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VIDEO GAME LOCALISATION:
A FRANCOPHONE GAMERS'
PERSPECTIVE ON THE QUALITY OF PC
VIDEO GAME LOCALISATION

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Le 23/08/17 à Dublin

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Since the 1970's, the video game industry has taken off rapidly, with localisation evolving alongside it, from virtually non-existent to full featuring dubbings. The area has therefore started attracting the attention of Translation Studies. Yet, few scholars and industry organisations have focused on gamers' reception of such localised products, an aspect that is crucial to the matter since they are the primary users of games. This paper therefore sought to gather first-hand data and inquire into francophone gamers' opinion on localised games. An online questionnaire was used in order to assess, among other topics, respondents' level of satisfaction with PC games localised into French, one of the first languages into which games were translated. Data showed that, overall, participants from the sample were more satisfied than dissatisfied with the French localisation, but to a small extent, with participants' discontent mainly stemming from the alleged poor quality of translations and dubbings, which hinder full immersion.

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1. Introduction

Video game translation is a recent branch of translation, much younger than its other counterparts related to the cultural and entertainment arenas (literary and audiovisual translation, among others). In this specific case, translators and localisers have to adapt to a polymorphous product belonging to the software category, allying various media (textual and audiovisual), featuring a combination of many types of texts (legal, technical, commercial and literary, among others) and focusing on interactivity. This "transmedial" nature of the video game object poses numerous challenges to whoever tries to adapt them technically, linguistically and culturally (i.e. to localise them). Therefore, although video games localisation draws on other (translation) areas, it is a much more complex task that requires versatility and accurate information, including context. However, mistranslations may easily be made due to the mere fact that video games are often presented in an interactive non-linear way, with some strings being absolutely decontextualised, and no access to the primary source: the game, which still remains the safest option to prevent mistakes or word-for-word translations. This sometimes "blind" translation is a key difference between video game localisation and most of other forms of translation, a difference that needs emphasising from the very beginning since it conditions, to a certain extent, the whole process and the results that may be obtained, therefore ultimately impacting player satisfaction.

Indeed, for over fifty years now, the video game industry has developed and affirmed itself, taking a fair share of the entertainment market. More recently, with the advent of mobile technologies, this leisure has broadened its audience, touching an increasing number of consumers over the world, of all genders and age categories. Newzoo, a company that gathers data in the games industry, estimates that in 2017 the number of gamers worldwide would be 2.2 billion (McDonald, 2017), i.e. a bit less than one third of the global population. In economic terms, this means that the video game industry is very lucrative, with Newzoo expecting gamers around the globe to generate 108.9 billion dollars of game revenues in 2017 (ibid.), with the Asia-Pacific region – especially China - contributing around one-quarter of these global revenues and mobile gaming skyrocketing over the next few years. In comparison, the film industry (TV and video), with which the games industry is often compared, has generated, according to the statistics website Statista, 286.17 billion dollars in 2016, with China, India and the USA being the top markets.

Therefore, the increased financial weight of the gaming sector has gradually made it clear for industry professionals, both developers and publishers, that they could generate exponential benefits from having their products translated and even localised, i.e. adapted to a specific culture. As the audience of players widens, so too does the variety of options offered for localisation, moving from the traditional minimal package of the FIGS (French, Italian, German and Spanish) to a more diversified market in terms of languages offered but also of varieties of one same language offered, with products being more and more tailored for very specific locales.

Given the tremendous success of video games in the world, this recent form of entertainment has progressively started gaining recognition both in the artistic and academic areas, for example with the creation of game awards and the increasing disciplines that take video games as subject matter for their research. This paper follows this current trend and explores the interaction between the "transmedial" product that is a video game and the crucial linguistic, cultural and eventually financial stakes embodied by localisation choices in general, and translation in particular. The focus adopted places the ultimate user of the localisation, the player, at the centre of the interrogations through the help of a questionnaire. This is relatively novel and follows suit with a trend of reception research initiated recently in Translation Studies, in particular in audiovisual translation and video game localisation. The research being conducted by a translator passionate about video games, it naturally delves into issues that ally both aspects. More precisely, the research explores francophone gamers' satisfaction with the localisation into French of video games operated on computers. This central question, i.e. are francophone players satisfied with the quality of game localisations into French, relates to various other aspects that raise the researcher's interest. The research therefore seeks to answer a three-fold question. Firstly, as mentioned earlier, francophone players' satisfaction is the focal point of the study, along with the rationale(s) for such satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Secondly, in relation to the previous point, the research seeks to identify potential weak spots in video game localisation into French so as to improve the localisation process and results. Lastly, the questionnaire explores whether francophone gamers have the same linguistic stance regarding a foreign video game and another foreign cultural product. In other words, it seeks to determine if participants play in a given language (their mother tongue or the original language) and act in a different way with other products like books or movies.

These various questions will be analysed and answered throughout the work, which is made up of seven chapters, including the introduction. After this brief introduction, Chapter 2 will provide an overview of the academic and industry panorama in video game localisation, starting by defining the key concepts of video game and localisation, as well as other relevant notions.

Chapter 3 will further explore the different types of research that have been conducted into video games, gamers, and localisation, both from the business and the academic perspectives, especially at the European and French levels. It will then present precursors of our reception research and explain what this research hopes to bring to light.

Chapter 4 will lay down the research methodology used in this participant-oriented research based on a questionnaire. It will explain all the elements that were taken into account before the design and launch of the survey before describing in detail all the sections featured in the questionnaire, the questions they included and the reasons for doing so.

Chapter 5 will present the results yielded by the survey following the order in which questions were displayed and therefore explained in the methodology chapter (chapter 4). This is the part where the initial research hypotheses will be set against data and supported or rejected. Other larger-scale studies on gaming and gamers will also be leveraged to serve as benchmark for our sample.

Chapter 6 will consist of a discussion of some elements highlighted in the questionnaire's answers. This includes acknowledging the limitations of the research but also discussing aspects like linguistic variety, the quality of translations and dubbings, and the overall impact of video game localisation on player immersion.

Finally, Chapter 7 will conclude the whole research work, first summarising succinctly the findings and second by opening up the debate towards potential trends and evolutions related to the subject matter of the thesis, player satisfaction with video games operated on computers and localised into French

2. State of the Art

In this chapter, we shall start by introducing our reader to the notions that will be exploited throughout this work, i.e. video games, localisation and related concepts. After this, we shall delve further into the concept of "video game localisation", exploring its origins as well as the rationales behind such practice and, finally, the assets concerned.

2.1 Defining the Terms

Nowadays, with the worldwide gaming industry boom, video games and their localisation are so intertwined that one can hardly mention one without talking about the other. This section will aim at explaining both concepts and introducing relevant notions.

2.1.1 Video Games

This section will define part of our object of study: video games. It will present the main characteristics of a video game before considering terminological issues surrounding the concept. The distinction between proprietary and open-source video games will also be drawn before presenting an indicative typology of the various existing video games. But first of all, we shall try to define a video game.

2.1.1.1 From a Game to a Video Game

A video game is, above all, a game. But what's in a game? Jesper Juul, a video game theorist and occasional game developer, addressed this question in his keynote speech to the 2003 Level Up conference, entitled "The Game, the Player, the World: Looking for a Heart of Gameness". He defined a game as "a rule-based formal 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). Although all six elements are not always present in games, they form a common basis for determining what is and what is not a game.

Juul also noted that games are "transmedial", i.e. they are not attached to a particular media, and have "non-electronic roots" (ibid.). Indeed, for millennia, games have existed, "the computer is simply the latest game medium to emerge" (ibid.), or at least was at the time, since nowadays handheld devices are invading the game scene.

In his keynote, Juul also evoked the values assigned to the different outcomes, for example being happy when winning and sad when losing. This is related to another important aspect of games, in which "there is a tendency that the positive outcomes are harder to reach than the negative ones" (Juul, 2003). This is very true in video games, especially in survival games, in which the player starts off with minimal resources in a hostile environment, and in roguelike games, in which he has no possibility to respawn (i.e. dies permanently). Examples of survival games include *Minecraft* by Mojang (2011), with *Sword of the Stars: The Pit* by Kerberos Productions (2013) exemplifying the roguelike subgenre.

Thus, according to Juul, video games as a whole fall under the "classic game model" though some individual instances remain borderline cases. Indeed, to some extent video games challenge certain characteristics that make up a game. For instance, titles like the open-end simulation *The Sims* or the sandbox game *Minecraft* "remov[e] the goals, or more specifically, (…) [do] not describ[e] some possible outcomes as better than others" (Juul, 2003). Among other developments, the diffusion of "semi-official cheatcodes" enabling players to "modify some of the basic rules of a game" can also be challenging for the traditional game model. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that video games still mostly encompass all six conditions identified by Juul.

But then, what makes a video game different from other games? Frasca (2001) defined a video game (which he spells in one word) as "any form[s] of computer-based entertainment software, either textual or image-based, using any electronic platform such as personal computers or consoles and involving one or multiple players in a physical or networked environment". This comprehensive definition can be used as a theoretical framework for our work, since it encompasses many relevant aspects of our object of study. Indeed, on top of the entertaining purpose and the fact that a game is a software product, this definition emphasises the fact that a video game usually has textual <u>and</u> visual components, a variable number of players, and can be run on various platforms (to which we can add arcade and handheld devices like tablets and mobile phones).

Now that the object of study has been clearly delimited, it is time to enter the terminological maze that surrounds it and explore the implications of using such or such denomination.

2.1.1.2 *"Terminological Heterogeneity" (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013)*

It is worth noting that academics have used, and go on using, a wide variety of terms to refer to video games and video game localisation: one concept thus corresponds to various terms in English, which may not be the case in other languages.

Indeed, apart from alternative spellings like "video games" and "videogames", the most common concurrent denominations include the generic "games" as well as "computer games", "electronic games", "digital games" and "multimedia interactive entertainment software" to refer to the concept defined above by Frasca.

As a starting point, both the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Encyclopedia Britannica* denote "video games" as two words, as do most people looking it up on the Internet as shown by research by Wolf and Perron in March 2008 (2009, p. 8). Strangely enough though, a considerable number of scholars and journalists use only one word to describe it, including journalists Thomas et al. who redacted *The Videogame Styleguide and Reference Manual*, a handbook in which they advocate for the harmonization of terminology in the field. Their "videogame" entry specifies: "[a]lways write as one word" (2007, p. 65).

Scholars' divergences of points of view do not only concern which term to use but go deeper and relate to the distinction between each term. For example, Buckingham et al. allege that "computer games" is used in the UK regardless of the platform, and would thus be "a more inclusive term" than "video games" which might not include PC games (2006, p. 6). Yet, other British authors like Newman (2004) and the journalist Poole (2000) use the word "videogames" to encompass everything, including PC games. Other scholars like Raessens and Goldstein (2005, quoted by O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013) argue that both "video games" and "computer games" are platform-specific, and advocate for broader terms like "digital games" and "electronic games". Taking this argument into consideration, the hypernym "games" used by Chandler and O'Malley (2012) would work as well. Still, this term may be a bit too generic in general discourse, though perfectly understandable in a specialized context.

On the other hand, although he frequently uses "video games" in his works, Bernal Merino suggested the term "**multimedia interactive entertainment software**", with "**MIES**" being its shortened form (2015, p. 15). This proposal presents the advantage of being comprehensive and descriptive, emphasizing the fact that video games stand at a crossroads. Yet, this option has been discarded in this thesis due to its length, a constraint that might not be ideal for a term that is to be repeated several times over the work. Furthermore, we thought that such denomination might sound too complex for a concept otherwise clear in most people's minds. In other words, this proposal resulted from an intense academic reflection but did not really seem to capture usage of terms in everyday life.

The following table is a recap of the terms encountered in the various types of sources we consulted. Note that only terms falling under Frasca's definition (i.e. broad enough and not platform-specific) were included

Term / Source	Games	Video games	Videogames	Computer games	Electronic games	Digital games	Multimedia interactive entertainment software (MIES)
Scholars	Chandler & O'Malley (2012)	O'Hagan & Mangiron (2013) Bernal Merino (2015)	Frasca (2001) Newman (2004)	Juul (2003) Buckingham et al (2006)	Raessens & Goldstein (2005, cited in O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013)	Kerr (2006) Raessens & Goldstein (2005, cited in O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013)	Bernal Merino (2015)
Industry associations	Computer Entertainment Supplier's Association (CESA – Japan) (2017)[1]	Interactive Software Federation for Europe (ISFE - Europe) (2008) Entertainment Software Association (ESA – USA) (2017)	Interactive Software Federation for Europe (ISFE - Europe) (2012)				
Journalists			Poole (2000) Thomas, Orland, and Steinberg (2007)				
Gamers[2]	Metacritic (entertainment	NeoGAF forum (in the description of its					

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[1] Based on their English welcome page, since most of the website and publications are only available in Japanese.

[2] As it is complicated to assess the terminology employed by most gamers, the name and general interface of a popular entertainment product rating website and of four popular gaming forums were examined. Results were coherent with the researcher's experience in terms of naming the abovementioned concept.

	product rating website) GameFAQs forum (in the name of the forum and the whole interface) MMORPG forum (main interface) GameSpot forum (main interface and name of the forum)	"Gaming discussion forum") GameSpot forum (name of topics)					
General public	Not taken into account in Wolf and Perron's study	Wolf and Perron (2009) research on March 4th, 2008: Yahoo: 207 million hits Google: 71.3 million hits MSN.com: 43.9 million hits	Wolf and Perron (2009) research on March 4th, 2008: Yahoo: 36.1 million hits Google: 15 million hits MSN.com: 9.38 million hits	Not taken into account in Wolf and Perron's study	Not taken into account in Wolf and Perron's study	Not taken into account in Wolf and Perron's study	Not taken into account in Wolf and Perron's study
Official linguistic resources		*Oxford English Dictionary Encyclopedia Britannica*		*Encyclopedia Britannica*	*Encyclopedia Britannica*		

Table 1. Terminological divergences on naming a generic concept in English

Some terminological inconsistencies may be noticed among the productions of a same author/organization. For instance, in its 2008 consumer study, the ISFE used the two-word form "video game", whereas it spelt it in one word in its 2012 version, frequently using the hypernym "games" in the report itself. Similarly, in its 2010 "Essential Facts about the Computer and Video Game Industry", the ESA made a distinction between "computer and video games", using both terms together throughout the report, thus deeming that neither is generic enough. Yet, the 2017 version, though also featuring both terms in its title, clearly favours the option "video game" as the most generic by using it consistently on its own throughout the report. These instances clearly show that the terminology in the area remains unstable and keeps evolving alongside the products it covers.

Given this "terminological heterogeneity" (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, p. 65), various arguments were examined in order to settle for one term in this paper. As exemplified in the beginning of the work, **we finally decided to keep the term "video game" with the hypernym "game" being used as a shortened version**. This choice was dictated by the large dominance of the term both among scholars and in marketing campaigns (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013), the media and, above all, gamers themselves, both in forums and in everyday life. This last point is crucial since this category of population is the primary focus of this study. On top of that, although according to Raessens and Golstein (2005, quoted by O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, p. 64), "video games" is mostly used to describe games operated on consoles, this definition is still highly debated. Furthermore, as O'Hagan and Mangiron emphasized, "the division between game consoles and computers is increasingly blurred" (2013, p. 64) as there are more and more so-called cross-platform games, i.e. games that are released on various platforms. Thus, contrary to O'Hagan and Mangiron (ibid., p. 65), choosing to use the term "video games" did not imply a stronger focus on console games but was to be understood in a general sense considering all the above-mentioned arguments.

Furthermore, for the purpose of this research, following O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013, p. 66), the denominations "players" and "gamers" will be used as synonyms.

After settling on the terms that are to be used throughout the thesis and distinguishing games according to the platform they may be operated on, we shall turn to a different way of classifying games, separating two categories that may entail different localisation processes.

2.1.1.3 Proprietary VS Open Source

An important distinction regarding video games as well as software in general is that of proprietary and open source. Proprietary software is owned by a company or an individual, and the source code remains private, contrary to open-source software. Indeed, in the 1990s, the open source initiative/movement, that aims at sharing and improving collaboratively software source code, became more important, with publications acknowledging the operating system Linux (The Open Source Definition, n.d.).

In order to be "open-source", a software primarily needs to have a license that allows users to access and modify the source code. Furthermore, its license shall, among others, "not restrict any party from selling or giving away the software" but shall constrain people to distribute derived works under the same terms as the original software's. Also, importantly, the software's license must be "technology-neutral", i.e. "[n]o provision of the license may be predicated on any individual technology or style of interface" (ibid.). This means that the software or the game in question should be compatible with various technologies, for instance various operating systems, in order to truly be open-source.

Still, one needs to be cautious and use the appropriate terminology. Open-source software is sometimes called free software. Yet, this denomination can be misleading because of the double meaning of the word "free". Indeed, a software may be free in terms of access (i.e. accessible to everyone), but not always free in terms of price (meaning that you may have to give a financial compensation in order to access it). This stands for some open-source software and video games as well.

There is yet another difference between proprietary and open-source video games. Indeed, because open source gives everyone access to the source code, it is frequent for amateurs (meaning players) to gather and suggest a translation/localisation. Proprietary games, on the other hand, are usually translated and localised by professional teams in-house or outsourced, who do not tend to have access to the source code, or the game itself, a challenge we will further explore in the discussion (chapter 6). Yet, this traditional model coexists, as we will see in section 2.2.2.2, with various forms of amateur localisations such as translation romhacking and crowdsourcing.

The proprietary/open-source distinction may thus be relevant to any research on localisation practices and feedback since there can be a great discrepancy between the versions provided by industry professionals and those provided on a voluntary basis. Still, this criterion will not be examined in detail in this paper. For further information, one may consult the work of a fellow student at University of Geneva, who analysed the localisation of SourceForge's most popular (open-source) video games (Sánchez Espinoza, 2015). Apart from the distinction between proprietary and non-proprietary games, and the various platforms games can be released on, one may decide to classify games according yet to another criterion: their genre.

2.1.1.4 Typology of Video Games

The way in which game genres should be classified is yet another highly debated point in the industry. In Kerr's words, "game genres are poorly defined and evolve as new technologies and fashions emerge" (2006, p. 41). Video games have indeed evolved tremendously over the last few decades: a wide array of genres and subgenres emerged but also transformed throughout time (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, p. 69). Indeed, "the concept of genre is developing dynamically" (ibid., p. 70), giving birth to new subgenres or to hybrid titles that become unclassifiable. For instance, in 2006, Kerr (p. 39) highlighted the fact that the shooter genre has existed since the beginning but that one of its subgenres, first-person shooter (also known as FPS), has developed more recently. O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) also quote McDougall and O'Brien (2008, pp. 96-98), who argue that the successful *Grand Theft Auto* (*GTA*) series may be classified in no less than three genres: RPG, racing games, and action (beat 'em up).

Furthermore, some new genres emerged and rapidly took more and more importance. Among these, one may mention serious games i.e. "games used for targeted purposes of training" (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, p. 69) in various areas. In 2015, Bernal Merino quoted the example of the medical, military and piloting areas, the latter being exemplified by the game *Flight Simulator,* "a game popular with amateur trainee pilots and commonly employed by national air forces and aviation academies to initiate trainees in a controlled environment" (p. 31). Other new genres identified by Mangiron and O'Hagan (2013) are party games and family games, that became very popular when Nintendo launched its Wii console, as well as social games. The latter are "played on social networking sites designed for interacting with friends" (p. 70), like *Candy Crush* that enables players to ask their Facebook friends to give them extra lives to keep on playing.

Last but not least, the advent of the ubiquitous Internet and of mobile/handheld devices also paved the way for the explosion of "casual games". Bernal Merino defined them as "games that are designed specifically for people who do not really have time to play, but would be interested if a result is achievable within the short timeframe that they have available: while commuting by train or bus, for instance, relaxing on their lunch breaks" (2015, p. 33). Among other examples, he identifies *Bejeweled* and *Angry Birds.*

Trying to categorise games poses cultural challenges, as some genres or subgenres that exist in certain regions may not be present or as popular in others (Kerr, 2006). For instance, Japan features specific genres like "sound novel" and "typing practice", as well as many subgenres for "simulation games" like "nurturing simulation" and "romance simulation" (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, quoting the 2012 CESA Games White Papers), a subgenre to which the non-conventional game *Hatoful boyfriend* (released in Europe in 2015) belongs. This considered, classifying games becomes a complicated task, and, understandably, academics disagree. Kerr (2006, p. 39) remarks that very often, categories for educational games or gambling and betting games are missing from genre lists.

Despite the debates surrounding the topic, O'Hagan and Mangiron note that "from the perspectives of translation and localisation the concept of genre is still relevant and useful, as genre signals text conventions to an extent", more precisely in terms of characteristics and volume (2013, p. 70). For that matter, they suggest an *indicative* classification of games in thirteen genres, including serious and social games. On the other hand, genres left out by this categorisation include the genres pointed out by Kerr, as well as sandbox games.

Their proposal, which builds on the works of other scholars, takes the form of a three-column table featuring respectively the genre, an explanation of its key-characteristics and various examples with the year of their release (see Table below) (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, p. 68). For reasons explained in section 4.2.2.2, this classification is the one that was used in the questionnaire directed to francophone gamers.

Game genre	Explanation	Examples
Action	Any game whose main purpose is the player's action, involving his/her quick reflexes and co-ordination skills. The genre includes "Beat 'em up" games. The latest sub-genre is rhythm action which may be treated as a separate genre.	*Doom* (1993) *Quake* (1996) *Monster Hunter Tri* (2009)
Adventure	The player's perspective is usually fixed just behind her/him. Includes detailed back stories.	*Tomb Raider* (1996) *Resident Evil 5* (2009)
Racing	The player is engaged in driving a vehicle.	*Gran Turismo* (1998) *Mario Kart Wii* (2008)
Shooter	The player sees the action in a first-person (FPS=First Person Shooter) or third-person perspective with the goal of firing the arsenal.	*Half-Life* (1998) *Halo* (2002) *Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare* (2007)
Massively Multiplayer Online Game (MMOG)	A game is played online with a large number of players.	*Ever Quest* (1999) *Lineage II: The Chaotic Chronicle* (2004) *World of Warcraft* (2004-)
Platform	The player needs to overcome various obstacles, while accumulating power (power-up).	*Donkey Kong* (1981) *Super Mario Bros.* series (1985-) *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* (2003)
Puzzle	The player's mission is to solve a puzzle, using logic.	*Tetris* (1985)
Role Playing Game (RPG)	The player takes on the role of a character and embarks on a lengthy quest. Includes detailed back stories.	*Final Fantasy* series (1987-) *Baldur's Gate* (1998) *Dragon Quest IX* (2009)
Simulation (sometimes called "God Games")	The player plays God and manages real-world simulated situations.	*Microsoft Flight Simulator* series (1982-) *The Sims* (2000)
Strategy	Games that place the player in a strategic conflict to be resolved.	*Civilization* (1991) *Command and Conquer* (1996) *Age of Empires* (1997)
Sports	Games that emulate sports such as tennis, football, golf, etc.	*FIFA* series (1993-) *Pro Evolution Soccer* series (2001-) *Wii Sports* (2006)
Serious Games	Games designed for specific purposes other than pure entertainment.	*America's Army* (2002) *September 12th* (2003) *Food Force* (2005)
Social Games	Games that are linked to social networking sites such as Facebook.	*Pet Society* (2008) *Farm Ville* (2009)

Table 2. Video game genres

Source: Newman (2004); McCarthy et al. (2005, 53-55); Kerr (2006a, 38-41);
Egenfeldt-Nielsen et al. (2008) cited in O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013, p. 68).

As mentioned earlier, this table is not the one and only possibility of classifying games but aims at providing a useful framework in the field of Translation Studies. It illustrates the wide variety of existing games and the debates surrounding this polymorphous object, as seen previously. The next section will focus on the other half of our field of research: localisation aim, defining it and establishing links with other concepts that apply in the industry.

2.1.2 Localisation and Related Notions

We shall start by defining localisation, before moving on to concepts within the same framework, namely globalisation, internationalisation, translation and, finally, culturalisation.

2.1.2.1 Localisation

In *A Practical Guide to Localization*, Esselink defines localisation as "the process of taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold" (2000, p. 84). Bernal Merino adheres to such definition but adds the idea of making the product technically appropriate as well (2015, p. 35). In fact, the word "localisation" or "localization"[3], often abridged "L10n", comes from the word "locale" "which traditionally means a small area or vicinity" (Esselink, 2000, p. 1). Yet, nowadays, this term "is mostly used in a technical context, where it represents a specific combination of language, region and character encoding" (ibid.). It is thus applicable to various technological products like software, websites and video games, our subject matter.

Localisation therefore requires a high linguistic and cultural knowledge of both source and, especially, target markets to adapt the product to local sensitivities and preferences. For instance, McCarthy et al. explain that, according to research undertaken by the University of Abertay (Dundee), Japanese players do not like competing and prefer "wait[ing] for their opponent to catch up with them than inflict[ing] a potentially humiliating defeat" (2009, p. 149). To that end, Enix modified several aspects of *Tomb Raider* for the Japanese market, including making Lara Croft's death less blatant and eliminating some of the sudden-death difficulty spikes (ibid.). This particular case of marked localisation verges on culturalisation, another notion that will be defined a bit further on in this chapter.

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[3]In this thesis, British English spelling conventions were followed. However, in the concepts and quotes by other authors, their writing preferences were respected.

On the same note, the image below illustrates, in a humorous tone, the adaptations that may be necessary in order to make a video game fit for a specific locale, in this case from the American culture to the German, Korean and Japanese ones. In this case, although the comic is entitled "Localization", the strategy adopted is that of "culturalisation", one of the related notions described further on. One can note that the depiction of violence is completely erased in the German version, something we will look more into detail when dealing with the localisation of art assets, in section 2.2.3.1.3.
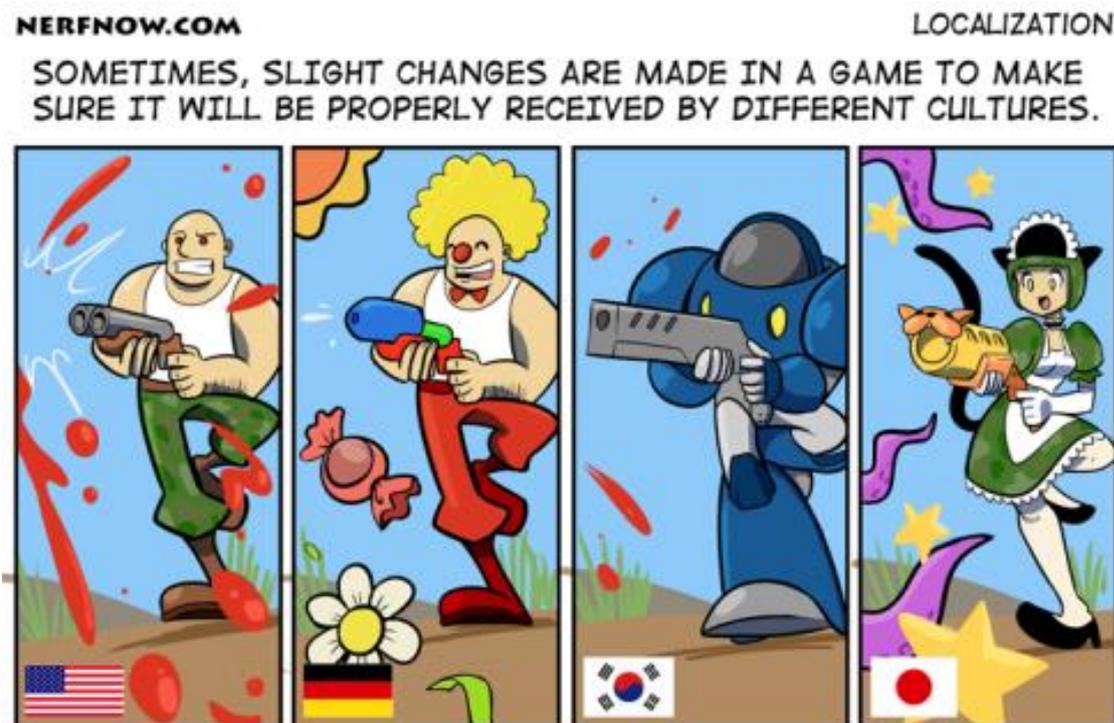
Source: Josué Pereira (2010) *Localization* [image online],

Figure 1. Localising a game into various cultures

available: http://www.nerfnow.com/comic/289 [accessed 08 Aug. 2017].

Furthermore, the notion of localisation is very much intertwined with what the language industry now calls "GILT", the letters standing for "globalisation" (also known as g11n), "localisation" (l10n), "internationalisation" (i18n) and "translation". Delving into these notions will enable us to understand how they differ from each other.

2.1.2.2 Globalisation

According to the Global Localization Association (GALA), globalisation encompasses "*a broad range of processes necessary to prepare and launch products and activities internationally*" (emphasis ours) (GALA, 2017). In fact, the globalisation of products, accompanied with the necessity of localising them to enter new markets, is a phenomenon that has existed for decades and does not exclusively apply to video games. Indeed, it has intensified as our world grew more and more interconnected, i.e. as "globalisation" of markets boomed.

For instance, McDonald's efforts to adapt their burgers to local markets illustrate how localisation operates in a daily life context since they tailor the names, prices, and even the ingredients they use to specific markets. For example, in 2000, they tried to conquer India and released products like the Maharaja Mac and burgers containing mutton and chicken meat (Harding, 2000). Their offering of substitutes for beef and pork shows that McDonald's was well-aware that in a diverse community like India, where many Hindus and Muslims coexist, there is a certain sensitivity regarding food, a characteristic that has to be taken into account if one wants the products to market well. And the same goes with digital products, as we will see in detail in subsections 2 and 3. In order to ensure proper globalisation of a video game, there are several steps to follow, internationalisation usually being the first one of them.

2.1.2.3 Internationalisation

"Internationalization is a design process that ensures a product (usually a software application) can be adapted to various languages and regions without requiring engineering changes to the source code" (GALA 2017). Internationalisation is thus a step that should come before localisation, as a pre-requisite that makes the actual localisation process far smoother and easier. It includes the implementation of a generic source-code that enables all characters (and, therefore, languages) to be represented, including accented characters, non-Latin alphabets and right-to-left or top-to-bottom languages. This can be achieved through the encoding in Unicode, a standard that "provides a unique number for every character, no matter what platform, device, application or language" (What is Unicode?, 2017). Overall, Unicode features more than 65,000 characters (Chandler, 2014, p. 286).

Internationalisation measures also encompass providing the possibility for the program to accommodate various keyboards and formats for dates and currencies, as well as adjusting the wide screen definition for example (Bernal Merino, 2015). Once a product is successfully internationalised, its localisation is ready to start, including the translation of linguistic assets.

2.1.2.4 Translation

Contrary to internationalisation, translation is not related to technical operations but to linguistic ones. It consists in "[t]he process of translating words or text from one language into another" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). It is thus one of the steps in the localisation process, other steps including "[a]dapting graphics to target markets, [m]odifying content to suit the tastes and consumption habits of other markets or [u]sing proper local formats for dates, addresses, and phone numbers" (GALA). Although the four abovementioned phases constitute the heart of the adaptation undergone by a video game in order to become suitable for other markets, sometimes it is necessary to push further this adaptation to the game content itself through culturalisation.

2.1.2.5 Going "One Step Further": Culturalisation

The concept of "culturalisation" is enlightening as regards with video game localisation since it consists in altering slightly the game content deemed sensitive or risky so that the product is suitable for a given culture. In Kate Edwards' words, *"[c]ulturalization is going a step further beyond localization as it takes a deeper look into a game's fundamental assumptions and content choices, and then gauges their viability in both the broad, multicultural marketplace as well as in specific geographic locales."* (2011, p. 2). In this sense, it is part of the localisation framework. Edwards quotes four types of sensitive content: religious content, historical content (especially inaccuracies), intercultural dissonance, i.e. *"perceived inequitable treatment of a specific culture/ethnicity and/or nationality"* (2011, p. 7) and geopolitical issues.

Taking the cultural dimension into account when localising games is crucial to prevent backlash from gamers and unintended audiences (non-gamers). Edwards quotes a case in point in that matter; the Xbox combat game *Kakuto Chojin: Back Alley Brutal* (Dream Publishing/MS Game Studios 2002), which featured a track with chanted portions of the Qur'an. Consequently, the backlash went viral and the game was banned in Saudi Arabia and other Muslim countries (2011, p. 2). In a chapter dedicated to culturalisation in *The Game Localization Handbook*, Edwards also emphasizes the importance of **contextual proximity**, i.e. the fact that "the closer a content element approaches the original context in person, place, time, and/or form, the greater the potential for cultural sensitivity" (2012, p. 29). To illustrate this, we may say that there is a higher chance for a game about 9/11 to trigger negative reactions than for a game set in the Roman Empire.

Here is a very important fact worth highlighting: culturalisation aims at making the product fit for the audience without changing structural elements like the plot or the essence of the characters. In this sense, a parallel can be drawn with literary translation, in which the "domestication" and "foreignization" strategies are used. The translation theorist Lawrence Venuti coined these concepts and defined "domestication" as "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bring the author back home". "Foreignization", on the other hand, consists in "an ethno deviant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference in the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (1995: 20). A combination of both is, of course, possible. The first strategy, which therefore consists in transforming elements to make them more familiar to the target audience, operates in the same way as culturalisation of video games. Yet, even though it can sometimes be strongly marked (for example in games depicting violence in Germany), this process should not be assimilated with rewriting since a guiding principle is "to make the most minimal changes to the least amount of content" (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012, p. 32). It is thus a way of enhancing the experience for the target player without creating an entirely different product.

Below is a representation of the relationship between the concepts defined in this section, globalisation encompassing all the others.
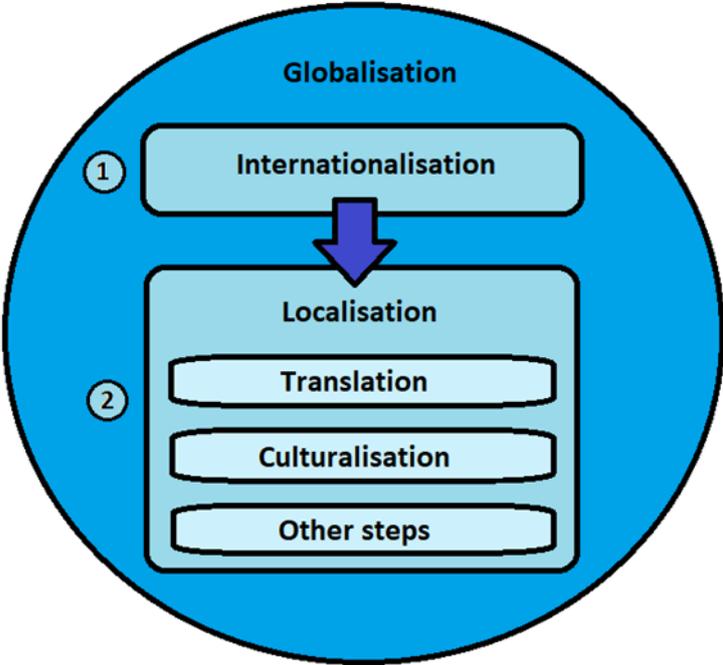
Figure 2. Interaction between the GILT concepts

After defining the various phases necessary to make a video game suitable for a specific audience, it seems natural to study more in-depth various aspects related to video game localisation.

2.2 Video Game Localisation

First of all, we shall tackle the issue of video game localisation from a historic perspective and identify the various phases that led us where we are now. Second, we will examine the reasons put forward for localising a video game, especially by developers/publishers and players. Finally, we shall take a closer look at all the elements that might need localising so that the video game as a whole may be appropriate to the target audience.

2.2.1 History

As people living in the 21st century, at the digital era, in a world that is highly interconnected and where everything, from video games to burgers, is tailored for specific publics and needs, we have trouble believing that only a few decades ago, games were mostly in English or in Japanese and they were much less varied and popular. Yet, the video game industry, and the localisation industry alongside it, have evolved rapidly over the past few decades. Taking a step back, we shall have a look at how different things were in the gaming area not so long ago. Following Bernal Merino's historical section (2015, pp. 157-175), we will explore the developments of the video game and localisation industry through five major steps, starting with the 1970's. One may also stress the fact that some academics like O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013, pp. 46-63) suggested a slightly different chronology but with similar steps, namely birth (early phase), growth, development, maturing and advancing phases. We shall explore them following Bernal Merino's titles.

2.2.1.1   1970's: The Birth of Digital Entertainment

After the birth of one of the first games in 1961 (*Spacewar!* by the MIT), other now-cult games followed suit in the USA in the early 1970's, such as *Computer Space* in 1971 and *Pong* in 1972 (Bernal Merino, 2015). These pioneering games were simple and intuitive at first, with almost no text. One could mostly find them at arcades and fair grounds, in the form of coin-operated games which quickly became profitable and were exported to households through the development of desktop consoles like Magnavox's Odyssey in 1972. By the end of the decade, the Japanese had joined in, producing arcade games directly available in English, like *Space Invaders* in 1978 and *Galaxian* in 1979. Yet, even at such an early stage, the seeds of localisation started sprouting in the mind of the Japanese since the USA represented such a big market. Bernal Merino quotes *Pac-Man* as the first true instance of this process, since originally the game was entitled *Puck Man*, which was deemed inappropriate due to its closeness with a well-known swearword (ibid.).

2.2.1.2   1980's: Establishment of the Game Industry

The 1980's saw the proliferation of the game industry, with the emergence of popular games like *Tetris*, *The Legend of Zelda*, *Sim City*, and *Super Mario Bros*. This period saw the establishment of games companies as well as an improved quality of games. The home console market burst (mostly with Sega, Atari, Nintendo and Apple) according to Patterson and Elston (2008) and, as a result, the "portable console war" began between Nintendo's Game Boy and Atari's Linx (Newman 2004, cited in Bernal Merino, 2015). In this context, it became common to localise games to a "box and docs" level into the so-called "E-FIGS" languages (French, Italian, German and Spanish) as well as in Dutch (Bernal Merino, 2015). Yet, at this stage there were no game localisation specialists: according to Bernal Merino (2015), translation was done in-house or by freelance translators, which signed the birth of language service provider companies, but also by non-professionals, namely bilingual players.

2.2.1.3   1990's: The Fight for the Markets

Games became more diverse in the 1990's and this decade marked a shift from "box and docs" localisation to (very) "partial localisation" (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012): the user interface was translated, though subtitles were not always provided and voiceovers were only used for best-sellers. Still, it seems that this change was more than welcomed by foreign players (Bernal Merino, 2015), as games grew increasingly complex, making the understanding of them harder without proper knowledge of the language (ibid.). Furthermore, the availability of subtitles, both interlingual and intralingual, opened up the world of video games to the deaf and hard-of-hearing community (Bernal Merino, 2011). Some instances of full localisations were also found in the late 1990's, for instance *Baldur's Gate*, released by BioWare in 1998, was one of the first examples of full localisation into Spanish, introducing the premise of what would later become common practice (Bernal Merino, 2015).

This decade also signalled the beginning of the partnership between the game industry and the game localisation industry, as people grew more and more aware that games had to provide a quality experience in terms of language and immersion if they wanted to compete with other entertainment/cultural products. Bernal Merino (2015) places the beginning of systematic linguistic play-testing at that point in time, as well as the birth of industry associations working for protection from piracy and creating age ratings.

Finally, according to Bernal Merino, "by the end of the 1990's, video games had become a full-fledged entertainment industry, challenging the preeminence of the film, music and book industries" (2015, p. 3).

2.2.1.4   2000's: The Professionalization of Game Localisation

With the turn of the century, a new model of game shipment emerged, known as the "sim-ship" model, meaning that all linguistic versions are released at the same time. This model imposed new constraints on the industry since the localisation process had (and still has) to start when the product was still unfinished in order to meet the unmovable deadlines. By then, the localisation world had become a full-fledged industry, with emerging companies like XLoc and Gameloc, some of them even tackling recordings of audio files (Sioli et al., 2007). Localisation strategies thus became more refined, with companies using local celebrities, in order to keep up with more refined products, featuring for example very high quality cinematics, as is the case in the game *L.A. Noire* (Bernal Merino, 2015*)*. It is also worth noting that cinematic assets started to be translated only recently after having "long been neglected" (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, p. 125).

