# Game localization pitfalls:
# Translation and multitextuality

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**Abstract**

From the translator's perspective multitextuality is one of the major challenges of video games localization. The translator needs to cope with texts spanning from the most standard, such as error messages, to the most creative, for example poems. Although every game is unique, it is possible to observe some commonalities with respect to textual genres and text types in video games. Various text types play diverse functions, their content is outstandingly multifarious and they include both standard and creative style and terminology. All of this leads to an assertion that they call for different translation approaches: a standard approach, a creative approach or a mixed approach.

## Pułapki lokalizacji gier. Tłumaczenie a wielotekstowość

**Abstrakt**

Z perspektywy tłumacza wielotekstowość jest jednym większych wy-zwań lokalizacji gier wideo. Tłumacz musi radzić sobie z tekstami od najbardziej standardowych, jak komunikaty o błędach, do najbardziej kreatywnych, jak np. wiersze. Chociaż każda gra jest unikalna, można zauważyć pewne prawidłowości w odniesieniu do gatunków i typów tekstów w grach wideo. Odgrywają one różne funkcje, ich zawartość jest wyjątkowo zróżnicowana i zawierają standardowy i kreatywny styl oraz terminologię. Wszystko to prowadzi do stwierdzenia, że do po-szczególnych typów tekstów należy odpowiednio dobrać podejście tłu-maczeniowe: standardowe, kreatywne lub mieszane.

**Słowa kluczowe**

lokalizacja gier, lokalizacja, podejście tłumaczeniowe, podejście stan-dardowe, podejście kreatywne, podejście mieszane, wielotekstowość

## 1. Introduction

From the translator's perspective, multitextuality is one of the foremost challenges of video games localization and "The quan-tity and variety of the translatable assets generated by each video game may come as a surprise to people who are unac-quainted with these products" (Bernal-Merino 2013: 152). In-game texts and collateral materials span a wide variety of tex-tual genres and text types (Bernal-Merino 2008, Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013, Mogi Localization Agent 2018). Moreover, every game is unique, which adds another level of difficulty and un-predictability to the localization effort. Despite these factors, however, it is possible to discern some commonalities as far as textual genres and text types are concerned. Once we grasp the textual complexity of games, it is also feasible to recognize spe-cific translation approaches which are relevant to particular tex-tual genres, text types and functions.

In addressing the issue of multitextuality the present article proposes a taxonomy of game texts and determines some possible translation approaches suitable for particular textual genres and text types. The presented classification of game texts will be based on fantasy MMORPG games such as Guild Wars 2 and Elder Scrolls Online, but similar text types can be found in other genres. Similar to the propounded game texts' taxonomy, the proposed translation approaches are the author's own invention based on years of translation practice and didactics.

## 2.   Textual genres and functions

In the most general terms, we need to realize that video game localization involves a marriage of specialized and literary translation, where "terminology meets literature" (Bernal-Merino 2008: 42[1]). According to Mangiron and O'Hagan (2013: 153-154), "a wide range of text types, from literary to technical with the use of literary narrative devices, legal texts and contemporary dialogue scripts full of street-speak, can be present within one game".

As far as specialized translation is concerned, games include technical, marketing, and legal texts. Regarding literary texts Bernal-Merino (2008: 42-43) argues that such texts indeed constitute literature:

> One of the textual types displayed in video games has a direct link with creative writing and literature: the in-game dialog and narration. Some people might feel uneasy about using the term literature, but I don't think there is any other word that would describe texts produced by the act of creative writing with an aim to thrill, move and delight.

All of these textual genres, as I call them, pose different challenges for the translator. Technical elements require knowledge

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[1] Bernal-Merino identifies the following textual types in games: journalistic, technical texts, user-interface texts, didactic texts, legal texts, narration and dialogue texts (2008).

of software localization, IT terminology and localization industry standards. Marketing content requires a dynamic and attractive style characteristic of advertising. Legal elements require a competence in translating licensing agreements, terms and conditions, and privacy policies. Translating literary fragments in turn, such as dialogs and plot, requires cultural and linguistic sensitivity, knowledge of pop culture, creativity and literary flair.

Additionally, games localization is a purpose or *skopos* oriented activity (O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013). The most general purpose of games is to entertain gamers and immerse them in the game universe, and this is also the purpose of the localized version. Moreover, games localization is target-oriented from its very onset (Esselink 2000). Therefore, the goal of game localization is to adapt the game in such a way as to entertain and immerse the target audience in order to generate income. The business side of localization cannot be ignored, as it governs game developers in their decision making process: determining whether or not the game will be localized, and if yes, then to what level[2] etc.

