



Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of Translation and Interpreting

**APPROACHES AND STRATEGIES TO COPE WITH THE
SPECIFIC CHALLENGES OF VIDEO GAME LOCALIZATION**

Sekin İlke ÖNEN

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2018

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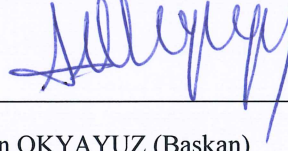
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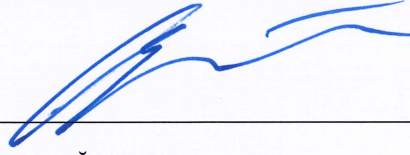
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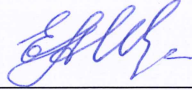
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Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

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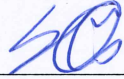
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☐ Tezimin/Raporumun.....tarihine kadar erişime açılmasını istemiyorum ancak kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisinin alınmasını onaylıyorum.

☐ Serbest Seçenek/Yazarın Seçimi

28 / 06 / 2018

(İmza)

Seçkin İlke ÖNEN

ETİK BEYAN

Bu çalışmadaki bütün bilgi ve belgeleri akademik kurallar çerçevesinde elde ettiğimi, görsel, işitsel ve yazılı tüm bilgi ve sonuçları bilimsel ahlak kurallarına uygun olarak sunduğumu, kullandığım verilerde herhangi bir tahrifat yapmadığımı, yararlandığım kaynaklara bilimsel normlara uygun olarak atıfta bulunduğumu, tezimin kaynak gösterilen durumlar dışında özgün olduğunu, Tez Danışmanının **Prof. Dr. Aymil DOĞAN** danışmanlığında tarafımdan üretildiğini ve Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Yazım Yönergesine göre yazıldığını beyan ederim.

(İmza)

Seçkin İlke ÖNEN



To my grandfather, Ali ÖNEN...

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to extend my deepest thanks and gratitude to my advisor Prof. Dr. Aymil DOĞAN, who showed great patience and shared her knowledge and experience throughout this process. I would also like to thank the scholars at the Hacettepe University Department of Translation and Interpreting for imparting their wisdom during the time I studied at the University.

I would also like to thank my parents Engin and Hülya ÖNEN for their constant encouragement that helped me complete my thesis.

Last but not the least, I want to thank my dear friend Özge ALTINTAŞ, who helped me greatly by proof-reading my thesis and offering advice.

ÖZET

ÖNEN, Seçkin İlke. *Video Oyunu Yerelleştirmesine Özgü Zorlukların Üstesinden Gelmek İçin Kullanılan Yaklaşımlar ve Stratejiler*. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2018.

Video oyunları her sene milyarlarca dolar üreten küresel bir endüstri haline gelmiştir. Bu nedenle video oyunu yerelleştirme sektörünün önemi her geçen gün artmaktadır. Bu çalışmanın amacı, video oyunu yerelleştirme sürecinde ortaya çıkan özgün zorlukları anlamaya çalışmak ve bu zorlukların üstesinden gelmek için yerelleştiriciler tarafından kullanılan yaklaşımları ve stratejileri incelemektir. Bu kapsamda Türkiye’deki iki popüler oyunun, *League of Legends* ve *Football Manager 2015*, Türkçe yerelleştirmeleri incelemek üzere seçilmiştir. Bu betimleyici çalışma sırasında hem nitel hem de nicel yöntemler kullanılmıştır. Oyunların yerelleştiricilerinin karşılaştıkları zorlukları göz önüne seren ilgili örnekler ortaya konulmuş; kaynak ve hedef metinler yerelleştiricilerin kullandığı stratejileri değerlendirmek amacıyla kıyaslanmıştır. Çalışma, farklı tür ve temalara sahip video oyunlarının kendilerine has zorluklarının olduğunu göstermektedir. *Football Manager 2015* yerelleştiricilerinin, çoğunlukla bağlam eksikliği ve değişken metin dizgilerinin ortaya çıkardığı sorunlarla karşı karşıya kaldığı, diğer yandan *League of Legends* yerelleştiricilerinin daha ziyade eğlence faktörünün korunmasıyla ilgili sorunlarla karşılaştıkları görüşmüştür. İki oyunun yerelleştiricilerinin de yerli bir tecrübe yaratmak amacıyla hedef kültür normlarından faydalanmaları çalışmanın bir diğer bulgusudur. İki oyunun analizi, video oyunları üzerine çalışan yerelleştiricilerin kültürel farkındalığa sahip, teknolojiyi kullanabilen, genel olarak oyunculuk ve özel olarak yerelleştirdikleri oyunun teması ve türüyle ilgili bilgilere haiz kişiler olması gerektiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışmanın Türkiye’de yeni gelişmekte olan bu alana bir katkıda bulunması ve başka çalışmaların yolunu açması umuduyla gerçekleştirilmiştir.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Video oyunları, yerelleştirme, çeviri, *League of Legends*, *Football Manager 2015*

ABSTRACT

ÖNEN, Seçkin İlke. *Approaches and Strategies to Cope with the Specific Challenges of Video Game Localization*. Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2018.

Video games have become a global industry producing billions of dollars in revenue each year. For this reason, the importance of video game localization industry is increasing with each passing day. The aim of this study is to develop an understanding on the specific challenges posed by video game localization and examine the approaches and strategies employed by the localizers to overcome these challenges. To this end, the Turkish localizations of two popular games in Turkey, *League of Legends* and *Football Manager 2015*, have been chosen to be analyzed. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used to conduct this descriptive study. Relevant examples highlighting the challenges faced by the localizers of the games have been presented, and the source and target texts have been compared to assess the strategies employed by the localizers. The study demonstrates that video games with different genres and themes create their own unique localization-related challenges. While *Football Manager 2015* mostly causes problems for the localizers due to lack of context and its use of variable text strings, the challenges of the localization process of *League of Legends* are mostly related to preserving the entertainment factor. Another finding of the study is that the localizers of both games have drawn upon target culture norms to create experiences that feel native. The analysis of the two games reveal that localizers working on video games have to be culturally aware, tech-savvy and have a strong grasp on gaming as a whole as well as the theme and genre conventions of the specific video game they are localizing. This study is carried out with the hope of making a contribution to this emerging field in Turkey and paving the way for further studies.

Keywords

Video games, localization, translation, League of Legends, Football Manager 2015

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Video game localization is an emerging field of translation and this study will focus on the challenges specific to this field. In this chapter, following an introductory part, the aim of this study, the research questions, limitations of the study and the definitions used during the study will be presented.

Games have been an integral part of human culture for thousands of years. In different eras humans from vastly different cultures have always come up with activities called games. The board game *Royal Game of Ur*, dating back as far as 4600 years ago, is just one example of the timelessness of the human desire to create games. As it is stated in an article in Time article, “For centuries, even millenniums, the Royal Game of Ur served as the PlayStation of its day” (Green, 2008). Today, people play their games on their televisions, personal computers and phones.

Games have evolved and diversified throughout the ages and the video games represent the present-day chapter in the history of games. Starting as experiments to test the capabilities of newly invented computers, video games have become one of the biggest pillars of the entertainment industry. The video games industry today is a giant, which is generating revenue equaling that of the movie industry (Bernal-Merino, 2006: 22). According to a research conducted by Entertainment Software Association (ESA), 67% of US households have a device that is used to play video games and consumers spent \$30.4 billion on video games in 2016 alone (Entertainment Software Association, 2017: 4). Total revenue generated by the interactive entertainment industry was \$108.4 billion (SuperData, 2018: 5).

The ESA report indicates that the average age of gamers in USA is 35. 41% of those gamers are female (Entertainment Software Association, 2017: 7). These statistics show that video games have reached a wider and more diverse audience than the stereotypical viewpoint stating that video games are almost exclusively played by male teenagers. It can be argued that this diversification is partially due to the recent trend of playing video games on smartphones, which have introduced gaming to a whole new audience. The report suggests that the average age of female gamers is 37 (Entertainment

Software Association, 2017: 7), which can be attributed to this phenomenon. A survey conducted in Turkey on 6.000 people by the Turkish game company Joygame and Anadolu University found similar results. According to the survey, the time allocated to playing online video games actually increases after the age of 24 (Baş, 2014).

The diversity of gamers also brings about a vast diversity of games (or vice versa). Today, video games range from action games, where one can play as a soldier in World War II, to strategy games where one is the commander of massive armies; from sports games to simulation games or from games in historical settings to games in fantasy worlds; from games requiring intense concentration and skill to relaxing games that can be played on your smartphone on your way to home from work. There are video games for every taste and to be played on every platform.

Another standout finding of the ESA report is the social aspect of video games. 54% of the most frequent gamers say that video games help connect them with their friends and 45% say that these games enable their family to spend time together (Entertainment Software Association, 2017: 8). These statistics demonstrate that for a lot of people video games are a social activity. The report also indicates that 71% of the parents think that video games have a positive impact on their children (Entertainment Software Association, 2017: 10).

The changing landscape of video games does not only have an impact on variety of games or the demographics of gamers. The reach of video games has also extended to unprecedented levels. They have become a truly global industry. Video games are played all around the world. That has made international marketing a crucial aspect for the success of a video game. For this reason, localization of games has become an even more important factor in recent years. In addition to the usual languages used in localization such as French, Italian, German and Spanish (known as “FIGS”), video games are increasingly localized for more and more languages and regions. This phenomenon has made video game localization a new avenue of work and research for translation and translators.

Similar to games, the practice of translation has also changed in time. Just as video games represent the newest chapter in the history of games, translation of digital media

is a newcomer in the history of translation. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze this new phenomenon from the perspective of Translation Studies to grasp new developments in the field of translation. However, the studies are at their infancy compared to the studies on other types of translation and studies on video game localization remain few and far between in Turkey. This phenomenon may partially be attributed to the public perception of video games:

“...video games still are consistently considered to be: unsophisticated in their form; problematic in their content; the cause of health problems-from obesity to addiction; and incalculated in amorphous cultural fears-like the seemingly ever-present scourge of anti-social, aggressive teenagers.” (Nielsen et al., 2008: 134)

However, despite all the prejudices against video games, video game localization continues to grow as an industry and as it spreads to more and more countries, its relevance for translators throughout the world increase and Translation Studies cannot turn a blind eye on such a rapidly-growing field of translation. Thus, analyzing the ins and outs of video game localization and how it differs from the traditional forms of translation, focusing on the challenges it poses may pave the way for a better understanding of this process.

The second chapter will present the literature on video games. The chapter will focus on defining the games in general and video games in particular. History of video games will be touched upon to develop an understanding as to how they have evolved through the decades and how that might relate to video game localization.

In the third chapter, the literature on localization and video game localization will be scrutinized. In this chapter, localization in general and video game localization in particular will be explained. The chapter will include a detailed analysis of localization and how it differs from the other forms of translation as well as how video game localization differs from other types of software localization. This chapter will also dwell on the challenges of video game localization and examine the different aspects causing those challenges and the skillsets that are required to overcome the said challenges.

The fourth chapter will explain the methodology of the study, including the data collection materials, procedure and data analysis techniques used throughout the study.

The fifth chapter will review the Turkish localizations of the video game *Football Manager 2015* based on all the information in the previous chapters. The localization of the game will be analyzed both in terms of challenges that are inherent in every video game and also in terms of challenges particular to the game itself. Qualitative methods will be used.

The sixth chapter will dwell on the analysis of the Turkish localization of another video game, *League of Legends*, using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Finally, conclusions of the thesis will be presented.

1.1. THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to find how video game localization differs from other forms of translation, what unique challenges it poses, how to cope with those challenges, what skills a translator working in this field needs and what strategies are used to overcome specific problems. Studying the challenges of video game localization and the strategies used to overcome them is expected to contribute to developing an understanding on this emerging field.

The study also aims to fill a gap in the Translation Studies by analyzing the localization of the two aforementioned games. The popularity of *League of Legends* in Turkey has also attracted some academic attention. *Gender representation in the League of Legends* by İşbilen (2014), *Esports: alternative fandom research in Turkey* by Özbıçakçı (2016) and *FRP bilgisayar oyunlarında karakter tasarımı ve örnek bir uygulama (Character design in computer game FRP and sample application)* by Arslan (2016) have studied the game from the perspective of Fine Arts, Communication Sciences and Fine Arts respectively. However, there is no thesis on the Turkish localization of *League of Legends*. The same applies to *Football Manager* as well. Analyzing the Turkish localization of the games from the perspective of Translation Studies is thought to contribute to the academic research on video games in Turkey.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of the study is as follows:

How does video game localization differ from the other forms of translation in terms of the required skills and the strategies used to overcome the specific challenges posed by its distinctive set of features?

1.2.1. Sub-questions

- 1- What are the differences of video game localization from other forms of translation?
- 2- What kind of challenges does video game localization pose?
- 3- What are the different challenges posed by different genres of video games?
- 4- What skills are required to overcome the specific challenges of video game localization?
- 5- What are the strategies employed by translators to overcome the specific challenges of video game localization?

1.3. LIMITATIONS

This study has four limitations:

1. The analysis of Turkish video game localization in this study is limited to two games: *Football Manager 2015* and *League of Legends*. These two games are chosen because they contain a variety of localization-related topics which may be analyzed, covering a wide range of potential issues and challenges faced by localizers. Since the two games are different from one another in terms of gameplay, theme and genre, analyzing both will provide a comprehensive understanding about the various aspects of video game localization process.

2. The study is limited to the analysis of localization from English to Turkish as the source text of both games is in English and the target texts analyzed are in Turkish. Since Turkey is mainly an importer of video games and the most popular games in the Turkish market are originally in English, the analysis of examples of English into Turkish localization is thought to be the best way to discover the challenges that the localizers in Turkey may encounter.
3. Since video games contain a large amount of text, the analysis of each string of text in a game is a very long task. Therefore, the study is limited to the analysis of the example texts selected based on their relevance.
4. Most of the data on video games is limited to studies conducted on United States market as there is limited amount of data that could be found from other countries. Since USA is a large market for video games, it may be considered a good representation for the video game market in general.

1.4. DEFINITIONS

This section will provide definitions for some of the key terms used in this study.

Champion: The term ‘champion’ is used to refer to in-game characters in the game *League of Legends*.

Console: The term ‘console’ is used to refer to the electronic devices that are built specifically for playing video games.

Cutscene: The term ‘cutscene’ is used to refer to the non-interactive movies in video games.

Dubbing: The term ‘dubbing’ is used to refer to the act of the replacement of original voices of characters in a video game with voices in another language.

Footballer/Player: In the analysis of the game *Football Manager 2015*, the term ‘footballer’ rather than ‘player’ is preferred to refer to athletes mentioned in the game, except for the cases where there are direct quotations from an in-game text, in which

‘player’ might have been used to define the athlete. This is done in order to avoid confusion about the player (gamer), who is playing the game and football players mentioned in the game.

Localization/Translation: The term ‘video game localization’ is used rather than ‘video game translation’ as it is the preferred terminology for the previous studies conducted in this field.

Localizer/Translator: The term ‘localizer’ is preferred to ‘translator’ in the context of video game localization for the above mentioned reason.

Multiplayer: The term ‘multiplayer’ is used to refer to games that can be played with other people via the internet.

Revoicing: The term ‘revoicing’ is used to refer to the act of the replacement of original voices of characters in a video game with voices in another language.

Sim-ship: The term ‘sim-ship’ is used to refer to the simultaneous shipment model used in the localization industry, where the product in the original language is shipped at the same time as the localized versions.

Text String: The term ‘text string’ is used to refer to finite group of characters.

Truncation: The term ‘truncation’ is used to refer to the act of cutting off text strings due to space restrictions.

User Interface: The term ‘user interface’ is used to refer to parts of a software product that enables the user to interact with the computer.

Voiceover: The term ‘voiceover’ is used in the context of video game localization to refer to the revoicing of in-game characters in another language. Throughout this study, the term ‘voiceover’ is used in that sense rather than audio in another language playing over the original audio.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW: VIDEO GAMES

This chapter is devoted to presenting the literature on video games. Definitions of the concepts ‘game’ and ‘video game’ as well as the history of video games and their development will be presented to establish a better understanding regarding their evolution and how that evolution may have an impact on video game localization.

2.1. DEFINING ‘GAME’

Games have been an integral part of human culture since the ancient times. The recorded history of games date back to 27th century BC, when people were playing a game called *Senet* in ancient Egypt (Nielsen et al., 2008: 45). From then on, humans have continued to create and play games as a means of entertainment, social interaction or competition. Games may take widely different forms from board games like backgammon to sports that are played on the pitch and to video games that are played on computer or television screens but they all share the same basic characteristics that make humans call them ‘games’. Therefore, defining the broader concept of ‘games’ and determining the commonalities between different types of games may be important.

What is it that makes games so captivating to so many people of different backgrounds, genders and ages? According to Caillois, games have six common characteristics. They are free, separate, uncertain, unproductive, governed by rules and make-believe (Caillois, 2001: 9-10). Below are some other formal definitions of ‘game’ to better understand what this term refers to:

“A game is a system in which players engage in an artificial conflict, defined by rules, that result in quantifiable outcome” (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003: 80).

“A game is a rule-based system with a variable and quantifiable outcome where different outcomes are assigned different values, the player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome, the player feels attached to the outcome, and the consequences of the activity are optional and negotiable” (Juul, 2003: 5).

The word ‘rule’ is central to both definitions, which may sound counter-intuitive at first because rules are not usually associated with fun. One can think that rules limit player’s creativity and freedom. However, rule based restrictions are one of the factors that make

games engaging. *Chess* is a good example. Each piece can only move within the confines of pre-defined rules. You have to carefully plan your moves and account for every possible move your opponent may make. This is what makes *Chess* challenging and it is this challenge that makes *Chess* an engaging activity. If there were no rules and all pieces on the board could move anywhere, there would be no way for you to guess your opponent's moves, which would eliminate any notion of strategy in the game. Rules in games restrict players and thus create obstacles. Players have to make use of their creativity to overcome those obstacles in clever ways to beat the game or outdo their opponent.

Another common point in both definitions is that games are interactive, expressed as “players engage in artificial conflict” and “the player exerts effort in order to influence the outcome” in the two definitions, respectively. Players are not passive receivers but active participants. Unlike many other forms of entertainment, such as watching a movie or listening to music, player's actions determine the outcome. The audience of a movie can't direct the actions of the actors and actresses; however, the actions of the player determine how the game will pan out. As Şengün explains:

“The core of literature could said to be words and structure of narrative and the core of movies could said to be images, but the core of video games is interaction. Without an input from a user, a video game is only a static piece of software code waiting to execute an idea, a narrative or a piece of action. In case no input is given, the video game is not executed and therefore does not exist” (Şengün, 2013: 21).

Third point is that games have quantifiable outcome. That is, a player or players win, lose or draw, succeed or fail in achieving an objective or they score certain amounts of points at the end of the game.

Another definition stresses similar points:

“..to play a game is to engage in activity directed towards bringing about a specific state of affairs, using only means permitted by rules, and where the rules prohibit more efficient means and where such rules are accepted just because they make possible such activity” (Suits, 2005: 48-49).

This definition goes into more detail about how rules create obstacles for players to overcome. It states that they “prohibit more efficient means”. This may be explained with a bowling example as follows: What's the goal of the game? Knocking down the

pins. What is the easiest/most efficient way of achieving that goal? To walk up to the pins and knock them down with your hands. However, game rules force you to use a ball to knock the pins down and throw it from a certain distance. This way, the game of bowling becomes much more engaging and interesting than the activity of knocking down the pins with your hands. Similar to the previous definitions, Suits also describes games as interactive (“To play a game is to engage in activity”) and “bringing about a specific state of affairs” is similar to the notion of “quantifiable outcome” (Salen and Zimmerman, 2003: 80).

Similarly, Avedon and Sutton-Smith define games as “an exercise of voluntary control systems in which there is an opposition between forces, confined by a procedure and rules in order to produce a disequibrial outcome” (Avedon and Sutton-Smith, 1971: 7).

There are some differences among the above mentioned definitions. However, based on common points we can say that games:

- 1- are defined by rules
- 2- are interactive
- 3- have a quantifiable outcome

The concept of games has been extensively studied (also see: Huizinga, 1949; McLuhan; 1964; Mead, 1967; Parlett; 1999; Jenkins, 2005). The different definitions that have been formulated in different studies might be interesting to look at; however, highlighting the aforementioned points should be enough for the purposes of this thesis.

2.2. VIDEO GAMES, THEIR HISTORY AND CURRENT STATE

This is an era where most everyday activities are digitalized. Computers are used to write things, to read news, to communicate, to listen to the music and to watch movies. Games cannot be regarded as an exception.

Human beings have played games since the ancient times. The games they played have evolved or changed throughout history. Some, such as *Chess* and *Go*¹, have withstood the test of time. Other types of games have surfaced with the advancement of technology. Video games are the latest stage in the history of games. They can simply be defined as games that are played using an electronic display device. From the perspective of Translation Studies, Mangiron defines them as “an interactive multimedia text that combines words, images and sound, and whose main objective is to entertain” (Mangiron, 2006: 307).

Video games have evolved from their initial state as experiments in computer labs to become a mainstream form of entertainment. The computers that were used to invent the first video games were massive and costly. Further developments in technology gave birth to video game arcades and gaming consoles that can be attached to televisions, enabling the commercialization of video games. Today, the video game industry generates billions of dollars of revenue every year and its growth shows no signs of stopping. Revenue generated by the interactive entertainment industry has increased from \$91 billion in 2016 (SuperData, 2016: 5) to \$108.4 billion in 2017 (SuperData, 2018: 5). Widespread use of the internet made video games even more of a global phenomenon. Consequently, the demand for video game localization is growing day by day.

The origins of video games can be traced back to the attempts at programming computers, which were developed to aid the war effort during World War II, to create games for entertainment purposes. When first attempts to create video games were being made, there were no devices designed for such purpose. For example, William Higinbotham’s *Tennis for Two*, considered by some historians to be the first video game (Kent, 2001: 18), could be played via controllers connected to an analog computer and graphics were displayed through an oscilloscope, a device used to monitor the change of an electrical signal over time. Computers that displayed information via monitors proved to be a big step in the history of video games. In 1962, MIT students Steve Russell, Martin Graetz and Wayne Wiitanen created the game *Spacewar* (Nielsen et al, 2008: 50-51). It was a two-player game, where each player controlled a spaceship and

¹ A board game that has its origins in ancient China.

tried to destroy the spaceship of the other player. Although the game was a success throughout the MIT (Kent, 2001: 20), there was no possibility of it becoming a commercially successful product. *Spacewar* could be played using a computer named PDP-1. Although it was smaller and less expensive than its contemporaries, PDP-1 was still as big as a large automobile and cost \$120,000² (Kent, 2001: 17). Needless to say, such computers were extremely rare. As Nolan Bushnell states, “In the late 1960s, if you wanted to connect a computer up to a telephone or a video screen, you only did it in four places in the world or in the known universe: the University of Utah, MIT, a college in Minnesota, or Stanford” (Kent, 2001: 29-30). The same Nolan Bushnell would find the way to make video games mainstream.

