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The Process of Video Game Localisation from the Perspective of Translation and Language Testing

(Bachelor Thesis)

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I declare that I have worked on this thesis and listed all primary and secondary sources in the bibliography.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Globalization has become a necessity for a majority of businesses. Successfully circulating a product outside the country of origin is very profitable, but the mechanics behind such an expansion of sales are hardly simple. The localisation of a product for use in a different country is an important part of successful global distribution and the video game industry is no exception. Localisation for video games is a relatively new industry, dating back only to the 1980s, which has recently experienced a boom in terms of quantity, quality and also sales.

Having worked as a translator and language tester in the video game industry, and knowing first hand the lacuna of formal analysis surrounding the process of localisation as a linguistic concern, I decided to describe the basics of localization and propose some solutions as to the improvement of the localization process. The analysis in this thesis is informed by case studies that I conducted in the companies where I had the chance to work over the last four years.

After the introduction, the thesis continues to describe the process of localisation on a theoretical level in its second chapter, starting from the general concept, progressing to a concrete and more detailed characterization of software and video game localisation. The second chapter also includes a listing and categorisation of the main video game genres and provides a few examples of how the type of genre can affect the translation style. This is followed by a description of the steps that prepare a product for international distribution: concept, translation, localisation testing, production and post-production phases of localisation. At the end of the chapter, the specifics of video game localisation, its technical aspects and extra-linguistic requirements are noted.

The third section of the thesis focuses on providing examples of issues connected with video game localisation, most of which are derived from actual working experience as a translator and tester. The first six issues show textual errors which hinder the actual game, followed by four issues which affect the translator and the localisation tester as a worker.

The fourth chapter provides proposed solutions to the aforementioned set of issues addressed in Chapter 3, and concludes findings of the thesis.

Before it is possible to move forward, a brief clarification of the terminology to be used should be presented. At this moment, the term *video game* does not have a unique

definition in terms of its application in research. As it is a relatively new subject, many researchers defined video games or computer games in a variety of ways. The idea I have decided to use for this thesis is that 'video game' is cumulative term for all digital games (Chandler 2005, 47), which include console, computer and mobile games. Other possible terms, which can be used almost synonymously with video games, are computer games, digital games, electronic games and console games. Additionally, the thesis focuses on video games in regards to their entertainment value. This is important to point out because games explicitly designed with educational purposes should have a similar level of localisation quality as software working tools intended for use by various professionals, due to the reasons mentioned in Chapter 2.2.

1.1 Video Game Localisation at the Theoretical Level

I would like to begin by addressing the question as to why there should be more academic research dedicated to video game localisation. According to The Guardian, in 2011 the video game giant *Activision Blizzard* unveiled a 7 % increase in revenues, reaching a record $4.7bn, up from 4.45bn in 2010. This was in part thanks to the sales success of their latest game, *Call of Duty* (Stuart 2012). The Asian market is even more favourable to video games, because gaming is considered one of the most popular entertainment outlets, and professional gamers are treated as role models for upcoming generations, not to mention that professional gamers also make a good living. Video games are often compared to a more popular consumer entertainment good; the film industry. When it comes to revenues, people often think that the movie industry is still the leading generator of money in the entertainment sector, but since 2010 this is no longer true. Jiří Petrů, in his master's thesis (Petrů 2011, 6), cites that there were $33 billion generated in game sales worldwide in 2010 (Mazel 2011), the game industry actually surpassed the film industry's $31.81 billion (Frankel 2011).

The aforementioned numbers demonstrate that the area of video game localisation is a viable career option for future translators to consider. Considering the importance of this burgeoning cottage industry, it should naturally fall under academic scrutiny as a subject of research, as the current number of works does not suffice. While deciding to pursue the topic of video game localisation for my thesis, the only academic source produced domestically, in Czech, was by Jiří Petrů (2011), which describes the historical evolution of video game localisation in the Czech Republic.

2 LOCALISATION AS A GLOBAL PHENOMENON

Globalisation is present in every aspect of contemporary society. According to Christina Schäfner, although this has become a 'buzz word' in the media, it is not just a word, but it shows real developments in the world of today (Schäfner 2000, 1). She goes on to add that while globalisation is especially visible in the economy and marketing, it also affects other areas of life and the daily activities of individual people. Every company wants to sell their product worldwide and there are many well known examples of this interest, such as McDonald's, Coca-Cola or Google. Localisation is a term closely linked to globalisation, and a globalised product has a much higher chance of succeeding in local markets if it is properly localised. As Anthony Pym notes:

> "Since the early 1990s, "localization" has been the name commonly attached to the most successful language industries of our day, particularly in the areas of software, product documentation, and e-commerce. "Translation", on the other hand, is associated with a cottage industry that would seem to have remained unchanged for centuries. Translation is often seen as a small part of localization, and localization is occasionally viewed as an elaborate form of translation. The two terms, however, name potentially antagonistic ways of approaching cross-cultural communication" (Pym 2004, XV).

2.1 Definition of Terms Used in Localisation Process

The following section is intended to help the reader get the basic gist of the localisation process. The most important element is the group of concepts referred to collectively as *GILT*, which stands for Globalization, Internationalization, Localisation and Translation.

2.1.1 Globalization

Globalization is a broad concept which can be used in any area of business. It is the decision to make a product or service available in areas different than the one it was created in. A globalized product is a product that can be used in different parts of the world without any major adjustment. To make this possible, globalization has to be considered and included in the early stages of development. For the needs of this paper,

globalization refers to the situation when software or video game developers start developing, translating, marketing and distributing their products to foreign language markets. Globalization is often used as a synonym or in connection with *internationalisation*. However, globalization focuses rather on the possible distribution and marketing in target countries (Esselink 2000, 4).

2.1.2   Internationalisation

The *internationalisation* of a product is the process of making the product capable of supporting localisation in an international market. In the software and video game industry, this means that the entire translatable content (not only the text, but also the audio or text appearing in the graphics) is easily available to send out to translators, which prevents them from changing or breaking the program code (Esselink 2000, 3). An internationalized product should also take into consideration the possibility of different alphabet characters (for example, in Chinese or Korean products), or of different text alignment (for example, in Arabic products). A very good example of internationalization can be seen in such globally popular webpages like Google, Ebay or Facebook. Esselink (2000, 3) also mentions that, in general, a product is internationalized during the product development cycle, as a precursor to the localisation of a product.

2.1.3   Localisation

According to the Localisation Industry Standards Association (LISA), *localisation* is defined as follows: "Localization involves taking a product and making it linguistically and culturally appropriate to the target locale (country/region and language) where it will be used and sold" (Esselink 2000, 2). Simply put, it is not only about the translation, but also more about making the product feel as if it were designed for the target language right from the beginning. A more thorough description of video game localisation and its specifics can be found in Chapter 2.3.

2.1.4   Translation

The *translation* converts written or spoken communications from one language to another. According to Esselink (2000, 4), the difference between translation and localisation can be defined as follows:

"Translation is only one of the activities in localisation; in addition to translation, a localisation project includes many other tasks such as project management, software engineering, testing, and desktop publishing."

In comparison to the traditional translation industry, localisation puts a stronger emphasis on the tools and technology used. Translation is the final step of the GILT process. The entire process is visualized in Figure 1, below.

