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Specialized Terminology in the Video Game Industry: Neologisms and their Translation

Specialieji terminai vaizdo žaidimų pramonėje. Neologizmai ir jų vertimas

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Abstract: The video game industry is growing at a very fast pace. At present, it is the biggest entertainment industry in the world, selling even more than film and music industries. Newly-developed technologies provide video game creators with the necessary tools to develop more complex game worlds, and user interaction is more important than ever. Each one has its own terminology and complexities, which must be perfectly understood in order to deliver high-quality work. Therefore, translators must be deeply aware of how all these technologies and game worlds work. More importantly, they need to be familiar with the specialized terminology they are going to come across while working in the video game industry. This paper is part of a series of studies where a corpus of 300 games is used to analyze the terminology needs of video game translation and interpreting. Specifically, this paper focuses on the relevance of neologisms—as they are one of the basic traits that define a specialized language—and defines the type of neologisms that can be found when localizing a video game with the overall goal of proving that they are common in the video game industry.

Keywords: video games, terminology, neologism, translation, localization.

Summary: Vaizdo žaidimų pramonė auga labai sparčiai. Šiais laikais tai yra didžiausia pramogų industrija pasaulyje, parduodanti net daugiau nei kino ir muzikos kūrėjai. Naujai sukurtos technologijos suteikia vaizdo žaidimų kūrėjams priemonių sudėtingesniems žaidimų pasauliams kurti, o vartotojo sąveika yra svarbesnė nei bet kada anksčiau. Kiekvienas žaidimas pasižymi sava terminologija ir sudėtingumu. Šiuos aspektus būtina puikiai suprasti, norint pateikti geros kokybės darbą. Todėl vertėjai turi gerai žinoti, kaip veikia visos šios technologijos ir žaidimų pasauliai. Dar svarbiau, kad jie būtų susipažinę su šios srities terminija, nes su ja teks susidurti dirbant vaizdo žaidimų pramonėje. Šis straipsnis yra dalis didelio tyrimo, kuriam sukurtas 300 žaidimų tekstynas, skirtas vaizdo žaidimų vertimo terminologiniams poreikiams analizuoti. Straipsnyje pabrėžiama neologizmų, kaip vieno iš pagrindinių specializuotų žaidimų bruožų, svarba ir apibūdinamas neologizmų tipas, kurį galima rasti lokalizuojant vaizdo žaidimus. Nurodoma, kokie neologizmai labiausiai paplitę vaizdo žaidimų pramonėje.

Keywords: lokalizavimas, neologizmas, terminologija, vaizdo žaidimai, vertimas.

Introduction

Entertainment software has often been dismissed as having little relevance and has even been ignored in comparison to film, music or literature. In 2016, the video game industry generated 1,163 million euros in profits (AEVI 2017) in comparison with box office revenues in Spain, amounting to only 109 million euros (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte 2016). Yet, this market growth and constant media improvements—be

it in terms of visuals, sound, narrative or even user-friendlier interfaces —have added several extra layers of complexity that could not have been foreseen only a couple of decades ago. Nowadays, video games are not just “shoot’em ups” where users must destroy an alien fleet or beat an opponent, but can deliver complex storylines, rich characters, many lines of dialogues, menus, and excellent dubbing. Video games can also offer a wide range of stories, such as recreating World War II, introducing users to fictional worlds in the distant future or enabling them to enjoy the thrill of driving a luxury car from the comfort of their own living room. As a consequence of this variety, a large amount of terminology must be taken into account, with the video game industry constituting a specialized field in its own right where translators and interpreters are required to take great care over any possible difficulty that may arise. This paper seeks to highlight the importance of terminology within the video game industry, as well as the role played by neologisms. In line with previous studies on an introduction to the topic of video games as a specialized language—e.g. Méndez González (2014b) and Calvo-Ferrer (2012) —, this study delves into discussing the specific challenges faced by translators when dealing with video game-related texts, before moving on to analyze the importance of neologisms and the problems involved in this field of translation.

