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Failures in video game localization: a comparative
analysis of the English-into-Spanish translation of *Final
Fantasy VII*

Fallos en la localización de videojuegos: un análisis
comparativo de la traducción al español de *Final Fantasy
VII*

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Abstract

The last few years have witnessed the great evolution that the video game industry has achieved. The success of a video game is not only based on the visual and playable aspects, but also in the game localization. The main aim of this paper is the analysis of several examples of dialogue boxes from *Final Fantasy VII* to identify and discuss the main problems which translators found when translating it. The analysis focuses on the translation of grammatical and lexical errors, and idioms from English into Spanish. The result suggests that localization is a very exhaustive process and that the mistakes seem to be due to a lack of linguistic proficiency and knowledge of the target culture.

Resumen

En los últimos años, hemos podido observar la gran evolución de la industria del videojuego. El éxito de los videojuegos no se debe solo a los aspectos visuales y jugables, sino también a la localización. El objetivo de este ensayo es analizar varios ejemplos de diálogos de *Final Fantasy VII* para saber los problemas que los traductores encontraron a la hora de traducirlo. El análisis se ha centrado en la traducción de errores gramaticales, léxicos y expresiones hechas del inglés al castellano. El resultado del análisis deja entrever que la localización es un proceso muy complejo y que los errores encontrados son errores debido a la falta de un nivel adecuado de idioma y de conocimiento de la cultura a la que estaba destinada el videojuego.

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1.- Introduction

Final Fantasy VII is a role-playing game developed by the video game producer Square (currently known as Square Enix, <<https://www.square-enix.com/>>) in Japan. Since Square decided to give the localisation to a Japanese native staff, if particular in-game dialogues are compared bearing in mind the three languages with which the game was released (Japanese as the source language and American English and Spanish as the target language) there are some significant deficiencies in the translation of some words and grammatical structures in the exchange of information between the characters. Therefore, this paper examines several examples taken from the game in English to highlight the bad localization of the game in Spanish. Localization is the translation of an electronic product from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). This aspect is discussed in Section 2.3 below.

This game, created by Yoshinori Kitase, is the seventh main instalment of the saga *Final Fantasy*. The game was released in Japan in January 1997 by Square, but it was not until September that the game was published in the United States. Later on, the game landed in Europe, and consequently in Spain, in November 1997. From the beginning, this instalment had an enormous acceptance all over the world from the moment it was released until the present day. The huge success transformed the game into a representative of the game enterprise, not only where the game was released but also in the European and American countries. *Final Fantasy VII* was the first role-playing game sold in Europe and this meant the creation of a new type of client whose profile was completely different from the Japanese one.

As mentioned above, the game was released in Japanese, so if the company wanted to distribute the game in other countries, such as the United States of America and Europe and have better reception, they had to hire a group of people responsible for the translation and localization of the game. In the 1990s, it was very difficult to find a person able to translate from Japanese to English, Ted Woosley <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ted_Woolsey>, was the person in charge of this task until he left Square. As a result, Square had to hire a new group of translators or at least people who knew Japanese and English, and this was the case of Richard Honeywood, who was a programmer, and Aiko Ito. So, Honeywood and Aiko Ito, <<https://vandal.elespanol.com/reportaje/alle-voy-como-final-fantasy-vii-acabo-con-una-desastrosa-traduccion>>, were Japanese ‘native’ staff responsible for the translation from Japanese to English. In the translation of the video game, they found several problems because the code of the game was encrypted. They needed the help of a program to transform the Japanese alphabet into the Latin alphabet. Although the translator who translated from English to Spanish remains unknown, what is clear is that there are a lot of mistakes in the translation of the game.

The game was a massive success due to the battle system based on shifts (it is a static combat where the players have to decide what to do and this decision cannot be changed until the next shift). The bewitching characters and the deep story were the cornerstones for its triumph. All these elements engaged the public without a doubt. Such was the triumph and great memories that gamers have of *Final Fantasy VII* that Square Enix has released a remake of the game this year <<https://ffvii-remake.square-enix-games.com/es?>>>. Although the growing popularity of the game, there was also a focus on the controversy due to the peculiar localisation it went through.

By the time this game was under development and, later on, released, game localisation and translation were and still are, increasing at the same time that the game industry. Perhaps, one of the most significant changes to localisation (and the game industry in general) was the dramatic success of games in the online arena at the end of the 20th century (Bernal-Merino, 2011, p. 16). So, the 1990s may be seen as the time when the game industry started to expand their boundaries; this means that they started to open to different countries and as a result, to different cultures. The reason why Square decided to release *Final Fantasy VII* in the United States and Europe is unknown, but it may be for obtaining more benefit. Nonetheless, being their first attempt to localise a game outside Japan and deal with the necessities of a different audience and culture, the game suffered from several cultural crashes that were included in the game and these errors became even more memorable than the game itself.