Figure 1: Bull's eye diagram of GILT (Lingo Systems 2004, 6)

2.2 Stages of Software Localisation

If any software, video games included, is to be localised properly, localisation has to be taken into consideration already at the beginning of the project. The reasons were mentioned previously; globalisation and internationalisation. In most cases, the translator does not have the ability to interfere in these processes, and if the steps are done incorrectly, the translator needs to be ready to find workarounds and bounded solutions to deal with the possible issues. The biggest impact on the linguistic elements is created during the translation itself, and through subsequent localisation testing. The stages of software localisation are as follows:

1) Concept
2) Translation
3) Localisation Testing

The key factors in software localisation are consistency and accuracy of terminology. The translation and localisation of professional software has to maintain a very high degree of quality, as they are tools meant to be used later in other businesses. Companies do not release new professional software tools with the intention of

frequently releasing future revisions, and the user requires these tools to function reliably over longer periods of time between the major releases of new versions. However, video games are mostly used for entertainment, and so the range of localisation quality is a bit more tolerant. Additionally, the video game industry is much more turbulent, and sequels within the same franchise get often released every year. A single version of professional software is used for many years, whereas video games are usually consumed in a matter of weeks. A brief description of the stages of software localisation will be given below. There is no single, standard strategy to localise a project, and each studio or company has its own preferred methods. However, the majority of the information noted below can be considered intrinsic to every project.

2.2.1 Concept

The conceptual phase of localisation, often called the 'pre-production phase', is the most abstract part of the whole process. Usually performed by localisation project managers immediately following a pro-localisation decision, the main emphasis is on project planning; specifically, how long is production of localised content going to take and how much money will it cost.

The first thing to do for the client (localisation manager, developing studio, project owner or designated representative) is to submit all possible documents, instructions and the purchase order (PO), which consists of contact data, a delivery deadline, a word count, price, payment conditions, etc., to the localisation studio outside (or inside) the developing company. The localisation studio then plans the whole project, counts the number of languages for localisation, the workload for every language, resources, the time window and possible backlogs. The next step is to prepare the reference material that will be used during the translation process, such as the guidelines, or, if possible, previous translations of the same project. The last step is the extraction of all the translatable content.

2.2.2 Translation

The translation phase consists of the actual translation of the content. However, depending on developments during the conceptual stage, the studio has to decide how much to translate and what to include in the translation package. The translation of the accompanying materials, documentation and audio can be also included. It is very

similar to any other translation, except that it is always done digitally, often with the help of Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) tools.

2.2.3   Localisation Testing / Quality Assurance

Localisation Testing (Quality Assurance, or 'QA') is usually divided into two parts: language (linguistic, localisation) testing and functionality testing. Language testing deals with the validation of the translated texts and focuses on finding language errors, which are difficult to find in the translation stage. Functionality testing focuses on functionality of the software, mostly to ensure that despite the fact that the software has been localized, it still performs the same way as the original version and that no errors were created during the translation.

2.3   Localisation of Video Games

Since the time video games branched out from being only computer applications, the beginning of game localisation has been deeply connected with software localisation. Localisation as a discipline has been known since the 1980s, thanks to the need for globalisation in the software and computer industries (Esselink 2000, 5). It proved to be very difficult to translate one piece of software to another language "out of the blue", and if a company wanted to make software publishing in different countries more profitable, it had to take software localisation into consideration from the beginning of the developmental process. The main difference between software localisation – including video games – and a simple translation is that, apart from text translation, localisation is also about altering the actual software code, art, audio or even graphics. An example of localised art can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2: An example of graphical localization. Comparison of American and Japanese boxarts of *Ratchet & Clank 2* game. Whereas American version is made using computer graphics, Japanese version is a hand drawn anime style picture to fit the culture of Japan better and attract more audience (Gustafsson 2007, 4)

This was, and still is, especially crucial in the case of intercontinental releases. The video game industry quickly followed the down the path forged by software localisation, and one of the first, though simple, examples of localisation can be seen in the widely known game of *Tetris*[1].

In the 1990s, the rise of personal computers (PCs) resulted in the form we know today. With the global spread of PCs reaching even poorer countries, localisation was in demand, and thanks to the current forces of globalisation and internationalisation, the localisation of games has become substantially more accessible. One of the benefits of personal computers is that they give any potential user considerable freedom to edit the

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[1] Tetris: From Russia with Love, directed by Magnus Temple, BBC, 2004. Available on Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TCoXFRGvl3Y&list=PLBC91E42D375757B5&index=1. Last accessed: 20.5.2013.

applications on their PC, and it was only a matter of time until fans and computer enthusiasts would become interested in the localisation of software and games, and create localised versions in their own free time as a hobby. Such developments in the Czech Republic are well described in the 2011 master's thesis written by Jiří Petrů. Slowly but steadily, even smaller language communities demanded game localisation, and the number of localised titles continuously grew. The primary wave of professional video game localisation came with the arrival of next generation of consoles (Xbox 360 and Playstation 3) and the interest in *sim ship*[2]. It had to be so, as it is nearly impossible for users to alter anything in console games, thereby making it impossible for enthusiasts to translate games on their own. At first, many big video gaming companies had their own localisation teams based on the premises to limit the possibilities of software leaks, but this proved to be very expensive. The next step was to create independent localisation studios, which are outsourced[3] to work on specific titles by the developing studios. Such localisation studios are often also responsible for finding translation agencies or individual translators to work on their projects. This facilitates the coordination of the two final stages of localisation, which are translation and language testing.

2.3.1 Genres of Video Games

As mentioned earlier, video games are created for multiple platforms, such as computers, consoles and increasingly popular mobile phones and tablets. Such differentiation may affect the textual content and style of translation. Video games are further divided into genres, the main categories of which are action, adventure, role-

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[2] Product-release schedule can differ from one market to another according to market needs. Ideally the localized product should be shipped on the same date as the original-language product, or with a delay less than 30 days. This concept is known as "**simultaneous shipment**," or "**sim ship**." (Microsoft 2013)

[3] Most of video games translations are usually **outsourced** to external agencies or multi-language vendors *(MLV)*. "MLVs are specialized firms, very often with expertise in both language services and technology. The main benefit to this approach is that project management and technical activities are typically centralized in one location by the vendor." (Esselink 2000) This means that the developing studio uses third party translations and testers for their products and therefore cannot directly guarantee the quality of the final localized product. As a benefit it has one point of contact for all languages.

playing (RPG), simulation and strategy. A working knowledge of each genre and platform is important for the translator, as it makes translation easier and, most importantly, more accurate. Translators are very often presented only with a text devoid of context or background, which makes a knowledge and previous experience of these genres extremely valuable, because translators have to rely on their intuition to create a genre-appropriate translation (O'Hagan 2005, 6-8).

However, the list of aforementioned genres is continuously growing, and each main category includes many sub-genres[4]. The translation of action games is relatively straightforward in comparison with role-playing or simulation games. Where action games usually present the player with an easy-to-follow and simple storyline, a successful role-playing game requires a strong story and background information, often presenting the player with a substantial amount of text which is essential to the game. A perfect example of such a game would be *Baldur's Gate 2* (released by Bioware in 2000), which confronts the player with some 1,200,000 words. This is important from the translation point of view because being unable to understand such game can be very limiting for the player making him or her unable to enjoy the game or even making it impossible to finish it. On the contrary, finishing an action game without understanding the language used in the game is easily possible and still fun.

