

Consistency Analysis of Slovak Minecraft Video Game Terminology in Novels and Original Video Games

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Abstract

This article examines the Slovak translations of fiction based on the video game *Minecraft*, with a focus on the adherence to the game's official terminology. The study aims to determine whether the terminology from the original game has been consistently applied in the translated fiction. The article begins by outlining key theoretical concepts related to video game terminology before presenting an analysis of the selected sample. The findings are discussed in terms of the accuracy of Slovak translations in relation to the official *Minecraft* terminology across six books. The Slovak translators under review are Slavomír Hrivnák, Lukáš Ondrejko, and Šimon Kotvas. The central research question explores the extent to which the translators preserved the game's terminology in their translations of the fiction.

Keywords: video games, terminology, localization, translation, Minecraft

1 Introduction

The increasing popularity of video games has significantly impacted contemporary culture. Once considered primarily a pastime for children, video gaming has evolved into a widespread hobby among adults. Some video games have even influenced literary works, inspiring the creation of novels and other written content. One notable example is *Minecraft*, a sandbox game originally designed for younger audiences, which has gained global popularity and spurred a wide range of merchandise. Initially, books related to *Minecraft* were limited to instructional guides, helping players optimize their in-game experience. However, since 2017, the game's developer, *Mojang Studios*, has commissioned various authors to create narratives set within the *Minecraft* universe. As a result, approximately 20 story-driven books have been published to date.

Given *Minecraft*'s fanbase in Slovakia, the local market has quickly responded, with *Fragment* publishing house releasing seven Slovak translations of these novels since 2017. Additionally, a Slovak localization of the game is available.¹ However, unofficial translations² have emerged due to the need for timely updates, leading to variations from the official version. This article aims to investigate whether Slovak translators of children's literature based on *Minecraft* have remained faithful to the game's terminology or adopted a more flexible approach, potentially diverging from the in-game lexicon.

2 Theoretical background

The topic of specialized video game vocabulary has been extensively addressed in international research, including the works of Mangiron and O'Hagan (2013), Bernal-Merino (2015), and Adams (2010), among others. Méndez González also published an article on video game terminology (2019). In Slovakia, Kabát (2022) contributed an article on video game terminology and its associated neologisms. Additionally, Koscelníková (2024) explored gaming vocabulary in a broader discussion on the translation of video games.

Méndez-González (2019) emphasizes the importance of understanding the unique characteristics of video games to produce high-quality products. The mechanisms and technologies that underpin games are crucial not only for developers but also for translators. To effectively localize video games, translators must be well-versed in the specialized terminology associated with gaming, including the frequent use of neologisms, which are a key component of this lexicon.

Kabát (2022) identifies three key areas of terminology found in video games. The first is platform-specific terminology, which refers to terms associated with hardware developers (e.g., Microsoft, Sony, Nintendo) and hardware systems (such as smartphones and tablets). The second area is video game-specific terminology, encompassing terms related to game software, such as character traits, weapon types, vehicle types, and other in-game elements. Lastly, there is industry-specific terminology, which pertains to marketing materials and releases in press. A competent video game translator must be proficient in all three areas to ensure accurate and effective localization.

Similarly, Méndez-González (2019) identifies three main categories of specialized video game terminology: terminology of the platform, game terminology, and industry terminology. In addition, Méndez González (2019) highlights the role of interpreters,

¹ Slovak localization should be available in options after downloading the game from the official Minecraft website: <https://www.minecraft.net/en-us>.

