

**Koscelníková, Mária. 2024. Video Game Localisation in Slovakia. Nitra: Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra.**

Reviewed by Zuzana Hudáková  
Comenius University in Bratislava  
zuzana.hudakova@uniba.sk

Mária Koscelníková's *Lokalizácia videohier na Slovensku* (Video Game Localisation in Slovakia) is a pioneering work in Slovak translation studies, addressing the underexplored domain of video game localisation into Slovak. The author sets herself the ambitious task of mapping the specific features of game translation from a pragmatic perspective within the Slovak cultural context. The result is a well-structured scholarly monograph that successfully combines theoretical grounding with detailed empirical analysis, while simultaneously opening space for further research into audiovisual translation and localisation practices.

The first part of the monograph situates localisation within the broader GILT framework (Globalisation – Internationalisation – Localisation – Translation), highlighting localisation as a *sui generis* translation activity. Alongside precise definitions of key terms, Koscelníková tackles the ongoing terminological inconsistencies that persist in Slovak Academic and public discourse on localisation (Kabát & Koscelníková 2022). A particular focus is placed on the position of minor languages, especially Slovak, in the global video game industry. This theoretical chapter provides an essential and previously absent overview of localization-related research, teaching, and practice, both in Slovakia and internationally.

The empirical section draws on a corpus of twelve Slovak-localised games – eight PC titles and four mobile games – selected to reflect a balanced variety of developers (domestic and foreign), genres, development stages, and localization types (professional, amateur, and community-based). Although the sample is not large, the qualitative methodology enables the author to draw meaningful generalisations about the practical challenges and emerging trends in Slovak game localisation.

A key contribution of the study is the development of a detailed evaluation model for localised content, grounded in a taxonomy of narrative game texts. This model encompasses multiple localisation layers – subtitles, dubbing, HUD elements, system messages, non-dubbed narrative texts, and variable management. Tables 22 and 23 provide the methodological foundation by categorising and describing the research sample and the types of texts analysed. Tables 24 to 27 form the core of the analytical section, offering a combined quantitative assessment of each text component. The analysis reveals significant deficiencies in the linguistic and translational competence of both volunteer translators and developers who localise without professional support. Common issues

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include awkward sentence structures, substandard vocabulary, disregard for Slovak language conventions, and incorrect variable usage.

In the final chapters (notably section 9.2.2), the author revisits seven research questions derived from widespread assumptions in both expert and public debates on localisation. These include claims about the low purchasing power of Slovak players, the unprofitability of localisation into small languages, and the supposed irrelevance of localisation for game development. The findings suggest that while the Slovak market may not be commercially prioritised, motivations for localisation often stem from other sources – ideological (support for the Slovak language), thematic (alignment between game content and national context), pragmatic (grant funding requirements), or community-driven (volunteer engagement). These insights are valuable in challenging prevailing stereotypes.

Of particular importance are the findings regarding the qualifications and performance of localisers. Koscelníková argues convincingly that while gaming experience can be advantageous, it cannot replace linguistic and translational expertise. The lack of such competence often results in subpar translations. The study highlights the risks of volunteer-based localisation, which, despite reducing costs, tends to lower language quality and erode trust in professional translation. The call to connect academia, game developers, and professional translators emerges as a strong and urgent recommendation.

The final chapter summarises the key findings and outlines a realistic agenda for future research. The author identifies the need for more comprehensive sociological studies of gamer communities, a revision of localisation-related curricula, and stronger dialogue among developers, localisers, and scholars. She advocates for an interdisciplinary approach and for the institutional recognition of game localisation as a distinct translational activity.

From an academic perspective, this publication makes a significant methodological and heuristic contribution. It offers not only a thorough analysis but also a terminological and classificatory framework that can be further developed in future studies. At the same time, the book has practical value as a guide for translation students, game developers, and localisation managers alike. It is a notable enrichment of Slovak translation studies and a substantial contribution to the understanding of localisation as an interdisciplinary phenomenon.

Koscelníková's monograph represents a unique contribution to video game localization research in Slovakia. Thanks to its effective integration of theory and practice, and its rigorous methodology, it sets a high standard for future work in the field. It is not only an important source of insight, but also a call to action – for academics, developers, and translators – to vie game localisation as a vital and intellectually demanding aspect of digital product development.

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Kabát & Koscelníková. 2022. Localization and Its Place in Translation Studies. In: L10N Journal. 1(1): pp. 4 – 26.  
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