

Strategies, Approaches and Techniques in Translating the Game Mechanics of Diablo III

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Abstract

Diablo III is the third installment of a renowned action RPG title developed by Blizzard Entertainment. The game has been fully localized into Polish, including the voice-over, and displays high-quality translation. The category of game mechanics covers a variety of in-game texts related to the gameplay as opposed to the game world or the game interface. In the domain of RPG games, these are texts such as character statistics, character classes, character skills, item properties, achievements as well as hints and tutorials. The present study seeks to investigate the challenges posed by these texts through an examination of strategies, approaches, and techniques that have been employed in their translation.

Keywords: game localization, game translation, game mechanics, gameplay, terminology, standard terminology, creative terminology, strategies, approaches, techniques

Streszczenie

Strategie, podejścia i techniki w tłumaczeniu gry Diablo III

Diablo III to trzecia część słynnego tytułu RPG akcji wydanego przez Blizzard Entertainment. Gra została w pełni zlokalizowana na język polski, wraz z podkładem głosowym, i stanowi przykład wysokiej jakości tłumaczenia. Kategoria mechaniki gry obejmuje różne teksty z wnętrza gry odnoszące się do rozgrywki w przeciwieństwie do świata gry i jej interfejsu. W domenie gier RPG są to teksty takie jak statystyki postaci, klasy, umiejętności, cechy przedmiotów, osiągnięcia oraz wskazówki i samouczki. W niniejszym artykule podjęto próbę przestudiowania wyzwań związanych z tymi tekstami poprzez zbadanie strategii, podejść i technik zastosowanych w ich tłumaczeniu.

Słowa kluczowe: lokalizacja gier, tłumaczenie gier, mechanika gry, rozgrywka, terminologia, standardowa terminologia, kreatywna terminologia, strategie, podejścia, techniki

1. Introduction

Diablo III is an action RPG game developed by Blizzard Entertainment and the third installment of this highly esteemed title. It was released in 2012 on PC, XBOX and PlayStation platforms. The genre of Diablo III and its predecessors is also referred to as hack'n'slash due to a heavy focus on combat. The game itself is played with an isometric view in a three-dimensional environment.

Before the game begins, the player chooses a class and gender for their character. Then begins the story of fighting the evil of all kind, from minions to skeleton kings and powerful diabolical bosses, such as Belial, Azmodan, and Diablo himself, with the help of an archangel Tyrael, an old scholar Deckard Cain, and his niece, Lea. Apart from fighting monsters, the key gameplay features are player character progression, the choice of skills, and obtaining more and more powerful equipment. Diablo has an active player community who exchange their ideas through various forums and has a dedicated official website localized into Polish (eu.forums.blizzard.com).

The first Diablo had a characteristic dark, climatic atmosphere and consisted in immersive looting and fighting monsters. Diablo II featured more locations, opponents, heroes, and unique elements, which from that moment on became a characteristic signature of the series, such as gems, runes, and item sets. Characteristic features of the series have always been: randomly generated levels, monsters, and events surprising the players in a fascinating universe; unconventional quests, a multitude of items, and a captivating story about the conflict between the Kingdom of Heaven and the Burning Hells. Diablo III is an heir to this heritage with rich lore and a characteristic dark atmosphere as well as a stirring soundtrack (eu.forums.blizzard.com).

One might observe that the Diablo series is focused more on gameplay than the narrative. Still, without a gripping story, the gameplay itself would become meaningless hacking. Hence, both aspects are important and harmonize in a way that is meaningful for the player. This being true, Diablo III contains elaborate game mechanics that can be treated as representative of the RPG genre. From a translator's perspective, the category of game mechanics covers all those texts which focus on gameplay as opposed to the game world or the interface, such as character statistics, character classes, character skills, item properties, achievements as well as hints and tutorials (Nawrocka 2019).

The present article seeks to explore the strategies, approaches, and techniques relevant to the translation of texts falling under the category of game mechanics on the basis of an analysis of the Polish localization of *Diablo III*.

2. Translation strategies, techniques, and approaches

The term translation strategy is not uniformly understood and applied by translation scholars. Some scholars differentiate between global and local strategies (Chesterman 1997). Others differentiate between strategies and procedures/techniques. The latter approach is advocated by Tomaszewicz (2004) and Piotrowska (2006). Tomaszewicz uses the term technique, while Piotrowska uses the terms procedure and technique interchangeably. In the present paper, the terms strategy and technique will be applied as defined by Piotrowska below.

Piotrowska (2006) defines strategy as: “a global approach (policy) of the translator, which is oriented on the goal and context of the translation task; a method assumed with respect to a specific message transfer from the source language to the target language”¹. She calls it a general decision and points to its features: (1) global – encompasses the translation task holistically; (2) preceding – procedures are applied as its result; (3) textual and macro-contextual – relates to the whole translation task, e.g. a written text; (4) abstract – pertains to concepts; (5) general – the goal is fulfilling the translation task; (6) dominant – superordinately determines the choice of technique.

As far as translation technique (procedure) is concerned, Piotrowska (2006) defines it as: “a specific procedural solution adopted while filling in the translation gap when faced with a translation problem”². She calls it a specific decision and points to its features: (1) local, unitary – pertains to specific translation units; (2) succeeding – results from the assumed strategy; (3) problem-centered and micro-contextual – applied in order to solve a specific problem; (4) concrete (pertains to specific solutions); (5) goal-oriented – focused on attaining an intended goal; (6) subordinate – subject to a chosen strategy.

Apart from strategies and techniques, the term translation approach will be used positioned somewhere in between strategy and technique. Due to the fact that in games localization there is an unprecedented variety of texts, which span from extremely standard ones to extremely

¹ Own translation.

² Own translation.

creative ones, three approaches will be considered: creative, standard and mixed. These approaches can be separately applied to style and terminology.

