

Video Game Localization: the Analysis of In-Game Texts

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Abstract. Globalisation acts as a driving force to present a variety of commercial products, including games, in different languages simultaneously so that they could reach auditoria and be enjoyed around the globe at the same time. Being the member of the European Union, Lithuania is not an exception in the process of globalisation. With the help of localisation various types of documents, software and products are adapted to the Lithuanian culture and market. However, the industry of game localisation of high or at least acceptable quality is still lagging behind.

The aim of the paper is to analyse the application of different translation theories as well as Chroust's localisation pyramid in localisation of video games and to accomplish the empirical research related to localization of the video game *Magic Encyclopedia: the First Story*.

The theoretical part deals with the layers of localisation and the source-orientated and target-orientated approaches to translation. The empirical research analyses the cases of application of source-orientated and target-orientated approaches in the process of the chosen game localisation. The research has revealed that the Skopos theory would be the most suitable tool to be used for game localisation, though the analysis of the translation of in-game lexis of *Magic Encyclopedia: First Story* mainly relies on Recker's theory of *Regular Correspondences*.

Key words: game localisation; transcreation; Skopos theory; regular correspondences; lexis; word assets.

Introduction

Games, irrespective of sex, age, social or political status are popular all around the globe. A localised game should be understandable and easy to play. Thus, translators are often given freedom to modify, adapt, and remove any cultural references, puns, as well as jokes, or any other element they think is not suitable in the target language. Game localisation allows translators to *transcreate* the things which are necessary to preserve the game experience and to produce a fresh and engaging translation. This type of creative licence granted to game localisers would be an exception in other types of translation unless they are based on the *Skopos* theory of translation (Toury, 1995, p.24) The *Skopos* theory could be applied in game localisation as translators do not have to be loyal to the original text, but to the overall game experience and the target text as well as the target culture.

However, the Lithuanian industry of game localisation of high or at least acceptable quality level is still lagging behind. Nowadays many countries have established game production and localisation departments engaging localisation and translation professionals around the world in order to produce a high quality and marketable games. Such departments are very popular in China, Japan, Russia and also European countries, i.e. Ireland, France, etc. While other countries make profit from this type of activity, Lithuania is just at the starting-point.

The problem of the quality of video game localisation in Lithuania is new and not sufficiently analysed yet, as the most of the researchers deal with the problems of software and website localisation (Dagienė, 2004; Grigas, 2004; Zeller, 2006; Miliūtė, 2008). Meanwhile foreign researchers have contributed to the analysis of video game localisation on a large extent. The importance and problems of this issue are

widely discussed by H. M. Chandler (2005), M. A. B. Merino (2006, 2007, 2009), M. O'Hagan (2007), C. Mangiron (2004, 2006) and many others.

The paper **aims** at analysing the localised Lithuanian version of the video game *Magic Encyclopedia: First Story* (the product of *Alawar Entertainment**) to check whether the *Skopos* theory or Recker's theory of Regular Correspondences is applied in game localisation. The analysis of Chroust's localisation pyramid (2007) allows to get a deeper awareness of localisation as such, concentrating only on the stages that are related to language and translation.

The **object** of research is the in-game lexis, i.e. the corpus of 535 word assets: separate words, vocabulary chunks or set expressions, simple and complex sentences. The research also involves the translation and localisation of in-game lexis as well as the problematic areas of in-game lexis translation.

Research methods are linguistic and comparative analysis.

Theoretical Background: Layers of Localisation

Localisation is a multilayered process. According to Chroust (2007, p.3) it has to be performed on different levels of increased comprehensiveness and cultural dependence.

Higher levels usually rely on lower-levels of localization. Chroust presents a figure which shows 7 layers, constituting the pyramid of localisation (see Figure 1). Localisation as a multi-stage process is based on the *Technological Infrastructure*. Actually, it is more important in the process of internationalisation as all technological preparations and organizational provisions have to be planned beforehand with localisation (Zeller, 2006, p.80).

* The product is originally released in Russian. The official website: <http://company.alawar.com/>

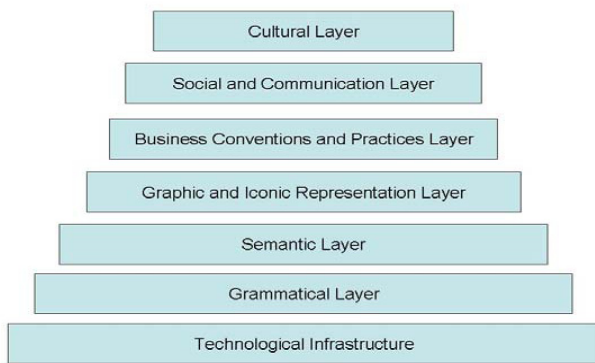


Figure 1. Layers of Localisation (Chroust, 2007, p.3).

The *Grammatical and the Semantic Layers* occupy the second and the third place of importance in Chroust's hierarchy. *The Grammatical Layer* encompasses textual translation of computer supported texts. As Chroust explains:

Typically in literary texts variations of expressions are good style, in system oriented domains uniform, standardized texts are to be preferred in order to avoid ambiguity and confusion (Chroust, 2007, p.3).

