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Czech Versions of Word Games in the Form of Mobile Applications

By official statistics in 2020 about 218 billion mobile applications were downloaded worldwide [1]. A quarter of this huge amount is represented by games [2]. Games have an indispensable role in human development, regardless of the form in which they can exist. One type of games is word games, which have a huge impact on our verbal intelligence. In the case of word games in the form of mobile applications, emphasis should be placed on both accuracy and proper translation. In my paper, I would like to point out the errors that occur in selected Czech versions of word games caused by poor translation and their impact on understanding.

Keywords: Czech, English, application, games, errors, translation.

1. Introduction

The word **game** has many definitions which try to capture and describe this form of human activity from many angles. One of these definitions describes game as a specific human activity, which with its deep meaning helps us to get to know ourselves and the world around us [3, p. 9]. Games play an important role in the development of personality and mental processes or even in gaining new life experiences. They have accompanied us since the beginning of our lives. Games take many forms, making it almost impossible to find a uniform classification of games. Among such a huge number of types of games [4], word games have also found their place.

In general, word games are mainly focused on verbal intelligence. These games train mental condition and help to optimize brain capacity. A great benefit also lies in the development of attention, which is related to the improvement of concentration, thinking and creativity [5, p. 11]. This type of games also represents a great technique to learn or improve vocabulary [6, p. 144].

In the age of postmodern society, together with the coronavirus crisis, technologies, including mobile applications, have an indispensable role in society, especially in both education and leisure. Many word games can be found in the form of mobile applications. They are thus available to everyone and everywhere. The international element is represented by various language versions of these games. This element, which seems a huge advantage at first, brings with it many pitfalls.

I decided to download one word game in Czech language. While playing the game I discovered that in the game there are many errors. It made the game a bit harder and discouraged me from playing. I immediately recognized that these were errors caused by a poor translation from the original language, English. Because of this discovery, I decided to download more applications like this one and find out if there is also such error rate.

The aim of this research is to answer the question what the error rate in Czech language versions of chosen word games is, based on the basic level of games. According to error levels described and defined by me, I will find out what errors and how many of them occurred in each round of the game. Thanks to this, I will be able to determine which of the selected games appears to be the best in terms of the use of Czech.

2. Sources and Methods

First, I decided to choose 4 applications with the same focus. All games should be based on the principle of making words, which will correspond with the theme of the round. Based on this criterion I chose these games: **Slovní bublina – Hledání skrytých slovních částí, Slovní Bublina Puzzle – Slovní spojení připojit hru, Slovo Cestování** and **Slovo Zásobníku: Skryté Slovo Hledání Hry**. One half of the games are using the method of a combination of bubbles in which there are groups of letters (usually syllables) forming a word. The second half are using the method of logical connection of letters that are given individually in blocks. I decided to use different games, because the output of each round is the same – find words that correspond to the theme of the round which is usually represented by one key word.
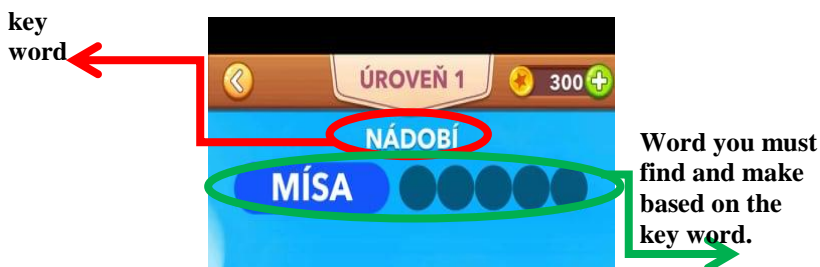
key word

Figure 1. Example of Key Word

Word you must find and make based on the key word.

I also chose these games because the themes of rounds were the same or very similar in all games (just in different order). It gives me a better opportunity to provide relevant data for comparing these word games.

In the next step I decided to play 10 rounds of each game which represent basic level. Based on the mistakes I noticed in the game, I created an error scale, depending on how they affect understanding.

Then I filled in the table according to the error scale to provide information about error rate in every round of each game. Thanks to this, I was able to compare the applications and determine which has the lowest error rate and appears to be the best game of the four.

3. Description of Applications

The games I chose are applications with quite a high rating on Google Play Store. Each game is from a different application developer. I also decided to work with the latest versions of every application to have current data.

