

REVIEWS/RESENHAS

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Chandler, Heather Maxwell, and Stephanie O Deming. *The Game Localization Handbook*. 2nd ed. USA: Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2012. 376.

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Aside from a thorough understanding of the aspects related to the area of game localization and the implications of this type of translation practice in the market, *The Game Localization Handbook*, by Heather Maxwell Chandler and Stephanie O'Malley Deming (2012), also provides an interesting perspective on the several dimensions deriving from this applied field of translation expertise .

Divided into **five sections** comprising sixteen chapters, the book perceives the translation of videogames as a systemic process

which should be part of the whole chain of development of this type of software. Throughout the chapters of the book, a comprehensive guide is offered to students, translators in this field of expertise, development personnel, producers, or anyone interested in deepening their knowledge in the area of game localization.

The first section of the book provides a general overview on the concept of localization by drawing upon the implications of selling games in different markets and cultural backgrounds, the necessary dimensions of planning in a localization project and the locale-specific characteristics to be taken into account in such translation practice. This section corroborates perspectives that are somehow taken for granted in translation studies. The authors essentially assume that the responsibility of safeguarding an optimal localization process lies in the fact that certain resources of representation cannot always be interchangeable from one cultural context to another without the proper adaptation. This condition becomes a fundamental assumption that ultimately shapes

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the translation choices and the way certain pieces of content are depicted in a game.

The second section discusses the necessary procedures to be considered before localizing a game. These procedures include a detailed budgeting, localization scheduling, determining what aspects should be localized in a game and in which languages, dealing with vendors, translation and development staff. This section brings to the fore interesting considerations regarding the amount of content to be localized in a game. These different levels of localization, as they are referred to in the book, can vary from the full localization of a game, which includes localizing all the assets of a game, to a partial localization of content, usually including only textual elements, packaging and subtitles to voiceover sequences. According to the authors, ultimately, the level of content localization in a game is directly dependent on how much money is invested in the distribution of a title in a given country. Besides the amount of content to be localized, the potential number of copies to be sold in a given linguistic market determines into which languages a game title will be localized. Fortunately, today

game developers and producers are aware of the potential return of investment of game localization in the Brazilian market, a fact which perceptively increases the number of titles adapted to our cultural and linguistic context.

The third section covers the description of the production of localized content, from important aspects on how to create a localization-friendly development process, the tools used for localizing games, the integration and management of different assets (text, voiceover, art, cinematics, subtitles, lip-syncing, etc) in a project, to the testing and launching of a localized title. This section particularly addresses the need to organize and plan the production of game contents so that its localization could be carried out more efficiently. The guidelines offered include easy access to text files so that localizers could know what game assets are to localize and where in the game they will be placed, definition of file format conventions, art assets to be localized in the game, translation guidelines, translation briefing, subtitling functionality among several other orientations that contribute to a well-executed practice.

The fourth section provides an insightful market perspective

on localization by offering tips on the importance of creating international demos, promoting press tour in different countries, perceiving market-specific needs and the organization of content delivery for market release. This section becomes critically relevant once it reinforces the need of a reliable communication pipeline among the several members of the *development team*, localization staff, publishers, marketing personnel and vendors.

And finally, **the fifth section** illustrates a few examples of technical, production and game design pitfalls to be avoided throughout the several stages of development and commercial launch of localized titles. This final section recollects several points approached in the previous chapters. It also emphasizes that the stage of testing is one of the most important procedures in the whole chain of development of software. This section also addresses the issue of translation quality by putting to the fore the fact that, invariably, problems regarding a poorly implemented localization are commonly caused by deficient communication between translators, the creation staff and the quality assurance professionals. Orientations on

how to deal with potential content issues are provided by using examples from games already released.

Analogous to several types of patterns that are common to games and organize how they should function, localization is also structured according to different macro and micro levels of organization. The guidelines that inform which translation approach should be taken in a given project will vary according to linguistic and cultural criteria that interact to establish what the translator can or cannot translate.

Although the book does not clearly draw on any theoretical apparatus regarding games as a multimodal phenomenon, the authors provide an interesting insight on the multiple aspects of modality that should be addressed in game localization practices. The characteristic multimodal segmentation which is part of games becomes a crucial element that informs translators of the necessity of an extended perception of the multiple components of representation that compose this semiotically dynamic form of text .

The book demonstrates that the aspects involved in this type of

translation practice go beyond the ones of a purely textual translation, as in its traditional sense. Chandler and Deming suggest the need to perceive games as a culture and a context-bound phenomenon in order to minimize the risks involved in localizing into different locales, that is, the different markets these games are to be commercialized.