The Semantic Layer is concerned with the use of technical versus common language, expressiveness of languages, and abbreviations, i.e. the issues which are largely dealt with by human language translators (Chroust, *ibid*). Though, according to Chroust's pyramid, the *Technological Infrastructure Layer* is the basis for localisation the other two successive levels are not of less importance: if the texts of the programme are translated inappropriately and faulty the whole work will come to nothing. An accurate and thoughtful translation can lead to product popularity and increase profit. This is clearly seen in the case of game localisation industry.

As far as the *Graphic and Iconic Representation Layer* is concerned this matter should undergo an exhaustive debate in a localiser's mind. It is a common pattern to change some pictures, diagrams or symbols when localising programmes or websites. In the case of a game localisation this question should be firstly addressed to the game developer as s/he may object any changes of graphics. Furthermore, the alterations of graphics or icons may lead to the origination of a totally different game.

The Business Conventions and Practises Layer is important for contractors, i.e. the game developer and the game localiser, when the process of localisation is inspired not by the game developer but by some other company which purchases the rights and permission to carry out this work. Thereby this layer is neither reportable nor momentous for a player.

The Social and Communication as well as *the Cultural Layers* are very intimately associated with cultural aspects. In order to understand their implications and background one has to understand basic dimensions of cultural preferences in different nations. As this is a very wide issue, it will not be discussed in detail in this paper.

Though all the layers are of great importance in the process of localisation, only two of them will be tackled in this

paper, namely the *Grammatical Layer* and the *Semantic Layer*. In the case of adaptation into Lithuanian, grammar or syntax is not so significant due to the fact that Lithuanian is a synthetic language and the word order is loose. On the contrary, the *Semantic Layer* is the most important in the case of game localisation. The selection of words: adaptation of puns, idiomatic expressions, employment of similes, appropriateness of style and other stylistic devices are the key assignments for the translator.

The Relationship Between Translation and Localisation

The beginning of localisation practises can be traced down to the 1980's when the computer industry and computer software sprang up (Esselink, 2000, p.3) and the globalisation started to spread around the world. Translation alone was not sufficient for the software which was developed and produced in one country to be adapted in a foreign market (O'Hagan, 2007, p.2). Thus, more work had to be done rather than translation because in addition to text-based translation various engineering processes had to be carried out - this was done in the process of localisation. As B. Esselink (2000, p.4) explains, there are many more activities included in the process of localisation than in the process of translation. According to the author, localisation process encompasses not only the activities of traditional translation, i.e. terminology research, editing, proofreading, page layout but also multilingual project management, software and online help engineering and testing, conversion of translated documentation to other formats, translation memory alignment and management, multilingual product support, and translation strategy support. One more important difference between translation and localisation is that the former is performed after the product or document is finished and released, and the latter usually runs in parallel with the development of the source document or product. This process is named as *simultaneous shipment* ('*sim-ship*') by many authors (Chandler, 2005; Merino, 2006; O'Hagan, 2007) around the globe.

The Localisation Industry Association (LISA) presents a following definition:

*Localisation is the process of modifying products or services to account for differences in distinct markets.*¹

This definition is too broad and it does not give a clue to translation.

Contrarily to LISA's definition, Lithuanian authors, such as Grigas, Dagienė, Jevsikova (2004, p.171), Zeller (2006, p.80), as well as Miliūtė (2008, p.2) tend to emphasize the significance of translation in the process of localisation.

Esselink (2000, p.4) argues that: "Translation is one of the activities in localisation <...>". Moreover, translation is the process of converting written text or speech to another language and requires the meaning of the source language be as accurately rendered into the target language as possible. The purpose of translation described by B. Esselink (*ibid*) is based on the traditional theory of translation,

¹ The Localisation Industry Association (LISA). The official website: <http://www.lisa.org/Globalization-Indust.468.0.html#c260>

which is not always suitable when localising software, films, or in this case, video games.

Translation Theories

Many translation theorists tend to differentiate between the *source-orientated approaches to translation* and the *target-orientated approaches to translation*.

According to Byrde (2006, p.25) source-orientated approaches to translation rely on one thing, i.e. "a link or bond of some sort between the source text and the target text". This link can be achieved by different types of equivalence. Based on the theories of equivalence translations are expected to reproduce the source text as closely as possible. However, those theories cannot be perfectly equivalent on all levels, thus translation theorists present various types of equivalence.

On the contrary, Toury (1995, p.24) states that translations should be treated as independent target language texts. In other words, target-orientated approaches to translation stress the importance of the target text in the translation process rather than the equivalence to the source text. Byrne (2006, p.34) presents Gutt's theory of relevance, where he states that translation should be approached from a communicative point of view. Moreover, Gutt makes a distinction between interpretive language use (which in the context of translation has some form of link or relationship with the source text) and descriptive language use (which in the context of translation is intended to function as an independent and autonomous target language). Explaining his theory Gutt contradicts himself stating, that only an interpretive translation is a 'real' translation, and descriptive translation is rather an 'adaptation'.