In 1971, Nolan Bushnell and Ted Dabney created Computer Space, based on *Spacewar*. It was a coin-operated arcade game that was the first commercial video game, albeit not a successful one (Nielsen et al, 2008: 53). One year later, Bushnell and Dabney founded Atari with an investment of \$250 each. Atari would go on to become the fastest growing company in US history (Kent, 2001: 38). The game that paved the way for Atari’s success was *Pong*. *Pong* was a simple table tennis game where players used paddles to hit a ball back and forth, missing the ball would mean the opponent scored. The player who scored eleven points won the game. *Pong* became an arcade sensation, bringing in about four times as many revenue as any other machine (Kent, 2001: 53). Although there were other games before that, *Pong* is widely considered as the beginning of the video game industry.

As technology developed, machines that are used to play games become smaller and more affordable. As a result, video games started to enter homes in the shape of consoles that can be attached to televisions. Magnavox Odyssey game console developed by Ralph Baer actually predated *Pong* and had a very similar game³. Poorly advertised and expensive, Odyssey didn’t garner much attention at first. *Pong*’s success, however, enabled it to become more popular (Kent, 2001: 54). In 1975, Atari also released the home version of *Pong*. Many other companies followed suit and started producing video game consoles. Channel F, released in 1976 by Fairchild Camera and

² 120.000 \$ in early 1960s is around 1 million \$ in 2018 when adjusted for inflation.

³ This similarity caused Magnovox to sue Atari.

Instrument, was the most influential as it introduced cartridges. Cartridges allowed consumers of the console to buy and play different games rather than one or few built-in games. Channel F also supported 8 colors. Atari released its console that featured cartridges one year later called Video Computer System (later renamed Atari 2600) which went on to become a huge success (Nielsen et al, 2008: 53).

Arcade games were also going strong. Games like *Space Invaders* (1978) and *Pac-Man* (1980) stood out. According to a story in Time magazine in 1981, Americans spent 20 billion quarters on video games and the video game industry made nearly twice as much money as the movie industry (Kent, 2001: 152). *Ms. Pac-Man* released in 1982 became the most successful game in American arcade industry, selling 115,000 units. By 1982, \$8 billion was being spent on arcade games in US alone and home video games sales amounted to \$3 billion (Provenzo, 1991: 10).

Bad business practices led to a sharp decline in the video game industry starting in mid-1982 (Kent, 2001: 176). By 1985, the annual sales of home video game industry had dropped to \$100 million (Provenzo, 1991: 10). In 1986, however, the tide turned with the release of Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). NES had been released in Japan in 1983 under the name Famicom (Family Computer). Its introduction in USA revitalized the video game industry (Kent, 2001: 278-311). NES enabled the creation of some of the most popular franchises in video game history such as *Super Mario Bros* and *Legend of Zelda*. Arcades, however, never recovered and started to decline as home consoles started to become the preferred choice of gamers (June, 2013).

1990s saw diversification of video game genres and the transition of video games to the mainstream. There have been huge technological improvements, most notably the switch to CDs and 3D graphics. Handheld games became popular thanks to the introduction of Nintendo's Game Boy (Stuart, 2014).

Another important development of that period was that personal computers became a major gaming platform. By that time, computers were no longer gigantic machines that could only be found in a select few places in the world. Personal computers that one could play video games on had also entered homes. Commodore 64 that was released in 1982 went on to sell 17 million units, making it the best-selling computer model of all

time (Griggs, 2011). PC gaming continued its growth and in the 1990s PCs became a gaming platform that can match the audiovisual capabilities of video game consoles (Nielsen et al., 2008: 78-79). PC games like *Doom*, *WarCraft*, *Command & Conquer*, *StarCraft*, *Half Life* and *The Sims* shaped the video game industry for years to come.

The growth of internet accessibility meant the exponential growth of online gaming. One of the most prominent of those online games was *World of Warcraft*. Released in 2004 by Blizzard Entertainment, it became a worldwide phenomenon. *World of Warcraft* allows players to assume the role of a character in a fantasy universe, where they play with or against thousands of other players. Since maintaining servers and adding additional content for such an expansive game is very costly, it has a monthly subscription fee of \$15. Despite such a financial barrier, in 2010 *World of Warcraft* reached 12 million subscribers worldwide (Activision Blizzard, 2010).

Switch from cartridges to CDs and then to DVDs vastly increased the amount of content a game can contain. To put it into perspective, a DVD with a capacity of 4.7 gigabytes can store over 70 times more data than the largest Nintendo 64 cartridges could. The digital distribution of video games enabled games to become even bigger than multiple DVDs could contain. Nowadays, some video games take up more than 50 GBs of hard drive space (Dingman, 2017). This also allowed video games to be multimedia products with cinematic sequences and voice acting. As Dovey and Kennedy state:

"...it is clear that contemporary mainstream console games and popular online games participate in what we might call an intermedial representational strategy. Techniques of film, graphic and text are combined in ways that reference existing forms of representation such as cinema, television, sport or literature." (Dovey and Kennedy, 2006: 88)

Digital distribution of video games also introduced new business models to the industry. The cost of packaging and distribution meant selling video games under a certain price would mean a loss in each sale. Digital distribution allows gamers to access games cheaply and in some cases for free. Free to play games can be downloaded and played by anyone free of charge and players can then pay for extra features. This model proved especially popular among PC gamers, with 69% of the revenue generated in 2017 by PC games coming from free-to-play games (SuperData, 2018: 10) and digital sales in video game industry have overtaken physical sales (Entertainment Software Association:

2017, 14). A good example for the success of this model is *League of Legends*, which is played by more than 100 million players every month (Riot Games, 2017). The trend in video game industry is towards digitalization. Digital sales in United States video game industry in 2010 constituted 31% of the total sales with physical sales constituting 69%. In 2016, the share of digital sales rose up to 74%, tripling the physical sale numbers (Entertainment Software Association, 2017: 14).

Video game consoles also continued their development throughout the years. Every year games with mega budgets such as *Call of Duty* or *Grand Theft Auto* are released for Sony's Playstation and Microsoft's Xbox, whereas Nintendo's Wii provides more family-friendly alternatives. Video games on home consoles continue to dominate the best-selling video games lists as games like *Wii Sports*, which sold over 82 million units (Nintendo, 2017), can only be surpassed by *Tetris*, which sold 125 million units (Takashi, 2009).

Video games installed on our phones made them even more accessible for people who are not dedicated gamers. Mobile games offer a good alternative for people who want to play video games without spending too much time trying to learn more hardcore games. They usually have much easier mechanics and are ideal for playing during small breaks. *Candy Crush Saga*, one of the most popular mobile games is estimated to have daily revenue of \$1.6 million (Think Gaming, 2017). According to SuperData, a games data and market research company, mobile games alone generated \$59.2 billion in 2017, 54.6% of all revenue generated by interactive entertainment industry in 2017 (SuperData, 2018: 5).

Video games have had a fascinating journey so far (also see: Herz, 1997; DeMaria and Wilson, 2002; Wolf, 2008; Donovan, 2010). Today, they have become a giant industry and they are a big part of the popular culture. Whether it is on PCs, game consoles or smart phones, people from diverse demographics play video games (Entertainment Software Association, 2017) and the revenue generated by video game industry increases with each passing year (see: SuperData, 2016; SuperData, 2018).

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW: VIDEO GAME LOCALIZATION

This chapter will be present the literature on localization in general as well as video game localization in particular. Different definitions of the term ‘localization’ will be explained with references to various authors to illustrate what makes them different compared to traditional forms of translation. This will give an idea on the key aspects of localization process and shed a light on the skills needed to localize a product. This chapter is divided into two. The first part takes a look at software localization as a whole, whereas the second part is specifically about video game localization. In the second part, the ins and outs of video game localization will be analyzed and its various aspects will be presented.

3.1. SOFTWARE LOCALIZATION

Video games are software products and as such, localization of video games falls under the more general category of software localization. Therefore, before taking a look at video game localization and its distinctive features, we will take a look at the broader concept of localization. Epistemologically, the term 'localization' derives from the word 'locale' and the process of localization means making a product “linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale” (Pym, 2005: 1). This transformation isn’t limited to language. Locale “represents a specific combination of language, region and character encoding” (Esselink, 2000: 1). As an example, Latin America and Spain are different locales in the localization context despite sharing the same language, since culture and market demands may vary between the two regions.

Nitish Singh defines localization as “the process of adapting products and services (websites, manuals and software applications) to the linguistic, cultural, technical, functional, and other locale-specific requirements of the target market” (Singh, 2012: 124).

Localization includes, but is not solely consisted of, traditional translation activities. As Esselink states:

“Examples of activities in localization which are not necessarily part of traditional translation include multilingual project management, software and online help engineering and testing, conversion of translated documentation to other formats, translation memory alignment and management, multilingual product support, and translation strategy consulting” (Esselink, 2000: 2).

Similarly, O’Hagan and Ashworth argue that “Localization is now being applied to both the Content and Package of wide-ranging products and services to render the Message as a whole into an appropriate form in the cultural context of the Receiver” (O’Hagan and Ashworth, 2002: 66).

They explain the difference between translation in digital environment and traditional forms of translation as follows:

“Whereas conventional translation was most concerned with the Content, which is a verbal (textual) component of the Message, the Message created in the digital environment has come to require that both the Content and the Package (the non-verbal or non-textual component) are subject to translation” (O’Hagan and Ashworth, 2002: 90).

It is important to note that the difference is not that conventional translation is only concerned with textual elements. As Pym mentions, Translation Studies underwent a paradigm shift in mid 1980s and translation scholars do not regard translation as a process of equivalence-based language replacement anymore (Pym, 2004). Just like localization, translations in non-digital environments also have to take into account vast cultural differences between source and target languages. ‘Package’ has always been a consideration for translators even in traditional forms of translation. The difference is that Package was an implicit element, whereas it is an explicit element for translations in digital environments (O’Hagan and Ashworth, 2002: 90).

Therefore, the notion in the field of localization that marginalizes translation as a “non-communicative phrase-replacement activity” (Pym, 2006: 1) is problematic. As an example, in localization industry, ‘software translation’ refers to the translation of all graphical user interface (GUI) components of a software application, such as dialog boxes, menus and error or status messages displayed on screen (Esselink, 2000: 57). This kind of restrictive conception of translation is contrary to contemporary thinking in Translation Studies, which no longer analyzes translation strictly on the basis of linguistic equivalence (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 101-102). The localization

industry tends to analyze translation of a software product in word or sentence level, rather than “a paragraph, a whole document or even a larger unit of culture” (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 102).

The disconnect between the academia and the localization industry about what the concept of ‘translation’ entails could be due to what O’Hagan and Mangiron (2013: 98) call “ambivalent” attitude in Translation Studies towards technologization. This attitude meant that the efforts to conceptualize localization in mainstream translation theory remain few and far between and difference between ‘localization’ and ‘translation’ remains ambiguous in Translation Studies. The term itself seems to have its origins in the industry rather than in academia. In an interview with Odacıoğlu, Bernal-Merino says that the first time he heard of the term ‘localization’ was in a conference of industry professionals rather than in a conference of academics (Odacıoğlu, 2017: 316).

O’Hagan and Mangiron suggest that the separation of cultural and linguistic dimensions, which is a common tendency in the localization industry, could be due to lack of dialogue between the localization industry and Translation Studies as well as the differences introduced by localization (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 91).

Since the distinction between ‘localization’ and ‘translation’ remains ambiguous, in this thesis the term ‘software localization’ or ‘video game localization’ will be preferred to ‘software translation’ or ‘video game translation’ as this terminology is the current norm in localization industry and in Translation Studies. That is to say, the choice to use the term ‘localization’ throughout the thesis is in an effort to remain consistent with the literature rather than imply a division between the two terms.

There are two fundamental terms associated with localization. First of them is globalization. In the localization context, globalization means a publisher developing, translating, marketing and distributing products outside the borders of the home markets to countries with different languages and cultures (Esselink, 2000: 4). The decision to localize a product can be made for two reasons. The first one is the reactive approach, where a product is localized at the request of an international customer who wants to purchase a localized version of the product. The second one is strategic approach, which

means the company made the decision to expand into one or multiple international markets (Giammarresi, 2011: 17).

Internationalization is the second term of importance. The process of internationalization is to make the software product localization-friendly, by removing elements that make a software product hard to localize. A company has to internationalize a product in order to globalize (Pym, 2005: 2). Internationalization includes separating text from the software source code, making it possible to display different character sets and local standards of particular language and country and making sure online help, documentation and websites are written with a global audience in mind so that they can be easily translated. Proper internationalization can have a huge impact on the success of a publisher's globalization and localization efforts (Esselink, 2000: 2-3).

One of the first decisions that have to be made before the localization of a software product begins is the scope of localization. Software products can be fully or partially localized. A software publisher may decide to translate the textual components of a software product but not the documentation that comes with that software, or only parts of the said documentation may be translated. This depends on potential of sales in that specific market and publisher's expectation of return on their investment (Esselink, 2000: 10-11). If a software product isn't expected to sell well on a particular market, the revenue from the sales may not be enough to justify the high cost of full localization.

It is true that there might be some confusion about the distinction between localization and translation as mentioned above. However, software localization does have features that make it a different process compared to a traditional type of translation such as literature translation. As software localization introduces new concepts to the field of translation, the translators working on localization face new challenges that are unprecedented in traditional forms of translation. These unique challenges are the key to understand the actual differences between software localization and conventional types of translation.

A distinctive feature of software localization is that translatable texts are embedded in a technological platform (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 92). This is one of the factors

that create the aforementioned challenges that are unique to software localization in comparison to other forms of translation as new techniques are required to deal with the digital nature of localization:

“Translators still translated words, but translation now needed to be formulated and coded in a specific form suitable for a given digital platform, in turn demanding new techniques and processes of localisation” (O’Hagan, 2009: 95).

There are also general tendencies in all translations, which are not unique to software localization but are subject to special considerations in a localization context. Pym lists general tendencies found by Descriptive Translation Studies by analyzing all forms of translations in many cultures as follows:

- “Translations are usually slightly longer than non-translations.
- Translations use a narrower range of words than non-translations (their type/token ratio is lower).
- Semantics are more explicit values in translations than non-translations.
- Optional syntactic connectors are used more in translations.
- The more expert the translator, the larger the text units they work on” (Pym, 2003: 3).

These tendencies are shared across all types of translation including localization. However, they create specific technical problems and challenges in software localization due to its digital nature. Translations being slightly longer than non-translations, for example, could cause issues if the size of dialog boxes can’t be altered and localizers have to work with space constraints. Esselink (2000: 26) states that translated text is approximately 30% longer than the English original and in some single words this figure can rise to as high as 100%. If there are significant length restrictions, this may force localizers to use abbreviations or synonyms that can confuse the user. To prevent this, he argues that the most important thing when designing user interface with localization in mind is to allow for text expansion. By doing so, software engineers can make the job of localizers easier and prevent any problems that can arise from localizers using abbreviations and synonyms. Mangiron emphasizes a similar approach to make job of the localizers easier:

“Another way to overcome the strict space limitations present in a game’s user interface, particularly in menu and battle screens, consists of using scrollable windows, which can stretch either horizontally or vertically. This allows the use of longer strings of text in the localised versions, without having to resort to the use of abbreviations or having to omit important elements of information. Localisers can concentrate more on their creativity and their wording if they are not constrained by a strict character and line limit and an imperious need to condense their message” (Mangiron, 2006: 308).

The core working unit of text in software products that is to be translated is called a 'string' in localization industry. Translators translate these short fragments of decontextualized texts (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 102). As mentioned previously, this is in contrast to the contemporary approach in Translation Studies which analyze translated texts in a larger scope. Strings are usually hard to grasp for a layman and “require in-depth programming, product or content knowledge” (Esselink, 2000: 63). There are single word messages in software products that can have dual meaning in different languages and can cause problems in localization process. For example, the word 'save' that is common in many software applications may have many different translations in a lot of languages depending on the context. When context is not given, it is up to the experience and knowledge of translator to find the right option. To offset this, programmers often include information in the comment strings to provide some context and mark strings that should not be translated (Esselink, 2000: 65).

A translator working in software localization industry needs to have the technical knowledge on how to translate strings in order to not cause problems in the functioning of the software application. Esselink lists a series of advice that should be considered when editing a resource file or software text:

- “Translatable text strings are usually placed in quotation marks (“and”), so the use of quotation marks within strings should be avoided, where possible. If they are absolutely necessary, enter double quotation marks.
- Avoid deleting or adding leading or trailing quotation marks. Each string should begin and end with a quotation mark.
- Avoid leading or trailing spaces.
- Avoid using the ampersand character (&) in translations. Use the word “and” instead. The ampersand is often used specifically for hot keys. Using ampersands in running text will confuse the software compiler and corrupt hot key functionality. If there is no other option but to use ampersand characters, double them (&&).

- If software resource files contain strings defining date, time or number formats, e.g. mm/dd/yyyyhh:mm AM/PM (displayed as for example 03/25/2000 9:00 PM) and if these need to be changed in target language do not change them in the resource file. It is better to consult a localization engineer or the software publisher. Very often these codes should remain untouched, because the software program will retrieve the date and time formats from the operating system.
- Never translate file names or file extensions, unless specifically requested by software publisher. If the software resource file contains the string "README.TXT" consult a localization engineer or the publisher to see whether the file should be translated here or in the installer script files" (Esselink, 2000: 65-66).

Some of these restrictions force localizers to use their creativity to find solutions to problems specific to this field of translation. For example, avoiding the use of the ampersand character (&) and using 'and' instead when possible to circumvent the problem is very different to challenges that may be encountered when translating a novel. A translator will have to be aware of these technical details to be able to localize a product successfully.

Aside from these technical guidelines, Esselink also lists suggestions regarding the choice of language and style when translating a software product:

- "Try to be creative, i.e. avoid literal translations of software options. Always verify the meaning or function of each software option, and use a word in the target language that accurately describes that feature.
- Ensure that the translation of software strings is consistent within and between software products.
- Choose terminology which is consistent with the target operating system, for example use standard Apple Mac OS or Microsoft Windows terminology.
- Avoid using the first person (I or we) anywhere in messages, and avoid using second person.
- Always try to use the imperative mood, as this makes the text easier to follow.
- Where exclamation marks are used in the English software, do not automatically include these in the translations, unless absolutely necessary. In many languages, it is less common to use exclamation marks.
- If menus or options are used to open a dialog box, use consistent translations for both the option and dialog box. For example, if the "Save As..." command opens a dialog box which has the same title, in Swedish both items should be translated as "Sparasom".

- Adjust capitalization to the standards of the target language. In English, software options are usually written in titles case, e.g. Open File. In many other languages grammatical rules will dictate how it should be written. In German, for example, this would be written as “Dateiöffnen”, where “open” is in lower case.
- Use a consistent style and grammatical form for specific types of user interface components.
- Adapt the language in the user interface to suit local conventions. For example, if the English user interface says “Congratulations, you have successfully installed this application” the translation may need to be more formal, so delete the word “Congratulations” (Esselink, 2000: 66-67).

As it can be seen, translators have to be knowledgeable on how software products function and be familiar with the terminology used in certain operating systems to be able to produce good translations.

As localization differs from other forms of translation and poses unique challenges, it also requires translators to have different skills. Esselink states that localization vendors expect linguist working for them to have following qualifications:

- “Native speakers of their target language
- Advanced knowledge of computer applications
- Experience using computer aided translation tools, e.g. translation memory
- Subject matter knowledge, e.g. expertise in the financial or medical field
- Professional approach schedules, budgets, and quality of deliverables
- Basic knowledge of terminology management” (Esselink, 2000: 9).

Some of these qualifications are expected of translators working in all fields and are not unique to localization industry such as the knowledge of source and target language. However, some of them like “advanced knowledge of computer applications” are required to overcome the unique challenges posed by the nature of software localization. It is evident that translators working on localization have to be tech-savvy and have the technical knowledge and experience to work in this field.

Another differentiating factor in software localization is the level of cooperation needed between localizers and software engineers and programmers in order to achieve the desirable outcome. The nature of software localization forces translators to work with

decontextualized texts. Close cooperation between the developers of the software and the localization team, the experience of the end user may prevent this lack of context affecting the experience of the end user negatively. The importance of the internationalization process means that the success of localization isn't purely due to those who translate strings but also software engineers and programmers, who need to program the software keeping localization in mind in advance of the process.

3.2. VIDEO GAME LOCALIZATION

With the growth of video game industry, more and more people throughout the world play video games. Video game companies try to make their games more accessible to people with using languages and living in different cultures. Localization of video games grows in importance as a result of this.

While it shares some common points with software localization, video game localization has its own unique facets and thus, needs to be studied on its own. Mangiron argues that the main difference between software localization and video game localization is that the purpose of the latter is to entertain:

“Even though these two types of translation share some features, one of the main differences between the two lies in the fact that while business software must primarily be effective and useful, video games must entertain and provide pleasure to players while submerging them in a virtual reality environment” (Mangiron, 2006: 309).

Thus, it can be said that the Skopos (see: Reiss and Vermeer, 2014) of video games differ from software products so the process of video game localization must also differ from that of software localization. This section will focus on the history of this emergent field as well as the unique aspects of video game localization and the skills that translators working in the field are required to have.

3.2.1. History of Video Game Localization

Game localization has progressed over time in parallel with the advances in the video game industry. Since video games are technological artefacts, advances in technology have profound effects on video games and localization of those games. In other words,

video game localization is closely linked with technology. As video games today are totally different from their counterparts in 1980s and 1990s, the localization processes have also undergone significant changes over time.

Early video games had very few elements to translate. They had simple characters, easy to understand rules, and most of the time no dialogues (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 49). Bernal-Merino state that during that era “most video games relied on clear mechanics and engaging gameplay, so there was little text to be read, and in deed to be translated” (Bernal-Merino, 2011:12). This meant that these games didn't require large scale localization efforts that modern multimedia video games require. Although, O'Hagan and Mangiron indicate that some characters in video games were translated differently due to cultural considerations during that period (2013:49). During the early stages of video game history, the focus was on Japan and USA. The few games that were exported to European markets remained in their original language which was usually English (Bernal-Merino, 2011:12).

During that period, localization of video games for an international market was carried out without an appropriate process, if carried out at all. Kent's story regarding the origin of the name of popular arcade game *Donkey Kong* illustrates this very well:

“Because of his desire to penetrate the American market, Yamauchi wanted the game to have an English name. Since Miyamoto spoke only a little English, he used a Japanese-English dictionary to find the correct words for the title. He wanted to name the game after the ape – “Stubborn Gorilla”. Looking through the dictionary, Miyamoto selected the *donkey* as a synonym for “stubborn” and the word *Kong* for “gorilla”.” (Kent, 2001: 158).

