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Pokémon Scarlet and Violet: A Comparative Analysis of the Localization in the English and Spanish Versions

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Abstract

This study explores the Spanish and English localizations of the videogame *Pokémon Scarlet and Violet*. First of all, the names of Pokémon and towns, two basic ingame elements, are analysed and classified according to five selected translating strategies combining the work of authors Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), Kena Miller (2022), and Don Arvidsson (2018). The results indicate that there is a strong representation of Spanish culture within the different names analysed. Additionally, it has been also demonstrated that most translated names maintain some meaning relation to the original name, with a few exceptions. Secondly, the evaluation of the variants into which the game was localized and the professional situation of translating teams demonstrate that the English audience does not show any adverse reaction against neutral English. The Spanish translation, on the other hand, proves the dissatisfaction of Latin American customers given that the difference between variants leads to misunderstandings and discomfort when playing the videogame. Considering all the aforementioned aspects, it can be argued that despite being a product widely enjoyed by Spanish and English players, further research on the importance of translating into the language variants of the videogame's target audience should be undertaken in order to not invisibilise a linguistic community. Additionally, this study also proves that a good translation and localization team is essential to provide a quality product that adapts to an intended market.

Keywords: Videogames, Localization, Pokémon, Ingame translation, language variant

List of Contents

1. Introduction

The popularity of the videogame industry has exponentially risen over the past twenty years due to several factors, including the emergence of new devices on which to play, new controllers that ease the experience, a wider range and types of users, and the rise of videogame companies (Méndez and Calvo-Ferrer 2018, 25-26). For that reason, the videogame industry has endeavoured to reach a wider audience through the translation of their products.

One of the most known enterprises in the field of videogames is The Pokémon Company. Its primary product is the Pokémon videogame series, which is produced along with other four corporations committed to developing software and hardware: Nintendo, Game Freak, Creatures, and Niantic. The videogame has become worldwide known over the last twenty years due to its successful trajectory and the fan base that they have constructed since the release of its first pair of game versions, *Pokémon Red & Green* (1996) in Japan, and, internationally, *Pokémon Red & Blue* (1998). Henceforth, the main line of Pokémon videogames has been distributed in paired editions that follow the same storyline but include exclusive content based on what version has been bought. Each pair of editions present exclusive Pokémon which can only be found from a certain pair of editions onwards and, as a consequence, these are divided into Pokémon generations. In other words, Pokémon from the second generation cannot be found in the first, but they can in the third, and thereafter.

The popularity of this franchise is probably not only due to the storylines and the entertaining aspect of collecting creatures but also owing to the game's settings in several real countries such as in *Pokémon: Sun & Moon* (Hawaii) or *Pokémon X & Y* (France). In November 2022 it was the turn for Spain to become the setting for the videogame *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet*, the ninth generation. Although it is mainly based on the Iberian Peninsula, players soon noticed that the predominant references were dedicated to Spain culture, such as the names of cities or the products that could be found in the shops within the videogame.

In light of the above, translating and localizing teams are required to adapt the content of the videogames to different cultures, paying special attention to cultural items and

conventions, in order to achieve a fulfilling and appropriate experience for the players. Indeed, *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet* is nowadays available in Japanese, English, European Spanish, French, German, Italian, Korean, and Chinese.

Provided that the videogame was released to the market a short time ago, there are no studies or much content about it.

Other than that, one of the main constraints that this project has encountered is the lack of space for this paper and a large amount of existing ingame data regarding the whole franchise. With this in mind, it has been preferred to analyse some aspects in depth rather than to provide a general overview.

On a different note, The Pokémon Company does not provide much information regarding the etymological aspects of the elements that can be found in their games. Hence, the Pokémon fan base constantly analyses and collects as much data as possible on their websites. Even though these are generally considered a reliable source of information as it is constantly reviewed by the community, there is some risk of misinformation. Consequently, further analysis and contrast of the data with personal knowledge and the game itself need to be undertaken.

This paper will provide a theoretical context about Pokémon, including relevant terms that will be used throughout the study as well as previous literature about the topic.

The analysis will be divided into two different sections that include different subsections. The first section englobes two subsections. These will examine in depth the localization techniques that can be observed in the Pokémonikers' and localities' names' localization, respectively. The second section also englobes two subsections. The first subsection will expound on how the Spanish translation affects players from Spain and Latin American players. The second subsection, on the other hand, will explore how English localization has interfered with the English-speaking players' experience.

