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# ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF THE VIDEO GAME *ROCKET LEAGUE*


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# ABSTRACTS


## Català

Aquesta tesi s'emmarca dins de l'àmbit de la localització de videojocs. L'objectiu principal és fer una traducció crítica de la localització de *Rocket League* al castellà. Per dur-ho a terme, aquesta tesi primer farà un repàs de la història dels videojocs i de la seva localització. Després, un anàlisi de la localització de videojocs per identificar els elements a localitzar més rellevants junt amb les dificultats i errors que comporta la seva traducció i l'impacte de la traducció automàtica quan s'usa per traduir-los. Per la traducció crítica, el cos dividirà els errors lingüístics trobats en el 2015 quan es va publicar com a joc *indie* i els errors actuals en el 2021 com a joc AAA. El treball troba que el 2015 hi havia moltes traduccions errònies que possiblement es van fer amb traducció automàtica. Per tant, l'experiència dels jugadors es va veure molt minvada. El 2021, la qualitat ha millorat, però moltes cadenes es troben sense traduir, les quals presenten dificultats com referències intertextuals, jocs de paraules o llenguatge inclusiu. Aquestes traduccions errònies i dificultats conformen l'exercici perfecte per aplicar els coneixements adquirits durant el màster i alhora avaluar la qualitat de la localització en els dos períodes.



**Paraules clau:** traducció, traducció audiovisual, localització de videojocs, traducció comentada, errors de traducció, traducció automàtica.



## Español

Esta tesis se enmarca en el ámbito de la localización de videojuegos. El objetivo principal es hacer una traducción crítica de la localización de *Rocket League* al español. Así pues, esta tesis primero hará un resumen de la historia de los videojuegos y de su localización. Después, habrá un análisis de la localización de videojuegos para identificar los elementos a localizar más relevantes junto con las dificultades y errores que acarrea su traducción y el impacto de la traducción automática cuando se utiliza para traducirlos. Para la traducción crítica, el cuerpo dividirá los errores lingüísticos encontrados en 2015 cuando se lanzó como juego *indie* y los errores actuales en 2021 como juego AAA. Este trabajo revela que en 2015 había muchas traducciones erróneas que posiblemente se hicieron con traducción automática. Así pues, la experiencia de los jugadores se vio muy mermada. En 2021, la calidad ha mejorado, pero muchas cadenas se encuentran sin traducir, las cuales

presentan dificultades como referencias intertextuales, juegos de palabras o lenguaje inclusivo. Estas traducciones erróneas y dificultades conforman el ejercicio perfecto para aplicar los conocimientos adquiridos a lo largo del máster y a la vez evaluar la calidad de la localización en los dos periodos.

**Palabras clave:** traducción, traducción audiovisual, localización de videojuegos, traducción comentada, errores de traducción, traducción automática.

**English**

This master's thesis is englobed inside the video game localisation field. Its main objective is to provide translation criticism to *Rocket League*'s localisation into Spanish. To carry this out, this thesis will first provide a historical overview video games and their localisation. This is followed by an analysis of video game localisation to identify the most relevant assets to be localised, together with the difficulties and errors their translation carries and the impact of machine translation when used to translate them. To do the critical translation, the body will divide the linguistic bugs found both when the game first launched as an indie in 2015 and nowadays as a AAA game in 2021. The 2015 ones are found to contain mistranslations that point to a probable use of machine translation. Consequently, they greatly impeded an enjoyable experience, and although most have been corrected, some remain untouched. In 2021, the translation quality has improved, but many strings remain unlocalised, which present difficulties when translating like intertextual references, wordplays, or inclusiveness. These difficulties and mistranslations will prove to be the perfect exercise to apply the knowledge acquired during the master's degree while also assessing the game's localisation in both periods.

**Keywords:** translation, audiovisual translation, video game localisation, annotated translation, translation errors, machine translation.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Motivation and Justification

Video games have always been an essential part of my life. It all started when I was little, with a Nintendo 64 that my father had purchased some years before. We only had two games: a racing game whose name I cannot remember and *Mario 64* (Nintendo, 1996). I distinctly remember playing these games over and over again without ever growing tired of them because, with little to no story, they managed to **entertain**. Some years later, the Game Boy Advance came along and, with some persuasion, I managed to get my parents to buy it with a copy of *Pokémon Sapphire* (Game Freak, 2002). This was my first and proper introduction to the world of Pokémon and the beginning of my 'career' as a gamer. This **passion** for video games is the reason why I decided to do a fictional project on a video game, more specifically, *Rocket League* (Psyonix, 2015). Like the *Pokémon* games, I have devoted and still devote a lot of time to it, which I believe will allow me to assess and create translations in a much better way thanks to my familiarisation with it.

To this day, I still play all the new *Pokémon* games that are being released. Moreover, as of writing this, the remakes of *Pokémon Diamond* and *Pokémon Pearl* (Game Freak, 2006) have been announced. The appeal of these remakes, which is a recurring trend in the videogames industry nowadays, is that of **nostalgia**. Like most of the people involved in this industry, we have grown and matured as video games have developed and grown to be what they are now. Even though they provide cinema-like experiences, with dubbing and subbing as a key part of the gameplay experience, we sometimes crave for simpler times when we just explored a pixelated world and the only voices we heard were the ones we imagined when reading dialogues in message bubbles. These remakes allow us to reminisce those times. *Rocket League* is not a remake, but it is a remake-sequel hybrid to a game called *Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars* (Psyonix, 2008), SARPBC for short, which I played from time to time when it was released. Therefore, the nostalgia that *Rocket League* evokes is another reason why I chose it, since I am passionate about it and I want its localisation to be the best it can be.

This nostalgia that has always worked so well stands on the shoulders of good **stories**, and consequently on good localisation. To be transported to a whole new world and to let the imagination fly is something we will never stop craving for, so localisation needs to make sure players are immersed in these stories as much as the original players are. Thanks to *Pokémon* and other games along the way, I became passionate about

stories, especially those in video games, but I was not aware that these games had undergone a translation process. In my mind, they had been created in Spain, which is a testament to the high quality of their localisations. Therefore, I decided to take an English studies degree to not only deepen my knowledge about stories overall, but also to have access to a wider array of stories thanks to becoming proficient in English. During this, I discovered the existence of this master's degree, which allowed me to 'create' (through translation) those very same stories that I had fallen in love with when I was younger. Consequently, when I finished my degree, I started this master's degree to, hopefully, one day be involved in the creation of stories that will inspire people like they did with me.

Another key component apart from localisation is that of **connectivity**. Playing with your friends and against other people online is a privilege that was scarce in games 20 years ago, but it has become paramount these days. Games with complex stories and vast worlds are usually those that only allow one player, hence their 'single player' denomination. Although there are some cooperative ones, it is mainly an individual experience, so **competitive** games are a great alternative to just relax and compete in a 'shallower' game that demands less emotional engagement. This is where *Rocket League* is located, an alternative that allowed and still allows me to just go online and play against people. Even if these games do not need as much localisation as the single-player ones due to them having less text and story (if any), they nevertheless need a quality localisation in order to succeed. Because of the difference in text quantity, indie companies, such as Psyonix, sometimes decide to leave the localisation of their games in the hands of the community or of a machine translation. Especially in the second case, this results in not-so-great localisations that hinder the gameplay experience, such as the one *Rocket League* players, myself included, had to endure.

In the case of *Rocket League*, its localisation to Spanish was quite poor, with blatant machine translations such as *jugada gratis* for 'free play.' Consequently, after the game's release in 2015, I **tweeted** the company on July 31, 2015, detailing some translation errors I had found in the game and how they could fix them. This was met with the following response: "We'll be making additional translation updates in future patches." Now that almost six years have passed since this tweet, I am seizing the opportunity of this thesis to assess whether they kept their promise or not.

Even though *Rocket League* does not have a story, it has many elements, such as cosmetics or player titles, that require localisation. Many of these were not present in 2015, as they have been added throughout the years, but they are enough (and even too

many) to assess the current state of the game's localisation and to compare it to how it was at the beginning. Furthermore, this game is part of the elite of games that have been developed by an indie company and later bought by a **triple A company** (Epic Games, creator of *Fortnite*, 2017). This is the case of games such as *Minecraft* (Mojang, 2011), which was bought by Microsoft. Therefore, now that the game is part of a big company that has more resources than they had as an indie one, it will also be interesting to see whether this has aided the quality of the localisation.

Finally, another reason why I wanted to pursue the writing of this thesis is that of a desire to add to the **literature** on video game localisation. Despite the exponential growth of video games – which will be addressed in the following history section –, literature on their localisation seems to be lagging behind. Despite numerous efforts by many authors, such as Mangiron, O'Hagan, Muñoz Sánchez and many others, the body of work is still lacklustre. One of the areas that remains largely unexplored is that of machine translation applied to video game localisation. Though it has advanced to a great extent, it is still an emerging discipline, so literature on machine translation itself is also lacking. There is not an official source that confirms that this game (or parts of it) was translated using machine translation, but due to its poor localisation to many languages, not just Spanish, it becomes clear that it is indeed what was used. Therefore, I wanted to write this thesis to add to the literature of both fields: machine translation, and machine translation in the field of video game localisation.

### 1.2. Objectives

Because this is a professionalising thesis, it has been taken as a **real-world commission**, where the translator has been tasked with the revision and, where necessary, the translation of *Rocket League*'s localisation into Spanish. Because the game was released six years ago, this translator will have access to all the necessary reference materials, either through the Internet or through the translator's kit provided by the developer.

From this fictional commission the **main objective** is derived: to find errors and to propose improvements, both at the beginning of the game and in the current game, while presenting and discussing the reasoning behind every translation or proposal for improvement. This objective seeks to answer the main research question: what was the localisation quality at the beginning of the game as part of an indie company and what is

its current quality as part of a AAA company? In sum, has a change in budget positively impacted the localisation into Spanish of the video game?

Other questions are derived from this one, which this thesis will also seek to answer: are there strings in the past version that indicate a possible use of machine translation? Have these past errors been corrected in the current game or do they remain largely untouched? Do the errors found in the current game point to a significant improvement of the localisation quality? What are the main difficulties in correcting or translating the current errors and how have they been solved? By answering all these questions, this thesis will allow for the practical application of all knowledge acquired throughout the Master's Degree, while also providing an overview of the state of *Rocket League*'s localisation into Spanish, both when it first launched as an indie game and nowadays as a triple A game.

### 1.3. Structure

To undertake this commission and to answer these questions, this thesis will start with a theoretical **framework** that will first describe video games and localisation. Then, an overview of their development throughout the years will be given to understand how they have evolved together and what their situation nowadays is. After this, the main elements to localise will be presented and explained to understand what localisation entails, together with the difficulties that can be found when localising such assets and the errors it can lead to. To conclude the framework, a brief explanation and discussion of machine translation will be given to understand the effect it can have when used to localise games.

The following section will describe the main elements of *Rocket League*, such as game mechanics, items and its history. Afterwards, a brief explanation of how English strings and Spanish translated strings were collected to carry out this thesis. This will be followed by the main **body**, the critical translation. In this section, errors found both at the beginning of the game and in the current game will be classified and discussed. At the same time, a proposal for improvement will be given with a justification of why it improves the official translation (or the absence of one). Finally, conclusions will be drawn and appendices will be presented with more errors and their proposals for improvement in other game categories, which could not be included in the main body due to space restrictions.

# 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Before jumping into the analysis, it is precise to give a theoretical framework in which this analysis will take place. Therefore, a history of video games and its localisation will be given, a comprehensive explanation of the peculiarities of video game localisation and the potential errors they can lead to, and a brief explanation of machine translation and its advantages and disadvantages, especially in the field of localisation.

## 2.1. History of Video Games and Their Localisation

Video games and their localisation have always gone hand in hand throughout their development. Therefore, it is necessary to first provide a combined history of both to fully delve into and analyse *Rocket League*'s localisation errors.

### *2.1.1. Definitions*

Before delving into the history, it is relevant to define these two concepts, which will be discussed in the following sections.

#### 2.1.1.1. Video Games

Due to their **complex and ever-evolving nature**, video games have had many definitions throughout their history. Because this thesis is written inside a Spanish-speaking context, the Real Academia's definition is used: *Diccionario de la Lengua Española* defines them as "*Dispositivo electrónico que permite, mediante mandos apropiados, simular juegos en las pantallas de un televisor, una computadora u otro dispositivo electrónico*" (2015, online). This definition, as evidenced in Vázquez Rodríguez (2016, p. 270), has only been updated to include "*u otro dispositivo electrónico*" in order to encompass all the new electronic devices with displays that can run a video game, such as mobile phones or portable devices like the Nintendo Switch. This is already a testament to the difficulty (and even impossibility) of giving an all-encompassing and comprehensive definition due to the rapid growth of video games. Also, RAE's definition only considers the technical side of video games, that is, how they are displayed and played, but there are other elements that make up a video game. For instance, Fernández Costales (2012) defines

video games as "multimedia and multimodal titles where the involvement and the interaction of the player with the game is a key element" (p. 387).

This **multimodality**, assigned to video games by other authors such as O'Hagan (2009), has been brought about by the development of video games, allowing for the use of more complex technologies such as cutscenes or spoken dialogues that create new channels. In turn, this has allowed for a greater degree of **interaction**. Interaction is not only achieved through the good use of state-of-the-art technologies, but also through good localisation, as players can engage with the story. As previously mentioned, even if a video game does not have as much text as other games with more in-depth stories, a good localisation is still crucial to allow for interaction and thus to be successful.

Therefore, with all of this in mind, one of the more complete definitions is given by Vázquez Rodríguez (2016, p. 270):

> entendemos por videojuego un producto audiovisual, cuyo fin puede ser no solamente entretener, sino también educar, informar, entrenar, rehabilitar, etc., que se ejecuta sobre una plataforma o hardware determinado y que permite cierto grado de interacción con su consumidor. (p. 270)

Even then, this definition does not explicitly mention multimodality, and, like the other ones, it does not explicitly mention genres either. Video games present themselves in different **genres** that contain some defining characteristics. Some examples of these genres are action games and RPGs. Inevitably, these genres are part of a video game's multimodality, since different genres will establish a different kind of player-game interaction through a distinct use of the communication channels that make up this multimodality. For instance, RPGs will establish interaction through complex storylines, usually using text, whereas action games will tend to favour a 'shallower' storyline to allow for interaction to happen on a more graphic level. However, as Fernández Costales (2012) points out, it is difficult to establish a clear-cut distinction between these genres due to the "hybridization" of video games, that is, games crossing boundaries between genres and becoming hybrids.

Nevertheless, these genres will have an impact on the game's localisation. As Fernández Costales (2012) states, "different textual typologies may require different approaches and strategies in order to preserve the gameplay in the target culture" (p. 394). In his paper, Fernández Costales concludes that "games that have heavily narrative-driven

can provide examples of transcreation, [whereas] the titles with a high ratio of technical vocabulary like simulators are frequently adapted relying on literal translation" (p. 404). Therefore, genres need to be included in the definition of video games due to their potential impact on localisation. But what is video game localisation?

#### 2.1.1.2. Video Game Localisation

Video game localisation also has many definitions. O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013) define it as:

> the many and varied processes involved in transforming game software developed in one country into a form suitable for sale in target territories, according to a new set of user environments with specific linguistic, cultural, and technical implications. (p. 19)

Vázquez Rodríguez (2016) also provides a very similar definition:

> entenderemos por localización de videojuegos el proceso que sufre un videojuego antes de ser puesto a la venta en otro mercado distinto del que fue concebido originalmente y que puede conllevar sobre el producto final cambios motivados por razones lingüísticas, culturales, técnicas y legales. (p. 271)

Therefore, both definitions converge on the idea that game localisation can and will provoke **changes** on the game to make it suitable for the target market and audience. These changes are caused by a variety of reasons that these definitions enumerate, so it is the job of the localiser to take them into consideration when translating to create a successful translation that adheres to all the rules of the locale.

The term '**locale**,' as defined by O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013), is "a specific combination of geographic region, language, and character encoding" (p. 8). Therefore, "game localization can be considered as the process of adjusting games to a particular locale" (p. 8), that is, to translate respecting the rules of the target locale. However, not only does the translation need to heed to these rules, but it also needs to consider **player expectations**. It is of no use a game that has no legal or linguistic issues but that does not meet what players expect from it. As Fernández Costales (2012) explains, "translators

focus on achieving the objective of meeting a functionalist objective: preserving the game experience. Therefore, fulfilling the expectations of the users in the target audience is the underlying principle" (p. 395). To fulfil these expectations, a translator must be aware of possible "meta-textual references (sometimes to previous editions of the same title or to other sagas and game-related material)" (p. 395).

It is clear, then, that localisation involves much more than just translation. Rather, it is an adaptation of a game in a way that respects all the rules and player expectations of the target culture. As previously mentioned, this brings about problems that translators need to solve adopting some strategies, which constitutes video game localisation.

### *2.1.2. First Video Games*

The history of video games and their localisation go hand in hand. It is only natural that when games got more complex and consumed by more people, they required an increasing amount of localisation. Their history dates back to 1958, when *Tennis for two* was created by physicist William Higinbotham. There are some game prototypes that came before this one, such as Edward Condon's *Nimatron* (1940) and A.S. Douglas' *OXO* (1952), but *Tennis for two* is usually regarded as the **first video game ever created**. It consisted of a simple interface divided by a vertical line, which created two sides of a tennis field. With a controller consisting of a dial and a button, players had to choose the angle and then hit the ball to hit it over the 'net.' Some years later, *Spacewar!* was released in 1962, where two spaceships fought each other around the gravity well of a star. Ten years later, a competition was held, creating what would be the first instance of an 'e-sports' competition.

These games "gave inspiration to early **coin-operated arcade games** such as *Computer Space* (1971) and *Pong* (1972), as commercialized by Atari" (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013, p. 46). The success of these games effectively established Atari as a force to be reckoned with, controlling an extensive part of the American market (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013). Therefore, video games started attracting attention and, what is most important, money. Seeing as these games had been successful in the market, Atari launched another video game console under the name of "Atari 2600." This featured options to choose the difficulty of the game, but, as O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013) point out, "*Pong* and *Space Invaders* included few elements which required translation to sell

in different markets – they had simple rules and no recognizable characters that were culture-specific, let alone any dialogue to be translated" (p. 49).

It was with the introduction of Japanese arcade games, such as *Space Invaders* (1978) and especially *Pac-Man* (1980), that localisation started to take place. Their success made them reach America, where *Pac-Man* underwent an **adaptation**. As O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013) explain, its original Japanese name *Puck-Man* was adapted into *Pac-Man* in order to avoid potential issues with people changing its first letter to create an inappropriate name. The names of the ghosts were also adapted, even changing them completely to accomplish the main objective of keeping the gameplay experience of the original. Other examples of localisation can be found with more Japanese titles, as localisation was based around Japanese into English. For instance, *Donkey Kong* (1981) featured two characters, "Jump-Man" and "The Lady," which became "Mario" and "Polly" in the English version because of the need to have "more specific edgy-sounding names for the American release" (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013, p. 49), thus creating adaptations that would later be known as 'localisation.'

### *2.1.3. Atari's Decadence and Nintendo's Rise*

After Atari's dominance over the US game market throughout the 1970s, it entered a period of pronounced economic decline, known as the "**Great Video Game Crash of 1983**," or the Atari Shock. This crisis was caused by several factors, but the most relevant one is the **failure of Atari video game releases**, especially *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (Atari, 1982). These games did not meet consumer expectations – an important point mentioned in the definitions – due their subpar quality, which inevitably provoked the loss of consumer trust and therefore lower sales. Atari also had to face the growing **competition of personal computers**, such as the Commodore 64, and thus moving away from arcades to favour a more home-based gameplay experience with consoles and computers that connected to screens. Furthermore, the market was oversaturated, with companies unrelated to video games, such as 20$^{th}$ Century Fox, trying their luck in the industry (Vázquez Rodríguez, 2018).

In this context, localisation was not living its best moment. As O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013) explain:

> "Translation was often performed by 'friends or other non-professionals", resulting in "many of the now famous mistranslations of the time.' This paints the picture of localization as a 'fairly amateurish business' with no real localization agencies in existence at the time." (p. 51)

These "**mistranslations**" that the authors refer to are what is known in pop culture as *Engrish*, a term created from the general inability of Japanese people to pronounce the /l/, therefore using the /r/ sound instead (Muñoz Sánchez, 2017). Because localisation was primarily Japanese into English, many of these mistranslations were caused by these "friends or other non-professionals" (who may have been Japanese native speakers) when translating into English. One of the most infamous cases of mistranslations is that of the game *Zero Wing*, released in 1989: "All your base are belong to us."

However, not all video game translations were lacking in quality. As O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013) point out, the *Super Mario Bros* franchise was a big hit during the 80s, and *Super Mario Bros. 3*, released in 1988, was no different. The success of this franchise, and especially its third instalment, could be attributed to the **playfulness** of the game's translation. For instance, the closing line of the video game has been '**transcreated'** in the English version, imbuing it with "intertextuality and humour" (p. 54) thanks to the use of a recurring line across instalments. This could be taken as "an early sign of what we call "'transcreation'" (ibid.), thus starting to establish the fundaments of localisation.

The success of the *Super Mario Bros.* series paired with the fall of Atari opened the door to new companies entering the market. Nintendo, who had already shyly entered it with the release of games like *Pac-Man*, now seized this opportunity to take the reins of the market. Nintendo launched the NES, or Nintendo Entertainment System, in 1983 in Japan and 1985 in the US. This console led to fame games such as *Super Mario Bros.*, *The Legend of Zelda* or *Metroid*, *Megaman* or *Castelvania*, and consequently propelled Nintendo to the **monopoly of the video game market**. With this, the crisis ended and a period of growth began.

