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ADVANCES IN SOCIAL HUMANITIES RESEARCH

The Effect of English Term Retention in the Localization of RPG Games By Hoyoverse on the Aesthetic Perception of Young Indonesian Players

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Abstract

The rapid growth of the global video game industry has prompted developers to localize their products for cross-cultural markets. However, many East Asian game developers, including HoYoverse, retain English terminology rather than fully translating it into local languages. Although previous studies have primarily examined localization strategies and functional and linguistic accuracy, the affective and aesthetic dimensions of language choice among Indonesian players remain underexplored. This study aims to investigate the effect of English term retention in HoYoverse's role-playing games (RPGs), including Honkai Impact 3rd, Genshin Impact, Honkai: Star Rail, and Zenless Zone Zero, on the aesthetic perceptions of young Indonesian players aged 15–25 who have played these games for at least six months and used Indonesian subtitles. A quantitative survey design was employed, involving 202 respondents recruited through purposive sampling. Data were collected using a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using validity and reliability tests and simple linear regression analysis in SPSS. The results indicate that English term retention has a positive and statistically significant effect on aesthetic perception ($\beta = 0.651$; $t = 12.122$; $p < 0.001$), accounting for 42.4% of the variance in aesthetic perception. The remaining 57.6% of the variance may be attributable to other factors, such as translation quality, voice acting, user interface and user experience (UI/UX) design, and individual English proficiency. These findings support the relevance of Venuti's foreignization framework to digital game localization and suggest that selectively retaining English terminology, supported by glossaries and customizable language settings, may enhance players' aesthetic perceptions while promoting inclusivity among players with varying levels of English proficiency.

INTRODUCTION

The video game industry has experienced rapid growth in recent years. In 2024 alone, its global revenue was recorded at USD 224 billion and is projected to reach nearly USD 300 billion by 2029, surpassing the combined revenue of the film and music industries (PwC, 2025). Despite these substantial figures, the industry's economic significance remains relatively underrecognized by the general public. This remarkable growth has encouraged the gaming

industry to expand beyond national and cultural boundaries. This expansion is reflected in shifts in developers' strategies for reaching new markets (Wu & Chen, 2020) and the evolving role of localization as a process of negotiating cross-cultural identities (Fontolan et al., 2022). Consequently, video games originally developed for domestic consumption in a single source language must now undergo extensive adaptation to ensure their accessibility and acceptance among international players with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

Localization plays a central role in this process. Full localization refers to a comprehensive adaptation process that extends beyond text translation to include voice dubbing, subtitles, and user interface customization (Wu & Chen, 2020). Similarly, Fontolan, Malazita, and Da Costa (2022) emphasize that localization involves negotiating cultural identities rather than merely transferring linguistic content between languages. Players' acceptance of particular linguistic elements also influences whether developers retain foreign terminology or adopt domestication strategies. However, developers do not always pursue full localization, often choosing to preserve selected terms in their original or intermediary languages. This phenomenon is supported by the findings of (Haydar & Widya S., 2024), who examined localization strategies in Genshin Impact and reported that direct borrowing from English accounted for 13.8% of the translation techniques identified. These findings suggest that certain localization practices preserve English terminology rather than consistently replacing it with Indonesian equivalents. In this context, English functions as a lingua franca, facilitating communication across diverse linguistic communities. This hybrid linguistic phenomenon warrants further investigation, particularly regarding the extent to which retaining English terminology shapes players' aesthetic perceptions and emotional engagement in non-English-speaking countries. This issue is especially relevant among young Indonesian players aged 15–25 who engage with role-playing games (RPGs) developed by HoYoverse.