STRATEGY -----APPROACH-----TECHNIQUE

Fig. 1. Strategy, approach, and technique. Source: author.

An approach is partly global (can relate globally to a certain text type) and partly local (can be applied to a certain unit of translation/term). It is both preceding (determines the way of translation) and partly succeeding (suggests a solution). It is both macro-contextual (relates to the whole text of a certain type) and micro-contextual (relates to a specific unit of translation/term). It is both abstract (relates to concepts) and concrete (relates to specific solutions). It is both general (translating a certain type of text) and goal-oriented (focused on a certain goal). It is subordinate to strategy but superordinate with respect to technique.

Last but not least, the present article will also touch upon specific techniques for dealing with variables that are inserted into the texts dynamically depending on a whole variety of technical factors.

3. Game localization and translation strategies

Game translation cannot be understood without reference to the GILT process³ (c.f. Dunne 2006 [In:] Crespo 2013). The GILT process places game translation within the framework of broader phenomena such as globalization, internationalization and localization. The first of these processes is globalization:

Globalization ... refers to all of the business decisions and activities required to make an organization truly international in scope and outlook. Globalization is the transformation of business and processes to support customers around the world, in whatever language, country, or culture they require.

(LISA 2007 [In:] Crespo 2013: 25)

The next process, internationalization, has a more technical focus:

³ GILT is an acronym for Globalization, Internationalization, Localization, Translation.

... [internationalization] primarily consists of abstracting the functionality of a product away from any particular language so that language support can be added back in simply, without worry that language-specific features will pose a problem.

(LISA 2004 [In:] Crespo 2013: 25)

The following process, called localization, focuses on the adaptation of the product to suit the needs and expectations of the end-user (Hartley 2009).

The processes by which digital content and products developed in one locale (defined in terms of geographical area, language and culture) are adapted for sale and use in another locale. Localization involves: (a) translation of textual content into the language and textual conventions of the target language, (b), adaptation of non-textual content (from colors, icons and bitmaps, to packaging, form factors, etc.) as well as input, output and delivery mechanisms to take into account the cultural, technical and regulatory requirements of that locale. In sum, localization is not so much about specific tasks as much as it is about the processes by which products are adapted.

Moreover, localization is but one of a number of interdependent processes and cannot be fully (or correctly) understood without being contextualized in reference to them. These processes are referred to collectively by the acronym GILT.

(Dunne 2006 [In:] Crespo 2013: 17)

From the GILT perspective, localization is more encompassing than translation, which it subsumes:

Translation is one of several services that form the localization process. So in addition to translation, the localization process may also include adapting graphics to the target markets, modifying content layout to fit the translated text, converting to local currencies, using of proper formats for dates, addresses, and phone numbers, addressing local regulations and more.

(GALA 2011 [In:] Crespo 2013: 16)

More often than not game translation is referred to as game localization (Mangiron, O'Hagan 2013) (Chandler, Deming 2012).

Localization is the process of translating the game into other languages. If the product has been properly internationalized, the game will not need to be redesigned or have additional features added to accommodate the translations. [...]

The extent to which game assets are localized can vary from project to project depending on how many resources are available to invest in the localization and the likely return on the investment.

(Chandler, Deming 2012: 8)

The GILT perspective is characteristic of the localization industry. From a Translation Studies perspective, localization seems to incline towards one side of the traditional „translation” dichotomy (Steiner 1975), namely the orientation on the target text and its receivers. The dichotomy can be found in the works of many renowned translation scholars.

Table 1. Source and target-oriented strategies. Source: author.

Source-oriented strategy	Target-oriented strategy	Author
Literal translation	Free translation	Ancient thinkers (Munday 2001)
Moves the reader to the author	Moves the author to the reader	Schleiermacher ([1813] 2012: 49)
Formal equivalence	Dynamic equivalence	Nida (1964)
Foreignization	Domestication	Venuti (1995)
Overt translation	Covert translation	House (1997)
Documentary translation	Instrumental translation	Nord (2005)

Although the strategies are not identical and vary in emphasis, games localization can clearly be identified within the target-oriented framework which can be treated as the overall strategy. Game localization is target-oriented because the player’s expectations play a pivotal role in this process. They provide a compass for the translator when devising solutions to translation problems. In order to understand those expectations, the translator needs to be a gamer and be knowledgeable about various game genres.

As far as specific strategies are concerned, game localization is closer to free translation than literal translation and undoubtedly moves the author (game) to the reader (player). Also,

the default strategy is domestication as opposed to foreignization as suggested by the very term localization. We can also view game localization in terms of instrumental translation since the target game functions independently from its source.

Also relevant are House's covert translation and Nida's dynamic equivalence. Games localization requires covert translation since the target game strives to be a new original (Bernal-Merino 2015) (Chandler, Deming 2012).

If end users are convinced that the international versions were planned for them from the beginning, they will be satisfied that they are getting the same game experience as someone who plays the source version of the game.

(Chandler, Deming 2012: 7)

Hence, the translator should remain invisible (c.f. Venuti 1995). Only through covert translation, the player is immersed in the game, the player's disbelief is suspended and the game world becomes credible. What is more, games aim at achieving dynamic equivalence in order to provide the player with a comparable entertainment experience to that of the source game, which is sometimes referred to as a similar "look and feel" (Mangiron, O'Hagan 2013) (Chandler, Deming 2012). This is directly related to the target players' expectations: "For most gamers, the concern is usually focused on whether or not the gaming experience is fun" (Chandler, Deming 2012: 22).

These goals can also be viewed in terms of the *skopos* of the localization of video games (Vermeer 1996; 2000). The *skopos* of game localization is providing a target game that would look like originally created for the target players in order to meet their expectations by providing a similar entertainment experience to that of the source game.

