

# Invisibility of Game Localizers and the Status of Localization in Slovakia

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## ABSTRACT:

The standard industry practice in publishing or audiovisual translation should be mentioning the translators for their work in the credits. When it comes to technical texts, for example manuals or localized texts such as websites, translators or localizers are hardly ever mentioned, especially when translation agencies provide the entire process of translation or localization. Digital games usually do contain credits listing all people working on a digital game, but such lists tend to leave out translators or localizers. The paper aims to investigate the issue of crediting digital game translators or localizers in Slovak digital games and show different crediting practices. We inspect credits in digital games made by Slovak developers and show different crediting practices in the industry. We examine the use of credits in Slovak digital games and rationalize the situation by looking at the localization of digital games, localization training at Slovak universities, and language support for Slovak digital games. The paper contains reviews of 69 selected computer and mobile device games published by 34 studios or developers.

## KEY WORDS:

digital game credits, game localization, localization training, translator crediting.

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# Introduction

In May 2022, a group of translators working for the Gameloc Gathering group, as a significant influential agent, established a Twitter account *Loc in Credits* as a reaction to the practice of digital game publishers not crediting game localizers for their work. They wanted to “bring game localization out of the shadows and to commend language service providers (LSPs), game developers, and publishers that do include translators in the credits”.<sup>1</sup> It should be standard practice to credit a person who was responsible for a given task within the project, and all intellectual property should comply with the copyright legislation of the country. As we have found, this has not always been the case, neither in theory nor practice. L. Venuti, speaking in relation to foreign literature being translated into English, discussed the concept that “[t]he more fluent the translation, the more invisible the translator”.<sup>2</sup> This was a reaction to practices adopted in the perception of literary translations into English. He also discussed the ‘illusion of transparency’ theory, where the fluency of the translated text is believed to be so good, that it is deemed original, and such invisibility adds into the lack of recognition for the translators and thus their ‘disappearance’. Despite the fact that his views concerned mostly poetry and prose, his theory can be applied to practices in the game localization industry as well.

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1 WHYTE, C.: *Online Movement Pushes That Translators Be Named in Game Credits*. Released on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022. [online]. [2023-11-31]. Available at: <<https://slator.com/online-movement-pushes-that-translators-be-named-in-game-credits/>>.

2 VENU TI, L.: *The Translator’s Invisibility: A History of Translation*. London, New York, NY : Routledge, 2008, p. 1.

In our long-term research of game localization, we have often found that digital games (either computer, console, or mobile device games) lack in crediting the authors of various language versions regardless of the nature of authorship. Such practices sparked our interest in the topic of how game localizers get credits for their work. In this paper, we will use the term 'game localizer' to identify digital game translators, editors or reviewers, and proofreaders of the text that is going to be tested by a language tester. In this paper, we will focus on Slovak digital games and their use of credits. We will focus on how, and if, Slovak digital game creators credit game localizers. We will also try to look into the attitudes of Slovak game developers towards game localization, and also the future of Slovak language in localization of digital games. We will discuss game localization in Slovakia through its historical development, available training, and its specifics. We also will look at Slovak as the target language of digital games developed by Slovak developers, and based on our research sample, we will categorize the crediting practices used by those developers. We conclude our paper by looking at the challenges that the digital games localization industry in Slovakia will face.

# Game Localization in Slovakia: History, Training, Specifics

Before we begin to explore game localization, we must clarify the rationale behind the term 'localization', and the reason why we are not primarily talking about translation. In terms of research, the first data that game localization theory later derived from were focusing on 'software localization'. Scholars such as B. Esselink or A. Pym started to talk about localization from various approaches and the term was later adopted in relation to digital games.<sup>3</sup> The term 'game localization' was defined by practitioners such as H. Chandler,<sup>4</sup> and researchers like M. O'Hagan, C. Mangiron or M. Á. Bernal-Merino,<sup>5</sup> and the definition laid theoretical foundations for researchers and practitioners. All the above mentioned scholars and practitioners used localization as a part of the 'GILT' process, encompassing globalization, internationalization, localization, and translation. The term localization is mostly connected to translation, however, within the digital game production industry, this term covers more processes and is deeply rooted in research and practice. In Slovakia, the use of localization in this precise meaning has only been seen in recent years. The first research on localization in Slovakia by V. Benko and A. Rajčanová was focused on software localization, in comparison to the international milieu.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the research practically ground to a hold until the middle 2010's, due to the lack of Slovak research results published on this issue (there were only some works, but those

