

Translating the Player Experience: Exploring Immersion in the Context of Videogame Localization

George Vasilikaris

University of Turku, Finland

georgios.g.vasilikaris@utu.fi

Abstract

Over the past two decades, video games have established themselves as a par excellence medium of immersive storytelling, aiming to provide unique experiences to players around the globe. Although video game localization has only relatively recently been recognized as a distinct translation modality, the field has matured rapidly since the early 2010s (Mangiron, 2018). Research to date has largely focused on its defining features and on the analysis of localization models and processes, while, more recently, a limited number of user-centered approaches have emerged, elucidating how localization shapes gaming experiences across cultures (e.g., Bernal-Merino, 2014; Bernal-Merino et al., 2023; Deckert & Hejduk, 2024; O'Hagan, 2019). By contrast, research on both video games and video game localization within the Greek context remains largely unexplored, creating a significant research gap. In light of this, the present paper seeks to shed light on the landscape of video game localization in Greece and to examine whether translators' choices can hinder or enhance player experience and the sense of immersion. Specifically, this paper reports on a qualitative study of immersion involving 10 *League of Legends* (Riot Games, 2009–present) players, who volunteered their perspectives by providing feedback on selected in-game quotations through semi-structured interviews.

Keywords: videogame localization, immersion, player experience, localization in Greece, League of Legends

1 Introduction

Despite their reputation as *media non grata*, video games have established themselves as one of the most widely enjoyed forms of transmedia storytelling (Jenkins, 2007; O'Hagan, 2019; Stone, 2021). The sheer size of the gaming industry has inevitably created a need for the translation of related products. This has proven to be a daunting task, as translators are required to combine and adapt techniques from multiple translation modalities, harness technology, and refine existing translation workflows

in order to deliver engaging experiences to wider audiences (Bernal-Merino, 2014; O'Hagan, 2019).

The present paper seeks to explore video game localization in Greece and examine whether translators' choices can hinder or enhance player experience and the sense of immersion, drawing on examples from the Greek version of *League of Legends* (Riot Games, 2009–present). To this end, the paper reports on a qualitative study involving 10 *League of Legends* players, who volunteered their views through semi-structured interviews, providing feedback on selected in-game quotations presented in both written and audio formats.

2 The Landscape of Localization in Greece

An overarching consensus on what constitutes a video game has yet to be reached. While the pursuit of strict video game definitions has largely been abandoned by contemporary scholarship – as it is often regarded as a trivial exercise by both scholars and the wider public – the absence of a widely accepted definition has posed significant challenges for the Greek gaming industry (Arjoranta, 2019; Bergonse, 2017; Bogost, 2009). Tracing the roots of gaming – and, consequently, localization – in Greece is no easy task, as the scarcity of relevant bibliography makes it difficult to pinpoint the advent of arcades, although estimates place it around the 1980s.

Arcades quickly became social hubs for people of all ages. However, perceived similarities between arcade cabinets and slot machines in the eyes of the government – on the grounds that both were coin-operated – led first to the implementation of an age restriction for arcade-goers (17+) and later to their prohibition in 2002. In an effort to combat gambling, the government enacted Law 3037/2002, which effectively banned any form of “mechanical, electrical, electromechanical, electronic, and recreational/technical games” in public spaces, thus bringing the arcade era to an end (Νόμος 3037/2002; my translation). Unsurprisingly, this highly expansive definition of “games” had a significant impact on arcade owners and retailers alike, as even display consoles were deemed illegal.

Public and political outrage was considerable, emphasizing the distinction between gaming and gambling and calling for the amendment of the law on the grounds that it was unconstitutional. The controversial legislation was amended in 2003 by Ministerial Decision (ΦΕΚ Β/1827/8-12-2003), without addressing the ban on “electronic games,” and was eventually repealed in 2011 following intervention by the European Council.

It would be reasonable to suggest that the situation outlined above, combined with the Greek financial crisis, hampered the development of a domestic gaming industry to some extent, as potential investors and developers were likely deterred from

committing to an increasingly volatile market. To this day, most video games developed in Greece originate from independent studios or developers, with notable examples including the *Darkfall* series (Aventurine, 2009) and the *World Basketball Manager* series (Icehole Games, 1998). According to Panos Kouanis, former President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication (EKOME), Greece was home to approximately 30 studios and 150 teams involved in video game development in 2020 (Ketsietzis, 2020). Moreover, since 2019, digital game projects have become eligible for cash rebates aimed at supporting and promoting domestic video game production, and Greek indie companies have been recurrently featured at Nordic Game, one of the leading game conferences in Europe (EKOME, 2018).