Recker's Theory of Regular Correspondences

According to Recker, (Marcinkevičienė, 2007, p.54), the essence of a translation is a search for a correspondence of an original language word in a target language, and the basis of this theory is laid on the analysis of these correspondences. The correspondences (mainly lexical correspondences) between two languages are classified into: equivalents; alternative or contextual correspondences; all kinds of translation transformations. The first type of correspondences are said to be independent of context, these are constant and regular correspondences, coinciding with systemic or dictionary equivalents, having parallel grammatical structures.

Recker's (ibid) theory of *Regular Correspondences* is widely applied and analysed in the translations from English into Lithuanian and vice versa. Byrne (2006, p.25) points out that the translation theories based on equivalence were criticised, as Reiss (1971) and House (1981) proposed the theory of functionalism. This theory stressed more on the function of the target text, rather than on the basis of the source text. This theory was also criticized, as the function of the target text cannot be "arrived at automatically from an analysis of the source text" (Nord, 1991, p.23). However, function focused theories are based not only on the linguistics but also on the pragmatics as they serve for the target reader and inspire communication between the

text, be it a book, manual or commands of a programme, and the reader/ user.

The Skopos Theory of Translation

Though *target-orientated approaches* and particularly the *Skopos* theory emphasize translator's free choice on most appropriate words according to the target reader it is hardly ever applied in localisation in Lithuania. Of course, the *target-oriented approaches* cannot be applicable in the translation of technical, legal, medical, or any other specific texts as these are very constricted and certain terms should be used and in the case of classical literature free translation could lead to serious deviations from the original production. But for localisation of websites, programmes or games the *Skopos* theory could be the toe-hold for the translator. Basically the aim of localisation is to make as many alterations as it may require so that a programme, a website or a game is made easy to use and understand for its consumer. Commonly, it is achieved through a professional and impeccable translation which is obtained if the translator tries to empathize into the role of a consumer, if s/he dares not to stick to the original and thinks about the target users and their culture. The creator of the *Skopos* theory Vermeer views

translation as a cultural transfer rather than a linguistic one, language being part of culture".... "The concept of culture is central to the Skopos theory as it is considered to be a special form of communication and social action contrariwise to abstract code-switching (Snell-Hornby, 2006, pp.54-55).

Thus to have a direct contact with the target user (reader) it is not enough to fulfil the linguistic and pragmatic objective, the translation should inspire communication. Localisation is considered up to the point if a user feels convenient and even does not doubt whether the programme, website or game is not original, in other words the act of communication between the user and the localized product should be flawless. If descriptions, programme guides or manuals seem alien to the user this is a signal that the centrepiece of localisation, i.e. translation has been fulfilled carelessly and can lead to constructive criticism or at the worst to low sales or even refusal to implement and use the product.

However, the cases of the *Skopos* theory application are rare, due to the fact that any deviation from the original is still considered to show amateurishness of the translator and thus it is not acceptable. On the other hand, the attempts to change the names of the characters and the application of target culture orientated symbols (also sometimes referred to as *transcreation*) show timid steps towards unrestricted application of the *Skopos* theory.

Empirical Analysis of In-Game Texts in the *Magical Encyclopedia*

In case of the *Magical Encyclopedia* (Lith. *Magiškoji enciklopedija*) the research has revealed that translation was not considered as the most significant part. Firstly, there were mistakes in rendering sentences and choice of style which resulted in ambiguity and discrepancies. Furthermore, there were instances of untranslated sentences. And last but not least, it was observed that the translator

applied the *source-orientated approaches*, mainly Recker's theory of *Regular Correspondences*.

The research was carried out relying on the asset plan suggested in M. Chandler's *The Game Localization Handbook* (2004). According to it, the translator should consider the translation of in-game text assets, art assets, audio assets, cinematic assets and printed materials. In *Magic Encyclopedia: First Story*, not all of the mentioned assets were present. In this single player game the main character *Catherine* (in the Lithuanian version *Dovilė*) sets off alone on a long troublesome journey around the world, thus there are no conversations or recorded voices. All information is transmitted by a written notice and instead of audio assets there is a calming soundtrack throughout the whole game. Moreover, there are no printed materials or special manuals giving information on how to play the game. The explanatory text is combined with in-game text strings and words in images.

The corpus of the game is comprised of 535 word assets, i.e. separate words, vocabulary chunks or set expressions, simple and complex sentences. As this is not a cohesive text and the ideas are not woven together, the given lexis, or in other words translation units, are rendered from the point of linguistics. To be more exact, the translator did not try to search for expressions in the target language that were more natural and more reasonable for the Lithuanian user. Contrarily, it is obvious that the translator stuck to the original and applying Recker's theory of *Regular Correspondences* (Marcinkevičienė, 2007, p.54) carried out an examination of: equivalents, alternative or contextual analogues and all kinds of translation transformations.

Comparing the source language assets and the translated word assets, the data could be organized as it is shown in the Figure 2.

As it is seen from the Figure 2, for the majority of word assets in the game the alternative or contextual analogues were found in the target language. Moreover, about eight percent of translation units were rendered with the help of equivalents.