Attached below you can see three examples of translation from different types of games. It is necessary to point out that almost every type of a game has a story-line to follow, yet some general idea of text difficulty and relevance can be seen in presented Figures 3 to 5.

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[4] More complete list of sub-genres can be accessed on Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Video_game_genres. Last accessed: 16.8.2013

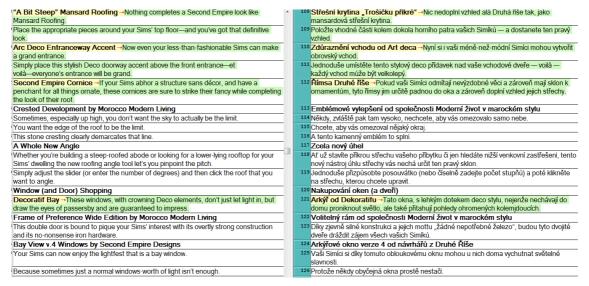| #	English	#	Czech / StringId
149	Chief Scientist	149	Přední vědec
150		150	StringId (Platform): NAME:SovietDesolatorInfantry (PC)
151	Desolator Trooper	151	Pustošitel
152		152	StringId (Platform): NAME:SovietGrinderVehicle (PC)
153	Grinder	153	Drtič
154		154	StringId (Platform): NAME:SovietHeavyWalkerDeployedTurret (PC)
155	Reaper Turret	155	Sekáčova věž
156		156	StringId (Platform): NAME:SovietHeavyWalkerVehicle (PC)
157	Reaper	157	Sekáč
158		158	StringId (Platform): NAME:SovietLargeScoutInfantry (PC)
159	Ursa Major	159	Major ursa
160		160	StringId (Platform): NAME:SovietMortarCycle (PC)
161	Mortar Cycle	161	Minometný motocykl
162		162	StringId (Platform): NAME:TH_JapanHiveGenerator (PC)
163	Nanoswarm Hive EX	163	Úl nanobotů EX
164		164	StringId (Platform): name:togglealliedartilleryautocannon (PC)
165	Pack Up Artillery	165	Sbalit artilerii
166		166	StringId (Platform): name:togglealliedartillerysiegeweapon (PC)
167	Deploy Artillery	167	Rozvinout artilerii
168		168	StringId (Platform): name:togglealliedgunship (PC)
169	Chain Guns	169	Rotační kulomety
170		170	StringId (Platform): name:togglealliedgunshipautocannon (PC)
171	Collider Cannons	171	Urychlovací děla
172		172	StringId (Platform): NAME:ToggleSovietMortarcycleMolotov (PC)
173	Molotov Flurry	173	Příval Molotovů
174		174	StringId (Platform): NAME:ToggleSovietMortarcycleMortar (PC)
175	Porta-Mortar	175	Přenosný minomet
176		176	StringId (Platform): NAME:YURIKC_POWERS_MENU (PC)

Figure 3: Translation extract from a strategy game *Command & Conquer Red Alert 3: Uprising*. Presented example shows translated unit names, which can be important for the player, yet the properties of such units can be deduced very quickly from the unit visual appearance.

English	Czech
Cruz's mysterious ways and dangerous driving holds her in thrall.	Záhadné způsoby a nebezpečné řízení Cruze ji dostávají do transu.
Now recovered, Ray is back to prove he's still got it.	Teď, když je vyléčený, může Ray dokázat, že na to pořád má.
Karol was heartbroken when Wade broke up with her.	Wade zlomil Karol srdce, když se s ní rozešel.
A mystery illness struck him down at the peak of his career.	Během vrcholu jeho kariéry ho přepadla záhadná choroba.
He cruised the world with rich old divorcees before this career.	Než začal svoji kariéru, proplul s bohatými a starými rozvedenými lidmi celý svět.
RACES WON	VYHRÁNO ZÁVODŮ
SUPER STREET LICENCE FINAL	FINÁLE LICENCE SUPER STREET
Marc competes with Diablo for the attention of the pit girls.	Marc soutěží s Diablem o přízeň startovních holek.
GAME	HRA
NEW	NOVÝ
BASE	ZÁKLADNÍ
STREET LICENCE FINAL	FINÁLE LICENCE STREET
Despite idolizing most drivers, Nate goads Rod into fighting.	I když s většinou závodníků vychází Nate dobře, Roda neustále pobízí k boji.
The locket around his neck never comes off. Contents unknown. 		Přívěsek okolo jeho krku nikdy nesundává. Ale proč, to nikdo neví. 	
Monroe sometimes sacrifices speed to maintain good relations.	Monroe někdy obětuje svoji rychlost, aby si udržela dobré vztahy.
Her rash decisions on and off the track are due to inexperience.	Její unáhlená rozhodnutí jak na trati, tak mimo ni, dělá kvůli nedostatku zkušeností.
Aya learned to drive sat on her father's knee in his Porsche.
	Aya se naučila řídit, když sedávala svému taťkovi na koleně v jeho Porsche.
AMATEUR LICENCE FINAL	FINÁLE LICENCE AMATÉR
CUSTOM	VLASTNÍ
UNLOCKED AT %1 PTS	ODEMKNE SE PŘI %1 BODECH
SUPER STREET	SUPER STREET
Wade always drives wearing his brother's bandana for luck.	Při každém závodě nosí Wade pro štěstí pásku po svém bratrovi.
Ryo's stony faced concentration transforms after a win.	Po výhře se Ryova kamenná tvář okamžitě mění.
Wade dislikes Montana's lack of professionalism and womanizing.	Wade nemá rád Montanův nedostatek profesionalizmu a jeho zálibu v ženách.
Ever suspicious, Ryo oversees everything done on his car.	Vždy podezíravý, Ryo dohlíží na všechny změny jeho auta.
Montana doesn't care that other drivers don't like him.	Montanovi je jedno, že ho ostatní řidiči nemají rádi.
Camera shy, he's been known to threaten fans for taking photos. 
	Před fotografy se stydí a je znám svými výhružkami vůči fanouškům, kteří se ho snaží vyfotit. 

STREET	STREET
Your system's nickname contains unsupported characters. The default profile name "NFS" will be used instead.	Přezdívka z vašeho systému obsahuje nepodporované znaky. Místo toho bude použito výchozí jméno profilu „NFS".
He is the most well liked and respected driver on the scene.	Je tím nejoblíbenějším a nejrespektovanějším řidičem na scéně.

Figure 4: Next example presents translation extract from a car racing game *Need for Speed: Shift*. Accompanying text in most car games is not that relevant, as it does not provide additional entertainment value to the actual driving.

