GRAB THE GARB: THE INFLUENCES OF TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES IN THE LUDOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF VIDEO GAME TRANSLATION
(A Case Study of Square Enix's Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII)

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian deskriptif kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mengungkapkan tipe teknik penerjemahan dalam terjemahan *garb*, kostum dengan kekuatan khusus dalam *Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII*, dan pengaruhnya terhadap aspek ludologi, mekanika game yang dalam hal ini merujuk kepada kekuatan khusus (*ability*) yang terkandung dalam *garb* yang diterjemahkan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa hanya terdapat dua teknik penerjemahan yang digunakan dalam penerjemahan 93 nama *garb* yaitu *pure borrowing* (44 data) dan adaptasi (49 data). Dari 49 data adaptasi yang diperoleh, 40 adaptasi menunjukkan bahwa adaptasinya mampu mempertahankan aspek ludologi keikuatan khusus *garb* yang diperoleh dari pemahaman awal mengenai nama *garb* dan bentuk fisiknya. Sementara itu 9 adaptasi yang lain memberikan pengaruh negatif terhadap aspek ludologi karena putusnya keterkaitan antara makna nama *garb* dan *ability* yang dimilikinya. Temuan ini menandakan bahwa dalam penerjemahan video game, pesan yang dialihkan tidak hanya pesan lingustik tetapi juga pesan mekanis atau ludologis yang terdapat dalam elemen video game.

Kata kunci: ludologi, teknik penerjemahan, *garbs*, Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII

1. INTRODUCTION

This article aims at exposing the influences of translation techniques in the ludological aspects of a video game in its translated versions. Two problems are attempted to be sought for answers. First is what translation techniques the translators of *Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII* (LRFFXIII) apply in the English translation of Lightning's garbs. Second is what ludological impacts are appearing from the applied translation techniques.

The theories applied to answer the problems are Molina and Albir's theory of translation technique, Aarseth's theory of textons and scriptons, and Frasca's theory of ludology. Molina and Albir propose eighteen translation techniques aimed at providing procedures to analyse and classify how translation equivalence works (2002:511). This theory of translation technique was applied to the translation of garb from Japanese to English to seek out the technique each translated garb used.

Meanwhile to reveal the ludological impacts of the equipped translation techniques, Aarseth's theory of textons and scriptons and Frasca's ludology were implemented.

> Textons are the strings of sign that exist in a text, scriptons are the strings as they appear to the readers, and traversal function is the mechanism by which scriptons are revealed or generated from textons and presented to the user of the text (Aarseth, 1997:62).

To better illustrate about the three terms, an example from the game is provided in the following. The focus of this research is the translation of garb. In LRFFXIII, garb is a term referring to *Kamen Rider* or *Sailor Moon* like costume granting power to the wearer when they perform their *henshin* (transformation). One of the garbs is named

荒野の探索者 (Wilderness Seekers). The name 'Wilderness Seekers' is the scripton. The texton of the garb is the game mechanics status of the garb:

Locked Ability	Heavy Slash Lv. 3
Maximum ATB	+30
Default ATB	50%

The above computational data is the texton of the garb from which the statistical impacts are equipped and received by the character equipping the garb. Meanwhile the link between the name and the mechanics the gamers perceive is termed traversal function. This function is obtainable when the gamers interact with the game through the game consoles.

The texton within game elements as aforementioned is a part of ludology. Ludology aims at placing video game as video game (and gamer, the *Homo Ludens*, as a gamer) in contrary to narratology which perceives video game as a form of narrative (Frasca, 2007). It implies that ludology constitutes game mechanics in its perspectives. This game mechanics is one of the ludology principles:

> 1. Games should be considered as systems, with elements interacting between each other
> within certain boundaries.
> 2. Games involve a conflict, which means that players will have to face some sort of challenge. This conflict is artificial in the sense that it is apart from real life.
> 3. Games are defined by rules. Rules are what delimit both the player's actions and the system's characteristics.
> 4. Games generate a quantifiable outcome. This can be a score or simply a judgment (winning or losing.)
> (2007:59)