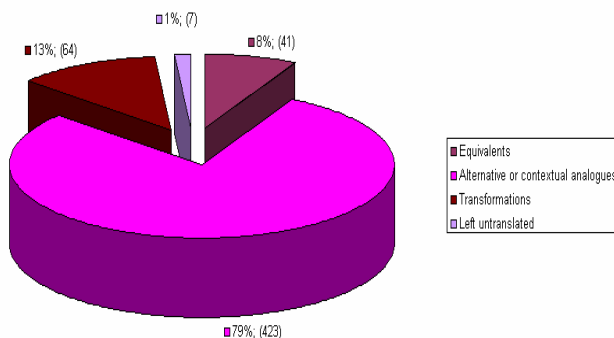


Figure 2. Percentage and Frequency of Regular Correspondences.

These figures show that the translator did not employ his/her imagination or creativity to produce an innovative translation. On the contrary, the employment of equivalents and alternative or contextual analogues proves the hypothesis that either the translator was not aware of the target-orientated approaches, or s/he did not dare to deviate from the lexical entries. Furthermore, the data evidences that the

percentage of transformations is nearly the same as the percentage of equivalents. In the case of transformations the translator should be complemented as this shows though poor but meaningful efforts to adapt the game into Lithuanian. However, it should be noted that the translation work was not fully accomplished as about one percent of word assets were not translated. What is more, as the essence of a game lies in hints and in-game explanations, even a few untranslated sentences lead to obscurity and awkwardness.

Equivalents

There was 41 example of equivalents found in the corpora of the word assets in the game. Mainly these are:

Names of realia:

Eng. *wigwam* – Lith. *vigvamas*

Eng. *mosaic* – Lith. *mozaika*

Names of animals or plants:

Eng. *hyena* – Lith. *hiena*

Eng. *coconut* – Lith. *kokosas*

Names of tools:

Eng. *bellows* – Lith. *dumplės*

Eng. *sickle* – Lith. *pjautuvus*

Geographic names:

Eng. *Egypt* – Lith. *Egiptas*

Eng. *China* – Lith. *Kinija*

The latter group of equivalents is of great importance in the game. As it has already been pointed out the main character travels around the world and visits sixteen different places in order to accomplish her mission. An accurate translation of geographic names is important not only for the sake of the game, but also for the players' education. If the player has no idea about the country or place in the game, s/he might want to search for more information about it and incorrect translation or even spelling will mislead and misinform the player. The game is designed mainly for children over the age of 7 who most probably have already heard the names of neighbour states, but other countries in the game, for instance Indo-China, Wild West or Maya might be new. The translation and spelling of these countries is not accurate in the Lithuanian version of the game and it is evident that *prima facie* reckless translation can lead to illiteracy. Consider these examples:

Eng. *Maya-Pyramid; Maya-Walls; Maya-Stairway.*

Lith. *Maja-Piramidė; Maja-Sienos; Maja-Laiptų takas.*

Eng. *Indo-China.*

Lith. *Indo-Kinija.*

As far as the translation and spelling of names of realia, tools, animals and plants is concerned, no mistakes were noticed as these mainly have only one lexical equivalent and are easily found in a bilingual dictionary.

Alternative or Contextual Analogues

The examination of word assets shows that contextual analogues comprise seventy-nine percent of the game

translation. According to Armalytė and Pažūsis (1990, p.29) it is more complex to find and apply a suitable contextual analogue than to translate an equivalent. There may be a myriad of polysemous words in the source language but in the target language the translator has to take much trouble to find a suitable separate word and vice versa. Alternative analogues are fixed in bilingual dictionaries, but contextual analogues are mostly dependent on the context. Only the context can show which meaning of a polysemous word is the most appropriate. However, according to the *Skopos* theory not only the context but also the target reader should be taken into consideration while translating. When a translator deals with a contextual analogue s/he should not skip the fact that the selected word should sound natural to the target language reader. In the case of game translation it should be not forgotten that words need to be selected attentively for the youth audience. Though it may seem that a word is reasonable in the given context one should think whether it is clear for a child.

In the case of the translation of the mentioned game it was noted that in some occasions the translator tried to find a vivid and felicitous analogue. Consider the following examples:

- Eng. *The news was delivered in the wings of a paper bird.*
 Lith. „*Naujienos buvo pateiktos ant popierinio lėktuvėlio“.*
 Eng. *This branch is rather loose.*
 Lith. „*Ši šaka yra gerokai klibanti“.*
 Eng. *This part of the wall looks loose.*
 Lith. „*Ši sienos dalis atrodo netvirta“.*

As the illustrations show the underlined words are contextual analogues. The translator tried to bear in mind the target reader as s/he has produced not a word-for-word translation but the one that sounds natural in Lithuanian. For example, it is not common to say *popierinis paukštis* (Eng. *paper bird*) though it would have been a literal translation and *popierinis lėktuvėlis* (Eng. *paper plane*) is a frequent frolic tool for the schoolchildren in Lithuania. The examples illustrate that the translator managed to find separate words for the polysemous English word *loose* and this shows that contextual analogues are apt in the given context. But the word *pateiktos* (Eng. *delivered*) sounds too formal and businesslike for a 7 year-old. A more neutral word such as *atneštos* or *užrašytos* would be preferable.