### *2.1.4. Technological Breakthroughs*

This period of growth brought about an **unparalleled development** of technology and games. Consoles shifted from one-game only to being reusable with multiple games thanks to ROM cartridges, an important technological breakthrough for gaming consoles

(O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013). Moreover, there were some **early signs of cutscenes** being used. Although these were not voiced yet, they contained text below the cinematics in a similar fashion as subtitles. As O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013) indicate, "this example shows how the emerging connection between game localization and audiovisual translation (AVT) can be traced back over 20 years with clear implications for translation" (p. 52). Finally, games started to have **more complex and extensive narratives**, partly thanks to the higher storage space brought by the introduction of the CD-ROM, thus calling for a higher degree of localisation. Even then, it still was an **afterthought**, with **internationalisation** not being accounted for in the development process.

Therefore, the videogame landscape was changing, which affected localisation in many other ways. In the late 90s, video games started being localised in languages other than Japanese and English thanks to all these technological advancements, especially when it comes to sounds and graphics. This prompted the creation of terms such as **EFIGS**, an acronym used to refer to the five main European languages into which video games were being translated: English, French, Italian, German, and Spanish (Vázquez Rodríguez, 2018). Spanish, however, had shown the first inklings of localisation in the late 80s (*Maniac Mansion*, 1987), but it was usually restricted to PC games due to the inexistence of an internationalisation process that allowed for an easier localisation, but also due to hardware limitations and the fabrication costs for each localised version (Muñoz Sánchez, 2017). Another term that was also coined, thanks to the advance of localisation, is that of the **level of localisation**. During this time, it was usual to adopt a "box and docs" level, where the content of the game was left in the original language, but the packaging and the documentation were translated. By being slightly more accessible to other markets, sales would increase (Vázquez Rodríguez, 2018). Nevertheless, this level was substituted in the 90s by "partial localisation," where the user interface and other menus were translated. In the odd case a game was dubbed into other languages, this would be a "full localisation" level, which is the predominant one nowadays.

Even with all these new localisation practices, many games still launched with **translation errors** that would go down in the history of video games. Because games were now being localised to the EFIGS market, these errors could be found in other languages. For instance, the infamous Spanish translation of *Final Fantasy VII* (1997) has become a staple in any video game localisation paper. This game contained translations such as *su fiesta le espera en el piso 2*, where 'party' was wrongly translated as *fiesta* instead of *grupo*, or *allé voy*. As (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013) point out, "the

early period of game localization covering the 1980s and 1990s is indeed known for having produced an unparalleled quantity of poor translations" (p. 57). Furthermore, even though these errors are now perceived with humour in video game culture, they may have had, and nowadays would definitely have, a negative impact on the gameplay experience. Therefore, it is clear that the localisation industry still had a long way to go, while video games showed no sign of stopping their exponential development.

### *2.1.5. Early 2000s: The Emergence of Indie Companies*

The early 2000s saw the shift from CD-ROMs to DVD-ROMs, which allowed for a higher storage capacity. In turn, this facilitated the use of **more text** and other translatable assets. Moreover, technology was advancing rapidly, with games starting to have cutscenes thanks to the development of **3D graphics** (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013). These more advanced cutscenes demanded translation for dubbing, but also subtitling. Therefore, localisation was no longer a matter of translating traditional text or text found in images, but it also began to involve other AVT modalities that required translators to translate within a different set of restrictions. Furthermore, because cutscenes allowed for more accurate facial expressions and mouth movements, localisation had to be done in **greater detail** than ever before. Fortunately, developers were more used to working with texts in different languages, which would make coding localisation functions a much easier and more efficient process (ibid.).

This period was also a breeding ground for **indie companies**. Even though they already existed back in the 80s in the form of the so-called 'bedroom coders' and in the 90s in the form of slightly more fledged companies, they did not have a place nor visibility in the market due to the monopoly of Nintendo, and later by the major three console platform holders: Nintendo, Microsoft and Sony (ibid.). However, distribution of video games shifted to a more online-based format, which facilitated the introduction of small indie companies into the market. Retail distribution comes with its limitations and its costs of having a publisher; **online distribution** bypasses these problems to establish a direct developer-player relationship. This increased visibility has also allowed indie companies to be recognised by major companies and by major game events, such as conventions. Even game awards now have a separate category for games developed by indie companies: "for outstanding creative and technical achievement in a game made outside the traditional publisher system" (The Game Awards, 2020).

Thanks to this **increased visibility and sustainability** "outside the traditional publisher system," indie companies have been able to create and publish games that have reached success comparable to that of AAA games. This is the case of Epic Games, an indie company founded in 1991. With 13 employees in 1997, they have managed to create and refine one of the most successful game engines (Unreal Engine) and, with the launch of several successful games, especially *Fortnite* (2017), they have become one of the most important companies in today's video game market landscape. With their growth, Epic Games have engulfed several other video game companies on the way. Psyonix, the indie developer that created *Rocket League*, is part of the companies that got bought by Epic Games to become subsidiaries.

Even if some indie companies have managed to be extremely successful in the video game market, this is not a normal occurrence. They manage to survive and sometimes gain a little traction, but sometimes, especially in emerging companies, they may struggle with **budget**. This will force them to take some measures to be able to still launch games and survive, such as choosing a no or partial localisation, launching games as early access while they are still being developed, or relying on crowdfunding to finish a game. With **sim-ship** – simultaneous shipment, where a game is simultaneously shipped and launched in all countries – being the predominant format in the industry nowadays, indie companies may be forced to take shortcuts when localising their games into all the main languages to reduce the cost. This is the case of *Rocket League*, whose localisation was so poor into all languages that the only possible explanation is that machine translation was used to translate game assets.

### *2.1.6. The Industry Nowadays*

The industry has acquired a level of maturity and professionalism that has allowed it to develop its technologies further and therefore to compete with – and surpass – other gigantic industries like **cinema and music**. Their multimedia and multimodal natures developed further with the release of the Wii, PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 gaming consoles, released in 2006, 2006 and 2005, respectively. Their **new capabilities** granted video games more space to work with, using more text to create more intricate narratives, but also enhanced 3D audio and higher resolution graphics, which would only mean that localisation would have more assets to translate and with higher attention to detail. This is where *Rocket League*'s prequel – *Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars* –

is located, as it was released in 2008. Because of this, it was a fairly complex game for indie company standards because it adapted to the new technologies, so it already needed translation of in-game assets, but nowhere near what *Rocket League* has.

After these consoles, the **PlayStation 4 and Xbox One** came around in 2013, which offered even more capabilities and technological breakthroughs, as well as the refining of older ones, that made them close to reaching their full potential. **Full-blown narratives** that are closer to films than video games start to get created, such as *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013), which inevitably poses new challenges to localisation, as they are closer to translation for dubbing but still rooted in video games. More importantly, these consoles saw and facilitated the consolidation of **online (competitive) gaming** that had already risen with their predecessors. Even if single-player games with in-depth stories were still popular, games like *Call of Duty* lived their golden age throughout the PS3 and Xbox 360 consoles that consolidated and became fully-fledged in the PS4 and Xbox One. In turn, this expanded the '**e-sports**' panorama that had already been born with other games like *League of Legends*, with more championships and live events than ever before with higher prizes. Although *Rocket League* came into this world a little late due to its release in 2015, it has created and expanded its e-sports scope to the point where tournaments and championships are being held throughout the year, with elite teams like F.C. Barcelona competing for the main prize.

The new generation of consoles that launched in 2020 represent another step forward to the development of games. The **PlayStation 5 and the Xbox Series X** provide a gaming experience comparable to that of films. Graphics resolution has reached an all-time high 4K, which allows for cutscenes that blur the borders between game and film. In turn, this has facilitated the creation of unparalleled immersive narratives, such as *The Last of Us Part II* (Naughty Dog, 2020), but at the cost of having longer development times to match the current industry standards. For localisation, this has meant that the demands for it are higher and with quality standards comparable to that of films in those games that use state-of-the-art cutscenes. To safeguard these standards, the localisation industry has been establishing many agents in the process of localisation:

> "un encargado de proyecto (coordina a todo el equipo), un coordinador de localización (organiza a los traductores), ingenieros de localización (exportan el texto para su traducción y lo reinsertan en el producto una vez traducido), un jefe de equipo de control de calidad (coordina al equipo de control de calidad), un

> equipo de control de calidad lingüística (realizan tareas de revisión sobre la traducción) y, por último, se sitúan los traductores (pueden trabajar como autónomos o en plantilla).” (Vázquez Rodríguez, 2016, p. 271)

When looking back at the history of localisation, when it was done by friends of the developers without any quality assurance whatsoever, it is clear that the process of localisation has undergone a deep transformation. The introduction of these new agents has made the process much more intricate, but it has standardised it to a certain degree, where two models are discernible: ‘outsourcing’ and ‘in-house.’

### *2.1.7. The Integration of the Localisation Process*

On the one hand, **outsourcing** “usually involves commissioning a specialized vendor, who is put in charge of the whole localization process” (O’Hagan & Mangiron, 2013, p. 118) and which contains most of the agents mentioned in the citation above. This vendor will then choose the translator(s) in charge of translating all the game assets, which will be integrated in the game by the same vendor once they have been translated. However, this model, together with the prevalence of the sim-ship release model, translators are left to carry out a de-contextualised translation that carries a risk of committing errors due to the lack of access to the game. This will be analysed further in the 2.2. section.

On the other hand, the **in-house** model is the preferred of those developers that choose not to follow the sim-ship model – often Japanese companies –. This model does not have the shortcomings of the outsourcing one, as translators work within the company and therefore have access to the full game. This allows translators to create translations that do not have to account for the potential risk that de-contextualisation provokes, which inevitably results in a better translation with less errors. Nevertheless, this model creates a lag between the original version’s release and the localised version’s one, since localisation takes place when the game is finished or almost finished. This has prompted these developers to shorten delays to get closer to the sim-ship model while still maintaining the in-house one, which will inevitably shorten the translators’ time to familiarise themselves with the game.

*Rocket League* followed the sim-ship model, but because of time and budget constraints because of their indie status, the game launched with a poor localisation. This is why indie companies sometimes choose not to localise their game, or partially localise

it. However, the predominance of the sim-ship and FIGS models puts pressure on the need to localise to launch a successful game in the market, so "even small, independent game companies need to take localization into consideration when developing games" (Toftedahl et al., 2018, p. 3). This sometimes provokes indie companies to resort to strategies such as machine translation or fan translations, where players can contribute to the game's localisation without remuneration. Sometimes, this may inadvertently help perpetuate the issue where translators are still underpaid and underappreciated despite all the work and effort that localising requires and despite the localisation process being an integrated part of the game development process.

This full integration in the development process has caused localisation (in a good way) to end its history of being an afterthought, although this is sometimes not the case with certain game developers. Fortunately, this is not the case for the vast majority of the industry, since it follows a process called **GILT**. This acronym stands for 'Globalisation,' 'Internationalisation,' 'Localisation,' and 'Translation.' **Internationalisation** has already been mentioned, as it was inexistent during the early days. It refers to companies taking into account that their games will be translated into other languages right from the beginning of the development process. This involves taking decisions such as coding the game to facilitate the integration of the localised text or creating buttons and menus that will allow for longer text strings than the original. The fact that this process exists is a testament to how far localisation has come and how much its status has improved.

**Globalisation** is a similar concept to that of internationalisation in that it refers to the awareness of companies that their products and the company itself will become global, so they take the necessary steps to support customers around the world. As Díaz Ruiz (2017) explains, globalisation is "principalmente una estrategia empresarial, ya que se centra en los negocios asociados al lanzamiento de un producto o servicio a un mercado global" (p. 8). A clear example is, precisely, customer support, where the company offers support in different languages.

**Localisation** and translation have already been explained in the definitions section, where localisation is more than **translation**. Rather, it is an adaptation of all the game assets into the target culture while conforming to all the rules of the target culture and the expectations of the target audience. It is relevant, however, to highlight their presence in the GILT process since, as this history section has shown, they have developed hand in hand with video games, yet they have always been an afterthought. Even though this is still sometimes the case, this process is a step forward to the full

recognition and appreciation that translation and localisation of video games have always deserved.

To finish this section, it is relevant to mention how 2020 has been a challenging year for the whole video game industry. Due to the recent **COVID-19 pandemic**, all these processes that have been described have suffered alterations and even breakdowns due to COVID restrictions. This is another example of how video games and their localisation continue to evolve and adapt to the current state of the industry and of the world. Furthermore, it is in these trying times when video games shine through, providing distraction and entertainment in the dire situation of a quarantine. Then again, we all gamers and video game fanatics have always been prone to being glued to screens, so quarantining comes as a second nature to us. One of the many positive outcomes to take away from these times of crisis.

## 2.2. Video Game Localisation: Elements to Localise, Difficulties and Errors

As this last section has shown, video games have developed a lot in a matter of 50 years, but so has localisation. As they got more complex, so did localisation to adapt to the growing necessity to translate the game into many languages, which meant more translatable assets but more difficulties and a higher margin for error. But what are the typical assets that a game contains? What difficulties does their translation pose? What errors can these difficulties lead to? This section aims at answering all these questions to provide a solid theoretical framework about the peculiarities of video game localisation.

### *2.2.1. Assets to Be Translated*

Localisation is much more than just translating text. Therefore, the assets that translators have to localise are manifold, such as text in the user interface (menus and system messages), dubbed, subbed and in-bubble dialogues, documents such as manuals, the game's box, trailers and ads, among others. Following Muñoz Sánchez classification, these are the typical translatable assets that video games contain:

#### 2.2.1.1. User Interface

The graphical user interface allows players to interact with the game. The **main menu** is the first interface a user encounters, containing different selectable options or buttons that

let players choose what to do. The number of options in the main menu often depends on the complexity of the game and its genre, usually balancing itself with the interface inside the game *per se*. For instance, RPG games tend to have simple main menu interfaces but complex ones inside the game, such as ability tree branches, character customisation or a map. On the other hand, first-person shooters have complex main menus, often due to the high number of game modes that they offer, but instead have more visual and simpler interfaces inside the game, called Heads-Up Display (HUD).


**Figure 1:** *Rocket League*'s main menu user interface.

This is an example of a main menu interface, taken from *Rocket League*. It features a simple main menu with a list of options inside buttons on the left-hand side, such as jumping into a match, opening the game's shop, customising the car in the garage, accessing the player's profile, tweaking the game's settings, and exiting the game. In turn, these buttons open their respective sub-menu interfaces, such as game configuration menus. The main menu also provides users with a clickable icon that displays another menu on the right-hand side to invite friends to a group and play together. These are the options that can be typically found in a game's main menu, though they vary in name and appearance depending on the genre. For example, the garage here would become a character customisation menu in RPGs with a different name and appearance.

User interfaces can also be found in **tutorials** or help messages – for instance, in the form of 'pop-ups' inside the game to guide players on their first steps – and in **system messages**, which are usually errors that the system displays so that the user can know what has caused such error, though they can also be related to messages that allow users to save or exit the game. Even though they may seem unimportant, they are of extreme

relevance to companies, as it is crucial for games to be approved for launch. As Muñoz Sánchez (2017) explains,

> si Nintendo dice que *POWER Button* se debe traducir por "botón POWER" en un mensaje de guardado de datos, tiene que aparecer así; de lo contrario, si se pusiera "botón *de* POWER", probablemente habría problemas en la fase de certificación final que se realiza antes de dar el visto bueno a cualquier lanzamiento. (p. 75)

Therefore, translators must adhere to the **first party's terminology** when translating system errors. Fortunately, many companies provide translators with **glossaries** containing the translation of all these terms. It is crucial, then, that all the elements of the user interface are translated appropriately, since they are what allows players to interact with the game and learn about it, and what allows such game to be certified for release.

#### 2.2.1.2. Dialogues

Thanks to the development of new technologies, video games have now shifted from narrative experiences that were eminently text-based to more cinematic experiences thanks to the introduction of cutscenes. Nevertheless, these cutscenes and text-based experiences coexist in games, even if the former are more popular than the latter nowadays. Although text inside bubbles can be considered part of a game's interface, it has been included in this section to comply with Muñoz Sánchez's taxonomy. Together with these two types of dialogues, subtitling is increasingly present in all games.

**Dubbing** conforms what O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013) call "**audio and cinematic assets**" (p. 124). It is important to include 'audio' together with cinematic assets, because even if cutscenes constitute most of a video game's assets that include audio, there are others that do not appear inside cutscenes. First-person shooters typically feature voiced lines from the characters inside a multiplayer game; for example, the character that the player controls will speak when downing an enemy, when hurt or when interacting with teammates. However, these assets are not inside any cutscene, so they do not fall under the cinematic assets term. Because of this, they do not require **lip synchrony**, unlike dubbed cutscenes, but they need to be short so as not to distract players from the competitive context of the multiplayer game. Moreover, in certain FPS games they also

need to be creative and expressive to add to the fun element. In cutscenes, this translates into writing in an **idiomatic and natural** way to mimic spoken language like films do.

These audio and cinematic assets are often accompanied by **subtitles**. These subtitles are usually intralingual, as most games are dubbed and therefore do not require interlingual subtitles, but there are games that have them, especially those with insufficient budget to dub or those that decide on a partial localisation – this is often the case of Japanese developers, who decide to dub the game only in Japanese and sometimes English, while the rest of the languages are only localised using interlingual subtitles –. These subtitles differ greatly from the ones provided in other dubbed audiovisual products, such as films or series. As Mangiron & O'Hagan (2006) point out:

> game subtitles usually appear at a faster speed than in cinema, so as to keep pace with generally rapid game actions. Another difference is that in subtitling for games the semantic unit is not given as much importance as in cinemas; one will often find a character's dialogue segmented into two or even more lines of subtitles which do not necessarily follow semantic units. (p. 14)

This is evidenced by subtitles from games as recent as *Call of Duty: Black Ops 4* (Activision, 2018):


**Figure 2:** Subtitles from *Call of Duty: Black Ops 4* (Activision, 2018). Source: https://www.reddit.com/r/CODZombies/comments/9s8qsg/please_make_the_subtitles_smaller_and_put_them/

This is in line with O'Hagan and Mangiron, since the subtitle does not account for **semantic units**, creating line divisions that would be unthinkable in 'traditional'

subtitling, and it contains **three lines**. This, together with the fast pace of these subtitles, will make them unreadable for certain players. Furthermore, because this is an FPS game, subtitles appear almost centred in the screen, as it is where the gun's crosshairs are, and therefore where players will direct their attention. Although this is a good idea, it may be counterproductive if subtitles are as big and contain three lines as this one, since it clutters the screen and blocks players' view. However, if they are moved further down, they will block some elements of the user interface. This is out of the translator's reach because game subtitles are often just transcriptions of the spoken dialogue, hence their breaking with subtitling rules. Nevertheless, some **good practices** can be followed while translating in an Excel page to make subtitles more readable, such as shortening or condensing interventions, segmenting correctly and, in short, following the subtitle conventions wherever possible (Muñoz Sánchez, 2017).

Finally, dialogues can also present themselves in the form of **written text inside bubbles or boxes**. Even if they do not require voice-over, they still need to be translated with the same naturalness as dubbed ones. This type of dialogue is usually found in RPGs, such as *Pokémon*, where the main character that players control does not have any dialogue or merely answers what the player has selected out of a list of predefined options. Because of this, it mainly appears in **NPC** dialogues that are displayed in boxes on the bottom of the screen or in speech balloons next to the NPC that is speaking. These NPCs are non-playable characters – hence the acronym – so players cannot physically control them, but they are crucial for the advancement of the story and therefore must have the same localisation quality as voiced dialogues.

#### 2.2.1.3. Printed Extras

These are all the **documents** that accompany a video game – the extras – such as health and safety information, legal documents regarding copyright laws and related issues, or the 'readme,' a document that contains information on how to install and operate the game or on specific files. An instruction manual can also be included, explaining in varying detail how to play the game. Sometimes, these documents are not translated by the same translators who localised the game, as they can be outsourced to other vendors or translators (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013).

Even though they fall under the 'printed extras' or 'printed materials' category, they have shifted to an **electronic format**, being included inside the game for players to

consult at any time. Especially for health and safety, they appear when the console or the game is launched in the form of a warning that advises players to visit the doctor if they experience or have experienced epileptic episodes. According to O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013), this shift from paper to digital may be because "not only is it more environmentally friendly, but it also helps publishers reduce printing costs considerably" (p. 126). Moreover, players did not usually read these manuals, so they became obsolete. Since their digital jump around 10 years ago, games nowadays do not include any printed extras, with just a couple of leaflets with propaganda or instructions inside the box. Nevertheless, they still need to be localised, though in a different format.

#### 2.2.1.4. Cover, Back Cover, and Art Assets

The cover of a game is found on the front section of the box. Therefore, it is what potential purchasers will first see, hence their mostly graphic nature with as little text as possible to **attract attention**. This text is usually the game's logo and its edition in the event it has one. The **logo** often needs to be localised when it is translated, as the translation can result in shorter or longer strings than the original one:


**Figure 3:** Logos of the newly announced *Pokémon* remakes (*Brilliant Diamond* and *Shining Pearl*) and the standalone *Pokémon Legends: Arceus* game. English logos on the left, Spanish on the right. 

These three games, to be released at the end of 2021 (remakes) and beginning of 2022 (standalone), have undergone a localisation in their logos. In the case of the *Diamond* and *Pearl* remakes, because of the grammatical difference between English and Spanish their artwork had to be shifted around to accommodate for the change of place of the adjective and its noun. Because the noun is what defines the game, it is placed

inside a larger box than the adjective, which prompted the localisation in the Spanish version. Nevertheless, there are other game logos and titles that are not localised. What is more, if games do not have sub-titles like the logos above, they are usually left in their original English name, even in "countries with protective policies like France, where the Toubon Law leads to the translation of most commercial materials and advertisement" (Fernández Costales, 2012, p. 398). This is the case of *Rocket League*, but also other games such as *Call of Duty* (whose sub-title is also left untranslated, such as *Modern Warfare*), or *Final Fantasy*, among many others.

The game's box also has a **back cover**, where a more detailed explanation about the game is given in a similar fashion as books. Not only does it contain legal information, but also the languages it has been localised in, a short summary of the game, and reviews from critics and the press. This has the aim of enticing potential buyers to purchase the game, so its localisation needs to work towards it. This typically involves the extensive use of exclamation marks and a more creative translation (Muñoz Sánchez, 2017).