Taking 荒野の探索者 as an example, the following is the significance of ludology in video game translation. The translated version of the garb is 'Hunter of the Wild'. The word 'hunter' in English based on Merriam-Webster dictionary refers to ' a person who hunts wild animals, a person who searches for something, a strong horse that people use when they hunt foxes whereas the word 'seeker' rooted from the word 'seek' which refers to 'to search for (someone or something), to try to find (someone or something), to ask for (help, advice, etc.), to try to get or achieve (something).' has no official entry in the dictionary. In the Northern American gaming world, since the era of board game *Dungeon and Dragons,* the word 'seeker' has been identical to magic and spirit (Mearls et al, 2010:20). Had the translator of 荒野の探索者 decided to translate it into 'Wilderness Seeker', the traversal function the gamers would imply would have been confusing them. The confusion rises from the implied ludological aspect that 'seeker' is attributive to magic and spirit whereas the fact indicates that 荒野の探索者 is a garb imbuing the character with physical power. Thus, the translator decided to translate the garb's name into 'Hunter of the Wild' as the word 'hunter' preserves the physical power attribute, which is the game mechanics of the garb, the original garb's name has. It, then, signifies that the translator violates the literal meaning of 探索者 but preserving the ludological aspect, the game mechanics, of the garb's name.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research is descriptive qualitative in design. The objectives of this research are to reveal the translation technique types employed in the translation of the garb's names in *Lightning Returns: Final Fantasy XIII*. This game from Square Enix is selected for an analysis because the game presents a unique system of a job. Job in gaming world refers to a collection of flaws, gifts, skills, and/or handicaps that are given to a character when his player elects

the class (Kirk III, 2005:28). The uniqueness arrives from the fact that the jobs provided in LRFFXIII are only for a single character that is Lightning. This is uncommon as usually jobs are assigned for various characters within the game. This uniqueness, to some extent, is adopted from the convention of *tokusatsu* especially *kamen rider* from which the main hero is able to perform *henshin* with many different costumes.

The research procedures taken were playing the game, obtaining the garbs, seeking out the garbs from Japanese and English game guides especially for the garbs failed to obtain from the game, analyzing the translation techniques adopted by implementing the theory from Molina and Albir and the ludological impacts by applying Aarseth's theory of texton, scripton, and traversal mode and Frasca's theory of ludology, and presenting them in a discussion. The game console to which the game was played is Playstation 3. This console system makes the unique system of garbs in LRFFXIII possible to happen due to its advanced gaming hardware.

3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

LRFFXIII possesses 93 garbs for the gamers to select for Lightning, the main character, to wear. From these 93 garbs, 18 garbs are written in kanji while the remaining 75 garbs are in katakana. It indicates that Square Enix has favored international tastes since the start of the game creation. Uniquely from the 75 garbs written in katakana, 30 garbs were translated by employing adaptation techniques. It implies that the translators consider that purely borrowing the names of the garbs from katakana to English exposes a risk of cultural constraints and it further signifies Square Enix's aim for international markets. The translation techniques employed in translating the garbs are revolving around two techniques only namely adaptation and pure borrowing with the former dominating the translation for 49 data and the latter 44 data. This

finding supports the focus on the international market.

In the perspectives of ludology, from the 49 adaptations of the garbs' names, 9 translated names suffer from negative ludological impacts while the other 40 names from the positive ones. The garbs suffering negative impacts in their ludological aspects are as follows:

Table 1 Translation of the Garbs

Num	Source Garb	Target Garb
1.	セイントダムゼル (Saint Damsel)	School's Out
2.	ザ・タワー (The Tower)	La Fouldre
3.	タービュランス (Turbulence)	Vigilance
4.	ブレイジングマーズ (Blazing Mars)	Crimson Bloom
5.	フロストマーキュリー (Frost Mercury)	Violet Twilight
6.	ウッドランドシルフ (Woodland Sylph)	Woodland Walker
7.	砂塵の孤影 (Lone Figure in the Dust)	Dust and Shadow
8.	雷威式正鎧 (Lightning Formal Armor)	Shining Prince
9.	金剛菩薩 (Vajra Bodhisattva)	Sohei Savior

The negative ludological impacts the aforementioned translation suffers are due to the inability of the English translation to stimulate a direct preliminary understanding on the game mechanics especially the abilities in the form of magical elements imbued in the garbs from the gamers, フロストマーキュリー translated into 'Violet Twilight' for example.