Furthermore, in this multitude of alternative analogues there were many instances of misleading translation, i.e. for a polysemous word the translator took an analogue by chance without any respect to the context. Such improvidence caused incomprehension and the player unnecessarily spent time trying to get a handle on further movement. E.g.:

- Eng. *A nail extractor – Lith.: Nagu traukiklis*

In the example above the translation is not only misleading but it is also frightening. The polysemous English word *nail* has such meanings:

1. *a horny sheath protecting the upper end of each finger and toe of humans and most other primates, Lith. nagas;*

2. *a slender usually pointed and headed fastener designed to be pounded in, Lith. vinis.*

In the game situation a player has to use a certain tool to extract nails from a barrel. When a pointer is set on that tool a text box appears giving a hint of what action should be performed with it. The clue in Lithuanian sounds grimly and misleading because nails of the fingers and nails in the wall have nothing in common. Furthermore it can scare the young player as it indicates that the tool is used for extracting horny protecting sheaths.

Another example: Eng.: *A garden pruner – Lith.: Džiovinta slyva iš daržo* also illustrates the similar incongruence. The action takes place in the *English Castle* (Lith. *Anglų pilis*). A player is given *secateurs*, or as it is called in the colloquial American English *a garden pruner* in order to cut a rose for the guard of the castle. Again, in the English version the term *secateurs* is not used thinking about children who might not know a gardener's term, thus a colloquial and easy to understand term is chosen. In the Lithuanian version a literal translation of the colloquial American English phrase is misleading. In Lithuanian the word *garden* is regarded as *sodas* (Eng. *a plot of ground where fruits are cultivated*) and for the word *pruner* the translator took the first dictionary entry *džiovinta slyva* (Eng. *a dried plum*). Thus instead of using *secateurs* (Lith. *sodo žirklys*) for cutting a beautiful rose for the guard of the English Castle, a user does not know what to do with a *dried plum* (Lith. *džiovinta slyva*) in the localised version.

Such mistakes are very much misleading and are essential because they not only interrupt the game but also lead to despair and intention to quit the game. The reason explaining why such mistakes have been made, may be the supposition that the localiser did not try to play the game and was not familiar with the context in which the given word assets function. Moreover, the translator has chosen the first dictionary entry of the polysemous word. As it is seen from the context of the game this was not a good solution in all cases because the translator should have searched for more specific words and expressions. Beside the mentioned mistakes and many more of the same kind there were also some inscriptions left untranslated.

Transformations

The analysis of the word assets revealed that the translator tended to disassociate from the original as a fair amount (about 13 %) of transformations was employed in the translation. Though the usage of transformations is considered to be a linguistic not a pragmatic tool of a translation, nevertheless it is more appreciated than the search of alternative or contextual analogues. Transformations are considered better than analogues, this is because applying transformations the translator does not stick to the original text, i.e. s/he does not try to find a separate translation unit for any separate original word. The translator can render the order of a sentence; employ various stylistic devices (eg. puns, metaphors, similes, etc.) and make any other alterations in order to bring the product closer to the user. The *Skopos theory*, on the other hand, addresses not only the surface of mere words but it penetrates into a deeper

level, i.e. the function of every single word or even every syllable.

Figure 3 presents explicit occurrences of different types of Recker's transformations, i.e. *differentiation*, *concretization*, *generalization* and *development of meaning*, *antonymous translation*, *full rearrangement* and *compensation*.

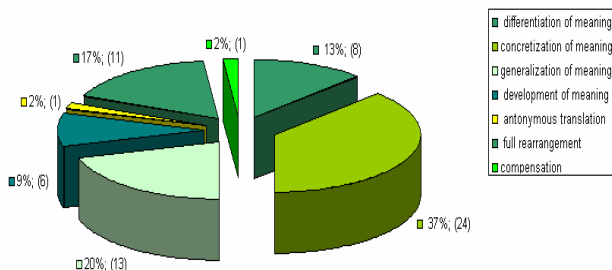


Figure 3. Percentage and Frequency of Types of Transformations.

Differentiation of Meaning

Differentiation of meaning comprises twelve percent of all transformations, i.e. there are eight examples of this transformation:

Eng. *How did my family picture get here?*

Lith. „Kaip čia atsidūrė mano šeimos nuotrauka?“

As the example illustrates, the translator differentiated the meaning of the underlined word, i.e. s/he did not apply the first entry found in the dictionary but on the contrary, s/he tried to search for a more differentiated meaning. However, the differentiation of meaning could have been done unconsciously, as it would sound strange to a native speaker if the translation was as follows: *Kaip čia gavosi mano šeimos nuotrauka?* Thus the differentiation of meaning in the translation of the following sentence could not be called an unconscious rendering.

Consider some examples of the translation of gender specific pronouns:

Eng. *I should try cutting it.*

Lith. „Turiu pamėginti nupjauti ja“.