Understanding terminology in the video game industry

As far as terminology is concerned, the main problem that localizers can find is that every game is different and has its own rules and difficulties in addition to the usual issues that can be found while localizing a video game. “It is impossible to understand a message without having some knowledge of the subject being discussed” (Seleskovitch 1998: 6) and that is a reason why a localizer who is not appropriately prepared for the assignment in question may end up doing a poor job. Another aspect to also be considered is that poor-quality translations can be highly criticized by users who, thanks to the Internet and social networks, can easily make their voices heard, without forgetting that in this industry the audience is possibly harder to please than in any other.

This paper aims to analyze one of the most basic aspects that must be taken into account when working for the video game industry: the specialized terminology that can be found in this field. As Cabré (2004: 99) states, specialized languages are basic communication instruments between specialists of the same field. Thus, terminology is the most important element, as it can transmit deep knowledge about a specific topic within a specific field. Therefore, when two professionals speaking different languages discuss a specialized field, a translator or interpreter is necessary (depending on whether communication is in writing or oral), allowing them to understand each other perfectly. When it comes to professionals of a specialized topic, terminology is the most important pillar of the act of communication. Therefore, specialized translators or

interpreters become a specialist so to speak (Cabré 2004: 99), and must deliver a proper message using the most suitable terms.

As Cabré (2004: 99) indicates, a specialized act of communication is defined by three main elements. First of all, the specificity of the topic discussed: the text conveys knowledge based on reality, and it can contain an important number of references and specialized terminology whenever the target audience are professionals of that specific field. Secondly, its interlocutors, who are extremely familiar with the topic discussed thanks to their training in that specific field of knowledge. Finally, the third element would be terminology itself, as the complexity of the text and its level of specialization depend on the number of specialized words that can be found in it. Taking these three elements into account, Cabré (2004: 102) regards a topic as specialized if it conveys knowledge that has been coded according to the exact schematics previously set by the specialists of a specific topic. While general knowledge can be huge and cannot by any means be delimited, specialized knowledge has clear borders and well-defined limits. Therefore, specialized texts are referential, and they try to reflect a reference in the most efficient way possible.

Specialization can be seen in two main layers: in lexical and textual terms (Cabré 2004: 102). Lexically-wise, translators and interpreters can find specific, highly precise, and even more complex terminology to understand when the text is extremely specialized. Textually-wise, the text portrays fixed structures, and needs to follow some systematic rules in order to present the information. All of this is true when it comes to the video game industry, where the complexity of many texts is extremely high both in the lexical and in the textual layers. For this study, 300 games of the so-called “Seventh Generation of video games consoles” (2006-2018) were analyzed, also considering several conferences that took place during that time frame in big trade fairs such as E3 and gamescom (Méndez González 2019: 282-283), all of which are available online. The Seventh Generation was chosen as it is the most recent one and is completed at the moment of the study. The Eighth Generation, despite still being currently relevant, might suffer changes that could make the data irrelevant in the future. The results obtained are used in different studies on specialized texts (Méndez González 2014b, 2015, 2017, 2019), and, more specifically, this paper provides a general outlook of the video game industry as a specialized text, before focusing on the main topic: neologisms.

Research in the field of video game localization

Localization is a field that has been evolving throughout history, and many studies have focused on one of its most important features: namely, that localization is the process of translating between languages while providing a cultural adaptation of the product according to the needs of each different target market. Chandler (2005: 12) offered one comprehensive, yet simple, definition of localization that fully transmits that idea: “Localization is the process of translating the game

into other languages.” Nonetheless, translation is just one step of the localization process, as there are a lot of people involved in it, such as developers, graphic designers, writers, and many other specialized professionals (Gouadec 2003: 528-529). Quah (2006: 19) takes this one step further, providing a more complex definition of localization: “[Localization is] the process of changing the documentation of a product, a product itself or the delivery of services so that they are appropriate and acceptable to the target society and culture.” Dunne (2006: 4) also defines localization as “the processes by which digital content and products developed in one locale (defined in terms of geographical area, language and culture) are adapted for sale and use in another locale.” This is seconded by Lommel (2007: 11), who says that “localization is the process of modifying products or services to account for differences in distinct markets.” According to LISA (Localisation Industry Association), “localisation is the process of modifying products or services to account for differences in distinct markets”. All of these definitions are completely accurate and deliver clear ideas of what to expect from the localization process, although they do not fully convey the complexity of it as more layers are involved (Chroust 2007: 3).