Last but certainly not least, an evaluation that gathers and connects all the aspects mentioned throughout the paper will be undertaken in order to draw a conclusion.

2. Theoretical Framework

Over the last twenty years, the number of gamers around the world, both children and adults, has exponentially increased. As a consequence, games have been localized to reach players from all over the globe.

Not only does this paper aim at analysing and comparing different techniques employed to translate and localize the videogame *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet* into English and Spanish, but also at how cultural aspects have been represented in three languages rooted in three different cultures: Spanish, English, and Japanese.

Furthermore, the situation of the translating and localizing teams in charge of the adaptation of the videogame into Spanish and English will also be illustrated in this study. It would be a mistake to overlook the fact that, as both English and Spanish are languages spoken throughout the globe, it may be usual to find many variants of them in different countries. For this reason, another objective of this study is to illustrate how the English and Spanish variants in which the videogame has been translated may affect the game experience as well as the decisions of the customers when selecting the language in which they are going to play.

This study brings relevant information into the theoretical framework of videogame localities due to the lack of linguistic research on different kinds of nouns in the Pokémon franchise. As previously mentioned, several scholars have analysed the motivations behind the translation of Pokémon proper names. However, no studies have been found concerning the translation of the proper names of cities. Another relevant point to take into consideration is that *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet* is a relatively new game, so there exist no studies on this particular game yet.

Another relevant point that brings relevance to this research is the fact that no academic reports about the dissatisfaction of Latin American customers with the Spanish translation of the Pokémon videogames have been found. The illustration regarding this situation not only does it demonstrate the lack of relevance suffered by the localization industry, but also exposes how inadequate localizations may negatively impact the players' experience.

This study intends to answer the following questions: What are the strategies applied in the English and Spanish localizations of proper and common nouns in *Pokémon Scarlet*

& Violet? How does this relate to customers' satisfaction and the situation of the translators involved?

2.1. Translation vs. Localization

As videogames are "an interactive multimedia form of entertainment" (Bernal, quoted in Rodríguez 2016, 270), the most accurate type of translation for this sector is "audiovisual translation", which can be defined as "processes and products that are involved in or result from the transfer of multimodal and multimedia content across languages and/or cultures" (Pérez-González 2018, 30).

The translation of a videogame content cannot be carried out without the collaboration of localization, "the process of changing the documentation of a product, a product itself or the delivery of services so that they are appropriate and acceptable to the target society and culture" (Quah 2006, quoted in Méndez González and Calvo-Ferrer 2017, 15). Thus, in order to successfully adapt a videogame into another language it is essential to take into consideration different aspects such as the culture and language of the target consumer. Itziar Zorrakin-Goikoetxea contributes to the study of the translation of video games in terms of Spanish varieties through her article "The Use and Reception of Varieties of Spanish in Videogames" (2022). Indeed, she examines the importance of localizing videogames in the variety of Spanish required by the target customers. Plus, several articles discussing about varieties of English were found, such as "Comparing varieties of English: problems and perspectives" (Davydova, Hilbert, Pietsch and Siemund 2011).

Another relevant aspect to take into account when translating videogames are ingame elements. These are all texts that constitute the game itself (Méndez González and Calvo-Ferrer 2017, 98). It is extremely important to localize them since they are the core of the game, and they will directly impact on the player's experience, as shall be demonstrated in sections 3 and 4. Some examples are menu texts, instructions or maps.

It is necessary to highlight that the terms "translation" and "localization" will be used in this study as synonyms unless otherwise indicated in order to avoid repetitions.

2.2. Pokémon: A Theoretical Approach

The word "Pokémon" is a portmanteau formed from *Pocket Monsters*, which alludes to the most important part of the videogame: collecting these creatures in *pokéballs*

(capsules in which where the gamer captures them) under the slogan "Gotta catch 'em all". These may evolve into more powerful beings, and once they are transformed, they receive a longer name to reflect their increased strength (Miller 2022, 4). On top of that, Pokémon are classified according to their type (fire, grass, water…) and their abilities when battling against others.