Game localization has been examined in previous studies from various perspectives. Wu and Chen (2020) investigated post-gold localization strategies and highlighted the prevalence of full localization practices among Chinese game developers targeting Southeast Asian markets. Meanwhile, (Wibowo & Suyudi, 2024) identified several localization strategies, including domestication, foreignization, and transcreation, in Indonesian horror games. Other studies have focused on player reception and localization quality. For example, (Hsu & O'Hagan, 2024) demonstrated that localization quality has become an integral component of the gaming experience rather than merely a supplementary feature. Their findings also suggest that overly rigid localization practices may diminish player immersion. Similarly, (Kuo & Lai, 2023), who examined gaming communities among Malaysian Chinese players, and (Abiyyu & Seinsiani, 2026), who investigated Indonesian students, reported preferences for English-language elements in gaming contexts. However, the underlying aesthetic and emotional motivations associated with these preferences remain insufficiently explored. Collectively, these studies indicate that in-game language serves not only as a functional means of communication but also as an element that contributes to players' emotional experiences, aesthetic impressions, and perceptions of game quality.

Despite the extensive literature examining localization strategies, translation quality, and language preferences, several significant research gaps remain. First, previous studies have predominantly emphasized functional and cognitive dimensions, including translation

accuracy, readability, and usability (Haydar & Widya S., 2024; Nurfauzan, 2023), while paying relatively limited attention to affective and aesthetic dimensions. These dimensions concern how linguistic choices influence perceptions of modernity, professionalism, prestige, and emotional appeal. Second, studies examining English-language preferences as markers of prestige (Kuo & Lai, 2023; Fontolan et al., 2022) have primarily focused on Malaysian, Chinese, or European contexts. Consequently, the relationship between English term retention and aesthetic perception remains insufficiently examined within the sociolinguistic context of Indonesian gaming communities, where players exhibit varying levels of English proficiency. Third, from a methodological perspective, much of the existing research has employed qualitative and exploratory approaches with relatively limited samples. This methodological tendency highlights the need for quantitative investigations capable of systematically measuring the relationship between English term retention and players' aesthetic perceptions.

Addressing these research gaps, the present study aims to examine the effect of English term retention in the localization of RPGs developed by HoYoverse, including Honkai Impact 3rd, Genshin Impact, Honkai: Star Rail, and Zenless Zone Zero, on the aesthetic perceptions of Indonesian players aged 15–25 who have been actively playing these games for at least six months. Specifically, this study investigates the extent to which retaining English terminology, rather than replacing it with Indonesian translations, influences players' perceptions of modernity, professionalism, linguistic prestige, aesthetic appeal, and emotional attachment to digital games. By positioning English term retention as the independent variable and aesthetic perception as the dependent variable, this study seeks to extend existing scholarship on game localization beyond predominantly functional and linguistic perspectives. Furthermore, it aims to provide empirical evidence regarding the relationship between language choices and digital aesthetics within the specific sociolinguistic context of young Indonesian players.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey design to examine the effect of English term retention in game localization on players' aesthetic perceptions. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed statistically to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The quantitative approach was selected to facilitate hypothesis testing and provide measurable empirical findings (Sugiyono, 2017). The survey design was adopted to examine players' attitudes and perceptions based on data collected from a defined sample (Creswell, 2014).

Respondents were selected through purposive sampling based on four inclusion criteria: (1) having played at least one of HoYoverse's role-playing games (RPGs), including Honkai Impact 3rd, Genshin Impact, Honkai: Star Rail, or Zenless Zone Zero; (2) being between 15 and 25 years old; (3) having played for at least six months; and (4) having used Indonesian subtitles during gameplay. The age range was selected to represent young players with substantial exposure to digital gaming environments and English-language content (Octova, 2022). These criteria were established to ensure that participants had relevant experience with the localization practices examined in this study (Babbie, 2020). The target sample size was estimated using the Lemeshow formula, and 202 respondents were included in the study.

The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale to measure two primary variables: English term retention in game localization as the independent variable and players' aesthetic perceptions as the dependent variable. Responses were scored on a scale of 1–5 to quantify participants' perceptions and attitudes (Sugiyono, 2017). The collected data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Instrument validity and reliability were assessed, followed by simple linear regression analysis to examine the statistical relationship between English term retention and aesthetic perception.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of statistical data processing related to the effect of maintaining English terms in the RPG game Hoyoverse (variable X) on the aesthetic perception of young players aged 15–25 years in Indonesia, which in this analysis is operationalized through the aesthetic perception indicator (variable Y). The test was carried out in stages, including a validity test, a reliability test, and a simple linear regression test, with a total of 202 respondents (N).