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3 For more information, see: ESSELINK, B.: *A Practical Guide to Software Localization*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia, PA : John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1998.; PYM, A.: *The Moving Text: Localization, Translation and Distribution*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia, PA : John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2004.

4 See: CHANDLER, H.: *The Game Localization Handbook*. Hingham, MA : Charles River Media, 2005.

5 See also: O'HAGAN, M., MANGIRON, C.: *Game Localization: Translating for the Global Digital Entertainment Industry*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia, PA : John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2013.; BERNAL-MERINO, M. Á.: *Translation and Localisation in Video Games. Making Entertainment Software Global*. London, New York, NY : Routledge, 2015.

6 For example, see: BENKO, V., RAJČANOVÁ, A.: Lokalizácia softvérových produktov (Jazykovedný pohľad). In NÁBĚLKOVÁ, M. (ed.): *Varia 7. Zborník materiálov zo VII. kolokvia mladých jazykovedcov*. Bratislava : Slovak Linguistics Society SAV, 1998, p. 70-75.

were mostly bachelor or master theses). Further, the research on localization used to be connected to 'technical or specialized translation' or 'audiovisual translation'. Slovak research aimed specifically at the game localization started to grow only recently. The long-term research of M. Koscelníková and M. Kabát, as well as the launch of the *LION Journal* in 2022, invited even more research into the topic of game localization.<sup>7</sup>

The complexity of the term localization and its use abroad in the nineties and the noughties motivated practitioners and Slovak translation agencies to adopt the term 'localization' to cover translation, though the use of this term has not ever been debated since. M. Á. Bernal-Merino proposed that it should be called 'translation of multimedia interactive entertainment software'.<sup>8</sup> Our proposal, in line with *Act no. 40/2015 on Audiovision*, where digital games are considered as 'multimedia works', is that it could be called a 'multimedia translation' or even 'multimodal translation' (a term already used by scholars).<sup>9</sup> But it could possibly add to the confusion, or traceability of research, and therefore this debate is for now left open. However, there is still the need to distinguish between software localization and linguistic localization (translation), and for the purposes of this paper, under 'game localization' we mean translation of textual in-game assets (interface, subtitles, dialogues, etc.).

Besides occasional terminological confusion, localization training in Slovakia has not yet been established, and until recently, there has not been any complex course of study aimed at game localization, or localization in general. While digital games present a medium with varied types of text that can be in some way seen as pieces of literary translation (e.g., poem as a part of a clue), technical translation (e.g., software license agreement) or audiovisual translation (e.g., subtitles in a cut-scene), we must point out that digital games are most of all software, and they should be seen as complex software with all its specifics.

In terms of training in localization training, and the distinction between linguistic localization and software localization, training in Slovakia ought to be provided by a) translation studies/linguistic departments, and b) IT or mass media communication, or film and television departments, or faculties. From the linguistic point of view, as it stands in 2023, of all the Slovak universities providing training in translation studies, there is only one department, at Comenius University in Bratislava, offering a course aimed directly at the localization of non-game and game software. Partially, focusing on the issue of localization, the department of translation studies at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra offers courses aimed at translation and localization of multimedia texts. Apart from these two departments or universities, no other university training translation offers courses aimed specifically at localization, not even universities specifically teaching programming or game design. We consider this problematic, as the Slovak digital game creators are also the authors of Slovak or English (or other) texts in their games. Furthermore, as those texts in digital games often lack consistency, combinations of English and Slovak or Czech terms tend to sound unnatural and show a lack of creativity. This in turn suggests that proper localization (translation) and language courses would be beneficial for the students of the related study programs and future digital game creators. From the digital game production and development point of view, none of the examined Slovak departments or faculties that had study plans for courses aimed at the software development, engineering, or game design, provided course on the game localization.

