Abstract

*Video games localisation is an emerging type of translation that has
deserved very little attention from a translation studies perspective to date.
This article discusses what is involved in video game localisation, what
assets need to be localised, what the different localisation models are and
what translator's competence is required in order to localise video games
successfully. It also emphasises the need to encourage the study of this new
discipline and the training of translators who have the skills and
competence required to face the challenges posed by this new translation
field. This will ensure that localised versions of games provide their users
with as many hours of enjoyment and entertainment as the original ones.*

Key words: Video games, video games localisation, localisation models,
translator's competence, global pop culture.

Introduction
In less than three decades, the interactive software entertainment industry,
known popularly as the *video games industry*, has become a worldwide
phenomenon, which generated global sales of 24,792.4 millions of Euro in
2006 and is expected to keep growing in the next years (Source: IDATE).

Video games are today a mainstream entertainment option, with one in
three Europeans playing video games regularly for an average of six hours
a week, their ages ranging from 20 to 30 years (Source: ISFE). Together
with music, movies and books, video games form the basis of global pop
culture, and it must be pointed out that video games sales currently
generate more revenue per annum than the cinema box office in the US
(Newman, 2004: 3).

This new form of electronic entertainment is very closely linked to technological developments, which have allowed video games to come a long way since *SpaceWar*, the first video game, made of simple dots and lines, was developed in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1962. New consoles appear regularly in the market, and the latest ones, known as the *seventh generation consoles*, are very different from the first 8-bit consoles that used cartridges and had very limited graphics, sound and storage capabilities.

The transition from fifth generation consoles, such as PlayStation, Nintendo 64 and Sega Saturn, which used CD ROMs as a storage medium, to sixth generation ones, such as PlayStation 2, Xbox and Sega Dreamcast, which replaced CDs with DVDs, a medium with a much larger storage capability, was a great breakthrough in video games history. The increased storage capacity allowed, for the first time, the incorporation of recorded scripts by voiceover actors into video games. This enabled games evolve into something approaching an interactive movie.

Today's games are full of cutting-edge graphics, elaborate soundtracks, and witty and fast-flowing dialogues. These features allow the players to enjoy a much more intense and real gaming experience. This experience has recently been taken a step further with the introduction of the latest consoles, such as Microsoft Xbox 360, Sony PlayStation 3, and Nintendo Wii. The latter is equipped with a wireless controller that can detect motion and rotation in three dimensions, making it possible for gamers to control their videogame movements with their own hand when they are fighting their sworn enemies or competing against their tennis opponents.

It is widely acknowledged that one of the main causes of the success of games is their internationalisation and globalisation, a process in which localisation has played a key role. In order to maximise their profits, most game developers, which are mainly based in Japan, the US and the UK, translate —or *localise*, the term used in the industry— their games into other languages (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006). Some games are even said to make almost 50% of their revenues from international sales (Chandler, 2006).

This paper focuses on video games localisation, referred to as *games localisation* hereafter, the different localisation models, and the role of the

localiser, the key agent of the localisation process. It will examine the different tasks s/he has to perform, the different text types s/he has to translate, and the challenges s/he has to face during the localisation process, such as the translation of cultural references, humour and intertextual allusions. It also tries to identify the abilities and the translator competence required to localise a video game successfully. This should become the basis for specialised courses in video games localisation that would provide a theoretical background, as well as training and practical skills to students of translation and professional translators willing to specialise in this new field. This, in turn, would ensure the quality of games localisation and would continue to support the growth of this emerging type of translation.

What is a video game?

According to Frasca (2001: 4), video games are "computer-based entertainment software, either textual or image-based, using any electronic platform, such as personal computers or consoles and involving one or multiple players in a physical or networked environment". This definition mainly refers to PC (including massive multiplayer online games, also known as *MMOG*) and console games, and it can also be extended to games for mobile phones. However, it does not really include old-style arcade games, which are not software-based and are usually not localised, mainly due to the fact that they do not contain much text.