4. Game mechanics and translation approaches

Game mechanics is one of three types of in-game texts next to the game world and the game interface (Nawrocka 2019). The game world can be seen as the most internal layer of the game. The game mechanics allows experiencing the game world, whereas the game interface is the most external layer which supports game mechanics and allows the player to control the game. These text types are characterized by different goals. The goal of the texts belonging to the game world is enabling immersion, the goal of the texts pertaining to game mechanics is enabling gameplay, while the goal of the game interface is enabling operation. In the context of games

localization, these goals may be viewed in terms of the skopos of translation albeit restricted to the specific text type.

Hence, each of the text types requires a different translation approach. Three basic translation approaches can be observed: creative, standard, and mixed (Nawrocka 2019). The game world made up of largely literary texts invites the creative approach, the game interface amounting to technical translation calls for a standard approach, while the game mechanics invites a mixed approach since it displays a mixture of technical and literary features. We can also view the mentioned text types in relation to the approaches:

Table 2. Standard, mixed and creative approach versus text types. Source: author.

Standard approach	Mixed approach	Creative approach
Game interface	Game mechanics	Game world

Moreover, the approaches can be separately applied to style and terminology:

Table 3. Standard, mixed and creative approach versus style and terminology. Source: Nawrocka (2019).

Approach	Style	Terminology
Standard	Standard	Standard
Mixed	Standard or creative	Standard or creative
Creative	Creative	Creative

Standard style adheres to software and games localization industry standards. These standards can be found for example in Microsoft Styleguide (2020) and representative games. Creative style is characteristic of literary texts which shape the game world and in some descriptive texts of the game mechanics⁴.

Standard gaming terminology is established by representative titles of which other games follow suit. The Diablo franchise can be treated as a representative title. Apart from the interior of games such terminology can be found on official websites of games, on wiki pages devoted

⁴ Game related texts include also marketing, informational and legal texts. These however are beyond the scope of the present paper, which focuses on the interior of games.

to particular titles, and in various glossaries and dictionaries related to games, such as *Słownik gracza* (2020) and *The Game Developer's Dictionary* (Carreker 2012).

Game-specific creative terminology consists of largely unique terms created for a particular title. Examples of such terminology are names of places, races, classes, skills, items etc. In the industry, they are treated as terminology and kept in the game glossary as their translation needs to be consistent in all in-game content as well as collateral materials. They predominantly require a creative translation approach since they are translated anew and the task of the translator is focused not so much on correspondence to the source text as on adequacy and function of the target term.

As the goal of texts falling under the category of game mechanics is enabling gameplay, their function is mostly informative (Reiss [1971] 2000). Character statistics inform the player of the attributes of their character. Character classes allow making an informed decision when choosing the class. Character skills descriptions provide key information for the player concerning the gameplay and style of fighting. Item properties inform the players of the characteristics of the items and help them choose which items to use in order to achieve desired results. Achievements allow the player to observe their in-game progress through some specific actions which are rewarded with an achievement title. Hints and tutorials in turn help the player to understand the mechanics of the game.

As far as translation approaches are concerned, as it has already been mentioned, game mechanics invites the mixed approach, which is a mixture of the standard and creative approach to both style and terminology (Nawrocka 2019). This implies that some texts may call for a creative style, while others may require adhering to gaming industry standards. Likewise, there are two kinds of terminology present: the standard gaming terminology and the creative game-specific terminology. They call for the standard approach and creative approach respectively. In other words, the creative approach is applied whenever the source text is creative as well, while the standard approach is advocated whenever the source text displays features of standardization.

5. Semantic, syntactic and pragmatic techniques

A classification of translation techniques can be found in Chesterman (1997)⁵, who divided them into semantic, syntactic and pragmatic.

Semantic techniques

Table 4: Semantic techniques (Source: Chesterman 1997 [In:] Nawrocka 2021).

Synonyms	Selecting not the obvious equivalent but a synonym or near-synonym.
Antonyms	Selecting an antonym and combining it with a negation element.
Hyponyms	Shifts within the hyponymy relation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST superordinate into TT hyponym • ST hyponym into TT superordinate • ST hyponym X into TT hyponym Y
Converses	Expressing the same state of affairs from opposing viewpoints (e.g. buy and sell).
Abstraction change	Choosing a more abstract or more concrete level.
Distribution change	Change in distribution over more items (expansion) or fewer items (compression).
Emphasis change	Reduction or alteration in emphasis or thematic focus.
Paraphrase	Content translated loosely, freely or undertranslated. Lexemes ignored for the sake of pragmatic meaning at a higher level.
Trope change	Changes in translating figurative expressions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST trope X into TT trope X (non-identical)

⁵ Chesterman (1997) uses the term (local) strategies, but the present paper will use the term technique after Tomaszewicz (2004) and Piotrowska (2007). Other scholars for example use the term procedure (Newmark 1988).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST trope X into TT trope Y (different trope) • ST trope X into TT trope \emptyset (no trope)
Other semantic changes	Other modulations (e.g. change of physical sense or deictic direction).

Syntactic techniques

Table 5: Syntactic techniques (Source: Chesterman 1997 [In:] Nawrocka 2021).

Literal translation	Translation maximally close to ST form but still grammatical.
Loan, calque	Deliberate choice of borrowing of individual items or syntax.
Transposition	Change in word-class (e.g. noun to verb, adjective to adverb).
Unit shift	Shift in unit (morpheme, word, phrase, clause, sentence, paragraph).
Phrase structure change	A number of changes at the level of the phrase, including number, definiteness and modification in the noun phrase, person, tense and mood of the verb phrase.
Clause structure change	Changes in the structure of the clause in terms of its constituent phrases.
Sentence structure change	Affect the structure of the sentence-unit (e.g. change in main-clause and sub-clause status, change of sub-clause type).
Cohesion change	Affects intra-textual reference, ellipsis, substitution, pronominalization and repetition, the use of connectors.
Level shift	Shift from one level to another (phonology, morphology, syntax and lexis).
Scheme change	Changes in parallelism, repetition, alliteration, metrical rhythm: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST scheme X into TT scheme X

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ST scheme X into TT scheme Y • ST scheme X into TT scheme \emptyset
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Pragmatic techniques

Table 6: Pragmatic techniques (Source: Chesterman 1997 [In:] Nawrocka 2021).