The garb in Japanese literally says 'Frost Mercury'. The phrase 'Frost Mercury' directly triggers a preliminary understanding to the gamers because the garb explicitly mentions about the element

imbued in the garb that is ice. The word 'frost' entails a direct meaning of ice as 'frost', based on Merriam-Webster, refers to 'a thin layer of ice that forms on the ground, on grass, etc., when the air becomes cold'. When the name of the garb is translated into 'Violet Twilight', the direct preliminary understanding toward the nature element of ice the garb is imbued to is not automatically obtainable.

Figure 1 Frost Mercury-Violet Twilight

The same problem with different level of accuracy also occurs in ブレイジングマーズ (Blazing Mars) translated into Crimson Bloom. The Japanese name of the garb has automatically transferred an understanding that the garb is connected to the element of fire. This understanding surfaces from the word 'blazing' which refers to 'raging fire' and 'Mars' which is symbolically identical to 'fire'. 'Crimson Bloom', the translation of 'Blazing Mars', only pertains the sense 'Mars' has in the scope of 'Mars' as a god of war and its red color significance. The word 'Crimson' might be confused with 'Crimson Blade', a halberd-like weapon in LRFFXIII when the garb is translated into 'Crimson Bloom'. The gamers might have a wrong preliminary understanding when noticing 'Crimson Bloom' but the decision to translate the garb into 'Crimson Bloom' displays a better choice of words compared

to 'Violet Twilight'. This better choice of words results from the consistency of the translation of Final Fantasy series to pertain the word 'crimson' to refer to fire as found in other Final Fantasy titles. Furthermore the choice of 'crimson' which reflects fire symbol signifies that the translator attempts to bridge the fire element the original name of the garb as close as possible. The only problem prevailing from this translation is that the translation is not ludologically friendly for the new gamers of Final Fantasy series as they are absent from understanding that the word ' crimson' in the North American version of Final Fantasy consistently refers to 'fire'.

Figure 2 Blazing Mars-Crimson Bloom

Another interesting finding is the translation ザ・タワー (The Tower) into 'La Fouldre'. In this case, the translators employ French language as the translation for the Japanese name of the garb. This decision, from the fact that the main focus of LRFFXIII is fashion, is positive as the translated name is in French, identical to fashion. Nevertheless, this translation ludologically exposes a problem. 'La Fouldre' is literally 'the Thunderbolt' in English and the preliminary knowledge the gamers, possessing the knowledge upon French, have, after noticing the name, is assumed to be that the garb is imbued with

Thunder Magic. If the preliminary knowledge is aligned with the game mechanics, in this case it is the nature element of the garb, a misleading is revealed. ザ・タワー grants the wearer Ruin Magic, a non elemental magic, not Thunder Magic as implied from 'La Fouldre'.

The same case as 'La Fouldre' is found also from 'Sohei Savior', the translated version of 金剛菩薩 (Vajra Bodhisattva). 'Vajra' refers to the double edged club and also refers to 'thunder' whereas 'Bodhisattva' refers to the ultimate level of Budhahood one can attain. The word 'Vajra' which refers to a weapon and a nature element is reflected from the game mechanics, the ludological aspect, in the form of nature element based magic and physical attack since 金剛菩薩 is imbued with 'Blitz' and 'Attack'. When translated into 'Sohei Savior', the Buddhism implication and 'Attack' game mechanics are still perceivable but 'Blitz' is lost.

The word 'Sohei' refers to monk warrior of the Buddhism emerging since Kamakura period. Benkei from Miyamoto no Yoshitsune saga is one of the examples of Sohei. Significant characteristics Sohei has are the color of the armor which is mostly yellow. This yellow color is the dominant color of the garb Lightning wears. It implies that the translators perceive the armor is the major basis of the translation. It further signifies that the translators actually take ludology as a consideration in their translation as they perceive the graphic grab, which is part of ludology, for their translation.

Figure 3 Vajra Bodhisattva-Sohei Savior

The case of 'La Fouldre' and 'Sohei Savior' employing non-English words in the translation implies that the adaptation the translators use are not always to adapt the translated object into the target culture. From the viewpoint of adaptation translation technique, the decision to translate the garbs into 'La Fouldre' and 'Sohei Savior' falls into one of the seven modes of adaptation namely creation, a more global replacement that preserves only the essential messages/ideas/functions of the original (Bastin in Baker, 2001).