According to U. K. Nissen (2002, p.26)

it is generally accepted that languages can be classified according to whether they show grammatical gender or not. The determining criterion of gender is agreement, and saying that a specific language has, for example, two genders implies that there are two classes of nouns, which can be distinguished syntactically, according to the agreements they take.

Thus the Lithuanian language shows the grammatical gender, and English only has the pronominal gender, i.e. it does not differentiate between the female and male nouns. However, when translating from languages having pronominal gender (e.g. English) into languages having grammatical gender (e.g. Lithuanian), the context should be obeyed and the translator has to be aware of the target language culture.

The English third person singular pronoun *it* does not differentiate the gender of an inanimate thing, however the

Lithuanian pronouns differentiate the gender of things. Thus the translator differentiated the meaning of *it* ascribing it to the feminine third person singular. However, this is fallacious in the game because the pronoun *it* refers to the roof or to be more exact the canopy of a stall in an Asian market, which the player has to cut in order to get another clue. In the Lithuanian version the pronoun *it* should have been translated as *ji*, because *stogas* (Eng. *roof*) is a singular masculine noun. The word *ja* in the above mentioned sentence induces the player to search for female gender objects and after fruitless efforts to identify them, the player is forced to move on trying to identify an object of masculine gender.

Concretization of Meaning

According to Armalytė and Pažūsis (1990, p.33) concretization of meaning is close to differentiation. However concretization of meaning is observed when the equivalent is more concretized and at the same time it is differentiated. Concretization is conditioned by several factors. One of the possible reasons for concretization of meaning is that the target language lags an equivalent or even an alternative analogue (ibid. p.33). However mostly both of them are present but the context, the peculiarities of the target language usage, stylistic and other factors force the translator to dispose of lexical equivalents and to concretize the meaning considering the context and the audience to whom the saying is intended. This reminds of the target of the *Skopos theory* and it is obvious that no word assets could have been concretized properly without the trial to play the game. Consider some examples of concretization of meaning:

Eng. *Your test is over.*

Lith. „Tu išlaikėi egzaminą“.

Eng. *A jar is a handy container for loose substances.*

Lith. „Ąsotis – puikus indas skysčiams laikyti“.

The selected examples contradict the presumption that while translating the translator did not play the game. That is, the underlined translation units could not have been translated with such felicity without any playing or testing of the game. For example, it is common to say *it is over* in the meaning of *it is finished* (Lith. *baigta*) at the end of some activity. Only after having played the game the translator could find out that the test is *not finished* (Lith. *baigtas*) but it is *passed* (Lith. *išlaikytas*). Thus it could be said that the phrase *to be over* was concretized in consideration of the game plot.

What is more, in Lithuanian there could be two possible translations for the word chunk *loose substances*, i.e. *birūs produktai* or the one used in the game *skysčiai*. The later translation is felicitous in the game as later on the *jar* (Lith. *ąsotis*) is used for scooping up some water. Again, the translator has selected the meaning which is most suitable in the game and this proves that it could not have been done without consulting the game. However, it inspires speculation that the rendering was done by more than one translator, i.e. the one who was responsible and carried out the work thoroughly, and another one who performed the task in a hit-or-miss manner.

Generalization of Meaning

Generalization is contrary to the above mentioned transformation. In the case of generalization a word having a concrete meaning in the original is substituted by a more general word which has broader semantic peculiarities. Generalization of meaning makes up twenty percent of all transformations found in the translation of *Magic Encyclopedia* (Lith. *Magiškoji enciklopedija*). Some of the examples are:

Eng. *Repair the bridge to reach this point.*

Lith. „Turite sutaisyti tiltą, kad ten pakliūtumėte“.

Eng. *Here's the mountain where the dragons live.*

Lith. „Štai kalnai, kuriuose gyvena drakonai“.

In these examples the translator tended to generalize the main locations which are of great importance in the game. Firstly, the player has to repair the bridge in order to get a mini-game, and the English indication *to reach this point* is informative for the player. However, the Lithuanian indication ‘*ten*’ (Eng. *there*) refers to some other place, as if having repaired the bridge, the player will be given an entrance to some other place, and there is no hint, that a new mini-game is awaiting.

As far as the examples with mountains are concerned, the reasons for the translator's choice to generalize the original entry are not plain. Preeminently, in the original the word *mountain* is used in the singular and the definite article stresses the importance of the mountain, i.e. it indicates that there is only one mountain where the dragons live. Moreover, if the translator viewed the scenes of the game s/he would have noticed that there was only one mountain in the game map, thus the plural word *kalnai* is not to the point in the game and also misleading.

Development of Meaning

There were six examples found illustrating the development of meaning.

Eng. *Are you sure?* Lith. *Ar tikrai norite ištrinti?*

Eng. *Where's the third one?* Lith. *Kur tas trečiasis narvys?*

Both examples show translator's attempts to make the game easier to understand and this is worth a positive account because if not this development of meaning the player would be trapped, not knowing how to act. The addition of extra words guides the player helping him/ her to come to a decision for the following playing strategy.