Much like the steadily growing number of players worldwide, academic research on both video games and video game localization has gained momentum in recent years (Mangiron, 2018; O'Hagan, 2019). Nevertheless, research focusing on Greek contexts remains markedly scarce. In particular, video game studies in Greece have tended to emphasize semiotic analysis, with notable contributions from Kokonis (2010) and Vasilikaris (2019), while video game localization remains relatively unexplored, with the exception of two MA dissertations by Almpala (2017) and Vasilikaris (2020). Moreover, the absence of a centralized database for domestically developed or localized video games makes tracing the first officially localized title nearly impossible. Nevertheless, it can be estimated that early attempts at full localization into Greek occurred in the early 2000s with titles such as the *FIFA* series (EA Sports, 1999) and *Ghosthunter* (Sony Computer Entertainment, 2003).

It should also be noted that during the same period, locally developed video games intended to be played in Greek, such as *World Basketball Manager* (Icehole Games, 1998) and *Conspiracies* (Anima Interactive, 2003), were being internationalized, with the latter featuring both English audio and subtitles. Although the Greek market remains relatively small, numerous products have been localized into Greek over the years, with games such as the *Pro Evolution Soccer/eFootball* series (Konami, 2008–present), *League of Legends* (Riot Games, 2009–present), and *The Last of Us* (Naughty Dog, 2013) serving as concrete examples. Today, it can be argued that an increasing number of companies are localizing their games into Greek, with prominent recent examples including the latest entries in the *God of War* series (Sony Interactive Entertainment, 2013; 2018; 2022), *Hades II* (Supergiant Games, 2025), and the *Bokura* series (Tokoronyori, 2023; 2025).

3 The Multimodality of Videogame Localization

Video game localization is a context-sensitive process that inevitably raises questions regarding the strategies and approaches adopted throughout the task. In addition to

the different text types that video games include (e.g., manuals, legal texts, and UI elements), video game genre must also be taken into account. For example, genres such as role-playing games (RPGs) often feature a wider and more diverse cast of characters and a greater number of translatable assets, particularly in the form of descriptions or menus, and consequently involve more complex localization implications (Bernal-Merino, 2011; Mangiron, 2016). By contrast, simulation games tend to place greater emphasis on specialized language and scientific jargon in order to enhance immersion. It should be noted, however, that while attempts have been made to address this issue through the creation of genre-based taxonomies, the hybridity of the medium renders such approaches largely ineffective, given that new genres are frequently created as developers combine gameplay and aesthetic elements in increasingly creative ways (Bernal-Merino, 2007).

Given that it would be virtually impossible to develop a one-size-fits-all solution for video game localization, a functionalist approach was introduced by Bernal-Merino (2006) and O'Hagan (2009), emphasizing the preservation of the game experience across all localized versions. This approach is accompanied by a wide range of challenges, ranging from the classic distinction between foreignization and domestication (Venuti, 1995) to more technical considerations, such as methods for compensating for meaning loss in the translation of metatextual references or humor through functional equivalence (Di Marco, 2007). Taking into account cultural differences and the linguistic particularities of each title, locale, and target language, localizers often resort to transcreation, a concept closely linked to Venuti's notion of domestication that enhances translator agency, in order to preserve the overall feel of the game (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006; Van Oers, 2014).

As technological advancements allow more elements to be integrated into video games, localizers are increasingly required to work across multiple semiotic layers and a growing number of translatable assets (Bernal-Merino, 2007). The introduction of sound significantly altered the localization landscape and, today, video game studios frequently hire professional voice actors to bring characters to life (Chandler, 2005). Although this aspect is crucial for localization and, consequently, for immersion, even seminal works have suffered from poor localization practices, with *Resident Evil 4* (Capcom, 2005) serving as a notable example. As noted by players, the game contains several localization inconsistencies, with audio identified as the primary point of criticism. More specifically, although the game is set in rural Spain, much of the ambient NPC dialogue incorporates features of Latin American Spanish and is delivered by non-native speakers, thereby undermining immersion in an otherwise atmospheric horror game (Reddit, 2020; 2023; Steam, 2018).

As multimedia products, video games present numerous challenges which, combined with extensive metatextual and intertextual references, render video game localization

a particularly demanding task. *Undertale* (Toby Fox, 2015) and *High on Life* (Squanch Games, 2022) provide clear examples, as they incorporate a wide range of self-referential elements (e.g., the Execution/Experience Points system or Kenny's reaction to shooting Slumsley), alongside allusions to other video games (e.g., *Touhou Project*, *God of War*) and to popular culture (e.g., Doge, *Rick and Morty*). Ultimately, given the inherent hybridity of the medium, a case-by-case approach is required, with strong emphasis placed on preserving the game experience across cultures.

4 Immersion in Gaming

Having surveyed the landscape of video game studies and localization in Greece, this section shifts focus to an aspect central to video games and long debated by scholars and practitioners worldwide: immersion. Much like video games themselves, a concrete definition of immersion has yet to be established, largely due to the variety of theoretical approaches adopted by researchers (Agrawal et al., 2020). This section provides an overview of theoretical frameworks considered particularly suitable for the purposes of this paper.

