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Eduardo Fonseca Nadais

**ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH-PORTUGUESE LOCALIZATION OF *LEGENDS OF***  
***RUNETERRA*, AN ONLINE TRADING CARD GAME.**

Florianópolis

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Orientador: Prof. Dr. Lincoln P. Fernandes

Coorientadora: Profa. Dra. Meggie Rosar Fornazari

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Eduardo Fonseca Nadais

**Analysis of the English-Portuguese localization of *Legends of Runeterra*, an online Trading Card Game.**

O presente trabalho em nível de Mestrado foi avaliado e aprovado, em 21 de Junho de 2024, pela banca examinadora composta pelos seguintes membros:

Profa. Dra. Marileide Dias Esqueda  
Universidade Federal de Uberlândia

Prof. Dr. Ewerton Gleison Lopes Branco  
Universidade Federal do Pará

Certificamos que esta é a versão original e final do trabalho de conclusão que foi julgado adequado para obtenção do título de Mestre em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários, na área de concentração Estudos da Linguagem.

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Prof. Dr. Lincoln Paulo Fernandes  
Coordenação do Programa de Pós-Graduação

---

Prof. Dr. Lincoln Paulo Fernandes  
Orientador

---

Profa. Dra. Meggie Rosar Fornazari  
Coorientadora

Florianópolis, 2024.

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## ABSTRACT

The popularity of games has been growing over the past few years, and with the pandemic, this number has increased significantly, creating a higher demand for game localization. This study is based on research by authors such as Chandler and Deming, Minako O'Hagan and Carme Mangiron, on game localization, which they claim is a way of translating not only the written text from a country or region but also making all content from the game understandable to the target audience's culture, avoiding misunderstandings and increasing the player's immersion within the game's universe. Thus, this study discusses the localization of the online Trading Card Game, Legends of Runeterra, a game created within the fantastic universe of another game, League of Legends. The study aims to understand the translation techniques, outlined by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002), used in the game's localization process, particularly in translating card texts, and investigate the constraints related to card layout and culture. The research questions focus on identifying linguistic categories that are possibly translation barriers, exploring translation techniques used by translators in the localization process, and examining how these techniques relate to cultural and layout issues by analyzing some categories of analysis, such as the Cultural-Specific Items (CSI), proposed by Franco Aixelá (1996), and worldbuilding terms, by Souza Neto (2015), created to name the creatures, places, items and so on. Furthermore, this study aims to analyze how translation techniques were used in this process. The significance of the study is based on the limited research on localization of Trading Card Games, and online Trading Card Games, as well as the potential impact of localization on game sales. As a result, the analysis of translation techniques revealed that the most used technique was literal translation. Paradoxically, at first glance, this technique seems to contradict the general assumption that the global techniques in localization should be those favoring the target language and culture. Nevertheless, a closer look at the issue unveiled the complexity of video game localization, which shows that depending on the type of text being localized, some techniques are more prevalent than others.

**Keywords:** Translation, Localization, Online Trading Card Game.

## RESUMO

A popularidade dos jogos vem crescendo nos últimos anos e, com a pandemia, esse número aumentou consideravelmente, criando uma maior demanda para a localização de jogos. Este estudo tem como base as pesquisas de autores como Chandler and Deming, Minako O'Hagan e Carme Mangiron, sobre a localização de jogos, em que afirmam ser uma forma de traduzir não apenas o texto escrito de um país ou região, mas também tornar todo o conteúdo do jogo compreensível para a cultura do público-alvo, evitando mal-entendidos e aumentando a imersão do jogador no universo do jogo. Assim, este estudo discute a localização do jogo de cartas colecionáveis online *Legends of Runeterra*, um jogo criado a partir do universo fantástico de outro jogo, o *League of Legends*. O estudo tem como objetivo compreender as técnicas de tradução, indicadas por Molina e Hurtado Albir (2002), utilizadas no processo de localização do jogo, especialmente na tradução dos textos das cartas, e investigar as restrições relacionadas ao layout das cartas e à cultura. As perguntas de pesquisa focam em identificar categorias linguísticas representam possíveis barreiras à tradução, explorar as técnicas de tradução utilizadas pelos tradutores no processo de localização e examinar como essas técnicas se relacionam com questões culturais e de layout, analisando algumas categorias de análise, como os Itens Culturais-Específicos, proposto por Franco Aixelá (1996), e os worldbuilding terms, proposto por Souza Neto (2015) criados para nomear as criaturas, lugares, itens, etc. Além disso, este estudo visa analisar como as técnicas de tradução foram utilizadas nesse processo. A importância deste estudo se baseia na escassez de pesquisas sobre a localização de Jogos de Cartas Colecionáveis, e Jogos de Cartas Colecionáveis online, além do impacto potencial da localização nas vendas do jogo. Como resultado, a análise das técnicas de tradução revelou que a técnica mais utilizada foi a tradução literal. Paradoxalmente, à primeira vista, esta técnica parece contradizer a suposição geral de que as técnicas globais de localização deveriam ser aquelas que favorecem a língua e a cultura alvo. No entanto, um olhar mais atento ao assunto revelou a complexidade da localização de videogames, o que mostra que, dependendo do tipo de texto localizado, algumas técnicas são mais prevalentes que outras.

**Palavras-Chave:** Tradução, Localização, Jogos de Cartas Colecionáveis Online.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The popularity of electronic games has increased over the years and has become a profitable product for the financial market. With the social isolation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, people had to stay longer at home, resulting in the need to find new forms of entertainment that could be performed in the comfort and safety of their homes. This scenario contributed to the purchase of games or products within the games increasing considerably, reaching a growth of 140% in 2020 (Larghi, 2021). This popularization of electronic games is also due to the availability of international versions, which are localized and distributed to different parts of the world, such as North and South America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East (Chandler; Deming, 2012).

One of the reasons why international versions are possible is because of the process of localization, which is a process that was formerly developed for productivity software; however, it was extended later to include website and game translation. Thus, localization encompasses the extensive and diverse range of processes involved in adapting software created in one country to make it suitable for distribution in target markets. This adaptation takes into account the specific linguistic, cultural, and technical requirements of the new user environments (O'Hagan; Mangiron, 2013).

Furthermore, a process named internationalization has to be made before localization can take place. As explained by Chandler and Deming (2012), internationalization is a process carried out in the creation of a product to facilitate its exportation to other countries, making it easier to adapt it to other cultures and languages. When a product is internationalized, it is changed to accommodate different characters, types of alphabets, reading directions, formats of time and date, and currencies (Chandler; Deming, 2012). The concepts of localization and internationalization will be further explained in the Review of Literature section.

Unfortunately, a problem indicated by Bernal-Merino (2015) is that for some games to be released as soon as possible, game publishers and game companies employ non-trained professionals with few language skills expecting to receive the maximum quality and productivity but paying the minimum for these people to perform the translation. These expectations are rarely met, and the poor translations are denounced in forums a few hours after the release of the game. Another problem indicated by the author is the lack of knowledge of what translation and localization really mean. This can lead to texts with errors that may bring

comprehension problems to the reader. Therefore, the real process of game localization is not performed, which results in the loss of game immersion. As highlighted by Chandler and Deming (2012), this occurs due to the loss of audio quality, typos, and untranslated texts, among other problems. In this regard, the author also states that many players prefer to purchase the original version of the games, which are often in English.

For this study, the chosen research object was the online game *Legends of Runeterra* released in 2020 by the company Riot Games, founded in 2006. The research object is a Trading Card Game (TCG), that is, a collectible card game in which players assemble decks by combining strategies according to the objectives of the game. The text of each card is short and has a limited text size, which means that the translation has to fit these textual inscription spaces, thus imposing additional challenges to the translation process.

*Legends of Runeterra* is a game based on the universe created for another game from the company Riot Games, entitled *League of Legends*, a MOBA (Multiplayer Online Battle Arena) style game in which each player chooses one of the characters available in the game to battle in one arena in two teams of five people. Due to the great success of *League of Legends*, the company brought some of the main characters of this game and turned them into a card game. *Legends of Runeterra* offers two modes of gameplay, one is the PVP (player versus player) mode, and the other is the PVE (player versus environment) mode. In the PVP mode, the players must create a deck containing a total of 40 cards each made with the cards available within the game to battle against another player. Similarly, in the PVE mode, the players use premade decks and upgrade them by defeating the AI (artificial intelligence). The game is totally played online even when playing in the PVE mode.

The cards are divided into three<sup>1</sup> categories, which are Units (creatures that can be Champions or Followers), Spells (divided into Burst, Fast, Slow, and Focus), and Landmarks (cards that have effects on different rounds within the match). Each card in the game provides information about its role, name, region, and rarity symbols. Unit cards (Figure 1) are represented by creatures, uniquely featuring two numerical values on both sides of their bottom section. These numbers denote their Power and Toughness, serving a pivotal role in either attacking the opponent's *nexus* or blocking attacks from creatures belonging to the player's

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<sup>1</sup> After collecting the corpus, a new category of card entitled "Equipment" was added to the game. The card type was not included in the corpus later because as explained in the Method Chapter, this study adopted a static corpus based on the Patch 3.11.0 of the game.

adversary. Unit cards remain on the board until their Toughness comes to zero, are replaced by another card, or are removed from the game by another card's action.

Figure 1 - Champion and Follower and Non-Collectable Follower. Units card samples from the studied corpus.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>.

Spell cards, as depicted in Figure 2, exert their effects exclusively during the turn they are cast and do not persist on the board beyond that round. Unlike unit cards, which remain in play until specific conditions are met, spells are momentary, delivering immediate impacts. The versatility of spell effects encompasses a wide range of possibilities, including but not limited to altering the power and toughness of a card, eliminating other creatures, inflicting damage to the nexus or a unit, and various other strategic maneuvers. Certain cards possess the ability to trigger various effects within the game, and these effects are labeled as "Skills". It is noteworthy that a Skill, despite being represented as a card, is not a collectible card. Consequently, players are unable to include it in their decks.

Lastly, landmark cards in *Legends of Runeterra* possess a distinctive feature represented by a countdown keyword followed by a numerical value. This numeric indicator signifies the number of rounds or turns necessary for the particular effect of the landmark to become active within the game.

Unlike collectible cards, non-collectible ones lack the rarity symbol that is found on the bottom of the collectible cards, showing their unique status within the game. Additionally, for



skills, a key identifier is the absence of a *mana* cost. While traditional collectible cards require mana to be cast, skills, being non-collectible, operate outside this conventional framework.

Figure 2 - Slow, Fast, Burst, and Focus spells, Landmark, and Skill card samples from the studied corpus.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>.

In card games, the text must be localized according to the cards' layout. Figure 3 shows that each card has a certain place for names, numbers, descriptions, and keywords. Keywords are the special ability that some cards have. On *Legends of Runeterra*, the keywords usually have a symbol to represent them, and this symbol makes it easier to identify those keywords when the cards are played. Additionally, in *Legends of Runeterra*, players can hover their cursor

over symbols and highlighted texts to open a box containing details and explanations about the specific item they are interacting with. This feature provides players with more information and context, enhancing their understanding and gameplay experience.

Figure 3 - Example of a Champion Unit card description, from the studied corpus.



Source: Adaptation of <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>.

Furthermore, cards also have a specific place for the *flavor texts*. These are texts that do not affect the game, but they are parallel texts that tell the game's story and give more characterization to the character portrayed in the card, as depicted in Figure 4. The number of written characters in each space is limited; therefore, some texts may change in the translation process to make them fit the available space. Thus, this study also intends to analyze the product of the translation of these cards to verify whether these limitations affected the translation process. For this purpose, the texts present in the names of the cards, their descriptions, the keywords, and *flavor texts* will be analyzed.

Figure 4 - Example of a Champion Unit card illustration with its flavor text, from the studied corpus.



Source: Retrieved from the game.

To win a match in the game the player has to destroy the enemy *nexus*<sup>2</sup> by dealing damage to it with creatures, spells, or skills. Usually, a *nexus* has twenty hit points<sup>3</sup> (this could vary in PVE matches) and when this number comes to zero the *nexus* is destroyed. Other ways of winning the game are when your opponent is out of cards to draw, or by accomplishing the winning requirement of a specific card. The player and their opponent take turns performing actions each round, being the attacking player or the blocking player as rounds go by. The players start drawing four cards and can choose whether to keep that hand or change it. After that, they draw another card, and then they can put a Unit or a Landmark on the board, play a spell, or even pass the turn. If both players pass in sequence, the round ends and another round begins. To play a card in the game, players need a specific type of resource called *mana*. Each round, every player receives one *mana* crystal to add to their pool. There are a total of thirteen *mana* crystals, with three designated exclusively for spell use.

The limit of cards for each player's hand is ten, and to hit the enemy *nexus*, the attacking player has to place the creature cards in the center of the battlefield. In *Legends of Runeterra*, each offensive can be repelled, that is, the opponent will have a chance to defend their *nexus* by

<sup>2</sup> The nexus crystals represent the player's health points.

<sup>3</sup> Hit Points or Health Points or simply HP is the amount of damage that a character, creature, or in this case the nexus, can take before it dies or is destroyed.

placing a creature in front of the attacking creature. Spells have different uses during the match; they can also hit the *nexus*, repel attacking creatures, draw cards, cancel other spells, or even destroy units or landmarks.

The languages in which the game is currently translated into are Brazilian Portuguese, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Russian, Spanish (Spain and Mexico), Thai, Turkish, and Vietnamese. A Full localization (see more in Chapter 2) was made in the game for Brazilian Portuguese, which means that all language assets were translated, in this case, the texts, voiceover, websites, trailers, and even videos on YouTube. There are no rule books or manuals explaining how to play this game; instead, it offers tutorials to teach the diverse mechanics of the game one by one.

Software age ratings guarantee that the game content is suitable for the intended audience (Chandler; Deming, 2012). They can vary according to the country, and this is not different in the case of *Legends of Runeterra*. In the United States, the game is classified as suitable for ages thirteen and above according to its website, which uses the ESRB (Entertainment Software Rating Board) classification, due to the presence of content such as alcohol reference, blood, fantasy violence, mild suggestive themes, users interact, and in-game purchases. However, in Brazil the recommended age rating is for ages twelve and above, according to Ministério da Justiça e Segurança Pública (2019) (<https://classindportal.mj.gov.br/consulta-jogos>), specifying the presence of violence, drugs, and in-game purchases. These differences in age ratings can influence the translation and adaptation of the game for each market, considering the specific restrictions imposed by each country for certain age groups.

The game is freely available for download and played on the computer on the game's official website (<https://playruneterra.com/>). *Legends of Runeterra* is a “cross-platform” or “multiplatform” game, which means it was released on more than one platform (O'Hagan; Mangiron, 2013) and players can interact with others using those different devices. In this case, the game is also available for download on smartphones on the App Store for IOS and Google Play for Android. *Legends of Runeterra* is the second “multiplatform” game from the company, the first was one game mode inside the game *League of Legends* entitled *TeamFight Tactics*, this game can also be played on the computer, smartphones, and tablets.

To date, there are few studies regarding the research in Trading Card Games. One of the studies that inform this research is the thesis and paper by Fornazari (2014, 2020) that

investigates the localization practices of the TCG entitled *Magic: The Gathering*, the first game of this genre ever released. Her research aimed to study the limitations of localization practices, decision-making processes, and the policies that influence them.

Another research investigates the humor elements in the game *Munchkin* – a game that was inspired by another game genre called RPG (Role Playing Game) and makes a satire of it - in both English and Portuguese versions, analyzing the solutions that the translators found to adapt these elements into the Brazilian culture (Moreira, 2020).

Finally, an investigation on general TCGs focusing on the nature of the dialogue between translation studies and the world of digital games was made by Katopodis (2021), working with three case studies that display archetypes, series or cycles, and reprints, which try to demonstrate the instrumentality of the approaches for the analysis of their characteristics.

What sets this research apart from previous studies is its focus on an online game in a digital format, characterized by its dynamic nature. As mentioned earlier, this dynamic nature is evident in the modifications made to the game's cards through updates, which consequently require new translations for elements present in previously translated cards. This aspect highlights the unique challenges and considerations involved in studying a continuously evolving game and the ongoing localization efforts necessary to keep up with its changes.

## 1.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

This study aims to analyze the localization processes of the online game *Legends of Runeterra*, a virtual Trading Card Game, with a view to understanding the common practices of localizing games in the Brazilian context. In other words, the goal of this research is to look into the translation techniques employed in the game's localization to translate the card texts and investigate the constraints related to card layout and culture that might influence the utilization of such techniques.