Even though Muñoz Sánchez does not include other assets inside this category, it is relevant to fuse it with what O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013) call '**art assets**.' These assets are similar to covers in that they involve text inside an image that needs to be localised, such as maps or signs. These assets can sometimes appear inside the game itself, but also in user interfaces. Therefore, unlike covers they do not need to be translated with customers in mind, but with a more functionalist aim to help build and keep the game's world. Despite this, in-game art assets localisation is often neglected by developers when planning the localisation process, so they are left in the original language in a localised game (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2013). This leaves a "heterogeneous textual world that may cause some confusion to the players" (ibid., p. 124).

#### 2.2.1.5. Webpage

Though it is not a part of the game or its box *per se*, it is a crucial element for the success of the video game. Furthermore, it may be one of the first elements to be translated, since many games nowadays are announced months and years before their release date, which makes the website the place where specialised press and fans converge to keep up with official news regarding its development (Muñoz Sánchez, 2017). Moreover, the website may be a person's **first contact** with the game, so it needs to have a good localisation to describe the game and its world as best as it can to be eye-catching and enticing to buy.

This is also true for fans, as it will be their first contact with the new world that the game offers, such as character names. A video game webpage has many elements: latest news on the game – and patch notes if it has already been released –, character descriptions in the case of more narrative-driven games, a general description of the game, its characteristics and what players can expect from it, available downloadable content, and player support. Depending on the game, the website will contain more features, such as forums and e-sports news and live streams.

#### 2.2.1.6. Advertisements

These also are important external assets of a video game, as they perform a similar function to that of the website. With today's digital age, game advertisement is mainly done on **social media** like Twitter, YouTube, Twitch, Facebook and the game's website. Many games have also been publicised on TV – such as *The Last of Us Part II* (Naughty Dog, 2020) – but it is a privilege reserved to AAA companies with large budgets, while smaller companies limit themselves to the social media scope. Nevertheless, as Muñoz Sánchez (2017) correctly explains, "hoy en día anunciar un videojuego en diversos canales es tan común como publicitar el clásico detergente en televisión" (p. 91). Ads have become more interactive, and social media are the perfect medium for it.

Obviously, ads need to be localised, and it should be done by resorting to the same strategies as websites and back covers to entice people to buy the game. They also contain a '**call-to-action**,' which specifically asks viewers to do something (ibid.), such as pre-ordering, buying or installing the game. We are all familiar with the typical 'PREORDER NOW' end screen in a trailer, accompanied by a voice-over that narrates it in an epic manner.

#### 2.2.1.7. Game Descriptions in Stores

The rise of mobile gaming has brought about another medium where games can be publicised and sold. Not only do mobile games pose new challenges for the translation of their in-game assets, but their advertisement also has its peculiarities. Because they are in the Apple Store and Google Play Store, it is more difficult for them to appear in **searches** due to the incredibly high number of games and therefore it is harder to publicise and gain visibility. To try to overcome this, developers create game descriptions that contain certain key words that will help the game appear more often in user searches.

This has prompted the creation of companies specialised in the tailoring of these game descriptions in stores, using strategies like these key words and '**search engine optimisation**' (Muñoz Sánchez, 2017). By including words like 'strategy' or 'platforms,' it is more likely for the search engine to display the game in the results when users search for such genres. For localisation, translators will be given specific instructions to use certain words when translating the game's description. This way, the game will be more publicised in the various language-specific versions of the store.

#### 2.2.1.8. Help Guides and Official Strategy Guides

Like all the printed extras that have been talked about in their respective section, help guides and official strategy guides have also shifted to a **digital format**. Before this, there would be printed guides that would guide players throughout the game, with tips and tricks, strategies and, in the case of RPGs, a map of the whole world. Though traditional guides with all these elements still exist, their digitalisation has made them obsolete, with players wanting a more direct source of information that does not involve flipping through countless pages. YouTube videos that contain the full game's walkthrough or short tutorials on how to solve specific puzzles and levels have become more prominent and therefore have substituted traditional guides. Even the newly released *Playstation 5* has a feature that allows players to see a short video on how to obtain certain objects or how to clear levels, all inside the console and without having to close the game.

Consequently, the **readiness of information** is nowadays preferred over long printed guides, but localisation is still required. Because guides are referring to specific elements of the game to help players advance through the game, they must be **consistent** in the use of terminology by using the same terms that are in the game. For instance, if the name of an object inside the game is *Robaalmas*, the guide must contain this term and not some other like *Robador de almas*. Even if they are similar, the difference in terminology may end up confusing players, making them think the guide is referring to a different object. This is where the use of glossaries and term bases in CAT tools come in handy, as they are perfect to ensure consistency across the game and its guide. Because guides are usually written when the game is finished or almost finished, allowing translators to play to familiarise themselves with all the terminology and the game world will also result in a good and consistent localisation (Muñoz Sánchez, 2017).

### *2.2.2. Difficulties*

With all these assets to be translated, it is no secret that translators will have to face many difficulties when localising a video game, which will differ from other areas of translation, like literary translation, due to its relationship with technology and software. Some have already been mentioned or hinted at in previous sections, but they will all be gathered and analysed in this section.

Before starting, it is important to define the concept of '**constrained translation**.' This is the underlying principle of all difficulties that will be presented here, in short, of game localisation as a whole. It is a concept introduced by Mayoral et al. (1988), defined as "when translation is required not only of written texts alone, but of texts in association with other communication media (image, music, oral sources, etc.)" (p. 356). In other words, when translating not only involves text, but also different channels that interact with this text.

This paper is more than 30 years old, so it does not account for game localisation as an instance of constrained translation. However, the concept and its principles perfectly depict all the challenges that game localisers face when translating; the term 'localisation' is used distinctively from 'translation' to encompass that translation which needs to account for all the elements that interact with the text. This creates the difficulties that are characteristic of video game localisation.

#### 2.2.2.1. Decontextualisation

Decontextualisation refers to the fact that translators work with **isolated text strings**. Therefore, they are translated without any context, which can lead to many translation errors because translation is extremely dependent on context. One of the main causes of decontextualisation is the way text strings are constructed and worked on. **Text fragmentation**, where text is divided into strings, is the most common practice among game developers. This is because all games are based on a code, so all text is integrated in this code, which may be too confusing for translators to read in search of translatable strings. Therefore, spreadsheets are used to make it more readable for translators, but also to facilitate the work of localisation engineers of reintegrating the localised strings back into the game code (Bernal-Merino, 2007). However, this leaves translators with a fragmented text that has no context other than the one that can be inferred or taken from text string IDs and concomitant cells, which may not have any connection to each other.

The other cause of decontextualisation is the predominance of the sim-ship and outsourcing models. Due to the sim-ship model, games are localised while they are still being developed, which not only creates unstable text that may change in the future, but also the impossibility for translators to access **reference materials** such as cutscenes or game images, or the game *per se*. The outsourcing model also contributes to this, as **confidentiality** is very common and taken with upmost seriousness. To try to mitigate decontextualisation, experienced game developers send a '**translation kit**' to the vendor so that it can be delivered to the translators. According to O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013, p. 119), this kit usually contains general information about the project and the game content, reference materials with in-game images and glossaries, software or CAT programs in the event they are required by the developer, the source code of the game to integrate the translation back into the game, and all the game assets that need to be translated. Nevertheless, many times this kit is not sent, especially when it is an inexperienced or indie company, so translators are left in the dark when it comes to context. Therefore, it is one of the main difficulties of translating video games, to the point where it can cause some of the following difficulties.

#### 2.2.2.2. Consistency

Consistency in video game localisation is crucial. Not only must system messages and related assets follow the first-party's terminology, but it is also crucial for the game's success to have terminological consistency across all its internal and external assets. Websites and official guides must have the same terminology as the game so as not to confuse players, but there must also be consistency throughout the game. Because of decontextualisation, and especially when more than one translator is working on a certain game's localisation, there can be **inconsistencies** when it comes to names of characters, objects, places, etc. Therefore, CAT tools must be used to ensure consistency, as well as following all the reference materials and instructions that come with the translator's kit. Furthermore, the translator's familiarisation with the game and its world can help maintain consistency, but due to decontextualisation, this rarely happens. This may be specially damaging when a game has **sequels** or **prequels**, since consistency will then have to be kept across the different instalments of the game's series.

2.2.2.3. Game Code: Control Codes and Variables

Because text is integrated inside the game's code, translators must be careful not to modify it. If it is modified, it can lead to game crashes, where the game becomes unresponsive, freezes and then closes. This code is made up of many elements and strings, which is what makes the game work, but when it comes to localisation, the most important ones that translators must bear in mind are control codes and variables. This is because they are extremely likely to appear in the text strings that need to be translated.

Like their name suggests, **control codes** are used to control the text that they appear in. For instance, they can create a manual line break, change the text colour or pause the text for a certain number of seconds (Muñoz Sánchez, 2017).


[Character 01]:[nl]If only we had the herb at the top of [colour 04]Mt. Metox[colour 02]…[pause][end]

**Figure 4:** Screenshot from *Star Ocean* (tri-Ace, 1996) and its code.
Source: https://legendsoflocalization.com/an-inside-look-at-video-game-control-codes/

The control codes inside the code are easily identifiable because they are included inside square brackets ([ ]), although they can sometimes appear inside angle brackets (< >). In this example, the control code [colour 04] changes the text "Mt. Meteox" to yellow, while [colour 02] reverts it back to white. Evidently, if these codes are modified – be it by translating them or by erasing one of the square brackets – the control code itself will appear on screen, as the code will think this is just normal text. This is the case in the following screenshot:


**Figure 5:** Screenshot from *Final Fantasy IV* (Square Enix, 1991).
Source: https://legendsoflocalization.com/an-inside-look-at-video-game-control-codes/

Because the translator erased the opening bracket, the code did not recognise the control code and displayed it as readable text. It is worth pointing out that this is a name control code, which also appeared in the previous one with [Character 01]. Even though they do not have any visible difference, name control codes are typically referred to as 'tags.' What is more, control codes are usually included inside the '**tag**' definition to create an umbrella term, which is what this thesis will be using.

On the other hand, **variables** are not inserted inside any bracket type, but they often appear preceded by a '%' sign. As Díaz Ruiz (2017) explains:

> son símbolos que se sitúan entre el código fuente que no deben traducirse, dado que simbolizan una palabra que probablemente se haya traducido anteriormente y que una vez que se exporte el texto traducido al videojuego, sustituirá al símbolo que aparecía en el código fuente. (p. 23)

Therefore, the variable inside the text will be substituted by another element when being displayed in the game. These variables are used to create many instances of the same message that would appear repeatedly. For instance, in RPGs it is very common to have messages telling players that they have obtained X object or X amount of experience. This 'X' is a variable inside the code that will be substituted, in this case, by a name or a number, which shows that variables can be substituted by both nouns and numbers.

The obvious difficulty that these tags and variables pose is not only translating text strings without breaking the tags, as they can sometimes be difficult to spot, but also to translate without creating **grammatical errors**. A simple text string like 'You picked

up some %s' can create errors if translated as *Has recogido alguno* %s, which would lead to gender and number concordance errors. Therefore, it could be translated as *Has recogido* %s to create a safer translation that will encompass all possibilities.

#### 2.2.2.4. Space

Another difficulty that translators face when localising games is that of **character limits**. Romance languages usually take up more space than English, so a well internationalised game will account for this and design expandable boxes or scrollable windows that allow for longer text strings (Mangiron, 2006, p. 4). **Expandable boxes** often need to be used in elements of the user interface, where there are many buttons that require short text strings. **Scrollable windows** will most likely be used in dialogue bubbles, where there are longer text strings that need to fit the space of the bubble. Furthermore, the rise of **portable gaming** has brought about stricter character restrictions due to their smaller screens. The difficulty here lies in creating text strings that adhere to these restrictions if the game does not allow for longer strings. Just like subtitles need to be within certain characters per line, video game text strings must also be within the limit that the developer fixes, which will involve condensation, reformulation, and, sometimes, abbreviation.

#### 2.2.2.5. Gender and Inclusiveness

Gender is a sensitive topic to touch upon, and games cannot escape that. English does not have the problem of gender and inclusion like Spanish does, as it has many grammatical resources to refer to all genders without using an unmarked one. According to the *Real Academia Española*, the explicit use of both masculine and feminine in a sentence, and the use of newly coined forms such as *les compañeres* to encompass both genres contradicts the law of linguistic economy, where the masculine gender is used as the **unmarked** one to refer to both (Real Academia Española, n.d.). *RAE* also adds that these two strategies are unnatural to the language's grammar and should therefore be avoided.

However, as Nawrocka (2019a) explains, "referring to all players in the masculine form is sexist and risks being ungrammatical and incorrect whenever the player or character name is female" (p. 132). Therefore, resorting to other strategies that include both genders while following the Spanish grammar will be especially useful in text strings where there are variables that refer to the player's name or to other NPCs' names. Because of decontextualisation, it is highly likely that translators will not know whether this

variable is referring to a male or a female, so they will have to resort to strategies that create **all-encompassing translations**. For example, a string like 'Now I see you and %s in a dimly lit room. You look serious… but not unhappy' can be troublesome to translate, as the player can be both a male and a female, as well as the character the variable is referring to. Thus, the adjective 'serious' cannot be translated as 'serio' because this will not account for the player being a female. A possible translation could be *se respira un aire serio*. Therefore, by translating variables correctly, we are including all genders. Fortunately, many video games nowadays include **variable tags for gender** that allow translators to translate a text string into both genders, marking a step towards the right direction for inclusiveness.

#### 2.2.2.6. Intertextual and Metatextual References

Games are riddled with references. They may contain references to other stories in books or films or even to the game itself. It is common for successful games to have sequels, which will undoubtedly reference their previous releases. These instances are **metatextual references** since they refer to the game itself. Something as simple as a character's name is a metatextual reference – though it is not a 'traditional' direct reference – so it is crucial to have consistency across the different games of a franchise. For instance, if *Mario*'s princess has been left as *Princesa Peach* in previous games, it should not be translated as *Princesa Melocotón* in future releases since it would confuse players that have played the previous ones and would hinder the gameplay experience. This also applies to the way a character's name is spelt; for example, *Chloe Frazer* was first introduced in *Uncharted 2: Among Thieves* (Naughty Dog, 2009) with her name spelt as *Chloe* in the Spanish version. She became a reoccurring character in the following instalments of the series, so her name must be spelt like it was first shown, *Chloe,* and not a variation such as *Cloe*.

Metatextuality can also present itself **outside the game** *per se*. Games that have an e-sports scene will offer in-game cosmetics of the different teams that compete in the game's championship. Therefore, team names and nicknames of players inside these teams should be left untranslated if they appear inside the game in the form of objects or other texts. For instance, a famous *Rocket League* competitive player is called *SquishyMuffinz* – his gamertag –. Therefore, if an in-game cosmetic is a muffin that is called 'Squishy muffin' or '*SquishyMuffinz*,' it may need to be left untranslated to keep

the metatextual reference. Even though metatextual references are quite transparent, there are others that can be more obscure, such as references to developers or specific sentences of previous games. Therefore, the translator's familiarity with the game and all its concomitant instalments is key for the correct translation of metatextual references.

Regarding **intertextual references**, they refer to elements outside the game's sphere. For instance, a trophy in *Assassin's Creed: Odyssey* (Ubisoft, 2018) is called 'Are You Not Entertained?' This is a clear reference to the film *Gladiator* (Scott, 2000) where Maximus shouts this exact sentence to the audience that is watching him slaughter his enemies. For that reason, the Spanish translation should use the sentence in the Spanish dubbing of the film, which is *¿Os habéis divertido?* This way, the intertextual reference is kept. Games that are based on other works are the ones that contain the highest number of intertextual references, such as *Dragon Ball* games or *Harry Potter* ones, so it is crucial for translators to be acquainted with the original work's world to maintain intertextuality.

#### 2.2.2.7. Genres

Because this has already been discussed in the definitions section, we will not dwell here. However, it is important to note that because different genres may require different translation **strategies**, translators will encounter difficulties in this regard. Moreover, some genres have an established **terminology** that is followed by most games inside the genre, such as the term 'HP,' usually translated as *Salud*, *PS* or *VIT* in Spanish, to refer to health points or hit points in RPGs. This is the reason why letting translators familiarise themselves with the game beforehand can help create a higher quality translation, but it is also as important as having previous knowledge of the different genres – be it by being a gamer or by studying them – to know these terms and their translations by heart.

#### 2.2.2.8. Multitextuality

Just like the wide array of genres poses a challenge to translators, so does the wide array of text types present in video games. As Nawrocka (2019b) explains:

> Technical elements require knowledge of software localization, IT terminology and localization industry standards. Marketing content requires a dynamic and attractive style characteristic of advertising. Legal elements require a competence in translating licensing agreements, terms and conditions, and privacy policies.

> Translating literary fragments in turn, such as dialogs and plot, requires cultural and linguistic sensitivity, knowledge of pop culture, creativity and literary flair. (p. 103-104).

Therefore, all the game assets that have been described up until now require slightly **different translation approaches**, which the author categorises into "creative," "mixed" and "standard." These categories are assigned to the different text types depending on whether they require more creative translations or more 'traditional' ones, that is, more literal ones. Therefore, within a game a translator will have to adopt these different translation approaches depending on the type of text that is being translated.

#### 2.2.2.9. Culture-specific Elements

To finish the difficulties section, culture-specific elements always appear in video games. Just like films, books and other story-driven products, the world that is created will contain references to the culture in which it has been created. These **cultural references** have been an object of study in Traductology for many years, as they are notably one of the elements that pose the most challenges to any translator. In video game localisation, these elements will be translated or left untranslated depending on the approach that it is taken: a **domesticating approach** or a **foreignising approach**, respectively. For instance, Mangiron & O'Hagan (2006) explore different domesticating translations that were carried out in the US localised versions of *Final Fantasy X* and *X-2*, such as the re-naming of objects and character names, the deliberate use of regional expressions to give a more domestic flavour to the game or the re-creation of play on words to transfer humour. Because of the transfer from Japanese culture to English culture, all these elements posed difficulties to the translators, who had to resort to their creativity to solve them.

Irrespective of the approach, translators act as cultural mediators, and as such they need to successfully carry over the game into the target culture. Therefore, elements that can cause **legal issues** must be adapted. Mangiron (2006) explains the case of a *Final Fantasy IX* character that was transliterated as 'Zidane' in the US version. Because this name would clash with the name of famous French footballer Zinedine Zidane, "European translators felt this name was not appropriate for the European versions" (p. 5) and decided to transliterate it as 'Yitán' in the Spanish version to avoid potential legal issues and to avoid introducing unwanted connotations into the game. Therefore, translators

must have a good cultural awareness of both cultures to solve these problems. Video game translators, as all translators, must face these cultural references, but with the added difficulties explained above, but that is, at its heart, video game localisation.

### *2.2.3. Transcreation*

After reviewing all the challenges that translators face when localising a video game, it is clear that game localisation is more demanding than other translation modalities. Fortunately, it is a modality where the process known as '**transcreation'** is much more present and even desired than in other audiovisual translation areas. It refers to the process where translators can move away from the original text to create a translation that only keeps the essence of the source text. Other audiovisual translation modalities cannot afford such freedom; video game localisation can because the main objective is to **keep the gameplay experience** and deliver it to players of the target culture with the same intensity as the one source culture players have access to. In short, players in the target culture must have the same gameplay experience as players in the source culture.

To do this, translators are given what Mangiron & O'Hagan (2006) call ***carte blanche***, where they can "modify, adapt, and remove any cultural references, puns, as well as jokes that would not work in the target language" (p. 15), also adding that "localisers are given the liberty of including new cultural references, jokes, or any other element they deem necessary to preserve the game experience and to produce a fresh and engaging translation" (ibid.). Obviously, this requires translators to be extremely creative and keen-eyed, but thanks to this they can overcome the challenges explained above with certain ease, especially those regarding variables, tags and space limitations.

Dialogues or character names may need to be reformulated or condensed to keep within the **character limit**. With transcreation, these can be totally changed not only to abide by the space limitations, but also to keep any humorous element that the original ones may have that cannot be literally transferred into the target language. Muñoz Sánchez gives an example of this, where character names were transcreated in the localised version of the video game *Bonsai Barber* (Zoonami, 2009). For instance, 'The Cherry Twins' was translated as *Las Ceremelas* to create a play on the words *cereza* and *gemelas*; or a more transcreated name, *Bristly Bob*, which was translated as *Johnny Pincho* because it is a cactus that talks like cowboys, thus giving it a foreign name with

*Johnny*, the element of being a cactus in *pincho* and a pun that was not in the original (*Yo ni pincho*).

However, Muñoz Sánchez also warns about the potential implications that this freedom can have. To quote Spider-Man's uncle, "with great power comes great responsibility," so translators must know where the **limits** are. A translation with too much transcreation can run the risk of surprising players in a bad way, thus having the opposite effect. For example, translating strings in a fantasy game by using expressions that are specific to the Spanish culture – *castizas* – can shock and confuse Spanish culture players because of its specificity and real-life referent in a made-up world. Moreover, having a *carte blanche* does not mean that translators can change the original message or game entirely. Some video game genres may allow for a greater degree of transcreation while others, usually the more 'serious' ones that have dubbing and subtitling, may allow for a lesser degree, but the original game's vision and message must be preserved. Any changes that are done through transcreation must never be gratuitous and they must always work towards player enjoyment while keeping the original's game message.

### *2.2.4. Errors*

Even with the help of transcreation, all these challenges can lead to translators committing errors that can go unnoticed in the linguistic quality assurance step. Consequently, the game launches with linguistic errors that can hinder the gameplay experience. Many of these errors have been talked about in previous sections, so this section's aim is to bring all of them together in an error typology. To do this, Muñoz Sánchez's (2017) classification of errors will be used. There are other classifications of errors, such as Vázquez Rodríguez's (2016) classification, but it is a wider classification that accounts for translation errors in all translation modalities. Muñoz Sanchez's, however, is strictly focused on game localisation, as he offers a 'linguistic bugs' classification rather than 'translation errors.' Furthermore, the aim of this section is not to give an exhaustive classification that can be used for any game localisation work, but to briefly explain one that will be used in this thesis that will allow for a structured analysis of errors.

