Translation of Culture-loaded Words and Cross-cultural Communication from the Perspective of Domestic Games
——The English Translation of Genshin Impact As An Example

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Abstract: As the "ninth art", video games carry the important responsibility of spreading national culture and values, and also represent the cultural symbols of each nation. The aim of this project is to give a reference to domestic games that go abroad in the future and help Chinese culture go out better. This thesis uses descriptive analysis and literature research methods to analyse the English translation of culture-loaded words in the Chinese game Genshin Impact from a cross-cultural perspective, and finds through the research that the English translation strategy of the game is mainly domestication, supplemented by foreinization.

1. INTRODUCTION

With the development of human technology, video games, as a new type of literary expression and communication media, are attracting more and more attention, and they are playing a pivotal role in spreading universal values and national culture. In the context of globalization, video games have also become an important means of cultural export in cross-cultural communication. The lack of culture in the translation of games can cause a lack of cultural meaning, weaken the essential core of game culture and reduce the readers' interest in entertainment and consumption. By sorting out the cultural images in the translation process, analyzing the translation strategies in different situations, and compensating for the differences between the source language and the translated language through appropriate processing methods, we can effectively help readers to understand the game texts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Studies on Game Localization Translation

Localization emerged in the 1980s, initially as a translation of products required by multinational IT companies to sell computer software, and has since expanded into other areas. In academic language, localization is the process of adapting digital content and products developed in one regional market (locale, defined by geographical, linguistic and cultural criteria) for sale and use in another regional market (Dunne, 2006)[4]. Translators need to consider the cultural differences between different country regions and try to adapt to the cultural values of the target market when

translating. At present, there are relatively few studies on game localization translation. In terms of research reviews, Liu Ming and Ma Xiaolei (2020) reviewed localization translation research, pointing out the stage research results of game localization translation and representative foreign works at each stage, such as The Game Localization The Game Localization Handbook (Heather Chandler, 2005) and Game Localization: Translating for the Global Digital Entertainment Industry (O'Hagan & Mangiron, (2013)[1]; and Zhang Weiwei and He Shan (2017) summarize game localization translation from different translation theoretical perspectives, such as communicative translation theory, functional purpose theory and naturalized alienation strategy[2].

2.2 Studies on Culture- loaded words

Culture-loaded words, also known as lexical gaps, refer to the fact that the cultural information contained in the source language cannot be found in the translated language. Chinese scholar Liao Qiyi (2000) has said that culture-loaded words refer to words, phrases or idioms used to express something unique to a culture[3]. These words reflect that in the long history, each ethnic group gradually accumulates a unique way of activity different from other ethnic groups.

When it comes to the translation strategies of culture-loaded words, in summary, they can be divided into two major categories: domestication and foreignization. The former advocates that the translation should adapt to the wording habits of the target language culture and reduce cultural conflicts; while the latter advocates that the translation should adapt to the wording habits of the source language culture and be faithful to the original work. Unlike traditional translations, however, game translations pose a higher challenge to translators in terms of both word limits and re-creation. On the one hand, the

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translator needs to consider how to compress the translation into the limited text space, and also how to match the length of the translation to the length of the character's voice. On the other hand, the ultimate aim of game translation is to bring the playability and entertainment of the game to the target language player. Game translators "do not need to be completely faithful to the original" (O'Hagan & Mangiron, 2006)[5]. Therefore, how to balance foreignization and domestication is a great test for translators' ability.

In conclusion, the regional complexity and ethnic diversity behind culture-loaded words is undoubtedly a huge challenge for translators. The choice of translation strategies and methods for Chinese culture-loaded words should take into account the principle of equality in cross-cultural communication and serve Chinese culture going abroad.

3. SPECIFIC TRANSLATION STRATEGIES FOR CULTURE-LOADED WORDS IN THE ENGLISH VERSION OF GENSHIN IMPACT

Genshin impact is an open-world role-playing game (RPG) produced and published by miHoYo Co. Ltd, which was officially launched in September 2020. According to Sensor Tower, as of November 2021, Genshin Impact has generated over US$2.3 billion in global mobile market revenue, with an average daily draw of over US$5.4 million, making it the third highest-grossing mobile game in the world during the same period[6].

The game takes place in a fantasy world called Teyvat, where those chosen by the gods are granted the "Vision" to channel the power of the elements. Players will take on the role of a mysterious character called "Traveller" who travels through seven countries. Players can encounter comrades with different personalities and unique abilities, defeating powerful enemies and recovering lost relatives. Apart from the excellent production, excellent localization translations have also helped to develop the game for overseas markets. There are large number of settings rooted in different cultures, so this thesis will select representative texts from the game and analyse the translation of the Chinese cultural load words in them.