² For example: <https://crowdin.com/project/minecraft>.

because they are a crucial part of international events in the video game industry. While localization allows translators some time for fact-checking, interpreters must react instantly and be well-versed in the specialized language of video games, which is arguably one of the most terminologically complex fields in the entertainment industry. Following Hasani-Yasin's (2010) classification, Méndez-González (2019) found that the seven groups of neologisms work excellently for the video game industry, but some categories need to be added. According to Méndez-González (2019), the categories of neologisms (including those inspired by Hasani-Yasin) are: **scientific neologisms** (when fictional discoveries (and their names) become reality, they can be a source for real-life terms), **political neologisms** (these are meant to create some kind of political or rhetorical point), **pop culture neologisms** (they originate in forums or in-game chats and with time become a part of general knowledge), **imported neologisms** (their origin is in different language but they are commonly used by users and developers – mostly English terms), **trademark-related neologisms** (hardware-related terms that become a part of general language), **nonce words** (these are created to have special effect in a precise moment), **inverted neologisms** (they arise after playing with words and spelling words backwards to create a new term), **new species neologisms** (some of these terms can be misleading, because they can have another meanings besides the meaning connected with the particular videogame), **weapon and skill-related neologisms** (some can be based on real-life words; unfortunately they sometimes also have a different translation in every new game that is released in the franchise), and **item-related neologisms** (these terms are connected with items or power-ups that players can use for gaining some kind of advantage in the game).

Kabát (2022) presents a detailed overview of video game terminology, using examples from a corpus of 42,058 words drawn from the video game *Minecraft*. The largest category identified in the corpus consists of terms related to in-game realia. These are further divided into subtypes: **names of new species** (e.g., the mineral *redstone*, translated into Slovak as *rudit*), **weapons/abilities** (e.g., *diamond sword*, translated as *diamantový meč*), **items** (e.g., *skin* as *vzhľad*, or *dispenser* as *výdajný blok* in Slovak), **scientific terms**, and **political terms** (with the only example being *Capitol*, in Slovak as *Kapitol*). The second major category comprises terms related to game mechanics. In *Minecraft*, one of the most fundamental mechanics is the *builder plate* or *stavebná platňa*, without which the game would lose its core feature – constructing buildings from various materials. A useful distinction between realia and game mechanics terminology is that realia typically appear in the narrative aspects of the game, while game mechanics terms primarily pertain to gameplay features.

Following Kabát's (2022) classification, the third group encompasses scientific and technical terms, which are sometimes left untranslated in the Slovak localization of the game because players adopt them before official translations become available. In the *Minecraft* corpus, a notable example is the term *Augmented Reality*, or *obohatená realita*.

However, when abbreviated as *AR*, the term is generally retained in its English form. The classification also includes legal terminology, primarily found in video game licensing agreements, as well as terms related to trademarks and copyrights, such as the names of operating systems like Android or iOS. Additionally, pop culture terms appear in the *Minecraft* corpus, with examples such as *Kraken* or *Steampunk*. Kabát's classification is further expanded by unique neologisms created for specific moments in the game, intended to captivate the player but not frequently repeated. One such example in the Slovak localization of *Minecraft* is the compound word *kravovrah* (*cow tipper*). It should be noted that the boundaries between these categories of terms are fluid, and some terms could be classified into more than one group.

3 Analysis

During this research, an analysis was conducted on the official terminology used in the video game *Minecraft* and compared with the corresponding terms found in six Slovak translations of *Minecraft*-themed books. To gain further insight, the English originals of these books were examined to identify the specific terms with which the translators worked. The focus was on game-specific terms and those that appeared repeatedly across multiple Slovak translations. The goal was to determine whether these terms were consistently translated within individual books and across the translations as a whole. Additionally, the study aimed to assess whether the translators adhered to official game terminology or exercised greater creative freedom in their translation choices.

The main source for verifying the accuracy of the Slovak translations was the official Slovak translation of *Minecraft* terminology. Access to the official *Minecraft* terminology was gained from a translator who was involved in its localization but did not want to be named. The Slovak versions of the game terms from the official terminology were compared with the terms found in the fiction. Sometimes, the term was translated correctly (or according to the official terminology) on one page, and several pages later, it was translated differently. A list of inconsistently or incorrectly translated terms can be found in Appendix A. Additionally, an examination of the current Slovak version of the game revealed that, in some cases, it does not fully adhere to the official translations, as would be expected.

