





What do you want to play?

The desirability of video game translations from English into Dutch

according to Dutch gamers and non-gamers

Auteur	Bericht	
William15	Berichttitel: Spellen met Nederlandse vertaling	Geplaatst: 09 dec 2009 22:10
<p>   Geregistreerd: 04 dec 2004 19:29 </p>	<p>Niet gelijk beginnen te flamen, voor er enkele woorden goed en wel geschreven zijn, maar ik merk dat er de laatste jaren steeds meer spellen naar het Nederlands worden vertaald. En dan niet alleen maar de gameboy spelletjes met Disney of andere cartooney super helden, nee ook big blockbuster games.</p> <p>Ik kwam net namelijk thuis, toen ik zag dat mijn broertje een PS3 had gekocht. Mijn verbazing was helemaal compleet toen ik Drake ineens hoorde zeggen: „Truste'." Toen hij een bewaker buiten westen hielp.</p> <p>Ik was gelijk helemaal "Into" the game en vond het prachtig om naar te kijken en te luisteren. Maar zo gebeurd het de laatste tijd meer dat spellen naar het Nederlands worden vertaald.</p> <p>Welke zijn er zoal en wat is jullie mening hierover?</p> <p>Ikzelf vind het supermooi, maar zolang er ook maar een taal switch optie is, zodat mensen die absoluut niet tegen Nederlandse stemmen kunnen ook naar de Engelse of Japanse (Of welke andere taal dan ook) kunnen gaan.</p>	
<p> Jorjaan  AniWay Crew  Geregistreerd: 02 sep 2009 21:05 Woonplaats: Utrecht </p>	<p>Berichttitel:</p> <p>Op zich vind ik NL subs niet een super groot probleem, dubs dan weer wel maar als die goed uitgevoerd worden dan vind ik 't meer dan prima. Ik hou er alleen niet van als het door mijn strot geduwd wordt (Layton, Saints Row 2 (wat? Idd ja)). Also maak ik me een tikkie zorgen om de ver-Nederlandisering van de media, want willen we dat? Ik niet in ieder geval, omdat het gemiddelde niveau van Engels onder kinderen en jongvolwassenen dramatisch is, terwijl vrijwel iedereen ruwweg mijn generatie en later het wel goed beheerst. Also, daling in het intellectuele gemiddelde, komt dat door genetische degradatie of vershraling of NL-maken van veel media?</p> <p>Tikkie controversieel, deze: ik denk niet dat men alles moet willen voor zo min mogelijk moeite. Aangezien Engels een van de meest gesproken talen ter wereld is (en de wereldtaal, fuck Spaans en Chinees, kijk maar naar dekkingspercentage en second language) moet je die gewoon beheersen, dus waag jezelf aan een Engelse game en je beheersing stijgt vanzelf. Bullshit? Ik was op mijn 10e vloeiend Engels-sprekend en schrijvend, mezelf aangeleerd omdat ik wel moest door de games. Als ik dat kan, kan iedereen het =D</p> <p>Maar voordat ik weer een discussie uitlok omdat ik weer interessant wil doen: goeie dubs vind ik prima en kunnen wat toevoegen aan een game, maar for god sakes dub niet alles alsjeblijft.</p>	

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Chapter One: Prologue

1.1 Topic introduction and research question

The younger the medium, the less research has been performed on it. Yet it is these younger media which would benefit the most from empirical research: they have more room for experimentation before solidifying into a certain kind of norm. Within the field of translation studies this means that types of translation focusing on the new media, more specifically audiovisual translation (AVT) and videogame translation, will benefit the most from empirical research. Although research in the relatively young field of videogame localisation is on the rise, most of this research is theoretical and prescriptive, rather than descriptive. Most papers still focus on the question of how to improve upon existing translation theories and models, but hardly anyone takes into account the wishes of the intended audience: those who play games and those who want to play games but are, for whatever reason, not doing so at the moment.

It is imperative for translation theorists, whose purpose it is to improve upon existing translation techniques, to perform research in the aforementioned area. At the moment, however, there are simply not enough descriptive studies in which both gamers and, more importantly, non-gamers – who may turn into gamers if their wishes are catered to – get a say in the matter. Translation theorists propose ways in which to make their translations more immersive, but do not collect empirical data to test their presuppositions. This thesis will attempt to fill this gap.

The purpose of this thesis is to discern whether Dutch gamers and non-gamers actually want to play games in Dutch and if so, what they think of existing translations. In order to investigate the research question, an online survey was created and distributed amongst a Dutch sample audience consisting of five different types of gamers, including non-gamers;

questions involved the subject's opinions on several areas of videogame translation and localisation, with a focus on subtitling and dubbing. Dutch gamers can be quite vocal when it comes to the translation of videogames from English into their native language; thankfully, the survey respondents were no exception.

My hypothesis was that the target group would be willing to play more games if a higher number of them were translated into Dutch in the first place, or if current videogame translations were improved upon in some way. Insights in these matters would prove invaluable for game distributors, as they would be able to sell more games based on the outcome of this thesis. If, on the other hand, it turns out that gamers and non-gamers simply do not want to play games in Dutch – as numerous online forums would have us believe – the Dutch video game translation industry should probably rethink their current localisation process.

1.2 Thesis overview

The following paragraphs will provide the reader with a brief overview of this thesis.

Chapter two, “Theoretical background”, provides some theoretical background on videogame localisation. First, the reader is acquainted with videogame terminology. After that, the chapter examines the localisation process, focussing on the perspective of game developers and distributors on the one hand, and the role of the translator on the other hand. Chandler's four levels of localisation and Mangiron's recent study of subtitling practices in videogames are also discussed.

Chapter three, “Methodology”, explains the methodology used in the research for this thesis. In order to discover the opinions of Dutch gamers and non-gamers regarding the video game translation scene, an online survey was created. After briefly revisiting the research question and hypothesis, the survey is discussed in detail, more precisely the creation of the survey itself as well as the individual questions.

Chapter four, “Results and analysis”, presents and discusses the results of this survey. Most of the analysis treats the respondents as a single group, namely Dutch people between the ages of sixteen and thirty. Apart from that, the respondents are also divided according to gaming frequency; this division makes it possible to examine whether there are any differences between five different gamer types.

Finally, chapter five, “Discussion and conclusion”, summarises the findings from the analysis and answers the research question. Afterwards, the limitations of the current study are discussed and some suggestions for further research are given.

Chapter Two: Theoretical background

This chapter provides some theoretical background on videogame localisation. First, section 2.1 introduces the reader to videogame terminology, both hardware (2.1.1) and software (2.1.2). Next, section 2.2 discusses the current videogame localisation process, focusing on development and distribution strategies of major corporations (2.2.1), Chandler's four levels of localisation (2.2.2), the role of the translator according to Dietz (2.2.3) and Mangiron's recent study of subtitling practices in videogames (2.2.4).

2.1 Videogame terminology

Before explaining the survey's results and analysis, or even the methodology that was used in creating said survey, it is imperative to inform the reader of several terms that will be used throughout this thesis. This is because the terminology used by researchers in the field of translation theory (or elsewhere) often shows slight deviations between papers. Although the survey created for this thesis does not overtly enquire after it, many respondents mention having different translation preferences for different genres or console types. For the purpose of intelligibility I will therefore provide definitions of some of the vocabulary used in this thesis.

2.1.1 Hardware

Computing hardware, or simply hardware, refers to all of the parts that make up a computer system. In the context of videogames there are four different types of gaming hardware, commonly referred to as 'platforms': arcade cabinets, consoles, handhelds and the PC. Of these four, only the arcade cabinet has become obsolete in the West – though it continues to be popular in Japan (Veugen 2006) – which is why this thesis will focus almost exclusively on the remaining three categories.

The first type of gaming platform is the PC. This is probably the most versatile gaming platform since it encompasses games of all genres, from one-minute casual games to hours-long massive multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG). It is also the most easily available out of all the platforms, since most people already own a PC or laptop for non-gaming purposes. Games can be installed from a CD-ROM or DVD-ROM, bought from online software platforms – the most popular one being Steam – or played online by means of web browsers. There are also special gaming computers available, which are standard desktop computers with high-performance hardware, such as a more powerful video card, processor and memory.

The second type of gaming platform consists of lightweight, portable gaming devices referred to as handhelds. Some of these devices, such as the PlayStation Vita (Sony) and Nintendo 3DS, were built specifically for gaming purposes. These devices are the current generation's only gaming consoles still making use of game cartridges – that is, removable enclosures containing read-only memory devices which can only be inserted in or connected to the specific game console it was made for – although recently it has also become quite common to download gaming software from a specific handheld's online store. In addition to handheld game consoles, whose primary function is to play games, Smartphones and tablets have incorporated the gaming function as a secondary functionality. Games created for handheld gaming consoles are usually longer, harder and more visually stunning than games created for Smartphones and tablets, due to differences in hardware capabilities. On the other hand, the accessibility and versatility of Smartphones and tablets has a greater reach when it comes to the target audience.

The last type of gaming platform, consoles are gaming computers specifically designed for consumers to use for playing videogames. In contrast to arcade cabinets, consoles are meant for home consumption, allowing the target audience to bring videogames

into the home. The best known consoles currently sold on the market are the so-called Next Gen consoles: the Wii U (Nintendo), PlayStation 4 (Sony) and the Xbox One (Microsoft). The main purpose of these consoles is to play videogames, although contemporary consoles often incorporate other functions such as DVD-players. Current gaming computers have no games hardwired into their circuitry, meaning the consumer will either have to buy the gaming software on CD-ROM or DVD-ROM, or download it via online services. The game can then be played by connecting the console with a television set, using a controller to influence the action on screen.

2.1.2 Software

Videogames can be categorised in two ways: firstly, by determining what type of hardware is required and secondly, by focusing on the content of the game itself (Van Oers 2010). The first category is needed because the hardware influences the gameplay to a certain extent. As Van Oers asserts, “[a] game for a handheld could belong to the same game type as a game for a console, but the gameplay and game design could differ tremendously” (p. 22); for example, handheld games are usually shorter than games meant for a console or PC, since the former are meant to be played on-the-go. Thus, by categorising videogames according to the hardware it is played on, one could label a game as being either a console game, PC game, arcade game or handheld game.

The second category focuses on the content of the videogame itself, based on gameplay interaction rather than visual or narrative differences (as opposed to literature and film). It is customary in the videogame industry to refer to the content and gameplay of a game as genre, even though there are no fixed guidelines to determine which game falls under which category and there is a certain amount of overlap (Van Oers 2010, p. 22). Because of this, most games nowadays are classified by naming a number of genres, instead of just one,

in order to provide the most accurate description possible: the *Assassin's Creed* series (2007~), for example, can thus be classified as a historical fiction action-adventure open world stealth videogame series.

In the rest of this section, I will describe some of the most common game genres and subgenres while naming notable titles and/or games that are mentioned throughout this thesis. This is not an exhaustive list – there are many more noteworthy subgenres, including party games, sandbox games and pornographic games – but it will at least give some idea of the vast number of videogame types on the market.

- Action: places much emphasis on combat, requiring the player to use quick reflexes, accuracy and timing to overcome obstacles. It is one of the broadest gaming genres and there are many subgenres of action games, the most obvious being fighting games such as the *Dead or Alive* series (1996~) and first person shooters such as the *Halo* series (2001~); although ball-and-paddle games such as *Pong* (1972) and maze games such as *Pac-Man* (1980) also belong in this category. Another well-established subgenre is the platform game or platformer, which involves travelling between platforms by jumping or climbing ladders; many popular platformers are associated with iconic videogame mascots, such as Sonic the Hedgehog, Rayman and Mario.
- Adventure: puzzles, problem-solving and character interaction form the basis of this genre that concentrates on the story rather than the action. Text adventures were some of the earliest games created, but nowadays graphic adventures are more common. Subgenres include point-and-click games, such as the *Freddi Fish* series (1994-2001); visual novels, such as the *Ace Attorney* series (2001~); and real-time 3D adventure games, such as *The Stanley Parable* (2011).
- Action-adventure: combines the elements of the two aforementioned genres. They tend to focus on exploration and involve item gathering, puzzle solving and combat.

The two most common subgenres are stealth games, such as the aforementioned *Assassin's Creed* series, in which the player is encouraged to sneak around (as opposed to running in guns blazing as in a shooter or fighting game); and survival horror games, such as the *Silent Hill* (1999~) and *Resident Evil* series (1996~), which attempt to scare the player through the use of atmospherics and other classic horror fiction elements such as blood, gore and the undead.

- Educational: aims to educate, as the name suggests – also referred to as edutainment. The aforementioned point-and-click series *Freddi Fish* also falls in this category.
- Role-playing: drawing their gameplay from traditional role-playing games like *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974~), RPGs cast the player in the role of an adventurer, often in a fantasy world setting. Magic and magical beasts are not uncommon in these types of games. The most common divide between RPGs is a cultural one, differentiating Western RPGs such as the *The Elder Scrolls* series (1994~) from Japanese RPGs such as the *Final Fantasy* series (1987~). Another important subgenre is the MMORPG, which stands for massively multiplayer online role-playing game, of which a notable example is *World of Warcraft* (2004), being one of the most researched games of all time.
- Simulation: designed to simulate aspects of a real or fictional reality. There are three noticeable subgenres: construction and management simulation games such as *SimCity* (1989~) task players to manage fictional communities or projects with limited resources; life simulation games such as *The Sims* (2000~) focus on having control over the lives of virtual people or pets; and vehicle simulation games such as *Kerbal Space Program* (2015) provide the player with a realistic interpretation of operating various kinds of vehicles, including flight simulators, space flight simulators and racing games.

