Translation Quality Assessment: Proceedings Carte Blanche of Translator in Localizing Simship MMORPG Video Game in Indonesia

Agung Prasetyo Wibowo[1]; M.R. Nababan[2]; Riyadi Santosa[2], Diah Kristina[2]
[1]*Doctoral student of Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta, Indonesia*
[2]*Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta, Indonesia*

Keywords: Translation Quality, Video Game, Localization, Carte Blanche, Transcreation, MMORPG, Dragon Nest.

Abstract: Video game translation, often called as localization, is a complex process that incorporates a number of aspects from other types of translation, such as literary, audiovisual, and software translation, to form a dynamic whole. As a new medium, video games also present their own challenges to translation in form of interactivity. It allows translators to transcreate the things that are necessary to preserve the game experience and to produce a fresh, engaging translation. This study looks at the translation quality assessment in the application of translator's Carte Blanche in localizing English Video Game into Indonesian, with the goal of revealing the translation quality based on instrument of translation quality assessment. The study uses descriptive qualitative method. In this case, the researcher collects, classifies, and describes the data using the method. The total data of the research is 193 data and then were verified by the expert and the translations were analyzed by raters related to the quality of translation. The result of this paper shows that the average score of the translation quality of the analyzed video game in term of accuracy is 1.8 or inaccuracy, acceptability is 2.26 or less acceptable and lastly readability is 2.38 or less readable.

1 INTRODUCTION

The beginning of localization practises can be traced down to the 1980's when the computer industry and computer software sprang up (Esselink, 2000, p.3) and the globalization started to spread around the world. Translation alone was not sufficient for the software which was developed and produced in one country to be adapted in a foreign market (O'Hagan, 2007, p.2). Thus, more work had to be done rather than translation because in addition to text-based translation various engineering processes had to be carried out – this was done in the process of localization. As B. Esselink (2000, p.3) explains, there are many more activities included in the process of localization than in the process of translation. According to the authors, localization process encompasses not only the activities of traditional translation, i.e. terminology research, editing, proofreading, page layout but also multilingual project management, software and online help engineering and testing, conversion of translated documentation to other formats, translation memory alignment and management, multilingual product support, and translation strategy support. One more important difference between translation and localization is that the former is performed after the product or document is finished and released, and the latter could run in parallel with the development of the source document or product. This process is named as simultaneous shipment ('sim-ship') by many authors (Chandler, 2005; Merino, 2006; O'Hagan, 2007) around the globe.

A localized game should be understandable and easy to play. Thus, translators are often given freedom to modify, adapt, and remove any cultural references, puns, as well as jokes, or any other element they think is not suitable in the target language. Game localization allows translators to transcreate the things which are necessary to preserve the game experience and to produce a fresh and engaging translation. This type of creative licence granted to game localisers would be an exception in other types of translation unless they are based on the Skopos theory of translation

Wibowo, A., Nababan, M., Santosa, R. and Kristina, D.
Translation Quality Assessment: Carte Blanche of Translator in Localizing Simship MMORPG Video Game in Indonesia.
DOI: 10.5220/0008215700002284
In *Proceedings of the 1st Bandung English Language Teaching International Conference (BELTIC 2018) - Developing ELT in the 21st Century*, pages 31-38
ISBN: 978-989-758-416-9

(Toury, 1995, p.24) The Skopos theory could be applied in game localization as translators do not have to be loyal to the original text, but to the overall game experience and the target text as well as the target culture. Moreover, Mangiron and O'Hagan (2006, p.11) introduced trancreation or carte blanche "to explain the freedom granted to the translator, albeit within severe space limitations." They stressed that transcreation or carte blanche is the creativity and freedom that game translators exercise. They observed that creativity indeed seems to be promoted rather than diminished, at least in some cases, even by the very constraints of various kinds imposed on the translators.

However, carte blanche cannot be done easily. Especially in a sim-ship type of localization. A good translating ability alone is not enough for a translator to wield this technique. A good programming skill and knowledge about gaming world are also strongly needed. Thus, even this strategy is highly recommended, assessment toward it is really needed. Since the translation will be so poor if the translator fails to apply it.