Cultural filtering	Naturalization, domestication or adaptation. SL items, particularly culture-specific items, are translated as cultural or functional equivalents.
Explicitness change	Change either towards more explicitness (explicitation) or more implicitness (implication).
Information change	Either the addition of new (non-inferable) information, which is deemed to be relevant to the TT readership, or omission of ST information deemed to be irrelevant.
Interpersonal change	Alteration in the formality level, the degree of emotiveness and involvement, the level of technical lexis and anything that involves a change in the relationship between text/author and reader.
Illocutionary change	Changes in speech act usually linked with other techniques. Changing the mood of the verb from indicative to imperative (from statement to request).
Coherence change	Coherence changes have to do with the logical arrangement of information in the text at the ideational level.
Partial translation	Any kind of partial translation, such as summary translation, transcription, translation of the sounds only and the like.
Visibility change	Change in the status of authorial presence or to the overt intrusion or foregrounding of the translatorial presence. For example the translator's footnotes.

Transediting	Radical re-editing of badly written original texts. Includes drastic re-ordering, rewriting at a more general level than other techniques.
Other pragmatic changes	For example layout changes.

6. Techniques for translating terminology

Apart from semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic techniques, what can be discerned are techniques for translating standard and creative terminology adopted from procedures of translating proper names. From the perspective postulated in this paper, proper names are subsumed under the category of terminology and treated as the game's creative terms.

Table 7. Techniques for translating terminology. Source: Nawrocka.

Technique	Description
Substitution	Using a conventionally sanctioned/standard term for a source term.
Transference	The term is transferred without any changes.
Transcription	The term is accommodated phonetically to the target language conventions.
Phonological replacement	The term resembles phonological features of the source term but constitutes a different term.
Rendition ⁶	Translating the term literally whenever it is made up of standard language.
Modification	The translator changes the form or implications of the term.

⁶ Vermes (2003) uses the term "translation". However due to a very general meaning of the term the author of this paper prefers to use the term "rendition" after Fernandes (2006).

Recreation	The translator recreates a neologism by providing a target neologism.
Cultural transplantation	Translating a term using a different term that is not directly related but has similar connotations and implications in a target culture.
Deletion	Deleting part of term or the whole term.
Addition	Adding information so that the target term is more comprehensible or attractive for the target receivers.

7. Character statistics

Translating character statistics, such as the ones in *Diablo III*, is largely a matter of employing standard gaming terminology. The basic statistics are: Level, Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, Vitality, Damage, Toughness, and Recovery, which are translated into Polish as: “Poziom”, “Siła”, “Zręczność”, “Inteligencja”, “Witalność”, “Obrażenia”, “Wytrzymałość”, and “Regeneracja” respectively. The first six of them are translated using the substitution technique. Toughness and Recovery could have other renditions, however, the ones officially chosen seem satisfactory and constitute modification, and more pertinently synonymy.

There are also detailed statistics, some of which are related to the offence. These constitute standard gaming terms, such as Attack Speed (“Szybkość ataku”), Critical Hit Chance (“Szansa na trafienie krytyczne”), Critical Hit Damage (“Obrażenia krytyczne”), and Cooldown Reduction (“Redukcja odnowienia”). They are also translated using the substitution technique. It is also important to note that the Polish versions use capital letters only in the first word of the statistics name as opposed to using capital letters for all words in English. The employed techniques seem successful at rendering the terms.

8. Character classes

In *Diablo III* there are seven character classes to choose from: Barbarian, Crusader, Demon Hunter, Monk, Necromancer, Witch Doctor, and Wizard (two of which are included in

additional content of the game). They have been translated as: “Barbarzyńca”, “Krzyżowiec”, “Łowca Demonów”, “Mnich”, “Nekromanta”, “Szaman”, and “Czarownik” respectively using the rendition technique. The last one could have other equivalents such as “Czarodziej” or “Czarnoksiężnik” but the one chosen seems to fulfill its function as it is the most neutral of the options. “Czarodziej” is generally associated with goodness, while “Czarnoksiężnik” with evil.

Each of the classes has its own characteristics, such as a different look, different attributes, and different skills, as well as uses different items. Below is a description of the Monk class, where one might observe creative style with mostly standard terminology. In translating descriptive texts a creative style is applied so that the target text reads well and the wording sounds natural. A literal translation of syntax is avoided whenever the result would sound awkward or unidiomatic. Hence, it is possible to move around particular elements of sentences, change the part of speech, divide sentences, or link more than one sentence into one, among others.

Table 8. Description of the class of monk. Source: Diablo III.

MONK	MNICH
<p>PRIMARY ATTRIBUTE: DEXTERITY</p>	<p>WSPÓLCZYNNIK: ZREĆZNOŚĆ</p>
<p>A holy warrior who attacks faster than the eye can follow, disabling enemies with precision blows.</p>	<p>Święty wojownik, który atakuje szybko jak błyskawica i unieszkodliwia przeciwników precyzyjnymi uderzeniami.</p>
<p>Holy and elemental magic infuse the Monk with the ability to heal and deliver crippling damage to adversaries.</p>	<p>Święta moc i magia żywiołów dają mnichom zdolność leczenia siebie i sojuszników oraz zadawania adwersarzom porażających obrażeń.</p>
<p>Quick and agile, Monks are masters of martial arts, employing their blinding speed to pummel their foes while dodging their enemies' attacks.</p>	<p>Szybcy i zwinni mnisi są mistrzami sztuk walki. Wykorzystują swą nienaturalną szybkość, aby błyskawicznie uderzać we wrogów, jednocześnie unikając ataków.</p>