## 1.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In order to achieve the goal of this research, three research questions were created to guide this study:

1. What linguistic categories in the original cards can be seen as barriers that need to be overcome?
2. What translation techniques are used by translators when dealing with certain linguistic elements?
3. How could these techniques be related to cultural and layout issues?

It is important to observe that the research questions above reflect the present study's descriptive nature and do not aim to evaluate the quality of the translated cards. The aim here is to investigate what kinds of practices occur and why translators opted for them to the detriment of other possible alternatives. How these Research Questions are going to be answered is discussed in the Chapter Method.

### 1.3 SIGNIFICANCE

Online card games are a recent form of entertainment, but currently, there are a few varieties of this type of game, such as *Hearthstone*, *Magic The Gathering Arena*, *GWENT*, and *Legends of Runeterra* itself. As they are a recent modality of online games, there is little research on this medium so far, some of these studies are further explained in the Review of Literature in Chapter 2.

Understanding the benefits of localization on game sales may increase game enterprises' demand for professional translators. Developing internationalization projects by expanding the field of technical and scientific knowledge regarding localization, is a way of offering this knowledge as a product to companies in the IT area and fostering research at the direct application of the demand – of intellectual product – inferred by the technological center installed in the state of Santa Catarina.

### 1.4 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Following this introductory Chapter, the Second Chapter provides a literature review relevant to this study. It delves into the concepts connected within the GILT chain of processes (Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, and Translation), discussing previous studies on the localization of trading card games and exploring the notion of Culture-Specific Items

within game localization. In the Third Chapter, the methods were elucidated by presenting the steps involved in creating the corpus and the definition of the categories of analysis used in the study, the explanations of culture-specific elements, neologisms, worldbuilding terms, and the translation techniques proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) applied in the analysis of card translations. The Fourth Chapter analyzes and presents the results of the study. It features statistics and graphs illustrating the frequency of translation techniques used and their distribution across different categories of cards. Additionally, it discusses other translation techniques employed in card translation that were not covered by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002). The Chapter also provides insights into the localization of the game's worldbuilding terms. The Fifth Chapter concludes the study by summarizing the findings and discussions, acknowledging any limitations and implications, and proposing suggestions for further research.



## 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this Chapter, the key concepts that guide the research are discussed. These concepts are connected in a chain of processes called GILT (Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, and Translation) (Munday, 2008), which, according to O’Hagan and Mangiron (2013) “have contributed significantly to the worldwide success of the game industry” (p. 111). The most general notions are presented, starting with the broadest themes to the most specific ones. Moreover, this section also offers brief research on the previous studies on game localization and gathers some studies on the localization of trading card games, and about Culture-Specific Items in game localization.

### 2.1 GLOBALIZATION

The term globalization also referred to as G11N<sup>4</sup>, is widely used for different reasons (ESSELINK 2000); it often has a negative connotation because of the view of standardization of products and/or cultures. From a positive standpoint, globalization is the number of possibilities that could be available when distances are easily overcome (Pym, 2006). Along similar lines, Palumbo (2009) argues that new technologies that ease communication between distant places affect the translation market. In general, the term is related to the market and sales. Gross (2006) refers to The Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA)<sup>5</sup> to emphasize that globalization is connected to the process of expanding a business or organization on a global scale, and it “involves integrating internal and external business functions with marketing, sales, and customer support in the world market” (p. 3).

Considering the *critical* theory of globalization, Cronin (2003) defines globalization as a process that “encompasses global movements and exchanges of people, commodities, and ideas and a politico-historical (*sic*) approach to changes in global processes” (p. 77). Nevertheless, in the field of translation studies, globalization is defined concerning Translation-Mediated Communication (TMC) (O’Hagan; Ashworth, 2002). Thus, according to these

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<sup>4</sup> The number 11 on the acronym stands for the eleven letters between the G and the N.

<sup>5</sup> The source cited is a website that belongs to the Localization Industry Standards Association (LISA), an organization founded in Switzerland in 1990 that gave support to translators, companies, and other experts involved in the translation and adaptation of software and web content into several languages, however this organization ceased its activities in 2011 and the site is now down (O’Hagan, 2020, p. 28).



authors, globalization is defined as “a process to enable the Message to be adaptable to the condition that may be imposed by Receivers who do not share the same linguistic and cultural backgrounds as the Sender” (p. 66).

Esselink (2000) explains three ways the term globalization is used. First, globalization refers to business and economic evolution. Second, globalization is related to the distribution of enterprises internationally by spreading offices or local branches increasing its presence globally. Nevertheless, the view that informs this research is related to the creation of a localized version of websites. This third view is concerned with enabling people who speak other languages than the website’s language to visit and interact with the page, by internationalizing the site’s back-end software and localizing all website content.

## 2.2 INTERNATIONALIZATION

Internationalization (I18N<sup>6</sup>) is related to the development of multilingual software. For implementing internationalization, software should be developed or modified to be easily translated into other languages, and it should fulfill the users’ needs in their region (GROSS, 2006). An important point highlighted by Chandler and Deming (2012) regarding internationalization is that it is a process that aims to create a project that makes it as easy as possible for developers to localize the software, ensuring that all players always have the same experience when playing the different versions of the game. Hence, the international versions have to present identical features to the original project. This means that “the user interface (UI), control scheme, game content, and other areas of the game” (Chandler; Deming, 2012, p. 4) have to be developed to enable international versions.

The concept of internationalization is a process that occurs before localization, and it was formerly used by the industry looking for the development of products directed to the international market (O’Hagan; Mangiron, 2013). To achieve its goal, the project of internationalization has to be able to accommodate different languages, and cultures, by creating a code base, a core feature set, and a user interface that could support the diversity of characters from other languages (Bernal-Merino, 2015; Chandler; Deming, 2012). In other

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<sup>6</sup> As in the globalization acronym, the number 18 here stands for the eighteen letters between the I and the N.

words, Bernal-Merino (2015, p. 102) also explains that Unicode<sup>7</sup> is required to be implemented to ensure that not only those characters from different writing systems will be displayed correctly, but also that the software will be compatible with different hardware, and with a multi-network configuration that provides a simultaneous online game experience without lags<sup>8</sup> in any part of the world.

The Unicode is capable of displaying more than 65,000 unique characters, including Asian ideograms (Chandler; Deming, 2012). This is related to the areas that internationalization can affect, for instance, character classification. As explained by Bernal-Merino (2015), English classifies as “alphabetical” 52 characters, which consists of [A - Z] and [a - z]. However, in Brazilian Portuguese, the language of the target text of the present study, there are more characters considered alphabetical such as characters with diacritic marks [Á, À, Ã, Â, É, Ê, Í, Ó, Ô, Õ, Ú, and Ç] and [á, à, ã, â, é, ê, í, ó, õ, ô, ú, and ç]. Other examples are the numerical/monetary formats and date/time formats, which can vary from country to country. Despite the problems with character sets, Unicode, according to Esselink (2000), offers support to all scripts used worldwide nowadays. In addition to software compatibility, the internationalization process of a game also considers the acceptance of some content by a certain culture. For example, in Germany, the use of symbols related to the Nazis and the depiction of blood in red is prohibited, while in the USA these images may be allowed (Bernal-Merino, 2015).

### 2.3 LOCALIZATION

Localization (L10N<sup>9</sup>) is the second part of the internationalization process. The term localization refers to the process of adapting a product, such as software, websites, or video games, to a specific local market or target audience to be linguistically and culturally suitable for the specific country/region where it will be used and sold (Sandrini, 2008, Palumbo, 2009, Esselink, 2000, Mangiron, 2017). For software, the localization process is related to the

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<sup>7</sup> Unicode is an international standard that defines digital codes for all known characters, glyphs, and ideograms of every language, regardless of location (GROSS, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Lag is a term commonly used in the context of online gaming and the internet. It refers to a delay or latency in the communication between a player’s device (such as a computer or gaming console) and the game server or other players’ devices. When a player experiences lag, there is a noticeable delay between their actions (e.g., pressing a button) and the corresponding response or feedback in the game.

<sup>9</sup> As in the acronyms before, the number 10 here stands for the ten letters between the L and the N.

translation of the texts present on the User Interface and the further adjustments, such as the size of the dialogs that are altered in the translation or cultural circumstances (Gross, 2006). According to O'Hagan (2009), the term localization was introduced to encompass the additional dimensions and complexities involved in incorporating translation and adaptation work into digital products; nevertheless, nowadays this term is also used for other types of translation that are related to computerized technologies, such as websites or, in the case of this study, video games.

Esselink (2000) states that well-localized software allows the user to interact not only with all language assets but also with interface components of a product in their native language, in other words, the user should be capable of not only reading translated contents even in error messages or screen tips but also to insert information using accented characters present in their local keyboard layout. This promotes a better user experience of the software and increases the probability of people using this software around the world. The translation of interface elements, according to Sandrini (2008), usually requires a cultural adaptation because these linguistic elements need to be appropriate with conventions and associations regarding the target market. The author also explains that for an interface translation, elements as in calendars and dates/time format, character sets, page sizes, and address formats, must be adapted to the set of standards and conventions of a given target local market (*ibid*).

The word Localization, according to Esselink (2000) derives from the word "Locale", which means a small area, however, the author explains that today the term is used in a "technical context, where it represents a specific combination of language, region, and character encoding" (p. 1). One example is that the Portuguese spoken in Brazil is a different locale than the Portuguese spoken in Portugal.

Palumbo (2009) explains that a larger amount of text to be translated, and its special characters require special engineering adjustments, and these factors created a higher necessity for translation technology in localization than in other areas of translation. For instance, the use of technologies such as translation memories and terminology management systems, help these larger volumes of texts, because "they are often highly repetitive or, as products are updated, likely to be massively recycled, which makes them suitable for the use of translation memories" (p. 72). For card games, as in this study, although the texts of the cards are short, there are more than a thousand cards present in the game, which generates a large amount of text and, because they are separated from each other, generates repetitive terms. For example, among the cards

of *Legends of Runeterra*, there are terms that define such action or effect of a card in-game. These terms are common in several cards, and they require to be translated equally in all the cards that it is present. For instance, the term “give” is always translated to *conceda* and other terms that may have other more common translations, such as “everywhere” that is translated to *globalmente* (see p. 32) instead of *em todo lugar*. In this case, the use of translation memory is highly necessary so that these terms are always translated in the same way so that there are no interpretation problems during the game.

During the Localization process, according to Esselink (2000), there are a series of procedures that must be done for the project to be carried out. Some of these processes are the Analysis of Source Material, by production specialists, such as engineers for the software. In this phase, problems are analyzed and identified, tools and approaches are selected, and information is provided for the project; the Terminology Setup, which is the creation of a glossary that must clearly indicate the terms frequently used in the product to be localized and always be kept up to date during the localization process; in the Preparation of Source Material, the step after the analysis, a translation kit is created by investigating if other translations could be re-used in the new project, to decrease the number of words to be translated and improve the translation consistency of the project; then the Translation step, that could be made in translation memory tool or software localization tool; other step is the Product Quality Assessment, a phase of testing, proofreading translations, finalizing bugs or problem reports, and reviews; and finally the Project Closure.

Creating a localization kit is important as it facilitates the game localization process. At the end of the production of a game, all types of used assets must be archived because, without them, it is almost impossible to create localized versions of the game. These files can be organized into three different and interrelated kits. The first is the closing kit, which “contains all the final assets, source assets documentation, and source code necessary to create a working version of the game without assistance from the original development team”; the second is the localization kit, which is included in the closing kit, that is, a subdivision of this kit, it is smaller than the previous one, as it only contains the assets necessary for the game’s localization; the third is the translation kit, which is a subset of the localization kit, it doesn’t contain all the assets to create a localized version, only the assets and texts to be translated, so the translator can translate the texts and send them to the team so they can integrate, test, and thus release the localized version. A localization kit contains the documentation; assets, including text, art,

cinematic, and voiceover assets; tools, such as text editor, plug-ins, localization integration tools, and proprietary tools; and code, necessary for the creation of a localized version, that can include the source language master, tools source code, and installer files (Chandler; Deming, 2012).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the localization of a game, so it is important to emphasize that game localization is a way of smoothing out the cultural differences between the source text and the target text by making cultural adjustments to ensure that the game aligns with the local customs, preferences, and sensibilities of the target audience, as well as translating not only textual elements but also all linguistic elements, such as images, dubbing, cinematics, game interface, error messages, help files, tutorials, gameplay hints, install guides, instructions for patch files, sometimes the music, and even the name of some characters of the game, and more (Chandler; Deming, 2012; O'Hagan; Mangiron, 2013; Dietz, 2006).

Moreover, localization imports referents of the target culture so that there is less estrangement and more identification of the player with the game, providing players with a seamless and immersive gaming experience that feels natural and relatable within their own cultural context (Malta; Barcelos, 2018). Furthermore, according to O'Hagan and Mangiron (2004), it is crucial, for game localization, to maintain the essence of the original "gameplay experience" in the localized version to ensure that all players, regardless of their language preference, can enjoy the game to the fullest. Preserving the core elements and emotions of the game across different languages helps create a consistent and immersive experience for all players. O'Hagan and Ashworth (2002) explain that to properly suit the Message to the Recipient's cultural context, the localization process should be applied to both the Content and the Comprehensive Package of products and services. The field of game localization is a growing professional practice, and the translation process it entails is distinct from other types of translation due to its combination of freedom and constraints. This distinction arises from the interactive and digital nature of video games, which demand a fresh approach to translation. While game localization shares similarities with screen translation and software localization, its primary objective is to provide entertainment to the end-user. Therefore, it sets itself apart from other forms of translation by prioritizing the enjoyment and engagement of the players (Mangiron; O'Hagan, 2006).

Players' interest in a particular type of game directly influences the game localization because it affects the market and according to O'Hagan (2013) "the market preferences affect

localization decisions in determining what types of games should be localized for certain territories” (p. 66), therefore, it is possible that in a country, a certain type of game is more popular among players than others, in this sense the localization of this type of game is more requested than that of less popular games. Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMOGs), for instance, are a kind of game very popular in China and Korea, but in Japan it is not played so much as in these other countries, so the localization of some of these kinds of games, such *World of Warcraft*, are localized into both simplified and traditional Chinese as well as Korean, however, are not localized into Japanese.

Some incidents involving mistranslation in a certain locale, such as product names that were not well translated into other languages are common, although some are just funny mistakes, others can be offensive to some people and cause several consequences for publishers and companies, since the game’s banishment in the country to more direct action against the company’s subsidiary personnel. An effective approach to mitigate these issues involves culturalization, which goes beyond localization by scrutinizing game content to evaluate its suitability for a diverse, multicultural audience, both on a broad scale and within specific regions. While localization focuses on understanding the game’s content, often through translation, culturalization takes it a step further by enabling gamers to engage with the game’s content on a deeper and more meaningful level. In contrast, culturalization ensures that gamers are not disengaged from the game due to content that is perceived as inappropriate, offensive, or inconsistent with their cultural background (Chandler; Deming, 2012).

