Translating Video Games: A Case Study of English and German Version of The Witcher 3

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Abstract

Video games have become a big part of today's entertainment industry. What started as a technological novelty in the 70s, has developed into something much more sophisticated. Today, most major video games have their own world – characters, locations, different societies, cultures, and so on. An entire world consisting of zeros and ones. Major video games, often called "Triple-A" or "AAA" games, are translated and localized into different languages. Similar to translating other audio-visual media, such as movies and cartoons, the same strategies can be applied to translating video games – subtitling, dubbing, voice over. This master's thesis describes and explains those strategies. The practical part of the thesis is based on a case study which focuses on the differences in translation and localization of the English and German version of CD Projekt RED's *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. Things such as character and location names are compared, but the focus is on the dialogue.

Key words: video games, localization, translation strategies, dubbing, Witcher

Sažetak

Video igre su postale veliki dio današnje industrije zabave. Ono što je 70-ih započelo kao tehnološki novitet, razvilo se u nešto puno sofisticiranije. Danas većina velikih videoigara ima svoj svijet – likove, mjesta, različita društva, kulture i tako dalje. Cijeli svijet koji se sastoji od nula i jedinica. Velike video igre, koje se često nazivaju "Triple-A" ili "AAA" igrama, prevedene su i lokalizirane na različitim jezicima. Slično prevođenju drugih audio-vizualnih medija, kao što su filmovi i crtići, iste se strategije mogu primijeniti na prevođenje videoigara – titlovanje, dubliranje, glas preko kadra. Ovaj diplomski rad opisuje te strategije. Praktični dio diplomskog rada predstavlja istraživanje koje se fokusira na razlike u prijevodu i lokalizaciji engleske i njemačke verzije CD Projekt RED-ovog *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. Uspoređuju se imena likova i mjesta, ali je u glavnom fokusu dijalog.

Ključne riječi: videoigre, lokalizacija, strategije prevođenja, dubliranje, Witcher

Introduction

In these modern times, video games have become a major entertainment factor in the lives of today's children, but also adults. At a very young age, children have their first contact with video games. In most cases, this starts with playing some basic games, but as they become older, they become interested in more complex games – such as games with their own story, world, character development. Almost all of those games are originally in the English language which can be an excellent way to learn a foreign language. However, sometimes the language can be too challenging and often, the young player won't have an idea of what is going on, due to the lack of the necessary linguistic knowledge to comprehend things. Over time, this problem is solved for one part of the audience who improve their English skills due to learning in school or maybe with the help of some other activities. Translating video games into the player's first language is done for practical reasons – most people wouldn't have an interest in something they do not understand.

For the publisher, the most important thing is to generate sales. The more sales they make, the bigger the profit. There isn't a better way to do this than launching the game on the global market. Doing this is crucial since the publisher wants to ensure success. It also depends on the type of video game – to the average player, the story and language of an FPS (First-Person Shooter) isn't as important as the story and language of an open world role-playing game. For the latter, it is very important to ensure that the video game offers a high-quality translation in the target languages because it is crucial to sales. A good story always sells, but a bad translation can ruin a good story and therefore, a high-quality translation is a must. Although they can be very exciting, translating video games can prove to be extremely challenging as well.

The aim of this master's thesis is to describe the strategies used in translating audio-visual media and how these processes work. The focus will be on the dubbing, subtitling, and voice overs – and how they are implemented in video games. However, the main part of this thesis is the comparative analysis of the English and German version of the video game *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* – in terms of translation and localization. A brief part will focus on the translation of names of certain characters and locations, while a major part of the analysis is based on the in-game dialogue.

The first chapter of the thesis talks about translating and localizing audio-visual media in general and briefly explains the main three strategies – dubbing, subtitling, and voice over. The second chapter focuses on dubbing, going into a more detailed approach of the strategy. The third chapter focuses on localization of video games. The following chapter discusses the use of more

specific translation strategies in video games. The fifth chapter is the main part of this master's thesis – a comparative analysis between the English and German dialogue in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. The final chapter of this master's thesis describes the differences in the two versions and presents some conclusions.

1. The translation of audio-visual media

In today's world, where globalism is everywhere, it is no surprise that the world of entertainment has especially been impacted by it. Entertainment producers, whether it concerns books, movies, TV series, or video games, know that if they want to make a large profit and have their product becomes successful, they must globalize it and launch it on the global market. This is where translation and localization become important. Cultures all over the world are very different and often, even incompatible. Therefore, content must be adapted for foreign audiences.

The audience would often like to connect to the characters, but this might be hard when the foreign content is not domesticated. It is obvious that the biggest barrier is the language itself – in terms of normal speech, but also in language-specific phrases, wordplays and so on, which are often very hard or almost impossible to translate, so a similar solution must be found in the target language. This is how localization works. There are three main strategies which are used in making foreign content more familiar to the audience – subtitling, dubbing and voice overs. Each one of these strategies has its own use, whether it is used in movies, series or video games.

Subtitling is the most common strategy in audio-visual translation. The most basic definition would be that subtitling is converting speech into text, whereas subtitles are the "words shown at the bottom of a film or television picture to explain what is being said in another language" (subtitle, n.d.). "Subtitling preserves the original text, both aurally and visually, while adding an extra layer of information." (Diaz-Cintas, 2012: 273) However, there are certain problems involved with subtitling. From a translator's point of view, he must follow specific criteria for the translation – it cannot be too long, it has a limited range of characters, frames are also important and so on. All these criteria can have a negative impact on the translation, because frequently a good translation won't be chosen because it is too long, i.e., has too many words or characters. Therefore, the translator must adjust and render the translation in the way that meets the technical criteria, possibly lowering the quality of the translation. From the viewer's point of view, subtitles can be annoying because the focus can shift on the act of reading, instead of watching what is happening on the screen.

Dubbing can be described as a process where the original audio language (SL) is replaced with a completely new recording (TL), so the new recording looks as natural and trustworthy as possible. The purpose of it is "ensuring that the TL sounds and the actors' lip movements are synchronised in such a way that target viewers are led to believe that the actors on screen are actually speaking their language." (Díaz-Cintas, Orero, 2010: 442) However, dubbing is not an inexpensive strategy because of the very high costs and complex process which requires the involvement of many professionals. Therefore, it is virtually restricted to the translation of films,

TV series, sitcoms, and some commercials. (Díaz-Cintas, Orero, 2010: 442) One specific area where dubbing is used extensively is in programmes for young children. The reasoning behind is quite obvious, because the target audience are not really in a comfortable position to read and comprehend subtitles. Or at least, they are not able to read the subtitles fast enough. Furthermore, translators have more freedom when they are translating for dubbing, compared to subtitling:

> "Given that the original soundtrack has been erased and viewers do not usually have the possibility of comparing original and translation, the professionals involved in dubbing do not need to be as literal as in subtitling and have in principle more latitude to play with the content and form of the dialogues. In adhering to the three synchronies, voices in off that do not exist in the original can be added to the translation and new utterances can be slipped in when actors are offscreen or with their back turned to the camera." (Díaz-Cintas, Orero, 2010: 442)

The three main synchronies are discussed under the section Dubbing (S. 2.).