Together with that, Pokémon can also be categorised by their rarity. There are Common Pokémon, which appear in unlimited quantities. Conversely, there are specific Singular and Legendary Pokémon that can only be found in certain editions, and which usually form part of the mythology of the Pokémon universe. Similarly, Starters are unique in each generation. There always are three Pokémon of the types of fire, grass, and water and the player can only obtain one of them as a gift at the beginning of the adventure. Additionally, *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet* has introduced a new category: Paradox Pokémon. These are said to have emerged either in the past or the future, depending on the version of the game. Pokémon from the Scarlet edition belong to the future whereas Violet's come from ancient times. These are particularly valuable linguistically as their names are among the few Pokémon names that are translated into Spanish instead of retaining the English version, as will be explained in a later section.

On a different note, Pokémonikers, the names of the Pokémon (Miller 2022), are the most important part of the videogame. Indeed, as the primary goal in the game is to "catch 'em all", Pokemónikers usually reflect the attributes of the Pokémon they are named after in order to make it easier for the player to remember them. Hence, Pokémonikers can be categorized as "semantically transparent names" (Arvidsson 2018, 7) in the English version. Nevertheless, it is not the case for the Spanish translation given that most Pokémon names adopt the English version instead of developing a different one for their target audience (Miller 2022, 11). The impact of this fact on the Spanish-speaking market will be further discussed in section 5.

2.3. Pokémon: Previous Literature

When investigating the process of translation of video games, it has been noted that there are a considerable number of studies related to different areas of the subject.

From a general perspective, Vermes Albert Peter presents in "Proper Names in Translation: A Relevance-Theoretical Analysis" (2002) different approaches that are generally adopted when translating. Furthermore, the translation strategies proposed by

Vinay and Darbelnet (1958) have also been proven to be still used nowadays in numerous studies related to video game localization.

Moving on to the field of video games localization, the journal article "Targeted Translation: How Game Translations are Used to Meet Market Expectations" (2017), by Aiden Ranford, provides an overview of Japanese audio-visual products and their international success as well as a brief analysis on the translation of proper games and the preservation of cultural cues in mass games. Likewise, Ramón Méndez González and José Ramón Calvo-Ferrer elaborate on the process of video game localization in a thoroughly detailed way in their book "Videojuegos y [para]traducción: aproximación a la práctica localizadora" (2017).

In the field of Pokémon video games' localization, several studies have been found concerning the translation of Pokémon's proper nouns from preceding editions. In "Would a *Bulbasaur* by any other name be as iconic? Analysing motivations in Pokémon name localization" (2022), written by Kenna Miller, the decisions taken behind certain Pokémon name localizations in different languages are examined in detail. Similarly, Don Arvidsson (2018) provides differentiation between onomastics, the study of proper nouns, and common nouns, and classifies the strategies used when translating both in the aforementioned video game franchise.

Since there is no abundant official background information on the videogames from The Pokémon Company, many fan-made websites emerged to cover the information gaps in different areas of the videogame, among which is the translation of names and their etymology. Thus, Japanese names and the etymological meaning of each translated Pokemóniker were selected from the section "Name Origin" and "In other languages" of the English community-driven webpage Bulbapedia.

3. Methodology

The names in English and Spanish were directly collected from the videogame *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet*. The examples of Pokémonikers covered in this study will be focused on regional Pokémon that cannot be found in previous editions of the videogame.

Japanese Pokémonikers and the etymological data of their localization were collected from the English community-driven webpage Bulbapedia, from the sections "Name Origin" and "In other languages".

Regarding the names of the localities, Bulbapedia was also used as an essential source of information for each etymological meaning. Although it is not an official page, it is widely accepted by the fan community.

All the Japanese names will be provided in trademarked romaji, the official spelling of the Japanese syllabary that Game Freak uses to ease the comprehension of readers who are unfamiliar with Japanese characters.

The English and Spanish translations of the names will be classified according to five translation strategies based on the models of Vinay and Darbelnet (1958), Kena Miller (2022) and Don Arvidsson (2018), depending on their relation to the source name:

- Borrowing: The source language noun is directly adopted to the target text without any change (Vinay and Darbelnet 1958).
- Literal Translation: A 'word-for-word' translation (Vinay and Darbelnet 1958).
- Overlap: The name form partially resembles the Japanese version. Some aspects may be omitted or added, but it always is "understood by players of the target localization" (Miller 2022, 6).
- Divergence: The translated name slightly resembles the original one since many of its constituent parts have been changed (ibid., 6)
- Equivalence: Translation of a name into its established counterpart in the target language, such as happens with onomatopoeias or units of measurement. (Arvidsson 2018, 26)
- Recreation: The translation has been reinterpreted by the localizing team and the form and meaning are different to the original one, maybe due to the impossibility of an equivalent translation or an error. (Arvidsson 2018, 41)

In section 5 it will be discussed how different aspects related to language variants in the localization have impacted on the players' experience based on the reports provided by different videogame information sources such as ANMTV's website and their interview to the first translator of the English version.