#### 2.2.4.1. Font Issues

These errors happen when the character set of the font does not include one or some **special characters** of the target language (p. 154). This results in vowels with acute

accents nor displaying correctly or simply not appearing, as well as other special characters such as the Spanish 'ñ.' When they are incorrectly displayed, they will appear in various forms, like an elongated square or even in Unicode format. To avoid this issue, developers should carry out a good internationalisation process.

#### 2.2.4.2. Wrong Text Implementation

This occurs when a text string appears in the **language of other localised versions** of the game. For instance, a text appearing in French or German in the Spanish localised version. This can have various causes: the project manager copied a text string in the wrong column when working in Excel files, or the developer's text implementation software has a bug that caused the issue (p. 155-156).

#### 2.2.4.3. Missing Translation/Unlocalised String

As the name suggests, this linguistic bug is caused by a text string **not being localised**. This bug may be caused by the translator not translating the string, but it can also be caused by the developer not sending the text string, so it is left untranslated. If the latter is the case, this bug may be present in the other localised versions of the game.

#### 2.2.4.4. Typo/Misspelling

These are caused by the **misspelling** of words or the inclusion of an unintentional **typo** when typing the translation. These are the easiest bugs to solve thanks to spellcheckers, so they should be inexistant when a game is released.

#### 2.2.4.5. Grammar Issue

Grammar issues can often come caused by **typos**; for example, a text can read *las bandera* because the translator has accidentally typed or left the 's,' which creates a grammar issue. Therefore, many grammatical errors can also be classified as typos, thus creating a sort of hybrid classification. For the sake of simplicity, grammatical errors, even if caused by typos, will be considered grammar issues. This will also be applied to grammatical errors provoked by the incorrect translation of **variables**; for instance, a text with incorrect subject-verb agreement because the translator has not accounted for all the possible

contexts of the variable. Decontextualisation is also a determining factor in these grammar issues due to the difficulty of translating variables without access to the context. Nevertheless, the translator's knowledge of the target language's norms is also a factor.

#### 2.2.4.6. Mistranslation

These are one of the most difficult errors to detect because, without access to the original text, they are **grammatically sound** and make sense in the context where they appear. However, the examination of the original text (if available) or further inspection of the context can reveal their incorrectness. These errors can have a serious **negative impact** on the gameplay experience, as they can provide players with incorrect or deformed information. Again, decontextualisation plays a big role in this error, as the lack of context can lead translators to create translations that do not work in the context.

#### 2.2.4.7. Overflow

Like wrong text implementation, this can also be caused by a weak internationalisation process. It refers to the fact that a text overflows, that is, it **surpasses the boundaries** of a button or of the interface and can overlap with concomitant text strings, thus making it laborious to read and unattractive to look at.

#### 2.2.4.8. Truncation

This is similar to overflow in that the text string does not respect the character restriction, but in this case, it gets **cut off** instead of overflowing. As with overflow, translators need to resort to transcreation to create shorter text strings and names to avoid these errors.

#### 2.2.4.9. Terminology Issue

This is usually provoked by translators not following the provided **glossary of terms**. If terms included in the glossary are translated differently, it can create consistency issues both inside the game itself and across instalments in metatextual references.

#### 2.2.4.10. Inconsistency

It can not only be caused by terminology issues, but also by **stylistic issues** like the inconsistent usage of capital letters in terms or by the different translation of terms that are not included in the glossary but that have an established translation, such as *Guardar* for 'Save.' Therefore, the correct use of CAT tools is essential in localisers.

#### 2.2.4.11. Guidelines Issue

This occurs when translators do not follow the **instructions** that the client has given them. For instance, a common instruction is to translate system messages according to the first party's terminology. If this is not paid heed to, it would be a guideline issue and would create serious problems in the game's approval for release, as explained before.

#### 2.2.4.12. Style/Readability

This is a rather subjective error because writing style varies from person to person. However, some clear stylistic issues can be caused due to the literal translation of the source text. Though the translation would be grammatically correct, it would flow badly in the target language. An **awkward sentence structure** can also be provoked by the usage of a regional variant of the target language. For example, using Latin-American Spanish where a neutral or Castilian Spanish is expected will result in natural-sounding sentences for Latinos but awkward-sounding ones for Castilian players. Furthermore, this can create terminology issues and even grammatical ones due to regional differences.

#### 2.2.4.13. Subtitle Issue

Examples of issues with subtitles are: subtitles do not appear or appear with asynchrony, they are too fast or too long, they are badly segmented, and they do not coincide with the dubbed audio. Yet again, decontextualisation, as well as game subtitling not following the rules of cinema subtitling contribute to this error.

#### 2.2.4.14. Audio Issue

Examples of audio issues are: the dubbed audio is not heard or is in the original language, it is desynchronised, and it does not coincide with the context.

#### 2.2.4.15. Cultural Issues

Cultural issues must be solved before a game launches to ensure its success, issues like the use of swastikas in games that will be distributed in the German market. These issues need to be detected and solved by translators and they cannot be present in the game when it is launched, as cultural issues may imply that the game cannot be distributed in certain countries. Nevertheless, there are some 'minor' issues – minor in that they do not have such **serious implications** but still hinder the gameplay experience – like the translation of cultural references with other obscure references that only a specific group will understand or with references that are too specific of the target culture.

#### 2.2.4.16. Inclusiveness

Lastly, this is a category that is not present in Muñoz Sánchez's classification, but it needed to have its own separate category because of the implications it can have when translating variables and because of the growing necessity to create **inclusive translations**. Even though using the masculine gender as the unmarked pronoun is grammatically correct according to *RAE*, there are many resources the language offers that can be exploited by translators to be inclusive without using such gender. Therefore, this error will appear in those instances where the unmarked masculine gender is used when an inclusive translation can be created as easily.

## 2.3. Machine Translation and Localisation

To finish up the theoretical framework, a brief explanation of machine translation follows, together with its advantages and disadvantages, especially in the field of localisation.

### *2.3.1. Brief History of MT*

Machine translation (or MT), "a subfield under Artificial Intelligence, is the application of computers to the task of translating texts from one natural (human) language to another" (Okpor, 2014, p. 159). It should not be confused with computer-aided translation (CAT); MT is wholly **automated**, while CAT is human translation aided by a computer. MT is a field that emerged in 1949 with Warren Weaver's Memorandum on Translation, and later started being researched in 1951 with Yehosha Bar-Hillel, the first researcher in

the field (ibid.). From then on, research groups appeared in different countries and public demonstrations and conferences of MT started to take place.

Even if MT was developing at the same time as computers, its progress was far from being able to keep up with the evolution of technology and its quality was still **subpar**. The ALPAC report (Automatic Language Processing Advisory Committee) stated that the research on MT had failed to fulfil expectations, hence the government retiring funding (ibid.). It was with the introduction of the World Wide Web that machine translation started to gain more traction, with systems such as SYSTRAN in 1996 and AltaVista Babelfish in 1997. The field also saw more **innovations** like the "opensource statistical MT engine (2007), a text/SMS translation service for mobiles in Japan (2008), and a mobile phone with built-in speech-to-speech translation functionality for English, Japanese and Chinese (2009)" (ibid.). Nowadays, the most prominent machine translation engines include Google Translate, DeepL (Linguee) and the Microsoft Translator.

### *2.3.2. Types of MT*

Machine translation engines can be grouped inside two major groups: **rule-based** machine translation and corpus-based machine translation. The former refers to engines that use a set of rules that has been fed in by human experts. Consequently, it requires a tremendous amount of input to work, which makes it expensive and time-consuming to create and is usually restricted to a single language pair (Okpor, 2014). Moreover, when it is fully functioning, it still presents some shortcomings that make it a not so desirable option for translating any kind of text. For instance, because input has to be fed in manually, it is **costly** and **painstaking** to adapt the engine to a different area of knowledge. If a rule-based engine has been fed input for legal translation, it will struggle and will need new input to translate a dialogue. Even when the right input has been fed, it will struggle with idiomatic expressions that require cultural knowledge, with ambiguity, and with complex sentences in the source language, which will most likely be transferred literally and therefore will create awkward sentences (ibid.).

**Corpus-based** machine translation differs from the rule-based one in that it uses data from **parallel corpora** that have been elaborated by specialists instead of being fed these data directly. Therefore, engines have access to larger data that can be in different fields, but these corpora are also expensive to build. The use of corpora can solve the problem of naturalness and awkward sentence structure in the translation because it has

access to full texts instead of single words, but it will still struggle with elements that are culture-bound. Moreover, corpus-based engines that use statistical approaches can face issues with **statistical anomalies**, where a word is translated incorrectly because another translation is statistically more common in the sentence's context (ibid.).

The latest development of corpus-based machine translation is that of **neural machine translation**. This MT is "trained on huge corpora of pairs of source language segments (usually sentences) and their translations, that is, basically from huge translation memories containing hundreds of thousands or even millions of translation units" (Forcada, 2017, p. 2). Therefore, it is a rule-based machine translation that differs from the other types in that it uses "a completely different computational approach: **neural networks**" (ibid.). They are called neural networks due to their resemblance to the way human brains work, where their activation (or not) is dependent on "the stimuli they receive from other neurons and the strength of the connections along which these stimuli are passed" (ibid.). Thanks to this neural network, machine translation has recently been able to overcome all the major challenges of translation and can now create translations that can sometimes become **indistinguishable** from human ones. Therefore, it is no surprise that the most prominent translation engines today use neural networks.

### *2.3.3. MT in Localisation: Advantages and Disadvantages*

Despite these advancements, **MT still struggles** to translate when it lacks context (although it has become better at it), as well as with elements that require deep knowledge of the culture and the language, such as cultural references, idioms, humour or complex sentences. Furthermore, in video game localisation it could break variables and tags as it may not identify them, as well as not being able to play around them by reorganising them or creating all-encompassing translations. The "handling of long sentences and the reordering of particular linguistic constituents requiring a deep semantic understanding of text" (Bentivogli et al., 2016, p. 265), that is, complex sentences that require deep understanding of the language and how it can be reorganised, is also an unresolved issue in machine translation. These issues could lead to the errors that have been explained above, such as grammar issues, mistranslations, and terminology and consistency issues. In short, machine translation still struggles to "'understand' a text as a person does, and […] [to] 'create' a new text in the target language that 'sounds' as if it has been written by a person" (Okpor, 2014, p. 160).

Therefore, machine translation has many shortcomings, so why do some companies and video game developers choose to use it? It is undeniable that it has **advantages**. For instance, it provides fast access and **high speed** since translation engines are always readily accessible, while contacting a translation company usually requires time and effort (Dudnyk, 2020). Moreover, the latest developments in machine translation ensure that the translation the engine outputs will have enough correctness to understand the general meaning of the original text (ibid.), and in the case of neural machine translation it can even have **human-level quality**. Another advantage is that of **profitability**, as machine translation does not require any payment, unlike human translators (ibid.). If the translation engine used is that of a CAT tool, some payment may be required. Lastly, machine translation can provide a higher degree of **confidentiality** than human translators, but this is uncertain and cannot be asserted as a firm advantage.

Even though these advantages can be appealing to translation companies, especially profitability for indie game developers, are they worth the **risk**? Neural machine translation has shown that MT can potentially replace translators in some areas of knowledge and convert them into posteditors. For some text types like legal documents, MT paired with postediting can be a useful tool to save time and money, but for other texts that require more **creativity**, such as video games, it will deliver unsatisfactory results. Therefore, MT is not prepared to take over video game localisation. Even if the costs are higher, human translators can work without **context** thanks to their intuition and an effective use of risk management translations, while machines do not have access to such skills. Moreover, translators' deep knowledge of the languages involved and their cultures allows them to tackle **cultural and linguistic challenges** like idioms, humour and cultural references, areas that MT has yet to master.

# 3. METHODOLOGY

Before translating and analysing the different strings, it is relevant to explain the game from which the strings have been taken as well as an explanation of how they have been collected, both the English ones and the Spanish translated ones.

## 3.1. The Object of Study: Rocket League

An explanation of *Rocket League* follows, together with its characteristics and its first localisation into various languages that prompted this thesis.

### *3.1.1. What is Rocket League?*

*Rocket League* is a unique game in that it is the promoter of a small genre called '**soccar**.' As the name suggests, it is a genre that fuses 'soccer' (football) and 'cars,' and even though it can be referred to as small because of the low number of games that can be included inside it, it has recently become extremely famous thanks to *Rocket League* and its e-sports scene. It is clear, then, that the translator that undertakes the task of translating games inside this genre will need an extensive knowledge of football and cars.

**Two teams** of cars compete against each other, ranging from 1v1 to 4v4. The goal, like in football, is to score more goals than the opposite team to win the match. These matches last five minutes, but if the score is tied, an overtime is played where the first team to score a goal wins. The tension that is built up in these overtimes is a big reason why *Rocket League*'s e-sports scene became successful, together with the fact that after the five minutes, the game does not enter overtime or end until the ball touches the ground, which allows for last-second goals that provide unparalleled spectacle. This thesis seizes this element of the game to add to the body of work, as most games that have been analysed in the field of game localisation are single player (*Final Fantasy VII* is the clearest example). Therefore, there is a lack of analysis of **competitive** games, maybe because they typically do not have as many translatable assets as single-player games, but as this paper will show, they contain many assets that are equally interesting. Furthermore, this paper will not only add to the online competitive genre, but also to the very specific genre of 'soccar.'

Like in any other competitive game, **communication** is crucial to ensure winning matches. Even though there is a voice chat feature, its quality is extremely unsatisfactory

and is therefore never used. The main channel of communication is through other VoIP programs like 'Discord,' 'Skype' or 'TeamSpeak,' among others. Obviously, the game can be played alone through matchmaking, where players are paired with other players that have similar competitive ranks. In these cases, in-game **quick chat** becomes the only option to communicate. This chat consists of four different tabs that can be opened while in a match using the controller arrows. Each arrow opens a specific tab in which there are four quick chat commands to choose from using the arrows once more. For example, rapidly pressing the up arrow twice will send the team message *¡Es tuya!*, while pressing up and then left will send *¡Lo tengo!* These examples will not be true for every player, as quick chats can be switched around using a pool of messages to fit the player's communicative needs. Regardless and to sum up, these quick chats are sent by inputting a command using the arrows, which allows players to communicate quickly (as the name suggests) with their teammates. Therefore, their translation needs to be accurate and, if possible, short to allow for efficient and fast communication.

Even if the competitive element is key, *Rocket League*'s charm resides in the myriad of ways goals can be scored in; from more 'traditional' goals to more **stylish goals** with a multitude of mechanics like 'flip resets,' 'flip cancels,' 'ceiling shots,' 'Musty flicks,' 'fakes' or 'ball pinches.' **Boost** is a crucial part of these mechanics. It can be picked up from small boost pads that give 12 boost or form the six big boost pads in each of the corners and in each side of the midfield that give 100 (the maximum). Boost can be used to propel cars into the air to score fancy aerial goals, but it can also be used to propel them into supersonic speed to move around more quickly around the field. At this speed, players can destroy other cars (called demoing) if they collide with them. Destroyed cars respawn after three seconds, but it can be a powerful mechanic to leave open nets when destroying the goaltender. Newcomers to the game will not know how to perform all these mechanics, but as they play and improve, they will start to learn them. The satisfaction of learning and mastering these mechanics, with new ones constantly appearing, is another key component of the game's success.

Lastly, **car customisation** is another essential part, as it is the main source of income. Players can choose from a wide array of car bodies. These bodies can then be customised with different **cosmetics**, such as antennas, toppers, decals, wheels, rocket boosts, trails, and engine audios. Furthermore, the explosion that happens when a goal is scored can also be customised, as well as the player banner, the player title, the player anthem and the avatar border. All these cosmetics can present themselves in different

colours, such as burnt sienna, black, white, etc. Some can be obtained through playing, but most can be acquired by buying them in the in-game store or through blueprints that can be unlocked using virtual currency that is bought with real money. They can also be acquired by trading with other players, which usually involves the exchange of equally valuable items or their value in credits.


**Figure 6:** *Rocket League*'s garage menu contains all the cosmetic items owned by the player, which are divided into their own separate tabs.

The cosmetics mentioned above are the heaviest part of the localisation load, especially when considering that most of them are what maintain the game alive and that menus contain very few translatable strings. Unlocalised or poorly localised cosmetics may translate into low revenue, so a conscious effort must be made by developers and by translators to have quality localised versions of the game.

### *3.1.2. Localisation into Spanish and Other Languages*

*Rocket League*'s localisation when it was first launched in 2015 was far from being a quality localisation. Even though it did not have a high number of strings that needed to be localised, many of those were translated so poorly that they could even have a serious impact on the gameplay experience. These will be discussed in their own sections, but they could range from misspellings and typos like *Ajustes predefeinidos* [sic] or *Calaberas* [sic], to serious mistranslations like *Truco de sombrero* (Hat trick), *Cruz-red* (Cross-network) or *Jugada gratis* (Free play).

This begs the question: how was *Rocket League* localised? This thesis presents the hypothesis that it was localised using **machine translation**. It is important to highlight

that there is no official confirmation that this is the case, but after careful analysis of the translations present at the game's release, it is clear that machine translation was involved. It may not have been used to translate all strings, but it most certainly was involved in varying degrees and shapes, such as the translator using it to translate isolated words in a long sentence or two-word one.

Not only do the translations themselves point to a probable use of machine translation, but other factors also support this hypothesis. One of those is Psyonix's status of **indie company**. As discussed before, indie companies often decide not to localise or partially localise their games into other languages due to their budget. Psyonix not only hired a translation company to localise their game, but also decided to localise it to languages outside the EFIGS model, such as Russian, Czech, Polish or Dutch. Psyonix's **high demand**, paired with the budget of an indie company, may have resulted in them hiring a dubious company that was not well equipped to handle that many languages and therefore turned to MT to complete the workload.

This is also supported by the fact that its localisation was mediocre in **all languages**, not just Spanish. There are many posts in 'Reddit' of players complaining about *Rocket League*'s localisation in their language, such as Russian, Czech, Spanish, French, German, Italian, Dutch, Polish, Portuguese and Japanese. Even these users acknowledge that many of these translations could have been done using MT: user 'MSB4Revy' states that "[…] in Spanish there is a lot of google translated text" (Reddit post by dial_m_for_me, 2020), while user 'LOTHMT' affirms that "It feels like they just used Google Translate to me" (Reddit post by serpao, 2016). User 'Stuf404' even adds that "It's okay, in the Japanese version they just added -chan to everything" (ibid.), while user 'cooperjones2' affirms that "it seems it's a mix of Italian, Portuguese and some Spanglish" (ibid.). Even though Reddit posts do not constitute a reliable source, players are the most critical of translations and their complaints are proof of the poor localisation that it had in all languages, which inevitably points to machine translation.

Another factor that supports this hypothesis is the fact that Psyonix was looking for **volunteers** to proofread the Spanish and the Italian translations. On May 30, 2015, a Psyonix employee created a Reddit post asking for these volunteers. According to this post, this call for volunteers was done on Reddit because they needed "people who are very familiar with the game" (Reddit post by Protatoooo, 2015). This explains why other developers have taken translations done by **Reddit users** and implemented them into the game. These users also received an in-game item, called 'Linguist,' as a reward for their

efforts to improve the game's localisation. Even though familiarity with the game and nativeness in the language are key to creating good translations, it is often risky to blindly trust these translations. This search for volunteers and the implementation of Reddit translations are a testament to the economic situation of Psyonix at the time, which again points to MT and, very possibly, mistranslations done by these users.

Nevertheless, Psyonix's economic landscape changed in 2019 when they were bought by Epic Games. Psyonix is still largely in control of their game because they have become a **subsidiary company** under Epic Games. This change from indie to subsidiary of a multimillionaire company, together with the revenue accumulated throughout the years thanks to *Rocket League*'s success, has undoubtedly increased their budget exponentially. This is apparent when looking at the different prize pools for the Rocket League Championship Series (RLCS for short), *Rocket League*'s e-sports tournament: in its first instalment in 2016, the prize pool was a total of $75,000 USD, while in 2019 it has already surpassed the $1,000,000 USD. Moreover, *Rocket League* is now **free-to-play**, that is, it does not need to be bought to be played. This is an extremely interesting factor when analysing this game's localisation, as a change in budget would logically mean a change in localisation, usually for the better. Because the array of games that have undergone this change is quite limited, no papers (to my best knowledge) have been written on the localisation of games that were translated under an indie's game budget and were later bought by a bigger one. Therefore, this thesis will add to the volume of work by filling in this gap.

Regardless of how the game was localised and the possible reasons behind it, it is clear that its localisation was far from fulfilling the industry's standards. As someone who started playing when it was first released, this substandard localisation quality severely impacted my **gameplay experience**. Some objects I did not know what they meant and got lost in some menus because their titles were poorly localised. Communication with teammates was inefficient because some quick chats did not correspond to the original in English, such as *¡Buen Gol!* for 'Nice shot!'. This frustration led players to switch the language to English to properly play the game, a clear red flag in a game's localisation.

## 3.2. Data Collection and Translation Process

### *3.2.1. Collection and Selection of Translatable Strings*

The first step to analyse the localisation of *Rocket League* was to collect all the translatable strings present in the game. The period of collection was from the beginning to the end of February. Therefore, all the items up until the Season 2 Rocket Pass. Because I own the game on PC, many of these strings were **extracted directly from the game** using a program called *Bakkesmod*, which hooks directly onto the game to display a list of all cosmetic items. However, titles and player banners do not appear in this program, so they had to be collected from online sites that contain a list of all the items present in the game: *RL Insider*, *Rocket League Garage* and *Rocket League Wiki*. In the case of the first two, they provide a trading service for people to trade in-game items and currency. Therefore, items on the website must have the same exact name as the item in the game to ensure fair trading and to abide by legal laws. Consequently, they are reliable sources to extract the English strings from, but they have all been contrasted against each other to ensure there are no inconsistencies or clashes in names, as well as contrasting with the names of the objects in *Rocket League*'s game files.