A voice over is when a voice is additionally recorded for its off-screen usage – "the voice of an unseen narrator", according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary. (voice-over, n.d.). The entire process works in the following way:

> "The standard approach is to reduce the volume of the original soundtrack to a faint auditory level that can still be heard in the background, whilst the translation is being read. Usually, the viewer is allowed to hear the foreign language for a few seconds (…) before the volume of the original is subsequently reduced so that the translated speech can be superimposed. The translation typically finishes a couple of seconds before the foreign language speech does, the sound of the original is raised again to a normal volume level and the viewer can hear once more the original speech. "(Díaz-Cintas, Orero, 2010: 443)

Compared to dubbing, it is less complex and demanding since the translation does not have to be adapted so it fits the movement of the lips. Furthermore, it is reasonably inexpensive, and it can be executed in a much shorter timeframe. All in all, both of these strategies have their pros and cons. Both can be very good when executed in a proper manner – a good translation combined with the proper usage of computer programmes. Still, not every programme is the same and those with better and more functions are certainly more expensive.

2. Dubbing

Dubbing is mainly used in Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Turkey, Brazil, China, Japan, and most Asian countries; it replaces the original track of a film containing the source language dialogs with a different track which contains translated dialogs in the target language. (Chaume: 2006) Different parts of the track, such as the soundtrack, the music and other special effects remain untouched. Because dubbing is very expensive compared to other strategies, it is interesting to see that it is still a widespread strategy in certain European countries such as Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

The process of dubbing has multiple stages, but only the translation aspect is taken into consideration here:

> "In the studio, a dubbing director selects the voices that will give life to the translation and stimulates and instructs the actors to put on the most adequate and accurate acting performances. (…) the studio commissions the translation to a professional translator. The translation brief usually consists of a literal translation that reflects all the (…) source text and culture – the so-called rough translation. Then a dialog writer rewrites the translation (sometimes done by the same translator), making it sound like natural speech and taking care of the three kinds of synchronization (…)" (Chaume: 2006)

When the number of people needed for the process of dubbing is taken into consideration, it is no surprise why it is such an expensive procedure. Furthermore, there are certain quality standards which make a quality dubbed product.

The first standard is the observing of the three types of synchronization. The three types are described under the section Synchronization Types (2.1.). The second standard is trying to avoid overacting and underacting performances. Whether it is too dramatic or too monotone, both can harm the way the story is presented to the audience. (Chaume: 2006) The third standard is one of the most important goals of the translator, according to Chaume – the creation of natural dialogs, "believable and convincing sentences, gestures and intonation that give the illusion of watching a 'real' story." (2006)

2.1. Synchronization Types

The lip sync or phonetic synchrony "focuses on fitting the target text into the mouth openings of the onscreen characters (…)" (Díaz-Cintas, Orero, 2010: 443) The translators "must forgo the sentence as their translational unit and concentrate on syllables and letters. The dialogue

must be created in such a way that despite its phonetically dissimilar nature it still appears to be visually identical to the original." (Díaz-Cintas, Orero, 2010: 443) To reach phonetic synchrony and fit the entire text in the mouth of the actors, certain strategies are used - like the adjustment of the rhythm at which the final text is delivered, or the deletion of some words. (Díaz-Cintas, Orero, 2010: 443)

The second type is labelled as kinetic or character synchrony – depending on whether Fodor (1969) or Whitman – Linsen (1992) are asked. The goal is to make sure that the dialogue matches the image of the scene. Another important criterion is that the voice matches the visual appearance of the character who is shown on screen. Just like in other translation strategies, the way how something is said carries almost the same importance as the words which are spoken. (Díaz-Cintas, Orero, 2010: 443)

Lastly, there is isochrony. It consists in making sure that both the original and translated exchanges have a similar duration and that the utterances between pauses (when the characters open and close their mouths) fit. (Díaz-Cintas, Orero, 2010: 443) Isochrony is where the most obvious dubbing mistakes are made. Badly dubbed media will often have scenes where the character's mouth closes, but the audio of him speaking still goes on – or vice versa – the character on screen is talking while there is no dialogue sound. All in all, this happens less and less today because the computer programmes which are used in dubbing are so advanced, it is very easy to notice and fix those mistakes.

3. Localization of Video Games

As mentioned previously, gone are the days where video games were basic creations and "with the increasing sophistication of the video game concept, it became apparent that seamless transfer from source culture to target culture is no longer an option – video games have evolved into complex narratives that rely heavily on language and other cultural cues." (Czech 2013: 4) These modern games are very story-driven so there is indeed a plethora of information to be translated - ranging from normal in-game text, spoken or written dialogue to cutscenes within the game. As video games became more popular – developers had to provide "an equal experience for all users, regardless of their linguistic or cultural background." (Czech 2013: 4)   This is when translating had to be incorporated into the developing process. Bernal – Merino (2007) describes this as the upcoming of a new type of translator – one who has understanding for both language and video games.

Before going any further, it is important to determine what the term localization represents. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, localisation is "the process of making a product or service more suitable for a particular country, area." (localization, n.d.). This is a broad definition, but nonetheless, a correct one because in the particular case of video games, the product is being designed to be more suitable for the market (within a country).

Even though it is true that the translation and localization of video games can be viewed as a combination of the following procedures – the process of dubbing, the translation of the subtitles itself and the use of localization programmes, according to Bernal – Merino (2006), what makes localizing video games unique is the fact that they allow the user "to interact with its various elements" and therefore, the translator must recreate "the original feel of the gameplay more than in any other comparable audio-visual medium."

When talking about localization in video games, sometimes it's not only the in-game text that has to be changed, but much more – graphic and visual signs, such as billboards, within the game. Therefore, the developers also play a part in the process of localization because they must change the in-game code to make the translated text appear visually – from source text to target text. However, since this costs more time and resources, developers often choose to bypass the whole process. In most games, once the user has hovered over the sign that shows something in a different language, a subtitle will appear underneath and show the translated meaning of the ST. Sometimes, graphic signs must be adjusted even if they don't have any text at all. This is often due to certain censorship within certain countries. Two good examples of this are the two first-person shooters *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege* and *Wolfenstein*.

In its attempt to expand their influence on the Chinese market, the video game company Ubisoft had to make certain adjustments in their online-shooter *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege*. Everything depicting death, nudity, gambling, or violence had to be changed. This can be seen in the examples below.

Figure 1 Blood being removed from the game. © Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege

Figure 2 The removal of slot machines. © Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege

Figure 4 The depiction of a skull is being replaced by a masked person. © Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six Siege

One can argue that these changes don't have an impact on the gameplay, which is true, however, each of the playable maps in the game has a specific atmosphere and the removal or changing of certain graphical aspects certainly influences the overall atmosphere. After a major uproar from the player base, Ubisoft decided to scrap the idea and for now, stayed out of the Chinese market. It is a bit ironic how the Chinese regulations don't have a problem with the game being based on killing different in-game characters, but certain graphical images are a controversial thing for them.

Another example would be the censorship withing the game *Wolfenstein*. The series focuses on fighting Nazis and takes place in an alternate universe where the Nazis were the victorious side in history. The game contains Nazi swastika symbols, which were banned in video games in Germany for a long time, until recently. The developers had to make an entire new version for Germany. Here are just two examples from the video game *Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus*.

