

Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine  
Sumy State University

Faculty of Foreign Philology and Social Communications

Department of Germanic Philology

**MASTER'S THESIS**  
**Specialty 035 "Philology"**

# Translation and Localization Features of English Video Games (based on the Subnautica franchise)

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**The relevance** of this topic stems from the fact that there is not enough research on video game localization, in particular its translation issues, and due to the lack of clearly established theoretical and practical foundations.

**The object** of research is texts containing in English video games of the survival genre.

**The subject** is the methods of their translation during the process of localization.

**The research material** is the game series “*Subnautica*” and its official Ukrainian localization.

**The purpose** of the study is to analyze and determine the main strategies for solving translation difficulties in video game localization from English in Ukrainian.

In accordance with the purpose of the study there are the following **objectives** of the study:

- 1)to explore the historical background of the localization industry;
- 2)to define the notion of localization on the basis of its correlation with translation;
- 3)to outline the characteristics of the video game discourse drawing upon its interaction and similarities with other discourses;
- 4)to examine a video game as the subject of localization as well as the assets that must be localized;
- 5)to analyze how English quasirealia are translated in video games;
- 6)to identify the translation features of in-game texts, namely descriptions and narrative texts;
- 7)to discuss technical difficulties in video game localization and strategies for dealing with them;
- 8)to analyze the aspects of teaching video game localization to translation students;
- 9)to develop a set of exercises for teaching translation features of video game localization.

# Localization

Localization is the process of modifying software products or services to account for differences in distinct markets.

Technical issues

Linguistic issues

Cultural issues

# Video Game

A video game is a multimedia interactive form of entertainment for one or more individuals, powered by computer hardware and software, controlled by a peripheral (a control pad, a keyboard, a mouse, a joystick, a game pad, a motion controller, a steering wheel, a video camera, etc.), and displayed on some kind of screen (a television set, an LCD or plasma monitor, or a portable display).



# Video Game Localisation

Video game localization is the actual process of translating the language assets in a game into other languages. Those assets are classified into in-game text, art assets, audio and cinematic assets and printed materials.

## In-Game Texts



User interface

Dialogs

Descriptive  
texts

Narrative  
texts

# Descriptive texts

The descriptive passages describe creatures, technological equipment or game mechanics the player can directly interact with.

**Function:** informative function with instructive and didactic messages.

**Translation brief:** clarity and information are stressed.



# Strategies for Translating Descriptive Texts

## 1) splitting and uniting sentences

*Its coloring is distinct but also functional. The bright white on the belly of the fish helps keep it safe from predators below, blending in with sunlight coming through the surface of the water.*

*Забарвлення виразне, але має своє призначення – яскраве біле черево риби надає подібність до сонячного світла, що проходить крізь товщу води. Це оберігає її від хижаків, які плавають нижче*

## 1) modulation

*«Seamoth depth module MK1. Enhances safe diving depth. **Does not stack**»*

*«Глибинний модуль тип 1 «Метелика». Збільшує безпечну глибину занурення. **Спільна дія кількох модулів неможлива**»*

## 1) generalization

*This large egg is held in a **hermetically sealed environment**, and has been chemically sterilized.*

*Це велике яйце зазнало хімічної стерилізації та зберігається в щільно **відокремленому середовищі***

# Narrative texts

Narrative passages are used to engage the player in the game world.

**Function:** expressive/informative for impairing certain information in a dramatic manner.

**Translation brief:** natural flowing writing style, separate rewriting might be applied.



# Strategies for Translating Narrative Texts

## 1) domestication

*The way she looks when talking about nuclear engineering is the same way I look at my grandmother's **dolmades**.*

*Вона говорить про атомну інженерію з таким виглядом, з яким я дивлюся на бабусині **голубці***

## 1) compensation

*Focus, Eloise. The flares! I knocked out the headlight of my Snowfox (**sorryyyyyy**) and I strapped a flare over the dash. **I was chilling** and it flickered out. I heard snow stalker growls like five minutes later! **It scared me** and I spilled my tasty beverage :(.*

*Зосередься, Елойзе. Світляки! Я розбив фару на своєму «Песці» (**ви-и-убач**) і примотав замість неї світляка. **Відпочиваю я, значить**, ну світляк і догоряє. Буквально через п'ять хвилин чую рик сніжного переслідника. **До чортиків налякав мене**, я аж розлив чай :(.*

## 1) pragmatic adaptation

*MARGUERIT: You see, Chief? You brought us to this sodden planet. **Told us we'd see a lush payday.***

*МАРґЕРИТ: Ну що, шефе? Ти привіз нас на цю затоплену планету. **Пообіцяв нам золоті гори***

# Quasirealia

Quasirealia is a type of equivalent-lacking words which are used to denote fictional notions in the game word.



