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## **ADAPTING DIGITAL STORYTELLING: A STUDY OF IN-GAME TEXT TRANSLATION**

**\*Badaliyev A.<sup>1</sup>, Akizhanova D.<sup>2</sup>**

**\*<sup>1,2</sup>L.N. Gumilev Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan**

**Abstract.** The article investigates the translation of in-game texts in modern video games, in which the use of language as a communication tool is, but also as a design feature, defining the perception of narrative and the ability to immerse the game world. The primary goal of the paper is to discuss the localization and adaptation of textual elements, including elements of the interface, menus, dialogues, subtitles, and descriptions of items.

This research is based on the qualitative and comparative approach, which incorporates the theoretical views on audiovisual translation and game localization as well as the case studies of the original and the localized texts. The study highlights the translation strategies, which will guarantee semantic accuracy, cultural relevance and visual soundness without interfering with gameplay immersion. Specific emphasis is placed on the localization of typography decisions, user interface design, and how the translator strikes a balance between the story faithfulness and the playability.

The findings show that effective video game localization is not a matter of referring to a literal translation-it involves a meaning rebuilding incorporating linguistic, visual and interactive levels. The analysis shows that translation errors of the interfaces, typography signals, or the names of items can break the immersion of the virtual world.

The paper is relevant to the interdisciplinary disciplines of translation and media studies because it suggests a combined methodology that would allow relating linguistic analysis to the principles of game design. It has a practical value in the form of methodological advice to professional localizers, teachers and developers dealing with multilingual interactive materials. The results highlight the fact that successful localization does not consist in word-to-word translation only, but in the translation of a world-its style and mood, its experience as a player.

**Keywords:** in-game text, game localization, audiovisual translation, digital storytelling, interactive media, user interface translation, video game adaptation, translation strategies

### **Introduction**

With the increased public awareness of video games and their successful infiltration of mainstream popular culture, the previous infantilism of the

video game consumer slowly faded away. The cultural change emphasizes on the increasing necessity of building skills in translation of video games, as the localized content is now indispensable in reaching out to the diverse population and guaranteeing the cultural relevance in the global markets [1, p. 4]. To counter these developments, translation was also systematically integrated in the game development process in order to offer equal gameplay experiences irrespective of the linguistic or cultural background of players. The result of this integration was the introduction of a new kind of translator who, in addition to being linguistically proficient, knew the conventions of video games and had experience with specialized localization tools which gave rise to game localization as a profession [2, p. 5].

Video games also cannot be localized in the same way as other audiovisual media because they are interactive, and players can interact with various elements of the text and visuals in ways that influence gameplay itself. Therefore, it is in the interests of localization to mimic the original experience and sustain useful immersion as opposed to the simple reproduction of dialogue or narrative material [3, p. 33]. Where there were uneven developments in localization practices, translation was usually not applied, and this discouraged casual players and formed different gaming cultures. A case in point is the Kazakhstani market, where untranslated releases dominate the market, making players supportive of no localization (compared to bad localization). Chandler mentioned same occurrence in Europe: “It is against this background that there was a necessity to go beyond the literal translation, and move on to the practice of full localization where the games are made to fit the linguistic and cultural realities of the target market [4, p. 3]”.

These dynamics can be explained with the help of translation theory. Toury also reasoned that translations needed to be seen as independent target-language texts, which, rather than being successful in being equivalent to the source, needed to be useful in the target culture [5, p. 25]. This attitude is consistent with Skopos theory which focuses on the communicative aim of the translation. Applied to video games, such a method emphasizes the fact that a localized content should serve gameplay, usability, and immersion, but not strictly follow the source-text forms [6, p. 3].

The other aspect of game localization that is usually ignored is the thematic diversity of video games. The text of arcade games is usually based on minimal text whereas simulation games, like military flight simulators, might have to use very technical language, with heavy manuals to back it up. This diversity requires that multiple types of subject matter expertise be commanded on the part of translators. Fantasy or science fiction role-play games require literary creativity but sports simulations like baseball titles require in-depth knowledge of the cultural and technical features of the game. In the absence of this knowledge, the localization would be prone to the problem of losing players and immersion [7, p. 3]. To perform an excellent translation, translators must be proficient in their native and

foreign languages, as well as have appropriate professional experience and a strict attitude to work, while they must constantly strengthen their professionalism and improve their personal qualities: accumulate relevant background knowledge and understand the meaning of the original text as correctly as possible [8, p. 409]. This is very typical for the translation of video games, since the accumulation of background knowledge in the translation of video games is critically important, because it is enormously different from traditional translation, thereby requiring an absolute understanding of all the internals of video game localizations

Meanwhile, the success of localization will be conditioned by the knowledge of video game subculture by the translators and their capabilities to define the demands of the target audience. In this area, much more is needed than just the ability to use linguistic accuracy; they should be attentive to societal expectations and player acceptance [9, p. 181]. Lastly, into proper translation is the key to playability. The game can be undermined by censorship, inflexible regulations or lack of proper meaning translation to the extent that the game is unable to be played. In this way, playability, guaranteeing functional coherence, usability, and localization immersion, is therefore the primary goal of the video game translation process [10, p. 14].

