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Prospectus

Introduction

Video games have evolved alongside the phenomenon of globalization to become the ever-so-dominant form of entertainment across the world. In this previously niche market, there is a compelling intersection about the now mass distribution of video games that focuses on language and cross-cultural communication that occurs as they are shared across the globe. When it comes to video games and making them available to the masses, they go through a process of localization. This process centered around the idea that video games need to be made appropriate for that target playing audience outside of their original release. However, it is that process is quite difficult and may not translate well continuously causing change within a game. There is much research that is attached to language and video games but when elevating it to a cross-cultural communication perspective one enters ideas that go deeper into the localization process that surrounds a growing field as the video game market grows out of an economic gain to a hegemonic translation of culture to the rest of the world.

In this investigation, I will be comparing and cross-analyzing how my three research objects, RPG video games, Seeker of Mana (1993), Mother 3 (2006), and Pokémon, show how language impacts how games are perceived by the public with a center on the ideas of video game localization where language is a big part of the localization process through translation of video game content including dialogue and story through RPG games. I will be looking at the

changes and instances where the games struggled to adjust to the audience which impacted the perception of the games in a target region.

To guide my research, I focused on the process of Video game localization, translation, and cross-cultural communication to create the following research questions

- What role does language play in shaping player immersion and engagement with video game narratives?

- How do video games represent cultural hegemony through language and content?

- How does any digital media balance between maintaining the original vision and adapting to cultural sensibilities?

These questions and some other guiding ideas help shape my overall argument which I intend to show that a lack of overall language communication can change the perception of how digital media is interpreted across diverse cultures. Beyond video games, cross-culture communication is a topic that is especially important in our interconnected world. From interactions at an airport to the daily interaction someone has in a retail setting. Due to globalization, language and culture have translated into others and interact even more than they have in the past.

Literature Review

History of video game studies into communications

The history of video game studies becomes a blurred line alongside its history. There is not a concrete source on what exactly the first video game was made but many scholars have a different definition of what exactly a video game at the beginning was. Video games in the 1950s and early 1960s were strictly computer simulations and university student experiments with what a computer could do and were not of public release until the release of Tennis for Two by Willy

Higginbotham later coined as Pong. Many sources argue on the true first video game as multiple games of different caliber were released at the time (Stanton) (The MIT Press). From its unclear origins, the video game industry since the 1950s has continued to boom and grow as a new digital media whose popularity rivals that of movies. Thus, the growing phenomenon has prompted a new type of digital media studies: video game studies. When it comes to studying video games, much literature spans multiple different disciplines from health studies and the health impact of games to psychology and the impact of things such as long-term game exposure, reflexes, and behavioral tendencies. According to Consalvo, in more recent years, video games have become a subject of research in media studies as "video games are dispersed throughout all industries, not just in overt ways but in subtler ways" (Consalvo 160). Game studies to Consalvo position video games as a way to study culture in creation and communication at play as "game engines now reach far beyond the medium of games to define cultures and practices of film, television, and other media forms" (Consalvo 162).

Game studies in communication are primarily centered on cultural studies. This comes from the idea that video games as a media create a new culture that centers on the idea that you need to interact with the game. Per Espen Aarseth, "Games are both object and process; they can't be read as texts or listened to as music, they must be played. Playing is integral, not coincidental like the appreciative reader or listener. The creative involvement is a necessary ingredient in the uses of games." Aarseth created the computer game research communication journal with the expectation of the fact that this industry would grow from its first issue in 2001 and has deemed "as far as research fields go, game studies is a success" (Aarseth). There is much to involve in the research across different spheres so my entering to conversation from the language perspective is a contribution to how to look at video games in the broad aspect that

comes with cultural communication analysis that opens the discussion to be "a nexus where fruitful connections can be made between all of these approaches, and many more." (Aarseth, Meta-Game Studies).