The force of Spirit powers the Monks abilities. Spirit is gained through the Monk's primary attacks.	Aby korzystać ze swoich zdolności, mnich potrzebuje siły duchowej, którą zdobywa wyprowadzając podstawowe ataki.
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The standard gaming terms featured are: attribute (“atrybut”), dexterity (“zręczność”), warrior (“wojownik”), enemies (“przeciwnicy”), blows (“uderzenia”), elemental magic (“magia żywiołów”), ability (“zdolność”), heal (“leczyć”), damage (“obrażenia”), speed (“szybkość”), foe (“wrogowie”), dodging (“unikać”), attack (“atak”), primary attacks (“podstawowe ataki”). Their translation adheres to gaming industry standards and they are rendered by substitution. As far as creative game-specific terminology is concerned, there is “Spirit”, which has been translated as “siła duchowa”. What can be observed here is a modification, namely a distribution change, since a single term is translated using two linguistic items.

In the first sentence “faster than the eye can follow” is paraphrased with an equally idiomatic expression “szybko jak błyskawica”. Also, the translator opts for “i unieszkodliwia” instead of “disabling”, which constitutes clause structure change. In the second sentence the translator adds the information of who is healed: “to heal self and allies” (“leczenia siebie i sojuszników”), which is an explicitness change. This was probably done so that “heal” (“leczyć”) has a direct object, which makes it sound more natural in Polish. Translating “infuse the Monk with the ability” as “dają mnichom zdolność” is a paraphrase. “Crippling” translated as “porażający” displays synonyms.

Another sentence starts with an adnominal (Quick and agile) ending with a comma, which makes it a subordinate clause, while in Polish the adnominal has been rendered with two adjectives that are not separated with a comma from the rest of the sentence, which makes them a part of the main clause. Hence, a clause structure change can be observed. “Blinding speed” has been translated as “nienaturalna szybkość”, where the adjective is paraphrased. In the translation of the “enemies’ attacks” there is an explicitness change (implication) since the translation omits the “enemies”. Also, the sentence has been divided into two in translation, which is a sentence structure change.

The fourth and fifth sentences have been linked in the translation into one, which is a sentence structure change as well. Also the logic of the sentence has been modified since the translation starts with “in order to” (“Aby”), which is a coherence change. We can also observe a cohesion change: the translation instead of using the noun “spirit” twice links the sentences in order to avoid a repetition. Also, the subject of the sentence is changed: in the English text the

subject is the “force of Spirit”, while in the translation it is the monk, which is another coherence change.

In accordance with the creative approach to style, the employed techniques were quite successful in achieving an attractive and naturally sounding translation and communicating the source text’s message. The standard terms translated by substitution and the creative term “siła duchowa” were also adequate.

9. Character skills

Character skills are specific abilities of the player character, which have an impact on combat. There are two kinds of skills: active and passive. Active skills need to be activated in order to be used in combat. Passive skills generally enhance the character in various ways and are applied automatically. The names of the skills are generally translated by employing the creative approach since they are terms unique to a specific game.

As far as translation techniques are concerned, some skill names are translated literally using the rendition technique: Cyclone Strike (“Uderzenie Cyklonu”), Mantra of Conviction (“Mantra Pewności”), Wave of Light (“Fala Światła”), Transcendence (“Transcendencja”). Others are translated using the modification technique, which means that there is some sort of change involved: Exalted Soul (“Niezrównana Dusza”), Sweeping Wind (“Powalający Podmuch”), Serenity (“Spokój Ducha”), Chant of Resonance (“Dźwięczna Inkantacja”). In the first example – “Exalted Soul” – the adjective „Niezrównana” displays synonymy. In the translation of Sweeping Wind there is a paraphrase (“Powalający Podmuch”). In “Serenity” (“Siła Duchowa”) there is both a paraphrase and a distribution change into two linguistic items. Chant of Resonance has also been paraphrased. The employed solutions seem satisfactory. Below is an active skill of the Monk called Sweeping Wind complete with a description.

Table 9. Description of the skill Sweeping Wind. Source: Diablo III.

SWEEPING WIND	POWALAJĄCY PODMUCH
<p data-bbox="443 1789 603 1823">Inner Storm</p> <p data-bbox="427 1843 619 1877">Cost: 75 Spirit</p>	<p data-bbox="1007 1789 1254 1823">Wewnętrzna Burza</p> <p data-bbox="940 1843 1318 1877">Koszt: 75 pkt. siły duchowej.</p>

<p>Surround yourself in a holy vortex for 6 seconds that damages nearby enemies.</p> <p>Critical Hits intensify the vortex.</p> <p>You gain Spirit whenever the vortex is at 3 or more stacks.</p>	<p>Tworzysz wokół siebie na 6 sek. wir świętej mocy, który zadaje obrażenia pobliskim wrogom. Trafienia krytyczne zwiększają siłę wiru.</p> <p>Kiedy twój wir zyska odpowiednią ilość ładunków (przynajmniej 3), zyskasz siłę duchową.</p>
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Regarding the description, there are a few standard game mechanics related terms: damages, Critical Hits, stacks. “Damages” (“zadaje obrażenia”) and “Critical Hits” (“trafienia krytyczne”) are translated by substitution. The translation of the verb to damage displays distribution change as one term is rendered by two linguistic items (“zadawać obrażenia”). As far as stacks are concerned, they are translated as “ładunki”, which is not the closest equivalent (“stosy”), but a synonym. The other possible translation of “stacks” is poziomy. However, it is generally “levels” that are rendered as “poziomy”. Hence, ładunki seems to be an acceptable solution, which employs synonymy.