Gradually, localisation levels switched to full localisation in a wide number of cases, and in an increasing number of languages (for instance Arabic, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Japanese, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Swedish), at least for AAA titles[4] (Bernal Merino, 2015). Indeed, for Bernal Merino, full localisation was "*increasing [companies'] revenue, their international standing and visibility, and the loyalty of their customers*" (ibid., p. 172). To that end, it makes sense that the stress should now be laid on the quality of the localisation, with increased out-sourcing of functional and linguistic testing, the latter now being performed by "large seasonal teams", mostly people that have a background in translation/languages and are "skilled players" rather than mere enthusiasts (Bernal Merino, 2015).

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[4] "AAA titles" refer to video games in which a lot of time and money are invested. They are allocated a high development budget and their level of promotion is high as well. Therefore, they are expected to market well and generate a high return on investment.

Regarding video games proper, the end of the 20th century marked the advent of a new era with the worldwide success of online games, especially MMOGs (massively-multiplayer online games) such as *Ultima Online*, one of the first, released in 1997. This new genre became very popular with the launch of *World of Warcraft* (WoW), the most popular, in 2004 (Bernal Merino, 2015). Online games enable developers to gather first-hand data and receive feedback from players, which may eventually lead to the decision to translate the game into other languages (ibid.).

2.2.1.5   2010's: Enhanced Localisation and New Developments

The last few years saw a radical change in the production process since localisation is now taken into account very early in the development of the game, i.e. in the creative and planning phases (Bernal Merino, 2015). This change has been accompanied with the development of a more creative role for the translator (ibid.).

The current phase is also the perfect example of what Jenny McKearney called "deep localisation" or "enhanced localisation" at the Game Localization Round Table in 2007 (quoted in Bernal Merino 2015, p. 173). Indeed, she insisted on the fact that "*whilst previous efforts had aimed at breaking into markets by simply eliminating language barriers, deep or enhanced localization staves off competition from other top games by presenting a product that caters directly to local tastes and sensitivities in a systematized way*" (ibid.). This perspective is directly linked to the "culturalisation" processes described by Kate Edwards, as defined in section 2.1.2.5. A good case in point is Atari's localisation of the music in one of its driving games: instead of using the American dance playlist, they switched it to hard rock songs in the Japanese version and therefore increased their sales by 20% (McCarthy et al., 2005, p. 149). This pioneering approach is now starting to take roots and become more commonplace in the industry, marketing very targeted products. Meanwhile, video games keep generating massive revenues (30.4 billion dollars in the U.S. market in 2016 according to the ESA, 2017). They also become increasingly numerous, varied and hybrid and reach new markets both in terms of social and geographical groups.

In this context, localisation is now everywhere and becomes a very powerful tool both in the video game world and the other industries, since it is a way for brands to roll out their products internationally and thus generate more profit. This is thus one of the reasons for localising video games, but we shall explore the others as well.

2.2.2 Why Localise: The Dichotomy

When having a look at drivers for localisation in the video game industry, two main motivations stand out, depending on which side people are on. Indeed, whereas gamers will localise voluntarily games for the benefit of others, the main advantage a company seeks to receive from its localisation strategy is an increased market share together with a higher profit. We will first explore this commercial driver before moving on to the second one.

2.2.2.1 Profit

For a game company, localising a product is a way to "boost sales globally" (Bernal Merino, 2015, p. 2). Indeed, the video game industry is a fast-growing entertainment industry that even took over some more traditional entertainment forms. Nowadays, the audience targeted by video games is increasingly varied and includes more and more children. As Bernal Merino puts it, "the stereotype of the teenage boy playing video games in the darkness of his bedroom is no longer an accurate representation of the demographics of players. Young adults account for the biggest section of the market for the video game industry, but they are represented by both male and female players" (Bernal Merino, 2015, p. 27). This change in itself can provide an incentive for companies to try to reach as many people as possible in a broader audience than was the case one decade ago. In 2012, Chandler and O'Malley wrote that the global market for video games was estimated at more than 31.6 billion dollars per year and that according to Global Industry Analysts (GIA) it would have almost trebled by 2015, with Europe and Asia's growth averaging 10% per year (quoted by Chandler and O'Malley, p. xiii, 2012).

The wide range of platforms (computers, consoles, mobile devices), the stark competition between companies as well as the gradual complexification of games in terms of scenario and commands make it necessary for companies to leverage language and culture to be successful worldwide (Bernal Merino, 2015). Indeed, according to what Chandler declared in an interview for Bytelevel, in the best cases, up to 50% of the revenues generated by a game can be attributed to international sales (Bytelevel, 2004[5]). This means that localisation really is a way for publishers to increase their revenues at a minor cost, especially when a localisation-friendly code has already been implemented from the beginning (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012). Chandler and O'Malley stated that the biggest markets for video games in Europe are the United Kingdom, France and Germany, with Spain and Italy being fast-growing markets. It is thus very common for game producers to plan to produce fully localised versions in French and German as well as in Spanish and Italian (what we call the E-FIGS). Other markets on the European soil are Scandinavia and Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012, p. 45). At the international level, one may note the growth of the game market in the Polish, Hebrew, Japanese and Korean communities (ibid., p. 52), making it worth localising titles, at least partially.

Indeed, localisation is a long and costly process that lasts approximately between one and three months (for translation, integration and testing) depending on the genre and size of the game, sometimes more for full localisation (i.e. including voiceovers) (Bytelevel, 2004). It is important for companies to make a worthy (that is profitable) investment, which is why before engaging in the process they usually conduct profits and losses (P&L) analyses (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012) to have a rough idea of where they stand. For example, publishers fully localise games into French and German because these countries are big markets and they are confident they can sell enough games (at least 10,000 of them). On the other hand, publishers will consider (fully) localising a game into Spanish or Italian only if they expect sales to reach a minimum of 5,000, what is necessary for them to recoup their localisation costs (ibid., p. 51). On the other hand, investment in (good) game localisation may boost players' opinion about the publisher and increase their fidelity (Bernal Merino, 2015).

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[5] In the interview, no date is specified, but the biographical information mentioned (projects worked on) point at 2004 or 2005. The first time this interview appears on the Internet archive "The way back machine" is December 2004, so we decided to keep this date as a reference. You can access the archive on: https://web.archive.org/web/20041204193737/http:/bytelevel.com/global/game_globalization.html [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].

It sometimes happens that a publisher decides to localise a game afterwards to satisfy public demand, as was the case with *Club Penguin*, an MMO game for children, in which a Brazilian server was introduced after dozens of players united in June 2007 to ask for it (ibid., p. 170).

As Bernal Merino summarises it, "[a]lthough the decision to localise is initially a financial issue, based on past experience and focusing on maximum returns, it is fairly common for languages that are not generating enough return, or actually losing money, to receive partial or full localisation as part of a proactive strategy to establish a stronger foothold for a brand that may become profitable in the near future" (2015, p. 188). This statement builds on the marketing strategy put in place by the publisher Sony, as explained by Wood and Ranyard in the 2009 interview they gave to Bernal Merino. Indeed, they declared that some products were localised into Portuguese, a language that was not profitable yet, in the hope that the market would get bigger in the future (Bernal Merino, 2009). Localisation, therefore, is a financial investment that can yield mixed results - in some cases it can lead to instantaneous success, in others it can be more slow-burning.

2.2.2.2   *Altruism: The Case of Amateur Translations*

Another driver for localisation worth mentioning is altruism, coupled with passion for the game in itself. Please note that we do not mean to say that professional localisers and translators themselves are not passionate about video games. They sure are, and actually, according to Clyde Mandelin, a fan translator who turned professional, it is common for professional game translators, at least in his company, to be former or current fan translators (Parkin, 2008). This part aims at focusing on a strictly non-profit driver entailing a somewhat different kind of localisation, a more spontaneous and horizontal process emerging from the gamer community itself.

With the shift to a new Web, Web 2.0, users started actively taking part in the Internet by generating content, thus becoming both consumers and producers and engaging in a "participatory culture" (O'Hagan, 2009b, p. 96). Without a doubt, this shift has enabled certain forms of voluntary and community translations to emerge, develop and organize, to the extent that what used to be unsolicited interventions have now become very welcome and even solicited translation services.

2.2.2.2.1 Romhacking

As far as multimedia content is concerned, the earliest form of fan translation or amateur translation comes from the subtitling into English of Japanese animes (a practice called fansubbing) in the 1980's (O'Hagan, 2009b). The aim of this practice was to give access to these productions to a wide audience that had not mastered the Japanese language. A similar trend also emerged in the field of video games, invigorated by the multiplication of emulators in the late 1990's. Emulators are virtual machines installed on computers that enable players to execute games on virtual equipment, be it obsolete or a different platform. This change was ground-breaking since, contrary to computer games that are easier to modify, console games are "a tightly sealed closed system, making external changes more difficult." (ibid., p. 108). Thus, the practice of "romhacking" blossomed (Díaz Montón, 2011) since emulators generated a renewed interest for old classics and the emergence of a trend to translate titles that had not been translated before (ibid., p. 72). This concerned, for example, Japanese role playing games (JRPGs), due to the tremendous worldwide success of *Final Fantasy VII* released by Square in January 1997 and, in parallel, to the small stock of titles of this genre available in English (Parkin, 2008).

The name "romhacking" comes from the fact that, in order to translate the games, players had to modify the data contained in the binary read-only memory (ROM) of the games: mostly the text but also possibly the graphics, the scenario and the gameplay (Díaz Montón, 2011). The modified versions were then released in the form of ROM patches. "Translation hacking" (O'Hagan, 2009b) is thus one of the various possibilities of romhacking. These hackers/players then organized into various teams with respect to their languages and locales, and shared the workload and tasks. According to Díaz Montón, amateur translation of video games was, and still is, a popular practice throughout languages and countries (2011, p. 72). Apart from generating translations from scratch for titles that had not been previously localised in the target locale, romhackers also produce "improved translations" of localised titles, for example that of *Dragon Age* (ibid., p. 73).

On some occasions, romhackers also perform "undubbing" on fully (but poorly) localised games, meaning that they modify the contents of the dubbed games in order to retrieve the original audio files, while maintaining the localised subtitles (Díaz Montón, 2011, p. 72). Interestingly, according to what the fan translators from Clan DLAN told Díaz Montón (ibid.), these dedicated gamers originally create the translations for their own use, as a challenge. Yet, they end up sharing them with other people because they find it sad that some players are unable to enjoy the game only because they do not understand the language.

It is worth stressing that being voluntary non-commercial projects, these types of translations are not subject to strict deadlines and receive very positive feedback from gamers that are happy to get releases in their locales (Díaz Montón, 2011). They also lay emphasis on the correctness of the translation from the linguistic point of view, with no typos, no literal translations and a natural flow (ibid.). Displaying all special characters in the target languages and preventing spelling mistakes are also priorities for the teams. The rest (creativity, beautiful style) comes second (Díaz Montón, 2011, p. 78). One can also highlight the fact that, as these translations are performed by experimented players who know the game and have access to it i.e. to the information in context, the translations provided can be accurate (ibid., p. 79), sometimes more than professional ones. Yet, the localisation challenges remain similar to those found in professional localisation, since a common operation for romhackers is to add the possibility for the font to accommodate special characters (ibid., p. 80).

Furthermore, this type of localisation - a practice quite similar to fan-subbing, though more technical - normally is illegal for copyright reasons. Yet, companies never charged anyone, since new localisations extend their product's reach (ibid., p. 81). Now, we shall focus on a more novel trend in amateur translation: crowdsourcing.

2.2.2.2.2 Crowdsourcing

Nowadays, another form of amateur translation has developed, for video games as well as for many more digital products: crowdsourcing. The online *Oxford English Dictionary* (2017) defines crowdsourcing as "[t]he practice of obtaining information or services by soliciting input from a large number of people, typically via the Internet and often without offering compensation". In this case, the service provided was translation of digital content. The very difference between this practice and the ones mentioned earlier is the fact that crowdsourced translations are both welcome and even solicited contributions. In O'Hagan's words, "these mostly unsolicited and often legally illicit user-based translation activities are now turning into solicited legitimate activities developing as an increasingly accepted business model" (2009b, p. 110), which is why she concludes that "crowdsourcing takes a step further the trend of leveraging free labour of love" (ibid., p. 111).

Indeed, the popular social network Facebook drew on its users to translate the website first into Spanish, completed in February 2008, followed by German and French shortly after (Facebook Press Releases, 2008) and ultimately by another 60+ languages (Kincaid, 2009). The company has also extended this business model to the developers whose websites or apps use the platform Facebook Connect, granting them access to its community of volunteers (ibid.). Magdalena Dombek explored Facebook users' possible motivations to take part in the crowdsourcing of the website, among which she identified "belief in mutual exchange and reciprocity", "reputation", "identification" with the group and the ability to network (2012). The sense of community thus seems to be an important driver in this type of projects.

This relatively new way has also been applied to video games. Díaz Montón quotes the example of the online game *eRepublik* (Díaz Montón, 2011), but one can also leverage the instance of the tremendously popular sandbox game *Minecraft* (released by Mojang in 2009) which, according to its CrowdIn page, has currently been fully translated from American English into 17 locales, many more still being translated and/or reviewed at the moment. Funnily enough, when the page was accessed on April 14th, 2017, the French translations had only been approved up to 98% of the content and the version was thus not considered "completed" (CrowdIn, 2017).

In parallel, participation in open-source projects and especially in the translation and localisation of video games can also be considered as a form of crowd-sourcing, since the product is made available for everyone to use and contribute to improve it and make it accessible to more players. Mercedes Sanchez Espinoza's thesis, presented at the University of Geneva in 2015, explored through a qualitative approach the localisation workflow and technologies used by 17 of SourceForge's most popular games. Her findings emphasise that of all the projects sampled, only the game called FreeCol does not have its own team of translators assigned to the project. Although it still functions on a voluntary basis, translators are taken from the crowdsourcing collaborative platform called TranslateWiki, which shows the interaction between user-generated translations, open-source projects and crowdsourcing.

The advent of the Web 2.0 has thus been decisive on the amateur game translation stage, since there was a significant increase in the number and reach of what O'Hagan calls "user-generated translations" (UGTs) (O'Hagan, 2009b, p. 4). The proliferation of open-source game projects with users voluntarily contributing to their localisation, like that of *Super Tux Kart*[6] is yet another example of the empowerment of users in general, and more specifically in the area of game localisation in the context of the Web 2.0. Moreover, this tendency that fans have to localise or use amateur translations of video games is an important element that has to be factored in upon analysing gamers' opinion on professionally localised versions of games. This will be touched on further in chapter 6. After analysing the various rationales behind the decision to localise a game, let us examine in detail the elements that might need to be adapted to the new audience.

2.2.3 What to Localise?

In this subsection, we shall first review in detail the variety of assets that may be worth localising and the aspects to bear in mind when doing so. Then, we shall move on to identifying the various levels of localisation there exists and explaining what each of them entails.

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[6] See STK's fan translation page at: https://supertuxkart.net/Translating_STK [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].

2.2.3.1 *Assets to Localise*

Video games being multimedia in essence, their localisation taps into different branches of translation and other areas like software engineering or graphic design. Therefore, there is a great variety (and potentially a great number) of elements, called "assets", to localise in a video game. Indeed, according to Bernal Merino (2015), there are usually thousands or hundreds of thousands of words to be translated per game, numbers that can of course vary greatly depending on the genre. As Bernal Merino underlined in 2006, "[b]eing a multimedia creation the assets to be translated multiply exponentially (manuals, dubbing, subtitles, menus, graphics, on-line help, etc.) and they require a great level of customisation. It is the first time that one single product requires all types of language transfer specialisations".

According to Bernal Merino (2015), these localisable assets are usually broken up into five distinct categories: 1/ in-game text, 2/ cinematics and voiceovers, 3/ art, 4/ glossaries and translation memories and 5/ "box and docs".

The same author (2006 and 2007, p. 4) and Vela-Valido (2011, p. 10) also suggested a different way of classifying linguistic assets, grouping them into seven categories according to their type (and, by extension, their function): 1/ narrative, 2/ oral or dialogic, 3/ technical, 4/ functional, 5/ didactic, 6/ promotional and 7/ legal. By identifying the various types of texts at stake, this alternative classification emphasizes the "translational complexity" (Bernal Merino, 2015, p. 84) of video game translation. Still, for the sake of simplicity, our analysis will stick to the traditional categorization of assets into five distinct elements.

2.2.3.1.1 (In-Game) Text

This notion regroups the user interface (also known as UI), i.e. menus, help messages, tutorials, system messages, narrative and descriptive passages or dialogues in written form only as well as system messages and the installer (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013). The user interface is what conveys information to the player while in game. As O'Hagan and Mangiron note, "game screens can be extremely busy" (2013, p. 122).

Furthermore, there is no set type of UI, every game has a different one and graphic designers show more and more creativity on designing the UI. Traditionally though, interfaces tend to be HUDs (head-up displays) made to disturb player experience as little as possible. As Fagerholt and Lorentzon explain it, "[i]n games, the term HUD refers to the method by which information is visually conveyed to the player whilst a game is in progress. The HUD is frequently used to simultaneously display several pieces of information such as the main character's health, items, and indicators of game progression and goals" (2009, p. 7). Though each UI is unique, Fagerholt and Lorentzon identified various types of UIs according to their level of integration in the 3D game space and in the virtual world created by the story (or diegesis), deeming "traditional overlay HUD elements" non-spatial and non-diegetic in first-person shooters (2009, p. 54). User interfaces in MMORPGs however are a bit less unique and tend to display information to players following a similar layout pattern. The following screenshot, taken from the MMORPG *WildStar* (Carbine Studios/NCsoft, 2014), displays the localised French version of the UI.

Figure 3. User interface elements in an MMORPG

Source: Screenshot from *WildStar*, 2016 (Carbine Studios/NCsoft, 2014) © NCsoft

This user interface features many elements that are traditional in MMORPG UIs. For instance, on the top right-hand corner (number 1), a mini-map helps players find their way in the game world and reach the areas corresponding to their quests, displayed in the form of a list on the right side (number 2). Note that on top of the mini-map, the actual time is available and its format was adapted from a twelve-hour basis to a twenty-four-hour one in order to match French standards. On the bottom of the screen are a series of buttons and information that the player may require in game. For instance, on the right (number 3) appears the money possessed by the character. In the middle are some skills and items that may be of use to the player, accompanied with the keyboard shortcuts to use them quickly (number 4). Underneath are two progression bars, the left one (almost empty) representing experience (EXP) acquired by the player, needed to reach the next level. On the bottom left of the screen (number 5) are other buttons to display information screens (character information, quests, mail, and friend listing, for instance). Just above that, on the bottom part of the left side is usually located the chat. In this instance, it is present but hardly visible against the background (number 6). Finally, other typical UI items include the portrait of the character (number 7), which is generally located on the top left-hand corner but is in the middle of the screen in this case. It features her name (Anastasia Sunshine), her shield and life bar, and the effects applied (displayed on top of the bar: speed and mount). When in combat, the portrait of the enemy and the same information are usually displayed on the top of the screen, with damage dealt and taken being written on the screen in the form of numbers. The interface is therefore very information-rich for players but may become very crowded at times, with every element needing to be in its spot in order for everything to fit. In this context, if legibility and non-overlapping are to be ensured, space constraints may be imposed, entailing character limitations and new challenges for the translation and localisation team.

All this explains why, when it comes to localising the UI, Bernal Merino identifies terminology and space constraints as the two most important challenges (2015). As regards with spatial issues, as a matter of fact, translations from English into FIGS languages tend to be 25% to 30% longer (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012, p. 132). This can be problematic if this potential issue was not planned ahead and provided for in the earlier development stages. Indeed, in order to prevent text overlapping or being cut off, a localisation-friendly attitude can be adopted when designing the UI. This entails leaving "extra room in the UI for localised text" so longer version may fit, using some "scalable UI elements" but also privileging icons and non-cluttered UI screens (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012, p. 132-133). In terms of internationalisation, some steps can also be taken to help the UI adapt to different locales. This includes making sure the UI can display correctly international time (as shown on the figure above), date and currency formats, as well as special characters, which also need to be included in virtual keyboards for consoles (ibid.). On the other hand, the second challenge pointed out by Bernal Merino, i.e. taking into account official terminology and trademarks, is more of a linguistic one. These are of utmost importance in the industry: sometimes minute variations distinguish a product from Microsoft's Xbox from another from Sony's PlayStation and, if the wrong terminology is employed, a publisher can reject the game during the submission process (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, p. 123). One therefore has to be extremely careful throughout the localisation process and especially when dealing with the user interface.

The following screenshot taken from the platform game *Trine 2* shows several localisation bugs on the French launcher of the game. These bugs were all the more surprising considering that the game itself was successfully localised into French.
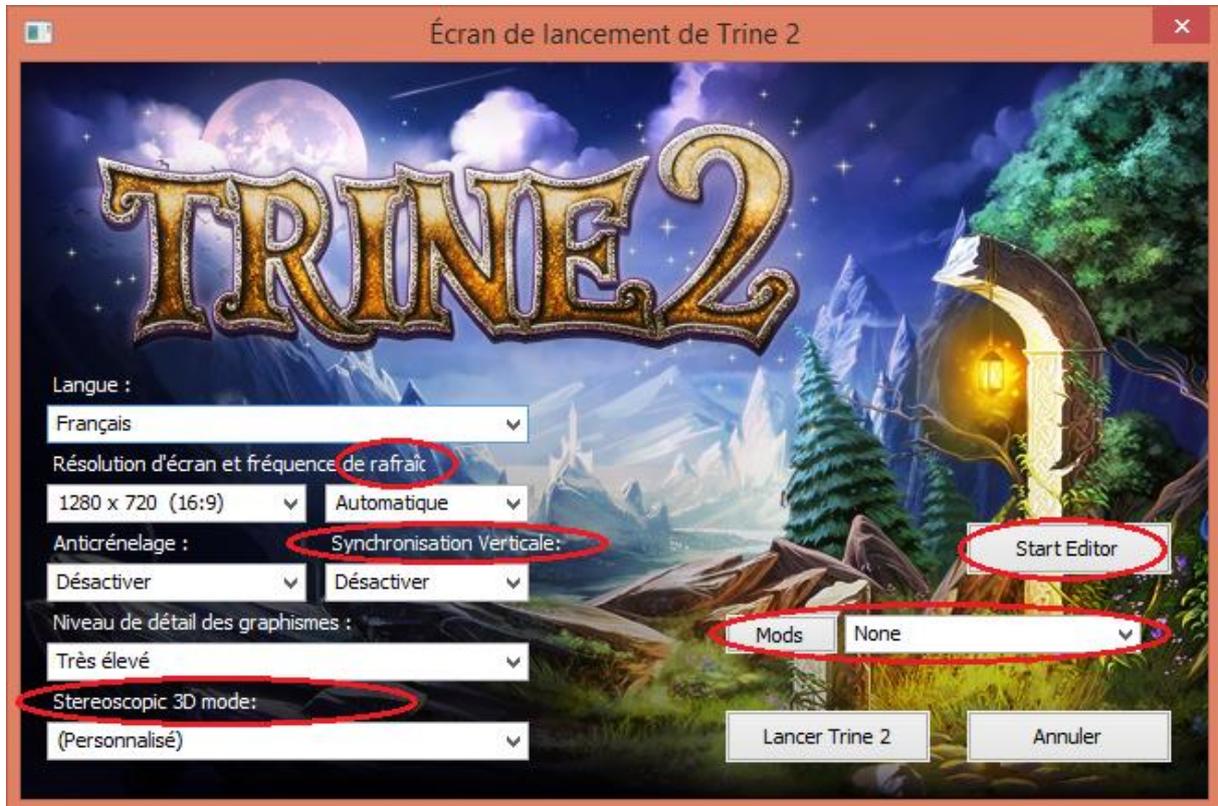
Figure 4. Localisation bugs in the French version of Trine 2's launcher

Source: Screenshot from *Trine 2*. Copyright © 2011-2016 Frozenbyte Oy.

As highlighted on the figure above with red circling, numerous bugs may be noticed on this launcher. The top one features a truncated word: it should read "rafraîchissement" but due to spatial/character restrictions the full word is not displayed. The string "Synchronisation Verticale" showcases two minor linguistic bugs, the first one being inconsistent punctuation, since the other French strings use a space before a colon, as dictated by French punctuation. The second minor error concerns inconsistency in the use of capital letters, since the second word should not be capitalised. Finally, the last bug is epitomised by the bottom left circle and the two right ones. It consists in the presence of untranslated string, resulting in a mix of languages in the interface, an aspect that players may find confusing. Four different bugs were therefore spotted on this screenshot, illustrating the various errors that may occur when localising video games and emphasising the importance of thorough functional and linguistic testing phases before the game release.

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Apart from user interface specific pitfalls, the localisation of in-game text presents various challenges. Indeed, in order for the text to be translated without any risk of damaging the game's source code, text strings should not be hardcoded (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012, p. 125). This is why they are usually presented to translation teams in file formats like .txt, .rtf, .doc and .xls that are all "compatible with most operating systems" (Bernal Merino, 2007, p. 4). They are often in the shape of lists without context being provided (ibid., p. 2) or without maintaining the linearity of the dialogues. This is an important specificity of game localisation that may have disastrous consequences on the final quality of the translation, and therefore of the product, a point we shall analyse more in-depth in the data analysis and discussion (chapters 5 and 6).

2.2.3.1.2 Cinematics and Voiceovers

First, it is worth signalling that the definition of "voiceovers" in the video game industry is different than that used in the film industry. In this paper, there should therefore be understood as "*all audio texts recorded for video games*" (Bernal Merino, 2015, p. 114). From a practical point of view, this category includes songs, (annotated) scripts for the dubbing actors and/or the text for the subtitle options in the game itself or in the cut-scenes - the non-interactive cinematic parts. The localisation requirements greatly vary from one game to another. Indeed, as Sioli et al. noted "[i]n dubbing for film and television, artistic formats are standardized" whereas in the video game industry "there are no artistic genres that define with precision the type of recording used" (2007, p. 103). Each project thus has its own constraints.

Bernal Merino (2015) identifies three degrees of localisation of these assets:

1. <u>Voiceover only</u> when faces are not visible: target utterances can be shorter or longer than the original ones and are easier to substitute to the original tracks. This is what Sioli et al. call a "wild" recording (2007, p. 103).
2. <u>Dubbing</u> when mouths are not visible but the character is and therefore the duration of the source and target utterances need to be the same. This corresponds roughly to a "sound synch" recording in Sioli et al. classification (2007, p. 103).
3. <u>Lip-synchronisation</u> (or lip-synching) for high quality sequences in which the player can see the characters' mouths. Lip-synching the characters with the target utterances can be achieved with software like FaceFX, used for games like *Skyrim* and *Call of Duty*. It is always a time-consuming and costly task.

The following table created by Sioli et al. (2007) recaps localisation constraints according to the type of recording needed.

Recording type	Character appearing on screen	Restrictions on the translated text	Text adaptation	Mandatory audio/video reference for studio	Studio time for recording one hour of final speech
Wild	No	No restrictions	No	Not needed	3-4 hours
Time Constraint	No	Check text length and synchronization points if applicable	Yes	Need original audio files	6-8 hours
Sound Sync	Yes	Check text length and internal pauses	Yes	Need original audio files	12-16 hours
Lip Sync	Yes	Requires adaptation to lip movements	Yes	Need original video files	12-16 hours

Table 3. Summary of recording types

Source: Sioli et al. (2007, p. 19)

2.2.3.1.3 Art Assets

This category is made up of in-game graphics, textual graphics and textures. In order to perform modifications in an easier and quicker way, it is advisable to use multi-layered image files (Bernal Merino, 2015). For example if the game displays a sign with text in the source language that needs to be replaced, the text layer can easily be switched for its target language version with an image manipulation tool like Gimp[7].

The localisation of artworks can take bigger proportions according to the target locale's preferences or interdictions. For instance, Bernal Merino quotes the example of characters becoming more muscly or voluptuous in the European and North American versions than in the original Japanese one, as is the case for the main protagonist of the game *Nier Gestalt* (*Nier Replicant* in Japan) by Square Enix (2015, pp. 131-132). One can also leverage the instance of Germany: like Australia, the country has higher restrictions regarding the depiction of violence in games than many of its counterparts (Bytelevel, 2004), i.e. its rating board, USK, is stricter. It has therefore become fairly common for companies to give a more robot-like aspect to their characters (Cooper, 2016). Plus, Germany also happens to be sensitive on the topic of its involvement in the Second World War and how it is shown. Indeed, "use of symbols of unconstitutional organizations" for purposes other than "art or science, research or teaching", is outlawed by paragraph 86a of the German Criminal Code[8]. Although the use of Nazi symbols for historical purposes is tolerated in media such as movies and books, it is not allowed in video games, which are not considered as an art form in this country. Therefore, any symbol relating to this topic, even in historical games, is prohibited, otherwise the product is banned, as was the case for *Wolfenstein 3D* released in 1992 (Remo, 2009). The 2009 edition of the first-person shooter *Wolfenstein* set in World War II Nazi Germany was therefore remastered. Indeed, given this context, Activision, the publisher, deemed the risk of letting the original version as such very high and decided to remove the blood on the shot corpses as well as to replace Nazi symbols, like the swastika, with more neutral ones (Bernal Merino, 2015, p. 92)[9].

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[7] For more information on this tool, you can visit Gimp's official webpage at https://www.gimp.org/ [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].

[8] The English law can be found here: http://www.iuscomp.org/gla/statutes/StGB.htm#86a [accessed 04 Sep. 2017].

[9] The following article taken from a website dedicated to video games provides an insightful comparison between German versions of certain games and their counterparts from most of the rest of the world: http://www.dorkly.com/post/80945/germany-censorship [accessed 04 Sep. 2017].

As a matter of fact, for this type of assets context is not always provided either, meaning that space constraints are not always clearly stated (Bernal Merino, 2015), which can result in truncated words (similar to what was displayed in Figure 4) or in "bleeding" text. Another common issue is the fact that developers do not always plan for the localisation of art assets, thus "presenting a heterogeneous textual world that may cause some confusion to the players" which can make them miss out on some valuable clue (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, p. 124).

2.2.3.1.4 "Box and Docs"

This is the term used to describe the packaging and manual. The category also includes the end-user license agreement, also known as EULA, which is a judicial text. All these elements were named "printed materials" in Chandler's typology (2012). Yet, nowadays, the manual or help files tend to be increasingly less on printed material but may very well be stored digitally on the game's official website or within the game itself, in the form of e-manuals or tutorials, following a trend launched by Ubisoft in 2010 (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013). Even so, it still needs to be localise to fully fulfil its purpose.

2.2.3.1.5 Glossaries and Translation Memories

The reference material is very important since it guarantees consistency throughout the game and, if appropriate, its sequels (Bernal Merino, 2015). It also ensures that trademarks are respected both by internal and external staff (ibid.). Indeed, it often happens that the team that localised the game is different from the one in charge of localising the printed materials or the other related components (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013). Thus, in order to ensure the game's consistency and consequently the company's credibility and the gamer's ability to play correctly, it is vital to provide all translation vendors with glossaries, translation memories and style guides.

Furthermore, the creation and maintenance of databases may also be a way to provide translators more context by identifying items and characters and associating them with a picture, as is the case in the *World of Warcraft* German database, which counts around 150,000 entries (Dietz, 2011).

2.2.3.1.6   Related Components

Apart from the game itself, other related products or components may need to be localised, for example promotional material like the demo (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012) but also "the readme files in PC games, which contain setup information for the user (including the minimum computing specs), press and marketing releases, the official website of the game, online help, and associated official strategy guides (…) which contain written and illustrated information useful to complete the game" (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013, p. 122). Furthermore, one cannot forget that video games being of an evolving nature, the localisation team often has to deal with additional localisation tasks like the various game patches and updates (Bernal Merino, 2015). Sometimes even fan forums and in-game chats get localised (Dietz, 2011).

Finally, on top of sometimes working on unstable asset versions that are modified afterwards, translators and localisers have to adapt to the fragmented and non-linear text structure of video games (Bernal Merino, 2015), where the logic and coherence of it all can easily be lost. Here is a summary of how challenging localising video games can be:

"Unfortunately, the text found in menus is presented to translators in tables or lengthy spreadsheets, which, together with the fact that the game is not actually available for them to contextualize, means that a reasonably simple translation task is turned into an error-prone guesswork exercise. This part of the translation of video games can prove very problematic due to the brevity and condensation of some of the concepts, the random order in which they appear on the spreadsheets and the lack of WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) translation work environment. The space available in menus, pop-up windows, and hint captions is at a premium" (Bernal Merino, 2015, p. 111).

2.2.3.2   Choosing the Appropriate Degree of Localisation

Localisation decisions do not only depend on the time and budget of the publishing company, but also on the expected success of the game in specific markets and on current practices. For example, nowadays games tend to be localised, whereas in the early days it was very common to have the games shipped in their original versions.

However, the degree of localisation of a game, even now, is not consistently the same. Various levels of localisation have thus been identified and detailed by Chandler and O'Malley (2012, pp. 8-11):

- **Level 0: no localisation**. The game is simply marketed internationally in its original version. As Chandler and O'Malley note, it is common for "budget titles", i.e. games with small development budgets and schedules, not to be localised (p. 9).

- **Level 1: packaging and manual localisation** (also called "**box and docs**" **localisation**). Only the packaging, the manual and additional documentation related to the game are localised. The game itself remains in its original version. This minimal localisation requires less time and money from the company, makes it easier to achieve simultaneous shipment and provides some information to the player, though it is not fully immersive.

- **Level 2: partial localisation**. This "means that only the in-game text is translated, not the voiceover." (p. 9). Sometimes the audio files are rendered in the target language in the form of subtitles. This level of localisation entails a bigger time and money investment on the part of the company and a higher level of risk since in order to accommodate various linguistic versions, the source code has to be altered. Functional and linguistic testing need to be performed on the game to ensure everything is in place, especially considering that the text can be unstable, i.e. the version is not final when the translators start working. The constraints for sim-ship releases are therefore heightened. "Partial localizations are usually created for quality games released in secondary markets such as Holland and Italy" (p. 10).

- **Level 3: full localisation**. At this level, everything is localised, including voiceovers.

    This degree of localisation is the most expensive one since tasks related to voiceover localisation are highly specialized, have to be performed very fast and require many people and skills. For example, facial animations may need to be redone in order to match the words pronounced by the characters, a long and laborious process. Due to these factors, full localisation is the costliest option, with audio localisation making up the biggest part of the budget. Indeed, according to Le Dour's estimation (2007), audio localisation (script translation, actors' recordings and studio time) accounts for 50 per cent to 70 per cent of the localisation budget, depending on the size and number of platforms, while text translation usually accounts for 10 per cent to 15 per cent of that budget. It may be worth noting that the cost of audio localisation depends more on the type of recording required than on the actual text volume (Sioli et al., 2007).

Still, Chandler and O'Malley deem the expense worthwhile since "[f]ull localization shows the player that the publisher is committed to providing the best quality gaming experience for its international customers" (2012, p. 10) i.e. to tailoring a locale-specific game that enhances immersion. However, due to its costs in terms of time and money, this option is "usually reserved for big-budget games" (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012, p. 10) for markets that are deemed highly profitable (and/or language-sensitive). This may explain why traditionally full localisation was provided only for the "FIGS" languages (French, Italian, German and Spanish).

Different decisions may be made by the developers and/or publishers as regards with localising the game taking some factors into account. Other aspects that should not be neglected when choosing the appropriate strategy for the target-locale will be discussed in the following lines. Apart from price and time at the company's disposal, efficient localisation decisions shall consider the characteristics of the targeted market. Indeed, as Jaime Giné, EA's Vice-President for International Development Services outlined in his keynote speech in the 2009's GDC, worldwide, but specifically within Europe, there are various types of markets, with specific needs. The following table summarizes the specificities of each market type and the localisation outcome EA saw as most profitable.

Type of market / characteristics	FIGS	Nordics, Du	Central Europe
Market size	Established large markets	Average-sized markets	Small markets growing fast
English knowledge	Average English knowledge	High English knowledge	Low English knowledge
Localisation penetration	Heavy game localisation	Game localisation minimal	Localisation entering
Example	Spain	Sweden	Poland
Localisation outcome	Full localisation expected	Documentation a must – in-game text and audio nice to have	Full localisation required

Table 4. Various localisation approaches depending on market type

Source: Giné 2009 [accessed 09 Sep. 2017], available at
http://game.watch.impress.co.jp/img/gmw/docs/079/921/html/gdcloc59.jpg.html

Other elements that might influence a company's choice include player data and piracy rates in the target country. Indeed, according to Bernal Merino, the turn of the century has enabled producers to make wise localisation choices based on accurate sales data like "constant direct information provided by game registration schemes, online game memberships and gaming networks" (2015, p. 188). This stream of data allows producers to tailor localisation for each game. For example, the dialogue-driven RPG *Mass Effect 2* (BioWare/EA, 2010) was localised into eight languages (Kietzmann, 2010), but due to high piracy levels in the Spanish-speaking world, this language was not offered in the traditional full localisation but only in the partial version, just like Czech, Hungarian and Russian (Bernal Merino, 2015, p. 188). This highlights the fact that there is no one-size-fits-all solution and that the characteristics of the various markets, and their needs alongside it, keep evolving.

This chapter first examined the concepts at the core of this paper. The various debates surrounding the field of video games (for instance regarding denomination and classification) were therefore analysed before defining localisation and other notions closely connected with it, including its most advanced instantiation, culturalisation. Then, the interaction between those concepts was established, first by giving a brief history of video game localisation, from none to full localisation. The rationales behind the decision to localise a game were also explored and the assets that may be affected by the process were reviewed, insisting on the challenges such a transmedial product entails and on the importance of knowing the target market, particularly in terms of needs and sensitivity. Furthermore, in the current context, while gaming companies develop ever-more refined strategies in order to attract more players and maximise their revenues, it is important to adopt the consumer's position to get an insight about how the localisation strategies put in place are perceived by their primary target, gamers. To that end, we shall have a look at the varied academic research on games before moving on to more consumer-oriented studies and describing our approach.

3. Research Question: A New Perspective, Focusing on the End-User

This chapter will focus on the topic of our research, first by examining other research that was done in the area of video games and then by explaining the approach that will be developed throughout this paper and their goals. We will therefore start by having a close look at research on the subject from the academic perspective, i.e. Translation Studies and other branches. Then, we shall move on to other research on video games and gamers before explaining the approach and objectives pursued in our study.

3.1 Academic Research on Video Games and Gamers

This section aims at providing an overview of academic research on video games as well as on gamers. It will first insist on the fact that video games, as a relatively new research area, have attracted the attention of a wide variety of disciplines, Translation Studies included. It will first show that in Translation Studies, and overall, a shift is gradually taking place from product-oriented research (which is still very common) to participant-oriented research in order to collect valuable feedback for the industry.

3.1.1 Video Games: A New Research Area

First, it is worth stressing that "the recognition of video games as an academic discipline is new" (O'Hagan, 2009a, p. 230). Indeed, according to Espen Aarseth, the Editor-in-chief of the journal *Game Studies*, recognition came with the turn of the century, with 2001 being **"Year One** of *Computer Game Studies* as an emerging, viable, international, academic field" (2001:1). This affirmation rests on several inaugural events like the first international scholarly conference on computer games and the introduction of regular university programs on the topic (ibid.). Aarseth defines video games as "a cultural field whose value is hard to overestimate" (ibid.) and encourages scholars to focus both on big proprietary productions and on open source communities in order to get the best of what the area has to offer. Despite these tentative beginnings and the long struggle for recognition, video games have now become a full-fledged and valid area of studies for many disciplines.

3.1.1.1 A Multidisciplinary Object of Study

With the advent of game studies, many disciplines have taken interest in this "polysemiotic and multimodal environment" (O'Hagan, 2009a, p. 213). Indeed, its diversity of form and content makes it an interesting object of studies in a wide array of disciplines. Among these, one can obviously quote computer sciences and engineering, for example with Fagerholt and Lorentzon focusing on UI design in FPS (2009).

Just browsing the online catalogue of resources available in libraries in Geneva[10] using the keyword "video game", one can get a good idea of the wide array of disciplines that study this subject nowadays. Here are a few areas that illustrate this variety.