The text presentation elements such as fonts, colors, sizes, dynamic text updates and visual elements provide each of the characters and the game their own unique style. Especially in *Undertale* the player is able to recognize characters through their typographical display and *Miside* employs floating text to move the narrative design forward. The choices of the design transform the bare text into an effective tool that affects the image of the gamer and can change the plot as well.

A localizer who translates game text must have total linguistic accuracy as well as wide knowledge of contextual values as well as cultural expressions and technical constraints. Effective localization applies an interpretation that does not lose the original tone, real feel and usability of the texts either in interface, menus, documents or dialogue windows. The game translation errors lead to a derailing of meaning that also affects the game balance as well as decreasing effective interaction of the players with the game.

In the article, the various forms of in game texts and their contribution to the immersive gameplay are being studied as well as the translation strategies, the challenges of which are presented to the localizers. They can be as basic as simple game elements, to complicated interactive textual frameworks and they all contribute to the development of an exciting and interesting game play system that will appeal to players all over the world.

### **Materials and methods**

The research is devoted to different types of in-game text in modern video games beginning with interface elements through menus and documents and concluding with dialogue systems. Text examples of video game localization are

the research materials removed in the following video games that employ various methods of localization: Red Dead Redemption 2, Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney, Undertale, Elden ring and others.

The qualitative research approach will be used in this research to discuss the solutions and problems of in-game translation text. The study will have two phases, including an overview of the text translation in games of different genres and platforms, with a subsequent detailed case study of a chosen game based on which practical translation problems and solutions could be introduced.

First of all, the comparative discussion of various techniques of translation is conducted in relation to the scholarly publications on video game localization, the practice in the sector, and the audience response. This entails the argument of the different approaches such as the direct translations, adaptation, transcreation, and cultural localization. Theoretical orientations of a translation of an audiovisual and interactive media are discussed as well.

Second, the research integrates the case study approach, as it is aimed to analyze one particular game to get an in-depth picture of its in-game translation of texts. Such actions involve investigation of UI, conversation choices, item writing, and system talk to characterize some linguistic and cultural challenges. Particular focus is paid to the consistency of terms, possible mistranslations, and the impact of the linguistic peculiarities that impact the immersion and understanding of a player.

Theoretical investigation and practical analyzing of a case will allow providing the information about the peculiarities of the in-game text translation process and give recommendations about the possibility to enhance the quality of the localization within the interactive media.

#### Literature review

Localization and text translation in video games have become an active interdisciplinary profession, and numerous renowned scholars have contributed to the clarification and elaboration of the complex field.

Xiaochun Zhang has done incredible works in studying the computational and algorithmic characteristics of game text translation. She examines emerging technologies that can help preserve the meaning and retain cultural elements in the process of translating video games.

In game text translation is an important aspect of video game localization; it directly impacts the experience of the video game player and the gaming experience. This overview will examine key research in the area and identify the key strategies, issues, and the state of game localization.

O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) research video game translation. They focus on maintaining the original text but also altering its cultural aspects for new players coming. Their output reflects that to achieve localization, the translator must understand both the language and the culture.

The profiles and experiences of video game translators have also been investigated recently. A recent research article published in *Games and Culture*

sheds light on the qualifications, work environment, and motivation of game localization industry professionals. In conclusion the research finds, that translators need to pass special trainings in order to overcome challenges that videogame localization presents.

In Kazakhstan, a study into video game localization is taking shape. In 2021, Temirgali Bakytzhan studied the influence of video game localization on Kazakhstan's gaming experience. He concluded, that lack of studies and training on video game localization in Kazakhstan creates a gap between academic training and actual professional needs.

Miguel A. Bernal-Merino has explored in great depth the issue of translating dialogue in an interactive game, the need to adapt non-linear stories without sacrificing linguistic and cultural coherence. His work sheds light on the special needs that video games present to the translator in contrast with other audiovisual materials.

The localization of games has been studied by Minako O'Hagan and Carmen Mangiron, who have extensively investigated the strategies of transcreation and adaptation of games. They found that in translating in game texts, both the story and the gameplay should remain functional. They consider both the technical and creative aspects of the work in their book *Game Localization: Translating for the Global Digital Entertainment Industry*.

These have been further elaborated by Laura Mejias-Climent, who addresses the overlap between video game localization and dubbing. She focuses on the application of dubbing techniques and the impact these techniques have on the adaptation of texts in-game, especially in voice-acted dialogue and interactive narrative. And so does the work of Silvia Pettini who considers how elements of culture can be translated during the process of localizing games, discussing what is meant by realia and irrealia and how this may affect the player and their sense of authenticity.

Bert Esselink authored *A Practical Guide to Localization* as well, but offers a larger overview of localization processes, including the work of translation as part of the total creation of digital content. Although his study includes more than video games, his observations are extremely useful in terms of understanding the technical and managerial characteristics of in-game text adaptation.

Silvia Pettini has studied translation of realia and irrealia in games localization and how culture-specific information is projected into another audience.

These studies together can give us a bit more insight as to how in-game text is translated. Translators must correct the language, localize it to suit the culture, and manage the constraints of the game so that it can be played and enjoyed by people across the globe.

## **Results and discussion**

Video games are interactive complex worlds and the text plays the role of transmitting information and defining the key features of gameplay experience

and involvement. The type of in-game text that is the most critical is the elements of user interface since these visual and written elements enable the user to manage their gameplay. Each element of the user interface helps the players to control the game navigation and manage controls of the player characters and provide the needed information about the game by using the elements of display. Bernal-Merino notes that in video games, the texts in the user interface are tightly space and time-constrained. These texts must be short, yet comprehensible. Failure to adhere to those limits will lead to breaking player immersion and interrupting the flow of the game [11. p. 111].