What is more, skills often contain values that are dynamically inserted into the description. In such cases, it is common for game developers to use placeholders for variables. When dealing with variables, the translator needs to envisage all possible values and provide a translation that will be grammatically correct once the values are inserted into the text that the player will be reading. In the example above there are three variables. One is for Spirit cost, another for the number of seconds the skill will last, and yet another for the number of stacks.

As far as Spirit cost, the translator used a standard method, which is adding the abbreviated expression “points” (pkt.). This is viable when dealing with damage as well as other attributes that consist of points. It is a necessary procedure, since Polish usually has two or three different forms of nouns depending on the number associated with it: 1 “obrażenie”, 2, 3, 4 “obrażenia” and 5 or more “obrażeń”. Using the abbreviation “pkt.” guarantees that the translation will be correct no matter the numerical value.

As far as seconds are concerned, a standard solution is to use the symbol for the unit of time (s) or the abbreviation “sek.”. Normally, seconds in Polish have three different forms: 1 “sekunda”, 2, 3, 4 “sekundy”, 5 or more “sekund”. Using “s” or “sek.”, as in the description above, similarly makes the sentence correct irrespective of the value. Likewise, when dealing

with minutes and hours, the unit of time would be used (min) and the abbreviation for hours (godz.).

Another solution for dealing with variable values is visible in the translation of the number of stacks. “Ładunki” in Polish have similarly three forms: 1 “ładunek”, 2, 3, 4 “ładunki” and 5 or more “ładunków”. The solution employed is inserting the number in brackets. In this way, the noun precedes the number and the sentence will be correct no matter the value. The addition of “at least” in brackets does not affect the outcome.

Another skill is called Transcendence (Transcendencja).

Table 10. Description of the skill Transcendence. Source: Diablo III.

TRANSCENDENCE	TRANSCENDENCJA
Every point of Spirit spent heals you for 105 Life.	Każdy wydany punkt siły duchowej przywraca ci 105 pkt. życia.
Heal amount is increased by 0.4% of your Health Globe Healing Bonus.	Efekt ten jest powiększony o 0,4% twojej premii do leczenia za kule zdrowia.
A life unlived is no different from death.	Niewykorzystane życie nie różni się niczym od śmierci.

Standard terms used here are: heal for (“przywraca”), Life (“pkt. życia”), and bonus (“premia”), which are translated using substitution. This time it is Life that is translated using the expression “points” (pkt.). The effect is a translation consistent with damage (“pkt. obrażeń”). There is also a percentage value, in which it is necessary to localize the decimal value by replacing the English separator (period) with the Polish one (comma). Otherwise, there are no specific problems with translating percentage values as long as the translator knows that the value will be a percent. This in turn depends on how the variable will be represented in the work file. It is possible to have placeholders such as %d% or %d%%⁷ for percentage values but also [BONUS_VALUE], <BONUS%>, and many, many others that are unpredictable. If the developer does not explain the placeholders’ usage, the translator may need to direct a query to the developer in order to make sure the value will be a percent and not an ordinary number or something else entirely.

⁷ Using two %% in the work file results in one % in the resultant text.

Subsequently, in light of the key features of skills, which is an attractive skill name and a clear description, the techniques employed seem quite successful. They also adequately render the source text's message.

10. Item properties

In most RPG games there are two kinds of items – generic and unique. As far as generic items are concerned, they are predominantly rendered by common nouns or neologisms. Unique items in turn have a proper name, properties and often have a flavor text. These texts can sometimes be quite lengthy. Whether generic or unique item names belong to the game world as well as their flavor texts. Game mechanics includes first and foremost item properties. Below is a description of a sword called The Sultan of Blinding Sand.

Table 11. Description of the item called The Sultan of Blinding Sand. Source: Diablo III.

THE SULTAN OF BLINDING SAND	SUŁTAN OŚLEPIAJĄCEGO BLASKU
Legendary Two-Handed Sword	Legendarny miecz dwuręczny
2,513.0	2 513,0
Damage Per Second	Obrażenia na sekundę
1738-2385 Damage	1738-2385 pkt. obrażeń
1.22 Attacks per Second	1,22 ataku na sekundę
Primary	Podstawowe
◆ +882-1105 Holy Damage	◆ +882-1105 obrażeń od mocy świętej
◆ +839 Intelligence	◆ +839 do inteligencji
◆ Increases Attack Speed by 6%	◆ Zwiększa szybkość ataku o 6%
◆ +19.144 Life per Hit	◆ +19 144 pkt. życia przy trafieniu
Secondary	Dodatkowe
◆ 34.7% Chance to Blind on hit	◆ 34.7% szans na oślepienie przy trafieniu
◆ Level Requirement Reduced by 9	◆ Obniża wymagany poziom doświadczenia o 9

Forged by the finest smiths in Kaldeum to commemorate the first emperor Hakan's ascension to the throne.	Miecz wykuty przez najznamienitszych kowali Kaldeum, by uczcić objęcie tronu przez cesarza Hakana I.
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First of all, a few standard gaming terms can be identified: legendary (“legendarny”), two-handed sword (“miecz dwuręczny”), damage per second (“obrażenia na sekundę”), attacks per second (“atak na sekundę”), intelligence (“inteligencja”), attack speed (“szybkość ataku”), life per hit (“pkt. życia przy trafieniu”), chance to blind (“szansa na oślepienie”), on hit (“przy trafieniu”), level (“poziom”), all of which are translated using substitution. “Holy damage” in turn is a creative term specific to Diablo III (“obrażenia od mocy świętej”), translated using modification, which is more specifically a distribution change.

As can be seen in the example above, item properties contain a large amount numerical values for particular attributes. These values are inserted dynamically into the game and while translating them it is necessary to predict all possibilities. Sometimes, similarly to skills, item descriptions can include an expression of what the item “does”. This is usually translated in the same way as in the example above (“Obniża wymagany poziom doświadczenia o 9”). The text below the properties, about who forged the weapon, belongs to the game world and can be classified as a flavor text.