One of the earliest and most influential approaches was proposed by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, who sought to measure positive experiences through the concept of "flow." Flow is defined as a state of deep engagement and concentration, typically experienced when individuals perform tasks that are optimally challenging relative to their abilities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). This balance between challenge and enjoyment, often described as the optimal experience, comprises several components: (1) tasks with a reasonable chance of completion; (2) clear goals; (3) immediate feedback; (4) deep but effortless involvement; (5) a sense of control over one's actions; (6) reduced self-consciousness; and (7) an altered perception of time (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 3–4). Moreover, achieving such optimal experience depends not only on external conditions, such as the balance between challenge and skill, but also on internal factors. In this respect, Csikszentmihalyi draws attention to personal characteristics and practices, including the body and the mind, memory, philosophy, writing, lifelong learning, work, solitude, and coping with stress (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 4–6).

A different approach was adopted by Ermi and Mäyrä (2005), who examined immersion specifically within the context of gaming experiences. Drawing on the distinctive features of video games, they propose three forms of immersion: sensory immersion, challenge-based immersion, and imaginative immersion (101). Sensory immersion relates to the audiovisual components of video games, including elements such as screen size and graphical quality. Challenge-based immersion is associated with the balance between game difficulty and the player's mechanical skills, problem-solving abilities, and strategic thinking. Imaginative immersion, by contrast, is linked

to narrative elements, lore, and the presence of characters with whom players can identify (Ermi & Mäyrä, 2005, 101). An important contribution of this framework is the observation that strong immersion does not necessarily result in a “good game experience,” but rather in what the authors term a “powerful game experience” (Ermi & Mäyrä, 2005, 89).

In this paper, immersion is understood as the degree to which a game engages players, makes them feel part of the virtual world, and enables empathy with their avatars. This conceptualization draws primarily on sensory and imaginative immersion (Ermi & Mäyrä, 2005), as well as on the reduction of self-consciousness described in Csikszentmihalyi’s theory of flow (1990).

In light of the above, immersion emerges as an intrinsic element of the gaming experience, and one that localization aims to preserve across linguistic and cultural contexts. In line with the functionalist approaches to video game localization proposed by Bernal-Merino (2006) and O’Hagan (2009), Riot Games (2017) further emphasize the importance of managing the distance between source and target languages so that games resonate with local players. By foregrounding users’ experiential, cultural, and emotional alignment, immersion – as defined in this paper – becomes a key criterion for evaluating translational adequacy and the extent to which a translation fulfills its Skopos.

5 Case study

Based on the aforementioned theories, the present qualitative study seeks to explore whether localization can enhance or hinder players’ gaming experience and immersion. In this context, 10 players provided feedback on examples drawn from the Greek version of *League of Legends* (hereafter also referred to as LoL), drawing on their empirical experience through semi-structured interviews. *League of Legends* is an ongoing free-to-play MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena) released in 2009 by Riot Games. At the time of writing (early 2025), the Riot Client, a unified launcher for Riot Games, has been translated into 27 languages, while LoL itself has been fully localized into no fewer than 19, with the Greek version released in late 2012 (Riot Games, 2020). With an estimated player base exceeding 120 million (Esguerra, 2022) and one of the largest and most competitive esports scenes to date, LoL is arguably among the most profitable gaming franchises, with products related to its universe ranging from dedicated clothing lines and makeup collections to an award-winning Netflix series.

Within Greece, *League of Legends* occupies a distinctive position in the gaming landscape. Its vibrant community, local teams, and the Hellenic Legends League, a regional professional league, underscore its cultural resonance, an impact formally acknowledged by Riot Games through a dedicated documentary.

Given that Greece is not, at least in terms of number of speakers, players, or sales, comparable to the E-FIGS markets, the selection of localized video games remains relatively limited. The primary criterion for selecting the material for this study was the identification of a game that reflects both historical and contemporary localization methods and strategies used in the industry. Furthermore, selecting a title that is easily accessible and allows interested readers to independently examine the examples discussed, without technical barriers, is advantageous for future research. *League of Legends* fulfills these criteria: it has had, and arguably continues to have, a significant impact on popular culture and resonates strongly with the Greek gaming community; it is free to play and has low hardware requirements, making it broadly accessible; and it continues to evolve more than a decade after its release, while also featuring characters introduced as early as 2009. To conclude, LoL represents a compelling case study for examining the evolution of translation and localization practices within the Greek video game industry, encompassing a wide range of localization- and locale-specific challenges.

