The Position of Game Localization Training within Academic Translation Teaching*

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Abstract—The video game industry which originated in 1960s is now an important entertainment industry mostly thanks to the digital revolution, especially as of 2000s. In parallel, the video game industry gains today million dollars and this will be increasing more as the number of gamers enhances. Therefore, this study emphasizes the position of the game localization training within the academic translation teaching by analysing two universities' translation courses and thus questions the availability and the position of the game localization training among the related courses. The study also touched on other universities in this regard. Before the analysis, the study offers some information about the definition of the game localization, some of its features and its reflections on the related courses. In addition, aspects such as the translation competence which would-be translators must develop and tools used in the process so as to make student translators familiar with this new type of translation and to raise their awareness are also included.

Index Terms—game localization, game localisation, video game industry, localization, localisation, game, gamer, playability

I. INTRODUCTION

This study seeks to analyse the position of the game localization training within academic translation teaching by analysing two universities' translation courses¹. In doing so, the study also touches upon the situation in other universities, definition of the game localization, its some features and its reflections on the related courses, the tools that can help translators in the translation process as well as the translation competence which would-be translators must possess. The reason why we write such a paper is that game localization is relatively a growing industry especially as of 2000s, when computer technologies have started hugely developing².

Research Questions

Here are some pre-determined research questions to be able to analyse the position of the game localization training within academic translation teaching.

- 1. Is game localization available as a different course in translation programs? If it is, in which degree is it offered? What are the contents of the course?
 - 2. What is the position of the game localization training within the academic translation teaching?
 - 3. What can be said about the future of the game localization training?

II. GAME LOCALIZATION

This section of the paper focuses on (i) the definition of the game localization, (ii) its some features, (iii) reflections of them on courses where game localization is offered, (iv) necessary translation competences which student translators should develop, (v) tools used in the process and (vi) the core of the study which is the analysis part focusing on two universities' translation programs to understand the position of the game localization training among the courses and to find out whether there is a specific course or not regarding the game localization.

A. Definition of Game Localization

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Video game localization or game localization can be regarded as a mix of audio-visual translation and software localization. Just like software localization, the game localization focuses on the localization of digital games (localization of characters' dialogues with each other, user interface texts and descriptive, help and tutorial texts³) from one language into many languages so as to make the release of the original and localized games at the same time all over the world for usually market driven purposes. What makes game localization different from the software localization, however, is that throughout the game localization projects, translators are responsible for doing a creative and original like translation in order to entertain the gamer as the source game does. But in software localization what comes first is keeping the functionality of the source material in the target production (qtd. In Munday, 2008, p.190, see also Munday, 2012).

B. Features of Game Localization and Its Reflections on the Related Courses

In game localization, there is not only a linguistic transfer but also the adaptation of cultural references, humour and irony. Besides, localizers sometimes may have to rename the characters, objects or locations, use neologisms/non-standard dialects or they may need to change the plot of the game (see Mangiron, 2007, p. 309; Munday, 2008). For instance, to make Tomb Raider attractive to Japanese gamers, some of the scary death scenes in the western version have been omitted from the localized version (see Bernal Merino, 2006). In addition to this, games are various in type like strategy, simulation, action, adventure, role playing, sports, and car racing which means that localizers may have to resort to different procedures in game localization projects.

Throughout a game localization project, many factors such as three dimensional technology, mathematics, physics, special effects, voice recognition, subtitling and dubbing which can also call to the mind audio-visual translation must be taken into account so as to create realistic scenes and thus to attract gamers more (see Bernal Merino, 2006). To get over these processes without a financial loss in game localization projects, a collaborative approach is usually followed. The collaborative team of a game localization project usually consists of a project manager, senior, translators in action, graphic designers, computer engineer, localization engineer, desktop publisher, testing member and so sorth. This team may follow an in house model or an outsourcing model. In in house model, the developer is in charge of the localization duty. To this end, a team of translators and related experts are hired. This model requires time and it is also expensive. In the outsourcing model, localizers, however, start the game localization at the development stage (Mangiron, 2007, p. 310). Especially the need for simship of game products requires the outsourcing model and the use of some translation technologies like translation memories, term banks, and electronic dictionaries for a speed translation.