Instrument Validity Test

The validity test was carried out by the Pearson product moment correlation technique, which is to correlate the score of each statement item with the total score of its variables. With N = 202 and free degrees (df) = N – 2 = 200, the r-value of the table was obtained at a significance level of 5% (two-way test) of 0.138. An item is declared valid if the r-value is calculated > r of the table and the significance value < 0.05.

The results of the validity test of variable X (English Selection) are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Variable Validity Test Results

Item	r count	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
X1.1	0.401	0.000	Valid
X1.2	0.397	0.000	Valid
X1.3	0.560	0.003	Valid
X1.4	0.569	0.000	Valid
X1.5	0.167	0.018	Valid
X1.6	0.533	0.000	Valid
X1.7	0.497	0.000	Valid
X1.8	0.508	0.000	Valid
X1.9	0.284	0.000	Valid
X1.10	0.646	0.000	Valid
X1.11	0.608	0.000	Valid

Based on Table 1, all 11 items of variable X declaration had a calculated r-value of > 0.138 with a significance of < 0.05, so that all items were declared valid. However, it should

be noted that item X1.5 obtained a relatively low calculated r-value (0.167) compared to other items in the range of 0.284–0.646, although it still statistically met the validity threshold.

The results of the validity test of variable Y (Aesthetic Perception) are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Results of Variable Y Validity Test

Item	r count	Sig. (2-tailed)	Remarks
Y1.1	0.718	0.000	Valid
Y1.2	0.764	0.000	Valid
Y1.3	0.703	0.000	Valid
Y1.4	0.737	0.000	Valid
Y1.5	0.801	0.000	Valid
Y1.6	0.735	0.000	Valid
Y1.7	0.492	0.000	Valid
Y1.8	0.597	0.000	Valid
Y1.9	0.542	0.000	Valid
Y1.10	0.447	0.000	Valid
Y1.11	0.446	0.000	Valid
Y1.12	0.301	0.004	Valid

All 12 items of the statement of variable Y also had a calculated r-value above the r table (0.138) with a significance of < 0.05, so that it was declared valid. The r-count value of the Y variable was generally higher (ranging from 0.301–0.801) than the X variable, indicating a stronger homogeneity of the item in measuring the construct of aesthetic perception.

Instrument Reliability Test

The reliability test was used to determine the internal consistency of the research instrument using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The instrument was declared reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value ≥ 0.60. The results of the reliability test of the two variables are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Results of Variable Reliability Test X and Y

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items	Remarks
X (English Selection)	0.675	11	Reliable
Y (Aesthetic Perception)	0.730	12	Reliable

The value of Cronbach's Alpha variable X of 0.675 and variable Y of 0.730 is in the range of 0.60–0.799, which according to Guilford's criteria is classified as a high reliability

category. Thus, both instruments are declared consistent and feasible to be used as a measuring tool in this study. The higher reliability value of variable Y compared to variable X indicates that the items measuring aesthetic perception have a relatively stronger internal consistency.

Simple Linear Regression Test

Simple linear regression analysis was used to test the influence of the English Language Selection variable (X) on the Aesthetic Perception variable (Y). The results of the model test, the F test, and the t-test are presented respectively in Table 4, 5, and 6.

Table 4. Model Summary

Models	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.651	0.424	0.421	5.437

The correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.651 indicates that the relationship between English Language Selection and Aesthetic Perception is relatively strong, because it is in the range of 0.60–0.799. The R-Square value of 0.424 indicates that the English Language Selection variable is able to explain 42.4% of the variation in the Aesthetic Perception variable, while the remaining 57.6% is explained by other factors outside this study model.