Moreover, the Indonesian industry of game localization in term of the quality is still questionable. The result of the translation conducted by Indonesian Video Games Development in adapt this technique really need to be assessed in order to produce a marketable games.

In fact, game developers localized many aspects of video game (Merino, 2015) such as in-game text, voice over and cinematics (audio and video scripts), art (game logo, in-game texture embedded words, glossaries, and even the packaging and promotion. However, in Indonesia, tdorabaaaahere is no game localized all of those aspects. The reason of this still need to be studied, but in order to localized all of those aspects needs a lot of money, which localization cost is even with the production cost. Furthermore, simship video games need to be released as soon as the original video game launched. Therefore, it is almost impossible to localize all aspects in such a short time.

In the previous research, Hyttinen (2010) conducted a research about cultural transfer in video game localization. In her research, she explained cultural representation in the localization of *Fatal Frame II: Crimson Butterfly* and classified the game into two main categories: representation and functionality. In representation, Hyttinen divided it into three aspects: in-game text, visual and audio. Furthermore, she divided the in-game text aspects into proper name and terminology. Finally, she concluded there are 5 translation techniques employed: retaining, change, omission, addition and substitution.

Other research, Purnama (2014) conducted a research about translation analysis of Pre-Battle Dialogue which reflected the myth of hero in Devil May Cry (DMC) trilogy. He aimed to find the translation techniques used and its impact on the translation quality. The result shows that there are some translation techniques used, namely linguistic variation, adaptation, literal, modulation, transposition, pure borrowing, and omission. In term of quality, the localized game can be categorized into the accurate one viewed from the clarity of the message that want to be conveyed. Meanwhile the average score for acceptability shows that most gamers feel that the localized game is less acceptable. For the readability, all translation techniques employed got perfect score, except omission.

On the other side, Carlson and Corliss (2011) conducted a research which entitled Imagined Commodities: Video Game Localization and Mythologies of Cultural Difference. This research exclusively explained the authority which play a role when the medium, in this case is the localizer, filters the pictures and narrations that are sold and marketed globally.

The other research related to the phenomenon of video game localization has successfully discussed about video game localization is in a Japanese video games with case study *Siren* video game series (Szurawitzki, 2010). This study raises the issue of whether rules in video games affect localization and how fictitious elements can affect localization. In the research, the thing that gained is that the rules and fiction in video games are often related. In order to enjoy a video game perfectly, the most important thing for gamers is to be able to master and understand the rules of the video game. While fiction provides integrity in playing video games, and became the main reason in playing a video game. Some cases are discussed both in the domain of rules and fiction elements at the same time, and thus can be analyzed in the context of the question.

A similar study that raised the phenomenon of localization successfully discussed video game translation in the Czech Republic (Petru, 2011). This study focuses on the timeline of video game translation since the era of translation done by the fan until the era of translation conducted by professionals in the Czech Republic. This study deals only with historically existing phenomena.

And based on those reasons, phenomenon and previous studies, since there is no research that

discuss about the quality of localization mainly in in-game text assets in Indonesia, the researchers aim to analyze and assess the translation quality of transcreation or carte blanche strategy applied by Indonesian game translator in translating the in-game text assets of Dragon Nest video game.

2 CORE THEORIES OF THE RESEARCH

In order to comprehend and follow the method correctly, this research employ some of theories which are becoming the core of the research. They are as follow:

2.1 In-game Text Assets

There are 5 aspects in video game (Bernal-Merino, 2015), they are in-game text, voice over and cinematics (audio and video scripts), art (game logo, in-game texture embedded words, glossaries, and even the packaging and promotion. In this study, the researchers focus in analyzing the in-game text in the game. In game text assets is the assets of video game in form of texts that can be found inside the game. O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013, p. 155) explains further about in-game text in the table below:

Table 1: In-game text assets proposed by O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013, p. 155)