6 Methodology

The qualitative study was conducted between July and September 2020 in order to investigate the ways, if any, in which localization can influence the sense of immersion among a sample of 10 *League of Legends* players. As discussed in Section 4, the goal of localizers is to create an immersive gaming experience for players by adapting characters so that they resonate with a specific locale (Bernal-Merino, 2006; O'Hagan, 2009; Riot Games, 2017). In this context, immersion – as defined in this paper – may serve as a criterion for assessing translation quality and the extent to which a translation fulfills its Skopos. Based on this premise, player feedback can be seen as a cornerstone for future improvements in localization practices. Given that immersion is a highly personal experience and that localization as a practice places players at the forefront, the study was designed to align with this player-centered perspective.

The hypotheses formulated to investigate how localization may influence the immersive experience of *League of Legends* players were as follows. Hypothesis 1 posits that the sense of immersion, as defined in this paper, is either enhanced or hindered by the quality of selected localized quotes, in line with Riot Games' developer post emphasizing the importance of creating characters that resonate with local players (2017). Hypothesis 2 posits the existence of an underlying negative bias toward Greek versions of video games. This hypothesis was informed by prior discussions concerning the perceived poor localization of video games into Greek, which reportedly led some players to avoid playing games in Greek altogether. Supporting this observation, further research identified a Steam group discussing the Greek version of *League of Legends*, in

which many users expressed dissatisfaction with the final product, describing it as “ridiculous” (Steam, 2012).

In order to allow players to express their views freely, the study sought to encourage spontaneous and genuine responses by avoiding closed questions and potentially leading statements. To this end, semi-structured interviews were employed as the data elicitation method, as they allow for greater flexibility through open-ended questions and support validity and credibility (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013). This approach aimed to create a safe environment in which participants could express their opinions without fear of judgment, thereby shifting “the balance of power away from the researcher and towards the research participant, allowing for the co-construction of knowledge” (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013). In a similar vein, research materials were distributed via email, and interviews were conducted in the game’s lobby (Phase 1) and via Skype and Messenger (Phase 2), both of which are discussed in greater detail in the following section.

The 10 participants were active players who began playing the game as early as 2009 and as late as 2012. They were recruited through convenience sampling from my own and my friends’ in-game friend lists, a strategy intended to ensure familiarity with the game and its community. All participants were male, aged between 23 and 32, had no background in translation or language studies, and were interviewed in three different focus groups. All were native speakers of Greek, with varying educational and occupational backgrounds, levels of competence in English, and degrees of in-game skill. The participants were long-term players, ranging from casual to formerly competitive. The rationale behind this selection was to capture perspectives from players of different profiles and to determine whether localization influenced both casual players and those at the upper echelons of the competitive ladder. Recruiting participants through convenience sampling constitutes a limitation of the present study, as it may reduce the representativeness and generalizability of the findings. Accordingly, future research should involve a larger and more diverse participant pool to strengthen the external validity of the results.

The material provided to participants consisted of 25 in-game character quotes, as well as corresponding audio cues available on YouTube. To reflect the range of localization methods used in *League of Legends*, the quotes were selected according to the following criteria: (1) the release date of each Champion; (2) the localization method used; and (3) the extent to which character-defining traits were conveyed in each quote, with priority given to examples that had been transcreated or contained emotionally charged language. The Champions (the in-game term for characters) from which examples were drawn were released over a span of 10 years, ranging from Corki (2009) to Sett (2020). The following examples illustrate these character-defining traits and provide an overview of some of the translation techniques applied in the localized sample. The first

character selected for the study was Corki, who pilots a flying contraption across the battlefield and casually employs military jargon such as “Lima Oscar Lima!” or “Delta Sierra at 12 o’clock!” Similarly, Sett is a former pit fighter who has risen to become “The Boss” of a fictional region’s criminal underworld. One of his defining characteristics is pronounced self-confidence, combined with the use of a low-register, informal speech style, as seen in quotes such as: “When you’re on top, there’s always some chump trying to drag you down. Pullin’ at your feet, scuffin’ up your nice shoes.” Examples of this kind were considered particularly suitable for the purposes of the study, as preserving character individuality aligns with the stated goal of Riot Games’ localization team “to [create characters that] better resonate with local players” (Riot Games, 2017).

One of the most distinctive characters included in the study was Kled, an unhinged yet surprisingly self-aware war veteran. In discussing *League of Legends*’ localization strategy, Riot Games (2017) describe him as “an interesting and very challenging champion” (emphasis in the original) to localize (para. 13). This difficulty is attributed to his highly idiomatic speech, which blends several linguistic features, including specialized military terminology and expressive onomatopoeia, as well as the fact that he “spits a lot of hot-headed phrases that might not be as well known outside of North America” (Riot Games, 2017, para. 13). The quotes examined below serve as examples of instances that were heavily adapted in order to resonate with Greek cultural expectations.