All the strings were grouped in Excel files following the classification inside the game, i.e., boosts, player titles, goal explosions, etc. Then, those groups of items that would present the most challenges were **selected**, either because they contained numerous wordplays or inclusiveness issues, or because their translations into Spanish were interesting to touch upon. Even though the official translations were not collected at this stage, my experience of playing the game allowed me to know which groups had the worst translations or a high number of unlocalised strings. In the case of player titles, those that are given to specific people, such as World Champion, 4-time World Champion or RLCS Analyst (among others) were not included, as their exclusiveness made their translation impossible to find. This is also the case for Grand Champion titles given at the end of a season. Although they can be more easily found, those from alternative game modes are uncommon and therefore harder to find, so they were discarded overall to favour a more profound analysis of the 'normal' titles that are more accessible. After the selection, these pages were exported to another Excel document to create different columns that allowed for their comfortable and correct analysis and translation.

### *3.2.2. Collection of Translated Strings*

The collection of translated strings was done throughout March and beginning of April 2021. All of them have been collected before the Season 3 Rocket Pass update on April 7, so any new strings added in this update or corrections done to any translations will not be taken into account. This collection of strings was a more time-consuming and complex process, mainly due to the **absence of webpages** that contained a list of all the items in Spanish. Only RL Insider had the official translations for many of the player banners, boosts and goal explosions, but this was not enough to collect them all. Because it is a trading site, only those cosmetics that can be traded are included, which leaves many items inside these three groups out, and leaves all player titles out. Even then, the number of collected translated strings was higher than those that had not been found yet.

To find the remaining boosts, banners, goal explosions and all the player titles, I had to enlist the help of my friends and play *Rocket League*. Most player titles were found by **playing matches**, since teammates and opponents had them equipped. For every new title I encountered, a screenshot was taken and saved in a Word document. Afterwards, I matched these titles with the original English ones. For those whose match was unclear or those that I still had not found, my **friends** provided an invaluable helping hand by supplying the missing translations and by switching the game's language back and forth from English to Spanish to find each title's match. Even with this, the translation of some items and titles still has not been found. In these cases, their analysis will be omitted.

After the collection of the selected strings, strings from the **beginning of the game** were collected. As mentioned before, one of the aims of this thesis is to assess whether a change of budget has helped localisation. By collecting strings that were present in 2015, not only will we be able to see if they have been corrected, but also to assess if machine translation was used and what translations it delivered. All in all, to see the state of the game's localisation at the beginning of its life and its state nowadays with a bigger budget. Because these strings are from 6 years ago, not all of them have been able to be collected. Then again, the number of strings at the beginning was quite low, so to have more than 40 different errors from 2015 is already enough to get a general grasp of the game's localisation at the time. These strings were collected using a **variety of methods**, which involved watching *Rocket League* videos on YouTube uploaded during that time, reading Reddit posts by people suggesting improved translations to the errors in the beginning of the game and, in some cases, taken from my memory or from that of my friends.

**Videos** are the most reliable sources because translations appear on-screen without any mediators, that is, they are recorded. These are videos posted by many 'YouTubers' when the game first launched. In the case of **Reddit posts** and social media posts in general, they are not a trustworthy source of information, but these constitute a more reliable one due to two reasons: first, many users corroborate the complaints of the original poster and agree with the translation errors, and second, Psyonix developers have used many of the translations proposed by these users to improve the quality of the game's localisation. Therefore, the strings the original poster was complaining about were in the game at the time of posting. The main post used is the one by 'serpao' (2016) with its subsequent replies, complimented with the Steam post by 'JonesTV' (2016). Furthermore, because my friends and I have played since the beginning, they can be contrasted with our **memories**, as some of the translations are burnt in. Once collected and filtered, the English equivalent was added for each string by using a video where the first version of *Rocket League* is played (FLuuMP, 2019) and the current game in English.

### *3.2.3. Analysis and Critical Translation*

After both the original strings and their respective official Spanish translations had been collected, a process of analysis was undertaken. All the Spanish strings were analysed to find any **translation errors or bugs**, both on their own and by comparison to the English ones. This error identification was done using the linguistic bugs classification by Muñoz Sánchez (2017), which was presented and explained in the previous section. However, the analysis has induced the creation of a new category that will be called '**improvable**.' These are strings that do not have an error *per se*, but that could be improved. Obviously, all strings that contain errors can be improved by correcting the error, but as stated, these strings are strictly those whose translation is correct but improvable.

Once all the strings that contained errors were identified, a **critical translation** followed. Unfortunately, many strings were unlocalised (which is an error), so critical translation could only be done with those that were localised. Nevertheless, this thesis is considered a professionalising Master's Thesis, so this has provided the opportunity to experience two real-world scenarios, one of linguistic quality assurance, the other of 'traditional' video game localisation. The decisions taken in the incorrect or improvable strings in both scenarios will be explained and justified in the following section, which will constitute the main body of the paper.

Even after the first narrowing of strings, the number of errors found in the delimited groups was **too high** to analyse in this thesis body. Consequently, only player titles, goal explosions and boosts will be discussed in the body, while the rest of groups will be included in the appendices in a table format. These three groups have been selected for various reasons, the main one being that they contain the most interesting strings to be discussed. In the case of player titles, inclusiveness, wordplays and specific terminology are compelling topics to examine in the translation's justification, while in goal explosions and boosts the topics of intertextual references, multiple layers of meaning and restricted translation due to the item's appearance are also appealing to analyse. In sum, these three groups cover a wide array of translation difficulties that will enrich the discussion of the current strings' translations (or absence of one).

As explained in the introduction, the analysis of the current strings has been taken as a **real-world commission** where the translator has access to reference materials. Therefore, the aesthetics and appearance of goal explosions and boosts have been considered when identifying errors and when translating those that were unlocalised, so screenshots have been included in the appendices. Furthermore, the commission is to revise and translate the current *Rocket League*, so it is obvious that strings from 2015 would not be involved. Their inclusion in this thesis serves a more **academic aim**: to analyse probable translations done with MT to add to the body of work, but also to correct or translate those errors that were present in 2015 but that remain uncorrected to this day. Their discussion is also useful to gauge the translation's quality at the beginning and compare it to the overall quality nowadays, which at the same time will help give insight to fully understand certain errors in present strings, especially mistranslations.

Finally, with their inclusion I also hope to give **visibility** to these situations where translation companies deliver such substandard translations. Regardless of whether they decided to use MT (which is the most probable one), they underpaid their translators or they employed translators that were unqualified for the job, these types of situations should not exist because they damage both the game's image and its players. Just like *Final Fantasy VII*'s case became the epitome of a badly localised game, I hope that *Rocket League*'s localisation when it was first released also becomes known and therefore adds its part to this infamous hall of fame, a miniscule part when considering the difference in the number of incorrectly translated strings in both games, but a part regardless.

## 4. ANNOTATED TRANSLATION

This section will focus on the analysis of linguistic bugs in *Rocket League* and the explanation of the decisions taken behind each proposal for improvement and correction. The first subsection will deal with those strings present at the beginning of the game, while the second one will focus on those present in the game nowadays.

### 4.1. Strings from 2015

To carry out the analysis and explanation of translation decisions, examples have been grouped in tables. In those cases where there are many examples, various groups have been created facilitate the analysis and its readability. These tables have numbers on the side. Each number corresponds to an example in the subgroup, which will be used to refer to that specific example inside the written analysis.

#### *4.1.1. Misspellings or Typos*

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bronze | Bronze | Bronce |
| 2 | Default settings | Ajustes predefeinidos | Configuración básica |
| 3 | Skulls | Calaberas | Calaveras |
| 4 | Receive | Recivir | Recibir |
| 5 | Aggressor | Aggresor | Agresivo |
| 6 | Watch now | Ver ahoa | Ver ahora |

In 1, the typo could also be considered an instance of unlocalised string, as it is the same as the original. In any case, it has been corrected in the current game. In 2, the typo has also been corrected in the current game, but the newly created translation is somewhat **confusing**, since *básica* is not usually used to refer to the default settings. Instead, just correcting the typo to *ajustes predefinidos* would have solved the problem entirely, although *configuración predeterminada* is a more common string in video games.

3 and 4 had blatant misspellings that have been corrected, while 6 had a typo that became **famous** (or infamous) among *Rocket League* players due to the number of times that it appeared. It was in a system message that popped up when players saved the replay for the match that was just played, prompting them to watch the replay now or to do it

later. Saving replays is a common practice among players of the game because it allows for the rewatching of entire games, be it to relieve spectacular (or pathetic) moments, or to revise one's playstyle and improve. Hence, all Spanish players saw this typo multiple times. Lastly, 5 has a misspelling due to the use of 'gg' like in the English word. Although this has been corrected, it has created a translation that is not inclusive, which is corrected in Appendix C (*sin miedo*).

All in all, the number of typos and their seriousness are not too high, but because they can be **easily prevented**, they should be non-existent. Even then, seven instances is unacceptable in a fully localised video game, even more when considering the wide array of options translators have at hand to spellcheck their translations.

### *4.1.2. Stylistic Issues*

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Score | Puntaje | Puntaje |
| 8 | Sorry! | ¡Ya lo siento! | ¡Lo siento! |
| 9 | Decal | Calcomanía | Calcomanía |
| 10 | This item | Este ítem | Este objeto |

Most stylistic issues found in the beginning of the game are related to the use of a **Latin-American** style that does not work in Spain, but this seems to be a reoccurring error in many translations that are currently in the game. This may be because the translator is based in the United States or in Latin-America, so the translation is inevitably influenced by the Latin-American variety. This is the case of all examples above except 10, which contained a term that is not commonly used to refer to in-game objects but that has been corrected in the current game.

In 7, the term *puntaje* is used to refer to a player's score inside the game, which is still currently in the game. However, this term is exclusively used in Latin-America. To create a more **neutral** translation, *puntuación* could be used, or *puntos* to avoid any possible character limit issues. 8 contained an expression that is heard here in Spain, especially in the Basque Country, but because of its specificity, a more neutral translation is preferred, like the one currently in the game. On the other hand, *calcomanía* in 9 is not a region-specific term, but it is not commonly used to refer to stickers decaled on cars to adorn them. Instead, *vinilo* is the usual term in Spain.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | Distance driven: X Feet | Distancia conducida: X Pies | Distancia conducida: X Metros |
| 12 | Reverse goal | Gol de reversa | Gol de espaldas |
| 13 | [PLAYER] SCORED! | ¡ANOTÓ [PLAYER]! | ¡ANOTÓ [PLAYER]! |
| 14 | Earbuds | Audífonos | Auriculares |
| 15 | Speakers | Bocinas | Altavoces |

In 11, the US customary units were not adapted to the metrical system. This might have been a decision made by the developer, as a change in the system of measurement involves the inclusion of new code that converts feet into metres. Currently, the game has an option that allows players to choose between either system, thus correcting the error.

Finally, the last four examples are more clear instances of Latin-American influence. Examples 12, 14 and 15 used the terms *reversa*, *audífonos* and *bocinas*, which are specific to Latin-America to refer to *marcha atrás*, *auriculares* and *altavoces*. These errors have been corrected, unlike example 13. This example demonstrates a clear case of Latin-American influence due to the use of *anotó*. Not only is *marcar un gol* more common than *anotar un gol*, but the verbal tense is not commonly used in Spain. This verbal tense is called *pretérito indefinido* and it is extremely common in Latin-America, while in Spain the *pretérito perfecto* is more common. Furthermore, the sentence structure is somewhat unnatural, as the natural SVO order (Subject-Verb-Object) is inverted to VSO. Therefore, a better translation would be *¡[PLAYER] HA MARCADO!* (where [PLAYER] is substituted by the scorer's name), thus solving all issues described above.

### *4.1.3. Improvable Strings*

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | Spectate | Mirar | Mirar como espectador |
| 17 | Solo Duel | Duelo individual | Individual |

Only two instances of improvable translations have been found. In 16, *Mirar* did not accurately and fully describe what 'spectate' means in this situation, which is to spectate a game in progress. In 17, even though the original also contains the 'Duel' element, it is better to leave it out to describe more accurately the 1v1 mode. Both have been corrected.

### *4.1.4. Truncation Issues*

Fortunately, only one truncation issue has been found, which can be seen in the following image:


**Figure 7:** Instance of truncation in *Rocket League*'s first days.
Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yQXlo7QyrBM

To solve the truncation issue, the developer could shrink the text to make it fit in the available space. Like any truncated string issues, this shows a **poor internationalisation** process because the different length of the various languages is not taken into account when developing the game. However, translators can also create translations that are shorter to prevent these problems; in this case, *SIN RANGO* would fit the available space and would also become inclusive. Because post-game menus have changed throughout the years, this string now has more space, and in fact has a bigger font size. Nonetheless, it is currently displayed as *sin rango*.

### *4.1.5. Inconsistencies*

All consistency issues can be found in the game's main menu. When a button in the menu is selected, an explanatory text appears below to inform players about the uses of the button. Because in English a verb like 'choose' can be translated as *escoge* and *escoger*, this can lead to **verb tense** inconsistencies where both infinitive and imperative are used in similar strings inside the same menu:

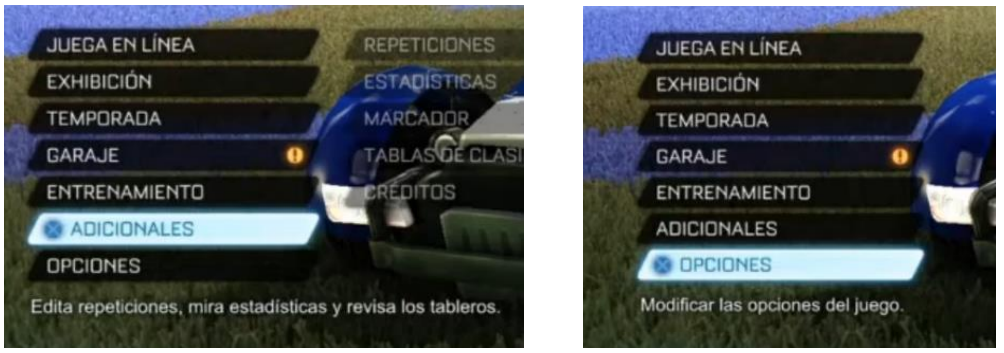


**Figure 8:** Verb tense inconsistencies in *Rocket League*'s old main menu.

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBM1nnLR1y0

As can be seen in the images, *edita* was used in one string, while in another *modificar* was used, thus creating a verb tense inconsistency. In video games, imperative forms are preferred because they refer to the player directly, whereas infinitive tenses tend to be more neutral and therefore 'colder' and more distanced from the player. Even though these strings are no longer in the game, these buttons still have an explanatory text, though shorter. Unfortunately, they still contain inconsistency issues because infinitives are used: *Salir de Rocket League* and *Ver opciones de personalización*. To maintain consistency, the imperative forms of these verbs should be used. In the second string, a verb like *Modifica* may work better in the imperative form than *Ve*.

### *4.1.6. Grammar Issues*

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | Common cars | Común carrocería | Carrocería (Común) |
| 19 | Premium cars | Prima carrocería | Carrocería (Premium) |
| 20 | Rare decal | Raro calcomanía | Calcomanía (Raro) |
| 21 | Limited decal | Limitado calcomanía | Calcomanía (Limitado) |
| 22 | Unusual antenna | Inusual antena | Antena (Inusual) |

Examples from 18 to 22 had the same grammatical error, where the adjective precedes the noun. Although Spanish allows for adjectives to precede nouns, the **natural order** is noun-adjective. For instance, example 22 is not a grammatical error *per se*, as the adjective can precede the noun, but *Antena inusual* would sound much more natural. In 18, the noun-adjective order must be followed, as the adjective *común* before the noun is extremely unnatural and grammatically incorrect. In example 19, not only is there a

mistranslation because ‘premium’ is translated as *prima*, but it must also be placed after the noun to abide by grammar rules. In examples 20 and 21, the adjectives do not agree with the noun and they are also placed before it.

All these errors have been corrected in the current game by placing the adjective inside parentheses. Because these adjectives refer to the different rarities of objects, it is possible that they are **variables** that do not allow for gender variation, which would explain why 20 and 21 had agreement issues and why the current ones are placed inside parentheses rather than constructed as ordinary phrases like *Calcomanía rara*. If this is the case, using them is a good option. If this is not the case, the proposal above should be used. Even though there are no agreement issues because the adjective inside the parentheses refers to the rarity itself and not the object, it still is visually awkward to see disagreement between noun and adjective.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 23 | When equipped | Cuando estás equipado | Cuando está equipado |
| 24 | Distance driven: X Feet | Distancia conducida: X Pies | Distancia conducida: X Metros |

Conversely, 23 contains an instance of subject-verb agreement error. The whole sentence reads *Cuando estás equipado, este ítem guarda un registro de tus salvadas*, where *salvadas* can also be *partidos ganados*, *disparos*, etc. Therefore, there was no agreement between the verb *estás* and the noun *ítem*. This has been corrected. In 24, a capital letter was used after a numeral, which is still not corrected. After a number, lower case must be used, which would result in *Distancia conducida: X metros*.

### *4.1.7. Mistranslations*

4.1.7.1. Highly Possible Machine Translations

This subgroup englobes those mistranslations whose quality is indicative of a highly probable usage of machine translation.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | Ping | Recursos de red | Ping |

25 contains an excessively literal translation that results in a term that is hardly ever used to refer to 'ping.' Ping refers to the delay in milliseconds that there is between the player's client and the server. The higher the ping, the worse the connection, which will result in rubberbanding and other lag artifacts that will impede an enjoyable gameplay experience. Therefore, it is important for players to know what their ping is. In Spanish, the **anglicism** 'ping' is usually used, but there are other alternatives to avoid it, such as *Conexión* or *Latencia*. *Ping*, and especially *recursos de red*, are terms that may be too obscure to players (although the anglicism is widely spread), so using one of the Spanish equivalents proposed above would be preferrable.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | Bicycle hit | Golpe con la bicicleta | Golpe con bicicleta |
| 27 | Hat trick | Truco de sombrero | Hat trick |

Examples 26 and 27 were **literal translations** of 'bicycle hit' and 'hat trick,' so literal that it may be argued that they were done with machine translation. Context is of extreme relevance in these strings, and a translator without context would recognise these strings to be football terms. Even though they have been corrected in the current game, they are still hugely improvable. *Golpe con bicicleta* is still overly literal and practically the same as the old translation. In Spanish, there are various ways to refer to a bicycle hit or kick, such as *tijera*, *chilena* or, if a more neutral term is preferred, *remate acrobático*. In the case of 27, 'hat trick' is an anglicism that is widely spread in the footballing world, so leaving it as *hat trick* in Spanish already works, but it can be avoided by using *triplete*.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 28 | Rocket Boosts | Mejoras de cohete | Mejoras de cohete |
| 29 | Boost | Empuje | Turbo |

28 is another instance of literal translation, where **context** was not accounted for, either because MT was involved or the translator did not account for it, and therefore produced a mistranslation. Even if there is decontextualisation, there were many strings at the beginning of the game to deduce that cars and football were involved. In this case,

‘boost’ is literally translated as *mejora*, one of its many meanings. Although other strings have corrected the error, this particular string still contains the first translation. Because ‘boost’ refers to the car’s boost, *turbos* or *propulsores* are valid translations. This term also appears in other strings, as can be seen in example 29, where it was not translated correctly either. In this case, *empuje* is used to refer to the car’s boost. Even though this translation is closer to the actual meaning, it is still too literal of a translation that does accurately transfer the original meaning. Fortunately, it has been corrected.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 30 | Toppers | Réplica | Adorno |
| 31 | Propeller hat | Cabeza del propulsor | Gorra con hélice |

Example 30 is another extremely poor translation, where ‘toppers’ was translated as *réplica*. Once again, a literal translation that does not account for context. A topper can be a *réplica* in that it can refer to a witticism that tops the previous one, that outdoes it. However, in this case it is referring to those cosmetic items that can be placed on top of the car, such as hats:


**Figure 9:** Original toppers menu in *Rocket League*.
Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCG-oDaukps

Therefore, the corrected translation *adorno* is accurate to what these cosmetics are. One of the various toppers that were introduced at the time was the ‘propeller hat,’ which is example 31. It is another instance where a literal translation results in a mistranslation. Not only was ‘propeller’ mistranslated as *propulsor*, but ‘hat’ was taken as the upmost part of something, instead of a literal hat, which produced this translation. Even without

context, *gorra con hélice*, the corrected current translation, is the most likely correct translation, apart from the fact that *cabeza del propulsor* is quite non-sensical.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 32 | Pool shots | Disparos en grupo | Carambola |
| 33 | Winner by forfeit | Ganador por penalty | Ganador por penalty |
| 34 | Cross-network | Cruz-red | Multiplataforma |
| 35 | Free Play | Jugada gratis | Juego libre |

32 is another instance of literal translation, where 'pool' was translated as *grupo*, therefore resulting in *disparos en grupo*. Like in many of the previous strings, it looks like each word was **translated separately** and then reassembled, which provokes these mistranslations. In this case, it is referring to a *carambola*, which in *Rocket League* means scoring a goal by bumping another car into the ball, so it has been corrected.

33 is another example of mistranslation where the wrong meaning of a word was taken, instead of the more literal one. In this case, 'forfeit' was translated as *penalty* because it can mean *sanción* in a sports context. Therefore, *sanción* or *penalización* would be the correct term, but besides that, it is extremely clear that 'Winner by forfeit' is referring to a team winning because the opponent team has forfeited or left the match. Consequently, *Victoria por abandono* would not only be an accurate translation, but it would also be an inclusive one by avoiding *ganador*. Even though this string is very common, it has not been corrected.