Relation to game word	Translation assets	Text function and description
Non dia-getic	User Interface	Informative function for smooth navigation and gameplay. Typically contains short text fragments
Non dia-getic	System Message	Informative function for instructive pragmatic purposes. Messages generated by the system, such as warning, instructions, and confirmation messages.
Diagetic	Narrative Text	Expressive/ informative function for imparting certain information in a dramatic manner.Literary passages used to engage the player in the game world or to a new level within the game. They contextualize and provide information about the game story, including a backstory.
Non diagetic	Exposition / tutorial	Informative function with instructive and didactic messages. In-game tutorials may be used to explain game mechanics by way of demonstration and the player practice.
Diagetic	Unvoiced dialogue scripts	Informative / expressive function mainly to provide information and elicit a certain action by the player. Dialogue which appears only in written form, ommonly used for Non- Playable Characters NPCs).

2.2 Carte Blanche Strategy

In translating localized game, translators are free to modify/adapt/remove anything that does not suit the target language, e.g. cultural reference, puns, jokes, etc. There is a creative license for game translator that allows them to be unfaithful to the original text as long as the overall game is fresh, engaging, and can be accepted in the target culture as localized game should be understandable and easy to play. Toury (1995, p. 24) called this exception as the Skopos theory. Other than that, Mangiron introduced trasncreation or carte blanche that means "the freedom granted to the translator, albeit within severe space limitations".

2.3 Quality of Translation

To analyze the quality of translation, related to the accuracy, acceptability and readability, the researcher used the instrument of translation quality assessment from Nababan et,Al.,(2012).

Table 2: Scoring system of Accuracy aspect. (Nababan, Nuraeni, and Sumardiono, 2012)

Category	Score	Qualitative Parameter
Accurate	3	Meaning of the word, technical terms, phrases, clauses or sentences of the source language are translated

		accurately to the target language; there is no distortion in meaning at all.
Less Accurate	2	Most of the meaning of the word, technical term, phrase, clause and sentence of the source language are translated accurately to the target language. However, there is still a meaning distortion or ambiguity or lose in meaning.
Inaccurate	1	Meaning of the word, technical terms, phrases, clauses or sentences of the source language are translated inaccurately to the target language or deleted

Table 3: Scoring system of Acceptability aspect. (Nababan, Nuraeni, and Sumardiono, 2012)

Category	Score	Qualitative Parameter
Acceptable	3	Translation is natural; technical terms used is commonly used and familiar to the reader; the phrases, clauses and sentences used are in conformity with the Indonesian grammar
Less Acceptable	2	In general, the translation is already natural; but there is little problem with the use of technical terms or a few grammatical errors.
In acceptable	1	Translation is not natural; technical terms used is unusual used and not familiar to the reader; the phrases, clauses and sentences used do not conform with the Indonesian grammar.

Table 4: Scoring system of readibility aspect. (Nababan, Nuraeni, and Sumardiono, 2012)

Category	Score	Qualitative Parameter
Readable	3	Words, terms, phrases, clauses, sentences can be easily understood by the reader.
Less	2	Generally the translation
Readable		can be understood by the reader; but there are certain parts that must be read more than once to understand the translation
Unreadable	1	Translation is difficult for the reader to understand

3 RESEARCH METHOD

This is a descriptive qualitative research which is conducted by collecting the data, analyzing the data and making conclusion from the research findings. Sutopo (2006, p. 93) stated that the data used in qualitative research are in the form of utterance, words, clauses, and discourse. Creswell (2014, p. 232) also explained qualitative research relies on text and image data, have unique steps in data analysis, and draw on diverse design. In addition, qualitative researches collect data themselves through examining documents, observations, focus on learning the data, review all the data, make sense of it and organize it into categories that cut across al of the data source. This research focuses in analyzing the in-game text and its translation. The data were taken from an MMORPG video game entitled Dragon Nest North America version by *Eyedentity* Games and its Localized version by *PT KreonGamescool*. Furthermore, the impact of transcreation technique employed in the localized version will be analyzed toward the quality of translation in terms of accuracy, acceptability, and readability. After being collected, the English and Indonesian versions the data were verified by the expert and the translations were analyzed by raters related to quality of translation through Focus Group of Discussion (FGD). The researcher gave questioners related to the carte blanche strategy, technique of translation and quality of translation from the accuracy, acceptability and readability.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in User Interface (UI)