In order to make the matter more transparent we can employ Katharina Reiss's textual functions (1971/2000) following Mangiron and O'Hagan (2013). The informative function is content-focused, the persuasive function is appeal-focused and the expressive function is form-focused. Thus technical and legal texts are governed by the informative function, presenting states and facts. Marketing texts display a focus on the appeal and their function is persuasive. Literary texts in games, like all literature, display an expressive function. While translating texts of particular genres, it is advisable to preserve and prioritize the functions of particular textual genres in the localized version of the game.

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[2] Levels of localization are as follows: no localization, box and docs localization, partial localization and full localization (O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013).

**Table 1**

Textual genres and their functions

| Textual genre | Informative | Persuasive | Expressive |
|---|---|---|---|
| Legal | ✔ | | |
| Technical | ✔ | | |
| Marketing | | ✔ | |
| Literary | | | ✔ |

## 3. Text types in games localization

The textual genres mentioned above need to be supplied with actual text types present in video games. In the most general terms, games feature two kinds of texts: in-game content and collateral materials.[3]

In-game content is the actual text of the game and can be further subdivided into Game Interface, Game Mechanics and Game Lore.[4] The interface includes elements such as menus, dialog boxes with options and settings, and strings (error messages, status messages, questions, tooltips). Game Mechanics, in turn, comprise item names and descriptions, hero classes and skills, player instructions, hints, tutorials, trophies and achievements. Game Lore consists of plot (descriptive texts, epic texts), dialogs (between player and NPC,[5] between multiple NPCs), quests and missions (dialogs, summaries, journals), world history, races, books and poems.

Collateral materials are external to the game and include text types such as Legal Texts, Informational Texts and Marketing Texts. Legal Texts include the EULA,[6] Terms and Conditions,

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[3] For an alternative game text taxonomy see O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013).

[4] Mangiron and O'Hagan (2013) utilize a division of texts into diegetic and non-diegetic. In this light Game Interface and Game Mechanics are non-diegetic, whereas Game Lore is diegetic.

[5] An NPC is a Non Player Character, controlled by the game's AI.

[6] EULA is the End User License Agreement.

and Privacy Policy.[7] Informational Texts can be the game man-
ual or walkthrough and also content such as the Readme file,
updates, patches and developer announcements. And finally
Marketing Texts cover advertisements, descriptions and web
content.

**Table 2**

Text types in video games

| In-game Content | Collateral Materials |
|---|---|
| Game Interface: | Legal Texts: |
| ➢ menu | ➢ EULA |
| ➢ dialog boxes with options and settings | ➢ Terms and Conditions |
| ➢ strings (error messages, status messages, questions, tooltips) | ➢ Privacy Policy |
| Game Mechanics | Informational Texts: |
| ➢ item names and descriptions | ➢ user instructions |
| ➢ hero classes and skills | ➢ Readme |
| ➢ player instructions, hints, tutorials | ➢ updates, patches |
| ➢ trophies and achievements (names and descriptions) | ➢ developer announcements |
| | ➢ system requirements |
| Game Lore | Marketing Texts: |
| ➢ plot (descriptive texts, epic texts) | ➢ adverts |
| ➢ dialogs (between player and NPC, between NPCs) | ➢ descriptions |
| ➢ quests and missions (dialogs, summaries, journals) | ➢ web content |
| ➢ world history, races | |
| ➢ books, poems, songs | |

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[7] Elsewhere Bernal-Merino (2015) proposes a division of texts into: the
game itself, the official website of the game, promotional articles, game patches
and game updates.

## 4.  Text types vs textual genres

In order to have a firmer grasp of multitextuality in video games it would be useful to map the various text types onto the previously mentioned textual genres. The in-game content spans texts ranging from technical to literary, depending on the game element. Collateral materials (legal, informational and marketing), belong to the legal, technical and marketing genres respectively.

**Table 3**

Text types vs textual genres in video games

|  | Category | Textual Genre |
|---|---|---|
| In-game content | Game Interface | Technical |
|  | Game Mechanics | Technical |
|  | Game Lore | Literary |
| Collateral materials | Legal Texts | Legal |
|  | Informational Texts | Technical |
|  | Marketing Texts | Marketing |

## 5.  Standard-to-creative continuum

Such a variety of textual genres and text types can be quite overwhelming for the translator, who needs to know how to translate all of them. In other words, the translator is expected to apply a proper translation approach relevant to a given textual genre, text type, and function. In the most general terms, the texts present in video games span from the most standard (Legal Texts, error messages) to the most creative (dialogs, poems). Therefore it is possible to discern a standard-to-creative continuum of texts in video games. Additionally, it is possible to arrange the different game text types along the standard-to-creative continuum from the most standard, i.e. Legal Texts, to the most

creative – Game Lore. Texts which fall in between these two points would combine standard with creative features.