In the game, players require the inventory screen to list the name of an item alongside the description and the character statistics such as health and stamina and the experience points that assist them in their gaming strategy. The game also has UI (user interface) elements that provide tooltips as well as system messages about new items or network malfunctions and names of central areas, including levels and missions and where they are found. There should be a correct translation as well as natural flow of the information in the text as the text presents considerably significant amount of critical information. The misinterpretation of UI objects will result in the player feeling lost.

The UI needs to be presented in a clear and straightforward way properly presenting health and mana bars, mini-maps and pop-ups that inform of players of their current state. Red Dead Redemption 2 makes players monitor different changing gauges that encompass the fatigue level, as well as the hunger and moral values. Improper translation of interface elements of this system may lead to mistakes of the players in the game.

Most revolutionary about UI design arises from interactive interfaces because they transform UI elements into integral gameplay components. The interface in “There Is No Game” functions beyond information delivery since it takes an active role in player engagement. A broken button interface appears together with moving text while the UI turns into a game puzzle for the player to solve. These particular mechanics create extra challenges for localization since poor translation adaptation could stop players from understanding necessary instructions thus breaking their immersion.

The process of UI localization serves to develop a seamless user-friendly experience that engages users completely. A correctly performed translation enables the preservation of an original game’s distinct qualities while delivering an enjoyable experience to worldwide audiences. Poor UI localization produces two major problems by creating confusion which consequently interferes with gameplay and disrupts overall immersion thus showing the industry importance of accurate and well-planned text adaptation.

In-game user interfaces can vary significantly depending on the cultural preferences of different regions. A prime example of this can be seen in the *Dragon Quest* series, where the UI differs between the Japanese and Western versions.



Figure 1 – Dragon Quest User interface

Players in Japan are used to the heavy text interfaces as it's shown on the right side of the figure. The UI offers a hierarchical menu with extensive text description, and in many cases, the player has to read several choices. This style corresponds to the historical tendency in Japanese RPGs (JRPGs) to use command-based gameplay, in which the player navigates through massive text-based menus to interact with the game world.

Conversely, Western players tend to favor more graphic interfaces with icons, symbols and simple menu navigation. This difference is demonstrated in the first figure by showing an inventory screen with portraits of characters, icons of items and health/magic bars in a more graphical format. The design is Western-based and prefers quicker and easier access to game features, and less reading.

This difference in the UI design has a huge impact on localization. In localizing a game, developers might have to redesign menu templates, scale font sizes, and even alter the way the user interacts with the mechanics of the game. Learning these cultural preferences will help translators give players enjoyable, natural and immersive gameplay.

Some video games prefer complex and aesthetically elaborate user interface designs. Final Fantasy XIV and Persona 5 along with their respective menus through ornate fonts alongside vibrant visual effects that blend with game-worlds of equal richness. Through its comic-book aesthetic Persona 5 set the UI to transfer between screens with stylistic animations and display clear text along with sharp color variations that match the defiant character of this game. The interface design expands the game character by transforming into an essential part of its personality which enriches the entire experience beyond basic usability.

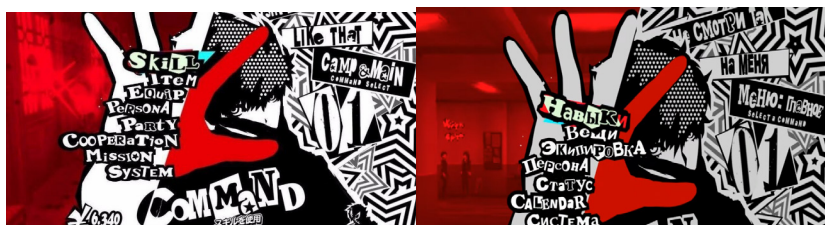


Figure 2a, 2b – Persona 5 settings menu

Figure 2a and 2b demonstrate that user interface elements can fully integrate with the game's overall artistic design. The black-white typography displays high contrast while the layout adjusts dynamically with red highlights as interface features. The menu text avoids traditional display boxes by spreading out naturally along the character's hand gesture in the design.

Adapting this UI requires translators and localization teams to face major difficulties. Plus, a correct translation of the text demands conversion into the target language to deliver equivalent visual impact. Understanding typography together with spatial design and artistic composition forms the key requirement for this work. The size and layout of text need modifications when longer words exist because translators must preserve the original design through adaptable formatting. The process of translating user interface requires precise recreation of the stylistic choices which include uppercase and lowercase letter mix as well as font distortions and decorative elements to maintain the game's signature style.

The process of translation of UI elements in *Persona 5* is not only regular translation, but also concerns design and graphic adaptation skills. Player of strategy games vitally dependent on user interface. Each interface in strategy games may contain hundreds and hundreds of numerous pages that serve essential functions during gameplay. Players need instant access to information sources which requires clear and organized presentation. On the other hand, *DOOM Eternal* maintains simple interface elements because fast action gameplay demands quick feedback through health indicators and enemy warning systems as well as ammunition display for fast-paced combat. Understanding this difference, that slower paced games with thousands of pages of information require translated text to be organized, well made, be easily accessible and informative, when fast paced games require it to give significant amount of information within short periods will help translators make the text naturally flowing.