Table 5. ANOVA Test Results

Models	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4344.433	1	4344.433	146.941	0.000
Residual	5913.152	200	29.566	-	-
Total	10257.584	201	-	-	-

The value of F of the table at df1 = 1 and df2 = 200 with a significance level of 5% is ≈ 3.89. Since F is calculated (146.941) > F table (3.89) with a significance value of 0.000 < 0.05, this regression model is declared fit to be used to predict the Aesthetic Perception variable based on the English Language Selection variable.

Table 6. Regression Coefficient Test Results

Models	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	8.276	2.875	-	2.878	0.004
English Language Selection	0.907	0.075	0.651	12.122	0.000

Based on Table 6, the following simple linear regression equation is obtained:

$$Y = 8.276 + 0.907X$$

A constant value of 8.276 indicates that if the English Selection variable is zero, then the Aesthetic Perception value is estimated to be 8.276. The X regression coefficient of 0.907 is positive, which means that every one unit increase in the English Selection variable will increase the Aesthetic Perception value by 0.907 units, assuming the other variables remain constant (ceteris paribus).

The value of t of the table at df = 200 with a significance level of 5% (bidirectional) is ≈ 1.972. Because t count (12.122) > t table (1.972) with a significance of 0.000 < 0.05, H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that the variable of English Language Selection has a positive and significant effect on the variable of Aesthetic Perception as a representation of the aesthetic perception of young Hoyoverse players in Indonesia.

The results of the validity and reliability tests showed that the instruments used in this study met adequate psychometric requirements. All items in both variables were declared valid, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was in the high category (X = 0.675; Y = 0.730). This condition is methodologically important because a valid and reliable instrument is a prerequisite for conclusions about the causal relationship between variables to be scientifically justified. It should be noted that item X1.5, although valid, has a much lower differentiation power (r calculation) than other items in variable X. This indicates that the statements on the item may be less sharp in differentiating respondents' perceptions, or measuring slightly different aspects of the core construct of "English Selection". The researcher further needs to consider editorial revisions to this item to improve the homogeneity of the instrument.

The Influence of English Language Selection on Aesthetic Perception/Localization

The results of a simple linear regression prove that maintaining English terms in the RPG game Hoyoverse has a positive and significant effect on the aesthetic perception of digital game localization among young Indonesian players (β = 0.651; t = 12.122; p < 0.001), with a determination contribution of 42.4%. Substantively, these findings indicate that the more players accept and positively assess the developer's decision to retain English terms instead of fully translating them into Indonesian, the more positive their perception of the aesthetic quality and authenticity of the game's localization.

These findings are in line with the framework of localization theory that distinguishes the strategies of domestication and foreignization. Domestication seeks to eliminate traces of alienation from the source text so that it feels natural to the target reader, while foreignization maintains the element of alienation (Venuti, 1995). Maintaining the English term in the RPG game Hoyoverse can be seen as a form of foreignization strategy that maintains the identity of the source culture instead of fusing it completely into the target culture. This is relevant to the view of (Bernal-Merino, 2015) who emphasizes that the localization of modern games does not necessarily mean thorough translation, but rather selective adaptation that still considers an authentic gaming experience for its users.

These findings also reinforce the results of a study by Wu and Chen (2020) which examined the localization of Chinese games for the Southeast Asian market. The study found that players in this region tend to prefer foreignization strategies over full domestication, while the status of English as a lingua franca in multilingual regions such as Southeast Asia also shapes this preference. This context is very relevant to Indonesia, considering that Hoyoverse (miHoYo) is a Chinese developer whose products, including Genshin Impact, are widely

marketed in this region. (Zahraputeri & Kusdibyo, 2021) study on the perception of Indonesian players in Genshin Impact games also confirms that aspects of content authenticity, including in-game terms and nomenclature, are one of the factors that affect players' assessment of overall product quality.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, the use of English as a global lingua franca Seidlhofer, (2005) also explains why these terms are not perceived as an obstacle by most respondents. (Winaldo & Oktaviani, 2022) note that the exposure of the younger generation to English-language games contributes positively to the mastery of vocabulary and associations of English with prestige and modernity values. The combination of linguistic familiarity and prestige associations makes terms such as skill names, character titles, or game system nomenclature actually strengthen player immersion because they are in line with the conventions of the global RPG genre, instead of being perceived as disruptive.