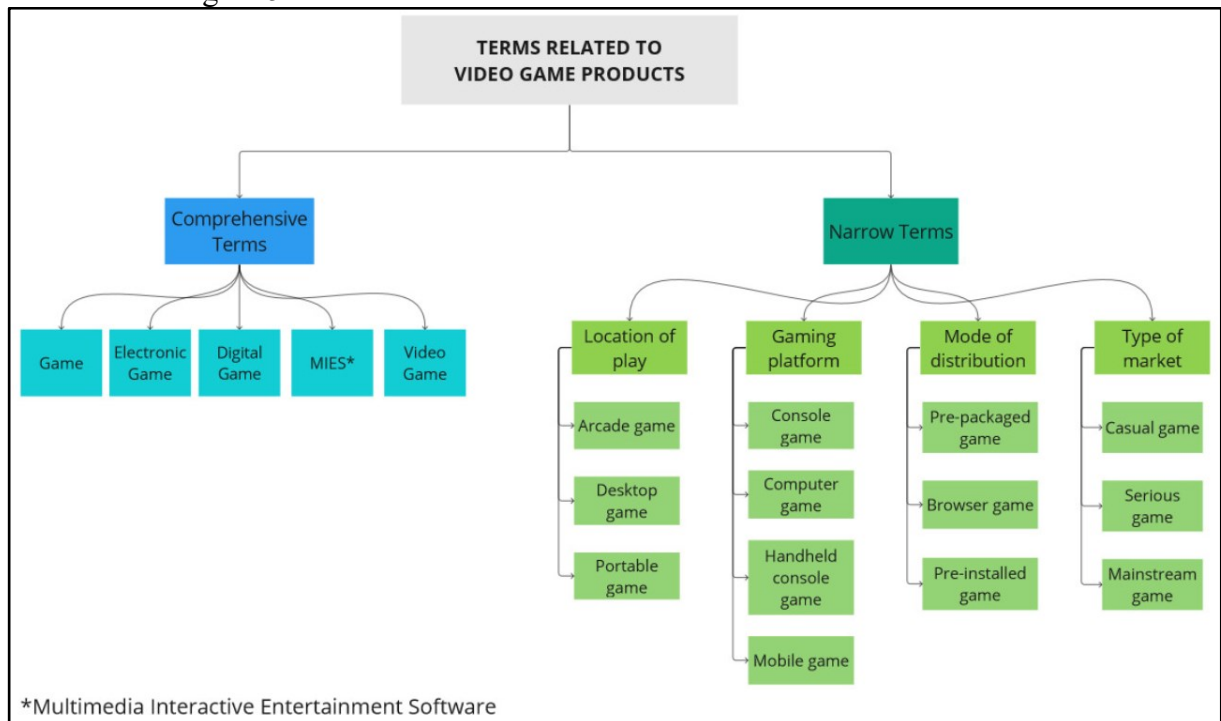
There are different levels of how to localize a game depending on how much the publishers intend to invest in this process. According to Chandler and Deming (2012) and O’Hagan and Mangiron (2013), a game could have:

- No localization at all, where the game and the package are not localized, and the internationalization occurs with the source language of the product;
- “Box and docs” localization, where the game is not localized, but the package and manuals are. In this method, as the game is not translated, the experience could not be as immersive for the player as in the translated game;
- Partial localization, where almost the entire game is localized except for voiceovers, which are just subtitled;
- Full Localization, which means that the entire game was localized, including packages, manuals, and voiceovers.

These levels of localization can vary according to the sales target for each country, for example, a publisher can focus on doing a Full localization for the game only for some countries while doing a Partial localization or a “Box and docs” for others (Chandler; Deming, 2012). A notable example is Nintendo, which exclusively adopts Full Localization for English. However, for other languages like Portuguese in the Brazilian market, they opt for the “Box and docs” strategy. This approach allows publishers to tailor their localization methods in alignment with the specific needs and market dynamics of diverse regions.

According to Bernal-Merino (2015), there are some classifications of terms regarding video games. The author divides the Comprehensive Terms, explaining some differences in “game types, modes of play, complementary equipment, devices, gadgets, and platforms” (p. 12), and Narrow Terms, which are divided into four sub-categories compartmentalizing the video game products even further, and considers the most commonly used terms (Figure 5).

Figure 5 - Classification of Terms related to Video Games Products.



Source: adapted from Bernal-Merino (2015).

The author emphasizes these terms, although have been created at different times, are still in use, nevertheless, the terms could be used differently according to the context and the group of people that use them, such as players, journalists, and industry professionals. The

object of this study fits in some of this group of narrow terms, which is divided into four Parameters: location of play; gaming platform; mode of distribution; and type of marketing.

The Location of play is associated with the device utilized for gaming. As *Legends of Runeterra* is a cross-platform game it is classified as both a Desktop Game and a Portable Game because it allows for play on computers, tablets, and smartphones. The Gaming platform encompasses terms pertaining to the hardware employed for gaming. In this instance, the game falls under two sub-categories, namely Computer game and Mobile game, due to the aforementioned reason.

As for Distribution mode, *Legends of Runeterra* falls into the Browser game category, as it is a web-based game that necessitates an internet connection and a web browser for downloading the game on the computer platform, or on a mobile app digital distribution service for tablets and smartphones.

Lastly, understanding the game's Target market is crucial in evaluating its significance in today's world and its impact on society. *Legends of Runeterra* aligns with the Mainstream Games category, which represents the primary sector of the video game industry. These games are designed to provide high-quality entertainment and are often associated with other forms of media such as cinema, music, television, or even other games, this is evident in the case of *Legends of Runeterra*, which is a derivative product associated with *League of Legends*.

## 2.4 LOCALIZATION AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

Professional “localizers” more often than not make a distinction between translation and localization (see Cronin 2003; Dunne, 2006; Pym 2004, 2010; Esselink, 2000; Gouadec, 2007; Palumbo, 2009). However, from a translation studies perspective, localization can be seen as a particular type of translation activity. As explained previously, there are important aspects of localization that make its nature different from that of other forms of translation. However, these distinctions do not categorize localization as an entirely separate process from translation. It is important to mention that authors define localization in relation to translation in a way that places localization as a subset or component of the broader translation process. Chandler and Deming (2012, p. 4), for instance, define localization as “the actual process of *translating* the language of a game into other languages” (emphasis added). Although Esselink (2000, p. 4) mentions that “translation is only one of the activities in localization [...]”, he also states (p. 1)



that “localization *is the translation* and adaptation of a software or web product [...]” (emphasis added). Furthermore, according to Dong and Mangiron (2018, p. 150), game localization “is an emerging type of *translation* that has increasingly gathered scholarly attention within the field of *Translation Studies*” (emphasis added). While some authors distinguish translation from adaptation as separate processes, it’s worth noting that in the field of translation studies (see Molina; Hurtado Albir, 2002), there is recognition that adaptation can be considered as one of the approaches or methods to translate. Thus, this research aims to align with the definition of localization within the field of translation studies, which recognizes localization as a part of the translation process.

According to Munday (2008), translation can be described in several different ways, depending on which field it is referred to. It could be related to the general subject field, to the product (the translated text), or to the process (the production of a translation). The author also explains that this translation process involves the changes of a Source Text (ST) from a determined Source Language (SL) into a Target Text (TT) in a specific Target Language (TL).

For Esselink (2000), translation is the activity of transforming one written text or spoken word from a specific language into another language. For this, all content and meaning from the source text have to be rendered into the target text, considering the cultural referents and style.

There can be no absolute correspondence between languages since no two languages have the same meanings given to their symbols. This is due to how these symbols are arranged in phrases or sentences. The reasons for the differences between translations can generally be attributed to three main factors: First, there is the nature of the message; second there are the author’s and the translator’s purposes, and finally the type of audience (Nida, 2012).

In this sense, Jakobson (2012) claims that the process of translation may occur regarding the interpretation of verbal signs, and this could be distinguished in three ways, “it may be translated into other signs of the same language, into another language, or into another, non-verbal system of symbols” (p. 127). And Jakobson named each of these kinds of translation as follows:

1 Intralingual translation or *rewording* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.

2 Interlingual translation or *translation proper* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.

3 Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems (JAKOBSON, 2012, p. 127).

Bernal-Merino (2016) explains that video games combine different semiotic systems, such as a linguistic system with an audio and visual one, and with this connection between these systems are made to “achieve a somehow more life-like, illuminating or even cathartic communication experience with the receivers of the product” (p. 46), moreover, translating a text taking into account only the written content without consider their imagery can lead the translator to make mistakes, which can even harm the coherence that exists between the various signs of the Source Text. As this study seeks to explore the translation of texts into a language different from the Source Text and considers the inclusion of images of some cards, certain translations will involve both interlingual and intersemiotic translation. An example of intersemiotic translation can be seen in the figure below:

Figure 6 - Example of Intersemiotic Translation



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/pt/lor/cards>

In the example above, the intersemiotic translation arises because the word *Whump* is a creation to designate a certain type of creature in the game, and there is no specific translation for it. In this case, the translation choice was based on the image of the card, which depicts a creature resembling a raccoon. Therefore, part of the word *guaxinim* (raccoon in Portuguese) was used to create the name for this type of creature.

Localization definitions currently have two different views and interpretations. The first views localization as a process in which translation is just a part of this procedure. In this view,

translation only has the function of translating textual elements, while non-textual elements undergo the process of adaptation (Dunne, 2006; Pym, 2004). However, this view may promote a limited and somewhat misleading conception of what the localization process is according to the concepts observed in the disciplinary field of translation studies, which has localization under the umbrella term “translation”. In this sense, localization is part of the translation and not the other way around, which means that translation is a general theoretical notion that covers a wide array of translation types such as dubbing, subtitling, and localization. Contrary to the previously mentioned researchers in the area of localization who differentiate translation and adaptation, from the perspective of translation studies, all elements are subject to translation, both textual and non-textual, such as images, objects, symbols, and even colors (Chandler; Deming, 2012). Translation, in this case, has a very heavy semiotic component (Jakobson, 2012) than just to the text and is broader than the definition used by localization researchers. Therefore, based on the definition of localization in translation studies, this research highlights that localization “involves taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold” (LISA 2003 *apud* Esselink, 2000, p. 3; Pym, 2004, p. 29), translating all the linguistic, cultural and technical elements present into a given language and culture (Chandler; Deming, 2012; O’Hagan; Mangiron, 2013). Localization aims to make the product feel native and natural to the target market, providing a smooth user experience and maximizing its acceptance and success in that particular language and culture.

When using localized software, users, more often than not, are supposed to read the instructions as if they were reading a text in their mother tongue. This idea has already been explored by Venuti (1995), concerning the publishing industry in North America, as he perceived that any of the potential “foreignness” of the texts that readers interact with is usually “domesticated”. Despite the view in which localization is considered to be a domestication process, there are certain types of fantasy games, for example, that create new fantastic worlds full of imagination that need to be translated, and not always a domesticating strategy will be welcome as such worlds do not exist in the languages involved. In the case of fantasy games, a more creative and adaptive approach to translation may be necessary to ensure the preservation of the unique and imaginative aspects of the game’s world. Simply domesticating the content may not adequately capture the essence of these fictional universes. Therefore, translators and localizers of such games face the challenge of striking a balance between making the content

accessible to players in their native language while also preserving the original fantasy elements and maintaining the intended experience of the game.

*Legends of Runeterra*, as explained in Chapter One, is a game based on the universe of another game called *League of Legends*. The game’s universe has various forms of transmedia<sup>10</sup>, including the creation of musical groups and other games like *Legends of Runeterra* itself. These transmedia projects are all based on the same universe, using characters, regions, creatures, and more from the *League of Legends* game.

Figure 7 - Card entitled according to the lyrics of a song.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>.

In *Legends of Runeterra*, certain cards are named after lyrics from songs by a K-POP group associated with the *League of Legends* universe. Additionally, the *flavor texts* of these cards are also inspired by the songs. An example of this is the card “Go Hard” (Figure 7), where both the title and *flavor text* were not translated to avoid losing the intended meaning in the translation process, maintaining the creative aspects of the card intact within the context of the game.

<sup>10</sup> According to O’Hagan and Mangiron (2013, p. 105) transmedia is a “concept, where a video game may be directly derived from other media such as a film or vice versa”, the term refers to the integration of games and their content into various forms of media, both traditional and new, to create a cohesive and immersive entertainment experience.

## 2.5 PREVIOUS STUDIES IN TRADING CARD GAMES

While there is extensive coverage and a growing body of research on games, there is a lack of comprehensive sources specifically dedicated to the development of game localization practices from the early days of the industry (O'Hagan, Mangiron, 2013). Furthermore, to date, there is an even more limited number of studies dedicated specifically to research on Trading Card Games. While TCGs have gained significant popularity and have a dedicated player base, academic research focusing on this area is relatively scarce.

One of the studies that inform this research is the thesis and paper by Fornazari (2014, 2020) that investigates the localization practices of the TCG entitled *Magic: The Gathering*, the first game of this genre ever released. The research conducted by the author involved the creation of a bilingual corpus to examine technical limitations, localization policies, decision-making processes, and the influencing factors in the translation of a trading card game. The corpus was analyzed using Wordsmith 3.0 and Notepad++ software, utilizing an adapted translation description model specific to the TCG genre. The analysis encompassed two levels: macrostructure (general) and microstructure (specific), with an interconnected systemic context stage. The bilingual, parallel, and static corpus was developed from the 2013 Core Set, comprising 249 cards, along with the Basic Rulebook. Initially, the macrostructure features of the translated cards were collected and analyzed, considering aspects such as linguistic interference, new words, socio-cultural features, and recognition of the translated text. The subsequent microanalysis focused on statistical data related to information insertion, deletion, explicitation, and alteration within the text. This analysis provided insights into the consistency of such modifications and offered a more precise understanding of the translation practices employed in the localization process. Consistencies were categorized and correlated when necessary. The research also examined the semantic prosody, specifically the positive or negative connotations associated with certain collocates, such as verbs following the term 'creature'. Throughout her research, several key findings and recommendations, that can potentially be extrapolated to other Trading Card Games, were made:

1. At several points of the corpus, the acceptable translation produced can make the text seem truncated and not applicable to its tenor of being written to be played.
2. When the development language has real-world North-American cultural references, they are still translated to be acceptable when they could be translated to be adequate to the Brazilian cultural point of view; when they are not, they sound like

a caricature of American culture in which sometimes creative flavor can be lost in humor or meaninglessness.

3. Mechanics keywords for static abilities should be translated as nouns; activated and triggered abilities as verbs.

4. Mechanics keywords that do not follow the aforementioned grammatical consistency to rules and have been translated in previous editions should be changed, in order to achieve grammatical consistency.

5. Font sizes may not be decided by translators, but should be considered as font reduction may be avoided by the use of translation strategies.

6. Creative text (Card Name and Flavor Text) should be translated in order to create culturally acceptable translated sections, instead of linguistically adequate sections like the game text in Trading Card Games. (FORNAZARI, 2014. p. 84).

Another research investigates the humor elements in the game *Munchkin* – a card game that was inspired by another game genre named RPG (Role Playing Game) and makes a satire of it - in both English and Portuguese versions, analyzing the solutions that the translators found to adapt these elements into the Brazilian culture. The game was originally developed by Steve Jackson and published in English, and it has now been translated into 15 different languages, including Portuguese. In Brazil, Galápagos Jogos is responsible for marketing *Munchkin* and handling its localization, with translators Yuri Fang and Renato Sasdelli tasked with translating its content. Guided by theoretical perspectives on localization, specialized translation contexts, multimodality, and translation of humorous content, the research aims to review *Munchkin*'s translation and analyze a portion of its playable content in English and its translated version in Portuguese. The goal is to evaluate the elements that create humor, how they were developed in English, and the solutions employed by the translators to convey humor while considering cultural aspects that would resonate with the Brazilian target audience. Based on the findings, the research concludes that, despite some reservations regarding the translation of certain cards, *Munchkin* is generally well-localized for the Brazilian target audience (Moreira, 2020).

Finally, an investigation of general TCGs focusing on the nature of the dialogue between translation studies and the world of digital games was made by Katopodis (2021) and has two main objectives. Firstly, it aims to explore the historical connections between digital games as a medium and the field of Translation Studies. Through a comprehensive review of relevant literature on game localization, this study identifies and analyzes seminal works that have shaped the field and served as the foundation for notable studies. A similar approach is taken in examining the academic literature published in Brazil. Secondly, the study aims to develop a framework for future research specifically within the area of Trading Card Game localization. Drawing on concepts from Polysystem Theory, Descriptive Translation Studies, and

Translational Norms, the framework is illustrated through the analysis of three case studies involving Archetypes, Series or Cycles, and Reprints. The analysis highlights two significant aspects of Trading Card Games: the sales model of serial release and the translation of cards as part of different localization processes, leading to variations in systemic contexts and norms. Through the findings and reflections presented in this study, the aim is to contribute to the expanding field of research on Trading Card Games and their localization.

Observing those previous studies, this research on the localization of an online TCG can contribute to a better understanding of aspects related to game localization. Such as the focus on identifying and evaluating different localization techniques employed in online trading card games. Understanding these localization techniques can help developers and translators make informed decisions during the process. In addition, this study explores the challenges and techniques involved in culturally adapting an online TCG for different regions and target audiences, more specifically for the Brazilian-Portuguese context. This includes studying how cultural elements, such as neologisms, character and place names, and references, are translated to ensure they resonate with the target audience while maintaining the game's integrity because understanding cultural adaptation can lead to more effective and engaging localized versions of the game.

This research distinguishes itself from previous studies by focusing on an online game in a digital format, which possesses a dynamic nature. As mentioned earlier, the game undergoes updates and modifications, leading to new translations of elements within cards that have already been translated in the past. This aspect adds a unique dimension to the study, as it explores the challenges and strategies involved in consistently adapting and translating content in response to these updates.