STANDARD                                                    CREATIVE
☐-------------------------------------------------------------------------------☐
**Legal Texts | Game Interface | Informational Texts | Game Mechanics | Marketing Texts | Game Lore**

**Figure 1**
Standard-to-creative continuum vs text types

Thus it is reasonable that standard texts would invite a standard approach, and creative texts a creative approach. The standard approach is based on industry standards, while the creative approach amounts to literary translation or transcreation (O'Hagan and Mangiron 2013). Regarding transcreation, Bernal-Merino (2006) does not consider it to be a useful term. Presently we are considering the creative approach rather than transcreation, although the concepts are close. Furthermore, since games constitute a domain where "terminology meets literature" (Bernal-Merino 2008: 42), it would be advisable to discern different approaches to style and terminology.

## 6. Style and terminology

Style will be understood as a motivated choice observed at all the levels of language and discourse, to include (Verdonk 2006: 203):

1. Graphology (typographical features: typeface, punctuation, etc.)
2. Phonology (sounds, rhythm, rhyme, etc.)
3. Lexis (vocabulary)
4. Syntax; grammar (sentence structure, use of tenses, etc.)
5. Semantics (considerations of textual meaning)
6. Pragmatics; discourse (features of external context; communicative situation)

A standard style would amount to one that is sanctioned by industry standards. As far as technical translation, and more specifically IT and software localization are concerned, such standards are to be found in the style guides of companies. These standards are specifically prepared for translators and localizers. An example of such a style guide is the Microsoft Style Guide, which is available publicly and contains localization guidelines for Windows-based applications (Microsoft Style Guide 2018). The Microsoft Style Guide contains a description of Microsoft voice, language specific standards and localization considerations.

Creative style, in turn, can be described as a style that is required in marketing (Multilingual Technologies, 2018) and literary texts. In other words, creative style is one that is not too close to the original syntax and sounds both natural and attractive. Creative style requires creativity on the part of the translator and is the opposite of word-for-word translation. In Marketing Texts, creative style is used to better communicate the advertising message to the target receivers and to exert a marketing influence in line with the persuasive function. Literary texts in games require a creative style in order to read well (IAIA, 2016) and to enable player entertainment and immersion in the game universe. Such texts accomplish this through an expressive function.

Terminology is to be viewed as 'a set of designations belonging to one special language' (ISO 1087–1, 2000 in Schmitz, 2006: 578). Standard terminology, similar to style, is based on industry standards. Such terminology can be found in specialized dictionaries and company termbases. An example of a publicly available termbase is Microsoft's terminology which can be accessed online in the Microsoft Language Portal (Microsoft Language Portal 2018). Along with IT and software-related terminology there is the established terminology of games, which can be found not only in representative titles of a particular game genre, but also in dictionaries such as The Game Developer's Dictionary (Carreker 2012); słownik gracza (*Słownik gracza*, 2018) and on various websites devoted to games.

Creative terminology is terminology created for a particular game. The original game often contains new terms created especially for a given title. This kind of terminology requires creative localization. Examples of such terms are item names (Astral Crossbow, Glimmer of Hope[8]), names of skills (Agonizing Chop, Executioner's Strike[9]), names of character classes (Mesmer, Dervish[10]) and races (Asura, Sylvari[11]).

## 7.  Translation approaches

Thus we have arrived at translation approaches which will combine approaches to style and approaches to terminology in video game localization. The first approach would be the fully standard, with a standard approach to style and terminology. The second one: mixed, combining a standard and a creative approach to both style and terminology. The final approach would be a creative one with a creative approach to style and terminology. This can be illustrated on the standard-creative continuum given in the form of a table below.

As far as textual genres are concerned, Legal Texts generally require a standard approach. Technical and Marketing Texts in games usually call for a mixed approach. Literary Texts in turn invite a creative approach.