However, as the challenges involved in localising console or PC games are rather different to those involved in localising a game for mobile phones or a massive multiplayer online game, in this paper when I refer to video games I will mainly refer to console games, and more specifically role playing games (RPGs). RPGs are the most interesting to analyse from a translation studies perspective, as they contain more text and text-types, due to their more elaborate and intricate stories.

From a translation studies perspective, a video game could be defined as an interactive multimedia text that combines words, images and sound, and whose main objective is to entertain. A video game is made up of a series of components of varying nature, also called *assets*, namely, in-game *text assets*, *art assets*, *audio assets*, *cinematic assets* and *printed materials* (Chandler, 2005: 51). Despite the fact that the translation of all these elements brings into play several translation skills, the different assets must

be localised and integrated harmonically, so that they form an engaging game that feels like an original and meets the players' expectations.

Text assets include all in-game text-only messages that make up the user interface, such as menus, drop-down lists, help messages, system messages, tutorials and dialogue messages that are not voiced over. *Art assets* are all the images and graphics that need to be redesigned by the graphic artist; that is, a new graphic needs to be created for each localised version for items such as maps, shop boards, signs, etc., which incorporate text in a given language. For consistency sake, it is advisable to localise all graphics in a fully localised version of a game, unless they are in a different language in the original game as well and they are used to convey a special atmosphere. However, the lack of time or a planning oversight may result in some art assets not being localised. *Audio assets* and *cinematic assets* include those components with sound, such as songs, voiceovers for the script, and cut-scenes, the movie-like elements that appear in action, adventure and RPGs and provide players with elaborate animated scenes that contribute to the development of the story line. It must be pointed out that scripts are not always voiced-over. Sometimes, due to financial and time constraints, the voiced-over script is left in English and simply subtitled into other languages. This is often the case when localising Japanese games, although it also applies to some games originally developed in English, which are only subtitled into other languages, such as the *Grand Theft Auto* Series in Spanish. Finally, *printed materials* include all those elements in paper support that accompany the game, such as the packaging and the instructions manual.

Games localisation The term *games localisation* is used as an analogy to *software localisation*, because the translation of the game needs to conform to the local standards of the target culture and it also has to be integrated within the game software. In order to be successful internationally, it is very important that publishers develop their games keeping localisation in mind from the beginning, in order to reduce to a minimum the amount of reengineering work that will need to be done for the localised versions.

For example, it is necessary to allow for special and extended characters, and for the conversion from languages which use double-byte character encoding, such as Japanese, to single-byte characters, such as English. Even when translating from English into romance languages, text boxes should be designed so that they will be expandable, as romance languages

usually take more space than English, in order to avoid truncations. Chandler (2005:9) states that ideally an extra space allocation of 30% should be made for all localised versions of a game.

Another way to overcome the strict space limitations present in a game's user interface, particularly in menu and battle screens, consists of using scrollable windows, which can stretch either horizontally or vertically. This allows the use of longer strings of text in the localised versions, without having to resort to the use of abbreviations or having to omit important elements of information. Localisers can concentrate more on their creativity and their wording if they are not constrained by a strict character and line limit and an imperious need to condense their message.

This creative factor is one of the main differences between software (particularly business applications) and games localisation. Even though these two types of translation share some features in common, one of the main differences between the two lies in the fact that while business software must primarily be effective and utilitarian, video games main function is to entertain and to provide pleasure to the players while submerging them in a virtual reality environment. The players of the translated versions should experience the game as if it were an original game designed for them. The idea is that most players will be able to enjoy the same gameplay experience irrespective of their origin and cultural background (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006).

For this reason, when a localiser is assigned a project, s/he is practically given *carte blanche* to make any changes they deem necessary, especially regarding the language, the cultural references and the humour, all of which are key elements in games. Localisers may even go as far as to request graphics, design and even story line changes if they feel it is necessary to truly localise the game for their target culture. Thus, games localisation distinguishes itself from other types of translation in that it allows for a high degree of customisation of the translated versions, to the point that localisers have the freedom to do and request changes not only to the dialogues or text messages, but also to the graphics, images and story line, in a fashion unknown to any other type of translation. It could be said that games localisation goes further than ordinary translation, to the point that it practically becomes *transcreation* (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006). All these aspects will be examined in more detail in the section *Translator's competence* of this article.