## 2.6 CULTURE-SPECIFIC ITEMS IN GAME LOCALIZATION

The translation of culture-specific items (CSI) is often considered one of the most challenging tasks in translation (Daghoughi; Hashemian, 2016; Ibraheem,2021). These items carry cultural connotations and are deeply rooted in the source language and culture. Translating them accurately and effectively requires the translator to have a comprehensive understanding of both the source and target cultures.

According to Mangiron and O'Hagan (2006), the primary objective of game localization is to preserve the gameplay experience for the target players by maintaining the original "look and feel" of the game. For this, the localization process aims to avoid estrangement or cultural dissonance that could disrupt the gameplay experience. The role of the localizer is to create a version that allows players to immerse themselves in the game as if it were originally developed in their own language, providing an equivalent level of enjoyment to that of the players of the original version.

To achieve this goal, translators need to have a deep understanding of the game domain. They need to be familiar with the specific elements that make up games, including the appropriate register and terminology used, the type of humor employed, and the use of puns, among other aspects. Additionally, translators should be able to identify and interpret allusions and references to other genres of global popular culture, such as comics and films, that may be present in the game (Mangiron; O'Hagan, 2016). As cultural references play a significant role in game localization, translators must possess cultural knowledge of both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) to accurately translate cultural references present in the game. Cultural references can include elements such as jokes, idioms, neologisms, historical or pop culture references, and specific cultural practices or traditions (Newmark, 1988). Translators need to consider the cultural background of the target audience and find suitable equivalents or adaptations that convey the intended meaning and cultural relevance in the translated version. This ensures that players in the target market can fully comprehend and appreciate the game's content, maintaining the immersive experience intended by the game developers.

According to Franco Aixelá (1996), culture-specific items can be categorized into two groups: proper nouns and common expressions. Proper nouns refer to specific names of people, places, or things that are unique and distinct. These can include names of characters, locations, landmarks, or specific objects within the game world. Proper nouns often carry cultural significance and require careful translation to ensure their cultural relevance is preserved. On the other hand, common expressions encompass a broader range of culture-specific items. This group includes elements related to the world of objects, institutions, habits, and opinions. It covers a wide range of cultural references, such as everyday items, customs, social practices, beliefs, and ideologies. Translating common expressions involves adapting these cultural elements in a way that is familiar and understandable to the target audience while retaining their intended meaning and cultural connotations.



The significance of cultural mediation in translation is also stressed by Franco Aixelá (1996), emphasizing that translators should not only convey the literal meaning of words but also capture the cultural connotations and nuances attached to them. Neologisms, being intricately connected to the cultural and linguistic context in which they emerge, can present difficulties for translators, especially when the target language or culture does not possess an equivalent term or concept.

The translation of neologisms necessitates meticulous attention to the target audience and the cultural references embedded in the neologism. Depending on the intended readership and the purpose of the translation, various strategies can be employed. These strategies may include using a similar-sounding term in the target language, offering an explanation or glossary, or adapting the neologism to align with the target culture while preserving its core meaning. The choice of strategy will depend on the specific context and the desired effect of the translation.

In video games, it is common to create imaginative and fantastical universes that feature new places, creatures, characters, plants, items, and more. These elements often have names that are closely tied to the culture and language used in the game. When it comes to names for weapons, items, and abilities, according to Mangiron and O'Hagan (2006) they form an essential part of the game's terminology, moreover, game creators invest a great deal of creativity in inventing these names, and translators face the challenge of effectively translating them while fitting within the limited screen space available. These new words can be defined as "worldbuilding terms" as they have the function of describing a new imaginative world, and this term will be further explained in section 3.1.4.

Translating these worldbuilding terms is particularly crucial because they may be reused in subsequent games within a series (Mangiron; O'Hagan, 2016). Therefore, it becomes even more important to ensure accurate and appropriate translations from the beginning. The genre of fantasy games, in particular, presents unique challenges for translators, as they need to maintain a sense of wonder and immersion while finding suitable equivalents in the target language. This requires a deep understanding of the cultural references, linguistic nuances, and creative aspects involved in the naming process.

### 3 METHOD

This research follows a descriptive product-oriented approach to Translation Studies, which, as outlined by Holmes (2000), represents a branch of the discipline that maintains the closest proximity to the empirical phenomena being studied. In essence, this approach focuses on providing a detailed and comprehensive analysis of translation processes and outcomes by closely observing and documenting the real-world manifestations of translation practices. More specifically, the study focuses on the “comparison of translations and their source texts” and the “software localization” from Williams and Chesterman’s theory (2002, p. 6, 15). In other words, this present research carries out a comparative investigation of the source and target texts of a set of digital cards to analyze the linguistic resources applied in the localization process of an online card game; namely, *Legends of Runeterra*.

A static bilingual and unidirectional parallel corpus was created based on the methodological framework proposed by Olohan (2004). This approach was employed to assess the frequency of translation techniques utilized in the localization of the game. Olohan (2004) defines parallel as “a set of texts in one language and their translations in another” (p. 24). This research focuses on analyzing the translation from English to Brazilian Portuguese, which makes the corpus unidirectional. It encompasses the analysis of 273 cards, including their names, descriptions, keywords, regions, and *flavor texts*, available in both English (Source Text) and its translation to Brazilian-Portuguese (Target Text). These texts can be found within the game, nevertheless, they are not available on its official website. To access cards outside the game, players need to visit database<sup>11</sup> websites that house the complete collection of game cards.

For this study, the chosen database was the website *League of Graphs*<sup>12</sup> because it was the only one that presented both the English and Brazilian Portuguese versions of the cards. Moreover, the website is a reliable source of material since it is recommended by the official *Legends of Runeterra* website. All cards within the game are listed on the database website

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<sup>11</sup> The sites that have English and Portuguese versions of the cards available are <https://lor.mobalytics.gg/> and <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>, although the former was presenting errors or did not display the text translation properly. Another database site is <https://dak.gg/lor>, however, it contains only the English version of the cards.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards> for English texts and <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/pt/lor/cards> for Brazilian Portuguese texts

which has a search space, with filters and many options to facilitate the search for a particular card. To choose the language the site offers an option that is found at the top right of the page. All texts and pictures from each card were collected from the database website in English and then its localized version into Brazilian Portuguese. After the collection, the texts and images were gathered by copying the image and texts and pasting them side by side with their localized version in two columns for the source and target texts on a Google Doc File for better visualization of images and texts, and then both versions of the card were compared.

The corpus of this research is static because *Legends of Runeterra* is an online game, and entirely digital, so it undergoes constant updates in which several cards are added to the game, and some are changed. Unlike physical TCGs, i.e. *Magic: The Gathering*, in which players buy the cards on paper, *Legends of Runeterra* offers only the digital cards within the game, thus some cards may be modified after some updates, such as changing *mana* cost, amount of power or/and resistance, or even altering their text descriptions (Figure 8). For these reasons, to create a static corpus, this study considered only the cards available in patch<sup>13</sup> 3.11.0 from the game.

Figure 8 - Example of text modification due to updates on the game. Here the mana cost was increased from 4 to 5 and the keyword “Challenger” was added.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>

<sup>13</sup> A patch is a set of changes in the software that aims to alter some program features, fix bugs, or add or remove assets in order to improve the program. Thus, in online card games, these updates can modify some card texts, rules, add cards, and so on.

The study employed two main sets of categories for analysis. The first set focused on the frequency of certain elements in the source cards, such as the Culture-Specific Items (CSIs), such as the presence of neologisms (newly created words for specific purposes such as naming imported or created objects or processes, as defined by Newmark, 1988), and the translated or untranslated names of characters, creatures or places, the worldbuilding terms. The second set of categories pertained to the various translation techniques (as outlined by Molina and Hurtado Albir, 2002) employed when translating these elements, including borrowings, adaptations, equivalence, and so on. The aim was to investigate how these elements were localized and the level of consistency in the localization process of the specific digital card game under study. Detailed explanations of these categories will be provided in the subsequent section.

### 3.1 CATEGORIES OF ANALYSIS

This study analyzes some aspects of the language such as Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) and Neologisms, as well as the worldbuilding terms, words created to describe imaginary worlds. These elements play a significant role in language and communication, particularly within the context of game localization.

When localizing games, it becomes essential to understand and appropriately handle these elements to ensure that the game resonates with the target audience and maintains its intended cultural impact. By considering these factors, the localization process can effectively bridge the gap between different cultures and enhance players' immersive experiences in the game.

In order to understand the localization process and analyze the techniques used to translate the various categories mentioned, the techniques described by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) will serve as a parameter for comparison between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT). These techniques provide a framework for examining the translation choices and strategies employed in the localization process. By applying these techniques, it becomes possible to identify and analyze how the translation of the neologisms and cultural-specific items, have been approached and rendered in the target text. This comparative analysis helps shed light on the translation techniques employed and their impact on the overall localization of the text.

### 3.1.1 Culture-Specific Items in Translation

Every linguistic or national-linguistic community possesses its own habits, value judgments, classification systems, and more, which can differ or overlap to varying degrees. These cultural variations introduce a factor of variability that translators must consider (Franco Aixelá, 1996). Translators need to be aware of these cultural differences in order to accurately convey the intended meaning and ensure that the translated content resonates appropriately within the target culture.

According to Newmark (1988), culture can be defined as “the way of life and its manifestations that are unique to a community using a particular language for expression” (p. 94). These manifestations often differ from one language or locale to another, resulting in a distance between the ST and the TT. This cultural distance presents a challenge for translators, as they need to navigate and bridge the gaps between the cultural contexts of the ST and TT to ensure effective communication and understanding. Newmark (1988) highlights that within a single language, there can exist multiple cultures or sub-cultures. These sub-cultures may vary in their customs, beliefs, values, and ways of life, creating distinct linguistic and cultural characteristics within the larger language community. According to Daghighi and Hashemian (2016), the cultural distances between the intended audience of the ST and the TT can give rise to significant differences in the impact and effects of the ST and TT. This cultural gap becomes particularly evident in literary translations, where the abundance of Culture-Specific Items (CSIs), distinct values, aesthetic elements, and expressive features pose greater challenges compared to other types of texts. The translator’s understanding of the intricate nuances between cultures plays a vital role in achieving an effective translation. Hence, language and culture are intricately linked and cannot be separated from each other.

The concept of Culture-Specific Items allows us to distinguish the strictly cultural aspect from linguistic or pragmatic elements. However, defining CSIs can be challenging because culture permeates every aspect of language. CSIs are often found in the seemingly arbitrary areas of a language system, including local institutions, street names, historical figures, place names, personal names, periodicals, artworks, and more. In essence, CSIs are associated with words or expressions that have distinct meanings or significance in specific cultures, or they may be common in one language while uncommon or absent in others. They reflect the unique cultural context and provide insights into the social, historical, and geographical aspects of a

particular community (Franco Aixelá, 1996). The author also defines Cultural-Specific Items as:

Those textually actualized items whose function and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the nonexistence of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers of the target text (Franco Aixelá, 1996, p. 58).

Translating cultural-specific items (CSIs) in literary translations presents one of the most demanding tasks for translators as it encompasses the challenge of creating well-translated texts while remaining faithful to the original message. CSIs contribute to the presence of an intercultural gap between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). This gap arises when an item in the SL has no equivalent in the TL culture, or when the TL lacks a specific word for that item. As a result, bridging this gap becomes a complex effort for translators (Daghoughi, Hashemian, 2016). A classic example illustrating the impact of Culture-Specific Items, according to Franco Aixelá (1996), is the word-by-word translation of the term “lamb” in the Bible into languages where this animal is either unfamiliar or lacks the same connotations of innocence and helplessness. In such cases, translating “lamb” from Hebrew into Eskimo languages, for instance, would present a translation challenge as it becomes a CSI. However, when translated into Spanish or English, the term “lamb” does not hold the same status as a CSI due to its intertextual significance as a symbol of purity and a sacrificial animal in these languages.

The example provided previously aligns with one of the classification categories of foreign cultural words presented by Newmark (1988). Specifically, it falls under the first category, Ecology, as it involves elements related to fauna in the text. This category also encompasses flora, winds, plains, hills, and other ecological aspects. Additionally, Newmark’s classification includes other four categories which are Material culture (artifacts) which involves aspects like food, clothes, houses, communications, and transportation. Social culture encompasses work, leisure, and social practices. The fourth category is Organizations, which includes customs, activities, procedures, and concepts related to specific organizations or institutions, which could be political, social, legal, religious, artistic, etc. Lastly, the fifth category encompasses Gestures and habits, often described in non-cultural language, focusing on non-verbal communication and behavioral patterns. These classification categories provide

a framework for understanding and categorizing different aspects of foreign cultural words in translation.

### 3.1.2 Neologisms

Neologisms represent linguistic innovations that address the evolving needs and developments in society, technology, and various domains of human experience. They refer to newly coined words, word combinations, or fixed phrases that emerge in a language as a result of social, cultural, scientific, and technological advancements and have the function of naming newly invented or imported objects, or processes, or filling gaps in a language's existing resources for expressing human thoughts and emotions (Newmark, 1988). Neologisms can be introduced at different levels of formality, ranging from colloquial or slang terms to specialized vocabulary used in specific fields or disciplines. They contribute to the expansion and adaptation of a language by providing linguistic tools to describe and communicate novel concepts, phenomena, or ideas that arise over time.

Among the various ways to create neologisms, one method stands out as particularly relevant to this research due to the substantial number of these elements observed in the corpus. This method involves the formation of new words through blending processes that involve combining existing words. For instance, examples of blended neologisms include *motel* (from *motor* and *hotel*), *infomercial* (from *information* and *commercial*), *edutainment* (from *education* and *entertainment*), *brunch* (from *breakfast* and *lunch*), *cafetorium* (from *cafeteria* and *auditorium*), *netiquette* (from *network* and *etiquette*), *trashware* (from *trash* and *software*), and *bit* (from *binary* and *digit*) (Sayadi, 2011).

Sayadi (2011) mentions that in literary texts, it is the responsibility of the translator to recreate any encountered neologisms based on the source language (SL) neologism. When translating a popular advertisement, the translator has the freedom to create a neologism, often with a strong phonaesthetic effect, as long as it maintains the sense of its SL counterpart and serves a pragmatic purpose. The translator may also transfer a cultural word from the SL if they consider it important for various reasons.

If the translator recreates an SL neologism using the same Graeco-Latin morphemes, they need to ensure the following: (a) no existing translation already exists, (b) both the referent and the neologism are significant and likely to interest the readership of the SL. The broader

aspects of neologism translation are influenced by language planning, policy, and politics. Furthermore, the author explains some ways of translating neologisms: - Selection of an appropriate analog in a target language (TL) - Transcription and transliteration - Loan translation and calque - Explanatory translation, and descriptive translation (Sayadi, 2011). It is worth noting that according to Ibraheem (2020), the translator bears the responsibility of translating newly coined words or terms from the SL into the TL. When faced with a neologism, the translator must ensure that the cultural meaning conveyed in the SL is preserved by finding an equivalent cultural word in the TL.

According to Rets (2016), there are five basic theories that define neologisms from different perspectives, and one of these theories is the Structural theory which describes neologisms as being characterized by having completely new forms, structures, or distinctive acoustic patterns. This means that neologisms are not simply new words, but they also possess unique characteristics. In the context of a game featuring a wholly new universe of characters, places, items, and creatures, the prevalence of neologisms with entirely new forms, structures, or even distinctive acoustic patterns is expected.

In general, games introduce unique concepts, fictional entities, and fictional settings that require the creation of new words or terms to represent them accurately. Nevertheless, these unique terms do not qualify as neologisms since they solely pertain to imaginary elements within fictional worlds. As they lack broad societal acceptance and functional use beyond referencing the game universe, in this case, these new words can be associated with lexical creativity. According to Souza Neto (2020, p. 82), neologisms and lexical creativity are typically discussed as separate concepts due to their distinct characteristics. However, both share a common foundation in the concept of nonce formation, which refers to the creation of words or terms for specific, often temporary, purposes. When viewed from the perspective of an imaginary world, what might be termed as nonce formations are neither lexical creativity nor neologisms. Instead, they can be classified as fictive items. These fictive items serve to denote traditional objects, practices, and aspects that are integral to and contribute to the richness of the imaginary world being created. Souza Neto (2020) also explains that the term “worldbuilding term” is a suitable categorization for words coined specifically to name various aspects of an imaginary world.

Therefore, as this research examines a game where an entirely new universe was constructed, leading to the creation of new vocabulary to label all components within this



imaginary world, the classification known as “worldbuilding term” will be employed to categorize these words coined for naming game-related locations, characters, or creatures. This classification will be further explained in the next section.