Game localisation thus resulted in an elaborate issue. Translating from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) was not enough, because the translators also needed to have some knowledge of the target culture in which the game was going to be released. In *Final Fantasy VII*, the whole story is narrated by means of written dialogue between the characters and there is also a soundtrack with special sounds depending on what is happening in the scene. All of this was used to facilitate the comprehension of the plot for the player. Even though the text should seem to facilitate the transmission to other cultures, when the player looked to the final result, he/she could realise that the process of localization (a term not known at that moment) was something very complicated.

2.- Theoretical framework

2.1.- History of Video Games and Most Common Genres

Before analysing the history of video games, it is interesting to know what is a video game. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines *video game* as “an electronic game in which players control images on a video screen”. However, this definition is too broad, and this can highlight the immense complexity and variety of video games. Another possible definition of the term is that *video games* are “interactive multimedia and multimodal products with a strong audio-visual component, based on complex systems of rules, and designed with the primary function of entertaining, albeit not exclusively limited to that function” (Mangiron, 2013, p. 2). This last definition exemplifies the complexity mentioned before. Due to the huge variety of genres, they cannot only entertain, but they can also be educative (for example *Brain Training*, Nintendo 2006), or they can develop teamwork (for example *Portal 2*, Valve 2011), etc.

After understanding what is a game, we are going to know its history from the 1970s until the 2000s. Although the video game industry and also the game localisation are still improving nowadays, a quick look at its development through the decades previously mentioned could help us to understand the great impact that this form of entertainment has had in our leisure time over books, TV, films, etc. And this is the reason why adequate translations are key to complete success.

The 1970s are known as the birth of the video game industry (Bernal-Merino, 2011, p. 12). In this period, the main countries which were the world power were the United States and Japan. The United States started developing games that were addressed only to the American gambler. These games were played in arcades which were “an area where there were many electronic or other coin-operated games for the public”

(Cambridge Dictionary). Such was the massive popularity that similar technologies were designed for home entertainment. Japan became aware of the great success that this technology could have in the future, and they were the first country to join the game industry.

The 1980s are known as the establishment of the game industry. This establishment was not achieved until 1985 by Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) and other video game companies after what is known as ‘the video game crash’ from 1983 until 1985. In 1983, the US video game industry experienced a major “crash” due to some factors, including an oversaturated game console market, competition from computer gaming, and a surplus of over-hyped, low-quality games (History.com, 2019). From 1985 onwards, with Nintendo Entertainment System, there was a substantial growth of the game quality and also an expansion of the home console.

In the 1990s, European countries established their market to compete against the US and Japan. This period supposed a great development in the industry with the release of consoles in 16-bits. In the first half of the decade, gamers saw the “release of a wealth of popular games on both consoles, including new franchises such as *Street Fighter II* and *Mortal Kombat*” (History.com, 2019). As a consequence of the great success of violent games among players, Sega created the Videogame Rating Council in 1993 to provide the recommended age for the games released in that console.

The 2000s are known as the globalisation of the industry because, as more and more countries joined the internet, the number of players grew and this also meant that the same video game could sell more copies. In the first decade of this period, several companies were specialized in the correct localization of games due to the increasing demand and this was translated into the growing of the profits. Moreover, it is in this

decade when games started to be released at the same time in different languages and countries (Sim-ship) to make the profits of the companies even bigger.

Finally, in the decade of the 2010s, the most memorable achievements are the improvement of graphics, the far better localisation of videogames, the introduction of games to smartphones, the development of webpages with indie games, etc.

Not only has the industry of video games evolved, but also the games, and when talking about games, nowadays we need to refer to their genres. Throughout the history of game genres, it could be said that the most important ones have been action games. However, nowadays they have to deal with other genres, for instance, adventure games, role-playing games, simulation, sports, strategy, etc.

2.2.- Video Games as Storytelling.

Once that the definition of video games has been made, and that we know the evolution of video games throughout the time and the possible genres that games can have, it is important to mention the importance that narration has in the success and localisation of the video game. This section is going to explore what is a narrative, the types of narratives that video games can have and the type of narrative that *Final Fantasy VII* represents.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term *narrative* as “a way of presenting or understanding a situation or series of events that reflects and promotes a particular point of view or set of values.” According to this definition, a narration is a method to present a series of events from the beginning to the end, although narratives do not always have this structure. In the case of video games, its narrative refers to storytelling, and the relation of events and characters. To know when we are facing a narrative, three elements are needed: a world/place settled with people and objects,

unpredictable changes in the story and changes that can be associated with the goals, emotions, plans of the main character/characters.

