

# Englishized? Polish Game Scholars' Responses to the Anglophone Norm

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## Keywords

Englishization, higher education studies, history of game studies, internationalization, Polish game studies

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The English language is the elephant in our room. It is so common in international game studies that we rarely pause to examine its role; or at least we rarely do so in conference papers or journal articles. This is contrary to the fact that we are now talking about game studies quite often (Chess and Consalvo 2022; Mäyrä and Sotamaa 2017). We have been discussing its history, intellectual structure, relations with different academic fields, researchers' backgrounds, regional and postcolonial divisions, feminist and queer concerns, and other significant matters. The Anglocentrism of game studies (Mejeur et al. 2021) calls for a discussion as well, and this discussion can draw from the field of higher education studies.

The backbone of game studies – in contrast to the more general area of game research – is the social sciences and humanities (Deterding 2017). With regard to these fields, the current role of English in global academia has been discussed in the opposing discourses of internationalization and Englishization. Proponents of internationalization have presented numerous reasons for making research more international (Woldegiyorgis, Proctor, and de Wit 2018). They are certainly right that a common language makes global scholarly communication easier. It may facilitate regional communication, too, as is the case with the CEEGS conference, now organized by the DiGRA Central and Eastern Europe chapter. However, critics have argued that the current form of internationalization is in fact Englishization (Phillipson 2009). They have observed that the rise of English has created an unlevel playing field for its native and non-native speakers, and that it may impoverish scholarly diversity (Boussebaa and Tienari 2021).

In my talk I will take into account the arguments from both these discourses. I will also consider local criticisms of English, grounded either in the values of academic autonomy and community (Nordbäck, Hakonen, and Tienari 2022) or in the sweeping movement of neo-nationalism (Douglass 2021). By including all these contexts, I will situate my empirical study against the background of the global role of English in game studies.

In the empirical study itself, I will look into the responses of Polish scholars to the key role of English – and more broadly, to the Anglophone norm – in game studies. Although Poland is not a core country in global culture, economy, or politics, it has an internationally recognizable video game industry. In the last decade Polish game studies has also become more internationalized (Garda and Krawczyk 2017). This

Proceedings of DiGRA 2023

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process began around the time when the country's government started reforming the national research evaluation system in order to internationalize the social sciences and humanities in Poland (Kulczycki et al. 2019). Indeed, research evaluation policies can exert a significant influence on scholarly communication, including publishing practices.

The main part of the talk will be based on six in-depth interviews with two groups of Polish participants, selected by purposive sampling. The first group is experienced game scholars (the ones who defended their PhDs at least eight years ago) and the other group is early-career game scholars (PhD students or recent PhD graduates). The interviews focus on scholarly publishing and mostly concern video games. They have been designed as semi-structured: while their final composition is not always the same, it depends on an initial list of questions. This list is given below (with the word "publications" always referring to publications in game studies).

1. How do you see the role of Polish- and English-language publications in your career so far?
2. How did you choose the language of your past publications? Did your criteria change over time?
3. How did you choose the subjects and venues of your past English publications? Did your criteria change over time?
4. How would you compare preparing and writing publications in Polish and in English?
5. What experiences have you had with reviewers and editors when working on English publications?
6. Have the policies of your institution (faculty assessment, awards, sanctions, funding for translation and proofreading, etc.) impacted on your publishing practices? Has this impact changed over time?
7. Do you think the national research evaluation policy has affected the role of English in game studies in Poland? If so, how?
8. Do you see any notable differences among current Polish game scholars when it comes to publishing in English? Were there any notable differences in the past?
9. What do you think should be the role of Polish and English in game studies in Poland: in individual practices, institutional policies, or the national policy?
10. What do you think about the role of English in game studies in general (not just in Poland)?

The list has been inspired by an earlier team project, partly composed of interviews with Polish historians, philosophers, economists, and legal scholars (the project has been called "The Evaluation Game" and the team's name is the Scholarly Communication Research Group). The initial version of the list was tested in a pilot interview in December 2022. At the time of submitting the camera-ready abstract (mid-May 2023), the research material is being examined through qualitative content analysis (Schreier 2012), carried out with the use of relevant software (NVivo), and the results will be presented at the conference.

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