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7 We specify such research more thoroughly in the article: KABÁT, M., KOSCELNÍKOVÁ, M.: Lokalizácia a jej miesto v translatológii. In *LION Journal*, 2022, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 4-26.

8 BERNAL-MERINO, M. Á.: *Translation and Localisation in Video Games. Making Entertainment Software Global*. London, New York, NY: Routledge, 2015, p. 6.

9 See: KOSCELNÍKOVÁ, M.: *Translačné špecifiká videohier v slovenskom kultúrnom priestore*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Nitra: UKF in Nitra, 2021.; For more on multimodality, see: KRESS, G.: *Multimodality. A Social Semiotic Approach to Contemporary Communication*. London, New York, NY: Routledge, 2010.

These departments provided only courses such as 'English language', but which are not specifically aimed at localization per se, albeit English language will be a prerequisite of any future game creator. This lack of concern for this aspect of games production causes that localization tends to be seen as a mere source of extra income, rather than an important part of the game. This in turn makes the localization providers seen as less important to be mentioned in credits, as we will demonstrate later. The 'invisibility of localizers' is further fuelled by the lack of interdisciplinary approach, training and the game developers' disregard of the issues concerning localization.

Localization is a complex process, and game localization has its specifics. Depending on the method of localization – either in-house or external, professional, crowdsourced or 'fanslated', the process of localization differs. Each digital game concept encompasses various thematic issues that need to or do not have to be adapted to the given locale, yet, when playing digital games in Slovak: (a) one can often notice terminological inconsistencies (e.g., in the digital game *Subnautica*<sup>10</sup>, we found here 'Subnautica' both with 'c' and 'k' as 'Subnautika'); (b) grammatical errors or bohemisms, and wrongly used words – usually wrong i/y letters, wrong prepositional phrases or bohemisms like 'klud' instead of 'pokoj' ('calm' in English), 'tlačítko', instead of 'tlačidlo' ('key' or 'button' in English), mistaking 'užívateľ' for 'používateľ' ('user' in English), etc.; (c) non-standard subtitle distribution (not respecting standard two-line placement and recommended characters per second); (d) creolized expressions deliberately left untranslated – mostly in settings, or mistranslations (e.g. 'credits' translated as 'kredity' instead of 'autori' or 'záverečné titulky'). Besides such instances, digital games have their own specifics like varied assets, limitations, unspecified recipient, variables, terminology, etc.<sup>11</sup> The final linguistic localization thus depends on translation or localization skills, and the competences of the game localizer, thus the less skilled the localizer, the more inconsistencies are present, and the lower the quality of the final localization.

Additionally, the current situation regarding recognition of game localization and its presence in Slovak study programs at technically oriented departments results in the lack of recognition of the profession in Slovak digital games. In our research sample, plenty of digital games had more than two localizations, yet the authors of the localization were often left out. In the majority of examined credits, the game authors did not mention the authors of the original language version of the game, in terms of in-game texts, only the author of 'the original idea' was mentioned in a few places, but without explicitly specifying their role. In the credits for the games for the Slovak market, using Slovak as a target language, not the source language, the mention of the localizers was nowhere to be found.

## Localizing Slovak Developed Games into the Slovak Language

According to the list of most widely spoken languages, Slovak is a less widely spoken language, with less than 15 million speakers. Despite its status of a 'minor language', it is more and more frequently present in digital games of Slovak or foreign origin. In our

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10 UNKNOWN WORLDS ENTERTAINMENT: *Subnautica* (PC version). [digital game]. San Francisco, CA : Unknown Worlds Entertainment, 2018.