Not only did the games experience an evolution in terms of quality and selling, but their narratives also underwent that evolution. At this point, it is important to mention that not all the games in the world have or focus on a narrative. For example, *Minecraft* is the perfect example of a game without a narrative, because when gamers start the game, they appear anywhere in the huge map and the only thing that people know is that they have to obtain resources, build their houses, kill animals, etc.

So, the narrative in the videogames is not important for all the games as said before, but if the narrative is important in one game, it is necessary to know that the narrative of video games is usually divided into two parts. The first part of the structure is the progression of the story, the different plot and subplots and how they are related, the second part refers to how the game shows the story that the creator wanted to transmit.

In the video game's narration, there are at least four types of structure. The first narrative structure is the linear in which the story goes from point A to point B without allowing the player to explore the world where the game is set, and the gamer cannot affect the resolution of the story; this is the most typical structure in the first games because it was easier for game developers to create this kind of story.

The second type of narrative structure is what Chris Stone (2019) refers to it as a string of pearls. This type of structure is similar to the previous one, but in this case, players can have a kind of freedom. This freedom can be seen when players can carry out secondary missions to escape from the main quest, but players do not have complete freedom. This is the case of role-playing games which have a linear structure based on several missions, and the player has freedom thanks to exploration and side quests.

The third type of narrative structure is that in which the player at the end of some scenes can decide between two or more options and depending on what he/she decides the game has a different ending, for example, *Heavy Rain* (Quantic Dream, 2010). So, it can be said that this structure is similar to novels in which at the end of the chapter you have to decide what to do, and depending on the decision you go to one chapter or other creating your own story, for instance, there is a collection of children's books called *Choose Your Own Adventure* which are based on this idea. Finally, the fourth narrative structure is that in which the gamer knows the story by means of exploring the world in which the game is placed, and this structure is common in open-world games.

So, the narrative structure of the *Final Fantasy VII* is linear, because it goes from point A, when Cloud is with Avalanche trying to destroy a reactor, to point B, when the characters have survived and they decide to fight one more day.

Another thing which is important to know after analysing the structure of *Final Fantasy VII* is how video games can represent the story. The first one is through cinematics which are scenes in a video game which are not interactive and break up the gameplay. This cinematics or cutscenes can combine dialogue and action and they help to the development of the plot. Another way of knowing the plot is talking with NPCs which are non-player characters which have fixed dialogues that help the player to find or understand the plot. Finally, dialogues are another method used to know the plot of the game and this is the case of the game which is going to be analysed. In *Final Fantasy VII*, the whole plot is known thanks to the dialogues between the characters and these dialogues are key to understand the personality of the characters if it is the first time that have you ever played any game of *Final Fantasy* instalment.

2.3.- What is the 'localisation' of a video game?

Localisation is one of the most difficult steps when carrying out a video game. As said before, this term is used when a product (mainly software) is translated from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). However, this is a broad definition because the localization of a game implies more than translating the text or dialogues. So, a narrower definition of the term should be “taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold” (Esselink 2000, p. 3). This definition exemplifies the fact that to make a correct localization of a video game, translators need to take into account the culture in which the game is going to be released when translating. So, this refers to what Bernal-Merino refers as *the process of internationalisation* which is “once the product has been ‘internationalised’ in its core design, it can be adapted linguistically, technically, culturally and legally to each of the receiving countries, i.e. it can be ‘localised’” (Bernal-Merino, 2013, p. 125). So, the internationalisation of the video game’s culture is the key term to achieve a correct translation of the game’s plot.

In the process of localisation, it can be argued that video games localisers show a clear predilection for domesticating over foreignizing strategies (Venuti, 2000). In this sense, it is very common to find expressions whose use was widespread among the inhabitants of the target country at the moment in which the localisation was being made. However, there is another tendency which tries to keep the cultural elements of the source culture with the aim of raise the curiosity and awareness of cultures and people who are different from those of the target culture. In the end, it is the marketing department and the localisation strategist who decide which option is the best depending on the market and the fan base.