4. Analysis

4.1. Pokémonikers

As previously mentioned, Pokémon are the most important element of the Pokémon videogames. Hence, it is extremely important to provide them an attractive name that helps players remember them. As can be seen in the following examples, most Pokémonikers of this generation contain Spanish words that mark this Pokémon videogame the first of its series to contain Pokémonikers that are more understandable to the Spanish audience.

4.1.1. Borrowing

This strategy is one of the less commonly used to localize Japanese Pokémonikers into English given that both languages are very different. Since each edition released introduces two game mascots, which are known as Legendary Pokémon, their names have always been directly adopted in order to preserve their international recognition.

In this case, *Miraidon* ('future ride dragon') is the Legendary Pokémon of the Violet version, whereas *Koraidon* ('ancient ride dragon') is Scarlet's Legendary Pokémon.

4.1.2. Literal Translation

Although it is not one of the most popular methods in this new generation, there are several cases in which its usage can be observed. A clear example is the evolutionary line of *Wakkanezumi* and *Ikkanezumi*. The first one is a combination of the words *wakka* 'circle' and *nezumi* 'mouse', which was localized into *Tandemaus.* It remains the meaning of a group of mice using the word *tandem* and the German noun *maus*, which means 'mouse'. The second one is formed by *ikka* 'a family' and *nezumi* 'mouse' and was literally translated as *Maushold* (*maus + household*). As it is an evolutionary line, the translator has preserved the presence of the word "*maus*" in both Pokemónikers as can be observed in the original versions.

It is also visible in the case of *Minību*, a compound noun formed by *mini* and *olive*. It was localized as *Smolive* (*small + olive*), keeping the exact meaning of 'a small olive'.

Similarly, the Pokémon *Idainakiba* 'great tusk' has been literally translated as *Great Tusk* in English, and *Colmilargo* in Spanish. The same happens with

Todorokutsuki 'roaring moon', which was translated as *Roaring Moon* in English and as *Bramaluna* in Spanish.

4.1.3. Equivalence

This procedure is mainly implemented in components which, albeit expressing the same idea, are conveyed differently depending on the language due to cultural conventions., such as onomatopoeias.

The Pokémoniker *Buroron* reflects the Japanese onomatopoeia for "a roaring noise of a motor vehicle accelerating or travelling at speed"[1]. In order to adapt it to the target culture conventions, it was translated into the standardized version of the English language –*Varoom*. The creature in which it evolves follows the same pattern. *Burorōmu* represents the same onomatopoeia with the added meaning of increasing the speed and was translated as *Revavroom*.

Taking into consideration the physical appearance of the Pokémon (an engine) and the intuitive nature of onomatopoeias, English players would probably have understood the reference had it not been translated. On the same basis, Spanish-speaking players can understand the analogy even if it has not been localized into their language.

4.1.4. Overlap

This is one of the most frequently observed strategies in the localization of Pokemónikers. An example of a modification of the original name can be observed in *Tetsunodokuga* 'iron venomous moth', which becomes *Iron Moth* in English and *Ferropolilla* in Spanish. They omit the venomous trait probably due to the length limitation, but they keep the sense of "a moth made of iron".

Tetsunokaina –'iron arms'– reflects an example of modulation from noun to noun. As Arvidsson states, a noun can be translated into a sub-category (2018). Instead of translating it as *Iron Arms or *Ferrobrazos, the English version has translated it as *Iron Hands* and the Spanish one as *Ferropalmas*. The reason behind this probably relies on the physical traits of the creature since its main feature is a pair of particularly sizable hands.

The three starters of this generation also feature this strategy in their localized names. The grass type one, *Nyaoha*, is a combination of the onomatopoeia known in

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[1] "vroom, n.". OED Online. March 2023. Oxford University Press. https://0-www-oed-com.llull.uib.es/view/Entry/224817?redirectedFrom=vroom (accessed May 25, 2023).