In sum, the challenge of translating item properties is employing standard and creative terminology and providing a translation that will ensure grammaticality when the variables will be inserted into the text, which the player reads. The translation seems adequate in this respect.

11. Achievements

Achievements consist of a catchy title and a description of what the player has to do in order to acquire the achievement. The titles frequently involve wordplay, alliteration, rhyme, and allusions to pop-culture. The developers use them as an additional opportunity to inject some humour or something interesting into their productions. They are often untranslatable in their entirety, which is why they may require creative solutions and compensation in the form of exchanging a certain effect for a different effect. The description is typically written in the imperative mood. Below are five different achievements that can be obtained by playing Diablo III.

Table 12. Achievements. Source: Diablo III.

<p>GREED OVER NEED Kill 100 Treasure Goblins.</p>	<p>ŻĄDZA PIENIĄDZA Zabij 100 goblinów skarbników.</p>
<p>PINK'D Kill the following enemies while wearing head, shoulder, hand, and torso equipment colored with Lovely Dye.</p>	<p>RÓŻO-KRZYŻOWIEC Zabij wymienionych przeciwników po założeniu na głowę, ramiona, stopy, nogi ręce i tułów przedmiotów w kolorze nadanym przy pomocy uroczego barwnika.</p>
<p>MONEY FOR NOTHING Kill Greed without getting hit by her Charge, Shockwave or Falling Chests.</p>	<p>FORSA ZA FRIKO Zabij Chciwość nie dając się trafić jej szarżą, falą uderzeniową lub spadającymi skrzyniami.</p>
<p>MO' MONEY MO' PROBLEMS Collect 5,000,000 gold during a single Greed encounter.</p>	<p>WENCYJ KASY, WENCYJ PROBLEMÓW Zbierz 5 000 000 sztuk złota podczas jednego spotkania z Chciwością.</p>
<p>I JUST BLUE MYSELF Kill the following enemies while wearing head, shoulder, feet, leg, hand, and torso equipment colored with Mariner's Dye.</p>	<p>NIEBIESKO MI Zabij wymienionych przeciwników po założeniu na głowę, ramiona, stopy, nogi ręce i tułów przedmiotów w kolorze nadanym przy pomocy morskiego barwnika.</p>

Already in the first achievement, one can observe the solution of “an effect for an effect”, namely compensation due to the untranslatability of the title as a whole. The source text displays rhyme, which has been maintained in the target version and the translation is similarly related to money, but the wording is different and there is an additional allusion to a song by the Polish

band Maanam (“Żądza pieniądza”). The translation seems quite successful and can be classified as a paraphrase.

Another title is Róžo-krzyżowiec in Polish as an equivalent of Pink’d. “Pink’d” is “[u]sed in Online games where “votes” given by players in a game towards another contribute to them being removed from the game” (Urban dictionary 2020). It is yet another example of creative translation and more pertinently, a paraphrase. The translator based the translation on a reference to the pink colour. The hyphen serves as an emphasis that the title is a play on words. The Polish translation does not however allude to voting against a player. Still, the translation can be deemed successful since it alludes to one of the character classes (Crusader). It is a further example to show that in achievements the “catchiness” of the title is much more important than its literal meaning.

Another title, “Money for Nothing”, comes from a song by Dire Straits of the same title. It is an example of an allusion to pop-culture, which is quite common in achievements. The Polish version has been translated creatively as “Forsa za friko”, which is a paraphrase but involves a change into the informal register (interpersonal change). It is also another example of compensation since an allusion has been replaced by alliteration and a change in register. The result is quite adequate.

In the next title, we can see non-standard language in both the source (mo’) and the translation (wincyj). Money, which is a neutral basic category, has been replaced with informal “kasa”, which fits the non-standard “wincyj” meaning “more” and displays an interpersonal change. Here the effect of the target text is closer to the effect of the source as compared to the previous examples and seems satisfactory.

The last title, “I Just Blue Myself”, is an allusion to a television series “Arrested Development” and a play on words: blue sounds like blew. A character from the series painted his whole body blue for an audition. It has been translated creatively as „Niebiesko mi”, which is a modification of the expression “zielono mi”. “Zielono mi” comes from a Polish song by Andrzej Dąbrowski of 1970 of the same title. So in this case we can also observe a paraphrase and an exchange of an effect for a different effect: an allusion to a TV series into an allusion to a song. The play on words also has been exchanged for a different one. Still, the result is quite successful.

As far as the descriptions are concerned, they are composed and translated in a standard manner, i.e. using the imperative form (“zabij”, “zbierz”) and contain an instruction of what is to be done in order to acquire the achievement. There are a few creative terms (Treasure Goblins, Lovely Dye, Charge, Shockwave, Falling Chests, Greed, Mariner’s Dye), which need to be

consistent with the translation of the base game. In the Polish version, they have been translated as: “gobliny skarbiniki”, “uroczy barwnik”, “szarża”, “fala uderzeniowa”, “spadające skrzynie”, “Chciwość”, and “morski barwnik” using the rendition technique. These terms have been capitalized in the source text but not in the translation, except “Chciwość”. The result is satisfactory as well.

12. Hints

Hints are short pieces of information presented to the player in various places of the game. Quite common are loading hints displayed while the game is being loaded so that the players are not bored waiting. They take the form of a piece of advice in the imperative or inform the player of various aspects of the game. They can contain standard terminology as well as the game’s creative terminology.

Table 13. Hint. Source: Diablo III.