Certain user interfaces transform their presentation according to how much players have progressed or what stage the narrative reaches. The user interface system in *NieR: Automata* represents artificial intelligence and system manipulation which are core themes of the game. The game interface showcases digital disruptions through glitches and disappearing features and hacking events to display that the player interacts with virtual structures. The user interface in *Dead Space* appears through holographic projection within the suit player is wearing. This realization of the user interface makes the user interface a genuine aspect of gameplay instead of a hindrance on the screen. When translating user interface preserving these elements as they are in the original, is one of the hardest tasks of a translator.

The core design in strategy games presents users with an extensive information overview but other game types choose limited displays that suit specific needs. The inventory system functions as the most vital UI element found in various game genres because it allows players to handle their resources alongside equipment and progression items.

### Translating Interactive Text in Video Games

Some games take in game text interactivity even further. Enemy attacks in *Undertale* use spoken words as battle elements (as seen in figure 3 below) with the difficulty directly related to phrase length and shape. Heart here is the player, and the words are the attack, if a player touches them, he takes damage. The length of translated words affects gameplay mechanics since it may modify encounter difficulty levels. A localized game requires successful translation of meanings as well as gameplay mechanics to preserve players' balanced experience.



Figure 3 – Undertale ghost battle

Every element in game text translation requires complete attention to details because the process involves multiple complex aspects. Balancing between right translation and maintaining readability is the most important part of translating in game instructions. Every piece of text in the game needs to be integrated into the in-game world in a way it preserves the gaming experience that was originally intended for any player speaking any language. Game text is a significant part of the way players enjoy the game and learn its mechanics. It is typically the primary content that is translated, such as menus, user interface components, and help messages. Translators need to be careful with their word choices since there is usually very little space available to write. They must ensure that the text remains accurate, clear, and readable and simultaneously be concise [12, p. 159].

Translators of video game subtitles and character dialogues must handle vital aspects including linguistic precision together with visual presentation, emotional delivery and functional role of the text. Different methods used by video games to present dialogues heavily affect the translation workflow. *The Phoenix Wright Ace Attorney* series displays dialogue through classic boxes at screen bottom which also includes character visuals. The dialogue system in

some games presents speech bubbles which appear either above or close to the character. The dialogue text in some instances becomes an active part of the three-dimensional environment. The spoken dialogue in *Miside* appears in the air and disperses across the floor creating an exclusive mood with remarkable visual presentation. The content of audio tracks becomes fully understandable for players through synchronized subtitles which appear in many games that use voice acting in their cinematic cutscenes.

A translator working with these elements needs to recognize that every single detail directly impacts the output. The preservation of character styles and individuality represents the most important concern when working on translation projects. Each video game character displays individual speech patterns through textual and visual elements of dialogue representation including text fonts together with colors and dimensions and animations. A character named Sans in *Undertale* uses Comic Sans as his font when speaking, while his brother Papyrus uses the Papyrus font. These small details play a big role in characters' individuality. These details let players recognize the character just by the text written on the screen without them appearing in the scene.

*7 Days to End With You* implements translation as its essential gameplay element while using it to power its storytelling mechanics. In the game, all elements around the world, words characters speak are in some unknown language player needs to decipher themselves. This creates a special experience for the player since their decisions on choosing the translation for the words directly affects how the story rolls out. A single word in the game possesses various possible meanings which affect how characters interact and produce emotional results and determine the game's conclusion. The words in this game gain their meaning dynamically according to the player's involvement which makes any, even smallest misinterpretations in translation made by localizers absolutely change the course of the narrative.

The localization process for *7 Days to End With You* requires special attention due to its particular requirements. The author uses purposeful obscurity in their original writing which requires the translation to preserve this enigmatic quality. The game's atmosphere together with its impact depends on proper management of elements which include font variations with dynamic text effects and spatial constraints. The translation process demands team effort between translators and game designers and developers to maintain absolute fidelity of linguistic and visual elements in the target language.

The interactive experience in *7 Days to End With You* illustrates text operates as both an interactive element and a narrative delivery tool. Players actively influence the progression of the story because they must understand an ambiguous language which becomes a vital core feature of their gameplay. Every word selection within the game requires careful consideration by the player and the translator as it showcases that language serves as both communication channel and storytelling control.

Games commonly make use of typography through text that reveals the traits and emotional states of their characters. The text displayed by Flowey in *Undertale* shakes while he is feeling angry to show his unstable personality.

The concept evolves in other games through animated text that reflects character emotional states. In the game *Celeste* when the main character Madeline is suffering from anxiety all text start to shake indicating her mental state. But when she is calm texts appear smooth and steady. These visual details transform dialogues into visual expressions of character's mental state.

Video games establish their overall atmosphere through different formatting choices in text presentation. *Night in the Woods* uses handwritten speech bubbles for its dialogue which creates a natural and relaxed small-town atmosphere. The game emphasizes certain dialogue words through bold or enlarging them to emulate natural speech rhythms while enriching character dialogues. The game introduces alien text through its spiraling design which assigns colors to indicate different characters in *Outer Wilds'* fascinating world. The gameplay in *Rain World* shows players that traditional dialogue no longer exists since it uses pictograms and glyphs which slowly become readable throughout the game to match the player's discovery process. Paying attention and preserving these details is crucial in the translation.