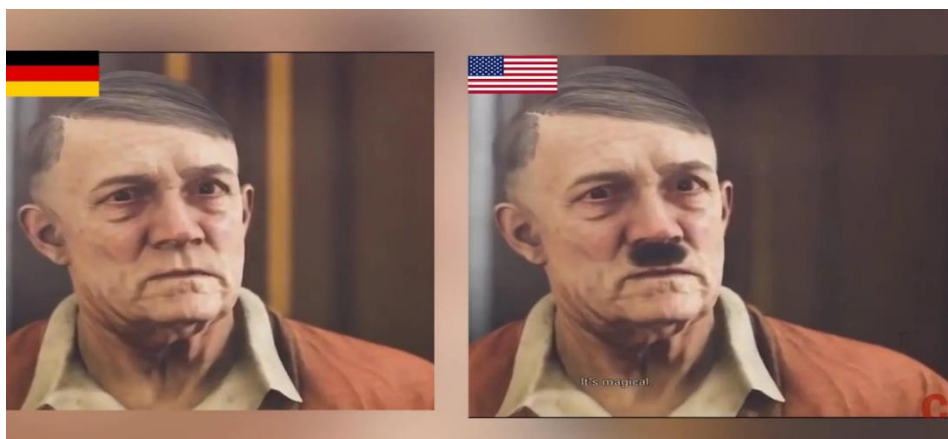**Figure 5** The German version has Hitler's moustache removed so it does not form a resemblance. © Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus

Figure 6 The Nazi swastika being swapped with a triangular shape. © Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus

After covering the graphic segments of localization, in the form of censorship, more specific translation strategies used in video games are discussed in the following chapter.

4. Translation Strategies in Video Games

As mentioned previously, all bigger video games today offer the option to at least turn on subtitles. Subtitles are often both intralingual and interlingual. Intralingual subtitles, meaning the same language as the dialogue of the game, are for people with hearing issues while interlingual subtitles are for people who do not understand the original language of the game. (Fernández Costales, 2012: 4) Of course, the user always has the option to turn the subtitles off. Furthermore, major video games are also dubbed, but due to the complexity of the process, it is a common occurrence that a game will not have the voices of the characters translated in one language but has a translated version of the subtitles in it. Dubbed versions are often reserved only for the major languages like German, French, Italian or Spanish. This leaves room for some creative mixing – a player could select French as the language for the voices of the characters, while having i.e., Portuguese as his subtitle language. It would be interesting to see how similar or different the text would be when compared between two target languages – both translated the same sentence, but the translations could be talking about two completely different things when compared to each other. From a technical aspect - the dubbing done in video games is very similar to the dubbing done in movies. After all, a major part of dubbing is done for cinematographic cutscenes in video games. From a translator's point of view, there is not a big difference whether he is translating for a video game or for a movie because at the end of the day – the translator is working with the dialogue. The same can be applied to dubbing – how much of a difference is there between adjusting the sounds and mouth movements of a real person or an animated (or programmed) character?

Domestication and foreignization (Venuti 1995) are two basic strategies used in translating and both of them can also be applied to video games. As their names describe it, one strategy focuses on keeping the foreign instances while the other one focuses on adapting to the target language. The use of foreignization is portrayed in the following:

> "A fairly good example of a successful foreignization strategy can be observed in Assassins' Creed, where the original atmosphere and taste of the Italian culture has been effectively preserved in the destination locales. The game is based on several Italian cities and regions, and a huge number of local names, places and cultural references are mentioned in the story. In different moments, certain characters use Italian words or expressions that have been preserved in the English or Spanish versions." (Fernández Costales, 2012: 7)

A good example of domestication can often be found in sports games. For example, EA Sport's football simulation game *FIFA*. During a football match, the player can hear announcers during the game, just like in real life, commenting on what is happening on the pitch. The German audience will hear German announcers, the French audience French announcers, and so on. Each version is adapted to its target audience and the game is domesticated that way. Of course, there is always the option to change the language of the commentary if the player wants to hear a different language. What is interesting is that the people announcing are actual real-life commentators, not just hired voice actors.

There are the also the strategies of transcreation and of 'no translation', where the text is left in its original form and not translated. Non-translation is self-explainable. An example of the non-translation strategy being used can be found in *Street Fighter*, a video game in which the combos and special movements the characters are not translated. (Fernández Costales, 2012: 9) The reasoning for it is the following:

> "If expressions like *Hadouken*, *Shoryuken*, *Shoryureppa*, or *Tatsumaki Senpukyak* were transferred into English or French, the expectations of the players would not be fulfilled since they are used to the specific terminology of this fighting game saga. The use of English expressions like 'Blastwave' or 'Fireball' (…) could be regarded as suitable from the linguistic point of view but would not be acceptable translations according to the expectations of the players, who would reject this domesticating approach." (Fernández Costales, 2012: 9)

Transcreation is used when the game experience must be preserved in the target language, where a simple literal translation would not suffice. It is often used in role-playing games which have a more complex narrative compared to other types of games. One way to describe it is that "the more complex and creative a storyline is, the more useful transcreation may turn in the translation process." (Fernández Costales, 2012: 9) It is important to distinguish that transcreation does not mean completely changing the source text, but that the translator has the freedom to choose a suitable translation to keep the original game experience. (Fernández Costales, 2012: 9) An example of transcreation can be seen in the following:

> "A more illustrative example of the creativity associated with transcreation can be found (…) in Mario Kart Wii. While in the English version players can run with the 'Wild Wing' -a medium size kart, Spanish users have the 'Alerón Chiflado' (the 'Crazy Wing'); similarly, the 'Tiny Titan' turns into a 'Minitractor' (…) The

coinage of these terms can shed some light on the creativity required by translators and the freedom they have when adapting names and concepts in video game localization." (Fernández Costales, 2012: 10)

5. Research on the Differences between the English and German Version of *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*

The main part of this master's thesis is the research done in the video game *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. This video game is the third part of the *Witcher* series, which is based on Andrzej Sapkowski's book series *The Witcher*. I have played the game thoroughly in both the English and German version and there are numerous differences – ranging from dialogue, which will be the main part of this research to the names of locations and certain characters. The original game was written in Polish, so both English and German are target languages.

To give some background information, here is a summary of *The Witcher 3*: The game is set in a fantastical setting based on Slavic mythology. There are various regions within the game, each one being distinctive and unique. Players take control of Geralt of Rivia, a hired monster slayer known as a Witcher, as he searches for his adoptive daughter who is fleeing the ethereal Wild Hunt – the main nemesis in the game. Players utilize weapons and magic to combat the game's various dangers and enemies, interact with non-playable characters, and complete tasks to earn gold, weapons, armour, experience points and skill points, all of which can be used to improve Geralt's powers and buy additional new gear. The game features three alternative endings, all of which are decided by the player's decisions at important moments during the story.

5.1. Methodology of the Analysis

Random dialogue from the game has been chosen and compared – whether from a mission or from different interactions in the open world. It is a mix of playing the game in one language, while watching a video of it in the other, but also watching short segments of the game on two different screens – one screen displaying the English version, the other one the German version – and pausing every 30 to 45 seconds in order to analyse if there are any differences in the dialogue. The dialogue is presented in a table – the left side shows the English text, the right side the German text, and underneath a comment with an explanation of the differences in translation. As previously noted, Polish is the source language, so it will be interesting to see how the English and German translators fared in translating and how much the two versions differ in dialogue. Before starting with the dialogue analysis, one section will be dedicated to the comparison of names and titles – the names of certain characters, creatures and locations.