Although the results of this study show a statistically positive influence, it is important to examine this phenomenon in a balanced way, considering that previous literature shows that acceptance of foreign language retention in digital products is not single or universal.

On the one hand, arguments in favor of retaining English terms find a foothold in several studies. (Fernández-Costales, 2012, 2016) exemplifies the case of typical action game names such as Shoryuken or Hadouken in the Street Fighter series, which, when translated, have the potential to cause confusion and dissatisfaction among fans who are familiar with the original terms. The same is true for Hoyoverse RPGs, where terms such as element names, Archon titles, or items typical of the Teyvat world have become widely recognized narrative identities by cross-country player communities, so the retention of these terms can strengthen the player's sense of connection with the game's global community.

On the other hand, there are also counter arguments that need to be considered. Fernández-Costales (2016) found that there is a tension between local and global interests in players' acceptance of game languages, where not all players have the same level of comfort with the use of foreign languages; some players, especially those with limited English literacy, prefer comprehensive localization to make the gaming experience easier to understand. In line with that, (Azumi et al., 2026) found that differences in foreign language competencies in Generation Z can form unequal social relationship dynamics, because not all members of the group have commensurate English proficiency. Applied to the context of this study, this condition means that the retention of English terms risks creating a gap in understanding between players with high and low English literacy, and has the potential to cause an exclusive perception that is less inclusive for some segments of young Indonesian players. In addition, excessive and inselective retention also risks being judged as a less serious or less professional quality of localization if it is not balanced with adequate translation of the main narrative.

Thus, the value of the determination coefficient of 42.4% in this study should be interpreted as evidence of the tendency of the majority of respondents who positively assess English language retention, without ruling out the possibility of a segment of minority players who actually take the opposite view. These pro-con nuances are consistent with the recommendations of (Wu & Chen, 2020) who suggest a distinction between the assumed locale, the practiced, and the actually preferred by the player, as a more appropriate analytical

framework to understand language preferences in game localization in linguistically plural regions such as Southeast Asia.

Comparison with Previous Research

Based on table 4, the summary model, around 42.4% was obtained, which shows that the English variable can affect the player's aesthetic perception. Meanwhile, the remaining variation of 57.6% that is not explained by the English Language Selection variable indicates that there are other factors that also affect the perception of game localization/aesthetics, such as the quality of narrative translation, voice acting suitability, user interface design (UI/UX), the level of English proficiency of the player, and individual cultural preferences. These factors are consistent with the game localization model proposed by (Bernal-Merino, 2014), which states that the quality of localization is determined by many dimensions at once, such as linguistic, technical, visual, and audio, so language alone cannot fully explain the variation in player perception.

Compared to previous research, these findings reinforce the results of Wu and Chen (2020) who showed the tendency of Southeast Asian players to prefer foreignization over full domestication in games of Chinese origin. Similarly, these results are in line with the study of Zahraputeri and Kusdibyo (2021) in the context of Genshin Impact in Indonesia, which found that the authenticity of content also shapes players' perception of the overall quality of the game. Meanwhile, compared to the Fernández-Costales (2016) study in the Spanish context which found a tension between local and global preferences in the acceptance of game languages, this study shows a more inclined tendency towards positive acceptance of the English language. This difference can be explained by different sociolinguistic contexts: Indonesia, like many countries in Southeast Asia, does not have a single established localized language and is instead accustomed to the use of English as the lingua franca in digital and entertainment products (Seidlhofer, 2005), in contrast to the European context that Fernández-Cotales researched, where the national language has a more dominant position in the local entertainment industry.