In the health and medicine areas, studies were made on the positive and negative effects of video games on individuals, on their health but also on their social and intellectual skills. One can thus quote the studies: "Physiological Indicators of Pathologic Video Game Use in Adolescence" (Coyne et al., 2015), "Memory abilities in action video game players" (McDermott et al., 2014) and "Video game play, attention, and learning" (Cardoso et al., 2014).

Because of the interactive component of video games, they may also constitute the basis for therapies, an area in which medicine pioneers. The paper "Video Game Therapy for Emotional Regulation and Impulsivity Control in a Series of Treated Cases with Bulimia Nervosa" (Konstantas et al., 2013) apparently exemplifies this new area of research. Usually, games used to a therapeutic end belong to the genre called serious games. These type of games may also be relevant to pedagogy on a theoretical and practical level, given that they aim at enhancing learning strategies and content through gameplay. For instance, the University of Geneva's Master of Learning and Teaching Technologies (MALTT) lays emphasis on the educational applications of such games, encouraging students to design purpose-specific games. One can quote the game *Sortez sorcières* created by Félicie Scherre in 2016 to help children conjugate verbs[11]. Serious games are thus increasingly regarded as a powerful tool both in medicinal and educational technologies.

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[10] http://explore.rero.ch [accessed 11 Sep. 2017]. Please note that the aforementioned articles are not directly connected to this thesis. Thus, only their titles (not their content) were taken into consideration when browsing the catalogue and defining the areas of study. Therefore, they are only meant to serve as instances of the richness and variety of topics that can stem from the study of video games.

[11] Here you can access *Sortez Sorcières*: http://tecfaetu.unige.ch/etu-maltt/tetris/scherfa0/Sortez_sorcieres/index.html [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].

Furthermore, as an art form, video games have even started arousing the interest of Music Studies. One can thus note the example of a book called *Game sound: an introduction to the history, theory, and practice of video game music and sound design* (Collins, 2008). Other disciplines studying video games relate to social sciences, for example Gender Studies, with papers like "What is a True Gamer? The Male Gamer Stereotype and the Marginalization of Women in Video Game Culture" by Paaßen et al., 2017.

In a similar way, one may quote the public speaker Anita Sarkeesian, who graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Communication Studies and a Master's degree on Social and Political Thought. She is known for analysing pop culture pieces like movies and video games from a feminist perspective, grounding her allegations on a theoretical framework, in a perspective that aims at being as academic as possible without becoming inaccessible. Sarkeesian made two series of videos on her YouTube channel "Feminist frequency"[12]. The series, entitled *Tropes vs Women* and *Tropes vs Women in Video Games*, examine tropes in the way female video game characters are depicted. She defines her object of study, tropes, as "common pattern[s] […] or recognizable attribute[s] in a character that convey[s] information to the audience". Coming back to the fields of study related to the game world, Sarkeesian's academic background truly shows that video games stand at a crossroads and remain a relevant topic for many areas of knowledge.

Please note that this review is not exhaustive but aims at showing the diversity of papers and disciplines that have explored this multi-faceted media, in so doing asserting its legitimacy as an area of study. Last but not least, we shall move on to other academics who have started examining video games: translation specialists.

3.1.1.2 Video Game Research from the Perspective of Translation Studies

Within the field of Translation Studies, research on video games alone has taken off and has been oriented, among other topics, towards accessibility (Mangiron 2011 and 2016) and the very active gaming communities in the form of user-generated translations (O'Hagan, 2009b), mod generation, crowdsourcing and open source (Sánchez Espinoza, 2015).

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[12]   Here is a link to the first season of the *Tropes vs Women* series: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLn4ob_5_ttEaA_vc8F3fjzE62esf9yP61 [accessed 04 Sep. 2017].

More particularly, game localisation has become a new area in Translation Studies, with most research focusing on "practical dimensions to highlight translation issues specific to this genre" (O'Hagan, 2009a, p. 214) i.e. emphasizing the multimedia nature of this form of entertainment and the new challenges this very nature poses (for instance, research by Bernal Merino, 2007), elements we have seen in chapter 2. In particular, some articles tackled the issue of culturalisation (or domestication) versus foreignization (O'Hagan 2009 for instance), a concern that becomes even more relevant in video games considering many of them are still developed in Japan, where the cultural references and preferences vary greatly from the Western ones.

In keeping with this evolution of the job of translator, some researchers focused more on professional aspects of the game translation and localisation industry, also questioning the skills necessary to be a good localiser (Gouadec, 2003) and, in so doing, laying emphasis on the necessity for translator formations/trainings to be adapted accordingly (Bernal Merino, 2015). Another research trend in the fields of literary and audiovisual translation that have been taken up in localisation papers is product-oriented research, which means analysing a certain part or aspect of a video game to highlight patterns.

3.1.2 From Product-oriented to Participant-oriented Research: Towards Players' Reception of Games

The following subsection shall explore how scholars from Translation Studies have tried to take objective criteria into account to assess localisations and their impact, as well as the new trend they initiated by giving an increasing importance to user-reception.

3.1.2.1 Establishing Evaluation Criteria for Localisations

The fact that poor localisations can be disruptive of immersion is widely acknowledged. This is why in order to evaluate of the quality of localised versions of video games some scholars have developed a methodology, establishing objective criteria, and applied it to games in product-oriented researches based on specific case studies. For example, in her master's thesis, Florence Roh (2011) built on the example of the role-playing game *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* (Bethesda Softworks/2K Games, 2006) to examine the effects of translation errors in video game localisation.

In her thesis, she compared the original version (English) and the localised one (French) and categorized the translation errors found in the localised version. The studied passages were at the very beginning of the game, namely the character design and the tutorial steps, which she justified arguing that these steps are crucial to players because it is where they choose their character's traits and learn to master the game. Thus, she analysed the effect of each error on gamers' comprehension and, to some extent, on their choices, which are often dictated by the information they get (Roh, 2011). Some of her findings will be described further on, in section 5.4.4.3, when analysing commonly encountered issues according to our participants. Yet, so far, a comprehensive benchmark of objective criteria to evaluate the quality of any localised version of a game has not been developed. Still, one should not forget that in entertainment products, the opinion that matters most may not be the researcher's but the ultimate recipient's, the players themselves, which is why end-user reception is key in video game localisation (research).

3.1.2.2 Leveraging Players' Opinions and Emotions

O'Hagan and Mangiron pointed at an interesting paradox: whereas game publishers increasingly resort to localisation to increase their revenues, one cannot help but notice a paucity in terms of localised games reception research on the part of those same companies (2013, p. 313). Plus, as O'Hagan (2009a, p. 212) highlighted, though "many game developments incorporate a form of player input through beta testing, focus group sessions etc", there is usually no formal process of external testing of the game by "real" players. Indeed, the testing task (functional and linguistic) – when existent – is, in most cases, assigned to internal testers who assume the position of the end-user though they are "insiders" (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013). This practise creates a potential gap between internal and external knowledge, which may result in misunderstandings or confusion on the part of the end-user. Therefore, O'Hagan and Mangiron advocate for as many "actual user tests of localized products" as possible (ibid p. 313) and, on an academic level, for more research in the area, especially empirical research.

To this end, O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013, p. 315) created a table compiling various approaches and methods relevant to the study of player experience and highlighted the benefits and potential flaws of each one of them (see Table below).

Approach	Method	Advantages	Drawbacks
Play tester style	Direct observation	Get a feel for player interaction with game; importance of action (as opposed to what they say)	Presence of observers biasing results; behavior requiring interpretation
Play tester style	Q & A: structured querying of play testers; validate play test goals; supplementary information	Answer specific design questions; determine specific player intent	Group biases; people don't know why they do what they do; potential for biased questions
Play tester style	Verbal reports: think aloud protocol	Glimpse into player thoughts, feelings, and motivations; bring up unnoticed details; effective for "why" questions	Interferes with gameplay; creates an artificial experience; inaccurate and biased
Play tester style	Surveys: set of standardized questions; force choice responses; quantify feedback; player categorization	Less biased responses; response validation; forced choice revealing preferences; time-based comparisons	Nuance may be lost; difficulty converting ratings to meaningful decisions; limited solution space
Game metrics	Geographical information system (GIS): process information with spatial dimension	Flexible; off the shelf; cheaper; minimal customization	Overkill; not integrated into game engine; limited 3D representation
Biometrics	Galvanic skin response (GSR): measure sweat glands; measure electrical resistance (or conductance); correlate to psychological arousal	Easy to measure; inexpensive hardware; easy to interpret; non-intrusive	Noisy signal or signals add together; large individual variations in baseline and responsivity
Biometrics	Cardiovascular measures: heart rate (HR)	Easy to measure (HR); inexpensive hardware; salient established measures	Intrusive to measure accurately; affected by many factors
Biometrics	Eye-tracking: saccades (fast movement of the eyes); fixations (attention focus); pupil dilation/blink rate	Easy to use; objective; covert; continuous; quantifiable; replicable; advantage of empirical data	Expensive; time-consuming

Table 5. Comparative observations of methods used in measuring player experience

Source: O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013, p. 315) – adapted from Nacke et al. (2009)

Thus, O'Hagan set out grounded empirical research delving into users' emotional and physiological responses, building on methods in use in audiovisual translation (AVT) reception research (for example for the reception of subtitles), like eye-tracking devices (Gambier, 2009, p. 23). In a small-scale pilot study of a qualitative nature, she had a gamer play the Japanese game *Ico* in its localised English version in their own home. The methodology mainly relied on observation, which is why the game trajectory was recorded, along with player's utterances and hand movements with the controller. Moreover, the player had to keep a player log (after each break, and at certain save points) and explanatory interviews followed the experience (O'Hagan, 2009a, p. 221). For the purpose of the study, the researcher also played the game in its original version. Interestingly, the participant refused the use of a Think Aloud Protocol (TAP), i.e. expressing thoughts aloud, because he deemed it too distracting. Such pioneering studies are meant to breach the gap between players' expected reactions and players' actual reception of the game. Even though in the present case the use of a single participant makes it hard to generalize results, it paves the way towards more experiments of this type. The study indeed allowed the researcher to explore the participant's reception of various elements that may be received differently in Japan and in Europe, for example the inclusion of the back story inside the manual rather than directly within the game or the relatively restrained freedom of play with pre-determined camera angles, something more common in Japanese games. Another aspect worth noting is the fact that the faint interface, uncommon in Western games, was well-received by the player, giving a "more realistic feeling" to the game (O'Hagan, 2009a, p. 224).

In her keynote speech to the First International Conference on Translation and Accessibility in Video Games and Virtual Worlds, O'Hagan tackled the subject of "emotion engineering" and "explore[d] how an emotion-based approach to game localisation could be developed to shed light onto understanding the user experience of localised games and how in turn the "emotion" data can be fed into a successful localisation process to breathing the right emotion into the end player in the target locale" (2010, p. 9). This exploratory experiment, whose aim was to examine the "emotional dimension of overt and covert humour" in the games *Plants vs. Zombies*, focused on biometric data with methods such as eye-tracking and heart-rate and galvanic skin response measurements (see Table 5).

Other player-oriented research using innovative techniques include "The fun of gaming" (FUGA) study led by Niklas Ravaja, from Helsinki Schools of Economics, and funded by the European Commission. This project, which was carried out over three years (2006-2009), aimed at "creat[ing] novel methods and improv[ing] existing measures in order to examine how the different dimensions of Game Experience can be assessed comprehensively with high temporal resolution" (2009, p. 3). In order to "measur[e] the human experience of media enjoyment", various techniques were used, for instance electrocardiography and electroencephalography, functional magnetic resonance imaging and eye movement recording (ibid.). These methods all require players to be connected to heavy apparatus and were therefore applied in a laboratory. Player reception research thus increasingly leverages other disciplines like neurosciences and biometrics to ground its theories, therefore verging on interdisciplinary research.

Yet, apart from user-oriented research developed in the field of Translation Studies, other entities around the world have taken a keen interest in gamers and in their practices, France and Europe being no exception.

3.2 Other Research on European and French Gamers

Generally speaking, studies related to video games and/or gamers are conducted either on a regional or on a national basis. Data at a global level is rarely gathered and only concerns the games industry and the revenues it generates, not gamers in particular. It is thus hard to find data grouping together speakers of the same language if they are not geographically connected. As the main target of our study is francophone gamers, implicitly from France, this review will focus on studies dealing with European and French populations.

In recent years, many studies were conducted at both French and European levels by various organisations. The table below presents the statistical data that appear in five studies covering the 2012-2016 period. Two of them deal with European data (blue columns) whereas the other three concern France exclusively (orange columns).

Study (in order of publication) / Category of data analysed	Videogames in Europe: Consumer Study (Ipsos MediaCT & ISFE, November 2012)	Videogames in France: Consumer Study (Ipsos MediaCT & ISFE, November 2012)	Les pratiques de consommation de jeux vidéo des Français (CNC[13], September 2013)	Essential Video Game News: Market - Consumption - Use (SELL, February 2017)	GameTrack survey – The New Faces of Gaming (ISFE & Ipsos Connect, February 2017[14])
Scope	*Europe*	*France*	*France*	*France*	*Europe*
Sample (size and age)	15,142 respondents Aged 16-64 16 countries	1,327 respondents Aged 16-64	2,800 respondents Aged 6-65	1,002 respondents Aged 10-65	3,000 respondents Aged 6-64[15]
GAMERS VS NON-GAMERS					
Average gaming percentage	48% of the population	57% of the population	66.55% of the population	70% of the population	
Regular gamers (NB: definition may vary according to the entity conducting the study)	25% of the population		83% of gamers play at least once a week, half of them play at least once a day	In 2005: 29% of the population In 2016: 52% of the population, with 28% playing every day	
Casual gamers			30.7% of gamers	70% of the population	
Gaming frequency			41.6% play every day 41.4% play between once and three times a week 12.2% every month 3.0% every trimester 1.7% less than once a trimester	28% every day or nearly every day 25% at least twice a week 21% 2 to 3 times a month 28% 2 to 3 times a year (on the whole 5 hours per week)	

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[13] Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée.

[14] The data reported in this survey and in that of the SELL concerns the year 2016.

[15] This information was gathered after sending an email inquiry to the people who conducted the survey.

VIDEO GAMES AND GENDER[16]					
Percentage of gamers for each gender	MEN 54% of European men play	MEN 61% of French men play	MEN 68.2%		
	WOMEN 43% of European women play	WOMEN 53% of French women play[17]	WOMEN 64.8%		WOMEN 44%
Percentage of each gender among gamers	MEN 55%	MEN 53%	MEN 50.6%	MEN 54%	
	WOMEN 45%	WOMEN 47%	WOMEN 49.4%	WOMEN 46%	
GAMERS' AGE					
Game penetration by player age (percentage of people in this age category who play games)	16-24 71% 25-34 58% 35-44 50% 45-54 37% 55-64 28%	16-24 80% 25-34 66% 35-44 52% 45-54 43% 55-64 36%[18]	6-9 86.1% 10-14 92.3% 15-24 79.5% 25-34 74.9% 35-49 65.8% 50+ 42.5%	10-14 95% 15-18 91% 19-24 88% 25-34 79% 35-44 78% 45-54 55% 55+ 38%	6-24 75% 25-34 no data 35-44 46% 45-64 27%[19]
Repartition of players by age		16-19 13% 20-24 15% **25-34 28%** 35-44 22% 45-54 14% 55-64 8%	6-9 8.3% 10-14 11.4% 15-24 18.4% 25-34 18.3% **35-49 26.2%** 50+ 17.4%		
Average player age	51% of players are under 35, 49% are 35 or over.	25-34 years old		34 years old (35 for men and 32 for women)	

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[16] Please note that contrary to our research, none of the abovementioned studies included a third category for gender.

[17]While comparing data about France with data from the other 15 countries surveyed in the European consumer study, it appears that France is the 3rd country with most female involvement in video games on the whole, behind Sweden (57%) and Finland (54%), the two countries with the biggest proportions of players.

[18] For the European and French studies 2012, the overall percentage of people playing video games in each age class has been obtained by calculating the mean between the participation of men and that of women in each age class. Decimal numbers have been rounded up to the higher unit.

[19] Although the proportion of 45-64 playing video games is smaller than that of 25-34, the older category reported spending more time playing video games than the younger (7.5 hours per week against 6.2).

GAMING PLATFORMS					
Computers		45%	75.6%	59% of people play on PCs[20]	71% of males aged 18-24 play on PCs. This group still constitutes "a key chunk of the market"
Consoles		33%	54.4%	61%	
Handheld devices (smartphones and tablets)		31%	28.9% of gamers play on smartphones, 19.1% of gamers play on tablets		From 18% in 2012 to 27% in 2016
Portable devices		20%	34.1%		
MISCELLANEOUS					
Favourite game genres			RPG / Adventure (played by 33.2% of gamers[21]) Strategy (31.2%) Card games (30.5%) Children / family games (29.9%)	Action/ adventure[22] Shooting games (FPS for example) Role-playing games	

Table 6. Comparison between statistical data gathered by five studies about European or French gamers

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[20] According to the study, "[t]he PC Gaming market achieved an [sic] historic comeback in 2016 and now exceeds one billion euros" (p. 35), with a growth of 30% in sales.

[21] As explained when analysing the results of the study in section 5.3.2, these statistics correspond to the number of people who played this specific genre in a multiple-choice question, meaning that each respondent can contribute to increasing the percentage of several or even all game genres provided they sometimes play it.

[22] The top 10 game genres were established in this study by looking at the game sales in volume in 2016 in the physical market, i.e. games sold for actual cash and delivered immediately. Action/adventure came in first place, by far, with almost 5 million sales, whereas the other two generated respectively around 3.2 and 3 million sales.

The findings of all five studies emphasise the fact that, nowadays, the profile of "the gamer" has evolved tremendously, giving birth to a polymorphous target audience that is as diverse as the games on the market. Gamers indeed vary in terms of gender, age, frequency of gaming and platforms they use to play, among others.

Apart from the extensive statistical data gathered on gamers' profiles in terms of gender and age repartition, these studies have also analysed other important aspects that have a more qualitative relevance, such as perceptions about gaming and the influence playing video games may have on people, especially children. Some of them, namely those issued by the ISFE, payed special attention to children's gaming practises, adult supervision and consumers' attention to PEGI ratings, which makes sense because the ISFE is the very body that created the PEGI rating system in the first place, in 2003. Some studies also delved into gamers' habits (ISFE, 2012 and CNC, 2013), even comparing them with non-gamers' (CNC, 2013). The extensive inquiry into gamers' consuming practises led by the French CNC in 2013 also explored topics such as audiovisual equipment owned by gamers, duration of gaming sessions, reasons for playing and persons with whom players did so. The CNC concluded that gaming was generally a regular activity, practiced mainly indoors and on one's own. These questions give researchers as well as the industry a good insight into gamers' lifestyles, tastes and needs. Such research may also provide valuable feedback in terms of localisation.

Still, as O'Hagan pointed out, localisation practices are mostly industry-oriented rather than based on research (2009a, p. 213). Even so, some research is led by the industry itself and not by scholars. This is a crucial point which may explain why some areas, for example which platforms gamers use, were covered in detail whereas the language in which gamers play was always left out of the analysis. Yet, this piece of information is a central element in publishers' marketing strategies as well as in the feel of the game, it should thus be a key component of their analysis. The void of information regarding such linguistic practises is something we will try to bridge, or at least to address, in our study, since it is central to our approach.

3.3 Approach Developed in the Thesis

This section will explain the approach developed throughout this paper by adopting an end-user perspective. It will set out the research objectives and hypotheses that will be tested in chapter 5.

3.3.1 From Isolated User Discontent to an Assessment of Generic Gamer (Dis)Satisfaction

It is common for players to complain about the poor quality of game localisation, for instance on forums and in written or video reviews. Furthermore, negative user commentaries on the Internet often seem to relate to the text itself, be it the translation, the subtitles or the voiceover.

For instance, *The Game Localization Handbook*, by Chandler and O'Malley opens with the example of an Italian gamer complaining about poor localised versions of English games that affect his overall gameplay experience. According to the authors, he prefers buying games in the original version since "the Italian version often seems like an afterthought" and has "typos, incorrect translations, text that is not translated, voice acting that is out of context, and a variety of other things" (2012, p. 3). The authors conclude that "[t]his attitude demonstrates how important quality versions of international games are to the intended audience" (ibid). This is also echoed by a practice noted by Díaz Montón: sometimes game fans also proceed to "undubbing" games or even to retranslating them (2011), which shows once again the gaming community's deep interest and concern for the quality of the games they play.

Yet, negative commentaries, as numerous as they might be, may remain anecdotal, isolated outbursts of discontent and cannot be used as the basis for assessing general player satisfaction. On top of that, one cannot deny that finding a translation "good" or "appropriate" is also, to some extent, a subjective view that does not always rely on clear objective criteria and/or comparison with the original. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to assess whether they really reflect a view shared by many players or just the opinion of more critical people.

As O'Hagan and Mangiron argue, video game localisation is a "function-oriented translation": it is indeed "focused on the user's satisfaction with the final product", which explains why "research addressing user reception is well justified" (2013, p. 312). Building on these assertions, this research aims at shedding light on what gamers think of localised games. Indeed, this aspect of game localisation is critical to the success of the titles but still, it has long been neglected both by scholars and companies (publishers for instance). This is starting to change, as we have seen with O'Hagan's exploratory experiments (2009a) in section 3.1.2.2 but there is still room for more research on this vast topic.

3.3.2 Research Objectives

Our study aims at unveiling various aspects of the relationship between gamers and video game localisation. It seeks to answer three different objectives:

1. Assessing gamers' satisfaction with video games localised in French

2. Identifying possible weak spots in French localisations as perceived by the final users

3. Comparing gamers' linguistic stance upon consuming video games and other cultural and entertainment products

Firstly, it is important to emphasise the fact that the study does not seek to gather physiological information about players, although its main point of interest is player reception.

It focuses on gathering as many individual gamer opinions as possible in the field of localised game reception, especially games played on computers. With this research, we seek to go beyond isolated complaints and, if appropriate, nuance the general idea that the gamer community is dissatisfied with localised versions by collecting the answers of a sample of the francophone gamer community. It will thus lead us to **get an overview of the reception of localised video games by francophone gamers, based on a small sample**, without necessarily being able to generalise these conclusions, as will be discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

The study will also point out which aspects of video game localisation into French need improving in order for the target audience to find the product appropriate. We will thus see if there is a pattern in respondents' answers or if the much-criticized translation is just one aspect among others. The identification of such weak spots in localisation and the effect they have on gameplay may eventually provide welcome feedback for the localisation industry by shedding light on concrete examples of games that respondents deem well or poorly localised. In this sense, the main focus of our study, i.e. player reception, has a practical goal: "provid[ing] useful information to the game industry as well as localisers and translators" (O'Hagan, 2009a, p. 213), offering insights from the angle of Translation Studies and to the area of Translation Studies. It is thus the expression of a will shared with O'Hagan: that of grounding practice on research, as small-scaled as it may be.

Last but not least, hopefully, this research will also shed light on gamers' linguistic preferences in terms of games. Analysing the language in which they play and their motivations for doing so will provide material for a comparison with results obtained for other cultural/entertainment products. In other words, the results will indicate if there is more reticence towards using the translated or localised version of certain products than of others.

Eventually, the research will seek to assess if localisation is seen as an asset or as a drawback by its primary users. Video game localisation is of the utmost relevance for companies, but does it seem as relevant to the other actors that are directly affected by its quality, namely the gamers? And is there a difference between gamers with a poor level in other languages than French and those with a high level in other languages, especially English? The stated objectives naturally lead to research hypotheses that will be tested in this paper.

3.3.3 Research Hypotheses

Based on the three research objectives stated above, we have developed research hypotheses that will be confronted with the results of our research.

Main topic (hypothesis 1): regarding overall gamer satisfaction with localised games:

We tended to believe that, contrary to comments that are very present on the Web, gamers are generally satisfied with the localisation of games into French. Our research will investigate if this initial hypothesis can be proven or rejected.

Topic 2 (hypothesis 2): regarding weak spots in video game localisation into French:

Based on our knowledge of the game localisation industry and on the numerous comments found online, our initial hypothesis relies on the belief that gamers indeed complain mostly about text/translation-related localisation issues, whether these affect written or spoken translations, i.e. in-game text, subtitles or voiceovers.

Topic 3 (hypothesis 3): regarding francophone gamers' linguistic stance towards video games:

Considering that video games are immersive in nature, we tended to believe that contrary to the linguistic stance adopted towards other cultural products (written or audiovisual), and regardless of their fluency in other languages, gamers usually play in their mother tongue (in our case in French) because it is easier for them to understand and focus on the game. We still predict that gamers with a relatively high level in the source language will tend to play more in that language than other gamers, but would still favour their mother tongue when available. We shall see in chapter 5 if this theory can be supported by our results.

To sum up, this chapter aimed at providing an overview of the multitude of research topics that relate to video games. First, we have shown that games are a recent object of study that is highly multidisciplinary given the fact that it possesses characteristics of many other objects. Second, we have seen that a trend started among scholars and the industry to gather data on players and on their reception of localised games. Last, we saw that the approach developed in this thesis builds on this trend, focusing on gamers and more particularly on their satisfaction with the localisation of PC games into French. Now that our objectives and hypotheses have been stated, we can explain in detail the methodology followed in the course of our research.

4. Research Methodology: a Participant-oriented Research

This chapter aims at presenting the methodology adopted for our participant-oriented research based on a questionnaire. It will therefore begin with going through elements that were considered prior to the questionnaire design, before explaining in detail how and why the study was designed.

4.1 Primary Considerations

Before designing and implementing the study, crucial elements were to be considered, including, of course, the most important aspect: the methodology to be adopted and the tool to be used. Other elements were also defined, such as the platform on which to conduct the study, the language to be used with participants and the way of broadcasting the study and attracting participants. Finally, ethics were also taken into account and a time-span was set upon, elements that we will now examine carefully.

4.1.1 Methodology Adopted

For the sake of our research, we have decided to develop what Saldanha and O'Brien (2013) call a "participant-oriented" approach, i.e. focusing on human beings, in our case not those translating the text but those on the other side of the screen, at the very end of the chain: the people who consume the game - the gamers.

To answer our research question, it seemed fitting to use an online questionnaire or survey[23]. Matthews and Ross define questionnaires as "*(1) a list of questions each with a range of answers; (2) a format that enables standardized, relatively structured, data to be gathered about each of a (usually) large number of cases*" (2010, p. 201). They "*offer a means of collecting structured data on a large scale and, in theory, they consume less time than individual interviews*" (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2013, p. 152). Questionnaires also enable researchers to reach people that they do not know and that do not live in the same country, but that fall into their sample. The decision to use the Internet as a medium was backed by this argument, but also by practical reasons and usage, since it has become an entrenched practice in our modern, connected world. Saldanha and O'Brien (2013, p. 167) stress that online surveys can be exclusive, yet in our case this consideration was not relevant since our sample relied on gamers, who have access to a computer and, more often than not, to the Internet. In that respect, using an online form would thus not bias the sample.

4.1.2 Platform

The platform chosen to host the questionnaire is called LimeSurvey. It is a popular free open-source survey tool available on the web. It was used in our research for various reasons. Firstly, it is commonly used at the University of Geneva, where the thesis was written. Plus, the tool offered numerous options in terms of response formats (29 possibilities) and of statistical analysis of results; it was therefore judged appropriate. Safety was also taken into consideration: the LimeSurvey servers for the university are located in the university's central servers, ensuring data protection[24]. For all these reasons, the tool was deemed suitable for hosting the survey. Secondly, in order to make the welcome page more attractive to participants, a basic Wix webpage was set up with all the important information about the research, including informed consent and a hyperlink redirecting to the questionnaire[25]. So as to catch the gamers' eye, a reference to "All your base are belong to us" was included under the title of the questionnaire. This quote is taken from the English mistranslation from the 1989 Japanese arcade video game *Zero Wing*. After choosing the platform, the language of communication was determined as well.

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[23] Although Saldanha and O'Brien note that these terms are not strictly synonymous (2013, p. 151), we will treat them as such for the sake of avoiding repetition.

[24] More information on data protection with UNIGE's LimeSurvey at:
https://www.unige.ch/webtools/wiki/doku.php?id=limesurvey:start [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].

[25] See Appendix 1 or http://marion-h38.wixsite.com/localisation [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].

4.1.3 Language

As the subject matter of the thesis is analysing francophone gamers' satisfaction regarding localised computer video games, it made sense to write the survey in French. Indeed, our main concern was for respondents to actually understand perfectly the questions as well as being able to answer accurately and as freely as possible, without feeling constrained by a language they did not master. For the same reason, all other communications with the participants, including piloting and yet to come follow-up messages informing participants about the results of the survey, have been and will be conducted in French. Furthermore, the use of a language that was common to all participants (since the study was directed at native speakers of French) helped reduce a potential linguistic bias of the sample. Indeed, if it had been offered in English only, some francophone players would not have participated because they did not speak the language at all or not well enough to understand the nuances of the questions. French therefore seemed like a fairer option that matched our purpose. This choice also enabled us to use some francophone channels of communication, as described in the next paragraphs.

4.1.4 Channels of Communication

The questionnaire was distributed to two different types of potential participants via two channels of communication: gaming forums and emails.

4.1.4.1 Francophone Gaming Forums

The questionnaire was released on three francophone gaming forums: Steam[26], Canardpc[27], and Gamekult[28].

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[26] https://steamcommunity.com/discussions/forum/25/ [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].
[27] See http://forum.canardpc.com/forums/11-Jeux-vid%C3%A9o-sur-PC [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].
[28] Available at https://www.gamekult.com/forum/c/discussions-diverses-jeu-video/forum-jeux-video [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].

In order to select just a few forums among the numerous francophone ones that exist, two criteria were considered: activity and topic of discussion. Indeed, as the aim of releasing a survey online is for it to be seen, and eventually filled in, by as many gamers as possible, it was crucial to select forums whose members were active, i.e. on which there were new posts on a daily basis and a significant amount of answers to most posts (usually in a short time). Second, forums like Jeuxvideo.com were taken out of the selection not because they were not active enough or because they featured forums that were specific to different age categories –the message could very well have been posted on each of them- but because when reviewing the topics discussed, it appeared that people were talking about a wide variety of subjects that had not the slightest link to video games, except for a few occasional posts. We thus decided that it was better to stick with active and game-focused forums where people were deeply interested in discussing aspects related to video games proper. On top of that, a third implicit criterion was taken into account before posting on these forums: compliance with the forum rules. This was ensured by the consultation of the terms of use for each forum prior to the creation of a new thread.

The three selected forums were more precisely subforums: Steam's francophone subforum, Canardpc's section dedicated to PC video games and Gamekult's consoles/PC games subforum. Though the latter also has another subforum dedicated to online games, the consoles/PC one was chosen on the grounds of being more generic and more tailored to our needs, since the research was not focused on online games exclusively but on all games operated on computers. All three subforums met the two criteria stated earlier on. Indeed, they all have a very active community. On May 4th, 2017, when a posteriori information was gathered about posts and members, all forums featured extremely recent activity since the last message was posted within ten minutes of our checking.

- **Canardpc's video games subforum**

  Canardpc's subforum is broken up into five subsections, namely video games (general topics), computer games, online and networked games, console games and fighting games. At the time of access, it featured 13,583 topics and 4,425,910 posts, the last one posted on May 4th, 2017 at 5.57 p.m.

- **Steam's francophone subforum**

    Regarding Steam, the total number of topics reached 20,687, with no way of knowing exactly how many posts there were in total. The last message was posted on May 4th, 2017 at 6.03 p.m.

- **Gamekult's consoles/PC games subforum**

    For Gamekult, information was not displayed in the same manner: though information about the last message was available (posted on May 4th, 2017 at 6 p.m.), there was no way of knowing how many posts and topics there were on the subforum. The data was only available for the all subforums put together, which gives an indication but is not specific to the relevant thread. Still, there were 357,900 topics overall and 16.6 million posts. Yet, a different indicator was available: an average number of new topics per month. The generic video games subforum featured an average of 12 new topics per month, this number reaching 16 for the specific online games one. Still, in the chosen subforum, some topics had more than 10,000 answers and sometimes over 5 or even 10 million views (for example topics about Nintendo, PS Vista and PC games news), a considerable number.

    In the same way as the number of posts, the information provided about the number of members grouped together all subparts of the Gamekult forum, totalling 551,400 members, 4,400 of them having been active in the last 30 days. On the other hand, for neither of Steam and Canardpc's subforums was it possible to access the number of members. Apart from appealing to complete strangers very interested in video games via gaming forums, another channel of communication was used, bringing a more interpersonal dimension to the questionnaire.

4.1.4.2 Acquaintances

    Indeed, in addition to online forums, the questionnaire was sent via email to a selected group of acquaintances whose mother tongue was French and who played video games on computers, regardless of their sex and age. Eighteen emails were therefore sent, among which 6 were sent to women and 12 to men. In terms of age, the most represented category was 18 to 24 years old (12 people), followed by 25-34 (4 persons) and 35-44 and 45-54 (1 person each). The two extremes were not represented. Regarding country of origin, most potential respondents came from France (13 out of 18), 3 from Belgium and 2 from Switzerland.

This method of attracting potential participants was therefore biased towards young French men, a bias that has been found in the overall results, as will be explained in part 5.2 tackling the results regarding the questionnaire's background information. Furthermore, this bias may have ricocheted and introduced a bigger bias in the study since these people, just like those on the forums, were encouraged to forward the message to anyone they could think of that would meet the research's criteria (French mother tongue and playing video games on the computer) and who might be interested in taking part in the study. It is therefore likely that addressees would have sent the message to people in their network that may belong to the same categories as themselves, therefore further increasing the unbalance between categories. Still, there was no way to control for this effect, one that remains a possibility.

To conclude, the choice of combining both communication strategies (forum and acquaintances) relied on several arguments. On the one hand, the idea of leveraging acquaintances stemmed from the assumption that when there is an interpersonal stake, for example answering a questionnaire for someone that potential participants actually know, there is a higher incentive to participate, especially when the questionnaire is quite extensive. Yet, as answers were collected anonymously, there was no way of monitoring how many solicited people actually took part in the questionnaire and how many completed it. On the other hand, the use of both channels of communication, and especially forums, aimed at balancing the potential bias stemming from using one's network to distribute largely the questionnaire, enabling the researcher to attract some categories that would otherwise have been less represented or missing in the data set.

Another concern that was very important to address prior to the research, as it involved human participants, is ethics. The following subpart will therefore detail the strategy adopted for that matter.

4.1.5 Ethical Considerations

As Saldanha and O'Brien (2014, p. 48) rightly underscore, the matter of informed consent is tricky in online questionnaires since it is impossible to be certain that the participants have actually read what was written, even when confronted with an "I consent" button. To remedy this, the authors suggest that it might be better "to break the consent down into specific and separate statements and to 'force' participants to agree to each one in turn (by not allowing them to continue to the next online page, for instance)". Yet, we found that the questionnaire was already long enough in itself, and may not have very sensitive data as its subject matter. For this reason, none of the above options were used, though information about the study was provided in clear and simple terms to the respondents on the webpage before they started the questionnaire. The last sentence of this introduction explained starkly that, by answering the questionnaire, they consented to the treatment of their data for scientific purposes only and to the fact that personal information was not to be disclosed at any rate. After all these factors had been taken into consideration, the final step consisted in setting a launch and a closure date for the collection of answers.

4.1.6 Time-span

In terms of duration, no deadline was set for the survey, though a reminder was sent to potential participants and posted on forums two weeks after the launch of the questionnaire. In the beginning, the closing of the questionnaire was meant to rely more on reaching a certain number of participants than on time. A minimum target of 40 was set.

The survey was launched on December 28th, 2016, right between Christmas and New Year's Eve. The purpose of choosing this date, apart from allowing the researcher to leave the questionnaire open for several weeks in order to gather as much data as possible, was to pinpoint a time when most people were on holidays and would feasibly have more time at their disposal to answer an extensive study. This strategy worked well since on the first day 20 answers had already been collected, and the 40-participant target was hit the day after the questionnaire was posted online. Yet, these answers were not all complete.

On the whole, within a very short time-frame (one week), more than half of the total number of answers were collected (51 out of 92). After that, answers were more scattered (even when a second reminder was posted on February 20th, around two months after the launch). The survey was finally closed on March 9th, 2017, after it had considerably lost momentum and a more than sufficient number of complete answers had been obtained (92 "usable" answers, which will be explained in detail in section 5.1).

After having detailed the various methodological aspects that were taken into account before creating and launching the questionnaire, the next section will describe the actual design of the questionnaire and the choices underlying it.

4.2 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire was designed during the two months preceding its launch. This section will first discuss generic design considerations, in particular the presence of a balance between open-ended and close-ended questions. Secondly, the four sections of the questionnaires (see Appendix 3) will be detailed, insisting on their goals. Finally, the piloting phase will be presented, along with the results it yielded.

4.2.1 Open-ended VS Close-ended Questions

Both open-ended and close-ended questions were included in the questionnaire since they are complementary tools. Indeed, one of the Colorado State University's (CSU) writing guides establishes that close-ended questions "limit respondents' answers to the survey. The participants are allowed to choose from either a pre-existing set of dichotomous answers, such as yes/no, true/false, or multiple choice with an option for "other" to be filled in, or ranking scale response options." (*Creating questionnaire questions*, n.d.). This type of questions is, by way of consequence, really useful in gathering statistical information and drawing conclusions when developing a more quantitative approach. On the other hand, open-ended questions allow respondents to express themselves, giving the researcher an insight into more personal views and examples. Indeed, they "allow participants to explain their choices for the closed questions, to add further opinions, or to highlight an opinion they hold and which is not addressed in the questionnaire." (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014, p. 157).

Yet, Choi and Pak highlight that "Open-ended questions can result in data with differential quality. Also, respondents are likely to be unwilling to take the time to answer them." (2005, p. 7), an issue that may have been encountered in our survey since there was a considerable dropout rate, as will be explained when analysing the results.

Therefore, in order to get the advantages of open-ended questions without getting all the drawbacks, we decided to combine them with close-ended questions, thus accounting for both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Indeed, as the CSU writing guide notes: "often researchers use close-ended questions in the beginning of their survey, then allow for more expansive answers once the respondent has some background on the issue and is "warmed-up."" (*Creating questionnaire questions*, n.d.). To some extent, it can be applied to our survey since questions in the first section (background information) and at the beginning of sections 2 and 3 (gaming experience and experience of localised video games) were close-ended whereas the following questions were broader, more open, in order to incentivize respondents to elaborate more freely around the thread that was provided.

Following the same logic, the inclusion at the end of an "Anything else you wish to add" question, considered good practice (Saldanha and O'Brien, 2014), aimed at making sure respondents did not feel frustrated about the questionnaire not covering all the topics they would have liked to speak about. After this introduction to the overall design of the survey, it is only natural to move on to concrete illustrations of what was just mentioned by having a close look at all four groups of questions.

4.2.2 The Different Groups of Questions

The survey was made up of four different sections: background information, gaming experience (on computers), experience of localised games and experience of other cultural products. A progression bar was used so that participants would know at any time how far through the questionnaire they were. They were also given the option of saving their answers and resuming later. Furthermore, the use of "skippable" questions was meant to reduce the time required by the survey for people who were not concerned by specific aspects developed throughout the study or who did not have any example in mind[29].

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[29] In the questionnaire (see Appendix 3), mandatory questions were preceded by an asterisk.

The following subsections present thoroughly each section and question and their objectives. For the sake of logic, they appear in the same order as in the questionnaire, which is available for reference at the end of this work (see Appendix 3).

4.2.2.1 Section 1: Background Information

The first section was entitled "Background information". This set of questions is typical in participant-oriented research. It is very important so as to have an idea of who the participants are in terms of age, sex, professional categories, etc. This, in turn, helps compare results, generalize them when appropriate, and identify trends depending on certain variables.

The very first question examined the age of participants. Its main objective was to pinpoint the categories of persons present in the sample and to compare the data with other studies that were conducted, for example at national level.