3.- Methodology and Analysis

For the analysis of localisation in video games, the examples that will be used are several dialogue boxes from *Final Fantasy VII*. As mentioned above, *Final Fantasy VII* is a Japanese role-playing game developed by Square in 1997. This video game is about a group of eco-terrorists called Avalanche which is formed by Cloud Strife (who is the main character and a mercenary), Barret Wallace, Tifa, Biggs, Wedge and Jessie. In the beginning, the game starts with this eco-terrorist group trying to destroy a reactor which belongs to Shinra Electric Power Company, their archenemies. When the group has destroyed two reactors whose function was to drain the planet's lifeblood as an energy source to increase their profits, Shinra decides to destroy the plate (a metallic circular element which is above of the slums) of the sector 7, killing several people and Biggs, Wedge and Jessie. Cloud initially fights for personal gain and for the promise he made to Tifa when they were young. During this journey, he joins forces with other characters in his way to destroy Shinra and his nemesis, Sephiroth.

The reason for the selection of the fifty-six fragments below for the analysis is that it was a very popular game in the late 1990s which achieved great success, not only in its country of origin but also in North America and Europe. The main reason for its popularity is, as previously said, the battle system based on shifts, the bewitching characters and the deep story. The questions that are posed in this paper and which have given rise to the choice of examples are the following: was the localisation of Japanese games in the 1990s correct? Which strategies did the translators use? And, finally, is the Spanish localisation of *Final Fantasy VII* a suitable one?

Finally, the examples have been selected in the following way. Due to the difficulties in the access to play the game, I had to watch the video game through several walkthroughs in English and Spanish. Walkthroughs are videos on YouTube in which someone plays the game from the beginning to the end. During the process of watching the videos, whenever there was a dialogue box, I compared what the English game said with what the Spanish game said. If there was any discrepancy, I wrote what the English version said and then the Spanish one in a Word document, and then I tried to look for a solution to the problem.

The data presented, taken directly from the game, is organised in chronological order from the beginning of the game until the end of the first three hours of the game. Utterances are divided into three sections according to the type of errors which have been found in the speech and conversations of the characters. These three sections are (i) mistranslation of idioms (set phrases with a specific meaning in English that have a different meaning in Spanish), (ii) mistranslation of the lexicon (different meaning for certain English words in Spanish), and (iii) mistranslation of grammar (different word order, errors in the use of tenses, etc.). A general context will be provided as this is important for the game localization process.

How the examples will appear is the following: firstly, the type of section in which the errors are found. Secondly, the English sentence in-game and then the Spanish one. Finally, an alternative translation of my creation for the Spanish text, followed by an explanation of the change suggested.

(i) Idioms

Example 1:

Context	Cloud, Barret and Tifa are trying to escape after destroying the reactor N 5. On the way out, they are surrounded by Shinra's soldiers. At the same time, Shinra's president arrives. Cloud says to him:
English	" <i>Long time no see</i> , President"
Spanish	" <i>Largo tiempo sin vernos</i> , presidente"

Final Fantasy VII translators have made a direct translation from English into Spanish of the word '*long*'. If we follow the literal translation, the word refers to the distance from point A to point B. So, this is the case that we found in the game: '*long*' is the Spanish '*largo*'. However, this can be considered an error because '*long time no see*' is an idiom which has its meaning. In English, this idiom is used to refer to the amount of time when you meet someone whom you have not seen for a long time and it also seems to be an imitation of broken or pidgin English (Wikipedia, 2019). According to this, '*long time no see*' could be translated in Spanish as "Mucho tiempo sin vernos, Presidente". Nevertheless, a freer translation could be also accepted, this free translation could be "Hace mucho que no nos vemos presidente". In any case, both sentences are better than the in-game Spanish one.

Example 2:

Context	Cloud and Aerith are trying to rescue Tifa who is in Don Corneo's mansion. To go inside the mansion, Cloud has to get dressed like a girl. Cloud and Aerith go to a tailor shop to have a dress made. The owner of the shop tells them that they have to talk to his father who is in a pub. In the pub, Cloud and Aerith talk to the father and he says:
English	" <i>Y'know</i> I got a friend that has the same taste as him"
Spanish	"Te diré que tengo un amigo con los mismos gustos que él"

The people responsible for the translation of the video game have made a mistake in the translation of the filler "*Y'know*". According to the Cambridge Dictionary, this filler is an idiom which is used when the speaker makes a pause to think what he is going to say next. So, as a result of this explanation, how the translators localised the sentence is wrong, because the meaning that the filler carries is lost, and the Spanish gamer only finds the next sentence and misses the fact that the speaker has doubts about what he is going to say next. A solution to this could be translating the idiom for the Spanish "*sabes*" which is used by the Spaniards when they want to introduce a trace of doubt in what they are saying. As a result, the sentence would be: "*Sabes, tengo un amigo con los mismos gustos que él*".