The translation of proper names has always been interesting and *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt* offers a variety of those examples between the English and German version. Most character names are the same, but certain names of locations, enemies – monsters, to be more specific, have all been translated differently and localized. Some of those are shown in the following table. For reference, I will also include the original names in Polish when it comes to the names of characters, creatures, and locations, to compare both translations with the original. Characters and creatures will also be followed by a short explanation, while the names of locations are just going to be compared in a table. There is a difference in pronouncing the names Ciri and Geralt. Ciri is (/siri/) in English, while (/ci:ri/) in German. Geralt is (/gɛralt/) in English, while (/ge:ʁalt/) in German.

Characters and creatures		
POLISH	**ENGLISH**	**GERMAN**
Jaskier ("Buttercup")	**Dandelion**	**Rittersporn**
Buttercup was deemed too feminine for the English audience; thus, "Dandelion" was chosen to be the English name of the character. Interestingly, the German translators also chose the name of a flower, but a different one – delphinium. "Löwenzahn" would be the German equivalent of dandelion.		
Myszowór	**Mousesack**	**Mäussack**
Moussack is an interesting case, because in the English version, he is often referred to as Ermion, whereas in the German version there is no mention of Ermion – he is strictly referred to as Mäussack. The reasoning behind this is unclear.		
Geralt z Rivii	**Geralt of Rivia**	**Geralt von Rivien**
Even though the name is practically the same, it is interesting how "Rivia", a region, is different in all three languages.		
Płotka	**Roach**	**Plötze**
All 3 carry the name of a fish – the gardon, or so-called roach. Both English and German translators stayed true to the original but decided to localize the name of Geralt's horse into their respective languages.		
Kłobuk	**Lubberkin**	**Tölpelbold**
Kłobuk is a protective house spirit in Slavic mythology. In English, he has been translated as "Lubberkin", which is a creature from the English folklore, but he is described as a large and hairy man, not as a ghost or spirit. The term "Tölpelbold" has no use or meaning outside of this		

game. It is plausible that the German translators used a translation of the English term. "Lubber" and "Tölpel" both refer to a clumsy person in their respective languages, while -bold is a suffix in German which can be used to describe a person who does something very often (i.e., der Scherzbold – prankster).

Kuroliszek	Cockatrice	Gorgo

Interestingly, there doesn't seem to be an appropriate name for "Cockatrice" in German, hence why the translators chose "Gorgo", which is actually the equivalent of a gorgon – a creature in Greek mythology. They do not even look the same – a cockatrice has a rooster's head, while a gorgo has hair which is made of living snakes.

Oszluzg	Dracolizard	Flugschlange

The English name is a mix of "dragon + lizard" while the German consists of "Flug (flight) + Schlange (snake)." "Oszluzg" would roughly translate to "Slyzard". A mix of "lizard" and "sly", which describes their mischievous nature.

Szarlej	Shaelmaar	Glumaar

Unfortunately, there is no reasoning for the English and German translations of the monster "Szarlej", so it would have been interesting to know how translators came up with the translation of the mentioned beast.

Zgnilec	Rotfiend	Moderhaut

"Zgnilec" means foulbrood in Polish – a disease of honeybee larvae. It is interesting to see how both the English and German translators chose a different approach. Rotfiend means, once consisting of rot, as the name suggests. "Moder" on the other hand, stands for muddy dirt, but is often connected with rotting and decay, but is still not the same.

Leszy	Leshen	Waldschrat

The term "Leszy" refers to a mythical forest being from Slavic mythology. "Leshen" has no real meaning in English, so it can be assumed that it was created to sound like the Polish word. "Schrate", on the other hand, stands for a spirit that dwells in the woods (*der Wald* = woods), having its origins in Bavarian folklore.

Stary Grot	Old Speartip	Speerspitze

This is an interesting case. The original name stands for "old arrowhead", an old cyclops featured in the game. However, the English translator choose to drop "arrowhead" and use "spear tip" instead, while the German translators did the same (*das Speer* = spear) but dropped the adjective.

Reardonów	Reardon	Rücker

The family name "Reardonów" has also been localized and adapted to the Englih and German language. There is resemblance between the English and German name, but the German one seems to be something completely different, but the reasoning behind the translation is unknown.

Prorok Lebioda	Lebioda	Majoran

Lebioda is the name of a plant. In German, it is also known as "Weißer Gänsefuß", or white goosefoot. Even though it is not an equivalent, the German translators chose the name of a different plant – majoram ("Majoran" in German). There wouldn't have been a problem even if the character kept the name "Lebioda", but this goes to show how dedicated the German translators were during the localization of the game.

Locations

Polish	English	German
Wieś Benek	Benek	Benkelheim

"Wieś" stands for village in Polish. Why the German version says Benkelheim is unknown. Furthermore, -heim is often used as a suffix for certain locations in Germany, so it is plausible that they just wanted to "germanize" the name of the village.

Wieś Glińsk	Claywich	Sandort

Another example where the German name is completely different. Glińsk and clay both refer to the same thing – clay, but instead of "Ton", which is the German word for it – the translators chose "Sand" which has the same meaning in English. A completely different material.

Wrzosowa	Heatherton	Heidfelde

All three names refer to a plant – heather. The German name for it is "Besenheide" and it was shortened to just "Heid". Both suffixes were created to adapt the name of the village to each respective language.

Wieś Zalipie	Lindenvale	Lindental

Another common name for all three languages – the linden tree (or lime tree). Interestingly, the original Polish name stands for "linden village", while English and German changed it to "vale" and "Tal" – both referring to valley – so it went from "village of linden trees" to "valley of linden trees."

Wieś Rudnik	Oreton	Erzdorf

"Rudnik" stands for mine worker in Polish. However, for some reason, the translators changed it "ore", both in English and German. There is still a direct connection between those two terms, but they still are not the same thing. Furthermore, the German version translated "Wieś" as

village this time, which was not always the case. There is inconsistency in the translation, but it is to be expected since there were multiple translators working on this project.

Wieś Jawornik	Mulbrydale	Maulbeertal

"Jawornik" stands for sycamore tree in English. For some reason, the translators often chose different plants when they were translating locations. Both the English and German name are based on mulberry tree, something completely different than sycamore tree. All in all, it is interesting to see how translators create their own names – it seems that the goal was to get a name similar to the original one.

Ostatni Bastion	Hindhold	Hindwacht

"Ostatni" probably means "last" in this context – the last bastion. It seems that "hind" has multiple archaic meanings – most of them are connected to animals, but there is no mentioning of any animals in the original name of the location. Hind also means "at the back of an animal's body". Since there is a connection between "last" and "back" in this context, it is possible that the translators chose a similar word so it would fit their respective languages better.

Kamieniołom Starych Pryków	Codgers' Quarry	Steinbruch der Alten

A fitting translation for "pryk" would be old geezer, a derogatory term for an elderly person. The English translators chose "codger" which is also fitting. The German version loses this derogatory connotation since it is translated as "quarry of the elderly".

Sierociniec na Krzywuchowych Moczarach	The Orphans of Crookback Bog	Waisendorf im Buckelsumpf

Interestingly, the only difference between these three is that instead of "orphanage", the English translator chose "orphans". It makes sense because orphans reside there, but it does sound a bit weird to name a location "orphan".