11 For the translation specifics, see: KOSCELNÍKOVÁ, M.: *Translačné špecifiká videohier v slovenskom kultúrnom priestore*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Nitra : UKF in Nitra, 2021.

research focused on less widely spoken languages<sup>12</sup> we have pointed out that regarding Slovak digital games, Slovak game developers usually develop their games in English, and then localize them into Slovak. However, when we tried to find the authors of Slovak texts in digital games, very often we found no information about any of them. The situation instigated our research into the topic and motivated us to study game localization on the Slovak digital games' scene. As it was very easy to get directly in touch with the Slovak game developers, over the years we have accumulated data from the research sample comprising mostly Slovak games with Slovak as the target language, rather than digital games of foreign origin. Slovak in digital games is usually a target language, rather than the original, and we can see that the motivation behind that is not only programming languages being in English, but also the strong position of English as a gaming lingua franca.<sup>13</sup> Certainly, there are Slovak digital games available only in Slovak (e.g. educational games for learning Slovak grammar such as the website Grammar.in), but the majority of digital games we have encountered in our research had several languages to choose from. Nonetheless, it might not be profitable, and the game developers usually opt to provide more languages in their digital games or release their game only in English. This was the reason why we decided to inspect Slovak digital games and to see whether game localizers would be mentioned in the credits. Combining the insight of Slovak game developers which we obtained while writing our research on translation specifics of game localization,<sup>14</sup> we attempt to map the current practice and see, if Slovak game developers credit localizers for their work.

## Methodology

For the purposes of this research, we examined 69 Slovak games developed by 34 Slovak studios or developers, among them 47 computer games, 21 mobile device games and 1 browser game. In the sample, we have categorized four types of language provision: (1) forced language with or without the option to change it manually in-game, (2) pre-set language with the possibility to later change it manually in-game, (3) choice of language that the user can choose prior to launching the game, and (4) games with a single language.

Forced language provision was mostly used in mobile device digital games: they are launched automatically with the language chosen according to the set language of the mobile device, with or without the in-game option to change. For example, if a player prefers to play digital games in English but is a native Spanish, Slovak or Arabic speaker with phone set in one of those languages, the game tutorial will have to be played in the automatically selected language according to the mobile device language, however the player can then change the language of preference. As this could be considered a benefit, and facilitation of communication with a player, players of many digital games, with automatically translated content can find this debilitating to in-game progress and disturb their immersion in the game. This was not found in our research sample, but nevertheless, such use of language based on the device region or language robs players of their ability to choose

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12 See also: KOSCELNÍKOVÁ, M.: Video Games and Less Widely Spoken Languages: The Baltic States. In *Bridge: Trends and Traditions in Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 2020, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 68-87.; KOSCELNÍKOVÁ, M.: The Localization of Video Games into Less Widely Spoken Languages That Share a Common History: An Example of Slovak and Czech Legislative Parallels. In *The Journal of Internationalization and Localization*, 2021, Vol. 8, No. 1, p. 1-25.

13 See: CHANDLER, H.: *The Game Localization Handbook*. Hingham, MA : Charles River Media, 2005.

14 For more information, see: KOSCELNÍKOVÁ, M.: *Translačné špecifiká videohier v slovenskom kultúrnom priestore*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Nitra : UKF in Nitra, 2021.

the game language freely. It is even more problematic with mobile games for Android phones, where there is no information about the full language support available on the Google Play store page prior to installing or even buying the game. Mobile games for iOS found at the Apple Store usually contain language selection. The question of leaving out information about available languages can also be seen as a lack of recognition and value of localization among the game developers. In terms of pre-set language, regardless of the language of the device, most of our research sample had English as the default language, regardless of the region of the device, but with the latter option to change the language. This was the case with most of the computer games. Several games also offered players the option to select the language prior to launching of the game, but that was just a small proportion of our research sample. As for the games with one language, these were either mobile device games or new translations of Slovak text games from 1980s, that have been made only in English as individual pieces of software.

