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# Teaching Video Game Localisation in Audiovisual Translation courses at university

**Ximo Granell, Universitat Jaume I, Spain**

**ABSTRACT**

In the current globalised market context, undergraduate and postgraduate courses in audiovisual translation (AVT) in Europe are incorporating new subjects to try to meet the requirements of a more than ever demanding and specialised market. The aim: to prepare translator trainees at universities to face the challenges posed by the professional world in this field. One of these subjects is Video Game Localisation. This paper aims to set the grounds for teaching Video Game Localisation at higher education institutions. Drawing on a previous study on AVT teaching (Chaume, 2003) and a parallel effort for teaching advertising translation (Chaume and Martí forthcoming), profiles for both students and lecturers of this subject are defined. Then, we will focus on the teaching objectives and learning outcomes, the teaching methods available, the characteristics of the materials to be used, and the bibliography used. A final word is also briefly devoted to assessment issues. As a result, a didactic proposal for a Video Game Localisation course for translators is presented.

**KEYWORDS**

Curriculum development, video game localisation, video game localisation lecturer, video game localisation trainee, video game translation, translation teaching, translation task-based approach, audiovisual translation.

## 1. Introduction

The global demand for interactive audiovisual products in our current information society has been enjoying a boom since the beginning of the 21st century. In the particular case of video games, the number of international versions and the breadth of applications for this type of audiovisual product have pushed the boundaries of the worldwide entertainment industry beyond its limits and most games are developed to address different regions, languages and cultures (Chandler 2006). Revenues of the gaming market have topped 38 billion EUR worldwide in 2010 and the growing tendency continues (IDATE 2010), which means that now, more than ever, there is a need for specialised translators to provide quality translated games fitted to the particular requirements of local markets.

This need has led to the creation of a new field of specialisation within translation studies, Video Game Localisation[1] (VGLOC), a modality of audiovisual translation which shares a number of features with other specialised translation and localisation modalities.

## 2. Profiling the students of a Video Game Localisation course

There are a number of contextual and personal factors that can directly affect the profile of the students of a VGLOC course: their previous knowledge and skills, the educational path followed, their geographic and social environment, their personal interest, and so on. For the purposes of this paper, the focus is on the profile of the students that are translation trainees of VGLOC as a modality of Audiovisual Translation (AVT).

Despite the increased demand for translators in the field of VGLOC, the presence of specialised subjects fully or partially incorporating VGLOC contents is still rather scarce among current translation programmes. Where available, VGLOC is being taught as part of AVT undergraduate subjects in the final years of Translation and Interpreting BAs or becoming more prominent as independent modules in Translation master courses. In this curricular scenario, whether at undergraduate or postgraduate level, it seems that the students of VGLOC are expected to have already developed a set of linguistic and translation competences[2] as part of their translation trainee background. For this reason, it can be claimed that there are a number of preliminary competences that students should ideally have before taking a VGLOC course within the current higher education system:

a. The command of the source language should be proficient enough to undertake the translation of both general purpose and subject-specific texts (among which we can find several types of text that need to be translated in a video game). In addition to reading and writing skills, it is important to take into consideration listening skills, since some audiovisual texts may not have a script or it can differ from the actual audio. In any case, students should be prepared to understand the text both at written and oral levels.

b. Students should also have consolidated a proficient command of the mother tongue (target) language during their early years of the translation degree in formal aspects (grammar, spelling, vocabulary…) as well as communicatively. Both registers of the language are essential to be capable of using the language actively in the production of the different types of text present in a video game, by adjusting the use of the language to the required conventions of the text, the level of formality, the register, diverse fields of speciality, etc.

c. Students should also be familiar with the translation process and the translation methods that are acquired by practice in general or by specialised translation courses. This means that a solid translation competence is required, including the use of tools and resources available to translators, but also being aware of the professional

practices required by the market. Thus, it is assumed that students should be able to find idiomatic solutions in their mother tongue that get away from word-by-word translations.