The Game Localization Handbook comprehends games as products of their originating culture. Although it is the “task of the translator” to help maintain the *fun factor* of the original game, he or she also has to perceive that different modes of representation are conveyed across cultures. Pre-conceived notions on resources of representation turn out to be one of the most representative aspects of potentially problematic localized contents. For instance, in the game *Age Of Empires II*®: *The Age of Kings*, the historical friction between Japan and Korea emerged during the release of the game in South Korea because of the way the game’s box art displayed a Japanese Samurai upfront. Later, when the same game released an expansion pack, the Korean box art displayed a Korean warrior, identifying the game with its target culture (chap.

2). Game localization also holds the role in mediating cultural and geopolitical domination between different countries. Such characteristic is reinforced by various episodes in which governments tried to claim the sovereignty of their territories, especially if in dispute with other countries, in the fictional universe of videogames, by means of demanding developers to change their game contents and game maps in favor of their nationalist views.

According to Kate Edwards, contributing author in the chapter called Culturalization of Game Content, culture and context related aspects should be viewed as a step further beyond the texts and command prompts to be translated in a game. The concept of culturalization represents the effort to culturally adapt games to different markets in order to avoid that specific game contents might cause friction of geopolitical and cultural nature with specific groups. As for this aspect, the book puts it as a common problem in localized games, mainly because localization is usually performed as a late step in the whole chain of development of a game title, giving no time for translators to map the most sensitive

issues of a given culture. This characteristic, proper to several game developers, maximizes the risks of finding contents that might be offensive or incongruent to different markets or cultural backgrounds. These clashing views, especially on matters of ethnicity, nationality, religion and history, according to the authors can cause a phenomenon referred to as *intercultural dissonance*. In the authors' opinion, these constraints are central to the successful integration of localized games in different markets, once the demands of specific group can affect the sales and ultimately represent the banning of a game in their territory, sometimes, on the account of a single piece of content.

One of the most important notions assumed by this book is that, in order to be part of different markets, localized games should comply with the discursive and cultural demands of different groups of players. Ironically, although this concern is particularly present as the major proposal in this book, most experienced gamers seem to perceive the differences between the context within the game and their own cultural background (*Kate Edwards – Geographer & Principal Consultant, Englobe Inc.*).

Most gamers are only concerned if the gaming experience is fun, and not if a piece of content is offensive or incongruent with the geopolitical and cultural values of their country. Several examples of strict measures concerning the ban of games because of localization problems are provided in the first section of the book, including a mention to Brazil.

As pointed out in chapter 2, although gamers seem not to care whether a piece of content in a localized game is somehow disruptive relative to the cultural values of a given locale, one of the aspects that can mostly generate backlash from its intended audience, the gamer community, is the non-compliance with the genre conventions which are part of every game. Names of characters, places, game items, humorous dialogues, etc., are elements that if not translated properly, they may be perceived as if not being part of what was the originally conceived game and ultimately not make sense whatsoever to players.

Complying with all these demands and assessing the risks involved in releasing a title in the international market requires a great deal of careful planning, which goes from the early conception of the game,

from game design, to the way the assets are organized within a coding structure and the art imprinted in the DVD or BlueRay Discs in which these games are placed. The authors make it clear that although the processes involved in localizing a game should be carried out by several professionals, they also emphasize the importance of developers promote an environment of shared responsibilities in their companies, where programmers, translators, testers are oriented into perceiving the localization of games as a context-aware process.

The in-depth look provided by this book on the inner aspects of game localization, and how these are predicated on cultural, geographical, ethnical and other conventions, reinforces the fact that this translation practice is composed by multilayered dimensions meaning. On the account of all these aspects approached, besides several others not mentioned, this book becomes a valuable source of information on different perspectives of translation game localization and, as result, on the extra-linguistic aspects of translation.

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Rojo, Roxane; Moura, Eduardo [Orgs.]. *Multiletramentos na escola*, Parábola Editorial, 2012. ISBN: 978-85-7934-041-3

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A obra é uma coletânea de trabalhos resultante de disciplinas de pós-graduação ministradas pela renomada docente e pesquisadora Roxane Rojo na UNICAMP e na UFMT. Tendo como fundamentação teórica a perspectiva socio-cultural da educação e o conceito Bakhtiniano de gênero discursivo, os diversos autores oferecem sequências didáticas para o ensino de língua portuguesa, seguindo o modelo proposto por Dolz e Schneuwly. Essas propostas de ensino visam os multiletramentos e a leitura crítica através da análise e da produção de textos multissemióticos e multiculturais, e são definidas pelos autores como *protótipos*, no sentido de que podem ser adaptadas a diferentes contextos de ensino e aprendizagem.