The importance of a collaborative model in game localization projects must be stressed in classroom activities as well because in courses where game localization is offered, the challenges encountered in the game localization process might be simulated interactively with a collaborative approach in order to make student translators familiar with the real time game localization industry. This also means that the challenges may easily be overcome. Besides, the collaborative model in a classroom teaching calls to the mind Kiraly's social constructivist approach rather than the transmission approach. According to Kiraly, people socially construct knowledge and the classroom teaching must be directed in this way. The transmission approach makes the individual student passive and increases the teacher's authority. In the social constructivist approach, however, the teacher only plays the role of a facilitator and students can freely follow their learning processes and take different roles (see Pym, 2011, p.318). In courses that focus on the teaching of game localization, therefore, social constructivist approach must be adopted. Thus, the real time game localization market might be easily observed and students can be used to the real time game localization industry as well.

C. Translation Competences in Game Localization

As repeatedly emphasized, translation is not only linguistic and even the cultural transfer but also it requires the adaptation of graphics, images (see also Mangiron, 2007), the re-design of the source material or production in the target setting and so forth. Therefore, in courses where game localization is offered, student translators must also be taught technical issues related with the computer technology, software engineering or the use of translation tools. To this aim, the related courses must be reinforced with elective courses from other departments which focus on technology (e.g computer engineering, software engineering, computer programming) (Odacioğlu and Köktürk, 2015, p.1087). The translation profession undergoes radical changes in the digital revolution and it urges practitioners to learn new knowledge and skills or acquire new competences. The industry including game localization has thus begun using sophisticated software or tools in terminology management and translation activity (O'Hagan and Ashworth, 2002, p. 108). Therefore, student translators must be familiar with how to use these tools in simulated game localization projects in the classroom as new components of the translation competence.

In parallel with this, new translation competences taught in simulated game localization projects in classrooms encourage would-be translators to be IT specialists, post-editors, designers, multicultural software designers, localizers, terminology experts, project managers, technology transmitter as well as being a linguistic and cultural transmitter (see Koby and Baer, 2003, p.213) when they graduate. Besides, student translators when localizing games in classroom activities must be used to "screen reading" (see Crespo, 2010) which calls to the mind paradigmatic than a syntagmatic approach (Pym, 2011)⁴. From this point on, digital contents are generally prepared paradigmatically and as a result the narrative style is left. So, the new translation competence must also address such issues.

D. Tools in the Related Courses

During the game localization project, there are many tools that can help translators or localizers to handle the process without any delays of the release of the product or additional financial cost arising from the unexpected translation problems or technical issues. These tools must be offered in translation classrooms, at least at an introductory level to make student translators familiar with them, so that they can work in the game localization industry without any challenges when they graduate. This section briefly presents some of these beneficial tools used in the process.

1. Translation Memory Tools

According to Zerfass, translation memory is based on the logic that translations are memorised made by a human translator (http://www.unige.ch/eti/ptt/docs/general-info.pdf). Translation memory tools were actually conceived in the early 1970s but they have been commercially available since 1990s (see Bowker, 2005, p.14). Bowker claims that translation memory tools store two types of texts, i.e. source and target texts and divide the texts into small units defined as segments which generally correspond to sentences or sentence like units (e.g. items, table cells, titles, headings) (Bowker, 2005, p.14).

These tools are frequently used in the localization market including software and website localization plus game localization. Like the definition above, translation memory tools such as SDL Trados or Alchemy/Catalyst store previous translations (translations of phrases, sentences or words, paragraphs) and these translations are later used in similar projects in order to save time and money (Chandler, 2012, p.188) which means productivity or fast translation. Productivity also implies simultaneous shipment of the localized content or in our case localized version of the game products all over the world, so that the company gains more profit. In order to achieve this, the reuse of translations through translation memory systems is necessary. However, some game publishers think that game localization is based on entertaining the gamer and this kind of localization is as artistic as literature and cinema. Therefore, these companies may not want to use translation memories since these tools are associated with a technical or phrase translation. Still, it is apparent that the simship of localized games along with the original product is mostly possible with the concept of productivity and the productivity is achieved by using such tools in the process, as also stated by O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013, p.143)⁵ Therefore, teaching of these tools in the game localization training is a must though all brands are impossible to teach in a course. At least, students can be made familiar with how to use these tools on the real time translation/localization markets through simulated translation activities in the classroom.

