



# Legends of Localization



Book 3:  
UNDERTALE

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ローカライズの伝説  
アンダーテイル  
第三巻 UNDERTALE

クライド・マンデリン

## Welcome to the Book Preview

This preview showcases only a few samples of the 270+ pages in the complete book. Although the book looks at *Undertale* in great detail, it also covers many other topics and touches on many other games. Even if you're not familiar with *Undertale* or much of an *Undertale* fan, you'll find a lot of fascinating information within these pages!

***\*NOTE: The images in this preview have been compressed to make them more internet friendly, they are not representational of the quality of the final product.***

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# What is Localization?

Before we dive into *Undertale*'s English-to-Japanese localization, there's one big question that needs answering: what exactly is localization, anyway?

The word "localization" is actually relatively new in the translation world, so different people use it to mean different things. Here's how I would define it in simple terms, though:

**Basically, localization is translation. Localization just changes things a bit when a literal translation doesn't quite work.**

If you're unfamiliar with translation, this idea probably sounds odd at first. Why should anything be changed at all? Shouldn't a literal translation work all the time? Let's find out.

## Getting Literal

Imagine you're talking to a grumpy genie who takes everything literally. You want to be rich, so you immediately wish to be "made of money". Unfortunately, instead of becoming rich, you transform into a pile of coins. Oops, that's not what you meant at all!

"Ugh, whatever! I just wish I had lots of dough!" you somehow say. You expect to become rich for sure this time, but instead, you suddenly find yourself covered in bread dough. Oops again!

These examples, as ridiculous as they are, show how a literal interpretation can completely miss the point of what's being said.

Literal translation can have hilarious side effects. In this scene, the English sentence "this work is killing me" was translated literally into Japanese as "this work of art is murdering me" (Game: *Girls and Quiz*)



When we communicate, words are our tools. They're like paintbrushes that we use to paint pictures for others to see. The problem is that if you focus too hard on someone's tools, you risk missing the full picture of what they're actually saying.



Literal translations can sometimes end up feeling "off" or incomplete (Game: *Fate/Grand Order*)



Literal translations can still sound like a foreign language despite being translated (Game: *Kitty Love*)



A literal translation can miss the original, intended meaning, which would have been "Make sure the stove is turned off!" in this example (Game: *Harvest Moon*)



Even advanced machine translations tend to miss what's being said by translating too literally. A better translation of this Japanese idiom might've been "Quit loafing around here!" (Game: *Final Fantasy IV* machine translation experiment)



## The Need for Localization

Every language has its own unique rules and quirks. Every culture has its own unique values and expectations. Because of this, not every word has a perfect, 1-to-1 equivalent in other languages. So when a straightforward, literal translation isn't possible, one alternative is to use completely different words to say the same thing. And that's precisely what localization is: **preserving the creator's intended meaning but with completely different words.** As the acclaimed translator John Ciardi once put it:

“When the violin repeats what the piano has just played, it cannot make the same sounds and it can only approximate the same chords. It can, however, make recognizably the same “music,” the same air. But it can do so only when it is as faithful to the self-logic of the violin as it is to the self-logic of the piano.”

In short, languages are weird, messy, and complicated. It's easy for people to misunderstand each other in one language, so translating between two can sometimes be impossible. In this chapter, we'll examine a few situations in which straightforward, literal translations don't quite work.

## Humor

There's a famous joke in English that goes:

*Why was 6 afraid of 7? Because 7 8 9!*

Of course, this joke only works because the number “8” and the word “ate” share the same pronunciation in English. This isn't necessarily true in other languages, so a literal translation of the joke might sound like this:

*Why was the sixth digit afraid of the seventh digit? Because seventh digit eighth digit ninth digit!*

As we can see, the result is meaningless nonsense that loses the original intention entirely. The joke is lost in translation.

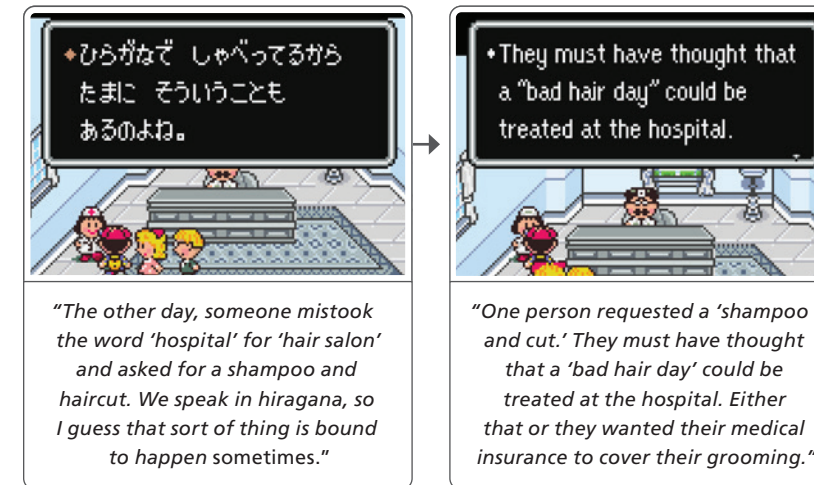
Similarly, consider this Japanese joke:

*ashi nihon aru kara nihonjin da*

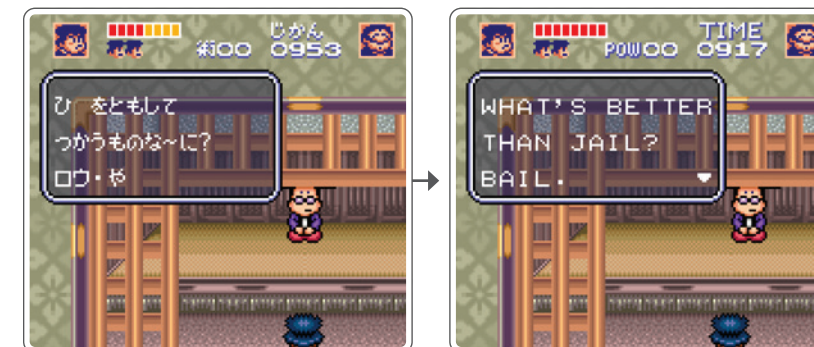
This joke, translated literally, means “I have two legs, so I'm Japanese”. Even though it's an incredibly simple, straightforward joke in Japanese, we can see how it makes zero sense when translated into English.

**In short, humor rarely translates easily between languages.**

So, as a translator, what do you do when you run into an untranslatable joke? The most common solution is to take out the original joke and replace it with a similar joke that works in the target language. And that's precisely what localization is all about: retaining the original intent even if it means changing the original words.



◀ The original joke in this scene only makes sense if you understand how the Japanese language works. Because a literal translation wouldn't make sense to most players outside of Japan, the joke was replaced with a different, but similarly-themed joke in English (Game: *EarthBound*)



◀ This imprisoned character plays with the Japanese words for “prison cell” and “candle” to make a simple joke. The translators replaced this untranslatable wordplay with a different prison-themed joke that makes sense in English (Game: *The Legend of the Mystical Ninja*)



◀ This Japanese pun on the words for “go bald” and “encouragement” was replaced with an English pun on the word “scalping” (Game: *Yakuza 0*)

## Idioms, Proverbs, and Multi-Layered Phrases

Every language has its own unique set of colorful phrases that have a literal meaning and a functional meaning. For example, the English phrase “I’m in a pickle” literally means “I am inside of a pickle” but functionally means “I’m in a difficult situation”.



Imagine this title being translated literally – it’d still be kind of silly to see this weird guy in a pickle suit, but the reason for the suit would be lost

These problematic, multi-layered phrases come in all types. Idioms, for example, are notorious for having very different literal and functional meanings:

- **Japanese idiom:** *nodo kara te ga deru*  
Literal meaning: to have your hand coming out of your mouth  
Functional meaning: to want something very much
- **Finnish idiom:** *heittää lusikka nurkkaan*  
Literal meaning: to throw the spoon in the corner  
Functional meaning: to die

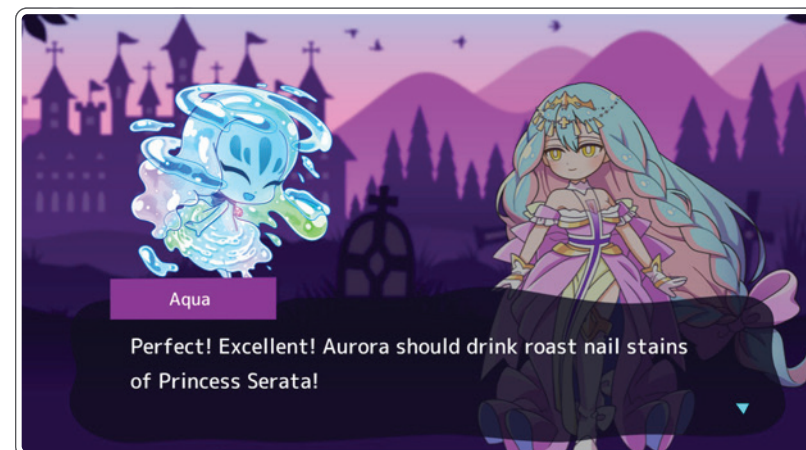
Proverbs are another source of tricky phrases with multiple meanings:

- **German proverb:** *Morgenstund hat Gold im Mund*  
Literal meaning: the morning hour has gold in the mouth  
Functional meaning: early risers get the best opportunities
- **Japanese proverb:** *hiza to mo dangō*  
Literal meaning: consult even your knees  
Functional meaning: consulting others can be unexpectedly useful