## Results: Language Support in Slovak Games, Automatic Language Settings, and Invisible Localizers

Most of the research sample had wide language support. The in-game languages included the standard 'EFIGS' group – English, French, Italian, German, and Spanish – but also Chinese or Japanese, and quite a few mobile device games were localized into less widely spoken languages such as Greek, Estonian, or Hungarian. With this strong language support, there should be a need for an increase in the number of people participating in the process of localization, however, when examining the digital game credits of the Slovak games, we encountered various approaches to crediting game localizers. We have categorized this as follows: (1) digital games without mentioning localizers in credits; (2) digital games mentioning localizers in credits only partially, and (3) digital games fully crediting localizers.

In the first group were mostly mobile device digital games with wide ranges of languages, but there were no credits whatsoever, no mentioning of the people responsible for localization regardless of the method of its provision. In these games the player never knows whether the texts are provided by the professionals, by someone from the crowd, fans, or by artificial intelligence. This was recorded in games e.g., by Pixel Federation (all their games), Fineway Studios (*Frankenstein: Master of Death*<sup>15</sup>), Charged Monkey (*What the Hen!*<sup>16</sup>), Powerplay Manager (*Cycling Legends: Team Manager*<sup>17</sup>, *Ski Legends*<sup>18</sup>), Games Farm (*Vikings: Wolves of Midgard*<sup>19</sup>), Cypronia (*Angry Bunnies: Colossal Carrot Crusade*<sup>20</sup>,

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- 15 FINEWAY STUDIOS: *Frankenstein: Master of Death (PC version)*. [digital game]. Helsinki : Jetdogs Studios, 2015.
  - 16 CHARGED MONKEY: *What the Hen! (Android version)*. [digital game]. Prague : Charged Monkey, 2017.
  - 17 POWERPLAY STUDIO: *Cycling Legends: Team Manager (Android version)*. [digital game]. Bratislava : Powerplay Studio, 2022.
  - 18 POWERPLAY STUDIO: *Ski Legends (Android version)*. [digital game]. Bratislava : Powerplay Studio, 2019.
  - 19 GAMES FARM: *Vikings: Wolves of Midgard (PC version)*. [digital game]. Worms : Kalypso Media, 2017.
  - 20 CYPRONIA: *Angry Bunnies: Colossal Carrot Crusade (Android version)*. [digital game]. Michalovce : Cypronia, 2019.

*Cube Life: Island Survival*<sup>21</sup>) and several others. Just to mention, in their first two games *The House of Da Vinci*<sup>22</sup> and *The House of Da Vinci 2*<sup>23</sup>, Blue Brain Games did not mention localizers in the credits, even though the games were localized into more than 10 languages. However, in their third game, *The House of Da Vinci 3*<sup>24</sup> their approach changed, and all localizers can be found in the credits.

The second group of digital games involved mostly computer games and the approach of the studios is indeed varied. In digital games by Bitmap Galaxy (*Yestermorrow*<sup>25</sup>), Lonely Troops (*Megapolis*<sup>26</sup>, *Romopolis*<sup>27</sup>, *Townopolis*<sup>28</sup>, *Hero of the Kingdom*<sup>29</sup>), 3Division (*Workers & Resources: Soviet Republic*<sup>30</sup>), Fatbot Studios (*Vaporum*<sup>31</sup>, *Vaporum: Lockdown*<sup>32</sup>), Games Farm (*Shadows: Heretic Kingdoms*<sup>33</sup>, *Shadows: Awakening*<sup>34</sup>) or ARTillery (*Catie in Meowmeowland*<sup>35</sup>) and others, we could only find inconsistent crediting of localizers. The localizers of only a few languages were mentioned, e.g., in Lonely Troops' game *Romopolis*, German, Italian, English and Russian localizers were credited, while French, Spanish and Slovak localizers were omitted. We also never found the person who was responsible for the Slovak localization, and we can only guess whether 'Script' or 'Original Idea' would truly encompass that role. Also, a 'localization director' or 'localization manager' was frequently mentioned in this category, as the person responsible for all languages. Localizers or advisors could also be hidden under the label 'special thanks to', e.g., in the case of the game *City Climber*<sup>36</sup> by O. Angelovič, a game which had 11 languages including French or Japanese. No localizer was mentioned directly, but names like Louison Hernoux or Seisho Honda appeared in special thanks – we might assume that they were the native speakers helping with the localization, but on the other hand, they might not be and thus, the 'special thanks to' label is vague, and if the former would be true, localizers should be credited properly. It is difficult to understand that where the various categories of work within 'art' are mentioned, spanning from 'concept art' through 'visual art' to 'level design', full credits are available, yet the complete list of people responsible for localizations is completely missed out.