"A Bit Steep" Mansard Roofing →Nothing completes a Second Empire look like Mansard Roofing.	108	Střešní krytina „Trošičku příkré" →Nic nedoplní vzhled alá Druhá říše tak, jako mansardová střešní krytina.
Place the appropriate pieces around your Sims' top floor—and you've got that definitive look.	109	Položte vhodné části kolem dokola horního patra vašich Simíků — a dostanete ten pravý vzhled.
Arc Deco Entranceway Accent →Now even your less-than-fashionable Sims can make a grand entrance.	110	Zdůraznění vchodu od Art deca →Nyní si i vaši méně-než-módní Simíci mohou vytvořit obrovský vchod.
Simply place this stylish Deco doorway accent above the front entrance—et voilà—everyone's entrance will be grand.	111	Jednoduše umístěte tento stylový deco přídavek nad vaše vchodové dveře — voilà — každý vchod může být velkolepý.
Second Empire Cornice →If your Sims abhor a structure sans décor, and have a penchant for all things ornate, these cornices are sure to strike their fancy while completing the look of their roof.	112	Římsa Druhé říše →Pokud vaši Simíci odmítají nevýzdobné věci a zároveň mají sklon k ornamentům, tyto římsy jim určitě padnou do oka a zároveň doplní vzhled jejich střechy.
Crested Development by Morocco Modern Living	113	Emblémové vylepšení od společnosti Moderní život v marockém stylu
Sometimes, especially up high, you don't want the sky to actually be the limit.	114	Někdy, zvláště pak tam vysoko, nechcete, aby vás omezovalo samo nebe.
You want the edge of the roof to be the limit.	115	Chcete, aby vás omezoval nějaký okraj.
This stone cresting clearly demarcates that line.	116	A tento kamenný emblém to splní.
A Whole New Angle	117	Zcela nový úhel
Whether you're building a steep-roofed abode or looking for a lower-lying rooftop for your Sims' dwelling the new roofing angle tool let's you pinpoint the pitch.	118	Ať už stavíte příkrou střechu vašeho příbytku či jen hledáte nižší venkovní zastřešení, tento nový nástroj úhlu střechy vás nechá určit ten pravý sklon.
Simply adjust the slider (or enter the number of degrees) and then click the roof that you want to angle.	119	Jednoduše přizpůsobte posouvátko (nebo číselně zadejte počet stupňů) a poté klikněte na střechu, kterou chcete upravit.
Window (and Door) Shopping	120	Nakupování oken (a dveří)
Decoratif Bay →These windows, with crowning Deco elements, don't just let light in, but draw the eyes of passersby and are guaranteed to impress.	121	Arkýř od Dekoratifu →Tato okna, s lehkým dotekem deco stylu, nejenže nechávají do domu proniknout světlo, ale také přitahují pohledy ohromených kolemjdoucích.
Frame of Preference Wide Edition by Morocco Modern Living	122	Volitelný rám od společnosti Moderní život v marockém stylu
This double door is bound to pique your Sims' interest with its overtly strong construction and its no-nonsense iron hardware.	123	Díky zjevně silné konstrukci a jejich mottu „žádné nepotřebné železo", budou tyto dvojité dveře dráždit zájem všech vašich Simíků.
Bay View v.4 Windows by Second Empire Designs	124	Arkýřové okno verze 4 od návrhářů z Druhé Říše
Your Sims can now enjoy the lightfest that is a bay window.	125	Vaši Simíci si díky tomuto obloukovému oknu mohou u nich doma vychutnat světelné slavnosti.
Because sometimes just a normal windows-worth of light isn't enough.	126	Protože někdy obyčejná okna prostě nestačí.

Figure 5: Third example is from a life-simulation game *The Sims 3*. Presented strings illustrate long descriptions of items, which the player can purchase inside the game. The description does not affect the actual gameplay, however, added humoristic value is one of the key elements inside the whole Sims franchise.

One should not forget that software localisation puts its biggest focus on maintaining the functionality and correctness of the language, whereas game localisation also has to keep in mind the overall feeling of the game play experience, including audio and visual stimuli (Darolle 2004). Moreover, as said in Chapter 2.2, the main purpose of the majority of video games, unlike professional or business software, is to entertain, which is why the whole localisation effort must result in a translated product which feels as if the original game was designed for the regionalized target audience. The cultural background and origin of the player should not matter, and each localised version of a game should provide a full experience of the title exactly as intended by the game developers (Mangrion and O'Hagan 2006).

2.3.2   Specifics of Video Game Localisation

By mentioning the range of game genres one can establish that each one requires a different approach when it comes to translation. Video games posses a very unique combination of attributes taken from different types of media, such as literature (in all its forms and styles: novel, poem, drama, short story etc.), visual graphics, film, subtitles, dubbing and more. In a single game one can find, for example, an epic

storyline, conversations between hundreds of characters, their written diaries, cutscenes[5] and descriptions of thousands of items. All of this is accompanied by technical manuals, user interface settings, voiceovers and legal texts. Furthermore, the most important characteristic, which brings the localisation of a video game under a completely different lense, is that video games are interactive. In many games the plot evolves according to player's decisions, creating new possibilities of story progression, causing a huge increase in the content volume.

Such volume of content, especially in combination with steep deadlines, means that video games often have to be translated by more than one translator. This can create problems with inconsistency, which is exacerbates delays in the delivery of translated content. The video game industry is a very fast-paced one, and very often previously translated content requires editing, causing an even greater workload. Such problems are further described throughout Chapter 3.

2.3.3   Guidelines

Another concept to mention in video game localisation are the *guidelines*. In connection with the major gaming console manufacturers, namely Microsoft, Sony and Nintendo, video game developers have to pay great attention to the set of terminology each of the consoles uses. Translated guideline terminology has to be used in the same exact way as the manufacturer determined, often creating unnatural language in the game. Guideline terminology mostly focuses on the hardware parts and software messages used in the operating system of the consoles, varying from one-word terms to whole messages. An example of a guideline document extract can be seen in Figure 6.

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[5] ***Cutscene***, also called cinematic, is a staged sequence in the video game where the player has limited or no possibility of interaction. Such scenes are used for story-changing and atmospheric events, to provide background information for new characters, to clearly distinguish chapters in the story and more.

UK English		Czech	
Term	Abbreviation	Term	Abbreviation
Xbox 360 Arcade		Xbox 360 Arcade	
Xbox 360 Faceplate		čelní kryt konzoly Xbox 360	
A		tlačítko A / A	
B		tlačítko B / B	
BACK button		tlačítko BACK / BACK	
(right/left) bumper	RB, LB	(levé/pravé) přední tlačítko	RB, LB
directional pad	D-pad or DP	směrový ovladač	směr. ovladač OR DP
START / START button		tlačítko START / START	
(right/left) stick	RS, LS	(pravá/levá) páčka	RS, LS
(right/left) stick button		tlačítko (pravé/levé) páčky	
(right/left) trigger	RT, LT	(levá/pravá) spoušť	RT, LT
vibration		vibrace	
X		tlačítko X / X	
Xbox 360 Big Button Pad		Velká herní podložka s tlačítky Xbox 360	
Xbox 360 Controller	Controller	ovladač pro Xbox 360	ovladač
Xbox 360 Controller for Windows		univerzální ovladač pro Xbox 360 a Windows	
Xbox 360 Wireless Controller		bezdrátový ovladač pro Xbox 360	
Xbox 360 Wireless Controller for Windows		Xbox 360 bezdrátový ovladač pro Windows	
Xbox 360 Wireless Racing Wheel with Force Feedback		Xbox 360 bezdrátový volant s efektem Force Feedback	

Figure 6: Extract from a guideline document, which is used as a terminology guide in connection with major gaming console manufacturers. Presented terms in Czech cannot be altered or shortened in any way, often creating unnatural language or linguistic issues (provided by *Electronic Arts company*).