Brama Tretogorska	Tretogor Gate	Dreibergertor

Tretogor is the capital city of Redania, but in the German version, it is translated as Dreiberg, therefore the reasoning behind the translation.

Miodosytnia Meiersdorfów	Honeyfill Meadworks	Imkerei Honigwab

In the original, the name Meiersdorf is mentioned – the name of the family who own the honeyfill. However, both the English and German version have dropped their name and created their own names based on honey. The reasoning behind it is unknown, even though there is nothing wrong with the name "Imkerei Meiersdorf" or "Meiersdorf Meadworks".

Karczma Gęsia Pipa	Cunny of the Goose	Die Gänsemöse

This example is just to show the creativity when it comes to vulgarities. "Pipa", "cunny" and "möse" all refer to female genitals. Furthermore, they are a softer vulgar version of the female genitals – so it is interesting that all three versions decided to keep the same degree of vulgarity.

5.3. Dialogue

As mentioned previously, the main focus is on the dialogue of the game. Random excerpts from both the base game, and the two expansions packs – *Hearts of Stone* and *Blood and Wine*, have been selected and analysed. The dialogue has been taken from cinematographic cutscenes, but also from interactions with other characters in the world of *The Witcher 3*.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Geralt: Don't get mad at her. **Vesemir**: Why the hell not? The whippersnapper refuses to do as she's told.	**Geralt**: Sei nicht wütend auf sie. **Vesemir**: Warum nicht, zum Teufel? Diese Göre weigert sich zu tun, was man ihr sagt.
Comment: In the English version, Ciri is called a "whippersnapper", which depicts a curious and a slightly overconfident young person. The reason for that is because she refuses to study and learn from books but would rather practice sword fighting. However, in the German version, the term "Göre" is used, which has a very negative and harsh connotation – brat is the English term for it. The German player gets the impression that Vesemir is very upset at her, while the English one does not because "whippersnapper" has a light or neutral connotation.	

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Vesemir: Well, you're a quick study. Quick, but mischievous.	**Vesemir**: Nun, du lernst schnell und bist schlau…schlau, aber auch hinterlistig.
Comment: Once again, the German version uses a much more malicious and harsher word. In this context, Vesemir is talking to Ciri about her behaviour. Children are often regarded as mischievous, and since Ciri is still a young child at this stage, she often acts in a mischievous way – having a certain fondness for stirring up trouble, but in a playful and non-harmful way. "Hinterlistig" on the other hand means treacherous or cunning. In the German version, one would get the feeling that Vesemir is accusing Ciri of being of deceitful nature, while in the English version, he is just making a harmless comment, remarking Ciri's mischievous and quick-witted nature. All in all, with the previous example, it creates the false impression that Vesemir has a dislike for Ciri in the German	

version – when compared to the English one, which is completely untrue because he is very fond of her.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Villager 1: This ain't Temeria no more, old man. It's Nilfgaard now. **Villager 2**: My arse, it is!	**Bauer 1**: Du bist nicht mehr in Temerien, Alter. Sondern in Nilfgaard. **Bauer 2**: Du kannst mich mal!

Comment: Even though it is a minor exchange, this interaction has slightly different meanings when compared. In the English version, the second villager angrily replies to the fact that Temeria became occupied by Nilfgaard, and his reply implies that this still is Temeria, ignoring the fact that Nilfgaardian forces defeated the Temerian army. In the German version however, his reply would be translated as "Bite me!", which would mean he directly insults the first villager because of his statement, meaning he is angry at the villager who stated the fact, compared to the English version where he is angry at the fact itself.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Geralt: One thing before we go... Why didn't you contact me? Didn't need me, didn't even want to see me? **Yennefer**: I didn't want to spoil things. I'd heard you and Triss made a great couple.	**Geralt**: Noch eins, bevor wir gehen… Warum hast du nicht versucht, mich zu erreichen? Hast du mich nicht gebraucht, wolltest du mich gar nicht sehen? **Yennefer**: Ich wollte nichts verderben. Ich hörte, Triss und dir lief es prima.

Comment: The German version states this as „You and Triss were having a good run." From this, the player cannot really know that Geralt and Triss Merigold were a couple for a specific period while Geralt lost his memory. One can only make certain assumptions, while the English version states it directly that they were a couple. This is also an information from previous sequels, so the fact is unknown to new players.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Man: Bolo...did you hear what I heard? **Geralt:** Go away. Or I'll kill you. **Man:** Dammit. Enough!	**Mann**: Bolo…Haste das gehört? **Geralt:** Verschwindet oder ich schlachte jeden einzelnen von euch. **Mann:** Verdammt, das reicht!

Comment: Geralt is much fiercer and more brutal in the German version. While it is obvious that a fight is about to break out, Geralt still gives the bandits a warning.

However, that warning is much more intimidating and brutal in German, when compared to the English one. What Geralt said can be translated as "Piss off or I will butcher every single one of you." Geralt's nickname is Butcher of Blaviken (Schlächter von Blaviken), so there is reasoning for the much fiercer translation in German.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Baron: Make yourself at home. Now, where'd I put the bloody vodka…? Ah, there it is! A snifter?	**Baron:** So, wo ist der verdammte Wodka…? Ah, da ist er ja!

Comment: Some of the dialogue in the German version has been omitted. The Baron is much friendlier towards Geralt in the English version. He is more welcoming when Geralt enters his room, while the line where he says that Geralt should make himself at home isn't available in the German version, alongside the line where he offers him a drink. The actions are still the same in both versions, but the dialogue is slightly different. All in all, the English dialogue is friendlier compared to the German one. Interestingly, the dubbing has also been adapted in the German version – the Baron keeps his mouth closed at the part where the dialogue has been removed.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Baron: Would you tell me to sod off? Go ahead. But then I'll do the same. And what'll that make us? Two helpless, empty-handed sods.	**Baron:** Du würdest mich hängenlassen? Nur zu. Ich lass dich dann auch hängen, und wir sind…zwei hilflose Hänger mit leeren Händen.

Comment: All in all, this is a good translation, but with a slight difference. "To sod off" is a vulgar expression in the English language, while "jemanden hängenlassen" means to leave someone hanging, which doesn't have a negative connotation and is a neutral expression in German.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Pellar: "They shall come whose stench is rape and death, but the wolf shall disperse them. The White Wolf."	**Waideler:** „Sie werden kommen, die nach Gewalt und Tod stinken, doch der Wolf wird sie vertreiben. Der Weiße Wolf."

Comment: The word "rape" has been translated as "Gewalt" in German which stands for violence. The literal translation would be "Vergewaltigung". Even though, in some contexts, "Gewalt" can stand for rape in German, it is plausible that the translator wanted to censor the word "rape" in this context. However, "Vergewaltigung/vergewaltigen" is

used in this game, so it may have been the translator's personal decision to censor this word in this case. After all, numerous different translators were working on this game, so it is no surprise that there were different translation approaches among them.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Graden: Hmm, akh akh… Noble of you. A killer for hire abandoning his bounty for the good of another. The hunters and the Church of the Eternal Fire thank you.	**Graden:** Hmm… Wie großzügig… Ein Söldner, der seine Beute zum Wohle einer anderen aufgibt. Die Jäger und der Kult des Ewigen Feuers danken dir.

