality.

Finally, in the last scene of the episode, Sento showed sympathy and tact maxims in His words, showing he understood what Banjou needed to hear. That someone finally believed that He wasn't a what He thought He was, even throwing a quip about a real idiot won't call themselves idiot, indicating that Sento showed trusts in Him and His words. This scene showed Sento's raw instincts (id) and also His ego influences His judgment, tolerance, reality testing, control, planning, defense, synthesis of information, intellectual functioning. (Freud's Psychoanalysis 1923).
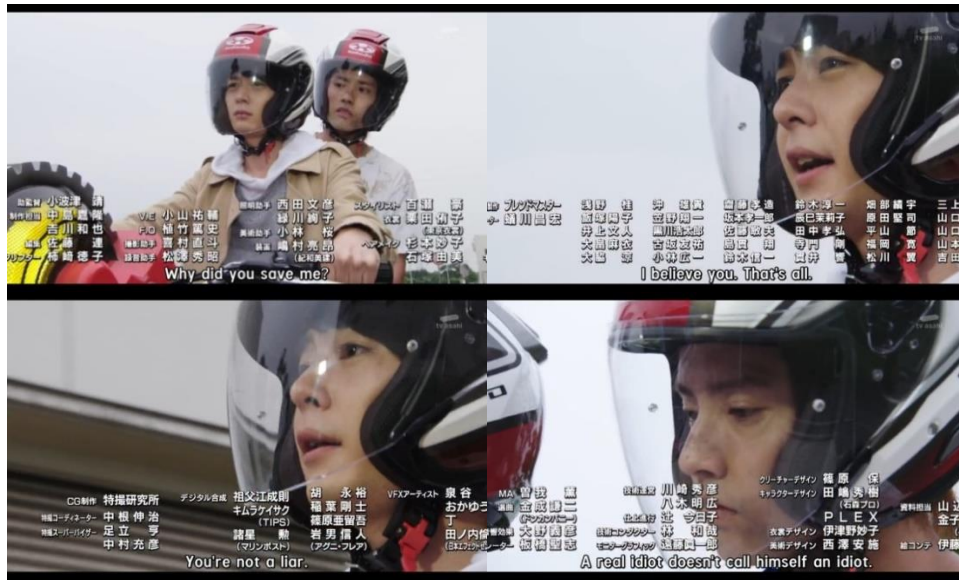
1.2 Behavioral changes

In this part, it will discuss the behavioral changes in His character. The changes of behavior are seen in mostly His body language more than anything else, the once serious and no-nonsense, efficient behavior of Takumi Katsuragi, are now replaced with a more expressive, dramatic, playful and theatrical behaviors of Kiryu Sento.

Sento often than not makes and strikes exaggerated poses, specifically when excited and or deep in His thoughts.

As seen, His pride and excitement (id) made Him unaware of His surroundings. Fortunately, He isn't like this when His head is cleared out. This clumsy behavior on itself, actually signified that it categorizes itself as a further change in behavior for Sento. This further highlighted that Sento's amnesia causes a temporary suppression of his superego, leaving his actions more influenced by raw instincts (id) and confusion (ego imbalance).

The changes doesn't only stop in His normal day to day civilian activities as well, in battle, or engaging with an adversary, Sento often quipped and throw one-liners at the opposing side when He deemed it fit.

CONCLUSION

Kiryu Sento's linguistic evolution in Kamen Rider Build highlights the interplay between memory, identity, and social interaction. Through pragmatic analysis using Leech's Politeness Maxims, Grice's Cooperative Principle, Brown and Levinson's Polietenss Strategies and psychoanalytic theory, this study demonstrates how language reflects psychological transformation. Sento's case exemplifies how amnesia influences both speech and self-perception, providing insight into the broader implications of language in identity formation.

Kiryu Sento's amnesia leads to a personality shift in his language, reflecting his evolving identity and social relationships. His initial violation of politeness norms indicates psychological disorientation, which stabilizes as he regains a sense of self. By applying pragmatic theories, this analysis highlights how amnesia influences linguistic choices and politeness strategies, enriching our understanding of character development in *Kamen Rider Build*.

Sento's journey in Kamen Rider Build exemplifies the idea that we do not choose where we come from, but we have the power to define who we become. Through Leech's politeness maxims, we see how his interactions balance honesty, tact, and efficiency in communication, allowing him to build trust with his allies. Searle's speech act theory further highlights how his language actively shapes his self-identity and destiny. By choosing to be Kiryu Sento rather than merely accepting himself as Takumi Katsuragi, he demonstrates the human capacity for reinvention and self-determination. In the end, Sento is not just a rider of science and logic—He is a testament to the idea that identity is a choice, not a predetermined fate.

Overall, Sento's speech patterns evolve alongside his self-identity, transitioning from a hesitant, amnesiac scientist to a confident leader who embraces his role as Kamen Rider Build.

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