

Videogame Localisation: Quality Assessment from a Storytelling Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the assessment of videogame localisation quality and argues that understanding videogames as a storytelling medium can contribute to effective quality assessment practice. The value of a storytelling approach to videogame localisation quality assessment is demonstrated through comprehensive analyses of localised games primarily from English into Chinese, since early days of the videogame industry to titles published within the past five years. Drawing on scholarly works in the fields of videogame localisation, translation quality assessment, videogame studies, and narrative theory, practical insights are offered into practical localisation quality assessment.

The methodology applied in this thesis combines comparative analysis with data from interviews with a wide range of practitioners in the videogame industry, including videogame players, localisers, videogame testers, and narrative designers. The games analysed were collected from various sources, including players' online discussions and my personal work experience as a localisation quality assessor for both independent game developers and for international videogame companies. Complementing comparative analyses are interview data. They provide a comprehensive understanding of the current industrial practice in videogame storytelling, localisation and localisation quality assessment, which better situates the discussion of this thesis in a professional context.

The proposed storytelling approach responds to the lack of a systematic localisation quality assessment methodology noted in previous scholarly works and observed in my own work. It aims to address this lack by exploring three key questions: 1) How do videogames enable the telling of

stories? 2) In what ways does videogame storytelling manifest through localisation? and 3) How can understanding videogames as a storytelling medium inform the development of criteria for assessing localisation quality? The discussion of these three research questions leads to the proposal of a quality assessment model comprised of two main criteria: Clarity, with the sub-criteria of Terminological Consistency, Paratextual Clarity and Text Presentation; and Coherence, with the sub-criteria of Character Coherence, Object Coherence, Intertextual Coherence and Assemblage Coherence.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the field of videogame localisation by offering viable methodology to assess localisation quality. The theoretical lens of videogame storytelling provides a viable perspective to metricise the hitherto hazily defined concept of “gameplay experience”. The proposed quality assessment model, with comprehensive criteria, further offers viable guidance to enhance future localisation practice, indicating aspects to consider for localisers to cater to players’ needs to enjoy videogame stories.

KEYWORDS

LQA, videogame localisation, videogame storytelling

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从游戏叙事出发检测游戏本地化质量

本论文关注游戏本地化质量检测，认为将电子游戏视作叙事媒介有助于在实践中有效评价本地化的质量。为证明该方法的价值，本论文分析了大量本地化游戏，主要关注英译中这一语言对，并涵盖了游戏产业形成初期至近五年发行的作品。透过与游戏本地化、翻译质量检测、游戏研究以及叙事理论领域的学术成果对话，本论文旨在为游戏本地化质量检测提供有实践价值的新见解。

本论文的方法论结合了文本对比分析与采访。采访对象包括游戏玩家、本地化译者、游戏测试员、叙事设计师等游戏行业相关从业者。文中分析的游戏来源多样，既包括广受玩家网络讨论的热门作品，也有作者为独立开发者及国际游戏发行公司工作时经手的测试项目。文本分析与采访数据相辅相成，旨在勾勒出当下游戏叙事、本地化以及本地化质量检测行业图景，让本论文的学术讨论更好地关照从业者的实践需求。

本论文提出的以叙事为核心的本地化质量检测方法直接回应了现有学术研究与作者本人工作中观察到的实践空白，也即当下本地化行业缺乏系统性、统一的质量检测方法。本论文的讨论围绕三个核心问题展开：第一，电子游戏如何进行叙事；第二，游戏叙事如何在本地化中体现出来；以及第三，将电子游戏视为叙事媒介的视角如何转化成切实的本地化质量检测指标。借助对以上问题的探究，本论文提出了一套包含两大核心标准七项子标准的质量检测模型：标准一为“清晰度”，其下包括“术语统一度”、“副文本清晰度”以及“文本显示”三项子标准；而标准二为“一致度”，其下包括“角色一致度”、“物品一致度”、“互文一致度”以及“集合一致度”四项子标准。

本论文的主要贡献在于为游戏本地化研究及实践提供了一套可操作的质量检测方法论。游戏叙事作为本论文采用的理论窗口，为量化在现有研究中定义模糊的“游戏体验”这一概念提供了一个有效的角度。本论文提出的标准详细的本地化质量检测模型则进一步为本地化提供便宜，点明了从业者在实践中需关注的重点，以便玩家透过高质量的本地化享受游戏故事。

关键词：

游戏本地化质量检测；游戏本地化；游戏叙事