4 Research evaluation

This research identified a significant lack of consistency in the translation of key terms, many of which did not align with the official *Minecraft* terminology. Additionally, numerous typographical errors and other mistakes were present in the books, likely due to factors such as translator oversight, inadequate proofreading, or time constraints

during the publication process. Attempts were made to establish contact with the publishing house, but all efforts were unsuccessful. As it was not possible to establish contact with the two translators responsible for most of the examined books, the underlying causes influencing the final quality of the translations can only be hypothesized. Additionally, no information could be obtained regarding changes made during the proofreading process, preventing an analysis of this aspect. Despite these issues, the analysis revealed several creative translation solutions. The research sample consisted of 72 terms, varying in frequency across six English Minecraft-themed books and their Slovak translations.

In the book *The Island (Ostrov)*, 31 of the 72 terms from the sample appeared in the section where the protagonist learned the names of *Minecraft* realia from books he found. Otherwise, the protagonist invented names for objects, as he did not know where he was. Of these terms, 14 were translated accurately, while the remaining 17 were either inconsistent or did not correspond to the official game terminology. Additionally, multiple spelling errors were observed. The term *spawner* also presented a challenge, as it does not appear in the official Slovak *Minecraft* lexicon. Consequently, its translation could not be definitively assessed as correct or incorrect. However, it was rendered inconsistently across the text, with variations such as *zjavovač* (revealer) and *továreň na príšery* (monster factory).

Table 1. *The Island*

Name of the book	Number of terms	Translated correctly	Translated incorrectly	Translated inconsistently	Failed to determine
<i>The Island</i>	31	14	12	4	1

In the book *The Crash (Havária)*, 52 relevant terms were identified, 20 of which were accurately translated. The remaining 23 terms were either inconsistently translated or did not align with the official *Minecraft* terminology. Additionally, 6 terms were not present in the official terminology, preventing an assessment of their accuracy. One example is the term *Overworld*, which was translated as *Povrch*. Several typographical and spelling errors were also noted in this text. These errors further highlight the need for careful proofreading and attention to detail in the translation process.

Table 2. *The Crash*

Name of the book	Number of terms	Translated correctly	Translated incorrectly	Translated inconsistently	Failed to determine
<i>The Crash</i>	52	20	23	3	6

In the book *The End (Koniec)*, 34 terms were identified, 14 of which were translated correctly. Seventeen terms were either mistranslated or displayed inconsistent usage, while 3 terms were absent from the official *Minecraft* terminology, making it difficult to

assess the accuracy of their translations. Notably, the translator adopted the most flexible approach in this book compared to the others analyzed. This is evidenced by several loose translations, such as rendering *enderman* as *fantóm Konca*, and a tendency to modify sentence structure – frequently splitting or merging sentences differently than in the original, with occasional omissions of parts of sentences.

Table 3. *The End*

Name of the book	Number of terms	Translated correctly	Translated incorrectly	Translated inconsistently	Failed to determine
<i>The End</i>	34	14	14	3	3

In the book *The Lost Journals (Stratené denníky)*, 52 terms were analyzed, 13 of which were accurately translated. A total of 33 terms were either mistranslated or displayed inconsistency, while the accuracy of 6 terms could not be assessed, as they were not part of the official *Minecraft* terminology. Noteworthy in this book are the creative translation solutions, particularly in rendering the names of sheep and certain characters. However, the translation also contained several typographical errors and misspellings, likely due to lack of attention and time.

Table 4. *The Lost Journals*

Name of the book	Number of terms	Translated correctly	Translated incorrectly	Translated inconsistently	Failed to determine
<i>The Lost Journals</i>	52	13	27	6	6

In the book *The Shipwreck (Vrak lode)*, 44 terms were analyzed, with 22 translated correctly and 21 either mistranslated or inconsistently translated, including 9 inconsistencies. One term could not be verified, as it was absent from the official *Minecraft* terminology. The translation also contained typographical and spelling errors. Lukáš Ondrejkoovič and Šimon Kotvas are the translators of this work, and Šimon Kotvas was the only one who could be contacted. He explained that his translation aimed to adhere closely to the official game terminology, while ensuring that the dialogue reflected the speech patterns of older school-aged children. In addition to maintaining accuracy in the terminology, the translator had to convey the distinct styles of the four text components: the main narrative, the online chat communication between the characters, the wizard’s riddles, and the video game software-related text.