In order to be systematic, continuous categories were provided, a strategy that has also been used for the design of the other questions. Indeed, as Ginette Law, from the data and design company Infoactive, advises, "[a]nswer choices should not overlap and should cover all possible options. This is called having "mutually exclusive and exhaustive" categories and is crucial for sound survey design" (Law, n.d.). Choi and Pak also advocate in favour of continuous and non-overlapping categories (2005, pp. 3-4) for sound survey design. In order to choose the interval for each age category, other surveys were consulted, including those on gamers presented in section 3.2. The following table sums up age categories offered by the consulted surveys and the categories used in ours (last column).

Les pratiques de consommation de jeux vidéo des Français (CNC, September 2013)	GameTrack survey – The New Faces of Gaming (ISFE & Ipsos Connect, February 2017)	Essential Video Game News: Market - Consumption - Use (SELL, February 2017)	Videogames in Europe/France: consumer study (Ipsos MediaCT & ISFE, November 2012	Sample Demographic Market Research Questions (Amplitude Research, n.d.)	Questionnaire de satisfaction (Boulogne-Billancourt City Hall, n.d.)	**Our study (December 2016 – March 2017)**
6-9 10-14 15-24 **25-34** 35-49 50 and over	6-24 **25-34** **35-44** 45-64	10-14 15-18 19-24 **25-34** **35-44** **45-54** 55 and over	16-24 **25-34** **35-44** **45-54** 55-64	18-24 **25-34** **35-44** **45-54** 55-64 65 and over	Under 25 **25-34** 35-49 50 and over	Under 18 18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65 and over

Table 7. Age categories used in various surveys

As visible in the table, there does not seem to be a set rule for defining age categories, apart from using non-overlapping ones, as mentioned earlier. The range of data collected and of each category are therefore largely dependent on the study itself, and more particularly on the information it seeks to gather. Indeed, the CNC's consumption study inquired largely into the gaming practices of children, which is why it made sense for them to start collecting data from 6 years old and to split children and teenagers into three categories. Boulogne Billancourt's City Hall, however, used a minimal approach by offering only four distinct categories, probably because, to them, they corresponded to marked categories which may use the city hall for different purposes. On the other hand, the French 2016 Population Census bulletin did not feature age categories but asked for the precise birthdate. This makes sense in this case since the census aims, among others, at establishing who is major and can be added to electoral lists. Yet, for our study, such degree of detail was not necessary and would even have made data harder to interpret, which is why the use of categories was more relevant. Still, given the variety of possibilities illustrated above, we have settled for an exhaustive system (meaning people of any age would be included) that did not go much into detail before majority and for the elderly but featured regular intervals in the middle (25-34, 35-44 and 45-54), taken from the above examples. The result, which can be observed in the last column of the table above, is very similar to the Sample Demographic Market Research questions provided by Amplitude Research (n.d.), only with an additional option for under 18-year-olds.

Another typical question in questionnaires relates to gender. On top of the traditional "male" and "female" choices, we decided to include an "undetermined" option to the gender question. For now, there is no evidence of this practice being entrenched in countries such as France: for example, the population census for 2016 by Insee only features "male" and "female" answers. Yet, in a context of emerging minorities and increasing consideration of all types of population, some countries like Germany, Australia or India and, very recently, some States in the USA, have started to recognize the existence of an intermediate status for people whose gender is not defined at birth or changes throughout their lives. Indeed, an article in *The Guardian* explains that "[o]n 1 November [2013], Germany became the first country in Europe – and one of the first countries in the world – to allow the parents of babies without "clear gender-determining physical characteristics" to register them not as male or female, but to choose a third blank box instead" (Nandi, 2013). Taking into account these pioneering countries, it was thus decided to include a third option, labelled "undetermined", to make sure all participants would feel included. This proved useful since four participants selected this option.

The next two questions focused on participants' country of origin and country of residence. Country of origin was not understood as participants' family origins but rather as where they were born and raised, or only raised in case they were born in a country where they did not spend their childhood. Country of residence, on the other hand, referred to the place where participants actually lived on a semi-permanent basis at the time of the survey, i.e. not for holidays. Both questions were asked since the answers may differ, which is more and more the case in a world with increasing mobility. They both held a considerable interest for the study since the linguistic features of the participants may vary, depending on where they were born and raised and where they live, attitudes towards languages being different in monolingual and multilingual countries, for instance. This may eventually influence the way they consume video games and other cultural products, as well as affect their perception of language.

The following question was closely related to these two since it concerned participants' mother tongues. It aimed at spotting respondents for whom French was not a first language. Indeed, the focus of the study was on native French speakers exclusively. We were also interested in knowing if respondents spoke other languages and, if so, which ones, an element that gave an insight into participants' linguistic diversity and may partly explain their gaming habits in terms of preferred and used languages.

Yet, analysing participants' spoken languages is but part of the answer, since fluency is deemed to be a key-criteria. Therefore, fluency in non-native languages, and more specifically in the first foreign language and in English, was examined in order to assess whether or not the participant was able to understand enough of a foreign language to play or consume other cultural products in this language. This question helped shed light on answers provided in the following section (concerning playing in a non-native language or not).

In terms of methodology, the question of fluency was based on a self-assessment of the participant's level, which was split up into five categories (or skills) and expressed in the form of six discrete grades ranging from A1 to C2. In order to construct this question and enable respondents to have a better idea of what each level corresponded to, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages[30] was used. Based on the official table for a self-assessment of skills, participants were provided with a condensed version of the table embedded in the questionnaire, so that they would know quickly where they stand. This lighter version was compiled by the researcher by keeping main characteristics for each skill and level (see Appendix 2).

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[30] The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was introduced by the Council of Europe in order to harmonise foreign language learning. It is available at
https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Framework_EN.pdf (see pp. 26-27) [accessed 04 Sep. 2017]. The French version, which was used for the questionnaire design, is available at https://rm.coe.int/16802fc3a8 (see pp. 26-27) [accessed 04 Sep. 2017].

Lastly, we sought to gather information about the participants' educational or/and professional background, depending on their occupation. Gamers were presented with a limited yet extensive set of choices in order to make the categorization of data easier and less prone to the researcher's subjectivity. For categories, the French and European classifications were used, namely the NAF[31] and the NACE[32]. Though they have different names, they feature the exact same categories, in the same order and with the same labels. However, a slight alteration was made by adding three other categories that could prove relevant for our research: "video game industry", "translation and interpreting" and "other (specify)". Indeed, when scrutinizing the typologies, it seemed that the language and entertainment industries did not fit into clear boxes. Yet, someone that works in translation would probably pay a lot more attention to language than the average gamer. In the same way, a video game developer may notice bugs or display errors that other people might not even spot. Indeed, there was a good chance that people's backgrounds would influence what they focused on and how they focused on it. For practical reasons, i.e. to make sure these two specific categories were seen by the concerned people, they were put at the top of the scroll down list, before the NACE categories, with the "other" being typically added at the end. After having described all the questions that were used in order to better know respondents and comparing them to samples from other data, we shall inquire more precisely into participants' experience with PC games.

4.2.2.2 Section 2: Experience with PC Games

Section 2, entitled "Experience with PC Games", sought to gather data about the gamers' background in the research field as a whole. It is very important in order to evaluate the reliability of the participants' answers. The first three questions functioned as a whole since they aimed at determining the respondent's "experience" in video games operated on computers taking into account three parameters: frequency of playing, total numbers of games played, and total number of games played within the last year, the latter aiming at assessing the respondent's current "level" of gaming, featuring a precise "starting time", to use the same terminology as Choi and Pak (2005, p. 3).

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[31] The NAF (nomenclature d'activités françaises) classification may be found here:
https://www.insee.fr/fr/information/2406147 [accessed 04 Sep. 2017].
[32] The 2008 revision of the NACE (Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne) classification may be found here:
http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/ramon/nomenclatures/index.cfm?TargetUrl=LST_NOM_DTL&StrNom=NACE_REV2&StrLanguageCode=FR&IntPcKey=&StrLayoutCode=&IntCurrentPage=1 [accessed 04 Sep. 2017].

To get an estimate of someone's "level", it is relevant to consider both frequency and quantity of games. Indeed, someone that plays the same game every day will not have a really good overview of games as a whole and someone that has played a lot of different games within the last year might have a good idea of the game and localisation panorama, two sectors that evolve together at a very fast pace. As mentioned earlier, the specification about playing "more than two hours" was added after piloting to make sure that respondents would consider games for which they have at least a good overview and not just a quick glimpse.

Once again, the answers to these questions have been tailored into continuous non-overlapping scales to be exhaustive. Plus, the precise intervals and the "more than two hours" indication enabled us to get precise answers, thus taking away patent forms of subjectivity that might arise from interpretation since, as Choi and Pak (2005, p. 2) wrote, "Vague words in vague questions encourage vague answers". Participants' were therefore defined in terms of gaming frequency and quantity, but were not yet defined in terms of gaming tastes, an element the next question sought to introduce.

The next question focused on games genres played by respondents, and more particularly on the one genre they played most. This aspect is of importance because according to the type of game, there may not be the same amount of text to translate and elements to localise. For instance, O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013, p. 69) identify adventure games and RPGs as "text-heavy" genres. Such questions also allowed the use of statistics on the research, to see if a trend of playing stands out from our sample. The second part of the question (percentage of time) helped assess the diversity of the gamer's video game landscape in terms of genres. The genre list used was an indicative typology taken from O'Hagan and Mangiron's *Game Localization* (2013, p. 68), displayed in section 2.1.1.4. This well-structured classification included 13 different major game categories. Although it was not exhaustive and did not account for hybrid genres, for instance, it was chosen as the basis of the questionnaire because of its consistency and its attempt at combining various scholars' typologies.

In order to make sure that respondents knew what the categories stood for, an example was drawn from the same table and added between brackets next to the genre. Examples were selected according to their representativeness of the genre and, when possible, their mental association with computers rather than other gaming device. For this task, an experimented gamer was informally asked for assistance. The person in question was a French man that has been playing video games on computers since he was 8 years old, i.e. for around 15 years. He currently possesses 135 titles in his Steam library and estimates the number of PC games he played to around 500 overall. He has also tried many different genres (13 out of the 13 on O'Hagan and Mangiron's categorisation) and regularly spends time playing (around 2 hours a day) and on video game dedicated websites (around 15 minutes a day) and, to a much lesser extent, on gaming forums. This player therefore falls into the category of "hardcore gamers" (something we will come back to in section 5.3.1) and, for that matter, his knowledge of video games and of the gaming community was deemed valuable, particularly when trying to choose appropriate examples of each category.

The aim of this step was to provide participants with famous examples that the gamer community would immediately recognize and would help them comprehend what the genre was about. The usefulness of such exemplification was assessed in the piloting phase, since the indications were found helpful. Based on a suggestion made by one of the pilots, one slight alteration was made though: instead of quoting *Tetris* as the example for puzzle games, as O'Hagan and Mangiron did (2013, p. 68), the instance given was *Portal*, another subgenre of puzzle games.

Concerning the gaming language, one of the goals of this unfolding question was to know if the surveyed played in their mother tongue, which would seem natural, as we posited in section 3.3.3. The second goal was to identify the reasons that motivated their choosing such language. Did they think about it before playing or did they naturally opt for their daily language? The last part of the question helped us quantify the importance of the aforementioned language, be it the gamer's mother tongue or another one.

The following skippable question was directly linked to the answer given about gaming language since it aimed at determining if and how often participants played a game in a foreign language, in case they played in their own language most of the time. The sub question "why" further delved into the reasons explaining their playing in a language different from their default choice (their mother tongue).

Finally, this section closed on a question related to games whose original language was French. Its purpose was to enable the researcher to learn more about the players' linguistic habits in the game environment and to consider to what extent they payed attention to language, especially the one in which the game was designed. After making general inquiries about gamers' gaming experience, the research moved towards questions that were central to the subject matter: satisfaction about localised video games.

4.2.2.3 Section 3: Experience with PC Games Localised into French

Section 3 was focused more specifically on localised game experience. It sought to collect information about the gamers' satisfaction regarding games localised into French and operated on computers, i.e. the primary focus of this master's thesis.

Choi and Pak insist that "Technical jargon and the profession's technical terms may not be understood by the general public and should be avoided" in questionnaires (2005). To this end, when posting messages about the questionnaire on the forums we have deliberately switched "localisation" with "translation" to make it more understandable to the non-specialists, i.e. people that did not work in the translation or the game industries. Still, we have decided to keep the term as such in the survey proper, although it may fit into what Choi and Pak call "technical jargon". Indeed, in order for this recurring term to be understood and clear at all times, a short simple definition was provided on the welcome page of the questionnaire (the Wix page) and was then made available to participants in every step of their answering by displaying it in the "description" field of the questionnaire, which appears at the top of every page.

The first question of this section considered localisation from a general perspective by inquiring into the most common degree of game localisation encountered by participants. It took the form of a close-ended question based on the different levels identified by Chandler and O'Malley (2012, pp. 8-11) and detailed in section 2.2.3.2. Degree zero (no localisation) was not offered for the sake of consistency, since the section was about localised games only. Such question was meant to give an idea of the general level of localisation of games into French, although of course it was biased because limited to the games played by participants. The option selected by participants might also reveal information about their preferences in terms of localisation degree.

The second question was open and made the participants think about the effect(s) of localisation on the gamer and especially on immersion. For this question, a very large textbox was provided so that participants would feel free to write as much as they wanted. The goal was to capture their perception of game localisation and to measure in an informal way to what extent localisation was crucial to the immersion process according to them.

The following question constituted the crux of the study: overall satisfaction with localised video games. This mandatory question had the participants grade their overall satisfaction towards the localisation into French of video games operated on computers. This means they were only allowed to consider the "adaptation" part, not the original features like gameplay when attributing the mark. This was at the core of our master's thesis, trying to get first-hand impressions about what the people who played the games thought of localised versions. This overall mark was to be split up by focusing on different aspects in the following questions. The assessment was made through a six-point scale, 1 standing for "very dissatisfied" and 6 representing "very satisfied". The choice of an even number was made to force the respondents to take a stance, either on the satisfied or on the dissatisfied side, since on scales featuring odd numbers people tend to choose the middle option, an effect we tried to prevent. Indeed, as Choi and Pak put it, a question with an odd number of categories "tends to result in neutral answers" whereas an even number of categories "tends to force respondents to take sides", which was our goal here.

In order to further elaborate on the topic of satisfaction, the following two questions were designed in a symmetric way: they were optional open questions that were meant to give players the freedom to quote examples from their own gaming experience. Although answers were bound to differ from one person to the next, they could still form the basis of a series of examples that can be further studied, in other works for instance. For each game, whether it illustrated successful or poor localisation according to respondents, the genre was asked. Considering it was not possible to include in the same question both a textbox and a list, this field has been left for players to complete, which they have not always done using the typology suggested earlier, an aspect which introduces a small bias by forcing the researcher to make a decision with which the participant might not always agree, especially in the case of hybrid games. A condition was also added to the questions so that if an answer was provided, a sub question would pop, enabling the person to elaborate in a large textbox.

In relation, another question aimed at discovering which localisation issue was most recurring in players' overall experience of localised games. In order to make sure respondents targeted one aspect in particular, only one choice was allowed and a set of answers was provided, with explanations between brackets when required. The "other: specify" field was also available and a large text box was added so that people could elaborate if they wished to do so. The list of options was created taking various resources into account. The "technical considerations" part of a localisation planning-phase checklist made by Chandler and O'Malley (2012, p. 13) was used as a starting point, especially for technical bugs. Personal gaming experience and information gathered through readings made for part 2 (for instance Bernal Merino, 2015 and O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013) helped complete this list, which included both linguistic, technical and cultural issues.

This question was followed up by a mandatory open one about the impact of these bugs, assuming that once they were broken up into discrete elements, it would probably be easier for gamers to answer in a specific way, rather than asking them to think for themselves about the issues they had encountered.

Last, a mandatory question had players rank gameplay, graphics, scenario and language (being understood as linguistic signs, not as a specific language). Number 1 corresponded to what they found was most important and number 4 to what mattered least. Participants also had to explain their choices. This ranking not only allowed us to see what prevailed in the mind of a gamer – embodied by participants from our sample - but also to assess which place they attributed to language and why. Is a good translation a priority for gamers or would they still play a badly-translated game if they liked the rest? This is the question that will be answered when analysing the results, in section 5.4.5. The section closed on that more generic question that goes beyond the scope of the study, and a new section opened, focused on setting video games against other cultural and entertainment products from a linguistic perspective.

4.2.2.4 Section 4: Experience with Other Cultural Products

Section 4, entitled "Experience with Other Cultural Products", aimed at comparing participants' linguistic attitudes towards video games and towards other products that were originally in a language different from their mother tongue. This question leveraged the concept of "original language" and the implicit assumption that people prefer playing video games in their own language whereas when it comes to other cultural or entertainment products they would rather consume them in the original language(2000). Yet, in designing the questionnaire we have tried to be very cautious not to bias the answers through the phrasing of our questions, a point that is crucial for the research to be valid.

In this section, a distinction was made between written products and audiovisual ones (see Appendix 3), video games belonging to the second category. The first question tackled written products as a whole, and examples were provided ("novels, comic strips and newspapers among others"). Participants were presented with a very limited number of options - whether their mother tongue or the original language - but a more open dimension was added to this closed question through the use of a "commentary" space, enabling people to elaborate on the topic if they liked.

The second subsection, featuring questions about foreign audiovisual products, respectively series and movies, was designed in the same fashion, i.e. a small number of answers accompanied by an optional commentary. The main difference in question design lay in the fact that, for audiovisual products, four answers were presented, namely original version, original version with subtitles in the original language, original version with subtitles in their mother tongue or dubbed version, instead of the binary choice provided for written products. The goal of separating movies and series was to see if different trends arose from these two types. These audiovisual products were set as a comparison with video games and the language in which they are usually played, which we posited as being the player's mother tongue, in our case, French (see section 3.3.3).

As mentioned in part 4.2.1, the questionnaire closed on the traditional "anything else you wish to add" for further insights and a short text space for people to leave their email address if they were interested in the results of the study. Once the questionnaire had been designed, a piloting phase took place.

4.2.3 Piloting

A phase of piloting of the questionnaire was therefore included to make sure it was clear and coherent. Indeed, in *Research Methodologies in Translation Studies*, Saldanha and O'Brien insist on running a piloting phase before launching the questionnaire. This step means testing the questionnaire "with an appropriate sample (by which we mean respondents who are part of your sample population and not family, friends, or colleagues who may not meet the criteria for inclusion in the sample). Piloting should assess numerous aspects such as the time required to fill out the questionnaire, its usability, clarity and so on" (2014, p. 158). Indeed, as the researchers highlight, "questions often seem unambiguous to the questionnaire designer but turn out to be ambiguous to respondents" (ibid., p. 155). Thus, we selected two of our acquaintances, who kindly volunteered, and gave them the questionnaire after checking that they met the criteria (one female, one male, whose mother tongue was French and who played video games on computers on a regular basis).

In order to put them in real conditions, they received a first email including information in French about what the piloting task required them to do, for example keeping track of their response time, paying specific attention to internal coherence, pointing out any question that seemed biased and making suggestions for improvement. Then, they were sent the exact email that was intended for the "real" participants in order for them to assess if it was succinct enough. Afterwards, each participant provided some feedback through a thorough email review. Their remarks were examined and, when appropriate, ensuing modifications were applied to the questionnaire.

This phase proved very useful since the people selected commented on aspects that had not been anticipated. For instance, one of them suggested the addition of an optional box at the end of the questionnaire for people who wished to leave an email address and get further information about the results of the study. Another insightful comment was related to the questions focusing on how many games the participant had played (overall and within the last 12 months). Indeed, one of the pilots stressed that players can buy dozens of games through platforms, for example during the sales on Steam when the games are sold for only a few euros. Yet, sometimes they launch them and play for five minutes before never touching them again. As this cannot really be considered as "playing" the game, he suggested amending the question, adding the precision "for more than two hours", which would allegedly give time to players to have at least a sense of the game overall. Other remarks helped improve the response format by switching to larger text spaces, and replacing a single-choice question by a ranking for most important game features.

Finally, this phase did not really help the duration of the questionnaire since it took one of the pilots 15 minutes to complete it whereas it took the other one almost 40. Yet, one should not neglect the fact that the latter answered every question, even the skippable ones, in a very comprehensive way, which takes a considerable amount of time, especially when they are open. According to these results and personal estimates, we decided to announce "around twenty minutes" to potential participants after making some open questions optional: depending on their linguistic features, on their gaming experience, on the examples that they could think of on the spot and on their level of interest in the questionnaire, we determined that it would be feasible in 20-25 minutes and that they could then spend more time on it if they wished to elaborate.

This time was fairly consistent with most questionnaires that aim at being thorough, which was also our goal and explains why we could not remove any question to shorten the survey. Still, the length of the questionnaire may have been a disadvantage, inducing "response fatigue" (Choi and Pak, 2005), thus entailing incomplete answers (as we will see in section 5.1), a potential flaw that we tried to remedy through the possibility of saving answers and resuming the survey later on.

To sum up, this chapter provided a detailed account of all the methodological elements related to preparing, designing, testing and launching the questionnaire via email and gaming forums. It tackled basic questions that the researcher needed to address beforehand, including the platform on which to conduct the survey, the way of handling ethics and the time-span. It also explained every step of the questionnaire design, the expected outcome of each question, both open-ended and close-ended, and the insightful results yielded by the piloting phase. Having reviewed the various groups of question and the rationales behind them, it is natural to focus on the outcome. The following chapter therefore presents the results of the study section by section, starting with some general information. These results will then be discussed in chapter 6.

5. Results of the Study

In this chapter, we will go through all the questions asked in the survey (available in Appendix 3) and describe the results. After a brief section concerning general information about our data sets, we shall follow the order provided in the questionnaire.

5.1   General Information

LimeSurvey, the software used for administrating our questionnaire, recorded 115 sets of answers. Yet, it is worth taking a closer look at these records and studying their nuances. Indeed, out of 115 people, only 57 completed the whole survey (i.e. reached the final page of questions). Among the remaining 58 incomplete answers received, 23 of them were empty, which means that people browsed the welcome page of the questionnaire but did not decide to fill it out. Yet, LimeSurvey kept track of them. As these records provided no data, they were discarded from the survey's statistics and analysis. Among the remaining 92 respondents, 17 stopped at page 1 (background information) and 18 at page 2 (experience with computer games). The remaining 57 respondents went through with the questionnaire until the end. Given the considerable difference between the total number of respondents and that of those who completed the whole survey, we decided to analyse both sets of answers separately and to compare them in this paper. This enabled us to see if the tendencies observed in the smaller sample met those in the larger one.

Our smaller sample was therefore composed of **57 respondents** and our larger one of **92**. Among these 92 people, 90 reported that their mother tongue was French and two reported they were native Russian speakers. Even if the questionnaire was explicitly directed to native speakers of French, the results of both respondents were included in the sample since their command of French was also indicated as native. Indeed, based on their country of residence, their self-assessment in French and the free text answers they provided, which we deemed as undistinguishable from that provided by native speakers, we decided they could be included in the analysis. As far as language is concerned, it may also be worth mentioning that three respondents stated they had two mother tongues, including French.

Now that these elements have been established, we shall proceed with the analysis of the data, starting with the first series of questions. This traditional set of questions aimed at gathering information about participants' background.

5.2   Section 1: Background Information

The elements analysed in the background section concerned respondents' age and gender, country of origin and of residence, level of proficiency in foreign languages as well as professional background (as shown in Appendix 3).

5.2.1 Age and Gender

The following paragraphs will examine the two common sets of data that are age and gender.

5.2.1.1 Age

The very first question related to participants' age and was split up into six categories. Our larger sample population was mainly composed of players aged between 18 and 34 years old, as shown on Figure 5 below. Indeed, these two categories alone made up just over 70% of the whole, with a marked predominance of 25-34 over 18-24 (respectively 40.22% and 30.43%). This imbalance between younger and elder participants was even more striking when analysing the smaller sample, in which 18-34-year-olds made up around 77% of the total, but this time with a higher representation of 18-24-year-olds than of 25-34 (40.35% against 36.84%). Another notable difference was the much smaller proportion of 45-54-year-olds in the smaller sample (from 9.78% down to 3.51% of the sample). The following graph shows the number of participants concerned by each age category and sets data from the larger and the smaller sample against each other.
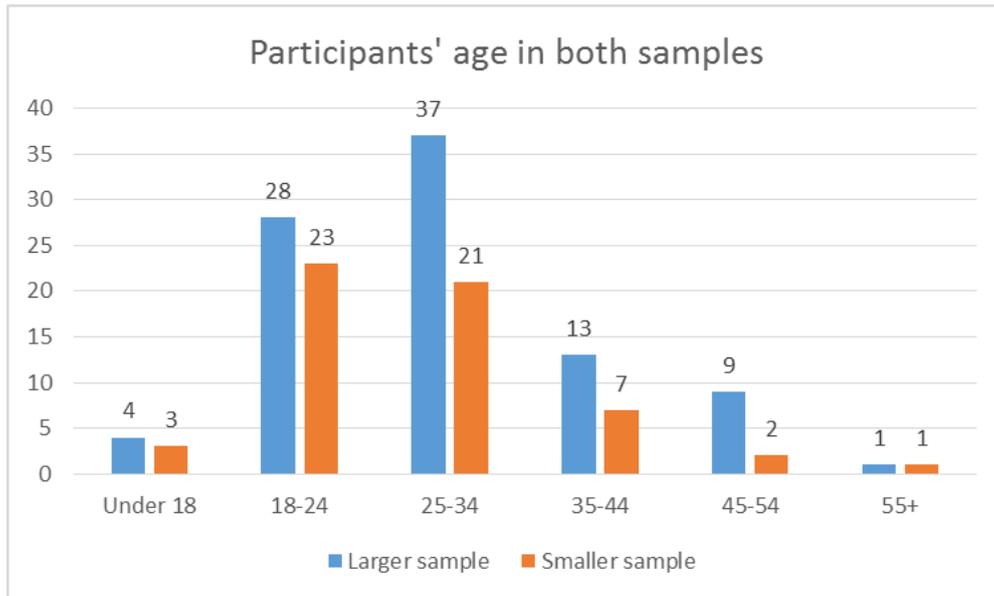
Figure 5. Participants' age in both samples

These results differ from those observed in the 2013 study by the CNC summed up in section 3.2, since the CNC identified 35-49-year-olds as the biggest proportion of gamers (26.2%), followed by 15-24 (18.4%) and 25-34 (18.3%). In the results of the ISFE's 2012 consumer study for France, on the other hand, just like in our data set, 25-34-year-olds was the most represented category, though in a much smaller proportion (28%) and, unlike in our sample, followed by 35-44 (22%). The main difference with the results of the 2013 study concerned the older category, defined as over 55 in our study and over 50 in the CNC's. Indeed, while this group was virtually missing from our set of data (only 1.09% of respondents, i.e. one person), it made up 17.4% of the CNC's respondents. The ISFE's 2012 consumer study, on the other hand, stood somewhere in between, with respondents over 55 years old accounting for 8% of the gamer population surveyed.

There are several possible explanations to the variations in results. For example, the slightly different age categories may partly account for these fluctuations, since including certain participants in one or the other class has an impact on the statistics of these groups. Plus, these studies were conducted 4 to 5 years prior to ours, which is a long time in a market evolving tremendously fast. Another possible explanation is the way participants were attracted, via forums and especially via emails, since a considerable proportion of potential participants were under 35, as explained in section 4.1.4.2. It is thus possible that these various factors have influenced our results.

Nonetheless, from the comparison with the abovementioned studies, both our samples seemed to over-represent the 18-24 category and, to a lesser extent, the 25-34. Consequently, they may also have under-evaluated the presence of other age categories in the gamer population, especially over-55-year-olds. Yet, as no data about age repartition was available in the most recent studies, it is hard to tell for sure.

On a different note, it may be worth stressing that under-18-year-olds were not intended as the questionnaire's primary audience for several reasons. One of them was linguistic knowledge, both of one's mother tongue and of foreign language. Indeed, we assumed that to a certain extent there was a positive correlation between age and mastery of languages, the latter possibly being crucial to the choice of one language or the other for playing. Plus, we thought the length of the questionnaire might deter some respondents, especially younger gamers. Still, we believe it is worth mentioning that three out of the four under 18s carried out the survey until the very end. After focusing on age, the next set of answers will examine yet another typical set of data in questionnaires: participants' gender.

5.2.1.2 Gender

In terms of gender, most respondents identified themselves as male (78.26% - 72 respondents), a smaller proportion as female (17.39% - 16 respondents) and the last 4.35% as undetermined (4 respondents). When considering our smaller sample, the results showed the same tendency, though slightly less marked, 73.68% of males, 21.05% of females and 5.26% of undetermined gender (respectively 42, 12 and 3 participants).

Although previous studies did not account for a third gender and, as a consequence, did not provide data in this respect, our findings featured a much higher proportion of men compared to women when other research tended to show a more even split between both genders (see Table 6 in section 3.2). For example, the last consumer study by SELL reported that 54% of gamers were male and 46% were female. Such findings are consistent with those of the studies we quoted previously. This considerable unbalance in our results was already present in the sample of potential participants who received the survey via email. It may thus challenge the representativeness of our sample, a limit that will be further developed in section 6.1.

The two figures below show the proportions of respondents for each category, first in the larger sample and second in the smaller one.
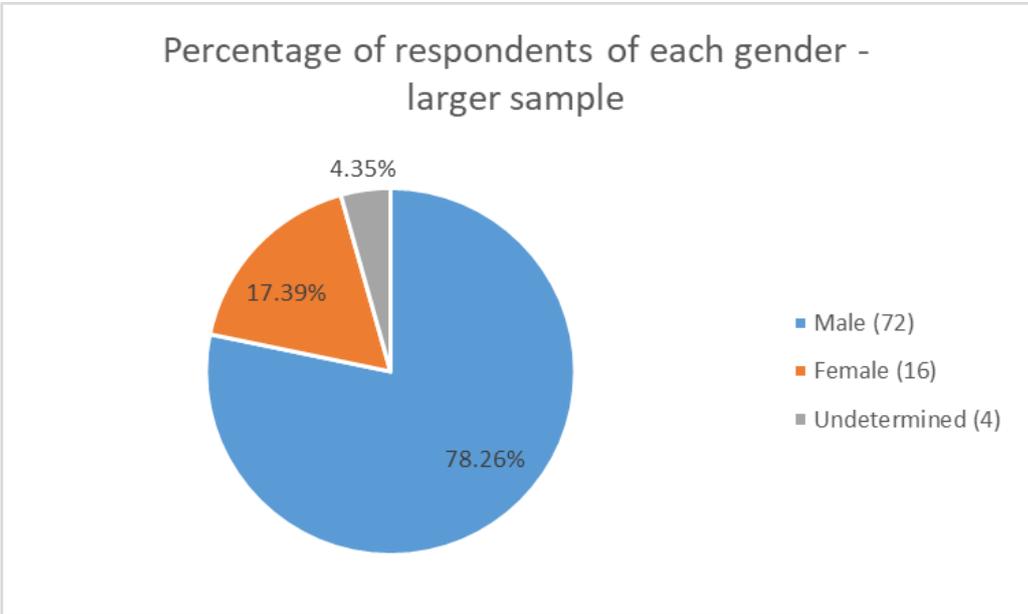

Figure 6. Percentage of respondents of each gender in the larger sample
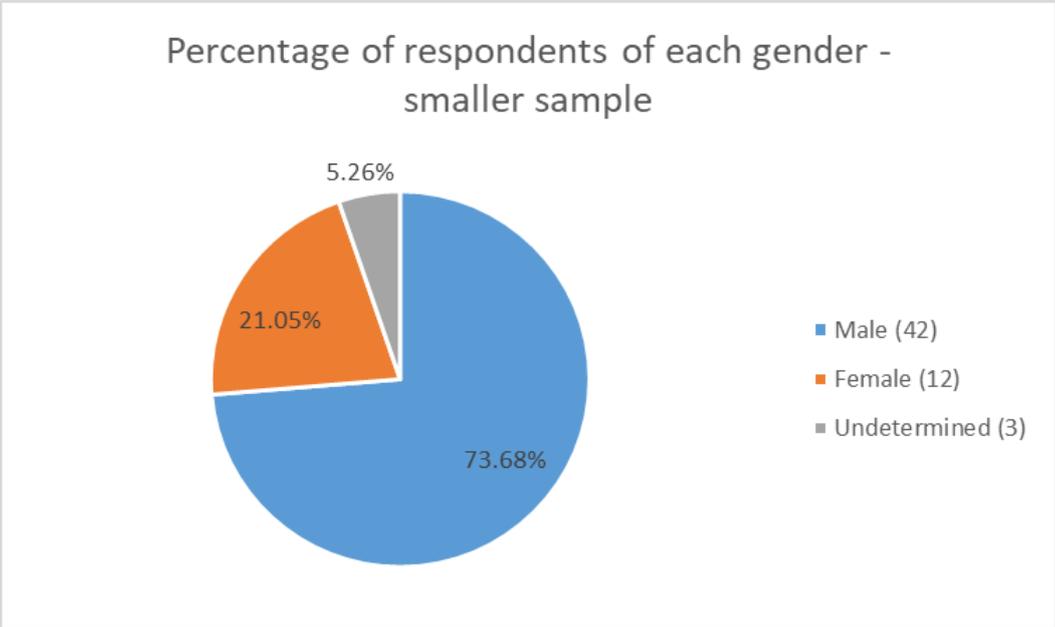

Figure 7. Percentage of respondents of each gender in the smaller sample

5.2.2 Country of Origin and Country of Residence

In terms of country of origin, a vast majority of respondents, 80 to be precise, declared they came from France (87.0%). Some respondents mentioned coming from other –partly-francophone countries such as Switzerland, Belgium and Mauritius, and the remaining 4.3% (4 people) from non-francophone countries (Russia, Brazil, Germany and Hungary). In our core sample, the proportion of respondents whose country of origin was France was slightly smaller (82.46% i.e. 47 respondents), with Switzerland representing the same percentage as the non-francophone countries aforementioned (7.02% each – 4 respondents) and Belgium accounting for 3.51% of respondents (2 of them). Though Mauritius was not present in this sample, there seemed to be a greater diversity than in the large one, with countries other than France being more represented.

The following graph shows the number of players by country of origin for the larger sample, exemplifying the marked predominance of French participants.
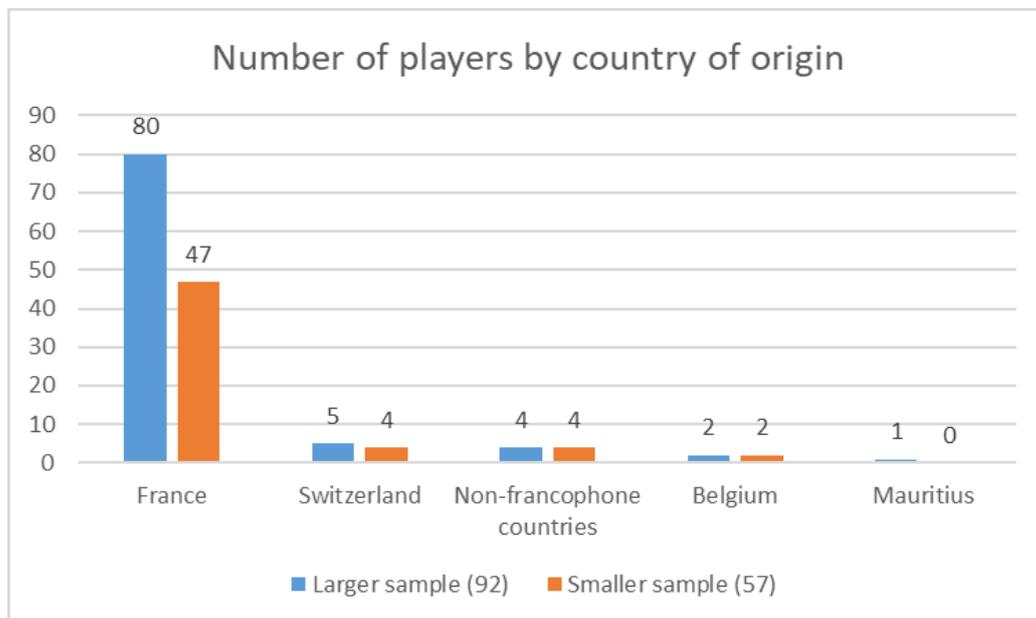

Figure 8. Number of players by country of origin in both samples

When it comes to countries of residence, the answers given were less varied, gravitating around France, Switzerland and Belgium (respectively 89.13%, 7.61% and 3.26% of respondents for the larger sample and 87.72%, 8.77% and 3.51% for the smaller one).

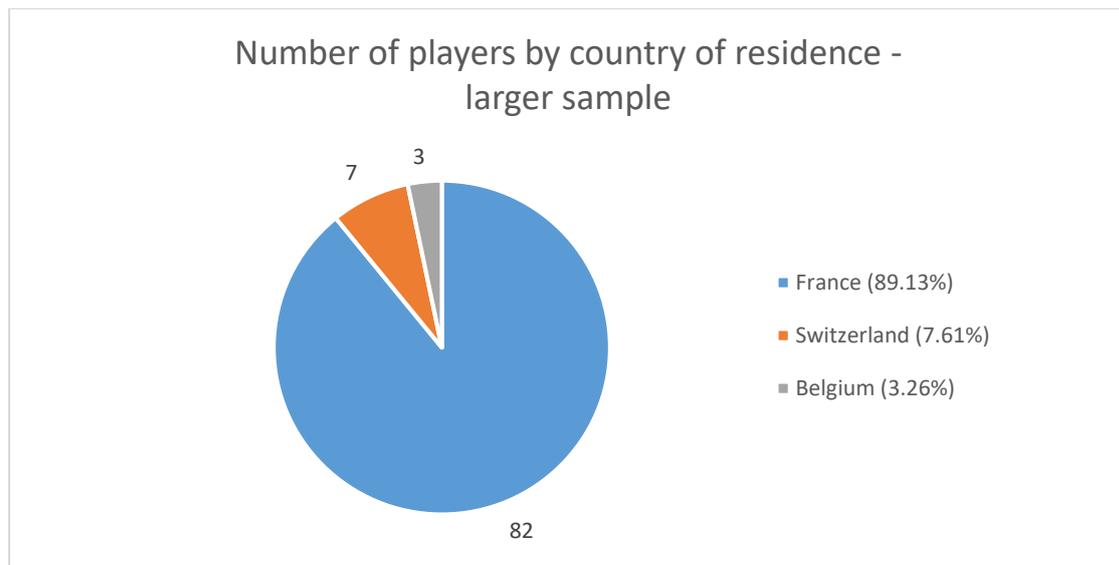The graph below displays data taken from the larger sample.

Figure 9. Number of players by country of residence in the larger sample

The three residence countries shown above are all at least partly francophone, which makes sense considering 90 respondents declared their mother tongue was French and most of them originally came from –at least partly- francophone countries. The fact that no one from Quebec answered our questionnaire may also be worth mentioning, and we shall come back to it and dwell on the possible implications in the discussion (chapter 6). As mentioned earlier, the same three countries were represented in the smaller sample, displayed below.
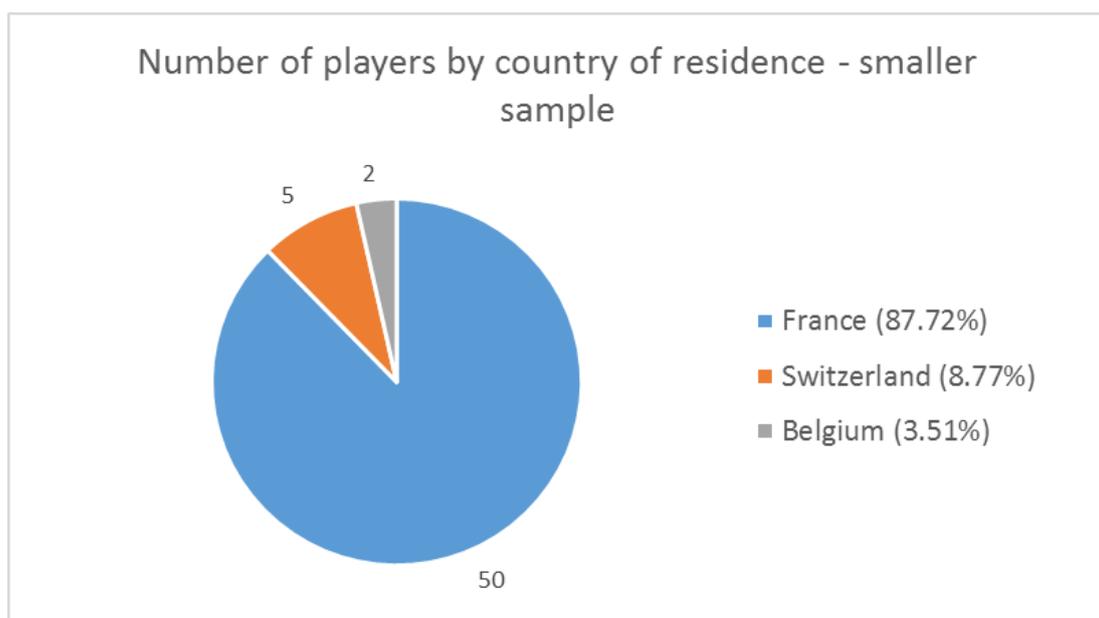

Figure 10. Number of players by country of residence in the smaller sample

Now, we shall move on to the next item, which is to some extent related to the countries of origin and residence: languages spoken by respondents.