There are 25 data of Carte Blanche strategy used by the translator in translating the user interface of in-game text assets. The result shows that the average score of accuracy in those data is 2.16, which can be

classified into less accurate; average score of acceptability in those data is 1.45, which can be classified into unacceptable; average score of readability in those data is 1.97, which can be classified into less readable. The details of the result can be seen in the table below:

Table 5: Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in User Interface of in-game text assets

Domain	Issues	Number of Data	Translation Quality		
			Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
User Interface (UI)	Menu	5	1.8	1.6	1.8
	Name	11	2.3	1.5	2.1
	Item	4	2.25	1.5	2
	Skill/ Job	5	2.3	1.2	2
Total and average		25	2.16	1.45	1.97

There are five issues regarding the domain of User interface (UI), they are menu, name, item and skill/job. Menu is the in-game text data that shows the option that the gamer can select through the game, name is the word that a particular person animal, or place known by, item is the thing that can be used by the gamer through the game, and skill/job is the special power or the ability possessed by the heroes. Below is the example of the data analysis taken from User Interface (UI):

Source Language	Target Language	Quality		
		Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
		1	2	1
Clap	Tepuk			

From the example above, it can be concluded that the translation version is not transferring the clear meaning from the source language. The clap itself according to Echols & Shadily English-Indonesian dictionary (2002) is *bertepuk tangan*. Meanwhile in this data clap is translated into tepu… which is actually *tepuk tangan* but omitted because of space restriction. According to Mangiron and O'Hagan (2013), the characteristic of UI is typically contained of short text fragments. The translator failed in using the *carte blache* strategy here to transfer the message correctly since the message is not clear enough. Therefore the quality in term of accuracy is 1 here or not accurate, 2 for acceptability since it is accepted in term of computer system but not accepted in the target language grammar, and 1 point for readability because *tepu*.. is unreadable since it is unfamiliar in the target text.

4.2 Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in System Information

There are 29 data of Carte Blanche strategy used by the translator in translating the system messages of in-game text assets. The result shows that the average score of accuracy in those data is 2.15, which can be classified into less accurate; average score of acceptability in those data is 2.05, which can be classified into less acceptable; average score of readability in those data is 2.13, which can be classified into less readable. The details of the result can be seen in the table below:

Table 6: Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in System Information of in-game text assets

Domain	Issues	Number of Data	Translation Quality		
			Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
System Message	System Information	17	2.05	2.05	2.1
	Pop-up message	4	2.2	2.1	2.2
	Game Techology	8	2.2	2	2.1
Total and average		29	2.15	2.05	2.13

There are three issues regarding the domain of User interface (UI), they are system information, pop-up message, and game terminology. System information is the message which appears on the screen that function as the helper for the gamer and it cannot be selected like the menu, The pop-up message is the text that show up in a dialog box in

the screen, and the last is game terminology, a term used in the game. Below is the example of the data analysis taken from system information:

Source Language	Target Language	Quality		
		Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
		3	3	3
Lv. 3 Congratulations on your level up!	Lv.3 Selamat kamu naik level!			

From the example above, it can be concluded that the translation version is transferring the clear meaning from the source language. The expert and the raters give perfect score (3) for each accuracy, acceptability and readability. In this data, the sentence is accurately translated to the target text. The meaning in the target text is the same with the meaning conveyed in the source text. As in the acceptability aspect, it hits the perfect score since the sentence structure in the target text is correct and also its length is accepted by the computer system. And the last, the translated version sounds natural to the Indonesian people.