Table 5. *The Shipwreck*

Name of the book	Number of terms	Translated correctly	Translated incorrectly	Translated inconsistently	Failed to determine
<i>The Shipwreck</i>	44	22	12	9	1

In the book *The Voyage (Výprava)*, 34 terms were analyzed, 14 of which were translated correctly, while 18 terms exhibited inconsistencies or inaccuracies, including 12 incorrect translations. Two terms could not be definitively assessed, as they were not included in the official *Minecraft* terminology.

Table 6. *The Voyage*

Name of the book	Number of terms	Translated correctly	Translated incorrectly	Translated inconsistently	Failed to determine
<i>The Voyage</i>	34	14	12	6	2

The results indicate that the books *The Crash* and *The Lost Journals* contained the highest number of terms, with 52 terms each, representing 72% of the total sample analyzed. In contrast, *The Island* had the fewest terms, with 31 terms, accounting for 43% of the sample. The highest number of accurately translated terms, consistent with the official *Minecraft* terminology, was found in *The Shipwreck*, where 22 terms were correctly translated, corresponding to 50% of the 44 terms in the book. The lowest number of correctly translated terms, 13, was observed in *The Lost Journals*, representing 25% of the total terms in that book.

Table 7. *Comparison 1*

	Name of the book	Number of terms	Percentage	Base number (100%)
Most of the terms	<i>The Crash;</i> <i>The Lost Journals</i>	52; 52	72%	72
Most terms translated correctly	<i>The Shipwreck</i>	22	50%	44
Most terms translated incorrectly	<i>The Lost Journals</i>	27	52%	52
Most terms translated inconsistently	<i>The Shipwreck</i>	9	20.4%	44
Most terms absent in official terminology	<i>The Crash;</i> <i>The Lost Journals</i>	6	11.5%	52

The Lost Journals also had the highest number of incorrectly translated terms (27 terms), accounting for 52% of the total. The fewest incorrect translations were found in *The Shipwreck*, with 12 terms, representing 27.3% of the total. However, *The Shipwreck* also had the highest number of inconsistently translated terms, with 9 terms, equating to 20.4% of the total. Conversely, *The Crash* exhibited the lowest number of inconsistently translated terms, with only 3 terms, representing 5.8%. Finally, the highest number of

terms for which accuracy could not be verified, due to their absence in the official terminology, was found in both *The Crash* and *The Lost Journals*, with 6 terms each, corresponding to 11.5% of the total.

Table 8. Comparison 2

	Name of the book	Number of terms	Percentage	Base number (100%)
Least of the terms	<i>The Island</i>	31	43%	72
Least number of correctly translated terms	<i>The Lost Journals</i>	13	25%	52
Least number of incorrectly translated terms	<i>The Shipwreck</i>	12	27.3%	44
Least number of inconsistently translated terms	<i>The Crash</i>	3	5.8%	52
Least of the terms	<i>The Island</i>	31	43%	72

5 Conclusion

This article explored the consistency of video game terminology between fiction and the original game, with a focus on six English *Minecraft*-themed books and their corresponding Slovak translations by Slavomír Hrivnák, Lukáš Ondrejko, and Šimon Kotvas. The research aimed to determine the extent to which translators adhered to the official *Minecraft* terminology in their Slovak translations. Prior to the analysis, a review of the relevant theoretical framework was concluded, including video game terminology theory and classification.

In the practical section, 72 terms from the selected books and the official *Minecraft* terminology, as well as the current version of the game, were analyzed to evaluate the consistency between translations and the game's lexicon. While some creative translation choices were observed, occasional typographical errors and inconsistencies in terminology were also identified, suggesting that insufficient attention was paid to maintaining uniformity across the translations. More general terms were translated consistently and mostly correctly, whereas more specialized terminology was translated more freely. However, it was not possible to determine whether this was due to the translators lacking access to the official terminology of the game, or whether they chose to ignore the established terminology. Findings of this research indicate a need

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for greater rigor in the translation and proofreading process, as the current approach lacks consistency in terminology adherence.