d. Being familiar with the very different types of texts found in video games is also important. As Mangiron points out "games are made up of a diversity of texts, such as technical messages, witty dialogues, songs and literary passages, which have to be translated differently" (2007: 316). Even if translation trainees have not dealt with video games as translators before, they have been exposed to them to a wider or a lesser extent as users or viewers at some point of their lives. In addition, most texts that are part of video games share a number of characteristics with texts that belong to other translation modalities, such as literary, technical, legal, or marketing translation, software and web localisation or other audiovisual translation modalities. Therefore, translation students in their final years should be ideally acquainted to a certain level with all these types of text and their main features, or at least with some of them.

Based upon this set of preliminary competences and knowledge, the design of the teaching and learning process of VGLOC students should consider the following assumptions:

a. The command of the source language should guarantee that lectures can focus on translation issues, rather than on language skills. The two main source languages required by VGLOC translators in the industry are English and Japanese—i.e. the languages in which most video games are developed.

b. The command of the student's target language should guarantee that no lectures will have to be devoted to improve the use of the language or focus on formal aspects of the language.

c. Since trainees should already have developed a translation competence, no attention should be paid to general translation issues and fundamentals, such as avoiding excessively literal translations, successfully finding idiomatic solutions to translation problems, or being capable of doing research through available tools and looking up specialised resources for translators.

Students who have successfully taken language and translation courses should be able to follow a VGLOC course from the very first day and start developing the competences required to translate a video game. Thus, no additional time should be devoted to fill essential linguistic, extralinguistic or translation gaps that may deter translation trainees from immediately becoming familiar with the text types found in video games in their source language and translating them to the target language.

Another important aspect to be taken into account when designing a training programme comes from the motivation and expectations that students may have towards the subject. In our case, the popularity of video games among the wide public (and especially among the younger population) and the increasing presence and relevance of this audiovisual product in our society can have a positive effect on the motivation and demand for training translators in this modality. The scarcity of VGLOC courses available at the moment is paradoxically opposed to the growing demand for video games in every language.

Similarly, the expectations among students are also considerable. Many students may also be or have been video game players, and know very well how demanding fellow players in their country can be in terms of the quality of the localised version of a game. This fact, along with their commitment as future translators, can result in a high degree of motivation among students, which means that there is an additional challenge for the lecturer to meet their expectations and catch up with the latest developments in such a changing and technology-dependant industry as the gaming one.

In terms of number of students per classroom, a maximum of 20-25 is deemed as ideal by Klerkx (1998) for the process of teaching and learning subtitling in the classroom, and we also find that it should not go beyond this figure in the case of VGLOC. In addition, due to the practical requirements of the lessons, computer labs must be used; hence it is almost impossible to have hands-on sessions with a larger number of students. However, the situation in the current higher education system is rather different, at least at BA level, where larger groups are quite common.

## 3. Profiling the lecturers of a Video Game Localisation course

Even though there is a relative wealth of Translation Studies (TS) literature on translation training, only a few studies have talked about the profile of the translation lecturer (Kelly, 2008: 99). It has been stated that the debate about the translation lecturer is still open (Presas 1998: 131). Recognised TS scholars, like Kelly (2005, 2008) or Hurtado Albir (2008), have further discussed what has been said on the translation lecturer profile as a trainer. Hurtado Albir (*ibid.*: 20) highlights the need for having a professional profile, i.e. experience as a professional translator, that guarantees an adequacy to the professional reality. Mayoral (1998: 127) claims that a lecturer in Translation and Interpreting must gather two main characteristics: being an experienced professional translator or interpreter and being in possession of the academic requirements that qualify to teach at the university, i.e. a PhD degree. We share this perspective on a twofold profile and believe that an active practice of the profession should also be a necessary condition of the lecturer in order to

convey his or her practical know-how into the teaching, so that he or she can deliver training that meets the quality standards required by the industry.