Another well-known translation mistake from this period was the line “All your base are belong to us” in the game *Zero Wing*. The phrase achieved cult status among gamers (Langdell, 2006). Other comical translation mistakes from the early periods of video game localization include the following examples:

Game Title	Translated Text
<i>Ghostbusters</i>	Conglaturation!!! You have completed a great game. And prooved the justice of our culture. Now go and rest our heroes!
<i>Pro Wrestling</i>	A Winner Is You.
<i>Ghosts N' Goblins</i>	Congratulations. This story is a happy end.
<i>Ghosts N' Goblins</i>	Being the wise and courageour knight that you are you feel strength welling in your body.
<i>Metroid</i>	Destroy the mother brain the mechanical life vein.
<i>Final Fantasy I</i>	See your face upon the clean water. How dirty! Come! Wash your face!
<i>Zero Wing</i>	Somebody set up us the bomb.
<i>Samurai Showdown 2</i>	Do not be angry each other, love is the power supreme.
<i>Samurai Showdown 2</i>	All creature will die.
<i>Battle Rangers</i>	You invaders get you the hot bullets of shotgun to die
<i>Magnetic Joe</i>	Take Joe to the exit while avoid spikes! While you are magnetised, the neighbour magnetic cells attract you!

Table 1. Errors in Video Game Localization (EVS Translations, 2010)

As it can be observed, there were many examples of poor translation during the early phases of video game localization history. Mandelin and Kuchar released a book called *“This be book bad translation, video games!”* chronicling similar cases of bad translations in Japanese video games throughout the years (Mandelin and Kuchar, 2017). According to O’Hagan and Mangiron, those mistakes “appear to have resulted from not involving competent translators as well as from a lack of proper localization processes” (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 57). As the localization industry grew, these instances of poor translation started to appear less and less.

In 1980s, localization expanded beyond the in-game text and the paratext for the video games started to be translated: “The translation of packaging and documentation became standard practice amongst those publishers who understood that this small investment could easily increase their revenues simply by being slightly more accessible to foreign consumers” (Bernal-Merino, 2011:14). During that decade, five languages (English, French, Italian, German, Spanish) became the standard set of languages most games were translated to (Bernal-Merino: 14-15).

Storage space was also a concern for those who were trying to translate texts in video games. The limited available space meant that localizers had to take that into account when translating video games and reduce the size of the translated text when needed. Space constraints are still an important part of video game localization process and in-game texts have to be translated to fit the user interface or the user interface has to be designed in a way to allow for extra space (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 131). A problem that is no longer a significant factor in video game localization is storage, which is no longer a concern for translating video game texts today with modern systems capable of storing gigabytes of data.

As video games developed, they started to incorporate new techniques of storytelling. In late 1980s some games even started using cinematic sequences. These sequences didn’t have voice and narration and were given in text. Nevertheless, it posed new challenges for the localization of video games (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 52). Subtitles started to appear for these cutscenes during the 1990s, which allowed non-English speakers to enjoy the game without relying on manuals (Bernal-Merino, 2011:15).

Another avenue of localization made possible by advances in storage capacity is dubbing of video games in other languages. In the 1990s, dubbing for different languages weren't common: "The recording of voiceovers for each language version is by far the most expensive part of any localisation project, and so it was reserved for the titles that were expected to be undisputed blockbusters" (Bernal-Merino, 2011: 15). Today, many video games have dialogues by in-game characters voiced by voice actors and actresses. Original audio is revoiced in different languages for localized versions (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 164). This is made possible with video games being distributed through CDs, DVDs and more recently through Blu-Ray Discs and even direct downloads from the Internet. As Mangiron states, "increased storage capacity allowed, for the first time, the incorporation of recorded scripts by voice actors and actresses into video games. This enabled games evolve into something approaching an interactive movie" (Mangiron, 2006: 306). As evident in this particular example, technological developments that impact video game development, in return, affect the scope of video game localization.

Advances in technology make localization process more complex and increase the importance of attention to detail. New generations of video game consoles have enhanced hardware capabilities, which mean "an increased volume of game software content needing to be localized, including text, audio, and graphics" (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 60). Another factor that affects localization is the fact that aside from some Japanese games, publishers prefer a model of simultaneous shipment (sim-ship). This means the release of the game in all markets at the same time, so the localized versions of the game have to be ready at the same time that the original product is ready to be released as opposed to post-gold localization, i.e. localization that is carried out after the game is completed ('gone gold') in the source language.

The simultaneous shipment model is preferred by game developers for marketing reasons. Bernal-Merino state that the start of a sim-ship race in the 2000s was due to "the fact that video games have a rather short life span, even when immensely successful, the best way forward for game publishers was the simultaneous shipment of all language versions" (Bernal-Merino, 2011: 16).

MoGi Group, which provides game localization, game customer support and gaming services explain the necessity for simultaneous shipment method as follows:

“A simultaneous release to market is of critical importance in the international gaming business. This happens when all languages of the game are released to market at the same time as the source language is released.... To further substantiate the simultaneous release approach, market competition for video games is intense, and the sales of an average game will slow down after a few months. For this reason it is a huge advantage to saturate multiple markets all at once and give the game as much exposure as possible” (MOGI Group International, 2017).

However, simultaneous shipment of video games in different locales causes problems for localizers as it is very difficult for “translators to fully comprehend the vast and intricate game world without actually seeing and playing the finished product” (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 61). This method forces localizers to work with an unfinished product that has a negative impact on the workflow (Bernal-Merino, 2011: 16). As games become more specialized and sophisticated, the volume of elements to be translated increase (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 24) and publishers’ preference of sim-ship models (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 234-235), the job of the localizers is becoming more and more difficult and complex.

As video games have grown into a giant industry, the need for localization grows even further. Sales in international markets have become crucial for the commercial success of a game. Therefore, knowing how to produce good localized versions are crucial for publishers in today’s video game market. Budget restrictions may cause small-scale game developers not to spend money on localizing their games but video games with bigger budgets are almost always localized for multiple international markets.

Traditionally, most English video games have had localized versions for French, Italian, German and Spanish (known as ‘FIGS’ in localization industry). Chandler and Deming (2012: 51-52) state that in addition to these traditional languages of localization, video games are also increasingly being localized for different languages such as Russian, Japanese, Korean and Hebrew. With expansion of video games into new markets, localization in even a greater number of languages has become a necessity.

One example of such a language is Turkish, the language this thesis is concerned with. According to the EF English Proficiency Index, Turkey ranks 62nd out of 80 countries

overall and 26th out of 27 countries in Europe. Turkey has an EF EPI score of 47,79 and is described as having "very low proficiency", which is the lowest category (Education First, 2017). Needless to say, any video game company targeting the Turkish market will have to localize their products if they want their games to reach a wider audience. This is apparent from the rise of Turkish support for popular video games. As of writing (05/04/2018), out of the top 10 games on Steam⁴ with the most concurrent players, 7 of them have at least partial Turkish support (Steam, 2018). This trend is expected to continue with more and more video games being localized into Turkish and other previously neglected languages.

3.2.2. Unique Aspects of Video Game Localization

O'Hagan and Mangiron provide the following definition for game localization:

“In commercial contexts, game localization refers to all 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” (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 19).

While sharing common features with software localization, video game localization has its own peculiarities and its own specific challenges that arise from these peculiarities. As previously mentioned, unlike other software products video games are not purely functional products but entertainment products. Whereas challenges posed by localization of other software products are usually centered around the translation and localization of UI elements, video game localization is a more multi-faceted undertaking. As Zhou states:

“Game localization is a complex endeavor. It typically involves many different media, including text, graphics, video, and audio. Aside from the challenges of localizing the user interface, the storyline and content may need to be modified or even re-created to account for cultural and legal issues” (Zhou, 2011: 349).

O'Hagan similarly emphasizes the multi-faceted nature of video game localization:

“For example, video game localisation has added new dimensions to utility software localisation. Modern video games are interactive multimedia systems, with their rich content comprising written text, graphics, cut-scenes (movies),

⁴ Steam is the biggest video game platform for PCs.

sounds, etc realised in a highly complex technological system” (O’Hagan, 2009: 95).

The development of video games into multi-dimensional products led not only to increase in volume of text to be translated, but it also meant an increase in the type of text a video game includes. Mangiron groups the assets that need to be localized into 5 categories: text assets, art assets, audio assets, cinematic assets and printed materials (Mangiron, 2006). Similarly, Miguel Á. Bernal-Merino (2007: 4) lists the various text types to be translated during the localization of a PC game as follows:

1. Manual
2. Packaging
3. “Readme” file
4. Official website
5. Dialogue for dubbing
6. Dialogue for subtitling
7. UI (User Interface)
8. Graphic art with words

To emphasize this point, we should take a look at the services provided by the video game localization industry. MOGI Group, a video game localization company, lists the services it provides as follows:

- localization project management and planning
- user interface localization
- localization of user manuals and print materials
- game script translations
- graphics localization
- voice-over recording
- game testing and QA support

- localization of game marketing collateral (website translations, banners etc.) (MOGI Group International, 2017)

Clearly, video game localization is not limited to translation of in-game text. The nature of video games allows the localizers to make more profound changes to the game. Mangiron states that “localisers have the freedom to make and request changes not only to the dialogue or verbal messages, but also to the graphics, images and story line, in a fashion unknown in any other type of translation” (Mangiron, 2006: 309). This unusual amount of freedom afforded to the localizers is explained by Mangiron and O’Hagan with the term “transcreation” (Mangiron and O’Hagan, 2006). The simplest example of these profound changes that can be made in video games would be changing of certain logos in the game to make it more appropriate for the target culture because different symbols may mean different things in other cultures. However, some video games go even further. Di Marco (2007: 2-3) gives the example of how the female protagonist of the Japanese video game "Fatal Frame" is significantly different in its localized version for the Western markets compared to the Japanese original. The character in the localized version is older, wears a different outfit and has more westernized facial features. Thus the character becomes more suited for the western audiences.

There might also be legal reasons for such alterations. For example, the popular video game series *Wolfenstein*, which is set in an alternative reality setting in which Axis powers won the World War II, has undergone changes such as removing swastikas from the game (Ziv, 2017). These types of changes are common in Germany when it comes to World War II-themed video games as German criminal code outlaws the distribution, public use and dissemination of objects containing the symbols of banned parties and organizations⁵, which prevents the use of Nazi symbols in a video game. Another well-known example would be *World of Warcraft* removing skeletons in the version of the game released in China, to make the approval process of their games easier since the Ministry of Culture of China forbids anything that “promotes superstition” and skeletons might have been perceived as violating that rule (Custer, 2014). Similarly, Dong and Mangiron talk about the changes made to *Diablo III* for the Chinese market:

⁵ German Criminal Code Section 86

“The red blood in the game became black, the exposed bones of a human skeleton were covered up with flesh, and the bloody wounds in the bodies of the characters were removed” (Dong and Mangiron, 2018: 161).

The easily malleable nature of video games allows for such changes. Such huge visual alterations would be much harder, if not impossible, for another medium such as movies.

The multi-faceted nature of video game localization also means that it poses challenges that are encountered in many different forms of translation. When translating a storyline, one may encounter similar problems as someone translating literature would, or localizing audio of a video game could pose similar challenges to dubbing of a movie. Bushouse underlines this point:

"As a new medium, video games also present their own challenges to translation in the form of interactivity, technology, non-textual and extra-textual elements, audience involvement, and new business practices" (Bushouse, 2015: iii).

Bernal-Merino talks about another distinctive feature of video game localization. He claims that the aforementioned simultaneous shipment process in video game localization is one of the defining characteristics that separate this new field from the traditional forms of translation:

“So, what is it that makes the translation of video games distinctive? It cannot be the complexity of the dialogues, the creativity, or the playfulness involved, since we can find these same characteristics in many other types of texts, like literature, films, and comic books. We have to go back to what was said earlier about customisation and shared authorship. The new business model for developing video games is one that makes the creative department work almost simultaneously with the localisation department” (Bernal-Merino, 2006: 34).

The fact that video games both as products and as an industry have unique features that mean video game localization entails aspects that are different from traditional software localization. Understanding these aspects and the challenges caused by the distinctive nature of video games is a crucial aspect of video game localization.

3.2.2.1. Genres of Video Games

An important factor to consider when localizing video games is the genre of the game in question. There are a lot of different video game genres and the genre of a game can

impact the choice of translation strategies for that particular game. As O'Hagan and Mangiron explain:

“As text types are significant in translation, game genres help identify similar characteristics of texts and also often text volume (text-heavy games as opposed to action heavy), thus indicating the particular translator competence required. Games belonging to a specialized domain such as military, aviation, and various sports genres seek to achieve a great degree of authenticity and realism through accurate visual and verbal representation for the given domain, including the precise use of terminology” (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 70).

So how can video games be categorized into different genres? Video game site gamespot.com categorizes video games into 68 different designations (Gamespot, 2017). Some of these are about game mechanics (strategy, action, adventure, role playing etc.), some are about graphics (2D, 3D) and some are about the business model of the game (free to play). A game can have a mixture of these characteristics. So, as an example you can have a 3D action game, which is free to play. In addition to the genre section games are also categorized into various themes. There are 30 different themes (Gamespot, 2017). These include categorizations such as comedy, fantasy, historic, superhero etc. So the 3D, free to play, action game could be further categorized on whether it's in a historic or fantasy setting or whether it includes superhero elements or not.

Many other video game sites use similar genre categorizations. Simon Egenfeldt Nielsen et al. (2008: 40) argue that while these genres are useful for the purposes of the website, they aren't derived from any standard principle as categories such as 'driving' and 'action' imply different characteristics of games. Instead, they propose a genre system based on the question 'What does it take to succeed in the game?' They categorize games into four broad genres:

Action games

Action games video games, where criterion for success is motor skill and hand-eye coordination. Most fighting games, racing games and shooters, as well as arcade games such as *Pac-Man* fall under this category. These games test players' reaction speeds more than their decision making (Nielsen et al., 2008: 43).

Adventure games

Adventure games require deep thinking and great patience and player must use skills of logic and deduction in order to achieve the game's goal. Games with puzzle solving elements and some role-playing games fall under this category (Nielsen et al., 2008: 43).

Strategy games

Strategy games are games, where the player assumes the role of a general instead of being on the battlefield (Nielsen et al. 2008: 43). Players “have to balance large numbers of interdependent variables, paying careful attention to signals of other players' choices and strategies” (Nielsen et al. 2008: 43). Popular games in this genre include *WarCraft*, *StarCraft*, *Age of Empires*, *Civilization* etc.

Process-oriented games

Process-oriented games provide players with a system to freely play with, instead of restricting them to certain goals. Massively Multiplayer Online Games, where players assume the role of a character in a vast, persistent universe; management games, where players manage a business like a zoo or a theme park; simulation games trying to convey real world experiences like flying a plane fall under this category (Nielsen et al. 2008: 44).

To summarize their genre systems, they created the following table:

	Action games	Adventure games	Strategy games	Process-oriented games
Typical action	Battle	Mystery solving	Build nation in competition with others	Exploration and/or mastery
Criterion of success	Fast reflexes	Logic ability	Analyzing interdependent variables	Varies widely, often nonexistent

Table 2. Video Game Genres (Nielsen et al., 2008: 44)

It goes without saying that the genre or theme of a video game has significant implications for localization of those games. Bernal-Merino makes the following point:

“It is obvious that translating a game based on ‘Sponge Bob’ has little to do with translating one based on the UEFA Champions League, World War II or ‘Spider-Man’” (Bernal-Merino, 2007: 3).

The genre of a game may even affect the decision to whether localize the game for a particular market or not. Some text-heavy games have little to no chance of success in a country, where the game isn’t localized into the native language. Globalization & Localization Association indicate how no localization can impact gamers’ preferences as follows:

“Urdu speakers can’t get many games in their own language, so they turn to racing games, which are easy to understand” (Globalization & Localization Association, 2018).

From the viewpoint of Translation Studies, Bernal-Merino categorizes video games into two:

“From the point of view of translation, we could say that there are only two types of games, based on the degree of freedom translators are given. Effectively, some games require more research than creativity, and others require more creativity than research” (Bernal-Merino, 2007: 3).

He goes on to explain that if a video game is based on a book, the translators of the game have to acquaint themselves the universe and translations of the books. This restricts the creativity of the translators as they have to use established terminology. Disregarding existing translations would result in discontent amongst fans of the universe and the sales will be negatively affected. Research and stylistic writing skills take priority over creativity in such cases. If the game is based on a new idea or is new to the target locale, translators have a higher degree of freedom and a more creative approach will be required (Bernal-Merino, 2007: 3).

3.2.2.2. Text Types in Video Games

In addition to genre types, another factor is text type of the translatable assets within the game. Determining the text type is an important process in translation, since the function of the source text will have an impact on which translation strategies to use to create the same look and feel in the target language. Reiss categorizes texts into three types based on their function:

- **Content-focused (informative) texts** that are focused on content. News reports, scientific articles, legal documents belong to this category (Reiss, 2000: 27-31).
- **Form-focused (expressive) texts** that are focused on form. Poem and novels belong to this category (Reiss, 2000: 31-38).
- **Appeal-focused (operative/persuasive) texts** that are focused on appeal. Advertisements belong to this category (Reiss, 2000: 38-43).

Additionally, Reiss mentions a fourth group of texts: **Audio-medial texts**, “which are written to be spoken (or sung) and hence are not read by their audiences but heard” (Reiss, 2000: 27). Texts belonging to this category can also be categorized according to the above three types of texts but also implement visual and audio elements that require special considerations (Reiss, 2000: 43-47).

As mentioned above, there are different assets to be translated when localizing a video game. These include user interface, dialogues between game characters, game manuals, contents of the game package etc. These different assets are of different text types and serve different functions. Below are some examples of translatable assets in video games matched with corresponding text functions according to O’Hagan and Mangiron’s table of taxonomy of narrative oriented game text:

User interface: informative function

Narrative text: expressive/informative function

Exposition/tutorial: informative function

Unvoiced dialog: informative/expressive function

Text in images (in-game): informative/expressive function

Text in images (not in-game): informative/some persuasive function

Voiceover: informative/expressive function

Songs performed by game characters/theme songs: expressive function

Environmental sound: expressive/informative function

Manual: informative function

Box: persuasive/informative function (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 155-158)

As it can be seen above, different parts of the texts translated in video game localization belong to different text types. It is possible to encounter every text type when localizing a video game. Translating the manual of the game and translating the text of a dialogue between in-game characters are two very different endeavors. While translating a manual or the tutorial of the game, the translator has to make the text clear so that the user can easily comprehend the instructions. On the other hand, translating the narrative parts of the game requires aesthetic considerations. For this reason, localizers of video games are usually given more freedom than localizers of other types of software products. Mangiron explains the reason for the increased amount of freedom video game localizers enjoy as follows:

“...when a localiser is assigned a project, s/he is practically given *carte blanche* to make any changes deemed necessary, especially regarding the language, the cultural references and the humour, all of which are key elements in games.” (Mangiron, 2006: 309).

Based on this, it can be concluded that parts of the game with an entertaining function (e.g. story, dialogues) can be localized with more freedom due to the developer's wish to preserve the entertainment value of the product for every locale.

Therefore, it is not feasible to determine one strategy for a specific video game localization project as a single video game may have texts of different types and those different text types will demand different strategies and approaches to overcome the specific challenges belonging to that text type. It is imperative that translators working on the project understand which part of the game they are translating and what kind of strategies are suitable to keep the same look and feel.

3.2.2.3. Levels of Video Game Localization

Like software localization, video games have varying levels of localization. Mangiron (2006) states that not all assets are localized in every video game localization project due to time and budgetary constraints. Chandler and Deming (2012: 8-10) list four levels of localization:

- No Localization
- Packaging and Manual Localization
- Partial Localization
- Full Localization

No Localization

This is when a video game isn't localized at all for a particular international market. Video games that are developed with strict budget restrictions are usually not localized since this localization adds to the cost of development. This level of localization does not pose a lot of risk for the developer since there is no additional investment (Chandler and Deming, 2012: 8-9).

Packaging and Manual Localization

For this level of localization, game language itself remains untranslated. Also referred to as 'box and docs', it includes localizing the manual, packaging and other documentation into target language/culture. This is also a low-risk type of localization and is preferred when the product isn't expected to sell too many copies in a particular market (Chandler and Deming, 2012: 9).

Partial Localization

In this localization model, in-game text is translated but the voice is left untranslated. It is a cost-effective approach since localizing dubbing requires translating voiceover text, setting up recording sessions, hiring actors and actresses, processing sound files and other tasks related to voiceover localization. Sometimes voiceover is in the original language but translated subtitles are added (Chandler and Deming, 2012: 9-10).

Full Localization

A full localization means translating every aspect of the game including the in-game text, voiceover, manual and packaging. Since this type of localization is costly, it is also the most risky. It is usually reserved for big-budget games and requires a greater level of

cooperation between localization team and the main team (Chandler and Deming, 2012: 10).

It is apparent that the level of localization is largely dependent on the expectation of return on investment by the publisher. If a video game is expected to sell well in a particular market, it is more likely that it will be fully localized, whereas the publisher will not want to spend money for localization if the product isn't expected to provide a return on the investment.

3.2.3. Qualifications of a Video Game Localizer

The fact that video game localization poses different challenges also means that a localizer has to have a specific set of skills. This phenomenon is explained by Bernal-Merino as follows:

“With regards to language specialists, the video game industry requires a translation professional with an array of skills rather different from other areas of the established language transfer profession. The translator of video games needs to have good computer skills in order to work with different file formats and software packages, as well as to be able to translate a wide variety of textual types ranging from the promotional to the technical, the creative, the didactic and the literary. Although these skills may not in themselves be new to the field of translation, their convergence is unusual and it deserves to be studied separately and on its own merits” (Bernal-Merino, 2015: 2).

Mangiron identifies 7 key attributes required from a localizer working on video games. These are: knowledge of general software terminology and specific games platform terminology, familiarity with the specific features of screen translation, mastering of natural and idiomatic language, creativity, cultural awareness, familiarity with games culture and familiarity with global pop culture (Mangiron, 2006: 311-316).

Dietz (2007: 2-3) argues that localizers should have computer skills, knowledge of gaming and subject matter expertise. To clarify, computer skills encompass the localizers' understanding of hardware and software terminology, the ability to play the game and solve hardware related conflicts as well as efficient use of internet for research. Having knowledge of gaming means familiarity with gaming and video game jargon. However, according to Dietz general familiarity with computer technology and gaming is not enough. Localizers should also be familiar with the subject matter of the

specific game they are localizing. Video games can have a wide range of possible settings. Localizing a game set in a medieval fantasy world is very different than localizing a game with a World War II setting. Different genres of games also pose different challenges and require different skills with some games more akin to literary translation and some requiring more technical expertise. Dietz gives the following example to elaborate: "While I would happily undertake a the localization of a World War II flight simulation or a naval strategy game, I would, for instance, avoid a baseball simulation, as I just don't know enough about that sport" (Dietz, 2007: 3).