The only aspect that developers are keen to keep standard in all versions of a localised game is the names of the main characters and scenarios in the game. This is mainly due to marketing reasons and the rational behind it is that players from all over the world can recognise, identify and have discussions about the game and its characters in Internet forums.

Having said this, exceptions can be made when it is considered necessary. Mangiron and O'Hagan (ibid) use the example of the Japanese name ジタン, the main character of the main character of *Final Fantasy IX*, which was transliterated as Zidane in the US localised version. However, European translators felt this name was not appropriate for the European versions, as it is the name of the world-famous French footballer Zinedine Zidane. Using the name Zidane could bring about some legal complications, as well as introducing incorrect wrong connotations into the game. For these reasons, it was decided to transliterate the name into the different languages, in a way that would closely resemble the original Japanese pronunciation. Thus, for example, Zidane became Djidane in the French version and Yitán in the Spanish one.

Liesl Liery, senior localisation strategist for the ENLASO group (cited in Chandler, 2005: 96) mentions the case of the localisation into Swedish of the game series *Nancy Drew*. This series is based on the famous American 1930's teenage detective novel series, which is still popular in the United States and Europe today. In the translated Swedish novels, the protagonist's name was changed to Kitty Drew, and therefore, if the game series were to be localised into Swedish, the name of the main character would have had to be adapted to the local tradition.

Games localisation models
There are two main games localisation models, namely *outsourcing* and *in-house* localisation. *Outsourcing* consists of handing a localisation kit, which should contain all the relevant instructions and reference materials, and all the assets to be translated to an agency, who is then responsible for the whole localisation process, including the recording of the script in a studio and the integration of the localised versions. In this model, the role of the localiser is limited to translating the script and in-game text messages.

As the deadline for publishing the game is usually very tight, localisers start working while the game is still being developed, which means that the

source text is unstable and often subject to change. Moreover, localisers must translate all the game assets without having access to the original game, and therefore the possibility of committing errors is quite high, especially when translating isolated strings, without any context. For example, if a localiser has to translate a string that only consists of the preposition "for", s/he will have to opt for one of the possible translations into Spanish. Although the most common translations would be "por" or "para", other translations would also be possible. In this case, the localisation specialist must opt for the translation s/he thinks is less risky, that is, the one that has a higher possibility of being correct in most contexts. In this case, "para" would probably be the more likely translation, although chances of making a mistake are obviously high without having access to the full sentence or sentences in which this preposition appears in the game.

Another notorious example of a mistranslation due to lack of contextual information is the translation of the noun "party" in the Spanish version of the game *Final Fantasy VII* as "fiesta" rather than "grupo" (*group*), which is the most common usage in games. This example reconfirms the perilous practice of translating without reference to the source text. It also evidences a lack of familiarity with video games jargon on the part of the localisers, as the term *party* is often used with that meaning in games. Despite its drawbacks, outsourcing is the localisation model that has been used more traditionally, and continues to be the model chosen by most European and US developers, who primarily for marketing reasons tend to opt for the *sim-ship model* (simultaneous shipment). This means that the original game and all the localised versions are published at the same time, usually in the same disk, that contains the different language options. Outsourcing the localisation allows them to start the localisation process before the game is finished, and have it ready at the same time the original version is finished.

In-house localisation is the model chosen by the bigger Japanese developers, such as Nintendo or Square-Enix. In this model, the company that develops the game (referred to as "a games developer") is also in charge of the localisation. They usually have a localisation department which employs a few translators and hires additional freelance translators for bigger projects or when they are handling several projects simultaneously. The company assigns a localisation coordinator who gathers a team of translators, who are usually required to work in the

company premises, and acts as an intermediary between the localisers' team and the original development team. The involvement of localisers in this model is much higher than in the outsourcing model, as translators must familiarise themselves with the game, they also review and cross-check other translator's work, and they participate in the testing and quality assessment process once the game has been localised.