English as 'meow' –*nya*– and the Spanish noun for 'leaf' (*hoja*) and was translated as *Sprigatito*, a compound word formed by *sprig* and *gatito* –'kitten'. The meaning of the translated components is very similar to the original, but not exactly the same. The fire type starter, *Hogēta*, is a portmanteau of *ho* 'fire' and *alligator* and was localized as *Fuecoco*. At first sight, it can be assumed that this is a case of literal translation. However, in Bulbapedia it is theorized that the Japanese Pokémoniker could also be inspired by *hogē* 'flabbergasted*'*, *hoguera* 'bonfire' and *malagueta pepper*. Thus, the localization might be missing an extra meaning due to the omission of these components, which would mean that an overlapping method was carried out. Finally, the water type, Kuwassu is formed by the onomatopoeia for a duck's cry in Japanese –*kuwakku*– and *wakkusu* –'wax'. It was translated as *Quaxly* (*quack* + *wax* + *duckling*). Here, the extra connotation of a baby duck has been included in the name probably due to the fact that it is the first Pokémon in its evolutionary line.

4.1.5. Divergence

This is the most common technique observed in the localization of this list of Pokémonikers along with the previous one.

In the case of *Pupimocchi*, it represents a combination between the nouns *puppy* and *mocchi*. The second component consists of a sweet rice paste which is traditional in Japan. Hence, it was translated as *Fidough*, which probably alludes to "Fido" –a stereotypical name for a pet dog– in addition to *filo*, a very thin pastry for desserts, and *dough*. The localized Pokémoniker has retained the general meaning intended but it is visible that changes have been undertaken to make it more idiomatic for the players.

A similar process takes place with *Guroton*. It is a combination of *gourmet*, *glutton,* and *ton* 'pig'. Its translation, *Lechonk*, maintains the general idea of the original version as it seems to be inspired by the noun *lechón* 'piglet', the onomatopoeia for a pig's gunt –*oink*– and the slang term *chonk* for overweight pigs. Instead of translating it as, for instance, *Glutton, the localizing team decided to distance the new form from the original without changing it radically.

4.1.6. Recreation

This method is frequently present when encountering significant difficulties in translating cultural items that may not be found in the target language. Nevertheless, as Japanese Pokémonikers use to allude to the physical traits of the Pokémon, there have not been

found cases of recreation in this list. All have preserved at least one reference to the source name.

4.2.   Names of the Localities

The names of the localities are a very relevant aspect of the videogames, especially in the Pokémon series of videogames, since they usually reflect a feature from the region they represent. Thus, it is safe to assume that localities' names are transparent in meaning in *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet*. These will be classified in the categories of Literal Translation, Overlap, Divergence and Reinterpretation since no examples of Borrowing and Equivalence have been found.

A relevant aspect to highlight in this section is the fact that the English version overlooks the "town" component of the original version of the names. In other words, while in the Japanese version a city is called *Bowl Town*, the English version only contemplates the first component and translates it as *Artazon*.

4.2.1. Literal Translation

Several examples were identified where a literal translation can be discerned, such as in the case of *Napper Yama*. In English, it was translated as *Glaseado Mountain*, which exactly corresponds to the components of the original name. In Spanish, it was also literally translated as *Sierra Napada*. Here, the localization has taken advantage of the Spanish geography to make a literal translation while alluding to Sierra Nevada, a mountain range that can be found in the South of the Iberian Peninsula.

The translation of *Frigde Town* follows a similar approach to the Spanish version. The localization team probably benefited from the geographical location of the town to use the Bask language for its name. Thus, the result was *Pueblo Hozkailu*, which precisely means 'fridge town'.

Some towns were literally translated into English. *Chanpuru Town* alludes to an intercultural blend in a region. Therefore, it was translated as *Medali*, which is inspirated by 'medley'. In Spanish, it was translated as *Pueblo Mestura*. As in the previous example, it is localized into a language spoken in Spain apart from Spanish or Basque: Galician.

There also are instances in which there is no allusion to Spanish territories, and there only is a literal translation with geographical reference to the fictional town it is

named after. For example, *Marinade Town* was translated into Spanish as *Pueblo Marinada* 'marinated town'.