Comment: The word "killer" has been translated as "mercenary" in the German version for some reason. Technically, mercenary fits better because Geralt was hired for a certain task, which in this context does make him a mercenary, while killer has a different connotation – and therefore – mercenary is the better fit. Furthermore, the religious cult – Church of the Eternal Fire – has been translated as Cult of the Eternal Fire in the German version. They still technically are a cult, but their organization still carries the word "church" in their name.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Cook gave him a lickin', strung him by his feet.	Da nahm der Koch den Löffel und schlug den Hund entzwei.
Cook then bled him empty, stripped his skin off clean.	Darauf ließ er ihn bluten und zog ihm ab das Fell.
Laughed and said, "How tasty, best sausage I have seen!"	Und freute sich: "Jetzt endlich ist Schluss mit dem Gebell."
Cook's a stupid killer shouldn't 'ave ate the pup.	Der Koch ist ein Gemeiner, drum zahlen wir's ihm heim.
Now we'll light a fire, gonna roast him up!	Wir machen jetzt ein Feuer und kochen ihn zu Leim.

Comment: This disturbing nursery rhyme is another example of how tricky translating video games can be. Children can be heard singing this during a cutscene. Even though certain parts of the rhyme are different, i.e., the cook is called a "mean person" instead of a stupid killer like in the English version. Also, in the German version, the cook says: "Now the barking is finally over" – something completely different than what is said in the English version. All in all, this was a difficult translation which was extremely well executed – the rhyme was not lost in translation, the meaning and the plot of the nursery rhyme, despite

certain differences in the text, stays the same and most importantly – the creepy atmosphere and ambiance of the nursery rhyme remains.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Menge: Special pyre for you, freak -- nice, slow burning!	**Menge:** Spezialscheiterhaufen für dich, Monster – der brennt schön langsam.

Comment: Menge says this before burning a doppler on a pyre. A doppler is a person who can take anyone's form and look like them. The important thing here is how the German translators chose "monster" as a translation for the word "freak". Throughout the game, and the series in general – witchers, dopplers, mages, elves, and so on – are referred to as freaks by normal humans. It is so common, they started embracing it, which can be seen during certain dialogues. Furthermore, Menge is a public person and is holding a speech during this moment, but he also represents the views of most of the common folk. By choosing "monster" as the translation, the original feel of the relations between humans and different races is lost because it seems like a very generic translation, and freak is more meaningful and more impactful in this context. Also, monsters and freaks are very distinguished in the world of *The Witcher 3* – you hire a freak – a witcher, to slay a monster.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Menge: And as bats sense moths, so I sense freaks. And start by warning them -- Novigrad's no place for your kind.	**Menge:** Wie Fledermäuse die Motten, so erspüre ich Missgeburten. Und warne sie: Novigrad ist kein Ort für sie.

Comment: It is interesting how in the English version, Menge is warning and threatening Geralt directly – "no place for your kind", while in the German, it says "no place for their kind", therefore it being an indirect warning. One can argue that Menge is more intimidating in the English version – because he is directly threatening Geralt. Furthermore, "freaks" have been translated as "Missgeburten" this time – a derogatory term for someone born with severe birth defects. Even though there is a connection between the two terms, "Missgeburt" is much more derogatory and insulting. It is one of the biggest insults in the German language and it has a much higher severity than calling someone a freak. All in all, the best thing would have been if the German translators also used the word "freak", especially since that word exists and is used in the German language.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Bedlam: 'Cause it will be our city one day, Geralt. Mark my words.	**Bedlam:** Denn eines Tages wird die Stadt uns gehören, Geralt. Denk an meine Worte.

Geralt: Yours plural?	**Geralt:** Unsere Stadt?
Bedlam: Yeah, mine and me friends.	**Bedlam:** Ja. Meine und meiner Partner.

Comment: Bedlam is one of the four crime bosses in Novigrad. Interestingly, he refers to them differently. In the English version, there seems to be a friendly tone when he is speaking about them, even calling them his friends. However, in the German version, he calls them his partners, creating a "strictly business" environment, so the player gets a different first impression about his relationship towards the other bosses, depending on whether he is playing the game in English or German.

ENGLISH	**GERMAN**
Zoltan: Ah, reminds me of our days of yore, eh?	**Zoltan:** Na also. Das lief gut.

Comment: Zoltan makes this comment after Geralt helps him beat up a couple of thugs. They are old friends, which can be seen from his comment about their "days of yore". In the German version, he just says that the fight went well - the player won't get this information because of the different translation and only much later in the game is he going to find out about Geralt's and Zoltan's previous adventures, therefore not getting to know a minor part of the lore early on.

ENGLISH	**GERMAN**
Zoltan: Ah, here already! Come on, let's find some arse-rests. Should start soon.	**Zoltan:** Ah, schon da! Suchen wir uns ein paar Stühle. Geht bald los.

Comment: The comedic atmosphere has been omitted in the German version. It's a minor thing, but it still changes the tone of the dialogue. Since "arse-rests" have been normally translated as chairs.

ENGLISH	**GERMAN**
These scars have long yearned for your tender caress.	Am Pfand meiner Narben ruht deine Hand
To bind our fortunes, damn what the stars own.	Den Sternen zuwider in Ewigkeit verbunden
Rend my heart open, then your love profess.	Öffne die Wunden und heil' sie wieder
A winding, weaving fate to which we both atone	Bis sich unser's Schicksals wirres Muster bildet
You flee my dream come the morning.	Am Morgen fliehst du aus meinen Träumen
Your scent -- berries tart, lilac sweet	Bitt're Stachelbeere, süße Flieder
To dream of raven locks entwisted, stormy.	Im Traum seh' ich rabenschwarze Locken
Of violet eyes, glistening as you weep	Deine Veilchenaugen von Tränen nass

The wolf I will follow into the storm.	Der Wolfsspur nach folge ich in den Schneesturm
To find your heart, its passion displaced	Um dein stures Harz abermals aufzuspüren
By ire ever growing, hardening into stone.	Durch Zorn und Trauer in Eis verwandelt
Amidst the cold to hold you in a heated embrace	Lass mich deine kalten Lippen küssend schmelzen
You flee my dream come morning.	Am Morgen fliehst du aus meinen Träumen
Your scent -- berries tart, lilac sweet	Bitt're Stachelbeere, süße Flieder
To dream of raven locks entwisted, stormy	Im Traum seh' ich rabenschwarze Locken
Of violet eyes, glistening as you weep	Deine Veilchenaugen von Tränen nass
I know not if fate would have us live as one.	Ich frage mich, ob du mein Schicksal bist
Or if by love's blind chance we've been bound	Oder ob der Zufall uns zusammenführte
The wish I whispered, when it all began.	Als ich den letzten Wunsch hervorbrachte
Did it forge a love you might never have found?	Wurdest du gezwungen, mich für immer zu lieben?
You flee my dream come the morning.	Am Morgen fliehst du aus meinen Träumen
Your scent -- berries tart, lilac sweet	Bitt're Stachelbeere, süße Flieder
To dream of raven locks, stormy	Im Traum seh' ich rabenschwarze Locken
Of violet eyes, glistening as you weep	Deine Veilchenaugen von Tränen nass