### **3.1.3 Worldbuilding terms**

According to Souza Neto (2020, p. 70), the term worldbuilding is the creative process of constructing a fictional world by intricately detailing landscapes, nature, customs, people, and history. This accumulation of information forms a complex tapestry that contributes to the overall composition of the fictional universe.

Wolf (2014, p. 98) contends that the construction of a new fictional world typically involves altering the defaults of the primary (real) world. This transformation serves various purposes, such as captivating, entertaining, satirizing, proposing possibilities, or prompting audiences to reconsider the defaults they usually accept without question. Much like narratives about distant lands, stories set in imaginary worlds offer the strange and extraordinary without the need for physical travel or the constraints of reality. These secondary (fictive) worlds encourage us to view the primary world from a different perspective and are often utilized to provide commentary on it.

While many other fictional worlds and realms existed prior, such as Lewis Carroll’s Wonderland in “Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland” (1865) and L. Frank Baum’s land of Oz in “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz” (1900), it was J.R.R. Tolkien’s Arda, within which Middle-earth is situated, would emerge as one of the most cherished and impactful imaginary worlds in history (Wolf, 2014, p. 182). Tolkien’s imaginative world has served as inspiration for various types of games, notably Role-Playing Games (RPGs), which in turn, have influenced a wide array of video games.

Role-Playing Games, often provide rich worlds filled with story hooks: situations, locations, and relationships that gaming groups can use as a foundation for their own narratives, adapting them to suit their needs or disregarding them entirely, and this concept extends to computer games, where worldbuilding is intricately linked with game mechanics (Ekman, Taylor, 2016, p.8).

An imaginary world must possess sufficient detail to appear plausible and achievable, while also avoiding contradictions. Completeness is harmonized with consistency to create a

sense of credibility. This fusion yields a voluntary suspension of disbelief, rendering the constructed world immersive and engaging (Souza Neto, 2020, p. 71).

In the context of imaginary worlds, each location is a combination of diverse elements, and each place has a specific purpose for being included (Ekman, Taylor, 2016, p.13). *Legends of Runeterra* is a game in which the story is set in the new imaginary world called Runeterra. There is a set of new words to name their environment, places, creatures, characters, and even historical events. In *League of Legends* and *Legends of Runeterra*, places are created to establish the characters within the game’s narrative. Moreover, in *Legends of Runeterra*, places also serve the additional function of organizing cards into different regions based on their unique characteristics and abilities, as in the case of *Freljord*, the only region in *Legends of Runeterra* that features cards with the “frostbite” special ability, as illustrated in the following figure.

Figure 9 - Example of Champion, Follower, and Spell cards from the *Freljord* region, in which all of them have the frostbite ability.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>

As previously mentioned, each region is represented by a symbol, which appears in the top right corner of the cards. The *Freljord* region in *League of Legends* is known for its “bitter cold” and “freezing climes”, characteristics that are often described on the card’s *flavor texts* in the game. This symbolism is also reflected in the game’s symbols, which often feature a bluish design reminiscent of icicles and incorporate elements reminiscent of Celtic designs. The characters from this region are typically depicted wearing heavy cold-weather clothing,

featuring fur, cloaks, and thick garments, and the imagery of ice and snow is commonly present as well. The region is situated in the north of Runeterra, the world created for *League of Legends* and consequently for *Legends of Runeterra*, and it is inspired by the history of the north of Europe, as in the Nordic mythology, and the Vikings. Many of the other regions in the game are inspired by real-world cultures and their mythologies. For instance, *Ionia* draws inspiration from various Asian countries, evident through references to monks, ninjas, kimonos, and the presence of trees resembling cherry blossom trees; *Bilgewater* takes inspiration from pirate stories and themes, creating a maritime and pirate-infused atmosphere; and *Shurima* is based on the Sahara Desert, featuring a desert landscape and drawing from North African influences. These inspirations enrich the game's world-building, adding depth and diversity to the cultural and geographical aspects of Runeterra.

Wolf (2023) explains that video game worlds consist of essential elements: geography, inhabitants, actions, and logical consequences resulting from these actions. Each game world has its own space where the gameplay unfolds. This space can range from basic two-dimensional screens (common in early arcade games) or verbal descriptions (as seen in text adventures) to expansive, intricately designed three-dimensional environments accommodating hundreds of thousands of players, as seen in massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs). In *Legends of Runeterra* and *League of Legends*, while there is a richly developed world (Figure 10), players do not directly interact with it in a traditional open-world sense. Instead, the game world is primarily conveyed through text descriptions, comics, short stories, and videos available in different sections of the official website in which players can explore the universe of the game.

Figure 10 - *Runeterra*'s map illustrating its different regions through interactive symbols in which players can read and learn more about the game's world and universe.



Source: <https://map.leagueoflegends.com/>

In *Legends of Runeterra*, the main interaction with the game world's map is typically limited to choosing a region for battles in the PVE (player versus environment) mode, nevertheless, certain aspects of the game's world are depicted frequently on the cards themselves, either through images or through textual descriptions.

On the official website, the map, depicted in Figure 10, displays the different regions of the game world. By clicking on their symbols, players can explore and access detailed information about the *League of Legends* characters associated with each region. This provides an opportunity to delve into the characters' backgrounds and lore, and this expanded universe also extends to *Legends of Runeterra*, which introduces even more characters, places, and creatures to enrich the game's universe.

The enrichment of this universe can be compared to a jigsaw puzzle, where each piece must fit perfectly with the others. These pieces, when brought together, expand and give shape to a cohesive whole. The growth of this universe is influenced by the introduction of new environments, and characters, and the creation of new names assigned to these pieces. It is a

process in which the meticulous construction of each element contributes to the integrity and expansion of the universe in a harmonious manner.

In this study, the names assigned to the elements in the game will be considered worldbuilding terms as they play a crucial role in enriching the game's universe and consequently, the gaming experience. According to Nord (2003), names are primarily used to identify a specific entity uniquely but are not limited to this function. They can serve multiple purposes. The author explains that proper names have the potential to provide insights into factors such as nationality, gender, and even age. In the context of fantasy worlds, names take on an additional layer of significance. They can be intentionally selected to establish a meaningful connection between the character and their name (Fernandes, 2013). Additionally, certain names can hint at the character's attributes or characteristics. For instance, in *Legends of Runeterra*, a character that embodies the qualities of a mermaid and is closely associated with water and the sea was given the name "Nami". This name was chosen because it translates to "wave" in Japanese, aligning with the character's thematic background.

For this study, the world-building terms identified in the corpus will be classified into four subgroups, adapted from Fernandes (2013):

1. Proper Creature Names: Typically used to name champion characters or specific creatures.
2. Proper Place Names: Category of names of specific places, such as regions, cities, and establishments.
3. Common Creature Names: Terms used for naming species of creatures.
4. Common Nouns: Used to describe environments, items, and spells.

Some concepts related to neologisms could be observed in the creation of worldbuilding terms, in this case, the Common Creature Names, as in the cards depicted in Figure 11. On *Legends of Runeterra*, the neologism's blending processes frequently occur with the names of animals to create names for fictional creatures. One interesting fact is that despite the conventional translation for "otter" in Brazilian Portuguese being the word *lontra*, the game translators made a unique choice by using the name of an animal native to the Brazilian environment, the giant otter. They employed a blending process by combining the word *ariranha*, which refers to that specific species of otter, with the word *polvo*, meaning "octopus".

Figure 11 - An example of the creation and translation of a worldbuilding term using the neologism's blending process, combining the term "otter" with "octopus", on the SL, and *ariranha* with *polvo* on the TL.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>

It is important for the reader to make association of new fictive words with real words, to make the audience relate that word to their purpose, and the localization aims to incorporate cultural references from the target culture into translation, enhancing text immersion for readers and reducing potential text alienation. Nevertheless, while translators might opt for a specific Brazilian fauna reference, like the *ariranha* (giant otter), it seems that in some parts of Brazil, people are more familiar with the word *lontra* (otters) than *ariranha*. Due to the giant otter's presence in the Amazon rainforest, it's more recognized there than in other parts of the country. This example reflects the sense of the word "locale", as it signifies a small area or region.

As in the example above, to maintain the immersive and cohesive aspect of the game universe, the world-building terms present in the game were translated and localized. This research will examine the translations of worldbuilding terms using specific translation techniques. These techniques will be elaborated upon in the following section.

### 3.1.4 Translation Techniques

When translating words that have cultural connotations specific to a particular locale, it is indeed necessary to employ specific techniques that can effectively recreate the same or

equivalent meaning in the target language. These techniques aim to capture the cultural nuances and references associated with the source language word and convey them in a way that resonates with the target language audience. Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) define translation techniques as procedures for analyzing and categorizing how translation equivalence functions. These techniques exhibit five fundamental characteristics:

1. They influence the outcome of the translation.
2. They are categorized through a comparison with the source text.
3. They affect small units of text.
4. They are inherently discursive and contextual.
5. They serve a functional purpose.

It is important to note that translation techniques are not the sole categories available for analyzing translated texts. Coherence, cohesion, thematic progression, and contextual dimensions also play a role in the analysis. Furthermore, the authors' classification of translation techniques is based on several criteria:

1. The separation of the concept of technique from other related notions such as translation strategy, method, and error.
2. Inclusion of procedures specific to the translation of texts rather than those related to language comparison.
3. A focus on the functional nature of translation techniques. Their definitions do not assess whether a technique is appropriate or correct, as this depends on its placement in the text and context, as well as the chosen translation method.
4. Utilization of commonly used terminology.
5. The creation of new techniques to elucidate mechanisms that have not been previously described (Molina; Hurtado Albir, 2002).

In this study, the focus will be on analyzing the localization of each card in order to identify the translation techniques used and the linguistic modifications that may have occurred in the target text (TT). The list of techniques referred to in the study is based on Molina and Hurtado Albir's classification from their *Translation Techniques Revisited: A Dynamic and Functionalist Approach*, 2002. They propose seven basic procedures for translation, which are divided into direct (or literal) and oblique techniques.

The direct (or literal) translation procedures, as described by the authors, involve maintaining an exact structural, lexical, or even morphological equivalence between the source and target languages. In other words, these techniques reflect a more literal approach to translation, where the emphasis is on maintaining a close correspondence to the source text. These procedures are:

- **Borrowing:** The simplest technique of all. It incorporates a word directly from another language into the target language. For example, “*tequila*”, the Mexican Spanish name of a drink is used in the same way in other languages. This technique is usually used to create a stylistic effect by using the foreign terms of SL, to introduce some flavor of the culture into the translation. However, some words and expressions are no longer considered borrowing by the fact that they are incorporated into the language, as in the case of “menu”, “hangar” or even “Déjà vu”.
- **Calque:** This is a unique form of borrowing in which a language adopts an expression from another language but translates each of its components literally. For instance, translating the English word “weekend” as *fim de semana* in Portuguese. As it is a technique in which a foreign word or phrase is translated and incorporated into the target language, this can result in a lexical calque, where the syntactic structure of the TL is maintained, but a new mode of expression is introduced; or in a structural calque, which introduces a new construction or pattern into the language. Similar to borrowings, there are several established calques that, over time, become fully integrated into the language.
- **Literal translation:** Literal, or word-for-word, translation is the straightforward conversion of a source language text without making significant changes. For example, translating the phrase “a light from within” as *uma luz que vem de dentro* in Portuguese. The translator's primary responsibility is to ensure that the TT conforms to the linguistic norms of the TL. In essence, a literal translation is a distinct solution that is both reversible and self-contained.

The oblique translation procedures come into play when a word-for-word translation is not possible or when cultural and linguistic differences necessitate adjustments in the target text. These oblique techniques, as defined by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002), include:



- **Transposition:** It involves shifting the word class or grammatical category of a term without changing the meaning of the message. For example, translating *Remetente* (noun or adjective) as “From” (preposition). When there is a shift between two signifiers, it is referred to as crossed transposition. For instance, translating “He limped across the street” as *Ele atravessou a rua mancando* (literally, “He crossed the street limping”) in Portuguese. Transposition is not restricted to translation between languages; it can also be employed within a single language. For instance, take the Portuguese sentence *Ele anunciou que voltaria*, which can be rephrased using transposition by replacing a subordinate verb with a noun, resulting in *Ele anunciou seu retorno*. In this case, the first sentence is named the base expression, while the modified one is referred to as the transposed expression. The choice to transpose a sentence or not depends on the sentence construction possibilities within a language. In some cases, transposition is optional, meaning you can choose whether or not to apply it based on linguistic flexibility. However, there are situations in which transposition is obligatory, meaning it must be used due to linguistic or structural constraints.
- **Modulation:** This technique involves a shift in point of view or cognitive categories. It allows for expressing the same situation from a different perspective. This could be achieved by shifting between active voice and passive voice, negative SL expression into a positive TL expression, or concrete and abstract concepts. It also can be optional or obligatory as the transposition. Modulation is necessary when the result of a literal translation or even a transposition results in a grammatically correct text, however, it is considered unidiomatic, or unsuitable to the culture of the TL. As in transposition, modulation is also considered free (optional) or fixed (obligatory) depending on each case. An example of obligatory modulation is the phrase “The time when...” which has to be translated to *O momento em que...* In fixed modulation, translators proficient in both languages freely apply this technique, being aware of its frequency of use, general acceptance, and confirmation provided by dictionaries or grammatical guidelines. Free modulations, on the other hand, are individual instances not yet standardized and accepted by common usage. While termed “optional”, when executed appropriately, a free modulation should result in a translation perfectly aligned with the situation indicated by the source language. The critical point is that free modulation tends towards

a unique solution, one that aligns with the natural expressions of the target language and feels necessary rather than optional. The difference between fixed and free modulation is essentially a matter of degree, and a free modulation may become fixed through regular usage, acknowledgment in dictionaries and grammars, and inclusion in educational materials. Until recognized and regularly taught, a free modulation is not considered fixed, and a translation not using such modulation might be deemed inaccurate or unsatisfactory.

- **Equivalence:** In this procedure, the same situation is conveyed using a completely different phrase. This is often seen in the translation of proverbs, onomatopoeia, or idiomatic expressions. For instance, translating the expression “It is raining cats and dogs” into *Está chovendo canivetes*, or sounds of animals as in “Meow” into *Miau*, or the cry of pain of a person that would be transcribed as “Ouch!” in English, and translated into “Ai!” in Portuguese. These straightforward examples highlight a specific aspect of equivalences: frequently, they possess a syntagmatic nature, influencing the entire message. Consequently, most equivalences are established and are part of a phraseological repertoire encompassing idioms, clichés, proverbs, nominal or adjectival phrases, and so on.
- **Adaptation:** Adaptation in translation is a process that involves modifying elements of a source text to better suit the cultural context, linguistic nuances, or reader expectations of the target audience. It is a dynamic and creative aspect of translation that requires a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures. It is about ensuring that the essence of the message remains intact while aligning with the linguistic and cultural norms of the audience for whom the translation is intended. Some texts may require expressing the message using a different situation or cultural reference. The use of the word “cycling” for the French, for instance, or “cricket” for the English, and “baseball” for the Americans in order to convey a similar concept, in this context, referring to a particularly popular sport. This process goes beyond the literal transfer of words and requires the translator to make strategic decisions to convey the intended meaning effectively. The reluctance to engage in adaptation becomes evident in a translation as it impacts not only the syntactic structure but also the progression of ideas and their representation within the paragraph. While translators can generate a text that is technically correct without adaptation, the lack of adaptation may be discerned through

a subtle tone, something that does not quite resonate correctly. Regrettably, this impression is frequently conveyed by texts released by international organizations.

The term “Technique” is used in this research instead of “Strategies” because, according to Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002), strategies and techniques have distinct roles in the translation process. The authors argue that strategies guide the overall approach and decision-making process in finding a suitable translation solution, while techniques refer to the specific methods and procedures employed to execute the translation. Strategies are part of the problem-solving process, whereas techniques directly impact the outcome of the translation. By using the term “Technique”, the research emphasizes the practical application and execution of specific translation methods in the localization of the trading card game.

## 4 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This Chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the methodology employed to build and align the corpus. It will delve into these processes, shedding light on the software tools that were used for these purposes. Additionally, it explains the specific categorization framework employed to organize the cards for subsequent analysis. Moreover, this Chapter undertakes a descriptive analysis to investigate the use of translation techniques based on the work of Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) as a foundational framework.