Some games break the fourth wall by addressing the player directly. The game *OneShot* sometimes communicates directly with the player instead of the main character. When doing so, the text appears in absolutely different style. Font, colors, writing changes signifying that the character isn't talking to the protagonist but the player. In *Stanley Parable* subtitles subtly change, misalign while the narrator is talking. This toys with players expectations strengthening the meta-narrative style the game has. A translation failure of these cues could diminish the game's effect thus requiring translators to grasp the overall narrative function of all text.

The text design serves essential character-building purposes even when games feature all-voiced dialogues. *Hades* presents text elements for its various gods where each one receives specific color fonts that symbolize their distinct personalities. The mind of the protagonist in *Disco Elysium* acts as a narrator through different personality segments which use distinct fonts to create an effect of multiple voices debating within the player's thoughts.

The written words serve both as a design piece in the gaming world and as psychological condition indicators. Some games incorporate text elements so that reading becomes integrated with environmental exploration. The dialogue in *Kentucky Route Zero* becomes part of the background atmosphere thus creating a dreamlike surreal experience for players. Through glitched distorted text in *Pony Island* and *Inscription* the player experiences psychological distress about their game reality.

Text functions beyond dialogue delivery in video games since it serves as a basic aspect of building game worlds alongside creating the gaming atmosphere

and affecting gameplay dynamics. The process of translating elements that use text in games becomes more difficult when developers create advanced interactive storytelling experiences.

The preservation of uniformity needs to extend between all textual elements within multiple formats. Video games of today use text through different presentation methods which include dialogue boxes alongside subtitles and environmental text represented by billboards and signs and ancient writings. Every format in a game requires its own translation strategy because each format presents unique requirements. The translation of dialogue needs to express character voices and emotional details and environmental texts should help construct the world of the game. Players need complete narrative integrity between all these presentation factors to achieve comprehensive gaming experience excellence.

### **Translating Game Text: A Look at Elden Ring's Menus**

We can take the example of game text analysis with the *Elden Ring* as the game, beginning with the in-game menu. Direct translation is usually the way to go in translating game menus. The exceptions only come when a direct translation becomes longer than the required character limit and there is a need to make some adjustments. The chief objective of menu translation is to make the game more user-friendly - these menus have no story-related meaning and can be associated with the gameplay only.

For instance, in the first settings tab, the following options appear:

Toggle Auto Lock-On, Auto-Target, Manual Attack Aiming, Controller Vibration,

These were translated into Russian as:

Переключение авто наведения, Авто выбор цели, Ручное прицеливание при атаке, Вибрация контроллера.

The translation is also very straightforward that the players can learn quickly what each setting does. Consistency between games is immensely crucial in the localization of menu settings. The same terms used more than two games will enable the users to locate their place in menus significantly easier and automatically interpret their purpose. Another compulsory menu category is Control which explains what various buttons are to do. This involves activities like movement control, movement forward, movement back, dodging, sprinting, among others. Such settings require accurate translation to make sense to the player. A description of one of the controls that are translated incompletely can lead to not understanding what the button does or may lead to not understanding how the button works which directly affects the game. Generally, game setting translation is not a hard task because it is quite common to translate it literally. This is the sole exception unless one is dealing with a highly stylized menu, as it is the case with *Persona 5* and everything about the design and the aesthetic should be kept as it is, along with the translation.

### **Character Selection and Attribute Translation in Elden Ring**

In the beginning of the game, the player gets to select a character class,

the choices are: *Vagabond*, *Confessor*, *Samurai*, *Astrologer*, *Warrior*. Every one of the classes is playstyle-specific. An example of this is the Vagabond, who is a front-line swordsman and specializes in fighting in a melee, and the Astrologer, who is a spellcaster and fights in range with magic. Translation of class names is extremely important in order to be sure that players will know their options and will be able to pick a figure that fits best their preferred playing style.

This menu also displays the character's attributes, such as:

Level - Уровень, Vigor - Жиз. Сила, Mind - Интеллект, Endurance - Стойкость, Strength - Сила, Dexterity - Ловкость, Intelligence - Мудрость, Faith - Вера, Arcane - Колдовство;

These attributes are generally translated directly, but it is imperative to make sure that the names make sense to players. The translation should be able to clearly represent what is influenced by each attribute but also be consistent with other games. Space and character limitations also need to be taken into account to make the interface aesthetically consistent.

For example, *Endurance* was translated as *Жиз. Сила* using an abbreviation to fit within character limits. While translating it as *Здоровье* (Health) might seem reasonable, that term was already reserved for the separate *Health* stat, which could otherwise lead to confusion.

Another notable case is *Mind*, which was translated as *Интеллект*. But because the game also has *Intelligence*, which was translated as *Мудрость*, a literal translation of *Mind* would have been unclear. The translators instead settled on *Интеллект*, which is consistent with past games in the series that used this stat to the same effect. This was done in a way that did not compromise on functional and terminological consistency but retained the original meaning.