- Strategy: revolves around tactics. Careful thinking and planning are required: in order to achieve victory the player must keep an watchful eye on their own as well as their opponent's resources, weapons and/or armies. Notable subgenres are 4X games such as the *Civilization* series (1991~), in which the objective is to explore, expand, exploit and exterminate, and real-time strategy or RTS games such as the *Age of Empires* series (1997~), in which the player is tasked with obtaining resources, building bases, researching technologies and producing units.
- Sports: allows the player to re-enact real-life, physical sports like soccer and basketball. An example of a popular sports videogame is the *Fifa* series (1993~). Racing games could also be placed under this category.
- Casual games: are targeted at those who do not want to spend too much time and effort on videogames, i.e. casual gamers (as opposed to 'hardcore gamers' or, as they are referred to in this thesis, extreme gamers). These games are meant to be played for short periods of time each day. Many of these games are simple logic games and can be played in web browsers and/or on portable devices such as a tablet or Smartphone. Popular casual games include *FarmVille* (2009) and *Candy Crush Saga* (2012).

2.2 The localisation process

This section gives a brief overview of the current videogame localisation process. It is important to note that videogame localisation is a hypernym of videogame translation, meaning that localisation encompasses more than just the translation of words: it also entails the adaptation of culture-specific images, sounds and other non-textual elements from the source language material into cultural equivalents that will be understood and enjoyed by the target audience. The following paragraphs discuss the current localisation process, focussing on the roles of developers, distributors and translators alike.

2.2.1 Development and distribution

Localisation should and often does start even before a game is made. In “‘How Difficult Can That Be?’ – The Work of Computer and Video Game Localization” (2007), Frank Dietz notes that “complete localization and the simultaneous (or near-simultaneous) launch of several language versions have now become much more prevalent” when compared to twenty years ago (p. 3). The reason for this lies in the high costs of game development and the short shelf life of contemporary games: in order to recover the huge development costs as quickly as possible, game developers must serve multiple markets simultaneously through a so-called ‘sim ship’ (i.e. the different language versions are all to be released simultaneously). Simultaneous release of several language versions requires parallel development, meaning that the translator will have to work with a text that is often still unfinished and sometimes requires frantic rewriting and retranslating during the last few days before the game’s release.

Dietz mentions that “localization usually comes as an afterthought” during a game’s development and for that reason he calls for “early and frequent communication between translators and developers” (p. 4). Carmen Mangiron propagates the same opinion in her article “Subtitling in game localisation: a descriptive study” (2013). She points out that the

decision to support subtitles should be made at an early stage in the game development process since the subtitles have to be added to every game's individual game code. In some cases verbal information is embedded in the game code itself (especially in the early days of videogames), making it very difficult for the translator to distinguish between the code and the text intended for translation; as a result the translator might translate some of the code by mistake, after which the game will not function properly and it is very hard to find the initial location of the error. Nowadays, the information regarding who is speaking, what is being said and the time at which it is said is often presented in a text file document, after which a scripting system extracts the data and uploads it to the video display component of the programme (Mangiron 2013, p. 45). This approach ensures that the translator only has access to the ST and is therefore unable to accidentally alter any of the game code.

Localisation practices vary between publishers. Nintendo, for example, is notorious for refraining from localising many of their games for Western countries even if they are popular and there is a demand for them. *Mother 3* (2006) is one of the most notable examples of an untranslated potential bestseller: after it was announced that the game would not be getting an American release, fans petitioned Nintendo to localise it; when this petition failed, an English fan translation was released in 2008. Furthermore, many Japanese companies (including Nintendo) use the English TT instead of the Japanese ST as a basis for localisations meant for smaller target audiences like the Benelux: an example of this is the *Professor Layton* series (2007-2014), which used the English translation as a basis for its Dutch localisation. Moreover, even if a game does have an official English translation it may not receive a release in all English-speaking countries, as in the case of *Another Code: R - A Journey into Lost Memories* (2009), which is available in Europe but was never officially released in North America. In contrast to Nintendo's sometimes strangely selective localisation policy, on the other hand, French developer and publisher Ubisoft has localised

all of their games since 2008 because of a law called the Toubon act, which “mandates the use of French language in commercial products” (Van Oers 2010, p. 27, paraphrasing Chandler 2005).

2.2.2 Levels of localisation

After the decision has been made to localise a game into a different region, there are several different forms of localisation which the developer or distributor can choose between. Chandler mentions four levels of localisation in *The Game Localization Handbook* (2005):

- No localisation: a game is imported into a region in the original language and no changes are made to either the packaging or the game itself. A reason for this may be that the target audience is expected to speak the original language, or that the game itself is based on simple mechanics rather than story. This is the least expensive of the four levels of videogame localisation.
- Box and docs localisation: the box, manual and other extratextual elements are translated, but the game itself is left untouched. Again the target audience is expected to be able to understand the original language, but the packaging is made to look less foreign.
- Partial localisation: usually, all the game text and the packaging are localised and the voiceovers are subtitled. With regards to English videogames, this is the most common form of localisation in countries such as Spain and Italy.
- Full localisation: everything is localised, including voiceovers. High-profile titles are often fully localised, especially for key territories such as France and Germany.

Ultimately, it all depends on how much the publisher wants to invest: high-profile titles are more likely to receive a full localisation than games with a smaller budget and/or target audience. Simultaneous shipping also increases the likelihood of a full localisation.

When it comes to subtitling and dubbing, there are also differences in localisation practices. Subtitles, on the one hand, are usually optional, meaning that they are not enabled by default and the player must choose to turn them on at the settings menu. The main trend nowadays is to include intralingual subtitles in most original games and interlingual subtitles in most localised games. Game dubs, on the other hand, are usually enforced, in the sense that the player is not able to choose between multiple soundtracks on a specific game cartridge or disc. However, online software distribution platforms such as Steam do sometimes enable the player to choose a different language for the soundtrack.

In the Netherlands, subtitled and dubbed videogames have both become quite common, although no localisation still seems to be the norm. Many contemporary games have been dubbed into Dutch, including the more recent games in the *Fifa* sports series (1993~), and some games are only available in the localised Dutch language version, such as *Professor Layton and the Azran Legacy* (2014), the latest game in the *Professor Layton* puzzle game series. Subtitling is also used, for example in the *Assassin's Creed* series, and more often than not multiple languages are provided to choose from. However, it is still generally the norm not to localise into Dutch, but rather to import games in the English language, whether it is the original version or a localised one: the games in the *Pokémon* series (1996~), for example, are still only available in English, even though they are continuously at the top of the list of best-selling games. Incidentally, it should be noted that I have not been able to find an official comprehensive list of games with Dutch dubs and/or subs, nor an extensive unofficial one. Perhaps another researcher could attempt to make such a list in the future, as it will allow future researchers to form a more informed opinion on the existing Dutch videogame dubbing and subtitling scene.

2.2.3 The role of the translator

Dietz argues that those interested in computer/videogame localisation have to be particularly computer-literate; in fact, videogame localisation “require[s] both the skills of a technical and a literary translator” (p. 2). He also gives several characteristics a good videogame translator ought to possess:

- The translator has to be familiar with the specific hardware and software terminology in both the SL and TL.
- The translator has to be able to deal with hardware and software conflicts, since unfinished games can be rather unstable.
- The translator has to be able to play the game, in order to be able to visualise the game world and the action on the screen.
- The translator has to be able to do research by means of the Internet, since many videogame-related terms cannot be found in standard dictionaries.
- The translator should be familiar with the gaming scene and jargon in the target culture (p. 2-3).

Some of these reasons, more explicitly the first and second, are specific to computer and videogame localisation, in the sense that other types of translation generally do not deal with hardware on a daily basis. The other reasons, though, show similarities to literary translation as well as other forms of AVT. Dietz states that many mistakes he has seen in game localisations were “obviously caused by someone not being able to visualise what would be happening on the screen” (p. 2), but this is not limited to videogame localisation as these kinds of mistakes happen quite frequently in other forms of AVT as well, such as subtitling for films or TV series. Similarly, nowadays most translators use the Internet in conjunction with paper dictionaries regardless of their preferred subject or area of translation (legal translation, literary translation, AVT, etc), so this does not distinguish videogame

translators from their peers either. And neither does the last statement: whether one is translating a videogame about elves and dwarves or a book about military aeroplanes, a translator should always be familiar with the subject scene and jargon in the TL, regardless of the subject material.

2.3 Current subtitling practices in videogames

Subtitling has been called a type of ‘vulnerable translation’ by Díaz-Cintas and Remael (2007, p. 8), a term which has since been adopted by many other translation theorists. Unlike forms of translation in which the ST is completely replaced by the TT, subtitles retain the verbal elements of the ST. The co-existence of ST soundtrack and TT subtitles means that “they must also stand up to the scrutiny of an audience that may have some knowledge of the original language” (p. 57). In the context of this thesis: a Dutch person with some understanding of the English language will notice when the translation of a videogame does not fit their expectations (e.g. when there is an omission, reduction or error), which may cast doubt on the quality of the rest of the translation. This vulnerability is not present in dubbing, since the target audience is not presented with the ST alongside the TT.

In “Subtitling in game localisation: a descriptive study” (2013), Mangiron explores the current subtitling practices in videogames. Some of the similarities between videogame translation and other forms of AVT mentioned by Mangiron are 1) time and space constraints, 2) segmentation and alignment in subtitles, and 3) lip syncing and natural speech for dubbing. The greatest difference between subtitling for AVT and videogames, however, is the lack of standardisation in the latter. Mangiron lists several features of videogame subtitles that differentiate this medium from other forms of AVT, stating that videogame subtitles:

- can combine monochrome and polychrome fonts;
- use different types of fonts;
- can be static or dynamic; and
- can be presented in different parts of the screen, more specifically bottom, top, sides, and inside speech bubbles (45).

Mangiron concludes this line of reasoning by saying that “subtitles in games present a wider variety in terms of layout compared to other types of subtitles, due to the more ludic and playful nature of the video game medium” (2013 p. 45).



Fig. 1: Small fonts are the norm in contemporary videogames (from *Sleeping Dogs* (2012)).

Rephrasing Bartoll (2008, pp. 308-309), Mangiron points out that “the degree of reduction found in game subtitles is less than that of other audiovisual media” (2013 p. 45). Genres such as puzzle, platform and sport games usually contain little verbal information, making one-on-one translation the most obvious solution. However, when it comes to genres that include a high volume of text and dialogue, such as visual novels, adventure games and RPGs, reduction may be preferred since, otherwise, players may miss out on important information presented on the screen due to long subtitles obstructing the view. Nevertheless, contemporary mainstream videogames tend to avoid reduction, instead presenting interlingual subtitles in the smallest font possible so as to obscure the player’s view of the action on screen as little as possible¹ (see figure 1). The tendency seems to be to use all the space available for each subtitle and no attention is paid to sense or grammatical blocks (Mangiron 2013, p. 51). When compared to the guidelines for subtitling for other audiovisual media, “the length of time game subtitles are displayed on screen is variable and often insufficient” (Mangiron 2013, p. 48). Question 15 of this thesis’s survey refers back to these two issues, analysing whether the survey respondents were bothered by the short amount of screen time.

¹ What this means for the player’s eyesight is a subject for a different study, though.

Chapter Three: Methodology

It has been established in chapter 1 that the aim of this thesis is to discern the opinions of Dutch gamers and non-gamers regarding the video game translation scene, both in its current form and in the future. In order to discover said opinions, I conducted research in the form of a survey. In this chapter the research method will be discussed in more detail, more precisely the creation of the survey (section 3.1) as well as its individual questions (section 3.2).

3.1 Online survey: rationale, tools and distribution

The aim of this thesis is to discover the opinions of Dutch gamers and non-gamers with regard to the current state of game translation and localisation. In order to do so, a survey was conducted. There are several reasons why this research method was chosen, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Snapsurveys.com mentions several reasons for businesses and researchers to conduct surveys. The first of these reasons is, unsurprisingly, to “uncover the answers”. According to the website, the best way to gather meaningful opinions, comments and feedback is by using a “non-intimidating survey environment”, that is to say, an environment which “best suits the privacy needs of the survey respondent”. Respondents are more likely to give their honest opinions in online surveys, paper surveys or mobile surveys than in face-to-face survey interviews or telephone interviews, since the latter are less private and more intimidating.

Since I am looking for honest, meaningful answers, a non-intimidating method is preferable: this way, the respondents will not experience nervousness due to the presence of an interviewer or a certain time limit. The survey created for this thesis was originally intended to be distributed in paper form. However, after having decided to aim for as high a number of respondents as possible – the more respondents, the more objective the outcome –

the survey was not distributed on paper but via the Internet. Online surveys can easily be shared via social media, thereby reaching more people than would be the case with a paper survey. The tool used to create the survey was Survey Monkey, an online survey builder. This survey was distributed via Facebook, both on my own timeline as well as in several groups. Additionally, people were asked to share the survey on their own timelines, whether they themselves had filled out the survey or not. Another way to increase the number of respondents was to invite survey respondents, at the end of the survey, to share this survey with as many of their friends as possible.

Another one of *Snapsurveys.com*'s reasons to conduct a survey is to "evoke discussion". This can be done by giving survey respondents "an opportunity to discuss important key topics" and by "communicat[ing] with your respondents about your survey topic". This survey contains many open questions. On the one hand, the purpose of this is to extract the respondents' feelings and opinions, as well as to allow them to present ideas which this researcher has perhaps overlooked. On the other hand, there is another important purpose to these open questions, namely to make the respondent reflect upon the translation choices discussed in this survey, such as subtitling and dubbing. As with any kind of translation, the craft behind game translation is rarely considered (or even noticed) by the general public. The function of this survey, thus, is not only to be able to objectively describe the opinions of the Dutch target audience with regard to game localisation, but also to make Dutch gamers aware of different translation issues in this field.