Because this study is cross-sectional and limited to one game franchise (Hoyoverse), generalization of findings to other RPG games, other publishers, or different age groups needs to be done with caution. Future research is recommended to replicate research designs on other game franchises in order to test the consistency of the direction of influence found in this study.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the relevance of the theory of foreignization (Venuti, 1995) in the context of the localization of digital entertainment products across cultures, while adding empirical evidence to the literature on game localization in the Southeast Asian region which is still relatively limited (Wu & Chen, 2020). This study also enriches the understanding of the preferred locale of Indonesian players specifically, complementing the presumed–practiced–preferred locale framework proposed by Wu and Chen (2020).

In practical terms, these findings provide implications for game developers and publishers that the policy of selectively retaining certain English terms, rather than translating or retaining them entirely haphazardly, can be an effective localization strategy to improve aesthetic perception and acceptance of young players in the Indonesian market. The prototype model for localizing in-game text assets developed by (Wibowo, 2021) can be a technical reference for game publishers in designing guidelines for when English terms should be

retained and when they need to be translated, so that narrative accessibility for players with limited English literacy is maintained. In addition, given the potential for understanding gaps in some segments of players (Fernández-Costales, 2016; Azumi, 2026), developers are advised to provide in-game glossary options or flexible language settings, so that foreignization strategies do not sacrifice the inclusivity of players with diverse backgrounds of English language skills.

For future researchers, this study recommends the use of a more user-centric research approach, as exemplified by Fernández-Costales (2016), to qualitatively explore the reasons behind players' preferences for retention and translation of terms, so that the quantitative findings in this study can be enriched with a deeper understanding of players' subjective experiences.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that the retention of English terminology in the localization of role-playing games (RPGs) developed by HoYoverse had a positive and statistically significant relationship with the aesthetic perceptions of young Indonesian players aged 15–25, accounting for 42.4% of the variance in aesthetic perception. These findings support the relevance of foreignization strategies, which preserve selected linguistic elements of the source text rather than fully adapting them to the target language. English term retention was associated with players' perceptions of modernity, linguistic prestige, and emotional attachment to digital games. However, the remaining 57.6% of unexplained variance suggests that other factors beyond English term retention may contribute to players' aesthetic perceptions. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that English term retention is universally preferred across all player groups, particularly given potential differences in English proficiency among respondents.

Theoretically, these findings extend the application of the foreignization framework to cross-cultural digital game localization and contribute to the limited literature on language preferences and aesthetic perceptions among Indonesian players. From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that game developers and publishers should adopt selective English term retention rather than applying it indiscriminately. Supporting features, such as in-game glossaries and customizable language settings, could help accommodate players with varying levels of English proficiency while preserving the aesthetic qualities associated with English terminology. Such an approach may promote linguistic accessibility and inclusivity without compromising the intended aesthetic experience.

This study had several limitations. First, the sample was restricted to players aged 15–25, limiting the applicability of the findings to other age groups. Second, the research focused exclusively on HoYoverse games, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results to games developed by other companies with different localization strategies. Third, the study was confined to Indonesian players, making cross-cultural comparisons necessary to determine whether similar patterns occur in other linguistic and cultural contexts. Additionally, the quantitative survey design did not fully capture the subjective motivations underlying players' aesthetic preferences. Future research should therefore include broader age groups, games from different developers, and participants from diverse cultural backgrounds. Integrating

qualitative methods, such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions, could also provide deeper insights into players' preferences for English term retention and localized translations in digital games.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The author fully contributes to the formulation of the main idea idea, collects library data, analyzes and interprets the primary text of the figure, and prepares the manuscript. All authors have agreed on the final version of the manuscript.

GENERATIVE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE STATEMENT

The author states that generative artificial intelligence (AI) was used in the preparation of this manuscript. The author acknowledges the use of generative AI to help improve language clarity and improve the grammatical structure of the manuscript. The use is done in compliance with the applicable ethical guidelines regarding the use and disclosure of generative AI in scientific research. Each author has made substantial intellectual contributions to this work. The entire manuscript content has been carefully reviewed to ensure its accuracy, and the author is solely responsible for the integrity and final content of the manuscript.

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