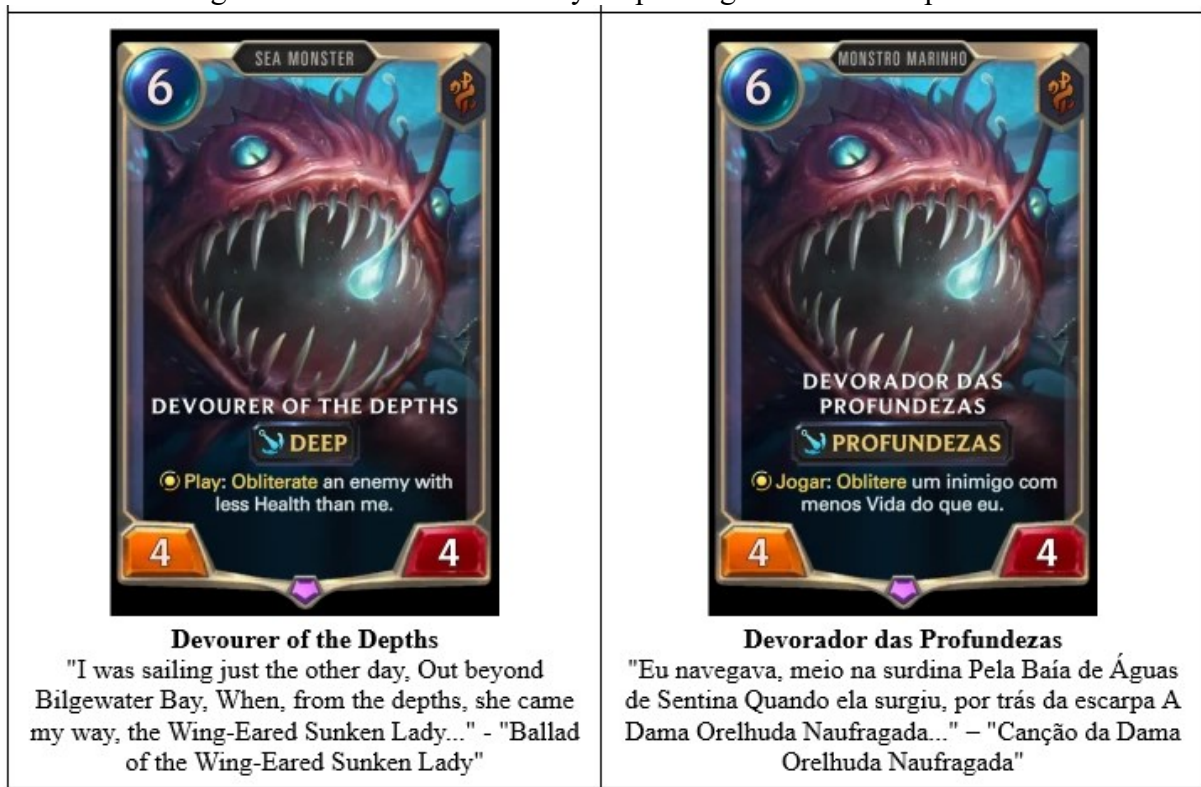
### 4.1 CORPUS BUILDING

The corpus, in this context, refers to a comprehensive collection of 273 cards from the inaugural set of *Legends of Runeterra*, and their translations. This selection encompasses 35 Champions, 94 cards representing the spells, skills, and landmarks, and 144 common creatures. Furthermore, the corpus incorporates 30 keywords along with their corresponding explanatory texts, and the 12 regions mentioned in the cards. The set was officially released on April 30th, 2020, and the corpus covers its evolution up to patch 3.11.0, which was introduced on July 20th, 2022. Throughout this period, various cards underwent alterations and updates, reflecting the dynamic nature of the game. It is necessary to highlight that the corpus specifically incorporates changes introduced in the update to patch 3.11.0, excluding any modifications that might have occurred before this particular update.

The images of the cards were arranged side by side with their respective translations in a Google Docs file. The names and flavor texts were transcribed below each corresponding card, creating a visual representation as illustrated in Figure 12.

For the first step of the analysis, the choice of Google Docs was intentional, considering that the study involved not only textual but also visual elements of the cards. This approach facilitated the alignment of both textual and graphical components, offering a practical alternative to using a spreadsheet application like Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel. The manual comparison of both the source text (ST) and target text (TT) with their respective card images was conducted, and subsequently, the translation techniques employed in each card translation were identified.

Figure 12 - Illustration of study corpus alignment for comparison.



Source: crafted by the author.

The importance of cards' images was due to their relation with the names of cards or their relation with their translation. Images can influence the interpretation of the cards' names and consequently impact their translation. The visual elements, such as the artwork or symbols on the cards, often contain cultural or contextual references that may not be evident in the text alone. The visual components provide additional context that can influence the choice of translation techniques and contribute to conveying the intended message in the target language.

After comparing ST and TT alongside their card images, the texts were organized into tables and categorized into groups such as Proper Creatures Names (Champions); Common Creatures Names (Followers); Spells, Skills and Landmarks; Regions; and Keywords. This process involved the systematic organization of data within an Excel spreadsheet, where the names of the cards in their original language and their corresponding translations were aligned with the techniques used to translate the text. This structured dataset facilitated a comprehensive analysis to better observe the details of the translation techniques applied. Upon careful examination, various translation techniques could be distinguished in the translated versions of the cards. These techniques were then systematically categorized and documented to provide a

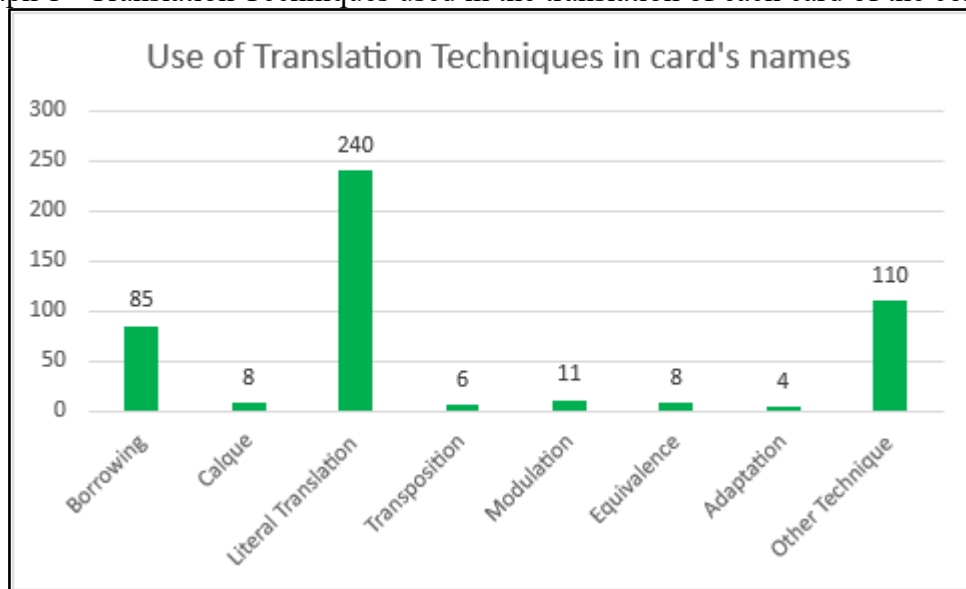
nuanced understanding of how each card's content was localized from the source language to the target language.

To delve deeper into the nuances of the translations, different aspects of the nomenclature and translations of each card were systematically categorized. These categorizations included an analysis of the worldbuilding terms crafted to designate creatures or places. In this context, distinctive approaches to their translation emerged. Firstly, some names were initially combined in their ST, however, they were subsequently separated in the translation. Conversely, another category encompassed names that were separated in the TT, but they were gathered in their translation.

#### 4.2 TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES USE ANALYSIS

As previously mentioned, the cards' names were systematically categorized into five tables in Microsoft Excel to enhance result visualization. These categories encompassed Proper Creatures' Names (Champions); Common Creatures' Names (Followers); Spells, Skills, Landmarks; Regions; and Keywords. Within each table, the ST and TT card names were meticulously aligned. Correspondingly, the translation techniques employed for each card were documented. After concluding each table, the frequency of occurrence for each translation technique was calculated. The results extracted from all five tables were tallied and the cumulative count across all tables was then depicted in the following graph.

Graph 1 - Translation Techniques used in the translation of each card of the corpus.



Source: Crafted by the author

Each card was translated using one or more techniques. Notably, the most frequently employed technique was literal translation. The graph also underscores a high prevalence of translation techniques beyond those covered in this study. Approximately 23% (Table 1) of the overall techniques employed for translating the cards fall under the category of other translation techniques that were not explicitly addressed in the research. Nevertheless, a more detailed explanation of these techniques will be provided in Section 4.2.6. The third most employed technique, Borrowing, specifically denotes instances where proper names were translated. The prevalence of Borrowing for translating proper names highlights its significance in maintaining the authenticity and recognizability of these names across different linguistic contexts.

Table 1 - Percentage of use of translation techniques

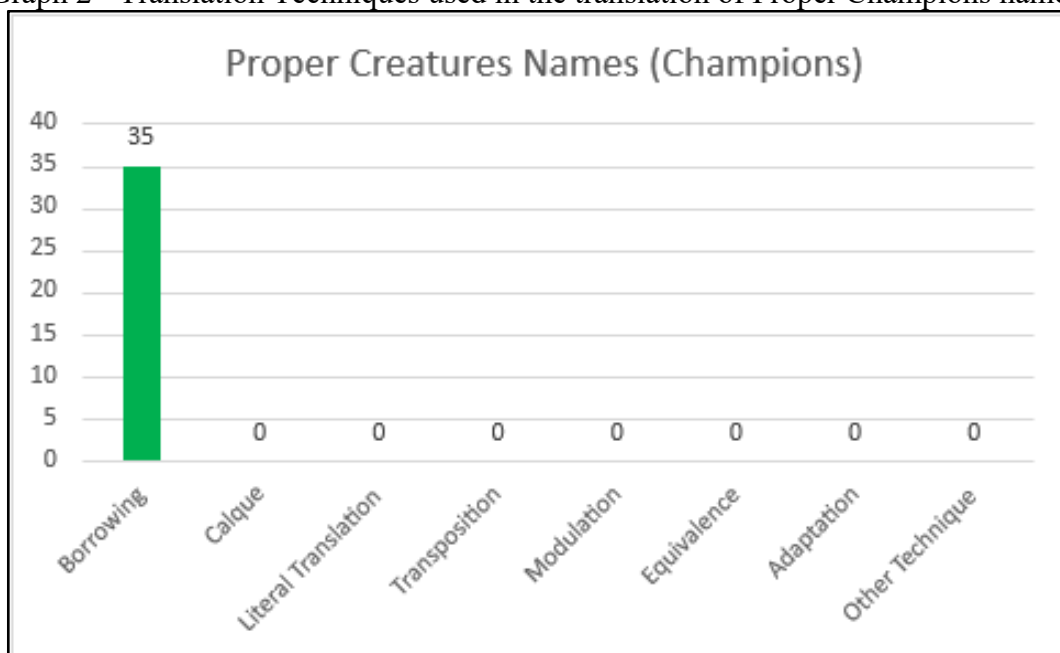
Techniques	Usage amount	%
Borrowing	86	18,22%
Calque	9	1,91%
Literal Translation	238	50,42%
Transposition	6	1,27%
Modulation	11	2,33%
Equivalence	8	1,69%
Adaptation	4	0,85%
Other Technique	110	23,31%
Total	472	100%

Source: Crafted by the author

#### 4.2.1 Proper Creatures Names (Champions)

Champions, as clarified earlier, represent characters from the *League of Legends* game<sup>14</sup>. They are unique in that they incorporate the level-up mechanic. In PVP matches, only six champions can be added per deck, with a restriction of three champions of the same name, aligning with the rule for the number of cards with identical names that can be included in a deck. For all 35 champion cards analyzed in this category, the borrowing technique was consistently utilized, as illustrated in Graph 2.

Graph 2 - Translation Techniques used in the translation of Proper Champions names.



Source: Crafted by the author

It's worth noting that the names of champions in *League of Legends* are also translated using the borrowing technique, using the same terms for both English and Brazilian-Portuguese versions. Consequently, as these champions are directly extracted from the game, maintaining the same name is crucial for easy recognition by players. The following figure presents instances of translated Champion cards along with the application of the borrowing technique for their card names.

<sup>14</sup> After the corpus collection, it was observed that some new champions were introduced exclusively in *Legends of Runeterra* and were not derived from *League of Legends*.



Figure 13 - Examples of translated Champion cards.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>

#### 4.2.2 Common Creatures Names (Followers)

Unlike champion cards, where the cards typically have proper names without descriptions, follower names exhibit different structures. They may consist of a common name followed by a complement, or a descriptive name, which according to Fernandes (2013) refers to a proper name followed by a complement, as illustrated in Figure 14 respectively.

Figure 14 - Examples of follower card names and their translation.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>

Additionally, followers can be represented by a worldbuilding term followed by a complement. In this context, worldbuilding terms, as explained before, refer to the creation of entirely new words or words formed by blending two or more existing words, as shown in Figure 15 respectively.

Figure 15 - Examples of follower card names represented by world-building terms and their translation.

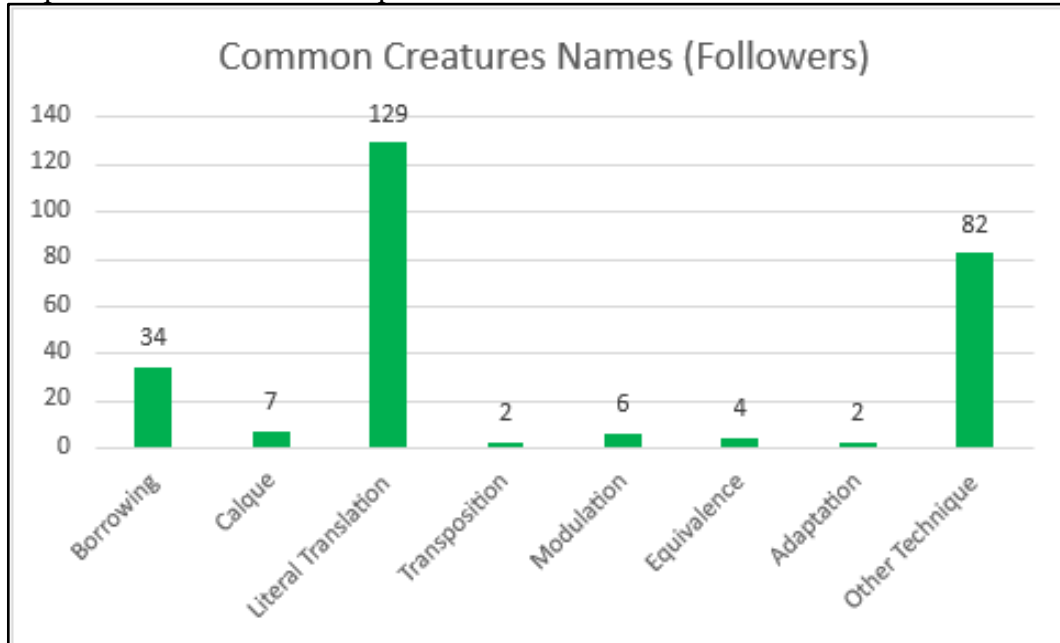


Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com/lor/cards>

Just like in the case of neologisms, the process of forming new words often entails combining existing words to generate a fresh term. In the English rendition of the game, worldbuilding terms are typically shaped by merging two complete words, exemplified by instances like *Wildclaw* (Wild + Claw) and *Owlcat* (Owl + Cat). In the translated cards, a common approach involves combining a segment of one word with a segment of another, resulting in translations like *Garreroz* (Garra + Feroz) and *Gatoruja* (Gato + Coruja). However, certain blended worldbuilding terms underwent separation in the translation process, as observed in *Scarmother* being rendered as *Mãe das Cicatrizes*. This practice of word blending to craft worldbuilding terms is a prevalent strategy in various games, including *Munchkin*

(Ghoulfriends - Noivampiras), *Hearthstone* (Bibliomite - Bibliófago), *Legends of Runeterra* (Otterpus - Arirolvo), and more.

Graph 3 - Translation Techniques used in the translation of common creature names.



Source: Crafted by the author

In this category, the application of translation techniques exhibited considerable diversity, covering the entire spectrum of techniques outlined in Molina and Hurtado Albir's classification, along with additional strategies introduced by other scholars.

