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Translation of Wordplay in Game Localisation

Retention and Re-creation in the Finnish and Swedish Localisations of *The Sims 3*

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UNIVERSITY OF VAASA**Faculty of Philosophy****Discipline:** English Studies**Author:** Hanna Eerio**Master's Thesis:** Translation of Wordplay in Game Localisation
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ABSTRACT

Digitaalisista peleistä on verrattain lyhyessä ajassa tullut suosittu ajanviete sekä meillä että muualla. Pelaamisen yleistyessä myös pelien lokalisointi, eli kotoistaminen tiettyyn kohdekieleen ja -kulttuuriin, on yleistynyt. Lokalisointi kattaa kaikki vaadittavat kielelliset, kulttuuriset ja tekniset muutokset, mutta pelitekstien kääntäminen on juuri se osa prosessia, joka selvimmin näkyy tuotteen käyttäjille. Pelilokalisointi on melko tuore ja vähän tutkittu ilmiö, mutta erityisesti kääntämisen näkökulmasta tutkimusta on vähän. Kääntämisen muotona pelilokalisoinnilla on yhteneväisyyksiä sekä avokääntämiseen että ohjelmistokääntämiseen, mutta lisäksi sillä on omat erityispiirteensä.

Tässä pro gradu -tutkielmassa verrattiin saman pelin kahta erikielistä lokalisaatiota sen suhteen, miten sanaleikkejä oli niissä käännetty. Tutkittu peli oli PC-versio *The Sims 3* -pelistä ja verrattavina olivat sen suomen- ja ruotsinkieliset lokalisaatiot. Tutkielmassa sovellettiin James S. Holmesin teoriaa kääntämisestä säilyttävänä (retention) ja uutta luovana (re-creation) toimintana. Käännösstrategioiden jako perustui Dirk Delabastitan luokitteluun sanaleikkien kääntämisestä. Lisäksi käännöksiä tarkasteltiin pelien lokalisoinnin näkökulmasta. Minako O'Hagan ja Carmen Mangiron painottavat luovuuden merkitystä pelien kääntämisessä ja käyttävät pelilokalisoinnista nimitystä transcreation, joka on yhdistelmä kääntämistä ja luomista.

Oletusten mukaisesti sanaleikki oli käännetty sanaleikkinä lähes yhtä usein molemmissa lokalisaatioissa, mutta oletusten vastaisesti näin oli käynyt useammin suomenkielisessä kuin ruotsinkielisessä versiossa. Suurimmat erot olivat käännöksissä, joissa sanaleikki ei ollut säilynyt sanaleikkinä. Suomenkielisessä lokalisaatiossa oli painotettu sanaleikin roolia tehokeinona, ruotsinkielisessä alkuperäisen sanaleikin muodostavien sanojen semanttisia merkityksiä. Eri lähestymistavoista johtuen lokalisaatiot olivat tyyliltään hyvin erilaiset. Suomenkielisen lokalisaation osittain hyvin vapaat ja luovat käännösratkaisut vastasivat pitkälti O'Haganin ja Mangironin transcreation-käsitettä.

KEYWORDS: game localisation, game translation, re-creation, retention, transcreation, wordplay

1 INTRODUCTION

Digital games, a fairly new but fast growing form of entertainment, have come a long way in a relatively short time. Although some still do not consider games a proper form of entertainment, overall the attitudes towards them have changed. Games and references to them have also started to appear in a wide range of contexts. For example social networking sites such as Facebook offer a vast selection of games like *Candy Crush Saga* and *Words With Friends* that users can enjoy together with their friends. Passengers playing games on their smart-phones is a regular sight on public transport, and in recent years proper commercials and trailers for games have started showing up on television and alongside film trailers in cinemas. In addition to being streamed online, some electronic sports competitions have even been televised. *Angry Birds* created by the Finnish entertainment media company Rovio is now not just a game series but a franchise where the game characters appear on clothes, packages of food and children's schoolbags. The image of one of the birds even decorated a glamorous long evening dress in the Finnish Presidential Independence Day reception, and NASA used the International Space Station to help market the launch of an instalment in the series, *Angry Birds Space*. Games are today practically everywhere.

Growing interest in digital games is bound to bring in new competition, but it also creates opportunities for existing companies and products to branch into new markets and attract new users. Just as it is with other types of software, when games are brought from one cultural and linguistic area to another, the transition usually requires some changes to be made. This means the products need to be localised. On the one hand, companies spend more money now on localisation than they used to, but on the other hand, those costs are only a fraction of the resulting revenue, as in many cases the greatest share of sales comes from the international market (DePalma 2006). O'Hagan (2009: 211–212) claims that digital games are actually indebted to the language transfer efforts of localisation for their current global status. Whatever the role localisation exactly has in making a game a success can be hard to measure, but it has become an increasingly important part of the process of making and selling a game, which in turn has made localisation theory important also for the study of games and their translation.

Considering the expansion of the gaming industry and the acknowledged importance of localisation in it, relatively little research has been conducted on game localisation. According to O'Hagan (2007: 2), this sub-domain has been ignored both in game studies and translation studies, and there does not seem to be agreement even on the terminology of the research area yet. Research relevant to game localisation can be found in areas of audio-visual translation such as subtitling but also in software translation. Frank Dietz (2006), for instance, has pointed out that game localisation shares many issues and methodologies with software translation but that features such as the non-linearity of digital games and their world-making power arising from interactivity also present unique challenges for the translation process. Localisation in general has been discussed by, for example, Bert Esselink (e.g. 2000), and game localisation in particular by O'Hagan (e.g. 2007, 2009). *Game Localization* by Minako O'Hagan and Carmen Mangiron was published in 2013 as an introduction to game localisation in translation studies, and it is possibly the first monograph written on the subject. Overall, there are a few different points of view that game localisation has been approached from, but the research has not been very extensive or systematic.

Although translation is essential in adapting products for foreign markets, there seem to be very different views about the role it has in a localisation process. Depending on the definition, it can be seen as either an integrated or an independent part of the process. According to Anthony Pym (2006), translation theory and localisation theory do not seem to agree on the matter; while the former has in recent years emphasised the differences between cultures and the function the translation has to serve in the target culture, the latter, borrowing vocabulary from the business world, has in some localisation models reduced translation into mere replacement of language strings. One extreme treats translation as linguistic localisation and the other sees localisation as just another form of translation. Neither makes justice to the practice. This conflict of views was partly the inspiration behind this study. To find out if, and how, localisation affects the end product from the point of view of translation, I will in this study compare two different language localisations, one in Finnish and the other in Swedish, of the game *The Sims 3* with the English original. The game has a strong element of humour, and I will concentrate, therefore, specifically on the translation of wordplay. Instances of

wordplay will be identified in the in-game text strings that include the names and descriptions of game objects such as furniture and books.

Even considering the disagreement about the role translation has in a localisation process, it is surprising how the recent developments of translation studies have been ignored in localisation theory and translation has been reduced into “just a language problem”. As language and culture are very much intertwined, it should be impossible to make a division where “linguistic matters” and “cultural matters” are dealt with in two different parts of a process. After all, Pym (2006) points out, for centuries translators have been dealing with both, adapting as well as replacing language strings. Even if translation theory and localisation theory do not agree on the role of translation in the localisation process, it is clear that translation serves an important function. In any case, for the user of a localised product, the most visible parts of the process are likely to involve linguistic changes. The restricted view of localisation theory may work as a business model or to some extent with simple software that only have a simple menu and help texts. However, digital games as entertainment products with a wider array of text types and functions need trained translators.

Translation in localisation, and especially in game localisation, differs from other types of translation (see Chapter 2), but even these differences do not make it the mere replacement of language strings. On the contrary, according to O’Hagan et al. (2013: 92), since in localisation texts are embedded in a technological platform, the treatment of already intertwined linguistic and cultural issues are further subject to technical considerations as well. Based on the above, the view that I adopt in this study is that translation is integrated in the localisation process. In other words, in game localisation the linguistic, technical and cultural dimensions must all be taken into account.

There are both Finnish and Swedish speakers in Finland and therefore potential users for both localised versions of the game in one country. In theory, if translation is only a linguistic problem, there should not be that many differences between the translations and the original. This view seems to be supported by how in games language has often been reduced into just one setting among many. If we, however, go beyond seeing

translations only as a linguistic operation, the different versions of the game might be telling different stories to the players, making also their gaming experiences different. On the one hand, although Swedish localisations are aimed at the Swedish users in Sweden, Finland and Sweden are culturally quite close to each other. On the other hand, linguistically Swedish is close to English (both belonging to the family of Germanic languages), while Finnish is different from both of them (a Finno-Ugrian language). In addition, wordplay, including allusive wordplay, represents a translation problem with both linguistic and cultural links. These factors make an interesting combination from the point of view of translation.

This study is not based on one clear research hypothesis, but the combination mentioned above gives rise to a few assumptions. Firstly, the translator of the Swedish localisation might benefit from the similarities between the source language and the target language especially in the translation of linguistic wordplay. Secondly, the challenges of culture related translation problems should be similar for the translators of both localisations, and therefore the translation strategies chosen could be very similar. This would reflect especially in the translation of allusive wordplay. All of the above suggests that overall there should not be notable differences in the translation of wordplay in the two localisations but that retentive strategies might be found more in the Swedish translation.

In this study, the instances of wordplay in the three localisations will be examined from the point of view of translation strategies applied to them when preparing the game for new users. According to O'Hagan et al. (2013: 92), localisation is supposed to keep the look and feel of the product the same, and this involves broad and specific cultural adjustments of nonverbal elements from graphics and sounds to different technical aspects. Linguistic elements are part of the look and feel of the product and, therefore, should not be an exception. Based on this fact and the nature of translation, the three products, in theory all the same, may in fact be different. The main research question will thus be what has been retained and what re-created in the localisation process.

My material consists of the wordplay in the English, Finnish and Swedish versions of the game *The Sims 3*. I will first identify in the game text strings that contain wordplay. Next, they will be categorised further into linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay. After having categorised the strings, I will study them in terms of two overall categories of retention and re-creation, which were originally coined by James S. Holmes (1988). The strategies applied to individual instances of wordplay in the source text have been modified and therefore differ from those originally suggested by Holmes. Finally, to study how localisation has become visible in the translation of wordplay, I will use the local translation strategies for wordplay classified by Dirk Delabastita (1996).

Game localisation is a fairly new form of translation, and more research is needed to raise awareness of this increasingly important sub-domain. This study is an attempt to mediate between translation studies and game studies. Game localisation is a specialised form of translation, and therefore for example translator training would benefit from more research on the subject.

In the following sections, the material and the method of the study are presented in more detail. Section 1.3 is a short overview of digital games and section 1.4 introduces the game series *The Sims*. In Chapter 2, the nature and special features of game localisation are discussed. Chapter 3 expands on wordplay and the categorisation used in this study. In Chapter 4, translation of verbal humour is discussed, concentrating on translation of wordplay. The findings of this study are presented in Chapter 5. Finally, Chapter 6 presents conclusions drawn from the findings.

1.1 Material

The material of this study consisted of three different language localisations of the digital game *The Sims 3*, currently the newest game in the *The Sims* series. The game is available for several different platforms, but it was originally released for the PC. The PC version was also used in this study. The English original was used as the source text and the localised Finnish and Swedish versions as the target texts. All three were

originally released together with all the other localisations, giving the player the option to choose the language they prefer. A digital distribution version for the PC was used in the making of this study. This means that the game was bought and downloaded from the Internet and no physical items such as a printed manual or a game DVD came with the purchase. Nevertheless, the game itself should be the same as the original DVD release. None of the additional expansion packs or downloadable content was used so that only material from the core game would be included. This was done to minimise any variance due to different translators, as there is no guarantee that the same translators have worked on the material released after the core game.

The Sims 3 is the third instalment in the series of *The Sims* life simulation games. As in the previous games of the series, the player controls the daily lives of virtual people, sims. Sims live in a world that very much resembles our own, and this resemblance is played on by embedding several cultural references in the game. The game has a strong element of humour that is largely based on different twists on these elements and on parodying, satirising and making jokes of real life phenomena. Wordplay is prominent among the forms of humour in the game. To find out how localisation affects the product from the point of view of translation, instances of wordplay in the three localisations were examined through the translation strategies applied to them when preparing the game for new markets. First, such instances were identified in the original English version of the game.

The instances of wordplay were identified with the help of a theoretical background of wordplay (see Chapter 3). In this study, wordplay was categorised further into linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay. The first category was based on a classification of wordplay by Delabastita (1996) and the second category on a classification of allusions and a definition of allusive wordplay by Ritva Leppihalme (1994, 1996). In both categories, the wordplay is based on one form having two or more meanings. Instances of wordplay were collected from the in-game texts of the game.

The Sims 3 contains large amounts of in-game text both in the user interface and inside the actual game world. I chose to concentrate on the latter type of texts because they

form the vast majority of the in-game texts and because they are narrative and descriptive in nature. Several types of these texts, such as notifications of accidents or other happenings, are only encountered randomly or when certain conditions are met. Reproducing such randomly occurring texts in all three localisations would have been difficult, and therefore the selection was narrowed down further to buyable game objects. Each object is a combination of a name, description and a picture of the object, and these combinations can be easily reproduced at any time and in any localised version of the game by entering the buy or build mode of the game-play and selecting the object in question. As each game object string comes with an image, this visual aspect adds another layer to the situational context.

After the steps taken above, the material still consisted of hundreds of game text strings with lengths varying from a few words to several sentences. All instances of wordplay in these strings were not examined for the following reasons. On the one hand, examining all of these strings would have been impossible within the scope of one thesis. On the other hand, further narrowing down would have required artificial restrictions of choosing only certain categories of objects. Because this could have had an effect on the types of wordplay found and at the worst resulted in a sample misrepresentative of the material, such restrictions were deemed unnecessary. Instead, a sample of 40 instances of wordplay, 20 of linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay each, was collected from the whole selection of buyable game objects. First, the instances of wordplay were collected randomly as they were noticed when going through the objects in the English version of the game. Then the corresponding sections were collected from the Finnish and Swedish localisations. No instances were selected or left out on purpose, but the selection does reflect this author's competence especially in recognising allusive wordplay. This is a case study and therefore the research is qualitative in nature and the findings not necessarily applicable as such to other games.

Linguistic wordplay examined in this study included four different types. Homonymy, or wordplay based on words with identical pronunciation and spelling, was the most common type. Example 1 illustrates the use of homonymy in *The Sims 3* (my italics in all examples):

- (1) *Lucid Light*: Some insist the *Lucid Light* is so advanced, it can actually think for itself. If that's true, what do you suppose a ceiling light ponders all day? It's fun to think about, but the point is moot. *Lucid*'s circuitry might be advanced, but it can't support that kind of AI.

Example 1 is the string of a lamp object called *Lucid Light*. 'Lucid' in the sense of shining or glowing is a word that can be used to describe a lamp. The secondary reading of 'lucid' in the sense of rational, sane or intelligible is activated by the description of the object. The lamp is described as if it is an intelligent life form capable of forming its own thoughts, and although that is strictly speaking not one of the meanings of 'lucid', it is close enough to trigger the wordplay.

Homophony was the second most common type of linguistic wordplay found in the material. Example 2 contains this form of wordplay that is based on words that have identical pronunciation but different spellings:

- (2) *Limbo Window*: Not quite heavenly and far from hellish, the *Limbo Window* is the latest offering from Underworld Studios. Its glass is suspended in an indeterminate state, creating a purgatory of *panes* and other theological window puns.