Comment: This is Priscilla's song. One of the most famous scenes in the game, which describes Geralt's love for Yennefer of Vengeberg. I will not go into too many details, but only talk about the parts which are differently translated. Since this is poetry, doing a literal translation is impossible and it would most likely result in a very bad translation. "Rend my heart open, then your love profess" has been translated as "open my wounds and heal them again". In "your scent -- berries tart, lilac sweet", "your scent" has been omitted. "The wolf" has been translated as "wolven path", since it means to follow the wolf, or his path. "Amidst the cold to hold you in a heated embrace" has been translated as "let me melt your cold lips with my kisses." There are more minor differences in the poem. All in all, this shows that video games can contain all sorts of texts. It's not just dialogue or names that one has to deal with, but sometimes poetry. This was an extremely difficult song to translate, because the song has to carry on the message and meaning in different languages – Yennefer and Geralt being forever connected with their love due to Geralt's "last wish". Because of

translations like these, one has to appreciate, respect, and also admire the work of the translator.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Varese: And you, Geriatric, or whatever your ploughin' name is -- wanna find Whoreson?	**Varese:** Und du, Gerhardt oder wie auch immer du heißt – du willst Hurensohn finden?

Comment: Varese refers to Geralt as Geriatric because he does not remember his name well. It is also a dig at Geralt's physical appearance – by default, he has long grey hair and a long grey beard. This has been lost in the translation because the translators chose just a name similar to Geralt – there is no wordplay concerning his age. Furthermore, the word "ploughing" has been omitted in the German version.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Mage: Yes...the help of a Redanian spy. Radovid's right-hand man. **Reuven:** That was long ago, sir. **Mage:** You raised that madman. You taught him to kill. You--	**Magier:** Ja…auf die Hilfe eines redanischen Spions. Radovids rechte Hand **Reuven:** Das ist alles sehr lange her. **Magier:** Du hast ihn erzogen. Ihn das Hassen beigebracht. Du…

Comment: In the German version, Radovid's lunacy and hatred is downplayed. Him being referred to as a madman has been omitted. Furthermore, "taught him to kill" has been translated as "taught him to hate" – referring to his hatred towards mages. Also, it is a minor thing, but Reuven refers to the mage as "sir" in the English version, which is a sign of respect. However, "sir" is omitted in the German version.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Geralt: Seen her? Know what the sorceress looks like? **Man:** Aye. Wears black and white. If not for her tits you'd think she was a beached orca. Fact is, even those who see her for a wench 'd gladly push her out to sea, tits and all.	**Geralt:** Du hast sie gesehen? Weißt du wie sie aussieht? **Mann:** Schwarz-weiße Kleider. Wären nicht ihre Brüste, sähe sie wie eine gestrandete Seekuh aus. Auch die, die eine Frau in ihr sehen, würden sie am liebsten zurück ins Meer werfen. Brüste oder nicht.

Comment: In the German version, the terms "tits" and "wench" have been translated formally, as "breasts" and "woman". It is a correct translation, but the formality is off,

especially since the vocabulary of a rugged Skellige warrior and pirate is very informal. Furthermore, Yenneffer is referred to as a "sea cow" in the German version. It makes sense because cow is often used as a derogatory insult for women. Taking into account that Skellige Islands are inhabited by what would be an equivalent of the real world's Scandinavian Vikings, the translation is indeed fitting.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Ermion: You need not do this, child.	**Mäussack:** Das musst du nicht tun.
Concubine: I know. But I want to.	**Concubine:** Ich weiß. Ich möchte es aber.

Comment: In this scene, the girl who is the king's concubine goes on a ship that carries her dead husband – king Bram. The ship will be shot with a flaming arrow and burned. She wants to sacrifice her life so she can join him in the afterlife. Ermion calls her 'child' in the English version and speaks in a calm and caring way. She is very young compared to her husband and it would be a waste to see such a young life go. In the German version, "child" is omitted, and he speaks in a more serious manner. Almost in a commanding way. He appears to be closer to her in the English version, than in the German one.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Geralt: No hard feelings, but we'll have to drink another time.	**Geralt:** Nicht böse sein, aber das müssen wir leider verschieben.
Yennefer: Yes. We've important discussions ahead.	**Yennefer:** Wir haben keine Zeit.
Madman: You land rats're all the same -- afeard o' your wenches.	**Lugos:** Ihr Landratten seid immer gleich – keine Eier vor euren Weibern.

Comment: In the German version, Yennefer does not reveal to Lugos that they have important business, instead, she only says that they do not have time for a drink. Furthermore, Lugos' reply is slightly more vulgar in the German version – he states that men from the land lose their balls in front of their women – a slight dig at Geralt since Geralt turned down drinking with him due to Yennefer's request.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Ermion: Good! May all Skellige know Yennefer of Vengerberg is a common thief!	**Mäussack:** Gut! Sollen doch alle erfahren, dass Yennefer von Vengeberg eine Lügnerin und Betrügerin ist!

Comment: Ermion's accusation is slightly different in the German version. There he accuses her of being a liar and a cheat, instead of being a thief, as it is in the English version.

She did manipulate Geralt in order to convince him to help her steal an artifact from Ermion. All in all, the German accusation sounds more serious than it is in the English version.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Geralt: What did the gods want? Exactly. Do you remember? What'd they tell you? **Udalryk:** A voice said, "You vile wretch. You didn't help Aki, and now you failed to sail out to beg his forgiveness."	**Geralt:** Was genau wollten die Götter, erinnerst du dich? Was haben sie dir gesagt? **Udalryk:** Eine Stimme sagte: „Du elender Feigling hast Aki nicht geholfen, und jetzt weigerst du dich wieder um Vergebung zu bitten."

Comment: In the German version, Udalryk is called a coward instead of a wretch. Making it sound much harsher – the reason being, he did not help his drowning brother. "Sail out" has been omitted, even though it has a significant meaning because Udalryk's brother drowned at a certain spot in the ocean – Geralt alone sailed out to that same spot to return the family sword to Aki – a way of begging for his forgiveness. The fact Udalryk did not go with him portrays an act of cowardice.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Geralt: All right, guess he should stay in the cage, then. **Vigi:** Whaa? I'll not forget this, an Craite! You want all the glory to yerself?! Lemme out right now!	**Geralt:** Also gut… dann sollte er lieber im Käfig bleiben. **Vigi:** Waaaas? Das wirst du bereuen an Craite! Du willst allein der Held sein?! Lasst mich sofort raus!

Comment: Vigi tells Hjalmar that he is going to regret not freeing him from his cage. This is a much more serious statement in the English version where he says that he will not forget about it. Furthermore, this is before Hjalmar, Geralt and another warrior are going to fight a giant. Vigi is mad at Hjalmar because by staying in the cage, he will not get to participate in the fight, thus earning no glory. In the German version, Vigi says "You want to be the hero all by yourself?!" and glory is not mentioned, but the meaning and message stay the same.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Hjalmar: Aye, after all, I'm to be crowned. I killed the giant, I won back Undvik... and lost my entire crew.	**Hjalmar:** Ja, schließlich soll ich als König gekrönt werden. Ich habe den Riesen geschlachtet, Undvik zurückgewonnen ... und meine gesamten Kameraden verloren.