4.2.2. Overlap

Along with literal translation, the overlap is again the most observed strategy of translation observed in this subsection.

Plato Town was translated as *Los Platos* ('the dishes') in English. It might be misinterpreted as a literal translation. Since the form of the name has been slightly changed by omitting '*town*' and adding '*los*' at the beginning, it has been determined as an Overlap. Similarly, in Spanish, it was localized as *Pueblo Ataifor.* The second component of the name refers to a traditional dish from Andalusian territory. Thus, despite maintaining the sense of a plate, the translation remains a closer connection to Spanish culture.

Fridge Town does also present Overlap in the English version –*Montenevera*– since the component '*town*' has been replaced by '*monte*', which means 'mountain'.

One of the most important cities in the videogame, *Table City*, has been translated in a very ingenious way. *Mesagoza* is the name for the English version, a combination of mesa –'table'– and Zaragoza, a city in Spain. Similarly, in Spanish it was localized *as Ciudad Meseta*, making reference to the Meseta Central, one of the most important interior plateau of the Iberian Peninsula. It might be regarded as belonging to Divergence's section. However, the word "*meseta*" bears some similarities to the word "*mesa*". Consequently, if it is considered a pun, it could be regarded as a possible Overlap.

Other groups of names like *Hakko City/Ciudad Leudal/Levincia*, *Carafe City/Ciudad Cántara/Cascarrafa,* or *Bake Town/Pueblo Alforno/Alfornada* present exactly the same localizing methodology. All of them change a small part of the original version to suit the target language, presumably on the assumption that a literal translation would not sound idiomatic.

4.2.3. Divergence

Cercle Town exemplifies an outstanding example of Divergence. It was translated into Spanish as *Pueblo Pirotín*. "*Pirotín*" differs from "*Cercle*" in the sense that the first one alludes to a cupcake filler whereas the second one is to a round mould without a base. Moreover, if we consider that *Cortondo* –the English version– is the result of the

combination of *cortador de galletas* ("cookie cutter"), *redondo* ("rounded"), and *Cordoba*, it exemplifies a case Divergence because of the addition of a Spanish region and a baking tool.

Another instance of Divergence can be observed in *Pueblo Altamía* and *Artazon*, the Spanish and English respective localizations of Japanese *Bowl Town*. As stated in Bulbapedia, the original name is probably related to art as bowls are often painted. Therefore, there is a certain connection between *Altamía* –an Andalusian type of bowl–, and art. Plus, it may be related to Altamira Caves, a natural cave that remains in prehistoric paintings. On the other hand, *Artazon* is a combination of *art* and *tazon*, a type of bowl in Spanish. It is visible that, despite being significantly dissimilar from the original one, they retain slight relevance to it.

Piquer Town was localized in English as *Zapapico*, and in Spanish as *Pueblo Veta*. The three versions share a sense of a sharp tool that makes holes. *Zapapico* is the version that most resembles the original as it can be understood as the combination of *zapapico* "pickaxe" and *picar* "snack". Alternatively, *Veta* is further detached from the original one as it mainly relates to mining than to snacking. As a result, it could potentially be considered a recreation as well.

4.2.4. Recreation

In contrast to Pokémonikers' section, it was found an example of a locality reinterpreted by the localizing teams.

Kosaji "teaspoon" *Town* was translated into English as *Cabo Poco*. The first component is a Spanish noun for a *cape*, "a piece of land jutting into the sea[2]", and the second one for *little*. In Spanish, it was localized as *Pueblo Cahíz*, which, according to the Real Academia Española, relates to a measure of capacity for cereals and probably to the Spanish region of Cadiz. As can be observed, the localizing teams decided to recreate the name of this locality probably due to the difficulty of translating it, taking into account different aspects such as the length available for the names or the cultural details, like the fact that the teaspoon is not as popular in Spain as in Japan.

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[2] "cape, n.3". OED Online. March 2023. Oxford University Press. https://0-www-oed-com.llull.uib.es/view/Entry/27381?rskey=QcVccG&result=3&isAdvanced=false (accessed May 13, 2023).

4.3.   Final Thoughts on This Section

The strategy of borrowing has been demonstrated to be the least used when translating Pokémonikers and names of localities into English and Spanish. The reason behind this is probably related to the origin of the Japanese language: as it is historically distanced from both Spanish and English, they share a little resemblance. If this technique was employed more frequently, the players' experience might be negatively affected since the names would no longer be idiomatic in the target cultures. The specific case of the use of English Pokemónikers in the Spanish version will be further discussed in section 5.