Table 1. *Sample quotes from Kled – The Cantankerous Cavalier*

	Source Text	Localised Text	Back Translation
1	Tried to bushwhack a bushwhacker!	Προσπάθησε να τσιφτήσει τον τσίφτη!	Tried to outhotshot a hotshot!
2	After we finish murdering these folks, what do you think? Tacos? Yeah, tacos!	Αφού τελειώσουμε με όλο αυτό το θανατικό, τι λες... σουβλάκια; Α, ναι... σουβλάκια!	After we finish with spreading carnage, what do you say... souvlaki? Oh yeah, souvlaki!

As is evident, the first line was completely altered through the introduction of the new verb *τσιφτήσει*, derived from the noun *τσιφτης* (“a clever and seemingly flawless person”), in accordance with Newmark’s (1988) technique of creating new lexical items when translating culture-specific concepts. Although this word had not previously existed, it complements Kled’s sense of superiority and highlights his deranged mentality, while remaining consistent with his use of slang, his lore, and his tendency to disregard rules, including grammatical ones.

The second quote is particularly noteworthy due to the use of a cultural equivalent for the word “tacos” (Newmark, 1988). While on his way to an in-game fight, Kled

frequently suggests getting something to eat after the fray, and since tacos are not particularly popular in Greece, the localized version replaces the term with *σουβλάκια*, a cultural equivalent and arguably the most popular street food in Greece. Although the localized version resonates more strongly with a Greek audience – thus aligning with Riot Games’ stated goals – it may also be problematic, as it is highly improbable that this type of food exists within the *League of Legends* universe, unlike ramen, for example, which appears in Akali’s joke animation.

Another set of examples can be drawn from Twisted Fate, a cardsharp whose profession, suavity, and cutthroat mentality are conveyed through the use of gambling jargon and a semi-formal register.

Table 2. *Sample quotes from Twisted Fate – The Card Master*

	Source Text	Localised Text	Back Translation
1	Only two Jokers in the deck, and I get dealt you.	Η μπάνκα κερδίζει πάντα.	The house always wins.
2	Nothin' better than a fool playin' tough.	Ο χαμένος τα παίρνει όλα... ή όχι;	The loser takes it all... or not?

Before proceeding with the analysis, it is important to note that each character has at least one taunt quote, such as those shown in the table. The first quote (Η μπάνκα κερδίζει πάντα, “The house always wins”) is a common saying associated with the dangers of gambling across various cultures. Although this could be interpreted as a form of transcreation (Mangiron & O’Hagan, 2006) and as a reference to Twisted Fate’s original lines, it can be argued that it lacks the brashness of its English counterpart. Similarly, the second quote was heavily transcreated to read “the loser takes it all... or not?”, which may function as an intertextual reference to the song *Ο Χαμένος Τα Παίρνει Όλα* (“The Loser Takes It All”) by Greek artist Giannis Aggelakas. The addition of the tag “or not?” serves to signal Twisted Fate’s willingness to do anything to win, thereby reinforcing his personality traits. However, it is safe to conclude that not all quotes were handled with equal success.

Table 3. *Sample quote from Fiddlesticks – The Ancient Fear*

	Source Text	Localised Text	Back Translation
1	Fiddlesticks End of Men, Fiddlesticks First of Ten.	Φίντλστιξ, έρχεται για εσένα, Φίντλστιξ, γόνατα κομμένα.	Fiddlesticks is coming for you, cower in fear.

In the Greek version of Fiddlesticks’ quotes featured in the table above, for instance, the lyrical quality of the original line was preserved through alliteration, albeit at the

expense of meaning in the second part of the sentence (Newmark, 1988). Although this degree of transcreation may be justified, prioritizing form over function in this case can create problems further down the line, particularly given that *League of Legends* is an ongoing game and that developers frequently embed hints about content that may be released at a later date. These so-called “easter eggs” serve to maintain community engagement by encouraging players to delve into the lore and construct theories in an effort to anticipate future Champions or Skins introduced into the game.

In this instance, the reference to Fiddlesticks as “the first of ten” was completely omitted, and with it the implicit hints toward the introduction of a new set of related Champions or Skins. Numerous other translation methods and techniques were employed in the sample, as well as throughout the game as a whole. While creativity is of paramount importance for localizers, it must be balanced with the need to deliver an engaging experience that resonates with the player audience while preserving the distinctive traits of the game’s characters.

7 Conducting the Interviews

For the purposes of this qualitative study, 10 players were asked to express their honest, experience-based opinions regarding the Greek version of the game through semi-structured interviews. To foster a sense of safety among participants and avoid overwhelming them, the interviews were conducted in two phases. Phase 1 was carried out in two groups of five participants and one group of three, with the researcher acting as a coordinator of the discussion flow in the game lobby during matchmaking. Phase 2 consisted of one-on-one online interviews with each participant.

The primary goal of Phase 1 was to establish a friendly and informal environment, given that most participants were unlikely to have had prior experience with research interviews. For this reason, the first phase took place in the game lobby, a familiar setting intended to help participants feel more at ease.