Example 2 is from the string of a window object. In this example, the game developers have actually decided to point out that there is wordplay in the description. Usually the word associated with purgatory would be 'pain', but here it has been replaced with 'pane' that is identical in pronunciation but is spelled differently. The theme of the description revolves around heaven, hell and between, but since windows have panes rather than pains, both of the readings come forward.

Only one instance of homography was found in the material. The type of wordplay is homography when two words have different pronunciations but identical spelling. This is illustrated by example 3:

- (3) Open Arms and Feelings Trashcan: *Refuse* never had it so good! Worry no more about the garbage – it's in a good place. The Open Arms and Feelings Trashcan cares about every piece of trash equally and without distinction. Finally, garbage can say "I'm home."

Example 3 was found in the description of a warmly welcoming trashcan. The noun 'refuse' is a synonym for trash and garbage, both of which are mentioned in the text. Another reading for the word is the verb 'refuse' that has the same spelling but is pronounced differently. Although the 'refuse' in the text functions as a noun, the other reading is activated by the unusual description of the trashcan as being accepting and approving, concepts opposite to refusal and refusing.

Paronymy is the fourth and last type of linguistic wordplay examined in this study. In paronymy there are slight differences in both the spelling and pronunciation of the components of the wordplay. Example 4 represents paronymy found in the material:

- (4) *Pampas* Grass: Often considered pretentiously *pompous* by many Sims, *pampas* grass might bring you the influence you need in your neighbourhood.

Example 4 was found in the string of a garden plant object. The paronymous wordplay is in the words 'pampas' and 'pompous' that are similar but not identical in spelling and pronunciation. The wordplay is clear enough with both words close to each other in the text, but it is also highlighted by the use of 'pretentious' that is semantically close to 'pompous'. The first three examples represent vertical wordplay where one of the components of the wordplay is materially absent and that sense has to be triggered by the context. Example 4 represents horizontal wordplay where the components are both present and their nearness brings about the confrontation of meanings.

Allusive wordplay was in this study divided into two groups based on the form of the allusion. In example 5, the allusive element is a proper noun that has been modified:

- (5) *Tri-Forge Stove*: Most modern stoves' heat output is limited because they use only one heating technology. But the *Tri-Forge Stove* gives you nearly limitless heat, thanks to its unique combination of gas, electric, and infrared heating technologies. Now you're cooking with gas, electricity, and electromagnetic radiation!

To a casual gamer, example 5 might seem like just another game object with a silly name and description. To someone more passionate about games, this would be an ultimate allusive wordplay, an 'easter egg' referring to one of the oldest and best-known video game franchises, Nintendo's *The Legend of Zelda* series. In the context of games, easter eggs are hidden messages and inside jokes often used as a type of homage, and here one can be found in the name of the object. On the face of it, the name seems to refer to the three heating technologies the stove uses, but actually, it is a play on the word 'Triforce'. In the *Zelda* games, Triforce is the name of an important item of power that has effectively become a symbol of the series. If the wording alone is not convincing enough, there is another hint in the visual context. The Triforce consists of three parts called the Triforce of Power, the Triforce of Wisdom, and the Triforce of Courage. These are associated with the colours red, blue and green respectively. As it happens, the *Tri-Forge Stove* is offered in red, blue and green and all these options are visible in the preview window for the object. This also serves as an example of how the wordplay can sometimes be triggered by the visual image.

Finally, the second type of allusive wordplay was wordplay based on key-phrase allusions. Example 6 contains a wordplay that is based on an allusion in the form of a key-phrase:

- (6) *Festus 44*: This is a *Festus 44*, the most powerful cooking stove in the world. Its even heating (never causes fires!) and self-cleaning mode will blow you away. *So you've got to ask yourself one question. Do you feel lucky? Well... do you, punk?*

In example 6 there is a slightly modified version of the famous but often misquoted line “You've got to ask yourself one question: 'Do I feel lucky?' Well, do ya punk?” from the film *Dirty Harry*. In this scene Clint Eastwood, who plays inspector “Dirty” Harry Callahan, is holding a .44 Magnum that he earlier in the same line calls “the most powerful handgun in the world”. The self-cleaning mode of the stove might also be a reference to the name of the film and the protagonist. The name of the stove is a combination of the calibre of the gun and the name ‘Festus’, possibly another reference: Festus Haggen is a fictional character, a deputy marshal in the American Western drama series *Gunsmoke*. Thematically this reference would fit, but alone the proper name Festus is not specific enough count as an allusion. The key to all the readings above and also the key-phrase allusion in this example is, therefore, the famous quotation.

As the examples show, in allusive wordplay the allusive element may be modified. Modifications can range from cases of clearly intentional verbal humour like in example 5 to subtle changes like in example 6 where the quotation was probably changed just to fit the rest of the text in the string better. The change may even have been unintentional, a misquotation.

1.2 Method

Just as it is with all forms of translation, even in game localisation linguistic transfer consists of a series of choices. Although the choices are different for every localisation, the end product should have a similar look and feel as all the other equivalent local products. The aim of this study was to find out how localisation becomes visible and how it affects the product from the point of view of translation. More specifically, the main research question was what has been retained and what re-created in the localisation process.

In order to analyse the choices made in the Finnish and Swedish localisations, the local translation strategies were divided into two overall categories of retention and re-creation based on how wordplay was translated. These categories were originally

suggested by Holmes (1988) and will be discussed in more detail in section 4.1. In brief, Holmes argues that retention and re-creation can be observed on two different axes that a translator's choices range on. These are the axis of exoticizing versus naturalizing and the axis of historicizing versus modernizing. Together they form a cline where exoticizing and historicizing choices represent an emphasis on retention and naturalizing and modernizing an emphasis on re-creation. (Holmes 1988: 47–49) In other words, retentive strategies may result in exotic features that remind of the foreign origins of the text, while re-creative strategies make the text feel more like a product of the target culture. Although the use of retentive strategies does not indicate a lack of creativity, re-creative strategies do give more leeway to be creative.

The local strategies applied to individual instances of wordplay were divided into four categories. The first of them represented retention and the other three different types of re-creation. This division was based on a classification by Delabastita (1996) discussed in more detail in section 4.2. The original classification consisted of eight categories, four of which were used in this study. The category representing retention was PUN → PUN that refers to translating a source language wordplay with a target language wordplay more or less different from the original. (Delabastita 1996: 134) A translation strategy was classified as PUN → PUN if a wordplay had been translated with any type of wordplay, linguistic or allusive. Thus, for a translation to count as retention, one form having two or more meanings had to be found in the translated string. The decisive factor between retention and re-creation was, therefore, whether wordplay had been preserved in a form that could still be identified as such. Strategies preserving just some of the aspects of the wordplay, or none in the case of omission, were categorised as re-creation.

The first of the re-creative categories was PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE that includes strategies attempting to preserve the function or the effect of the wordplay by using some wordplay-related rhetorical device. The second category was PUN → NON-PUN containing translations where the translator has attempted to preserve the semantic content of the wordplay with a non-punning phrase that salvages one or more of the senses of the wordplay. The third category of re-creative strategies was PUN →

ZERO that includes translations where the portion of the text containing wordplay has been simply omitted. (Delabastita 1996: 134) Because of the nature of the game text strings, the complete omission of for example the name of an object would not be possible, and therefore the translator may have had to add entirely new textual material to compensate for an omission. When no structural (PUN → PUN), functional (PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE) or semantic (PUN → NON-PUN) equivalence to the source text wordplay was found, the translation strategy was categorised as PUN → ZERO.

In brief, the analysis was carried out on the instances of wordplay that had first been categorised by the type of the wordplay. Next, the translation strategies used in the Finnish and Swedish localisations were categorised into the four categories introduced above. These categories were further divided into the two overall categories of retention and re-creation. Examples of the different strategies follow next. Example 7 illustrates the use of translations belonging in the PUN → PUN and PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE categories:

- (7) Chillgood Fridge: Woah, there, Chillsworth! Relax, slow down... *chill*. The Chillgood Fridge isn't your standard, uptight high value refrigerator. It has no posh notions. It just is, man. Keep your food and vibes cool with the Chillgood!

(FI) Viileytin-jääkaappi: Hei kuumakalle, otahan iisisti! Viileytin ei näet ole mikään huipputekninen ökykaappi, vaan aivan tavallinen jääkaappi, joka pitää ruoka-aineksesi tuoreina ja syömäkelpoisina siinä missä kalliimmatkin kaapit. Ota siis rennosti ja nauti *Viileytimen viileistä viboista!*

(SV) *Kyliga kylan*: Hallå där, *kalla* killen! Slappna av, varva ner... ta det kallt. *Kyliga kylan* är inte ditt vanliga, spända, exklusiva kylskåp. Det har inga flotta idéer. Det bara är, liksom. Håll din mat och dina vibbar iskalla med *Kyliga kylan!*

In the source text string of example 7 there is a homonymous wordplay based on the different meanings of 'chill'. When talking about a refrigerator, the appropriate reading

would be ‘chill’ as a noun in the sense of coldness or as a verb in the sense of becoming either cold or making something cold. The expressions used in the string, however, trigger the reading of ‘chill’ as a slangy way of asking someone to relax or calm down. In the Swedish translation of the string, the source text wordplay has been translated with a target language wordplay, and the translation was, therefore, categorised as a PUN → PUN strategy. There is a homonymous wordplay in the name of the object, ‘Kyliga kylen’ [The chilly refrigerator], where ‘kylig’ can be understood both in the literal sense of cool or chilly and as a figurative way of saying that someone is standoffish, i.e. cold. There is another, very similar use of homonymy in the expression ‘kall kille’ [cool kid]. ‘Kall’ is a word for cold and when used of a person it can mean someone is either cool in an admirable way or, like with ‘kylig’, standoffish. These homonymous pairs in Swedish are similar to each other and come close to the source text wordplay. The translator has taken advantage of the fact that the figurative use of words like warm and cold is not specific to the English language.

In the Finnish translation of example 7, the wordplay has been replaced by a wordplay-related rhetorical device. Translations using this strategy were categorised as PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE. In this example, alliterative soundplay has been used to compensate for the loss of wordplay. Alliteration has been intentionally created in the very last section of the object description, ‘nauti Viileyttimen viileistä viboista’ [enjoy the cool vibes of The Cooler], where the same sound is repeated three times in the beginning of the last three words. There is more alliteration in ‘kuumakalle’ [hothead] and ‘kalliimmatkin kaapit’ [even the more expensive refrigerators], but both cases may as well be coincidental. Alliteration, rhyming, idiomatic expressions and other rhetorical devices were categorised as the use of a related rhetorical device if anything in the translation was suggestive of authorial intention.

The translations of example 8 illustrate the use of strategies belonging to the categories PUN → NON-PUN and PUN → ZERO:

- (8) *Jack, Jill and Rolling Hills*: Beyond the panes of your regular windows lies the same boring neighbors... with this luscious artwork you can replace those lame windows with a piece of the country side, thus making your scenery far more impressive. Disclaimer: Painting will not replace neighbors.

(FI) Unelmien näkymä: Kun et enää jaksa tuijottaa tyhjää seinää, ripusta sille tämä taideteos, joka on kuin ikkuna toiseen ulottuvuuteen. Ihaile näkymää, joka on varmasti upeampi kuin omasta ikkunastasi avautuva maisema. Lisäbonuksena tästä maisemasta puuttuvat naapurit.

(SV) *Jack och Jill i böljande landskap*: Bortom dina vanliga fönsterrutor finns samma tråkiga grannar ... med det här ljuvliga konstverket kan du ersätta de där tama fönstren med lite lantidyll, så att din utsikt blir mycket mer imponerande. Ansvarsbefrielse: Målningen byter inte ut grannarna.

There is an allusive wordplay in example 8. The name of this window object is a modified proper name allusion referring to the famous nursery rhyme *Jack and Jill*. The modification has been inspired by the first lines of the rhyme, “Jack and Jill went up the hill to fetch a pail of water”. The Swedish translation of the source text string was categorised as PUN → NON-PUN, because no instances of wordplay or wordplay-related rhetorical devices were found but one of the senses of the wordplay has been salvaged. The name ‘Jack och Jill i böljande landskap’ [Jack and Jill in a rolling landscape] as well as the rest of the string have been translated almost word for word, and therefore the literal interpretation of the motif of the painting survives. For a player of the Swedish localisation who does not know the nursery rhyme in English the result may feel foreign: because Jack and Jill are not Swedish names and the allusion has been lost, there seems to be no explanation for the use of foreign names. However, this is a stylistic matter and therefore does not have an effect on the categorisation.

The strategy used in the Finnish translation in example 8 was categorised as PUN → ZERO. In this translation, the portion of the text containing the wordplay has been omitted and no equivalence to the source text allusive wordplay was found. Because leaving the object nameless would not have been an option, the translator has compensated the loss by making up a name that is very different from the original.

Consequently, no structural, functional or semantic equivalence to the source text wordplay was found and the translation strategy was categorised as PUN → ZERO.

1.3 Digital Games

Digital games have become a worldwide phenomenon in a relatively short time. They have become popular enough to be called a mainstream entertainment option, and especially casual gaming has increased substantially. The fast growth rate of the gaming industry is also visible in statistics and some studies.

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers's *Global Entertainment and Media Outlook 2010–2014*, the annual growth rate for the gaming sector¹ will be 10.6%, and the global industry sales as a whole are expected to rise from 52.5 billion dollars in 2009 to 86.8 billion in 2014. This growth rate makes games the second fastest growing sector in entertainment, leaving behind sectors such as music and films. (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2010). These estimates are supported by the fact that the action-adventure game *Grand Theft Auto V* released in September 2013 became the fastest-selling entertainment product of all time in just three days after its launch (Richter 2013). These numbers show that the industry is a force that cannot be ignored in the entertainment business.

Some studies chart user profiles and the spread of gaming. Juho Karvinen and Frans Mäyrä's 2009–2011 barometer study about the relationship Finnish people have with games and gaming is based on the three-year survey averages of the representative sample of Finns between the ages of 10 and 75. According to the findings of the study, 73% played digital games² at least occasionally, while 54% were active gamers. The averages for male and female active gamers were 60% and 48% respectively, and the authors of the study suggest that the difference between the sexes might be even smaller

¹ This sector consists of four categories: console, online, PC, and mobile gaming.

² In this study, digital games were divided into the so-called proper digital games played for entertainment on a computer or a console, online money games, and digital teaching games.

in reality because, as a consequence of the stereotypical views about gaming, women might underestimate and men overestimate the time they spend on playing games. The average age of a person playing digital games was 37 years. (Karvinen & Mäyrä 2011: 2) This study shows that, at least in Finland, games are enjoyed by many types of people instead of just a small part of the population.

Games can be played on many different platforms, also called systems. The PC and the different consoles are perhaps most commonly associated with gaming, but there are several different handheld gaming devices as well. Depending on the definition, the web browser also counts as a platform of its own, and even smartphones are becoming increasingly popular as handheld gaming devices. This is not a complete list of all the possible platforms but a reminder that games are not only played with a controller or a mouse and keyboard.

Games can also be classified into genres, and some genres often go together with certain gaming platforms. For example, games played on smartphones are often casual puzzle games that are easy to start and quit if necessary. Games that are long and require concentration, such as most role-playing games (RPGs), are not usually best suited for a small smartphone screen. Game genres can be categorised in many different ways, but one commonly acknowledged categorisation in the West is the division of the genres into action games, adventure games, driving games, puzzle games, RPGs, simulations, sports games and strategy games (O'Hagan et al. 2013: 66–67). However, some would double or even triple the amount of categories, and combinations such as 'action-adventure' and the use of prefixed genre names such as 'horror RPG' are common. Even games of the same genre can be very different from each other.