2. Game Localization Management Tools

The use of game localization management tools has become necessary because games today have reached a broader global scope and the borders have extended. According to Chandler, there are some game localization managements tools like XLOC which specialise in game asset manipulation and track the development of the localized versions synchronically with the original product (2012, p.192). These tools are effective to eradicate mistakes at the development stage, especially from a localization perspective (Chandler, 2012, p.193). The teaching of these tools to make the translation process fast, productive and easy is necessary to increase the abilities of would-be translators. In addition, these tools alleviate the burden of translators in action or the other actors in a collaboration team of the game localization project by facilitating the process. We, at this point, suggest that instructors must impose on student translators the fact that their duty is not only to translate but also to be specialized in managing the whole process. To achieve this, translation students must be equipped with technical knowledge (know-how) instead of only know-that. Therefore, the instructor must play a role of a technical expert or IT specialist as much as possible than only playing a role of a translation scholar or translator.

3. The Other Tools

In addition to using translation memory and game localization managements tools, there are also some other electronic resources that can help translators/localizers in the localization project like electronic corpora, online dictionaries (tureng.com, merriam-webster.com, thefreedictionary.com), cloud based web applications, search engines (Google, Yahoo), term banks, terminology management tools and terminology databases. All these tools are used to facilitate the process and reduce the burden of the translator or other actors in the localization project.

E. Analysis of Atılım and Roehampton Universities' Translation Programs and the Investigation of the Position of Game Localization Training within Academic Translation Teaching

This section includes Table 1 and Table II showing some of the practical courses⁵ of Atılım and Roehampton universities' translation programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and questions the position of game localization training among them. The reason to choose these two universities is the scope of the study. The aim here is actually not to compare them but to be able to reach a general conclusion about the position of game localization training within academic translation teaching. In order not to give the impression that the study is only comparison, the situation of other universities is also mentioned by referring to Bernal Merino's analysis.

TABLE 1.

ATILIM UNIVERSITY / FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES / TRANSLATION & INTERPRETATION DEPARTMENT

Undergraduate courses 6:

Postgraduate Courses (MA)⁷

Course Code	Course Name	Course Code	Course Name
	Compulsory Departmental Courses		
ETI 303	Translation of Texts on Social Sciences	ETI 502	Special Topics in Translation I
ETI 308	Translation of Medical Texts	ETI 503	Special Topics in Translation II
ETI 310	Communication and Media Translation	ETI 504	Literary Translation I
ETI 409	Translation of Texts on Law and International Affairs	ETI 505	Literary Translation II
ETI 419	General Translation I	ETI 508	Translation of Texts on International Relations
ETI 420	General Translation II	ETI 511	Translation of Medical Texts
ETI 416	Translation of Texts on Economics and Commerce	ETI 512	Legal Translation
ETI 412	EU Studies and Translation	ETI 514	Translation of Texts on Banking, Finance and Economy
	Departmental Elective Courses		
ETI 314	Use of Computer Technologies in Translation	ETI 515	Scientific and Technical Translation
ETI 407	Literature and Translation I	ETI 518	Translation of Texts of International Organizations
ETI 408	Literature and Translation II	ETI 519	European Union Texts I
ETI 421	Technical writing and Translation	ETI 520	European Union Texts II
ETI 433	Project Management and Localization	ETI 522	European Union Acquis Communautaire Texts

Table 2.

ROEHAMPTON UNIVERSITY / DEPARTMENT OF MEDIA, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE / MODERN LANGUAGES: TRANSLATION

Undergraduate courses⁸: Audiovisual Translation Postgraduate Courses (MA, PGD)⁹

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Modules	Module Name	Module Code	Module Name	
MLT020N280S	Computer-Assisted Translation Tools	#AST040L730S	Translation Theory and Practice	
MLF020X425S	Professional Translation (French)	#AST040L731Y	Subtitling and Surtitling	
MLF020X426	Specialized Translation (French)	AST020L734A	Translation Tools	
MLS020X435S	Professional Translation (Spanish)	AST020L741S	Dubbing and Voice Over	
MLS020X460A	Media Translation	AST020L742S	Media Access: Audiodescription, Subtitling for the Deaf and Respeaking	
		AST020L747A	The Localisation of Video Games	
		#AST020L737A	Technical and Scientific Translation	
		AST020L738S	Economic and Legal Translation	

1. Analysis

•Atılım University

1.1 Analysis of Undergraduate Level¹⁰

The translation curriculum (4 years) designed by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Atılım University includes a wide range of courses to train student translators. As can be seen in Table 1, compulsory departmental courses focus on the translation of texts on social sciences, translation of medical texts,, translation of texts on law&international affairs, translation of texts on economics&commerce and translation of EU texts. It is apparent that these courses are closely associated with the teaching of the translation of texts on technical&scientific, political and general issues. However, there is not a specific course to refer to the game localization in the compulsory departmental courses.