3.2 Survey questions

The rest of this chapter consists of a discussion of the questions used in this survey (see Appendix 1 for the complete survey), clarifying the function of groups of questions and their relation to the research topic.

3.2.1 Native tongue and age: narrowing down the target sample audience

The survey starts with two general questions on the respondent's native tongue (question 1) and age (question 2). These questions are meant to identify and select potential sample members. Since this survey was conducted in Dutch, I expected most respondents to be native speakers of Dutch; however, some respondents spoke Dutch as a second language or were bilingual. In order to keep the results as unambiguous as possible, this thesis focuses only on native speakers of Dutch: firstly, because they are the most likely to have played games in Dutch instead of (or as well as) in English, and secondly, because they have a shared cultural background which SL speakers almost certainly do not fully comprehend. There were 208 respondents in total, of which 100 did not fall into the target sample group; as a consequence, 108 respondents' answers were used in this research.



Fig. 2: Filters added to narrow down the target sample group

Apart from only including native speakers of Dutch, this thesis will also focus on the answers of respondents within the age group 16-30, primarily university students. As mentioned before, this survey was distributed via Facebook. Social media are widely used by the intended target demographic of this survey: according to PewResearchCenter, as of January 2014, 74% of online adults use social networking sites, of which 89% belong within the age group 18-29. Another reason to opt for this age group is because students are located between two other age groups: children (<16) and working adults (>30). The older group has been gaming, or has been in contact with games, for over twenty years and is used to games in the Netherlands being available almost exclusively in English (remember that video game translation has only started to become more conventional in recent years!). The younger age group, on the other hand, is more used to games being readily available in several languages, including Dutch – plus, children may not be able to play games in English since their proficiency is not sufficient. The age group 16-30 has known both eras in video game translation and has a relatively good command of both languages; therefore, they are more likely to provide useful critical feedback. Section 4.1.1 divides the respondents between the five gamer types.

3.2.2 Gaming frequency: identifying gamers and non-gamers

Questions 3 to 8 were meant to identify the respondent's gaming identity. In this thesis I will differentiate between five different gamer types: extreme gamers, semi-extreme gamers, casual gamers, semi-casual gamers and non-gamers (see figure 3). The reason for splitting respondents into these five categories is that it allows me to locate possible differences in translation preferences between the different target audiences. It is important to include non-

gamers in this survey, since they represent a potential market which has not yet been reached as a result of the current localisation process². Therefore, their voice should not be ignored.

Since the aim was to categorize respondents as gamers or non-gamers, this section of the survey started with the question whether the respondent would classify themselves as a gamer (question 3). This is very subjective, to be sure, and not easily quantifiable – therefore, the next several questions were meant to identify the respondent’s gaming frequency in a more objective manner: question 8 specifically enquired after the number of hours the respondent spent on gaming in the last month, while questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 examined the number of games played in English, Dutch and other languages. I expected there to be different translation preferences between the different categories: for example, I expected that semi-casual gamers prefer to play games in Dutch more so than extreme gamers do. In section 4.2.1 the results of these questions are shown, followed by a discussion on why the hypothesis turned out to be erroneous.

The most important question in this category is number 8, since it allows us to put the respondent in a certain category, as illustrated here:

How many hours have you spent on playing videogames in the last month?	
More than 50 hours	Extreme gamer
20-25 hours	Semi-extreme gamer
10-25 hours	Casual gamer
2-10 hours	Semi-casual gamer
0-2 hours	Non-gamer

Fig. 3: Five different gamer types based on the answers to question 8.

² Though some non-gamers just do not like videogames, whichever language they are presented in.

The “Gamer Segmentation 2010 report” conducted by the NPD group classifies people who spend 48.5 hours on games per week as ‘extreme gamers’: for the purposes of this survey, I have taken that number and rounded it up to 50. The reason that non-gamers are given a two hour margin is because, nowadays, games are so very much entwined in our society that it is almost impossible to escape them entirely. In the 80s, arcade games were similar to fairground attractions, in the way that one would have to leave the house (and possess a lot of quarters) to enjoy a game; in the 90s, videogame consoles brought games into the home, but that still meant that one would need to own one of these expensive consoles in order to be able to play games. Nowadays, however, videogames are more easily accessible than ever. We do not have to go outside to visit an arcade or a videogame store, because we can buy everything we want online; we do not need to buy an expensive gaming console, because we probably already own one in the form of a PC, tablet or mobile phone; we do not have to play by ourselves if our offline friends are busy, because we can go online and play with anyone from all over the world; and we do not have to spend our money on and time with just one game, because there are millions to choose from. In this day and age, one would have to try *really* hard to never come into contact with any videogames – thus, the two hour margin.

3.2.3 Language preferences: choosing one language over another

After having narrowed down the target audience of the survey and having identified the respondents’ gaming identity, the respondents’ preferred language when playing videogames was determined. Questions 9 and 10 both indicate ten reasons which could play a role when deciding to play a game in Dutch or English, respectively. Most of these statements were inspired by a discussion in the topic “Spellen met Nederlandse vertaling” [Games with Dutch translation] posted on the forum of *Aniway*, a Dutch magazine for anime, manga, games and other things related to Japan (see cover page for part of the forum discussion). The

statements presented in questions 9 and 10 thus represent the opinions of Dutch gamers actively participating in the online debate. In order to discover which reasons are deemed the most important by the survey's target audience, respondents were asked to assign a number from 1 to 5 to each statement, 1 being very unimportant and 5 being very important.

3.2.3.1 Noticeable or no noticeable language preferences

The statements in questions 9 and 10 can be divided into two categories, namely 'noticeable language preferences' and 'no noticeable language preferences' (see figure 4). This distinction is very important. If, for example, the statements presented on the right are marked by respondents as being of higher importance when choosing a game language than the statements on the left, that would be an indication that the target audience could probably be swayed either way: Dutch gamers are content with playing games in English if these are, for example, cheaper than their Dutch counterparts or if they are not (yet) localised; but these same gamers would also very likely play more games in Dutch if only localised games were more easily available to them. If, on the other hand, the statements on the left turn out to be more highly rated, localisers must react in one of two different ways. If Dutch gamers turn out to have a preference for the Dutch language, that would mean more games may be localised. However, if English is favoured, publishers may wish to rethink their localisation procedures, for example by focussing more on subtitling than on dubbing, since subtitles keep the English ST intact for the gamer to enjoy. Publishers could therefore use the information received through this survey in the next review of their localisation procedures. Sections 4.2.2 discusses the results of questions 9 and 10 and section 4.2.3 analyses whether the respondents had a noticeable language preference or not.

To what extent do the following statements play a role in your decision to play a game in Dutch (Q9) / English (Q10)?	
Noticeable language preference	No noticeable language preference
I think Dutch is a beautiful language (Q9)	The Dutch version is cheaper than the English version (Q9)
I do not think English is a beautiful language (Q9)	The English version is cheaper than the Dutch version (Q10)
I think English is a beautiful language (Q10)	There is no other option; the game has only been released in Dutch (Q9)
I do not think Dutch is a beautiful language (Q10)	There is no other option; the game has only been released in English (Q10)
Because then I will not have to try so hard to understand everything (Q9+10)	I played the game at a friend's or borrowed the game from them (Q9+10)
I want to play the game in the original language, in this case Dutch (Q9)	For variation's sake (Q9+10)
I want to play the game in the original language, in this case English (Q10)	I do not care about the language (Q9+10)
	I never play games in Dutch (Q9)
	I never play games in English (Q10)

Fig. 4: Statements presented in questions 9 and 10 divided into two categories.

3.2.4 Opinions on existing game localisation practices

Before a decision is made to either change videogame localisation procedures or not, it is imperative to examine the respondents' opinions regarding current game localisation procedures. The purpose of questions 11 and 12 was to ascertain the respondent's standpoint –

that is to say, pro or con – regarding the fact that more games are being translated nowadays than was previously the case. Question 11 aimed for an emotional response from the respondent by asking for a quantifiable term, from ‘very bad’ to ‘very good’. Question 12, then, asked for specific reasons for having opted for ‘good’ or ‘bad’, consulting the respondent’s logic and ratio. I expected respondents to like this phenomenon, seeing as it means that they will be able to play more games in their native tongue. The results are discussed in section 4.3.

After having looked at the respondents’ views on videogame translation as a whole, the next part of the survey differentiates between two different modes of AVT: subtitling (in which the ST is complemented by the TT) and dubbing (in which the ST is replaced entirely by the TT). Firstly, question 13 enquired after which was preferred: subs, dubs, neither, or ‘it depends on the game’. In an attempt to bypass rational thinking, respondents were urged to follow their instincts and not think for too long before answering the question. If Dutch gamers really do not want their games to be translated, ‘neither’ was likely to be chosen most often. However, my hypothesis was, again, incorrect: respondents preferred subtitles. This is discussed in detail in section 4.4.

3.2.4.1 In-game translation strategies versus gaming experience

The next two questions (14 and 15) enquired in more detail after the respondents’ opinions regarding subtitling and dubbing in games. In both questions, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with certain statements, from ‘completely disagree’ to ‘completely agree’. The statements presented in question 14 can be divided into two categories, namely ‘in-game translation strategies’ on the one hand, and ‘gaming experience’ on the other (see figure 5) and the statements presented in question 15 can be divided in the same way (see figure 6).

When I play a game with Dutch dubs...	
In-game translation strategies	Gaming experience due to in-game translation strategies
...I often recognise a voice from TV (cartoons, films, TV shows, etc.).	...I enjoy recognising a voice from TV (cartoons, films, TV shows, etc.).
...I often recognise a voice from a different game.	...I enjoy recognising a voice from a different game.
...I often hear different Dutch accents or dialects, such as Amsterdams or Flemish.	...I enjoy hearing different Dutch accents or dialects, such as Amsterdams or Flemish.

Fig. 5: Statements presented in question 14 divided into two categories.

When I play a game with Dutch subtitles...	
In-game translation strategies	Gaming experience due to in-game translation strategies
...the subtitles often disappear too soon.	...I am often unable to follow the story because the subtitles disappear too soon.
...the subtitles often do not disappear soon enough.	...I often miss the action on the screen because the subtitles are in the way.
...the subtitles are cut off wrongly.	...it bothers me when the subtitles are cut off wrongly.
...I often see mistakes or strange expressions in the subtitles.	...it bothers me when I see mistakes or strange expressions in the subtitles.
...the font of the subtitles is often too small.	

Fig. 6: Statements presented in question 15 divided into two categories.

I expected respondents to agree with the statements on the right more than with the ones on the left. When playing a game, the player must often focus on several things at once, including – but not limited to – the action on the screen, voiceovers, sound effects and/or subtitles. Take, for example, *The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker*. At the beginning of the game there is a short tutorial, in which the player is taught certain button combinations (‘combos’) while sparring with his sword fighting instructor. In this specific scenario, the player has to gather information by reading the instructor’s comments in a text box, while at the same time learning how to fight by pressing the right buttons when prompted by a sound effect and visual aid. Since players must switch between the two quite often, they do not want to focus too much on how the information in the text boxes is presented – which is why I expect the statements on the left to be something the respondents have not thought about too much. Conversely, when there is something wrong with the presentation of the information – for example due to mistakes or strange expressions in the translation – this is immediately noticeable and irksome to the player: precious extra seconds are needed to process wrong or strangely formulated information. Sometimes, like in the tutorial mentioned above, the extra time needed to process the information just means a short interruption of the gaming experience; at other times, such as in a fight against a difficult opponent, these precious seconds needed to process the information might mean the difference between in-game life or death. In either case, the mistake interrupts the player’s immersion and detracts from the gaming experience as a whole. Therefore, I expected the statements on the right, referring to gaming experience as a result of the used translation strategies, to be agreed with more often than the statements on the left. Section 4.4.2 focuses on this distinction.

3.2.5 Open questions

It was considered only appropriate to end the survey with two open questions, creating space for the respondents to write down any of their thoughts concerning game translation which had not been mentioned in the survey. These were thought to be the most important questions in the entire survey, since they might reveal queries which this researcher had overlooked. Most of the respondents' answers to these questions elaborated on subjects which had been asked about before, though there were a few interesting new ideas. Since the answers to the open questions were so varied in subject material, they can be found throughout chapter 4 as they are discussed in sections related to the specific statement.

3.3 Hypotheses

In conclusion of chapter 3, here are some of my expectations, the validity of which will be discussed in chapter 4:

- Questions 4 and 5: Respondents have played significantly more games in English over the past year than they have in Dutch.
- Questions 6 and 7: Respondents have played almost no games in other languages than Dutch or English in the past year.
- Question 8: There are different translation preferences between the five different gamer types (extreme gamers, semi-extreme gamers, casual gamers, semi-casual gamers and non-gamers), such as:
- Questions 9 and 10: Respondents do not have a noticeable language preference (as defined by figure 4).
- Question 11 and 12: Respondents enjoy the fact that more games are being translated nowadays.
- Question 13: Respondents like neither dubs nor subs.

- Question 14 and 15: Respondents will agree with statements referring to in-game translation strategies less than with statements referring to gaming experience due to in-game translation strategies.
- Question 16 and 17: Respondents will present ideas which this researcher has overlooked.

The results of this survey, as well as the answers to the open questions, are discussed in the following chapter, “Results and analysis”. The results show whether Dutch gamers and non-gamers actually play games in Dutch and if so, what their opinions on existing translations are. The results of the survey are used to offer suggestions to game distributors on how to improve upon existing videogame localisation strategies in the Netherlands.