1.4 The Sims

The material of this study consists of wordplay in the English, Finnish and Swedish versions of the digital game *The Sims 3*. Electronic Arts published the game for the PC in June 2009 as one of their flagship titles that year, starting with the North American

release and followed by the Australian and the European ones within a few days. Later it was released for several other platforms as well. The PEGI rating³ for the game is ages 12 and over. The game is the third instalment in a series of *The Sims* games, a branch of the larger *Sim* series of simulation games that started with the classic city-building simulation game *SimCity*. The first *The Sims* game was released in 2000, and the concept has become a great success: since its publication, several expansion packs and spin-offs as well as two sequels with their own expansions have followed the first instalment. The *The Sims* franchise has also expanded from its PC origins to consoles and mobile phones, and a spin-off version was even made for Facebook. The series has been one of the best-sellers in digital games, and *The Sims 4* was announced to be released in the autumn 2014. Games in *The Sims* series have been localised into Finnish from the start, and these localisations have been among the first in Finland not aimed exclusively at the younger audiences.

In *The Sims 3*, the player controls the everyday lives of virtual people called sims. The main play mode is called live mode, and that is where the player can observe and guide the sims as they go about the various activities of their virtual lives. Sims can be left alone to take care of themselves, which means that they will act based on their distinct personalities, but the player may also choose to micromanage their every action. However, just like real people, hungry and tired sims are not always co-operative and sometimes throw tantrums when in a bad mood. The game also has a build mode and a buy mode where the player can build houses and buy furniture and other items for their sims. Building a house from scratch and furnishing it can take hours, and planning further expansions and purchases for when the family has grown in size and wealth is part of the fun. There are hundreds of buyable objects in the game ranging from building materials such as doors and windows to furnishings and knick-knacks such as sofas, houseplants, and draperies. They all come with a humoristic product name and a sales pitch in a style familiar from real life advertisements. A large proportion of the

³ An age rating by Pan European Game Information meant as guidance and based on an evaluation of the entertainment content (PEGI S.A.: 2013).

texts that a player encounters while playing the game are in these objects. Consequently, they all need to be translated.

As mentioned in section 1.3, there are several different classifications of game genres. *The Sims 3*, just like its predecessors, falls into the category of life simulations. It could be further categorised into social simulation games, being perhaps the best-known example of the subcategory. It can also be called a god game which by Steven Poole's (2000: 66-69) definition is a game where the player is like a god and has power to control features of the game world such as the flow of time. Because there is no real main objective or a way to win or finish the game, *The Sims 3* is also an open-ended sandbox game. All of these categorisations say something about the game-play, but none of them are very useful in determining how much text and what text types a translator may have to face when translating a game: games in one genre can be very different in their narrative aspects.

The Sims 3 has a strong element of humour that is largely based on the fact that the sim world is sort of a parody of our world. The basic mechanisms of the game satirise consumerism: sims have many needs and wants, most of which can be satisfied by spending money. First, a sim might be happy with just any television, but eventually they will want a bigger, better and more expensive one. They slave away at work for a better job and bigger salary so that they can buy more possessions for themselves, but a house filled with luxury items just leads to other types of worries and fear of burglars. Sims too busy with work or other activities may not have enough time to spend with family and friends or even to clear away the piling order-in pizza boxes. One source of humour is the conflict between what a sim wants and what the player and other sims want from them. Since every sim has a personality and their own set of interests and desires, such conflicts happen often and can lead to tragicomic events.

Another source of humour is how the game world has been created. Because the world of the sims is a version of ours, just like us, the little virtual consumers have their celebrities, brands and other cultural phenomena. The sim world is clearly not supposed to be a one on one copy of the real world, but many things in it have their models in real

life. Consequently, there are many cultural references in one form or another in the game. This can be seen especially in the names and descriptions of the buyable game objects that parody the language of shopping channels and the like and are full of witticisms and twists often based on phenomena familiar to the player. These include for example the sim world best-seller novels *Murder, She Typed* and *To Mock a Killing Bird*⁴. The humour of *The Sims 3* is not limited to linguistic and allusive wordplay, but both are abundant in the game. Together with other types of humour, these two make the game funny and entertaining.

⁴ Both are examples of allusive wordplay: the first on the name of the television series *Murder, She Wrote* starring Angela Lansbury and the second on the name of the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee.

2 GAME LOCALISATION

This chapter introduces the process and the form of translation called game localisation. In the first section, the concepts of localisation and game localisation are discussed. The second section introduces the special features of game localisation: what it has in common with and how it differs from other modes of translation. The third section is a discussion about game localisation as a form of translation called transcreation.

2.1 Perspectives on Localisation

Localisation is difficult as a term because it has been used in a variety of senses depending on the context. In a broad sense it is a process where all the necessary changes, linguistic or otherwise, are made to a product from one language and culture area so that it can be marketed and used in another. Generally, that product is either a software product or a web page. Each localisation is made for a certain **locale**, “a specific combination of geographic region, language, and character encoding” (O’Hagan et al. 2013: 8). The requirements of a locale include for example certain format conventions for currency and date and time. It could be argued that, in a process where all localisations of a game are worked on at the same time, no localised version is the original. However, in this study ‘original’ is used to refer to the version that has been used as the source text for the other localisations.

With focus on the linguistic dimension, localisation has been used interchangeably with translation especially in compounds such as ‘game localisation’. Miguel Bernal Merino describes localisation as a complex process involving linguistic, cultural, technical and legal factors and argues that the term is too broad to be used in translation studies: it includes non-linguistic activities and should be left for the uses of the gaming industry. However, as localisation has already been used before in translation and the term has therefore been established, he expresses that a distinction should be made between the all-comprehensive product localisation and linguistic localisation. (Bernal Merino 2006: 31) Despite the name, Bernal Merino’s ‘linguistic localisation’ is not separate from the

cultural and technical dimensions but rather used to stress the point of view. Mangiron and O'Hagan (2006: 11) explain localisation as a combination of the traditional concept of translation with an added dimension of software engineering and use the term as is, without a specifying prefix. In both cases, the linguistic dimension is integrated in a broader concept of localisation.

The matter has also been approached from a different point of view. Keiran Dunne claims localisation and translation to be separate from each other, as independent parts of a group of processes belonging together and referred to by the acronym GILT (Globalisation, Internationalisation, Localisation, and Translation). Globalisation is the process of conducting business globally, while internationalisation refers to the steps taken in advance to make localisation easier. As translation deals with linguistic transfer, this leaves localisation to cover any other changes needed to make the product acceptable in the target culture market. (Dunne 2006: 4–7) While in the frame of this study translation is the most relevant of these processes, it can hardly be separated from the rest of them. Firstly, linguistic transfer may necessitate such changes that in GILT would count as localisation. The efforts of internationalisation affect the smoothness of the whole operation, translation included. Finally, without globalisation, there would be no need for the rest of the GILT processes. Thus, such a division, useful perhaps in business and marketing contexts, proves rather artificial from the point of view of translation studies.

This study is concerned with what in the absence of established terminology could be called both game localisation and game translation. While both choices can be defended, O'Hagan et al. (2013: 91–92) make a compelling point in favour of using game localisation: the process deals with texts embedded in a technological platform creating a combination of the linguistic, technical, and cultural dimensions, which further come under the forces of domain-specific factors. When a game becomes the object of translation, the restrictions of one dimension may call for adjustments in others and therefore the translator(s) can hardly work in isolation from the rest of the process. Calling the whole process translation would be expanding on the traditional understanding of the concept, but using a separate term for the linguistic approach to

localisation would unnecessarily complicate the terminology. Therefore, while in this study the approach is linguistic, the whole process that also includes translation is referred to as **game localisation**.

It should be noted that there is no agreement even on how to refer to games in the context of game localisation. A number of terms including video game, computer game, electronic game, and digital game have been used, sometimes referring to only certain types of games and sometimes encompassing all types of digital games as opposed to so-called traditional games. Some of the terms used are clearly platform-specific, such as console game and mobile game, but some are more ambiguous. For example, according to O'Hagan et al. (2013: 63–65), the term video game is sometimes used to refer to games played on a console, and the term computer game can be understood as referring only to games played on a PC. However, for example Poole (2000) uses the term videogame (not video game or video-game) to encompass both console games and PC games. Bernal Merino (2006: 24–25) considers the term electronic game to be the most generic, but also comments that it is increasingly common to use just the hypernym 'game'. The term digital game can also be used to cover the whole field (O'Hagan et al. 2013: 64). In this study, the term **digital game** and the shortened form game are used to refer to the whole field in all its diversity. This covers a wide range of games from simple self-made mobile phone applications to big brand games that may greatly differ from each other in many respects. All digital games are not necessarily localised, and whether or not localisation is needed depends on the individual product.

2.2 Special features and Constraints of Game Localisation

Game localisation is a fairly new sub-domain within the broader domain of localisation. Although games are a type of software and the process of localising them has its roots in the practice of software localisation, these are today seen as two different things. O'Hagan et al. trace the origins of software translation to the 1980s where it arose as a response to the need for mainly American-developed computer application software to go global. As the contents of such software was mainly written in English with

American cultural assumptions and conventions, linguistic and other changes were needed to prepare the product for use in other areas. For a long time games were perceived as a trivial form of entertainment, and game software products were not considered part of the software industry. (O’Hagan et al. 2013: 22–24) As games have worked their way into a global phenomenon, game localisation has become increasingly important. Understanding the practice requires a definition of the medium.

O’Hagan et al. have chosen to use the term video game to refer to the object of game localisation. Their objective is to locate game localisation within the framework of translation studies, and they base their theory on a definition by Gonzalo Frasca (2001: 4) defining **video games** as

any form of computer-based entertainment software, either textual or image-based, using any electronic platform such as personal computers or consoles and involving one or multiple players in a physical or networked environment. (O’Hagan et al. 2013: 65)

Modern games, whether textual or image-based, usually also contain audio elements. This makes them audio-visual products. In fact, for example the cinematic cut-scenes in games are sometimes subtitled just as regular films and television shows are. ‘Computer-based’ does not refer to personal computers but to the digital nature of the products. The purpose is what sets games apart from other software products: they are not just tools but forms of entertainment.

Although the definition above is rather comprehensive, it lacks the one defining element that, according to O’Hagan et al. (2013: 75), also “sets games apart from other forms of entertainment”: **interactivity**. This refers to how a game “changes dynamically in response to the player’s input” (Poole 2000: 165): the player chooses an action, communicates it through the game interface, and the game reacts to the command. Since people act differently, they also operate the game differently. This gives rise to another significant feature, which is **non-linearity** (Dietz 2006: 124). This together with the principles of software code gives video game texts a fragmented nature, and therefore it is practical to broaden the concept of the core working unit of text.

A game is made up of components called **assets**. O'Hagan et al. list these assets to include in-game text, art assets, audio and cinematic assets and printed materials. It is these assets that need to be localised. In-game texts, also known as onscreen texts, comprise the bulk of the texts to be translated in a game. In contrast to for example a paragraph or a whole document, these texts are presented as working units referred to as **strings**. Strings are mainly short fragments of decontextualized units of texts. (O'Hagan et al. 2013: 102, 122) The whole content of a string is displayed at the same time, and the division of text into strings is made by the development team, based on texts that belong to the same context (Esselink 2000: 59). The length of a string can thus be anything from a single character to hundreds of words. A translator may not get to see the texts in their context in the game, and therefore the only context arises from each individual string. Such is the nature of the basic translation unit in game localisation.

There is a multitude of text types involved in game localisation. The texts can be error messages, cut-scene subtitles or long descriptive passages to mention just a few (for a longer list see Dietz 2006: 121). They serve different functions, and there are several ways to approach translation from a functionalist viewpoint (see e.g. Nord 1997). A text can be important for example in creating the mood and facilitating the player's immersion in the game, directly affecting the gaming experience. Christiane Nord (1997: 40) provides one model that classifies texts into referential, expressive, appellative and phatic functions. A cruder division would be the division of game texts into instructive and atmospheric texts. Most games can be expected to contain at least some amount of instructive texts in the form of tutorials and other guiding information. Since such texts contain information essential for the workings of the game, accurate rather than creative translations are required. Creativity may be needed for example in the translation of atmospheric texts. Especially with instructive text types, it is important that the translator identifies and translates them correctly so that the player can still understand how the game works.

There are different levels of localisation based on which of the game assets are translated. O'Hagan et al. list four levels, starting with no localisation at all. Box and docs localisation refers to the translation of only the packaging and manual of the game.

In partial localisation, the in-game texts are translated but voiceover is not, although target language subtitles may be added to the dialogues. Full localisation, as the name implies, involves translating all the assets in a game. It is the most expensive option but also facilitates gameplay and immersion in the game for the new players. The trend seems to be towards full localisation. (O'Hagan et al. 2013: 141–142) Although this division is fairly accurate, variations of partial localisation where for example only instructive texts are translated can also be found. In addition, indie games – games developed by small independent companies – and fan translations created by the gaming community do not necessarily follow the mainstream localisation practices. As one of the flagship titles for Electronic Arts, *The Sims 3* has been fully localised. The game does contain audio assets, but because all dialogue is in the gibberish language simlish, no translation of these assets was necessary.

As game localisation has features in common with audio-visual translation and software translation, it also shares some of the constraints. Dubbing a cinematic cut-scene is mostly similar to any other dubbing project. The minor differences include the possibility of changing the game animation to achieve lip-syncing. In both software localisation and game localisation the source text consists of decontextualized units of texts, but in game localisation the use of different text types further complicates the matter. O'Hagan et al. list other constraints more or less unique to game localisation, including space constraints, the use of variables as placeholders for strings of text and the requirement of platform-specific terminology. In game localisation, translation may take place while the original game is still under development and therefore the texts the translators work on may change. The strings are not necessarily translated in a logical sequence but, instead, according to the schedule of the project. In addition, multiple translators may work on the same project leading to inconsistency issues. (O'Hagan et al. 2013: 130–132) These features make **testing** an integral part of game localisation.

Just as texts are proofread, localised games need to be tested for any mistakes that may have happened during the localisation process. O'Hagan et al. list debugging and quality assurance as one of the stages of post-localisation. In addition to functionality testing and compliance testing, this stage includes linguistic testing. Linguistic testing is

done to ensure that the translations fit semantically and otherwise in the space allocated to it and that no linguistic errors remain in the finished product. (O'Hagan et al. 2013: 136–138) Although testing is listed as a post-localisation process, in reality the transition from one phase to another may not be that clear cut.

Another way to ensure the quality of a product is a **localisation kit** that developers and publishers usually provide as a compensation for the lack of contextual information. It may contain information that helps the translator, such as specific translation instructions, reference materials and information about the project and the game content (O'Hagan et al. 2013: 119–120). An additional source of such secondary information about the product may be other games, if the game is part of a series as is the case with *The Sims 3*. Secondary information can help the translator make an educated guess in a situation otherwise unsolvable, but it does not necessarily lead to a working solution. Testing is the only way to reliably evaluate the choice.

2.3 Game Localisation as Transcreation

It has been established that games are both culture-specific products and entertainment products. This together with the features listed in the previous section, in section 2.2, is what defines game localisation. Bernal Merino divides localisation into three levels that each build on the richness of the previous one. On the lowest level, professional utility software require technical but practical translations. With web pages, a journalistic approach is added to the technical layer. At the most complex level, entertainment software such as games add an extra linguistic layer and call for a creative translation. (Bernal Merino 2006: 31– 32) Creativity is also emphasised by O'Hagan et al. who have borrowed the term **transcreation** to convey the freedom and sometimes need to make changes in game localisation.