The last is the category where localizers were fully credited. These were the games from studios or developers such as Nine Rocks Games (*Way of the Hunter*<sup>37</sup>), O. Angelovič (*The Flood*<sup>38</sup> – all localizers were named except for the creator of original English texts, while in his other game *City Climber*, with 11 languages, no localizers were mentioned), P. Jurkovský (*Juro Jánošík*<sup>39</sup>) and Blue Brain Games (*The House of Da Vinci 3*). To this category also belong 24 of the Slovak games localized into English, within the Slovak

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21 CYPRONIA: *Cube Life: Island Survival (Android version)*. [digital game]. Michalovce : Cypronia, 2018.

22 BLUE BRAIN GAMES: *The House of Da Vinci (PC version)*. [digital game]. Bratislava : Blue Brain Games, 2017.

23 BLUE BRAIN GAMES: *The House of Da Vinci 2 (PC version)*. [digital game]. Bratislava : Blue Brain Games, 2020.

24 BLUE BRAIN GAMES: *The House of Da Vinci 3 (PC version)*. [digital game]. Bratislava : Blue Brain Games, 2022.

25 BITMAP GALARY: *YesterMorrow (PC version)*. [digital game]. Sydney : Blowfish Studio, 2020.

26 LONELY TROOPS: *Megapolis (PC version)*. [digital game]. Halič : Lonely Troops, 2010.

27 LONELY TROOPS: *Romopolis (PC version)*. [digital game]. Halič : Lonely Troops, 2009.

28 LONELY TROOPS: *Townopolis (PC version)*. [digital game]. Halič : Lonely Troops, 2008.

29 LONELY TROOPS: *Hero of the Kingdom (PC version)*. [digital game]. Halič : Lonely Troops, 2012.

30 3DIVISION: *Workers & Resources: Soviet Republic (PC version)*. [digital game]. Košice : 3Division, 2019.