The literal translation took the lead as the most used technique, followed by the use of other techniques apart from Molina and Hurtado Albir's classification, and then, borrowing. The amount of use of the borrowing technique in the translation underscored the significance of proper names within this category. It shed light on the introduction of new names for nationalities and species of creatures, as depicted in Table 2.

Table 2 - Application of the borrowing technique for nationalities and species.

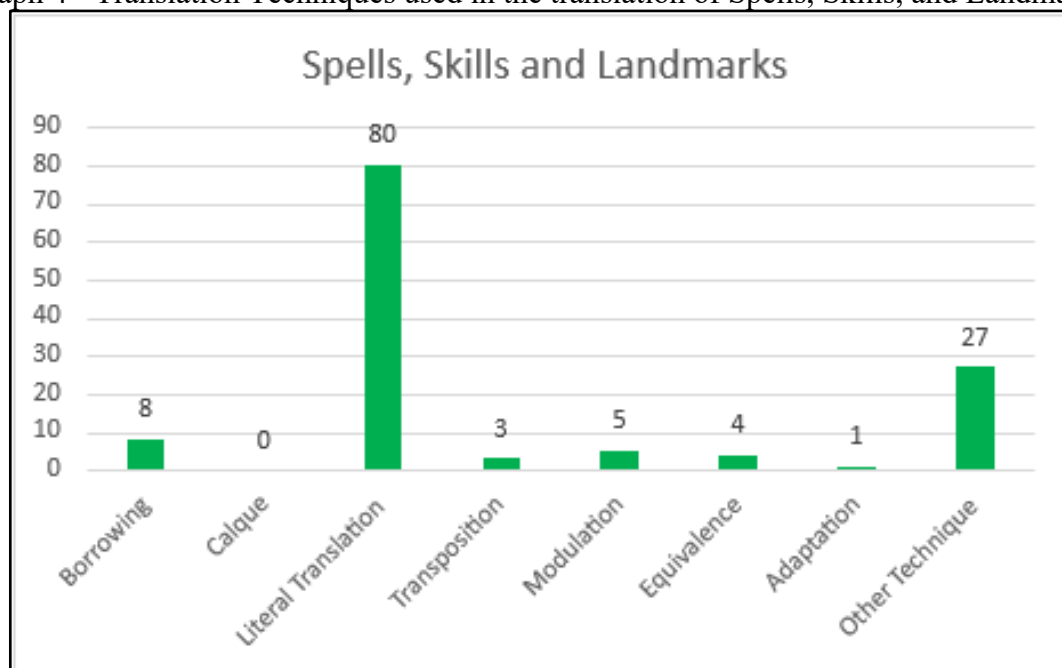
Source Text	Target Text
Dunehopper Mech	Mech Puladuna
Lecturing Yordle	Yordle Palestrinha
Marai Songstress	Cantora Marai
Navori Bladescout	Batedor Navori
Nimble Poro	Poro Parrudo
Solari Sunhawk	Ignifalco Solari
Stormclaw Ursine	Ursine Tempesgarra
Voidling	Voidling
Xer'sai Hatchling	Filhote Xer'sai

Source: Crafted by the author

#### 4.2.3 Spells, Skills and Landmarks

Similar to the previous categories, the spells, skills, and landmarks category also involves a variety of translation techniques. The most used technique is literal translation, followed by “other techniques,” as indicated in the following graph.

Graph 4 - Translation Techniques used in the translation of Spells, Skills, and Landmarks.



Source: Crafted by the author

The borrowing technique in this specific category was not only employed for translating the species of creatures, like using the worldbuilding terms *yordles* and *poros*, but it also served to highlight the intertextuality between the content from *League of Legends* and *Legends of Runeterra*. As elucidated in section 2.4, certain cards were named based on lyrics from songs



by a K-pop group featuring characters from *League of Legends*. Consequently, the borrowing technique was strategically applied, as depicted in Table 3, to ensure that players could readily recognize these references and connections.

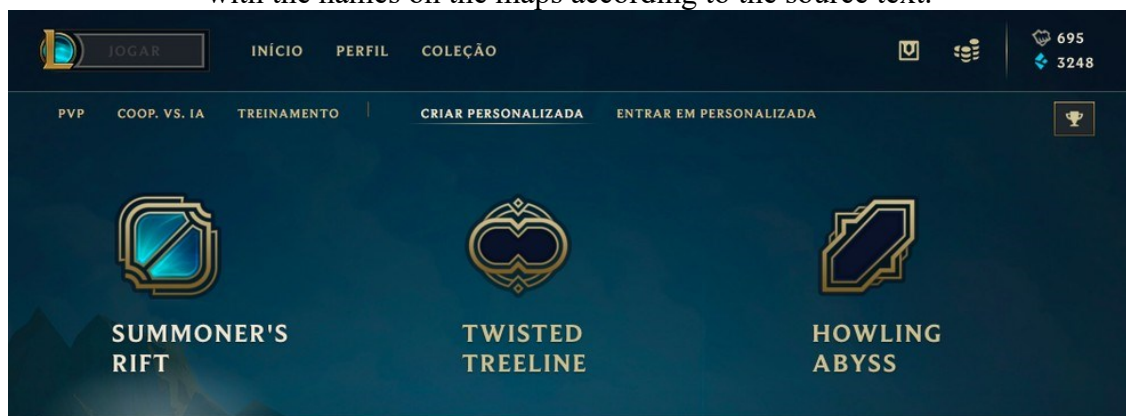
Table 3 - Application of the borrowing technique to preserve the intertextual elements found in the source text.

Source Text	Target Text
Feel The Rush	Feel The Rush
Give It All	Give It All
Go get it	Go get it
Go Hard	Go Hard
Out Of The Way	Out Of The Way
Pack Your Bags	Pack Your Bags

Source: Crafted by the author

In contrast, certain card names were originally references to playable maps within *League of Legends*. Despite this, they were translated into *Legends of Runeterra* using the literal translation technique. A notable example of this is observed in cards like “The Howling Abyss” and “The Twisted Treeline” which were translated to *O Abismo Uivante* and *O Arvoredo Retorcido* respectively. It is worth highlighting that, in the *League of Legends* game, the names of these maps remained untranslated, as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 16 - Illustration of the selection of playable maps section in League of Legends with the names on the maps according to the source text.



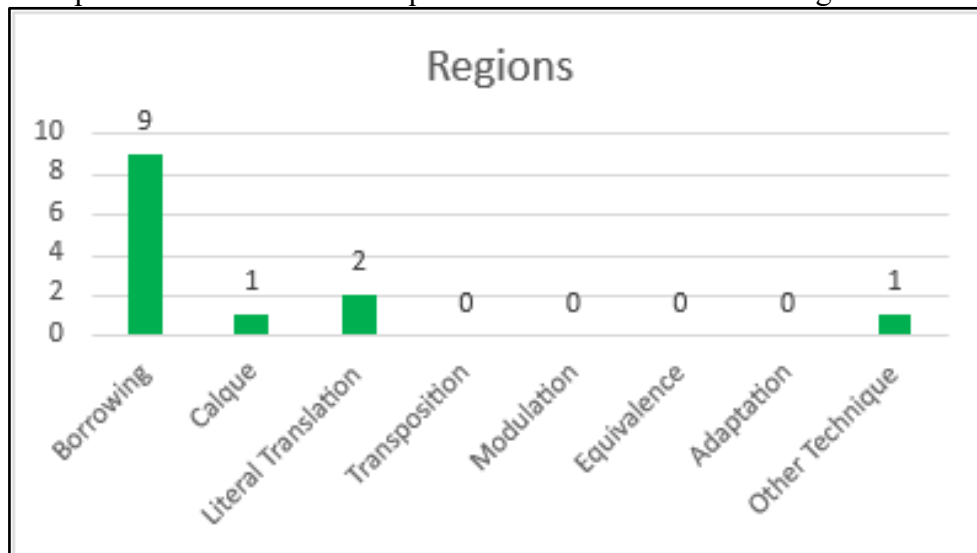
Source: <https://www.techtudo.com.br/noticias/2018/07/10-coisas-sobre-league-of-legends-que-quem-nunca-jogou-precisa-saber-guialol.ghtml><sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The image belongs to another website due to the fact that the “Twisted Treeline” map is no longer available in *League of Legends*. The map was an alternative game mode that required only three players per team and was removed from the game in 2019 due to a lack of players interested in this mode, according to the Riot’s website <https://www.leagueoflegends.com/pt-br/news/game-updates/obrigado-jogadores-de-twisted-treeline/>.

#### 4.2.4 Regions

As region names were invented to represent fictional places, most of their names were created from scratch, resulting in the formation of new world-building terms. The translation technique predominantly used for this purpose was borrowing as portrayed in Graph 5.

Graph 5 - Translation Techniques used in the translation of region names.



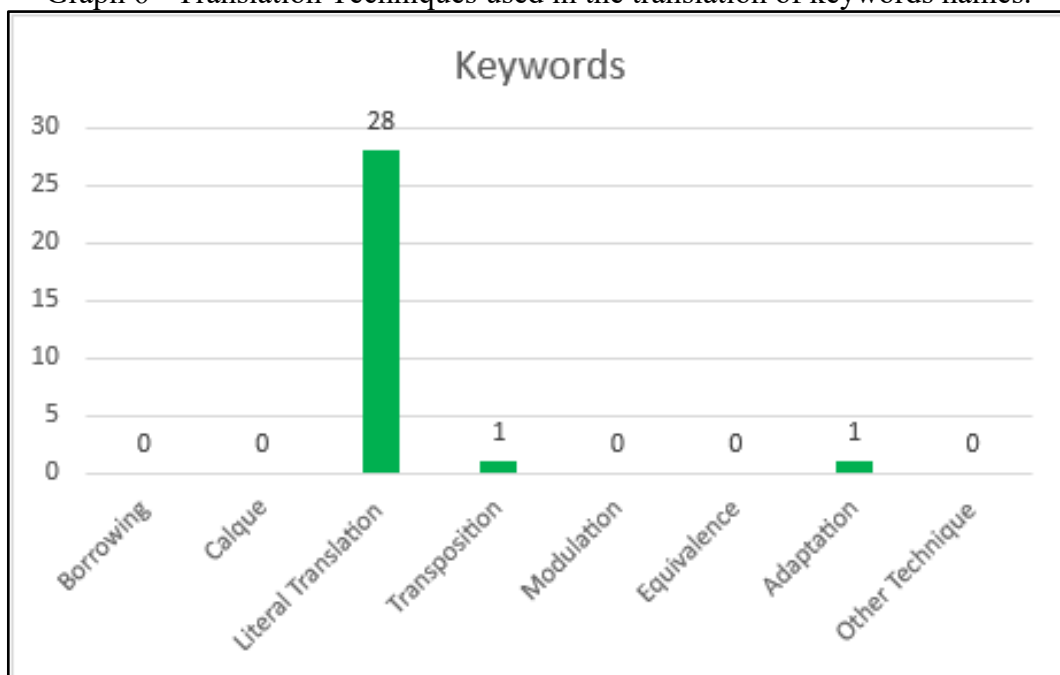
Source: Crafted by the author

However, in a few instances, different techniques were employed when translating names that already exist in the real world. For instance, Shadow Isles was translated into *Ilha das Sombras* and Bilgewater into *Águas de Sentina*, with both cases using Literal Translation. The term “bilgewater” refers to the dirty water that accumulates in a vessel's bilge, and as this region is portrayed in-game as a city inhabited by pirates, the translation opted to use the nautical term *Sentina* (Bilge) to convey the essence. Another technique employed was Calque, seen in the translation of *Bandlecity* into *Bandópolis*. In this case, the newly coined world-building term combines a fictional word (“Bandle”) with the word “city,” which represents a place. In the translation, “Bandle” was calqued with its essence captured in the translation “Band,” while “city” was rendered using the Greek radical *pólis*, which is a word that also denotes “city” in Greek and is frequently employed in Portuguese to name cities and other places.

#### 4.2.5 Keywords

For the keywords, the primary method of translation employed was literal translation, given that there were no instances of world-building terms or compound words within this category. In the context of the game, keywords serve as concise representations of specific effects or abilities associated with individual creatures or spells. Consequently, each keyword is condensed into a single word that must succinctly encapsulate its corresponding effect within the limited space available on the card, while still conveying its full impact within the game mechanics.

Graph 6 - Translation Techniques used in the translation of keywords names.



Source: Crafted by the author

However, there were two instances where variation in translation techniques occurred for keywords, as depicted in Graph 6. The first instance involved adapting the term “Burst” to *Súbito*. This adaptation was necessary because, as previously mentioned, the card’s effect represents something instantaneous and rapid, but the literal translation of “burst” did not effectively convey this sense of immediacy. Therefore, the term *Súbito* was chosen to better capture the swift nature of the effect. The second instance of variation involved the transposition of the word “Focus” into *Focado*. This alteration changed the grammatical class of the word from a noun to an adjective.



#### 4.2.6 Other translation techniques

The use of basic techniques outlined by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) was not sufficient in comprehensively elucidating all the translation techniques employed in the localization of the game. In addition to the fundamental set of techniques presented by the authors, a spectrum of other translation techniques was employed to effectively adapt the game's content to the target language and culture. Among these supplementary techniques were:

**Augmentative and Diminutive:** Altering the size or intensity of words or phrases to convey nuances of meaning or emotion, such as emphasizing or diminishing the significance of certain elements. The use of the augmentative and diminutive in the source text is marked by the use of adjectives that may or may not be together with their nouns. In translation, however, affixes, in this case the suffixes, were used to mark this change in size. It is important to highlight that the use of augmentative and diminutive through suffixes has not been found to be an established form of translation technique. In this case, the translators used a creative approach to adapt the meaning of the adjectives in the original text, using typical Portuguese suffixes to express augmentatives and diminutives, in order to maintain the essence and impact of the original content in the context of the target language. Table 4 shows that the majority of cases where this option was used involved the diminutive form, with only one instance of the augmentative form.

Table 4 - Augmentative and Diminutive used in cards' localization.

<b>ST</b>	<b>TT</b>	<b>Translation Techniques</b>
Longtooth	Dentão	Literal Translation + Augmentative + Omission
Short Tooth	Dentinho	Literal Translation + Diminutive + Omission
Puffcap Pup	Cogumelhotinho	Literal Translation + Diminutive + Omission + Semiotic
Tiny Shield	Escudinho	Literal Translation + Diminutive + Omission
Tiny Spear	Lancinha	Literal Translation + Diminutive + Omission
Sneezy Biggledust!	Poeirinha Espirrenta!	Literal Translation + Diminutive + Omission
Flame Chompers!	Mordidinha Flamejante!	Adaptation + Literal Translation + Diminutive + Omission
Mini-Minitee	Minipeximboi	Literal Translation + Diminutive
Minitee	Peximboi	Literal Translation + Diminutive
Megatee	Mega Peximboi	Literal Translation + Diminutive

Source: Crafted by the author

**Compression:** Condensing or summarizing information from the source text to create a more concise and streamlined version in the target language (Molina, Hurtado Albir, 2002). The compression technique was used in the translation of worldbuilding terms referent usually to names of creatures in which their names in the TT were two words gathered in one, in this case the translation the two words were translated literally and then compressed in one eliminating one part of words to create a more fluid word. As in the case of the following cards' names on the table:

Table 5 - Compression technique used in cards' localization

<b>ST</b>	<b>TT</b>	<b>Translation Techniques</b>
Razorscale Hunter	Caçador de Escamâminas	Literal Translation + Compression
Stormclaw Ursine	Ursine Tempesgarra	Borrowing + Literal Translation + Compression
Ravenboom Conservatory	Conservatório Floricorvus	Literal Translation + Compression

Source: Crafted by the author

**Convention:** Following established linguistic or cultural conventions in the target language to ensure that the translation maintains idiomaticity and cultural relevance (Fernandes, 2013), as depicted in Figure 17.

Figure 17 - Convention technique applied to maintains idiomaticity of a character's name.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com>

**Explicitation:** Involves adding information from the source text that is implicit in the context or situation, such as clarifying the gender of a person (Vinay, Darbelnet, 1995). In the context of the game cards, the explicitation technique becomes particularly relevant due to the semiotic nature of the cards themselves. Without the accompanying images, certain cards' names could yield different translations. For instance, the gender of characters may only be discernible from their images or their *flavor texts*, especially in cases where creatures lack clear gender attributes. In such scenarios, as depicted in the next figure, the translator may need to incorporate additional information to ensure that the intended meaning is conveyed accurately in the target language using the explicitation technique, in this case, the gender of the creature was mentioned only in the card's flavor text. However, the translator must incorporate this gender marker into the card's name to conform to the grammatical structure of Brazilian Portuguese, where gender agreement is essential.