Once the translation process starts, localisers have constant access to the game, which they can consult in case of doubt or when they need contextual information. This model of localisation requires more time and is therefore more expensive, as localisation does not start until the original version is finished or almost finished. The main reason for this is to ensure that the localisation process runs smoothly and few changes will have to be made to the localised versions, as the original version of the game will have been fixed at that stage. In addition, once the development team have finished working on the original version they will have more time to devote to the localised versions. Despite the time lag between the release of the original and the localised versions, this approach guarantees a greater quality in the localised versions, as access to contextual information reduces considerably the amount of contextual errors. This model also facilitates the quality assessment of the localised version, as there are less bugs and errors to be found.

Translator's competence
As previously mentioned, games are made of assets of very different nature, which require several translation skills to localise them, depending on the text types associated with them. In order to localise a game successfully, it is important that translators are familiar with the specific features of video games localisation, some of which are common to software localisation and audiovisual translation (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006). It is important to identify these skills in order to be able to provide training for translators and translation students wantingto specialise in this field. In this section, the different skills and competences required from the translator will be examined in more detail.

1. Familiarity with general software terminology and specific games platform terminology
Messages such as "Insufficient free space on memory card (8MB) (for PlayStation®2) in MEMORY CARD slot" and "Save error" are common in games. For general terminology, such as *save*, *delete*, *cancel*, *press*, etc.,

standard Microsoft software terminology is most commonly used. For specific hardware terminology, each first-party publisher, be it PlayStation (Sony), GameCube (Nintendo) or Xbox (Microsoft), has its own official terminology, and all games to be published for their platform must strictly adhere to it. Failure to do so could result in the game failing the QA from the first-party publisher and the need to resubmit it once the necessary changes and adjustments have been made. Localisers need to be aware of these terminology variations and also the need to comply with them.

Moreover, these kind of messages, such as system messages, warning messages, and help messages must be brief, clear and user-friendly, as their main function is to facilitate a smooth gameplay experience, without interfering with it by introducing long and complicated messages.

2. Familiarity with the specific features of screen translation
The localisation of audio and cinematic assets ideally requires that the translator is familiar with the specific features of dubbing and subtitling. Regarding dubbing, they have to be aware of issues such as lip synch, adjusting the time available for a character's intervention, and matching the translated text with the image (if the localisers have access to the original game). In relation to subtitling, a localiser has to be able to condense a message and keep the semantic unit intact whenever possible, although this aspect is not given as much importance in games as in movie subtitles.

However, there are also considerable differences between traditional screen translation and subtitling for games (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006). For example, labels with the name of the character who is speaking are sometimes present, and information relevant for gameplay, such as place, object and character names is often highlighted in a different colour to help players advance in the game. Also, subtitles appear on screen at a slightly faster speed than subtitles on a movie, and players have the possibility to control the subtitles (pause them, restart them and even skip them if they so wish), something that is not possible in traditional subtitling but it is possible in new media such as DVD.

3. Mastering of natural and idiomatic language
Language plays a crucial role in games, especially RPGs, and the use of natural, fluid and idiomatic language is essential to convey the gameplay

experience and allow players to fully enjoy the game, as unnatural or too literal language, known as *translatese*, may deter their enjoyment.

In many action, adventure and RPG games, the kind of language used is colloquial, cool street-speak slang, and it is very important to get the right tone in the localised versions as well. When localising a game for younger kids, for example, a video game based on the popular *Bratz* dolls, the localiser must aim to reflect the way 10 year-old girls speak in his/her country in order to make the game appealing to them.

4. Creativity

Game localisers need to be very creative in order to be able to produce an exciting game that will engage players. Games must be quirky and fun to play, and for that reason localisers have to be very creative when translating weapons, objects, ability and command names, for example.