Basic Data

All data I used for this part are from Google Play Store [7].

Table 1. Basic data

Data/Applications	Slovní bublina	Slovní Bublina Puzzle	Slovo Cestování	Slovo Zásobníku:
Application developer	CQN LLC	Connect Word Games	tap4joy	Cool Word Puzzle Games
Launched	2020	2020	2019	2019
Original language	English	English	English	English
Version	3.5	2.6	1.0.11	6.0
Last update	4. 1. 2021	4. 2. 2021	27. 2. 2020	4. 1. 2021
Rating in Google Play	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.6

4. Error Scale

The levels are based and explained on the real mistakes of these games.

4.1. First Level

The first level of errors are grammatical errors, which despite their occurrence have no or negligible effect on understanding. I also included the issue of grammatical genders in this level. English as an analytic language with a small number of synthetic features, does not have grammatical genders for nouns or adjectives. On the other hand, the Czech language, as a synthetic language with a considerable amount of inflection, expresses grammatical gender by using suffixes. In the game this issue was represented by using a key word **modrý.** The adjective used in this way tends to search just for Czech masculine although it was necessary to find words of other grammatical genders, too. It would be better to use **modrý/á/é** or instead of one key word use a general question: **Co je modré?** (What is blue?).
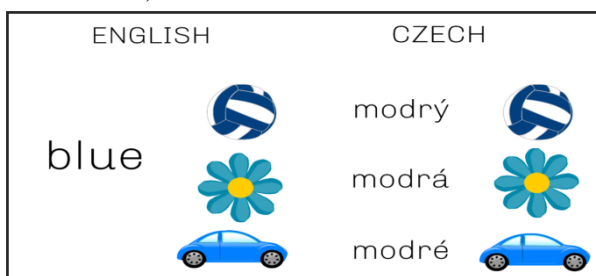

Figure 2. Example of Grammatical Genders Issue Found in the Game

4.2. Second level

Errors included in this level predominantly are a result of semantic differences between the original language and Czech. Such mistakes have a more significant effect on understanding because knowledge of the original language is required to pass the round. Semantic differences here represent polysemous nouns and verbs. In the game, it was assumed that the Czech language also considers these words to be polysemous.
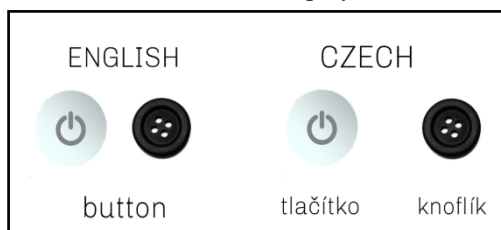

Figure 3. Polysemous Words Issue Found in the Game

4.3. Third level

This level can simply be called nonsense. This group presents such errors that have a huge impact on understanding. It contains words that do not exist in Czech, or those words that even after understanding semiotic differences in the form of polysemes are nonsense. An example is finding the word *snail* (in the game non-standardly as *šnek*) as a corresponding answer to the key word *insect* (in Czech *hmyz*).
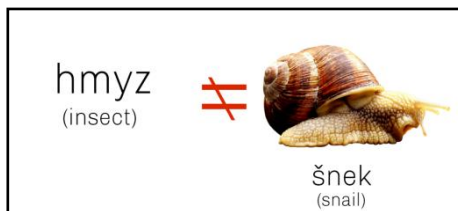

Figure 4. Example of Nonsense Found in the Game

5. Evaluation of Errors and Games

5.1. Filling in the Table

Based on the created error scale, I was able to fill in the table. The individual columns represent the games I selected and the rows the rounds of each game.

I divided each column into two parts. In the first part of each column, which is marked as **Words**, it is written how many erroneous words out of the total number of words (including the key word) appeared in the given round. For example: 1/6 means that there was 1 wrong word of a total 6 possible (even with a key word). This is because a different number of words had to be found in each round.

The second part of the columns, which is marked as **Level**, shows the error level according to the error scale. If there is no error in the round, a cross is given. If all errors are of the same level, they are uniformly marked with a level number. If errors occur that fall into more than one error level, the number of erroneous words is listed next to them in brackets. For example: 1(1), 3(2) means that there is only one error in the first level, but 2 errors fall into the third level. This is based on determining the number of errors from the first section **Words**.