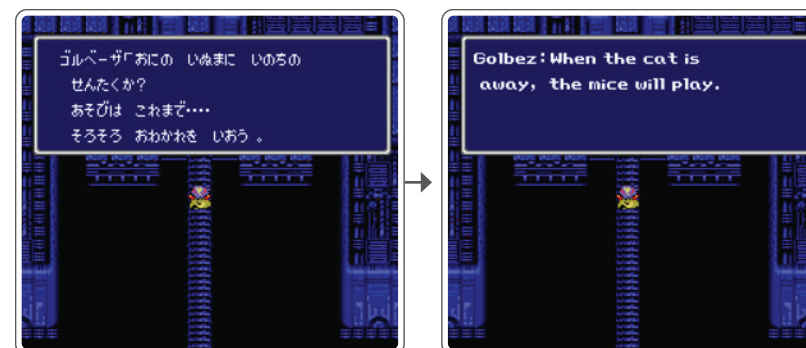
Slang, jargon, and other multi-layered phrases provide a similar challenge for translators:

- **Japanese slang:** *denpa*  
Literal meaning: electromagnetic wave  
Functional meaning: a person with a wildly incoherent and delusional mindset
- **Choctaw phrase:** *oka mali hashi akuchaka itintakla*  
Literal meaning: head towards water wind while heading towards the sun’s home  
Functional meaning: southeast

As we can see, idioms, proverbs, and other multi-layered phrases are rarely meant to be taken literally, so it doesn’t always make sense to translate them literally. Instead, it’s usually more helpful to focus on preserving their functional meanings, even if it means ignoring their literal wordings.



The Japanese phrase “to drink the brewed dirt from under XX’s fingernails” sounds bizarre when translated literally, but functionally means “to take a lesson from XX” (Game: *Refreshing Sideways Puzzle*)



This Japanese proverb could be literally translated as “doing life laundry while the ogre is away”. This doesn’t make much sense in English though, so the localized script uses a completely different proverb to say roughly the same thing (Game: *Final Fantasy IV*)



This Japanese battle cry was translated literally into English as “I will turn you into a beehive”, resulting in a bizarre, hilarious, non-threatening threat. In English, we’d probably say something like “I’ll fill you full of holes!” or “I’ll turn you into Swiss cheese!” instead (Game: *Star Ocean: The Second Story*)



## Cultural Knowledge and Expectations

Have you ever heard someone tell an inside joke that you weren't in on? Even though you understood the literal words that were being said, the intended meaning was lost on you. This same thing happens in translation.

Cultures are basically their own giant in-groups: they have their own histories, customs, rituals, traditions, folk stories, foods, and more. A reference to any of these might sound meaningless to an outsider when translated literally. In this situation, understanding the literal words isn't enough – the actual “inside joke” needs to be explained too. It basically needs to be translated twice instead of only once.

This type of in-group obstacle comes in many forms. Here are a few common examples.

### Cultural and Historical References

Imagine someone says in Japanese:

*pussuma de nagisuke o osotta egashira 2:50 mitai da!*

(Literally: It's just like when Egashira 2:50 attacked Nagisuke on Pussuma!)

The above translation, despite being literal, is probably still meaningless to most people outside of Japan. It only makes sense as intended if you're already familiar with Japanese celebrities and television. You have to be part of the “in-group”, in other words.

### Cultural Facts, Stats, and Practices

Imagine someone says in Japanese:

*watashi no nenshū wa 530,000 en desu*

(Literally: My annual income is 530,000 yen.)

At first glance, this literal translation seems fine. But for people unfamiliar with Japanese economics, it's unclear just how much money this is. Is it a lot? Is it very little? A literal translation still leaves questions for those outside the in-group.

### Culture-Specific Food

References to culture-specific foods can become meaningless when translated literally or left untranslated. Imagine someone says in Japanese:

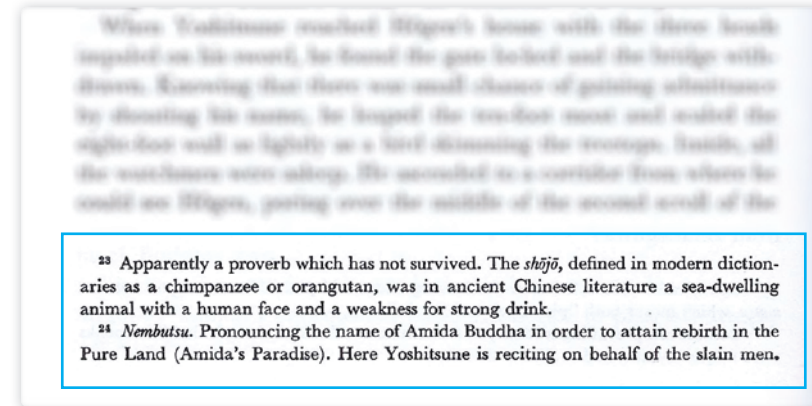
*kinō shirako to funazushi o tabeta*

(Literally: I ate shirako and funazushi yesterday.)