Chapter Four: Results and Analysis

In this chapter the results of the survey are presented and discussed. The respondents' answers are analysed in two ways: as a single group, representing a target audience of Dutch young adults, and according to gamer type, from non-gamer to extreme gamer. Section 4.1 explains which respondents were included in this analysis and section 4.1.1 gives a definition of the five gamer types. After that, sections 4.2 through 4.5 discuss the answers given by the respondents in more detail.

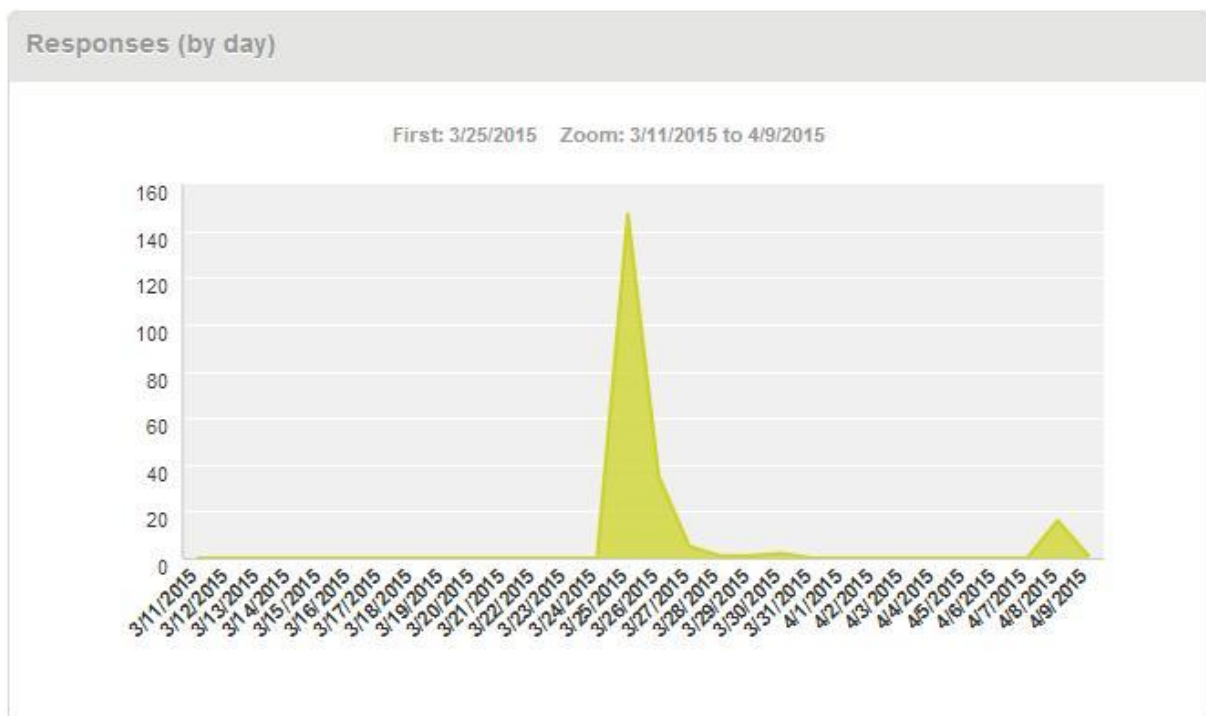


Fig. 7: Number of responses per day

4.1 Introduction

The survey was distributed via Facebook and was active between Wednesday 25 March and Monday 20 April. In that time period there were 208 respondents, of which 108 were eventually used for this research: the other 100 respondents were not part of the target audience group, because they:

- 1) did not fall into the relevant age group of 16-to-30-year-olds;
- 2) did not have Dutch as a first language; or
- 3) did not finish the survey.

The answers of the remaining respondents will be discussed in this chapter. In addition to examining the respondents as a single group, another division was created in which respondents were grouped together according to gamer type. The following section will explain that division in more detail.

4.1.1 Defining the five gamer types

Before an analysis can be made, the respondents must first be put in one of the five aforementioned groups of gamer types, from non-gamer to extreme gamer. Question 3, “Do you think of yourself as a gamer?”, showed that most of the respondents did indeed think so: almost two-thirds answered “yes”, while only one-third answered “no” (see figure 8). Interestingly enough, those who did not think of themselves as a gamer might, however, still have played quite a lot of games: one person had stated that they had played more than twenty games in Dutch in the past year (question 4); another person had played more than twenty games in English (question 5); and there were even two self-appointed “non-gamers” who had played more than fifty hours worth of games in the past month (see figure 9). Needless to say, question 3 proved to be quite useless in deciding which gamer type a specific respondent belonged to.

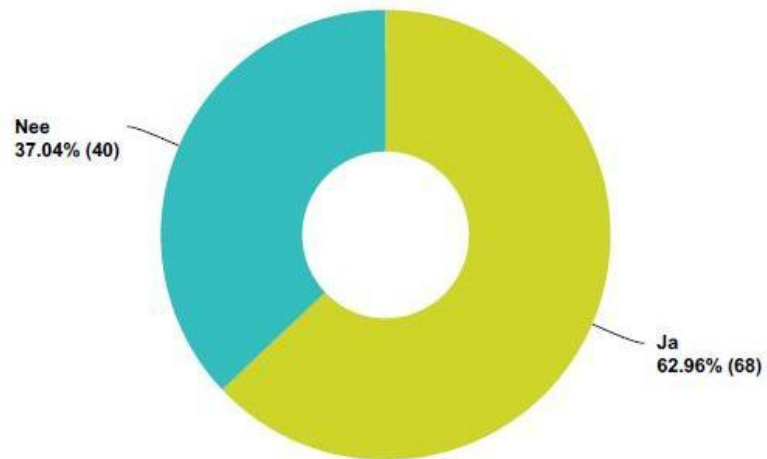


Fig. 8: Question 3: “Do you think of yourself as a gamer?”

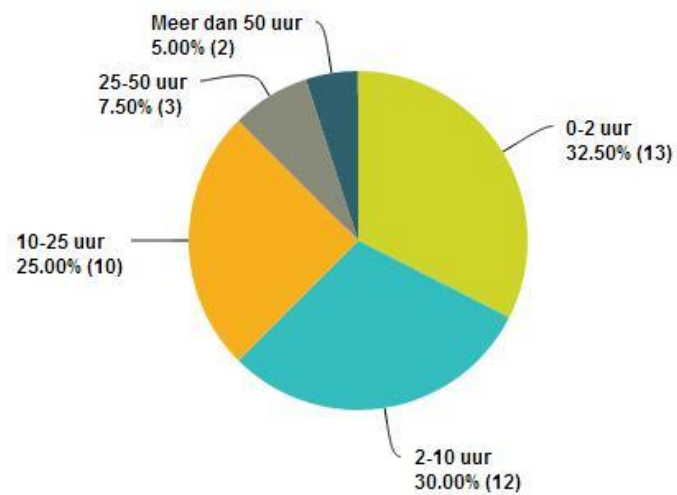
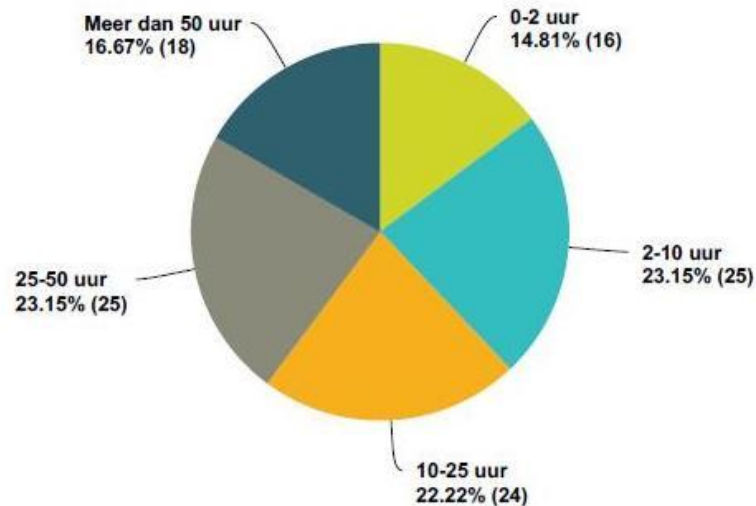


Fig. 9: Question 8: “How many hours have you spent on playing videogames in the last month?” according to those who answered question 3 (“Do you think of yourself as a gamer?”) with “No”.



How many hours have you spent on playing videogames in the past month?		
More than 50 hours	Extreme gamer	17% (18)
20-25 hours	Semi-extreme gamer	23% (25)
10-25 hours	Casual gamer	22% (24)
2-10 hours	Semi-casual gamer	23% (25)
0-2 hours	Non-gamer	15% (16)

Fig. 10: Percentage of respondents per gamer type.

Question 8, on the other hand, was exceptionally valuable (see figure 10). As expected, the two most extreme categories (0-2 hours and more than 50 hours) are the two smallest categories at 15% and 17% respectively. Nevertheless, as illustrated by the pie chart, all five different categories are quite evenly divided, meaning none of the types are overrepresented or underrepresented. Throughout the rest of this thesis, the definitions presented in figure 10 will be used when referring to the different gamer types.

4.2 Language preferences

The following paragraphs identify the respondents' preferred language when it comes to videogames. Firstly, section 4.2.1 looks at the respondents' gaming habits of the past year in Dutch, English and other languages (questions 4, 5, 6 and 7). Secondly, section 4.2.2 explores the reasons given by respondents for playing games in either Dutch or English (questions 9, 10, 11 and 12). Section 4.2.3 investigates whether respondents have noticeable languages preferences or not, referring back to figure 4 presented in section 3.2.3.1. Lastly, section 4.2.4 presents some of the open answers to questions 9 and 10, in which respondents give reasons for choosing one language over another which were not covered in the survey.

4.2.1 “How many games have you played in Dutch, English or other languages?”

As mentioned in chapter 3, I expected there to be different language preferences between the various gamer types. Therefore, questions 4, 5, 6 and 7 enquired after the number of games played by the respondents in Dutch, English and other languages, and questions 9, 10, 11 and 12 tried to make a distinction between respondents with a noticeable language preference and those without a noticeable language preference. The results of these questions are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Starting with question 4, “How many games did you play in Dutch in the past year?” (see figure 11), it is immediately clear that my hypothesis that non-gamers play more games in Dutch than extreme gamers is erroneous. Semi-casual and semi-extreme gamers are only slightly above non-gamers: in both cases, there was an even divide between those who played one to five games (44%) and those who did not play any games (56%). Interestingly enough, casual gamers and extreme gamers also played about the same number of games, the largest percentage in both groups being one to five, at 63% for casual gamers and 61% for extreme

gamers. There is, however, a noteworthy exception: the only two instances of respondents having played more than twenty Dutch games occurred in the extreme gamer category.

How many games did you play in <u>Dutch</u> in the past year?	Number of games	Number of respondents	Percentages
Non-gamer	0	8	50%
	1-5	8	50%
Semi-casual gamer	0	14	56%
	1-5	11	44%
Casual gamer	0	6	25%
	1-5	15	63%
	6-10	2	8%
	11-15	1	4%
Semi-extreme gamer	0	14	56%
	1-5	11	44%
Extreme gamer	0	4	22%
	1-5	11	61%
	6-10	1	6%
	>20	2	11%

Fig. 11: Question 4: “How many games did you play in Dutch in the past year?”

How many games did you play in <u>English</u> in the past year?	Number of games	Number of respondents	Percentages
Non-gamer	0	3	19 %
	1-5	9	56 %

	6-10	4	25 %
Semi-casual gamer	0	1	4 %
	1-5	13	52 %
	6-10	6	24 %
	11-15	2	8 %
	15-20	2	8 %
	>20	1	4 %
Casual gamer	0	1	4 %
	1-5	4	17 %
	6-10	10	42 %
	11-15	4	17 %
	15-20	2	8 %
	>20	3	12 %
Semi-extreme gamer	0	1	4 %
	1-5	2	8 %
	6-10	7	28 %
	11-15	6	24 %
	15-20	1	4 %
	>20	8	32 %
Extreme gamer	6-10	2	11 %
	11-15	1	5 %
	15-20	3	17 %
	>20	12	67 %

Fig. 12: Question 5: “How many games did you play in English in the past year?”

Looking at the answers to question 5, “How many games did you play in English in the past year?”, it is immediately clear that all gamer types play more games in English than they do in Dutch (see figure 12). In the non-gamer category 25% of respondents now state to have played 6 to 10 games in English, which is a significant rise compared to the 0% of the previous question; more importantly, although 50% had not played any Dutch games in the past year, only 19% had not played a game in English. Another noteworthy occurrence is the fact that within every gamer type, excepting non-gamers, there are respondents who claim to have played more than twenty games in English in the past year.

One of the things I expected before having carried out this survey was that semi-casual gamers would have played more games in Dutch than extreme gamers; however, this turned out not to be the case. Firstly, almost all respondents – regardless of gamer type – had played zero to five games in Dutch (with only six exceptions out of 108 respondents), meaning that semi-casual and extreme gamers had played the same number of games in Dutch. Secondly: on the one hand, 63% of semi-casual gamers had played only one to five games in Dutch, compared to 4% having played more than twenty games in English; on the other hand, 61% of extreme gamers had played only one to five games in Dutch, compared to 67% having played more than twenty games in English. In summation, extreme gamers had indeed played more games than semi-casual gamers – but almost all of the additional games were in the English language.