As for the pedagogical perspective, Kelly criticises existing literature on translator trainers because it focuses mainly on prior knowledge and experience (2005: 101-102). In her effort to depict a more detailed and holistic understanding of the translation lecturer profile, she draws on the UK Higher Education Academy's Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education (Working Group "Basic Skills, Entrepreneurship And Foreign Languages" 2003) to apply it to the translator trainer competence (Kelly, 2008). The current European Higher Education Area (EHEA) also fosters the pedagogical role of the translation lecturer and suggests student-centred approaches to produce quality outcomes, opposed to traditional master lectures. This has already been done in translation degrees over the past twenty years (Chaume and Martí forthcoming).

From the AVT angle, Díaz Cintas (2008) provides an updated overview of the works published about training in this type of specialised translation (*ibid.*: 9) and brings together a comprehensive volume covering most AVT modalities. If we focus on video game translators' training, very little has been published to date, except for one of the chapters in Díaz Cintas' volume, written by Miguel Bernal (2008), and presentations in specialised fora, such as The Languages and The Media 2010 conference (Granell, Mangiron and Vidal 2010).

In the particular case of the video game localisation lecturer, we believe that the features advocated by scholars must be considered as a cornerstone for defining a suitable profile. Moreover, a deep understanding of the objects of analysis is essential, i.e. video games, their components, text typologies and processes involved, etc.;

- a video game localisation lecturer must rely on his or her professional experience, both as trainer and as researcher in this area;
- a video game localisation lecturer must have a close connection with the gaming industry and stay active as a professional translator, even through sparingly collaborations, in order to catch up with the latest developments and novelties in the field. It is nevertheless important to state that the main dedication of the lecturer is teaching and researching.
- a video game localisation lecturer must have an outstanding knowledge of the types of texts found in video games, how they are built, their particular characteristics, their cultural and local market contexts, and other issues such as technical and legal constraints present in this type of texts.

This understanding of the academic and professional field, the industry and the texts can be of a great help when defining the learning objectives and the teaching methodology to train video game translators.

We find that, ideally, these should be the competences required from a VGLOC course lecturer. These ingredients must be present to some extent in the video game lecturer's curriculum. However, due to the young age of the field, if all these requirements are not fully present in the beginning, they should be progressively incorporated in the medium-term through ongoing learning and continuous development and practice.

## 4. Learning outcomes

The current European Higher Education context places the emphasis of the teaching and learning process on students, rather than on the lecturer. The Framework of qualifications for the EHEA defines "learning outcomes" as "statements of what a learner is expected to know, understand and/or be able to do at the end of a period of learning" (Bologna Working Group on Qualifications Frameworks 2005: 29). Thus, the concept of competence becomes essential when defining the teaching objectives and identifying the learning outcomes expected from a translator who has followed a VGLOC course. Such learning outcomes in translation training must stem from a needs analysis and the potential contribution of the trainees to the professional arena, and should be based on defining tasks which will be part of their professional practice (Chaume & Martí, forthcoming).

The specific learning outcomes of a VGLOC course must be focused on knowing how to address the translation and localisation problems originated by the intrinsic characteristics of video games, which are different from those of other audiovisual products. Therefore, the teaching objectives of a VGLOC course should aim to develop a number of competences required for video game translators. Apart from the general linguistic, extralinguistic or translation competences –presented earlier– that VGLOC students should ideally have before starting the course, more specific competences need to be developed so that trainees:

- will be able to analyse the context of a video game—i.e. genre, platform, target audience and culture, etc.—and opt for an appropriate overall translation approach;
- will be familiar with the localisation process and subprocesses involved in a VGLOC project;
- will be able to handle the localisation kits[3] used in a VGLOC project —i.e. follow guidelines and instructions, edit translatable files and look up the reference materials included in them, including style guides, glossaries, legacy files, corpora, etc.;
- will be able to use the tools and resources at their reach to manage and edit a variety of text formats, use translation memories, and solve documentary queries; and also will have the skills to explore

and exploit new tools and resources that might become available in the future;
- will be familiar with the different types of text found in video games and their characteristics, and know how to produce texts that work in the target game—i.e. using idiomatic language, adjusting language register and tone, using specialised terminology, using creative language when required, following text typology conventions, etc.;
- will be able to deal with the restrictions found in video game assets, such as spatial limitations of the graphical user interface, use of variables, text fragmentation, tagged languages, etc.;
- will be able to handle audiovisual texts, and translate them bearing in mind issues such as lip-sync, kinetic synchrony, isochrony or the use of dubbese in dubbed scenes; or text condensation in subtitled scenes;[4]
- will be aware of the Quality Assurance (QA) and testing processes of VGLOC.

In addition, it is important to highlight that these outcomes, which are specific to video game localisation, should, in turn, also contribute to the outcomes of other AVT modalities like dubbing or subtitling and specialist translation modalities like software localisation or literary translation, since such modalities also share some of their specific outcomes with VGLOC. For instance, the ability to translate a text of a creative nature within the spatial limitations of a video game interface—such as a game menu option or something funny said by a character in a speech balloon–can also be a useful learning outcome for a translator who needs to fit a translation in subtitles—which also have spatial limitations—or translate funny and catchy names for the characters of a dubbed TV show for children—which requires an extra effort in terms of creative thinking.

Since the aim of the teaching process is to train professional translators for the gaming industry, the specific outcomes of the training must also take into consideration the professional practice aspects of VGLOC. It becomes necessary to make trainees aware of the role of the translator and the localisation tasks within the whole process of launching a video game to a local or global market. It is also important to enable students to work in the different settings and workflows in which a translator may operate (i.e. in-house or freelance scenarios) and to equip them with the communicative skills they may need to interact with other members of a VGLOC project.

## 5. Methodology

In accordance with the current student-centred approach of modern didactics, the teaching and learning process in the classroom should be focused on finding the appropriate methods to enable knowledge transfer and the development of skills and attitudes required for the later

professional life. Training translators for the gaming industry implies that both declarative knowledge (e.g. extralinguistic knowledge or characteristics of video games texts) and procedural knowledge (e.g. how to use translation technology or how to deal with audio/video files) must be present. For this reason, a mixed methodology bringing together the best of available teaching methods and techniques should be used. In this section, we examine some of the most common ones, applying them to VGLOC training. Experts in Didactics within the TS field like Kelly (2005: 97) believe in finding the right balance throughout the teaching and learning process: "a well thought-out combination of these [teaching] techniques, depending on the specific outcomes aimed at and the context, offers the richest learning experience to students and trainees."

With this integrated approach in mind, AVT and VGLOC lecturers must take advantage of all kinds of aid and tools available at their reach. Today most universities have virtual learning environments (VLE) to support their face-to-face sessions, such as those based on Moodle technology.

Below, we present some of the most common teaching methods and techniques being used in physical environments in higher education (De la Cruz 2001; Ferrer 1994; Kelly 2005), which can now also be complemented by the use of VLEs.

- **Participative lecturing**, which stems from the 'traditional' lecture or presentation delivered by the trainer. However, currently this methodology emphasises the participation of students by allowing a continuous interaction between the trainer and the trainees, turning the lesson into a dialogue rather than being a monologue of the lecturer. It is the most well-known and used method at present and it is mostly used to transfer declarative knowledge to students, but also to fulfil other objectives like making contents clearer and more understandable or continuously motivating students through the teaching and learning process (Chaume and Martí, forthcoming). Master lectures are not as common in translation courses as they might be in other fields. However, due to factors such as the overcrowding of students in universities, the ease of transferring information or students' motivation, this type of teaching is found to be advantageous by trainers.

  As in other translation fields, this method is widely used in VGLOC teaching and proves to be particularly useful for delivering introductory sessions, checking students' levels of awareness of linguistic and cultural issues or their general translation competence, or motivating students to take part in discussions building upon their prior knowledge of the gaming industry.