### **Tutorial Messages in Elden Ring**

Tutorial messages are instructional in nature, they give players the necessary information about how the game works:

*«Resting at a site of grace will restore your HP, FP, and cleanse any status ailments. It will also refill your sacred flasks. However, most of the enemies you've defeated will be revived. You can find sites of grace by going where light converges».*

This was translated into Russian as:

*«Отдых в месте благодати восстановит ваши ОЗ, ОК, излечит от любого недуга и наполнит все священные флаги. Однако большинство поверженных врагов при этом воскреснет. Места благодати можно найти там, где скапливается свет».*

Such instructions need to be translated clearly and precisely so that players can learn the mechanics of a game much faster. Characters also have to be considered. As an example, English text contains 247 characters, while the Russian version contains 244 that perfectly fits into UI restrictions. If it is exceeded it may cause the text to be overflowing outside the dialog box.

The other tutorial message describes travelling on the mount:

*«Use the Spectral Steed Whistle to summon and ride your spectral steed. If your spectral steed dies, you can summon it again, but it will cost one Flask of Crimson Tears to do so. You can dismount by using the whistle again or by pressing X».*

The Russian translation is as follows:

*«Чтобы призвать и оседлать своего призрачного скакуна, свистните в костяной свисток. Если призрачный скакун погибнет, его можно призвать повторно, однако для этого потребуется флага багровых слёз. Чтобы спешиться, ещё раз свистните в костяной свисток или нажмите X».*

Such messages should be translated straight and to the point in order to have the best understanding of the game. The second significant element of in-game text is the inventory system.

### **Inventory: Items, Descriptions, Attributes, and Functionality**

Inventory is among the most informative parts of the game and has hundreds or even thousands of items which the player may carry. These items are grouped into 18 tabs that divide it.:

Tools - Инструменты, Ashes - Прах, Crafting Materials - Материалы для создания, Bolstering Materials - Материалы для усиления, Key Items - Ключевые предметы, Sorceries - Чары, Incantations - Молитвы, Ashes of War - Пепел войны, Melee Weapons - Оружие ближнего боя, Ranged Weapons - Оружие дальнего боя, Ammunition - Стрелы/болты, Shields - Щиты, Head - Голова, Chest - Туловище, Arms - Руки, Legs - Ноги, Talismans - Талисманы, Info Items – Сведения;

Among these, Sorceries, Incantations and Ammunition, and are worth mentioning, specifically due to several translation decisions.

### **Sorceries vs. Incantations**

The distinction between Incantations and Sorceries is what makes magic in Elden Ring.

Magic used by wizards is known as Sorceries, and is based on Intelligence stat. The spells most commonly have a staff or other magic tools in the casting of the spells.

Divine spells and prayers of Faith-based characters are called Incantations. These spells are prayed or chanted.

This is due to a difference in the language based on the original meaning of the words:

Sorcery is associated with wizardry, spells and magic and is often used in connection with magical tools like staves.

Incantations refer to spoken spells, chants, or prayers. This is true, especially to the religious part of those abilities in Elden ring.

Translation can take several forms:

Sorcery could be translated as *Заклинания, Чары, Волшебства, Колдовство*. However:

*«Заклинания»* means spoken words, so it is more appropriate to Incantations.

«Колдовство» is already used for the Arcane stat.

«Волшебства» and «Чары» are interchangeable, and *чары* was selected because it would be consistent with past games within the series.

Incantation could be translated as *Заклинания, Молитвы*. However:

«Заклинания» is too general and commonly associated with wizardry.

«Молитвы» (prayers) better represents Faith-based spells and aligns with previous *Souls* games, where Miracles were also translated as *молитвы*.

Translation of Ammunitions

Ammunition was translated as *стрелы/болты*, giving a better and easier meaning of the word to players instead of direct translation such as *боеприпасы*.

Elden Ring has only arrows and bolts as ammunition types, so this translation was accurate in context and did not require unnecessary generalizations. These decisions during the translation of the inventory make it simple and easy to comprehend so that the players can easily learn about the item's functions.

The translation of «*Ammunition*» as «*Стрелы/болты*» is due to the fact that this tab exclusively contains arrows and bolts. Other throwable items, such as knives or bombs, are categorized under the «Tools» tab. This difference makes it easier to navigate the inventory as one can easily find the required items thanks to this distinction.

Each item in Elden Ring is named, and the vast majority of names have a narrative meaning, allowing to reveal the complex lore of the game. The story itself is presented in an atypical manner, as it is not given to the player, but must be reconstructed through dialogues, notes, description of items and, and most importantly, names of items.

### **Item Naming and Translation**

The names of the items in the game have multiple uses:

Some weapons are called using generic names such as *Dagger* (*Кинжал*) and can be directly translated without any meaning loss. Others identify the purpose of a weapon like *Backhand Blade*, a weapon that is used in the offhand. As the main hand in Elden Ring is the right one, the translators translated it as «*Клинок для левой руки*», and explained its purpose. Other weapons indicate what they are made of or what they look like, e.g., *Iron Greatsword* (*Железный двуручник*), *Erdsteel Dagger* (*Кинжал из эрдстали*). Others make it clear that something is the possession of someone, or is related to, such as *Noble's Estoc* (*Эсток вельможи*) and *Velvet Sword of St. Trina* (*Фиолетовый меч святой Трины*). These names were directly translated and their meaning maintained.