Humour is also a defining element in many games, which are rich in jokes, puns and play-on-words. These can seldom be translated literally and have to be recreated in order to keep the comic effect in the target community. Moreover, localisers often take their creativity a step further and introduce new jokes and puns in places where no humour is present in the original.

The RPG series *Final Fantasy* is a good example of this, as the US localised versions are littered with jokes and puns which are actually absent in the original. For example, in one of the opening scenes of *Final Fantasy X*, the main character, Tidus, drifts into a ruined temple in the middle of the sea. Things are not looking too good and he is feeling very cold. In the Japanese original, the narrator states: 事態はどんどん悪くなっていく…夢も希望もありません..., which literally means "The situation was getting worse... I had no dreams nor hopes". This was translated in the US version as "I had made it out of the frying pan... and into the freezer". Localisers took the English saying: "out of the frying pan and into the fire" and made a play on words changing "fire" for "freezer", creating a humoristic effect. Another of many examples can be found in the translation of the following battle message, when one of the characters attacks his/her enemy using a fire spell. The original Japanese says 炎よ、踊りなさい, literally, "Dance, Flame". It was translated into English as "Need a light?", a play on words with a comic effect, as this is used to ask somebody for a light for a cigarette.

A similar thing happens with cultural references and the introduction of regional accents to characterise some characters, which are often introduced in the localised versions to allow gamers to identify themselves

with the game and feel that it is an original game developed for their benefit and enjoyment. For example, one of the main characters of FFX, Wakka, has no special accent in the Japanese original version, but he was dubbed using a Hawaiian accent in the American one, in order to give the game a more local flavour.

It is another example of transcreation, as translators are introducing new elements absent in the original game in order to further localise it, adapt it to the target culture and bring it closer to the players.
Traditionally, the notion of "translation loss" has been central in translation studies. Even though the idea that loss is an inevitable and intrinsic part of the translation process is widely shared, the notion of "translation gain" has not yet been explored in much detail. Games localisation, due to the high amount of creativity and rewriting that is associated to it, provides a good basis for further exploring the concept of translation gain, as localised games are sometimes as good or even better than their originals.

5. Cultural awareness
The role of any translator goes beyond simply rendering words from one language into another, as translators act as cultural mediators, bridging the gap and bringing closer the two cultural communities between which they operate. In the case of games localisation, translators have to be able to pick up any cultural references from the original and render them appropriately, either by maintaining them, adapting them or suppressing them in their translation. They also must be alert to recognise any other sensitive issues that could have a negative impact on the localised version and may have been overlooked by the developers, who may have very little knowledge of the cultures into which their games are going to be localised.
The German example, with its national rating board, the USK (Unterhaltungssoftware SelbstKontrolle) is often quoted, as Germany, together with Australia, is one of the countries with stricter control and censorship over games. They examine thoroughly the game code, the packaging, the manual, the cheat codes and the walkthroughs for the use of profanity, symbols related to racial hatred and Nazism, and blood and gore (Chandler, 2005: 33). However, Di Marco (2006) discusses the example of the Japanese game *Final Fantasy VIII*, in which one of the villains, Seifer Almasy, wears a long overcoat with a left-facing swastika symbol, which is a symbol of good luck in Buddhism and Hinduism. Localisers into European languages pointed out that the use of the swastika symbol, even

if it was not the right-facing Nazi swastika, could be considered offensive in Europe. If localisers had not noticed it and the graphic had not been changed, it could even have led to the game being banned in Germany. For this reason, the developers' team agreed to change the symbol and used a Christian cross, similar to the Fleur-de-Lis cross, for the European and American versions of the game.