Antonymous Translation

The research has revealed that there is only one occurrence of antonymous translation in the game. The inversion encompasses the regrouping of both the grammatical and the lexical structure, but the meaning should be left unchanged. E.g:

Eng. *Dragons burning down our towns? Impossible! This can't be our future!*

Lith. „Drakonai degina miestus? Negali būti! Negi tokia bus mūsų ateitis!“

The Lithuanian sentence is well-directed and player-orientated. The usage of the colloquial word ‘*negi*’ brings the player closer to the thrilling situation in which the main character of the game finds oneself. This rhetorical question inspires the player to go on and do one's best to save the towns and all the humankind.

Full Rearrangement

The transformation of full rearrangement is what the supporters of the target-orientated translation theories would call the rudiments of the *Skopos theory*. Full rearrangement is a way to express the same meaning with totally different words and constructions. That is for a translation of a word, a word chunk or even a sentence the translator is allowed to choose a different way to retell the extralinguistic situation. However this full rearrangement of meaning serves for the original text (i.e. it is equivalent to a word or sentence in the original) but not for the target reader and that is the main touchstone excluding this type of translation from the ones characteristic of the *Skopos theory*. Moreover, it should be noted that the transformation of full rearrangement is frequent when translating phraseological units or other formulaic expressions:

Eng. *The first part of the arrow! I'm off to a good start.*

Lith. „Pirmoji strėlės dalis! Gera pradžia - pusė darbo.“

Here the target sentence is both expressive and based on the idea of the original. This is probably the only one example in all the word assets, where the translator gave oneself the freedom to disassociate from the structure of the original and present a target-orientated translation that is both vivid and lucid to the target player.

Compensation of Meaning

Out of 64 examples of various transformations, there were seven instances of compensation of meaning found. Compensation of meaning is the transformation that focuses on the target of the text, its style, appropriateness of words and expressions and generally on the impact that the text will create on the reader.

Speaking in the terms of localisation, compensation of meaning is the same what Maroto and Bortoli (2001) and Mangiron and O'Hagan (2006) define as *transcreation*. To remind of transcreation it should be noted that there is no direct relation between translation and transcreation. As for the former the translator has to be fluent both in the source and the target language, whereas for the latter any ingenious person can completely recreate the utterance of the original.

According to Stibbe (2009)

Transcreation is about taking a concept in one language and completely recreating it in another language <...>. The language, therefore, must resonate with the intended audience.

In the case of a traditional translation accuracy and equivalence mean quality. But with transcreation the focus is on creativity, unconventionality, boldness. Moreover, in the case of translation the work is carried out by a single person, whose work is sometimes proofread, whilst transcreation involves a team. A transcreator consults people to whom the product is designed in order to get familiar

with the language of the target reader. To be more exact, in the case of game localisation the transcreator has to communicate with children to whom the game is intended and inspect the language that they use, the jokes they tell, the surroundings they live in.

Furthermore, a translator and a transcreator can not always be the same person. This is because a professional translator would always present a fluent and faultless translation, but at the same time these would not always be eloquent. For a transcreator a linguistic and conceptual dexterity is obligatory. To quote Stibble (ibid)

the goal of transcreation isn't to say the same thing in another language. The aim of the game with transcreation is to get the same reaction in each language, something that translation in itself won't be able to achieve.

Transcreation Versus Translation

The analysis has revealed that *Magic Encyclopedia* (Lith. *Magiškoji enciklopedija*) has a lot of translation mistakes and inaccuracies. However, the Lithuanian localisation company could be praised for the practice of transcreation, i.e. there are some examples showing not a verbatim translation but creativity and a wish to resonate with the target audience:

Eng. *I'm scared, Roger!* Lith. *Aš bijau, Mariau!*

Eng. *This is a story about Catherine, the top student at the academy.*

Lith. „*Tai yra istorija apie Dovilę, geriausią akademijos studentę.*“



Figure 4. Examples of Transcreation (taken from the original and the localised versions of *Magic Encyclopedia*).

As it is presented in the examples, the names of the main characters of the game were transcreated. The English name of the main character *Catherine* and her brother *Roger* were substituted for *Dovilė* and *Marius* respectively in the Lithuanian version of the game. Though it takes least efforts to change the names such attempt should be praised as it shows that the localisers are familiar with transcreation and they successfully exercised their rights. The transcreation

of names brings the player closer to the game, as s/he is taken into a roleplay of being the right-hand of her/ his peer. This enhances the player's interest in the game and forces to do some heroic deeds for the humankind. If the names of the characters were left the same as in the original, the player would have felt alienated from the game. The original names are not common in Lithuanian and it would have been more difficult for the player to empathize into the role of the character's friend.

Though there is room for improvement to be carried out by the transcreator the examples presented here are praiseworthy and they prove the idea that game localisers in Lithuania are familiar with transcreation. Furthermore, they are inclined to serve for the user in order to satisfy the demands and expectations of the target player.

Conclusions

From what has been analyzed the following conclusions could be drawn:

The research has revealed that the extent of video game localisation in Lithuanian might be considered poor as there are no separate localisation departments that could employ both qualified programmers and professional translators who could produce projects of high quality. The process of game localisation in Lithuania is limited to bare translation usually carried out by translation agencies or by amateur translators or game lovers themselves.