For people not familiar with Japanese food, this translation probably doesn't mean much at all. As we can see, a literal translation can only go so far when crossing the cultural divide.



In rare cases, translators will simply leave cultural references untranslated and leave an explanation in parentheses immediately afterward (Game: *Mysterious Stars: The Samurai*)



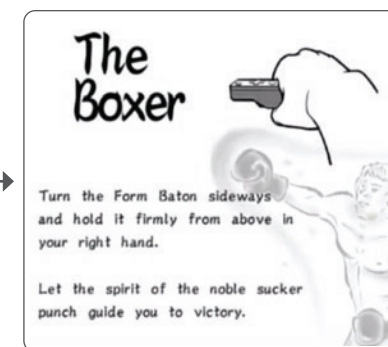
There are several ways of handling cultural matters in translation. In academia, it's standard practice to translate everything literally and include lots of explanatory footnotes. In entertainment, it's more common to localize foreign cultural references by replacing them with something similar, but more familiar to the target audience



A Japanese line about “Hanako” was translated literally into English, making it completely meaningless for most players outside of Japan. For players in Japan, it's an obvious reference to the famous urban legend of Hanako, the ghost girl who haunts bathrooms (Game: *Breath of Fire II*)



Originally, this character delivered food from a generically named Japanese-style Chinese restaurant. Because the name's significance would've been lost on players outside of Japan, the package was replaced with a generic pizza box for the English release (Game: *Tricky Kick*)



Japanese players are asked to hold the controller like a traditional *okappiki*. But because most players outside of Japan wouldn't understand this reference, the English version asks players to hold the controller like a boxer instead (Game: *WarioWare: Smooth Moves*)



## Speech Patterns

Naturally, a translator should strive to preserve what's being said. But it's often just as important to preserve *how* it's being said. Otherwise the resulting translation might become “flattened”. A flattened translation lacks the original text's unique traits, can lead to confusion, and can cause key information to be lost.

Language-specific speech patterns are particularly tricky – and sometimes impossible – to preserve when jumping between languages. Here are a few speech patterns that can easily be lost in a literal translation.

### Accents and Dialects

Some speech patterns have their own histories, backgrounds, and deep ties to specific regions of specific countries. These speech patterns convey extra information that give off a specific vibe not found anywhere else.

For example, there is no “Boston accent” in Japanese. There's no cowboy dialect, nor is there a “Southern belle” speech pattern. Similarly, there's no “Heian era” speech pattern or “Kyoto accent” in English. These speech patterns simply become flattened in a literal translation.

### Pronouns

Different languages use pronouns in different ways. For example, in English we only have “I/me” when referring to ourselves, but there are dozens of ways to say “I” in Japanese, each with a different connotation.

Similarly, there are dozens of Japanese pronouns that mean “you” in the singular, but it's just as common to restate the listener's name every time instead of using a pronoun. In fact, it's perfectly normal to drop pronouns entirely in Japanese if it's clear who's being referred to. The Japanese phrase for “I love you”, *ai shiteiru*, literally contains no pronouns, for instance.

Because every language uses pronouns in such different ways, dialogue and conversations risk being flattened when translated literally.

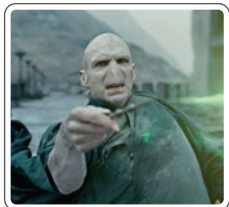
### Grammar

The same sentence can flow very differently in different languages. For example, English sentences generally go subject-verb-object, as in “Bob ate a monkey”. But in Japanese, sentences tend to go subject-object-verb, as in “Bob a monkey ate”. This difference can make a literal translation fall apart when a sentence is incomplete – which is extremely common in Japanese – or when timing is important.

Other aspects of grammar, such as gendered speech and politeness levels, also get flattened in a literal translation. Basically, grammar is a language's rulebook, but not every language plays by the same rules.



Originally, this boss in *Pocky and Rocky* spoke with a heavy Japanese regional accent. This trait was left unlocalized in English, resulting in flattened dialogue



In some Japanese translations of the *Harry Potter* series, Voldemort uses the first-person pronoun *ore-sama*, the same pronoun that Wario uses



◀ This Japanese line features a strong “rural, country bumpkin” speech pattern. The localized line, despite being in a completely different language, uses a roughly similar English dialect to provide the same vibe and details that would've otherwise been lost in a literal translation (Game: *Blaster Master Zero 2*)



◀ In the Japanese *Animal Crossing* games, Mr. Resetti speaks with a very thick Osaka dialect. Because this dialect doesn't exist in English, the localization team approximated it by giving him a distinctive, gruff New York accent instead



◀ Imagine someone asked you to translate this game into English. What happens when you run into text like this? If a bilingual character sometimes speaks a foreign language, a literal translation of their dialogue into that foreign language will flatten their speech and effectively turn the character monolingual (Game: *Tokimeki Memorial*)



## Language Peculiarities

Despite their differences, DVDs, Blu-rays, and VHS tapes can all hold the same movie. These formats aren't compatible with each other, though – you can't just stick a VHS tape into a DVD player. Languages are very similar – they can say roughly the same things, but you can't just shove text from one language into another and hope it'll work right.