2.4 Stages of Localisation of Video Games

The localisation of video games is similar to software localisation, which was briefly described in Chapter 2.2. However, I would like to present video game localisation in more detail, as there are many specifics which are unique to it. Also, the localisation testing phase must be described in greater detail, as this process is less widely known.

2.4.1 Concept

In the conceptual stage of video game localisation, also called the 'pre-production' stage, neither the translator nor language tester has an influence on the product at this phase and usually cannot affect it in any way. At this stage of a project, the managers decide how many languages they should localize the game into, how much of the game

should be localized (whether or not to provide dubbing or subtitles for in-game video clips) and prepare the localized content for extraction from the actual game. The selection of localisation vendors is also done in this phase.

2.4.2 Translation

In Chapter 2.3.1 it was demonstrated that games boast a wide range of genres, each of which uses a different style of language. The translation process of video games also includes many materials outside the actual game content, such as legal texts, technical documentation, and so on. Below, all the texts a translator has to go through while localizing a product during the translation stage are listed (Esselink 2000).

1) Terminology
2) Game content
3) Online help and webpages
4) Readme file and manual
5) Updates
6) Legal texts
7) Marketing and advertisement

As it can be seen, video game translation requires a lot of versatility from the translator. According to Petrů (2011, 34), the majority of translators in the Czech Republic started with fans and enthusiasts, who worked without any professional background, focusing the translation effort mainly on the game content and often leaving the rest of the aforementioned materials poorly translated or completely untouched. Thanks to the professionalization of the localisation process this has changed, especially in the case of the accompanying text and documentation such as legal texts. Also, this is due to the recent phenomenon in which big gaming publishers shifted from selling games to only renting them. Because of the growing popularity of online gaming, many games require a consistent connection to internet servers, which is very pricey. As the game gets older, fewer and fewer players connect, but the price of running the online servers stays the same, eventually making the game unprofitable. However, if the company only offers the rights to rent a game, they can withdraw such rights at any time in the future and potentially shut the servers down, rendering the game unplayable and cutting the company's losses. Such information is contained in legal texts and mistranslation of such information could cause massive expenses to the

company in the case of a potential lawsuit. The method of vending mentioned above is a very recent innovation, but it is anticipated that more complex sales models will be introduced in the future, requiring translators to adapt accordingly.

Translation of video game content happens in the form of blind translation. The source text is delivered to the translator in various forms, usually as a package ready for completion in one of many CAT tools or as a spreadsheet file (described in Chapter 2.5). Therefore, the translator only sees the source language text and has to provide an adequate corresponding translation. This creates numerous issues for the translator, the main one being lack of context. The translator cannot see what is happening on the screen and it can become difficult to determine certain aspects of the text, such as polysemantic words or gender of characters (in the case of translating from a language without gender-marked nouns and adjective to a languages that requires such specifications). These problems are described with illustrative examples more thoroughly in the third section of the thesis. An example of side-by-side text original and translation can be seen in Figure 7.

ENGLISH	CZECH
Decide whether you would like to allow your child to play free multiplayer games. These games include Windows Live Games and Xbox Live Multiplayer promotions.	Rozhodněte se, zda svému dítěti dovolíte hrát hry pro více hráčů zdarma. Mezi tyto hry patří Windows Live Games a nabídky z Xbox Live Multiplayer.
This product is licensed by Nintendo.	Tento produkt je licencován společností Nintendo.
(A) selects the tile and (X) reshuffles the remaining tiles, but beware! Penalty points are deducted!	(A) dlaždici vybere a (X) zbývající dlaždice přeskupí. Ale pozor, budou vám uděleny trestné body!
Equine Cushing's Syndrome (ECS) is a hormonal imbalance. Due to a dysfunction of part of the pituitary gland, the adrenal cortex produces too much of the hormone called cortisol.	Cushingův syndrom (ECS) je hormoniální porucha. Kvůli dysfunkci části hypofýzy dochází u kůry nadledvinek k nadměrné produkci hormonu zvaného kortizol.
The recreation zone is an Xbox LIVE area that caters to players who take a more casual, laid-back approach to gaming.	Odpočinková zóna na Xbox LIVE je místo pro příležitostní hráče, kteří se u her chtějí hlavně uvolnit.
Unsuspecting, the NATO deploys a former Soviet military base – though the soldiers soon discover the remains of a former underground laboratory, which comprise a horrid secret: not after long, mysterious creatures attack the headquarters. Heavily armed troops hermetically seal the base. Under the command of Cole Sullivan, a special force unit consisting of three men is ready to face the threat	Nic netušící jednotky NATO odkýrvají bývalou sovětskou vojenskou základnu, v níž vojáci brzy objeví zbytky podzemní laboratoře, která skrývá hrůzostrašné tajemství. Zanedlouho je velitelství pod útokem tajemných bytostí a po zuby ozbrojení vojáci jsou nuceni základnu hermeticky uzavřít. Pod vedením Cola Sulivana je tak hrozbě připravena čelit speciální tříčlenná jednotka

Important: During the storing or loading of a score, you should on no acount remove the Memory Card (8MB) (for PlayStation®2) from the slot or activate the MAIN POWER switch or the RESET button as this may result in damaging the data!	Důležité: Během ukládání nebo nahrávání skóre nesmíte za žádných okolností ze slotu vyjmout Memory Card (paměťová karta) (8MB) (pro PlayStation®2) nebo stisknout hlavní vypínač MAIN POWER nebo tlačítko RESET. Mohlo by dojít k poškození dat!

Figure 7: Extract from a translation test by *Anakan* localisation centre. Presented *strings*[6] show various types of texts, which tested candidate should be able to handle. The example shows how versatile, in terms of language skills, any translator or language tester has to be.

2.4.3 Localization Testing

Localization testing (language testing, 'LT' or 'beta-testing') is the final part of the localisation process for video games. Native speaking testers for each language usually work outside the game-developing studio and gather in specialized localisation studios. Unfortunately, Czech localisation is not considered as important as for other languages, simply because from the financial angle it is not that lucrative[7] (Bonusweb 2012). The most common languages for localisation in Europe are French, Italian, German and Spanish, the so called *FIGS* languages, thanks to their market strength, but many other languages, such as Portuguese, Dutch, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, Russian and recently Polish, are catching-up fast.

Localisation testing is a unique process, which is not present in book translation or movie subtitling. The main difference between localisation testing and translation (proofreading included) is that, unlike the translator who only sees the content as text cells in one of the CAT tools (or Excel or similar spreadsheet application), the tester sees the final product as the end user does. Therefore, the tester can see all the details, links and references in the game to make final adjustments and fixes. These are

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[6] **String** is a term for a block of text, let it be one word, sentence or a paragraph, present in the translation. It is used in connection with ID, which is a unique index for the presence of the string in the product.