31 FATBOT GAMES: *Vaporum (PC version)*. [digital game]. Bratislava : Fatbot Games, 2017.

32 FATBOT GAMES: *Vaporum: Lockdown (PC version)*. [digital game]. Bratislava : Fatbot Games, 2020.

33 GAMES FARM: *Shadows: Heretic Kingdoms (PC version)*. [digital game]. Worms : Kalypso Media, 2014.

34 GAMES FARM: *Shadows: Awakening (PC version)*. [digital game]. Worms : Kalypso Media, 2018.

35 ARTILLERY: *Catie in Meowmeowland (PC version)*. [digital game]. Sydney : Blowfish Studio, 2022.

36 ANGELOVIČ, O.: *City Climber (PC version)*. [digital game]. Prešov : O. Angelovič, 2017.

37 NINE ROCKS GAMES: *Way of the Hunter (PC version)*. [digital game]. Vienna : THQ Nordic, 2022.

38 ANGELOVIČ, O.: *The Flood (PC version)*. [digital game]. Prešov : O. Angelovič, 2018.

39 JURKOVSKÝ, P.: *Juro Jánošík (PC version)*. [digital game]. Prešov : Black Deer Games, 2021.



Digital Games translation project.<sup>40</sup> All people involved in localization are fully credited, and games in this category should be an example of good practice. Apart from the digital games listed in this category, we did not find any other Slovak games fully crediting the majority or all localizers, or people responsible for localization. Certain digital game credits contained information only about English proofreading; nonetheless digital game credits should contain information about all the agents participating in the localization of game texts. That is the standard practice seen being regularly followed in translated literary works. When it comes to audiovisual translation, not all streaming platforms, or television, follow proper crediting of the authors of the translation, so far, we saw this standard followed only on the Disney+ platform. It is indeed difficult to fully credit everyone responsible for translation and localization, when it is not uniformly followed everywhere, but we can only hope that in terms of game localization, it will stop being seen as an inferior or supplementary part of the game development process.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Since the creation of the first digital games,<sup>41</sup> they have fundamentally changed. They are far more technologically advanced, they can offer immersive and extensive environments, and depending on genre, a lot of text. The former concerns of people about the safety of digital games, their influence mostly on children, or their impact on health are slowly receding, and new topics of concern like diversity, inclusion, accessibility, or cultural issues emerge and are constantly discussed in the game industry nowadays. When it comes to game localization into Slovak, finding information on language support is still difficult and inaccurate. In our research experience of less widely spoken languages in digital games,<sup>42</sup> we have often found discrepancies between the information about the language support of the selected digital game on the store page and the real number of languages in-game. For the purposes of this paper, we had to buy the selected digital games (if we could not obtain them as a gift or received them earlier unrelated to this research), install them and only then we could verify how many languages the digital game contained and whether their number is the same as described on the store page or in the box (either no information or partial information were provided). On several game selling platforms or e-shops the information on language support tends to be still incomplete (e.g., the digital game *Way of the Hunter* with Slovak support, Steam or PlayStation store page contain information about Slovak support, although the Epic store page does not mention Slovak at all). Looking at digital games in general, many other standard digital

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40 SGDA: *Playable English Localizations of Slovak Digital Games From the Late 80s Period (Updated)*. Released on 28<sup>th</sup> December 2022. [online]. [2023-11-31]. Available at: <<https://sgda.sk/playable-english-localizations-of-slovak-digital-games-from-the-late-80s-period/>>.

41 Remark by the author: Some say *Tennis for Two* by W. Higinbottam (1958) is the first game, others that *Spacewar!* by S. Russell (1962), another mention *Bertie the Brain* (1950), *Nimrod* (1951) or *Pilot ACE* (1952).; For more information on history of digital games, see: KENT, S. L.: *The Ultimate History of Video Games, Volume 1: From Pong to Pokémon – The Story Behind the Craze That Touched Our Lives and Changed the World*. New York, NY : Three Rivers Press, 2001.; ŠVELCH, J.: *Klíč ke kultu. Proč jsou některé hry proslulé a jiné upadnou brzy v zapomnění?*. In DOBROVSKÝ, P., BACH, M., POLÁČEK, P. et al. (eds.): *O hrách a lidech*. Prague : Xzone Originals, 2022, p. 72-79.

42 For more information, see: KOSCELNÍKOVÁ, M.: *Translačné špecifická videohier v slovenskom kultúrnom priestore*. [Dissertation Thesis]. Nitra : UKF in Nitra, 2021.; KOSCELNÍKOVÁ, M.: *The Localization of Video Games into Less Widely Spoken Languages That Share a Common History: An Example of Slovak and Czech Legislative Parallels*. In *The Journal of Internationalization and Localization*, 2021, Vol. 8, No. 1, p.1-25.; KOSCELNÍKOVÁ, M.: *Video Games and Less Widely Spoken Languages: The Baltic States*. In *Bridge: Trends and Traditions in Translation and Interpreting Studies*, 2020, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 68-87.