Some authors, such as Grigas, Dagienė, Jevsikova (2004: 171), Zeller (2006: 80) and Miliūtė (2008: 2), place more importance on translation than any other phase in the localization process. However, every element is as relevant as the rest in the video game industry. This is because games are better enjoyed when they are “linguistically and culturally appropriate for a particular local market” (Esselink 1998: 2). Many studies in line with this approach can be found, where the process of localization is analyzed as a whole (Méndez González 2012, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2015, 2017; Calvo-Ferrer 2012; Gros Salvat 2008; Fernández Costales 2014; Lepre 2015; O’Hagan and Chandler 2016; O’Hagan 2009, 2015; Seljan and Katalinić 2017; Yuste Frías 2012, 2014). Their main goal is to display a clear outlook of the process itself, which is based on translating and paratranslating both the text and all paratextual elements that are part of the intended message (Méndez González 2013: 62-63). It is essential to underline that the latter implies the need of being familiar with the specialized texts localizers might have to work with.

The video game industry and its specialized texts

The video game industry is not only one of the biggest entertainment industries nowadays, but it is also one of the most complex in terms of terminology. It is commonly thought that users have a better understanding of the market than professionals, sometimes even going so far as to suggest that fan translations are better than official translations (Ishaan 2009). Some video games are, in fact, created with fans in mind, whereby developers must have a keen understanding of what those users expect in order to deliver the experiences required by the latter. What this means is that translators and interpreters should, therefore, also be ready to work with any kind of game and be able to fulfill the expectations of

the end client, i.e. the users. This implies being familiar with the specific terminology required by the industry in general and each individual game in particular, covering not only knowledge related to software for the use of different devices, but also to all conferences and events held throughout the year. These events are generally streamed online, whereby interpreting does not only affect those attending the conference, but also all the users who are following it online. The level of specialization required for major events is such that even the best-trained professionals may have problems delivering a speech that complies with the standards required by the industry itself (Méndez González 2015: 263-291).

As previously mentioned, the video game industry uses specialized terminology, but in doing so it faces the problems highlighted by Cabré (2001: 175): it is not an easy task to draw clear boundaries for the concepts of specialized knowledge vs. general knowledge, or of specialized texts vs. general texts. These denominations are largely employed, but the concepts are not clear enough, and lack evident boundaries. Before Cabré, other authors such as Hoffman (1979), Kocourek (1982), Picht and Draskau (1985) tried to define what a specialized language is, but all of them had different points of view depending on the year and their respective schools of thought. In fact, even nowadays, more than three decades later, it is still rather difficult to reach a consensus on what the features and classifications of specialized languages are. As Jiménez says (2002: 25), such consensus is essential in order to fully understand the true essence of specialized languages. Without it, it is nearly impossible to study or improve the practice of translation or interpreting, and even worse in the video game industry, which is being unfairly regarded as a minor field. Jiménez also offers several worth-mentioning remarks: that specialized languages feature several traits that set them apart from common languages; that we can establish differences depending on the topic; and, most importantly, that these languages must be a tool to grant easier access for the audience, and not an obstacle for them.