The term transcreation was not originally coined in the context of game localisation. O'Hagan et al. have borrowed the term from translation studies and especially the Brazilian context where translation is likened to the concept of cannibalism. The

concept of transcreation challenges the view of translation as subservience to the source text and instead represents it as a two-way transaction. The translator's agency is privileged, making the act of translation both servitude and freedom. As a term, transcreation both expresses the concept of translation and combines it with the creation of something new. Game localisation strives to re-create in the target version the player experience of the original. O'Hagan et al. argue that the **manipulations** needed to achieve this and to retain the **affective appeal** of the original are not covered by the concept of translation. Therefore, the concept of transcreation is needed. (O'Hagan et al. 2013: 196–199) What types of manipulations are needed depends, of course, largely on the game in question. For example, in *The Sims 3* the problems with dubbing are avoided, as no audio assets require translation. The game is also a contemporary text revolving around general everyday topics, as opposed to for example the *Shogun: Total War* games that are set in 16th-century feudal Japan and revolve around the warfare of that time. However, *The Sims 3* is still a product of its culture and has a strong element of humour that mainly taps into cultural phenomena to achieve the effect. The catch is that humour is also culture-specific – a characteristic of humour that, according to Thorsten Schröter (2005: 61), is mostly agreed upon in the literature about humour.

The prompt to transcreate rather than translate may arise from the medium, but the freedom may also be sanctioned by the developers of the game. Regarding the translation of the previous game in the series, *The Sims 2*, Tuomo Karvonen, who worked as one of the translators on the Finnish localisation of the game, states that the development team acknowledged that there were many culturally oriented elements in the game. The localisation goals were stated on a general basis, but the translators were instructed to adjust the humour whenever needed to suit both the target language and culture. (Karvonen 2008: 14) It is not far-fetched to assume that the same instructions apply for other games in the series as well and have most likely been given to all the translators working on the different localisations of the games. The instructions show that the development team regarded the existence of humour more important than the exact form of packaging it comes in. The next chapter discusses one such form that is called wordplay.

3 WORDPLAY

This chapter introduces the concept of wordplay. Two categories of wordplay are examined in this thesis, and the two sections in this chapter are dedicated to those two types of wordplay.

The phenomenon called wordplay has interested linguists for a long time. Delabastita states that wordplay comes in different kinds and uses and that the difficulties in classification have even led many to give up on trying to find a precise definition. He suggests that one way to approach the matter is to consider the classification as a cline rather than a binary option. This would allow for the existence of variable degrees of intensity and typicality, fuzzy edges and overlap. (Delabastita 1997: 2, 4–5) Schröter (2005: 84–86) comments on the fuzziness inherent in the term wordplay and notes that it has been used broadly to describe any such use of language that aims to amuse and in a narrower sense as a synonym for pun. This study focuses on two forms of wordplay, and the categorisation used is as follows.

For the purposes of this study, **wordplay** has been divided into two categories: linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay. In both categories, the play arises from one form having two or more meanings. In the first, it depends on structural features and in the second the context. The category of linguistic wordplay is based mainly on Delabastita's (1996) definition of wordplay where he uses the word interchangeably with pun. The category of allusive wordplay is based on Leppihalme's (1994, 1996) categorisation of allusions and a definition of allusive wordplay as modification of a frame. These categories are next discussed in more detail.

3.1 Linguistic Wordplay

As the name suggests, **linguistic wordplay** is connected to the structure of language. Wordplay can be used as a wide term encompassing different types of play on words, but it is also used in a narrower sense, synonymously with one of the types also called

pun or punning. The category of linguistic wordplay used in this study is based on that narrow sense, and the name was chosen to distinguish from a different type, the allusive wordplay discussed in section 3.2. Delabastita (1996: 128) uses wordplay interchangeably with the term pun and defines it as

[...] various *textual* phenomena in which *structural features* of the language(s) used are exploited in order to bring about a *communicatively significant confrontation* of two (or more) linguistic structures with *more or less similar forms* and *more or less different meanings*.

Delabastita has emphasised with italics the elements he considers the most relevant and that warrant further discussion.

Schröter, using Delabastita's definition as a base for his discussion, makes some further specifications. First, even though the phenomenon is called *wordplay*, some instances of it seem to rely on linguistic units that are either above or below the word level (Schröter 2005: 155). Salvatore Attardo (1994: 132) also notes that wordplay can operate on units smaller than words, meaning morphemes and phonemes, as well as larger units including syntagms and frozen expressions. Reference to the components as linguistic structures in the definition takes this into consideration. However, according to Schröter, there is still fuzziness in the concept and ambiguity in how linguistic wordplay is to be distinguished from other phenomena such as rhyming, half-rhymes and alliteration. Regarding this ambiguity, he identifies three further criteria: the context must permit more than one plausible interpretation, there is an actual conflict of meanings rather than mere referential vagueness, and the ambiguity must either be intended or at least believed to be intended. (Schröter 2005: 156, 159) Delabastita touches on all these points in a more detailed discussion of his definition. This argumentation will be discussed next.

The first part of the definition identifies linguistic wordplay as textual phenomena. Delabastita elaborates that specially contrived textual settings are needed for the dormant associative power of the words and structures to be effective. The structures that trigger wordplay can either be co-present, occurring in the same portion of text, or

occur one after another. These are called **vertical wordplay** and **horizontal wordplay** respectively, and the difference is in the way the confrontation is brought about. In horizontal wordplay, the nearness of the components in the text may be enough, but in vertical wordplay one of them is materially absent and the sense has to be triggered by the context. These contexts can be verbal or situational. Verbal contexts follow from an expectation of grammatical well formedness and thematic coherence, and situational contexts are often crucial in multimedia texts where the visual image can activate a secondary meaning. (Delabastita 1996: 128–129) The last part can be especially true for games as entertainment media. In the case of the objects in *The Sims 3*, the situational context is especially important as each object string is accompanied by a picture. That picture itself can carry hidden meanings or work as a component of a wordplay.

Regarding the second highlighted section of the definition, linguistic wordplay also depends on the structural features of the language used. Delabastita lists such features based on the type of the structure (lexical, morphological, syntactic, phonological and graphological) and points out that often several features are employed simultaneously. Linguistic material from different languages can also be combined to create the effect. All of these categories may not be relevant, or at least not relevant to the same extent in all languages, and therefore in distant languages and language groups different wordplay techniques may be used. Even the perception and understanding of texts and how language operates may differ in them. (Delabastita 1996: 130–131) What matters is the combination of the languages in question.

Of the three languages relevant for this study, English and Swedish are both Germanic languages and therefore closer to each other than Finnish, a Finno-Ugric language. The similarities and differences between the languages affect not only the understanding of wordplay but also how wordplay can be transferred between languages. While similarities between the source language and the target language can be an asset to the translator, a strong tradition in the use of certain other types of verbal humour can also offer an alternative for wordplay. For example, the use of soundplay has a long history in Finnish, and the weekly Disney comics magazine *Aku Ankka* [Donald Duck] published in Finland has made especially the use of alliteration almost like its

trademark. This, among other factors, of course, has most likely promoted the appreciation of soundplay as a rhetorical device in Finnish.

The requirement for communicative significance relates to the question of intention. According to Delabastita, some regard wordplay to be communicatively significant only when and if it is intended as such. For others the criterion is the context, whether there are clues in the text pointing to the wordplay. Drawing a line between perceptive reading and punhunting is not a simple task, because it is also connected to the recognition and appreciation of wordplay. (Delabastita 1996: 131–132) The latter is discussed together with translation of wordplay in Chapter 4.

The last part of the definition, a contrast between the similar forms and different meanings, gives a basis for a classification. According to Attardo (1994: 134), the contrast arises from a failure to completely disambiguate a portion of text containing wordplay or an inappropriate meaning forced for it. Based on the form of the components, Delabastita (1996: 128) divides linguistic wordplay into the following categories:

- **homonymy** - identical sounds and spelling
- **homophony** - identical sounds but different spellings
- **homography** - different sounds but identical spelling
- **paronymy** - slight differences in both spelling and sound.

Examples of the categories in vertical and horizontal occurrences are given in Table 1:

Table 1. Categorisation of linguistic wordplay (Delabastita 1996: 128)

wordplay	homonymy	homophony	homography	paronymy
vertical	Pyromania: a burning passion	Wedding belles	MessAge	Come in for a faith lift
horizontal	Carry on dancing carries Carry to the top	Counsel for Council home buyers	How the US put US to shame	It's G.B. for the Beegees

In the example of vertical homonymy in table 1, the same portion of text can be understood both as a passion for burning things and as a very fierce passion. In horizontal homonymy, the verb ‘carry’ and ‘Carry’, the name of a dancer, occur one after another. In both examples, the pronunciations and spellings are identical. Because the components of the wordplay are completely identical, homonymy can be called, in a sense, a perfect form of wordplay. In vertical homophony, ‘belles’ shares the pronunciation but not the written form with ‘bells’. In horizontal homophony, the pronunciation is again the same but there is a two-letter difference between ‘counsel’ and ‘council’. The example of vertical homography is the name of a band. The confrontation of meanings is between the readings ‘message’ and ‘mess age’. In horizontal homography, ‘us’ as the objective case of the pronoun ‘we’ and the abbreviation of ‘United States’ share the written form but are, again, pronounced differently. Vertical paronymy is illustrated by a slogan of a church where ‘faith lift’ is very close to the expression ‘facelift’. In horizontal paronymy there is a more notable difference between the written form of ‘G.B.’, the abbreviation for ‘Great Britain’, and ‘Beegees’, the name of a band. There is still a clear connection between the two, and the pronunciations are also similar.

In addition to the four categories introduced above, Schröter, identifies and adds one more to the list:

- **polysemy** - identical sounds and spelling, (transparent) etymological relationship in meaning.

This category is similar to homonymy regarding the requirements of the form, but with meaning, there is additionally an etymological relationship between the lexical items. The distinction is therefore based on the origins of the words. According to Schröter, homonymy is quite rare as it is based on unrelated lexical items that, due to coincidence, just happen to be identical in pronunciation and spelling. Polysemy is more common because it results when a lexical item acquires new meanings for example through metaphor. One example of polysemy is the meaning of ‘counter’ as a certain type of table versus ‘counter’ as something that is opposite or contrary to something. (Schröter 2005: 164, 168) There are degrees to how obvious or strong the semantic link between

different polysemes can be. Whether that link is perceived or not depends on the individual language user.

There are reasons for both treating polysemy as a category of its own and combining it with the category of homonymy. The choice depends on the approach taken. According to Schröter (2005: 169), the etymological connections can sometimes be hard to confirm, and what seems to matter more is the synchronic perspective, how the modern language user perceives the relationship between the lexical items. Indeed, according to Delabastita, the distinction between homonymy and polysemy is diachronically speaking a dynamic one. Two meanings of a polysemous word may become dissociated and grow apart into separate words. Conversely, a polysemous word may be the result of two originally separate words merging. (Delabastita 1997: 5) In addition, from the point of view of translation, polysemes tend to behave like homonyms: they probably cannot be transferred directly to the target language, except for some fortunate coincidences (Schröter 2005: 170). When considering the translatability of and strategies for translating linguistic wordplay, possible etymological connections can be seen as secondary to the form: that there is perceived to be a difference between the meanings of the components is more important than the actual origin of that difference. Especially between languages from different families, such as English and Finnish, the distinction becomes even less important. Therefore, in this study homonymy and polysemy are treated as one category referred to as homonymy.

In addition to the features mentioned so far, linguistic wordplay also has a function in a text. Delabastita (1996: 129–130) lists such functions to include for example adding to the thematic coherence of the text, forcing greater attention from the receiver, discussing taboo themes, and producing humour. Because of the nature of the material, humour can be seen as the key function of linguistic wordplay in this study. Humour can even be the unintentional result in some coincidental situations of “no pun intended”.

3.2 Allusive Wordplay

Whereas the category of linguistic wordplay in this study depends on the structural features of language, **allusive wordplay** depends on the context. It is based on modification of **allusions** where the text evoked by the allusion provides one reading and the text alluding to it another. First, a definition of allusion is needed for a better understanding of this type of wordplay. The phenomenon is relevant to both literary studies and translation studies and for the purposes of the latter Leppihalme (1994: 9–10) defines it as:

- (a) brief borrowings [...] of the words of another, in expectation of receiver recognition of either the meaning they have in the original [...] context, or the meaning they are collectively thought to have as “culturally established collocations” [...]; or as references, including a key-phrase, to other texts; or (b) as brief references, usually by name, to fictional or real-life persons, places, events etc. sufficiently removed from the world of the text to require an act of inference by the receiver before the meaning of the reference is understood.

In other words, allusions can be either brief borrowings or references the author expects the reader to recognise and thus find meanings from in the new context. The allusive element can be either a proper name or a key-phrase.

As the definition above indicates, allusions are a culture-bound translation problem. Instances that are incomprehensible to the reader can become what Leppihalme calls **culture bumps**: an allusion perfectly understandable in one culture might make no sense in another. Allusions can be a problem even among the speakers of one language, as those speakers may belong to several language communities and a particular example of allusive wordplay may not work in all of them (Leppihalme 1996: 203). Thus, allusive wordplay counts on the allusion being spotted, but the recognition of allusions depends on the individual. Individual readings can be very different: some intended meanings might be missed and unintended ones found. It must be remembered that while translator competence is important, the translator is also an individual when it comes to recognition and interpretation of allusions.

Just as linguistic wordplay was classified into subcategories based on the linguistic form, allusive wordplay can also be divided into categories based on the form of the allusion. Leppihalme first identifies three broad main categories of allusions: allusions proper, stereotyped allusions and borderline cases. The primary category of **allusions proper** can be further categorised into **proper name allusions** that contain a proper name and **key-phrase allusions** that do not. They can appear as regular allusions, i.e. “prototypical” allusions, or modified allusions containing an alteration or modification. Leppihalme illustrates the categories with the examples “Think I’ve become a *Raffles* in my old age?” for proper name allusions and “Apparently taxis *turn into pumpkins at midnight*.” for key-phrase allusions. (Leppihalme 1994: 18–21) In the first example, the name ‘Raffles’ is a proper name allusion to a fictional gentleman thief A.J. Raffles. In the second example, the key-phrase refers to the story of Cinderella where at midnight a magical carriage made out of a pumpkin reverts into its original form. The allusions and the sense they carry would have to be identified for a full appreciation of these utterances.

The second main category of allusions is **stereotyped allusions**. According to Leppihalme, these include for example clichés and proverbs that for many readers may have lost the connection to their original source but can still pose a problem in translation regardless of their lower level of allusiveness. An example of this category is “We were *ships that pass in the night*”. (Leppihalme 1994: 19–20) This phrase is a poetic metaphor that has been used enough to have become an idiomatic expression or a cliché. It has come to mean brief encounters not likely to have a lasting significance, and although the audience might understand the phrase in this sense, the phrase might not evoke the original source anymore.

The third main category of **borderline cases** consists of semi-allusive comparisons and eponymous adjectives. According to Leppihalme, the first include superficial comparisons and looser associations that are used to indicate superficial similarity, as in the example “*Like in the land of Oz*, technology has good and bad witches.” Eponymous adjectives are derived from names but do not have fixed collocations with their current headwords. This is illustrated by “*Orwellian* images” and “in her most *Jamesian*

manner”. (Leppihalme 1994: 20–21) Both categories are similar in the way that they evoke their sources but not necessarily in a way that activates a secondary reading from it. As Leppihalme (1994: 20) remarks, “[t]he degree of allusiveness [...] is low, more often involving denotation than connotation”. In a way, these types of allusions come close to regular metaphors in the way they function.

As demonstrated by the examples, the last two main categories consist of a varied selection of allusions with more or less lower levels of allusiveness. In addition, in some cases the allusion can be too superficial to properly activate a secondary reading and, consequently, such forms cannot count as one form having two or more meanings. Therefore, only the main category of allusions proper is included in this study. Finally, to turn an allusion into an allusive wordplay, some alteration or modification is needed.