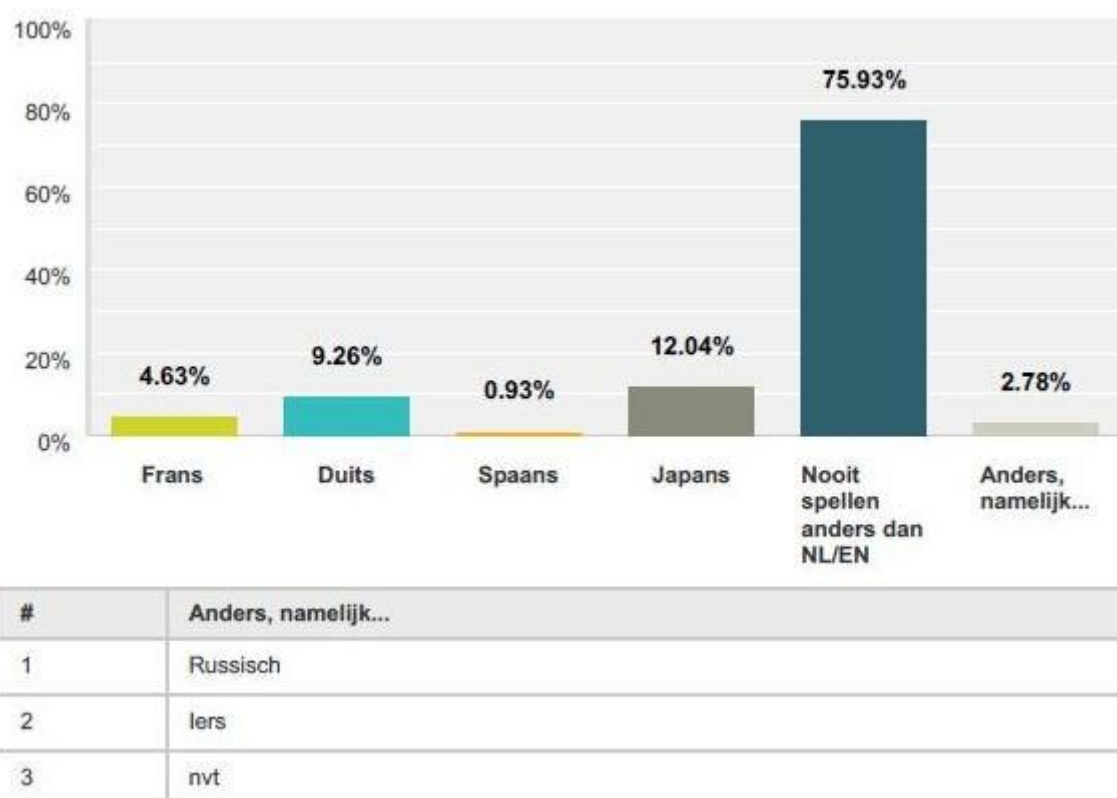


Fig. 13: Question 7: “If you have played a game in a language other than Dutch or English in the past year, which language was this?”

Almost 25% of the survey respondents had played games in a language other than Dutch or English (see figure 13). It is quite interesting to see how many respondents (12%) claim to have played a game in Japanese. One explanation for this could be that many Japanese games do not receive an official localisation in western countries (especially visual novels, a genre which is especially popular in Japan but not so much in Europe and America); this of course then means that one would have no other language option than Japanese if one wants to play the non-localised game³. Apart from Japanese, German is also mentioned relatively often, at 9%. A reason for this could be that Dutch and German are quite similar to each other – plus, the Dutch are taught German in secondary school. It is also relatively easy

³ A different explanation for this phenomenon could be that many of my friends are currently studying Japanese at university and/or like watching anime, which would mean the respondents do not sufficiently represent the actual target audience.

to import a German game, since the country is located next to the Netherlands. Other languages mentioned are French (4,5%), Spanish (1%), Russian (1%) and Irish (1%).

The more extreme the gaming frequency, the more respondents have played games in other languages in the past year (figure 14): non-gamers had played only games in Dutch and English, while 33% of extreme gamers had played games in other languages. However, none of the groups exceed the 'one to five' category, meaning that these other languages are by far not as popular as Dutch and English. Game distributors looking at the Netherlands as a potential market for their games are advised to either translate their games into Dutch or not translate them at all, since other languages are simply not as popular.

	Non-gamer	Semi-casual gamer	Casual gamer	Semi-extreme gamer	Extreme gamer
How many games did you play in <u>a language other than Dutch or English</u> in the past year?	0	0 (84%) 1-5 (16%)	0 (75%) 1-5 (25%)	0 (76%) 1-5 (24%)	0 (67%) 1-5 (33%)
Which language?		French 2 German 2 Japanese 1 Irish 1	French 1 German 4 Spanish 1	German 2 Japanese 6	French 2 German 2 Japanese 6

Fig. 14: The popularity of games in languages other than Dutch or English (questions 6 and 7).

In summation, the respondents of this survey, regardless of gamer type, had played more games in English in the past year than they had in Dutch or any other language. It is clear that the sample target audience has developed a preference for playing games in English, but at this point of the thesis it is still unclear why. The following section will discuss some of the reasons the respondents mentioned for choosing games in either Dutch or English.

4.2.2 “Why do you play games in Dutch or English?”

As will be discussed in the following paragraphs, the answers to questions 9, 10, 11 and 12 can be used to explain why all gamer types play more games in English than they do in Dutch. In questions 9 and 10 respondents were asked to rate, from ‘very unimportant’ (1) to ‘very important’ (5), to what extent certain statements play a role in their decision to choose a game in Dutch or English, respectively. As can be seen in figure 15 – in which the statements regarding Dutch games are on the left and English games are on the right – there are clear differences when it comes to how respondents decide between the two languages. In the graph on the left, it is noteworthy that most statements were deemed somewhere between ‘very unimportant’ (1) and ‘unimportant’ (2), with only two statements exceeding the ‘neutral’ (3) category. In the graph on the right, on the other hand, most statements were deemed between ‘unimportant’ (2) and ‘important’ (4), with only one statement falling in the ‘unimportant’ (1) category. It is obvious that the survey respondents had stronger opinions when it comes to games in English than they had about games in Dutch.

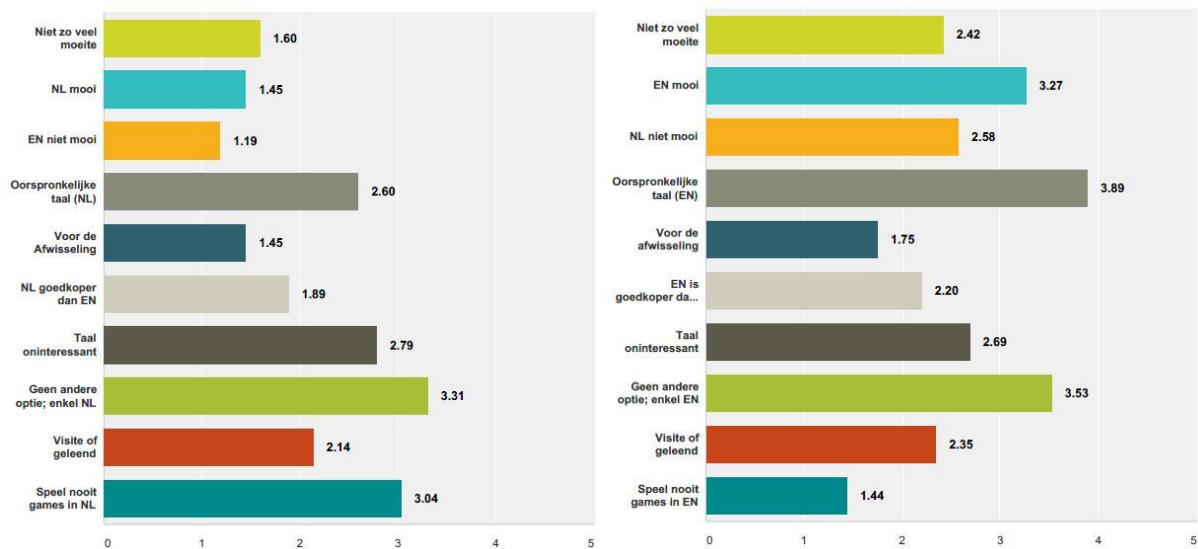


Fig. 15: “To what extent do the following statements play a role in your decision to play a game in Dutch (question 9, left) or English (question 10, right)?”

It is interesting to note that, according to the respondents, they “do not have to try so hard to understand everything” while playing games in English (2.42 points) when compared to Dutch (1.60 points). This seems very strange, considering every respondents’ first language is Dutch, not English: logically speaking, Dutch games should be easier to understand for them than games in any other language. Perhaps it is a force of habit, since videogame translation into Dutch is not all that common yet, or perhaps it is because videogame terminology might be more familiar to them in English. Without further research it is not easy to form a theory as to why Dutch people think English videogames are easier to understand than Dutch ones, since none of the respondents elaborated on their choice to give understandability of English games a higher rating.

Another interesting feature is that even though in both questions 9 and 10 a game's language was considered to be a fairly neutral reason to play a game in either Dutch or English, respondents still considered both the attractiveness of the Dutch language and the unattractiveness of the English language to be 'very unimportant'. This is demonstrated in figure 16.

	Dutch		English	
Beautiful	1.45	very unimportant to unimportant	3.27	neutral to important
Not beautiful	2.58	unimportant to neutral	1.19	very unimportant

Fig. 16: Questions 9 and 10: "To what extent do the following statements play a role in your decision to play a game in Dutch or English?"

Apart from rating to what extent the aforementioned statements played a role in the decision to play a game in a certain language, respondents were asked in an open question whether there were any other reasons to play a game in either Dutch or English. In total, 19 respondents expanded upon questions 9 and 10. Most of the answers were explanations for one or more of the respondent's choices, including quite a few variations of the statements presented in the survey: for example, "I received the game in Dutch as a gift" and "I played the game with my nephew who cannot speak English" can be seen as variations of "I played the game at a friend's or borrowed it from them". Several respondents stated that they have not played a game in Dutch since their childhood. In addition, one respondent noted that a reason not to play a game in Dutch is because game localisations "often make a game sound strange and childish, especially when done with voiceovers". More opinions on subtitling and dubbing can be found in section 4.4.

4.2.3 Noticeable or no noticeable languages preferences

As mentioned in section 3.2.3.1, the statements in questions 9 and 10 were divided into ‘noticeable language preferences’ and ‘no noticeable language preferences’. Figure 17 shows that there are no clearly observable differences in language preference between gamer types, since similar scores have been given to each statement by all gamer types. This means that my hypothesis that there are different translation preferences between the five gamer types can immediately be disregarded.

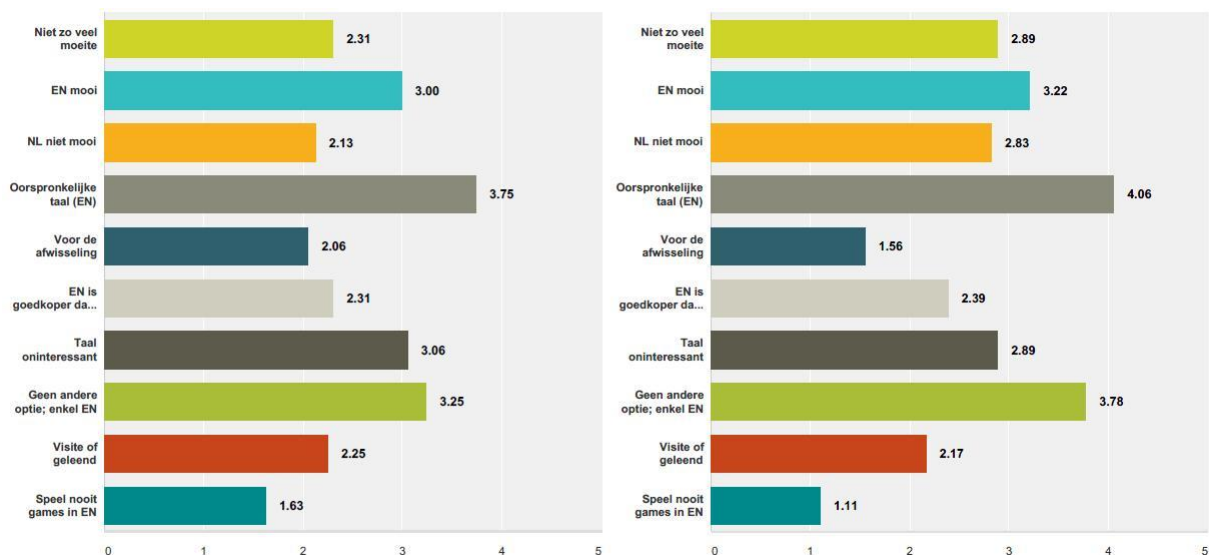


Fig. 17: Question 10: There are no readily observable differences between the language preferences of non-gamers (left) and extreme gamers (right).

However, the hypothesis that the Dutch do not have a noticeable language preference can still be explored. As mentioned above, respondents were allowed to give a rating between 1 and 5 to each statement presented in questions 9 and 10, 1 being ‘very unimportant’ and 5 being ‘very important’. None of the statements, however, ended up with a rating higher than a 4.06: apparently, the average respondent did not deem any of the statements to be a ‘very important’ reason to play a game in Dutch (question 9) or English (question 10).

In order to emphasise the individual scores of each gamer type, two figures were created. Firstly, figure 18 shows the statements in questions 9 and 10 which received the highest scores, meaning these statements were chosen by the survey respondents as the most important reasons for playing a game in Dutch (question 9) or English (question 10). Since none of the statements received a score higher than 4.06, figure 18 shows statements having been rated with a 3 or higher by most gamer types. Apart from the statements presented in figure 18, there was one other statement which received a score higher than 3: in both questions 9 and 10, “I do not care about the language” was given a score of 3.06 by non-gamers. However, none of the other gamer types rated this statement higher than 3 nor were the ratings exceedingly different (all falling in the ‘unimportant’ to ‘neutral’ category), so this statement was excluded from the table.