5.2.3 Multilingualism

5.2.3.1 Monolingual and Multilingual Respondents

As a matter of fact, **most respondents from the larger sample declared they spoke at least one language other than their mother tongue**[33], regardless of their level in said language, this information having been tested just a bit further away in the questionnaire (see 5.2.3.3). Indeed, 84 respondents (91.3%) answered affirmatively, against 8 (8.7%) who answered in the negative. This means that over 90% of our sample was "bilingual", which has to be understood here as "speaking at least one foreign language, regardless of the respondent's level". The following graph illustrates our findings for the larger sample. It is followed by the results for the smaller sample, in which the difference is even more marked.
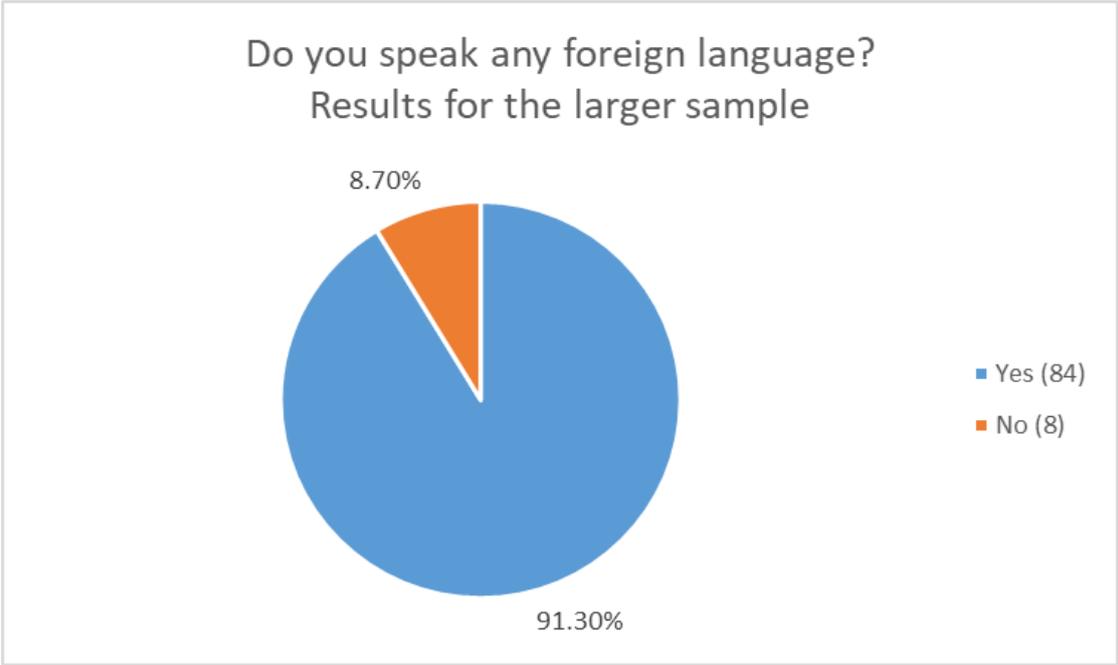

Figure 11. Percentage of bilingual respondents in the larger sample

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[33] For the sake of our study, "mother tongue" refers in our analysis to French exclusively.
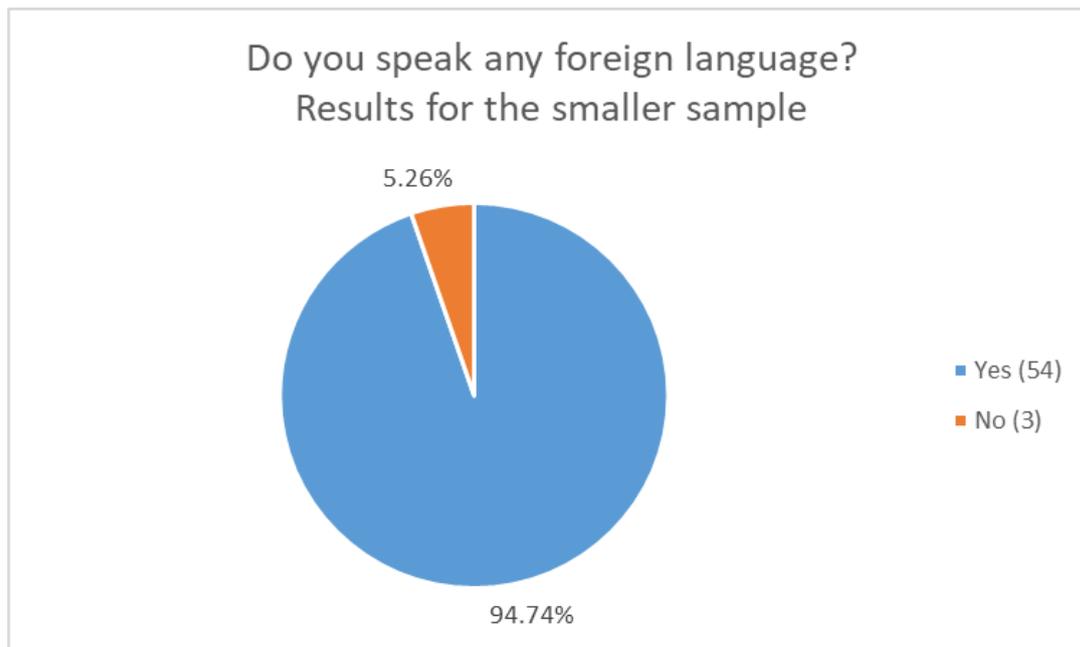
Figure 12. Percentage of bilingual respondents in the smaller sample

Yet, when it came to trilingual participants in the larger sample (i.e. people speaking their mother tongue and two other languages, regardless of their level), there was a steep drop in the number of answers: less than half our larger sample is trilingual (39 participants - 42.39%). Understandably, this number kept decreasing respectively to 13.04% (12 participants) and 3.26% (3 respondents) as we added languages (meaning that only 3 respondents knew at least four[34] foreign languages).

The following graph illustrates this steep drop: for each case, it represents the total number of answers. This means that, for instance, respondents who knew two foreign languages were taken into account in the count for trilingual people but also for bilingual and monolingual people on this graph. The same data is displayed right after for the smaller sample as well to facilitate comparison (Figure 14).

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[34] Given the fact that we did not provide the possibility to enter more than four foreign languages, we do not know if any participant knows more foreign languages, though it seems unlikely.
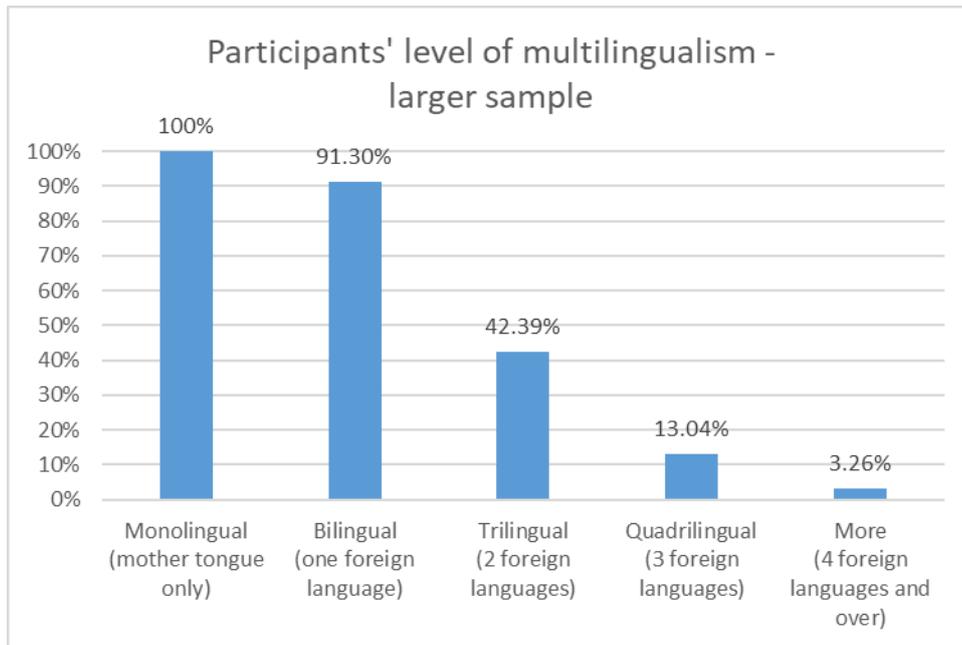
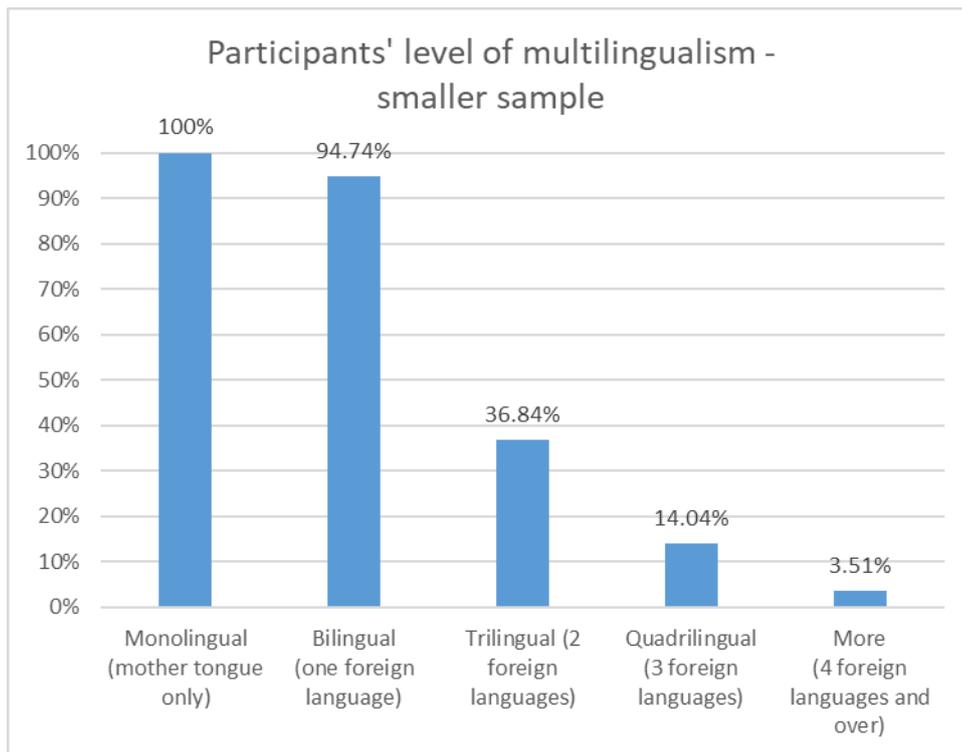*Figure 13. Participants' level of multilingualism in the larger sample*

Figure 14. Participants' level of multilingualism in the smaller sample

The pie chart, on the other hand, shows the proportion of participants in each category for the larger sample. The bilingual category clearly stands out, making up for almost half of the sample.
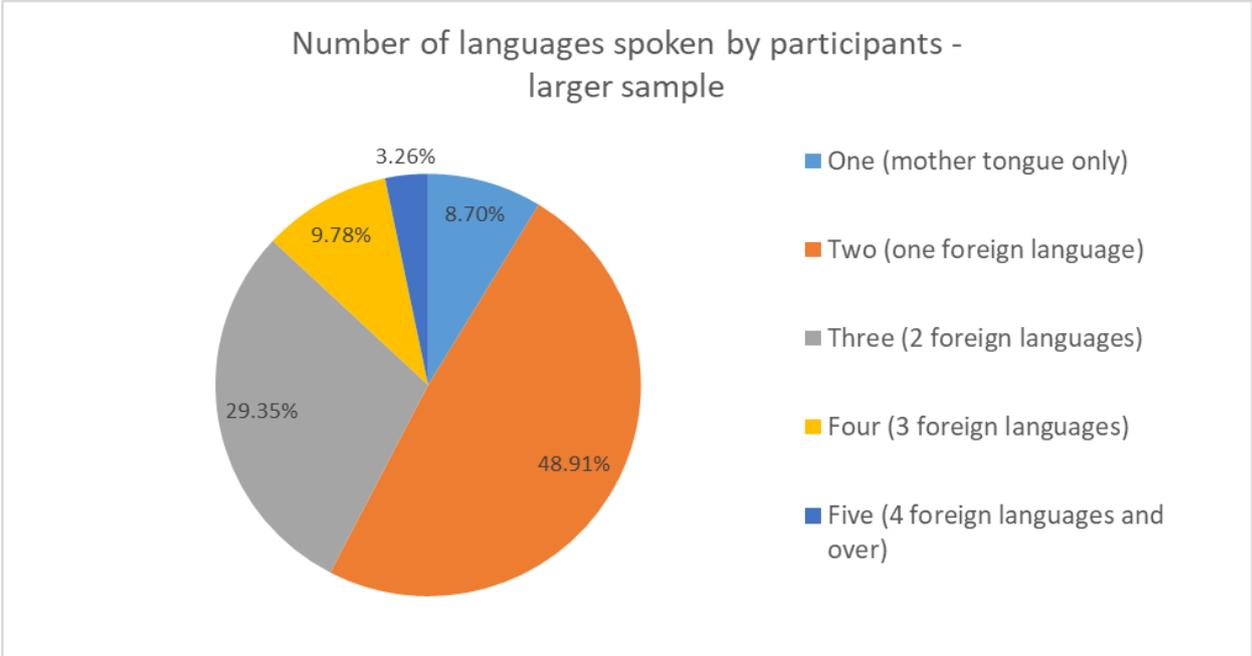
Figure 15. Number of languages spoken by participants in the larger sample

As shown on Figures 12, 14 and 16 (below), our smaller sample showed similar tendencies to the larger one. Indeed, 94.74% of respondents (54 people) spoke another language, so the percentage of bilingual people was slightly higher than in the larger sample. Regarding additional foreign languages, 36.84% (21 participants) knew at least two foreign languages (i.e. are trilingual), which was slightly lower than in our bigger sample. Finally, 14.04% (8 respondents) knew three, and only two of them (3.51%) knew at least four.
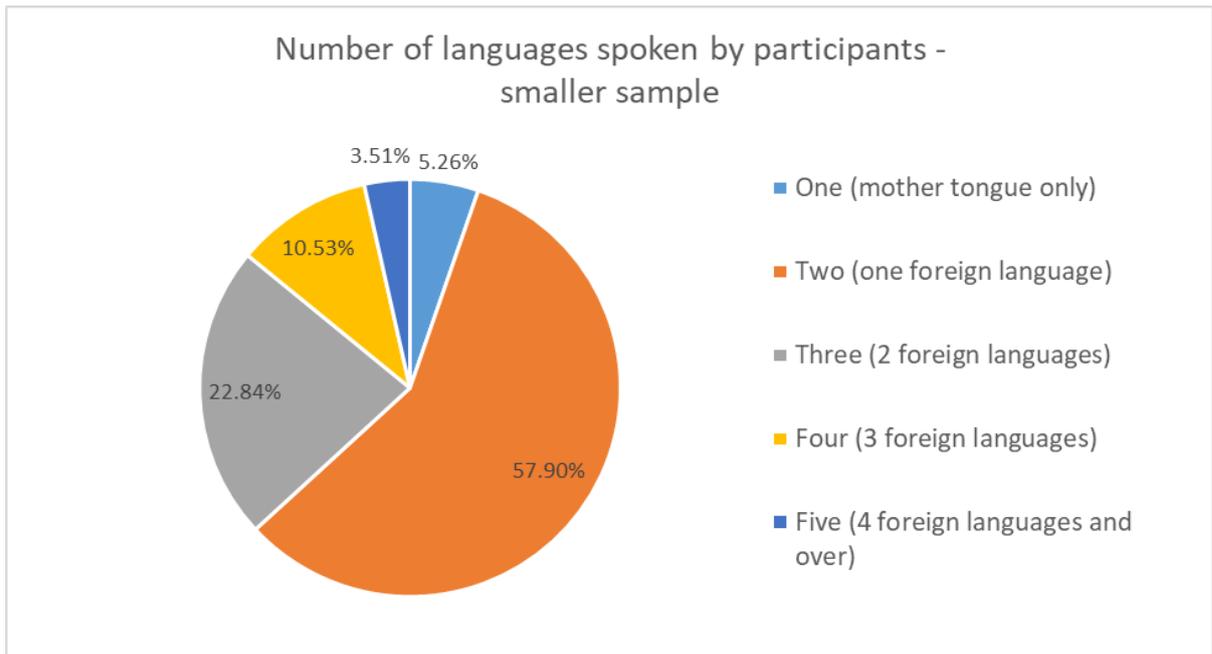
Figure 16. Number of languages spoken by participants in the smaller sample

The fact that the participants were relatively gifted in foreign languages is very important given that we posited that language mastery may be part of the factors conditioning playing in a certain language. A high number of bilingual people therefore means a high potential for playing in a language different from one's mother tongue, though at this stage respondents' proficiency was still left out of the analysis and will not be explored until section 5.2.3.3. Although a basic knowledge of the language is a sine qua non condition for playing in this language, a relatively low level may hinder comprehension and thus make it harder to play the game. It is thus crucial to examine players' proficiency in foreign languages. But first, let us take a look at the variety of languages spoken by respondents in our samples.

5.2.3.2 Foreign Languages Spoken

It is worth noting that all the respondents that declared they spoke at least one foreign language quoted English as one of them, although not always as first foreign language. This is very important within the framework of our research since many – if not most - video games are originally developed in English. In other words, the "original" untranslated version of video games is generally created in English, even when the developers come from other countries, a point underlined by four respondents. The fact that all bilingual participants had at least a basic knowledge of English makes sense since it is a mandatory foreign language in French schools. In Belgium and Switzerland, however, it is not mandatory[35], but remains very commonly taught, as is the case in many countries throughout the world.

The number of speakers of Japanese (another key development language) is much lower: five respondents (5.43% of the sample) reported they spoke Japanese, with a level that generally did not exceed B1, except for one respondent who declared their level was B2 for oral skills. The relatively low level of speakers may partly be explained by the fact that, unlike English, Japanese is not among the languages traditionally taught at school in Europe and is further from French than English, from a linguistic point of view, making it more complicated to learn for native French speakers. This level difference would allegedly make it harder for gamers to play video games in the original Japanese version than in the English one.

Apart from Chinese, other foreign languages mentioned by respondents almost exclusively included European languages, mostly Spanish (18.48%), German (14.13%), Italian (6.52%) and Portuguese (4.35%). On the whole, including participants' mother tongue, thirteen languages were spoken within our samples. The following bar-graph displays data from our larger sample and shows the number of participants speaking each foreign language.

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[35] In Belgium, languages taught depend on the linguistic zone where children study. In the francophone zone (Wallonia), for instance, students have the choice between several languages, very often Dutch (a national language that is not mandatory either), English and German. See the articles at: http://www.ouest-france.fr/education/europe-comment-sont-enseignees-les-langues-etrangeres-dans-lue-3395887 [accessed 04 Sep. 2017] and http://www.levif.be/actualite/belgique/l-anglais-comme-deuxieme-langue-dans-l-enseignement-flamand/article-normal-155503.html [accessed 04 Sep. 2017].
In Switzerland as a whole, studying English is not mandatory either and a preference is given to the teaching of the national languages, mostly German and French. Being a federal country, laws, school systems and curricula vary from one canton to the next, meaning some cantons may impose the teaching of English when in others it remains optional for higher levels. In the francophone canton of Vaud, for instance, studying English is not mandatory in the most basic education level, called "voie générale". See http://www.vd.ch/themes/formation/scolarite-obligatoire/cursus-scolaire/cycle-3/voie-generale/ [accessed 04 Sep. 2017].
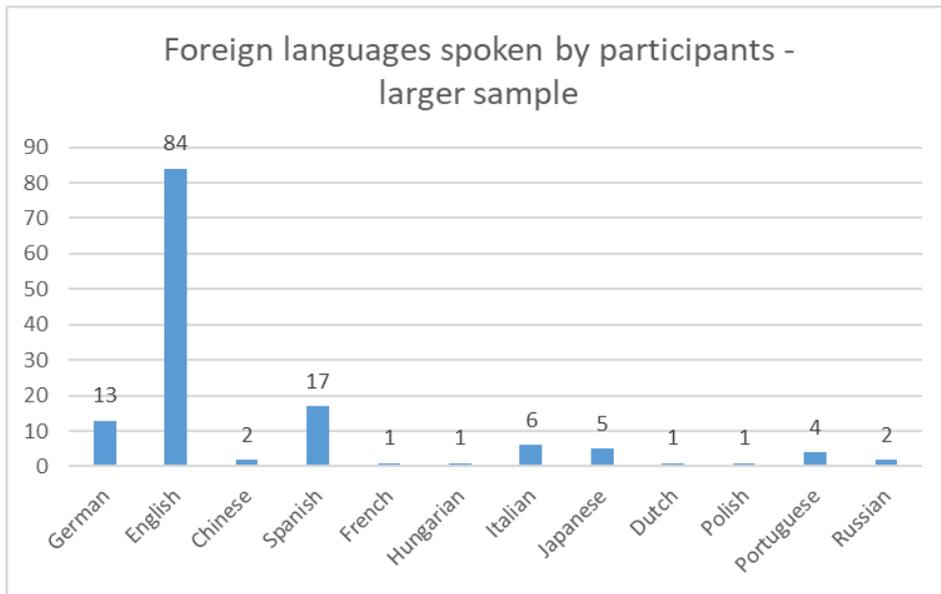
Figure 17. Foreign languages spoken by participants in the larger sample

Considering the smaller sample, similar results were yielded, with all respondents who spoke a foreign language (54 out of 57 – 94.74%) speaking at least English. However, one may note that, contrary to the larger sample, the second most spoken foreign language was not Spanish but German, although Spanish came very close (respectively 8 and 7 votes, which represented 14.04% and 12.28% of answers). The chart below presents the results for the smaller sample.

Figure 18. Foreign languages spoken by participants in the smaller sample

After establishing which languages were spoken and briefly mentioning the degree of heterogeneity among participants and the possible implications for gaming practices, we shall take a closer look at proficiency in said languages.

5.2.3.3 Proficiency in First Foreign Language

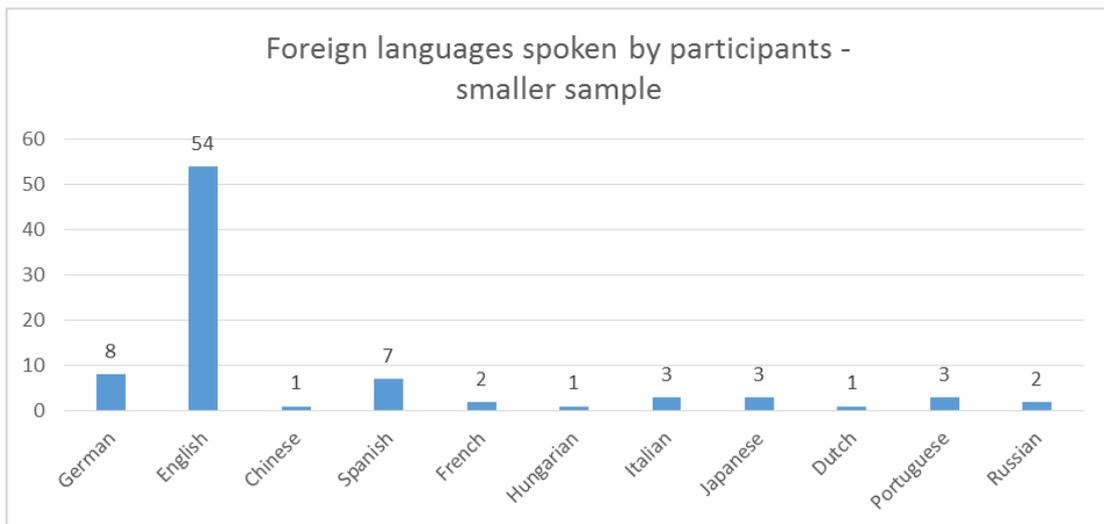Firstly, it may be worth stressing that English was quoted as first foreign language by 77 participants, which represented almost 92% of the 84 respondents who stated they spoke at least one foreign language. Language proficiency, as determined by the abovementioned Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) was expressed through ordinal data, which means the data was ordered but there was no real knowing how big the interval between each category was (Oates, 2006, p. 247). For example, the six-degree scale tells us that C1 corresponds to a very high level, yet there may be differences in proficiency among people in this same category.

In terms of fluency, the heterogeneity of our samples was patent considering that answers ranged from A1 to C2 for all four foreign languages declared. Similarly, when considering only proficiency in English, data also ranged from A1 to C2, that is to say the whole possible scope of the CEF. This shows that although the language was learnt (possibly at school) by most participants, the final result, i.e. the proficiency, varied greatly from one person to the next.

The following figures show the level of participants first from the larger sample and second from the smaller one in each skill suggested by the CEF. These levels are presented on a cumulative basis thanks to a stacked-column graph. The similarity of the repartition may be noted once again.
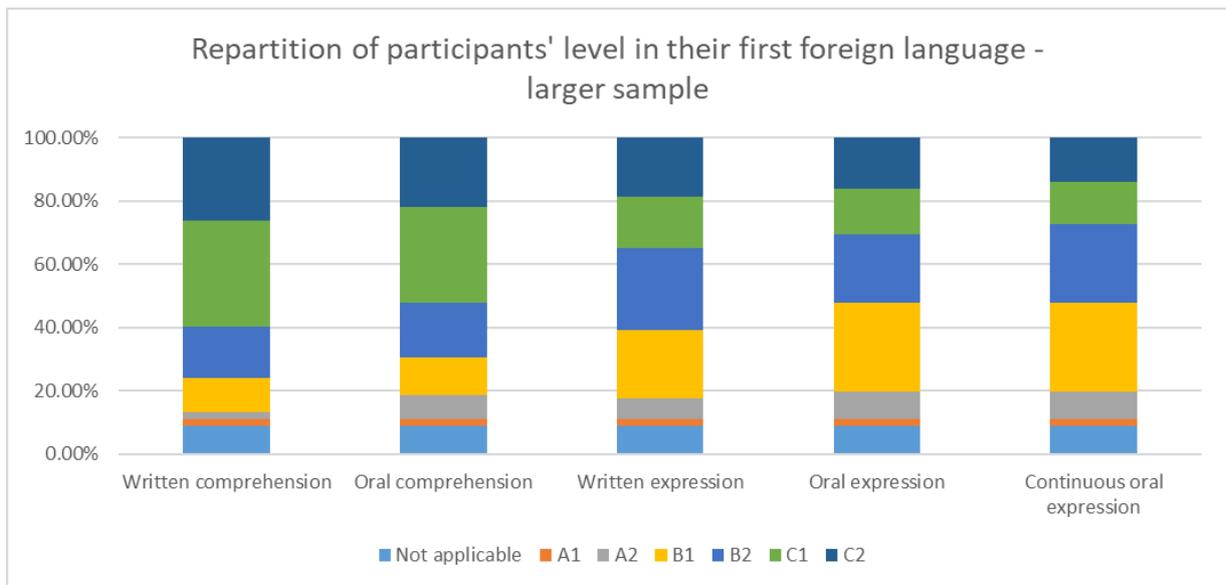
Figure 19. Repartition of participants' level in their first foreign language in the larger sample

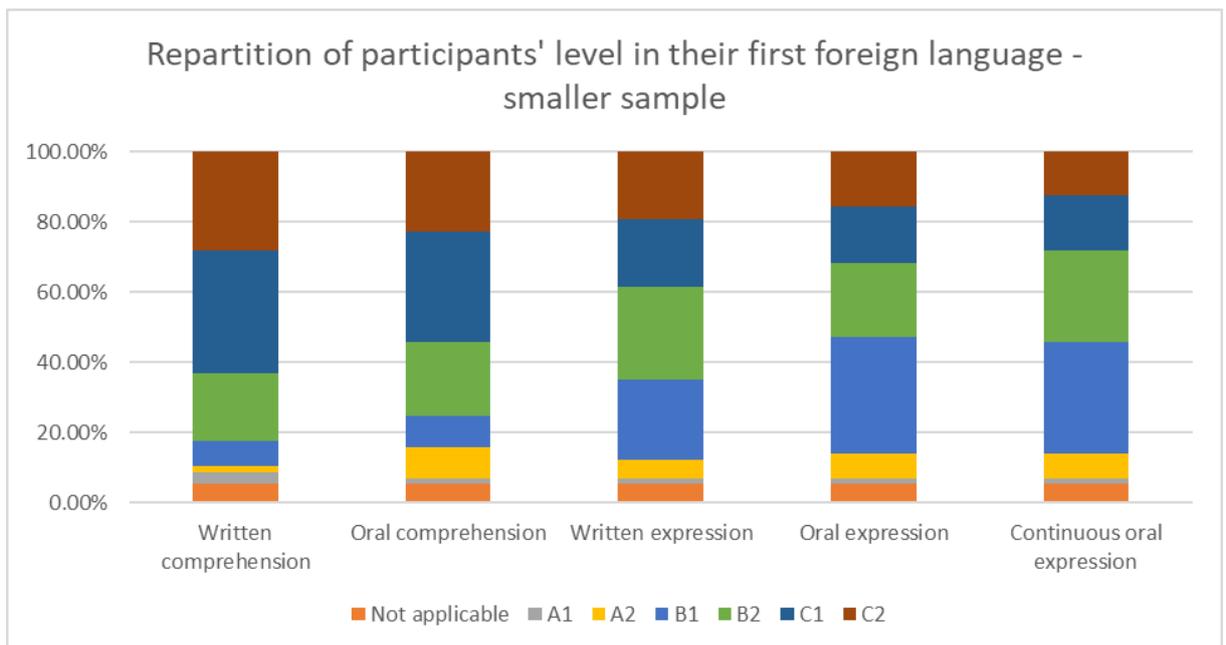*Figure 20. Repartition of participants' level in their first foreign language in the smaller sample*

Furthermore, in order to have a better picture of the central tendency and minimize the impact of the outliers, the median was calculated for the first foreign language in both samples. It may be worth bearing in mind that participants' first foreign language was not necessarily English.

The following table shows the results yielded by these two calculations, which were identical for both samples, as shown below.

	Larger sample		Smaller sample	
	Mode	Median	Mode	Median
Written comprehension	C1	C1	C1	C1
Oral comprehension	C1	C1	C1	C1
Written expression	B2	B2	B2	B2
Oral expression	B1	B2	B1	B2
Continuous oral expression	B1	B2	B1	B2

Table 8. Mode and median of participants' proficiency in their first foreign language

In both samples, one may note a discrepancy between very strong comprehension skills (more than half the sample reported being C1 or C2, i.e. almost bilingual) and lower expression skills. Indeed, the mode equalled B1 for oral and continuous oral expression, meaning that in these two cases B1 was the level reported by the highest number of participants. Yet, in both cases mentioned, the median was B2. As a reminder, "the median gives us the point where 50 per cent of the cases in our data set lie to one side of it, and 50 per cent to the other" (Oates, 2006, p. 256). This gap between comprehension and expression seems consistent with the generally acknowledged fact that it is harder to express oneself in a foreign language than to understand it. Furthermore, games usually require a good understanding of what is going on, but it is a lot less common to have players write or utter their own sentences; predefined options are usually available. The level of expression may thus be less relevant for players when it comes to choosing in which language they will play the game. After examining various aspects related to foreign languages spoken by participants, we shall look carefully at the last item of the background section: professional background.

5.2.4 Professional Background

As outlined when laying down our methodology (section 4.2.2.1), 24 job categories were available for participants to choose from (the 21 official ones, to which we added "game industry", "translation and interpreting" and "other"). No "student" category was provided since the question was phrased in such a way that participants had to pick the category corresponding to their job or their area of studies. Out of these 24 categories, 15 were represented, which means the study was largely transversal in terms of professional background. Indeed, although not all professions were present, respondents came from varied areas.

18 people did not recognize themselves in the rigid categories provided by the NACE classification. They constituted the biggest –and most heterogeneous- group of respondents, labelled "other" (19.57%). Behind came people working in professional, scientific and technical activities (12 respondents – 13.04%) and those working in the information and communication area, which include computer sciences (11 respondents - 11.96%). On top of that, 8 respondents declared they worked in the categories we added, namely Translation and Interpreting and Video Game Industry (4 in each - 4.35%). This, however, did not prove relevant in the analysis since there were very small proportions that had diverging opinions.

Concerning the smaller sample, 14 categories were represented (against 15 in the larger one). There again, there was a vast majority of "other": 13 respondents, which corresponds to almost 23% of answers. Other well-represented categories were far behind: professional, scientific and technical activities (8 people - 14%) and information and communication (7 people - around 12%). Still, these results were in keeping with those from the larger sample. Actually, most people from these four categories were part of our smaller sample. Regarding translation and interpreting, 3 out of the 4 people in the larger sample fell into the smaller one, and the same went for the video game industry.

From an objective point of view, the clustering of some professional categories and the (quasi) non-representation of some others may bias our results. Indeed, the proportions obtained did not necessarily correspond to the "real" proportions of each category in the countries where respondents came from. On top of that, judging from the professional categories, the massive presence of qualified workers may also introduce a social bias that can have repercussions on various aspects of the analysis, including the core of our study, user satisfaction with localisation. Yet, these possible biases are difficult to monitor.

After establishing participants' general background, we shall proceed with the data analysis to reach the answers that concern more directly our object of study. To do so, we will first have a look at participants' experience in the gaming area, and more specifically with games operated on computers.

5.3 Section 2: Experience with PC Video Games

This section focused on the overall experience of participants with video games operated on computers. It featured questions aimed at assessing the gaming level of respondents, as well as their preferences in terms of gaming genres and languages and their experience with games originally in French, i.e. non-localised.

5.3.1 Gaming Experience

This section inquired into participants' gaming experience taking into account two criteria: frequency of gaming and number of games played.

5.3.1.1 Gaming Frequency

Almost half of respondents played video games on PCs on a daily basis (34 people out of the 75 who answered this section – just over 45%) and may therefore correspond to what is commonly referred to as "hardcore gamers".

The first entry of the *Urban Dictionary* defines this concept as "[s]omeone who plays video games as a primary hobby. They tend to spend large amounts of time playing games, often in excess of two or three hours a day. (…) They'll often seek out obscure and older games" (Ninj3w, 2008). The French website Jeuxonline.info emphasises the fact that a hardcore gamer is very involved in video game communities both in-game (for example by leading a guild) or in game-related areas (forums for instance)[36].

Coming back to gaming frequency, depending on the sample analysed, the second biggest proportion of gamers played between 4 and 6 times a week (larger sample) or 2-3 times a week (smaller sample). It may be worth highlighting the fact that the three first categories only (i.e. playing several times a week) represented respectively around 88% and 85% of our samples, which corresponds to 66 and 49 participants. A possible explanation for such a high gaming frequency may lie in one of the distribution channels of the survey: forums. Indeed, people who saw the survey on gaming forums were likely to be very involved in video games, as highlighted by one of the above definitions of hardcore gamers. On top of this, the gaming platform on which the study was focused (PCs) may also entail a deeper involvement in gaming practices in general than other platforms such as mobile phones and tablets, that may be used more by "casual gamers".

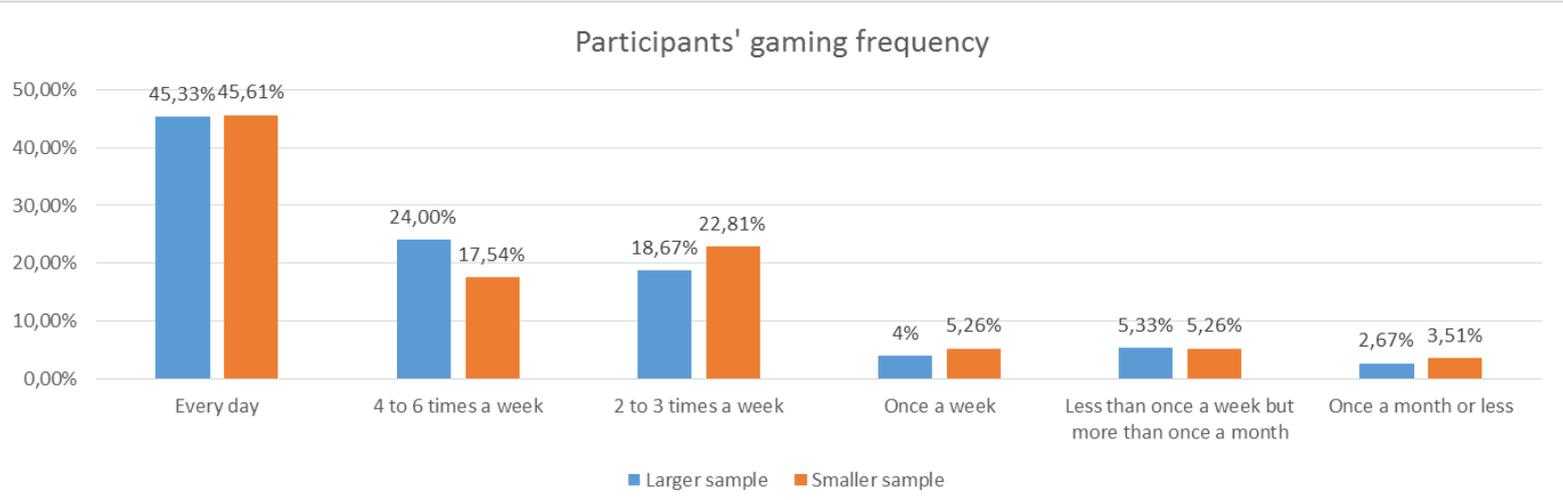The following graph sums up the answers obtained for both samples.

Figure 21. Participants' gaming frequency

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[36] The French definition can be accessed here: http://www.jeuxonline.info/lexique/mot/Hardcore_gamer [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].

In order to check if our gaming frequency data seemed consistent, it was set against the results gathered in other studies. Firstly, the CNC's study yielded similar findings for daily gamers (41.6% of respondents). Yet, further comparison is hindered by the fact that said study featured non-continuous data with relatively big intervals (every day / between once and three times a week / every month / every trimester / less than once a trimester). This may have biased their data in so far as it forced respondents to pick an answer that may not have absolutely fitted their gaming practises. Still, if we add up people playing daily and those playing a couple of times a week, we reach 83% of respondents, which is consistent with our own findings (between 85% and 88% - 49 and 66 people). However, the CNC's study found that 16.9% of respondents played once a month or less, whereas in our study the proportion was 2.67% of respondents (2 people). This may be due to the considerable interval that exists between playing weekly and monthly, an aspect the CNC's questionnaire did not account for.

Similarly, when taking into account the results from the SELL's study, the issue of non-continuous data arose as well. In this case, answers were more evenly split, with daily gamers representing only 28% of the sample and all respondents playing at least twice a week totalling 53% of answers, i.e. just a bit more than half of the sample. These results contrasted greatly with those yielded by our questionnaire and that of the CNC, although the study was conducted a lot more recently, i.e. closer to our time frame. These contradictory results did not enable us to say for sure that our data matched a more generalizable trend, yet, the consistency of our answers with those from one larger-scale study may be a good sign in terms of representativeness.

