# Experiencing translated video games: a user-centric model

– abstract for the general public –

Video games are an essential part of an entertainment industry on a grand scale, but they also play crucial roles in the domains of art, education, health, etc. The medium is also considered to be a driving force of technological innovation, a good example of which is the constant development of new ways to make games more accessible to the widest possible audience. While game testing is a standard part of the game development process, the research potential of the convergence of game reception and translation has so far been minimally exploited.

The goal of our project is precisely to better understand how games are experienced and to capture the role of translation in this process. Through experiments, we will investigate how translation-introduced (semantic and typographical) errors, can influence the reception of localized versions of video games.

It is worth noting that gaming is more than just playing games – it can also be a social experience. It is becoming increasingly popular to watch others (friends, YouTubers, or live streamers on *Twitch.tv*) play through video games, analogously to watching a more or less interactive movie or a sports performance. Therefore, the project will empirically and contrastively investigate both how receptors experience translated games by playing them and by watching the gameplay of other players.

Thus, the project adopts a user-centred approach. The research plan is to conduct remote experiments using audiovisual stimuli and questionnaires. To map out the relationship between translation and reception, experience will be understood as a conglomerate of inter-related constructs: cognitive effort, comprehension, satisfaction, and other reception facets like immersion and audiovisual appeal. We will also factor in the perception of the subtitles and the translator as well as players' and viewer's error identification rates. In addition, our model will incorporate individual differences (e.g. personality) in users – as a factor that possibly introduces variability in the reception of games in translation – as well as the dynamics between experimentally detected effects and the meta-cognitive judgments of participants who potentially anticipate (no) such effects.

On the one hand, the project views errors in translation as a means to an end (serving as the manipulated variable). On the other hand, they will be an end in themselves since the research will provide results on the processing of such stimuli in a multimodal context. The project's findings will thus contribute to research in translation studies and media accessibility, as well as game studies, but undoubtedly may have broader implications by integrating linguistic and psychological inquiries.