The analysis of translation theory proved that the Skopos theory might be the most suitable in the game localisation as it emphasizes the purpose of the target rendering. However, the investigation revealed that Lithuanian translators tend to refer to source-orientated approaches of translation, or in the case of an online game the translation was done with the help of free online language translation services.

The research has revealed that while translating in-game lexis mainly Recker's theory of *Regular Correspondences* was addressed. The total of 535 in-game lexis entries spread into: 41 example of equivalents, 423 examples of alternative or contextual analogues, 64 transformations and 7 examples of untranslated word-chunks. The 64 examples of transformations were grouped respectively: 8 examples of differentiation of meaning, 24 examples of concretization of meaning, 13 examples of generalization of meaning, 6 examples of development of meaning, 1 example of antonymous translation, 11 examples of full rearrangement and 1 example of compensation. There were also several instances of transcreation, i.e. the localisation of names and the grading system.

The research findings indicate that the translation might be considered unprofessional. The misleading and sometimes inaccurate examples and the vivid and accurate examples prove that the translation was done by two different translators who presented a different attitude to the task. However, the final version was neither proofread nor tested as there were mistakes left. Overall evaluation of the in-game lexis translation

is of low quality and in most cases misleading thus it should be reconsidered and amendments should be applied.

The recommendations for further projects of game localisations would be as follows:

the translation should be carried out by a professional translator having experience in translating fiction literature or being interested in this field;

the translators of games, films, websites, software and many more user-orientated applications should have some knowledge in the functionalist translation approaches. Thus they were not stuck with the original text and felt confident having the right to alter, adapt, remove and do any other changes to make a target text serve for its reader;

the translators should be given the possibility to play the game simultaneously with the process of translation, as this should guarantee the proper interpretation of the lexis in the context of a game;

the final stage of localisation should be the proof-reading of a final version of the game performed by the translator. Moreover, the client should carry out a pre-test before starting the mass release of the game.

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Vaida Šiaučiūnė, Vilmantė Liubiniene

Vaizdo žaidimų lokalizacija: teksto masyvo analizė

Santrauka

Lietuvoje vaizdo žaidimų lokalizacijos problematika nėra analizuota. Sulietuvinti vaizdo žaidimai yra neišbaigti ir turi daug trūkumų. Šio straipsnio tikslas – išanalizuoti vaizdo žaidimo teksto masyvo vertimą į lietuvių kalbą, bei išnagrinėti lietuvinimo proceso eigą. Tyrimo objektą sudaro žaidimo leksika, t.y. 530 leksinių vienetų: pavienių žodžių, žodžių junginių, sakinių. Vaizdo žaidimų lokalizacijos ir Skopos vertimo teorijos apžvalgai taikomas sisteminės literatūros analizės metodas. Žaidimų leksikos vertimo bei taikomų lokalizacijos aspektų tinkamumas ar netinkamumas analizuojamas lyginamuoju, gretinamuoju ir aprašomuoju metodais. Empirinei analizei pasirinktas žaidimas „*Magiškoji enciklopedija: pirmasis pasakojimas*“ (angl. *Magic Encyclopedia: First Story*).

Teorinėje darbo dalyje analizuojama lokalizacijos samprata, ypač kreipiant dėmesį į vertimą, kaip vieną iš lokalizacijos komponentų. Analizuojama funkcinė Skopos vertimo teorija, kaip viena priimtinausių verčiant vaizdo žaidimus. Empirinėje darbo dalyje analizuojamas vaizdo žaidimo teksto masyvas. Aptariami vertimo ekvivalentai, kontekstiniai atitikmenys, transformacijos ir kt. Darbo gale pateikiamos išvados ir rekomendacijos.

Tyrimo rezultatai atskleidė, kad atliekant vaizdo žaidimo lokalizaciją, neužtenka vien teksto masyvų vertimo. Lokalizatorius turi puikiai išmanyti kultūrinį kontekstą ir atitinkamai adaptuoti, transformuoti tekstą tuo siekiant sukurti tokį patį išpūdį, bei sukelti tokias pačias emocijas, kokias patiria žaidėjas, žaisdamas originalų žaidimą. Tyrimas parodė, kad žaidimų lokalizacija Lietuvoje kol kas yra tik pradinėje stadijoje, kadangi čia nesteigiami atskiri žaidimų lokalizacijos skyriai, kuriuose dirbtų ir kvalifikuoti programuotojai ir profesionalūs vertėjai, galintys pateikti aukštos kokybės, ekspresyvius ir į žaidėją orientuotus vertimus. Žaidimų, ir ne tik, teksto masyvų vertimą kol kas atlieka dažniausiai iš vertimo biurų samdomi vertėjai, kurie neretai būna geri tam tikros srities žinovai, tačiau negalintys tinkamai išversti daugiau ekspresijos ir sąmojo reikalaujančių tekstų. Taip pat buvo pastebėta, jog žaidimus neretai verčia patys žaidimų mėgėjai.

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