[7] Himmat, Chalid. 2012. Interview by Zach Ondřej. 12.9.2012. Málo her v češtině? *Lokalizace komplikuje vydavatel, říká český distributor*. Transcript available at http://bonusweb.idnes.cz/rozhovor-s-cenegou-o-steamu-a-mafii-dud-/Magazin.aspx?c=A120910_162531_bw-magazin_oz. Last accessed 18.8.2013.

elements which the translator could not foresee, such as phrase misunderstandings, string length, special character coding error, mistyping of variables and more (see Chapter 3). In literary translations such testing is not required, as the writer provides the whole context in the actual text, whereas in video games, the context appears on a screen to which the translator does not have access.

However, both the language testing and translation of video games are not only about cultural and language knowledge. The knowledge of actual video games is also a very important aspect, more concretely, the way they are created, played and also their in-game history. A combination of all these traits – language education, cultural awareness, video game interest and informational technology proficiency – is quite rare, which makes finding an LT competent person difficult. Very often one or more of these skills is missing (most frequently, a deeper, formal education in language) thus making the final product unrefined in quality.

2.4.4   How does Localisation Testing Work

The tester receives a plan with areas of the game that need to be checked. This includes every possible aspect of the game, ranging from the installation process and supporting documentation, to the actual game play or even accompanying webpages. Such plans are very descriptive and contain a lot of details, but a good localisation tester should be able to think outside the box and improvise while looking at unusual areas of the game where potential mistakes may be present. It is a very repetitive process, which requires a great deal of focus and attention to detail.

Depending on the size of the game, the tester can have enough time to double or even triple check everything the game has to offer, or, on the contrary, the tester can only review everything once. This is typically the case for text-heavy projects such as role-play games or adventure genres. It is also very important to see as much content as possible while 'playing' the actual game, as many issues are only revealed in use (examples in Chapter 3).

If the tester finds a mistake, he or she has to construct and propose a solution to fix it. The most common errors are textual, which can be fixed through the database of the game by the actual tester (if allowed). However, many issues cannot be fixed through the database, as they require the developing studio to alter the code of game in order to

fix them. In such cases the tester has to report a bug[8] and send it to the development studio with a proposed solution.

The report of a bug should include a brief and concrete description of the bug, its severity and categorization, pathway how to find it in the game, the exact wording of the mistake, proposed solution, screenshot and technical details of the game (language used, version number, platform, etc.). The ability to provide well-written, short and concrete bug reports is a very important skill for a good localization tester, as the programmers have to go through thousands of bugs over the period of the game development. If the studio approves the bug, once fixed it returns to the tester who has to regress it in order to check if it was fixed. An example of a bug report is shown in Figure 8.

[S2] [PS3] [Czech] Special characters do not show properly in Options screen [Text]
DESCRIPTION:
After entering the options screen of the game, Czech special characters are not properly shown.

HOW TO FIND:
Boot the game in Czech language > Main Menu > Options Menu > See the error (see screenshot)

SOLUTION:
Provide working Czech special characters for the used font.
STRING ID:
HUD_Options_Screen_Resolution
TEXT:
Rozlišení

Screenshot attached.
Build (version): 1.xxxxx

Figure 8: An example of a localisation bug describing non-working special characters in Czech language. Such bug has to be written concretely as the programmer most likely does not speak Czech language.

After the localisation phase is finished, the project is signed-off and sent to production phase.

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[8] ***Bug*** is an error in the development of the game that needs to be repaired. Localization bugs are errors connected with the language.

2.4.5 Production and Post-production

From the linguistic point of view, the production stage is not relevant, as the localisation testing phase ends and access to text changes is denied. Very often many localisation issues are not fixed and are included in the final release of the game due to time pressure and the aim of simultaneous shipment. The goal of these stages is to create a finished product and successfully deliver it to the customer on time. The developing studio sends potentially finished product to local distributors for a final check and if approved, the video game then proceeds to physical manufacturing and digital distribution.

The post-production phase can include additional localisation changes happening to the video game, e.g. addition of new content that requires further localisation. The process of localisation of additional content is the same as for the main content. However, post-production phase is also the final opportunity where the studio is able to provide corrections for remaining or newly discovered localisation issues, or any other problems in the game in the form of a patch[9]. The possibility of adding changes or new content into a game is relatively easy and such additions can be provided for an extensive period of time (even years) after the final release of the game, thus creating more work for the localisation team.

2.5 Technical Aspects of Localisation

Video game localisation stretches far beyond just a simple knowledge of the target language. In fact, linguistic ability is only the beginning, and a necessary skill to enter the whole process of localisation. Translation and localisation testing both use specialized software. *Trados, SDLX, Wordfast, memoQ* or *Déjà Vu are* only a handful of professional tools used in video game and software localisation. *Microsoft Excel* should be a noted, as even nowadays it is still extensively used, despite the lack of translation memory and other benefits of Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) software.

Localisation Testing, in regards to the use of software, is a completely different story. Each localisation headquarter uses a different set of tools and software which is

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[9] **Patch** is a form of a software update designed to fix existing issues (bugs) or add new content to a program.

required for a varied range of activities, such as logging of bugs (see Figure 8), editing text databases, taking screenshots or projecting text changes onto the video game before a newer version, also called the 'build', is available. Each of this tasks require the tester to learn a new piece of software, which is usually easy to learn, but difficult to master due to vast amount of options and possibilities. One also has to take into consideration the already mentioned the fact that video games are developed for many platforms, currently the most popular being consoles Playstation 3, Xbox 360 and Nintendo Wii, computer operating systems Windows and OS X, handhelds PSP and NDS and mobile operating systems Windows Phone, iOS and Android. Year 2013, though, will bring new versions of mentioned consoles, namely Playstation 4 and Xbox One. Very often each platform uses a different set of programs. At the core they are very similar, but still a good beta-tester has to be open to new technologies, and for some people too many new programs can seem overwhelming.

Online textual databases are one of the key elements in localisation testing, as majority of textual errors can be fixed by altering the affected strings. To present an example; imagine the tester finds a mistake, a typing error where a period ('.') is mistakenly entered instead of a colon (':') in the score between opposing football teams. The tester could find the erroneous period by typing '.' into the database search field, however, that would present him or her with all strings which contain a period. In such difficult scenarios, the tester can use hidden options of the game and search for a concrete string id of the score separator. Once the affected string is fixed, instead of waiting for a new build of the game to see if the error has been fixed, the tester can use another tool to project the corrected string into the game and see if it really was the erroneous string. Also, as every bug report has to include a screenshot of the error, in the case of consoles – which, unlike PCs, cannot take screenshots on their own – the tester has to use another tool to get the screenshot into his or her computer. Or, he or she could also use a hand held camera.

2.6 Extra-linguistic Knowledge in Video Games

Over the course of the thesis it was established that localisation requires a translator to carry over the entire feeling of a game, and that the final localised product should deliver the same experience as the original version (Mangrion and O'Hagan 2006). It was also said that video games utilize a wide variety of literary genres with all their characteristics. Very often both the translators and language testers forget to pay

attention to the small, yet important, details of respective languages. To name a few of these oft-overlooked details: address, date and time format, currency used, punctuation differences (quotes, commas, semicolon etc.), units rules, spacing between numbers, abbreviations and more.

It should also be pointed out that each country has localisation needs set by the state legislation which the developing studios, hence the translators as well, should follow. To present an example, in the Czech Republic it is forbidden to advertise cigarettes in any form throughout the game, which can create serious issues in, for example, Formula 1 games. Another example can be, that in Germany, red blood is not allowed in titles targeted at audience younger than 18 years. Such requirements can become even more limiting when localizing games intercontinentally.