Figure 18 - Explicitation technique applied to clarify the gender of a character.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com>

**Omission:** Removing redundant or different elements from the source text to improve readability or maintain the pace of the target text (Molina, Hurtado Albir, 2002). The omission technique usually was used to remove parts of the words that were gathered to create a new word, as depicted in Table 6.

Table 6 - Omission technique used in cards' localization.

ST	TT	Translation Techniques
Redfin Hammersnout	Barbatelo Rubro	Literal Translation + Compression + Omission
Fae Bladetwirler	Fada das Lâminas	Literal Translation + Omission
Field Musicians	Músicos de Batalha	Literal Translation + Omission

Source: Crafted by the author

**Recreation:** Recreating expressions or cultural references from the source text in a manner that resonates with the target audience's linguistic and cultural sensibilities (Fernandes, 2013), as depicted in Table 7.

Table 7 - Recreation technique used in cards' localization.

ST	TT	Translation Techniques
Zap Sprayfin	Zap Nadajato	Borrowing + Literal Translation + Compression + Recreation
Furyhorn Crasher	Ranzinzim Destruidor	Recreation + Diminutive

Source: Crafted by the author

**Semiotic Translation:** Translating not only the linguistic components of the text but also its semiotic elements, such as visual cues, cultural symbols, and non-verbal communication (Jakobson, 2012). In the game's localization, the semiotic translation technique was employed to generate new names inspired by the visual elements of the cards, particularly when the original names are newly coined terms, such as the worldbuilding terms, without direct translations. As depicted in Figure 19, an example illustrates the renaming of a card in the translation based on its image. The term *Zeebles* serves as a worldbuilding term to represent the creature depicted on the card, resembling a ferret. Consequently, a new term was coined in the translation, aligning with the image, resulting in the term "Furins," derived from the Portuguese word *furão*, meaning ferret.

Figure 19 - Semiotic Translation technique applied to rename a worldbuilding term.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com>

**Substitution:** Replacing elements from the source text with equivalent or analogous elements in the target language to convey the same meaning or effect (Fernandes, 2013), as in the next figure.

Figure 20 - Substitution technique applied to rename a creature.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com>

**Transcription:** Rendering phonetic or phonological aspects of the source text, such as proper names or onomatopoeic expressions, into the target language's closest corresponding alphabet or language (Fernandes, 2013), as in the next figure.

Figure 21 - Transcription technique applied to rename a worldbuilding term.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com>

These additional techniques were instrumental in addressing the diverse challenges posed by the localization process, allowing for a more nuanced and culturally sensitive adaptation of the game's content for global audiences.

## 5 CONCLUSION

### 5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study was to explore the translation techniques used in the localization of the *Legends of Runeterra*, an online Trading Card Game, to gain insights into the prevalent strategies for adapting games in the Brazilian gaming market.

Chapter One provided an overview of the game, including its gameplay mechanics, rules, and distinctive features. Additionally, it presented a concise introduction to the concepts of localization and internationalization, explaining their significance in adapting games for different cultural and linguistic contexts. It also presented the general objective, the research questions, and the study's significance.

Chapter Two delved into the concepts connected within the GILT chain of processes which are Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, and Translation. The concepts related to GILT were explored with a focus on the localization of digital games. The chapter presents different perspectives on localization by several researchers but adopts the view that localization has a very strong semiotic component beyond just text, in which all elements are subject to translation, both textual and non-textual, such as images, objects, symbols, and even colors. The study also highlights different translation methods used in game localization, aiming to demonstrate an approach that seeks to make the product native and natural to the target market, providing a smooth user experience and maximizing its acceptance and success in that specific language and culture. Furthermore, it presents some previous research on trading card games and also explains the concepts of Culture-Specific Items, where the concept of world-building term is introduced, a concept created to encompass new words that define fictional creatures and places created for a new world of fantasy, such as game universes.

Chapter three elucidated the methodology, delineating the establishment of a parallel, bilingual, and unidirectional corpus along with its alignment. Given the focus on digital illustrated cards as the object of study, the inclusion of images proved pivotal for comprehending card translation dynamics. The chapter also introduced the set of categories of analysis, including the Culture-Specific Items, Neologisms, Worldbuilding terms, and the translation techniques proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) employed in the analysis of the game's card translations.



The Fourth Chapter comprehends the analysis of the study. The corpus building was detailed and consequently, the corpus was segregated into two alignments: one on Google Docs for the card images and another on a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet containing text in both languages alongside the translation techniques applied to each card. Additionally, a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was also employed to segregate the cards into five different categories to generate graphs and statistics concerning the number of translation techniques used in each card translation. The chapter provided data regarding the number of translation techniques employed in translating the cards and elucidated that all the techniques proposed by Molina and Hurtado Albir (2002) were insufficient to cover all the elements present in the card texts, requiring the use of additional translation techniques.

## 5.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

In Chapter One, three guiding questions were introduced to guide this study toward a descriptive translation analysis of the localization process of a TCG. These questions were coined as a reference to the linguistic and cultural aspects of localization, reflecting the descriptive nature of this study, as they seek to elucidate how the translation techniques are related to the layout, cultural, and linguistic aspects of localization.

### **1. What linguistic categories in the original cards can be seen as barriers that need to be overcome?**

As previously mentioned, fantasy games often immerse players in entirely new universes filled with fantastical creatures, magical places, and extraordinary concepts. To effectively capture the essence of these imaginative settings, game developers must recreate new terminology to name all these new varieties of beings and elements introduced within them. Thus, the worldbuilding terms become crucial in meeting the demand for naming these components. However, the process of recreating these new terms can present challenges, particularly when they are loaded with cultural references that may be unfamiliar or difficult to translate directly to a certain TL. In such instances, translators are tasked with employing various translation techniques to effectively convey the nuanced concepts encapsulated within these terms from the source language. Take, for instance, the term *Zeebles*, which lacks a direct



translation or inherent meaning in the source language. To faithfully convey its intended concept, translators often rely on contextual clues or visual representations to guide their translation efforts. Similarly, other terms like *Windfarer* or the case of the card “Bayou Brunch” may be heavily loaded with cultural connotations that may be difficult to accomplish a straightforward translation. In these cases, translators may opt for techniques such as omission or semiotic translation to bridge the linguistic and cultural gaps and ensure that the essence of the original term is preserved in the target language.

## **2. What translation techniques are used by translators when dealing with certain linguistic elements?**

In contrast with the practice often seen in children’s literature, the characters’ names remained unchanged from the source text (see Fernandes, 2013). Borrowing was the predominant technique employed in this case. All characters’ names from *League of Legends* that were introduced into *Legends of Runeterra* remained unaltered.

Region names were also predominantly translated using the borrowing technique, particularly when the names were newly created and did not contain existing words. However, region names composed of existing words were translated using different techniques. For instance, Shadow Isles was translated using a literal translation to *Ilha das Sombras*. Similarly, Bilgewater was translated using literal translation to *Águas de Sentina*, however the term was separated, and *Bandlecity* was translated using Calque + Transcription to *Bandópolis* as elucidated before.

Adaptation was employed occasionally, typically when no other alternatives were viable due to specific cultural references. For instance, the card “Bayou Brunch” was translated to “Rango no Rio” (Figure 22) because “bayou” refers to a specific landscape found in the southern United States, characterized by flat, wet areas near the coast with slow-moving streams and trees. Since this landscape lacks the same cultural significance in other countries, the decision was made to translate “bayou” simply as *rio* (river). As for “brunch,” a term already borrowed from English into Brazilian Portuguese, it combines “breakfast” and “lunch” to denote a late-morning meal. However, instead of using the borrowed term, translators opted for the slang *rango* in Brazilian Portuguese. Although *rango* was typically used informally by young people to refer to a meal, it is no longer commonly used in everyday language and is

only found in movies, cartoons or games, however it is still recognized as an old slang for people.

Figure 22 - Example of adaptation using cultural references.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com>

As explained before, the explicitation technique was employed to make implicit information in the source text explicit in the target text, particularly when it is necessary due to different linguistic characteristics. In this context, explicitation was employed to add gender-specific markers or pronouns in cases where the gender of characters or creatures depicted on certain cards was not explicitly stated in the textual content. However, the gender became evident through visual cues provided by the accompanying image or through information provided in the *flavor texts*, thereby ensuring clarity and accuracy in the translation process.

Regarding the use of Augmentative and Diminutive, there is a tendency towards infantilization in the translation of cards featuring images of cute creatures, such as *yordles* or other creatures from the *Bandlecity* region. Typically, the most common practice involves the use of diminutives, as seen in the translation of “kisses” into *beijinhos* or “how cute” into *tão fofinha*, as well as “Tiny Shield” and “Tiny Spear” into *Escudinho* and *Lancinha*, respectively.

Semiotic translation was closely related to the translation of worldbuilding terms, as some of them do not have a specific translation, so the choice was to use the cards’ imagery to rename them and bring the term closer to the target language.

### 3. How could these techniques be related to cultural and layout issues?

Nida (1964) introduced a range of translation techniques and argues that his translation techniques have two functions, the first is to fix the linguistic and cultural differences, by bringing terms or concepts, such as measures, customs, items, proper names, or wordplay, and the second is to give further information regarding the text's historical and cultural context. In *Legends of Runeterra*, wordplay is frequent when dealing with the creation of worldbuilding terms, as some names are created by blending different species of animals, objects, and adjectives, incorporating cultural aspects into their composition. For example, the card *Otterpus* was translated as *Arirolvo* due to the specific species of otter found in the northern region of Brazil, as previously explained. Additionally, certain cards feature slang or specific manners of speech attributed to characters, which must be translated in a manner that aligns with the cultural nuances of the target language. For instance, in the card *Lecturing Yordle*, where the flavor text portrays the creature as one that talks excessively, the term "lecturing" was translated as *Palestrinha* in Brazilian Portuguese, a term referring to a person who also talks excessively. Concerning the layout, the localization strategies were implemented to address the issue of translated texts being too extensive to fit within the allotted card spaces. These strategies included omitting the name of keywords, leaving just the symbols, and shortening the names of cards (e.g., *Redfin Hammersnout* into *Barbatelo Rubro*). Furthermore, adjustments were made to reduce the font size as needed, ensuring better visual presentation within the game interface.

### 5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This research can be used as a foundation for future investigations in several ways:

1. **Comparison with other games:** The results and methodologies of this research can be compared with similar studies on the localization of other games, allowing for a comparative analysis of localization practices in different contexts and genres of games.
2. **Additional case studies:** Further research can focus on analyzing the localization of other collectible card games or different genres, using the same methodological framework to investigate translation techniques and challenges faced.

3. **Deepening into translation techniques:** The study of the specific translation techniques used in this research can be expanded to delve deeper into each technique, investigating how they are applied in different localization contexts and their implications for understanding the game.
4. **Comparative study of cultures:** Considering that localization often involves the adaptation of cultural elements for different linguistic and cultural contexts, this research can be expanded to include a more in-depth comparative analysis of the cultural adaptations made in different localized versions of the game.
5. **Impact assessment:** In addition to analyzing translation techniques, future research can focus on evaluating the impact of localization on the player experience, both in terms of game understanding and user satisfaction.

In addition, this study serves as a foundation for real-life localizers to navigate the complexities of game localization more effectively. By providing insights into translation techniques, cultural adaptation, and strategies for addressing layout and user interface challenges. Furthermore, it provides insights regarding the translation of cultural references and worldbuilding terms, and the creation of an immersive and engaging experience for players in the target language and culture.

In summary, this research can serve as a starting point for a wide range of additional studies on game localization, providing valuable insights into translation practices, cultural adaptation, and player experience in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

#### 5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

As the demand for localized games continues to rise, it becomes increasingly important for game translators to have a deep understanding of localization processes, especially within the game industry. This research serves as a valuable resource for educators looking to equip translators with the necessary skills for game localization. By offering practical insights and concrete examples drawn from the context of Trading Card Games, educators can enrich their teaching materials and create engaging learning experiences for students by examining the unique challenges and strategies inherent in TCG localization. Moreover, this study delivers the background for further research exploring the potential use of TCG examples in developing

teaching proposals for translation, localization, and game localization. By examining the unique challenges and strategies inherent in TCG localization, educators can adapt their teaching approaches to address the specific needs of future translators entering the gaming localization field.

As highlighted earlier, *Legends of Runeterra* draws its thematic roots from the expansive universe of *League of Legends*, weaving an intricate tapestry that incorporates the known characters from the *League of Legends* world. The game not only serves as an extension of the existing lore but introduces fresh faces and narratives, contributing to the ongoing expansion of this evolving universe. In this context, the game becomes a platform for not only revisiting familiar characters but also for exploring entirely new ones, each with its unique background and significance. This dynamic adds layers to the storyline, creating a captivating experience for players. Moreover, the storytelling in *Legends of Runeterra* extends beyond mere gameplay. There are intertextualities present between a range of elements. The flavor texts associated with certain cards play a crucial role in conveying the rich narratives embedded in the game. Taking the example of the *Mintee* card (Figure 23), the narrative arc is not confined to a single card. Instead, it extends to its evolved form, *Megatee*, creating a connected and evolving story that unfolds as players progress through the game.

Figure 23 - Cards connected in the game by their evolution relation.



Source: <https://www.leagueofgraphs.com>

The *flavor texts* of the cards are interconnected, offering further depth to the narrative. For instance, the flavor text of the *Mintee* card says: "Things mintees like: napping on the

warm summerstones beside the Nakotak tribal lands. Things minitees do not like: being shoved off said summerstones by cheeky yordles...” Conversely, the *Megatee's flavor text* refers to the misbehaving nature of *yordles* with the phrase “...but, as they say, yordles gonna yordle!”. In addition, beyond the intertextuality present on cards and *flavor texts*, *Legends of Runeterra* also incorporates elements from other media associated with the game, such as the *League of Legends* K-Pop band. These aspects of the game present a compelling opportunity to delve into the intertextuality between the game and various other forms of media. By investigating the localization strategies and translation decisions adopted by game developers, we can better understand how games relate to other media and how this intertextuality influences players' experiences and the cultural impact of games.

## 5.5 FINAL COMMENTS

This research provided valuable insights into the localization of Trading Card Games, with a specific focus on *Legends of Runeterra*. Through an in-depth analysis of translation techniques, worldbuilding terms translation, cultural adaptations, and layout adjustments, was possible to understand the complexities involved in adapting a game for different linguistic and cultural contexts. By examining the challenges faced and the strategies employed in the localization process, we have highlighted the importance of considering linguistic nuances, cultural references, and player experience. Furthermore, this study opens up avenues for further research, including comparative studies across different games and media, investigations into the impact of localization on player engagement, and the development of teaching materials for game localization education. Overall, this research contributes to the growing knowledge in the field of game localization and serves as a valuable resource for practitioners, educators, and researchers alike. Furthermore, professional localizers could benefit from this study since it provides a foundation to them navigate the complexities of game localization more effectively, and think about the possibilities of translation using the varieties of translation techniques to translate cultural references and worldbuilding terms to create an immersive and engaging experience for players through the game localization.

Finally, the translation technique with the highest percentage was literal translation, which somehow may contradict the general assumption that in game localization the tendency is to use techniques that favors the target language and culture. This is due to the belief that an

adaptation of a linguistic elements to cultural and linguistic norms of a target language would ensure a more immersive experience, which creates a better receptivity from the players. In the case of Legends of Runeterra, the consistency to the original game universe, which shares its lore with League of Legends, necessitate a certain level of fidelity to the source text. This is because the game already has established specific terminologies and narratives, and maintaining these elements in the translation ensures continuity and preserves the intended meaning and experience. The important thing to be observed here is where exactly this specific technique occurs more often. Different translation techniques were employed only to those linguistic elements that could cause divergences with the target culture or when the use of the literal translation could modify the specific terminology created to both of the games, as in the case of the champions cards' proper names, where the characters were imported from League of Legends and their names were already translated using the borrowing technique. Furthermore, the use of the literal translation was possible, because of the fact that the cards names were loaded with semantic meanings, and according to Fernandes (2013) their meaning have the function of describe characteristics or to create comic effects, or in the case of the game, to represent their abilities, or species, or nationality. Therefore, a closer look at the issue unveiled the complexity of video game localization, which shows that depending on the type of text being localized, some techniques are more prevalent than others, highlighting that the choice of translation techniques is highly context-dependent.

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