This type of lectures must be well-designed and incorporate techniques to make the experience as active and interactive as possible to contribute to the student learning. Thus, the trainer can:

- *use questions and answers effectively* to ensure interaction;
- *use brainstorming techniques* to prompt students' participation;
- *deliver questionnaires* before and/or after each session to spark learners' interest and obtain feedback about the degree of understanding of the aspects treated in the classroom;
- *use content outlines with missing keywords (blanks)* to foster note taking and catch students' attention;
- *deliver sample or further reading texts* to support the trainer's input;
- and especially, *use audiovisual support media*, as well as *computer-based aids* (e.g. slide presentations and VLEs) to present content to the class and further involve trainees into the learning process through debates, follow-up discussion groups, etc.

- **Discussion groups**, or small groups sessions where students participate, are another method for leading the teaching and learning process that allow the development of communication skills, intellectual and professional competences, and personal growth of students and the trainer (Brown & Atkins, 1988). In this type of teaching the following techniques can be used:
  - *step by step discussion* or sequential activities starting with a brief introduction, followed by a task to be performed by the students, and a later input by the trainer to comment on the outcomes produced. It gives students an opportunity to discuss freely within the bounds of each task and it shifts the control of the learning process to trainees;
  - *problem solving activities* undertaken by students within the session or the following day to work on particular translation or localisation typical problems found in video games (such as dealing with the translation of variables and concatenated strings of text, as described by Chandler (2005: 322) and in Bernal (2007: 6). Some useful ways of conducting these techniques are subdividing groups to work individually, in pairs or in smaller groups; comparing the results; and receiving feedback from the trainer. It is important for students to realise that being wrong is part of the learning process;
  - *group seminars about the different types of texts found in video games* used in the early stages of the learning to develop understanding, analysis and synthesis, both in source and in target languages. As part of these activities a number of translation strategies can also be used, like pre-translating, sight translation, group translation, etc.;
  - *student presentations* are popular in translation training programmes. They are particularly useful to present topics of

interest or theoretical issues, although they can also be used to work on practical issues: analysing source texts, analysing target texts, arguing solutions applied, etc. Non-presenting students can also be involved through this technique, by encouraging them to ask questions, summarise key points, argue for or against the issues presented, or by asking them to do a peer-to-peer assessment on the presentation skills demonstrated. In addition, feedback should be provided by the trainer to the group as a whole (either face to face or through the VLE if there is limited time for this activity in the classroom).

- *case studies* (mostly in the shape of translation simulations) that may allow delivering content, promoting critical thinking and putting acquired skills into practice. Starting from a functionalist perspective, i.e. focusing on the relevance of the target audience of the translation, students will realise that for translating the different types of text found in a video game, the translation strategies and the approach to be followed may considerably vary. Factors such as the audience, the client, the media, and the component of the game (asset[5]) where the text is going to appear will inevitably influence the translation approach and the decision making process about the methods, strategies and techniques to be employed. This can help students to understand the processes and workflow involved in a VGLOC project. In order to use this training method in the classroom the trainer presents the case as a translation request received by a client, the objectives of the assignment and the steps to be followed. Again, the use of VLEs can help to simulate a real working environment, delivering the information and required documents, uploading the output files, providing a channel for queries, setting deadlines, and so on. Later, after the students have worked on the assignment, shared their views and come up with a possible solution, individually or in small groups, they upload it to the VLE. Finally, each individual or group presents their proposal to the rest of the class and the trainer provides feedback and corrections according to the professional guidelines given. As it has been highlighted earlier in the paper, the role of lecturers of specialised translation modules greatly benefits from being connected to industry and from undertaking research in that field;
- another way of working on a simulated professional environment is *undertaking tasks* that are part *of a fictitious project*. For this purpose, several groups can be built, one for each working group within a VGLOC project (i.e. engineers, project managers, translators, testers, quality assurance linguists, quality assurance engineers, etc.). Then, the translation project should be presented to the whole VGLOC team, before it is divided in several tasks, which are allocated to the team responsible for that role within the project workflow. After each team has completed its job, feedback should be provided by the lecturer as a wrap-up. Once again, VLEs