When aiming at pinpointing the gaming habits of participants, the matter of frequency naturally reads into that of quantity, in the shape of the number of games played overall and in a more recent time-frame.

5.3.1.2 Number of Games Played

The analysis of the total number of games played by respondents in each sample yielded similar results: most gamers seemed to have a wide experience of computer games, with a minimum of 11 games played in over 90% of cases (69 respondents). This positive point may have enabled participants to have a broad opinion on the topic of game localisation. It also seemed to confirm the previous suggestion that hardcore gamers were widely represented.

Yet, results were more diverse when focusing on recent game experiences on computers. In both samples, results were close to each other, with the highest percentage corresponding to people who had played more than 20 games over the past year. Still, contrary to the answers to the long-term approach, the answer "1-5 games" came second (25.33% - 19 participants). It was followed by the 6-10 category (22.67% - 17 people), and finally by 11-20 (14.67% - 11 respondents). Of course, these answers were but an estimate made by respondents, yet, it may appear striking that there should be such a discrepancy. Apparently, players have generally tested many games, but some have kept playing just a few for the past year. For example, one affirmed spending over 25 hours a week on *World of Warcraft*.

The graph below shows the relation between the percentage of participants from the larger sample and the number of games operated on computers they have played. The strong preponderance of the "over 20" category in overall gaming experience is clearly visible.
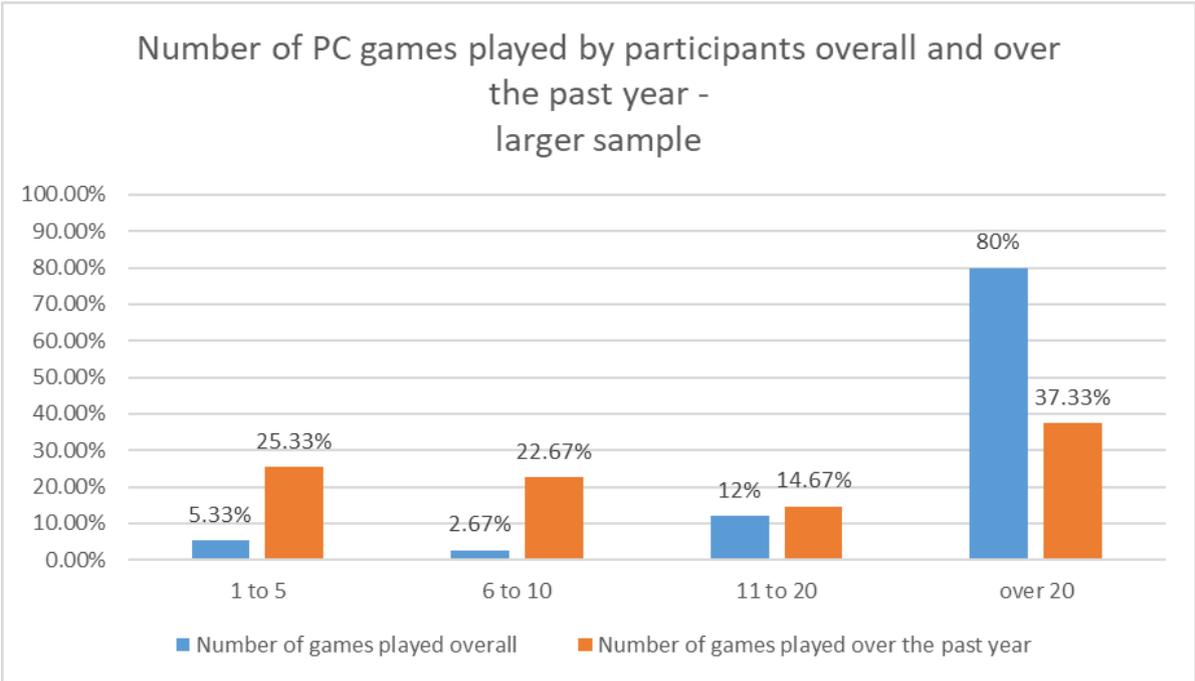
Figure 22. Number of PC games played by participants overall and over the past year in the larger sample

When observing data from the smaller sample, similar trends may be noted as well, enshrining the preponderance of experienced gamers in the sample since overall almost 80% of this sample as well have been playing over 20 video games on a computer in their life. The figure displayed below shows the results obtained for the smaller sample.

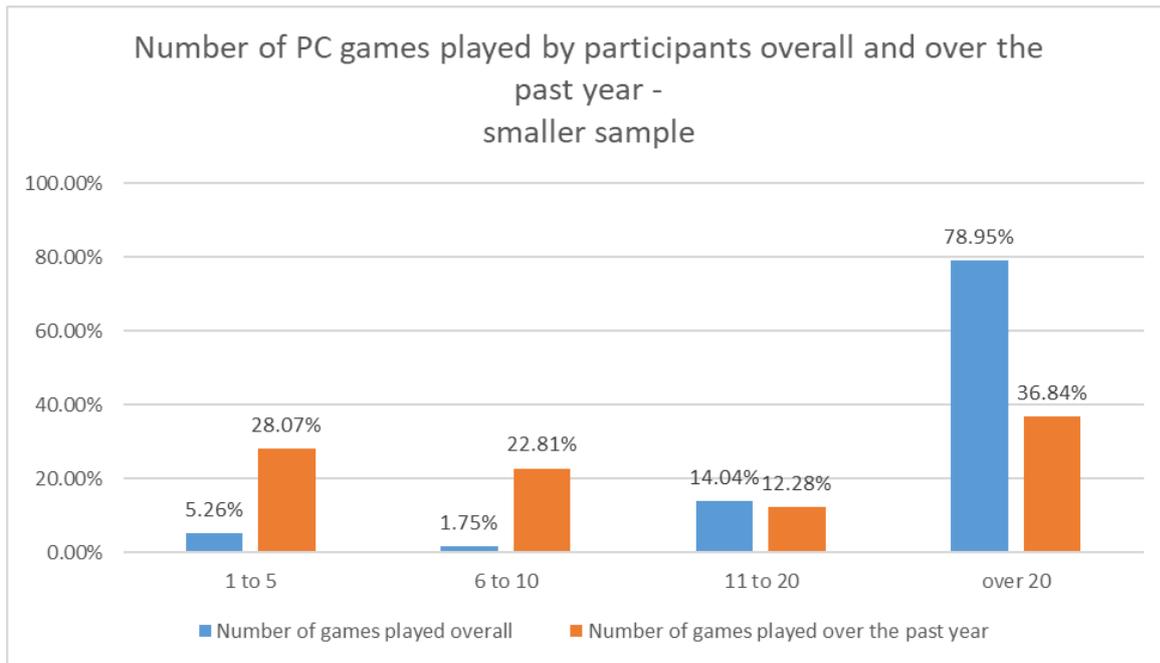**Number of PC games played by participants overall and over the past year -
smaller sample**

Figure 23. Number of PC games played by participants overall and over the past year in the smaller sample

Please note that these sets of data could not be compared with the other reference studies since they did not look into the actual number of games played by their respondents. After having examined this quantitative aspect of gaming experience, the next subsection will explore another aspect relating to gaming practices: the types of games preferred by participants.

5.3.2 Favourite Game Genres

Our two samples highlighted the same trends and presented almost the same variety. Indeed, though games that were less represented overall tended to be more represented in the smaller sample, there was no huge shift. This consistency was partly due to the fact that, as people kept dropping out of answering the questionnaire, the number of total respondents and the number of respondents who answered all sections got much closer – in this case 75 and 57.

Respondents from the larger sample clearly favoured role-playing games (RPGs) over the rest (41.33% of the biggest sample – 31 respondents), followed by strategy games (18.67% - 14) and massively multiplayer online games (MMOGs, 14.67% - 11). Some genres were hardly represented (platform and puzzle games for instance) and three were completely missing: racing, sport and social games, as shown on the graph below.
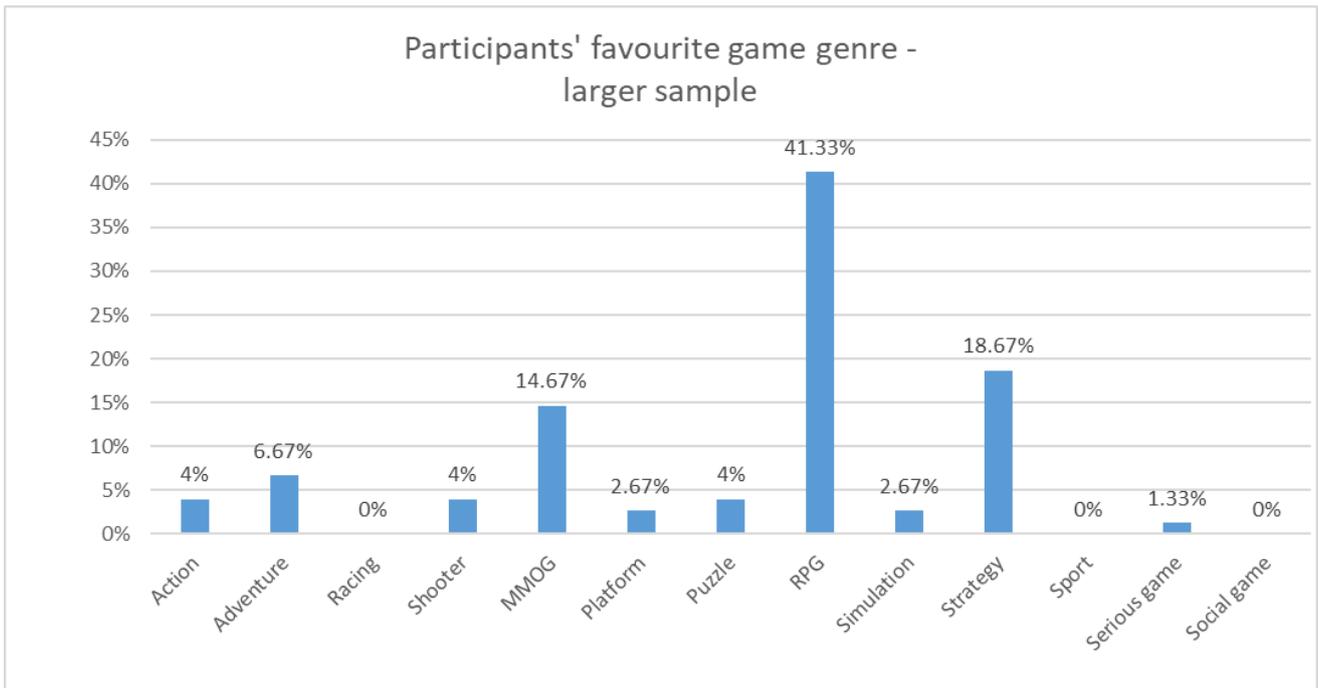
Figure 24. Participants' favourite game genre in the larger sample

Once again, the core sample follows the same trend as its bigger counterpart, featuring the same top three games, as visible on the graph below.
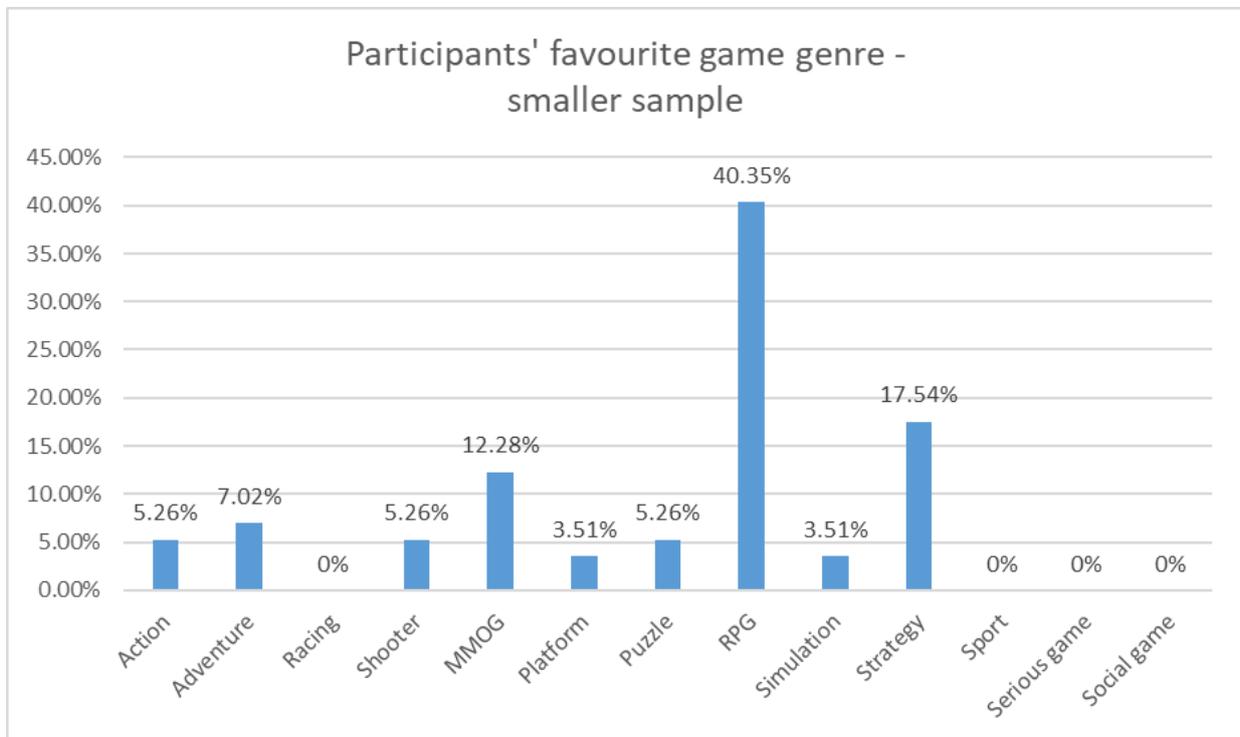

Figure 25. Participants' favourite game genre in the smaller sample

When it came to setting our data against other findings, it appeared that a comparison with other studies was slightly hindered by the fact that game genres are not well defined and classified, as highlighted in section 2.1.1.4. For example, the genre "children/family games", which the CNC identified as the 4th top game genre in its 2013 study on French consumers, was not taken into account in O'Hagan and Mangiron's classification (2013, p. 68), on which the closed answers for this question were based. Yet, the preferences of our samples, both large and small, matched those outlined in the research the CNC conducted, with RPG/Adventure coming first and strategy second. However, the SELL's results in 2016 were very different, with action/adventure representing by far the biggest sales in the physical market, followed by shooting games and RPGs. In our analysis, action and adventure were separated, but if we add them up, they total 10.67% of answers (8 answers) in the bigger sample and 12.28% in the smaller one (7 answers), which places them in third position, along with MMOGs. It may also be worth noting that shooters were not very popular among our participants. Yet, throughout these three studies, there seems to be a trend for RPGs.

It may also be worth emphasizing that there are no set criteria for assessing favourite genres; each study thus using a different method. For instance, the SELL 2016 market consumption study considered game sales whereas the CNC provided respondents with game genres and asked them to select all those they played. It then established a percentage – and a ranking - based on the number of people playing a given game genre compared to the overall surveyed, which means the total for all genres was over 100%. On the contrary, our respondents could only select one option, i.e. the one and only genre they played most. We then established a ranking based on the genres that were most selected. This approach may have made the question hard to answer if participants loved different genres, if the games they played were hybrid, i.e. typically fell into different categories, or if there was no explicit category for their favourite game genre. For instance, a participant noted "I had to choose but I play a wide variety of games". Another one quoted two games he played but stressed that he "didn't know which genre they belong to" so he resorted to a default choice. These two examples epitomize how tricky it may be to put games into boxes.

For that matter, apart from explanations on the answers provided, respondents also used the comment box associated with the question to make suggestions on how to improve the examples and classification chosen and make the latter more exhaustive. Proposals included adding genres like "visual novels" or "combat games", splitting up genres in the list or creating more specific subgroups (for example including a subgenre for "management games" inside the simulation category to account for the variety within this genre). Someone also suggested that adding a distinction between "Western" RPGs and Japanese RPGs (JRPGs) might be relevant, since these differ a lot. Furthermore, this question triggered a form of backlash in the free text box provided, with one participant openly criticizing a classification that he found had no logic and examples who seemed random and not evocative enough to his mind. This illustrates once again how complex classifying games can be.

Still, as highlighted in section 2.1.1.4, game genres, however imperfect and artificial their categorisations may be, provide a useful framework for analysis in the context of translation studies, since one can associate certain characteristics to them, in terms of text volume and content for instance. This aspect may be particularly relevant to a player when choosing the language of the game since a product with almost no text will be easier to understand than an MMORPG with extensive quest dialogs, a point some player stressed in further questions. Let us thus examine the answers respondents provided concerning their preferred gaming language.

5.3.3 Preferred Gaming Language

5.3.3.1 General Results

Regarding the preferred gaming language, the larger sample featured an equal split between English and French (35 votes each – 46.67%), with one person mentioning Japanese. It thus seemed that **regardless of their mother tongue, a high proportion of gamers preferred playing in the original language**. Yet, this finding must be contrasted with the fact that our sample had a relatively high level of fluency in English, as shown in the first section of the questionnaire. In both samples, another two people did not single out a specific language, but declared playing in the "original version", which depends both on its genre and on the game itself, although one may acknowledge that the majority of games produced stem from English. Still, these answers were set apart in order not to bias the analysis towards English.

Furthermore, two respondents stated that they played in various languages: English/French (even split) and English/French/Japanese (respectively 70%, 20% and 10% of the time, meaning mostly in English).

When considering the smaller sample, results were similar, with a slightly greater number of respondents favouring English when playing video games (see table below). The following chart sums up the answers obtained for this question for both samples.

Sample ⟍ Language	Bigger sample (92 respondents – with 17 of them who did not answer anything from this section onwards → **75 participants**)	Smaller sample (**57 respondents**)
French	35 (46.67%)	25 (43.86%)
English	35 (46.67%)	27 (47.37%)
Japanese	1 (1.33%)	1 (1.75%)
French or English	1 (half and half) (1.33%)	1 (half and half) (1.75%)
French or English or Japanese	1 (1.33%)	1 (1.75%)
"The original language"	2[37] (2.67%)	2 (3.51%)

Table 9. Participants' preferred gaming language

In one of the following questions, respondents were asked to give an estimation of the proportion represented by this language in their overall gaming experience (i.e. in percent, how often did they play in the language they identified). The range of answers was very wide, from 10 to 100%. Yet, extremely low percentages seemed incoherent with the question itself, which concerned the language players used <u>most</u> of the time. For this question, the mean was 81.52% of the time. The median, however, was slightly lower: 77.5% of the time, which means there were probably a few extreme upper cases. Still, this percentage was high, which probably indicated that many respondents had a strong preference for a given gaming tongue.

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[37] A third respondent specified he played in "the original language" but that this was usually English. Therefore, that participant was categorised under "English".

Furthermore, among respondents who usually played in their mother tongue, 33 declared they also played in English. This represented almost the whole of players favouring French in our larger sample (35 people), indicating that there seemed to be cases in which one could not help but play in English, even if it was not their preferred gaming language. Such practices will be explained more in detail a bit further, when inquiring into the players' rationales. For now, let us explore the reasons why gamers decided to play in one or the other language.

5.3.3.2 Reasons Dictating Language Choices When Playing Games

In the larger sample made up of 75 people, twelve respondents (16%) who preferred playing in their mother tongue said it enabled them to have a deeper understanding of the game. On the other hand, thirteen tenants of the original version (17.33%) emphasised a preference for the original product and content, independently from the quality of the localisation. Indeed, players favouring the original version argued that using the authentic product enabled them to grasp all the richness of the original, its nuances, puns, spirit, when translations were sometimes not very faithful. For that matter, two respondents (2.67%) stated they played in English because the English (localised) versions were usually closer to the Japanese originals than the French ones, which makes sense considering English is commonly used as a pivot language for translations from more "rare" languages, Japanese included (Bernal Merino, 2015). Still, our samples were generally very proficient in English, which made it easier for these gamers to enjoy the original version, something that might not be the case on a broader scale. It is therefore important to keep this aspect in mind.

The following table sets reasons given for favouring one's mother tongue against participants' arguments in favour of foreign languages / original versions.

FRENCH Reasons for playing in one's mother tongue		FOREIGN LANGUAGES Reasons for playing in a foreign language	
Linguistic / cognitive reasons		Linguistic / cognitive reasons	
Deeper understanding of the game	**12 respondents (16%)**	**Preference for the original product and content, regardless of the translation's quality**	**13 respondents (17.33%)**
It is my mother tongue	5 respondents (6.67%)	More faithful (English localised versions closer to the Japanese originals)	2 respondents (2.67%)
"Easier" (less effort needed)	4 respondents (5.53%)	Dubbings usually poor in French	6 respondents (8%)
Increased reading comfort	1 respondent (1.33%)	Lower or poor quality of French translations and localisations (literal)	10 respondents (13.33%)
Not fluent enough in the original language	2 respondents (2.67%)	Fluent enough to understand	4 respondents (5.33%)
Greater immersion	3 respondents (4%)	Better immersion in the original product	1 respondent (1.33%)
Other reasons		To enjoy the accents and voices of the original actors / to hear a variety of accents	2 respondents (2.67%)
Default language when downloading the game (on Steam for instance)	5 respondents (6.67%)	**Default choice (no other language available or no localisation in player's mother tongue)**	**9 respondents (12%)**
Has become "a habit"	1 respondent (1.33%)	Improving level in foreign language (oral comprehension above all)	4 respondents (5.33%)
Available / to "honour the translation effort"	2 respondents (2.67%)	Other reasons	
		Access to a community when there is none in their mother tongue	1 respondent (1.33%)

Table 10. Participants' reasons for playing mostly in **a given** *language*

After asking respondents to state which language they usually played in and why they did so, we added a question to learn whether those that usually played in their mother tongue did so in another language, and why. Most participants who liked playing in French (33 people out of 35 – 94.29%) reported that they also happened to play in English, even though it was not their preferred language. A question aimed at inquiring into why they did so.

The answers yielded by the free text box were largely similar to those presented above, but, this time, concerned specifically respondents whose default choice was not the original language of the video game. Therefore, the main reason advocated by respondents was understandably the absence of a localised French version: this aspect was mentioned twenty-one times, which represented almost two-thirds of the positive answers for this question (63.64% of the 33 positive answers – 28% of the overall 75 answers). The following table sums up the answers yielded by this open-ended question.

Reasons for playing in a foreign language when French is their preferred one	Number of respondents
Linguistic reasons	
No localised French version	**21 respondents (28%)**
Original language itself not understood (Polish and Japanese for instance) → resorting to a pivot foreign language (English)	3 respondents (4%)
Only for games easy to understand and with almost no text (arcade games for instance)	3 respondents (4%)
To learn or improve one's level in an entertaining way (English mostly)	5 respondents (6.67%)
To enjoy fully the richness of the original version	6 respondents (8%)
To enjoy the accents and voices of the original cast	2 respondents (2.67%)
Greater immersion	1 respondent (1.33%)
To avoid poor translation quality (translation mistakes and inconsistencies among others)	**8 respondents (10.67%)**
To avoid lower-notch or poor French dubbings	6 respondents (8%)
To avoid poor localisation and poor gaming experience overall (bleeding interfaces mostly)	1 respondent (1.33%)
To play with someone that does not understand French	1 respondent (1.33%)
Other reasons	
Early or earlier access to the game (no sim-ship release)	2 respondents (2.67%)
Access to a game community	1 respondent (1.33%)
Access to more resources on the game (in English)	1 respondent (1.33%)

Table 11. Reasons for playing by default in a foreign language

As a conclusion, one may say that although reasons for playing in English as a second choice were extremely varied, the main one remained a lack of localisation of certain games into the players' native tongue: French. After having analysed players' linguistic practice for gaming and their slight preference for the original language as a rule, let us see if they can identify a game originally produced in French.

5.3.4 Experience of Games Originally Designed in French

When asking gamers if they had ever played a game whose original language was French, we obtained as many "yes" as "I don't know, I don't pay attention to the original language of a game" (40% each, which represents 30 participants out of 75). Almost 40% of respondents (28 of them, to be precise) left a comment to elaborate on the topic. Here is the essence of what they pointed out.

The game most quoted by respondents was the MMORPG *Dofus* (mentioned four times – 5.33%), followed by *Wakfu* (three mentions – 4%). Both were created by Ankama, a French studio which, indeed, produced both games originally in French. Their official website names *Dofus* a "French MMORPG"[38]. Other instances included various games from the French studio Ubisoft, like *Rayman* (three mentions – 4%), *Child of Light* (two mentions – 2.67%) and *Beyond Good & Evil* (one mention – 1.33%).

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[38] See https://www.ankama.com/fr/games [accessed 11 Sep. 2017].

Yet, the developers being French does not guarantee that French indeed was used when creating the game. Indeed, knowing the location or nationality of the developers does not help in our globalised world since, as four respondents rightly emphasised (5.33%), many games are developed originally in English even though the team is francophone. It appeared that, very often, it is hard to determine which language is the game's "original" language. Plus, such information was not easy to find, as it is part of the company's internal process, which may have evolved as it developed and new games arose.

To sum up, after having gathered precious information about participants' experience with video games operated on computers, we shall proceed towards the ultimate focus of our study by analysing their experience with localisations into French of such games.

5.4 Section 3: Experience with PC Games Localised into French

5.4.1 Degree of Localisation

The first question participants were asked in this section had to do with the three degrees of localisation mentioned in part 2.2.3.2 (see also Appendix 3 for the whole questionnaire). Please note that, from this question onwards, only the smaller sample (57 participants) was used[39]. Regarding the most common degree of localisation into French, the data showed an even split among all answers (19 votes each). The chart below shows the results obtained for this question.

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[39] Due to the high dropout rate throughout the questionnaire, the "larger" sample at this stage amounted to 58 people, which means that there was only one more participant, a negligible difference. Therefore, only the core smaller sample of 57 respondents will be used
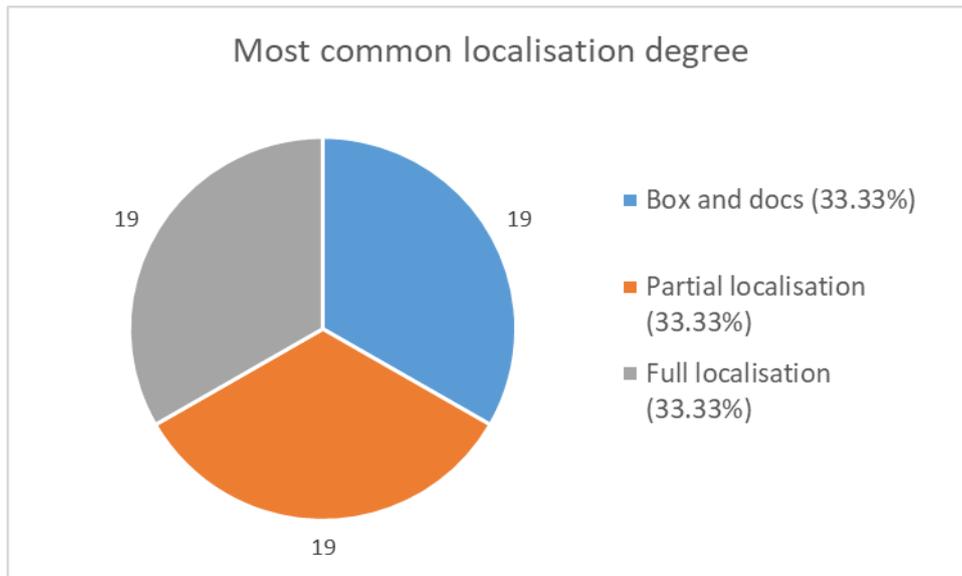
Figure 26. Most common degree of game localisation into French

As a conclusion, judging from the opinions of participants from our sample, the localisation into French, when existent, was not consistently done with the same degree, since, as we have seen, it depends on many factors, including the company's budget and the expected sales generated by the title.

On top of that, the heterogeneity of answers may reflect the variety of genres and games played by respondents. This means that if one was to conduct the same study with another sample, the results might be different. Indeed, there is no rule of thumb for localisation degrees and the latter depend more on the title itself than on its belonging to a specific genre.

These various localisation degrees, which have evolved through time towards a more exhaustive approach, are meant to contribute to a certain extent to players' immersion. We shall therefore focus on what respondents think of the relationship between localised version and immersion.

5.4.2 Effects of Localisation on Immersion

Both tenants of the original and the localised versions of games expressed their opinion on effects localisation has on the player, and particularly on immersion. The table below gives the gist of the answers provided by the 57 remaining participants.

Positive effects		Negative effects	
Suppresses linguistic barriers → higher comprehension, higher fluidity of experience, higher enjoyment of the product (focus on gameplay) = higher immersion	**18 respondents out of 57 (31.58%)**	Lower immersion (focus on reading the subtitles rather than on the game)	1 respondent (1.75%)
Makes the game more accessible (to people who do not speak the original language)[40]	2 respondents (3.51%)	Legibility sometimes neglected (long unfolding subtitles, overlapping)	1 respondent (1.75%)
Shows that the francophone community is interested in these games	1 respondent (1.75%)	X	X
Helps players feel more involved in the game	1 respondent (1.75%)	Reduces or breaks immersion when domestication is excessive[41]	5 respondents (8.77%)
Helps players feel closer to the main character(s)	1 respondent (1.75%)	Reduces immersion even when successful because the game is "thought out" and created in one specific language (like literature)	2 respondents (3.45%)
If good, immerses players as much as, or even more than, the original version (adaptation or explicitation of cultural references for instance)	5 respondents (8.77%)	**If poor, clearly impacts negatively player immersion, reducing it or even breaking it** • Fails to convey the game's atmosphere • Creates a gap between sight and hearing (wrong meaning, erroneous lip synchronisation)	**14 respondents (24.56% - almost one-quarter)** • 1 resp. (1.75%) • 1 resp. (1.75%)

Table 12. Positive and negative effects of localisation according to participants

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[40]This aspect was also put forward by amateur translation teams (see section 2.2.2.2.1).

[41] For that matter, two participants quoted Phoenix Wright, a Japanese game that is supposed to be set in Japan but takes place in Paris in the French version or in the United States in an Anglophone version. According to participants, this inconsistency breaks player immersion.

One may note that seven respondents (12.28%) insisted on the fact that the part played by localisation in immersion depends once again on the game and its genre. In a dialog-heavy game, localisation would be crucial to game experience, especially if the original language is not perfectly understood by players. On top of this, 40 players (70.18%) agreed that **the immersive aspect of the localised game is conveyed mostly through translation and dubbings**, which we will see in sections 5.4.3 and 5.4.4. Therefore, localisation can whether enhance or hinder the credibility of the game universe (three mentions – 5.26%) as well as stimulate player imagination (one mention – 1.75%).

The concept of **authenticity** was also evoked, in a dilemma between being more faithful to the original or providing players with a context and references they are familiar with. The question of **domestication / culturalisation and foreignization** (see 2.1.2.5) was thus raised by seven comments (12.28%), including one in a different question. According to participants, immersion may be reduced when characters that are supposed to live in the United States speak in French: it may sound awkward. This is why one participant claimed that, to their mind, the ideal localisation level is partial, with the original voice-acting but subtitles in their mother tongue and text and UI strings translated so that player immersion is not broken by "complex words". This participant gave the example of *Grand Theft Auto V*, which, according to them, applied successfully this principle. One respondent summed up the issue by saying that **localisation is beneficial to players since they do not have to try and understand a foreign language, yet, there may be losses when the game is totally based on foreign cultural references**, for instance the *Grand Theft Auto* and *Yakuza* series.

Finally, three participants (5.26%) considered that the language (meaning here French, English or any other particular language), and therefore the localisation, had almost no influence on immersion. In this line, one person stated that "the quality of the localised translation and dubbings is more important than the fact that the game is or is not in one's mother tongue. **Good voice acting in an original language that we do not understand is worth more than a bad dubbing in our mother tongue since sounds convey emotions**, rather than the meaning of the words that you can still read on the screen". Just like in a movie or a series, the emotional aspect conveyed by the tone of the actors is indeed important in the immersion process, according to players.

To sum up, localisation may have positive and negative effects on player immersion. Even though it can broaden up the gaming horizon of players, it may also hinder their enjoyment of the game is poorly done, or it can even go a bit too far. Therefore, although costly, it may be beneficial to players if, as one respondent underlined, games were made available both in partial and full localisation, so that players could pick their favourite option. Having set positive and negative outcomes against each other, we shall now focus on players' assessment of the French game localisation situation and concentrate on their (dis)satisfaction.

5.4.3 Satisfaction Regarding Game Localisation into French

5.4.3.1 Overall Satisfaction

In terms of range, marks expressing (dis)satisfaction ranged from 2 to 6, which means that no one reported to be "very unsatisfied" with video game localisation into French, whereas some respondents (although there were only three, i.e. 5.26% of the sample) said they were "very satisfied" with it. Actually, most respondents selected a score somewhere in the middle, not very satisfied but not unsatisfied either, as shown by the fractile analysis. Indeed, the first quartile stood at 3, the second and the third at 4 and the fourth at 6. From this analysis, we could not deduct that gamers were very satisfied with game localisation into French, but overall their opinions tended to be more positive than negative, though the number of mostly dissatisfied respondents was significant (26 participants – 45.61%).

Therefore, our initial hypothesis, i.e. that gamers are generally satisfied with the localisation of games into French, seems to be supported by results, although, as mentioned, the extent of this satisfaction remains small and the opinions are mitigated.
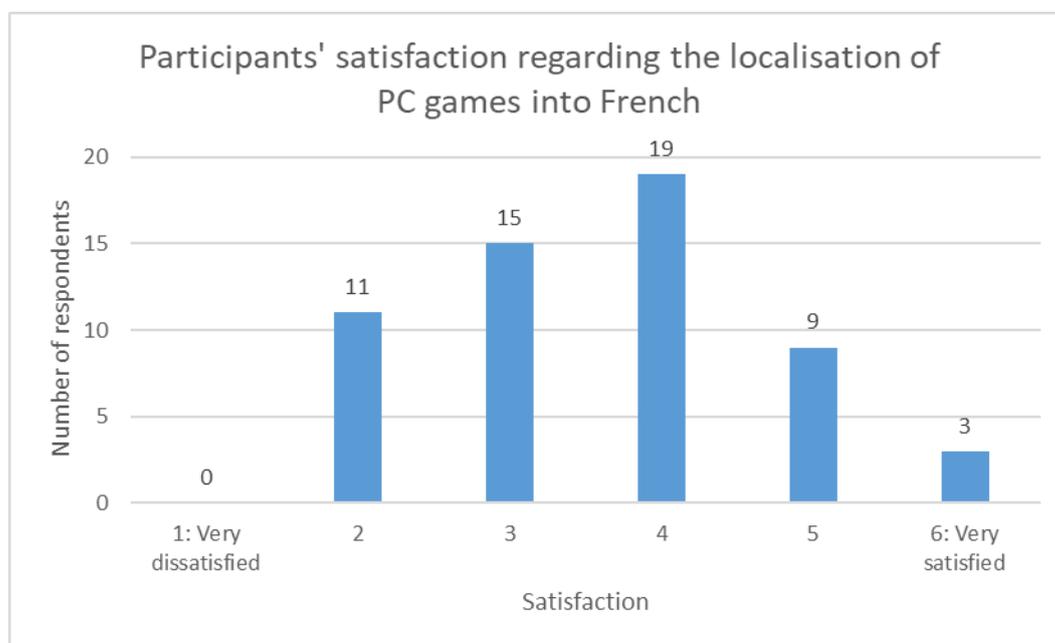

Figure 27. Participants' satisfaction regarding the localisation of PC games into French

Furthermore, in order to see if the same trend was perceptible among the industry professionals present in the sample, their answers have been looked at separately. Concerning translation specialists, opinions diverged: one person did not answer this question, and the marks attributed by the three others ranged from 2 to 4 (one each). The limit between slight dissatisfaction lying between 3 and 4, this would tend to show that our very small sample of translation experts were mostly dissatisfied with localisations into French, although to a small extent. As a matter of fact, the three of them stated they normally played games in their original language. The exact same phenomenon happened with members of the game industry, with an identical repartition of satisfaction answers. Regarding playing language, two respondents stated they usually played in the original version, arguing that the translation or dubbings' quality in French is generally not very good. On the other hand, one of them declared playing in French to honour the time and effort spent by the localisation team on adapting the game. This person, however, did not deem the end-products to be of a high quality, attributing only a 3 to the overall localisation into French. Once again, the results were not very conclusive, with dissatisfaction being merely slightly predominant.

Still, one shall bear in mind that these populations represented extremely tiny parts of our samples (only four people each time, which is 4.35% of the bigger sample). Thus, in order to draw generalizable conclusions, results would need to be based on a much bigger group, especially given the high subjectivity component involved in assessing the quality of a game's localisation, particularly in terms of translation and dubbings.

Yet, in order to understand what constituted the basis of participants' satisfaction or dissatisfaction, they were asked to provide examples of games they have played and whose localisation into French they found particularly well managed or problematic. The next subsection examines these instances.

5.4.3.2 Concrete Examples of Good and Poor Localisations

It may be worth noting that the biggest number of good localisations concerned RPG games, ten of them to be precise (17.24%), on top of which one may add four MMORPGs (6.90%). The shooter genre was also represented, with its subgenre FPS mentioned four times (6.90%), and strategy games were quoted three times (5.17%). Yet, on the wrong side of the scale, RPGs were once again the most quoted examples (eight mentions – 13.79%), with other genres being largely minor in terms of mentions (two maximum – 3.45%). Given the fact that RPG was the genre most played by participants (see 5.3.2), it seems only natural to find many instances of games belonging to this genre on both sides.

Upon giving examples of great and poor localisations, respondents were given the option to provide more feedback on why they liked or did not like the localisation of the games they quoted. Many of them made detailed comments on very specific aspects of localisation, in the areas of translation quality, dubbing quality, conveying the atmosphere of the game and technical subtleties. The following table recaps the number of positive and negative mentions for each aspect evoked by respondents. Its design comprehends aspects that were mentioned in both cases but also some others that were more specific either to a good or a poor localisation. For each category, the most mentioned aspect in each case was highlighted.

	Great localisations	Poor localisations
Translation quality	**10**	**9**
Typos	2	1
Spelling mistakes, including inversion of letters	3	5
Use of non-existent words	0	1
Grammar or syntax mistakes	3	3
Mix of languages (non-translated passages)	0	**7**
(In)complete translation	0	1
Literal translations	0	7
Approximate translations	0	1
Faithful translation	2	0
Translation made from a pivot language (EN)	0	1
Omissions	0	1
Adaptation of humour	3	0
Adaptation of puns	2	0
Adaptation of cultural references	1	0
(Lack of) logic or coherence	2	3
Context was (not) taken into account	2	2
(Hardly) understandable (meaning)	2	5
(In)adequate tone or language register	1	1
(Not) Pleasant to read (even poetic)	3	
Feeling that (not) enough time was devoted to translation	**7**	2
Dubbing quality	**14**	**6**
Convincing voice acting	**5**	0
Monotonous voice	0	2
Inappropriate tone (too enthusiastic or not enough)	0	2
Causes to laugh	0	**3**
Fame of voice actors	1	0
Variety of actors	1	0
Timing of dialogues	1	0
Translation of songs	1	0
Conveying the atmosphere of the game	**5**	**0**
Emotions	2	0
Immersion	2	1
Closeness to characters	1	1
Technical achievements or bugs[42]	**0**	**0**
Legibility and respect of spatial constraints in the interface	0	**2**
Display of special characters	0	1
System integration of localised words	0	1
Integration of previous translations by patches	0	1
Total number of mentions	**76**	**70**

Table 13. Positive and negative aspects of games localised into French, according to participants

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[42] Please note that the numbers written in each big category do not correspond to the sum of all other comments in this category, but to the number of times the issue was identified as such by respondents (for instance "translation was really great"). This is why, contrary to the other three groups, technical achievements or bugs do not feature anything above zero: they were not praised or blamed as such but rather the subcategories were directly addressed.