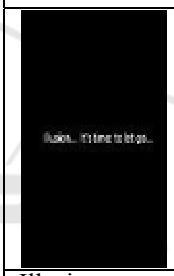
4.3 Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in Narrative Text

There are 13 data of Carte Blanche strategy used by the translator in translating the narrative text of in-game text assets. The result shows that the average score of accuracy in those data is 1.77, which can be classified into less accurate; average score of acceptability in those data is 2.4, which can be classified into less acceptable; average score of readability in those data is 2.4, which can be classified into less readable. The details of the result can be seen in the table below:

Table 7: Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in Narrative Text of in-game text assets

Domain	Issues	Number of Data	Translation Quality		
			Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
Narrative Text	Background Story	4	1.75	2.5	2.5
	In-game stroy	9	1.8	2.3	2.3
Total and average		13	1.77	2.4	2.4

There are two issues regarding the domain of narrative text, they are background story and in-game story. Background story is the narration which appears as the introduction of the game and shows before the gamers start the game. Meanwhile the in-game story is the narration which appears during the gameplay to help the gamers stay in line with the main story. Below is the example of the data analysis taken from narrative text:

Source Language	Target Language	Quality		
		Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
		3	3	3
Illusion... It's time to let go	Illusion... Sekarang Lepaskan dirimu			

4.4 Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in Tutorial/Exposition Text

There are 60 data of Carte Blanche strategy used by the translator in translating the tutorial/exposition text of in-game text assets. The result shows that the average score of accuracy in those data is 1.75, which can be classified into less accurate; average score of acceptability in those data is 2.49, which can be classified into less acceptable; average score of readability in those data is 2.49, which can be classified into less readable. The details of the result can be seen in the table below:

Table 8: Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in proceeding Tutorial/Exposition Text of in-game text assets

Domain	Issues	Number of Data	Translation Quality		
			Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
Exposition/Tutorial	Guide	3	1.6	3	3
	Description	57	1.9	1.98	1.98
Total and average		60	1.75	2.49	2.49

There are two issues regarding the domain of exposition/tutoria), they are guide and description. Guide is used to lead the gamer on how to play the game. Meanwhile the description is the explanation that define the items, characters, place or things in the game. Below is the example of the data analysis taken from exposition/tutorial.

Source Language	Target Language	Quality		
		Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
		2	3	3
Left-click to Perform a normal attack.	Klik-kiri Untuk menggunakan normal attack.			

From the example above, it can be known that the scores of this translation are 2 for the accuracy, 3 for acceptability and 3 for the readability. The expert of the translation give score 2 in this data. The reason of this scoring is because the translator choose to maintain the normal attack phrase into normal attack. Although it is still accurate, but it still can be translated since there is its equivalent in the target language. Therefore this decision is questioned and reduce the score.The raters give perfect score (3) for each acceptability and readability. As in the acceptability aspect, it hits the perfect score since the sentence structure in the target text is correct and also its length is accepted by the computer system. And the last, the translated version sounds natural to the Indonesian people.

4.5 Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in Unvoiced Dialogue Text

There are 66 data of Carte Blanche strategy used by the translator in translating the unvoiced dialogue of in-game text assets. The result shows that the average score of accuracy in those data is 1.17, which can be classified into inaccurate; average score of acceptability in those data is 2.93, which can be classified into acceptable; average score of readability in those data is 2.93, which can be classified into readable. The details of the result can be seen in the table below:

Table 9: Translation Quality of Carte Blanche in Unvoiced Dialogue Text of in-game text assets

Domain	Issues	Number of Data	Translation Quality		
			Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
Unvoiced Dialogue	Key Dialogue	46	1.15	2.96	2.96
	Supporting Dialogue	20	1.2	2.9	2.96
Total and average		66	1.17	2.93	2.43

There are two issues regarding the domain of unvoiced dialogue, they are key dialogue and supporting dialogue. Key dialogue is the main conversation that the gamers need to do in order to continue the game and keep in line with the main story. It is usually containing the clue or hint of what the gamer should do in order to continue the game. On the other hand, the supporting dialogue is the conversation between the main character with the NPC (non player character). The conversation does not affect the game story and usually only a hint lead to side quest.

Source Language	Target Language	Quality		
		Accuracy	Acceptability	Readibility
		2	2	2

We're inside your mind.	Disinilah adalah dunia didalam kamu..			