From the standpoint of the text types discerned previously, the relevant approaches are suggested in Table 6.
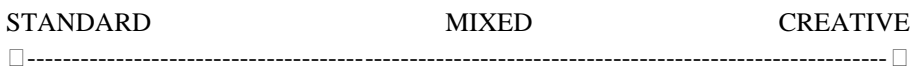

STANDARD                          MIXED                          CREATIVE
☐------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------☐

**Figure 2**
Localization approaches

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[8] Baldur's Gate: Siege of Dragonspear (2016).
[9] Guild Wars (2005).
[10] Guild Wars (2005).
[11] Guild Wars (2005).

**Table 4**

Localization approaches

| Approach | Style | Terminology |
|----------|-------|-------------|
| Standard | Standard | Standard |
| Mixed | Standard or Creative | Standard or Creative |
| Creative | Creative | Creative |

**Table 5**

Textual genres and most common translation approaches

| Textual genre | Standard | Mixed | Creative |
|---------------|----------|-------|----------|
| Legal | ✔ | | |
| Technical | | ✔ | |
| Marketing | | ✔ | |
| Literary | | | ✔ |

**Table 6**

Text types and most common translation approaches

| Text type | Standard | Mixed | Creative |
|-----------|----------|-------|----------|
| Legal Texts | ✔ | | |
| Game Interface | | ✔ | |
| Informational Texts | | ✔ | |
| Game Mechanics | | ✔ | |
| Marketing Texts | | ✔ | |
| Game Lore | | | ✔ |

## 8. Localizing Legal Texts

The function of Legal Texts is informative and they display a standard style and standard terminology.

**Table 7**
Style and terminology in Legal Texts

| Legal Texts | Standard | Creative |
|---|---|---|
| Style | ✔ | |
| Terminology | ✔ | |

Considering the above, the standard approach is advised for both style and terminology. These texts cover the licensing agreement (EULA), Terms and Conditions, Privacy Policies etc. The original meaning needs to be faithfully reproduced, and the style as well as the terminology needs to conform to the standards of legal texts. Below is an example excerpt from Guild Wars 2's Privacy Policy.

| | |
|---|---|
| This Privacy Policy explains how we collect, use, protect, and store your Personal Information and how we respect applicable data protection laws. Other service providers and websites, including those we may link, may have their own privacy policies. If you have questions about how other websites, services, or games handle your Personal Information, you should review their privacy policies. | W niniejszej polityce prywatności wyjaśniono, jak zbieramy, wykorzystujemy, chronimy i przechowujemy dane osobowe Użytkownika oraz jak przestrzegamy obowiązujących przepisów w zakresie ochrony danych. Inni dostawcy usług i witryny, włącznie z tymi, do których przekierowujemy, mogą mieć własne polityki prywatności. W razie pytań odnośnie do sposobu, w jaki inne witryny, usługi lub gry postępują z danymi osobowymi Użytkownika, należy zapoznać się z ich politykami prywatności. |

Source: Guild Wars 2, Privacy Policy [Website] (2019).
Own translation.

The usage of the term "User" (Użytkownik) is an example of the standard style of legal texts in Polish. There is also some standard terminology: privacy policy, collect, store, data protection, service providers, website, services, Personal Information.

## 9. Localizing the Game Interface

The Game Interface usually displays standard style, but it may contain standard and creative terminology.

**Table 8**

Style and terminology in the game interface

| Game Interface | Standard | Creative |
|---|---|---|
| Style | ✔ | |
| Terminology | ✔ | ✔ |

While localizing the Game Interface, which belongs to the technical genre, the standard approach would be the most commonly used. This means that the menu, dialog boxes with options and settings, and strings (error messages, status messages, questions, tooltips) are usually translated using standard style and standard terminology. These are defined by the software localization standards. When dealing with Windows-based games, the software localization standards can be found in the Microsoft Style Guide and Microsoft Terminology available in the Microsoft Language Portal (Microsoft Language Portal 2018). Other platforms and game producers utilize their own style guides and termbases. The creative approach to terminology is reserved for situations in which the translator encounters new terms in the UI which require creative localization.

The examples below come from the game Guild Wars 2. These are error messages, which are generally translated in a uniform, standard manner.

| The game client lost its connection to the server. Please wait a few minutes before restarting the client and trying again | Klient gry utracił połączenie z serwerem. Odczekaj kilka minut, a następnie zrestartuj klienta i spróbuj ponownie. |
|---|---|
| Network error. Please check your Internet connection and try again. | Błąd sieci. Sprawdź swoje połączenie internetowe i spróbuj ponownie. |

Source: Guild Wars 2 [Website], Common Error Codes (2019). Own translation.

## 10. Localizing Informational Texts

Informational Texts tend to display standard style, but like the Game Interface, they may contain both standard and creative terminology.