Table 2. Errors and Levels

		GAMES AND ERRORS							
		Slovní bublina		Slovní Bublina Puzzle		Slovo Cestování		Slovo Zásobníku	
		Words	Level	Words	Level	Words	Level	Words	Level
R O U N D S	1	0/5	X	0/3	X	3/4	1(1),3(2)	0/5	X
	2	2/5	2	0/3	X	2/4	3	2/5	2
	3	0/7	X	0/4	X	0/5	X	0/7	X
	4	0/5	X	1/5	2	0/4	X	0/5	X
	5	3/4	2	1/5	3	0/4	X	2/5	2
	6	1/4	2	0/5	X	1/5	2	2/4	2
	7	2/4	2	1/5	1	0/5	X	2/5	2
	8	2/7	2	0/4	X	1/5	2	2/7	2
	9	1/6	2	0/6	X	0/5	X	1/6	2
	10	1/5	1	0/7	X	1/5	3	1/6	1

The first obvious information from the table above is that the most common errors were those that are included in the second level. On the other hand, the least errors are from the first level.

The first game, **Slovní bublina**, has 12 erroneous words from total 52 words. Just 1 erroneous word falls into the first level, on the other hand, 11 erroneous words fall into the second level.

The second game, **Slovní Bublina Puzzle,** has 3 erroneous words from total 47 words. In terms of error levels, 1 erroneous word falls into the first level, 1 erroneous word into the second level and 1 erroneous word into the third level.

The third game, **Slovo Cestování**, has 8 erroneous words from total 46 words. Just 1 erroneous word falls into the first level, 2 erroneous words into the second level and 5 words into the third level.

The fourth game, **Slovo Zásobníku**, has 12 erroneous words from total 55 words. Just 1 erroneous word falls into the first level, on the other hand, 11 erroneous words fall into the second level.

5.2. Error Rate Calculation

To calculate the error rate, it was first necessary to determine the severity of the errors by assigning a weight to each level.

To explain: In this case, this means that the first level error has a weight of 1, the second level error has a weight of 2, and the third level error has a weight of 3. It means that one error in the third level has the weight of three errors in the first level.

Table 3. Weights and Error Levels

Level	1	2	3
Weight	1	2	3

Based on the determined weights, I calculated the error rate. The number of errors in the individual levels (in the columns **First Level**, **Second Level** and **Third Level**) is multiplied by the respective weight. Subsequently, these results are summed and divided by the total number of words (in the column **Total Words**).

Table 4. Error Rate

Game	Total Words	First Level	Second Level	Third Level	Error Rate [%]
Slovní bublina	52	1	11	0	**44,23**
Slovní Bublina Puzzle	47	1	1	1	**12,77**
Slovo Cestování	46	1	2	5	**43,48**
Slovo Zásobníku	55	1	11	0	**41,82**

The game with the lowest error rate is **Slovní Bublina Puzzle** with 12,77 %. The error rate of other games was very similar, close above 40 %.

6. Conclusion

In my paper I dealt with the issue of Czech versions of word games in the form of applications. I noticed that there are errors in the Czech versions of word games, which are the result of a poor translation from the original language, English. I focused on four games that were selected based on the described criteria. All these games, **Slovní bublina – Hledání skrytých slovních částí, Slovní Bublina Puzzle – Slovní spojení připojit hru, Slovo Cestování** and **Slovo Zásobníku: Skryté Slovo Hledání Hry**, are based on the principle of finding the words which will correspond to the key word.

The errors that I managed to find while playing the basic level (which represents 10 rounds) were classified into an error scale, according to the impact they have on understanding. I have thus created three levels of error, where the first level has the least impact on understanding, the second level requires knowledge of the original language for understanding, and the third group, which consists of nonsense that has a huge impact on understanding.

Based on this scale, I managed to fill in a table that outlined the error rate in the rounds of each game. Based on the data in the table, I was able to

determine that in terms of translation the best game is **Slovní Bublina Puzzle – Slovní spojení připojit hru** that contained the least error rate. Thanks to this table, I also found that the most common errors in the basic level are errors from the second level.

In conclusion, I would like to note that despite the relatively small error rate in the winning game, all the games will not fulfil their educational purpose, which is secondary, but still very important. Each error in these games can have an adverse effect on the development of Czech of an individual who does not know the original language. It would be worth considering the human element in the form of a native speaker to help eliminate errors in the games.

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