The interviews began with three warm-up questions: (1) participants’ preferred position(s); (2) their favorite Champion(s); and (3) the Champion(s) they selected most frequently. As the discussion progressed, additional topic-related questions were introduced, including: (4) whether they played *League of Legends* in English or Greek; (5) the rationale behind their preference; and (6) their favorite quotes and/or audio cues. While these questions formed the core of the study, additional questions and discussions emerged organically due to the flexible nature of semi-structured interviews (Saldanha & O’Brien, 2013).

Phase 2 consisted of individual online interviews with each participant. Following an initial, informal discussion related to the topic, participants were presented with the sample material, first in written form and subsequently in audio form. They were asked

to identify each Champion based solely on the quotes, thereby assessing whether key character traits had been preserved in the localized versions. Participants were then shown the correct answers and invited to provide feedback on both the written quotes and their audio counterparts, with particular emphasis on how natural each rendition felt. They were subsequently asked whether they would choose to switch to the localized version of the game and to elaborate on their decision. Finally, participants were debriefed regarding the aims and nature of the study.

It should be reiterated that none of the participants had any background in translation or language studies. As such, the findings are intended to reflect player perspectives rather than those of translation professionals, who may apply different evaluative criteria. Participants were given unlimited time during the interviews and, afterward, were offered the opportunity to contact the researcher should they wish to provide additional commentary or discuss the material in greater detail.

7.1 Findings of Phase 1

Greek was the preferred language for 2 out of 10 participants, although all had played both versions in the past. Most participants stated that they considered the localized version to be inferior, thus partially confirming Hypothesis 2. When asked to elaborate, all emphasized the substantial impact of voice acting and argued that the Greek version lacked gravitas, primarily due to what they perceived as weak vocal performances. Participants 6 and 8 were particularly vocal about the quality of the Greek version, noting that “the Greek version lacks a certain ‘oomph’” (Participant 6) and citing characters such as Twisted Fate as examples of underwhelming and lackluster voice acting when compared to their English counterparts.

For 6 out of 10 participants, poor voice acting was the primary reason for playing in English. They claimed that the localized version sounded “particularly awkward and unnatural” at times, which disrupted their sensory immersion and prevented a high level of concentration. Furthermore, 2 out of 10 participants continued playing in English because Greek was not available at the time of release, meaning that switching languages would require additional time and effort to become familiar with terminology and menu navigation. One participant played the English version in order to practice the language (Participant 5). By contrast, 2 out of 10 participants preferred playing *League of Legends* in Greek, stating that it was more entertaining and expressing interest in seeing how specific quotes had been translated.

When asked to name their favorite quotes, three participants did not have any or could not immediately recall one, four selected English quotes (Participants 2, 5, 6, and 9), and three selected Greek ones (Participants 3, 7, and 10). Notably, Participant 3 identified a favorite quote from the Greek version of the game despite preferring to play

in English, suggesting that the localized version had made a lasting impression. When asked to explain his choice, he laughed and commented on how humorous the quote was in terms of both translation and voice acting.

Based on these responses, a tentative link can be established between the localized product and the sense of immersion as defined in this paper. Taking into account the arguments offered to justify language preferences, as well as comments on voice acting quality, it becomes evident that players pay close attention to the final localized product, which can significantly influence their overall gaming experience.

7.2 Findings of Phase 2

The results of Phase 2 of the interviews were thought-provoking, as they offered a perspective distinct from that of professionals, largely due to participants' lack of linguistic training. Of the 10 participants, three correctly recognized all six characters from the quotes, four recognized five out of six characters, and the remaining participants recognized four out of six characters. The majority of participants (Participants 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, and 9) stated that the localized text was satisfactory overall, although they reported difficulty understanding quotes that contained specialized vocabulary or terminology.

In addition, most participants evaluated translation quality based on the absence of word-for-word accuracy, yet they found transcreated and highly domesticated quotes to be more entertaining than their English counterparts. When asked to comment on Kled's quotes, Participant 9 stated while laughing, "I don't know why or how it is done, but these are some S-tier lines." This response contrasts sharply with the views expressed by Participants 3, 5, and 7, who emphasized the lack of word-for-word equivalence. These reactions suggest a limited familiarity with translation theory, which aligns with the well-documented bias against the translation profession and the common assumption that proficiency in the source language alone qualifies one as a professional translator (Malmkjær, 2009; Chodkiewics, 2012).

Another noteworthy finding is that 7 out of 10 participants reported enjoying quotes with a lower register or those that had been culturally adapted (Nord, 2018). A particularly revealing comment was made by Participant 4 in response to Kled's suggestion to eat *σουβλάκια* instead of tacos. For this participant, the lack of word-for-word accuracy raised concerns that the localized quote might not be well received in northern Greece, where the term *σουβλάκι* is part of a long-standing regional debate and may refer to different types of food depending on locale. Even some of the more skeptical participants, including Participant 6, who had previously stated that the localized version lacked "oomph," appeared to enjoy the localized quotes and praised the work of the localizers.