Allusions can be modified in several ways. Leppihalme divides them into **situational, lexical and syntactic modifications**. In situational modification, no changes have been made on the linguistic level and the effect is due to how material has been inserted into the new context. Lexical modification includes all types of lexical substitution of a keyword ranging from the use of antonyms, homophones etc. to “unexpected” substitutions motivated situationally. Syntactic modifications range from reductions and additions to splitting the form of the allusion. Different types of modifications can be used simultaneously, but over-modification may obscure the allusion. (Leppihalme 1996: 199–201) In a strict sense, wordplay usually involves linguistic modification, and reversely all use of allusions can be said to involve at least some form of situational modification. An understanding of the various modification types is important for the identification of allusive wordplay. However, an allusion can also be modified beyond recognition, and especially if different modifications have been made on the same portion of text.

In this study, the categorisation of allusive wordplay is based on the form of the allusive element, a proper name or a key-phrase. That element can be modified in any of the ways listed above. Overlap of linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay is possible when an allusion has been modified at the lexical level with any of the linguistic

wordplay types, homonymy, homophony, homography or paronymy. Categorising these as linguistic wordplay would not only be ignoring the allusion, but it would also eliminate a great proportion of lexically modified allusions from the category of allusive wordplay. Therefore, such cases of overlap were categorised as allusive wordplay. If both a proper name allusion and a key-phrase allusion were found in the same string, naming the source was considered a stronger reference and thus the proper name was considered to trump the key-phrase. Such cases of overlap were categorised as allusive wordplay containing a proper name allusion.

Allusive wordplay can have various functions in a text. Leppihalme lists that, in addition to the general function of involving the reader, the functions include characterisation, thematic reinforcing and humour. The communicative significance can vary from great to superficial and the effect from shock to amusement. (Leppihalme 1996: 202) As it is with linguistic wordplay, humour is not the only possible function of allusive wordplay but still a common one. As the material for this study comes from an entertainment product in a game series known for its use of verbal humour, it can be expected that allusive wordplay has been used chiefly for a humorous effect.

In conclusion, in this study wordplay is based on one form having two or more meanings and a play arising from the confrontation of those meanings. Wordplay consists of two categories, linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay. The category of linguistic wordplay consists of homonymy (identical pronunciation and spelling), homophony (identical pronunciation but different spellings), homography (different pronunciations but identical spelling) and paronymy (slight differences in both spelling and pronunciation). Allusive wordplay consists of wordplay based on proper name allusions that include a reference in the form of a proper name and key-phrase allusions where the reference is in the form of a phrase. The next chapter will discuss local translation strategies for wordplay and the global strategies of retention and re-creation.

4 TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR WORDPLAY

This chapter introduces translation strategies for wordplay. The first section discusses the global translation strategies of retention and re-creation. In the second section, a classification of local translation strategies is introduced.

All research about translation is ultimately based on a view that an act called translation is actually possible. At the same time, the notion of the untranslatability of wordplay has been around for a long time, and according to Delabastita, some have considered it a feature that distinguishes wordplay from other forms of rhetoric. Delabastita disagrees with this notion and claims that the many constraints just make prioritising more important in the translation of wordplay than in so-called ordinary translation. Prioritising shows for example what the translator's understanding of the original text is, what their concept of translation is and what layers of meaning and textual devices they regard important. (Delabastita 1997: 9–11) The classification of local strategies introduced in section 4.2 is based on one categorisation of the possible prioritising choices. Since the global strategies represent broader tendencies in translation, they will be discussed first.

4.1 Retention and Re-creation as Global Strategies

A translator's choices can be seen to belong to one of the two overall categories of **retention** and **re-creation**. Holmes coined these terms in his discussion about translatability where he observed that the problems a translator faces seem to group into three levels: linguistic context, literary intertext and socio-cultural situation. In translation, a text usually has to be shifted on all these three levels, and on each level the choices that can be made range on an axis of exoticizing versus naturalizing and, if enough time has passed between the writing of the original and the translation, also on an axis of historicizing versus modernizing. (Holmes 1988: 47–48) Holmes originally discussed this framework in the context of translation of poems, but it can be applied to

other areas of translation as well. The relevance of individual elements depends also on individual texts.

As mentioned above, translation problems arise from three different levels. According to Holmes, on the axis of **exoticizing** versus **naturalizing** a translator may opt to retain specific elements of these levels (e.g. source-language syntax, source-literature verse form, and source-culture symbols and images) knowing that such elements will acquire an exotic aspect in the target context, intertext and situation. Alternatively, the translator can replace such elements with ones matching or equivalent in the target context, intertext and situation (e.g. target-language syntax, target-literature verse form, and target-culture symbols and images). The axis of **historicizing** versus **modernizing** concerns the choice between emphasizing and de-emphasizing the time of the original work. These axes combined, exoticizing and historicizing choices represent an emphasis on retention and naturalizing and modernizing an emphasis on re-creation. (Holmes 1988: 47–48) In other words, retentive translation strategies are a reminder of the foreign origin of the text while re-creative strategies bring the text closer to the reader. In a certain sense, all translation is re-creation and this dichotomy does not dispute that. While the use of retentive strategies does not indicate a lack of creativity but a choice, or rather choices, re-creative strategies do give more leeway to be creative. Since there are several dimensions and axes involved in the process, the choices are not binary but instead form a cline. The choice between retention and re-creation is, thus, a matter of degree.

Individual translation choices are tied in with an overall strategy. While some have argued that all choices should be in line with one strategy, Holmes states that in practice it is not so and that choices vary depending on the situation. He notes that while some generalisations can be made about tendencies, it more importantly seems that retention or re-creation as such is not a translator's goal. (Holmes 1988: 48–50) Even though individual choices do vary, one strategy can be overall more dominant. This depends what aim the translator has.

For *The Sims 3*, the axis of exoticizing versus naturalizing is relevant on all the three levels of linguistic context, literary intertext and socio-cultural situation: as a game, it is also a text and a product of its culture. However, the axis of historicizing versus modernizing does not have such relevance. The game is a contemporary text, and the translating occurred right after or most likely even during the creation of the source text. In addition, since the setting of the game is modern, there are no restrictions related to a certain time period even in the contents of the game.

4.2 Local Strategies

To study how localisation has become visible in the different versions of *The Sims 3*, instances of wordplay in the three versions are examined from the point of view of translation strategies applied to them. The categories of local translation strategies used in this study are based on a classification by Delabastita (1996: 134), who proposes the following eight types of strategies to be at a translator's disposal when translating wordplay:

- PUN → PUN
- PUN → NON-PUN
- PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE
- PUN → ZERO
- PUN ST = PUN TT
- NON-PUN → PUN
- ZERO → PUN
- EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES

Although these were originally identified as translation strategies for what is in this study called linguistic wordplay, they are in this study extended to allusive wordplay as well. The strategies concentrate on the form of linguistic wordplay, and as the classification of allusions into proper name and key-phrase allusions is also based on the form of the allusion, the same strategies can be applied to both types of wordplay.

To see what has been retained and what re-created in the localisation process, the local strategies have to be classified into the two overall categories of retention and re-creation. In this study, the decisive factor between the categories is whether a form that can be called wordplay survives in the translation. That form can be any type of allusive or linguistic wordplay. Consequently, a retentive strategy is one that preserves such a form in the translation. Other strategies that preserve only some or none of the aspects of the wordplay are re-creative. Some of the strategies listed are not relevant to this study because of the method used and the nature of the material and game localisation in general. All the strategies and their relevance are next discussed in more detail.

The **PUN → PUN** category refers to translating a source language wordplay with a target-language wordplay that can be more or less different from the original regarding the formal structure, semantic structure or textual function (Delabastita 1996: 134). Thus, a translation strategy is categorised as **PUN → PUN** if a source language wordplay has been rendered in the translation by any type of wordplay, linguistic or allusive. This is the only category that represents retention. The strategies that fall into this category can be examined in more detail based on the wordplay type. If the type of wordplay has stayed the same, for example an instance of homonymy in the source text has been rendered by homonymy in the target text, retention is direct. When the type of wordplay changes for example from homonymy to paronymy, retention is indirect. Retention can also be examined through the wordplay categories, whether the category changes from linguistic to allusive or the other way around.

PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE is a re-creative category with a focus on the function of the wordplay in the source text. Translations belonging to this category involve the replacement of a wordplay by a wordplay-related rhetorical device (e.g. repetition, alliteration, rhyme) with an aim to recapture the effect that the original had or created in the source text (Delabastita 1996: 134). Just as wordplay is focused on the form, the use of related rhetorical devices emphasises how something is said rather than what is being said. For example, when the function of the wordplay is that of producing humour, the translator has a range of different forms of humour from which they can choose. As noted before, because wordplay is one of the main sources of

humour in *The Sims 3*, the function of wordplay can also be expected to be mostly that of producing humour.

PUN → NON-PUN is the second category representing re-creation. In the translations belonging to this category “the pun is rendered by a non-punning phrase which may salvage both senses of the wordplay but in a non-punning conjunction, or select one of the senses at the cost of suppressing the other” (Delabastita 1996: 134). Even though in this category the form and function of the wordplay are lost, the semantic structure is still preserved. While in linguistic wordplay the meanings of the wordplay components arise from the language, in allusive wordplay they are connected to the cultural and situational context, and therefore, depending on what sense or senses the translator aims to retain, allusive elements may still be found in the translation. If no proper name or key-phrase can be found, such elements belong to the borderline category of allusions. As the categorisation of wordplay in this study is based on the form, and consequently the focus in allusive wordplay is on allusions proper, such elements do not count as retention.

PUN → ZERO is the third and last of the re-creative categories. As the name suggests, it is simply the omission of the portion of text containing the wordplay (Delabastita 1996: 134). In game localisation, omission is especially problematic because of the nature of the basic unit of translation, the string. In a long text, omissions can be made more easily, but because a string cannot be left empty, in some cases the translator may even have to create entirely new material to replace what has been omitted. The choices available to the translator therefore also depend on the length of the string.

PUN ST = PUN TT is a type of non-translation. It refers to reproducing a source language wordplay and possibly its immediate environment in the original form without having been actually “translated” (Delabastita 1996: 134). In a sense, this category could be seen as ultimate retention, because no changes have been made to the material. At the same time, this also means that no actions that are usually referred to by translation have been performed on the material. This can be listed as a type of

translation strategy, because non-translation is always a choice, but in a division to retentive and re-creative strategies, it is problematic.

The last three categories all represent different types of additions. In **NON-PUN → PUN** wordplay is introduced where there is no wordplay in the original. This can be done as compensation for wordplay lost elsewhere but also for other reasons. In **ZERO → PUN**, entirely new material containing wordplay is added. **EDITORIAL TECHNIQUES** include the use of for example explanatory footnotes, endnotes, comments and so forth. (Delabastita 1996: 134) All of these are, again, problematic because of the nature of both this study and game localisation. When examining how wordplay has been translated, examples have to be found first in the source text. Any additions, however, would have to be looked for in the target text, thus reversing the process. Because game texts are highly fragmented by nature and the strings that translators work with are in no chronological or fixed position in relation to each other, any search for additions would be a game of luck. It would also be impossible to deduce the reason for individual additions. Moreover, as additions are material that can be found only in the target text, they represent creation rather than retention or re-creation.

For the reasons given above and based on the material, the categories of local translation strategies relevant for this study are the first four. **PUN → PUN** is the only retentive category, but it can be further divided into the types of direct and indirect retention. Re-creative translation strategies include the **PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE** category with focus on the function of the wordplay, the **PUN → NON-PUN** category with focus on the senses of the wordplay and the **PUN → ZERO** category that includes translations where the wordplay has been omitted. Based on this division, the categories represent the global strategies of retention and re-creation. In the next chapter, the analysis of the material based on these categories is discussed.

5 TRANSLATION OF WORDPLAY IN THE SIMS 3

In this chapter the analysis of the material and the findings of this study are introduced. Furthermore, the findings will be drawn together in Chapter 6, Conclusions.

As previously pointed out in section 2.3, a localised product is expected to have a similar look and feel as the other equivalent local products. However, different localisations of a game, essentially marketed and sold as one product with several language options, might in fact be telling different stories to the players. The aim of this study was to find out how localisation affects the product from the point of view of translation. To study how localisation has become visible in the Finnish and Swedish localisations of *The Sims 3*, instances of wordplay in the English original were examined through the translation strategies applied to them. Wordplay in the form of linguistic and allusive wordplay was chosen because it represents translation problems with both linguistic and cultural links. To study what has been retained and what re-created in the localisation process, a classification of local translation strategies for wordplay was used. These categories were examined through two overall categories, the global translation strategies of retention and re-creation.

Although this study was not based on one clear research hypothesis, the combination of the Finnish and Swedish localisations gave rise to a few assumptions. One was based on the fact that linguistically Swedish is close to English, while Finnish is different from both of them. In general, translation may be easier between languages of the same language family, depending on how close those languages are. Consequently, the translator of the Swedish localisation might sometimes manage with little changes, whereas the translator of the Finnish localisation might have to use rephrasing or other means to convey the same idea. This would reflect especially in the translation of linguistic wordplay. Another assumption was based on the fact that Finland and Sweden are culturally quite close to each other. Even though the American influence can be seen in the cultures of both, the two countries share history and have a long tradition of cultural exchange. Thus, the challenges of culture-related translation problems should be similar for the translators of both localisations, and therefore the translation strategies

chosen could also be very similar. This, then, would reflect especially in the translation of allusive wordplay. All of the above suggests that there should not be notable differences overall in the translation of wordplay in the two localisations but that retentive strategies might be found more in the Swedish translation because of the similarities between the source language and the target language. This was, however, found to be only partly true.

The Finnish and Swedish locales proved a good pair for examining localisation. To summarise the findings of this study, firstly, retentive strategies were used almost as often in both the Finnish and the Swedish localisations. Retention was represented by the PUN → PUN category where wordplay survives in the translation, preserving more or less the structural, functional and semantic equivalence between the source text and the target text. Although in some cases the target language wordplay came very close to the original, in others the only connecting thread was the fact that both were some form of wordplay. While in the Finnish localisation translations belonging to this category were used the most, in the Swedish localisation the re-creative strategy PUN → NON-PUN was the most common. Consequently, there was more retention in the Finnish localisation. A more significant finding turned out to be the translators' choice of strategy when retention had not been possible. This could be called secondary retention. The Swedish translator had aimed at preserving the semantic equivalence with the source text by using translations belonging to the PUN → NON-PUN category, whereas the aim for the Finnish translator had been to preserve the functional equivalence with translations belonging to the PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE category. Just as the Swedish translator had been careful to make no omissions or additions on the level of words, the Finnish translator had often reworked the text and in most cases even added new material. As a rough summation, the Swedish localisation, although mostly functional as a translation, does most of the time not go beyond the level of words, whereas the Finnish localisation seems to embody the concept of transcreation introduced in section 2.3.

As was expected, the Swedish translator seems to have benefited somewhat from the linguistic similarities between English and Swedish. This is especially true for linguistic

wordplay that has survived better in the Swedish than the Finnish localisation. However, the loss of a form identifiable as wordplay does not automatically mean omission of all the aspects of the wordplay. The Finnish translator has compensated the loss with the use of re-creative strategies, favouring the PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE category. In the translation of allusive wordplay, the similarities and differences between the source language and the target language were less significant. Overall, the results of this study seem to say more about the choices of the individual translators than the linguistic and cultural differences between the two locales.