Example 3:

Context	Tifa and Cloud are talking in the dungeons inside Don Corneo's mansion about how Tifa ended in that place. Tifa starts to explain and she does not want Aerith to hear, so Aerith says:
English	"I'll just <i>plug my ears!</i> "
Spanish	"Solo <i>escucharé</i> "

The English sentence in-game depicts the meaning that the player can get when playing the game. This meaning is the fact that Tifa does not want Aerith to hear what she is going to say about how she ended in that place. After reading Aerith saying the sentence, the gamer can see how she moves away some metres and she covers or put her fingers in her ears. So, "*Plug my ears*" is an idiom that the team of translators used to carry the Japanese context into English. However, this idiom has been mistranslated in the Spanish version. In the Spanish version of the game, one can read how Aerith says "Solo *escucharé*" which makes no sense with what she does later on. Consequently, a correct translation of this idiom in Spanish would be: "¡Me taparé los oídos!" whose meaning is closer to the English one, and as a result, the localisation of the game will be better.

Example 4:

Context	Cloud, Barret, and Tifa are going to the slum where they are living through a tunnel. At some point, the three of them stop to talk and, suddenly, Cloud has a vision about the Ancients and Sephiroth. After that vision, Cloud falls and Barret says to him:
English	<i>"Pull it together, man!"</i>
Spanish	<i>"¡Vamos, hombre!"</i>

"Pull it together" is an idiom which means to calm oneself down and begin to think or act properly or to repress the feelings. As a result of this meaning, the Spanish '*vamos*' does not make much sense, because this word is used in order to cheer someone up, and consequently the English meaning is lost. A possible alternative to the Spanish sentence could be *"¡Cálmate hombre!"* whose meaning is closer to the English one. Moreover, another reason why this sentence is more correct than the original is because Tifa and Barret do not know what has happened to Cloud and they can think that Cloud is suffering from reactor 7's explosion. Furthermore, it seems that the English sentence suggests that it is not appropriate for Cloud to behave like he has done because he is a mercenary, and, as a result, he should not have any feelings. For that reason, the alternative proposed is more adequate.

(ii) Lexicon

Example 5:

Context	Avalanche (the eco-terrorist group) is running away from the reactor that they have just detonated. In their way out, the group get stuck in a tunnel and they detonate a wall and they go out of the tunnel. After that, Barret says:
English	“ <i>Rendezvous</i> at sector 8 station!”
Spanish	“¡ <i>Cita</i> en la estación del sector 8!”

“*Rendezvous*” is a word which has a French origin. The etymological origin of the word in English can be found, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, in 1645 as a verb. Moreover, this dictionary says that the history and etymology for the word is “Middle French, from *rendez vous* present yourselves.” Furthermore, this verb means to meet with someone at a particular time and in a particular place. So, the Spanish translation of the word is not correct because ‘*cita*’ is a noun and the word should be a verb. An alternative translation to this sentence could be “¡Nos encontramos en la estación del sector 8!” whose meaning is closer to the meaning in English.

Example 6:

Context	Cloud is at Tifa's bar talking with her about a promise that both made when they were younger. Cloud says that he cannot keep the promise. Suddenly, Barret climbs up from the bottom of the bar, and he addresses Cloud with the following sentence:
English	"Wait a sec <i>big-time</i> SOLDIER!"
Spanish	"¡Espera un momento, SOLDADO de todos los tiempos"

In the Spanish sentence, it could be said that there is a translating error. In the English sentence, it is found the expression '*big-time*' which is a compound adjective whose meaning refers to the state of someone being famous or successful. As a consequence, the Spanish translation does not share the initial meaning of the English compound, because '*big-time*' is not the same as '*de todos los tiempos*'. Moreover, there is another reason why it could be said that the meaning is lost, the reason is that Barret is being ironical, and this interpretation of the sentence cannot be got in the Spanish in-game sentence. After looking up the definition of the word in several dictionaries, like Cambridge and Merriam-Webster, this compound could be translated into Spanish as "*exitoso*" or "*de primer nivel*". So, the more acceptable translation in Spanish would be: "¡Espera un momento soldado de primer nivel!", an expression which embodies the meaning that Barret wanted to share.

Example 7:

Context	Barret asks Cloud for an explanation on how to use the Materia. After that, the player finds a dialogue box with two options either explain Barret how to use them or not explaining the usage of the Materia. If you select not explaining Barret the use of the Materia, he says the following sentence.
English	“Ok. <i>I’ll ask</i> Jessie again later. But you’re in charge of the Materia!”
Spanish	“Muy bien. <i>Volveré a liquidar</i> a Jesse más tarde. ¡Pero tú te encargas de Materia!”