Figure 9: Example of wrong commas used in the Czech localised version of *The Sims 3* game.

3 ENCOUNTERED ISSUES IN VIDEO GAME LOCALISATION

In the third section of the thesis, I will present the most notable problems I have encountered in my experience as a translator and videogame language tester over a period of three years. I worked as a freelancer in translation agency *Presto: Překladatelská agentura*, where I supplied video game translations for the company *Electronic Arts*, one of the biggest video game producers in the industry. I later had the chance to work at *Electronic Arts* as a language tester.

The two roles and their job requirements are quite different, yet many of the problems described can be used interchangeably in both environments. Quite often, both phases are done concurrently, making the problems even more closely connected. I would like to describe the most typical errors from localization testing phase, some of which are carried over from the translation phase. Very often though, the translator, due to the manner of video game localization process, cannot foresee such errors. Problems 3.7 – 3.10 do not describe direct mistakes in the game, yet they are important issues from the translator's and tester's perspective, and so I believe are worth addressing.
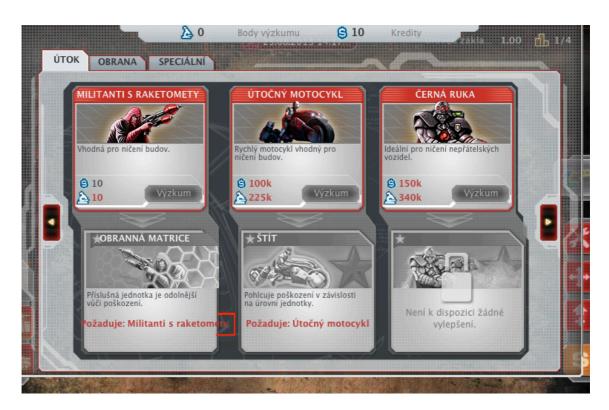
3.1 Text Truncation

Translating to different language often requires more space in terms of the number of characters. According to Chandler (2005, 3), ideally one should allocate 30 % extra space for all localized versions of the game. Not always is such possibility available, which creates numerous text issues, specifically cut-offs, overlaps or text misplacement.

Figure 10: Provided screenshot shows a cut-off (marked red) of an objective (quest) in a browser game *The Settlers Online*. Such issue can prevent the player from proceeding in the game as it is unclear what the task of this quest is. A suitable fix for this problem is either to provide a wider box for the whole line to fit or make the cut-off text appear under the first line by making a line break.

Figure 11: An example of a misplaced paragraph. In this case the tester is not able to fix the issue by himself or herself and has to write a bug report to the studio. The studio then has to move the whole paragraph to the designed area (from *The Settlers Online)*.

Figure 12: An example of a cut-off text (marked red). The translated string *"Požaduje: Militanti s raketomety"* is longer than the English original *"Requires: Rocket Squad"*, causing the text to overlap out of the textbox. Such issue can be fixed by making the string shorter or by shrinking the used font (from *Command & Conquer: Tiberium Alliances*).

3.2 Unsupported Special Characters

Incorrect or a completely lacking visualization of special characters is very common in software localisation. When designing a new font for new software, very often the developing studio forgets to consider special characters which occur in different languages, creating issues during localization.

Figure 13: No visualization of Czech special character (marked red). One of the most crucial issues for localization, which requires the developing studios to provide working special characters for the font used (from *Command & Conquer: Tiberium Alliances*).
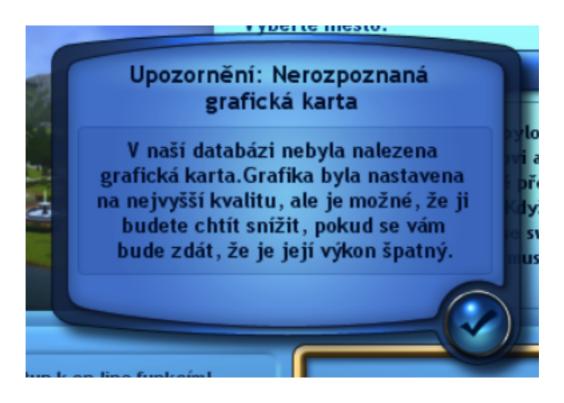
3.3 Missing Translation

Missing translations are a common error, especially at the beginning of the localisation testing phase. This can occur due to the following reasons: error on translator's side where he or she forgot to translate the missing string; the developing studio forgot to extract the missing strings and send them for translation; there is a coding error which prevents the game from getting the correctly translated string from the database.

Figure 14: Issue of missing translation. Marked red you can see string ID "RHYTHM_CONTROL_HUD" instead of the intended translation. If left unrepaired, such error could cause serious gameplay issues as the missing text describes function of one of the controlling buttons (from *Fifa 2013)*.

3.4 Linguistic Errors

Linguistic errors happen in any translation and video games are no exception. Such problems range from typos and punctuation, or mistranslations, to stylistic, grammar, lexicology issues and more. However, in video games there is a higher number of such errors due to the aforementioned lack of visual context, and very often it is up to the localisation tester to provide the final and correct translation.

Figure 15: An example of unnatural translation. The translation is not entirely senseless and the player can understand the purpose of the message, but the text suffers from many linguistic issues. An intentionally awkward (for the sake of demonstration) translation into English could be as follows: "*Warning: Unrecognized graphic card. In our database graphic card was not found. Graphic was set to the highest quality, but it is possible, that it you might want to lower, if you feel that its performance is bad.*" (from *The Sims 3*).

3.5 Lack of Context

The translator is often presented with only fractions of individual sentences or sections of texts from different parts of the game, so called 'strings'. For instance, one can start translating a storyline section from the middle of the game without any context of the previous story. Another example is when the translator has to translate the control mechanisms of the game, tutorial section or help screen. Such parts of the game contain important information for new players and if they are translated inconsistently, they can create problems and misunderstandings during the player's progress in the game, causing frustration or, in extreme cases, rendering the game unplayable. As described in Chapter 2.4.2, due to the form of translation of video games (blind translation) it is often impossible for the translator to know the correct context. Unfortunately, in majority of cases the translator does not have access to the unreleased

games he or she translates, therefore it is necessary to count on further proofreading hopefully provided in language testing phase.

Figure 16: Provided example presents a promotional advertisement text to a console game inspired by the movie Kick-Ass. At the time of translation it was unclear whether will be the character names (Big Daddy, Hit Girl etc.) translated to Czech or let in English, as the movie was not yet released. Due to the lack of context and information the translator often has to count on his or her own intuition. If translated wrong, such mistake can be repaired in post-production phase of the game by applying a patch (from *Kick-Ass: The Game*).

3.6 Inconsistency

Consistency in video games is one of the most important aspects. Depending on the amount of text, it can be relatively easy to keep track of consistency within one game. If you encounter an issue, you fix it in the database or with the help of the studio. However, more complicated issues arise in multi-sequel games. Imagine a situation when one is testing or even translating the third sequel in a franchise. A major issue can be uncovered, which not only affects the current sequel in production, but also it is present in each previous title within the series. Is it better to fix the issue and create a distortion in the consistency, therefore causing players to relearn something they have been using previously, or to leave the error, at the risk of further misinterpretation of the game? I try to answer these questions in the discussion part of the thesis in Chapter 4.