From the example above, it can be known that the scores of this translation are 2 for the accuracy, 2 for acceptability and 2 for the readability. The expert of the translation give score 2 in this data because the translator's choice in translatiice in translating *your mind* into *di dalam kamu*. This translation is rather unclear since di dalam can refer not only to mind (benak) but also, for example, soul, self, brain, and etc. therefore it is classified into less accurate. The raters give 2 score for each acceptability and readability. As in the acceptability aspect, it is not hit the perfect score since the sentence structure in the target text is wordy. And the last, the translated version is less readable because it sounds awkward to the Indonesian people.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result and discussion, it can be drawn that the averages of accuracy in UI, system messages, narrative text, tutorial/exposition text and unvoiced dialogue of in-game text assets consecutively are 2.16, 2.15, 1.77, 1.75, and 1.17. From those numbers, it can be concluded that the overall score of the accuracy is 1.8, which means the accuracy of Carte Blanche technique applied by the translator is less accuracy. Meanwhile, the averages of acceptability in UI, system messages, narrative text, tutorial/exposition text and unvoiced dialogue of in-game text assets consecutively are 1.45, 2.05, 2.4, 2.49, and 2.93. From those numbers, it can be concluded that the overall score of the acceptability is 2.26, which means the acceptability of carte blanche technique applied by the translator is less acceptable. Lastly, the averages of readability in UI, system messages, narrative text, tutorial/exposition text and unvoiced dialogue of in-game text assets consecutively are 1.97, 2.13, 2.4, 2.49, and 2.93. From those numbers, it can be concluded that the overall score of the readability is 2.38, which means the readability of carte blanche technique applied by the translator is less readable.

REFERENCES

Bernal Merino, M. Á 2006, 'On the Translation of Video Games' *The Journal of Specialised Translation, issue 6*.

Bernal Merino, M. Á 2007, 'Video games as a new domain for translation research: From translating text to translating experience', *Revista Tradumàtica, vol. 5.*

Bernal Merino, M. Á 2015. *Translation and Localisation in Video Games. Making Entertainment Software Global*. New York/London: Routledge

Carlson, R., Corliss, J 2011. 'Imagined Commodities: Video Game Localization and Mythologies of Cultural Difference', *Journal of Games and Culture, vol. 6, no. 1. SAGE Publications.*

Chandler, H. M., Deming, S.O 2005. *The game localization handbook (2nd ed.).* Sudbury, MA: Ontario/London: Jones & Bartlett Learning.

Creswell, J. W 2014. *Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA Sage.

Czech, D 2013. 'Challenges in video game localization: An integrated perspective', *Explorations: A Journal of Language and Literature vol. 1,* hlm. 3-25.

Esselink, B 2000. *A practical guide to localization*, Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company Hyttinen, M 2010, 'Bringing the foreign into play: cultural transfer in video game localization', *Master Thesis: University of Tampere. Journal of Specialised Translation, vol. 11.*

Mangiron, C. & O'Hagan, M 2006, 'Game localisation: unleashing imagination with 'Restricted' translation', *The Journal of Specialised Translation*, vol. 6.

Mangiron, C. & O'Hagan, M 2013, *Game localization: translating for the global digital entertainment industry.* Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

O'Hagan, M 2007, 'Video games as a new domain for translation research: from translating text to translating experience', *Revista Tradumàtica*, vol. 5.

Purnama, SF. L.S 2014, 'Analisis dampak terjemahan pre- battle dialogue terhadap myth yang direfleksikan hero dalam trilogi video game devil may cry karya capcom (pendekatan popular culture)', *Master Thesis: Universitas Sebelas Maret.*

Petrů, J 2011. 'Video game translation in the czech republic' - from fan translation to professionalism. *Diploma thesis: Masaryk University, Czech Republic.*

Sutopo 2006, *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Surakarta: UNS.

Szurawitzki, A 2010. 'Japanese video games and localization: a case study of sony's sairen series', *Master Thesis: University of Helsinki, Finland.*

Toury, G 1995, *Descriptive translation studies and beyond*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company