The basis for the analysis of the material was the translation unit string introduced in section 2.2. The decision to examine each whole string as translation unit created some challenges but also proved to suit the material well. Although in theory a string can be anything from one word to a segment of hundreds of words, the ones under examination in this study all had a similar structure and were relatively short. Each string consisted of a title, i.e. the name of the buyable game object, and a short paragraph describing the object.

Wordplay could be found in either the title or the description of an object, but often the whole string had been written around the same theme to bring forward and highlight the different readings. Each string thus formed an independent whole, like a very short story or a joke. Because game texts are fragmented and the strings are in no chronologically or otherwise fixed position in relation to each other, the translators must also operate on the level of the string. This independent nature of the string as a unit of translation has given the translators some leeway in their choices but also limited them. On the one hand, in translation a wordplay could be moved, in the confines of the string, from the name of the object to the description and vice versa. A strict sentence-for-sentence translation is not always necessarily the best or the most accurate solution, and considering the relative shortness of the strings in the material, in this study the occurrence of wordplay (or other equivalent such as a related rhetorical device) anywhere in the translated string was taken into account. On the other hand, anything that has been lost in the translated string is effectively lost in the whole localisation.

Even if compensatory strategies have been used in other strings to make up for any lost elements, it is impossible to trace such strategies and deduce the relationship between omissions and additions in strings that are not equivalents.

Using the string as the basic translation unit, the translations were divided into four categories based on what type of translation strategy had been used. The two pie charts in figure 1 below illustrate the difference between the distribution of translation strategies used in the Finnish and Swedish localisations of *The Sims 3*:

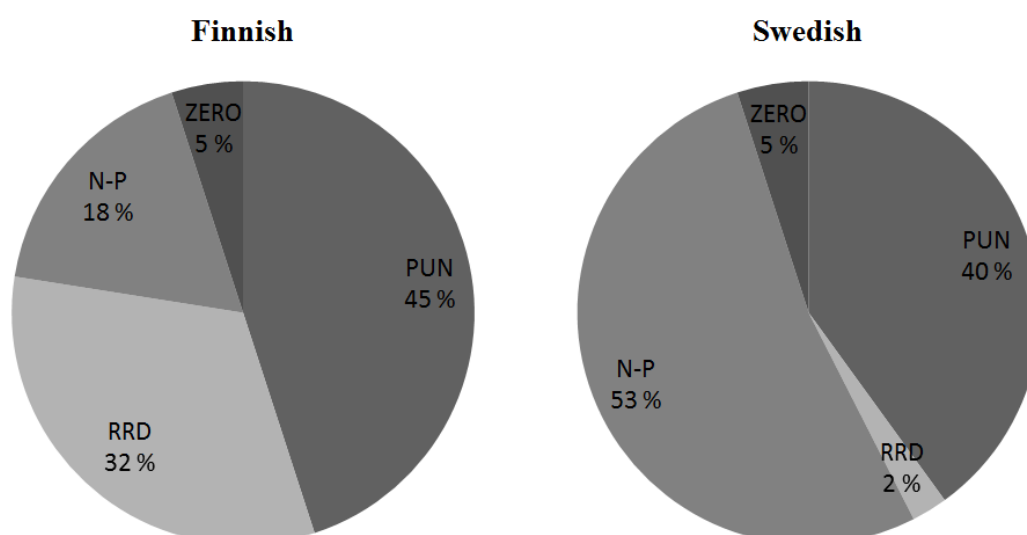


Figure 1. Distribution of the translation strategies used

On the first glance, the two charts look rather similar. Some similarities can indeed be found, but there are also significant differences as well. To start with what the charts have in common, PUN → ZERO translations have been used the same amount in both the Finnish and the Swedish localisations, amounting to 5% in both. The PUN → PUN category forms the largest sector in the chart for the Finnish localisation and is therefore the type of strategy that had been used the most. The share of this strategy is almost the same in the chart for the Swedish localisation with only a 5% difference. This is where the similarities end.

While in the Finnish localisation PUN → PUN translations were used the most, in the Swedish localisation the PUN → NON-PUN category was the most common. Although the Swedish translator used PUN → NON-PUN translations in more than half of the instances examined, in the Finnish localisation they amounted only to 18%. The second most common category in the Finnish localisation, PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE, was in the Swedish localisation used the least, amounting only to 2%. In other words, in the Swedish localisation mainly two types of translation strategies were used, while the other two categories combined represented only 7% of the total. In the Finnish localisation, the different strategies were used with more variation. Based on the division of the local translation strategies into retentive and re-creative categories, there was more retention in the Finnish localisation. Although the difference is only 5%, this result was not expected. However, these numbers represent only the surface of the matter. A closer examination revealed further details.

Wordplay was in this study divided into two categories, linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay. The translations were examined through these categories to gain more detailed information about the differences between the localisations. While the overall numbers showed general tendencies, the numbers by category revealed more about the translation of each type of wordplay. In table 2, the number of times each type of strategy was used is given by the language and further by the category of wordplay:

Table 2. Translation strategies used by category of wordplay

translation strategies	Finnish			Swedish		
	linguistic	allusive	in total	linguistic	allusive	in total
PUN	7	11	18	9	7	16
RRD	10	3	13	1	0	1
N-P	3	4	7	10	11	21
ZERO	0	2	2	0	2	2

Similar to figure 1 that illustrated the differences in the overall distribution of translation strategies used, table 2 shows variation in what strategies have been used in the translation of linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay. Variation between the categories was found especially in the Finnish localisation. As stated earlier, in the Finnish localisation PUN → PUN translations were in total used the most, and while this was also true for the category of allusive wordplay, in the category of linguistic wordplay the PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE was the most common with 10 uses out of 20 in total. The difference in numbers is notable as the most common type of strategy in each category was used in half or more of the instances examined. In the Swedish localisation, there was little variation between the two categories, and the use of the translation strategies in them mostly corresponded to the overall percentages. As in the Finnish localisation the survival rate of linguistic wordplay is lower than that of allusive wordplay, the numbers suggest that the Swedish translator may indeed have benefited from the similarity between the source language and the target language. This was as expected. In the following sections, the variation in the types of strategies used in each category of wordplay is discussed in more detail.

5.1 Translation of Linguistic Wordplay

The overall view of the translation strategies used revealed general differences between the two localisations, but comparing the numbers by category of wordplay yielded more detailed information. In the category of linguistic wordplay, the differences between the localisations seem to be connected to the way linguistic wordplay works, the fact that it exploits the structural features of the language or languages used.

The translation of linguistic wordplay in the Swedish localisation corresponded mostly to the total numbers of the wordplay categories combined. The most common category was still PUN → NON-PUN with 10 uses, followed closely by PUN → PUN with 9 uses. Only the two least common categories changed places when compared to the overall numbers, as the PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE category was the third most common with 1 use and PUN → ZERO came last with no uses. However, for

the Finnish localisation the numbers of linguistic wordplay looked different from the total sums of both wordplay categories combined. In the Finnish localisation, PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE was the most common category in the translation of linguistic wordplay with 10 uses. The overall most common category, PUN → PUN, came only second with 7 uses. The two least common categories were in the same order with 3 uses of PUN → NON-PUN and no uses of PUN → ZERO. Example 9 illustrates the use of the most common types of translation strategies in both localisations:

- (9) Tub Nouveau: For years, bathtubs were nothing more than festering pools of still water – hardly hygienic. But the Tub Nouveau’s new Constant-Current technology slowly circulates in fresh water, creating a bath experience so clean, you’ll feel like you showered.

(FI) Uulalaá-kylpyamme: Monien synkkien vuosien ajan kylpyammeet olivat vain saastaisia paljuja, joissa simit lilluivat omassa liassaan. Pimeys on kuitenkin kaikonnut ja hygienian valo kohonnut valaisemaan kylpymaailmaa. Uulalaá-kylpyammeen *kohinakierrätin* pyörittää vettä sellaisella paineella ja tohinalla, että tyhmempikin bakteeri tajuaa pysyä poissa tämän kvasihygieenisen *vesivatkaimen* tieltä. Ei enää törkyisiä bakteereja kuhisevia kylpyammeita, vaan kirkas illuusio hygieenisyydestä. Uulalaá!

(SV) Nytt-kar: I årtal har badkar inte varit mycket mer än groende pölar av stillastående vatten – inte särskilt hygieniskt. Men den nya cirkelströmsteknologin hos Nytt-kar ser till att nytt vatten ständigt cirkulerar in och ger dig en badupplevelse som är så ren att det känns som om du hade duschat.

The object in example 9 is a cheap bathtub. There is a homonymous wordplay in the description text in the word ‘current’, the second part of the compound ‘Constant-Current’. In this context, three readings can be triggered for the word. One is the sense of ‘current’ as a flow of things such as air, or as in this case, water. The second reading is an extension of the first sense, a flow of electric charge also known as an electric current. Although for most players the first sense might be reading that first comes to mind, depending on the background of the person, the second sense might also be the stronger one. As the object is a bathtub and the topic is the circulation of water in it, it is

easy to conclude that the Constant-Current technology has been named because it causes circulation by forming a constant current of water. The name could as well be interpreted as the form of power creating that current. In electrical engineering, ‘constant-current’ is a term related to power supplies, and even though the exact workings of the technology may not be known to a layperson, the term might still be familiar to them. However, nothing in the text directly triggers this meaning. As for the third possible reading, both the name of the object and the description highlight it. As ‘nouveau’ is the French word for ‘new’ and the technology is also described as something new, the player is reminded of the sense of ‘current’ as something present, recent or new.

There is a clear etymological relationship between the first two of the listed senses of ‘current’ in English, and as Finnish follows that same logic, the equivalent noun ‘virta’ can be used in both senses. The third sense is not attached to the Finnish word, and therefore the same imagery cannot be created with just one word. Instead of using a different target language wordplay, the Finnish translator has aimed to preserve the function of the wordplay by using soundplay. In the phrases ‘lilluivat omassa liassaan’ [soaked in their own dirt] and ‘pysyä poissa’ [stay away] the alliteration might not be intentional – the latter is actually a fixed collocation. However, the words ‘kohinakierrätin’ [hum rotator] and ‘vesivatkain’ [water whisk] are a different story. Firstly, neither is a real word or makes much sense. Secondly, both words sound too silly not to be jokes. The strangeness of ‘kohinakierrätin’ could be explained as the translator’s reaction to the original wordplay, as the Finnish word ‘kohina’ can mean both the sound that water makes in the pipes and a phenomenon called noise in electronics. However, nothing in the description triggers such wordplay. Because soundplay that seemed intentional was found in the translation, the strategy was categorised as PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE.

The Swedish translator has kept close to the original, and the section containing the wordplay has been translated word for word. The Swedish noun ‘ström’ can also be used both for a current of water and an electric current, but only the first reading is supported by the rest of the text in the string. Again, the third sense is not attached to

the equivalent in the target language. As no wordplay or related rhetorical devices were found but at least one of the senses of the source text wordplay was retained, the strategy was categorised as PUN → NON-PUN.

Looking deeper than just the categories of translation strategies used, the localisations were also examined through the categorisation of wordplay. The 20 instances of linguistic wordplay examined in this study were further divided into four subcategories. The most common category was homonymy with 11 instances found. The second most common category was homophony with 5 instances, followed by paronymy with 3 and homography with 1 instances. It depends on the language how relevant each category is, but other factors as well may affect their use. For example, because in homonymy both the pronunciation and the spelling of the wordplay components are identical, some might prefer this as a “perfect” form of wordplay. While wordplay based on paronymy can be easier to create because only similarity is required of both pronunciation and spelling, some might perceive it as a lesser form of wordplay or even as “not quite” wordplay. Even though a translator may strive to preserve the exact type of wordplay in the translation, the result is also dependent on the structure of the target language.

Although there was no notable difference overall in the translation of the two main categories of wordplay, allusive wordplay survived slightly better than linguistic wordplay. In the category of linguistic wordplay, the rate of retention was higher in the Swedish localisation than in the Finnish localisation. Homography and paronymy were the rarest types of linguistic wordplay in the source text, and only once had one instance of paronymy been translated with a target language wordplay. That was in the Swedish localisation, in the translation of the wordplay on ‘pompous’ and ‘pampas’ given in example 4. Homophony was the type of linguistic wordplay most often translated with the PUN → PUN strategy, and the exact same 3 instances out of 5 were translated with a wordplay both in the Finnish and Swedish localisations. Homonymy came second with 4 PUN → PUN translations in the Finnish and 5 in the Swedish localisation for the 11 instances in total. In example 10, homophony has been translated with paronymy in both localisations:

- (10) *4-Everything Van: Four doors, four wheels, four door handles and four cup holders. The 4-Everything Van is perfect for you, your home and your transporting lifestyle. Never take the family in two separate trips again when they can all fit the first time in the 4-Everything Van – the all-encompassing automotive wonder!*

(FI) *Neliverto-tila-auto: Neljä rengasta, neljä ovea, neljä ovenkahvaa ja neljä mukinpidikettä. Neliverto-tila-auto sopii täydellisesti kaikkiin kuljetustarpeisiisi. Sinun ei enää koskaan tarvitsee ajaa edestakaisin, vaan nyt saat perheesi, sukulaisesi, lemmikkisi, matkatavarasi, pellesi ja elefanttisi kaikki kerralla kyytiin! Tilaa ja tyyliä kuljetukseen!*

(SV) *Minibussen Fyrnämligt: Fyra dörrar, fyra däck, fyra dörrhandtag och fyra drickahållare. Minibussen Fyrnämligt är perfekt för dig, ditt hem och ditt transportliv. Nu behöver du aldrig mer köra familjen i två omgångar eftersom alla får plats på en gång i Minibussen Fyrnämligt - den fulländade underbilen!*

The object in example 10 is not a piece of furniture but a car. The paronymous wordplay is in the name of the car, ‘4-Everything’, and it is based on the pair ‘four’ and ‘for’. Since the car is said to have four of everything, the name can be understood as a shorter version of ‘four-of-everything’. The car is also described as an “all-encompassing automotive wonder” and basically perfect *for* everything. Both translators have recognised the wordplay and decided on very similar solutions in their translations. In both localisations, the wordplay is in the name of the object and both include paronymy with a twist.

The Finnish translator has called the vehicle ‘Neliverto’, close to but not quite ‘neliveto’ [four-wheel drive]. The first part of the compound word is the Finnish word for four in a form it takes in compounds, and the second part has been modified into something resembling the word body ‘kerto’ referring to multiplicity or multiplying. Thus, the wordplay includes a reference to a type of car and also retains the four-of-everything sense. Strictly speaking, the solution is a made-up word, but as both of the senses mentioned are clearly implied, the translation was categorised as paronymy. In the Swedish localisation, the vehicle is called ‘Fyrnämligt’. This is a modification of the adjective ‘förnämlig’ meaning distinguished or excellent. The first part of the word has

been changed into ‘fyr’, which is the form the Swedish word for four takes in compounds. The name is fitting considering that both the four-of-everything sense and the praise for the car in the source text is replicated also in the target text. Similar to the Finnish version, the Swedish name is a made-up word, a portmanteau made by combining two words, but as both senses are again clearly implied, the translation was categorised as paronymy. There might be a reason why both translators had handled the translation of homophony so similarly, but that is at least partly a question of how wordplay is recognised in the first place. For example, especially with paronymy and homophony the slight changes in spelling might signal the reader to better notice the wordplay. From the point of view of this study, the focus is on the translation resulting from the wordplay being spotted.