Similarly, Francesca Di Marco argues that in addition to knowledge of language and notational conventions, video game localizers require other skills including "...understanding of game mechanics, game jargon and genre conventions, and, undoubtedly, the ability to interpret the effect that the original aims to produce in the mind of the player and to generate a functional equivalent" (Di Marco, 2007: 7).

To sum up, video game localization differs itself from traditional types of translation as it blends linguistic challenges with technical challenges but it also differs itself from other forms of software localization due to the unique aspects of video games. In turn, translators who work in video game localization should have a unique set of skills to deal with the unique set of challenges they will face.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

This chapter will present the methodology of the study. The process of collecting data and analyzing the collected data is explained step by step in the following sections:

4.1. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The study is conducted on a descriptive basis. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods are employed throughout the analysis. The source texts and target texts are analyzed comparatively.

4.2. DATA COLLECTING MATERIALS

The data used in the analysis was gathered from the following sources:

1. Games: The main source of data for this study is the games themselves. The Turkish localizations of two games, *Football Manager 2015* and *League of Legends* have been analyzed in detail to find the relevant examples that highlight the challenges faced in video game localization. Screenshots have been taken to illustrate certain examples.
2. Job Listings: Job listings for localization-related positions posted by the developers of *Football Manager 2015* and *League of Legends* have been analyzed for to determine the skillset that localizers working on the games are expected to have.
3. Websites: The website of *League of Legends* has been used to provide an accessible comparison between the Turkish and English versions of the game, since a big portion of the translated in-game text can also be found on the website.
4. Forums: Forum sections of the websites of both games are used to assess the user reception of the localizations as well as to read the explanations from localizers for their choices.

4.3. SELECTION OF THE GAMES

The two video games selected to be analyzed in this thesis are *Football Manager 2015* and *League of Legends*. The games are chosen according to the following criteria:

1. Genres: Two games belong to different video game genres. *Football Manager 2015* is a football management simulation, whereas *League of Legends* is a multiplayer game that mixes the elements of action and strategy genres. This enables the analysis to be carried out on different aspects of video game localization. It also helps identify different challenges posed by different genre of games.
2. Themes: The two games have vastly differing themes. *Football Manager 2015* is a game based on managing a football team. *League of Legends*, on the other hand, is based on a fantasy world. Therefore, the different terminology in the two games provides a wide range of differing localization challenges to study.
3. Text-types: *Football Manager 2015* is a text-heavy game, whereas *League of Legends* makes use of a variety of audiovisual effects. Analyzing both games will provide a more complete understanding about the variety of text types that can be translated during video game localization as well as different aspects of localization such as dubbing.

4.4. SELECTION OF EXAMPLES

The examples to be used for the analysis of the localization of the games are selected using the following methodologies:

- For *Football Manager 2015*, the examples are selected based on their relevance. Since it is an extremely text-heavy game, analysis of all the text in the game would take very long. Therefore, a number of examples that are demonstrative

of the challenges the localizers faced in the game are found and analyzed in comparison with the original text.

- For the textual analysis of Turkish localization of *League of Legends*, all the fantasy-themed terminology, champion titles, champion ability names and item names in the game are analyzed and relevant examples are picked for each section.
- For the analysis of dubbing in *League of Legends*, random sampling method is used as there are thousands of voice lines in the game and analysis of every voice line is beyond the scope of this thesis. Out of the 140 champions in the game, 14 champions are selected for analysis of the Turkish dubbing of the game. Every tenth champion on the alphabetical list on the website of the game is chosen. This way 10% of the champions in the game are covered, which is thought to be a good sample size.

4.5. PROCEDURE

The following steps are taken during the study:

1. The history and characteristics of video games have been researched in order to understand the roots of the medium as well as its similarities and differences compared to other similar media. *The Ultimate History of Video Games* (2001) by Steven L. Kent and *Understanding Video Games* (2008) by Simon Egenfeldt Nielsen, Jonas Heide Smith and Susana Pajares Tosca have been used as main sources in this regard.
2. The literature about software localization as a whole has been reviewed to assess its similarities and differences with video game localization. *A Practical Guide to Localization* (2000) by Bert Esselink has been particularly useful in this regard. *Translation and Localization Project Management* (2011) edited by Keiran J. Dunne and Elena S. Dunne as well as articles titled *What Localization Models Can Learn From Translation Theory* (2003), *Localization: On its nature, virtues and dangers* (2005), *Localization, Training, and the Threat of*

Fragmentation (2006) by Anthony Pym have also been reviewed for this purpose.

3. The literature about video game localization has been reviewed to learn about the specific features of this type of localization. *Game Localization: Translating for the Global Digital Entertainment* (2013) by Minako O'Hagan and Carmen Mangiron and *The Game Localization Handbook* (2012) by Heather Maxwell Chandler and Stephanie O'Malley Deming have been the main sources in terms of video game localization. Bernal-Merino's article entitled *A Brief History of Game Localisation* (2011) has also been a useful source for understanding the history and development of the video game localization industry. Additionally, Alberto Fernandez Costales' article *Exploring the Translation Strategies in Video Game Localization* (2012) has been reviewed to analyze the different translation strategies that can be used in video game localization.
4. Two games have been chosen for analysis: *Football Manager 2015* and *League of Legends*. Their English to Turkish localizations have been reviewed in light of the information that has been gathered about the specific challenges posed by video game localization.
5. Two games have been played to get a better understanding how they work and research about the games has been conducted using the internet. Examples relevant to the study have been found within the games and the websites of the games. The original texts and the Turkish texts have been compared to figure out the strategies used for the localization of the games.

4.6. DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

The data that was gathered was analyzed using the following techniques:

- Comparison: The original English texts and the target Turkish texts are compared for the chosen text strings in the two games to determine the challenges posed by the said text strings as well as the strategies used to overcome them.

- Statistical Analysis: Frequency is used to quantify the strategies used in the translation of various elements in *League of Legends*.



CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS: TURKISH LOCALIZATION OF *FOOTBALL MANAGER 2015*

This chapter will be a detailed analysis of the Turkish localization of the video game *Football Manager 2015*. Peculiarities of the game regarding its genre and theme, findings as to the localization-related challenges, approaches and strategies used by the localizers to cope with said challenges and discussion about the findings is presented in this chapter.

5.1. ABOUT *FOOTBALL MANAGER*

Football Manager is a simulation game series developed by Sports Interactive that put the gamers at the helm of a football club. A new installment of the series is released annually towards the end of the calendar year (either in October or in November). Every game in the series is named after the succeeding year, so the game released in autumn of 2013 is named *Football Manager 2014*. The first *Football Manager* game (*Football Manager 2005*) was released in 2004 but the origin of the series can be traced back to its predecessor *Championship Manager*, which was first released in 1992.

The game is immensely popular all over the world as it gives football enthusiasts an opportunity to fulfill their fantasy of managing a football club. Compared to other sports games, *Football Manager* stands out in terms of its realism and incredibly detailed database of players and teams from all over the world. That realism means the impact of *Football Manager* transcends beyond gaming. Its vast database is used by actual football clubs to find out about new players and some of the biggest sports networks in the world use it as a tool to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of footballers (Blickenstaff, 2015).

The first game in the series to be translated into Turkish was *Football Manager 2013*. In this study, the Turkish translation of *Football Manager 2015* will be analyzed. The reason this game is chosen was to be able to study the unique challenges that a highly technical, very text-heavy game poses for localization process. Unlike many video games, *Football Manager* does not have a story. The players create their own story.

Şengün classifies games like *Football Manager* as non-narrative (Degree 0) video games:

“The representational sports games that were decidedly put into Degree 0 might seem to contest this criteria, since in most of these games the player is controlling an athlete or a team (fictional or actual). Yet in their example, the existence of a narrative space is missing. In a football video game the player controls a team to win the match, not to construct or experience a narrative. What these games construct is more of a simulation (simulating the mechanics of the sports in question) rather than a narrative space. Thus, the player does not become a spectator for the narrative space but a simulator for the simulation instead” (Şengün, 2013: 50).

Without a fixed narrative, the game becomes an open canvas, which brings about its own unique challenges in terms of localization. Analyzing these challenges is thought to be illuminating for understanding the challenges in video game localization. As such, games focus fully on what makes games unique, i.e. interaction, as opposed to narrative and audiovisual elements that are the core aspects of other entertainment mediums.

5.2. LOCALIZATION PROCESS AND GAME-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

Every genre of video games and every individual game have their unique challenges that the localizers have to overcome in addition to the challenges of software and video game localization that are explained in the previous chapters. Knowing how a game works and the expectations of that specific game’s target audience are crucial to produce a good localization of the game. As such, before analyzing the Turkish localization of *Football Manager 2015*, it is important to take a look at the localization process and pinpoint the specific challenges posed by the game.

These specific challenges call for a translator with specific qualities. The developer of the game, Sports Interactive, lists the qualities a translator working on a *Footballer Manager* game should have as follows:

- An aptitude for translation (preferably with relevant experience or qualifications)
- Mother tongue speaker for target language and in particular football terms and colloquialisms
- Very good knowledge of English and in particular football terms and colloquialisms

- Lots of experience in playing FM games⁶

It can be seen that, in addition to usual qualifications expected from the translators (i.e. good knowledge of both languages), there are other skills required from the localizers of the game. Knowledge of source and target culture football terminology as well as experience playing previous games in the series demonstrate that localizing specific video games require unique skills depending on the genre and theme of the game. These skills are needed to cope with the specific challenges a game such as *Football Manager 2015*. The following sections aim to underline these challenges.

5.2.1. Text Strings

The main point to keep in mind when analyzing the localization of a *Football Manager 2015* game is that most of the text in the game is created through the use of text strings that have variables in them. As highlighted by O'Hagan and Mangiron, translators working on localization projects translate these types of short fragments of decontextualized texts (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 102). This is explained in the official forums of the game as follows:

The main thing to remember is that what you see on the screen is rarely a direct translation as most sentences (strings as we call them) contain variables within them. So if you are thinking “How could the translator make such a basic error?” it may not be as simple an error as it appears to be.

If we look at the simple string:

Code:

The English Premier Division match between Arsenal and Man Utd originally scheduled for 21st October has been moved to 26th October due to international call ups.

This is how it appears in our code

Code:

The <%fixture_name#1-long> match between <%team#1-short-notype> and <%team#2-short-notype> originally scheduled for <%date#2-long> has been moved to <%date#1-long> due to international call-ups.⁷

⁶Retrieved October 10, 2017, from <https://community.sigames.com/topic/381468-read-before-posting-posting-in-the-translation-forum/>

As can be seen, the localizers can only translate the non-variable parts of the text. The rest is filled in depending on what happens in each game. This is fundamentally different from translating the text of a novel or translating subtitles for a movie, where the text is fixed. It is easy to see how the translation of these text strings might cause problems for localizers due to decontextualization. As mentioned by Esselink, localizers have to have "in-depth programming, product or content knowledge" (Esselink, 2000: 63) to overcome the challenges posed by this type of translation environment.

Another challenging aspect of the use of variables is the structural differences of different languages causing issues for the localizer. Bernal-Merino illustrates a potential challenging scenario of variable in-game text as follows:

"Variables can be used in many complex ways to enhance players' immersion by addressing them, their chosen profile and their performance directly. For example, strategy games allow the player to choose among different nations to conquer the world. When someone attacks you, the message received says "/n nameofnation /n is attacking you!". Names of nations vary widely from one language to another. They may take an article or not; they can be singular or plural, as well as masculine or feminine. Not only do translators therefore have to be careful with the syntax of the sentence and the possible relocation of the variable, but they also need to be aware of potential changes due to the morphology of individual linguistic items. The formula in question could generate a sentence such as "Rome is attacking you!", but it could also produce "The Vikings is attacking you!". Whenever possible, programmers and designers opt to rephrase sentences to avoid these grammatical hurdles of natural languages. The above message, for example, could be rewritten in the passive voice, as "You are being attacked by /n nameofnation /n!", so the formula would allow for both "the Vikings" and "Rome". However, this might not be an option for all target languages" (Bernal-Merino, 2007: 6).

As suggested by Bernal-Merino, different languages require different solutions for overcoming this particular challenge.

5.2.2. Terminology

Translation of terminology is a significant part of localization process. Bernal-Merino states, localizing a game with a football theme is significantly different than localizing a golf or World War II game (Bernal-Merino, 2007: 2). As a football-themed game, *Football Manager 2015* uses a lot of terms that would only make sense to a football

⁷<https://community.sigames.com/topic/381468-read-before-posting-posting-in-the-translation-forum/>
 Accessed: 14/10/2017

enthusiast. The translation of these technical terms requires an extensive knowledge of the sports in addition to the linguistic skills required to do any translation. Ideally, a translator should not only be familiar with the football terms but also the whole culture surrounding the sport in both the source and target countries. While translating the game, the translator should pay special attention to use terms that are commonly used by the football media in that particular target country. If different terms are used from the ones the player is used to hear on television when watching a football game or in the newspapers when reading an article by a journalist, then the terms would feel foreign to the target audience even if they are in the target language. The best example of this is how Britain and USA differ in what the sport is actually called. Even when both locales use English, 'football' means an entirely different sport in the USA. The term 'soccer' should be preferred for the US localization of the game as it is more familiar to that target audience.

Another factor to consider when translating terminology is the consistency between different games in the series. Since a new game in the series is released annually and fans of the series buy a new game every year, the terminology should be consistent with the previous games. Radically changing the terminology used in the game might confuse the players and influence their playing experience negatively as they would have to figure out which terms from the older games have been replaced by the new terms. Of course, this does not include changes made to improve the quality of the translation of the game. If there are poorly translated parts in the older versions, they should be revised accordingly.

5.2.3. Amount of the Text

Football Manager 2015 is a very text-heavy game. It has a 3D match engine that allows players to watch matches; but other than that almost every aspect of the game is presented in text. Since gamers interact with the game through text, it is crucial that they fully understand it. The game itself is hard to learn due to its detailed and complicated nature. A poor localization may add yet another barrier, which would make it impossible for the player to fully experience the game as it is intended. A game with few translatable assets could be enjoyed with poor or even no localization but this is not

the case for *Football Manager 2015* and a good localization is essential for a good experience. If the player cannot understand the in-game text, it will break the sense of immersion and make it impossible for the player to fulfill the fantasy of managing a football team.

The sheer amount of text in the game would pose another challenge for localizers. There are a lot of translatable assets, but since the game is released at the same time every year, time constraints will play a huge role in the translation of the said assets. Even though most of the text in the new game remains identical to the previous installment, every year new features and new textual component are added to the game and translation of these under strict time constraints can impact the quality of the localization.

5.2.4. Variety of Text Types:

The game does not only offer a huge amount of text but also a great variety of text types. From user interface elements to news reports, footballer profiles and match commentary, there are a lot of different text types in *Football Manager 2015*. Translating these different types of texts will require different strategies, as different types of texts in video games serve different functions (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 153-159). For example, the commentary text that accompanies matches will need to convey the excitement, whereas user interface has to be clear and concise. Localizers have to know beforehand which text belongs to which part of the game in order to translate the text in its own context.

5.2.5. Use of Symbols, Abbreviations and Acronyms

Symbols are used very sparingly throughout the game and most of the information is conveyed through the text. This means that the space constraints are a real challenge for the localizers, which is in line with the challenges identified by Esselink (Esselink, 2000: 26).

Since there is a lot of information on the screen at the same time, abbreviations and acronyms are frequently used throughout the game and translating them in such a way that target audience will understand at the first glance is something that forces the localizers to come up with creative solutions.

Parts of the game will be analyzed below within the scope of these challenges. The problems localizers have faced and how they have coped with those challenges are demonstrated. The root causes of the problems in the localization process of the game will be determined. This analysis will hopefully show what kind of challenges a video game like *Football Manager 2015* can pose for localizers and what sort of strategies are available to overcome these challenges.

5.3. FINDINGS

Analyzing the localization of a video game necessitates many factors to be taken into account to understand the reasons why localizers have made certain choices and used certain strategies. Costales (2012: 400) argues that since sports and simulation games incorporate many technical terms and do not rely on complex storylines and plots, a strategy of literal translation may be more appropriate for those games compared to games that focus on narrative, which would require more creativity from the localizers. Although this may be true for most sports and simulation games, in addition to many technical terms *Football Manager 2015* also incorporates many elements that would require the translators to use their creativity. For example, interactions with the media are not that different from the dialogues in story-driven games. Similarly, match commentary can be considered as a text type that requires the use of more creative translation strategies. This is in line with Costales' conclusion that the multi-faceted nature of video games (especially modern games) necessitates a mix of different translation strategies to be used in the localization of the same game. Different parts of the game are analyzed below in line with that assessment.

5.3.1. Basic Localization Features

Football Manager 2015 uses a simultaneous shipment model and it is released in all languages at the same time. The player can choose from 17 different language options from the ‘preferences’ menu. An important thing to note in terms of languages is that there are different options for American English and British English as well as two different settings for Portuguese that cater to players from Portugal and Brazil. Players can also choose the currency, heat unit, weight unit, height unit, distance unit, date format etc. from the same preferences menu. Therefore, instead of having fixed settings for each locale (for example, Turkish lira, Celsius, kilograms, meters and dd/mm/yyyy for Turkey), players can customize the language and units of measurement settings as they wish.

One part of the game that is not properly localized is the displaying of percentages in Turkish. Conditions of footballers in the game are displayed in percentages. That means if a footballer is in 100% condition, he is fully fit; whereas a footballer with 60% condition is tired or injured. The problem with the localization emerges from the placement of the symbol. The Turkish translation of ‘60 percent’ would be as ‘yüzde 60’. As it can be seen, the word ‘yüzde’ which corresponds to ‘percent’ is placed before the number rather than after it. For this reason, it would be displayed as ‘%60’ in Turkish instead of ‘60%’. However, in the game it remains unchanged from English.

Presumably, this could be something that is embedded in the game code and not included in the translatable assets that have been sent to the localization team. In cases like this, it is the developer that has to make sure that placement of symbols can change with language so it calls for cooperation between localization team and developers. However, it is not a localization shortcoming that impacts players’ enjoyment and understanding of the game. Therefore, given the time constraints of localizing such a big game, it can be assumed that this issue might have been overlooked or not prioritized.

It can be said that in terms of basic features of localization, *Football Manager 2015* has all the basic localization features expected from the game of its stature. The game allows the player to customize settings in line with their preferences so that the players

from every locale will be able to choose not only the language but also the units of measurements that they are familiar with.

5.3.2. Name of the Game

The first thing that springs to the players' attention is that the name of the game remains 'Football Manager', even when Turkish is selected as the language. The brand name is retained and it can be said that a strategy of 'non-translation' is used. As Costales (2012: 398) explains, this is the norm in the video game industry. Unlike in the movie industry, where titles of movies are usually translated into the target language, video game titles usually remain in English even if the game itself is localized. In addition to this, the first *Football Manager* game was released in 2004 and was a popular game in Turkey long before the first official localized version was released in 2012. Making use of brand recognition and keeping game's name in English is a wise move as the game's target audience in Turkey would be more familiar with the name *Football Manager* even if it is in a foreign language.

5.3.3. Terminology

As a realistic simulation of football management, *Football Manager 2015* includes many terms related to football. For someone who is unfamiliar with football, some sentences in the game might be hard to comprehend. Understanding and correctly translating these terms require a vast knowledge of football and football jargon, especially the jargon used in Britain, game's (and football's) country of origin.

5.3.3.1. Manager or Technical Director

The first term in the game that will be analyzed is 'manager'. 'Managers' in a football context are people who are in charge of football clubs. Their responsibilities can range from selecting the squad, determining tactics, managing training sessions to making decisions on which footballers to transfer and offer contracts to. However, there are no 'managers' in Turkish football culture. The closest term is 'teknik direktör' (literally

‘technical director’), whose responsibilities are much more limited. A technical director rarely determines the club’s transfer policy. A sporting director or a director of football is responsible with such tasks. Therefore, the translation of this term is an interesting case. For the Turkish version of the game, the term ‘menajer’ is preferred instead of the aforementioned ‘teknik direktör’. It can be said that localizers have made a suitable choice. Changing the term that the game is named after wouldn’t have been the best decision, but more importantly, game allows players to run all aspects of the club like a real life football manager could, rather than the more limited technical directors and it is of crucial importance for a video game that the terminology used in the game is in line with the gameplay mechanics.

A problem that arises from the choice of using the word ‘menajer’ is that, this term is usually used in Turkey to refer to agents that represent the footballers. The same term can’t be used to translate both ‘manager’ and ‘agent’ as that would create confusion for the player. To circumvent this issue, agent is translated as ‘temsilci’ (representative). If the word ‘agent’ was to be translated independently, then ‘menajer’ would have been the more suitable choice; but in this case, the word ‘menajer’ is used for a crucial term in the game and can’t be used to refer to another job. Therefore, it can be said appropriate words were chosen for the translation of these two words.

5.3.3.2. Competitions

‘Competitions’ is another term that can cause problems for Turkish localizers. Competitions screen is where players can see the competitions their teams are in. This includes the league the team is in, as well as various cup competitions. Although the term ‘competition’ has Turkish equivalents in other contexts (such as ‘yarışma’ or ‘rekabet’), there is no commonly used phrase in Turkish football culture to refer to both league and cup competitions. Instead of trying to find a direct equivalent for the word, localizers have dealt with this problem by translating the name of this screen as ‘Lig/Kupa’ (League/Cup). This translation enables the target audience to quickly understand what the screen is for and serves the purpose of communicating game’s message to the players.

5.3.3.3. On-loan

An unusual mistake in the translation of football-related terminology can be observed in the translation of the term ‘on-loan’. Here is an example of a news item describing a goal:

Source Text:

Top quality strike from on-loan Trabzonspor right winger Serdar Güler as he scores an incisive finish from 12 meters.

The footballer in question here is a Trabzonspor player but is on-loan at another club. The Turkish translation of the text, on the other hand, suggests that the footballer is on loan at Trabzonspor:

Target Text:

Trabzonspor takımında kiralık olarak forma giyen sağ kanat oyuncusu Serdar Güler, 12 metre mesafeden zekice bir bitirişle şık bir gol attı.

The match that the goal takes place in is not a Trabzonspor match and for this reason, the target text will confuse the player. There are three possible reasons for this translation. First reason would be localizers’ lack of knowledge of football terminology and misunderstanding of the term ‘on-loan’ in this context. If this is the case, it would be an anomaly as it is apparent from the overall localization of the game that localizers of the game had a good understanding of the terminology. The second possible scenario that caused this issue could be down to a lack of context. Since the localizers work with isolated text strings, it is possible that localizers thought the string was referring to the team the player was loaned to and not the parent club of the footballer. Finally, it could simply be the result of a typo. If the second word of the target text were ‘takımından’ instead of ‘takımında’, the original meaning could have been conveyed. In any case, it could be said that the disparity between the source and target texts in this case has been the result of the challenges of the localization process for such a video game, rather than the incompetence of the localizers.