One especially striking reaction came from Participant 8, who became visibly upset upon encountering the final set of quotes. When asked to elaborate, he exclaimed, “I lost three games to Draven players today, I can see him mocking me.” While this reaction may be considered exaggerated, it suggests that the localized version succeeded in resonating with the local player base and in eliciting a strong emotional response toward a fictional character.

Furthermore, 5 out of 10 participants stated that they would play characters from the sample specifically in order to hear more of the localized quotes. On this basis, it can be argued that the Greek version of the quotes may enhance sensory immersion and fulfill an entertainment function, particularly for players who are less familiar with the source material, thus partially supporting Hypothesis 1 for this sample. Finally, all participants stated that they would consider switching their preferred language settings to Greek in order to listen to the localized versions of their favorite characters and expressed interest in learning more about translation and localization techniques in the future, primarily for entertainment purposes.

B Discussion

Based on the interview results, a link can be established between localization and immersion, as defined in the present paper. As previously noted, the aim of localization is to provide a more immersive gaming experience and to create characters that resonate with local audiences (Bernal-Merino, 2006; O’Hagan, 2009; Riot Games, 2017). Within the sample, most participants preferred the English version of the game due to their familiarity with game terminology and their previous negative experiences with localized versions. Interestingly, following the interviews, all participants expressed interest in changing their language settings to determine whether this might enhance their gaming experience. In this respect, Hypothesis 2 can be considered confirmed, given that most participants who preferred the English version had only played the Greek version briefly upon release and were therefore unable to form a well-informed opinion.

With regard to feedback on the selected Champion quotes, all participants agreed that the quotes could be entertaining, although some were perceived as difficult to understand without relevant background knowledge. Expanding on this point, 50 percent of participants appeared to prefer certain culturally adapted and transcreated quotes, finding them more entertaining than their English counterparts. Considerable emphasis was also placed on voice acting, as some performances were perceived as influencing immersion, as illustrated by reactions to Twisted Fate. It should be noted, however, that these reactions may also stem from personal preferences and players’ familiarity with the original English voices, rather than from the intrinsic quality of the Greek voice acting alone. A similar explanation may apply to perceptions of terminology

or phrasing, which may feel less impactful simply because players are accustomed to experiencing the game in English.

Comments concerning the accuracy of the target text made by some participants can be attributed to the fact that the source text was provided during the interviews, as well as to their limited familiarity with translation theory and practice. Although the findings partially support Hypothesis 1, no definitive conclusions can be drawn given the small sample size. Additional evidence is therefore required to establish a stronger link between immersion and localization. Overall, the data suggest a tentative relationship between localization and immersion in the case of *League of Legends*, a relationship that could be further examined through a larger sample and or by focusing on a more narrative-driven game.

One of the most unexpected, yet encouraging, outcomes of the study was that all participants expressed interest in learning more about video game localization theory and practice. This interest may be beneficial for both research and practice, and may also contribute to educating a wider audience. Notably, two participants contacted the researcher several weeks after the interviews to provide further comments on the sample quotes, while another submitted a more extensive written analysis of his responses using a self-developed evaluation scale. Participant engagement with the study highlights the extent to which players feel connected to the games they play and underscores their willingness to contribute to the ongoing development of the medium.

9 Conclusions

Translators and localizers must consider a wide range of elements when undertaking the task of localizing a video game, with customer satisfaction being of primary importance. It is also necessary to bear in mind that the inherent hybridity of video games, combined with the case-by-case approach adopted by professionals, can result in discrepancies, particularly with regard to terminology. At the same time, the final product depends to a large extent on localizers' creativity and their familiarity with video games. However, based on the interview data, reception of the final product may also be influenced by factors that fall outside the translator's direct control, such as voice acting, which can either enhance or undermine the intended sense of immersion. Despite the steadily growing number of players worldwide and the increasing sophistication of video game design, Greek researchers often appear reluctant to engage with video games as an object of study. This reluctance stands in stark contrast to the willingness of the players who participated in this study to learn more about their hobby and the practices associated with it, including localization.

While the present study offers meaningful insights into player perspectives on video game localization, several methodological limitations must be acknowledged. The

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analysis is based on a small convenience sample which, although suitable for exploratory qualitative research, does not permit generalizable conclusions. Accordingly, caution is required when interpreting the findings or attempting to replicate the study with a different participant group, as such replication could yield divergent results. Future research should therefore aim to expand the participant pool and adopt randomized recruitment procedures in order to increase representativeness and strengthen the validity of the findings. Despite these limitations, the present study provides a valuable foundation for future research on video game localization, particularly in the Greek context, and its findings contribute to the ongoing development of game translation user research.