Out of all the 40 instances examined in this study, wordplay in the source text was translated with a target language wordplay 18 times in the Finnish and 16 times in the Swedish localisation. Thus, in all these 32 translations in total the strategy was categorised as PUN → PUN and, therefore, retention. In the majority of these cases, the main category of wordplay remained the same. In other words, linguistic wordplay was nearly always translated with linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay was nearly always translated with allusive wordplay. In the category of linguistic wordplay, a change to allusive wordplay was found only once in each localisation. On the one hand, this suggests that the translators have perceived linguistic wordplay and allusive wordplay to be different enough that a target language wordplay should preferably be from the same main category. On the other hand, this also suggests that allusive wordplay has still been considered similar enough to be used as a related rhetorical device. Example 11 illustrates the change of category in the Finnish localisation:

- (11) Family Time Bar: Juice bar... Sand bar... That test lawyers have to pass... Face it people, bars are everywhere today and without one you will be *bar-none*! So join the crowd and bring the Family Time Bar into your home today!

(FI) *Logistini*-baaritiski: *Logistini*-baaritiski on kerrassaan oivallinen logistinen rajapinta kuluttajan ja myyjän välillä. Sen ääressä asiakas tilaa juomat, sen päälle myyjä laskee juomat ja sen äärellä asiakas nauttii juomansa myyjälle rennosti jutustellen. Koko logistiikkaketjun huipentaa tuotteen maksaminen ja vaihtorahojen vastaanotto, joka sekin tapahtuu baaritiskin äärellä. Eikö olekin hämmästyttävää? Ihmeellistä kerrassaan. Saanko vielä toisenkin mansikkapirtelön?

The object in example 11 is a type of luxury item, a bar that sims can buy for their home. Different uses for the noun bar are listed jokingly in the description, but this is not what triggers the conflict of meanings. There is a homophonous wordplay in the construct ‘bar-none’ that is only one hyphen away from the expression ‘bar none’. The pronunciation for both components of the wordplay is identical, and it could be argued that the hyphen alone is not enough to make the wordplay homophony but in fact homonymy. The categorisation was made based on the following logic. Firstly, the expression ‘bar none’ consisting of the verb ‘bar’ and the pronoun ‘none’ and used in the sense of ‘with no exceptions’ is written without a hyphen. The compound word ‘bar-none’ is a made up word where the pronoun component is the same but ‘bar’ is used in the sense of a counter where usually alcoholic drinks are served. The hyphen used in the made-up word both marks it as a compound and creates enough contrast to the other reading to trigger the wordplay. Thus, the hyphen was considered to carry a meaning and the wordplay was categorised as homophony.

In the Finnish translation, the source text has been heavily rewritten and new material has been added. No linguistic wordplay was found in the translation, and the clearest link to the source text seems to be the implication of elegance or even elitism: without a Family Time Bar, a sim is a nobody. In the Finnish localisation, the bar is called ‘Logistini’, likely a modification on the name ‘Batistini’ that alludes to a clothes brand of the Norwegian men's clothing store chain Dressmann. The Batistini brand represents a certain kind of laid back, smart casual elegance, and that also seems to be the essence of the Finnish description text. The name of the object seems to be a combination of the brand name and the word ‘logistiikka’ [logistics], which is repeated twice in different forms in the description. Even in a modified form, the name contains an allusion.

Therefore, the strategy was categorised as PUN → PUN and the category as allusive wordplay containing a proper name.

As mentioned earlier, the main category of wordplay most often remained the same. More fluctuation was found between the different subcategories of linguistic wordplay. In approximately half of the translations, the target language wordplay was of the same exact type as the source text wordplay. Whether the type of wordplay had changed or remained the same, the wordplay in the target text was usually homonymy. In example 12, homonymy has been rendered by homonymy in both translations:

- (12) *Isometric Table*: Simple interaction with an Isometric Coffee Table can be an exhausting workout. It blasts your glutes and pumps your pecs. Or is it the other way around? Either way, with an Isometric Coffee Table, you're sure to feel the burn.

(FI) *Isometrinen* sohvapöytä: Kuntoiluhullu sim ilahtuu varmasti löytäessään Isometrisen sohvapöydän. Sohvalla lorvailu ei enää tunnu lorvimiselta, kun Isometrinen sohvapöytä tarjoaa voimaharjoittelua joutilaille hetkille. Harjoittelu tapahtuu takuulla oikeaoppisesti eli täysin ilman liikkeitä.

(SV) *Isometriskt* bord: En enkel interaktion med ett Isometriskt soffbord kan vara en utmattande träning. Den trycker till dina stjärtmuskler och pumpar upp dina magmuskler. Eller var det tvärtom? Med ett Isometriskt soffbord kommer du hur som helst att känna att det fungerar.

There is a homonymous wordplay in example 12 in the name of the coffee table, 'Isometric Table'. The sense of 'isometric' as relating to muscular contraction or a certain type of static strength training is highlighted by the description of the object. Although the imagery is somewhat confusing for a coffee table, interaction with it is said to give sims a good workout, one type of which is isometric exercise. The sense of 'isometric' as something having equal dimensions or measurements is triggered by the picture of the object. The picture is that of a typical coffee table. At the same time it is, in fact, an isometric projection: a representation of a three-dimensional object in two dimensions as a drawing. The picture is, literally, an isometric table.

There is a very similar equivalent for 'isometric' in both Finnish and Swedish. This fact had been exploited in both localisations. All three words clearly share a common origin, and therefore the Finnish 'isometrinen' and the Swedish 'isometrisk' can both be used in the same two senses as the source text wordplay. Although in this rare case homonymy could be reproduced as is in both localisations, the wordplay may still work the best in English. The term 'isometric' is rather specialised in both target languages, and for example 'isometric exercise' is probably more often referred to as 'static exercise'. This gives reason to believe that both translators have recognised the wordplay, because otherwise they would likely have used a less specialised alternative.

For the Finnish translator this was the only case where a similarity between the source language and the target language could be exploited. For the Swedish translator such similarity was of use in the translation of 4 instances of linguistic wordplay. This means that in almost half of the PUN → PUN translations the Swedish translator was able to reproduce a source text linguistic wordplay almost as is in the target language. Taking this view, wordplay was retained in the target text with a more or less different kind of wordplay created by the translator 6 times out of 7 in the Finnish and 5 times out of 9 in the Swedish localisation. Taking this into consideration, the numbers come closer to the overall percentages.

5.2 Translation of Allusive Wordplay

Because linguistic wordplay depends on the structures of the language, the similarities and differences between the source language and the target language were important in the analysis of that category. In the translation of allusive wordplay, a form that carries all the meanings it has in one cultural context needs to be embedded into a context it may or may not be known in. The emphasis is thus on the cultural point of view. Since Finland and Sweden share culture and history, no major differences between the localisations were expected. However, similarities between the source language and the target language proved to be an advantage to some extent even in the translation of allusive wordplay. In the category of allusive wordplay, there was a greater difference

between the two localisations in the retention of wordplay than there was in the category of linguistic wordplay.

Similar to the category of linguistic wordplay, in the translation of allusive wordplay in the Swedish localisation the distribution of translation strategies was close to the total percentages of both categories combined. The most common category was again PUN → NON-PUN with 11 uses. It was followed by the PUN → PUN category with 7 uses. The category of PUN → ZERO translations was in the third place with 2 uses and the PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE category came last with no uses. Thus, in the Swedish localisation the order of the categories was the same as when both categories of wordplay were combined. In the Finnish localisation, the distribution of the translation strategies for allusive wordplay was very different from the category of linguistic wordplay. Translations belonging to the PUN → PUN category were clearly the most common, and over half of the translations belonged to this category with 11 uses out of the total 20. Next came the PUN → NON-PUN category with 4 uses. Compared to both the overall numbers and the category of linguistic wordplay, the PUN → NON-PUN category changed places with PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE now in third place with 3 uses. Similar to the Swedish localisation, PUN → ZERO translations were used 2 times in the Finnish localisation. Different from the category of linguistic wordplay, in the Finnish localisation one strategy type was clearly favoured in the translation of allusive wordplay.

In both localisations examined, the categories that were most common in the translation of allusive wordplay were also the most common categories overall. Example 13 illustrates the use of those strategies with an allusive wordplay containing a proper name allusion:

- (13) *Life Preserver*: Emergency flotation device, or giant, minty candy ring? Ambiguous, isn't it? Nah... but it's fun to pretend.

(FI) *Riskirengas-teos*: Onko tämä pelastusväline vai jättimäinen donitsi? Sillä ei oikeastaan ole mitään merkitystä, sillä ostettuasi teoksen itsellesi voit nähdä siinä mitä ikinä haluat.

(SV) *Livräddningsring*: Flytanordning för nödsituationer eller jättestor polkagrisring? Svårt att veta va? Nää... men det är kul att låtsas!

The object in example 13 is a life preserver sold as a decorative item. Life preservers can also be called for example life savers and life donuts. As a proper name ‘Life Savers’ can also refer to an American brand of ring-shaped hard candy that can now be bought in many flavours but originally came in peppermint flavour. The name chosen for the object is a synonym for the name of the candy, but the allusion is triggered by the description: not being able to make a difference between a life preserver and a giant candy ring is not a very common problem. Although the allusive element has been modified by substituting it with a synonym, the allusion is still triggered. Based on the form of the allusion, this example of wordplay was categorised as wordplay based on a proper name allusion.

Because the Life Savers candy is not sold in Finland, the allusion would not have worked very well as such in the Finnish localisation. Instead, the translator has replaced the wordplay with a different type, homonymy. In the Finnish localisation, the object is referred to as a work of art called ‘Riskirengas’ [risk ring]. The word ‘riski’ in Finnish can mean risk or hazard, and although the name of the object is another made-up word, it can be understood to mean a device used when in hazard. ‘Riski’ can also mean strong, robust, big, or even fat in a joking sense. Therefore, in a way the name also refers to a big ring. Because there was a homonymous wordplay found in the translation, the strategy was categorised as PUN → PUN.

In the Swedish localisation, the object is simply called ‘Livräddningsring’ [life saving ring], which is one possible equivalent for ‘life preserver’. The translator has added culture specific flavour by replacing the section ‘minty candy ring’ with ‘jättestor polkagrisring’ [huge polkagris ring]. Polkagris is a type of candy that is traditionally made as a peppermint flavoured cane in white and red. Because the life preserver in the

preview picture of the object is white with red stripes, there is a link between the translation and the picture. However, this is only true for the default preview picture, not the pictures of the other two colour combinations, yellow with blue stripes and orange red with white stripes. Although the translation is clever, as a common noun ‘polkagris’ does not count as an allusion – a similar joke could be made for example about car tyres and liquorice rings. No wordplay or the use of related rhetorical device was found, and therefore the strategy was categorised as PUN → NON-PUN.

The 20 instances of allusive wordplay examined in this study were further divided into two subcategories based on the type of the allusion. In 13 cases the allusion was in the form of a proper noun and in the other 7 cases the allusion was a key-phrase. Opposite to the translation of linguistic wordplay, allusive wordplay survived better in the Finnish localisation. While in the Finnish localisation the share of the PUN → PUN translations was 55%, in the Swedish localisation 35% of the translations belonged to that category. The difference is more notable than in the translation of linguistic wordplay and the overall percentages. This means that the greater difference in the retention of wordplay was in the category of allusive wordplay.

Of the two types of allusive wordplay, the instances including a proper name allusion survived better overall. Approximately half, or exactly 7 out of 13 of such cases, were rendered by some type of wordplay in both localisations. The greatest difference was in the translation of wordplay based on a key-phrase allusion. In the Finnish localisation, the survival rate of such wordplay was approximately the same as for wordplay based on a proper name with 4 out of 7 cases rendered by wordplay in the target text. In the Swedish localisation, every instance of wordplay based on a key-phrase allusion was lost, and the strategy used was always PUN → NON-PUN. Example 14 illustrates the translation of wordplay based on a key-phrase allusion:

- (14) Puck’s Soliloquy: If your wall needs something splendid, buy this print and *all is mended*. You have but to hang it here, to brighten your home with puckish cheer. And this painting’s playful theme, *no more yielding but a dream*.

(FI) Unelma-taulu: *Elämän värikäs kudelman* on nyt napattu taidokkaasti tauluun, ja kyseinen taulu voi tuoda eloa sinunkin kotiisi. Siinäpä oikea kesäyön tai -päivän unelma! Leikkiähän kaikki on vain, taulussa ainakin.

(SV) Pucks monolog: Om din vägg behöver något utsökt kan du köpa den här affischen, *så är det fixat*. Du behöver bara hänga upp den för att lysa upp ditt hem med skälmsk munterhet. Och den här målningens lekfulla tema är *lika flyktig som en dröm*.

The object in example 14 is a painting called Puck's Soliloquy. It is hard to make out the details of this small object, but the painting seems to picture a puck-looking character playing a flute. In this example, the whole description text forms a key-phrase allusion. The name of the painting also points towards the source of the allusion, Puck's final speech in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Although the last part of the play is sometimes referred to as Puck's soliloquy, this was not considered an established name that would count as a proper name allusion. In a strict sense, only the sections 'and all is mended' and 'no more yielding but a dream' are straight out of the alluded text. However, this allusion also uses the rhyming pattern of the original. The rhyming of the description text matches the first six lines of the original soliloquy, starting with 'splendid' instead of 'offended' and following this logic all the way through. The translation of this string was handled differently in the two localisations.

The name of the painting in Finnish, 'Unelma' [dream], shows that the translator has identified the allusion to Shakespeare. There is no rhyming in the translation, but the core idea of the source text is still there, and the translation includes allusions to two different works of Shakespeare. The description text starts with 'elämän värikäs kudelman' [the colourful tapestry of life] that comes from a Finnish translation of the line "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together" in *All's Well That Ends Well*. There is an attempt at a reference to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in the last sentence of the Finnish string, but the name of the play is also referenced to in 'Siinäpä oikea kesäyön tai -päivän unelma! [That's a real summer night or day's dream]. Because a proper name allusion was found in the translation, the strategy was categorised as PUN → PUN.

The Swedish translator has preserved the semantic structure and to some extent even the linguistic structures of the source text. There is no rhyming in the translation, and both key-phrases were rendered in a form where the allusion cannot be recognised. The translator may have missed the allusion and thought of the text as just a poem. Although the allusion has been lost, the semantic structure of the literal reading was preserved. Therefore, the strategy was categorised as PUN → NON-PUN. This example illustrates how in the Swedish localisation key-phrase allusions were lost in translation by being blended into the target text based on their literal meaning.

As mentioned in section 5.1, when wordplay in the source text was translated with a target language wordplay, the category of wordplay usually stayed the same. In the translation of allusive wordplay, there was only one instance where allusive wordplay was translated with linguistic wordplay. That was found in the Finnish localisation, and this instance of allusive wordplay translated with target language homonymy was explained earlier in example 13. Again, this suggests that the translators have perceived the two main types of wordplay two different phenomena and have aimed at similar solutions in their translations.

Just as it was with linguistic wordplay, the subcategory of wordplay sometimes changed in translation. In the Swedish localisation, because no wordplay based on a key-phrase allusion survived, the source text wordplay in each PUN → PUN translation was based on a proper name allusion. Every target language wordplay resulting from PUN → PUN translation was also based on a proper name allusion. This means that the subcategory of allusive wordplay always remained the same in the Swedish localisation. In the Finnish localisation, the subcategory had changed both ways but only three times in total. Twice the allusive element in the wordplay had changed from a key-phrase into a proper name. In summary, there was less fluctuation between subcategories in the translation of allusive wordplay than in the translation of linguistic wordplay. This may suggest that the subcategories of linguistic wordplay are seen as more closely related to each other than the two subcategories of allusive wordplay.