When glancing at the chart, one may notice that, in the end, the total number of mentions for positive aspects is slightly higher than that for negative ones, which may show that players also remember positive experiences in detail. **Respondents praised more the overall quality of the dubbings – deemed convincing - than of the translation, whereas for poor localisations, they insisted more on the poor translation quality.** Yet, these two aspects are both crucial to gamers, as we will see just after.

Before moving on to the most reported common issues in French game localisations, we shall mention that two participants (3.51%) provided links towards videos of games they quoted as examples of poor French localisations. These erroneous translations included inverted letters (for instance "Je vais vous poignerder et voler le chavel" instead of "poign**a**rder" and "ch**eva**l"). Participants also deemed that the voice acting featured was of poor quality, whether too monotonous or too enthusiastic but never quite in the tone of the game, which epitomizes some answers summarized previously in Table 13.

After analysing examples of top and flop localisations into French according to respondents' opinion, the following paragraphs will explore the issues generally encountered when playing localised games.

5.4.4 Commonly Encountered Localisation Issues and Their Effects on Game Experience

This section will report findings corresponding to the localisation issues respondents encountered most in their overall experience of PC games and will explore the negative impact they may have on immersion, gameplay and credibility for the game and company.

5.4.4.1 Main Issues

The two main problems identified by 40 respondents (70.18%) in total, i.e. translation and dubbings, were in keeping with the flaws they quoted earlier in the questionnaire. Yet, in this question, there was a clear preponderance of people mentioning poor translation over poor dubbing (respectively 26 and 13 answers, i.e. 45.61% and 22.81% of the 57 answers received).

The chart below shows the percentage of answers obtained for each issue identified.
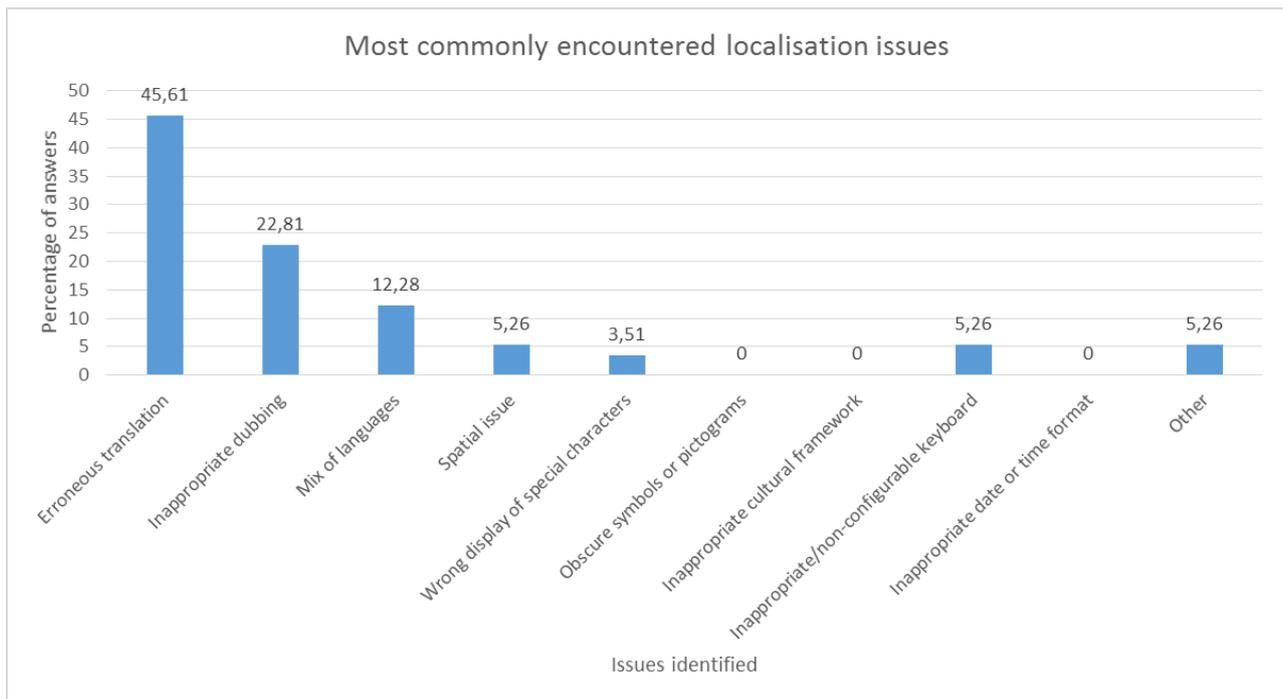

Figure 28. Mostly encountered localisation issues

The "mistranslation" box provided in the questionnaire related to various linguistic assets, like the UI, the in-game text, subtitles and the text pronounced in dubbings. As these types were not distinguished, it was impossible to pinpoint precisely which one of them was most affected by mistranslations, though comments tended to associate more translation mistakes with the written text, the main reproach regarding dubbing being an inappropriate tone, i.e. not a purely linguistic one.

Out of the 10 different categories of issues, some were never selected, for example "obscure symbols" or "inappropriate date or time format" (see Figure above). This does not mean that they never occur but, more certainly, that according to participants, they were not the most recurrent features, and probably not the most aggravating either. Also, three respondents (5.17%) mentioned that they had already encountered all the issues, and that these sometimes occurred within the same game. Indeed, one should not forget that all these elements interact with each other and are interconnected. Thus, various issues may be present and have repercussions on more than one aspect of the game.

Once more, respondents were given the opportunity to delve further into the topic through the presence of a text field: 18 did so by leaving a comment (31.03% of respondents). Naturally, comments provided answers similar to those yielded by other questions, especially regarding translation and, to a much lesser extent, dubbing (see section 5.4.3 about satisfaction), as shown by the table below.

Translation issues (in general)	5 respondents (8.77%)	Dubbing issues (in general)	2 respondents (3.51%)
Specific translation issues Among others: • "Under-translations" and approximations • Typos or accidental mistakes • Meaning mistakes • Wrong gender in adjectives[43]	**18 respondents (31.58%) (83.33% of the 18 comments)** • 4 respondents (6.90%) • 3 respondents (5.17%) • 3 respondents (5.17%) • 1 respondent (1.75%)	Specific dubbing issues: artificial / monotonous delivery tone of some voice actors	2 respondents (3.51%)

Table 14. Mostly encountered translation and dubbing issues

A respondent also explained that one of the most common issues, in their experience, consists in inconsistencies and including sentences with opposite meanings when considering subtitles and voiceovers. Another one claimed that truncated text is the most common issue, but that inappropriate and non-configurable keyboard is the one that most hinders gameplay. Last, one player affirmed reading the reviews and, depending on them, deciding whether to buy the game, an element which shows the importance of the gaming community and the dramatic effects bad reviews can have on the game's reputation, as we will discuss in the next paragraphs.

Another question had participants provide insights on the impact these various issues have or may have on game experience (see Appendix 3); it was completed by 57 participants. Feedback was classified into three main types of effects, all negative: effects on immersion and entertainment, on gameplay, and on the game/developer/editor's image.

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[43]Gender and number are not always marked in English nouns and never in adjectives, whereas they are in French. On top of that, the mistake may be due to the fact that translators do not always have context, including the gender of the characters, as we will explain more in detail in section 6.3.

5.4.4.2 Negative Effects on Immersion and Entertainment

Seventeen players out of 57 (29.82%) agreed that localisation issues can dramatically hinder or even break one's immersion into the game world. This goes in line with the idea that immersion is central to video games, even more so with the development of new technologies aimed at making the experience feel "more real", like virtual reality equipment. We shall come back to this in the discussion (section 6.4). Six participants (10.53%) declared such issues triggered annoyance, to various extents, sometimes even making playing the game become unbearable. Frustration was also evoked.

These issues have adverse effects on the game's "fluidity" as well (3 mentions – 5.26%) and, as they break immersion, lead players to react in unintended ways, for example to laugh because of artificial and/or inadequate dubbings (3 mentions – 5.26%) or even to focus more on mistakes than on the game itself (3 mentions – 5.26%). In any case, in participants' opinion, all this lessens the pleasure of gaming (7 mentions – 12.28%), and can eventually lead to users stopping playing the game out right (4 mentions – 7.02%) or switching to another language, usually the original version (5 mentions – 8.77%), in the hope that the overall game experience and spirit will be more obviously grasped (puns, richness of the world and characters – 6 mentions – 10.53%). These issues may even lead players to adopt a preventive approach rather than a curative one, enticing them to play mostly in the original language/in English to avoid such localisation issues. This point is of significant importance and was mentioned by four players (7.02%), one of them also underlining that, in practical terms, as English is more international than French, choosing this language makes it easier for players to find information or to communicate on forums, which was, in their minds, another potential benefit of playing in English. Yet, these aggravating aspects affecting immersion and enjoyment of the game do not come alone and combine with other effects harmful to the game experience as a whole.

5.4.4.3 Negative Effects on Gameplay

Seven respondents out of 57 (12.28%) emphasized the fact that localisation issues, in particular mistranslations, adversely affect gameplay in so far as they create new obstacles to the players' comprehension of what is expected of them. This concerns the very mechanics of the game and can take various forms, for instance loss of information in dialog (or other parts of speech) and loss of hints, which may be crucial in a puzzle game for instance. Two players (3.51%) stated that these losses have sometimes caused them to be stuck, while two others insisted on the fact that it made them lose track of the storyline.

In her master's thesis, Florence Roh studied the effects of translation errors in video game localisation, leveraging the example of *The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion.* It is worth recalling that this opus of *The Elder Scrolls* saga was mentioned twice by respondents as an instance of poor localisation. Roh analysed translation errors in the crucial steps of character design and tutorial, i.e. the very beginning of the game, when players start to understand its mechanics and to master the gameplay. As she mentioned, the text often dictates players' choices, which means that a translation mistake may lead to a wrong choice or an inappropriate action (2011, p. 50). This echoes the testimonies of our gamers who reported having trouble playing the game due to a poor localisation. For instance, Roh noticed that some talent descriptions were probably translated using an intermediate version between non-definitive text-strings and strings from the previous game of the series, *Morrowind*. Consequently, these descriptions present additions that may entice the player to choose such capacity when in fact the bonus provided by the object is not the one described. Similarly, she noted many information omissions in race descriptions (ibid., p. 58). Once again, the mistranslation, and the subsequent loss of information, may influence players' decisions regarding the design of their character, leading them to possibly act differently than they would have done, had they known all the characteristics of each race. Furthermore, contrary to a completely incoherent text, these omissions and additions make sense from the linguistic point of view, although they do not relate to anything concrete in the actual game. This may make them a lot more difficult to spot for players, leaving them no choice but to rely on erroneous information. These examples are but a few of the errors one may encounter when playing a localised game and obviously hinder the game experience by distorting the gameplay.

It thus seems that, far from affecting only immersion, localisation issues have a deep impact on the gameplay itself. Looking even further, one can perceive the unfortunate effects of localisation errors on the game itself and, therefore, on the developer and publisher's image.

5.4.4.4 Detrimental Effects on the Game/Developer/Editor's Image

When a game's localisation is poor, the overall experience is marred since a game that would otherwise be good, with creative puns, deep characters and a rich world can be turned into something flat or even ridiculous. Therefore, it may make consumers feel like the game was botched (three mentions out of 57 – 5.26%) and like, in the developer's mind, francophone players do not deserve such investment: some respondents therefore felt like they were "sub-consumers" not worth all the effort and spending that a proper localisation entails (three mentions – 5.26%). This may lead to a loss of credibility of the game, a reluctance to buy the next one in the series or the same developers and a loss of credibility for the studio itself (one mention – 1.75%). Ultimately, the player might even regret buying the game in the first place (two mentions – 3.51%). This echoes an answer to another question, in which the participant stated having already asked for a refund when a game marketed as "localised into French" featured incomplete or erroneous translations. Obviously, such negative feedback and opinions can harm the company's image, especially considering that nowadays with the Internet the information spreads through many channels, such as social networks, forums and videos, exposing even more any faulty game. This aspect was also noted earlier in the questionnaire, with one respondent mentioning reading the reviews and not buying the game if they were mediocre. In this context, it would therefore be crucial for companies to send a positive image through functionally and linguistically correct games.

To conclude, according to our respondents, the overall game experience and reputation could suffer from these localisation issues that, at best, slightly annoy players or even become cult laughing stocks, and, at worst, cause users to turn to other games or other languages, affecting the image of both the game and the developers and editors. This could show that localisation and language in a broad sense are important features in experiencing a game. Yet, are they deemed as important as other features by players?

5.4.5 Most Important Game Features

In order to explore this question, respondents were asked what was most important to them in a video game. They had to rank four items: graphics, gameplay, scenario and language (in its broader sense, i.e. "le langage" and not "la langue" in the French original questionnaire). Apart from one person who seemed to have understood language in its narrow sense (in our case, meaning either English or French), no respondent put language first, which means that, to them, it did not constitute the heart of a video game. Indeed, a clear majority of the remaining 57 respondents (34 of them, almost 60%) identified gameplay as the most important aspect in a video game, followed by scenario (18 - 31.28%), graphics (4 – 7.02%) and language (1 – 1.75%).

When it comes to the second most important aspect, however, language (11 respondents - 19.30%) ranked third, higher than graphics (7 – 12.28%). The top category was scenario, with over 40% of votes (23 respondents), followed by gameplay (16 of them - 28.07%). These results showed that **according to the gamers from our sample, the two central elements in a video game were gameplay and scenario**.

Graphics came third place for 40.35% of respondents (23 participants), whereas 33.33% of answers (19 participants) declared language came third in their opinion. **Overall, language came last**, totalling 45.61% of votes for the fourth category (26 respondents), with graphics not that far away (40.35% - 23 respondents).

Graphics and language therefore appeared to be secondary elements for most our respondents: well managed, they enhance the game experience, if mediocre, they can harm it, but arguably not as much as a bad or non-original scenario or gameplay. Yet, one shall not forget that all these elements interact together in a subtle way to create a whole. The following stacked-column chart sums up how our 57 participants ranked these four criteria, emphasising the relative polarisation of opinions.
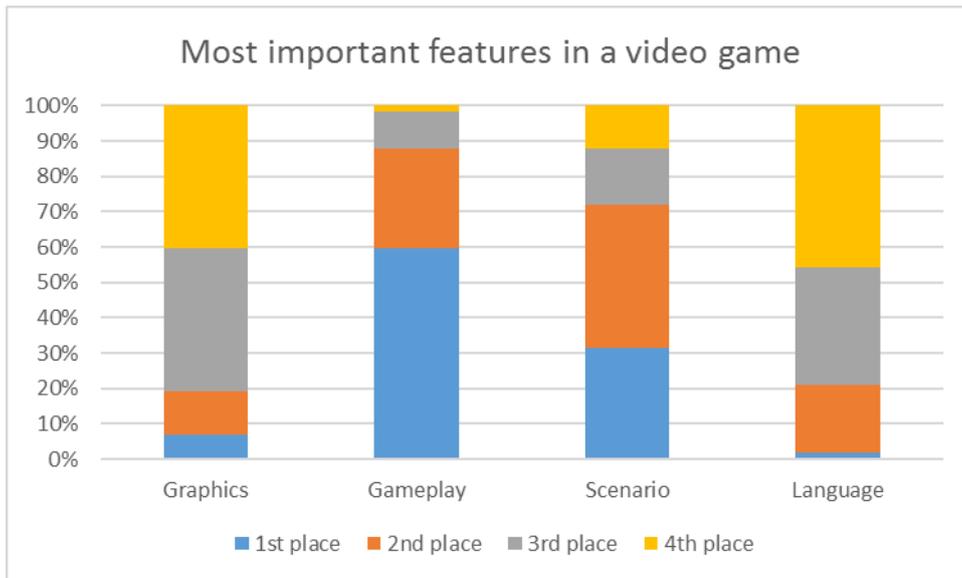
Figure 29. Most important features in a video game according to our respondents

After ranking the four abovementioned features, participants were given the opportunity to explain themselves. Here are some of their comments.

Ten respondents (17.54%) specified that, once again, the answer depends on the games and game genres considered. For instance, in visual novels or "contemplative games with some dialog/texts but a lot of landscapes/graphic effects" these elements may be reordered, with graphics coming first. Similarly, in games with no text at all, language cannot be part of the equation. Also, without taking such extreme cases, and personal preferences put aside, it is true that, as a participant underlined, in an action or adventure game, gameplay will play an important part whereas an RPG will tend to favour scenario and characters, who determine to a certain extent the player's attachment to the game (one mention). In this sense, language is deemed important as it is a way of conveying the storyline. The following table sums up comments related to the four ranked elements.

Gameplay	Scenario	Graphics	Language
The "heart of the game", what makes it entertaining and fun **➔ 7 respondents (12.28%)**	**What makes the game interesting** **➔ 6 respondents (10.53%)**	Visual identity of the game ➔ 1 respondent (1.75%)	**Important** **➔ 10 respondents (17.54%)**
Makes the game "pleasant" and "interesting" ➔ 2 respondents (3.1%)	Directs the storyline ➔ 1 respondent (1.75%)	Attract players ➔ 1 respondent (1.75%)	Makes the game understandable
Makes the game original, different from other games	Makes the game memorable ➔ 2 respondents (3.51%)	Help consider the title as good ➔ 1 respondent (1.75%)	When successful, enhances game world and coherence. When poor, hinders it and players feel insulted ➔ 2 respondents (3.51%)
Gives a feeling of accomplishment ➔ 1 respondent (1.75%)	Ensures coherence with the game world	**Greatly contribute to immersion in the game world** **➔ 4 respondents (7.02%)**	Is on a different level compared to gameplay and scenario / Minor feature ➔ 7 respondents (12.28%)
Creates a wish to play this game again ➔ 1 respondent (1.75%)	What takes most time to assess but deserves admiration when well-built ➔ 1 respondent (1.75%)	**Yet not necessary in order for a title to be good** **➔ 4 respondents (7.02%) (cf. titles from the 1990's)**	
	Can be hindered by a poor localisation	Can be made up for through extensive descriptions stimulating imagination 1 respondent (1.75%)	

Table 15. Comments on four video game components

Comments were therefore in line with statistical results, showing that participants considered graphics more as a "nice to have" and an immersion conveyor than as a crucial element to the game, just like language. Indeed, as one participant noted: "**localisation is (almost) never a quality when it is properly done, yet it is a very important flaw when poor**". In the category of "secondary elements" according to participants, we could add yet another element that has

"a direct impact of player immersion" but that we had discarded in this ranking. This is the sound aspect, mentioned by one player (1.75%). This includes "sounds and sound effects, narration", to which we can add the soundtrack and dubbings.

As a conclusion, a respondent summed up the interaction between the four examined elements as follows: "**Gameplay brings fun, graphics are one of the foundations of immersion, scenario gives direction to the game and language is one of the means to convey this direction.**"

After having analysed extensively players' answers to questions regarding their experience of games localised into French and having delved into the sources of their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, we yet have to tackle the topic of other cultural and entertainment products and examine more closely the language in which these are consumed.

5.5 Section 4: Experience of Other Cultural Products

This section, the last of the questionnaire, compares linguistic practices regarding playing video games with practices when it comes to consuming other cultural or entertainment products, written or audiovisual.

5.5.1 Linguistic Stance towards Written Products

When reading a foreign cultural product in the written form (novel, newspaper, or comic book, among others), a small majority (52.63% - 30 participants) of the 57 remaining respondents read in the original language, provided they understood it.
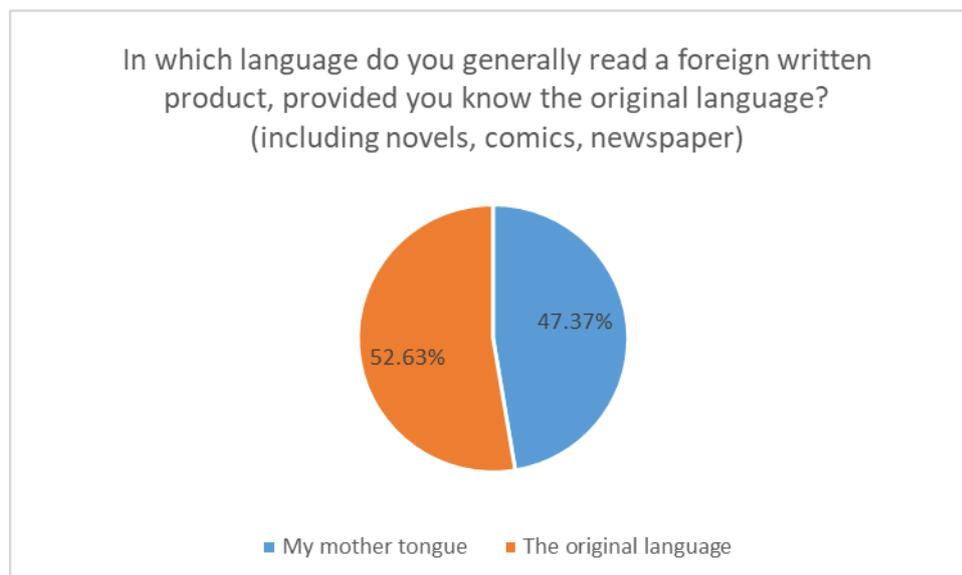
Figure 30. Language in which respondents mostly read foreign written products

A few people gave their motivations for reading in French: two of them (3.51%) declared that for them it was less tiring and enabled them to relax more, especially if they read in the evening, when they were already tired. One person said they read the French translation because it was available, and another one said they used this language for translations of very high quality, like those Patrick Couton made of Pratchett's works. Yet, another respondent mentioned having learnt English to a high level in order to enjoy all the subtleties of Pratchett's novels in the original language, which basically consists of the opposite attitude. On the other hand, one person commented reading in the original language when the translation had the reputation of being of poor quality. Another respondent, a translator, mentioned reading half in English and half in French to improve both languages. Another one explained they read novels in French but other products in the original language, maybe because they deemed novels to be more complicated and more tiring. One participant specified using English for the second read when they liked the book in French. To sum up, answers provided echoed those obtained when analysing reasons for a specific linguistic stance towards playing games: bad reputation of the translation, will to enjoy the richness of the original, will to learn/improve English (vocabulary or phrases – two mentions, 3.51%), earlier availability (no translation yet) and tendency to criticise French translations.

Now, let us compare these stances with that adopted by players towards audiovisual products.

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5.5.2 Linguistic Stance towards Audiovisual Products

Regarding audiovisual products, **respondents mostly watched series and movies in the original language** (respectively 87.71% and 84.21% of respondents, which represented 50 and 48 people). Around 70% of the total (40 respondents out of 57) watched the original version of both programs using subtitles with, in both cases, a slight preference for subtitles in French. Still, there was a small difference worth mentioning (see Figure 30 below): slightly more respondents tended to watch a series in its original version than a movie. This may be because, as one surveyed mentioned, movies seen at the cinema are not always available in their original version, whereas series tend to be watched at home, where more options may be available.
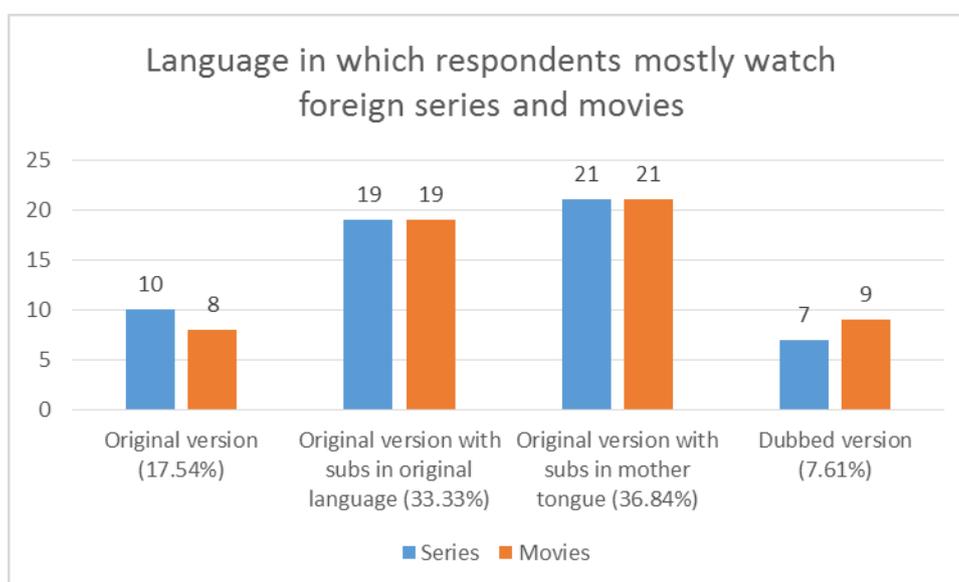

***Figure 31. Language in which respondents mostly watch foreign series
and movies***

As was the case with some previous questions, respondents justified their practise through comments that will now be analysed. First, it is worth stressing that remarks regarding series were the same as those regarding movies. For instance, one respondent (1.75%) who enjoyed watching movies and series in French mentioned that it helped them to relax and to enjoy the program more, which chimes in with some of the reasons given earlier for playing video games in French and reading translated books. One participant also said that, although a dubbed version is less faithful to the original, it makes it a lot easier to understand programs in which many words are spoken.

These reasons paralleled some of the explanations given for playing a game in one's mother tongue in section 5.3.3. On the other hand, the explanations given by tenants of the original version also mirrored those evoked when talking about video games, for instance more authenticity, the will to hear the original voices of the actors, as well as the opportunity to learn the language and its pronunciation. Two respondents (3.51%) also mentioned that French dubbings of series and movies are usually "ridiculous", with voices that do not match the characters. One participant emphasised that dubbed dialogs are "artificial" due to lip-sync constraints. Another person said they got tired of hearing the same voices in all programs dubbed into French, an element that did not appear when considering games.

Also, in their comments, three participants (5.26%) insisted on the fact that they preferred using subtitles in case they did not hear or understand something. Two respondents mentioned that they used subtitles in the original language when the movie or series featured specific accents that they had more trouble understanding. For that matter, they quoted Scottish, Texan, and Irish. Another respondent was radically against subtitles, arguing that they deviate the spectator's attention from what is happening on the screen. There was a wide array of linguistic attitudes and practices within our sample.

Other comments also reflected some insightful attitudes. For example, two participants (3.51%) explained that they watched audiovisual programs in the original language without subtitles when said language was English and with subtitles for other languages, in which they were less proficient. Also, two respondents said they switched the language of the subtitles (back to French) if they were watching the program with other people. This echoed a previous answer in which a player said he switched the video game to English to play with someone who did not understand French. This could indicate that **linguistic practices may vary depending on the social context surrounding the consumption of the product, i.e. if it is used solo or together with other people**.

The following table gives an overview of the quantitative results obtained regarding the linguistic practices of respondents when faced with various cultural or entertainment products originally created in a foreign language they know.

	Original version			Localised version (fully translated written product / dubbed series or movie / localisation degree 1 to 3 for games) (VF)
	No subtitles (VO)	Subtitles in the original language (VOST)	Subtitles in my language (French) (VOSTFR)	
Video game[44]	56.14% (32 respondents[45])			43.86% (25 respondents)
Written product	52.63% (30)			47.37% (27)
Series	17.54% (10)	33.33% (19)	36.84% (21)	7.61% (7)
Movie	14.04% (8)	33.33% (19)	36.84% (21)	9.78% (9)

Table 16. Summary of respondents' linguistic practices regarding various cultural/entertainment products

The table clearly shows that, **for the four cultural/entertainment products identified, the 57 participants mostly favoured original versions**. This clearly **rejects our third hypothesis**. Indeed, **although we were right in positing that respondents would mostly read or watch a program in its original language, we also believed that they would do the opposite with video games (i.e. play in their mother tongue), which was not the case here**. After analysing in detail all the different aspects examined in the study, the following part will look for a relationship between them by having a closer look at correlation coefficients.

5.6 Correlation Analysis

In order to try to determine the existence of a relationship between our variables, a correlation coefficient was calculated. Given the considerable number of incomplete answers in the larger sample, a correlation analysis would have been biased since the computing of zeros (standing for "no answer") might have interfered with the rest of the data and created a pattern that otherwise did not exist. For this reason, the correlation coefficients were only calculated for the smaller sample (57 participants).

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[44] Please note that for video games, the comparison is partly biased since the question asked concerned the language most played in and not the fact that it was the original or not. Data on subtitle use were not gathered either.

[45] One respondent commented playing in English half of the time and in French the other half, but said the choice stemmed from lack of choice more than personal entertainment. We therefore considered this lack of choice had to do with the non-availability of localised versions and classified the answer under "original version".

Data showed a very strong positive relationship between participants' written comprehension in English and their oral comprehension in the same language (+0.92). This means that, generally speaking, the higher the level in written comprehension, the higher the level in oral comprehension and vice-versa. On the contrary, someone with a low level in written comprehension will also tend to have a low level in oral comprehension.

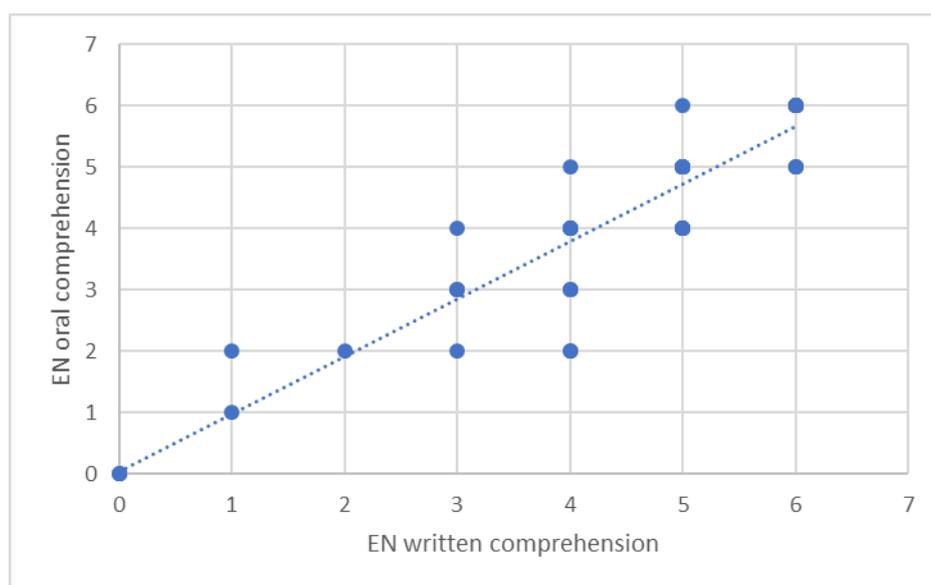The following graph illustrates this very strong correlation.

Figure 32. Positive correlation between participants' oral and written comprehension in English

There was also a strong relationship between the language and version in which respondents watched foreign series (provided they spoke the original language of the series) and their practice when it came to watching movies (+0.71). People who watched series in original versions (represented by the number 4 in the graph below) therefore tended to be the same as those who watched movies in their original versions (represented by 4 as well), whereas those who watched one with subtitles (number 2 or 3) or in a dubbed version (number 1) usually did the same with the other (see graph below).
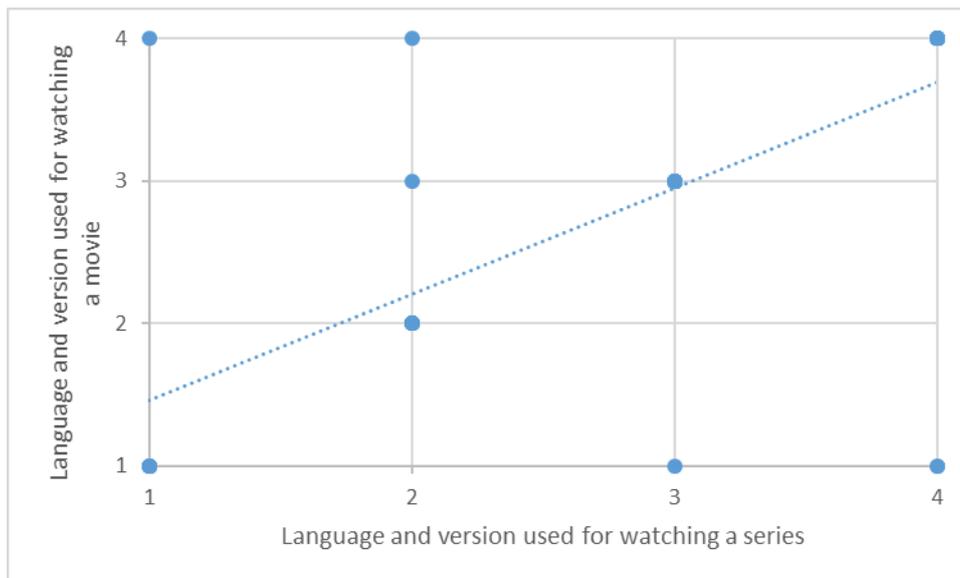
Figure 33. Positive correlation between the language and version in which participants watch series and movies

Other relationships included a moderate positive correlation between the following variables:

- Country of origin and country of residence (+0.44)
- Level of written comprehension in English and the language in which a foreign written product was read (+0.41)
- Level of oral comprehension in English and the language in which a foreign written product was read (+0.41)
- Total number of games played and games played in the last year (+0.52)
- The language in which a foreign written product was read and the language in which gamers mostly played (+0.49)
- Localisation level mostly encountered and gamers' satisfaction with French localisations (+0.48).

On the other hand, moderate negative correlations were also noted:

- Gaming frequency and total number of games played (-0.58)
- Gaming frequency and number of games played in the last year (-0.56)
- Language in which gamers mostly played and localisation level mostly encountered (-0.42)
- Language most played in and gamers' satisfaction with French localisations (-0.55).

This last point is interesting since it shows that people who usually played in the original language tended to be more dissatisfied with the quality of French localisations than people that played in their mother tongue (French). This makes sense since it is part of the reasons given by players for using the original version, as described in section 5.3.3.

To sum up, this chapter focused on providing a detailed analysis of the results obtained from the questionnaire, both for the larger sample (92 then 75 respondents) and the smaller one (57). In general, similar trends were observed. The background information section revealed a sample population massively masculine, French and with a tendency to be under 35 and have a relatively high fluency in English. Education and professional backgrounds were varied, although people working in scientific and technical activities and in the information and communication industry were more present. The second section, focusing on gaming experience, revealed that overall the sampled had mostly played a large number of games and did so on a regular basis. In terms of gaming preferences, MMORPGs came first and as regards with playing language, a small majority of participants favoured English over their mother tongue. However, 40% of participants stated they did not pay attention to the original language of the game, which may seem contradictory. In terms of experience with localised games, respondents encountered all localisation degrees equally. These were overall more satisfied than dissatisfied with localisations into French, but to a small extent. They reported encountering mainly translation issues, as well as dubbing ones, both of which can have detrimental effects on various aspects of the game. Finally, a clear majority of players favoured gameplay and scenario over language and graphics in a game. Regarding the last section of the questionnaire, it appeared that overall, our respondents favoured original versions of cultural and entertainment products, be it games, books, movies or series, something which may be partly explained by the high level of fluency they had. Last, a correlation analysis was conducted to try to establish relationships between values. Among others, a very strong correlation was obtained between participants' level of written and oral comprehension in English. After having set our initial hypotheses against actual data and analysed in detail the many aspects covered in our study, we shall discuss some of them more thoroughly.

6. Discussion

In this chapter, we shall examine more in detail some topics that emerged throughout the study. First, it is important to start by acknowledging the limits of our work, before moving on to topics such as linguistic variety in localisations, poor translation and dubbing quality and, ultimately, the effects of mistranslations on immersion.

6.1   Limits of the Study

As emphasized earlier, our study is very limited in scope and, consequently, in terms of representativeness, since some groups are largely over-represented compared to the typical gamer population or the overall population. In our samples, gamers tended to be French males under 35 with a high proficiency in languages, especially English, and a strong gaming background. Also, the high dropout rate, possibly stemming from the length of the questionnaire, made the comparison between the larger and the smaller sample increasingly less relevant as we proceeded with the sections, since the data and respondents were largely the same. These two elements led to a study that was not extensive and not as varied as it could have been, had the samples been bigger.

Also, for length purposes, some questions were not addressed or delved into. On average, participants took 34 minutes to complete the questionnaire, including those who saved their answers for several hours before resuming it. Therefore, the questionnaire was already extensive, and addressing more aspects would have intensified the effect of "response fatigue" mentioned by Choi and Pak (2005). Yet, this study may still provide the basis for further investigation into gamers' practices and satisfaction. For instance, gamers who liked playing in the original language were not asked if they did so with or without subtitles, and in which language those should be, a point that may make it easier in the future to compare gaming with watching a movie or a series.

A second example would be inquiring more in-depth into the list of localisation issues we provided, since those usually regrouped various bugs. For example, dubbing problems (leaving out the text itself) could be split into "monotonous tone", "inappropriate tone" and "inappropriate voice" (for example a very high pitch for a muscly character). In the same way, we could refine the translational issues to ask players whether they encounter most often misspellings/typos, literal translations, mismatches with the original (for example with the audio for partial localisation) or absolute nonsense. It would therefore be possible to make other studies on more-targeted aspects of the topic.

Another way to gather similar answers without having a high dropout rate might be to have players answer a reduced version of the survey, with less open questions, and then ask some volunteers to participate in follow-up interviews to elaborate on the topics mentioned in the questionnaire. Yet, in this case, in order to obtain as many qualitative data as we did, a considerable number of interviews would have to be conducted. Another more viable option would consist in sending volunteers a second questionnaire with more open-ended questions, although in this particular case a minimal number of answers is not assured either, respondents possibly reluctant to answering a second set of questions, especially if those require reflection due to their openness.

This naturally leads to another potential bias of the study, inherent to the use of open-ended questions: the selection of answers or of elements contained in participants' answers. As Choi and Pak explained "open-ended question[s] [may] present[s] a difficult recording task. The interviewer must decide whether to record everything that the respondent says, record only what the interviewer considers relevant, or paraphrase the respondent's answer" (2005). Indeed, in the analysis, answers that appeared several times or seemed particularly insightful, original or relevant were mentioned, whereas some others were not summarised, especially for questions that were a bit further from the core matter, for instance the question about the most important features in a video game. The interpretation of data, be it as slight as possible, may therefore have played a certain part in biasing the results.

On a different level, the case study itself might have introduced a bias since it focused on localisation into a "big" locale, as French is part of the E-FIGS. Players are thus very used to having access to French localisations and might become more and more critical about them. Furthermore, the Article 2 of the Toubon law enacted in 1994[46] made French compulsory for product designation, documentation and advertisement, rendering localisation into French a sine qua non condition for video games to enter French stores. Yet, with the advent of the Internet and dematerialised products, it may happen that all games sold to French players are not localised into French, as mentioned by 21 respondents, and including that French players access games that were not destined to their market (Japanese-specific genres for example). Nevertheless, French remains a lucrative locale in which many game companies keep investing. One may therefore wonder if the results of a satisfaction study would be similar for a much smaller locale and if the quality of the localisation, when provided, fluctuates as much. Similarly, it would also be possible to refine the analysis by comparing the satisfaction of traditionally big locales with a high level of proficiency in English and that of a big one with a low level of proficiency. The same distinction could be operated with smaller markets which rarely benefit from localisation, or even between various locales corresponding to the same language.

This very particular point, which concerns linguistic variety, may constitute an interesting aspect and will therefore be examined in the next section, before discussing other reflections stemming from answers to the questionnaire.

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[46] The consolidated version is available here:
https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/affichTexte.do?cidTexte=JORFTEXT000000349929&dateTexte=20170722
[accessed 04 Sep. 2017].

6.2   Linguistic Variety: One Language for Countless Locales

In terms of linguistic variety, the relatively small scope of the study did not enable us to gather much data from non-French francophone players, making it hard to establish a correlation between country of origin or residence and satisfaction with localisation into French. Still, we believe it is a point worth emphasizing since, as already mentioned when defining localisation (section 2.1.2.1), within the same language (in this case, French) there is a great linguistic variety. Within the localisation area, this variety manifests itself through different locales. For the sake of simplicity, the study has been treating localisation into French as if there was only one French locale, which, in practice, is far from being the case. The questionnaire did not particularly draw participants' attention on the fact that there may be variations in cultural frameworks (and including in the choice of words) according to the country for which the game was marketed. No participant, not even those with a translation and interpreting background, pointed out this aspect either, which led us to think that most games were localised into a French regarded as "standard", allegedly understood by all francophone players, probably the locale from France. Yet, these variations exist, some of them are minute and some much more salient, often even within the same country.