5.3.4. Problems caused by variables

As mentioned earlier, a lot of the text in the game is in strings with lots of variables and those strings are translated in with those variables. It is easy to see how grammar differences between languages can cause problems for localizers in such an environment. For example, word order in a sentence is different in English and Turkish. In Turkish verbs are at the end of the sentence, whereas in English they come after subjects. This is a relatively easy problem to solve, if the game is internationalized and the place of variables in a string can be changed.

There are, however, some problems which are much harder to solve. In Turkish, suffixes change depending on whether the word ends with a vowel or a consonant. As an example, in English, the suffix -'s is used with nouns to form a possessive, such as 'John's book'. In Turkish, this is not as straightforward. Two common Turkish names, *Ali* and *Ahmet*, can be used as an example to show why that isn't the case. The same phrase with those names would be translated from English to Turkish as follows:

Ali's book → Ali'nin kitabı

Ahmet's book → Ahmet'in kitabı

As can be seen, the first noun gets an '-nin' suffix as it ends with a vowel but the noun ending with a consonant gets the '-in' suffix.

Normally, this wouldn't have been a problem during the translation process, as the translator will choose the appropriate suffix in each case. However, localizers working for *Football Manager* do not translate a text with fixed names. As mentioned before, they translate strings with variables in them and those strings can be applied to every footballer/manager/club name in the world, making it impossible for them to decide which suffixes to use when translating a particular string.

To better understand the difficulties caused by such a translation environment, below are three examples from the game, where same string is used to describe a goal and below them are the Turkish translation of the three sentences.

Source Texts:

- An error from Poland's Angelo Langer allowed inside forward Patrick Roberts to score a placed shot.
- An error from Estonia's Ragnar Klavan allowed complete forward Danny Welbeck to score a mighty header from within the six-yard box.
- An error from Slovenia's Denis Kramar allowed industrious midfielder James Milner to score a well-timed close range finish.

Target Texts:

- Polonya oyuncusu Angelo Langer hata yaparak içe kat eden oyuncu Patrick Roberts isminin düzgün bir vuruşla gol atmasına sebep oldu.
- Estonya oyuncusu Ragnar Klavan hata yaparak komple forvet Danny Welbeck isminin altı pas içinde sert bir kafa vuruşuyla gol atmasına sebep oldu.
- Slovenya oyuncusu Denis Kramar hata yaparak çalışkan orta saha James Milner isminin yakın mesafeden yaptığı güzel bir vuruş ile gol atmasına sebep oldu.

For native Turkish speakers, the target text will feel unnaturally long. The same meaning could be conveyed in a much clearer and concise manner. However, it should be noted that this is not a translation of a fixed text. Localizers can only translate the non-variable parts of the string and translating it in such a way that the sentence will make sense after variables are filled in is a difficult task. Based on the example previously mentioned from the official forums, the string that localizers translate would look like this with variables in parenthesis:

An error from (team name)'s (footballer name) allowed (footballer description) (footballer name) to score a (goal description).

When we look at the Turkish translations, it looks like it has been translated as follows:

(team name) oyuncusu (footballer name) hata yaparak (footballer description) (footballer name) isminin (goal description) golatmasına sebep oldu.

It is obvious that the translator of this string tried to avoid the issue with Turkish suffixes. The words ‘oyuncusu’ (player) and ‘isminin’ (name) have been added to the Turkish translation after the variable team and footballer names. Both of these variables would require suffixes when translating this text string under normal circumstances. However, since the correct suffix would be different for each name, it will be incorrect in some cases whichever suffix the localizers choose. By adding words that would normally be considered redundant, the localizers can then add the suffixes to those words instead of right after the variables and by doing so circumvent this problem. In another medium, the translated text would be criticized for using redundant words that make it less concise. However, in this case, the localizers have made this choice to circumvent a problem that is specific to translating text in a digital context.

However, there is no consistency in strategies used to circumvent this issue. There are cases where suffixes aren’t used at all after variables, which make the sentences hard to comprehend. It is also common in the game to see suffixes that are grammatically incorrect. If this has been observed in the translation of a literary text or in the subtitles of a movie, it would have been natural to conclude that the translation has been carried out by unqualified translators. However, in this case, the difficulty of producing a viable one-size-fits-all solution is apparent. Although the inconsistency in the way this issue is dealt with can be a point of criticism, the inability to produce a seamless text for the target audience has to do with the linguistic differences between Turkish and English and the way sentences are formed in *Football Manager 2015*. Therefore, sentences that would look non-native to the target audience cannot be attributed to the incompetence of the localizers. These examples also show that the localization of video game text cannot be assessed without their scope of their work and limitations into consideration.

5.3.5. Interactions with the Press

Before and after every match in *Football Manager 2015*, the player answers questions from the media like a real life manager would. Every question can be answered with one of the five different answers provided by the game. Players can also choose from four different options to determine the manner in which those answers are given: calm, assertive, cautious and passionate. The answers given to those questions by the player

will determine how the player's character is perceived in the game world. The player can choose to be a calm or petulant manager and it will have an impact on the game. If the player criticizes one of the footballers before the media, it can upset him or motivate him to do better. The player needs to choose answers carefully in each situation. It is vital for the player to understand the questions and answers to fully enjoy the experience. A poor translation can confuse the player if the answers do not seem to fit the question or giving an answer causes an unexpected impact in game.

Below are some examples to demonstrate the translations of this type of text. The relevant parts that will be analyzed are underlined.

Source Text 1:

You've just signed a contract to stay at Arsenal for the foreseeable future. You must be delighted to have concluded this deal?

-I'm delighted to have signed a new deal. I'm absolutely loving it here and it was a no-brainer to commit to staying even longer

-I'm pleased to have been given the opportunity by the chairman to continue what I've started here

-I've got nothing to say on the matter

-It's good to get it out of the way, now we can look ahead and focus on the football side of things

-If anyone should be delighted it's the chairman. The club continues to have a great manager

Target Text 1:

Arsenal ile yeni bir sözleşme imzalayarak geleceğinizi buraya teslim ettiniz. Kulüp ile anlaşmaya vardığınız için mutlu musunuz?

-Yeni sözleşme imzaladığım için mutluyum. Burayı gerçekten çok seviyorum ve sözleşmeyi imzalarken en ufak tereddüt yaşamadım

-Başkanımızın bana futbola başladığım bu kulüpte yoluma devam etme fırsatı vermesinden dolayı çok mutluyum

-Bu konuda konuşmak istemiyorum

-Bu sözleşme meselesini halletmek çok iyi oldu, artık işimize dönebilir futbolumuza odaklanabiliriz

-Biri mutlu olacaksa o da kulüp başkanı olmalı çünkü harika bir menajerle çalışmaya devam edecek

In this example, the manager is asked a question about the new contract that has recently been signed. As can be seen, the player can choose from several options on how to react to this news. The first two answers provide positive reactions to the news, the third one is a neutral answer, the fourth is dismissing the importance of the contract and the fifth can be construed as an arrogant reaction. These options give the players the ability to role play and choose an option in line with the way they want their in-game character to act.

In the Turkish translation of the game, four options are translated in a way that conveys the message of the source text. The second answer, however, is mistranslated. The Turkish text can be back translated as “I am very happy that the chairman allowed me to continue in the club that I started my football career”. In this context, “to continue what I’ve started here” conveys the message of the manager’s desire to continue the work has been done as the manager of the team. However, the target text sounds more like a footballer talking about continuing at a club where his football career started. If the localizers have misinterpreted the source text as an answer by a footballer rather than a manager, it would be a prime example of how a lack of context, caused by localizers working with decontextualized text strings (O’Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 102), can give rise to problems in video game localization. Another explanation is that the localizers interpreted the source text as an answer from a manager whose management career has started at that particular club. However, if that is the case, it can be said that the target text could have been conveyed in a way that is easier to understand.

Source Text 2:

How important have Graziano Pelle's performances been to Southampton this season?

- He's a player of incredible quality and class. When a club possesses a player such as him they're going to be formidable because of what he brings to the table

-I think they'd be a lot worse without him

-I'm here to discuss questions about my own team

-He's not been that good, certainly not compared to some other players in the league

-He's a good player –not without his flaws- but he's not the reason they're doing well

Target Text 2:

Graziano Pelle'in göstereceği performans Southampton için ne kadar önemli?

-Muhteşem bir oyuncu. Böyle bir oyuncuya sahipseniz çok şanslısınızdır çünkü takıma katkısı muazzam olan bir oyuncu ile çalışıyorsunuz demektir bu

-Onsuz işleri daha da zorlaşacak

-Takımım hakkında soruları burada tartışabilirim

-O kadar da iyi bir oyuncu değil. Ligdeki bazı oyuncularla karşılaştırılmaz bile

-Kusurlarını göz ardı ettiğimizde kendisini çok iyi bir oyuncu olarak tanımlayabilirim ancak takımın iyi performans göstermesinin sebebi o değil

In this example, the manager is questioned about the impact of an opposition footballer. The player can either compliment the opposition footballer or play down his importance to the team. In the Turkish translation of the answers, there are two cases which can cause problems for the player. In the second answer, the original text states that the

opposition team would do worse if they didn't have that footballer. The Turkish translation of the text can be back translated as "They will have a harder time without him". The change to future tense in the target text may lead the player to think that the footballer is not available (due to injury, suspension etc.) and the opposition team will miss him in the future because of that.

Another source of potential misunderstanding can be observed in the fourth answer. The use of present perfect tense in the source text can be interpreted to mean what is in question is the performance of the footballer so far during the season. In the target text, however, simple present tense is used. The target text can be back translated as 'He is not that good of a player. He can't even be compared with some of the players in the league'. The answer in the target text is a comment about the general quality of the said footballer. The change of tense limits the scope of the message in the target text and the resultant target text is not inclusive enough to allow for many interpretations as the source text does.

Source Text 3:

Alexandre Lacazette is a real crowd favourite and has delighted fans with his recent performances. Do you think the supporters' backing will help him maintain this form?

Target Text 3:

Alexandre Lacazette halkın favorisi ve son zamandaki performansıyla taraftarları mest etmiş durumda. Taraftar desteğinin formunu sürdürmesinde etkili olacağını düşünüyor musunuz?

In this example, the term used for describing the footballer (real crowd favourite) is translated into Turkish as 'halkın favorisi', which can be back translated as 'people's favourite'. This is not a term that is used regularly in a football context. There are similar terms used frequently by the football media in Turkey. Preferring one of these terms might have been a better way to convey the message of the source text.

Source Text 4:

Obviously you don't like seeing your side concede goals, but surely you will admit that Robin van Persie's effort was a sensational one. What did you make of it?

-It was a fantastic strike, absolutely no question

-I can't think of many better than that

-I don't want to comment on individuals

-There was more than hint of good fortune about it, I thought

-I am not in the business of praising opponents

Target Text 4:

Kalenizde gol görmekten hoşlanmazsınız, fakat bu da Robin van Persie isminin harika bir oyununa yol açtı. Siz neler söylemek istersiniz?

-Fantastik bir vuruştı, kesinlikle sorgulamaya gerek yok

-Ondan daha iyisini düşünemiyorum

-Bireysel performanslar hakkında değerlendirmede bulunmak istemiyorum

-Ben bu golde şanstın daha fazlasının olduğunu düşünmüştüm

-Benim işim rakipleri övmek değil

In this example, there are two different mistakes in the translation of the question. The question in the target text can be back translated as “You do not want to see your team concede goals. However, this led to Robin van Persie's great performance. What do you want to say about it?”. There is no causality in the source text but in the target text it sounds like the footballer played well because the manager doesn't want to see the team concede goals, which doesn't make much sense.

The other problem is that the original text is talking about the goal the footballer scored but the target text talks about a “great performance” instead. Therefore, a question about a specific goal is transformed into a question about the performance of a footballer.

Turkish text of the second answer can be back translated as ‘I can’t think of any better than him’, which is also a comment about the footballer rather than the goal. However, first and fourth answers talk about a goal as in the source text. This contradiction between question and answers will confuse the players as they won’t understand the question and therefore won’t be able to interact with the game as they want. The problem here is probably caused by a lack of terminology knowledge as ‘effort’ in this context is used as ‘shot’ but the localizers seem to have understood it as ‘performance’.

Source Text 5:

Abou Diaby was an unfortunate casualty against a Leverkusen team many have claimed play too close to the edge and often cross the line of what might be considered acceptable physicality. What do you make of their style and approach?

-I’m disgusted by them and particularly Roger Schmidt. Their style of play has no place in football

-I’m not a fan of it. There’s being assertive and then there’s Leverkusen; they have left their mark on Abou and he won’t be the first nor last to suffer

-I don’t believe Schmidt would ever send a team out to inflict injury or to be deliberately dirty. They’re abrasive and combative but that’s how they want to play, so good luck to them

-I think they’re entitled to play however they want as long as it stays within the laws of the game

-I would rather not comment on that at this stage

Target Text 5:

Abou Diaby’in, Leverkusen’e karşı oynanan maçta talihsiz bir şekilde sakatlanmasının ardından birçok kişi, rakibinizin insanlık sınırını aştığını iddia etti. Leverkusen’in oyun stili hakkındaki yorumlarınız nelerdir?

-Oynadıkları çirkin oyunun futbol dünyasında yeri yok. RogerSchmidt'ten ve oynattığı futboldan iğreniyorum.

-Böyle bir oyun anlayışının taraftarı değilim. Sert futbol bir yana, Leverkusen bir yana; adamlar resmen kasap. Abou'ya yazık ettiler

-Schmidt'in, oyuncularını kasten böyle şeyler yapmaları için sahaya gönderdiğine inanıyorum. Sert futbol oynamayı seviyorlar sadece

-Oyunun kurallarına uymak koşuluyla, diledikleri gibi oynasınlar

-Şu aşamada buna yorum yapmayı tercih etmiyorum

In this example, the manager (the player) is asked about the opposition team's overly physical play. The Turkish translation of the question talks about the opponent 'exceeding the limits of humanity'. The over the top tone of the target text is in contrast with the source text and gives out a comical vibe that wasn't intended in the original question.

The translation of the second answer uses the word butcher ('kasap') to describe the style of the opponent. Even though the source text doesn't contain that specific word, the word 'kasap' is used a lot in Turkish football terminology to describe players who are overly physical and in that sense it fits the tone and feel in the source text, which is to criticize the physicality of the opponent.

It can be said that in this example we see a good and poor way of using a more free form of translation. The translation of the question fails to convey the feel of the source text. The translation of the answer, on the other hand, makes good use of a word that is familiar to the target audience, conveying the meaning and feel of the source text.

Source Text 6:

While teams in other countries prepare for the winter break, your side's schedule looks busier than ever. Would you agree it's about the time the league thought about opting to break for a few weeks at this time of year?

-It's ridiculous that we don't have a break; we risk the players' fitness and the hopes of our national team by continuing in this manner while other nations take a breather

-I think we could all benefit from a winter break and at the very least it should be discussed by the relevant parties

-I don't have an opinion either way

-I wouldn't go along with that necessarily; I think the current schedule works fine and we're looking forward to the run of games we've got coming

-If it's not broken, don't fix it; that's my take on it

Target Text 6:

Diğer ülkeler devre arası tatiline hazırlanırken, ülkenizde ise devre tatili uygulaması bulunmuyor. Sizce Futbol Federasyonu devre arası tatilini uygulamalı mı?

-Devre arası tatili uygulamasının ülkemizde uygulanmaması saçmalık. Oyuncuların kondisyonlarını ve dolayısıyla milli takımda verimli olmalarını riske atmak anlamına geliyor bu durum

-Bence bu uygulamanın yararlarını ve yürürlüğe konmasını yetkili makamlar olarak gündeme almamız gerekiyor

-Benim iki şekilde de bir tercihim bulunmuyor

-Bu fikre katıldığımı söyleyemem. Şu anki sistemde gayet iyi idare ediyoruz

-Şu zamana kadar bu konuda bir sıkıntı yaşamadığımız için herhangi bir değişiklik yapılmasına gerek görmüyorum

In this example, both in question and the first answer some parts of the source text are omitted. The 'your side's schedule looks busier than ever' part in the source text isn't translated for the target text. The same goes for the 'while other nations take a breather' part in the first answer. However, these omissions do not alter the meaning and feel of

the text and conveys the message in a concise way that doesn't confuse the player or cause misunderstanding. Additionally, localizers have correctly interpreted that the question is posed to a manager working in a country with no winter break even though that was not explicitly stated in the source text and added a part in the target text that can be back translated as 'however, there is no winter break in your country'. Therefore, it can be said that the localizers have used a strategy of omissions or additions where they have deemed appropriate without negatively affecting the experience of the player.

A criticism can be leveled at the way the third answer is translated. The text is translated word for word. The result is a text that sounds 'non-native' to the target audience. Using a more creative translation strategy than sticking with a literal translation strategy in this case could have conveyed the feel and message of the text.

5.3.6. Space restrictions

As mentioned previously, localization of software products (not only video games but software products in general) poses challenges for localizers in terms of available space (Esselink, 2000: 26). There are a lot of instances where a specific text has to fit in a box of specific size. Team instructions screen in *Football Manager 2015* is an example of such a case. In that screen the player can give instructions to their team and influence how they play. Each instruction is in a dialogue box and even the longest text has to fit into that box. As can be seen in the following image:

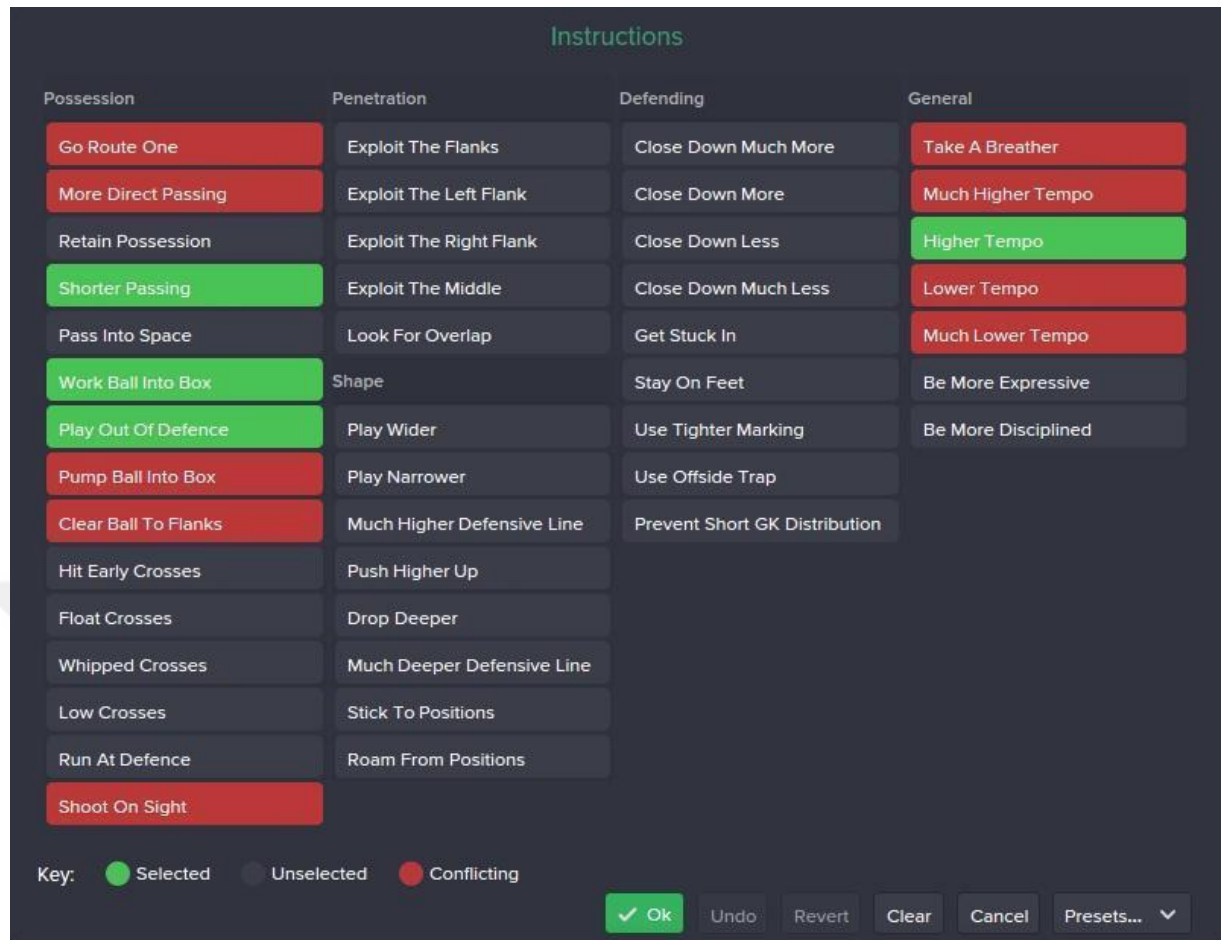


Figure 1. Instructions in the English version of *Football Manager 2015*

However, as the length of text can change during translation, there are cases in the Turkish translation where text does not fit in the box:



Figure 2. Instructions in the Turkish version of *Football Manager 2015*

As it can be seen from the image, the instructions that don't fit the box are cut off. For example, in the last row of column 5, the target text 'Rakip Kaleci Top Çıkartırken Defansa Baskı' is truncated and is displayed as 'Rakip Kaleci Top Çıkartırken...'. Under normal circumstances, this could cause a problem for the player as the player cannot understand the instructions that don't make sense when cut off. However, when you mouse-over the text, all of the text is displayed as well as the explanation of the instruction. This allows the localizers to translate the text as they wish, without worrying too much about shortening the text. The fact that localizers haven't shortened the text demonstrates their knowledge of the workings of game's user interface.

5.3.7. Acronyms and Abbreviations

There is a lot of information on the screen at the same time, since, as previously stated, *Football Manager 2015* is a text-heavy game. To convey all that information to the player and save space, acronyms and abbreviations are frequently used in the game. Translation of these acronyms and abbreviations can cause problems for the localizers and require creative translation solutions to overcome these challenges.

One area where the game makes use of acronyms frequently is displaying the positions of the footballers. There are dozens of footballers in each team and acronyms are needed if the player wants to have a quick look at which footballers play in which positions. Acronyms are done in a pretty straightforward manner in the source text. As an example, a footballer who plays on the left side of the defense is displayed as ‘D (L)’ and a right sided defender is displayed as ‘D (R)’. Similarly, an attacking midfielder that plays on the left is displayed as ‘AM (L)’ and a right sided attacking midfielder is displayed as ‘AM (R)’. Someone with an average knowledge of football terms will understand what these acronyms stand for or will figure it out pretty quickly.