**Table 9**
Style and terminology in informational texts

| Informational Texts | Standard | Creative |
|---|---|---|
| Style | ✔ | |
| Terminology | ✔ | ✔ |

The function of Informational Texts is informative. These span from user instructions, Readme files, updates and patch descriptions, to developer announcements and system requirements. Localizing user instructions is based on software localization standards, such as using the imperative form for describing all kinds of procedures. User instructions can be found in the game manual (now usually in an electronic or web form, previously also in booklet form) or in the walk-through. The style tends to be simple and clear. The suggested approach to be applied here is the standard one: standard style and standard terminology. There is also the possibility that the game's creative terms will be referred to, which is a case where consistency with the translation of the in-game terms is required, which is another industry standard.

The excerpt below comes from the manual of the game Morrowind, which belongs to the Elder Scrolls franchise. It contains standard procedures in the imperative, a description of what can be done and a description of the consequences of the actions taken by the player. The fragment contains only standard terminology: "left click" (kliknij lewym przyciskiem myszy), "item" (przedmiot), "inventory" (ekwipunek), "pick up" (podnieść), "equip" (wyposażyć się), "drop" (upuścić), "armor" (zbroja), "clothes" (ubranie), "rings" (pierścień), "potions" (mikstury), "ingredients" (składniki), "weapons" (broń), "lockpicks" (wytrychy), "torches" (pochodnie), "icon" (ikona), "unequip" (przestać używać), "cursor" (kursor).

| ITEMS | PRZEDMIOTY |
|---|---|
| Left click an item in your inventory to pick it up. You can equip the item by then dropping it on your character picture. This allows you to wear armor, clothes, and rings, read books, use potions and ingredients, and ready weapons, lockpicks, torches, or other items. Any equipped item will be shown with a box around the icon. To unequip, click the item again, and then drop it. You can either drop items into your inventory or into the world. Holding the cursor over an item will display information on that item. | Aby podnieść przedmiot znajdujący się w ekwipunku, kliknij go lewym przyciskiem myszy. Możesz wyposażyć się w przedmiot, upuszczając go na wizerunek swojej postaci. Tym sposobem możesz założyć zbroję, ubrania, pierścienie, a także czytać książki, używać mikstur i składników oraz przygotować broń, wytrychy, pochodnie i inne przedmioty. Aby przestać używać przedmiotu, kliknij go ponownie, a następnie upuść. Przedmioty można upuszczać w ekwipunku lub w świecie gry. Przytrzymanie kursora na przedmiocie spowoduje wyświetlenie informacji o nim. |

Source: Morrowind [Manual] (2002).
Own translation.

Another fragment comes from the Guild Wars 2 Game Release Notes and constitutes a description of updates implemented in the game. Expressions such as "reduced", "fixed a bug" and "decreased" are standard and in Polish their translation is also standard and takes the impersonal form (zmniejszono, naprawiono). There are also some standard terms: might, PvP, WvW, trigger, cast, bonus, critical-hit chance. In addition to these terms we also have examples of creative terminology: Revenant (Zjawa), Unrelenting Assault (Nieubłagana Napaść), Roiling Mists (Mętne Mgły).

| Revenant | Zjawa |
|---|---|
| ● Unrelenting Assault: Reduced might duration from 8 seconds to 5 seconds in PvP and WvW. Fixed a bug that caused this skill to trigger the confusion condition multiple times in a single cast. <br> ● Roiling Mists: Decreased bonus critical-hit chance from 100% to 50% in PvP. | ● Nieubłagana Napaść: Zmniejszono czas trwania mocy z 8 sekund do 5 sekund w PvP i WvW. Naprawiono błąd, który powodował, że ta umiejętność aktywowała stan dezorientacji wiele razy przy pojedynczym użyciu umiejętności. <br> ● Mętne Mgły: zmniejszono dodatkową szansę na trafienie krytyczne ze 100% do 50% w PvP. |

Source: Guild Wars 2 [Website], Game Update Notes (2019).
Own translation.

## 11. Localizing the Game Mechanics

Game Mechanics appears to be the most unpredictable of all the text types. This category may include both standard and creative style as well as standard and creative terminology.

