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The Problems of Localization in Videogames Based on «Uncharted» Game Series

This article describes the difficulties of the specific type of video game adaptation called localization and such aspects involved into this process as the game title, the wordplay, characters' addressing, context dependence, slangs and cultural features. We regard the examples based on the game «Uncharted» and offer the recommendations.

Key words: video games; localization; localisers; blind translation; context; plot; culture.

Video games are one of the leisure activities of choice of many people around the globe. Children, teenagers and adults enjoy playing videogames just as much as reading, watching films or going to the theatre. The demand for entertainment software has prompted game publishers to translate more of their products into more languages. The process of preparation of a video game for sale is called video game localization (and the professionals, who work with it, are called localisers). During the process of translation, certain difficulties appear and, as a result, many gamers express their dissatisfaction with the level of localized products [6].

The aim of this work is to reveal the problems appearing in the process of localization of famous «Uncharted» game and to offer the solutions. The hypothesis stated by the author is that the localization is a difficult time-consuming process requiring flexible thinking and understanding of cultural differences. Thus, the following objectives have been set:

– to analyze the ways and methods of localization

– to compare English and Russian episode versions of the «Uncharted» game

– to find the solutions to the localization problems

Video game localization is the preparation of video game software and hardware for sale in a new region or country. Although translating the text is a large part of localization, the process includes any changes made to a game, including altering art assets, creating new packaging and manuals, transforming hardware, cutting out whole portions of the game due to different cultural sensitivities, and even adding sections to replace cut content.

The goal of localization is to create an enjoyable, non-confusing play experience for the end user by paying heed to their specific cultural context while being faithful to the source material. The suspension of disbelief is of utmost importance to the process; if a player feels as though the product was not meant for him/her, or if the localization creates confusion or difficulty in comprehension, this may break immersion and disrupt the player's ability to continue the game.

The translation involves the following stages:
– analyzing and adapting the script,
– preparing for translation,
– selecting a team, distributing the roles and tasks,
– distributing materials to the translators, setting deadlines,
– translation,
– assessment and editing,
– final check,
– sending translated materials to a client-company,
– localization testing.

The following aspects are supposed to cause the most difficulties at the translation stage:
– proper names
– cultural references
– word play
– untranslatable phrases and specific word combinations (collocations, slang, set expressions).

To study the difficulties related to the aspects above the following methods have been used:
– research of resources, including videos with playing process, articles
– scanning whole Russian and original versions
– text analysis

To reveal possible problems, «Uncharted» video game has been analyzed.

«Uncharted» is translated as «*Не отмеченный на карте*». However, the translation is too long and grammatically incorrect: in English the gender of adjectives and participles cannot be defined without a noun. «*На картах не значится*» seems to be a better Russian name for this game.

«A Thief's end» is the last part of the franchise. Nathan Drake's adventures finish, he is not a thief anymore. There is one more interesting detail: Rafe Adler, the main antagonist, confirms that he is a thief despite being extremely rich. In the end he dies «swimming in gold», as he wanted.

«*Путь вора*» is the Russian translation, which is a bit confusing. Apparently, we cannot translate it as «*Конец вора*», it is senseless. «*Так умирают воры*» seems to be a better alternative for the game title. Firstly, such a title is provocative (good for marketing), so the gamers would react immediately. Secondly, this title allows us to understand the main idea of the last part. In the end, we see 2 dead pirates (who are thieves), dead antagonist (who is also a thief), and the dead thief inside Nathan Drake. This, in turn, is the reference to the last 22nd chapter in the game, which has the same title as the whole game. The localisers translated the title of this chapter exactly as «*Так умирают воры*», so in Russian, the title of the whole game has to be the same.

Most of the characters' lines are translated blindly, the translators do not know the context, that is why they translate the words wrongly.

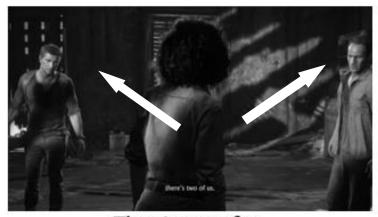To hang on is: 1) *виснуть* 2) *держаться, цепляться* [4] (see Fig. 1).

Again Elena (to Nate): Hang on! –	Держись!
I'm hanging! I'm hanging! –	Я повис! Повис!