Secondly, figure 19 shows the statements which received the lowest scores, meaning these statements were chosen by the survey respondents as the least important reasons for playing a game in Dutch or English. Figure 19 shows statements having been rated between 1 and 2 by most gamer types. Again, apart from the statements presented in figure 19 there was one other statement which received a score lower than 2: in question 10, “The English version is cheaper than the Dutch version” was given a score of 1.68 by semi-extreme gamers. Since none of the other gamer types had a very different score, this statement was excluded from the table.

Most highly rated statements	Non-gamer	Semi-casual gamer	Casual gamer	Semi-extreme gamer	Extreme gamer
I think English is a beautiful language	3.00	3.00	3.50	3.52	3.22
I want to play the game in the original language, in this case English	3.75	3.88	4.00	3.76	4.06
There is no other option; the game has only been released in English	3.25	3.80	3.29	3.48	3.78
There is no other option; the game has only been released in Dutch	3.19	3.60	3.00	3.28	3.50
I never play games in Dutch	2.81	3.28	2.54	3.28	3.22

Fig. 18: Questions 9 and 10: Statements having been rated with a 3 ('neutral') or higher ('important' by most gamer types. Scores lower than 3 have been made bold.

Lowest rated statements	Non-gamer	Semi-casual gamer	Casual gamer	Semi-extreme gamer	Extreme gamer
[When I play a game in Dutch] I will not have to try so hard to understand everything (Q9)	1.81	1.40	1.67	1.64	1.56
I think Dutch is a beautiful language	1.44	1.20	1.75	1.56	1.28

I do not think English is a beautiful language	1.19	1.20	1.29	1.20	1.06
For variation's sake (Q9)	1.44	1.32	1.50	1.56	1.44
For variation's sake (Q10)	1.44	1.64	1.88	1.68	1.56
The Dutch version is cheaper than the English version	2.06	1.88	1.88	1.80	1.89
I played the game [in Dutch] at a friend's or borrowed the game from them (Q9)	2.25	2.40	2.29	1.80	1.94
I never play games in English	1.63	1.76	1.29	1.40	1.11

Fig. 19: Questions 9 and 10: Statements having been rated with a 2 ('important') or lower ('very unimportant') by most gamer types. Scores higher than 2 have been made bold.

After having created the previous two tables, figure 20 shows at a glance whether the survey respondents have a noticeable language preference or not. Figure 20 notes whether the average rating for each statement presented in figures 18 and 19 was high (3 or more) or low (2 or less), followed by whether or not a statement shows a noticeable language preference or not (as labelled in figure 4 in section 3.2.2). The results of this analysis are at best ambiguous. Three out of five highly rated statements show no noticeable language preference, which would suggest that the survey respondents do not attach much importance to the language in which they play a game; however, four out of seven lowest rated statements were also classified as showing no noticeable preference. Conversely, two out of five highly rated statements show a noticeable language preference, but so do three out of seven lowly rated statements. Because of this ambiguity, it is impossible to label the target sample audience as either having or not having a noticeable language preference.

Statement	Rating	Noticeable language preference?
I think English is a beautiful language	High	Yes
I want to play the game in the original language, in this case English	High	Yes
There is no other option; the game has only been released in English	High	No
There is no other option; the game has only been released in Dutch	High	No
I never play games in Dutch	High	No
[When I play a game in Dutch] I will not have to try so hard to understand everything (Q9)	Low	Yes
I think Dutch is a beautiful language	Low	Yes
I do not think English is a beautiful language	Low	Yes
For variation's sake	Low	No
The Dutch version is cheaper than the English version	Low	No
I played the game [in Dutch] at a friend's or borrowed the game from them (Q9)	Low	No
I never play games in English	Low	No

Fig. 20: The ratings given by the survey respondents combined with whether or not each statement shows a noticeable language preference.

Even though the results of figure 20 show ambiguous results, though, there are still some conclusions that can be drawn from it. Firstly, the average respondent prefers to play a game in the original language. Although the statement “I want to play the game in the original

language, in this case English” received a higher overall rating than the one referring to Dutch original games, it is most likely because there are simply not that many Dutch original games when compared to games being developed in English. This argument is validated by the fact that respondents rated “I never play games in English” (average score 1.44) with a much lower score than “I never play games in Dutch” (average score 3.04).

4.2.4 Open answers: reasons for choosing one language over another

As mentioned in section 4.2.2, survey respondents were asked in questions 9 and 10 to which extent certain statements play a role in their decision to play a game in either Dutch or English. Apart from the preselected statements, respondents were also allowed to note other reasons in the form of an open answer: out of 108 respondents, only 16 (question 9) and 18 (question 10) people took the time to do so. There was not much overlap between these 34 open answers, but there are still some interesting answers that should be mentioned.

Two reasons to play a game in a certain language were mentioned most often. The first, mentioned 5 times, is that there is no other option: the game is only available in either Dutch or English. The other reason, mentioned 6 times, is that respondents are disinclined to change the language offered by the default settings: they do not see any reason to change the language from Dutch into English or vice versa. Interestingly, these two reasons were mentioned equally as often for both languages – that is to say, it does not matter whether a game’s default settings are in English or Dutch because the player is unlikely to change the settings in either case.

Other arguments for choosing either Dutch or English when it comes to videogames can be found in figure 21. Most of the statements are explanations for playing a game in Dutch. Interestingly, the reasons for choosing a Dutch game are all ‘if’ statements, in the sense that the respondents play games in Dutch only under certain circumstances: whether it

is because they are playing an educational game on their own or because they are playing with a child. Conversely, playing an English game does not seem to have to take place under certain conditions. This can be rationalised by the fact that English games are still more prevalent than Dutch games on the Dutch market, explaining why the respondents view English games as the rule and Dutch games as the exception.

Language	Reason for choosing this language	Number of times mentioned
English	It is easier to look up information on the Internet.	3
English	Communication between Dutch and international players is easier when all parties have played the game in the same language.	2
Dutch	The apps on my mobile phone, such as <i>Trivia Crack</i> (2013), are only available in Dutch.	2
Dutch	I only play puzzle/language/educational games in Dutch, such as a typing game or the <i>Professor Layton</i> series.	2
Dutch	I only played games in Dutch when I was a child, such as <i>Freddi Fish</i> .	2
Dutch	I only play games in Dutch when I am playing together with a child.	2

Fig. 21: Open answers to questions 9 and 10: reasons for choosing either Dutch or English videogames.

4.3 Opinions on existing game localisation practices

Questions 11 and 12 enquired after the respondent's opinion regarding the fact that more games are being translated from English into Dutch nowadays when compared to previous years. Question 11 (figure 22) aimed for an emotional response by asking for a quantifiable term, from 'very bad' to 'very good', and also by telling respondents not to think too much before answering the question. Interestingly, 24% of respondents considered the recent rise in videogame translations as 'good', while a similar number considered it 'bad' (27%); the same happened with 'very good' and 'very bad' (both 4%). When comparing the different gamer types to each other (see figure 23), it is interesting to see that extreme gamers have more, well, extreme opinions than other gamer types. Still, it should be noted that almost half of the survey respondents, regardless of gamer type, stated that they felt neutral towards the rise in the number of translated games. One reason for this could be that the respondents do not really care whether videogames are translated or not.

It is also quite likely that respondents see both the good and the bad and are simply not able to choose between the two – an idea that is enforced by the answers to question 12, to be discussed in the following paragraphs. Question 12 asked the survey respondents to present specific arguments pertaining to the previous question, which 107 out of 108 respondents did. Even though the majority of respondents had stated in question 11 that they felt neutral towards videogame translation, many of their arguments in question 12 present a negative image towards videogame translation, or possibly translation in general. The following paragraphs will present some of the arguments that were mentioned most often. A summation of these arguments can be found in figure 24 at the end of this section.

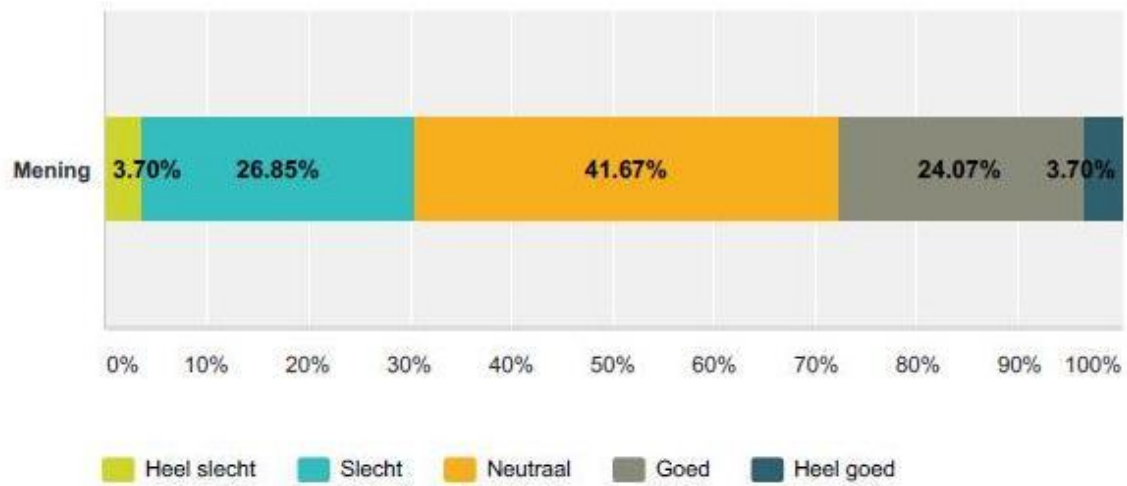


Fig. 22: Question 11: “What is your opinion on the recent rise in the number of games being translated from English into Dutch?”



Fig. 23: Question 11: Extreme gamers (top) have more extreme opinions when compared to non-gamers (bottom).

Starting with the positive, almost half of the survey respondents think it is a good development that more games are being translated. 47 Respondents praised the fact that translations are more accessible for the general public, since they allow those whose level of English is not high enough – such as children – to play games in their native tongue. Subtitles were mentioned as beneficial, since on the one hand they allow players/children to practice their reading skills and improve their level of written Dutch or spoken English, while on the other hand allowing the player to follow the story even when there is a lot of background noise.

On the other hand, 35 respondents praised the educational merits of English and/or untranslated games, stating that they and/or their friends have learned most of their English through playing videogames, and that others – such as children – should be allowed to do the same. Three non-gamers mentioned that they have repeatedly heard this argument from their friends who do play games. Another person explained that “I already speak Dutch, so I will not learn anything from a translation”. One non-gamer even added that the reason they think translating games into Dutch is bad is because the educational side of the English-language version is the only positive side to gaming they can think of. It is interesting to see that the educational side of playing games in a non-native tongue is seen as important by so many of the target sample audience.

After these positive notes, many different downsides to the translation of videogames were mentioned. Firstly, fourteen people stated that they find it annoying or irritating when the translation is “worse” than the original text and, more importantly, that this happens more often than not. One example of this, according to five respondents, is that jokes and metaphors are often lost in translation because the translation is too literal. Secondly, twelve respondents stated that they dislike or hate dubs, since Dutch voice acting is “terrible”: it sounds too “childish”, “strange” or “fake”, so they “cannot take it seriously”. Moreover, there

is not enough variation in Dutch dubs when it comes to voice actors; the English version does it better in that respect, since there are a lot more English voice actors to choose from.

Another downside to the translation of a videogame is that it makes it harder to communicate with others who have played the game in the original or English language, both in online and offline communication. Dutch players will have to use the English terminology of a translated game in order to take part in forum discussions, look up an online walkthrough or while having a conversation with a friend who has played the game in English and/or does not speak Dutch. As a result, international communication is seen as an important reason not to play translated games. Furthermore, Dutch-language translations often retain some of the English words, causing the player to constantly have to switch between the two languages, which is seen as undesirable.

Many survey respondents stated pros as well as cons and thus did not present themselves as having a clear preference either for or against videogame translation. One reason for this could be that the target sample audience simply does not care whether games are translated or not. For example, 27 respondents stated that the fact that more games are being translated will not alter their own personal gaming habits. Six people also stated clearly that they “do not really care” and four said that they had never thought about it before. Also, multiple respondents have answered not only for themselves, but with others in mind. Two people said that they would be okay with translated videogames “if it means more people will start gaming”, and two others agreed with that sentiment “as long as there is a demand” for translated videogames. Six respondents summed up this attitude by stating that they “do not really care, but others might”.

In relation to respondents not caring whether videogames are translated into Dutch or not, multiple respondents stated that they do not think it is necessary to translate games. Four respondents explained that their English is good enough and nineteen said that they actually

prefer the original language, or English if the original game is in a language they do not speak. Three people noted that they are simply used to the English language by now since, all things considered, not that many games have been translated. Other reasons to think that translations are unnecessary include “everyone speaks English already” and “real gamers will play the game anyway”.

Two respondents stated that they “wouldn’t mind if Dutch dubs were available”, suggesting that the number of games which have been translated into Dutch is not very high or at least not very prominent. Another popular opinion is that translation is fine, as long as the player can choose to turn it off: ten respondents said that the original or English soundtrack or text should be available as a selectable option next to the Dutch version, so that there are no downsides and only advantages for both parties: those who prefer English and those who prefer Dutch.