Most of the weapon names could be literally translated, although some exceptions had to be made to make them understandable:

*Main Gauche* – This is a French word which means «*left hand*». A direct translation as «*Левая рука*» would have been deceptive hence the translators translated it into «*Кинжал для левой руки*», to make its purpose clearer. The word noble as used in Elden Ring signifies aristocrats who have a certain amount of authority. A translation of Noble as «*вельможа*» e.g. (*Noble's estoc* - *Эсток*

*вельможи*). is correct because it has a connotation of status. However, the game contains multiple items with *Noble* in their name (*Noble's Set*, *Noble's Estoc*, *Noble's Slender Sword*), indicating that these weapons and outfits belonged to various nobles, rather than a single individual.

*Godskin Noble* (*Аристократ божественной кожи*) is not a common representative of the noble caste, this adversary is an exceptional character. To emphasize his singularity, *Noble* was translated as «*Аристократ*» rather than «*вельможа*». This was also applied consistently to other related equipment (*одеяние аристократа божественной кожи*), to enforce his personal status over that of the common nobles.

Such small things in translation render the text understandable and precise enough that the players easily retrieve the names of items and retain their textual meaning.

### **Conclusion**

Translation of video game text becomes one of the most advanced processes which cannot be viewed as mere linguistic conversion. Game texts have more than just a simple word for word translation. A menu, a description of the items in the game, a subtitle, and notes all have their own narrative and functional issues.

As an example, user interface is not just a navigational tool. They are very significant design features. These texts demonstrate how the game works, its style, and how players navigate it. Cultures treat interface design differently - Japanese games are characterized by cumbersome and text-intensive menus whereas western games are more about graphics and simplified interface navigation. An experienced localizer should not only translate words, but should also redefine whole interaction experiences to each cultural environment.

Inventory systems are entire little fabricated worlds. Each description of an item can form a portion of the narrative. It can contain elements of lore, history or information about the characters. It is also important to note that in games like *Elden ring*, the description of the item is a significant part of the story because it helps to reveal the history of the world and reveal the motives of characters through the well-written text. In the translation of such descriptions, the words alone are not to be told. The translator must also convey the feeling and the historical flavor within them.

Even more complex are the texts of subtitles and dialogues. They are not ordinary translations; the translator must make them alive by demonstrating how each of the characters speaks, his/her style and his/her feelings. With games such as *Undertale*, typography is shown to have at times become a character trait - Sans is written in Comic Sans font, with his brother Papyrus being written in Papyrus font. This sophisticated approach to the text design demands that the translator is a linguist, graphic designer, and actor.

Interactive writings take localization to the furthest limits possible. Other games turn language to a gameplay element, as seen in *7 Days to End With You*.

In this case, translation is not merely about the exchange of meaning. The choice of words can hugely influence the unfolding of the story.

Another aspect that presents a challenge is the technical constraints. The content of characters, the area in which the interface is bound, and the fact that the visual appearance of the design should be preserved, require translators to be remarkably inventive on many occasions. They are forced to reduce meanings, use specific words, and make sure that textual translation can fit perfectly well into the original layout.

The localization will get much more advanced as video games keep on develop as a form of storytelling around the world. Even more sophisticated cross-cultural competencies will have to be developed by the translators, and using more advanced technologies and working closer with the game developers to transform it into a truly universal gaming experience. Localization of a game means to incorporate originality and connection to the players. It demands translators to be narrators, cross-cultural representatives, and technical specialists, who can easily switch interactive experiences across linguistic borders. The most successful localizations are not merely a simple translation of the words - but a translation of the whole world, the complex story and the interactive quality of any specific game text.

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## **ЦИФРЛЫҚ БАЯНДАУДЫ БЕЙІМДЕУ: ОЙЫНШІЛІК МӘТІНДЕРДІҢ АУДАРМАСЫН ЗЕРТТЕУ**

\*Бадалиев А.<sup>1</sup>, Акижанова Д.<sup>2</sup>

\*<sup>1,2</sup>Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия Ұлттық Университеті  
Астана, Қазақстан

**Аңдатпа.** Мақала заманауи бейнеойындардағы мәтіндердің аудармасын зерттеуге арналған. Мұнда тіл тек коммуникация құралы ретінде ғана емес, сонымен қатар ойын әлемін қабылдауға және оған енуге мүмкіндік беретін дизайн элементі ретінде де қарастырылады. Зерттеудің басты мақсаты интерфейс элементтері, мәзірлер, диалогтар, субтитрлер мен заттардың сипаттамаларын қоса алғанда, мәтіндік компоненттердің локализациясы мен бейімделуін талдау болып табылады.

Бұл зерттеу сапалық және салыстырмалы әдістерге сүйенеді, оған аудиовизуалды аударма мен ойын локализациясына қатысты теориялық көзқарастар, сондай-ақ түпнұсқа және локализацияланған мәтіндердің жағдайлық талдауы кіреді. Мақалада семантикалық дәлдікке, мәдени сәйкестікке және визуалды үйлесімділікке қол жеткізетін, бірақ ойынға ену процесіне кедергі келтірмейтін аударма стратегиялары айқындалады. Ерекше назар типография шешімдерінің, пайдаланушы интерфейсінң дизайнының локализациясына және аудармашының оқиғаға адалдық пен ойын тәжірибесінің қолайлылығы арасындағы тепе-теңдікті сақтауына аударылады.