Fig. 1. The example of the blind translation

It is obvious that Nate «*повис*» but here this a phrasal verb which has to be translated as «*держаться*». At least, the tense is wrong: «I'm hanging» is present continuous; «*Я повис*» happened in the past. In general, this dialog has to be translated as:

Elena: *Держись!*

Nate: *Да держусь я! Держусь!*

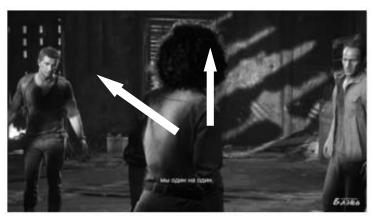There is one more example of blind translation. The original phrase is:

Fig. 2. English version

Saying this, Nate means that for Nadine there is no sense to fight with two men (see Fig. 2).

The sense is different here (see Fig. 3):

Fig. 3. Russian version

Nate means that there is no sense for Nadine to fight with him but in the 7th chapter after the fight with Nadine, younger Drake flew out the window.

The verb «shoot» means both «*стрелять*» and «*фотографировать*» [3]. Such wordplay is used when Elena jokes after the last adventure, when the characters had to use guns a lot. As Elena is a journalist, she uses her camera to take photos i.e. to «shoot». «And I will be doing all of the shooting with my really expensive camera», she says. The translation into Russian in the game is «*И я отвечаю за всю съёмку своей безумно дорогой камерой*». Whereas

«*И я буду вооружена своей безумно дорогой камерой*» would make more sense.

«In like Flynn» is a slang phrase which means «having quickly or easily achieved a goal or gained access as desired» (as shown in Table 1) [1, 2].

Table 1

Localization of slangs

The original version	The Russian translation
In like Flynn. Right?	*Поймай удачу, да? Ай да Флинн. Круто!*

Unfortunately, this expression has no analogues in Russian, so it is impossible to translate it saving the main idea. Translating this phrase, we have to save the name Flynn because Nate turns to a character with a name Flynn in this episode.

In the Russian version we have such a translation as: «*Ай да Флинн!*». We could suppose it is the reference to the famous Pushkin's expression «*Ай да, Пушкин! Ай да, сукин сын!*». It seems to be a really good decision, as it is a part of the Russian culture.

There is the episode, when brothers are at the auction in Italy to steal the St. Dismas Cross. After Sam knocking the waiter out, he takes his pants.

The joke in this episode is based on the Latin phrase «*Si fueris Romae, Romano vivito more; si fueris alibi, vivito sicut ibi*» [6]. That means «If you are in Rome, live in the Roman way; if you are elsewhere, live as they do there».

Indeed, most people in 2015 wear «skinny» jeans but Sam does not know about it as he has been imprisoned for 15 years (see Table 2) [5].

Table 2

The Original and the Russian translation of the dialogue

The original version	The translation
Sam: Yeah, these pants are just a little bit too tight. – Брюки немного жмут.	*Сэм: Хорошо, но штаны немного тесноваты.*
Nate: Well, that is the style these days. – Ничего, так нынче носят.	*Нейт: Ничего, так нынче носят.*
Sam: Really? Well, when in Rome… – Да? Ну что ж, в Риме…	*Сэм: Ну…в Риме поступай как римлянин.*
Nate: Ha. 'Cause we are in Italy. – Ха. Потому что мы в Италии.	*Нейт: А, потому что мы в Италии. Смешно.*

In order to save the joke, it is possible to translate is verbatim as it is presented in the left column of the table above.

Having studied the features and mistakes, that is possible to give some recommendations. They are as follows: to improve the translation quality and to avoid the inaccuracies, the translators should be deeply immersed into the game plot, be aware of the characters and their relationships, to understand the context and be able to draw parallels and find analogues for some names or collocations in their native language.

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Startup Projects:
Large Public Technical University Experience

The article considers the initiative of integrating the students' startups across tertiary education. It also presents the list of skills a student develops at every stage of a startup life cycle prepared in the course of work. The experience of implementing the program «Startup» as a diploma work» at a large public technical university is studied.

Keywords: startup projects; diploma work; tertiary education; skills; project life cycle.

In fact, practical training of future engineers plays a significant role in the modern system of higher education in Russia. This is primarily due to the in-