On the contrary, Overlapping and Divergence have been proven to be the most frequently handled techniques in both ingame elements. There is a tendency to change at least one aspect from the original name in order to produce a more idiomatic version for the target audience.

Both Pokémonikers and names of localities reflect a transparent meaning that can be understood by the players. The localities display their geographical characteristics both in their names in Spanish and English, as seen with *Sierra Napada* or *Montenevera*, two snowy and cold places. Nonetheless, it is important to bear in mind the fact that, as there are so many references to Spain's languages and their cultures in both languages, there might be individuals who may not consider these names transparent.

5.   Problems with the Spanish and English Localizations and the Situation of the Translators

When languages become worldwide, which is the case of Spanish and English, a larger number of individuals pertaining to many different cultures and regions use these until these become their main language. Consequently, these languages vary due to the evolutionary usage of the speakers, which depends on many factors like the culture or the influence of other languages upon them. The result of these variations can be denominated as a variant. It is crucial to decide to which variant of a language the source text is going to be translated. To achieve this efficiently, it is necessary to be aware of the target audience that is going to purchase the translated product.

The translation and localization teams of Pokémon videogames are different for each language. In the videogame *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet*, the English language has its

own team for both the localization and the translation. Notwithstanding, there is only a translation team specifically for Spanish. For the localization, they share the same team as the other European non-English languages to which the game is translated. This clear disparity of specialists in each language might be the main reason for Latin American players being generally dissatisfied with the Spanish translation.

5.1. The Spanish Translation and Latin American Players' Unconformity

As previously mentioned, the team for the Spanish localization is constituted of fewer members than the English one. This does not only imply a serious concern in the professional field of localization, but also affects the quality of the product and, consequently, the experience of the consumer.

The fact that a millionaire-leading company that is worldwide known does not provide a specific team of localizers for the Spanish translation may indicate that the European public is important to them, but not crucial. In other words, even though they may consider European consumers a target audience for the videogames, they probably prefer to focus their investments on the much larger English-speaking market.

A clear example is the adoption of English Pokémonikers in the Spanish version. As a result of "a fast-paced agenda, little funding, and a small team" (Miller 2022), English Pokémonikers are borrowed by the Spanish localizing team. As Pokémonikers are mainly in English, Spanish players who may not know English will not understand them and, therefore, their gaming experience is negatively affected.

As was confirmed during the interview of ANMTV, one of the most known Latin American webpages destined to inform about anime series, manga, and videogames, with Nob Ogasawara, the translator in charge of the first translation of the franchise, his localization served as the base for the other languages in which the game was going to be translated until nowadays (2021). The main disadvantage of developing a translation from another translation is that inaccurate results could arise if the base localization is imprecise, which might negatively affect the final version of the product and the players' experience. Additionally, this situation does also provide a glimpse into how translators have to deal with work conditions that are not always the most suitable for producing a high-quality result.

Another remarkable issue is how the Spanish translation is affected by the lack of specialization of the localization team. In this domain, it is essential to make a distinction between European Spanish, which is targeted to a Spanish audience, and Latin American Spanish, which is targeted to Latin American customers.

As has been affirmed by the website Vandal, one of the main sources of information regarding videogames in Spain, *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet* broke records in Spain and became the best-selling generation of Pokémon in its history (2022). The reason behind this success is not only given that the game is settled in Spain and Portugal, but also that the game has been translated into European Spanish and, as a result, it contains several expressions and idioms that sound comical to Spanish people. Unfortunately, this has not been the case in Latin American varieties.

As European Spanish is the single version of the Spanish translation, the Latin American audience receives a translation that, despite being very similar to their variety, Latin American Spanish differs in many aspects from the European version (Goikoetxea, 2022). Indeed, ANMTV has expressed the Latin American population's general dissatisfaction regarding the videogame translation in a formal letter to The Pokémon Company in 2021 (2021).

This issue has still not been resolved. The last Pokémon game released, *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet,* has only been translated into European Spanish. Latin American players have generally stated their unconformity towards that fact through social networks such as Twitter. Many have stated that they prefer to play the English version so as not to be confronted with a translation that they do not understand. However, not all the players know the English language. Hence, many players have had to conform to a game in a language that, despite being very similar to theirs, is a barrier to enjoying the game in its totality.