Here are some examples of how a language's uniqueness can cause literal translations to miss the mark.

### Sound Effects

Some sound-effect words, such as animal sounds, are generally easy to convert between languages. But some languages use sound-effect words more than others, and some languages have sound-effect words that don't even exist in other languages. For example, the Japanese language has a sound for staring. It even has a sound effect for silence. When it comes to sound effects, sometimes a literal translation isn't even possible.



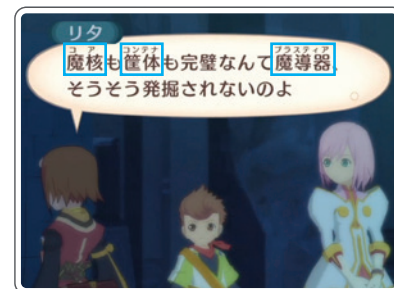
▲ Sound effect translation can lead to humorous results if done poorly. Here, the Japanese sound effect for chewing food hilariously became "CHUCK, CHUCK" in English (Game: *Battle Rangers*)

### Punctuation

Not every language uses punctuation the same way. Some languages have similar-looking punctuation marks that serve different purposes. And some languages have punctuation marks that don't exist in other languages. Because of this, a literal translation with all of the original punctuation intact can have unintended effects.

### Writing Systems

Unlike English, the Japanese language has three distinct writing systems. This lets you spell the same word in multiple ways – sometimes dozens of ways – to achieve different effects. What's more, the Japanese language even allows you to write words on top of other words to achieve various effects not possible in other languages. Unsurprisingly, these effects tend to get flattened in a literal translation.



▲ Japanese text can have extra text on top to change meanings or pronunciations (Game: *Tales of Vesperia*)

### Numbers

If you type "58008" on a calculator and turn it upside down, it makes English-speaking schoolchildren laugh because it spells "BOOBS". This numberplay would make little sense to non-English speakers, however. Similarly, the Japanese language has its own unique forms of numberplay that make zero sense in other languages – November 4<sup>th</sup> can be interpreted as "Nice Butt Day", for example. When language is involved, numbers lose their literal predictability.



◀ In Japanese, quotation marks and similar characters are often used for emphasis. In English, however, such quotation marks often indicate sarcasm and/or dishonesty



◀ This bit of Japanese numberplay was left unlocalized for English-speaking players. Instead, a short translation note was added for clarification for those unfamiliar with Japanese (Game: *Waku Waku Sweets*)



◀ Double-negatives are usually a no-no in proper English, but this same rule doesn't necessarily apply to other languages like Japanese. As a result, literal translations can end up breaking expected grammar rules (Game: *Sword Art Online: Hollow Fragment*)



## Creative Packaging

Sometimes, it's not the words themselves that are difficult to translate, but how they're presented. Literal translations tend to fall apart when this type of "creative packaging" is involved. Here are a few simple examples.

### Clues and Hints

Writers sometimes include meticulously worded hints meant to guide the reader or lead the reader astray. Such hints might be used as mystery clues, as foreshadowing devices, or to say something indirectly. Naturally, a carefully crafted hint can easily break during translation.

### Poetry

Rhyme, rhythm, and syllable counts are important in poetry, but tend to get lost in a literal translation. For example, a literal translation of a Japanese haiku into English will probably have too many syllables to still be a traditional haiku.

### Songs

Songs present a similar creative packaging problem. A literal translation of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" into Japanese, for example, will result in lyrics that no longer fit the music. The natural solution, then, is to tweak the translation until they *do* fit the music:



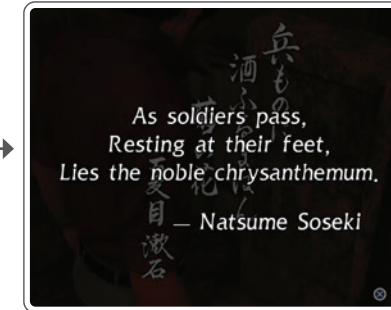
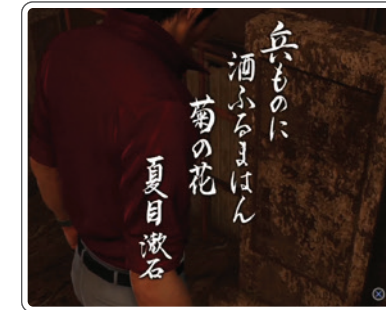
Incidentally, this particular localization from 1960 is the standard version everyone in Japan sings today, but many other localizations exist. One even somehow inserts Jesus into the lyrics!