Kehoe and Hickey (2006: 29) also present some interesting examples of cultural adaptation in games. One of them, from the game *Crash Bandicoot*, lead to the modification of the main character model for the Japanese localised version, as he only has three fingers and a thumb in the US and European versions. They explain that for various reasons, it was decided to redesign the main character for the Japanese market, so that he would have four fingers and a thumb, in all graphics, animations, and marketing materials. Even though these authors do not go into detail about the motivations behind this change, Japanese sources (O'Hagan quoted in Reidy, 2006, and personal communication) confirm that this is because of various negative associations likely to arise from a missing finger for a Japanese audience.

These authors mention another example related to the differences between Oriental and Western cultures that had to be taken into account when localising the game *Warcraft III* into Korean. In this occasion it was not the graphics, but the story line that needed to be modified in order for the game to be allowed to be released in Korea. They claim the reason was that in the story a son betrayed his father, something morally unacceptable in Korean society due to the importance of honour and respect to one's parents and ancestors. The Confucian and Buddhist concept of *filial piety* is deeply engrained in Oriental cultures. It is so predominant in Korean culture that a game portraying the betrayal of a father by his son would more than likely flop in the Korean market. In Western cultures, however, there is an acquaintance with the concept of family betrayal, which is recorded, for example, in the Bible and Shakespeare's *King Lear*.

Another crucial aspect that needs to be considered when localising a game into another language is the different classification and rating systems that apply to different countries. Often what is acceptable for a certain age group in a given country is not appropriate in another one. For example, the rating system in Japan is quite loose in comparison with the European and US systems, and it is quite common to find references to sex, homosexuality, transvestites, etc. in games that are rated for the general

public. However, these references would not be acceptable for a similar rating in Europe and the US, which means that either the rating needs to be changed, which would reduce the original target audience in the localised versions, or the controversial dialogues or graphics need to be altered or removed in the Western versions. Di Marco (2006) mentions the example of one of the latest Nintendo Super Mario games, in which three sisters appear, and in one particular scene they discuss the sex change operation of one of them. As this game was aimed at the general public in Japan, after considering all the options available, it was decided to modify the dialogue in that scene, rather than removing the scene or changing the classification for the game.

6. Familiarity with games culture
Being familiar with games culture is another crucial skill a games localiser should have to be able to transfer the gameplay experience into the localised version of the game and meet the target player's expectations.
There is a certain degree of repetition and intertextuality in games, as some abbreviations, techniques and objects appear recurrently in many of them. For example, the abbreviation HP can be found in most RPGs, action and fighting games. A frequent gamer will immediately know that it refers to the health points that indicate how healthy a character is and how much damage s/he has received during a battle. In the case of RPGs, most of this terminology originates in board RPGs, which in turn derive from epic and fantasy novels, such as Tolkien's renowned trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. Another example can be found in the use of the fictional metal *mithril*, a creation of Tolkien, which features prominently in many RPGs, such as *Oblivion, King of Chaos, Kingdom of Hearts* and the *Final Fantasy* Series. Also, in the case of serialised games, such as *Final Fantasy* or *The Legend of Zelda*, there is a certain element of repetition in character's names, weapons, objects, abilities, etc. For that reason, it is important to be familiar with the series and its terminology. Most translation agencies use assisted translation tools, such as Trados, which facilitate and speed enormously the localiser's task, although many developers who opt for the in-house localisation model still do not use these tools.

Tony Van, executive producer of Ubisoft (cited in Chandler, 2005:54-56) mentions a very interesting example about the localisation of the Japanese RPG, *Story of Thor*, which was re-titled to *Beyond Oasis* in English. He explains that the English translation was so bad that it was almost impossible to understand the plot of the game. As the launch date for the

game was fast approaching, he did not have enough time to query the Japanese developer or to have the game retranslated. Hence he decided to rewrite the story and all the dialogues, using all the point plots he could understand as reference and writing what sounded good to him when he did not understand them. He claims nobody ever commented or complained about it, which means his rewriting was effective. It obviously worked due to his long-standing experience in the games field and his thorough knowledge of players' expectations of what that type of game should be like. If this should be followed as a model is another question, although it is clear that localisers should have a thorough knowledge of the game domain in order to be able to provide a good quality localisation.