Ruiz Rosendo (2006)—who worked with medical language in her studies—stated that interpreters must be well aware of all the particular traits of specialized languages in order to provide a better interpreting job. She highlights the importance of being familiar with medical terminology, as this is a key element when it comes to offering the best possible communication in a specialized environment; the quality of the text depends on the terminological knowledge of the localizer or interpreter. Following Ruiz Rosendo's traits for specialized languages, Méndez González (2014b) applied them to the video game industry:

- a) Polysemy: many terms can have several different meanings depending on the context.
- b) Synonymy: different terms refer to the same element of the platforms or video games.
- c) Foreign words: in the video game industry, many English terms end up being part of the Spanish language.
- d) Borrowed words: many terms in the video game industry—be it technological terms or just ingame terms—end up being adapted

- to the language; they can either be left as they are or adapted to the phonology and grammar of the new language.
- e) Neologisms: when a video game is set in a fictional world, there are a lot of new terms that may arise; these can be common to the whole video game industry or specific for a video game franchise.
 - f) Abbreviations, acronyms and initials: all these textual elements are widely present in the video game industry—both ingame or in real life—when it comes to game titles or platforms.
 - g) Circumlocutions: in the video game industry, both marketing efforts and press tend to use long sentences to make the statement seem more complex and specific.
 - h) False friends: the hunger for information delivers many fast translations with a significant amount of false friends, especially with terms that come from video games and have different meanings from what you may expect in common language.
 - i) Famous names and nicknames: there are a lot of people involved in the video game industry—from developers to presidents and PRs—, as well as many characters in video games, many of them with a name and a nickname.
 - j) Overuse of the passive voice: this is one of the most noticeable features of many specialized languages—and the video game industry is no exception—due to the predominance of English in the scientific world.
 - k) Gender: grammatical gender, considered by research in specialized languages as one of the most important aspects (Navarro 1998), is also a problem in the video game industry, where gender can be ambiguous and lead to confusion.

In 2012, Calvo-Ferrer conducted a study where he stated that there is plenty of specialized terminology in the field of mobile devices, and that localizers must be familiar with all the terms in order to localize products for smartphones and tablets correctly. They are one of the multiple platforms where video games can be released, followed by game consoles, handhelds, computers, browser-based games, smartTVs, and many other platforms that are emerging every year. Overall, when translating a video game, localizers must take into account three main different kinds of specialized terminology:

1. Terminology of the platform: there are three main hardware developers in the video game industry (Microsoft, Sony and Nintendo), as well as many other hardware systems (smartphones, tablets, Apple devices, browsers, and so on). Every one of them has its own preferences when it comes to the terminology used for different elements involved in their platforms, but also their own applications and services. While in English some terms are shared throughout the platforms, in other languages, such as Spanish, the same term can have different translations depending on the manufacturer. For instance, one of the most notorious examples is the controllers' control stick (see Table 1):

Table 1
Spanish translations of “stick”.

	English	Spanish
Microsoft	Stick	<i>Stick</i>
Nintendo	Control stick	<i>Palanca de control</i>
Sony	Stick	<i>Joystick</i>

2. Game terminology: software itself has its own terminology. While translating and playing, you can come across terms related to skills, abilities, characters, enemies, weapons, vehicles, and many other elements that are specific to each game. If the game is part of a long franchise, then localizers should not translate freely, but rather take into account previously translated terms from other entries in the series.

3. Industry terminology: aside from hardware and software, localizers may have to work with other assets, such as press releases and marketing texts, where they need to be familiar with information from the industry: names of people, development studios, graphic engines, events, magazines, and many other aspects that go deep in the game code (such as technologies used, programming, and so on).

These points are crucial when it comes to localizing a video game, but nowadays interpreting also plays a key role as it is a new field of work of which many people are not fully aware. While localization gives translators the time to study and research the difficult terms they may not understand, interpreters need to be authorities on the topic of their assignment, since the immediacy of the communicative link requires them to deliver a text fully adapted to the new language. Interpreting in the video game industry has become more relevant and necessary than ever. However, aside from Japanese-English interpreters, unfortunately interpreting quality is not as good as users would expect. For example, Sony and Microsoft offer simultaneous interpreting for their international events, but their professionals for English-Spanish lack the knowledge needed to do a proper job. Despite being great professional interpreters, they could not hide their lack of understanding regarding specific terminology in this area when delivering their interpretation, as in the case of the following examples. In February 2013, when Sony showcased its new PlayStation 4 console, the interpreter translated into Spanish terms such as “*PlayStation Network*”, when they should not be translated as indicated in the terminology on Sony’s platforms (Méndez González 2014b). In June 2014, Microsoft interpreters improperly translated game titles, such as *Forza Horizon*. Another example of how problematic specialized terminology can be was found in February 2013, when Microsoft offered a live interview in the Spanish online magazine MeriStation, with Jim Brown, the developer of *Gears of War: Judgement*. Since it was a live interview, users could watch it via streaming and interact by asking questions in real time, so there was an English-Spanish consecutive interpreter. It was a 48-minute interview, and the interpreter was substituted after only 5 minutes, as she was making many mistakes,