For example, one can imagine that the respondent who stated he came from Mauritius and lived in Reunion Island (France) may not exactly speak the same locale as other French people. Indeed, there might be words of Mauritian and/or Reunionese Creole in his daily life and cultural references that would be more suitable for these specific locales.

Considering Belgium and Switzerland, the French spoken there is generally similar to that spoken in France, although the accent is different and some of the words used are regionalisms. For instance, very common words like mobile phone ("(téléphone) portable" in French from France) are different: "GSM" in the Belgian locale and "natel" in the Swiss one. Another distinction that probably occurs a lot more and may thus be somehow problematic is numbers. Indeed, the Belgians and the Swiss use "septante" and "nonante" when the French use "soixante-dix" and "quatre-vingt-dix". In Switzerland, some speakers (mostly from the Vaud canton) say "huitante" where the rest of the francophony says "quatre-vingt". This may be particularly striking in fully localised (i.e. dubbed) games with a strong historical background leading to the presence of numerous dates.

Therefore, what could appear as a mere trifle may have a slight effect on player immersion since the first way of counting probably would not feel natural to someone from France, unused to it. The reverse may be true as well, although Swiss and Belgian users are completely aware of the variation in France, even if they do not use it.

As mentioned in the data analysis, no respondent came from Quebec. This would have been interesting in order to see if the games they play are tailored to their specific locale or if they only have the option of playing in the French from France locale and, if so, whether it bothers them and has an impact on their immersion. One could say the same with other French locales not represented in our samples, for example players from some African countries. In this case, localisation may become profitable in the short term since the video game market in Africa is still small but is growing rapidly (Chan, 2017), with an increasing number of events in the gaming industry being held on this continent (Sika Latzoo, 2016). Indeed, the revenue of the games industry in Africa is expected to reach 442 million dollars in 2017, according to the analysts from Newzoo (cited in Chan, 2017). On the other hand, the yearly revenue data provided by the same analysts during the second quarter of the 2017 year did not single out Africa but added it up to Europe, totalling 26.2 billion dollars (24% of the global games market), which makes it harder to compare with their previsions (McDonald, 2017). Although the importance of the French-speaking community in Africa (around 55% of the French-speaking population according to the International Organisation of la Francophonie[47]) would yet be another element in favour of more localisation, the issue of which locale to use remains, since Africa hosts a wide variety of peoples with their own specificities. On top of that, the two countries with the biggest markets (South Africa and Nigeria) do not have French but (at least) English as an official language (Chan, 2017). We shall therefore see if a trend emerges in the future.

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[47] See https://www.francophonie.org/Welcome-to-the-International.html [accessed 04 Sep. 2017].

In the case of Quebec however, it would make sense that games should be localised in this particular locale. Indeed, the country is a big market as a whole, and, according to the Canada 2016 Census, it counts around 7.2 million native French speakers, which represents just over 20% of the population (the second most spoken language). Some French game development studios are also well-established there, like Ubisoft, based in Montreal. Furthermore, although the population is very exposed to English and masters it, studies have shown that as a general rule, and contrary to other French speakers from Switzerland, Belgium and Luxembourg for example, Quebec inhabitants have a negative a priori towards English, the dominant language in Canada, and clearly favour francophone cultural products or products which are advertised for in French (Bernal Merino, 2015). On top of this, the predominance of French, notably as the commercial language, was enshrined in the law in 1977 with the Charter of the French language, also known as Bill 101 (Thibault, 2014). However, it was not until 1997 that it included video games, stating explicitly "[a]ll computer software, including game software and operating systems, whether installed or uninstalled, must be available in French unless no French version exists"[48], which may remind us of the French Toubon law mentioned in 6.1. Yet, until the 2000's, most games in Quebec were only marketed in English, as a part of the enormous North American market, even after the Charter was passed (Thibault, 2014). A tremendous step has therefore been taken since then, since games are now marketed in French to the Quebec population. Still, it may be beneficial for companies to invest in a more-targeted approach taking into account this specific locale, as advised by the language service company LevelUp on its blog (Damien, 2016). In addition, in the film industry it has become common practice to release movies both in the French from France locale and in the French from Canada one: as early as in 2001, 65% of dubbed movies for release in Quebec were dubbed in this particular locale (BBC, 2001). Coming back to the video game industry, it seems that producers are starting to cater for more locales. Indeed, according to a keynote speech delivered by Jaime Giné in 2009, when he was Vice-President of the International Development Services at Electronic Arts (EA) (cited in Bernal Merino, 2015, p. 188), nowadays, there is a trend towards offering localisations for various linguistic variants, provided the target community is big enough to make the investment profitable. These variants are often Canadian French, Brazilian Portuguese and Latin-American Spanish and, according to the same source, they may be available together with their European counterparts or sometimes *instead* of them, which shows the increasing refining of marketing strategies, to which localisation belongs.

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[48] The updated English version of the law is available at: http://www.legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca/en/showdoc/cs/C-11 [accessed 04 Sep. 2017]. The quoted sentence was taken from article 52.1.

A different way to cater for linguistic variety in the industry is the use of various dialects. This is a common game localisation technique, which belongs to what Molina and Hurtado coined "linguistic variation" (2002, p. 511). In practical terms, it consists in "the introduction in the target text of dialects [or accents] absent in the original for characterisation purposes" (Mangiron and O'Hagan, 2006:5). This technique can also aim at enhancing humour, which is why it is often used in plays as well. Yet, as it remains controversial in translation studies, it is usually used parsimoniously only in certain translation genres like theatre plays, children's literature, comics, animated movies and video games. Still, all accents might not be represented equally, or even not represented at all, which may make players feel like the game was not tailored specifically for them.

To sum up, given the fact that, apart from words, expressions and accents, there are countless differences between all French locales (even currency, since the use of euros may disconcert someone from Switzerland), one may challenge the idea of a one-size-fits-all localisation. Thus, minute changes may need to be operated in order to make players from non-"standard" Francophonie feel completely "at home" in the game, paving the way for what McKearney coined "deep" or "enhanced" localisation (2007), a concept we defined when going through the history of video game localisation (section 2.2.1). Such reflections would of course be better supported if other similar studies inquired further into this very specific, yet crucial, issue. On top of the one-locale-to-rule-them-all potential issue, our study shed light on other crucial aspects of the practice of localising games into French, including the poor quality of French translations and dubbings in the industry, according to participants.

6.3   Poor Translations and Dubbings

As explained in the data analysis (chapter 5), our initial hypothesis about player satisfaction was supported, i.e. players in the sample were mostly satisfied with French localisations, although this satisfaction remained largely mitigated, as explained earlier. This seems mostly due to the fact that, according to respondents, poor translations and dubbings are commonplace when playing a video game localised into French.

In order to better grasp the factors at play in the final quality of the target product, it is crucial to consider the localisation process from the perspective of language service providers, especially translators. First, as outlined in section 2.2.3, many challenges are inherent to the "transmedial" nature of video games, for instance the plurality of text types and of assets to manage, the non-linearity of the text, the presence of cultural elements, as well as major space constraints.

Second, tight budgets, alongside with the tight deadlines imposed by the increasingly common model of sim-ship release, tend to squeeze the localisation phase, allowing for more errors resulting from inattention (typos for instance) and less time for proper linguistic testing. In practice, this means that more mistakes are made but less are corrected.

On top of that, localisation engineers and translators must face many other "process" challenges that players remain largely unaware of. Indeed, in an ideal world, translators would work having access to the game, or at least most of it, but also to its prequels if there are any. They would also be able to consult a glossary like the one translators had for *World of Warcraft* (Dietz, 2011, explained in section 2.2.3.1.5). Plus, state-of-the-art translation and localisation tools offering the possibility of a what you see is what you get environment, like for software localisation, would be available so the team can check if translations fit in the available space, be it on a graphic, a button or in any other display. Of course, length restrictions would be accompanied with precise instructions regarding authorized number of characters or other useful indications. Similarly, the dubbing studio would not only receive the dialogues but also some information about the characters, the atmosphere and the tone that should be adopted (Bernal Merino, 2015, p. 115-116). To sum up, in a perfect world, translators would be provided with **context**, as much of it as possible, because translating a game without context is like translating a paragraph from a book without knowing what genre it is, what it talks about and if your excerpt comes from the beginning, the middle or the end. Fortunately, this situation is very unlikely to happen in book translation. Unfortunately, in the game localisation industry, it can happen, and it does.

Indeed, although in practical terms localisation teams may have access to style guides and computer-assisted translation tools (Díaz Montón, 2011, p. 9) and also to terminological databases and glossaries, they still lack crucial information. Tools may help ensure consistency between games of a series and among the team when new translators join due to an unexpected increase in the word volume or to colleagues going on holidays (ibid.), yet they do not cater for all translators' needs. Indeed, consumers usually ignore that it is fairly common for translators to perform "blind" translations, with translatable strings being presented in a column in a spreadsheet with no complimentary information, only a column for the translation and possibly another one for comments from the translator. In some cases, translators are not provided with the basic information they need to understand where the string they need to translate fits in. This explains why players sometimes feel like the job was "botched" or was "amateur" or a "literal" translation taken directly "from the dictionary", elements that were actually pointed out by respondents.

This complete lack of context could lead to translation mistakes that at best become as cult as "all your base are belong to us" and at worst discourage players from proceeding any further in the game. Díaz Montón gives an example of a translational blunder due to a lack of context, not of knowledge of the source-language. Indeed, in the game *Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion* (quoted twice by our respondents as an instance of poor game localisation into French), the English phrase "piece of cake", which means that something is easy, was included into a terminological glossary, making it impossible for translators to know that it referred to the phrase and not to the literal meaning. Subsequently, the Spanish version of the phrase read "trozo de tarta", a most unexpected translation in context (Díaz Montón, 2011, p. 9). In the same piece, the author pinpoints four main reasons for mistakes in professional translations: lack of context, lack of information, lack of time and lack of communication with/between translators (ibid.), all four elements concurring to an inaccurate final product.

Furthermore, it is also rare for translators to get time to familiarise with the game, and it often happens that they do not see the product at all, unless they are in-house, and yet, not always (Díaz Montón, 2011, p. 10). This secrecy is applied as a precaution due to the sensitive/confidential aspects of video games (code or overall storyline and gameplay for example). Although one can understand the confidentiality concerns of the developers in an industry driven by a stark competition, this suspicion is less than ideal for the localisation team and, to some extent, prevents them from doing the job at their highest potential.

Therefore, this lack of access to the game itself, and consequently to the necessary context, partly explains why sometimes user-generated translations may be more accurate than official ones: because amateurs have the game culture and have access to the whole product, possibly in its final version, as already highlighted in section 2.2.2.2.

The gaming community, which is passionate and very involved, is also very critical of official localisations of games, as shown in the study. For instance, on Canardpc.fr, one of the forums where the questionnaire was posted, there exists an old thread entitled "rubbish translations"[49], where gamers exchanged about which games featured terrible translations and were able to share some of the most blatant instances.

Regarding dubbings more specifically, the same contextual lack applies in various cases, in a double way: the translator and the actors may not get the context they need to uphold the tasks they are entrusted with. As Bernal Merino underscores (2015, p. 115), translators are presented with the original text to be revoiced according to specific constraints (and then dubbed) in the form of spreadsheets. These normally include "information for all the professionals involved in the revoicing process, such as the name of the character, the cue or actual text that needs to be translated, the context to which the utterance belongs, the inflection used by the character, the location or place where the exchange is taking place, the area within that location, the effect given to the sound file, and the file name" (ibid.). Quoting Díaz Cintas (2001), Bernal Merino (ibid.) insists on the fact that issues may arise when the strings are extracted from the game code and not from the dialogue list, leaving the translator – and possibly the actor - with only the speaker, the cue and the file name instead of other valuable information like source dialogue, context and inflection for the cue (Chandler and O'Malley, 2012, pp. 171-172). Chandler and O'Malley also recommend providing translators and actors with the script in order (ibid.), which is not always the case.

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[49] The thread can be accessed at: http://forum.canardpc.com/threads/1592-Traductions-pourries?highlight=traduction+jeux+vid%E9o [accessed 04 Sep. 2017]. The post in question is number 27.

Although all the abovementioned mistakes may be more easily understood by players when made aware of the conditions in which translators operate, it does not change the fact that the quality of some final products is not satisfying, which lowers or even nullifies player immersion into the game world. In order to avoid such dramatic consequences, it may be very important to go on with streamlining localisation processes and laying a particular emphasis on how crucial localisation kits are if the resulting quality is to be top-notch.

In this context, it is worth taking a closer look at the invaluable tool that is a localisation kit, building on the information provided by Chandler and O'Malley in their dedicated chapter (2012, pp. 277-298). According to the authors, a localisation kit normally "contains only the assets and documentation needed to create localized versions" of the game (p. 278). A translation kit, on the other hand, is smaller and contains only "the assets and text that need to be translated" (ibid.). Localisation kits thus should include many elements like text, visual and audio assets (accompanied with the script, casting notes and technical specifications), documentation (including box design usually in pdf format, help files, physical or electronic manual, screenshots to be localised), any ready-made glossary, tools (plug-ins, proprietary and other relevant tools) and possibly code (ibid., p. 279). In order to help the kit be more easily accessible, Chandler and O'Malley recommend that checklists of the various assets be included. Also, when possible, context should be made available, including core design docs about the gist of the game and gameplay, the UI flowchart (showing how the UI fits together), key characters and storylines (for example using walkthroughs) and any other relevant information. Cheat codes may also prove useful in the familiarisation phase or in the linguistic and functional testing phases, to access specific points without having to go through the whole game. Furthermore, a crucial element to provide localisers with is **the original files** (also called source files). They serve as reference for translators and may provide them with a bit more context (location of the text, person speaking and character limitations, for instance) and will also be useful for the localisation engineers when integrating the assets and creating the gold master localised version of the game.

To give a practical example of the successful use of localisation kits, one may refer to the material provided by BioWare for the massive localisation into eight languages of *Mass Effect 2* (450.000 words and 30.000 lines of voiceover). The localisation kit available included "a pronunciation guide (that's crow-guhn, not kroggin!), an IP glossary, a collection of translator Q&A documents and an extensive character database" (Kietzman, 2010). This database provided details on each character: "gender, species, personality and significance to the overall plot", even for minor characters (ibid.). This was meant to help translators do their job efficiently. Ryan Warden, BioWare localisation project manager, stated that "[a]ny time that a translator spends time asking questions and waiting for feedback... that's wasted time" (ibid.). This example therefore illustrates the fact that a localisation kit is made up of many elements that can altogether create a positive outcome for all parties by helping the localisation team do their job properly and the gaming community receive a product that is linguistically and culturally accurate.

Yet, this process is still developing and not systematically implemented in such an exhaustive way, game localisation remaining a relatively new area that keeps perfecting itself over time. In the meantime, the possible lack of information may go on causing some unfortunate translations. We shall therefore dwell a little more on the relationship between mistranslations and player immersion.

6.4   Mistranslations and Immersion

This section will take a closer look at the relationship between (mis)translations and immersion, focusing on the immersion hindering effect of mistakes and raising some concerns for their effect on game experience in a context of increasingly immersive technologies like virtual reality.

6.4.1 Immersion or Emersion?

Immersion, which was alluded to a lot by participants (17 mentions), is at the core of the gaming experience for most genres. This is partly linked to the very nature of video games: as sensorial media, they usually appeal to sight and hearing, leaving some room for imagination. They conjure up around them their own world and reality, driving the player to operate, just like the reader, a "willing suspension of disbelief". Indeed, even though players know they enter a fictional world, they accept to fully embrace what the game provides them with, ceding reason to immersion. Yet, as many gamers pointed out, poor localisations are often annoying and can even "emerse" the player from the game, therefore going against the purpose of the product itself. Thus, it seems worth recognising the importance of the job done by the localisation team and the burden it carries, since they are responsible not only for making the product fit for the audience but for recreating a whole experience revolving around immersion in the game world.

Ultimately, possible solutions to very poor translations include the release of patches, whether by the producer or by amateurs (see section 2.2.2.2). But, in any case, the credibility of the game and of its creators and producers may be damaged if the localisation, and particularly the translation, was not done correctly from the start, as we have seen with respondents' answers. This is all the more patent in an industry that set off on a perpetual quest for increased immersion.

6.4.2 Towards More Immersion: Virtual Reality

Regarding immersion, another object of concern is the current trend towards virtual reality (VR), a technology that has made great progress over the past decade (TechTerms, n.d.). According to the Virtual Reality Society, it is "the term used to describe a three-dimensional, computer generated environment which can be **explored and interacted with** by a person. That person becomes part of this virtual world or **is immersed within this environment** and whilst there, is able to manipulate objects or perform a series of actions" (emphasis ours).

TechTerms's definition includes some more details: "A person may enter a world of virtual reality by putting on **special glasses and headphones** attached to a computer system running the virtual reality program. These devices **immerse the user with the sights and sounds of the virtual world**. Some virtual reality systems allow the user to also **wear gloves with electronic sensors** that can be used to touch or move virtual objects. As the user moves his head or hands, the computer moves the virtual world accordingly in real-time" (n.d., emphasis ours).

Although virtual reality can be applied to many areas, from real estate to tourism and military activities, developers have started to perceive its potential in gaming. Indeed, this technology, which aims at being even more immersive than traditional gaming devices, has taken off rapidly, with "2016 mark[ing] the debut of several high-profile VR headsets" (GDC, 2017, p. 2). In their *State of the Game Industry 2017,* Game Developers Conference noted that "PC and mobile remain the most popular platforms by far" (ibid.). Yet, they underlined that 13% of respondents declared that the last game they developed was released on VR headsets, which is over twice as many as in 2016 (ibid.). Furthermore, when asked about which platform(s) their current game would be released on, 24% of respondents said they would release it (at least) on VR headsets, against 16% in 2016 (ibid., pp. 3-4). Given this state of affairs, one cannot help but wonder if the effects of an improper localisation will not be even more disastrous in virtual reality. In order to prevent this, we suggest that gaming companies start tackling potential localisation issues from the beginning and try to provide as much context as possible to their teams (for example through the use of localisation and translation kits mentioned previously) to make the localised game as enjoyable as the original one.

7. Conclusion

In conclusion, video game localisation is a very complex task that involves many technical and linguistic skills due to the hybrid nature of the product, therefore tapping into other translation and localisation areas. The wide variety of game assets as well as the numerous spatial constraints and the need to respect trademarks and ensure consistency with previous projects are as many challenges that game designers and localisation vendors try to overcome through ingenious solutions. Yet, given the diversity of projects in terms of size, scope and genres, among others, there is no magic recipe for a successful localisation and the approach must be tailored to each project in order to adapt to its technical requirements and its particular atmosphere. Still, on the translation side, the systematic use of information in context and of extensive localisation kits would help prevent "blind translations" from being performed.

Still, not every video game is localised, or at least not always with a satisfying result. Therefore, for a few decades now, amateur gamers have also undertaken the titanic task of making video games technically, linguistically and, to some extent, culturally suitable for other player communities, for instance through romhacking or crowdsourcing, two practices that rely on a voluntary basis. This extreme involvement of the community, stemming from passion and altruism, is a very distinctive feature of the gaming world, with many games being not only translated but improved, extended through mods or even developed from scratch by and for the player community, for example under open-source licences. Yet, on being so eager to take an active part in the production process of games, the player community may in return be more critical of localised versions produced by professional language service providers in conditions that far differ from those in which amateur translators work.

The use of a questionnaire oriented on participants precisely aimed at gathering information regarding players' opinion of (professionally) localised video games. This method yielded valuable answers to the questions that constituted the heart of the research. Following traditional scientific methodology, the hypotheses laid down a priori which were then compared with the actual results obtained from a small heterogeneous group of francophone gamers to establish whether data supported them.

The core question concerned the overall satisfaction of francophone gamers regarding the localisation into French of video games operated on computers. The initial hypothesis posited was that gamers would generally be satisfied with the quality of French game versions. This was corroborated by the results obtained, although opinions were mitigated and the extent of this satisfaction remained small, with the average mark reaching 4 out of 6. Therefore, according to the answers given by the respondents, there is a solid basis in game localisation into French but, clearly, the reported data highlights that various aspects can be improved to help meet the end-users' expectations and enhance their game experience.

The analysis of participants' explanations regarding the scores they attributed, as well as the examples they gave for poor and successful localisations and their reasons for playing a game in the original language rather than in the French version, helped identify where the dissatisfaction stemmed from in our sample. Although many localisation issues were present on a regular basis, according to participants, two aspects stood out as recurring: erroneous translation and inappropriate dubbing. These answers therefore confirmed our second hypothesis, which posited that the weakest spot in the result of localisations was anything text-related (in-game text, subtitles and dubbings). This is therefore the one area where the industry can and should improve, with many errors (especially literal translations and monotonous or inadequate tone in voice-acting) being avoidable if the translators and the actors were provided with more context to help them visualise how their part fits in with the overall storyline and game universe. In the discussion, the case was therefore made for a more systematic and efficient use of comprehensive localisation kits giving, if possible, access to (part of) the game. This would help creating a situation mutually beneficial for every party and enhancing player immersion instead of hindering it, ultimately maybe contributing to improving the reputation of French localisations in the eyes of sceptical gamers.

Indeed, the poor quality of the localisation into French, especially of translations and dubbings, was mentioned altogether by 16 out of 39 tenants of the original language (75 respondents overall) as one of the reasons for not playing in their native language. As a matter of fact, whereas our larger sample featured an equal split between respondents mostly playing in the original language and in their mother tongue, people mostly playing in the original language (when different from their mother tongue) outnumbered tenants of their mother tongue in our smaller sample.

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This may partly be explained by the relatively high proficiency in English of our samples, with the median fluctuating between B2 and C1 for both samples in each of the five skills determined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. Yet, these results clearly rejected part of our third and last hypothesis. Indeed, we posited that, due to the immersive nature of video games, players would tend to consume them in their mother tongue regardless of their proficiency in English, whereas they would tend to favour the original language when consuming other cultural and entertainment products (magazines or novels, movies and series). Although results clearly showed that participants consumed the aforementioned products in the original language, provided they knew it, it so happened that they did the same with video games, which we had not predicted. Furthermore, as posited, the level of proficiency in foreign languages, especially English, would definitely be considered as one of the key factors dictating participants' choice of one or the other gaming language, more proficient people naturally resorting to the original language when those with a lower level did not really have much of a choice. It therefore appeared that the linguistic stance towards cultural and entertainment products relied understandably more on participants' proficiency than on the type of product concerned.

Two hypotheses out of three were therefore supported, and, regardless of the results, all three answers brought to light interesting aspects regarding player satisfaction and way of thinking, providing some valuable insights for the video game (localisation) industry, that would need to be checked in another study using other data generation methods. Therefore, hopefully, these results pave the way for more research on the topic in order to pinpoint the gamer community's expectations and meet them as much as possible in the future.

In our increasingly connected and changing world, the future of video game localisation rests assured since demand for more languages and locales is very likely to keep on growing. Eventually, this may lead to a form of streamlining of the industry and of localisation processes, with standard procedures and extensive localisation kits being implemented at a larger scale. This improved interaction between developers, publishers and language service providers would definitely prove beneficial for everyone in terms of time and money, yielding a better-quality product at the end of the day, and therefore contributing to more player satisfaction. In order for this to be possible, there remains a blatant need for more feedback from the end-users through more data gathering as well as better research techniques and protocols.

On the language-vendor side, an increased fine-tuning of video game localisation is to be expected. This would involve the use of ever more refined culturalisation strategies to account for the variety of locales, even for one common language. The so-called 'enhanced localisation phase' in which we are living will therefore probably go on thriving in the years to come, with the ultimate goal being clear: providing the best game experience as possible.

In order to do so, this experience has to be immersive, which it has increasingly become over the past decades. Indeed, the last decade has set the first stone in the immersion edifice gradually built by the entertainment industry with the emergence, advent and democratisation of 3D technologies, especially used in the cinema industry. The second step in this ongoing quest for the ultimate immersion can be represented by the phase that started in the last couple of years, i.e. the development and increasing use of virtual reality to enhance the game experience. Although the next step is yet to come, one could imagine a form of even more enhanced virtual reality combining all the latest technologies. For instance, some cinemas already make it possible to watch a selection of films in 4D, leveraging the sense of feel through motions in seats matching the action (blows received, and bumps on the road, among others) and other similar effects like water splashing if the characters jump into a pool, something undulating at the spectator's feet to simulate snakes creeping, and so on. With this costly technology already available and the fact that games can already be played on very immersive simulators, the future might see the proliferation and democratisation of 4D gaming centres where players could go, sit in a specifically designed seat, put on a virtual reality headset and start playing a game while actually feeling some of the actions performed. Would not this be the ultimate immersive experience? If such concept was to be applied, the face of gaming may change tremendously, giving birth to new ways of consuming video games: individually, yet in a collective environment. However, developing such technology would require a lot of financial and temporal investment, especially if adapted from the film industry, since video games are non-linear products, constantly reshaped through the player's decisions and actions. Therefore, the interactive and evolving dimension at the heart of the gaming experience would probably be one of the biggest challenges when trying to provide an immersive experience as comprehensive as possible. Furthermore, in a scenario granting so much importance to optimal immersion, every detail would count even more as it already does, and a special emphasis would therefore need to be laid on language, meaning localisation, so that all the efforts put in the other immersive aspects subtly blend in with an adequate localisation that really adds value to the gaming experience, immersion the player and ensuring maximum satisfaction.

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Table of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning	Comment
CEF	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages	Harmonised European system for evaluating linguistic skills (5 of them) through 6 levels ranging from A1 to C2
CNC	Centre national du cinéma et de l'image animée	French entity focusing on cinema and animated image
E-FIGS / FIGS	French, Italian, German and Spanish	Languages in which games are traditionally localised
ESA	Entertainment Software Association	Gaming organisation for the U.S.A.
FUGA	The Fun of Gaming	A player-oriented research funded by the European Commission
FPS	First Person Shooter	Game genre
GALA	Globalization and Localization Association	Global localisation industry association (not specialised in video games)
ISFE	Interactive Software Federation of Europe	Gaming organisation for Europe
JRPG	Japanese role-playing game	Game genre
l10n	Localisation	
MMOG	Massively multiplayer online game	Game genre
MMORPG	Massively multiplayer online role-playing game	Game genre
PC	Personal computer	
RPG	Role-playing game	Game genre
SELL	Syndicat des éditeurs de logiciels de loisirs	French software organisation
TAP	Think Aloud Protocol	Participant-oriented research method
UGC	User-generated content	Within the framework of Web 2.0
UGT	User-generated translation	Synonym: amateur translation
UI	User interface	Element of game design that players see and interact with. Gives information to players (life bar for instance).

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- Appendix 2: Table compiling the characteristics of all six levels from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (in French)

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Appendix 1: Screenshot of the questionnaire's introductory Wix webpage

Appendix 2: Characteristics of all six levels from the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
Compréhension écrite	Je comprends des mots familiers et des phrases très simples (annonces, affiches…).	Je peux lire des textes courts très simples et trouver une information prévisible dans des documents courants.	Je comprends des textes en langue courante ou liés à mon travail. Je comprends aussi la description d'événements et les lettres personnelles.	Je peux lire des articles sur des sujets actuels et comprendre un texte littéraire contemporain en prose.	Je comprends de longs textes littéraires ou spécialisés, même s'ils ne sont pas en lien avec mon domaine.	Je peux lire sans effort tout type de texte, même abstrait ou complexe.
Compréhension orale	Je comprends quelques mots familiers et expressions courantes si on parle lentement et distinctement.	Je comprends des mots fréquents en lien avec mon environnement mais aussi les annonces et les messages simples et clairs.	Je comprends l'essentiel d'un message clair et standard sur des sujets d'actualité ou qui m'intéressent.	Je comprends des conférences et des discours assez longs, même un peu complexes ainsi que les films en langue standard.	Je comprends les longs discours peu structurés ainsi que les émissions de télévision et les films.	Je comprends sans problème le langage oral, même lorsque mon interlocuteur parle vite et d'un sujet qui m'est inconnu.
Expression écrite	Je peux écrire une courte carte simple et porter des détails personnels dans un questionnaire.	Je peux écrire des messages simples et courts et rédiger une lettre personnelle très simple.	Je peux écrire un texte simple et cohérent sur des sujets familiers, décrire mes expériences et mes impressions.	Je peux écrire des textes clairs et détaillés sur de nombreux sujets relatifs à mes intérêts et argumenter pour ou contre une opinion.	Je peux rédiger un texte clair et bien structuré et y développer mon point de vue. J'adapte mon style au destinataire.	Je peux écrire un texte clair, fluide et stylistiquement adapté aux circonstances. Je peux résumer et critiquer un ouvrage professionnel ou littéraire.
Expression orale (conversation)	Je peux poser des questions simples sur des sujets familiers et y répondre si l'on parle lentement et que l'on répète.	Je peux communiquer lors de tâches simples et habituelles et avoir des échanges très brefs mais je ne comprends pas assez pour avoir une conversation.	Je peux communiquer sans préparation sur des sujets familiers, d'intérêt personnel ou de vie quotidienne. Je peux me débrouiller au cours d'un voyage.	Je peux participer activement à une conversation avec un locuteur natif dans des situations familières. Je peux défendre mes opinions.	Je peux m'exprimer spontanément et couramment sans trop sembler chercher mes mots.	Je peux participer sans effort à toute conversation et suis très à l'aise avec les expressions idiomatiques et les tournures courantes.
Expression orale continue	Je peux utiliser des expressions et des phrases simples pour décrire mon lieu d'habitation et les gens que je connais.	Je peux décrire en termes simples ma famille, d'autres personnes et mon activité professionnelle.	Je peux raconter de manière simple des expériences, des événements ou l'intrigue d'un livre ou d'un film.	Je peux m'exprimer de façon claire et détaillée sur de nombreux sujets relatifs à mes centres d'intérêt et donner mon point de vue.	Je peux présenter des descriptions claires et détaillées de sujets complexes, en développant certains points.	Je peux décrire ou argumenter de façon claire et fluide dans un style adapté au contexte et dégager les points importants.

Appendix 3: Questionnaire (in French)

La traduction de jeux vidéo

Rappels : L'étude porte principalement sur les jeux vidéo sur ordinateur. Par « localisation de jeux vidéo » on entend la traduction et l'adaptation culturelle d'un jeu vidéo.

Section 1 : Informations générales

- *Quel âge avez-vous ?
  - ➢ Moins de 18 ans
  - ➢ 18 à 24 ans
  - ➢ 25 à 34 ans
  - ➢ 35 à 44 ans
  - ➢ 45 à 54 ans
  - ➢ 55 ans et plus

- *De quel sexe êtes-vous ?
  - ➢ Masculin
  - ➢ Féminin
  - ➢ Indéterminé

- *Quel est votre pays d'origine ? ....

- *Quel est votre pays de résidence ? ....

- *Quelle est votre langue maternelle ? ....

- *Parlez-vous d'autres langues en dehors de votre langue maternelle ?
  - ➢ Oui
  - ➢ Non
  - Si oui laquelle/lesquelles ?
  - ➢ Langue 1 : ....
  - ➢ Langue 2 : ....
  - ➢ Langue 3 : ....
  - ➢ Langue 4 : ....

<u>A l'aide du tableau fourni en annexe (appendix 2) :</u>

- Pour la première langue étrangère que vous avez indiqué, quel est votre niveau de :
  - ➢ De compréhension écrite : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - ➢ De compréhension orale : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - ➢ D'expression écrite : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - ➢ D'expression orale : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - ➢ D'expression orale continue : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2

- Pour la deuxième langue étrangère que vous avez indiqué, quel est votre niveau de :
  - De compréhension écrite : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - De compréhension orale : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - D'expression écrite : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - D'expression orale : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - D'expression orale continue : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2

- Pour la troisième langue étrangère que vous avez indiqué, quel est votre niveau de :
  - De compréhension écrite : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - De compréhension orale : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - D'expression écrite : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - D'expression orale : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - D'expression orale continue : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2

- Pour la quatrième langue étrangère que vous avez indiqué, quel est votre niveau de :
  - De compréhension écrite : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - De compréhension orale : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - D'expression écrite : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - D'expression orale : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2
  - D'expression orale continue : A1 – A2 – B1 – B2 – C1 – C2

- *Dans quel domaine étudiez-vous/travaillez-vous ?
  - Traduction et interprétation
  - Industrie du jeu vidéo
  - Agriculture, sylviculture et pêche
  - Industries extractives
  - Industrie manufacturière
  - Production et distribution d'électricité, de gaz, de vapeur et d'air conditionné
  - Production et distribution d'eau ; assainissement, gestion des déchets et dépollution
  - Construction
  - Commerce ; réparation d'automobiles et de motocycles
  - Transports et entreposage
  - Hébergement et restauration
  - Information et communication
  - Activités financières et d'assurance
  - Activités immobilières
  - Activités spécialisées, scientifiques et techniques
  - Activités de services administratifs et de soutien
  - Administration publique
  - Enseignement
  - Santé humaine et action sociale
  - Arts, spectacles et activités récréatives
  - Autres activités de services
  - Activités des ménages en tant qu'employeurs ; activités indifférenciées des ménages en tant que producteurs de biens et services pour usage propre
  - Activités extra-territoriales
  - Autre : précisez

Section 2 : Expérience des jeux vidéo sur ordinateur

- *En moyenne, à quelle fréquence jouez-vous aux jeux vidéo sur ordinateur ?
  - ➢ Tous les jours
  - ➢ 4 à 6 fois par semaine
  - ➢ 2 ou 3 fois par semaine
  - ➢ Une fois par semaine
  - ➢ Moins d'une fois par semaine mais plus d'une fois par mois
  - ➢ Une fois par mois, ou moins

- *Approximativement, à combien de jeux vidéo sur ordinateur avez-vous déjà joué (plus de deux heures) ?
  - ➢ 1 à 5
  - ➢ 6 à 10
  - ➢ 11 à 20
  - ➢ Plus de 20

- *Approximativement, à combien de jeux vidéo sur ordinateur avez-vous joué (plus de deux heures) <u>au cours des 12 derniers mois</u> ?
  - ➢ 1 à 5
  - ➢ 6 à 10
  - ➢ 11 à 20
  - ➢ Plus de 20

- *A quel genre de jeux jouez-vous le plus souvent ?
  - ➢ Action (Monster Hunter)
  - ➢ Aventure (Tomb Raider)
  - ➢ Course (Gran Turismo)
  - ➢ Shooter (Call of Duty)
  - ➢ Massively Multiplayer Online Games ou MMOGs (World of Warcraft)
  - ➢ Plateforme (Super Mario Bros.)
  - ➢ Puzzle (Portal)
  - ➢ Jeu de rôle ou RPG (Final Fantasy)
  - ➢ Simulation (Les Sims)
  - ➢ Stratégie (Age of Empires)
  - ➢ Sport (FIFA)
  - ➢ Jeu sérieux (America's Army)
  - ➢ Jeu social (FarmVille)

- *En pourcentage, combien ce genre représente-t-il sur le temps que vous passez sur les jeux vidéo ? ....

- *Dans quelle langue jouez-vous généralement ? ……......
  *Pourquoi ? ……..
  *Par rapport à votre expérience de jeu globale, quelle proportion cette langue représente-t-elle approximativement (en pourcentage) ? ....

- Si vous jouez généralement dans votre langue maternelle, vous arrive-t-il de jouer dans une autre langue ?
  - ➢ Oui
  - ➢ Non

  Si oui, laquelle/lesquelles ?
  - Langue 1 ....
  - Fréquence (en pourcentage) ....
  - Langue 2 ....
  - Fréquence (en pourcentage) ....
  - Langue 3 ....
  - Fréquence (en pourcentage) ....
  - Langue 4 ....
  - Fréquence (en pourcentage) ....

  Pourquoi ? ……..

- *Avez-vous déjà joué à un jeu vidéo dont la langue originale est le français ?
  - ➢ Oui
  - ➢ Non
  - ➢ Je ne sais pas, je ne fais pas attention à la langue originale des jeux

  Si oui, précisez le(s)quel(s) dans la zone de commentaires.
  ....

Section 3 : Expérience des jeux localisés

Cette partie concerne spécifiquement les jeux vidéo <u>non francophones</u> auxquels vous ayez <u>joué en français</u>.

- *Quel est le degré de localisation des jeux non francophones auxquels vous jouez généralement ?
  - ➢ Degré 1 : « box and docs » (jeu en langue originale, généralement en anglais, mais packaging et manuel d'utilisation traduits en français)
  - ➢ Degré 2 : localisation partielle (packaging et manuel en français, texte traduit en français, dialogues en version originale mais sous-titrée en français)
  - ➢ Degré 3 : localisation totale (tout est traduit, les dialogues sont doublés)

- *D'après vous, quel effet la localisation du jeu a-t-elle sur le joueur, en particulier sur son immersion ? ....

- *Sur une échelle de 1 à 6 où <u>1 signifie "très insatisfait" et 6 signifie "très satisfait"</u>, comment évalueriez-vous votre satisfaction par rapport à la localisation en français des jeux vidéo sur ordinateur ?
  - ➢ 1 : très insatisfait
  - ➢ 2
  - ➢ 3
  - ➢ 4
  - ➢ 5
  - ➢ 6 : très satisfait

- Pouvez-vous donner un exemple de jeu (auquel vous ayez joué) que vous trouvez particulièrement <u>bien localisé</u> ?
  Nom ……………… Genre .... Expliquez
  ……………...

- Pouvez-vous donner un exemple de jeu que vous trouvez particulièrement <u>mal localisé</u> ?
  Nom ……………… Genre .... Expliquez
  ……………...

- *Quel problème de localisation rencontrez-vous le plus souvent ?
  - ➢ Mauvaise traduction (texte, sous-titres ou dialogues doublés)
  - ➢ Mauvais doublage (synchronisation labiale défaillante ou ton pas approprié)
  - ➢ Présence de texte en langue originale (mélange de langues)
  - ➢ Problème d'espace (texte tronqué)
  - ➢ Mauvais affichage des caractères spéciaux (accents par exemple)
  - ➢ Présence de symboles/pictogrammes peu compréhensibles dans mon référentiel culturel (choix de symboles peu habituels par rapport à la tradition vidéoludique, en particulier sur l'interface graphique)
  - ➢ Référentiel culturel inadapté
  - ➢ Touches inadaptées et/ou non configurables
  - ➢ Mauvais format de la date et/ou de l'heure
  - ➢ Autre : précisez

- *Quel impact ces problèmes de localisation ont-ils sur votre expérience de jeu ?
  ....……………………..

- *Selon vous, qu'est-ce qui est le plus important dans un jeu vidéo ? Classez les éléments suivants du plus important (1) au moins important (4).
  - ➢ Les graphismes
  - ➢ Le gameplay
  - ➢ Le scénario
  - ➢ Le langage
  Expliquez
  ……………...

Section 4 : Expérience d'autres produits culturels

Produits écrits

- *En général, dans quelle langue lisez-vous un produit écrit étranger dont vous comprenez la langue originale (entre autres roman, bande dessinée, journal) ?
  - ➢ Ma langue maternelle
  - ➢ La langue originale

Commentaire : ……...

Produits audiovisuels

- *En général, dans quelle langue regardez-vous une série étrangère dont vous comprenez la langue originale ?
  - ➢ En version originale (VO)
  - ➢ En version originale sous-titrée dans la langue originale (VOST)
  - ➢ En version originale sous-titrée dans ma langue (VOSTFR)
  - ➢ En version doublée dans ma langue maternelle (VF)

Commentaire : ……...

- *En général, dans quelle langue regardez-vous un film étranger dont vous comprenez la langue originale ?
  - ➢ En version originale (VO)
  - ➢ En version originale sous-titrée dans la langue originale (VOST)
  - ➢ En version originale sous-titrée dans ma langue (VOSTFR)
  - ➢ En version doublée dans ma langue maternelle (VF)

Commentaire : ……...

- Avez-vous d'autres commentaires en général ?
  ……………..

- Si vous souhaitez être informé(e) des résultats de notre étude, vous pouvez laisser votre adresse email ici : ………….............................

Merci d'avoir pris le temps de répondre à notre questionnaire !