**Table 10**

Style and terminology in the game mechanics

| Game Mechanics | Standard | Creative |
|---|---|---|
| Style | ✔ | ✔ |
| Terminology | ✔ | ✔ |

Texts belonging to the Game Mechanics category typically contain item names and descriptions, hero classes and skills, player instructions, hints, tutorials, trophies and achievements. Their function is generally informative. These are the texts typically found only in games. Sometimes they can also be found on websites devoted to particular games. The most frequent approach here would be the mixed approach. The standards are based on the most representative games and can also be established by the game developer. The creative side is mostly related to creative terminology, but creative style is also possible.

Item names and descriptions typically refer to weapons, armor, or other objects used by the player. These usually have unique names, although they may include standard terms which are used in other games. The descriptions tend to be typical, which means that the style is similar across different games. Descriptions usually have a form of "what something is" and "what it does". This same style applies to skills and their descriptions. Sometimes items may be supplemented by a story as in games such as Baldur's Gate I (1998) and Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn (2000), or by a humorous description.

The focus of hero classes is mostly informative. In-game player instructions, hints and tutorials inform and direct the player in undertaking a particular action. These mostly take an imperative form, which is rooted in the basic standards of software localization.

Trophies and achievements are a relatively new occurrence and are quite popular in games nowadays. These consist of a catchy name and a description of what has to be done to acquire them, given in an imperative form. Specifically these

catchy names require a very creative stylistic approach since they often contain word-play, alliteration and allusions to pop culture whether from films, songs, or other games.

The example below presents a skill description as it appears in-game. It is a relatively standard text as skills in various games appear to be similar. Apart from the standard style illustrated in the translation by the expression "Slices" (Zadaje) there are also a number of standard game terms: "cast time" (czas użycia), "target" (cel), "range" (zasięg), "enemy" (przeciwnik), "deal damage" (zadać obrażenia), "bleed" (krwawienie), "Physical Damage" (obrażenia fizyczne). Also when translating such fragments, the developer provides a text with variables, which are only later replaced with specific values, hence expressions such as "points" (pkt.) and "seconds" (s), which will be suitable no matter what value these variables will assume. There is also an example of a creative term, which is the name of the skill "Twin Slashes" (Bliźniacze Cięcia).

| TWIN SLASHES I | | BLIŹNIACZE CIĘCIA I | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cast Time | Instant | Czas użycia | Natychmiast |
| Target | Enemy | Cel | Przeciwnik |
| Range | 5 metres | Zasięg | 5 metrów |
| Cost | 1944 Stamina | Koszt | Wytrzymałość: 1944 |
| Slice an enemy with both weapons to cause deep lacerations, dealing 1994 Physical Damage with each weapon and causing them to bleed for an additional 9795 Physical Damage over 9 seconds. | | Zadaje przeciwnikowi cios obiema broniami, aby spowodować głębokie rany. Zadaje 1994 pkt. obrażeń fizycznych każdą z broni, a także wywołuje krwawienie powodujące dodatkowe 9795 pkt. obrażeń fizycznych przez 9 s. | |

Source: Elder Scrolls Online [Computer Software] (2014).
Own translation.

The next fragment is a class description. The first thing to notice is that the creative term Mesmer has been transferred directly into the Polish version as Mesmer. Another unusual term is phantasmal magic, which has been translated as "fantazmatyczna magia". Other terms are quite standard: duelist, wield, weapon, fight. Hence the text can be classified as featuring creative style with both creative and standard terminology.

| Mesmer | Mesmer |
|---|---|
| Mesmers are magical duelists who wield deception as a weapon. Using powerful illusions, clones, and phantasmal magic to ensure that their enemies can't believe their own eyes, mesmers tip the balance of every fight in their favor. | Mesmerzy posługują się w walce magią, a ich bronią jest oszustwo. Za pomocą potężnych iluzji, klonów i fantazmatycznej magii sprawiają, że ich wrogowie nie mogą uwierzyć własnym oczom. Tym sposobem mesmerzy potrafią przechylić szalę zwycięstwa na swoją korzyść. |

Source: Guild Wars 2 [Website] Mesmer (2019).
Own translation.

## 12. Localizing marketing texts

Marketing texts most frequently include a creative style and standard terminology but creative terminology is also possible.

**Table 11**
Style and terminology in marketing texts

| Marketing Texts | Standard | Creative |
|---|---|---|
| Style | | ✔ |
| Terminology | ✔ | ✔ |

As far as Marketing Texts are concerned, the most commonly used approach is the mixed one, combining a creative approach to style supported by standard or creative terminology. The function of a marketing text is persuasive and it is often achieved through a catchy, creative style. It is expected that the translation will read well, be stylistically attractive and idiomatic in order to maintain the appeal. This is the reason why it is advisable to have a creative approach regarding style. The terminology, in turn, needs to comply with industry standards with the exception of game-specific terms which, similarly to terms in Informational Texts, would need to be consistent with the in-game content translation.