and the journalist had to correct her many times and interpret the information correctly for the viewers. It was one of Microsoft Spain's PRs who had to take care of the interpreting: despite lacking experience in interpreting, his knowledge on the topic in question was so high that he managed to effectively convey the information to the audience.

As previously stated, there are many aspects to take into account in the video game industry, probably the most terminologically-complex field in the entertainment industry. Once it has been proved that we are dealing with a new kind of specialized language, this paper aims to offer an in-depth study about one of the most important aspects of every field of specialization: neologisms.

Neologisms in video games

Congost Maestre (1994) stated that neologisms can be newly-created words or words that already existed but are given a new sense. Newmark (1988: 140) defined them as "newly coined lexical units or existing lexical units that acquire a new sense." As observed, there is a theoretical consensus around what a neologism is. Obviously, when you create a new fictional world and work, for example, with main characters that do not resemble human existence, there will be a high chance that you will have to deal with neologisms. The same can be said about new gaming platforms or user interaction on the Internet. This is why the video game industry is so specialized, as for every new generation of consoles and for every new game released there are many new terms that instantly become part of its general and specialized knowledge. These terms have variable persistence: many of them die quickly from one generation to the next (especially those involving hardware), while others move into other games and evolve into common terms.

As Hasani-Yasin (2010: 245) pointed out, "these items can pose a great challenge for the translator as they cannot be found in dictionaries. Therefore, it is the translator who has to create new words and expressions as equivalences during the translation process." Regarding translating neologisms, Newmark (1988: 143) states that "any kind of neologism should be recreated; if it is a derived word it should be replaced by the same or equivalent morphemes; if it is also phonaesthetic, it should be given phonemes producing analogous sound effects." He later goes on to state that translators not only have the right to create neologisms, but they also have the duty to recreate any neologism they come across (Newmark 1988: 149). Therefore, localizers must be well aware of their position as creators of new words that will be part of the specialized language of the industry, but also of the general knowledge of popular culture. As Rey (1995: 77) points out, neologisms can be perceived as belonging to the language in general or as belonging to a subject-specific usage which may be specialized or general. This constitutes one of the major problems with localization and interpreting in the video game industry, as many terms are perceived as part of language in general, and, therefore, specialized

terms are dismissed, ignored or unknown by many professional localizers and interpreters.

There can be several kinds of neologisms, which will vary according to the field they first occur in. Hasani-Yasin (2010: 249-251) presents seven types of neologisms: scientific, political, pop-culture, imported, trademarks, nonce words and inverted ones. We have studied them and applied them to the videogame market, where we found they are a perfect categorization for this industry:

1. Scientific neologisms: scientific discoveries are a focus of neologisms in real-life researches, but they can also be applied to fictional discoveries, as in science fiction. According to Newmark (1991: 44), “the task of the translator in science fiction is made more complicated by the fact that, apart from mediating between cultures, he or she has to create names for things that do not exist in reality, not even in the source culture.” In fact, it is likely that some terms are created in fictional works based on real-life investigations and, when they become a reality, they may inherit the term—in its original or translated version—from the fictional world. In the research conducted for this study to verify this theory, many examples of this kind of neologisms in video games were found, such as the “T-Virus” from *Resident Evil* (1996), “fold technology” from *Strike Suit Zero* (2012) or the “Kuruvirus” from *Dead Island* (2011), which has even a full pathology and description of its in-game origins. Aside from the fictional scientific terminology, new terms arising from new discoveries in real science or technology are increasingly more common. The industry sees the evolution of terminology every day thanks to new graphic engines (such as “Unreal” or “Unity”), new video output solutions (such as “HDMI”), new ways of funding a project (such as “crowdfunding” campaigns), or even new development techniques (such as “Parallax Scrolling”).
2. Political neologisms: these are words or phrases created to make some kind of political or rhetorical point. They are more general neologisms that tend to have positive meanings but can also convey a negative point of view. As in the previous case, there are videogames that may offer new political statuses or different ways of addressing issues that may be unknown or unrelated with real-world situations. These can be military organizations, such as “Blackwatch” from *Prototype* (2009) or the “Private Military Corporations (PMCs)” from *Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare* (2014).
3. Pop culture neologisms: words or phrases evolved from mass media content or used to describe cultural phenomena. The video game industry can generate this kind of terms through forums and in-game chats, so they become part of its general knowledge, and, therefore, they end up being used by specialized media but also in the games themselves. Some

examples of this can be the terms “noob” and “newb”. A “newb” is a player that is inexperienced in a video game and needs guidance to improve his or her skills. Meanwhile, a “noob” is someone who is not a good player but does not want to listen to anyone else’s advice and shows no respect towards other players. These two terms are rather similar, but their meanings are completely different, so a translator or an interpreter of the video game industry should be fully aware of this kind of examples in order to avoid further comprehension problems when delivering the message. Another term from pop culture that has a big impact on every possible language in the world is “hype”, a term used to express the high expectations that users have when it comes to a video game.

4. Imported neologisms: these are the terms or phrases originating from another language. While in other fields they are used to express ideas that have no equivalent term in the native language (Hasani-Yasin 2010: 250-251), in the video game industry they can have an equivalent but the English term came first and, therefore, it is the most commonly used by users and developers. The video game industry is all about immediacy; thanks to the Internet and the need for information of users, all news is delivered in real time worldwide, especially if it is a press conference, an interview in a foreign magazine or even an event held in another country. As with new technologies, it is rather usual to see users using foreign words to express something that in Spanish (for example) would require longer explanations. Almost every technological term is maintained from the English version, such as “Anti-Aliasing”, “V-Sync” or “Motion Blur”. All of them have appropriate translations in the players’ languages, translations that deliver as much information as the English text, but users, as well as the media and even developers, tend to prefer the foreign versions because they are used to them or simply because they prefer them.
5. Trademark-related: brands can make their way both into specialized language and in general language. As for the video game industry, it is rather usual to see many hardware-related names that make it into the general language, such as “Nintendo” or “PlayStation”. Also, in specialized language, we can find that, for example, video cards for PC are referred to directly by the name of its manufacturer, such as “Nvidia” or “ATI”.
6. Nonce words: these words are coined and used only for a particular occasion, usually to have a special effect. This frequently happens in many videogames, which tend to use special words only to have an effect in a precise moment. That is the case, for example, of the word “Upstreamers”, which is

only used in one short story of the video game *Lost Odyssey*, as a metaphor of what is happening to the main character.

7. Inverted neologisms: these are words that are created by playing with spelling in order to form a new word by writing a standard word backwards (Hasani-Yasin 2010: 251). A couple of examples of this can be the classical “redrum” that derives from “murder”, or the name “Alucard” that derives from the name “Dracula”, and which is the name of his son.