In departmental elective courses, the "Literature and Translation (I-II)" course intends the teaching of translation of literary texts. However, another course "Use of Computer Technologies in Translation" aims at teaching computerized tools or CAT tools which can facilitate the translation process. Still, the content of the course is too broad and from the explanation on the website, it is not clear that the responsible instructor also teaches game localization in the classroom. Besides, "Technical Writing and Translation" course focuses on scientific and technical texts. Here, it is still not obvious whether the instructor also refers to the game localization training throughout the course. "Project management and Localization" course, on the other hand, deals with the teaching of software and electronic media for localization and project management. This course can be useful for student translators to catch up with the real time localization

market. But, the course is comprehensive and the instructor is possibly devoted to teaching student translators at an introductory level. So, whether game localization is taught or not in the course is uncertain. For further information, the content of the courses can be found online on the related website.

All in all, we do not see a specific name evoking game localization training both in compulsory and departmental elective courses at the translation curriculum of the undergraduate level. It is also outstanding that courses on the project management and localization and besides on the use of computer technologies are offered only in departmental elective courses. In the digital age, we think that these courses are as important as those listed in the compulsory translation curriculum, so they must be made compulsory for real time translation&localization markets.

1.2 Analysis of Post-Graduate Level¹¹

MA courses (two years) have similar names and related contents with undergraduate courses. The difference is the presence of different course names such as Special Topics in Translation (I, II). But these courses, as can be seen from the descriptions on the department website focus on the teaching of the translation of legal and diplomatic texts. At the Post-Graduate Level, we do not also find a specific course on the game localization training and even the curriculum does not include any courses regarding the localization teaching.

Roehampton University

2.1 Analysis of Undergraduate Level¹²

Modern languages-translation program of Roehampton University is offered at Roehampton Lane campus most of the time. The program targets teaching the ability to use a foreign language. Students can learn one main foreign language either English, French or Spanish. They can also choose a second language and even the third language including European, Eastern or Middle Eastern languages. For the Modern Languages-Translation, the goals intend to be able to improve students' understanding on theoretical and practical issues in translation and interpretation as well as introducing them professional translation settings/requirements and gaining them professional skills for various purposes. information can found other about the program be on the (http://studentzone.roehampton.ac.uk/programmedetails/ug/modernlanguagestranslationsh/index.asp). The program is offered under the department of Media, Culture and Language. From the chosen practical courses shown in Table 2, it can be said that "Computer-Assisted Translation Tools" module intends to teach students the use of CAT tools and IT technologies. In "Professional Translation (French)" and "Professional Translation (Spanish)" and "Specialised Translation (French)" modules, students are required to "complete a timed translation into their native language, submitted in electronic format and hard copy and accompanied by an invoice" and "coursework dossier, containing a of two translation, one of which must be the into student's second language" (http://studentzone.roehampton.ac.uk/programmedetails/module.asp?module=MLS020X435). On the website summarizing the program details of these modules, it is also stated that the aim is "to meet the need at national and international level for foreign language specialists with the linguistic competence and expertise necessary for operating international organisations" successfully in contexts and http://studentzone.roehampton.ac.uk/programmedetails/module.asp?module=MLS020X435). Translation" "Media offered by Miguel Bernal Merino, on the other hand teaches students audiovisual translation, film translation, media translation and game localization. However, the game localization is taught under "Media Translation" module. Therefore, it can be said that there is not a specific module for this special field at an undergraduate level.