Finally, example 34 contained another translation that seems to have been done **word for word**, as 'cross' was wrongly translated as *cruz*, resulting in *cruz-red*, an extremely wrong translation. The same happens in example 35, where 'free' has been translated as *gratis* and 'play' as *jugada*, thus resulting in *jugada gratis*. This refers to a game mode where a player can play in an arena freely, without opponents or timers, so it is a serious mistranslation. Fortunately, both errors have been corrected.

#### 4.1.7.2. 'Normal' Mistranslations

Although these translations are still of substandard quality, they are not as clear markers of machine translations as the previous ones.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 36 | Playlist | Lista de juegos | Lista de partidos |
| 37 | Output type | Tipo de producción de sonido | Tipo de producción de sonido |
| 38 | Defending… | Defensa. | Defiendo… |
| 39 | Nice shot! | ¡Buen Gol! | ¡Buen disparo! |

Error 36 is a mistranslation due to the use of *juegos*. In video games, playlists refer to the different **game modes** that can be played. Each game mode has its own specific playlist, which can be selected to search a match in that game mode. The current translation is a better translation, although *Listas de partidas* or *Modos de juego* would be clearer terms to refer to a game's game modes. Unfortunately, 'Playlist' is incorrectly translated in other strings currently in the game, as can be seen in the following image:


**Figure 10:** 'Playlist' mistranslation in current *Rocket League*.

Because the game features songs in the main menu, the translator may have got confused and thought 'playlists' was referring to music playlists, or it may have been translated using MT. Regardless, it should be translated like explained above and without an initial capital letter. This image also contains another error in the second line, where *Intenta* should be *Intentando,* as it is referring to the game trying to find players with similar skill.

Error 37 was an awkward mistranslation of 'output type.' Even though it is somewhat close to the original meaning, *Salida de audio* is the usual phrase used to refer to the audio output type. Errors 38 and 39 are quick chat messages, so these had an impact on **player communication**. Error 38 is a mistranslation because the original message's intention is to let teammates know that the player is going to be defending, whereas the old translation seemed to indicate that the player wanted everybody or somebody to defend. Error 39 could also be a wrong text implementation, where the translation of the string 'Nice goal!' may have been wrongly implemented in the 'Nice shot!' one.

However, there is no ‘Nice goal!’ string, so this is a mistranslation that had a major impact on player communication, since the player that took a shot may have taken it in an ironic way, thus thinking his or her teammates were criticising him or her for not scoring a goal.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 40 | No problem. | No problemo. | No hay problema. |
| 41 | Need boost! | ¡Necesito impulso! | ¡Necesito turbo! |
| 42 | Collected | Recolectado | Coleccionado |
| 43 | Rocket Boosts | Huella de cohete | Acelerador |
| 44 | A 4v4 hectic battle | Una batalla héctica de 4 contra 4 | No longer in game |
| 45 | USA | UU. EE | EE. UU. |

Error 40 sparked laughs among Spanish and English players alike, as it is a common phrase to say ‘No problem’ in a Mock Spanish manner. Moreover, it is a phrase that has appeared in the *Terminator 2: The Judgement Day* movie, so this mistranslation included **unwanted references** and connotations, but it has been corrected.

Example 41 contains the term ‘boost’ like in example 29 in the previous subsection. In that example it was translated as *empuje*, whereas here it was translated as *impulso*. Although this one is closer to the English ‘boost,’ *turbo* is still preferrable.

Example 42 poses different errors: on the one hand, it is a mistranslation of ‘collected’ because it is referring to the collection of in-game items, so *recolectar* would not work here; on the other hand, it would create a grammar error because any number above one would result in a **number disagreement**, such as *12 recolectado*. This is also the case for the current string, so a translation like *Obtenidos: X* would solve the issue.

Example 43 contains the same English string as example 28 in the previous subsection. This string appeared when customising the car, whereas 28 appeared when browsing through the inventory. Nonetheless, 43 was translated as *huella de cohete*, while 28 was translated as *mejoras de cohete*. It is unclear why the same string had different translations, but 43 has been corrected, unlike 28.

In example 44, ‘hectic’ was wrongly translated as *héctico*. Although it is a correct word, its meaning is far from what it seems, as it is related to tuberculosis. The string is no longer in the game, but *Una batalla caótica* would be the correct translation. In

example 45, the incorrect abbreviation for the USA was used, as it may have been translated as *Unidos Estados,* but it has been corrected.

| | ENGLISH | OLD TRANSLATION | CURRENT TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 46 | Searching in all regions | Buscando en todas las religiones | Buscando en todas las regiones |
| 47 | Back to game | Volver al juego | Volver al juego |
| 48 | Mute | Silenciando | Silenciar/denunciar jugador |

It is unclear how error 46 came to be, but the translator may have misread 'regions' for 'religions' and thus translated accordingly. Even then, he or she should have detected the **non-sensical** nature of the translation, or it should not have gone past linguistic testing (if any). Regardless, it has been corrected. On the other hand, error 47 is common in video games, because 'game' can be translated as *juego* or *partida*. However, an experienced gamer or video game localiser would instantly detect these strings to refer to resuming an ongoing match. Therefore, *Volver al partido,* instead of *partida*, would work in this game because matches are football matches. Finally, error 48 used a gerund when the original did not contain any, which resulted in an awkward translation that has been corrected.

All in all, both mistranslations where MT was probably involved and those where that is not so clear severely impacted gameplay experience. Some mistranslations allow for the deduction of what they are trying to refer to, but there are others that are opaquer and therefore impede the player's engagement with the game.

### 4.2. Strings from 2021

Unlike the previous ones, these are strings that are currently in the game. To analyse them and to comment on the proposed translation, they are divided into groups following the in-game item classification. Inside these groups, subgroups have been created for each type of error found.

#### *4.2.1. Player Titles*

Player titles appear below a player's gamertag, as can be seen in the image below:


**Figure 11:** *Rocket League* player titles in the scoreboard of a match.

Therefore, they are directly referencing the player that has them equipped. For instance, if a player equips the player title *dominguero*, it means that that player is describing themselves as a Sunday driver. However, there are other titles that are acquired by winning tournaments or by reaching high ranks such as Grand Champion or Supersonic Legend. In this case, it is not so much the player describing themselves as showing off an achievement. Regardless, it is still referring to the player, so **inclusiveness** is crucial.

4.2.1.1. Mistranslations

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | BOOST HOG | EGOÍSTA DE LOS IMPULSOS | EGOÍSTA DEL TURBO |
| 2 | FLIP LORD | EMINENCIA DE LOS REGATES | EMINENCIA DE LAS VOLTERETAS |

The mistranslation in 1 is derived from the mistranslations of ‘boost’ at the beginning of the game, where *impulso* and *empuje* were used. Therefore, a simple change from *impulsos* to *turbo* is enough to solve the issue. Example 2 is also provoked by a mistranslation of an in-game element. In this case, ‘flip’ is a basic mechanic, where the car does a flip to one direction after double pressing the jump button and keeping the joystick in the direction the player wants the car to flip in. In Spanish, these flips would be better described by *voltereta*, but the title uses *regates*. Even though it could work if it has been transcreated, flips do not necessarily involve dribbling, as this is another separate

mechanic. Consequently, it has been changed to *volteretas* to refer more accurately to the mechanic the original is alluding to.

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | SURE STRIKER | DELANTERO CONFIADO | ATACANTE INFALIBLE |
| 4 | TILT DETECTOR | DETECTOR DE INCLINACIÓN | DETECTAENFADOS |

Mistranslation 3 is in the translation of 'sure' as *confiado*. Even though this is one of its meanings, 'sure' here seems to refer to a striker that does not miss. Moreover, *delantero confiado* poses inclusiveness issues, so it was changed altogether to *atacante infalible*, where *infalible* can contain both meanings of a striker that is sure of themselves and that does not miss. Finally, 4 mistranslates 'tilt' as *inclinación*. Though this is the most immediate meaning, 'tilt' in video games is always used to refer to a player that is angry or frustrated. Consequently, the anglicism is widely spread among Spanish gamers, but to avoid it and to create an inclusive translation, **compounding** has been used.

4.2.1.2. Improvable Strings

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 5 | BACKSEAT DRIVER | CUÑADO AUTOMOVILÍSTICO | COPILOTO |
| 6 | LEADFOOT | PIES DE PLOMO | ACELERADOR FÁCIL |
| 7 | ALL-STAR | TODA UNA ESTRELLA | ESTELAR |

5 contains a reference to 'backseat gaming,' which is used to refer to those people that are not playing the game but are constantly teaching and telling the player that is playing what to do. The official translation not only is non-inclusive, but it is also confusing as to what it means. It may refer to a prototypical brother-in-law that tells the driver what to do, but this cannot be extrapolated to everyone. Therefore, it has been changed to *copiloto* to englobe both meanings of 'passenger' and 'backseat gaming.' Moreover, *piloto* and

*copiloto* are inclusive because RAE does not contemplate their feminine versions, which are almost never used.

In 6, 'leadfoot' may contain a **wordplay** on the football term 'lead foot.' However, because it is written as a compound, the meaning of 'foot as lead' was used. It is a term that refers to somebody who likes to speed, therefore having a foot as lead on the pedal. *Pies de plomo* may work here, but it is an idiom that is not associated with cars, as it means to be cautious or to tread cautiously. Changing it to *acelerador fácil* creates a wordplay on *gatillo fácil* and thus keeps the main meaning of the original string. Finally, example 7 already works, but it seemed a literal translation of 'all' for *toda*, even if this is a valid expression in Spanish. *Estelar* is also inclusive and avoids the use of 'all.'

4.2.1.3. Unlocalised Strings

These are those strings that are not translated into Spanish for some unknown reason. Therefore, tables will only have two columns, one for the original string and one for the proposal, as the original and the current Spanish string coincide.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 8 | AIRHEAD | CABEZA HUECA |
| 9 | ANIMATOR | DIBUJANTE |
| 10 | CARPOOLER | COCHE COMPARTIDO |

Example 8 is a straightforward translation that is also inclusive, since other options like *mentecato* would not be inclusive. Example 9 refers to the profession of animating drawings. The game has many objects with names and aesthetics that contain cartoon elements, so it is not surprising that there is a player title too. In this case, *animador* would not be inclusive, but *dibujante de dibujos animados* would result in too **long** of a string. Consequently, it has been left as *dibujante*, which also implicitly contains the element of 'cartoons.' In order to make it explicit and inclusive, *pro de los dibujos animados* or similar would need to be used, but it would also result in a long string.

'Carpooler' in example 10 is used to indicate those people that share a car, that is, to carpool. There is no equivalent term in Spanish other than *compartir coche*, but *compartidor de coche* would sound unidiomatic and be exclusive, hence the use of **nominalisation**. It is a technique where a grammatical category is transformed into a

noun. Even though there is no transformation in this string because there is no official translation, the use of an adjective with the suffix '*-dor*' has been avoided by using a noun to achieve inclusiveness. Obviously, the use of a noun instead of an adjective will create a more indirect link between title and player, but the link is still palpable and inclusive.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 11 | CHIP CHAMP | AS DE LAS VASELINAS |
| 12 | COMMITTED | COMPROMISO CON EL BALÓN |
| 13 | COUCH POTATO | AMANTE DEL SOFÁ |
| 14 | CROSS-PLATFORMER | FAN MULTIPLATAFORMA |

Example 11 contains a **football term**, 'chip.' It is a type of shot where the player kicks the ball from underneath to create a lobbed trajectory that goes over the heads of opponents. In Spanish there are many terms to refer to it, but the most common one is *vaselina*, followed by *sombrero* and *globo*. All of these would work here, but what was important was to create an inclusive translation. *Campeón de las vaselinas* would not be inclusive, so *as* was used, which is a term that is used in other player titles.

Example 12 contains a term from *Rocket League*, although it can be extrapolated to any ball-based sport. To commit to a ball means to go for the ball, to compromise to go for it. If two players in the same team go for the ball at the same time, that is called a double commit, and so forth. There is no equivalent term in Spanish, as the anglicism is used, but a rough equivalent would be *comprometido a ir a por el balón*. Because *comprometido* is not inclusive, nominalisation has been used again.

'Couch potato' in example 13 is another term with **no equivalent** idiom in Spanish. Therefore, it has been explained with the use of *amante* to be inclusive. This is also the case for 'cross-platformer' in 14, as it is a term restricted to the gaming world. A cross-platform game allows for players to play with and against players of other consoles. For instance, PlayStation 5 and PC players playing together. Therefore, a cross-platformer is a player that uses this feature. In Spanish, *multiplataforma* and *juego cruzado* are the usual terms to refer to it. Because *multiplataformero* would not be inclusive, *fan* has been used, since someone using this feature would logically mean they are a fan of it.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 15 | DIRTSIDER | TERRESTRE |
| 16 | DRIFT QUEEN | REINA DE LOS DERRAPES |
| 17 | DUELIST | DUELISTA |
| 18 | FIFTH WHEEL | SUJETARRUEDAS |
| 19 | FLIPTASTIC | LEYENDA DE LAS ACROBACIAS |

Example 15 contains another made-up term that has no clear equivalent in Spanish. In this case, 'dirtsider' is a term restricted to science-fiction works that is used in a derogatory way to denominate those people that live on the Earth or on the Moon, 'spacer' being its antonym. Because of the game's theme, it may contain a wordplay with 'dirt,' where 'dirtsider' would be someone who likes to race on dirt tracks, or a car driving on dirt. It is unclear how many **layers** the term has, but 'dirt' seems to be the nucleus. *Terrestre* seemed to fit the best, as it is used to refer to people living on Earth and contains the 'terra' element that can be applied to dirt races and dirt cars.

Example 16 is specifically non-inclusive because there is another title called 'Drift King,' which is translated as *As de los derrapes*. To maintain the original duality of king-queen, it has been changed to *Rey de los derrapes*. 'Drift Queen' may contain a reference to the 'Drag Queens,' but the *derrape* element was more important to keep due to the game's theme, as well as the title duality.

17 is a straightforward translation that is also inclusive, whereas 18 is more complex. 'Fifth wheel' is often used as a synonym of 'third wheel,' meaning an unnecessary person or thing. It is generally used to designate a person that accompanies a couple, which would be a third wheel, or two couples, which would be a fifth wheel. In Spanish, this is called an *aguantavelas* or *sujetavelas*, but it was important to keep the 'wheel' element of the title due to the game's theme. Therefore, a wordplay has been created with *rueda* and *sujetavelas*, thus creating *sujetarruedas*. *Rueda de repuesto* was also an option, but it does not confer the same meaning as the original.

In 19, suffixed words, such as *volteretástico* or *volterestacular* did not flow naturally, so a suffix was not used like in the original string to favour a normal sentence structure. 'Fliptastic' contains the '-tastic' suffix, which creates adjectives denoting someone or something that is the perfect example of what the adjective is referring to. However, it can also be used ironically to refer to someone or something as being the

worst example. In this case, ‘fliptastic’ is used to indicate a player that is extremely good at doing flips, although the ironic connotation can also be contained in it. *Leyenda de las acrobacias* can also be used in an ironic tone. The use of the term ‘acrobatic’ is common in *Rocket League* as a **metatextual reference** to its prequel, *Supersonic Acrobatic Rocket-Powered Battle-Cars*. Its use in this translation not only allows to keep the ‘flip’ element in the original string, but it also adds this new layer of meaning that can be perceived by long-time fans.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 20 | FREE SPIRIT | ALMA LIBRE |
| 21 | GEARSHIFTER | CAMBIAMARCHAS |
| 22 | GRIDIRON GURU | GURÚ DEL GRIDIRON |
| 23 | HARDSTUCK | RANGO INMÓVIL |
| 24 | JUGGLER | MALABARISTA |
| 25 | NET WORKER | ARAÑA ENTRE REDES |
| 26 | OG PLAYER | AQUÍ DESDE EL INICIO |
| 27 | PASSTRONAUT | PASESTRONAUTA |
| 28 | PROSPECT ELITE | PROMESA ÉLITE |

20 is another straightforward translation, but ‘spirit’ was changed to ‘soul’ because it sounded better than *espíritu libre,* but this may be a subjective change. In 21, compounding was used again. Though ‘gear shifter’ can refer to the instrument used to shift gears, this meaning would create a title that does not describe the player in any form. Consequently, the meaning that does describe the player (someone who changes gears fast) was used to create the compound. 22 contains the word ‘Gridiron,’ which refers to American football. In Spanish, this would be the anglicism *rugby*, but the game mode’s name did not use this term and was left untranslated. Because this title was obtained by playing the game mode, ‘Gridiron’ needed to be left untranslated.

23 contains another term specific to gaming. ‘Hardstuck’ is used to label those people that cannot get out of a certain competitive rank. For example, a player in the bronze rank that cannot rank up to silver for an extended period of time would be a hardstuck bronze player. In Spanish there is no equivalent because the anglicism is used, but *atrapado* or *atascado* would be rough equivalents. Obviously, these would not be

inclusive, so it was somewhat transcreated to explain what the term is: the player has an immobile competitive rank because they cannot get out of such rank.

24 is a straightforward translation that is also inclusive, while 25 is more complex. It contains a pun with ‘networker,’ someone who facilitates contacts, and ‘net worker,’ someone who works in the net, that is, a goalkeeper. Only the second meaning needed to be kept, but *red* was still used to maintain the essence of the first meaning. *Araña* is commonly used to refer to goalkeepers that save many shots, so its use here was fitting to add more meaning to the translation.

26 contains another gaming term, ‘og.’ It comes from ‘original,’ so ‘og player’ refers to those players that have played a game since it was first released. In Spanish, the use of *jugador* would not be inclusive, so the meaning was explained while still maintaining inclusiveness. To finish this batch, 27 and 28 were straightforward translations. 27 contains a pun with ‘pass’ and ‘astronaut’ that was literally rendered.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 29 | RENEGADE | REBELDE |
| 30 | ROCKET ROOKIE | PRINCIPIANTE DE LOS COHETES |
| 31 | SHOT NINJA | NINJA DE LOS DISPAROS |
| 32 | SILENT KNIGHT | NOCHE DE PAZ |
| 33 | SLEIGH QUEEN | REINA DEL TRINEO |
| 34 | SOCCER SENPAI | SENPAI DEL FÚTBOL |
| 35 | SOLOIST | SOLISTA |
| 36 | SPEED CHASER | PERSIGUEVELOCIDAD |
| 37 | SUPERSONIC ACROBAT | ACROBACIAS SUPERSÓNICAS |

29 and 31 are straightforward translations that are also inclusive. 30 uses a sentence structure that is also found in other titles, such as *Señor de los cohetes* or *Élite de los cohetes*. 32 contains a wordplay on ‘silent night’ and ‘knight.’ Because this title could be acquired during the Christmas event, the first part of the wordplay was **prioritised**, hence its translation as *Noche de paz*. This is also the case for 33, which contains a wordplay with ‘slay queen.’ ‘Slay queen’ is commonly used to encourage women that ‘destroy’ with their devastating comments, or to refer to those that dress well, therefore ‘slaying’ with their beauty. Like ‘silent knight,’ this title was released during

another Christmas event, so the most immediate meaning of 'sleigh' was prioritised to create *reina del trineo*. The original title is deliberately non-inclusive, so the translation is also non-inclusive.

34 and 35 are straightforward translations that are inclusive, although 35 contains a reference to music, as a 'soloist' is a musician who performs a solo, hence its translation as *solista*. 36 uses the technique of compounding once more to create an inclusive translation, while 37 uses a change in noun. This last example in 37 is somewhat special because it contains another **metatextual reference** to *Rocket League*'s prequel, hence its use of 'supersonic acrobat.' Therefore, both elements needed to be kept in the translation to maintain the reference. However, this would have created a non-inclusive translation, *acróbata supersónico*, where the adjective makes it not inclusive. Consequently, the name *acróbata* has been changed for a synonymic name to force the adjective to refer to this new name instead of the player *per se*.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 38 | TECHNICIAN | TÉCNICA ASOMBROSA |
| 39 | THE FANTASTIC | FORMIDABLE |
| 40 | THE MERCURIAL | TEMPERAMENTAL |
| 41 | THROWBACK | AÑORANZA DEL PASADO |
| 42 | TROUBLE SHOOTER | TERROR DEL ÁREA |
| 43 | VIRTUAL REALIST | REALISTA VIRTUAL |
| 44 | WHEELER | A DOS RUEDAS |

38 may refer to a mechanic, due to the game's theme, but if this were the case, 'mechanic' would have been used instead. This may refer to a player's technique in the game. The more game mechanics a player has mastered, the better technique they have. Therefore, a technician is a player that can perform a wide array of mechanics, thus having an astonishing technique. 39 and 40 are part of a group of titles that start with 'the,' such as 'the calculator' or 'the accelerator.' It is clear that using the equivalent *el* in Spanish would have resulted in non-inclusive translations, so inclusive adjectives were used: *formidable* and *temperamental*.

41 posed a greater challenge due to its **non-equivalence** in Spanish. This term is commonly used in the phrase 'Throwback Thursday,' where users of social media post

an image from their past to reminisce those times with nostalgia. In Spanish, its rough equivalents would be *retorno al pasado*, *reminiscencia* or *retroceso*. These alone would not convey the original meaning, so the element of nostalgia was added with *añoranza*.

42 may contain a wordplay on 'to troubleshoot' (problem solving) and 'trouble shooter' (dangerous striker). It felt unnecessary to keep the wordplay, so the string was **transcreated** while keeping the meaning that was closer to football. A trouble shooter is a striker to be reckoned with, as their shots are problematic to deal with, so they are a danger inside the area.

Finally, 43 is straightforward and inclusive. In 44, 'wheeler' refers to somebody who does a 'wheelie,' a manoeuvre where the front wheels come up. In cars, this would translate into the car driving with two wheels, so it has been translated as such instead of using the term *caballito*, which is the common term to refer to a wheelie.