Because a proper name effectively identifies the text alluded, a key-phrase allusion may in comparison seem more like a hint than a definite reference. Whatever the reason, a tendency to favour allusive wordplay based on a proper name was observed in both localisations. Example 15 illustrates the most typical type of translation in the PUN → PUN category where the subcategory remains the same:

- (15) *Flex Crystals* Bollard Fence: *God save the Queen* Fencing Co. as they introduce the *Flex Crystals* Bollard Fence, a lighted enclosure done your way. And if your square neighbors don't like the *Flex Crystals*, just flash a snarl and tell them to *never mind the bollards*.

(FI) *Jonirotten*-aita: Kun *Ex Pistolit* -yhtiö lähti kehittämään uutta aitaa, tarkoituksena ei ollut luoda silmiä hivelevää taideteosta - päinvastoin. Yhtiö halusi kehittää jotain uutta ja mullistavaa, ja siinä se jossain määrin onnistuikin, vaikka sitä moitittiinkin aidantekotaidottomaksi amatööripoppoksi. Pelkästään *Jonirotten*-aidan suosio kertoo yhtiön taidoista jotain aivan muuta.

(SV) Stolpstaket i flexikristall: *Die Mauer* AB presenterar ett Stolpstaket i flexikristall, en upplyst inhägnad som blir din uppgång och ditt fall. Om dina trista grannar inte gillar flexikristall kan du bara morra åt dem och säga åt de att beväpna sig!

The object in example 15 is a type of a fence called the ‘Flex Crystals Bollard Fence’. The string contains three proper name allusions, all revolving around the same theme. The name of the object contains what could be called the key allusion in the string: ‘Flex Crystals’ is a modification of the name of the English punk rock band Sex Pistols. ‘God save the Queen’ is, among other things, one of the band’s best-known songs. ‘Never mind the bollards’ refers to the studio album *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols* the song is included on. Together with the other hints in the description, the string constitutes one complex allusion to the band Sex Pistols. Because all the three allusions were based on proper names and their referent was ultimately the same, this string was categorised as an instance of wordplay based on a proper name allusion.

The Finnish translator has recognised the allusive wordplay and decided on a similar solution in Finnish. The name of the fence in Finnish is ‘Jonirodden’, a modification of Johnny Rotten, the singer of Sex Pistols. The fence is said to be manufactured by a company called ‘Ex Pistolit’ [ex pistols], another modification of the band’s name. The rest of the description text was heavily modified, but it still follows the theme of the allusions. With the existence of two proper name allusions, the subcategory of the translation is the same as in the source text, wordplay based on allusive wordplay.

The Swedish translator chose a slightly different approach. The Swedish string does not allude to the Sex Pistols but to a song called *Die Mauer* by the Swedish punk band Ebba Grön. The name of the song has been inserted into the description as the name of the company manufacturing the fence. The song is about two lovers separated by the Berlin Wall, Berliner Mauer in German. The name of the song alone would not have been enough to definitely identify the referent, but the imagery of the description text that has been borrowed from the lyrics of the song and the fact that both Sex Pistols and Ebba Grön were punk bands support this interpretation. Because the allusive element is the name of a song, the translation was categorised as wordplay based on a proper name allusion.

5.3 Secondary Retention and Transcreation

In the previous two sections, sections 5.1 and 5.2, the focus was mainly on the retention of wordplay as a rhetorical device. When a wordplay cannot be rendered by a target language wordplay and the form of the rhetorical device is lost, the structural, functional and semantic equivalence between the source text and the target text becomes more central. Translation is largely an act of making choices, and the number of choices possible increases when a form carries several meanings. While the usage of retention offered one way of examining the translators’ choices, the distribution of the re-creative strategies also revealed something about their overall approach to translation. Just as the PUN → PUN strategy was based on the retention of the form of wordplay, the re-creative categories could be seen as the retention of different aspects of the wordplay.

For the PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE it was the function and for PUN → NON-PUN the semantic structure of the original wordplay. When neither of these strategies was possible, the result was a PUN → ZERO translation. The retention of a certain aspect of the wordplay could be called secondary retention. It should be noted that retention of the formal structure is not the same as retention of the form: retention of the formal structure would be keeping to the level of words, which is not a sensible objective in translation.

Of the three re-creative categories, the PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE was the most common in the Finnish localisation. In other words, the emphasis was on the function of the original wordplay. Most of the game text strings were like short parodies or jokes, and wordplay was one of the ways of producing humour in them. Wordplay was, therefore, used as a means to amuse the player. In the majority of Finnish translations in the PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE category, the wordplay was replaced with some type of soundplay. Alliteration was used the most, but rhyming was also found in some translations. The use of soundplay can be seen for example in examples 7 and 9. The use of other types of related rhetorical devices is illustrated in example 16:

- (16) Big Sky Country Couch: You can take the couch out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the couch. That's especially true with the Big Sky Country Couch. What this sofa lacks in urbane sophistication, it makes up for with *true grit*.

(FI) Elonkorjuu-sohva: *Maatalon sohva on maatalon sohva, vaikka kaupunkihin kannettaisiin. Niitä sohvamarkkinoiden paras sato ja valitse Elonkorjuu. Sitten voitkin elää kuin pellossa ja vetää lonkkaa oikein antaumuksella.*

The object in example 16 is a country couch in more than just the name. In this example, the wordplay is homonymy in the form of a phrase, 'true grit'. When a person is said to have 'true grit', it means that they have courage and resolution. The weirdness of an expression like this being used of an inanimate object such as a couch triggers the

wordplay and the literal interpretation of ‘true grit’ as actual soil or small pieces of stone. This reading is also supported by the rest of the description text where it is said that country, a synonym of for example land and soil, cannot be taken out of the couch.

The Finnish translator has taken the creative use of an expression even further with a translation that is a combination of different types of fixed expressions. The first sentence in the string is a modification of an old Finnish proverb according to which things are what they are, no matter how hard one tries to hide their true nature. The second sentence contains a metaphor where buying the coach is likened to reaping the best harvest possible. The third sentence contains the idiomatic expressions ‘elää kuin pellossa’ [to live as if in the field] referring to a carefree happy-go-lucky lifestyle and ‘vetää lonkkaa’ [to pull hip] meaning being lazy or relaxing. With this jumble of expressions, the translation strategy was categorised as PUN → RELATED RHETORICAL DEVICE.

In the Swedish localisation, the most common re-creative category was PUN → NON-PUN. This category was even more common than the retentive category PUN → PUN. Thus, when producing wordplay in the translation had not been possible, the emphasis had been on the retention of the semantic structure of the original wordplay. Although PUN → NON-PUN was categorised as a re-creative strategy, the level of creativity required to produce a translation like this could range from simply choosing a fitting equivalent for the primary reading of the wordplay to changes on the structural level. One of the more creative solutions was presented in example 13 where an American brand of candy had been turned into a type of candy invented in Sweden. However, usually the translations were fairly simple like in examples 9 and 13. In a few cases, faithfulness to the semantic structure of the source text had resulted in so-called culture bumps. This is illustrated by example 17:

- (17) Rassin’ Frassin’ Door: The law of the Old West was simple... *live by the door, die by the door*. This was due in part to the alarming rise of door-related accidents, both comic and deadly. Then the Rassin’ Frassin’ came along and ended those senseless door disasters right quick.

(SV) Ruff o Tuff-dörr: Lagen i Vilda Västern var enkel... *lev med dörren, dö med dörren*. Det berodde till stor del på den alarmerande ökningen av dörrelaterade olyckor, både komiska och dödliga. Sen kom Ruff o Tuff och satte stopp för alla dörrkatastrofer direkt.

The description of the object in example 17 is like the plot description of a typical western film where a new sheriff comes to town to bring in law and order. The description includes a key-phrase allusion that is a modification of the saying “live by the sword, die by the sword” derived from a biblical parable. In the Swedish localisation, the phrase ‘live by the door, die by the door’ has been translated as ‘lev med dörren, dö med dörren’ [live with the door, die with the door]. Firstly, the original biblical parable is known and has something that could be called an official translation in Swedish. The shorter saying derived from it does not have. Secondly, in English the wordplay takes advantage of the ambiguity of the pronoun ‘by’, which can indicate for example a means or a location. In this context, the Swedish preposition ‘med’ can be understood only as ‘(together) with’. The result is confusing. The translation is a literal rendering of a modification of a saying derived from another source, and because of this long chain of changes, the allusion has been lost in translation. A player who has not seen the original text is likely to notice that something is going on, but would have to go beyond the translation to unravel the mystery. Because the semantic structure was retained, although in a very literal sense, the strategy was categorised as PUN → NON-PUN.

Aside from the actual categories of translation strategies, the two translators seem to have followed very different guiding principles. In the Swedish localisation, the rule seems to have been “when in doubt, change as little as possible”. Some of the translations were so faithful to the source text that they corresponded to the original almost word for word, actually retaining the formal structure. At worst, this led to a culture bump in the translation like in example 17, and in the milder cases, the result was understandable but unnatural sounding language. Such cases were in the minority but not uncommon, either. One reason for this could be that the translator had not always identified the wordplay in the original and had tried to make the best translation

out of something that seemed incomprehensible to begin with. Whatever the reason, it seems that when no satisfactory solution could be found, the translator had preferred staying faithful to the source text rather than omitting anything from it. The Finnish translator had taken the opposite approach.

As can be seen in the examples, in nearly every string in the Finnish translation there are omissions, additions and other changes that cannot be explained merely as changes required by linguistic transfer between different languages. Mostly these changes were additions ranging from short additional comments such as in example 7 to larger insertions of new texts such as in example 9. In some cases, the text in a string was practically rewritten, so that without any visual clues it would have been hard to identify the translation corresponding to the source string. This can be seen in example 8. The motivation behind many of these changes seems to have been keeping the tone of the translations humorous. Ultimately, this strategy seems to arise from the medium.

Although the principles of translation are always the same, the medium also has an effect on how translation is approached. Different media are and must be translated differently. The focus is different for example in the translation of prose and academic texts, and the medium adds its own restrictions for example in audiovisual translation and software translation. Even with products that are the same type of medium, for example a game, the function of the product should also be taken into consideration. *The Sims 3* is a game, a type of entertainment software made to entertain. The same is true of for example horror games, but they, again, require a different approach, because the way they entertain is usually different. The genre of a game is just the first clue of how to approach translating a game.

In conclusion, the approach taken with the Finnish localisation of *The Sims 3* seemed to embody the spirit of what O'Hagan and Mangiron call transcreation. Because localisation is supposed to keep the look and feel of a product the same, sometimes changes need to be made. The key idea is that a localisation should do in its locale what the original product does in the original locale. Just as languages are different, cultural conventions and attitudes may differ between locales. For example, nudity and violence

may be tolerated differently in different locales. In addition, for example the use of swearwords may have a very different impact in different locales, and just one word in a translation may have a stronger effect than five in the original. The way humour works also differs by culture. The changes made in the Finnish localisation can be explained as something the translator had deemed suitable for adjusting the humour to suit the target language and culture. That seems like a reasonable adjustment in the translation of a game that aims to entertain the players for example by amusing them with humour.

In this chapter, the findings of this study were discussed. The next and final chapter, Chapter 6, presents conclusions drawn from the findings.

6 CONCLUSIONS

This study set out to examine how localisation affects the product from the point of view of translation. To study what has been retained and what re-created in the localisation process, instances of wordplay in the game *The Sims 3* were examined through the translation strategies applied to them in the Finnish and Swedish localisations of the game. This chapter sums up the findings and presents the conclusions drawn from them.

Firstly, wordplay was retained almost as often in both localisations. The amount of wordplay retained in translation was 45% in the Finnish localisation and 40% in the Swedish. Part of the hypothesis was that the total amount of retention would be approximately the same in both localisations. The result that retention proved slightly more common in the Finnish localisation, however, was not expected. The reasoning behind such expectations was that with allusive wordplay the translators would be more or less on equal ground, but with linguistic wordplay only the translator of the Swedish localisation would likely be able to exploit the similarities between the source language and the target language. The reasoning proved true, and while the translator of the Swedish localisation had in some cases been able to reproduce a source text linguistic wordplay almost as is in the target language, this happened only once in the Finnish localisation.

On the one hand, considering how challenging it is to translate wordplay, the overall percentages of retained wordplay were not bad. Less than half but still a considerable amount of wordplay survived in both localisations. On the other hand, keeping in mind that wordplay is a very typical stylistic device and a form of witticism in *The Sims 3* and the entire game series, the percentages were not particularly good, either. A closer examination of the re-creative strategies revealed more about the translators' approach.

The above logic resulted in the finding that, secondly, the most significant differences between the localisations were found in the usage of the re-creative strategies. In other words, these are the choices the translators had made when retention had not been

possible. While the overall categories of retention and re-creation represented general tendencies, the re-creative strategies represented different kinds of compromises between a source-oriented and a target-oriented approach. When a compromise has to be made, a translator may prefer to retain certain features of the source text and pay less attention to others. The choice of re-creative strategy reveals such tendencies and could be called secondary retention.

In the Finnish localisation, the most common type of re-creative strategy was to render a source language wordplay in the translation by a related rhetorical device. This method aims to recapture the effect of the original wordplay and thus preserve the functional equivalence between the source text and the target text. Most often, the related rhetorical device used in the Finnish localisation was soundplay either in the form of alliteration or rhyming. Both are commonly used in Finnish and can be appreciated even by younger audiences, who may be familiar with soundplay as a stylistic device for example in naming things in a funny way. In the Swedish localisation, the most common type of re-creative strategy, even more common than retention, was translating the wordplay with a non-punning phrase that may salvage just one or both of the senses of the wordplay. The aim of such translation is, then, preserving the semantic equivalence between the source text and the target text.

Thirdly, because of the tendencies of secondary retention, all the three localisations examined in this study turned out to be rather different. Although in principle all the localisations are the same product, the player may at any time change the language of the game and thus change the gaming experience. The Finnish localisation is similar to the English original in the way that the translation recaptures the function of the source text. From the semantic point of view, the Finnish target text is in places far from what is traditionally meant by translation. On the contrary, the semantic equivalence between the English and the Swedish localisations is clear, but the effect of the translation is different from that of the source text. The result may not be perfect but it is clearly a translation. Neither approach can be declared ultimately better, but the audience and the function of the translation should also be taken into consideration. Bearing in mind that *The Sims 3* is an entertainment software that aims to amuse the player and relies

strongly on humour to do that, the Finnish localisation keeps the look and feel of the product closer to the original at least from this point of view. The developer's instructions regarding the translation of the previous game in the series discussed in section 2.3 support this interpretation.

Finally, the results of this study raise some questions regarding the concept of translation. In the Finnish localisation, there were many such changes and especially additions that do not fit the traditional notion of translation. However, mostly these manipulations seem justified, feel natural in their contexts and seem to embody what O'Hagan and Mangiron call transcreation. Is there, then, a need for the term transcreation? How do translation, transcreation and adaptation differ, and where is the line between the three? How much is this a special characteristic of game localisation? After all, the term was originally coined in the context of post-colonial translation. It should also be noted that, although in some cases creativity may be the main guideline, in some localisation processes a more "faithful" approach may be required.

The differences between the localisations also raise some questions specifically about translation in game localisation. Can the differences be explained by the choices of the individual translators, or could overall attitudes towards games, game localisation or even translations in general have had some effect? How would the Finnish and Swedish localisations compare with the other localisations of *The Sims 3*? Comparing all of the 17 localisations would be a tremendous effort, but choosing just one localisation made for a different locale might yield interesting results. For example, Germany and France have a strong tradition of translation, and both the German and French localisations have wider audiences than the Finnish and Swedish localisations. However, that would be just one way of expanding on the subject. On the whole, this was just one case study scratching the surface of the still largely unexplored area of game localisation, and consequently, no generalisations can be attempted. Clearly, more research is needed regarding the translation of this ever more popular form of entertainment.

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