English Lyrics	Localized Japanese Lyrics
Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer had a very shiny nose	<i>makka na ohana no tonakai san wa</i> (The reindeer with a bright red nose)
And if you ever saw it you would even say it glows	<i>itsumo minna no waraimono</i> (was always laughed at by everyone)
All of the other reindeer used to laugh and call him names	<i>demo sono toshi no kurisumasu no hi</i> (But on Christmas Day that year)
They never let poor Rudolph play in any reindeer games	<i>santa no ojisan wa iimashita</i> (old man Santa said)
Then one foggy Christmas Eve Santa came to say	<i>kurai yomichi wa pika pika no</i> (On the dark night path)
Rudolph with your nose so bright won't you guide my sleigh tonight?	<i>omae no hana ga yaku ni tatsu no sa</i> (your shiny nose will be useful)
Then how the reindeer loved him as they shouted out with glee	<i>itsumo naiteta tonakai san wa</i> (The reindeer who always used to cry)
"Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer You'll go down in history!"	<i>koyoi koso wa to yorokobimashita</i> (gleefully felt "tonight's finally my night!")

Although these Japanese lyrics don't fully match the English lyrics, they still tell roughly the same story with words that can be sung to the original tune.



This dying message was localized for audiences unfamiliar with Japanese writing systems. Without this change, the underlying mystery – and its solution – would've made zero sense in English (Game: *Phoenix Wright – Ace Attorney: Justice For All*)



This 5-7-5 Japanese haiku also contains an important gameplay clue. As such, the content of the poem was prioritized over the need to keep the syllable count intact (Game: *Yakuza 6*)



Gato's Japanese song, which was meant to be sung to his theme music, required some minor lyrical rewrites to remain singable in the English release (Game: *Chrono Trigger*)



This gameplay hint refers to the differently colored buttons on the player's controller. Although the hint was translated literally into English, regional controller differences ensured the hint was meaningless for most players in North America (Game: *Breath of Fire II*)



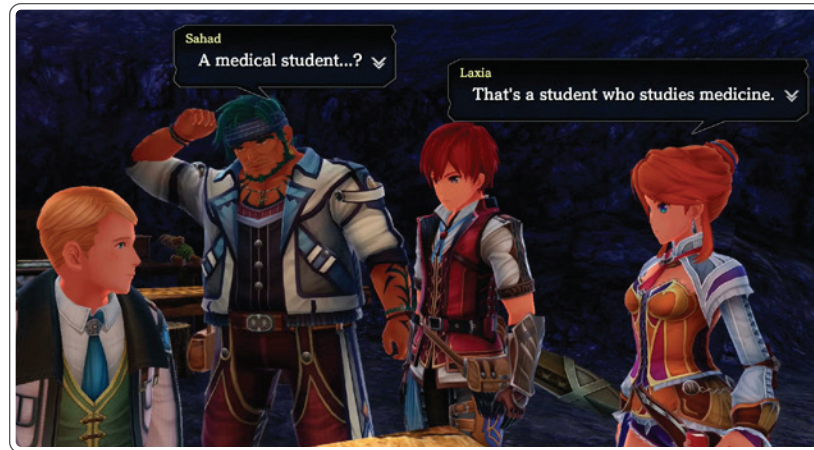
## Avoiding Side Effects

Sometimes, literal translations simply come across as odd or confusing. Occasionally, they might even carry extra, unintended meanings in the target language. If left as-is, these translations risk conveying something the original creator never intended.

### Redundancy

Sometimes a literal translation might sound unintentionally redundant or foolish. This is common in entertainment translation when special terminology is being defined, and said terminology uses words from a foreign language. Redundancy can also occur when a word sounds complicated in the original language but simple in the target language.

A literal translation can cause dialogue to mesh improperly, leading to redundancies and unintentionally silly sentences (Game: *Ys VIII: Lacrimosa of Dana*)



### Sounding Funny or Improper

A literal translation can leave an unintended impression if it sounds funny or inappropriate in the target language. For example, there's an item in the *Pokémon* series that restores Power Points. In Japanese, the item is literally called the "PP Aid". This name would sound unintentionally funny and inappropriate in English, however, so the item was renamed to something tamer during localization.



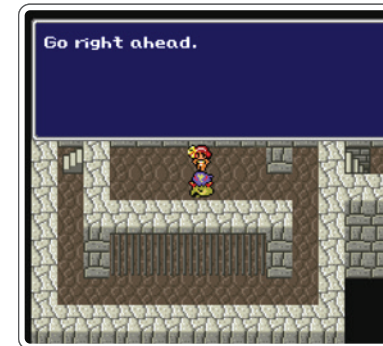
Words and names that sound fine in one language won't necessarily sound fine in another language

### Ambiguity

A literal translation of an idea that's clearly defined in the source language can become ambiguous in the target language. For example, the Japanese term *hikari damēji* literally means "light damage" in English. But wait, does that mean "damage that isn't severe" or does it mean "damage from light beams"? In Japanese, it's clearly the latter, but the literal English translation paves the way for confusion.