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Appendix A

Warmup questions

- 1) Which are your preferred positions?
- 2) Which are your favourite champions?
- 3) Which champions do you main?

Topic-related questions

- 4) Do you play LoL in English or Greek?
- 5) Why did you pick that language?
- 6) Do you have any favourite quotes or cues?

Material Used in Phase 2

Character 1 (Corki)

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation
That just goes to show you you're nothin' but a Whiskey Delta!	Golf Tango Papa! Επαναλαμβάνω, Golf Tango Papa!	Golf Tango Papa! I repeat, Golf Tango Papa!
Lima Oscar Lima!	Lima Oscar Lima!	Lima Oscar Lima!
Consider yourself spanked, nugget!	Τις έφαγες για τα καλά, σκουλήκι!	You got beat up real good, maggot!
Delta Sierra at 12 o'clock!	Μπελάδες εν όψη!/Χαμός! Επαναλαμβάνω, γίνεται χαμός!	Trouble up ahead!/Mayhem! I repeat, mayhem going down!

Character 2 (Sett)

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation
When you're on top, there's always some chump trying to drag you down. Pullin' at your feet, scuffin' up your nice shoes.	Όταν είσαι ο καλύτερος, πάντα υπάρχει ένας βλάκας που προσπαθεί να σε ρίξει, μπλέκεται στα πόδια σου και σου χαλάει τα ωραία σου πατούμενα.	When you're the best, there's always some moron trying to topple you, they get in your way and mess your nice kicks.

Bustin' heads!/Facebreaker!	Σπαζοκεφαλιά!/Σπασμένη μούρη!	Breaking heads!/Broken face!
The crackin' of bones is the clinkin' of coins.	Τσακίζεις τον εχθρούλη, γεμίζει το σακούλι.	Crush the enemy, fill the bag.
They called me X the "Beast-Boy Bastard". Hah. Now it's X "the Beast-Man Bastard."	Κάποτε με φώναζαν X, «το μπάσταρδο κτήνος-αγοράκι», τώρα πια λένε X «το μπάσταρδο κτήνος μαναράκι».	They used to call me X the "Beast-Boy Bastard," now they call me X "the Beast-Hunk bastard."
Wait, hold up. Are we gettin' paid for this?	Ωπα, στάκα... πληρωνόμαστε για αυτό;	Woah, hold up... are we getting paid for that?

Character 3 (Caitlyn)

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation
Me, miss? Not by a long shot.	Εγώ να αστοχήσω; Ούτε κατά διάνοια.	Me, miss? Not by any stretch of the imagination.
Want another shot? I wouldn't want to leave things up in the air.	Ψηλά τα χέρια τις δαγκάνες, τα πτερύγια και ό,τι άλλο έχετε!	Hands, claws, fins or whatever else you got up!
Who doesn't like being under the gun?	Σε ποιόν δεν αρέσει να είναι με το πιστόλι στον κρόταφο;	Who doesn't like being under the gun?

Character 4 (Kled)

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation
Tried to bushwhack a bushwhacker.	Προσπάθησε να τσιφτήσει τον τσίφτη!	He tried to outhotshot the hotshot!
My brain is full of weasels!	Το κεφάλι μου είναι γεμάτο νυφίτσες!	My head is full of weasels!
After we finish murdering these folks, what do you think? Tacos? Yeah, tacos.	Αφού τελειώσουμε με όλο αυτό το θανατικό... σουβλάκια; Ναι... σουβλάκια!	After we finish murdering these folks... souvlaki? Yeah... souvlaki!

Y'all made a nice stabbing bag.	Όλοι εσείς κάνετε ένα ωραίο μαξιλαράκι για καρφίτσες!	All of you are nice pincushions!
Pure Noxian girl. Almost liked her. Almost.	Καθαρός νοξιανός κορίτσaros.	Pure Noxian lassie!
Who sent you?	Εσύ τίνος είσαι;	Whose are you?

Character 5 (Twisted Fate)

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation
Lady luck is smiling.	Η τύχη σου χαμογελά.	Luck smiles upon you.
Only two Jokers in the deck, and I get dealt you.	Η μπάνκα κερδίζει πάντα.	The house always wins.
\\	Ο χαμένος τα παίρνει όλα... ή όχι;	The loser takes it all... or not?
Just the luck of the draw.	Όλα είναι θέμα τύχης.	Everything is a matter of luck.

Character 6 (Draven)

Source Text	Target Text	Back Translation
No followin' these footsteps.	Δεν ακολουθώ τα βήματα κανενός.	I am not following anyone's footsteps.
Got axes, need victims.	Βάζω τσεκούρια, βάζεις τα θύματα;	I get the axes. You get the victims?
Seems to be blood everywhere I go.	Έχουμε γεμίσει αίματα παντού.	We have got blood all over the place.