Comment: Due to him referring to his fallen warriors as comrades, it appears that Hjalmar was much closer to them, compared to the English version where he just labels them as his crew. In both versions, the line is delivered with sadness, but because of the implementation of the word "Kameraden", the German dialogue sounds more personal.

ENGLISH	GERMAN
Geralt: "To slay beasts most foul - 'twas for this I was made, I kill as my calling, not just to get paid."	**Geralt:** „Nur Bestien von übler Natur töte ich. "
Geralt: "Perhaps 'midst the guests he hides, in fear?"	**Geralt:** „Vielleicht trinkt's ja inmitten der Gäste ein Bier?"
Geralt: "Seems men's hearts can love for changelings foster!"	**Geralt:** „Sie liebt ihn und mag er auch Anderling sein."
Geralt: "No monster is he whose shape can shift."	**Geralt:** „Doppler sind keine Monster, drum tötet sie nicht."

Comment: These are the some of the lines Geralt says in a theatrical play. The entire play is in rhyme, so it is already challenging enough to translate it. Therefore, only Geralt's main lines are analysed. Starting off with the first line – more than half of it has been omitted and only "I only slay beasts most foul" has been translated. Perhaps the second part was making the rhyme challenging, so the translators decided not to translate it at all. The second line is vastly different in the two versions – while it suggests that the doppler hides in fear among guests, in German, it suggests that he is drinking a beer among them. Again, probably due to rhyme. The third line has kept the same meaning, but the perspective has been altered – in the German version, he says that "she loves him despite him being a doppler". The plot is about a woman's love for a doppler. The fourth line has a different meaning but the message is kept the same – in the German version, he directly refers to dopplers and pleads people not to kill them (because of the current political and social situations where almost all non-humans are hunted and killed). Dopplers are able to shape and change their appearance, therefore, in the English version, this doppler is referred to as "he whose shape can shift." Completely different words are used to transmit the message.

5.4. Discussion and conclusion of the research

Taking into consideration the sheer size of the game itself, including all of the dialogue, it was expected that there would be a decent number of differences in translation. The ones analysed in this thesis are some of the more noticeable ones. Of course, there were more, but some were so minor that there was no point in putting them in since they did not change the plot, the experience or the information which is given to the player. A decent amount of the differences changed the way a character is perceived in a given moment – i.e., a character might seem much harsher and serious in the German version, than in the English version because of the translation.

In the German version, the player may have a different impression of certain characters due to the translation – i.e., Vesemir calling Ciri a brat and a cunning person in the beginning, compared to what he says in the English version – whippersnapper and mischievous. Altogether, the German version seems much harsher and more brutal – i.e., verbs as "to kill" are often translated as "to butcher". Furthermore, the English version therefore appears to be more friendly when it comes to character relationships – in certain compared instances, the German characters seem distant and cold to each other, compared to the interactions in the particular scenes in the English version. An interesting thing is how the word "rape" is sometimes censored in the German version – it is often translated as "violence", but violent vocabulary, as in insults, threats and swear words have no censorship, sometimes, they are even enhanced. What makes it interesting is that there isn't really a consistency, sometimes it is translated literally, sometimes it is censored. Concerning the lore and the plot, in modern day terms, nothing is omitted and players from both versions will not miss anything; however, when talking about the little details regarding experiences and events from the previous games, the German version does seem to omit them – i.e., Zoltan's line about the good old days when he used to fight thugs with Geralt has been omitted in the German version.

Regarding the translation of the names of characters and monsters, especially in the German version, the translators really went out of their way "to germanize" certain names – like Dandelion, Lebioda, Johnny – tracing back the origins of those names and finding German alternatives. Talking about the names of locations, it seems that both translators had taken the approach of translating as similar as possible – some places have a literal translation, but some are different i.e., the village "Rudnik", which means "mine worker", has been translated as "Oreton" and "Erzdorf" – "mine" became "ore" in the English and

German version. Or another example, the village "Jaworik", which stands for sycamore tree, has translations based on the mulberry tree – "Mulbrydale" and "Maulbeertal".

Regarding the dubbing and movements of characters, both are on point and there are no real differences. The dubbing has been done very well since the lip synchronizations have been adjusted for every line in both the English and German version. To sum it all up, both versions have been translated very well and the dialogue seems so natural, one does not get the impression that one is playing a translated version at all. However, regarding the translations in their own respective language, there are certain inconsistencies regarding the usage of certain words, because they are often translated differently or changing the "degree" of certain words – especially in the German version. As already mentioned, even though the threats and vocabulary are more brutal in the German version, on occasion, words which are used very informally in English – "tits" and "wenches", are translated formally in German as "breasts" and "women". Translating an enormous game like this, with over 40 hours of dialogue is a very challenging task that requires large teams of people, and it is to be expected that not everything can be adjusted to be perfect, especially to make sure that everything is always translated the same way. Therefore, it is unrealistic to have expectations that every word, every phrase is going to be perfectly and consistently translated every time.

6. Conclusion

Video games are one of the most popular entertainment products in today's world. Popular especially among younger audiences, but also adults, it is not surprising that there are different kinds of video games. That said, major video games are also very profitable for the developers and publishers, and therefore, they want to sell their product across the globe. Worldwide audiences must be able to understand the video game and because of that, it must be adapted to their culture. This is where translators and technicians with the help of strategies like subtitling, dubbing and voice over, localize the product within the respective target culture.

All these strategies have certain advantages and disadvantages. Subtitling is by far the most used strategy because it is the easiest and cheapest to do. A downside of it is that the viewer must focus on reading the text, instead of watching what is happening on the screen. However, if a person does understand the language, they will not be hindered by a hypothetical wrong translation because they can still hear the original. Dubbing on the other hand is by far the best strategy, but also by far the most expensive strategy. Voice actors record the translated lines, and the original audio is replaced. Computer programmes also adjust the lip movement of the actors and characters, so it looks natural, and the spoken text is harmonised. These are all "technical strategies" so to speak.

When it comes to actual translation strategies in video games, they are used depending on the circumstances. Domestication and foreignization are two of the most basic strategies used in video games – one strategy keeps the foreign instances in the translation, while the other one focuses on completely adapting to the respective target language. Furthermore, there are also the strategies of non-translation and transcreation. Non-translation, as the name already suggests, does not translate the respective word or phrase, but keeps it as it is in the source text. Transcreation is used when a literal or similar translation will not suffice and the translator must create his own term, in order to keep the translated term in spirit of the original text.

In the research based on the video game *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, the examples show various changes done between two versions of the game, the English and the German one. Ranging from the adaptation of the names of characters, locations, and monsters within the game, to various changes in the dialogue, whether the intent was to censor certain phrases, to emphasize them even more and so on. All in all, there are certain inconsistencies in translation within each version, so it is hard and maybe even impossible to make a general conclusion, or at least, to verify a predictable pattern or translating. This is possibly due to

the translators having the freedom to adjust things the way they see fit, as long as the translation remains loyal in meaning to the original. Not every translator works the same way and since numerous translators were working on this project, it was expected to find these inconsistencies. There were no major cultural differences between the English and German versions, especially since both cultures are part of the Western European culture (both are Germanic cultures). However, it is important to note that the subtle changes, even if the player does not notice them while playing – due to the player not having an insight in other versions of the game, at least not at the same time while playing, did impact the experience, sometimes in a positive, sometimes in a negative way.

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