Japan doesn't embrace fair use doctrine, so please enjoy the many off-model illustrations that this book has to offer!



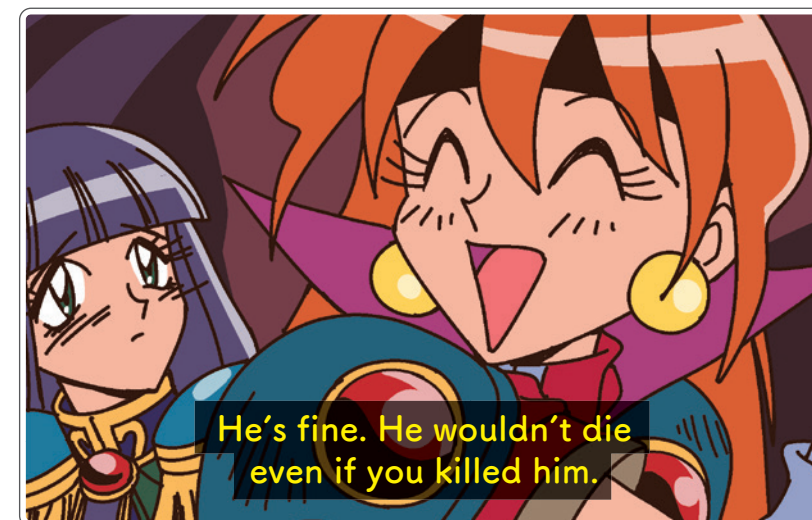
A literal translation can create ambiguity where there was none before. For example, is this character giving an invitation, or is she giving directions? (Game: *Final Fantasy II*, Super NES)



Even the simplest of words can take on extra, unintended meanings when translated literally between languages (Game: *B.C. Story*)



The word "Execute" in this menu is a literal translation of the Japanese word, but it also takes on the extra, unintended meaning of "murder my character for her wrongdoing" in addition to "perform task" (Game: *Princess Maker 3*)



Literal translations can sometimes come across as distractingly funny or weird. This *Slayers* line, for example, is literally what's said in Japanese, but "even if you tried to kill him, he wouldn't stay dead" is functionally closer to the intended meaning



## External Influences

Being a professional translator is a lot like being a professional chef – a customer hires you to create something that needs to follow custom specifications.

For example, a restaurant customer can order a hamburger, but ask that it be cooked a certain way and include specific toppings. Similarly, a translation client can order something to be translated according to their custom requirements, like “each line of text can only be 22 letters long” or “use these specific terms in these situations”.

What’s more, customers are also free to modify the final product as they see fit. If a restaurant customer wants to set their hamburger on fire or turn it into a horrifying birthday cake, they can do that. Likewise, a translation client can edit the final product however they want. Basically, clients have direct influence over how a translation is performed and how it’s ultimately presented.

When it comes to entertainment translation, clients are one part of the equation, but there are other parts too. The original creator, for example, might demand that certain names be spelled certain ways, or that certain terms be translated in certain ways. Industry and corporate guidelines might also demand that certain things be handled in certain ways. And, of course, local laws and cultural values can have an effect on the final product.

Video game localizations, in particular, have undergone such content changes for decades. These changes have famously included:

- Removal of religious content
- Removal of sexual content
- Removal of drug, alcohol, and tobacco use
- Removal of racial and sexual stereotypes
- Removal of profanity and excessive violence
- Removal of blood, gore, and graphic illustrations of death

These changes were especially common in video game localizations during the 1990s and 2000s. However, as the times change, the external influences on the localization process can change too.

In short, professional entertainment localization rarely happens in a vacuum – there are almost always external factors that might cause something to deviate from a straightforward, literal translation.



It’s common to see jokes, references, and text changes added to translated games. When such added content is unwarranted, it technically ceases to be a translation or a localization. Because the result no longer reflects the original’s intention, it becomes more of a “transformation” or “alteration”. I’m not fond of this practice myself, and as a professional translator I don’t feel comfortable tinkering with others’ creativity.



“The translated script MUST be half the length of the original text, oh, and after you’re done we’ll insert some memes!”