The error in this example is originated in the translation of the verb ‘to ask’. The verb can be used in English for two purposes: ask something or request something. Here, the verb means to request something, and this something is an explanation about how the Materia can be used. In Spanish, the verb ‘to ask’ has the same meaning as in English. So, the Spanish in-game translation is completely wrong, because the verb ‘to ask’ is not the Spanish verb ‘*liquidar*’ as said before. So, the translators have transformed the meaning of the sentence entirely, since ‘*liquidar*’ makes no sense with the context in which the sentence is found. An alternative translation, and more correct, would be keeping the original meaning of the verb, and the result would be: “Muy bien. Se lo preguntaré a Jessie más tarde. ¡Pero tú te encargas de la Materia!”.

Example 8:

Context	Tifa, Barret, Cloud and President Shinra are talking after the eco-terrorist group has destroyed the reactor. The President uses the word vermin to refer to the group, and Barret starts to answer back, and, at some point, Barret insults him in the following way.
English	“And that makes you King VERMIN! So shu’up <i>jackass</i> !”
Spanish	“¡Y eso te convierte en el Rey SABANDIJA! ¡Así que cállate <i>gusano</i> !”

This example deals with the issue of the translation of expletives (taboo words), which is a complicated issue when translating a game. The reason why this is complicated resides in the target culture in which the game is going to be released. Probably, in 1997, when the game was released for the first time, the direct translation of English or any language expletives into Spanish was not seen as a correct, and this could be the reason why the term ‘*jackass*’ has been translated as ‘*gusano*’. The translation keeps a little bit the meaning of the original word, but the real meaning and the essence of Barret is lost. The translator decided to use a language without taboo words to avoid the use of these words in real life. However, as said before, the charisma of Barret is lost. Nowadays, the use of taboo words is widely accepted, so an alternative translation would be: “¡Y eso te convierte en el Rey SABANDIJA! ¡Así que cállate imbécil!”, which keeps closer to the original meaning and the essence of Barret.

(iii) Grammar

Example 9:

Context	Avalanche has escaped from the explosion of the reactor and Barret, Tifa, Biggs and Wedge are in the train back to the slum where they live. Cloud has “disappear” and at some point in the journey back to their home, they hear some knocks in the door of the train. After that Biggs says:
English	“Say, do you think Cloud’s <i>going to fight</i> to the end for AVALANCHE!?”
Spanish	“Dime, ¿crees que Cloud <i>voy a luchar</i> hasta el final por Avalancha?”

The error in this example is found in the concordance of the verb ‘be going to’, which is used to refer to something that it is sure to happen in the future, with the subject of the sentence in Spanish. The meaning of the verb has been correctly translated into the target language. However, the problem is found in the concordance between the subject and the verb in the Spanish in-game sentence. In Spanish, the verb has to concur in number (singular or plural) and person (first, second or third). In this case, the agreement is not found because Biggs, the character who is speaking, is thinking what Cloud is going to do. So, in this case, the agreement has to be done between Cloud and the verb be going to. As a result, ‘voy’ which is first person singular form of the verb ‘ir’ is not the correct agreement, because the subject of the question is Cloud, not Biggs who is speaking in the first person. The correct translation of the sentence would be: “Dime, ¿crees que Cloud va a luchar hasta el final con Avalancha?”. Now, the concordance has been achieved.

Example 10:

Context	Cloud and Aerith are talking in the church's roof about the group of people that has just attacked them, and he says that they also belong to Shinra and their have to recruit people for Shinra. Cloud also says to her:
English	"They're also involved in a lot of dirty stuff on the side"
Spanish	" <i>También</i> están implicados en un montón de asuntos turbios <i>aparte</i> "

The translation of the lexical of the sentence is correct. The problem is the word order in the Spanish sentence. '*Aparte*' is found in the wrong position. This conjunction is used to add or specify the information. In this particular example, the conjunction is used to add information. So, its position cannot be the end of the sentence, the conjunction has to appear either at the beginning followed by a comma or in the middle (López, n.d.). So, after applying the rule, the sentence should appear in this way: "Aparte, también están implicados en un montón de asuntos turbios".