These are the seven types of neologisms that Hasani-Yasin presents, all of them based on reality and the complexities of everyday language. It has been demonstrated that all of them apply to the video game industry as well, but they are not enough to represent all the needs of this industry. This is an industry where anybody can create a new term for a game, or even to joke about them in forums and social networks. As a consequence, its terminology changes almost every day. Aside from the seven types of neologisms previously discussed, it is worth adding a few more categories to meet the needs of the industry when it comes to its specific terms, such as the following:

8. New species neologisms: many video games are set in fictional worlds, with fictional species and new worlds, quite similar to the sci-fi and comic-book worlds. Therefore, it is common to find words like “heartless” in *Kingdom Hearts*, “krogan” in *Mass Effect* or “Spartans” in *Halo*. This last case is of extreme relevance, as that term can be misleading (and a good example that this industry has specialized terms, and that translators and interpreters should perfectly understand the source material they are working with). While in English the term is the same for the fictional characters and the real-world Spartans from the Ancient World city-state, in other languages (such as Spanish) the real-world term is “espartanos”, while the fictional term from *Halo* remains “Spartans”. If someone unknowingly changes the term, this can lead to difficulties in appropriately conveying the message.
9. Weapon and skill-related neologisms: a typical feature of video games is the use of weapons, skills, and even vehicles that are unique to the game or the universe they are based on. This involves a significant amount of terms. Some of them based on real-world equivalents (depending on the game genre), but mainly with new names and qualities, such as the “keyblade” from *Kingdom Hearts*, the “Jagdplaute” from *Castlevania* series, the “plasmids” from *Bioshock* or the “artes” from the *Tales of* franchise. As for skills, it is worth highlighting that high-profile games, such as the RPG series *Final Fantasy*, have been inaccurately translated through the different entries, with many terms having a different translation in every new game released in this franchise. Therefore, the Japanese, English

and Spanish versions have little in common and share little more than ideas when it comes to skills and magic from the characters. The results are that the language is more specialized—as translators and interpreters must perfectly know the originals and the localized versions—and the job of the localizers becomes even harder than with other products. For example, the use of suffixes is changed to supposedly make the names easier to understand for Spanish users: “Piro”, “Pira” and “Piraga” are in the Spanish localized versions “Piro”, “Piro+” and “Piro++”. This is not maintained in every entry of the Final Fantasy series, so it can easily lead to inconsistencies and to the misbelief that two skills from different games are different when they were instead originally intended to be the same.

10. Item-related neologisms: similarly to previous examples, it is also well known that there can be many new items in video games. Almost every game has items to equip or power-ups to use, and they always have new terms that try to express important information about what they do and the benefits for players. These can be simple objects, such as the “pellets” from Pac-Man or the “mushrooms” from Super Mario Bros., but also more complex items such as the “Gold Skulltulas” from The Legend of Zelda or the “Tooth of Vlad” from Castlevania: Symphony of the Night.

All these types of neologisms are common in the daily development of the industry and must be taken into account when localizing a game or interpreting a game conference. When interpreting, a whole range of topics can be discussed or a conference could be about only one specific game, but there may be references to many other games from other developers, there may be talks about how to fund a project or how to start working in a development studio, or in a Q&A session users or journalists could ask almost anything, be it the personal life of the interviewee or about historical games or facts. Therefore, while some people argue that a good interpreter must be able to do a great job in this industry, there is no doubt that they need to specialize in this field in order to provide a proper interpreted speech.

Concluding remarks

In this paper, it has been demonstrated that the video game industry significantly uses neologisms in several different ways: they can be created *ad hoc* for the games; they can be inherited from new technologies used when developing video games; or they can be derived from the industry itself. No matter what their origin is, more and more neologisms are being created everyday in an industry that is bigger than ever. This phenomenon—alongside others, such as polysemy and synonymy, among many others—suggests that the video game industry employs a specialized language.

This study has proved that neologisms are common in the video game industry and, therefore, must be taken into account in order to provide a proper localization or interpreting job. As can be seen in the examples provided, localizers should create new neologisms and be faithful to previous translations of neologisms that users are already familiar with. This study provides a cursory overview of the terminological intricacies of the video game industry, of which neologisms are but one aspect contributing to the existence of a specialized language. This paper is part of a series of studies, and aims to serve as a starting point to expand the topic in future research, laying the basis for a more exhaustive analysis of all of the terminological issues and complexities arising in this field of expertise, calling for further documentation and a broader analysis.

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