Зерттеу нәтижелері тиімді бейнеойын локализациясы тура аудармаға ғана негізделмейтінін көрсетеді, ол тілдік, визуалды және интерактивті деңгейлерді біріктіре отырып, мағынаны қайта құруды қамтиды. Талдау интерфейс, типографиялық белгілер немесе заттардың атауларындағы аударма қателері виртуалды әлемге ену әсерін бұзуы мүмкін екенін дәлелдейді.

Мақала аударматану мен медиа зерттеулерінің тоғысындағы пәндер үшін өзекті, өйткені ол тілдік талдауды ойын дизайнының қағидаларымен байланыстыратын біріктірілген әдістемені ұсынады. Зерттеудің практикалық құндылығы көптілді интерактивті материалдармен жұмыс

істейтін кәсіби локализаторлар, оқытушылар мен әзірлеушілерге арналған әдістемелік ұсынымдар түрінде көрінеді. Нәтижелер сәтті локализация сөзбе-сөз аудармада емес, тұтас бір әлемнің, оның стилі мен көңіл күйінің, ойыншы ретіндегі тәжірибесінің аудармасында екенін көрсетеді.

**Тірек сөздер:** ойынішілік мәтін, ойын локализациясы, аудиовизуалды аударма, цифрлық баяндау, интерактивті медиа, пайдаланушы интерфейсін аудару, бейнеойынды бейімдеу, аударма стратегиялары

## **АДАПТАЦИЯ ЦИФРОВОГО ПОВЕСТВОВАНИЯ: ИССЛЕДОВАНИЕ ПЕРЕВОДА ВНУТРИИГРОВЫХ ТЕКСТОВ**

\*Бадалиев А.<sup>1</sup>, Акижанова Д.<sup>2</sup>

\*<sup>1,2</sup>Евразийский Национальный Университет им. Л.Н. Гумилева  
Астана, Казахстан

**Аннотация.** В статье исследуется перевод внутриигровых текстов в современных видеоиграх, в которых язык используется не только как средство коммуникации, но и как особенность дизайна, определяющая восприятие повествования и возможность погружения в игровой мир. Основная цель статьи - обсудить локализацию и адаптацию текстовых элементов, включая элементы интерфейса, меню, диалоги, субтитры и описания элементов.

Это исследование основано на качественном и сравнительном подходе, который включает в себя теоретические взгляды на аудиовизуальный перевод и локализацию игр, а также тематические исследования оригинальных и локализованных текстов. В исследовании рассматриваются стратегии перевода, которые гарантируют семантическую точность, культурную значимость и визуальную обоснованность, не препятствуя погружению в игровой процесс. Особое внимание уделяется локализации типографских решений, дизайну пользовательского интерфейса и тому, как переводчик находит баланс между достоверностью сюжета и удобством воспроизведения.

Результаты исследования показывают, что эффективная локализация видеоигр не сводится к буквальному переводу - она предполагает перестройку смысла, включающую лингвистический, визуальный и интерактивный уровни. Анализ показывает, что ошибки перевода интерфейсов, типографских знаков или названий предметов могут нарушить погружение в виртуальный мир.

Статья имеет отношение к междисциплинарным дисциплинам перевода и медиаисследований, поскольку в ней предлагается комбинированная методология, которая позволила бы связать лингвистический анализ с принципами геймдизайна. Она имеет практическую ценность в виде методических рекомендаций профессиональным локализаторам, преподавателям и разработчикам, работающим с многоязычными

интерактивными материалами. Результаты подчеркивают тот факт, что успешная локализация заключается не только в дословном переводе, но и в передаче мира - его стиля и настроения, его опыта игрока

**Ключевые слова:** внутриигровой текст, локализация игр, аудиовизуальный перевод, цифровое повествование, интерактивные медиа, перевод пользовательского интерфейса, адаптация видеоигр, стратегии перевода

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***Авторлар туралы мәлімет:***

Бадалиев Азатбек Манонұлы – 3 курс докторанты, Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия Ұлттық Университеті, Астана, Қазақстан, <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6561-3179> e-mail: [Badaliyevazatbek@gmail.com](mailto:Badaliyevazatbek@gmail.com)

Акижанова Диана Муратовна – доцент міндетін атқарушы, Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия Ұлттық Университеті, Астана, Қазақстан, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1300-0339> e-mail: [Akizhanova\\_dm@enu.kz](mailto:Akizhanova_dm@enu.kz)

***Информация об авторах:***

Бадалиев Азатбек Манонович – докторант 3 курса, Евразийский Национальный Университет им. Л.Н. Гумилева, Астана, Казахстан, <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6561-3179> e-mail: [Badaliyevazatbek@gmail.com](mailto:Badaliyevazatbek@gmail.com)

Акижанова Диана Муратовна – и.о. доцента, Евразийский Национальный Университет им. Л.Н. Гумилева, Астана, Казахстан, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1300-0339> e-mail: [Akizhanova\\_dm@enu.kz](mailto:Akizhanova_dm@enu.kz)

***Information about authors:***

Badaliyev Azatbek Manonovich – 3rd-year PhD student, L.N. Gumilev Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-6561-3179> e-mail: [Badaliyevazatbek@gmail.com](mailto:Badaliyevazatbek@gmail.com)

Akizhanova Diana Muratovna – Acting Associate Professor, L.N. Gumilev Eurasian National University, Astana, Kazakhstan, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1300-0339> e-mail: [Akizhanova\\_dm@enu.kz](mailto:Akizhanova_dm@enu.kz)