3.7 More than One Translators for One Project

The issue of inconsistency is tightly connected with another specific attribute of video game localisation. It was mentioned that video game translations often face strict deadlines in connection with big volumes of text. Such combination requires localisation studios to hire more translators to work on one project at the same time. Also, in some cases the originally assigned translators are not available in order to

provide requested translation. In these cases the agency or translation submitter cannot afford to wait for the translator to be available, and has to deliver the translation on time with the help of another employee, who does not have to be familiar with the involved content. One could say the best solution to this problem would be having an in-house translator present at every moment, but as stated in Chapter 2.3, due to financial reasons, the vast majority of video game translations is outsourced.

3.8 No Access to Previous Translation

Issue 3.7 noted that translators are not always familiar with the content of their task. It can happen, that either the previous translation, for example, for a prequel to the game being currently translated was done by a different translator, possibly even a different agency, or there was a different coordinator for the game who did not have access to his or her colleagues' files. Another reason could be that the translation was assigned over the weekend when the translation coordinators were not available. Such conditions can leave a translator in a very difficult situation, where he or she is unable to obtain necessary information in order to deliver satisfying results. In some cases, it is possible to request for previous translations personally, but that takes time, which one does usually not have due to steep deadlines.

3.9 Lack of Connection between Translator and Tester

Throughout the thesis it was established that translation and localisation testing are often performed simultaneously, and in case of the employers in the case studies, this was exactly the situation. However, the main advantage of parallel translation and testing is the possibility of communication between the tester and the translator, which was unfortunately not taken advantage of in those cases. This created numerous problems, especially when making particular mistakes on the translator's side, which then the tester had to repeatedly correct.

3.10 No Access to Dictionaries at Localisation Centres

In some cases, localisation centres restrict access to internet due to the risk of potential data leaks, as language testers are permitted access to unreleased versions of software. Such leaks might cost the developing company millions of dollars. However, if that happens, localisation centres often do not have paper-based or offline specialised glossaries or dictionaries to supply the testers with. From the perspective of translation,

it is critical to always have access to dictionaries when in doubt, especially if a language tester is the last person to edit and fix possible linguistic issues.

4 DISCUSSION

In the discussion part of the thesis I would like to address the last five problems described in Chapter 3. I tried to come up with ideas how to fix these issues or at least provide partial facilitation. Unfortunately, I was not able to provide concrete materials and examples to support each of the mentioned problems due to non-disclosure agreement (NDA). However, by mentioning them theoretically I hope to arise awareness and potential interest in fixing by affected localisation studios.

The first issue I would like to address is the issue of consistency. The first solution of how to fix the error of inconsistency among multi-sequel titles that comes to mind is to make everything consistent not only the most recent sequel but also in the previous titles. Unfortunately, such changes are nearly impossible, as they may cause unexpected behaviour or errors in previously released and purchased games among the customers, making such changes extremely risky and time and money consuming.

I believe that, due to the aforementioned danger of this solution, studios fear making changes even in the upcoming titles. However, I advocate the view that if there is something wrong, one should fix it. Also, as a customer and user of Czech language products, I prefer enjoying the game as it was originally intended for the customer rather than tolerating mistakes caused by incorrect translations or lack of attention to detail. Knowing that there is an error inside a product and refusing to fix it is, in my opinion, unacceptable. Therefore even at the cost of inconsistency, I would recommend to fix the issue and prevent the further aggravation of the language and player's experience of the localised game.

Having more than one translator working on a project is a necessity in video game translation and establishing communication with collaborating translators can prove to be a solution to this requisite. Another solution could be to take advantage of the newly emerging trend of moving services to a *cloud computing*[10] platform. Moving translation completely online would help both translators and testers deliver immediate changes and also see previous text content. The idea of establishing mutual communication could also solve the issue of poor connection between the translator and the tester. The proposed solution is to formalise and implement the exchange of contact information

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[10] Cloud computing is a concept that uses a large number of computers connected to each other in real-time using a network (usually the Internet). A well-know example can be Google Docs.

(email, Skype etc.) between the tester and translators assigned to the project, to facilitate the workflow and avoid further mistakes. As the translation and testing often happens at the same time, communication in real-time is key to successfully tackling this issue.

When working on video game sequels or continuing franchises, the possibility of access to a previously translated material at any desired time is priceless. However, such possibility is not always at hand. As an alternative, the translator could familiarise himself or herself with the previous game on his or her own. Of course this can become troublesome, as the translator has to purchase the game using his or her own money and also finding extra time to play the prequel is not always an option. Another idea is to thoroughly keep track of all translated materials and include them in every translation request. In such situation the translator does not have to rely on other people such as the coordinator or previous translator, and can access provided previous materials if needed. Despite the appearance that keeping track of all changes and additional information one accumulates during translation might seem time and money consuming, when dealing with problematic situations, it becomes priceless. If none of the above is possible, the translator can then at least mark any discrepancies encountered in the translation for the proofreaders and testers, as there is a higher chance one of them will have more experience with the translated franchise.

The last problem I would like to address is the access to dictionaries, which is truly crucial at any stage of localisation. Any localisation studio, which is not able to provide such perquisite, has to promptly find a solution. Such studio could either purchase a digital dictionary (e.g. *Lingea Lexicon, Pc Translator*), buy paper-based dictionaries (e.g. *Oxford, Macmillan, Longman, Webster*) which the whole language team can share, or allow internet access only to the dictionary sites while keeping the rest of the internet inaccessible.

5 CONCLUSION

The main intention of the thesis was to raise awareness as to the lack of analysis concerning video game localisation. By presenting examples of issues connected with video game localisation, I hope to have made a step towards tackling the issues which are most common for translators and localisation testers working in the video game industry. Although this in not intended to be an exhaustive list of the problems which appear during the practical processes of localisation, the most prominent issues and their possible solutions have been addressed, and the remainder await further research and consideration. In light of the growing importance of the video game industry in both profitability and influence among other tech-related fields, the steps of globalisation and localisation of video games should undergo a phase of formalisation, in order to streamline the practical work process for professionally trained translators and localisation testers. Hopefully, this thesis will be among a growing number of research and academic texts dedicated to this new and important field of study.

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7 ANNOTATION

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Abstract: The intention of the thesis was to describe the process of localisation in video games and provide both typical and less typical problems, which the translator and the localisation tester have to solve. Problems are supported by illustrative examples taken from a case study of two companies, which were necessary in order to write this thesis. The goal is to point out how the mentioned issues affect the work of the translator and the localisation tester and propose ideas to solve some of them.

Abstract in Czech: Záměrem této práce bylo popsat průběh lokalizace ve videohrách a předložit jak typické, tak i netypické problémy, se kterými se musí překladatel a tester lokalizace vypořádat. Problémy jsou doloženy názornými příklady v rámci případové studie dvou firem, které byly potřebné pro napsání této práce. Cílem práce je pak poukázat na to, jakým způsobem zmíněné problémy ovlivňují práci překladatele a testera lokalizace a navrhnout změny, jak se s některými z nich vypořádat.