The text below is a short excerpt from the Guild Wars 2 website. It features two sentences, of which the second is quite long.

| Competitive Play | Współzawodnictwo |
|---|---|
| Competitive play in *Guild Wars 2* is easy to learn but offers challenges for new players and hardcore PvPers alike. Whether you decide to jump into quick, furious matches between small groups of players in organized PvP or join hundreds of other players in the grand battles of World vs. World, PvP is where you'll find the ultimate challenge! | Łatwo jest się nauczyć współzawodnictwa w Guild Wars 2, choć oferuje ono wyzwania zarówno dla nowych graczy, jak i hardcorowych wielbicieli PvP. Możesz dołączać do szybkich, intensywnych pojedynków małych grup graczy w zorganizowanym PvP. Możesz też wraz z setkami innych graczy brać udział w wielkich bitwach World vs. World. Niezależnie od Twoich preferencji to właśnie PvP postawi Cię przed najtrudniejszym wyzwaniem! |

Source: Guild Wars 2 [Website], Competitive Play (2019).
Own translation.

In such a text, a creative approach to style is very important. Hence the order of the elements in the first sentence has been changed in the Polish version. The second sentence in turn has been divided into three separate sentences so as to maintain the clarity of the text in the Polish version. Additionally it should be noted that "you" and "your" in Polish Marketing Texts is usually translated with a capital letter. As can be observed, more often than not a creative style in marketing is supplemented by standard terminology, here: "competitive play" (współzadownictwo), "hardcore player" (gracz hardcorowy), "PvPer" (wielbiciel PvP), "match" (pojedynek), "battle" (bitwa), "World vs. World" (World vs. World).

## 13. Localizing the Game Lore

The Game Lore generally displays a creative style and creative terminology.

**Table 12**

Style and terminology in game lore

| Game Lore | Standard | Creative |
|---|---|---|
| Style | | ✔ |
| Terminology | | ✔ |

Localizing texts belonging to the Game Lore category, i.e. plot (descriptive texts, epic texts), dialogs (between player and NPC, between NPCs), quests and missions (dialogs, summaries, journals), world history, races, books, poems, songs, calls for a creative approach. This category contains texts which can be described as literary, whose function is expressive, i.e. form-focused. These texts are the ones which demand the most creativity from the translator, an activity often described as transcreation (O'Hagan and Mangiron, 2013). Descriptive texts and epic texts serve to present the story of the game and it is very important that they have a natural, attractive style. Quests and

missions often include texts in the form of dialogs, summaries and journals. Dialogs also serve to present the story and the characters in the story. Books and poems, if present, enrich the game world and play an important role in creating immersion.

The example below is a fragment of the player journal in the game Elder Scrolls Online. This is a descriptive text, which additionally provides the player with hints for their required action. Moreover, since the player can be male or female, the text has been translated to maintain gender neutrality, using expressions such as "My death was" (Moja śmierć była), "Having awoken, I can surmise" (Przebudziwszy się, mogę stwierdzić).

| SOUL SHRIVEN<br>IN COLDHARBOUR<br>I died, but that was only the be-ginning…<br>I awoke in Oblivion. My body is intact, but my soul has been torn from my body. I must find a way out of this nightmare place to reclaim what was lost to me, or I will be damned for all eternity.<br>I have been approached by a hooded figure who wished to speak to me, but I had other things to attend to. I should find them and see what they wanted from me. | ROZGRZESZENIE<br>W COLDHARBOUR<br>Moja śmierć była tylko począt-kiem…<br>Przebudziwszy się w Oblivionie, mogę stwierdzić, że moje ciało jest w dobrym stanie, ale moja dusza została z niego wyrwana. Muszę wydostać się z tego kosz-marnego miejsca i odzyskać utraconą duszę. W przeciwnym razie czeka mnie udręka przez całą wieczność.<br>Podeszła do mnie zakapturzona postać i chciała ze mną poroz-mawiać. Muszę ją odnaleźć i do-wiedzieć się, czego chce. |

Source: Elder Scrolls Online [Computer Software] (2014).
Own translation.