can be of great help when organising this activity, building working teams easily and providing tools that replicate a professional working network and that contribute to develop teamwork skills (e.g. through the use of wiki-like spaces in the VLE to get groups to work on the same document, discussion fora within each group or at project level, sharing resources within the project, monitoring progress in real time, etc.). The trainer can easily supervise the work being done and provide feedback whenever it is required by the activity. It is also important to realise that this method allows assessing not only the output at the end of the project, but also the work undertaken along the whole process.

- **Mentoring schemes** are another strong mechanism for supporting training at universities. Focusing on the specific profile of VGLOC students, trainers can make use of supervision facilities available in the centre to monitor the degree of contents, skills and attitudes assimilation through face to face or virtual sessions, one to one or in small groups. It can become a powerful and customised feedback tool if used efficiently. In addition, students will be happier to comment on doubts and ask questions in this setting than in public. Since students might be reluctant to express doubts openly it is important that they identify the lecturer as someone who is there to help them to learn, not as someone who is constantly judging and assessing their performance. New technologies, and in particular e-mail and VLEs, now allow making questions to lecturers much easier, less time-consuming (for the student) and less threatening. Also, virtual spaces, like fora or discussion groups, can be enabled to provide support to the whole group. Another good use of a mentoring scheme is to follow-up work placements and mobility programmes before, during and after the experience itself.

- Developing the **autonomous learning** competence is another important method to help students in their learning process. As in other subjects, VGLOC students must be able to further develop their skills on their own. Some techniques that may be useful to them are reading around the subject, reviewing and reflecting on abilities in learning journals or progress files, use discussion rooms in VLEs, etc. To this end, institutional infrastructures and resources that can be used by students include language multimedia labs, self-learning language centres, self-learning resources and spaces in virtual learning environments and open-access computer labs. Through the use of such facilities, students are empowered with the tools and resources they need to undertake their practical assignments outside the classroom, to gain further practice and insights into the contents of the module, and to continue their learning process individually after finishing the formal training of the module.

## 6. Learning materials and bibliography selection

Not all activities are suitable for all levels of learning, thus selecting the right texts and materials for video game localisation tasks is crucial and depends on the characteristics of the students and the intended learning outcomes. Chaume and Martí (forthcoming) highlight a number of **criteria** that should be taken into account when selecting the materials for a course:

- Suitability of the materials for the objectives, methodology and learning outcomes.
- Text relevance, according to: a) professional practice, b) the contents of the module, c) the approach followed in the training and d) students' interest.
- Sample reliability: selected texts must be representative samples of different genres, types of text, styles, period of time, geographic region, etc.
- Sequential progression in terms of level of difficulty and degree of specialisation.
- Likelihood of contribution to the development of competences.
- Educational infrastructures available to students to work with the texts.
- Trainees' degree of familiarity with the topics.

In audiovisual translation modules and, in particular, in VGLOC courses, it is really important to work with texts in electronic and audiovisual formats that bring the trainee closer to the real environment. The training materials of these courses focused on preparing translators for the professional market must inevitably be in their electronic format since no video game translator is ever going to work only on paper versions of the texts but on a wide breadth of types of files. Whenever possible (and if they are available), audiovisual texts and context interfaces (or screenshots) found in video games should also be used during the training to make trainees aware of the context of the translated text. Nevertheless, trainees need to work with context-free texts, since, unfortunately, it is a common practice (especially in the case of freelance translators) to work with files that only contain text strings without any context, with all the constraints and problems posed by this lack of information (Mangiron, 2007: 310).