Observation	Number of times mentioned
Translations are more accessible for the general public, amongst whom children and others whose level of English is not high enough.	47
Educational merits; players (I myself, children, others) can learn English by playing untranslated games.	35
I do not really care; it will not alter my gaming habits.	27
I prefer the original language/English.	19
The translation is often worse than the original, which bugs me.	14
Dutch voice actors are terrible/I hate dubs.	12
As long as I can choose: the original/English soundtrack or text should be available as a selectable option.	10
The translation often mixes Dutch with English; if I just play the English version, I will not have to constantly switch between two languages in my head.	7
The translation of certain terms, such as names, makes it harder to communicate with others who have played the game in the original/English language.	5
I do not think it is necessary.	5

Fig. 24: Answers to question 12, “Can you explain why you think that it is good or bad that more games are being translated nowadays?”, sorted by the number of times a respondent made this comment. Comments submitted by less than five respondents are excluded.

4.4 Dubs and subs

In question 13, respondents were asked to choose between subtitling and dubbing in videogames. Most respondents (77%) had a clear preference for subtitling, as can be seen in figure 25. When it comes to the different gamer types, figure 26 shows that all five had a clear preference for subtitles. There are, however, some small differences between the groups. Most notably, 22% of extreme gamers, as opposed to much lower numbers in the other four categories, claimed that it depends on the game whether subtitles or dubs are to be favoured. Furthermore, 16% of semi-extreme gamers would like neither subtitles nor dubs, rather choosing to play a game fully in the original language, probably having English-language games in mind. Nevertheless, these differences are nothing compared to the similarities: the main conclusion is that all gamer types have an overwhelming preference for videogames with subtitles.

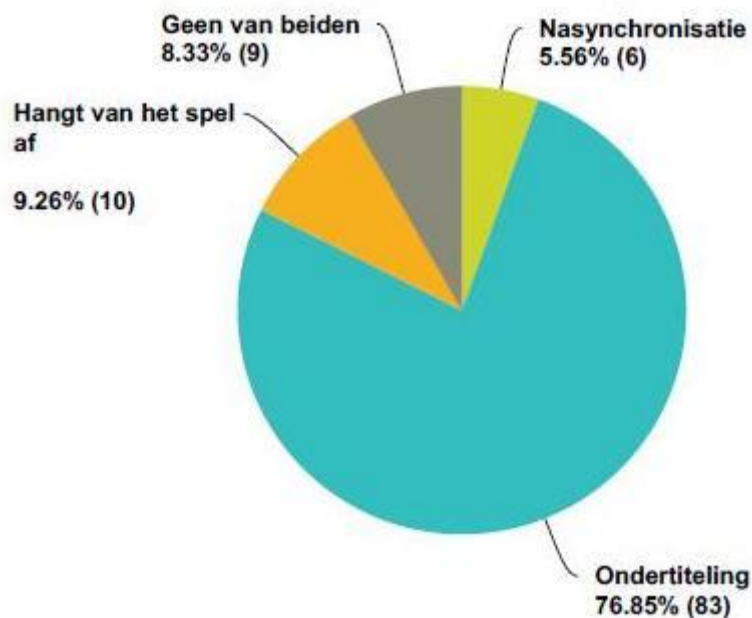


Fig. 25: Question 13: Most respondents had a clear preference for subtitling.

	Non-gamer	Semi-casual gamer	Casual gamer	Semi-extremee gamer	Extreme gamer
Subtitles	81%	84%	71%	80%	66%
Dubs	6%	4%	8%	4%	6%
Neither	-	8%	8%	16%	6%
It depends on the game	13%	4%	13%	-	22%

Fig. 26: Question 13: “If you had to choose between subtitling and dubbing, which would you choose?”

4.4.1 Open answers about subtitling and dubbing

The survey respondents were also asked in question 13 to elaborate on their choice of subtitling or dubbing, and 100 out of 108 respondents took this opportunity to give their opinion on current subtitling and dubbing practices in the Netherlands. The following paragraphs will discuss the pros and cons of subtitling and dubbing as indicated by the target sample audience. At the end of this section, figure 27 gives an overview of the arguments that were mentioned most often, divided by category (subtitling, dubbing or neither) and whether the comment is positive or negative.

Fourteen respondents have stated that they prefer the original soundtrack, since subtitling keeps the original jokes and the game developer’s original ideas intact. When there is a choice between English and Dutch, eight respondents explicitly stated that they prefer English when it comes to subtitles. Five respondents said that they prefer English, because it suits the in-game environments, storylines and characterisations better than Dutch does. Two respondents mentioned that they would not mind if Dutch subtitles were available, suggesting that this is not something they have come across very often. A major put-off is when the

translation is deemed to be “wrong”. According to six respondents, subtitles are often too literal, causing subtle jokes and metaphors from the original to become lost in translation. The same is said about dubs by three respondents. Of the respondents who preferred neither subtitles nor dubs, four people said that they do not need a translation because their English is good enough to understand everything.

There seems to be a general consensus that Dutch voice acting is inferior to the English version, whether that is the original language of the game or not. Eighteen respondents think Dutch voice acting sounds terrible and nine elaborated on this sentiment by stating that Dutch voices are too over-the-top, artificial, fake, annoying, cheesy, or just plain “bad”; furthermore, one person commented that Dutch is “not epic enough” for videogames and two respondents said that hearing Dutch interrupts the immersion. Twelve respondents believe that more time and effort is put in the original recordings or that not enough effort is put in the voice acting in the Dutch dubs; two respondents gave as a possible reason for this lack of effort that voice acting is too expensive in the Netherlands. Another thing that greatly bothers the target sample audience about dubbing, as mentioned by fourteen respondents, is the lack of synchronisation between images, especially lip movement, and sound: it looks ugly, strange and unnatural. Still, two respondents mention that a lack of synchronisation is alright when the characters are animated. Eight respondents declare that they hate dubs or that they find them irritating.

Respondents are more positive when it comes to subtitles. Ten respondents state that subtitles are useful as support: for example, subtitles allow the player to not miss anything of the story when there is too much noise in the environment, either in-game or in the player’s house. Players are also able to practice their English, seeing as eight respondents mention that subtitles help them to better understand the information presented in the voiceovers. Another positive aspect of subtitles, mentioned by eight respondents, is that they are used to them

because of television as every non-Dutch television show is subtitled. However, there are some negatives to subtitling as well. Subtitles can be distracting: five respondents noted that subtitles pull their attention away from the action on the screen, and one more respondent finds it distracting to hear a different language in the dubs than should be read in the subtitles.

Category	Pro or con	Observation	Number of respondents having made this observation
Dubs	Con	Dutch voice acting sounds terrible.	18
Dubs	Con	I hate it when lip movements/images on the screen and spoken language are not synchronised.	14
Subtitles	Pro	I prefer the original soundtrack; subtitling keeps the original jokes and the game developer's original ideas intact.	14
Dubs	Con	Not enough effort is put in the voice acting in the Dutch dubs / more time and effort is put in the original recordings.	12
Subtitles	Pro	Subtitles are useful as support when there is too much background noise.	10
Subtitles	Pro	I prefer the English subs.	8
Subtitles	Pro	I can practice my English by listening to the English soundtrack.	8
Subtitles	Pro	I'm used to subtitles because of television.	8
Dubs	Con	I hate dubs/dubs irritate me.	8

Subtitles	Con	I hate it when the subtitles are wrong.	6
Subtitles	Pro	English sounds better than Dutch when it comes to videogames.	5
Subtitles	Con	Subtitles are distracting from the action on the screen.	5

Fig. 27: Recurring observations made by respondents in answer to question 13, sorted by the number of times a respondent made this comment. Comments submitted by less than five respondents are excluded.

4.4.2 In-game translation strategies versus gaming experience

In questions 14 and 15, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement with certain statements, from ‘completely disagree’ (1) to ‘completely agree’ (5). As mentioned in section 3.2.3.1, the statements presented in both questions were divided for the analysis between in-game translation strategies (objective) and gaming experience (subjective). I expected respondents to agree with the subjective statements more than with the objective ones, since mistakes in a translation tend to break the immersion. At the end of this section, figure 30 shows the statements from questions 14 and 15, sorted by rating, and repeating whether they were considered to be subjective or objective.

When it comes to question 14, the aforementioned hypothesis turned out to be incorrect: the objective statements about dubbing received higher scores than the subjective ones (see figure 28). Respondents stated that they often recognise a voice from television (3.39), while voices from other games are slightly less common (2.78). They also sometimes hear Dutch dialects or accents in the dub (3.20). It is noteworthy, however, that respondents do not necessarily enjoy hearing these familiar voices: in both cases, the subjective counterparts received lower ratings.

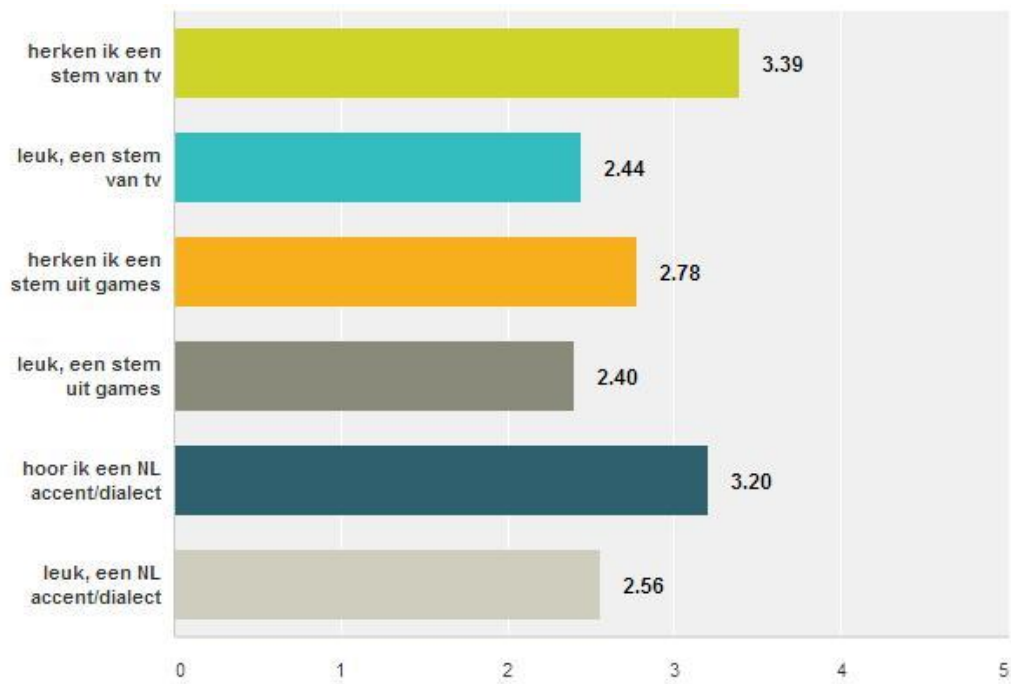


Fig. 28: Answers to question 14: “When I play a game with Dutch dubs...”

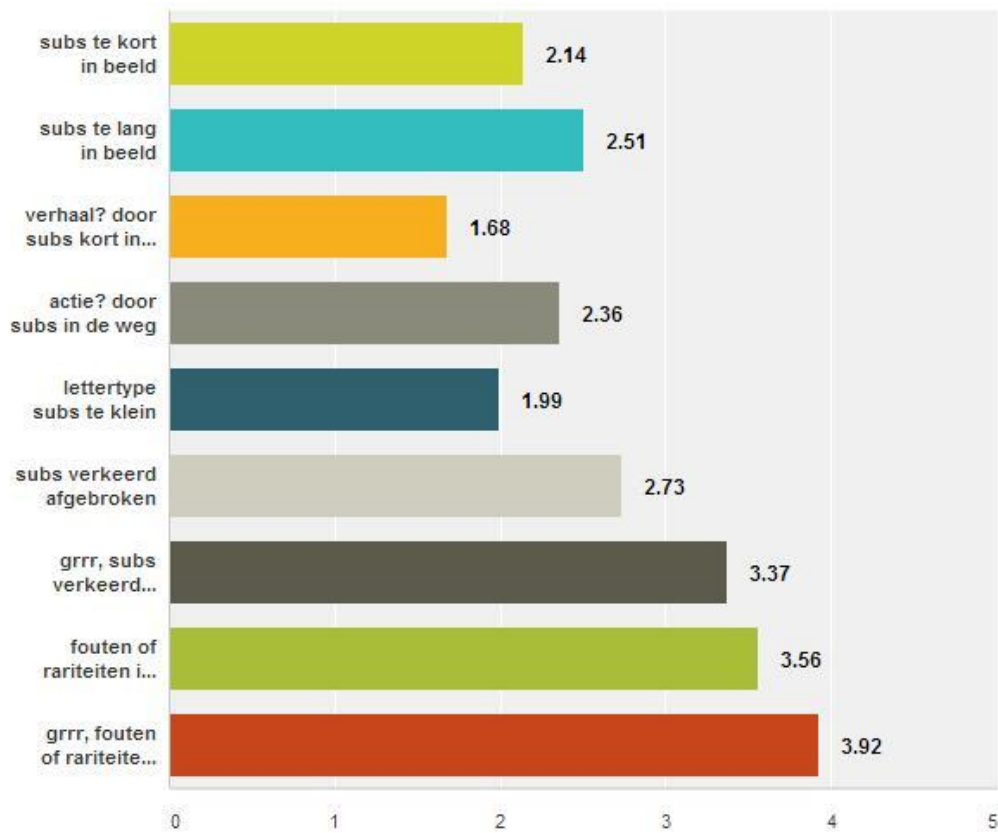


Fig. 29: Answers to question 15: “When I play a game with Dutch subtitles...”