The other example comes from the same game and is an instance of a dialog. Apart from the gender neutrality in "You managed to discover" (Udało ci się odkryć) what is most interesting about this fragment is the special way the character Razum-dar speaks, referring to himself in the third person. His speech is typical for the Khajit race and constitutes an idiolect that is worth transferring.

| -Razum-dar- | -Razum-dar- |
|---|---|
| Raz's investigations have brought him to Rellenthil. When this one noticed your Psijic friend slip into town, Raz figured you'd be along soon. | Dochodzenie Raza doprowadziło go do Rellenthil. Gdy ten zobaczył, jak twój przyjaciel z zakonu Psijic zakradł się do miasta, Raz pomyślał, że wkrótce podążysz za nim. |
| So what did you discover in Artaeum, the island that isn't here anymore? Ow. That made Raz's head hurt! | A zatem co udało ci się odkryć w Artaeum, na wyspie, której już tu nie ma? Ał. Od tego wszystkiego Raza rozbolała głowa! |
| We learned that the false Aldrach belonged to a Daedric cult called the Court of Bedlam. | Dowiedzieliśmy się, że fałszywy Aldrach należał do daedrycznego kultu o nazwie Dwór Bedlam. |
| Goodbye. | Do widzenia. |

Source: Elder Scrolls Online [Computer Software] (2014).
Own translation.

Another example from the same game is a poem entitled Song of the Spirits. The game Elder Scrolls Online abounds in lore that can be found in quests and missions as well as in books and poems. The skills required to translate such excerpts are no different than what is needed when translating ordinary poetry, with creativity being probably the most important element.

| Song of the Spirits | Pieśń duchów |
|---|---|
| The night is dark,<br>The ground is deep,<br>Its warmth can keep you still. | Noc jest ciemna,<br>Dno głębokie,<br>Jej ciepło cię ukoi. |
| Your pain forget,<br>Your anguish gone,<br>Your slumber will not end. | Twój ból zapomniany,<br>Twoja udręka miniona,<br>Twój sen się nie skończy. |
| I am your guard,<br>I am your hope,<br>I will not fail my charge. | Jestem twym stróżem,<br>Jestem twą nadzieją,<br>Nie ustanę w mojej szarży. |
| The night is dark,<br>The ground is deep,<br>You shall not rise today. | Noc jest ciemna,<br>Dno głębokie,<br>Nie powstaniesz dzisiaj. |

Source: Elder Scrolls Online [Computer Software] (2014).
Own translation.

The next fragment comes from the game Guild Wars 2. It is a description of the Sylvari race. Here we see creative terms – "Sylvari" (Sylvari), "Pale Tree" (Blade Drzewo) and the "Dream" (sen).

| Sylvari | Sylvari |
|---|---|
| Sylvari are not born. They awaken beneath the Pale Tree with knowledge gleaned in their pre-life Dream. These noble beings travel, seeking adventure and discovery. They struggle to balance curiosity with duty, eagerness with chivalry, and warfare with honor. Magic and mystery entwine to shape the future of this race that has so recently appeared. | Sylvari się nie rodzą. Budzą się pod Bladym Drzewem z wiedzą zdobytą we śnie poprzedzającym ich życie. Te szlachetne istoty podróżują w poszukiwaniu przygód i odkryć. Nieustannie starają się osiągnąć równowagę między ciekawością a obowiązkiem, gorliwością a rycerskością oraz walką a honorem. Magia i tajemnica splatają się, by kształtować przyszłość tej rasy, która pojawiła się tak niedawno. |

Source: Guild Wars 2 [Website], Sylvari (2019).
Own translation

## 14. Summary

It is necessary to conclude that the proposed game texts taxonomy and translation approaches are relative since every game is unique. Some games will lack certain text types or contain ones not covered in the presented classification. Sometimes it may be hard to decide whether the text displays a standard or a creative style, whereas creative terminology is often based on the standard one. Still, the differentiation into standard and creative style, standard and creative terminology, and their combinations could be useful in practical terms and serve as general directions to help translators get a grasp of the game's multitextuality. Realizing that games span texts from the most standard, such as EULAs and error messages, to the most creative, such as dialogs, journals and poems, can make the life of the translator easier. Knowing when to be uniform and conform to standards and when to be creative is an important guideline, especially for translators entering the market and students of Translation Studies.

The translator's freedom in texts belonging to Game Lore is often quite considerable and can be larger than in classic literature. The translation of Game Lore is characterised by target-orientedness[12] which means that greater modifications are often justified. Moreover, game localization in general is also function-oriented (Mangiron and O'Hagan 2013). The informative, persuasive and expressive functions of particular textual genres and text types can be achieved in part through the application of the presented translation approaches.

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[12] The goal of game localization is "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).

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