Equip your followers with new weapons and select new abilities for them as they level up!	W miarę, jak towarzysze będą awansować na kolejne poziomy, pamiętaj, aby wyposażać ich w nową broń i zdolności.
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The standard terms in the example above are: equip, follower, weapon, abilities, level up translated as: “wyposażać”, “towarzysze”, “awansować na kolejne poziomy”, “broń”, “zdolności” using substitution. What can be observed, is a distribution change in the case of level up from two linguistic items into four (“awansować na kolejne poziomy”). What is also worth noting, is that the Polish version does not use an exclamation mark. In software localization into Polish, it is a standard procedure to replace the exclamation mark with a full stop whenever dealing with an error message or something negative. On the other hand, it is common to use the exclamation mark for positive messages. In this case, the translator did not want to „yell” at the player or „command” him or her.

Table 14. Hint. Source: Diablo III.

Stay awhile and listen - your lore books can be accessed through their tab in your quest log.	Zaczekaj chwilę i posłuchaj – dostęp do ksiąg wiedzy możesz uzyskać za pomocą ich zakładki w dzienniku zadań.
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In the next hint, there are a few standard terms: lore books, tab, quest log. They have been rendered as: “księgi wiedzy”, “zakładki” and “dziennik zadań” using substitution. We can also see clause structure change from the passive voice (can be accessed) into active voice (“możesz uzyskać dostęp”).

Table 15. Hint. Source: Diablo III.

Run over gold to pick it up-no clicking required!	Przejdź po złocie, aby je podnieść. Nie trzeba niczego klikać!
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Another hint also contains standard terms: gold, pick up, clicking. They are translated as “złoto”, “podnieść” and “klikać” using the substitution technique. There is also a sentence structure change since one sentence has been divided into two. Also, the exclamation mark has been kept this time, probably since the second sentence is good news and is not written in the imperative.

Table 16. Hint. Source: Diablo III.

Demon Hunters can dual wield 1-handed crossbows!	Łowcy demonów mogą posługiwać się dwiema kuszami jędnoręcznymi.
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The last hint contains information about Demon Hunters. There is also some standard terminology: dual wield, 1-handed, crossbow. Dual wield is translated as “posługiwać się dwiema”, which is a modification of a term as it is a distribution change from two into three elements. “1-handed” and “crossbow” are translated as “jędnoręczna” and “kusza” using substitution. The translation ends with a full stop instead of an exclamation mark probably because the translator felt that such an informative sentence does not require an exclamation.

In sum, the techniques observed in hints seem quite satisfactory in serving the informative function of these texts while maintaining good style.

13. Conclusion

In conclusion, the ultimate goal of entertainment in video games localization is realized through target-oriented strategies, text-type restricted approaches, and specific techniques including the techniques of translating terminology. The strategies provide a general framework or direction for the whole translation task. The approaches – creative, mixed, and standard – are applied to particular in-game text types such as the game world, the game mechanics, and the game interface respectively. At the same time, the specific techniques provide solutions to translation problems.

That being said, House's covert translation and Nida's dynamic equivalence seem to be the most relevant to game localization since the target game functions as a new original and strives to provide a comparable entertainment experience, which can also be viewed in terms of the skopos of game localization. Game localization is thus a clearly target-oriented and goal-centered activity, which has implications for the applied approaches and techniques.

While the aim of the texts belonging to the category of the game world is enabling player immersion and the goal of the interface is enabling game operation, the aim of game mechanics is enabling gameplay. These too can be treated as the skopos of the translation even if restricted to a given text type. In the domain of game mechanics, gamers expect clarity and communicativeness, good style as well as consistent and attractive in-game terminology. This pertains to all the examined texts. Achievements, however, pose an additional challenge, which is translating the catchy titles in such a way that the translation also includes something compelling, which can be called a technique of "an effect for an effect".

In the domain of translation approaches, which are text-type restricted, game mechanics calls for a mixture of the standard and creative approach to both style and terminology. The reason is that game mechanics displays a mixture of technical and literary writing. Certain fragments display a creative style, while others are quite standard. Terms are either standard or constitute creative game-specific terminology. Consequently, the key translator competencies in game localization, which are knowledge of software and games localization standards on the one hand and a literary zest and creativity on the other, are both paramount in translating game mechanics.

As far as Chesterman's semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic techniques are concerned, not all of them were observed in the texts of the game mechanics of *Diablo III*. The examined semantic techniques included synonymy, distribution change, and paraphrase. They were employed whenever a literal equivalent would be undesired for the sake of a naturally sounding

translation. Syntactic techniques identified included transposition, cohesion change, and clause and sentence structure change. These techniques allowed the translators of the game to avoid erroneous syntactic calques and achieve adequate style. Pragmatic techniques found in the translation included explicitness change, coherence change, and interpersonal change. They were directed at the communicative quality of the texts. This being said, the employed techniques allowed the translators to convey the message of the texts in such a way that they would meet the expectations of the gamer community.

The texts associated with the game mechanics in Diablo III contained a considerable amount of terminology, which needed to be dealt with in a professional manner. Two kinds of terms were identified: standard and creative. As far as translating standard terms, techniques such as substitution and modification were explored. Substitution amounted to using a standard term, while the modification technique involved some sort of change of the term in translation and could include other techniques such as synonymy or distribution change. In the area of creative terms, the techniques used included rendition and similarly modification. The rendition technique consisted of a literal translation of newly created, unique terms of the game, whereas the modification technique sometimes involved synonymy or even a paraphrase.

Another type of techniques touched upon were the ones related to translating in-game variables: numerical and percentage values. These techniques were aimed at achieving a grammatical translation by taking into account all the possible values. Four techniques were observed in this area: using the abbreviated expression points (pkt.), using a unit of time or measurement (s, min, godz., m) as well as placing the variable in brackets.

All things considered, the localization of the game mechanics of Diablo III can be deemed successful and serve as a paragon for other RPG titles. The observed strategies, approaches, and techniques seemed quite effective in providing a comparable entertainment experience for the Polish players of Diablo III through achieving the skopos of game mechanics, which is enabling informed gameplay.

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