Language and Culture

Language and culture are intricately connected with one another. The feature of one is influenced by another and vice versa (Rafael Art. Javier 509). Though to understand them explaining each individually shows how they are connected. Language is what we use to communicate and express thoughts, feelings, and accounts to each other. Language is presented and understood through codes. Codes are culturally agreed-on symbols that we have attached to a word that allows us to organize and create meaning. Messages are encoded and decoded when presented to a (word you call someone who is doing the decoding and encoding of a code.) I have mentioned the world culture and should shift to define that as well. Culture is the shared values, beliefs, norms, traditions, language, and symbols that shape the group. This includes language showing their interconnected nature one produces and shapes the other interchangeably. (mention here that some things are understood in one than the other) (mention the circuit of culture and how it will help in understanding video game culture)

Language and Video games

- **Talk about what is language used in video games**
  - **Dialogue, cutscenes, voice acting, lack of voice acting**

Culture and Video games

Video games have their own take on culture that is important to mention. Video games are a digital media that have gotten rid of spatial-cultural borders and is constantly changing and

reconstructing the culture around it (Mario Cerezo-Pizarro 2). Pizarro-Cerezo and his colleagues, go in-depth about the study of games and culture focusing on games and the people who interact with them. Games expand cultural processes as they are a media that can take different forms of gameplay and make it available to all as well as creating "social networks or online communities" giving people to connect and "share their cultural experiences…that are reflected in..[the] new cultural genres and formats" (Mario Cerezo-Pizarro 2) that is games.

Video games due to their playful and engaging activity "as a medium allow for the reproduction, assimilation, transmission, and creation of culture" (Mario Cerezo-Pizarro 3)

(HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO TOPIC: RPG GAMES→FAN INVOLVEMENT IN GAMES)

- ***Define Game culture→mention that it is created by the two dominating countries U.S. and Japan and that it comes at a cost***

- ***USE THE POLAND PEER REVIEW JOURNAL***

- ***Cultural Hegemony mention here***

- ***Themes in video games are centered around the culture the game is produced from making it difficult to translate into some culture***
  - ***Peer review source of Final Fantasy and making it available to outside audiences***

- ***End with how culture influences video game sales→ gender age and political and economical are either ignored or part of it.***
  - ***Peer reviewed source***
  - ***Peer reviewed source***

Localization and Video games

Localization is a key process in distributing media to other locales. It happens in everything from movies and TV shows, to video games. Video game localization though takes it one step further from its counter medias and includes the altercation of the game's name, art, content, dialogue, and many other aspects. The point of localization is to create the same experience of the original video game and translate it to another audience. When it came to games prior to the 2000s, localization was not a priority for big companies at first being done as raw translation. After the early 2000s, the growth of the video game industry both in technology and interest changed and companies began to take the localization process seriously as "during the 1980's…[video games] have grown to be a worldwide phenomenon, forming part of the global pop culture" (Carme Mangiron 13) Two scholars of profound knowledge of video game localization are Minako O'Hagan and Carme Mangiron.

Dr. O'Hagan and Dr. Mangiron, have collaborated generously to explore the topic of video game localization and are a center point of a lot of my research on localization. They provide a great insight into the game localization process, specifically the focus of language through translation. Many times, they express that the translation process in video game localization is the reason the video game industry was able to grow. Games are made to be user-friendly, enjoyable, and entertain and immerse the user into the game (Carme Mangiron 13). Games are either dubbed or subtitled depending on what language it is being translated to. For example, "Japanese games are usual dubbed into English and subtitled into other European languages" (Carme Mangiron 13). This is important as most games are manufactured and produced in the U.S. and Japan.

Role of the Player in Video Games

Conclusion of Literature Review

This literature provided great insights into guiding my analysis on what exactly to look for when analyzing a video game including the difficulties I may encounter. As an open study and the difficulty of this recent research. I should include that many people talk about video games on a daily and that watching those who are not video game experts, localization expert interviews, videos on video games, and blogs about video games helped as well and should be brought to attention. This exemplifies just how relevant this study is once again but also how open the realm of game studies is.

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