The Turkish translation of these acronyms, on the other hand, poses some interesting challenges. While someone playing the English version of the game can figure out quickly that ‘L’ stands for ‘left’ and ‘R’ stands for ‘right’, same can’t be done in the Turkish version. As Turkish words for left (sol) and right (sağ) both start with the letter ‘S’, an acronym can’t be produced for these positions in the same manner. To overcome this problem, Turkish localizers of the game have come up with abbreviating the words ‘sol’ and ‘sağ’ and ‘Sl’ and ‘Sğ’ respectively. This means a left sided defender is displayed as ‘D (Sl)’ and right sided one is displayed as ‘D (Sğ)’. It can be said that this is a clever solution to the problem. Lower case letter next to ‘S’ indicate that it is part of the same word and since only one additional letter is added, it doesn’t create unnecessary visual clutter.

Abbreviations are also used to display the status of a footballer. Small boxes next to the name of the footballer appear to convey information pertaining to injuries, suspensions, happiness of the footballer etc. These boxes contain only three letters which are

abbreviations of the words that convey such information. For example, an injured footballer will have a red box next to his name containing the letters ‘Inj’.

Most of the abbreviations in the game don’t cause an issue as it is easy to abbreviate majority of those words in an easy to understand manner. An interesting case can be observed in the translation of the abbreviation for ‘unhappy’, which is ‘Unh’. This appears next to the footballer when he is unhappy about something. Player needs to be aware of this as it can impact morale and performance of that player. The term ‘unhappy’ can be translated to Turkish as either ‘mutsuz’ or ‘üzgün’. However, hands of the localizers are tied in this case as the word ‘mutsuz’ shares the same three starting letters with the Turkish word for ‘happy’ (‘mutlu’), which would cause problems for the abbreviation as the box is limited to three letters. Therefore, localizers had no choice but to translate the term as ‘üzgün’ and abbreviate it as ‘Üzg’. In this case, we can see that the restrictions of the user interface have removed one of the viable choices for the localizers. Existence of a viable alternative means the choice is obvious for the localizer and it doesn’t impact the end user but it is an interesting example that shows the factors localizers have to keep in mind.

There are, however, some inconsistencies when it comes to abbreviations and acronyms. In the original text, Central Defender is displayed as ‘CD’. In the Turkish translation this term is translated as ‘Standart Stoper’ but it is displayed in short as ‘DK’, which is not an acronym for the translated phrase or any other similar phrase. One plausible explanation is that the translator though ‘CD’ was referring to ‘Compact Disc’. There is a message from an internet forum topic about the game complaining that ‘Central Defender’ is translated as ‘Kompakt Disk’⁸. It could be that the phrase was corrected with a patch but the mistranslated acronym went unnoticed. This example clearly demonstrates the importance of context in translation.

Another inconsistency is in the translation of footballer duties. Every footballer in the field can have one of four duties: Attack, Defend, Support or Automatic. In the English version of the game these are displayed as A, D, S and Au respectively. In the Turkish

⁸Retrieved October 16, 2017, from

<http://forum.turksportal.net/vb/showthread.php?t=123474&s=67d4a5595fb914f11918e04370443472&p=2743947&viewfull=1#post2743947>

translation, the short form of Automatic is ‘Og’, which is confusing as it could have been simply left as ‘O’. The only reason that English abbreviation has two letters is that it would otherwise conflict with Attack, which is displayed as ‘A’. In Turkish there is no such problem. Moreover, and even more confusingly, the Turkish word for Automatic, ‘Otomatik’ does not contain the letter ‘g’. One possible explanation is that localizers added another word besides ‘otomatik’, such as ‘otomatik geçiş’ (automatic transition) to better convey the gameplay functions of the duty. However, if this were the case, it can be said that the localizers did not adhere to the conventions of the game as addition of another word would require the use of uppercase letter and the acronym should have been ‘OG’ to remain consistent with the rest of acronyms in the game. These inconsistencies making into the released game could be due to the huge amount of text that has to be translated in a short amount of time, leaving little time for quality assurance.

5.4. DISCUSSION

It is clear from the analysis of the Turkish localization of *Football Manager 2015* that the lack of context, time constraints and other challenges caused by the nature of the game has produced some translation ‘errors’ or inconsistent translations. Without an understanding of the video game localization process and the problems caused by the specific genre of game, one can conclude that the localization of the game has been carried out poorly. However, as demonstrated in this analysis, these ‘errors’ have been the results of the challenging localization process of the game. As a text heavy game that simulates a management experience, *Football Manager 2015* is a localizer’s nightmare with the text changing constantly and the translation is done via text strings with variables in them. The situation is made even worse for localizers translating into Turkish, which is structurally different from English. The game is also challenging in terms of its heavy use of football jargon. On top of all of that, the game belongs to a series that releases new games annually and localizers work under tight deadlines. The localizers would have had to use all of their football and gaming knowledge to overcome these challenges. *Football Manager 2015* is a good example of how not only video game localization poses different challenges compared to other forms of

translation but different genres of video games have their own specific challenges that need to be studied.

In terms of the strategies used for the Turkish localization of *Football Manager 2015*, the localizers seem to have preferred a domestication strategy, especially when translating the news items and press interactions. There are a few occasions, where foreignization is preferred such as using a non-translation in the name of the game and translating the term ‘manager’ as ‘menajer’ but these are few and far between and done mostly to fulfill the expectations of the fans of the series. However, in some cases, there is a lack of consistency in the preferred strategies. Radical forms of both literal and free form translation are used in the same type of text. It is apparent that instead of determining a specific strategy for specific text types, each localizer decided on how to translate on a case by case basis. This may have been effective in finding appropriate translation solutions for different scenarios, although it has led to inconsistencies that cause problems in some cases. However, the inconsistencies should not be seen as the fault of localizers since localization is usually a team effort and the localizers might not have been in contact with each other or have not had the time to make sure that the localization of all part of the game is consistent.

The findings of the analysis of Turkish localization of *Football Manager 2015* are summed up in the table below:

Challenge	Strategies Used	Skillset Required
Heavy use of football terminology	Using football jargon of the target culture	Good knowledge of football terminology of source and target languages
Use of variables causing problems in the target text	Addition of extra words, changing the structure of the sentence	Experience in translating text strings, understanding of the grammatical structure of source and target texts
Decontextualization	Use of background information	Deep knowledge about the <i>Football Manager</i> series
Acronyms and abbreviations	Using alternative synonymous words, addition of lowercase letters	Knowledge of the user interface of the game

Space Restrictions	Truncation and providing the extra information through mousing over the text	Knowledge of the user interface of the game
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Table 3. The findings of the analysis of Turkish localization of *Football Manager 2015*

It is possible to conclude that *Football Manager 2015* is a difficult game to localize, posing a variety of challenges in a variety of areas. For the Turkish localization of the game, most of these challenges have been overcome. The analysis demonstrates that localization team has a good grasp of both languages and their knowledge of football terminology is adequate. Most of the translation ‘errors’ seem to have been caused by a lack of context or hard to localize nature of the game (e.g. text with lots of variables in them). These cases underline the specific challenges unique to video game localization and provide an outline of features to look at to assess how the translated text in video games should be evaluated.

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS: TURKISH LOCALIZATION OF *LEAGUE OF LEGENDS*

This chapter will be a detailed analysis of the Turkish localization of the video game *League of Legends*. The peculiarities of the game regarding the genre, theme and localization process, findings as to the localization-related challenges, approaches and strategies used by the localizers to cope with said challenges and discussion about findings is presented in this chapter.

6.1. ABOUT *LEAGUE OF LEGENDS*

League of Legends is a Multiplayer Online Battle Arena (MOBA) game. It is developed by Riot Games and was released in 2009. It is a multiplayer game, where two teams of player-controlled characters (called ‘champions’) fight each other in a fantasy world to complete various objectives. The game is based in sessions (lasting around 40 minutes) rather than having one continuous story that can be found in more narrative-driven video games. The developers define *League of Legends* as follows in the official website:

“League of Legends is a fast-paced, competitive online game that blends the speed and intensity of an RTS with RPG elements. Two teams of powerful champions, each with a unique design and playstyle, battle head-to-head across multiple battlefields and game modes. With an ever-expanding roster of champions, frequent updates and a thriving tournament scene, League of Legends offers endless replayability for players of every skill level.” (Riot Games, 2018)

A more detailed explanation of the gameplay is provided by Neal Hinnant:

“The map forms a rough square mirrored diagonally. In two opposite corners of Summoner's Rift are the bases for each team. The centerpiece of each base, a large crystal known as a nexus, is the ultimate game objective; destroying the enemy team's nexus brings victory to the glorious conquerors. Safeguarding each nexus is a network of defensive towers that deal substantial damage to players and other defensive structures. Players must fight their way across the map, escorting shock troops known as minions to assist them in clearing a path to the opposing nexus. These minions follow a predetermined course to the enemy team's base, forming three pathways known as lanes. There are three lanes in Summoner's Rift: one that follows the upper edge of the map, one that follows the lower edge, and a lane that cuts through the middle of the play area. The majority of gameplay consists of

aiding waves of minions as they work their way up the map lanes while thwarting the opponent's attempts to do the same.” (Hinnant, 2013: 33-34)

Easy to learn but deeply immersive and engaging gameplay of *League of Legends* combined with its replayability has made it an immensely popular game that is played by tens of millions of people all around the world. *League of Legends* generated \$2.1 billion in revenue in 2017, making it the top PC game in terms of revenue (SuperData, 2018: 10).

One of the biggest reasons for the success of *League of Legends* in different parts of the world is the business model it uses. League of Legends uses what is known as a ‘Free to Play’ (or F2P) business model. This model allows anyone to download and start playing the game for free. The player doesn’t have to spend tens of dollars on purchasing the game. Players then have the option to spend money on customizing the look of their characters or buying new ones. While this model is currently common for multiplayer games, in 2009 (when the game was first released) being able to play such a high-quality game for free was not the norm. Thus, the popularity of League of Legends can partially be attributed to this model, which makes the game very accessible to a wide range of players. This is particularly relevant to this study as free-to-play model also allows video game companies to expand to new markets, where traditionally video games do not sell well and piracy is a huge problem.

Growth in internet access in these aforementioned markets has paved the way for this sort of distribution model. In the past, most of the games were only available as physical products. The cost of CDs or DVDs as well as the cost of distributing those physical products around the world meant that video games had to be sold at a certain price to make profit. Video games becoming digital products that are downloadable from the internet allow the game developers to distribute their products at a lower price or in some cases, like in League of Legends, for completely free. Free-to-play games have become very prominent as a result and they have made up for 69% of the PC gaming market in 2017 (SuperData, 2018: 10).

Another big contributing factor to the popularity of *League of Legends* is its competitive scene. Professional video game competitions, commonly known as ‘esports’, have seen a rise in popularity since the advent of free and easy-to-use online streaming services.

The most famous of these services is Twitch.tv, which was acquired by Amazon in 2014 for \$970 million (MacMillan and Bensinger, 2014). Newzoo, a market research firm, estimates the number of global esports enthusiasts at 221 million and the revenue for 2018 at \$922 million.⁹ Similarly, SuperData, a games data and market research company, reports that esports industry is on track to generate over billion dollars in 2018 (SuperData, 2018: 18). Using Twitch.tv and similar streaming services millions of viewers watch professional video game players compete in tournaments that distribute millions of dollars in prize money. *League of Legends* topped the charts of most viewed esports game with an estimated 157 million unique viewers every month (Superdata, 2018: 19). Professional *League of Legends* players in North America earn an average yearly salary of \$105.385, according to the survey of the major sports network ESPN.¹⁰ To put things into perspective, this figure is almost the double of median household income in the United States, which stood at \$59.039 in 2016 (The U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

The popularity of competitive *League of Legends* has also spread to Turkey with big Turkish companies sponsoring *League of Legends* teams and important tournament matches being broadcast on major sports channels¹¹.

6.2. LOCALIZATION PROCESS AND GAME-SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

As of writing, *League of Legends* is localized for 11 regions (North America, EU West, EU Nordic & East, Latin America North, Latin America South, Brazil, Japan, Russia, Turkey, Oceania and Republic of Korea). These regions have their separate servers and language options to choose from. Some languages are supported in multiple regions. English, for example, is supported for 4 different regions (North America, EU West, EU Nordic & East and Oceania). The other languages in the website are German, Spanish, French, Italian, Polish, Greek, Romanian, Hungarian, Czech, Portuguese, Japanese, Russian, Turkish and Korean. However, these are not the only languages the game is localized for. For example, the Chinese version of the game is hosted by the gaming

⁹ Retrieved February 13, 2018, from <https://newzoo.com/insights/markets/esports/>

¹⁰ Retrieved February 13, 2018, from http://www.espn.com/esports/story/_/id/18461870/life-league-legends-pro

¹¹ Retrieved February 12, 2018, from <http://tr.beinsports.com/haber/turkiye-buyuk-finali-lig-tvde>

platform of Tencent (a Chinese investment company that owns game's developer Riot Games) and the game has a different Chinese website (lol.qq.com). All in all, the game is shipped in 24 different languages.¹² The amount of regions and languages *League of Legends* is localized for shows its popularity and worldwide appeal.

Due to a combination of aforementioned factors, the popularity of *League of Legends* has skyrocketed in Turkey and it has become one of the most well-known games in the country. As mentioned above, the game is not only localized into Turkish but Turkey is one of the standalone regions for the game. That means the game has servers dedicated just for Turkish gamers.

Mangiron states that there are two main models of video game localization: outsourcing and in-house development. Outsourcing refers to localization models where the game developer works with an agency to localize the product. This model has its drawbacks but is the preferred model for most US and Europe based game developers (Mangiron, 2006: 310). However, some big game companies with huge resources can afford to form their own localization teams. The developer of the game, Riot Games, is one of those companies that have in-house localization teams. It has an office in Istanbul and that branch employs 75 people. The purpose of the Istanbul office is explained as follows in the official website of the developer:

“With a roster of 75 Rioters, we’re constantly asking ourselves how we can serve players from Turkey. We work among like-minded individuals who breathe video games like air (and would likely suffocate in a world without them). With such a focus on games and gaming in general, we have to constantly check that we’re challenging the status quo around player satisfaction in Turkey. Our team brings content to players around the globe, not just Turkey though, so you’ll have to be great at working towards local and global goals” (Jaggers and Piper, 2017).

A look at a job posting for a localization coordinator to work on the Latin American localization of *League of Legends* demonstrate the skills expected by Riot Games from the localizers who work on their game and gives us a good idea how the Turkish localization team has been formed. The job posting indicates that the company is looking for candidates who are:

¹²Retrieved March 6, 2018, from: <https://nexus.leagueoflegends.com/en-us/2017/12/dev-kayn-and-the-showerhunter/>

- **Intellectually adaptable:** you've earned a bachelor's degree and have at least a year of experience in translation; you know that education doesn't have an end date, so and enjoy absorbing new knowledge and thinking on your feet
- **A team player:** you don't just play well with others, you know that working with the team creates the best possible outcome
- **Detail oriented:** you're a modern Sherlock Holmes and not even the tiniest detail escapes your ever-vigilant eye
- **A communications ace:** you excel as a liaison between people even if they're on opposite sides of the world, and they trust you to always advocate for their player focused initiatives
- **Multilingual:** fluent in at least English and Spanish, you relish working with other cultures, you're able to communicate with players and Rioters in different regions
- **A Spanish language writer:** you can write and/or translate content pieces for an eager and knowledgeable gaming community
- **Player-focused:** as a player yourself, you know that subpar localization makes local players feel like second-class citizens, and can leverage your in-game experience to accurately and authentically communicate messages across language barriers
- **Familiar with the tools of the trade:** you bring a working knowledge of game development, audio recording processes, and localization tools (such as MemoQ and Xloc); an intermediate to advanced understanding of planning and bug database tools will score you extra points¹³

As it can be seen, the job listing lists a mixture of skills that are required from all translators as well as skills required from software localizers and video game localizers specifically. The first six points can apply to translators working in every field of translation. The last point indicates that the candidate should have the technical skills which are useful for software localization. The remaining point requires the candidate to be “player-focused” and clearly underlines that the localizers applying for the job should be gamers themselves in order to understand the potential problems encountered by other gamers.

The job posting allows us to see what qualifications an ideal game localizer working on *League of Legends* are expected to have. It can be concluded that the localization teams for *League of Legends* are formed by localizers who have the language skills of a

¹³Retrieved March 2, 2017 from <http://www.riotgames.com/careers/252053>

translator, the technical knowledge of a computer enthusiast and the video game knowledge of a passionate gamer.

As a result of the localization efforts of the developer, the game has fully been localized for the Turkish market. The interface of the game, all the in-game text, the content of the website and promotional materials are all translated into Turkish. Dubbing is used to localize the voices in the game with famous sports announcer Murat Kosova and actors Zafer Algöz, Erdal Tosun and Altan Erkekli among those who worked on revoicing the game. The fact that the developers of the game has attached such an importance for the Turkish localization of the game is yet further evidence for the growing of gaming industry throughout the world as games are localized for a greater variety of languages and regions.

In an article written by two of their localization producers, Riot Games give the following definition for localization:

“Translation, while incredibly important during the creation of loc, is only one part of the equation. Riot plays around in a lot of different mediums including audio recording, graphical asset creation, systems that interact with players through text, and even physically printed materials like board games. How each of these assets are localized will be drastically different based upon product need and requirements” (Jaggers and Piper, 2017).

This definition reflects the prevalent conception of translation in the localization industry. Different mediums such as audio recording is seen as outside the realm of translation and it seems that translation is regarded only as the change of one text string in a certain language to another. A similar limited view of the concept of translation can be observed in another part of the article when talking about old-style localization approach:

“...in other words, make it for you, then just translate it and ship it somewhere else” (Jaggers and Piper, 2017)

It can be inferred that authors of the article think that making a product suitable for a target audience is different than “just translating” it. Therefore, translation is regarded limited in its scope. This is contrary to the modern understanding of translation in Translation Studies and demonstrates the aforementioned distance between academia and industry when it comes to localization.

Turkish localizers of the game have an even more dismissive attitude of the concept of translation. In a message posted on the official Turkish forums of the game, a member of Riot Games' Turkey office state that the difference between translation and localization is that the latter is not word-for-word. The message goes on to talk about how the localization team tries use idioms and expressions from the Turkish language and Turkish culture, emphasizing the importance of target culture in their localization process.¹⁴

The target-oriented approach of the Turkish localization team is not an isolated choice but the policy of Riot Games when it comes to localization of *League of Legends*. The aforementioned article mentions how the translators working on the game are given freedom to come up with solutions suitable for their own regions rather than treating content on a word-for-word basis. This is done using what Riot Games calls a “decentralized model” (Jaggers and Piper, 2017). Through this approach, the localization decisions for a given region are taken by those who are located in that region rather than a localization team in the developers' headquarters in the US. The aim is described as creating “awesome, local player experiences” (Jaggers and Piper, 2017). This approach echoes what Lawrence Venuti described as a domesticating strategy (Venuti, 1995). Analyzing the examples from Turkish localization of *League of Legends* based on a foreignization-domestication dichotomy might prove illuminating in terms of understanding how localizers approached the process.

Another factor to keep in mind when it comes to the localization process of *League of Legends* is that it is a continuous one. In a narrative-driven single player game, for example, the text rarely changes after the launch. It is akin to a movie, the script does not change. There is no need for a constant localization effort. However, *League of Legends* is a constantly updated multiplayer game. New features, new heroes and other new content are constantly added to the game, years after release. Additionally, the website and the promotional content of the game needs to be constantly localized for all the regions the game is published for. The enormity of the localization work carried out on a monthly basis is outlined in the article as follows:

¹⁴ Retrieved March 13, 2018, from <http://forums.tr.leagueoflegends.com/board/showthread.php?t=435>

“For reference, we can ship up to a quarter of a million words a month, both in and out of game, on top of recording hundreds of lines of new audio, and creating localized recordings and graphics in the various videos we release!” (Jaggers and Piper, 2017)

The localization of hundreds of thousands of words each month underlines the challenging nature of localizing such a game. Even though *League of Legends* was playable and available in other languages when it was localized into Turkish and would, therefore, normally be categorized under ‘post-gold localization’ in regards to different localization models discussed earlier, it can also be said that Riot Games uses a continuous simultaneous shipment method as all the new content added to the game has to be released at the same time but in contrast to the traditional sim-ship methods, the localization process does not end when the game ships but continues constantly in a cycle.

A potential upside to such a method is that it allows localizers to correct their mistakes or improve the localization of the game by making changes to the translation via software updates (patches) that are released on a regular basis. This can be said about the translation of other media as well. Translation errors in the books can be corrected in new editions or subtitles in a movie can be changed after the movie is released. However, a potential error in such media is less forgiving than in a video game such as *League of Legends*. While a book or a movie is usually consumed once by the audience, *League of Legends* is played over and over again in short sessions similar to a game of *Chess* or *Poker*. As such, correcting an error or improving the localization of the game is more effective for the consumers who will benefit from the improvement when they play the game again, whereas a person is unlikely to read a new edition of a book they have already read and will therefore be unlikely to notice changes in translation. A side effect of ever-changing nature of the game means that some examples discussed in this thesis might become outdated in the future. However, analyzing the current state of the localization of the game should still prove useful even if parts of the analysis become redundant in time.

6.3. FINDINGS

Findings of the analysis of Turkish localization of *League of Legends* are presented in this section. Strategies used by the localizers to overcome the challenges posed by *League of Legends* is analysed and relevant examples are provided to demonstrate the localization approach of the localizers.

6.3.1. Name of the Game

The name of the remains unchanged in the Turkish localization of the game. The name *League of Legends* is used in the game, website and the promotional materials about the game even if all the other content is in Turkish. As discussed earlier, a strategy of non-translation is the norm in video game industry when it comes to the titles of the games (Costales, 2012: 398) and the Turkish localization of *League of Legends* is no exception in that regard.

6.3.2. Terminology

League of Legends is set in a fantasy world created by Riot Games. There are many terms in the game derived from various fantasy, mythology and fairy tale media such as novels and movies as well as other video games set in fictional settings. The translation of these terms requires knowledge of the said fantasy media and a good grasp on popular culture. The strategies that are preferred to convey the feel of this fantasy world is an interesting topic to study. Since Turkey is an importer rather than a producer of fantasy literature, there is a lack of Turkish terms that can be used in a fantasy setting. For this reason, the way localizers try to use strategies that will create a ‘local player experience’ for the target audience while keeping the fantasy elements becomes intriguing. This sort of divide between the richness of vocabulary of source and target languages might force the localizers to be more creative and in this respect, translation of the text of such a game can be considered to be more similar to the translation of a literary work rather than a technical translation. Therefore, even though *League of Legends* is a competitive multiplayer game and the lore is not as big of a priority as it would be in a story-focused single-player game, it would still be correct to say using a

creative translation approach, which as Costales (2012: 399) says is usually associated with narrative-based games and which is called 'transcreation' by Mangiron and O'Hagan (2006) would be appropriate for the localization of *League of Legends*. Combined with the freedom afforded to the localizers by Riot Games, this has created some interesting choices when it comes to the translation of fantasy terminology within the game.