The hypothesis was also incorrect for question 15, although less spectacularly so than in question 14 (see figure 29). The two most popular statements are concerned with mistakes and strange expressions in the subtitles, namely the subjective “It bothers me when I see mistakes or strange expressions in the subtitles” (3.92) and the objective “I often see mistakes or strange expressions in the subtitles” (3.56). Here, the subjective statement received a higher rating than the objective one. This is also the case with the two statements concerning grammatical blocks in subtitles, namely the subjective “It bothers me when the subtitles are cut off wrongly” (3.37) and the objective “The subtitles are often cut off wrongly” (2.73). However, a similar observation cannot be made with the remaining statements.

Figure 30 combines the two questions in order to examine whether subjective or objective statements received higher ratings. The results, however, are mixed and can neither prove my assumption that players focus more on gaming experience than translation strategies, nor claim the exact opposite. It can only be concluded that my hypothesis was incorrect.

Category	Statement	Objective (translation strategies) or subjective (gaming experience)?	Rating
Subtitles	It bothers me when I see mistakes or strange expressions in the subtitles.	Subjective	3.92
Subtitles	I often see mistakes or strange expressions in the subtitles.	Objective	3.56
Dubs	I often recognise a voice from TV (cartoons, films, TV shows, etc.).	Objective	3.39

Subtitles	It bothers me when the subtitles are cut off wrongly.	Subjective	3.37
Dubs	I often hear different Dutch accents or dialects, such as Amsterdams or Flemish.	Objective	3.20
Dubs	I often recognise a voice from a different game.	Objective	2.78
Subtitles	The subtitles are often cut off wrongly.	Objective	2.73
Dubs	I enjoy hearing different Dutch accents or dialects, such as Amsterdams or Flemish.	Subjective	2.56
Subtitles	The subtitles often do not disappear soon enough.	Objective	2.51
Dubs	I enjoy recognising a voice from TV (cartoons, films, TV shows, etc.).	Subjective	2.44
Dubs	I enjoy recognising a voice from a different game.	Subjective	2.40
Subtitles	I often miss the action on the screen because the subtitles are in the way.	Subjective	2.36
Subtitles	The subtitles often disappear too soon.	Objective	2.14
Subtitles	The font of the subtitles is often too small.	Objective	1.99
Subtitles	I am often unable to follow the story because the subtitles disappear too soon.	Subjective	1.68

Fig. 30: In-game translation strategies versus gaming experience in questions 14 and 15, sorted by rating.

4.5 Open questions

This section discusses the open questions 16 and 17. Firstly, in question 16 respondents were asked whether they had any closing remarks regarding subtitling and/or dubbing in videogames, which 46 out of 108 respondents did. Secondly, in question 17 respondents were encouraged to write down any final remarks regarding videogame translation in general, which 29 out of 108 respondents did. Most of the respondents' answers to both questions were simply repetitions, used to underline a certain standpoint or idea that was explored in earlier sections of this thesis: for example, nine respondents feel the need to reiterate that they dislike bad translations.

There are, however, some statements which can be explored in future papers. For example, one person stated that the genre of a game influences their language preferences. They enjoy translated puzzle games, but would rather play an action game in English. The differences in language preference between different genres is something I wanted to look at, but did not have time to do. Another issue this thesis does not explore is the font size. Four respondents state that the ideal font size differs for every console, television set and game; they also indicate that they would like to have control over the font size, just like it is fairly common to influence the amount of time a given text remains on-screen.

There are two other interesting things to mention. Firstly, one person has stated that they have never seen Dutch dubs or subtitles in a game before. This might be an indication that the translation of videogames into Dutch is not very well-known amongst the Dutch audience, but it might also simply be assign of a lack of awareness in this particular respondent. Secondly, six respondents state that they would rather have no translation at all than a bad translation. As was shown in the previous section, the target sample group places great importance on the 'correctness' of translation from English into Dutch.

Chapter Five: Discussion and conclusion

This chapter offers a general overview of the results presented in the previous chapters and formulates some overall conclusions. Section 5.1 summarizes the discussion presented in chapter 4 and answers the research question presented in chapter 1. Section 5.2, finally, presents suggestions for further research.

5.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to discern whether Dutch gamers and non-gamers actually want to play games in Dutch and if so, what they think of existing translations. My hypothesis was that the target group would be willing to play more games if a higher number of them were translated into Dutch in the first place, or if current videogame translations were improved upon in some way. The first part of the hypothesis turned out to be false. Firstly, all gamer types discussed in this thesis preferred to play games in English – although this probably has more to do with current localisation strategies than with a specific language preference. There are, however, better indications that Dutch people between the ages of sixteen and thirty would not play more games in Dutch if they could: namely, that almost half of all respondents (42%) felt neutral towards the recent rise in translated videogames and that 27 respondents (25%) explicitly stated that the fact that more games are being translated will not alter their own personal gaming habits.

However, the second part of the hypothesis does still hold some ground. From the results presented in figure 26 and the analysis of the answers to question 13 in sections 4.4 and 4.4.1, it is clear that the target sample group does not appreciate dubs, since most negative comments are aimed at that specific translation strategy. Inferior voice acting and a lack of lip movement synchronisation are seen as the most important grievances against dubbing. Subtitles are seen in a more positive light, since the original soundtrack is kept intact while

still allowing the player to better understand the information presented in the voiceovers, plus the Dutch audience is used to subtitling from television. However, subtitles can form a distraction from the action on the screen, especially when they are inaccurate. Perhaps the target group would be willing to play more games if these criteria – better lip movement synchronisation, quality voice acting, a translation that is less literal, correct subtitle segmentation and no spelling or grammar mistakes – were met with.

Finally, here are my hypotheses again, as presented in chapter 3, followed by a definitive conclusion drawn from the data presented in chapter 4:

Question number(s)	Hypotheses	Results
4 and 5	Respondents have played significantly more games in English over the past year than they have in Dutch.	70% of respondents had played more than 5 games in English in the past year (with 22% having played more than 20 games), while only 5% of respondents had played more than 5 games in Dutch.
6 and 7	Respondents have played almost no games in other languages than Dutch or English in the past year.	Only 25% of respondents had played a game in a language other than Dutch or English in the past year. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most popular languages other than Dutch and English were Japanese (12%) and German (9%).
8	There are different translation preferences between the five different gamer types, such as that	There are no clearly observable differences in translation preferences between the five different gamer types,

	non-gamers prefer games in Dutch, and that extreme gamers prefer games in English.	since all gamer types preferred games in English.
9 and 10	Respondents do not have a noticeable language preference.	Respondents have an ambivalent attitude towards language preference.
11	Respondents enjoy the fact that more games are being translated nowadays.	Almost half of all respondents (42%) felt neutral towards the fact that more games are being translated nowadays.
12	Respondents have not consciously considered translation as a factor in videogame localisation before answering the survey questions.	It is unclear whether respondents have consciously considered translation as a factor in videogame localisation before answering the survey questions, since none of the respondents have mentioned it.
13	Respondents prefer neither dubs nor subtitles.	77% of respondents prefer subtitles.
14 and 15	Respondents will agree with statements referring to in-game translation strategies less than with statements referring to gaming experience due to in-game translation strategies.	Respondents agreed mostly with statements referring to incorrect translation, the quality of the voice acting, a lack of synchronised lip movement and incorrect subtitle segmentation.
16 and 17	Respondents will present ideas which this researcher has overlooked.	Only a few respondents presented new ideas.

5.2 Suggestions for further research

As mentioned throughout this thesis, there are quite a few issues requiring further research for which I unfortunately did not have enough time. Firstly, some questions were omitted from the questionnaire in order to make sure the online survey did not end up being too long. Secondly, there was no end of questions which I had wanted to compare to each other, or answers which I had wanted to analyse in more detail. The following paragraphs will discuss both of these areas of interest and suggest topics for further research.

First and foremost, this thesis focused on the translation preferences of a Dutch sample audience within a specific age group, namely sixteen-to-thirty-year-olds. It might be worthwhile to undertake a similar study focusing on, and comparing, the translation preferences of different countries (such as France, Germany and Spain) or different age groups (such as children, students and adults). Furthermore, my respondents were mostly university students, meaning they probably have a more than average grasp of the English language when compared to other native speakers of Dutch. A future study might examine translation preferences between two or three groups with different levels of English, letting respondents take a TOEFL test beforehand to determine their level of English.

As mentioned on the cover page of the survey, respondents of this survey were asked to take any kind of videogame into account, including games on different consoles (including PC, mobile phone, tablet, PlayStation 4, Wii U, Xbox One, 3DS, PS Vita, etcetera) and of different genres. However, bundling these different types of games together might have muddied the waters to some extent, as it means small games and apps like *Candy Crush Saga* and *Trivia Crack* were given the same weight as longer and more serious games like *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* and *The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim* (these games were all mentioned by the respondents themselves). It would be interesting to see if there are any differences in translation preferences between different consoles or genres. When it comes to

consoles, one could try to pinpoint the best font size for different sized screens – such as gaming PCs, handheld devices (3DS, mobile phone, tablets) and widescreen TVs (PlayStation, Xbox, Wii) – by having subjects play games on different consoles with different font sizes. When it comes to genres, a useful research topic could be whether the intended audience has different translation preferences for dissimilar genres, for example comparing puzzle games such as the *Professor Layton* series to story-driven games like Telltale's *The Walking Dead* and beat 'em ups like *Dead or Alive*.

Another differentiation which this survey did not make is the distinction between indie games and AAA games. AAA games are games with the highest development budgets and levels of promotion, created by big corporations such as Nintendo, EA games and Ubisoft. Indie games, on the other hand, are created on a much smaller budget and are also usually created by a much smaller team. The respondents probably grouped both types of games together, since they are equally easily available through the magic of the Internet. However, indie developers often cannot afford translators due to a limited budget. Some of these indie games are released on Steam, a popular software platform through which one can legally buy most games in circulation today, even though they were not translated by professionals: examples of this are the Russian visual novel *Everlasting Summer*, of which the official translation was created and copy-edited by fans, and the Polish adventure game *The Detail*, of which fans were encouraged by the developers to share their fan translation through Steam. Further research could compare the translation strategies used in games of various budgets.

This survey focused mostly on in-game text – in particular spoken text – capable of being subtitled or dubbed. Not enough emphasis was placed on non-narrative and boxed text to be found in the game's manual or interface. Steam offers more than 3700 games; however, many of these games are only available in English and there are only a handful of them that offer the option of switching the interface to Dutch. More often than not, this means that if the

player wants to change the language to Dutch (or any other language for that matter) they will first have to go through an English menu in-game and, as a result, the player almost always has to understand English in some capacity in order to be able to play a game in their native tongue. The survey created for this thesis did not ask for comments on translation problems with game menus or manuals, but it might be of interest for future research.

As became clear in the analysis presented in chapter 4, most respondents prefer subtitling over dubbing. However, the survey did not clarify which language these subtitles needed to be in, likely causing respondents to group English and Dutch subtitles together. In a future survey, a question could be added enquiring after the respondent's preference when it comes to the language of the subtitles. It would also be interesting to see if there are any differences between Dutch children, adolescents and adults: I would expect children to prefer Dutch dubs, adolescents to prefer English subtitles and adults to prefer Dutch subtitles. Similarly, a study focusing on the translation preferences in different countries could examine the influence of the use of subtitling or dubbing for cinemas and television: Germans might have a higher preference for dubbing than the Dutch, since it is more common in Germany to dub films and television shows meant for adults, as opposed to the Dutch practice of only dubbing family films and children's shows.

The present study fills a gap in the current body of work on videogame translation by focusing on the opinions of Dutch adolescents within the age group of 16-to-30-year-olds – but it is clear that there is much more interesting empirical work to be done in this fast-developing field of translations studies.

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6.1 Games

The name of the developer and the year of release of the original version are provided.

Ace Attorney series (Capcom, 2001~)

Age of Empires series (Ensemble Studios, 1997~)

Another Code: R - A Journey into Lost Memories (Cing, 2009)

Assassin's Creed series (Ubisoft, 2007~)

Civilization series (MicroProse, 1991~)

Candy Crush Saga (King, 2012)

Dead or Alive series (Team Ninja, 1996~)

The Detail (Rival Games Ltd, 2014)

The Elder Scrolls series (Bethesda Game Studios, 1994~)

The Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim (Bethesda Game Studios, 2011)

Everlasting Summer (Soviet Games, 2013)

FarmVille (Zynga, 2009)

Fifa series (EA Sports, 1993~)

Final Fantasy series (Square Enix, 1987~)

Freddi Fish series (Humongous Entertainment, 1994-2001)

Halo series (Bungie, 2001~)

Kerbal Space Program (Squad, 2015)

The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker (Nintendo, 2002)

Mother 3 (Nintendo, 2006)

Pac-Man (Namco, 1980)

Pokémon series (Game Freak, 1996~)

Pong (Atari Inc., 1972)

Professor Layton series (Level-5, 2007-2014)

Resident Evil series (Capcom, 1996~)

Silent Hill series (Konami, 1999~)

SimCity (Maxis, 1989~)

The Sims (Maxis, 2000~)

Sleeping Dogs (Square Enix, 2012)

The Stanley Parable (Davey Wreden, 2011)

Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic (BioWare, 2003)

Trivia Crack (Etermax, 2013)

The Walking Dead series (Telltale Games, 2012-2014)

World of Warcraft (Blizzard Entertainment, 2004)

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- Wyse, S. (2012, June 29). The 4 Main Reasons to Conduct Surveys. Retrieved July 18, 2015, from <http://www.snapsurveys.com/blog/4-main-reasons-conduct-surveys/>

Appendix 1: The survey