2.2 Analysis of Post-Graduate Level¹³

The postgraduate program of the university varies from subtitling, surtitling, translation tools, dubbbing and voice over, audio description, subtitling for the deaf and respeaking, the localization of video games to the technical and scientific, economical and legal translation. All these chosen courses for the study evoke the translation practice and the post-graduate level seems various in form requiring specialisation when compared to the undergraduate level. All these courses except technical and scientific, economical and legal translation bring to the mind audio-visual translation. Technical and scientific, economical and legal translation are however other special fields in translation. In Roehampton University's MA Audio-visual translation program, there is a specific course for the game localization, which is "the Localisation of Video Games" offered by Miguel Bernal Merino. According to the program details of the module, students are offered main concepts about game localization and they are encouraged to acquire "practical experience of working with the various types of material that make up the process, including in-game, user interface, interactive subtitles, online-help, voice-over, manuals, packacing, graphic files and official website" and students are also introduced "different genres of video game" (http://ws1.roehampton.ac.uk/ektron/programme/module.asp?module=AST020L747) throughout the module. This shows that there is a specific module/course in the game localization at the post graduate level.

3. The Availability of Game Localization Training within Other Universities

In our paper, we only analysed two universities due to the limitation of study. But we think that Bernal Merino's research also touches on the same problem we defined. That is to say, in his book entitled *Translation and Localisation in Video Games* (2015), Miguel Bernal Merino has also analysed universities which offer post graduate courses on media studies, audiovisual translation, screen translation, localization of utility software, websites and video games, terminology management, dubbing, subtitling, public speaking, localization project management and so forth. The detailed information can be found on the chapter six of the book (see Bernal Merino, 2015, p.231-233). In the analysis

performed by Bernal Merino, it is seen that some translation//audiovisual and translation/localization programs of universities have game localization training besides the localization of utility software and websites. To show the availability of the game localization training in analysed universities, such examples can be offered: the master program entitled M & ter en Tradum & Localizaci & y Traducci & Audiovidual designed by Universidad Alfonso X El Sabio (Spain) offers courses including localization of video games. Another example is Universitá di Bologna's (Italy) master degree in Screen Translation which offers modules focusing on dubbing and subtiling for television, cinema and business, audiovisual translation modules as well as the **translation of video games** (see Bernal merino, 2015). It is seen from these statements that localization of video games is offered in related courses but one can also ask here whether there is a specific course only focusing on the localization of video games or not in these analysed universities. Indeed, Bernal Merino has conducted research on sixteen univerties' post-graduate programs but as far as we observe from the data he collected, it can be said that none of the universities being analysed have a specific course on the game localization but they offer it under different courses on localization. We think this may be problematic because the game localization industry accounts for 50 percent of the global revenue of the video game industry and that would be better to define a specific name for game localization training like medical, legal, economic, literary translation not only at an undergraduate but also at a post-graduate level due to its high potentiality on the localization markets.

III. CONCLUSIONS

This study has analysed the position of the game localization training within academic translation teaching. In doing so, the study also offered some information about game localization in general and other factors that can affect a game localization project. The study analysed Atılım and Roehampton universities' practical translation courses at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels and found out that it is unclear whether "Project Management and Localization" and "Use of Computer Technologies in Translation" (undergraduate) courses provided by Atılım University include game localization training or not. Besides, Atılım University's undergraduate translation program does not have a specific name for the game localization. Besides, in post-graduate courses, Atılım University does not have a game localization teaching and even localization teaching.

Roehampton University's Modern Languages translation program has a module entitled "Media Translation" (undergraduate) which includes the teaching of audio-visual translation, film translation, media translation and game localization. Game localization is taught in this module as one field of the media translation. Therefore, it is not comprehensive, either. On the other hand, Roehampton University has a specific module entitled "The Localisation of Video Games" at a post-graduate level. This module teaches student translators main concepts about game localization and students are motivated for practical experiences. They are encouraged to deal with subtitles, user interface, onlinehelp documents, graphic files and so forth. However, the fact that "The Localisation of Video Games" is only offered at MA level limits the game localization training for undergraduate courses while it can be useful for post-graduate students. The situation seems similar in other translation/audio-visual translation and localization programs of universities. There are usually not any single courses/modules only focusing on game localization training or there are not courses/modules under the name of game localization. This is also obvious from the data and analysis provided by Bernal Merino in his latest book. According to his research, it can be said that game localization as a different course is not offered in most of the translation programs, especially at an undergraduate level even though it is offered in some localization courses at a MA level in a limited way. Last but not least, the future of the game localization training is now under-development. What instructors must do at this point is to raise awareness of other scholars and student translators in order to show that game localization training is worth considering just like other translation types such as medical, legal, economic and literary translation mostly due to its market/industrial potentiality.

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