4.2.1.4. Inclusiveness Issues

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 45 | MOTOR MANIAC | OBSESO DEL MOTOR | PASIÓN POR EL MOTOR |
| 46 | RELIABLE ROTATOR | ROTADOR FIABLE | ROTACIÓN FIABLE |
| 47 | SALT MINER | MAL PERDEDOR | MAL PERDER |
| 48 | THE CONDUCTOR | DIRECTOR DE ORQUESTRA | DIRECCIÓN ORQUESTAL |
| 49 | VETERAN | VETERANO | VETERANÍA EN COHETES |
| 50 | EXPERT | EXPERTO | EXPERTICIA EN COHETES |
| 51 | MASTER | MAESTRO | MAESTRÍA EN COHETES |
| 52 | TRANSCENDENT MASTER | MAESTRO TRASCENDENTAL | MAESTRÍA TRASCENDENTAL |
| 53 | ULTIMATE BALLER | MAGO DEL BALÓN | MAGIA CON EL BALÓN |

All the strings above have undergone a process of nominalisation to achieve inclusiveness. In 45, *motormaníaco* is a term that is used to refer to those passionate about

cars. However, it is not inclusive, so an **explicative translation** was used. In 46, it was important to keep the 'rotator' element, as this is a term specific to *Rocket League*. It refers to the player rotation on the field: when a player centres the ball, this player rotates back to defence to become a defender, while the player in the midfield becomes the striker and the player in defence becomes the midfielder. These positions rotate as players go for the ball and then go back to defence. Therefore, a reliable rotator is that player who understands and correctly performs these rotations. These rotations may be called out by a player, who would become the conductor of the team, the organiser, as title 48 depicts.

In 47, the official translation is valid because it correctly identifies 'salt' as being angry, a 'salt miner' being somebody who is extremely competitive in video games and thus gets angry often. Unfortunately, it was not inclusive, so it was changed to the **idiom** *tener mal perder*. Titles 49 to 53 are acquired by levelling up in the game. In these types of titles, and sometimes in the 'normal' types, the use of *de los cohetes* is common, *cohetes* being a synecdoche for the in-game rocket-powered cars. Therefore, it has also been used here together with nominalisation.

Conversely, titles 52 and 53 do not contain this. In 53 it was important to keep the element of *mago* in *mago del balón*, as it is a common idiom to refer to a player that is highly skilled. However, *maga* is accepted, so nominalisation was used to be inclusive and to maintain the 'magical' element of the idiom.

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 54 | ROCKETEER | SEÑOR DE LOS COHETES | AUTORIDAD DE LOS COHETES |
| 55 | ELITE CHALLENGER | EXPERTO EN DESAFÍOS | ESPECIALISTA EN DESAFÍOS |
| 56 | ROCKET DEMIGOD | SEMIDIÓS DE LOS COHETES | SEMIDEIDAD DE LOS COHETES |
| 57 | BALLISTIC | IRACUNDO | IRASCIBLE |
| 58 | SHOWBOAT | FANFARRÓN | FACHENDA |
| 59 | QUICK CHAT CHAMPION | CAMPEÓN DEL CHAT RÁPIDO | AS DEL CHAT RÁPIDO |

Titles 54 to 56 are also acquired by levelling up, which is why 54 and 56 also contain *de los cohetes*. In the case of 54, the official translation was blatantly non-inclusive, so a different noun was used. This title, in the beginning of the game, was the last title to be acquired by levelling up, so *autoridad* seems a fitting noun for the high level achieved. This is also the case for 55, where an inclusive synonym is used instead. 56 was more complex because the 'demigod' element needed to be kept, as it currently is the last title acquired by levelling up, given to players when level 1000 is reached. However, *semidiosa* is accepted, so *semidiós* is not inclusive. Although *semideidad* is not a common word, it can be used like *deidad*, in this case to encompass all demigods.

Titles 57 and 58 are examples of the use of a synonym that is inclusive, while title 59 is an example of the use of *as*. This term is used in many correctly translated strings because of its versatility and inclusiveness. Consequently, it has been used here again as an inclusive synonym of *campeón*.

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 60 | FLOATER | INDECISO | CONDUCCIÓN TITUBEANTE |
| 61 | SUNDAY DRIVER | DOMINGUERO | CONDUCCIÓN DOMINGUERA |
| 62 | PROFESSOR OF PHYSICS | PROFESOR DE FÍSICA | AMOR POR LA FÍSICA |
| 63 | ROCKIN' ROLLER | ROCANROLERO | ENTUSIASTA DEL ROCANROL |
| 64 | SPINNING CAR WIZARD | MAGO DE LOS GIROS | PEONZA VOLADORA |
| 65 | THE FABULOUS | EL FABULOSO | TODA UNA SENSACIÓN |
| 66 | WALL-CRAWLER | TREPADOR DE MUROS | TREPAMUROS |

Titles 60 and 61 use a technique seen before in title 37, where an inclusiveness issue is resolved by adding a noun for the adjective to modify, instead of using the adjective to refer to the player directly. *Indeciso* and *dominguero* are both correct translations, but they are not inclusive. Therefore, the inclusion of *conducción* in both

allows for these adjectives to modify the noun, and the resulting title is a driving style that defines the player.

Title 62 is not inclusive due to the use of *profesor*. Other alternatives like *docente* or *doctorado en* were contemplated, but *amor por la física* seemed to work better. Those that are professor of physics are passionate about physics (although there may be some exceptions). Therefore, the string has been somewhat **transcreated** to keep the essence of the original while being inclusive. Title 63 is similar to 62 in that somebody who is a rock and roll follower (*rocanrolero*) is a lover of it, just like somebody who teaches physics is a lover of physics. Therefore, the same strategy as before has been used, however this time using *entusiasta* to avoid repeating *fan* or *amante*.

The 'spinning car' in title 64 refers to the fact that cars in *Rocket League* can perform air rolls and barrel rolls to readjust their trajectory while flying towards the ball. Because these air rolls usually involve a horizontal motion, cars look like a spinning top in the air, hence the transcreated translation *peonza voladora*.

To finish up the player titles section, title 65 contains a change in word to an inclusive synonym, in this case *sensacional*, which became *toda una sensación* to avoid having too many titles with one-word adjectives. The final title, 66, has been compounded to create an inclusive translation.

### *4.2.2. Goal Explosions*

These cosmetics allow players to customise the explosion that happens inside the net when a goal is scored (only the explosion equipped by the scorer will be seen). Therefore, it is crucial to consider the explosion's appearance when translating, so images will be provided in the appendices where necessary.

#### 4.2.2.1. Mistranslations

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Overgrowth | Sobrecrecimiento | Selva exuberante |
| 2 | Vampire bat | Murciélago vampírico | Murciélago vampiro |

In 1, a literal translation here does not work, as *sobrecrecimiento* is commonly used in medicine to denominate a certain condition rather than to overgrown nature. A more

transcreated translation following the explosion's appearance is therefore desirable (see figure A1 in Appendix A). In 2, a literal translation works, but *vampírico* is not the adjective used to refer to a vampire bat. Instead, *murciélago vampiro* is the correct term.

4.2.2.2. Unlocalised Strings

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | Atomizer | Explosión atómica |
| 4 | Buffy-Sugo | Buffy-Sugo |
| 5 | Digiglobe | Mundo digital |

Like in most video games, English uses **title case**, where the first letter of each word is capitalised. For example, instead of being 'Force razor,' it is written as 'Force Razor.' This practice is not common, even undesirable in Spanish, so it is important not to follow the original orthography and to write as if it were a sentence, even if this string may later appear in full uppercase. This will be something that will be followed in most goal explosions and boosts.

In 3, a literal translation would not accurately describe the explosion, as an *atomizador* in Spanish, as well as 'atomizer' in English, is a spray dispenser. Therefore, the more literal meaning of 'to atomise' was taken, meaning to divide into very small parts or into atoms. As can be seen in figure A2 in Appendix A, *explosión atómica* works because it resembles an atom and its circling components (neutrons, protons, electrons), and *explosión* reinforces this meaning, where the goal line has atomised the ball that has just gone in. The use of *explosión*, as well as *bomba*, is common in goal explosions to reinforce the idea of the goal creating an explosion in net as the name suggests, so it will be used in other strings.

4 is a special string in this thesis, as it is one of the few strings that has been left **unlocalised** after careful consideration. The character that appears in the explosion (see figure A3) is a made-up musician (or the musician's avatar) whose face can be seen advertised in the Tokyo Underpass arena. Furthermore, Neon Fields was created specifically for this character, with loudspeakers, light shows and a concert with the avatar on the stage. Therefore, it is clear that this character has become somewhat important in the game's limited lore, so leaving the name as the original is the safest bet. Moreover, as mentioned above, this character is first introduced in the Tokyo arena, so the '-Sugo'

suffix it contains is used to give the name a Japanese flair. This, together with the game's lore and the fact that artist names are usually not translated, are the reasons why it has been left untranslated.

5's name already describes the goal explosion's appearance: a globe of the world that is digitalised. *Digiglobo* is a valid option, but *mundo digital* was used to make the connection between the name and the explosion clearer, but also to refer to the fact that we live in a digital world.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | Force Razor | Cuchillas supersónicas |
| 7 | HoloData | Holocubos |
| 8 | Kablooey | ¡Cataplum! |
| 9 | Meta-Blast | Implosión |
| 10 | Mic Drop | Suelta el micro |

6 already presents the main issue in translating goal explosions: the explosion's appearance is sometimes **unclear**, even when analysing the original string. In this case, 'razor' gives the clue that the elements that rapidly circle the central explosion (see figure A4) are slashes, razors, or slashes created by razors. Consequently, *cuchillas supersónicas* or *cortes supersónicos* are both valid translations that contain all these meanings. Also, the use of *supersónicas* not only conveys the fast movement of the slashes, but it also adds the metatextual reference to *SARPBC* seen in previous strings.

7 follows the original string's structure by compounding *holográfico* and *cubos*. The equivalent to 'data' was not used because, even though these cubes (see figure A5) later explode into what seems to be data, the main part of the explosion is the arrangement of these cubes into a larger one that resembles a *Rubik* cube.

8 uses an **onomatopoeic** expression, usually spelt as 'kablooie,' where the prefix 'ka-' is used as an intensifier of the 'blooie,' a rendition of an explosion. Because the goal explosion does not present any distinctive features, an equivalent onomatopoeic expression has been used. 9 does present features, although these are somewhat unclear. It has been included in Appendix A (figure A6), but the whole explosion and its animation need to be considered. The halo and the rays that can be seen in the image are created right after the explosion. This halo and light rays are then sucked in by the light ball in

the centre and then disappear completely. This, together with the use of 'meta-' in the original string, point to this explosion being, in fact, an implosion, hence its translation.

The original string in 10 already clearly depicts the explosion's appearance, where a hand reaches out of the goal line and drops a mic. Dropping the mic at the end of a speech or song is a gesture of triumph, of a performance so well done it cannot be refuted. Even though this gesture originated in the 80s, it was popularised by former President of the United States Barack Obama, who performed mic drops in 2012 and in 2016 that quickly became memes. Therefore, it is important to keep the 'mic' element, which is why *suéltalo* and *déjalo caer* were discarded in favour of *suelta el micro*.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 11 | Mister Monsoon | Señor Monzón |
| 12 | Neuro-Agitator | Neuroagitador |
| 13 | Poof | Puf |
| 14 | Quasar | Cuásar |
| 15 | Rad Rock | Piedras preciosas |
| 16 | Righteous Gale | Vendaval fabuloso |

11 to 14 are straightforward translations, *Monzón* being capitalised because it is used as a proper name. In the case of 12, the original compound was followed, while in 13 an equivalent onomatopoeic expression is used. 15 posed a greater challenge due to its appearance (see figure A7) and how it correlates to the different **colour variations**. Colour variations of cosmetic items do not affect the translation of such items, as the original strings do not change either for each colour. However, in this case, the translation as *explosión de amatistas* would create a problem: amethysts are usually purple, so if the goal explosion is painted, they would no longer be amethysts. A case could be made that *amatistas* would still work, as the original unpainted goal explosion is the version translations are modelled after, but creating a risk-managed translation is safer. Therefore, *piedras preciosas* englobes all colours of precious stones while keeping the 'rad' element of the original in the literal meaning of *preciosas.*

16 contains the same challenge as previous strings, where the explosion's appearance is unclear (see figure A8). 'Gale' refers to a strong wind or a windstorm, so 'righteous' is not an adjective commonly paired with it. This adjective is strongly linked

with the explosion's aesthetic and theme, which together with the sound of the explosion give the impression of a fabulous, wonderful or marvellous gale. Therefore, *vendaval fabuloso* seemed the translation that fit this theme best.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 17 | Spatial Rift | Grieta interdimensional |
| 18 | Stay Puft | Hombre de malvavisco |
| 19 | Toon | Dibujo animado |
| 20 | Voxel | 8 bits |

17 is a straightforward translation, but *grieta interdimensional* is a more impactful term than *grieta espacial*, maybe because of the influence of science fiction, where *interdimensional* or *espacio-temporal* are more common. Regardless, the explosion's theme (see figure A9) allows for any of these translations to work.

18 contains an **intertextual reference** to the film *Ghostbusters* (Reitman, 1984). 'Stay Puft' is the last enemy that the Ghostbusters face in the film, which is a man made entirely of marshmallow (see figure A10). In Spanish, Stay Puft can be used to refer to it, so leaving it unlocalised can work, but the official translation in the film is *Hombre de malvavisco*. Consequently, the film translation has been used to maintain the reference.

To finish, explosion 19's aesthetics and sound when explodes mimic those explosions seen in cartoons (see figure A11). Even though 'toon' can be used in Spanish as an anglicism, it can be easily avoided by using its equivalent *dibujo animado*. Explosion 20 is also aesthetically peculiar in that it has been drawn in a pixelated style (see figure A12), reminiscent of *Minecraft*. This is because 'voxel' is a contraction of 'volumetric pixel,' the equivalent of a pixel in a 2D plane. However, the explosion is a normal explosion but pixelated, so it can be transcreated to fit this meaning. An 8-bit game is that game that has a pixelated art style. Although this art style is commonly associated with 'retro' games, some games released today choose this art style, especially indie companies, so *retro* does not fully transfer the meaning. Due to this and because the explosion mimics this art style, *8 bits* has been used.

4.2.2.3. Inclusiveness Issues

Goal explosions do not usually contain inclusiveness issues because they refer to the explosion itself, rather than the player. However, these three explosions were given to players as part of the Season 7 rewards. Players in the bronze and silver tiers would receive 21, gold and platinum players would receive 21 and 22, and diamond and above would receive the three of them. Therefore, they are indirectly **describing the player**, so inclusiveness is desired.

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | Striker | Delantero | Especialista del área |
| 22 | Striker Legend | Delantero legendario | Leyenda del área |
| 23 | Striker Pro | Delantero profesional | Profesional del área |

It is precisely because they are part of the same group of rewards that consistency across the three should be maintained. This way, players can instantly recognise them to be three versions of the same pack. To keep this consistency, the phrase *del área* has been used, which was already used in title number 42. This way, inclusiveness is achieved while allowing for players to recognise that the name refers to a striker, as they usually operate in the area. *Atacante* also appears in other strings to achieve inclusiveness, so these strings could also be *atacante*, *atacante de leyenda* and *atacante profesional*.

4.2.2.4. Stylistic Issues

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | Big Splash | Salpicón grande | Gran chapuzón |
| 26 | Hand Heart | Corazón con manos | Corazón con las manos |

In 25, *salpicón* is not the best **word choice**. Even though it is perfectly valid, it is commonly used to refer to a typical Spanish dish, so synonyms like *chapuzón* or *salpicadura* are preferrable. In this case, the former has been used because it is a fun word and it reflects the fact that the ball has created a big splash by immersing itself in the goal (see figure A13). Adjective-noun order has also been changed to create a more impactful name: *chapuzón grande* is not as epic-sounding as *gran chapuzón*, but this may be

personal preference. In 26, *corazón con las manos* flows better thanks to the inclusion of the definite article.

4.2.2.5. Improvable Strings

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 27 | Juiced | Jugoso | Explosión frutal |
| 28 | Party Time | Hora de fiesta | ¡Empieza la fiesta! |
| 29 | Riser | Efecto de aumento | Subidón |
| 30 | Shattered | Destrozado | Resquebrajado |
| 31 | Singularity | Bomba singular | Singularidad |

27 is a valid translation, but it being **too literal** makes it somewhat bland. As can be seen in figure A14, this goal explosion sends fruits flying out. Consequently, *explosión frutal* describes it more accurately, but it also imbues it with a more light-hearted tone that matches the game's theme.

This is also the case for strings 28 and 29. In 28, *hora de fiesta* sounds rather serious for a goal explosion that has confetti and balloons flying out (see figure A15) and children cheering 'Yay!' in the background. The addition of exclamation marks would be enough to lighten the tone, but the translation has also been changed to add to the light-heartedness. In the case of 29, the explosion's visuals do not help with the translation, as the name refers to what the explosion's audio is doing: music that builds up tension and rises to a climax. Hence, a 'riser,' or rising music. In Spanish, *subidón* can be used to describe the rush that one experiences when a song increases in volume, pace or tension. Therefore, it is a better translation in terms of tone and accuracy.

In 30, rather than being *destrozado*, the goal line breaks into tiny pieces (see figure A16) and then explodes, thus creating the effect of cracks opening like a wave through an invisible wall and then shattering. Therefore, the goal line cracks and then shatters, which is more accurately described by *resquebrajado*. Finally, the adjective *singular* in 31 does not quite work, as it means 'unique' rather than referring to a singularity. Thus, *bomba de singularidad* or simply *singularidad* are better options.

### *4.2.3. Boosts*

When a car uses its boost, a visible smoke comes out of the car's exhaust pipes. This smoke can be customised with any of the boost cosmetics, which changes its appearance and sound. Unlike toppers or antennas, a boost must always be equipped, be it the standard one or a higher rarity one. This, together with their visibility, makes them popular and sought-after items. Like in goal explosions, images will be in the appendices.

#### 4.2.3.1. Mistranslations

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Candy Corn | Caramelo de maíz | Dulces de Halloween |
| 2 | Candyfloss | Hilo de azúcar | Algodón de azúcar |
| 3 | Cloudburst | Nube de humo | Chaparrón |
| 4 | Enchanter | Encantador | Hechizado |
| 5 | Faded Cosmos | Cosmos degradado | Cosmos descolorido |
| 6 | Mood Slime | Humor Slime | Mocos románticos |

In 1, *caramelo de maíz* is a literal translation that results in a mistranslation. This is a sweet that is typical of the USA and Canada for Halloween. Therefore, there is no clear translation here in Spain, and the most 'correct' one, *maíz dulce*, would overlap with the type of popcorn. Therefore, the specific **cultural reference** has been discarded while keeping the Halloween tone with a more general term.

2 also contains a literal translation, so literal that it could be argued that **machine translation** was involved. It may be that the term was split into 'candy' and 'floss,' which were then translated in isolation and then reassembled, hence the mistranslation *hilo de azúcar*. If the boost resembled a candy string, this translation would work, but as can be seen in figure B1 in Appendix B, it clearly resembles a candyfloss, an *algodón de azúcar*.

The translation in 3 also **contradicts** the boost's appearance, as this 'smoke' is in fact a deluge, a great amount of water pouring out. Moreover, the standard boost has a blue hue that indicates this (see figure B2 in Appendix B), so *chaparrón*, *chubasco* or *aguacero* would work with this boost. In sum, any term that refers to rain.

The translation in 4 also somewhat clashes with the appearance of the boost. In this case, this appearance is unclear, but it resembles wizard incantations (see figure B3),

so *encantador* does not accurately reflect what the boost is and the 'magic' element is hidden. Thus, it has been changed to *hechizado*, which does not pose any inclusiveness issues because, like goal explosions, names refer to the object, not the player.

5 also has an inaccurate translation, where *degradado* is a mistranslation of 'faded' because it does not accurately reflect the boost's appearance (see figure B4). Even though it contains a gradient from white to black, it is faded because it has lost its colour when comparing it to its boost pair, 'golden cosmos.' Therefore, it is a bleached cosmos rather than a gradient cosmos.

6 is similar to 2 in that both words may have been translated separately, maybe with MT, and then reassembled, but 'mood' was not even translated. For this one, any translation that is not *mocos románticos* would be wrong, as 'mood slime' is a type of slime that appears in the *Ghostbusters II* film (Reitman, 1989), with the boost resembling such slime (see figure B5). In the Spanish version, this was translated as *mocos románticos*, so this translation has been used to maintain the intertextual reference.

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | Party Horn | Cuerno de fiesta | Matasuegras |
| 8 | Season X - Prospect | Temporada X: Expectativa | Temporada X: Promesa |
| 9 | Season X - Challenger | Temporada X: Desafiante | Temporada X: Aspirante |

7 is a blatant mistranslation where MT could have been involved because of how literal it is. 'Party horn' refers to paper tubes that unfurl when blown into, producing a noise like a horn, which are almost always used in parties or social gatherings. The boost shows confetti and similar party-related items flying out, and its sound is that of a party horn (see figure B6). Hence, its Spanish equivalent, *matasuegras*, is used.

Finally, boosts 8 and 9 were given to players at the end of a season as season rewards. Thus, 'prospect' and 'challenger' are former competitive ranks that no longer exist, which in these boosts have been translated literally and hence created mistranslations. *Promesa* is a better translation of 'prospect' than *expectativa*, and *aspirante* is also better than *desafiante*. What is more important, they are also inclusive, as competitive ranks refer to the player, they describe him or her on the basis of their skill.

4.2.3.2. Unlocalised Strings

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | Ambustion | Cauterización |
| 11 | Anispray | Aniespray |

In 10, ‘ambustion’ is an obsolete medical term referring to a burn. *Combustión* could have been used here, but *cauterización* would transfer the same meaning of ‘burn’ as well as keeping the medical undertone.