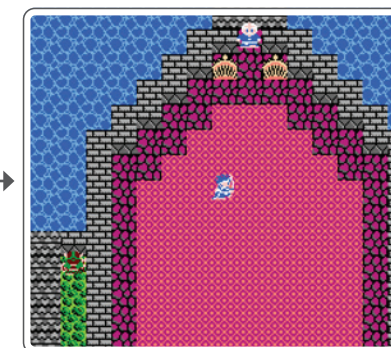
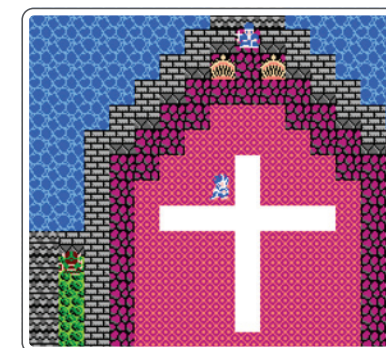
◀ At some point during the localization process, this “Naughty Book” item was replaced with a tamer “Comic Book” item as a result of external influences (Game: *Mega Man Legends*)



◀ In the 1980s and 1990s, the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* games were renamed for certain audiences due to local laws forbidding references to ninjas



◀ External factors caused all references to opium to be replaced with bananas for the English-language release (Game: *Final Fantasy Legend II*)



◀ Because video games rely on more than text to convey ideas, localization and external influences can apply to graphical depictions too. Here, we see how religious imagery was dropped from the English release of *Dragon Warrior III* due to Nintendo of America’s content policies at the time





Basically, you can translate something literally to the best of your ability and still be wrong – unless you can read minds or see the future



Local abbreviations can completely lose their intended meaning if left intact and unlocalized

## Unpredictable Circumstances

Sometimes, the lack of external information can cause a literal translation to fail later on. This is common when translating ongoing entertainment series. In these situations, it's possible that only the original creator knows where the story will go. Or it's possible that the creator has no idea and is making things up as they go. Either way, without input from the creator, a translator can only hope and guess which insignificant things will become significant later on.

As an example, an important island in the *One Piece* series named ラフテル (*rafuteru*) was introduced in 1999. Because the Japanese language doesn't distinguish between "L" and "R" sounds, and because the series' creator wasn't involved in the translation process, English translators originally called the island "Raftel", hoping this literal transcription was correct. In 2019, with the series still chugging along, it was finally revealed that the creator intended the name to be "Laugh Tale" all along.

## And Many More

There are many other times when a literal translation might not work properly. Some of these problematic situations involve:

- Abbreviations, signs, and symbols
- Units of measurement
- Vocabulary levels
- Internet slang
- Unstated information and filler words
- Etiquette and gestures
- Physical differences
- Differences in surroundings
- Space, time, and technological limitations

There are always new, unexpected challenges in translation, so this list is only the tip of the iceberg!

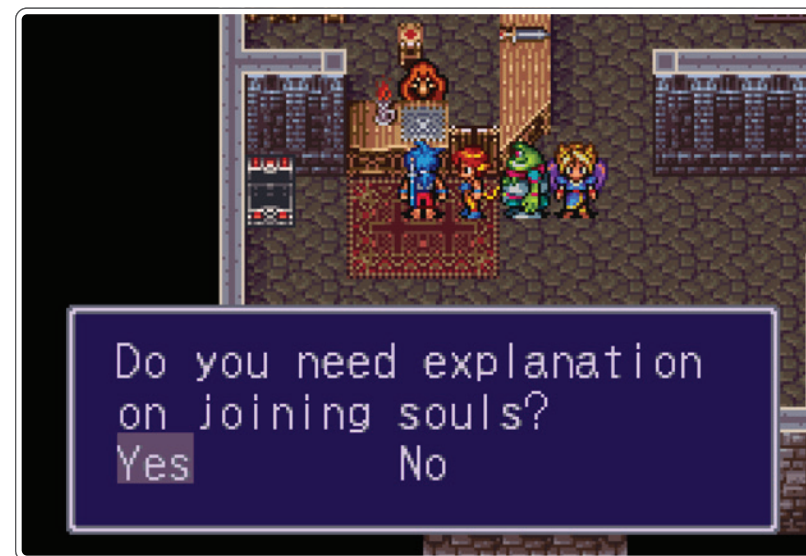
## All Together

As we've seen in this chapter, a lot can get lost in translation if you only focus on the words used. Recognizing and preserving the *ideas* behind those words is arguably more important, and is at the heart of what localization is all about.

In this third *Legends of Localization* book, we'll look at the specific things that changed during *Undertale*'s translation process into Japanese. And given that the game relies so much on humor, unique speech patterns, cultural references, and more, there'll surely be a lot to discover!



It goes without saying that *Undertale*'s localization encountered almost every obstacle in this chapter, and more. It's such a big, strange game that I'd be shocked if it *had* been an easy, straightforward translation!



Simple words like "yes" and "no" don't always work the same way between languages, especially when a negative question is involved. In the literal English translation of this scene, choosing "yes" would effectively mean "no" and vice-versa (Game: *Breath of Fire II*)



Sometimes a simple word in the source language isn't as simple in the target language. Translating word-for-word without consideration of the target audience can lead to weird results (Game: *Alice in the Heart ~Wonderful Wonder World~*)



The English letter "W" is regularly used in Japanese as a symbol for the word "double". Leaving this "W" as-is in translation can cause confusion for audiences outside of Japan