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# You Spooky Bard!: An Analysis of Video Game Localization Practices

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### Abstract

This paper analyzes the appropriateness of the localization practices utilized in the Japanese video game series *Final Fantasy* and *Pokémon*. Its argument is informed by survey responses from players of both series. Immersion, the ability of the player to remain in the game-world without distraction, is believed to be an important goal for successful localization. In this paper, the appropriateness of the localization of the *Final Fantasy* series is judged based on player immersion and enjoyment. This study finds that immersion is not essential to player enjoyment and therefore is not essential for a successful localization. In regard to the *Pokémon* series, the appropriateness of the heavy alteration and censorship of elements in the American localization is analyzed via player response to the changes. This localization practice proves to be appropriate and an effective model for future localization of Japanese video games targeted toward children in America. In addition, this paper explores immersion in *Pokémon* strategy guides released in America and Japan. The aim of this thesis is to expand the dialogue on Japanese video game localization for America and to display successful, creative localization practices which can also be utilized in other media.

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"spooky bard" expression harks back to that estranged time of yore (bardic, emphasis intended) when video game culture ebbed and flowed in these, distinct channels, Japan was the epicenter of game hardware and software, production, and translating and localizing video games from Japan was, often an expedited task. Weird as it may sound, "spooky" is a valid English word (although an, "You spooky bard!" is shouted at Edward while attacking. Despite it being known as a poor translation, the phrase "spooky bard" has become so popular with the fans of the franchise that even later reworked translations for the game's remasters has contained the line while many other aspects of the script were changed. The phrase is so popular, the term "spooky bard" has worked its way into many other Final Fantasy titles and has even been referenced in other games like Ace Attorney. Considering its legacy, maybe it's not such a fail after all. A winner i