Another important issue has to do with the **authenticity** of the texts. Whenever possible, real texts should be selected to make students face real issues as they will need to do in their professional practice. Austermühl (2006: 69) emphasises this requirement for localisation training programmes in general and Bernal also discusses this need in the case of video games (2008: 149). However, as this author states, "copyright issues surrounding this [gaming] industry can pose an insurmountable problem" (*ibid.*: 149) and claims that "academics can help

here with their research on the analysis of current practice and the proposal of game localisation standards, but they need, of course, access to authentic game localisation procedures and files" (*ibid.*: 150). We fully agree with this claim, although it seems rather complicated to overcome the barriers set by game developers/distributors to gain access to game files, even to old games which have been out the market for years. In this line of thinking, Pablo Muñoz has written about the use of *romhacking* techniques to translate old versions of video games by fans (Muñoz, 2008) and he has even proposed to use such techniques to teach VGLOC (Muñoz, 2010). According to Wikipedia 'ROM hacking' is defined as "the process of modifying a video game ROM image [i.e. a file containing all the data from a game to be played in an emulator] to alter the game's graphics, dialogue, levels, gameplay, or other elements. This is usually done by technically-inclined video game fans to breathe new life into a cherished old game, as a creative outlet, or to make essentially new unofficial games using the old games engine." (Wikipedia 2011). Other possibilities that could be explored are using open source or liberated games (commercial games that have been liberated and made free in playable form to the public) which are licensed under more flexible schemes than most commercial games; or seeking joint ventures with independent game developers or research groups working on video game design that would have an interest in developing localised versions of their products.

The **pedagogical progression** of the learning materials should follow a logical sequence in terms of level of difficulty, degree of specialisation, degree of replication of the real environment, and resources available. Bernal (2008: 150) proposes a three-step approach that can be offered by higher education institutions depending on the staff, budget, technical facilities, and industry contacts available. His proposal is based on Chandler's three types of game localisation projects in the industry (2005: 12-15), namely:

a) Box and docs: only manual and packaging are translated.
b) Partial localisation: user interface texts and subtitles are also translated, but spoken dialogues in the source language are left in the source language due to cost-effective reasons –no voiceover or dubbing is used to translate them.
c) Full localisation: all game assets are translated, including audiovisual files that are either dubbed or voiced-over.

Bernal's proposal also considers including another type of project, 'multilingual game web site,' that, according to our view, could be included within the full localisation type of project. In addition to game assets, there is an increasing amount of information present in games' web sites which also needs to be made available to target languages users. His proposal is focused on working on the first type of project (only written texts) at the first step; move on to a second stage where text-

based material widely available on the web can be used to work with excerpts from games; and a third step that should simulate the whole workflow of real life practice.

Ideally, all three levels should be covered during a formal training in a higher education institution; however, due to the lack of resources and the difficulty to access authentic materials and full localisation kits within the gaming industry, it is usually too complicated to replicate the whole workflow.

As stated in the first two levels identified by Bernal, we also believe that students can learn about the principles of game localisation and be initiated into the field terminology, genres, creativity, register and style. In addition, even if authentic localisation kits are not available –for instance, due to copyright restrictions–, partial localisation scenarios can be replicated to some extent to work on the different assets, types of text and conventions of a video game. This simplified way of dealing with the workflow can be performed by working through a task-based approach, rather than on a project scale and, once again, VLEs can provide a useful platform and tools. As in other AVT modalities, a higher degree of involvement in the VGLOC workflow could be acquired through internships or learnerships in the industry. In this way, students do not only complement their training at the university, but also gain insights into all the dimensions of the reality of their future career.