This is the reason why sometimes job specifications for localisation specialists do not require previous experience in this field, only some previous translation experience, experience as a gamer, and knowledge of the gaming world are necessary. It is also possibly the reason why fan translations have on occasion received higher praise than the official ones, such as the English translation of the Japanese RPG *Final Fantasy IV*, because fan translators, as gamers, know what the game should be like in order to appeal to other gamers like themselves.

In fact, gamers are very harsh and severe critics of the quality of the localisation of a given game. As soon as a new game is out, it is analysed in detail by habitual gamers in their discussion forums, and their verdict can influence other players' decision to buy or not buy the game. Sometimes, when voiced loudly enough, fan voices can be heard by developers, who usually take their comments into account. This was the case with the Japanese developer Square, currently Square-Enix, who opted for the in-house localisation model after the European versions of their best-selling game *Final Fantasy VII* received an incredible bashing by fans. They moved from the outsourcing to the in-house model in order to gain more control and guarantee the quality of their localised games and maintain their first-class developer of RPGs image in the rest of the world.

7. Familiarity with global pop culture
In order to localise games successfully, familiarity with global pop culture is also an advantage, as there are often intertextual allusions to other games, books, comics and movies, and it is important to maintain the consistency between the different genres.

Several examples of intertextual allusions can be found in the graphic adventure series *Monkey Island*, with quotes from *Star Wars* and *Indiana Jones*, such as the line "That diamond belongs in a museum!", from *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, amongst others.

Many video games derive from comics, books and movies, such as *The Lord of the Rings*, *Shrek*, *Harry Potter*, *The Godfather* and *Spiderman*, to quote but a few. In the Japanese context, there also seems to be a connection between *manga*, *anime* and videogames (O'Hagan, 2006), as they use the same type of language and humour, and many *manga*, like *Dragonball*, have become *anime*, and subsequently video games.

More recently, there is also a trend to produce movies based on videogames, such as *Resident Evil*, *Tomb Raider* and *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children*. It is important to keep the consistency between these different genres of entertainment based on the same original, in order to avoid something similar to what happened with the Japanese subtitles of the first instalment of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. O'Hagan (2003) explains that die-hard Japanese fans of the original story were so outraged by the inadequacy of the translation partly due to the lack of understanding of Tolkien's work by the subtitler that they decided to complain to the distributor. When the latter did not respond to them, they appealed to the director, Peter Jackson, who in turn said that he would ask for a different subtitler for the next two movies. This case emphasises the need for the translators to be familiar with global pop culture, and more specifically the works or the sources of the works they are working with. It is also another example of how translation users are increasingly becoming more interested in the outcome of the translation process, while becoming stricter and more demanding of quality. Internet, through discussion forums and mailing lists, has provided fans of global pop culture with a strong voice that can reach the relevant people in the industry.

Conclusion

Games localisation is an emerging field of translation that is gaining momentum and will undoubtedly continue to do so, as new games and electronic platforms are being constantly developed in order to enhance the gameplay experience of the ever-growing worldwide community of gamers.

A good quality localisation, which succeeds in maintaining the gameplay experience and the look and feel of the original, is the main goal of the localisation process. In order to achieve this, games localisation allows for the possibility of tailoring the target product to the target market. It is probably the only translation genre in which the source text is so flexible and malleable that it can be modified to the extent of changing images, graphics or story lines to fit in the target culture.

It is therefore crucial that localisers are familiar with the localisation process and the different kind of assets that form a game and the skills required to translate them, as games are made of texts from different nature, such as technical messages, witty dialogues, songs and literary passages, which have to be translated differently.

To date, very little research about games localisation has been carried out from a translation studies perspective, and the number of universities that include this new translation genre in their curriculum is still very limited. It is important to embrace the study of this new discipline and the training of translators who have the skills and competence required to face the challenges posed by this new translation field. This, in turn, will ensure that localised versions of games provide their users with as many hours of enjoyment and entertainment as the original ones.

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