The situation presented in this section is a very problematic one in the translating landscape since a franchise such as The Pokémon Company, which has become over the past ten years one of the world's leading video game companies is providing his Latin American market with a translation that does not correspond to its audience. There are expressions in European Spanish that can present offensive and inappropriate meanings in Latin American Spanish that a kid should not encounter. Plus, this matter does also impact the translating job by not providing them with the source text instead of a

translated text into English to produce a localization in European Spanish. The causes are not clear since The Pokémon Company has not provided any comment regarding this issue. Nob Ogasawara has speculated that the "Latin American market is not as big as in the United States and Europe. It seems that things are put back" (2022). However, in the same year Goikoetxea argued in her article that, in fact, there are significantly higher numbers of Mexican players than Spanish ones, which makes them a "very promising market" (2022). According to the latter data, it could be claimed that, if The Pokémon Company invested more funds in the localization team, not only would better translations emerge, but the Latin American target would also become much more satisfied. Additionally, the franchise would discover the high percentage of players that Latin American represent in the Spanish-speaking market and that their sales might substantially increase.

5.2. The English Translation

Throughout history, the British Empire has been known for its extensive territorial expansion throughout the world. During their conquests, they imposed their language on the inhabitants of the areas they occupied. This resulted in the development of several variants of the English language which "share specific morpho-syntactic properties that are not found in the standard varieties" (Davydova, Hilbert, Pietsch and Siemund 2011, 1). In the present day, there are many varieties of the English Language, such as American English, British English, Australian English, or Irish English.

Regarding Pokémon Scarlet & Violet, for the English translation, there was a specific team for each translation and localization process. For this reason, the English translation could be carried out in a more detailed and accurate manner than possibly the Spanish translation.

Unfortunately, there is scarcely available information about the variants of English in Pokémon games and the players' opinions concerning the translation of the game. Nevertheless, by observing the videogame translation directly, it could be argued that the variant employed in the localization is neutral English. It is also important to take into consideration the fact that, as previously mentioned, English served from the beginning as the base for the translation to other European languages, which probably has further neutralised the language.

Besides, no complaints were found from English-speaking groups with regard to the translation. Therefore, it can be deduced that the localization of the Pokémon videogames was successful and that there is no general dissatisfaction on the part of English-speaking players.

6. Conclusion

First and foremost, the descriptive analysis of the Spanish and English localizations of two *Pokémon Scarlet & Violet* ingame elements has revealed a significant number of references to Spain in terms of language, geography and cultural items.

English Pokémonikers have been observed to be adapted to the target audience in order to show a transparent meaning, while always maintaining a resemblance to the original version. Spanish Pokémonikers have resulted to be directly adopted from the English version since the Spanish localizing team is considerably smaller and therefore may have more difficulty translating the game in the required timeframe. Despite the fact that many names contain Spanish words, these are not fully transparent for Spanish-speaking players, which negatively interferes with the full experience of the game.

The localization of the names of the Localities appears to be inspired by real territories in Spain both in English and Spanish. In this case, it could be claimed that these names are transparent for Spanish players, while English or Latin American players may find it more difficult to understand the references. On a different note, most cases of the localization of localities' names appear to retain elements of the source name as well.

Taking into consideration all the aforementioned, the fact that a world-renowned and best-selling game does not offer players a suitable localization for each intended target not only does reflect the challenging conditions under which localizers work but also a lack of interest on the part of the company towards a quality translation.

If The Pokémon Company would allocate more funds to develop an adequate translation for each linguistic community they intend to cover, Latin American audiences might enjoy the full game experience, as Spanish and English communities do, and their sales would probably increase. Indeed, the fact that the Pokémon videogame edition which contained Spanish words in most of its Pokémonikers may be a strong indicator that the Spanish-speaking public might be much more interested in a product that is more related to their language.

Further research could be carried out on ingame-related items such as names of shops, products or characters to obtain more data on whether the translation is truly adapted to the target language. Additionally, further analysis of how the dialogues of the Spanish translation negatively affect the experience of Latin American players to the extent that they do not understand what is happening on the screen might also be undertaken. Only by insisting on and developing further studies in this field will Pokémon localization become suitable for all its audiences.

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