The aforementioned three examples exposing negative ludological impacts from the English translation version of Lightning's garb in LRFFXIII imply that there is a distortion on the preliminary knowledge of the game mechanics, of the ludological aspects, mainly in the mechanics of elemental magic. Negative ludological impacts signify that the original Japanese versions of the names of the garbs are abler to transfer the preliminary knowledge to the gamers about the game mechanics in the form of elemental magic compared to the translated versions. Though the translated versions are less able to transfer the preliminary knowledge of the game mechanics, the translators have attempted to transfer the ludological message of the garbs. The attempts are

perceptible from the focus of the game mechanics the translators use as one of the considerations in translating the garbs. The focuses found in the translation cover the focus on graphics, symbolism, none of the two. Graphics refers to the appearance of the garbs in polygons whereas symbolism refers to the symbols considered to be able to represent the game mechanics of the garbs. Meanwhile 'none of the two' means that the translators do not use either graphics or symbolism as the basis of the translation. The following is the detail:

Table 2 Focus of Ludology

Num	Target Garb	Focus		
		G	S	N
1.	School's Out	v		
2.	La Fouldre			v
3.	Vigilance	v		
4.	Crimson Bloom	v	v	
5.	Violet Twilight	v		
6.	Woodland Walker	v	v	
7.	Dust and Shadow	v	v	
8.	Shining Prince		v	
9.	Sohei Savior	v	v	

G: Graphics S: Symbolism N: None

As seen from the table, the dominant basis for the translators to attempt to preserve the ludological aspects in the form of garbs' abilities is graphics, the second is symbolism and the last is neither graphics nor symbolism.

The four garbs focusing on both graphics and symbolism imply that their translated versions are close to transfer complete ludological aspects in the form of abilities from the Japanese version to the English one. Woodland Walker is one of the examples. This garb is the translated version of ウッドランドシルフ (Woodland Sylph). Sylph or Sylphid is a mythological

fairy-like being said to have control upon air and thereby Sylph, mainly associated to female gender, is called the spirit of air. 'Woodland Sylph', the Japanese name for the garb, is able to project a link between the air element and the ability of the garb which is Aero+ Lv.2, a wind based magic.

Figure 4 Woodland Sylph-Woodland Walker

As seen from the picture, the color dominating Woodland Sylph is military based motif from which the word 'Woodland' arrives. Holding on the motif, the translators decide to translate the garb into 'Woodland Walker' to emphasize the military sense the garb has. The word 'Walker' refers to non-human military walking devices or vehicles constructed to dismantle bombs, mines, and to do other operations impossible for men to conduct. This decision to employ the word 'Walker' signifies that the translators attempt to transfer the characteristics of Slyph into 'Walker'. Both share same characteristics: non-humans, more powerful than humans yet bound to humans, and performing duties beneficial for humans. By extracting the decision to translate the garbs from the considerations over graphics and symbolism, 'Woodland Walker' shares significant ludological properties of 'Woodland Slyph' but the translation fails to directly trigger a preliminary knowledge to the gamers that the ability the garb has is that of wind based element namely Aero.

Another interesting example from the garb translation focusing on the graphics and symbolism is 砂塵の孤影 (Lone Figure in the Dust) apparently taken from Japanese proverb 塵も積もれば, 山となる which literally means 'Even dust when piled up will become a mountain'. If this proverb is linked to the ability the garb has, a connection is obtained because the garb's ability is Guard allowing Lightning to guard the attacks of the enemies better. This guard sense is actually perceivable also from the translated version of the garb. Dust and Shadow, similar to 砂塵の孤影, is apparently taken from quotes by Horace saying 'we are but dust and shadow' which means that humans are fragile yet strong and prominence at the same time.

Figure 5 Lone Figure in the Dust-Dust and Shadow

Among the nine garbs with negative ludological impacts, Dust and Shadow is the closest to the positive one. Prominent problem this garb translation is the presence of the word 'shadow'. This word in Final Fantasy world is identical to ninja which is attributive to speed and offense whereas Dust and Shadow garb's ability is Guard which is defensive in nature. Though it fails on this ludological part, Dust and Shadow remains an interesting translation. The interesting parts are the source and target language linearity on the background

of the garb's name which is a proverb and the representation of 'Lone Figure' as 'Shadow' referring to Ninja.