6.3.2.1. Summoner

'Summoner' is one of the most significant terms in the game. In *League of Legends*, players are called 'summoners'. Within the context of the game, this term refers to the players' ability to 'summon' champions to fight on their behalf. Besides controlling champions, players also cast various spells to help their team or hurt the enemy team. The term is regularly used in mythological and fantasy settings to refer to magicians able to summon beings into existence.

The method localizers used to translate the word is quite interesting. 'Summoner' is translated as 'Sihirdar'. The word does not exist in Turkish. It is the combination of the word 'sihir' (magic) and the suffix 'dar'. The suffix 'dar' has a Persian origin and is used in some words in Turkish such as 'hazinedar' (treasurer) derived from the word 'hazine' (treasure) and 'veznedar' (cashier) derived from the word 'vezne' (cash desk). By combining the word 'sihir' and the suffix 'dar', the Turkish localizers have created a new word, using a strategy of neologism.

The choice for this translation strategy is explained in a forum post by a member of Riot Games' Turkey branch with the nickname 'Riot Kumbil'. The post goes into detail about the process through which localization team decided on using the word 'Sihirdar'. Riot Kumbil states that they have been inspired by some words in Turkish (mostly from the Ottoman era) that end with the suffix 'dar', which are used to denote someone who is in charge of something. As such, the new word has a meaning close to 'magic wielder'. More literal translation options that focus on the term 'summon' such as

‘Çağırma Büyücüsü’, ‘Celp Eden’ and ‘Celbâni’ are said to be dismissed to better reflect the role of ‘Summoners’ within the context of the lore of *League of Legends*.¹⁵

Some other terms in the game or in the official website with the word ‘Summoner’ in it is also translated in a similar fashion with ‘Summoner’s Rift’ translated as ‘Sihirdar Vadisi’ and ‘Summoner’s Code’ as ‘Sihirdar Kanunu’. The choice seems to be well-received amongst Turkish *League of Legends* players with the said post receiving mostly positive comments.

6.3.2.1. Mana

As mentioned above, Riot Games in general and Riot’s Turkish localization team in particular has the aim of making the game as suitable for target audiences as possible. This can be observed in the Turkish localization of the game as localizers seem to have preferred domesticating strategies in a lot of cases. However, there are exceptions to this rule.

The term ‘mana’ is one of such exceptions. For the translation of the word localizers have used a non-translation strategy and the word ‘mana’ appears in the Turkish version of the game unchanged. However, this localization decision has also been made based on the expectations of the target audience. In countries where video game localization is at its infancy, some video game related terms are entrenched in the minds of the players in their English form as they are accustomed to playing the games in English. Czech elaborates on this point based on the experience of gamers in Poland:

“Interestingly enough, it seems that one of the most significant problems associated with video game translation lies not in the games themselves, but rather in the mindset of their recipients. Throughout the years, Polish game users were accustomed to very scarce localizing or no localizing at all, absorbing and familiarizing the English game terminology they were exposed to, especially the one connected with multiplayer modes, as communication is crucial for team play. Hence, many foreign lexical items have been incorporated into the gamer slang and popularized by internet communities. Gradually, they started taking a life of their own in the target language, following its linguistic conventions and becoming recognized terms among people playing video games.” (Czech, 2013: 19).

¹⁵ Retrieved March 13, 2018, from <http://forums.tr.leagueoflegends.com/board/showthread.php?t=435>

Derived from the Polynesian word for ‘supernatural power’, the term ‘mana’ is commonly used in similar role playing or video games to refer to a player's ability to use special moves or spells (Golub, 2014: 121-122). In *League of Legends*, every character has a mana pool and you use mana to cast spells and use abilities, if you run out of mana your character cannot use his/her powers and you have to wait for your mana to replenish. Since it is an important mechanic in the game, it is crucial that players understand what it means. It can be argued that domestication strategies are more appropriate for situations where target audience understanding a phrase is the priority. However, in this case the target audience will be more familiar with the term ‘mana’ (for the reasons explained above) than any other Turkish equivalent, since there is no widely accepted Turkish equivalent and players will have seen the term ‘mana’ in many other games. Localizers might have taken this into consideration and left the word unchanged in an attempt to cater to the target audience of the game.

Some other examples of translations related to the terminology concerning the fictional constructs in the game world can be seen in the below table:

Source Text	Target Text
Minions	Minyonlar
Inhibitors	İnhibitörler
The Nexus	Merkez

Table 4. Translation of fantasy-themed phrases in *League of Legends*

As can be seen, first 2 of the 3 listed examples use loanwords and can be considered as a use of a foreignization strategy, which is uncharacteristic for the localizers of the game. It can be argued, however, that the hands of the localizers have been tied in these instances by the lack of equivalent words in Turkish for the role playing or video game terminology. In these cases, “coining an entirely new term may often introduce ambiguity and unwanted connotations in the target language” (Czech, 2013: 21). Therefore, it seems like localizers have been forced to keep some words in their foreign form, which are entrenched in the minds of the target audience. Paradoxically, in these cases keeping the English word without change is actually more in line with the expectations of the Turkish recipients.

6.3.3. Strategies Used in Translation of Written Elements

Three game elements will be used to gather the examples to analyze the translation of written elements of *League of Legends*. These game elements are champion abilities, champion titles and item names. These texts provide the player with important information pertaining to gameplay and game world. Thus, they provide a good framework to analyze the strategies used by the localizers.

One of the most important and maybe one of the most challenging parts of localization of *League of Legends* is the translation of abilities of the champions. Champions are in-game avatars controlled by players. Champions typically have 5 abilities (1 passive and 4 active abilities). There are a vast range of abilities that damage/hinder enemy champions or boost/help your own champion or champions of your teammates. These abilities are designed to fit the theme of the specific champion. Some champions are good in combat, others are focused on healing other champions in their teams. Each champion plays a role in the team and their abilities are what help them fulfill this role. The success of the team depends on players fulfilling their roles and using their abilities well, so it is crucial from a player's perspective that ability names are intuitive.

As of writing there are 140 champions a player can choose from in *League of Legends* and this number keeps increasing, which means a huge number of abilities. Especially for new players, it would be overwhelming if they have to read the description of every ability in the game. Therefore, easy-to-understand and intuitive ability names in the localized version of the game are significant for the enjoyment of the game for players in that locale.

In addition to their importance from a gameplay point of view, abilities also reflect the thematic features of certain champions and their translation is important in conveying the feel and the lore of the game universe to the player.

Additionally, each champion has a title that explains their characters. For example, a mummy champion is named Amumu, the Sad Mummy. A pirate champion is named Gangplank, the Saltwater Scourge. The proper nouns remain as the original in the

Turkish version of the game but the titles of the champions are translated and they have to make sense and resonate with players if they are to be immersed in the game world.

During the course of a *League of Legends* match, players earn currency and they can spend that currency by buying items that strengthen their champions. Items in *League of Legends* are one of the most important aspects of gameplay. There are many online guides teaching players which items to buy. As of writing, a search for the terms “League of Legends item guide” returns 602.000 results on YouTube. As such, it is important for players that translation of such an important part of the game is done well. Item names usually reflect the function of the said item or refer to the characters in the game world. Translating them in a way that retains the original flavor but doesn’t make it hard for players to understand their functionality has been one of the challenges localizers faced.

We will take a look at some of the examples for the translation of ability names, champion titles and item names and try to explain the challenges the specific example poses as well as explain the translation strategy used by the localizers.

6.3.3.1. Domestication versus Foreignization

Taking a look at the translation of game elements and the use of domestication and foreignization strategies is important to understand the mindset of localizers. As mentioned previously, domestication strategies are the go-to choice of the localizers of *League of Legends*. A good example for the use of such a strategy is the translation of the ability called ‘Happy Hour’:

Source Text: Happy Hour

Target Text: İçelim Güzelleşelim

One of the champions in the game (Gragas) have a drinking theme. In fact, his background story in the game’s website states that “The only thing more important to Gragas than fighting is drinking”. One of his abilities is called ‘Happy Hour’ in reference to the practice of businesses offering alcoholic beverages at a discount in a certain time of the day. A literal translation of the term would not make sense to the

gamers in Turkey and it would fail to convey the reference. To overcome this problem, localizers instead used the term ‘İçelim Güzelleşelim’, a phrase commonly used in Turkey when drinking alcohol. By using a strategy of domestication, localizers have managed to capture the essence of the character as well as making the phrase sound native to the target audience.

Here is another example that sheds a light on localizers’ choice between domestication and foreignization strategies:

Source Text: Sadism / Masochism

Target Text: Sadizm / Acısever

There is a champion in the game called Dr. Mundo who has two abilities named sadism and masochism. There are loanwords in Turkish for both of them (‘sadizm’ and ‘mazoşizm’) and the most obvious translation method could have been to use these words. However, in the localized version of the game only ‘sadism’ was translated this way. The alternative Turkish word for ‘sadism’ (elezerlik) is not well-known and might have been harder to understand for the target audience than the transliterated word. ‘Masochism’, on the other hand, is translated as ‘Acısever’, which is a word that is composed of the Turkish words ‘acı’ (pain) and ‘sever’ (lover). ‘Acısever’ conveys the message of the text well and is easy to understand for the target audience. As it can be seen from this example, localizers of the game have usually opted for a domesticating approach and only when there is a lack of viable alternative have they used a foreignization strategy.

Other prominent cases of ability names, item names and champion titles where localizers have had a clear choice between domestication or foreignization can be found in the table below. Examples in which localizers used idioms and phrases that are popular in the Turkish culture and language but are not the word for word equivalent of the source text are considered as domestication. Examples, where foreign words and phrases are transliterated are considered as cases of foreignization strategy.

Source Text	Target Text	Strategy
Charm	Ayartan Öpücük	Domestication
Despair	Gözyaşı Seli	Domestication
Pyromania	Kundakçı	Domestication
Ranger's Focus	Pürdikkat	Domestication
The Great Steam Golem	Büyük Buharlı Golem	Foreignization
Mana Barrier	Mana Bariyeri	Foreignization
Concussive Blows	Meydan Dayağı	Domestication
Stand Behind Me	Yettim Gari	Domestication
Unbreakable	Kapı Gibi	Domestication
Valkyrie	Valkyrie	Foreignization
Parrley	Çakaralmaz	Domestication
Harsh Lesson	Sille Tokat	Domestication
Loose Cannon	Delifişek	Domestication
Get Excited!	Ay Çok Heyecanlı!	Domestication
Super Mega Death Rocket!	Manyak Güçlü Ölüm Roketi!	Domestication
Rend	Ciğerini Sök	Domestication
Shunpo	Shunpo	Foreignization
Leap	Çullan	Domestication
Help, Pix!	Yetiş, Pix!	Domestication
Summon Voidling	Hiçlik Haşeresi Çağır	Domestication
Highlander	Gözükara	Domestication

Love Tap	Şıpsevdi	Domestication
Bullet Time	Mermi Manyacı	Domestication
Berserker	Başbozuk	Domestication
Clockwork Windup	İşleyen Demir	Domestication
Defensive Ball Curl	Tortop	Domestication
Rune Prison	Rün Hapsi	Foreignization
Stand United	Birlikten Kuvvet Doğar	Domestication
Fleet of Foot	Tabana Kuvvet	Domestication
Devour	Ham Yap	Domestication
Thick Skin	Kayış Gibi	Domestication
Draw a Bead	Gez, Göz, Arpacık	Domestication
Card Master	İskambil Ustası	Domestication
Wild Cards	Koz: Ölüm	Domestication
Ray	Şua	Domestication
Let's Bounce!	Hopluya Zıplaya!	Domestication
Contempt for the Weak	Düşene Tekme	Domestication
Hexplosives Expert	Sihirmayın Uzmanı	Domestication
Flame Chompers!	Patlangaç!	Domestication
Ravenous Hydra	Vahşi Hydra	Foreignization

Lich Bane	Lich Boğan	Foreignization
Raptor Cloak	Keskingaga Pelerini	Domestication
Boots of Mobility	Gezgin Çizmesi	Domestication
Chronobreak	Kronokırılma	Foreignization
Harsh Lesson	Sille Tokat	Domestication
Mounting Dread	Karabasan	Domestication
The Cantankerous Cavalier	Deli Bozuk Şövalye	Domestication
Jousting	Yardır	Domestication
Umbral Trespass	Davetsiz Misafir	Domestication
Portal Jump	Bi' Ordayım Bi' Burda	Domestication
Super Spicy Snax	Acayip Acılı Kurabiye	Domestication

Table 5. The choice between domestication and foreignization in translating certain phrases in *League of Legends*

Out of the 54 examples analyzed in this category, domestication has been preferred in 45 cases, whereas localizers have used a foreignization strategy only 9 times and those instances are mostly related to the terminological constraints mentioned above. Statistically, domestication has been used at 83.33% of the analyzed example sample. The data shows a clear preference for domestication on the part of the localizers, which is consistent with the overall localization strategy of the game developer and the statements of Turkish localizers on the official forums of the game.

6.3.3.2. Using Gameplay Elements

A strategy used by localizers for the translation of certain terms is to make use of gameplay elements, a strategy unique to video game localization. Instead of providing a literal translation of a phrase in the game, sometimes localizers have opted to use words

that conveyed the gameplay functions for the said phrase instead. As an example, let's take a look at the translation of one of the abilities a champion (Anivia) can use in the game:

Source Text: Crystallize

Target Text: Buz Duvarı

The ability 'Crystallize' creates an ice barrier that blocks movement. The literal Turkish translation of the phrase would have been 'Kristalize et'. However, in the Turkish version of the game this ability is called 'Buz Duvarı' (Wall of Ice). This way, localizers have emphasized the gameplay and visual aspects of the ability and made it easier for their target audience to understand its in-game functionality.

Another case which shows the importance attached to the in-game functionality of abilities is that a single term can be translated differently depending on how they affect the gameplay. As an example, the term 'rush' is translated four different ways in the game depending on how the ability it refers to works.

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation of TT
Spirit Rush	Ruh Saldırısı	Spirit Attack
Lunar Rush	Ay Koşusu	Lunar Run
Adrenaline Rush	Adrenalin Akışı	Adrenaline Flow
Lightning Rush	Şimşek Gibi	Like a Lightning

Table 6. Different translations for the term 'rush' in *League of Legends*

As can be seen, different terms have been used in target text for the same English word to emphasize the in-game function. For example, the 'Lunar Rush' ability makes the champion dash towards the enemy. The 'Lightning Rush' ability, on the other hand, makes the champion turn into a ball of lightning. Different translations for the word 'rush' in Turkish version of the game emphasize the differing functions of the abilities.

A similar translation strategy is used for the translation of the abilities of the champion called 'Udyr'. This champion can harness the strengths of different animals and his abilities are all animal-themed. While the word 'stance' has been used for four abilities

of the champion in the source text, Turkish localizers have used different phrases for all three abilities.

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation of TT
Tiger Stance	Kaplanın Öfkesi	Fury of the Tiger
Turtle Stance	Kaplumbağanın Metaneti	Resoluteness of the Turtle
Bear Stance	Ayının Haşmeti	Majesty of the Bear
Phoenix Stance	Ankanın Alevi	Flame of the Phoenix

Table 7. Different translations for the term ‘stance’ in *League of Legends*

In this case Turkish localizers have shown a preference to make the abilities easier to understand rather than mirroring the choices made in the source text. Activating ‘Turtle Stance’ ability, gives the champion a defensive bonus, hence the use of the word ‘metanet’ (‘resoluteness’) in the Turkish translation. The ‘Phoenix Stance’ ability makes the champion release waves of fire around him, explaining the decision to use ‘alev’ (‘flame’) in the Turkish translation of the ability.

It is clear that the Turkish localization team treated phrases and words in the game on a case-by-case basis rather than picking an equivalent for a word and sticking to it for the whole game, allowing them the freedom to pick a suitable word that focuses on the gameplay and visual effects of the phrase or word.

Some other examples where gameplay mechanics and visuals have been used to come up with a phrase that explains the function of the ability or champion rather than literally translating the English words into Turkish are listed in the following table:

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation of Target Text
Tempered Fate	Kader Birliği	Union of Fate
Volatile Spiderling	İntihar Örümceği	Suicide Spider
Lunge	Hamle	Move
Riposte	Karşı Hamle	Counter Move

Rend	Ciğerini Sök	Rip Out Its Liver
Distortion	Vurkaç	Hit and Run
Harvester of Sorrows	Ölüm İşlemez	Immortal
Underthrow	Balta Fırlat	Axe Throw
Empowered Bulwark	Mana Kalkanı	Mana Shield
Imbue	Ortak Şifa	Common Cure
Rat-Ta-Tat-Tat	Zehir Salvosu	Poison Salvo
Make it Rain	Kurşun Yağmuru	Bullet Rain
Elixir of Iron	Sağlamlık Karışımı	Toughness Mixture
Comet of Legend	Uzay Seyyahı	Space Voyager
Seismic Shove	Yerden Bitme	Sprung from the Ground ¹⁶
Grand Entrance	Zarif Uçuş	Elegant Flight

Table 8. Translations of certain phrases in *League of Legends* based on gameplay and visual elements

The use of such a strategy has been detected in 25 cases. This method of translation requires localizers to know how the game works. A localizer who has not played *League of Legends* will have a hard time coming up with idioms and phrases that convey the gameplay elements and can even make crucial mistakes that confuse the player. Frequent use of this strategy clearly indicate that the localizers of *League of Legends* are gamers themselves, which allow them to use such a method and be more effective at conveying the meaning of certain phrases in the game than someone who has not played the game would.

¹⁶ Also used as a figure of speech to describe a short person

6.3.3.3. Using the Lore of the Game

Another strategy employed by localizers in translation of certain terms is to make use of game's lore. In some cases, when translating a term or a phrase associated with a certain character, instead of a literal translation localizers have used their creativity to come up with terms in line with a character's background story. One instance of the use of such a strategy is the translation of the ability called 'Lay Waste':

Source Text: Lay Waste

Target Text: Hortlak Mayın

The ability 'Lay Waste' enables the player to damage enemies in small area. Instead of translating the phrase directly, localizers of the game translated it as 'Hortlak Mayın' which can be back translated as 'Spectre Mine' or 'Ghost Mine'. There is no reference in the original ability name to a ghost or a mine. However, the champion that uses this ability (Karthus) is a ghost and his characteristics as well as his abilities are all centered on a ghost theme. Thus, localizers have translated the term in a fashion that is in line with the theme of the character and explains the ability without resorting to a literal translation that may have sounded non-native and may have been unintuitive to the target audience.

Some other examples, where lore of the game and backstory/characteristics of the champions are used for the translation of ability names and titles can be seen in the following table:

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation of the Target Text
Glacial Fissure	Freljord Karşılması	Freljord Welcome
Rappel	Örümcek İnişi	Spider Descent
The Kraken Priestess	Ruhani Rehber	Spiritual Guide
The Enlightened One	Bilgelik Ateşi	Wisdom Flame

Judicator	Adaletin Kılıcı	Sword of Justice
Caustic Spittle	Ölümün Salyaları	Saliva of Death
The Eternal Hunters	Madalyonun İki Yüzü	Two Sides of the Medallion
The Void Burrower	Yer Altındaki Dehşet	Underground Terror
Jack in the Box	Şeytan Kutusu	Devil's Box
Dragon's Descent	Ejderin Öfkesi	Wrath of the Dragon
Abyssal Voyage	Lezzet Yolculuğu	Flavor Voyage
The Box	Hücre	The Cell
Rolling Thunder	Dört Pençeli Fırtına	Four-Clawed Storm
Frenzy	Kuduz	Rabid
Rise of the Thorns	Dikenli Cazibe	Thorny Charm
The Wandering Caretaker	Kozmik Koruyucu	Cosmic Protector
Mark of the Kindred	Avcının Damgası	Mark of the Hunter
Deadly Flourish	Trajedi	Tragedy
Whisper	Suflör	Prompter
Reaping Slash	Karanlık Hasat	Dark Harvest
Blade's Reach	Kasvet Dalgası	Wave of Gloom
The Quickness	Seri Cazibe	Quick Charm

Deadly Plumage	Amansız Hiddet	Relentless Rage
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Table 9. Translations of certain phrases in *League of Legends* based on the lore of the game and character backgrounds

Utilizing the lore of the game and the background stories of the champions to cope with challenging translation decisions require a good deal of knowledge about the game world and characters in that world. 24 examples found in this category is evidence that localizers of *League of Legends* have made use of their knowledge about the game to come up with solutions that fit the game.

6.3.4. Dubbing

Dubbing is one of the most important parts of the localization process for *League of Legends*. Low quality voiceovers can ruin the experience for the player. It is clear that the Turkish localization team was aware of this potential problem. All voices in the game are revoiced in Turkish by professional voice actors and actresses. As of writing, a total of 94 different voice actors and actresses worked on revoicing the characters in the game, including many famous names¹⁷. The number of voice actors and actresses that the Turkish localization team has worked with shows the importance attached to the dubbing of the game and reaffirms the commitment of the localization team to produce the best possible product for the Turkish audience.

Increase in storage capacity led the video games to become truly multi-faceted products. Voiceovers for characters have been one of the key components of that change. As localization industry grew, translation of voiceovers by means of dubbing has become the norm for major titles. Dubbing in video games presents the localizers with similar problems that are faced by those working on dubbing movies. However, not all video games are equally challenging in terms of problems to be overcome in the dubbing process. *League of Legends*, for example, has an isometric camera angle and champions (characters controlled by the player) take up very little space in the screen. Therefore, lip synchronization is not something localizers of the game would be concerned about in contrast to people working in movie industry or on video games where there are close-

¹⁷ Retrieved April 15, 2018, from <https://support.riotgames.com/hc/tr/articles/228655167-Seslendirme-Kadrosu>

up shots of characters. However, the other challenges for any voiceover process remains.

Vast majority of the voices within *League of Legends* belong to champions. Each champion in the game has voiceovers and each have many unique quotes. These quotes change according to the state of the champion. The champions have different voice lines for when they are given the command to attack, different voice lines for when they are simply moving and different voice lines based on their interactions with other champions. There are also funny voice lines based on the characteristics of the champion that are intended to add flavor.

League of Legends has many in-game characters (champions) with various personalities and this means many different types of voices are used. Some champions have epic-sounding voices, while others might have a robotic voice. Turkish voiceovers in the game are done in a way to be as similar as possible to the original tone of voice. It is clear that voice actors and actresses have studied the original voices or have been directed by the localization team before dubbing the game.

When analyzing the Turkish voice lines in the game, random sampling method will be used. As of writing, there are currently 140 champions in *League of Legends*. A total of 14 champions are selected for analysis of the Turkish dubbing of the game. Every tenth champion on the alphabetical list on the website of the game is chosen. This way 10% of the champions in the game are covered. The voiceovers of the following champions are analyzed:

Azir	Nunu
Darius	Renekton
Fizz	Sion
Irelia	Taric
Karma	Varus

Kog'Maw	Xayah
Maokai	Zyra

Table 10. Champions selected for dubbing analysis

Since there are thousands of voice lines in the game and analysis the dubbing of the game can be a study on its own, it is thought that limiting ourselves to the relevant examples from the said sample will be enough for the purposes of this thesis.