To address these issues, it is proposed that translators gain access to the official game terminology from the publishing house and collaborate with previous translators to ensure consistency across works. Furthermore, translators should develop their own glossaries and actively engage with proofreaders to explain translation choices, contributing to the entire translation process until publication. Raising awareness about video game localization and enhancing the quality of Slovak localizations could also contribute to improved consistency between fiction and original game terminology. While the establishment of a specialized publishing house dedicated to video game-inspired literature could potentially solve these challenges, it would require significant time and financial resources to compete in the current commercial landscape.

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Appendix A

Table 9. *Term translation comparison*

Term	Official Slovak translation	Other translations in the books	Slovak translation in the current version of the game
Beetroot	Cvikla	repa	repa
Blaze powder	prášok zo žiarivca	prach ohniváka	prach ohniváka
Boat	Čln	loď	čln
Bucket	Vedro	vedierko	vedro
Chest	Truhlica	truhla	truhlica
Crafting table	pracovný stôl	pracovný stolík; remeselný stôl; remeselnický stôl	pracovný stôl
Creeper	Creeper	sliedič	creeper
Emerald	Smaragd	zafír	smaragd
Enchantment table	čarodejný stôl	čarovací stôl; zaklínačský stôl; stôl na očarovávanie; čarovný stôl	stôl očarovania
Ender chest	truhlica z Konca sveta	koncotruhla; endertruhlica; všadetruhla	Ender truhlica
Ender dragon	drak z Konca sveta	drak; drak záhuby; Ender drak; posledný drak; drak konca	Ender drak
Enderman	Enderman	fantóm konca; fantóm Endu; fantóm	enderman
Endermite	Endermit	koncormit	endermit

Furnace	Pec	vyhňa; ohnisko	pec
Ghast	Ghast	prízrak; mŕtvolák	ghast
Glowstone	žiarivý kameň	svietikameň	žiarivec
Lapis lazuli	Ultramarín	lapislazuli; lapis lazuli; lazurit	lazurit
Mob	Tvor	tlupa (príšer); banda; partia; (zvieracia) mafia; entita	tvor
Monster	Príšera	monštrum	príšera
Mooshroom	Mooshroom	hríbokravy; kravohríby	mooshroom
Nether	Nether	Podsvetie	Nether
Nether quartz	netheritový kryštál	podsvetný kremeň	Nether kremeň
Pressure plate	prítlačná doska	nášlapná doska; tlakový spínač	nášlapná doska
Redstone	Rudit	červenokameň; červený kameň	redstone
Redstone torch	ruditová fakľa	fakľa z červenokameňa; pochodeň z červenokameňa	redstonový prach
Sandstone	Pieskovec	vápenec	pieskovec
Silverfish	Rybenka	švehla; striebroryba; strieborník	švehla
Skeleton	Kostlivec	lukostrelec; kostra	kostlivec
Soul sand	pohyblivý piesok	piesok duší; prízračný piesok	piesok duší
Squid	Kalmár	sépia; kalamár; chobotnica	chobotnica
Stick	Palica	palička	palica
Survival mode	režim prežitia	mód prežitia; modus prežitia; mod prežitia	režim prežitia
Torch	Fakľa	pochodeň	fakľa

Village	Dedina	osada	dedina
Villager	Dedinčan	osadník	osadník
Witch	Striga	čarodejnica; ježibaba	bosorka
Wither effect	Chradnutie	efekt withera; chronické chradnutie	chradnutie
Wither skeleton	Wither kostlivec	witherkostlivec; uschnutý kostlivec	Wither kostlivec
Workbench	pracovný stôl	stôl; pracovný stolík	pracovný stôl
Zombie	Zombie	zombie; zombia; zombík; zombi	zombie