From the aforementioned examples, it is comprehended that the translations focusing on both graphics and symbolism are close to positive impacts of ludology. It implies that the translation taking only graphics or symbolism is of inferior to the translation with both focuses and it further suggests that the absence of focus on either graphics or symbolism is of the most inferior quality of translation. The detail is as follow:

Table 3 Translation Quality

Num	Target Garb	Translation Quality		
		Lv3	Lv2	Lv1
1.	School's Out		v	
2.	La Fouldre			v
3.	Vigilance		v	
4.	Crimson Bloom	v		
5.	Violet Twilight		v	
6.	Woodland Walker	v		
7.	Dust and Shadow	v		
8.	Shining Prince		v	
9.	Sohei Savior	v		

Translation quality Lv3 signifies that the translation has the best quality and the closest one to transfer the complete ludological aspects of the garb from the basis of graphics and symbolism. Lv2 denotes that the translation fails to transfer the ludological aspects rooted from either graphics or symbolism. Lv1 is the least qualified translation because the translation does not stand on the ground of either graphics or symbolism.

4. DISCUSSION

The dominant use of adaptation techniques, besides indicating that the orientation of the game is that of international markets, signifies that the translation team concerns not only on the translation but localization, the aim to bring the taste of being local, domestic, from the video game (O'Hagan, 2005:3).

The concern on localization signifies that the translators do not only engage in narratological aspects, the textual and visual elements of the media from which imagery acts as a narrator (Mietinnen, 2006:2), but also ludological aspects, in the case of video game, is realized through game mechanics. The necessity to localize LRFFXIII for international markets results in the emergence of 49 adaptations and 44 pure borrowings. The latter is deemed to be taking part in the localization of the garb for the international markets because out of 93 garbs, 75 garbs are written in katakana and the rest is in kanji. These concerns of localization and international market expose a risk of deteriorating the imbued game mechanics from the garb as localization as the center of the translation alters not only the linguistic features of the game but also the other game elements as seen from the Layers of Localization by (Chroust, 2007:3) below:
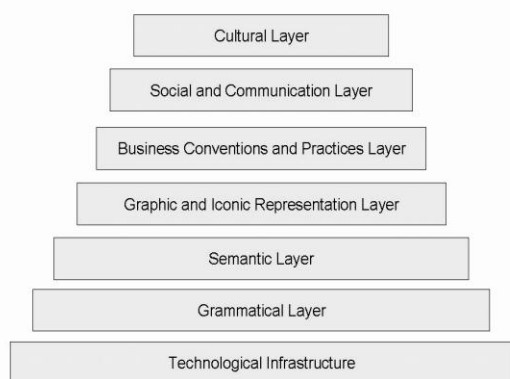

Figure 6 Layers of Localization

As seen from the figure above, seven layers of a digital product are in the scheme of localization. In the case of LRFFXIII, semantic and graphic/iconic layers are those of concerns. This is visible from the findings showing that the 49 garbs to which adaptations are employed consider graphic and iconic representation layer as a point of comprehension to work with the semantic layer. This relationship between graphic and iconic representation layer and semantic layer signifies the attempt to transfer the textons, the scriptons, and the traversal mode of the garb. This attempt is positively exercised in the translation as seen from the findings that 40 from 49 adaptations trigger positive impacts on the ludological aspects for the gamers.

5. CONCLUSION

The translation technique dominating the translation of the garbs' names in LRFFXIII is adaptation (49 data) with pure borrowing (44 data) arriving next. From 49 adaptations, 9 adaptations spark negative ludological influences while the rest preserves positive influences. Though deemed to fail, the 9 adaptations display a ludogical attempt on the translation process. The ludological attempt is perceivable from the consideration upon graphics and symbolism as one of the bases of the translation. 8 English names of the garbs expose the attempt while only one does not. This finding denotes that ludology is taken as a consideration by the translator team of Square Enix's LRFFXIII.

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FIGURE REFERENCES

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