According to O'Hagan and Mangiron, voiceovers fulfill an expressive function (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013: 156) and as such, localizers will need more freedom for the translation of voice lines. When analyzing the translation of the voice lines, it is clear that localizers were given freedom to convey the feel and the meaning to the Turkish audience. This freedom ranged from making small changes to the voice lines to replacing the original with a completely different one, mostly inspired by target culture norms. It can be said that 'transcreation' (Mangiron and O'Hagan, 2006) applies perfectly in this case.

Mostly, voice lines were translated based on the original voice lines with small alterations. For some champions, such as Renekton and Varus, the original and target voice lines are nearly identical. However, for other champions analyzed the localizers clearly used all the freedom they were afforded. Some voice lines were clearly inspired by the original voice line but still have gone significant changes. One example of such a change in the original and the target text is examined below:

Source Text: So, uh, Urgot. We can't hang out any more. I'm cool now.

Target Text: Yani, şey, Urgot. Sosyal çevremi değiştiriyorum. Beni artık arama.

Back Translation of the Target Text: So, uh, Urgot. I am changing my social circle. Don't call me anymore.

As can be seen, even though the meaning has changed somewhat between the source and target texts, the flavor and the intended effect is still similar. Those sorts of changes

to make the voice line sound native and resonate with Turkish gamers more are common throughout the analyzed sample.

The more interesting part of the dubbing of *League of Legends* is the replacement of original voice lines with new voice lines that have references to the target culture. This meant that sometimes voice lines have been changed so radically from the original that it is extremely hard to tell which original voice line it is intended to replace. However, this does not mean that localizers have just come up with random voice lines. Even in some of the cases examined below, where the Turkish voice line is completely different from the original, the voice line is still based on the characteristics of the given champion.

One method for coming up with new voice lines in line with the target culture is the frequent use of popular culture references. Popular quotes from well-known movies, television shows and songs have been used either directly or with small changes. The examples for such references are provided in the table below:

Target Text	Explanation
Güvercin uçuverdi kanadını açiverdi.	A lyric from a well-known Turkish folk song called <i>Ankara Misket</i>
Bugün bir Darius kolay yetişmiyor.	Reference to a quote from the Turkish comedy series <i>Avrupa Yakası</i> aired between 2004 and 2009*
Ateşteyim ateşte ateşte...	A lyric from a popular 1990s Turkish pop song called <i>Ateşteyim</i>
Brand, bir şey soracağım. Senin suratına ne olmuş?	Reference to a quote from the Turkish comedy movie <i>G.O.R.A.</i> released in 2004*
Başa sar. Evet, oynatalım Zilean'cığım.	Reference to an iconic quote from the former football referee Erman Toroğlu on the Turkish football programme <i>Maraton</i> *
Döverim seni, hepiniz döverim ulan!	A quote from the famous action movie star Cüneyt Arkın in a Turkish movie <i>Yıkılmayan Adam</i> released in 1977
Döverim ulen! Hepinizi döverim!	Reference to a quote from the famous action movie star Cüneyt Arkın in a Turkish movie <i>Yıkılmayan Adam</i> released in 1977*

Kara tren gecikir, belki hiç gelmez.	A lyric from the Turkish folk song <i>Kara Tren</i> released in 2000
Dağ gibiyim, taş gibiyim, dimdik ayakta!	A lyric from the Turkish pop song <i>Dağ Gibiyim</i> released in 1997 and sung by the Eurovision winner singer Sertab Erener
Ben sadece saksı değilim! Toprak da benim, çiçek de benim.	Reference to a quote from the famous singer Erol Büyükburç uttered during a heated argument on the Turkish singing competition <i>Şarkı Söylemek Lazım*</i>
Tek taşı mı kendim aldım, tek başıma kendim taktım. Demiştin, değil mi?	Reference to a lyric from the Turkish pop song <i>Pırlanta</i> released in 2006 and sung by Nil Karaibrahimgil*
O eski halimden eser yok şimdi.	Lyric from the Turkish song <i>Yalnızım</i> released in 1985 and sung by İbrahim Tatlıses
Kendin ettin, kendin buldun.	Reference to a lyric from the 1970s Turkish folk song <i>Kendim Ettim Kendim Buldum*</i>

Table 11. Popular culture references in *League of Legends*

*The quote or lyric is altered, in most cases to fit the theme of the game.

As can be seen, localizers have made use of their pop culture knowledge and have come up with creative solutions. There are similar references in the original text and by making use of local references in the target text, Turkish localizers of the game have ensured that the entertainment value is kept high in a way that would not have been possible if the jokes in the source text were translated literally.

Another way the localizers used the target culture was how they used Turkish proverbs and idioms. The well-known proverbs and idioms have been used in a way to fit the theme of the champions or the lore of the game. Additionally, localizers have also been inspired from the phrases which are commonly used in Turkish daily life. The use of proverbs, idioms and commonly used phrases have been identified in the examples contained in the table below:

Target Text	Explanation
Ah! Beni altın kafese koysalar, “yine de Shurima” derim.	Reference to a Turkish proverb*
Emir demiri, imparator baronu keser.	Reference to a Turkish proverb*

Artık önünüzdeki maçlara bakarsınız.	A Turkish phrase used commonly by footballers after a defeat
Malmortius'un Ağzı olan konuşuyor.	Reference to a Turkish idiom*
Hey, Maokai! Skor almayı beklerken ağaç olmuşsun bakıyorum.	Reference to a Turkish idiom*
Hakemin ilk düdüğü duyuldu. Maç başlıyor.	A Turkish phrase used commonly by football commentators
Adam geçer, top geçmez!	A Turkish phrase used in relation to football
Top benim oynatmam deyince kendi topunu mu getirdin Orianna?	Reference to a Turkish phrase used in relation to football*
Balık baştan kokar... Olsun!	Reference to a Turkish proverb*
Dikkat et! Tersim pistir.	Reference to a commonly used Turkish phrase*
Onu Noxus'a gömün. Burada yatacak yeri yok.	Reference to a Turkish idiom*
Ruh beni geri getirdi. Yüzünü kara çıkarmayacağım.	Reference to a Turkish idiom*
Elini veren ülkesini kaptırır.	Reference to a Turkish idiom*
Ne demişler? Ummadık bıçak karın yarar.	Reference to a Turkish proverb*
Canavarın hakkından canavar gelir.	Reference to a Turkish proverb*
Bil bakalım işler neye sardı.	Reference to a Turkish slang phrase*
Canavarla canavar olma.	Reference to a commonly used Turkish phrase*
Midem kazınıyor.	A Turkish idiom
Karnım zil çalıyor.	A Turkish idiom
Bu ağacı gözüm bir yerlerden ısırtıyor.	Reference to a Turkish idiom*
Fide, ağacın dibine düşermiş.	Reference to a Turkish proverb*
Konuşuyorsun ama bu laflar bir kovuğumdan girer, öbüründen çıkar.	Reference to a Turkish idiom*
Tatlı dil Yeti'yi ininden çıkarır.	Reference to a Turkish proverb*
Niye bana öyle aval aval bakıyorsun?	Reference to a Turkish slang phrase*
Hareket yapma, hareketin kralını görürsün!	A Turkish slang phrase

Demirden korksam tren olmazdım.	Reference to a Turkish proverb*
Bakıyorum da taş gibisin.	Reference to a Turkish slang phrase*
Malın iyisinden anlıyorum.	A Turkish slang phrase
Gözlerimiz bayram etsin.	A commonly used Turkish phrase
Ummadık taş baş yarar.	A Turkish proverb
O yandakiler neyin kafası? Gövdeme fazla geliyorlar sanki.	Reference to a Turkish slang phrase*
Çivi çiviği söker.	A Turkish proverb
Mücevheri seven bedeline katlanır.	Reference to a Turkish proverb*
Her kuşun eti yenmez canım!	A Turkish proverb
Bu kuleleri yapanlar malzemeden çalmış sanki.	Reference to a commonly used Turkish phrase*
Eskiden buralar yemyeşildi. Aa, hala yemyeşil.	Reference to a cliché phrase*

Table 12. Turkish proverbs and idioms in *League of Legends*

*The phrase is altered, in most cases to fit the theme of the game.

These examples demonstrate how the localizers tried to make the game sound familiar to the Turkish audience. As is the case with the previously analyzed parts of the game, the priority of localizers seems to have been creating a local feel and making the gamers in a certain locale think as if the game has been tailor made for them. The frequent use of proverbs, idioms and daily phrases also show that the localizers have great command of target culture. The traditional proverbs and idioms of the Turkish culture have been adapted to the characters and the lore of the game. This is further evidence to the vast knowledge of the localizers about the game.

Localizers have also made use of wordplays and rhyming to create an amusing experience for the player. Three examples identified during the analysis can be seen on the table below:

Target Text	Explanation
Al sana bir kaya, smacı bas potaya.	Use of two rhyming words: 'kaya' and 'potaya'

Hepinizi bir potada eriteceğim. Yoksa potayla mı demeliydim?	A pun on the two different meanings of the word ‘pota’
Fidelerim ağtını duymak istiyor. N’olur bir parça söyle, ben de seni parçalayım.	A pun on the two different meanings of the word ‘parça’
Ben de akut yakut hayranlığı var.	Use of two rhyming words: ‘akut’ and ‘yakut’

Table 13. The use of wordplays and rhyming in *League of Legends*

Overall, it can be said that localizers have been given the freedom to write new voice lines based on the character and combine the theme of the character with cultural references from the target culture. It can be said that the nature of voice lines in *League of Legends* helped localizers to work with a free hand. If the voice lines were in a certain sequence like they would be in a movie or a narrative-focused video game, it might not have been possible for localizers to make such radical changes to some of the voice lines. Similarly, as mentioned previously, in a movie or a video game where the camera is closer to the characters, lip synchronization would have been an additional challenge. Not having such obstacles has allowed the localizers to include popular culture references, proverbs, idioms, phrases and puns more freely and ensure that the entertainment value intended in the original voice lines has been kept intact.

6.4. DISCUSSION

The essence of the challenges related to the localization of *League of Legends* is related to preserving the entertainment value and conveying the feel of the game to the target audience. Fantasy theme of the game requires the localizers of the game to come up with solutions for terms and phrases that have no obvious Turkish equivalents. It is clear from the examples analyzed in the thesis that localizers themselves are *League of Legends* players and have deep knowledge of the game world, characters in the game and how the game works. Some of the strategies localizers have used would not have been possible without this knowledge.

Based on the analysis, it can be concluded that the Turkish localizers of *League of Legends* have strived to cater to their target audience as frequently as possible, a strategy outlined by both the US-based localization producers of the developer as well as the Turkish localization team. To do so, they have utilized domesticating strategies

for translating important elements of the game. Many idioms and phrases used commonly in Turkish daily life have been used to make the game feel and sound native to the gamers in Turkey. There are some phrases in the game that have been left in their original English form or loanwords have been used for their translation. However, these examples are few and far between and do not reflect the overall translation strategy of the localizers. These exceptions have mostly resulted from a lack of widely-used Turkish equivalents for some of the terms in the game that are based on fictional constructs. These exceptions do not change the fact that domestication is the dominant strategy used for the localization of *League of Legends*.

The backstories of the characters in the game, the lore of the game and the gameplay elements have also been used to come up with the best solution for each case. Instead of looking at the text of the game on a word-for-word basis, localizers have taken into account different aspects of the game to decide on the best option. It is clear that localizers were familiar with the game world and game mechanics, allowing them to use such a method. This underlines the importance of localizers being gamers themselves, which is a key factor for game companies hiring localizers as evident from the job listings mentioned before.

Dubbing of *League of Legends* poses its own challenges. The focus of the dubbing efforts has been on keeping the humorous nature of some of the voice lines in the original text. This has been done through a mix of pop-culture references, use of proverbs, idioms and common phrases as well as some wordplays, all making sure that the dubbing of the game reiterates the characteristics of champions in the game world but also feel familiar to the target audience and entertain them. By doing so, they have ensured that the entertainment value intended in the original product has been conveyed to the target audience. The analysis of dubbing of the game showcases that localizers working on video games should have an extensive knowledge of the target culture as well as be familiar with the phrases, television shows, movies and songs known by the young people as they are the main target audience of the game. The nature of the game has enabled the localizers to have a great deal of freedom to use their creativity, which is reminiscent of the 'transcreation' term put forward by Mangiron and O'Hagan (Mangiron and O'Hagan, 2006).

The findings of the analysis of Turkish localization of *League of Legends* are shown on the table below:

Challenge	Strategies Used	Skillsets Required
Translation of terminology related to fictional constructs	Neologism	Creativity, good grasp of the target language
	Transliteration	Understanding the expectations and mindset of the target audience
Translation of champion titles, champion ability names and item names in a way that emphasizes functions of the game elements and characteristics of the in-game characters	Domestication	Good knowledge of target language and target culture
	Foreignization	Understanding the expectations and mindset of the target audience
	Use of the gameplay elements	Deep understanding and knowledge on how the game works
	Use of the lore of the game	Deep understanding and knowledge about the in-game characters and the game world
Translation of the dubbing text in a way that preserves the entertainment factor and emphasizes the characteristics of in-game characters	Use of pop-culture references	Creativity, good sense of humor, deep knowledge of movies, television series and songs of the target culture
	Use of proverbs, idioms and commonly-used phrases	- Creativity, good sense of humor, deep knowledge of proverbs, idioms and commonly-used of the target culture
	Use of wordplays and rhyming	Creativity, good sense of humor, deep knowledge of target language vocabulary

Table 14. Findings of the analysis of the Turkish localization of *League of Legends*

Overall, the quality of Turkish localization of *League of Legends* is exceptionally high. There are no glaring errors, which used to be commonplace in the localizations of older video game titles, a sign that shows how far video game localization has come in the last couple of decades. The quality of the Turkish localization of the game can be

attributed to the commitment of Riot Games to the Turkish market as evident their Istanbul branch.

To sum up, the various challenges the localization process of *League of Legends* poses have been overcome by the localization team using a variety of strategies with the main aim of making the game feel as natively produced as possible for the target audience.



CONCLUSION

Video game localization is an especially interesting subject to research. As discussed in this thesis, video games have many distinct characteristics that make their localization unique. What stands out the most is the multidimensional nature of video games. A single video game might include multiple types of texts. Translating some parts of a video game text might resemble translating a literary text and other parts might resemble translating an instruction manual. It is this unique blend and multi-faceted nature of video games that seems to set video game localization apart. Localizing a video game is akin to translating a novel, subtitling a movie and dubbing a television series all at once. As such, the ideal localizer of a video game should be versatile and capable of using different strategies to cope with challenges posed by different types of texts.

In addition to its multidimensionality, video game localization is made even more compelling due to being embedded in a technological platform. As software products, the localization process of video games share characteristics with the localization of other software products. These characteristics include space constraints, translating without context and requirement of technological know-how.

Aside from the technological challenges encountered in all software localization processes, video game localization offers unique challenges of its own. As an interactive type of media, video games are shaped by the actions of the players. Understanding how a player interacts with the game and the text in the game is an important skill for localizers, who are usually forced to work with little to no context. It is therefore no surprise that video game companies prefer localizers with gaming experience. This experience also helps localizers come up with various options when faced with difficult translation decisions, since they can make use of their knowledge of game world and game mechanics to come up with a solution that presents the target audience with the best possible experience.

The Turkish localizations of two popular video games, *Football Manager 2015* and *League of Legends*, have been analyzed in this thesis to shed a light on the unique

challenges of video game localization process. It is clear that difference in genres and themes of the two games created vastly different problems for the localizers working on each game.

For the localization of both games, a strategy of domestication is prevalent. Only in some exceptional cases have localizers used foreignization. It is clear that the localization of both games have been carried out by those who are familiar with the games and the theme of the games, rather than by random translators employed for the localization of the game. The characteristics showcased by the localizers of the games reaffirm the idea that to cope with the unique challenges of video games, one needs a special skillset. The two case studies demonstrate that not only is video game localization different from other forms of translation, but there are differences between games of different genres/themes as well and that each game needs a specific approach and maybe even different localizers specialized in that specific genre or theme. Based on the job postings of major game developers for localization jobs and the skillset demonstrated by the localizers of the analyzed games, it can be concluded that localizers are expected to know the target and source language/culture very well, be capable of using cultural references that would appeal to the target audience, be familiar with translation in a technological platform, have a command of video games in general and have some knowledge on gameplay, lore and the fan culture of the specific video game/video game genre they are working to localize.

Analysis of the two games and the literature review show that the genre of the game, the theme of the game, backstory of characters in the game and how the game plays all factor into the decision making of localizers working on video games and the strategies they choose to employ. Studying the similarities and differences between video game localization and other forms of translation can lead to painting a more complete picture of what translation in the digital era means.

Video game localization was once limited almost completely to fan translation in all but a few select countries. Throughout the last two decades, however, the practice has spread beyond those countries and has become an important field of translation in countries like Turkey. Video game companies now open offices in Turkey and employ dozens of localization experts to create the best possible experience for Turkish gamers.

Studying the Turkish localization of more video games might contribute to developing an understanding on the unique challenges of video game localization in the Turkish context as well establishing whether the trends observed in the two games analyzed for this thesis are the norm for other video games localized into Turkish.

It is undeniable that software localization in general and video game localization in particular grows in significance each day and video game localization is becoming an important field of work and research for translators. However, it is also undeniable that there is still a big gap between the localization industry and Translation Studies. Reducing the concept of ‘translation’ to linguistic equivalence seems to be the norm in the localization industry. On the other hand, academic studies on localization remain limited and that is even more apparent when it comes to studies regarding video game localization. This is unlikely to be the case in the future as video games are now competing with other entertainment industries both in terms of revenue as well as the diversity of their target audiences and video game localization has played and will continue to play a huge part in the growth of the industry. More studies on localization and video game localization may help in establishing a better understanding about localization and translation for both academia and industry, bridging the gap between the two and broadening the horizons of both.

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APPENDIX 1: ETİK KURUL MUAFİYET FORMU

 HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ETİK KOMİSYON MUAFİYETİ FORMU	
HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZCE MÜTERCİM-TERCÜMANLIK ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA	
Tarih: <u>28.06/2018</u>	
Tez Başlığı: Video Oyunu Yerelleştirmesine Özgü Zorlukların Üstesinden Gelmek İçin Kullanılan Yaklaşımlar ve Stratejiler Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmam: 1. İnsan ve hayvan üzerinde deney niteliği taşımamaktadır, 2. Biyolojik materyal (kan, idrar vb. biyolojik sıvılar ve numuneler) kullanılması gerektirmemektedir. 3. Beden bütünlüğüne müdahale içermemektedir. 4. Gözlemsel ve betimsel araştırma (anket, mülakat, ölçek/skala çalışmaları, dosya taramaları, veri kaynakları taraması, sistem-model geliştirme çalışmaları) niteliğinde değildir. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Etik Kurullar ve Komisyonlarının Yönergelerini inceledim ve bunlara göre tez çalışmamın yürütülebilmesi için herhangi bir Etik Kurul/Komisyon'dan izin alınmasına gerek olmadığını; aksi durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim. Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.	
Tarih ve İmza	
Adı Soyadı: <u>Seçkin İlke ÖNEN</u> Öğrenci No: <u>N11228183</u> Anabilim Dalı: <u>İngilizce Mütercim-Tercümanlık</u> Programı: <u>İngilizce Mütercim-Tercümanlık Yüksek Lisans Programı</u> Statüsü: ☒ Yüksek Lisans ☐ Doktora ☐ Bütünleşik Doktora	<u>28/06/2018</u> 
<u>DANIŞMAN GÖRÜŞÜ VE ONAYI</u>	
 Prof. Dr. Aymil DOĞAN (Unvan, Ad Soyad, İmza)	
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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
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**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING DEPARTMENT**

Date: 28/06/2018

Thesis Title: Approaches and Strategies to Cope with the Specific Challenges of Video Game Localization

My thesis work related to the title above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
2. Does not necessitate the use of biological material (blood, urine, biological fluids and samples, etc.).
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I declare, I have carefully read Hacettepe University's Ethics Regulations and the Commission's Guidelines, and in order to proceed with my thesis according to these regulations I do not have to get permission from the Ethics Board/Commission for anything; in any infringement of the regulations I accept all legal responsibility and I declare that all the information I have provided is true.

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Date and Signature

Name Surname: Seçkin İlke ÖNEN
Student No: N11228183
Department: English Translation and Interpreting
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Status: ☒ MA ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Combined MA/ Ph.D.

28/06/2018

ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

Prof. Dr. Aymil DOĞAN

(Title, Name Surname, Signature)

APPENDIX 2: ORJİNALLİK RAPORU

 HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ YÜKSEK LİSANS/DOKTORA TEZ ÇALIŞMASI ORJİNALLİK RAPORU
HACETTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ İNGİLİZCE MÜTERCİM-TERCÜMANLIK ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA
Tarih: 28/06/2018
Tez Başlığı / Konusu: Video Oyunu Yerelleştirmesine Özgü Zorlukların Üstesinden Gelmek İçin Kullanılan Yaklaşımlar ve Stratejiler Yukarıda başlığı/konusu gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam 138 sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 28/06/2018 tarihinde tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda belirtilen filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı % 16'dır. Uygulanan filtrelemeler: 1- Kabul/Onay ve Bildirim sayfaları hariç, 2- Kaynakça hariç 3- Alıntılar hariç/dâhil 4- 5 kelimedenden daha az örtüşme içeren metin kısımları hariç Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Tez Çalışması Orijinallik Raporu Alınması ve Kullanılması Uygulama Esasları'nı inceledim ve bu Uygulama Esasları'nda belirtilen azami benzerlik oranlarına göre tez çalışmamın herhangi bir intihal içermediğini; aksinin tespit edileceği muhtemel durumda doğabilecek her türlü hukuki sorumluluğu kabul ettiğimi ve yukarıda vermiş olduğum bilgilerin doğru olduğunu beyan ederim. Gereğini saygılarımla arz ederim.
Adı Soyadı: Seçkin İlke ÖNEN Öğrenci No: N11228183 Anabilim Dalı: İngilizce Mütercim Tercümanlık Programı: İngilizce Mütercim Tercümanlık Yüksek Lisans Programı Statüsü: ☒ Y.Lisans ☐ Doktora ☐ Bütünleşik Dr. Tarih ve İmza 28/06/2018 <i>[Signature]</i>
<u>DANIŞMAN ONAYI</u> UYGUNDUR. <i>[Signature]</i> Prof. Dr. Aymil DOĞAN (Unvan, Ad Soyad, İmza)



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**HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
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Status: ☒ Masters ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Integrated Ph.D.

28/06/2018

h/o

ADVISOR APPROVAL

APPROVED.

Prof. Dr. Aymil DOĞAN

(Title, Name Surname, Signature)