game sellers often do not consider it important to inform buyers about language support in a game at all). Localization is being considered as something extra. The invisibility of people responsible for localization, or just the mere use of their nicknames can be seen. This is because of the concept of using nicknames in the game, hiding oneself under a false name, this phenomenon is often noted in digital game credits, or in game-related texts and events. Since digital games have initially been considered a 'lesser medium' or 'mere sources of entertainment without deep meaning', they have given players the opportunity to hide themselves in their immersive fantasy worlds. Nickname usage practice in digital games then usually transfers into the real world, having their nickname in the middle of their name and surname. As a constrain can be seen the use of nicknames in interviews, reviews, blogs, websites, where we can find plenty of authors either hidden under such a nickname, or nickname allowing them to get away from the seriousness of the real world. Such nicknaming can also negatively impact the need to take localization seriously, and for proper crediting of the work. Many 'fanslators' do not wish to be named, they use nicknames, and this is also common in crowdsource translation, which in turn results in the lack of gravitas of their work, for example, the credits of *The House of Da Vinci* by Blue Brain Games container 'special thanks' section with the name 'This is Locco', or credits of *Catie in Meowmeowland* by ARTillery credited Ľubomír "Double Ash" Haraksim for 'music composing', but in the section 'additional sound design' he was credited without nickname. Moreover, translation being the 'illusion' mentioned in the introduction of our paper, allows, or motivates localizers to be unseen, thus not think about this issue and they consider it normal. When it comes to remuneration, money is an important issue in localization and the available languages depend on the willingness of the developers to invest in localization of their digital game. Another issue is the common problem of lack of funds. Therefore, many developers tend to use the crowd for localization – it is 'anonymous' and 'free'. Despite this situation, localizers from the crowd should be mentioned in credits properly, but it is often not the case as it is not feasible. There were several cases in other countries, of using fan localization in official games without mentioning the localizer and not remunerating them, but still the localizer did not consider it important to be rewarded for their work.<sup>43</sup> In some other cases, the translators were completely left out of the credits,<sup>44</sup> or translators were left out as it was at the developer's discretion to mention them or not.<sup>45</sup> While inspecting the credits of Slovak digital games, we have noted that the authors did not have a problem to credit themselves as several agents of the game creation process, however, localisation is a branch of the gaming industry that is considered quite differently, and while the lack of being credited and remunerated properly provoked the Loc in Credits movement abroad, Slovak academics and trainers, as well as between trainers, localizers, and game developers, will hopefully soon change, and this could play an important role in changing the approach towards the whole games localization sector. During interviews with some Slovak game developers in our former research, we have learned that many of them localized their games by themselves, and while they credited themselves for various roles within the game development process, they left out their role as localizers.

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43 GEIGNER, T.: *Fan Translator Likely Finds His Work in Official Game Release and Is Totally Cool with It*. Released on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018. [online]. [2023-11-31]. Available at: <<https://www.techdirt.com/2018/10/24/fan-translator-likely-finds-his-work-official-game-release-is-totally-cool-with-it/>>.

44 PLUNKETT, L.: *Persona 3 & 4 Translators Left Out of Game's Credits [Update]*. Released on 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2023. [online]. [2023-11-31]. Available at: <<https://kotaku.com/persona-localisation-translation-credits-sega-3-4-1850017066>>.

45 KUROSAWA, Y.: *Game Translators Discuss Being Left Out of the Credits & Why Veterans Are Leaving the AAA Space*. Released on 24<sup>th</sup> December 2021. [online]. [2023-11-31]. Available at: <<https://automaton-media.com/en/news/20211224-7911/>>.

Localization should not be deemed a complementary process, and only open dialogue among academics, practitioners and developers can bring a change to this situation in the future. A series of meetings with Slovak digital game developers or open discussions about localization with translation scholars and software developers shall bring an improvement to this sector. Furthermore, this whole new sector might call for the proper development of study materials and training courses.

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