In translation modules where skills acquisition is a major objective a relevant bibliography must also be present among the working and reference materials. For this reason, in addition to the tools and resources available to students from general translation courses (dictionaries, reference works, etc.), special attention should be drawn to specialised materials such as:

- video game-related bibliography
- gaming-related web sites and blogs
- content-rating web sites
- video game developers' style guides, glossaries & guidelines
- specialised magazines
- online databases for games
- industry-related web sites
- online translation resources (in particular related to gaming culture, cultural cross-references, etc.)
- online subtitling tools and other AVT tools

## 8. Assessment

The assessment of any teaching and learning process should be focused on checking whether its objectives and outcomes have been

accomplished. In our case, the assessment instrument needs to be capable of monitoring students' learning process throughout the course to see whether they have achieved the expected outcomes and will be prepared to work in this field.

Given the complex set of linguistic, cultural, translation, instrumental, professional, and interpersonal competences that VGLOC students should acquire, we believe that a mixed approach is necessary to assess the success of this type of training with so many variables in play. Such an approach should include continuous assessment and formative assessment, both based on the tasks and the activities undertaken along the training, like the ones described in section 5 of the paper. Kelly defines 'formative assessment' as "any marking, correction or comment which gives students feedback on their learning precisely in order to help them learn more, or better." (Kelly 2005: 133).

Nevertheless, assessment approaches are constrained to a wider or a lesser extent by academic programmes and institutions, so it might be necessary to think about several assessment itineraries that fit into different institutional scenarios (i.e. formative assessment such as essay/test-based final examination, task-based continuous assessment, individual/group work, etc.).

Due to the relevance required to address assessment issues and the length limitations of this paper, more detailed attention should be devoted to them in future research.

## 9. Conclusion

We are witnessing a growth in the demand for specialised translation services to meet the requirements of the 21st century global market. In particular, the gaming industry is becoming an enormous marketplace that needs qualified translators who can face the challenges of such an exigent modality of audiovisual translation. Higher education institutions with translation degree programmes need to cater for the needs of this demand and train translators in this field of specialisation.

This paper draws on previous studies on teaching audiovisual, advertising and video game translation, as well as on translator training literature, to discuss a didactic proposal for teaching VGLOC at higher education institutions. Attention is paid to learners' and trainers' profiles and the competences ideally required by them to make the most of a VGLOC course. The learning outcomes and the learning methods of this training are also discussed within the current student-centred European Higher Education context. Emphasis is placed on the available teaching methods and techniques with examples on how to exploit them in a VGLOC course. Then, a number of issues are discussed about the characteristics of the

materials supporting the teaching and learning process and the type of bibliography to be considered. Last but not least, assessment is briefly addressed.

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## Biography

Dr Ximo Granell is a researcher of the TRAMA (Translation and Communication for Audiovisual Media) group at Universitat Jaume I, Spain. He is a Translation and Interpreting graduate from Universitat Jaume I and completed his PhD at Loughborough University (UK). He has worked as a translator specialised in software, website and video game localisation, as well as in ICT, marketing and business communication translation. He has taught and researched translation technologies, video game localisation, and documentation for several universities.
He can be reached at granell@trad.uji.es.

[1] Chandler (2005: 12) describes 'game localisation' as "the process of translating the game into other languages", however Bernal (2006) provides a broader definition of this concept and a detailed discussion about the suitability of using 'game localisation' or 'game translation.' For the purposes of this paper, the former term is used to refer to both conceptions of this type of audiovisual translation.

[2] The Working Group "Basic Skills, Entrepreneurship And Foreign Languages" considers 'competence' "to refer to a combination of skills, knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes, and to include disposition to learn as well as know-how" (2003: 10).

[3] Following Chandler's definition, a 'localisation kit' "includes all the necessary assets [i.e. components, see endnote 7] to create localized versions of the game, such as source code, game assets, and design documents." (Chandler 2005: 323).

[4] A more detailed explanation of these AVT issues can be found in Chaume (2006), for dubbing, and in Díaz Cintas and Remael (2007), for subtitling.

[5] The term 'asset' is commonly used to refer to the series of components that make up a video game, namely, in-game text assets, art assets, audio assets, cinematic assets and printed materials (Chandler 2005: 51).