Example 11:

Context	After meeting Aerith's mother, she says to Cloud to leave Aerith because he will bring her problems in the future. Cloud decides to leave the house in the middle of the night without making any noise. When Cloud is almost leaving the slum, he finds Aerith in the gate of the slum. Cloud tries to explain himself and she says:
Spanish	"Are you done?"
English	"¿ <i>Estás acabado?</i> "

The error in this example can be found in the translation of the grammatical construction of the question. What Aerith wants to know is if Cloud has stopped apologising. The English construction consists of a copular structure, 'BE + Subject Predicative [adjective, 'done']'. As a result, the Spanish translation, which is based on an

intransitive construction instead, is wrong. The correct translation of the sentence would be “¿Has acabado?”, without a literal translation of the form of BE in the original

Example 12:

Context	Aerith has taken Marlene, Barret’s daughter, to her house to protect her. Cloud y Barret arrives at Aerith’s house, and they start talking with Marlene. She says that Aerith has made her several questions. One of them is the following:
English	“ <i>Like</i> what kind of person Cloud is”
Spanish	“ <i>Me gusta saber</i> qué tipo de persona es Cloud”

The error found in this example is grammatical and it is related to the translation of the word ‘like’. ‘Like’ can be both a verb and conjunction used to compare or to give an example. In this case, the word functions as a conjunction, for that reason, the in-game target translation is not correct because the translators have translated the word as a verb. So, the functioning of the word indicating an indirect question is lost. The correct translation of the word would be the Spanish ‘como’. As a result, the sentence would be: “Como que tipo de persona es Cloud”.

4.- Discussion of Results

The examples previously analysed are only a sample of the type of errors found when analysing the translation of *Final Fantasy VII* from English into Spanish. After watching three hours of gameplay, it is possible to find at least fifty-six examples of translation errors. However, due to the stylistic limitations of the dissertation, not all the examples were analysed in the previous section. The number of examples obtained in each group differs from each other, this can be seen in the figure below:

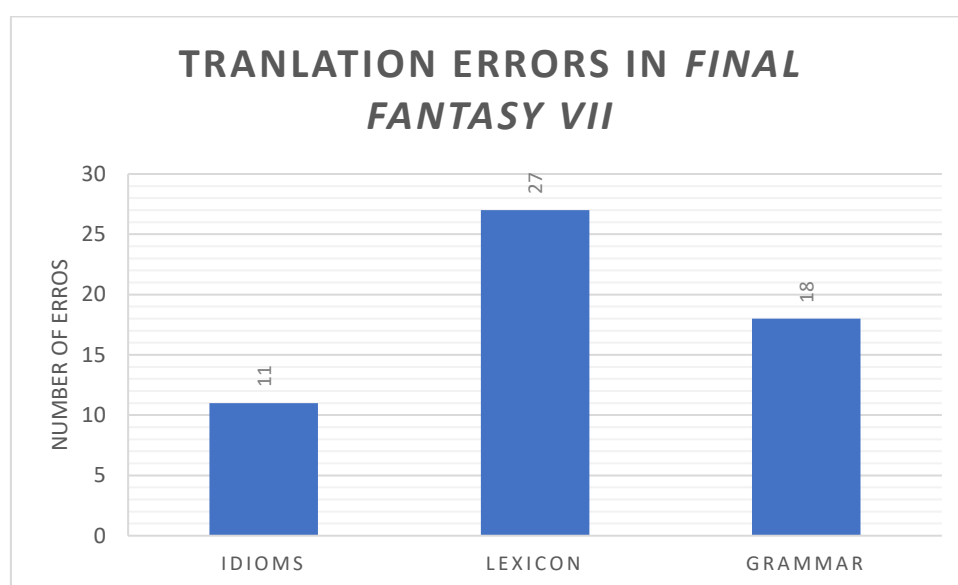


Figure 1: Number of the total errors in each group

Figure 1 collects the number of total errors of each group, which were found after the comparative analysis of three hours of the game. This graph shows that almost half of the examples belong to the area of the lexicon (27 instances). The rest of the examples are divided between the areas of Idioms (11 instances) and grammar (18 instances). In the end, there are fifty-six errors.

As the term 'grammar' covers a far more diverse typology of errors than the other two categories, Figure 2 gives a breakdown of the errors in terms of subtypes:

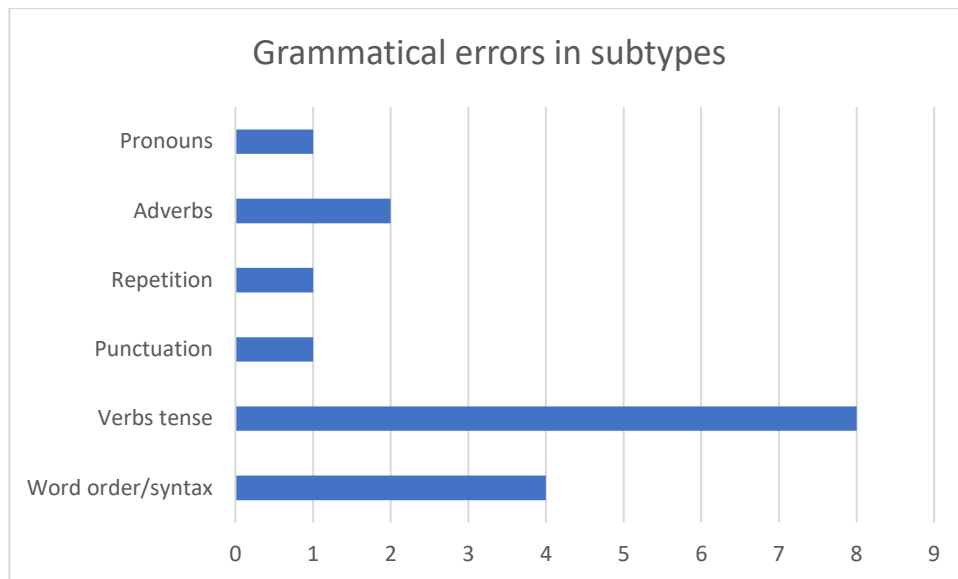


Figure 2: Number of grammatical errors divided into subtypes

Chandler (2005, pp. 120-121) says that “the cultural distance involved is remarkable when it comes to the localization of Japanese video games”. Moreover, Chandler also talks about a so-called “non-friendly localization language” when translating the localisation of a game from Japanese to English, which can be extended to Spanish. So, this justifies the results of the analysis. Furthermore, it is obvious that the localisation of Japanese games in the 1990s was not an easy task due to the difficulties that the translators found when adapting the text from the source language (Japanese) to the target language (first to English and then to Spanish). So, finding fifty-six examples in three hours highlights the difficulties that these translators had to deal with. Nowadays, when players play any Japanese game they find almost no errors in the localisation of the game.

The fact that the lexicon category is the one with more examples is not something unexpected due to the lack of people who were proficient in both languages in the 1990s. This means a lack of English-Spanish vocabulary which affected the translation of the video game. The high number of errors in the grammar section also highlights the difficulty of translating the grammar structures from English into Spanish. Lastly, the few

errors in idioms suggest that the English idioms are more or less similar to the Spanish ones.

Moreover, the strategies that the translators mainly used were the adaptation of English cultural elements to the Spanish counterparts, the literal translation of the sentences, and calque. These strategies are wrongly used most of the times in the localisation of the game. Finally, it could be said that the Spanish localisation of *Final Fantasy VII* cannot be classified as a good one due to the number of errors that are found in such short amount of time in the game. However, these are specific mistakes that cover up the difficult task that the translators had to do because the gamers only focus on the errors and not on the work that the translators undertook in order to make the game's localisation as good as possible.

5.- Conclusion

The success and popularity of *Final Fantasy VII* are due to the battle system based in shifts, the bewitching characters and the deep story. All these elements captivated the fans and made the players falling in love with the characters. Although the localisation of the game produced a comical and a confusing response from the player, this characteristic contributed to the growth of its popularity.

Final Fantasy VII, taken as the object of discussion, can be considered as an excellent example which illustrates the difficulties that translators have to deal with in the localisation of any product before it is released. Game localisers, as translators, have to work under adverse working conditions, for instance, the limited time which they have to localise the video game (they have to start translating the script before it is finished with the difficulties that they may find, for instance, changes in the script) or the access to the script without playing the game with the consequences that this can have such as the missing of important contextual information.

However, the amount of data collected is a minimal percentage of information compared to the whole script that conforms the video game, which may be considered a limitation of the study. Nonetheless, the number of samples analysed is an illustration of the errors found in the game (idioms, lexicon and grammar) and the methods (adaptation, literal translation and calque) that the game localisers used in the corresponding localisation to convey the original meaning in the target culture as faithfully as possible.

In order to suggest my alternative sentences to the Spanish in-game ones, I watched the scene where the error was found several times to understand better the context and the possible translation. After that I looked up the meaning of the words, the grammatical structures and the meaning of idioms in different online dictionaries to find the most suitable word, for instance, WordReference, Cambridge, and Merriam-Webster. Then, I proposed different possible translations based on free or literal translation, and afterwards, I picked the one which was more faithful to the original meaning. So, I consider that if the translators had had such amount of time and resources, the translation would have been more faithful.

As said before, the Spanish localisation is not a good one and there have been several translations made by fans or in order to improve the localisation of the game, for instance, *Traducciones XT*, who are a group of fans that published a retranslation of the game providing a more faithful translation of it. To sum up, even if getting a perfect localisation is considered to be a dream, the knowledge of the target culture and a bottomless experience about games is necessary to adapt any video game to the target culture properly. Moreover, that translation should respect the authentic work as possible, although some elements are improved to immerse the demanding new customer into the mood of the game.

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