11 has been one of the most **problematic** strings because of its unclear meaning. It is clear that ‘spray’ is an element of the possible compound, where ‘ani’ would be the prefix or the other compounded word. This is a boost that was given to players as part of the Fan Rewards, that is, rewards that can only be obtained by watching *Rocket League* e-sports Twitch streams. It is part of the phase 7 items, released on July 1. Because the game’s anniversary in on July 7, this ‘ani’ may come from ‘anniversary,’ but if this were the case, ‘annispray’ would have been used. Because this is tremendously unclear even with the boost’s appearance (see figure B7), it has been translated following the original compound, but as a translator, I would use the translator’s log to inquire about this string. If it were not supplied, the project manager would be the next best option.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 12 | Blast Ray | Rayo de energía |
| 13 | Burnout | Quemarrueda |
| 14 | Cupid | Cupido |
| 15 | Dark Matter | Materia oscura |
| 16 | Ectoplasm | Ectoplasma |
| 17 | Fiber Optic | Fibra óptica |
| 18 | Flamerate | Combustión rápida |

12 is also a Fan Reward, but unlike ‘anispray,’ this is a much straightforward translation that follows the boosts appearance (see figure B8). 13 has been translated as *Recalentamiento* in other cosmetics, as there are names that are shared by different types of cosmetics, as will be seen in following boosts. However, ‘burnout’ refers to a brake stand burnout, where the brakes are applied together with the accelerator, thus creating a

white smoke cloud created by the back wheels. This is what the boost depicts (see figure B9), which in Spanish is commonly referred to as *quemar rueda*. Moreover, by compounding these two words into *quemarrueda*, a term that refers more directly to the boost is created.

14 to 17 are straightforward translations that follow the boost's aesthetics. Because their name is already descriptive of the boost, images will not be used. However, 'flamerate' in 18 was also a highly problematic term, comparable to 'anispray' in 11. The name's meaning is much clearer in this string, but because it can contain **two meanings** that are equally valid in the context, it is difficult to ascertain which of the two would fit best. One of the meanings is the literal one, 'flame rate,' which would mean 'the rate at which a mixture burns.' The other meaning would imply a wordplay on 'flame' and 'frame rate,' thus creating 'flamerate.' 'Frame rate' refers to the image frequency, the number of frames per second. The higher the frames, the more fluid an image looks. The first meaning is more immediate and likelier, so it is the one that has been used to create *combustión rápida*. Instead of translating it as *ratio de combustión*, it has been assumed this rate is high due to the boost's appearance (see figure B10), hence the translation. Nevertheless, I would also try to use the translator's log or contact somebody to clarify the string's meaning, like in boost 11.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 19 | Geo Soul | Alma geotérmica |
| 20 | Glimmerslag | Escoria reluciente |
| 21 | Glitch | Fallo del sistema |
| 22 | Hexphase | Hexafásico |
| 23 | HoloData | Holocubos |
| 24 | Hypernova | Hipernova |

19 is also a straightforward translation, but it was translated as *alma geotérmica* instead of *alma terrenal*, *alma geo* or *Geoalma*. The boost sends small rocks flying out of the exhaust pipes (see figure B11), and because boosts are inherently hot, *geotérmica* was used to add the 'thermal' element that is not present in the original. This way, a new **layer of meaning** is added without altering the original message. The boost in 20 also contains rocks, but this time it is slag, residue from smelting metal. This slag, as the name

indicates, glimmers while it floats just outside the car's exhaust pipes, as if they were outer space debris (see figure B12). Consequently, this prompted the somewhat literal translation *escoria reluciente*, which effectively transfers the meaning.

The term in boost 21 is commonly used in Spanish as an anglicism. It refers to any informatic error, often used as a synonym to 'bug.' The boost's aesthetics reminds of the archetypical film scenes where somebody enters a computer, physically or figuratively (see figure B13). *Fallo* alone would not fully transfer all the meaning, so the type of *fallo* has been specified by adding *del sistema,* although *informático* would have also transferred it.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 25 | Imulsion | Imulsión |
| 26 | Interdimensional GB | Ser gaseoso interdimensional |
| 27 | Krackle | Chisporroteo |
| 28 | Magmus | Magma |
| 29 | Nitrous | Nitroso |
| 30 | Pixel Fire | Fuego pixelado |

In 25, *imulsión* may seem a straightforward translation, but this term comes from the *Gears of War* game series (Epic Games, 2006). In the game's lore, it is a petrol-like substance that was extracted to fuel machines, but this gave rise to the various infected and mutated enemies that players must face. Therefore, to keep this **intertextual reference**, the official translation in the Spanish version of the game has been used, which coincides with a literal translation.

26 is another instance of an intertextual reference, this time to the *Rick and Morty* animated series (Roiland & Harmon, 2013). The boost's name stands for 'Interdimensional gaseous being,' a species in the series' lore. Due to its aesthetics and its sound (see figure B14), the boost is referencing the interdimensional being called 'fart,' which first appeared in episode 13, season 2 (2015). Therefore, to keep the intertextual reference, the official Spanish translation has been used, *ser gaseoso interdimensional*. Because the 'gaseous being' in the English string has been shortened to GB, the translation could also be shortened to *SG interdimensional* to avoid any

character limit issues. Another alternative would be to use *pedo*, the gas' name in Spanish, but it should be avoided, as the English one has intentionally avoided 'fart.'

Even though 27 is **deliberately misspelt**, it is still referring to a 'crackle.' This becomes clear when looking at the boost (see figure B15), which contains rather big sparks inside a brown smoke. It is unclear why it is misspelt intentionally, so a straightforward translation has been done: *chisporroteo*.

Boosts 28 to 30 are also straightforward translations. In 28, it is also unclear why it is spelt 'magmus' instead of 'magma,' but like 27, the equivalent to the English one has been used to follow the boost's appearance (see figure B16). In 30, *fuego 8 bits* could also be used to mirror the goal explosion *8 bits* (example 20), but in this case, *pixelado* fit better.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 31 | Overcharge | Overcharge |
| 32 | Portal – Conversion Gel | Gel de conversión |
| 33 | Portal – Propulsion Gel | Gel de propulsión |
| 34 | Portal – Repulsion Gel | Gel de repulsión |
| 35 | Proton | Protón |
| 36 | Proton Pack | Equipo de protones |
| 37 | Quasar | Cuásar |
| 38 | Rad Rock | Piedras preciosas |
| 39 | Righteous Gale | Vendaval fabuloso |

31 is another example of intertextual reference, in this case, from the video game *Sunset Overdrive* (Insomniac Games, 2014). In this game, 'overcharge' is an energy drink that transforms people into monsters that players must battle. The first instinct would be to translate it as *sobrecarga* or similar, but as with the previous strings with intertextual references, it is important to keep such references. In the official Spanish version of the video game, it was left untranslated as 'overcharge,' so here it has been left untranslated too to maintain the reference.

32 to 34 are also intertextual references, this time to the video game *Portal 2* (Valve Corporation, 2011). In this game, these gels modify the player's mobility in certain ways, and each of them is identified with a different colour: conversion is white,

propulsion is orange, and repulsion is blue. Each of these boosts resemble their respective gel with their respective colour, so it is important to keep the intertextual reference by using the official translated names in the video game, which are what have been used.

35 is **straightforward**, while 36 seems to also be straightforward, especially when comparing it to 35. However, it also contains an intertextual reference, this time to *Ghostbusters*. A proton pack is the iconic backpack that the Ghostbusters use, which comes equipped with a pistol that shoots proton lasers that capture ghosts. This boost resembles that proton laser (see figure B17), so the intertextual reference must be kept by using the official Spanish version, just like in 'mood slime.' In this case, they are usually called *equipo* in the second film, as it refers to the whole pack of backpack and pistol, hence *equipo de protones*.

Examples 37 to 39 are straightforward translations because they have a goal explosion equivalent that shares the same name and appearance (examples 14, 15 and 16). Therefore, the same translation as the explosion has been used to maintain **consistency**.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 40 | Radiant Gush | Torrente refulgente |
| 41 | Sandstorm | Tormenta de arena |
| 42 | Shining Barrage | Cortina de luz |
| 43 | Slash Beam | Haz cortante |
| 44 | Streamer | Serpentinas |

Boost 40 is a gush of two green rays that sparkle and that are radiant, as the English name suggests (see figure B18). By following this logic, it has been translated as *torrente refulgente*, which not only accurately describes the boost, but also creates a fun rhyme between both words.

In 41 it is clear what the boost looks like, so it has been translated literally to follow its appearance. In the case of 42, this is not so clear because its aesthetics are confusing (see figure B19). Like in previous strings where this happened, analysing the English name can help decipher its meaning. 'Barrage' is usually related to war, as it refers to a burst of artillery fire, but it can also mean 'dam.' Because of the adjective 'shining,' the first meaning is more likely. Therefore, *bombardeo luminoso* would be a valid translation, but its link to the boost's aesthetics would be blurry. Because the strings

that the boost has reminisce the strings of a curtain, *cortina de luz* has been used, as *cortina* contains both the 'barrage' and the 'curtain' meanings.

In boost 43, it was important to keep the 'slashing' element not to contradict the boost's appearance. As can be seen in figure B20, there are some orange slashes at the beginning of the turbo (they can be more easily appreciated with a video), hence 'slash beam.' Therefore, *haz cortante* is a translation that accurately describes this. Boost 44 is similar to this in that a straightforward translation is best not to clash with the boost's aesthetics. In this case, the boost is inspired by typical party streamers (see figure B21), so *serpentinas* is a literal translation that works best.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 45 | Super Manga-Bolt | Superrayos manga |
| 46 | Tachyon | Taquión |
| 47 | Terrorkinesis | Terroquinesia |
| 48 | The Dark Knight Rises Tumbler | El Acróbata de Batman |
| 49 | Toon Flame | Llama animada |
| 50 | Toon Sketch | Boceto animado |
| 51 | Toon Smoke | Humo animado |

Boost 45 resembles the typical lines used in Japanese manga to give a feeling of velocity or strength (see figure B22). Its aesthetics also resemble a drawing, creating an illusion of speed through an animated drawing. Therefore, the 'manga' element of the original string must be kept to accurately describe the boost, which in Spanish is also *manga*. By placing *manga* as an adjective, *super* is used as a prefix that is appended to *rayos*, thus creating *superrayos manga*.

Boost 46 is a straightforward translation, where 'tachyon' refers to a hypothetical particle that can move faster than light. 47 is also straightforward, where the made-up **compound** would come to mean 'kinetic terror.' This compound has been literally rendered in the translation, but some changes needed to be made. First, *kinesia* is an accepted spelling in Spanish, but *quinesia* is more commonly used and the only accepted form, together with *cinesia*, in the *Diccionario de términos médicos*. Consequently, the spelling *kinesia* has been avoided. Secondly, the 'r' in *terror* has been omitted to create a

more fluid term, as *terrorquinesia* contains the 'rq' consonant cluster that impedes a fluid pronunciation. This way, it is also closer to *telequinesia*.

48 contains a clear intertextual reference to *Batman*, more specifically, *The Dark Knight Rises* film (Nolan, 2012). This boost comes equipped with the Batman Tumbler pack, where The Tumbler is the car that Batman uses in the film and that can be used to play matches. In the Spanish version of the film, it was translated as *El Acróbata*, hence its use here to maintain the intertextual reference.

49 to 51 all have the same cartoonish appearance, like the 'Toon' goal explosion. Like in the 'Striker' goal explosions, it is important to have a **consistent structure** across the three names so that players can easily spot them and understand that they form a group of similar-looking items. Because of their cartoonish aesthetics, *dibujo animado* would be the perfect translation, as in the 'toon' explosion. However, this time they contain a noun ('flame,' 'sketch and 'smoke'), so *llama de dibujos animados* would result in a string that could pose character limits issues. Consequently, the adjective *animado* has been used instead, as it also refers to cartoons and results in a shorter string, such as *llama animada*.

| | ENGLISH | PROPOSED TRANSLATION |
|---|---|---|
| 52 | Trinity | Trinidad |
| 53 | Tsunami Beam | Tsunami láser |
| 54 | Xenosplash | Xenomateria |
| 55 | Xmas | Navidad |
| 56 | Xmas Lights | Luces de navidad |

52 and 53 are straightforward translations. In 52, the element of 'three' in 'trinity' needed to be kept, as the boost contains many triangles that fly out, so translating it as *Trinidad* keeps it. In 53, 'beam' has been translated as *láser*, which has become an adjective that modifies the element that had to be kept, *tsunami*. Therefore, the boost is a tsunami in a laser form, which is what the boost looks like (see figure B23).

'Xeno' in boost 54 is used as a prefix with the meaning of 'foreign' or 'strange.' For instance, 'xenophobia' is fear of strangers or foreigners. In this case, 'xeno' has a further meaning as a substance that is of alien origin. Therefore, a 'xenosplash' is a splash of such strange or alien substance. The translation *xenosalpicadura* did not flow naturally,

especially because of its length. As mentioned now, this is an alien substance, so the terms *sustancia* or *materia* could be used to refer to the matter itself rather than the splash it creates. Thus, *xenomateria* has been used, as it is shorter and still describing the boost.

Finally, 55 and 56 are straightforward translations, but the translation as *Navidad* in example 55 **clashed** with another boost, called 'yuletide,' which was translated as *Navidad*. Therefore, to resolve this overlapping, 'yuletide' has been translated as *navideño* to allow for 55 to be translated as *Navidad*.

4.2.3.3. Typos

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 57 | Battle-Stars | Batalla Galáctica | Batalla galáctica |
| 58 | Nuts & Bolts | Tuercas y Tornillos | Tuercas y tornillos |

Both examples have committed typos because they have followed the English **title case**, where the first letter of each word is capitalised. Therefore, they are easily solved by just lowering the case of *galáctica* and *tornillos*.

4.2.3.4. Stylistic Issues

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 59 | '16 Batmobile | '16 Batmóvil | Batmóvil del 2016 |
| 60 | '80 Batmobile | '89 Batmóvil | Batmóvil del '89 |
| 61 | Gold Rush (Alpha Reward) | Fiebre de oro (premio Alfa) | Fiebre del oro (premio Alfa) |
| 62 | Speed Force | Fuerza de velocidad | Fuerza de Velocidad |

59 and 60 are obvious intertextual references to Batman, more specifically to his 2016 car and his 1989 car (referring to the year in which the film where it appears was released). In Spanish, the year does not precede the noun, so *Batmóvil del X* is a more idiomatic structure. Furthermore, '2016' has been spelt out, as '16 makes it seem like this Batmobile is from 1916.

The boost in 61 is the most priced and sought-after of boosts, as only players that played *Rocket League*'s alpha build were rewarded with it. The translation is correct, but in Spanish it is common to refer to *la fiebre 'del' oro* rather than *de oro*.

Boost 62 contains another intertextual reference, this time to *Flash*. Even though examples 57 and 58 contain typos because they follow the English title case, here *Velocidad* should be capitalised. This is because it was spelt as *Fuerza de Velocidad* in the comics, so it should follow this spelling not only to maintain consistency and the reference, but also to visually show that this is a specific term.

4.2.3.5. Improvable Strings

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 63 | Feather | Pluma | Emplumado |
| 64 | Fish | Pez | Pezqueñines |
| 65 | Sparkles | Chispas | Centelleo |

All these strings have translations that are correct, as they follow the English closely. However, a more distanced translation results in a more fun one. For instance, *pluma* and *pez* are literal translations of the originals and they work, but *emplumado* and *pezqueñines* keep the original meaning, as well as adding more layers of meaning and imbuing it with freshness and a more **light-hearted tone**. In the case of 65, not only does it create this, but it also fits the boost's appearance a bit better (see figure B24). These are not the first strings that have literal translations that confer a more 'serious' tone to the translation, as was discussed in goal explosions like 'Party Time.' This shows that knowing the tone of the game can help in transcreating to create names that can even be better than the original.

4.2.3.6. Inconsistencies

| | ENGLISH | CURRENT TRANSL. | PROPOSED TRANSL. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 66 | Lightning Yellow | Rayo amarillo | Relámpago amarillo |

To finish the boost section, example 66 is an instance of a lack of consistency. This is because there is another boost called 'Lightning,' which was translated as *relámpago*.

Therefore, because this is the slightly altered yellow version of that one, it should also use *relámpago* to create consistency across the pair of boosts.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This thesis has analysed errors found in *Rocket League*, both when it was first released and nowadays up until the end of the Season 2 Rocket Pass. After the discussion carried out in the first section of the main body, it has become clear that the quality of *Rocket League*'s localisation into Spanish when the game first released was extremely **lacklustre**. The fact that users complained about these errors in Reddit posts supports this statement, but the analysis carried out here reinforces it.

The typos, inconsistencies, improvable and truncated strings, and the use of Latin-American terms that have been found in 2015 negatively impacted the gameplay experience of the first players. However, grammar issues, and especially mistranslations, **greatly hindered** the experience because they affected player-to-player communication, user interface navigation, settings configuration and in-game cosmetic group names and item names.

Furthermore, out of the 24 mistranslations, 11 are highly likely to have been done through **machine translation** due to their exceedingly literal and word-for-word translation. Fortunately, most original errors have been corrected, but some Latin-American terms and mistranslations have perdured until nowadays, so their impact has lasted these six years. Moreover, some corrections have not fully solved the problem or they have created another one, usually an inclusiveness issue.

The current state of the game's localisation as part of an AAA company is generally of an **improved** one due to the drastic reduction in mistranslations and the correction of the 2015 ones. However, there are **echoes** of the original localisation in new strings that have literal translations that reminisce those that may have been done using MT, especially in boost names, or of old errors that remain untouched. **Inclusiveness** issues are also extensively present, mainly in player titles. Even though this game may be mainly directed to a male audience and inclusiveness is still being fought for in video games, it needs to be present. Creating an inclusive translation is an arduous and difficult task, but it can and should be done to achieve an all-encompassing player satisfaction.

What is more worrying is the high number of **unlocalised** strings in all groups, especially when considering that *Rocket League* is now part of *Epic Games*. When the game first launched as a product of an indie company, there were many mistranslations and other errors, but there were no unlocalised strings. It seems illogical, then, that a

larger budget has provoked many strings to have no translation at all. It is unclear why this is the case, but the difficulty of translating the original strings may be a reason.

Throughout the strings that have been analysed in the body, many **difficulties** have been encountered that have difficulted the translation. Player titles contained wordplays, as well as game-specific and gaming-specific terms that did not usually have a clear equivalent in Spanish. To correctly identify and translate these, **familiarity** with the gaming world and the game itself has been of upmost importance. Furthermore, metatextual references to *SARPBC* were common, so familiarity with the prequel was equally important. The need for an inclusive translation was also added on top of all these.

In the case of goal explosions, inclusiveness was no longer an issue, but specific terminology and wordplays still presented difficulties that had to be balanced out with intertextual references and the explosion's appearance. This was also the case for boosts, where their appearance **restricted** the amount of freedom when translating and the high number of intertextual references required a good documentation process to correctly transfer them.

Each string was its own world, but the strategies and measures taken to solve these problems can be generalised. In the case of **player titles**, nominalisation was a recurrent technique to create translations that avoided directly referring to the player with a non-inclusive adjective. The use of inclusive adjectives and nouns, such as *fan, eminencia* or *as* was also common, as well as compounding and transcreation. Furthermore, the use or creation of Spanish equivalents for specific game, gaming and football terminology was frequent, especially in those where the equivalent was unclear or the anglicism was used. In wordplays, it was common to prioritise the meaning closer to the game's theme where a pun could not be kept.

With **goal explosions**, transcreation was also used to create translations with a more light-hearted tone or to get around wordplays with difficult equivalents, even leaving 'Buffy-Sugo' untranslated to respect the game's lore. Nevertheless, literal translations were also present because the explosion's look and aesthetics restricted the amount of creativity that could be used. However, this look was sometimes unclear, which allowed for more transcreation that would fit the general aesthetics. Nevertheless, this often had to be balanced out with risk management to create a translation that would account for all the contexts of the appearance to avoid contradicting it.

This was also the case for **boosts**, where transcreation was used to create engaging translations while still abiding by the boost's look. Despite this, the high number of

intertextual references demanded for a more cautious transcreation. In these cases, the official translation of the terms was used to maintain the intertextual reference. This transcreation was also used to create distanced translations that would result in more fun names with a light-hearted tone. However, boosts was the group with the most literal translations, be it because a literal one was sufficient or because transcreating would run the risk of contradicting the boost's appearance. Literal translations were also useful in those strings where the appearance was so unclear it was impossible to ascertain a clear-cut meaning and therefore the translator's log would have been used.

Despite all these difficulties, it is not an excuse to have such a high number of unlocalised strings. Therefore, even though *Rocket League*'s localisation into Spanish has improved in terms of mistranslations, it still has a **long road ahead** of not only translating all strings, but also creating inclusive, imaginative and accurate translations. This becomes more imperious when considering the larger **budget** Psyonix possesses, which seems to have played a role in the betterment of the localisation's quality, but not a sufficiently impactful one when considering the large room for improvement.

All these difficulties and solutions have helped me to hone my skills as a video game localiser. The strings with an official translation that contained errors, especially the 2015 ones, allowed me to develop skills related to the **proofreading** and correction of translations, chiefly when it comes to searching all possible meanings of a word and all possible intertextual references it may have to detect any hidden errors. Unlocalised strings allowed me to hone my '**traditional**' translation skills by applying all my knowledge of video games to create the best possible translation in each string with player enjoyment in mind. Their particular difficulties and the added commitment to be inclusive has 'forced' me to look for creative solutions to transfer the original meaning while staying true to the game's tone and its items' aesthetics.

As **avenue** for future research, *Rocket League* could be used again to assess the impact of the current localisation on players' gameplay experience, thus carrying out a more **player-oriented** thesis. In more general terms, player-oriented studies need to continue to be carried out to understand the impact of both good and bad localisations, thus deepening the collective knowledge of what translations and decisions have a positive and a negative effect on player enjoyment. Finally, **inclusiveness** is a topic that has gained some traction as of lately, but it remains largely unexplored in the field of video game localisation. Papers dealing with degrees of inclusiveness and how certain degrees are received by players will add to the body of work.

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# 7. APPENDICES

**Appendices removed for the published version to comply with the right to quote.**