# Loan Translation



boneshark  
кістяна акула

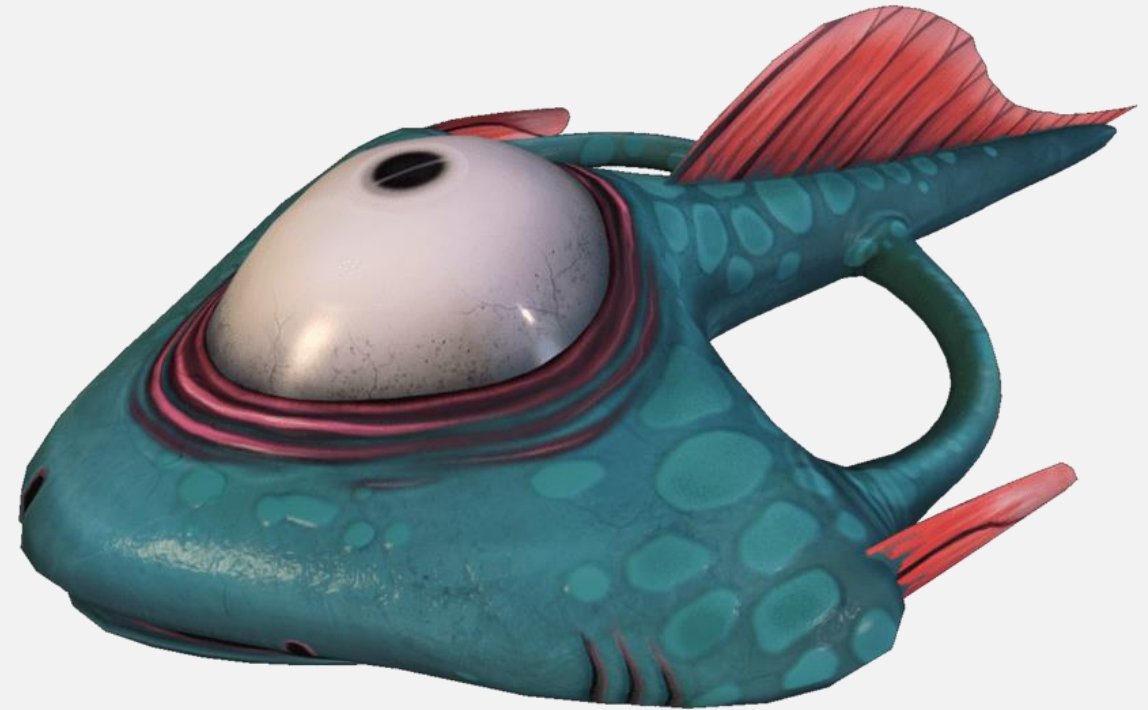


crabsquid  
крабовий кальмар

# Word-Building Adaptation

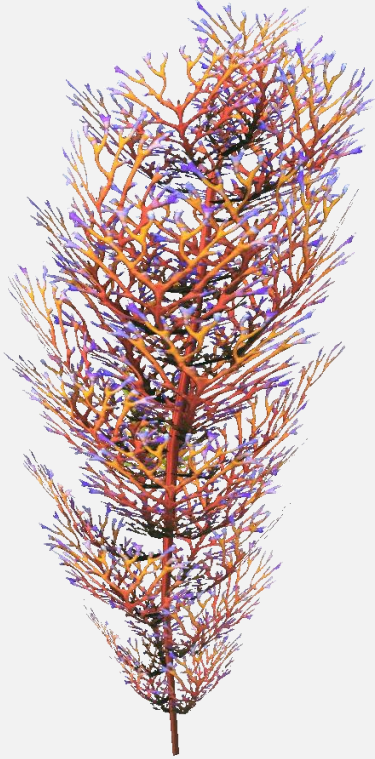


holefish  
дірявиця



spadefish  
лопатниця

# Contextual Equivalent Based on the Visual Component



hardy cave bush  
помаранчевий печерний куш



luna plant  
серповик

# Transcreation



Prawn Suit

Pressure Reactive Armored  
Waterproof Nano Suit

«Рачок»

Реактивно-човниковий  
океанічний костюм

# Conclusion

The localization of video games is a complex process that combines both translation and non-translation issues. The translation side of video game localization shares similarities with software localization, literary and audiovisual translation.

The translation of video games may be hindered by lexical, stylistic, pragmatic and technical issues. To resolve them, localizers are given more creative than in other types of translation. The common strategies in video game localization include transcreation, domestication, reliance on visual components of the game, compensation and modulation.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
ATTENTION