3.1 Domestication

3.1.1 paraphrase

The paraphrase is faithful to the content of the original, but does not adhere to the style and form of the original, aiming to convey its connotation.Authors and Affiliations.

Example 1: The original: 欲买桂花同载酒，只可惜故人，何日再见？

The translation: Osmanthus wine tastes the same as I remember... But where are those who share the memory?

The first half of the line is from Tang Duo Ling, whose original poem means that I want to buy osmanthus flowers and carry wine with me on a boat, but I don't have the same boldness as when I was a young man.

In the game, as the oldest and most powerful of the seven gods, Rex Lapis used to meet with his friends at a wine party, but things have changed and five of the seven people at the party have passed away. In the first half of the line, the original meaning of the poem is "I want to buy cinnamon flowers and bring wine with me", without the meaning of "tastes the same as I remember", but the translation is "the taste of cinnamon wine is still the same as I remember". This not only expresses the regret and sadness that the old friend is no longer with him, but also fits in with the character's own background.

Although the above example uses the paraphrase strategy for culture-loaded words, the sentences are still slightly lengthy, which is something that needs to be avoided in game translation, otherwise it will result in an awkward situation where the sound and picture are not in sync. Therefore, the following example is taken from the names of the character skills to see how the translator can correspond with the original text in a limited number of words. Example 2:

	The original	The translation
Elemental Skill (press)	弥坚不催	Crumble!
	壁立千仞	Rise!
	震天撼地	Quake!
Elemental Skill (long press)	安如磐石	Stabilize!
	固若金汤	Solidify!
	兼收并蓄	Gather!
Elemental Burst	天理长驱	Order guide you!
	此乃天道	This is order!
	天动万象	I will have order!

The four-character idiom is a linguistic feature of Chinese, which often contains a wealth of connotations. In English, on the other hand, a precise verb can express the meaning succinctly and vividly, especially in character battle voice, where the sense of power of the translation is often more appropriate than the ink-consuming words. In the six voices mentioned above, the translator uses a single verb to translate, which fits the meaning of the Chinese, for example, "震天撼地" is translated as "Quake". It also perfectly synchronizes the sound and picture, which is crisp and elegant. In addition, the translator translates the word "天", "天理" and "天道" into "order", which not only helps to unify the players' perception of the characters, but also allows for the cross-cultural dissemination of the "homophone jokes" in the "Derivative art".

3.1.2 Replacement

Finding similar imagery in the translated language for substitution to prevent ambiguity in the culture of the source language during translation. It is one of the common means in the translation strategy of culture-loaded words.

Example 3: The original: 灾星罩着灾星？虽然感觉是加倍的不详，但......我喜欢。.

The translation: two cursed scapegoats banding together for survival...sounds like a recipe for disaster, but at the same time...I kinda dig it.

"灾星" is a derogatory Chinese folk term for a comet, also known as the "jinx". The ancients used the celestial phenomena to attach themselves to human affairs. It was believed that if a star appeared to be abnormal, there would be a corresponding disaster on earth, which was later used to refer to the person who would cause the disaster.

The word "scapegoat" is from the Old Testament. It said that God asked Abraham to kill Isaac in order to see if he was truly faithful. Just as Abraham was about to take the sword and kill his son, God's angel immediately stopped him from doing so, telling him that it was only a test from Yahweh and then he used a sheep as a sacrifice instead. It is now used to refer to a person who takes the place of other's sin. Here the translators uses replacement translation strategy because the word "灾星" is in fact a superstitious expression, blaming a person for an unfounded disaster, which in a sense makes that person a "scapegoat". Therefore, it allows English speakers to better understand the meaning of the original. In addition, the translator also uses a pun here, as "scapegoat" is also "goat", hence a dish made with two "scapegoats" is, of course, a disaster.

3.1.3 Transcreation

Transcreation is a common tool in game localization translation. It is a second creative processing of the translated text based on the cultural background of the target language to make it more acceptable to the readers. It differs from replacement. The previous one involves finding the same or similar cultural imagery in the culture of the language into which it is translated and replacing it, whereas the latter is a second creative process based on the cultural background of the language into which it is translated. Examples are given below.

Example 4: 尘歌壶 Serenitea Pot

仙人 Adepti（pl：Aduptus）

The above examples are strictly self-invented composites, using a very obvious strategy of translation. The first word, "尘歌壶", is an in-game prop used to create a "the realm within" for the player (a typical Chinese loaded word from Tai Chang Yin, referring to the realm of immortality), which is simply a home system. The translator's treatment of this is very evocative. "Serenity" meaning "quietness", "Serenitea" and "Serenity" are harmonious, and the word "tea" and "pot" also form the meaning of "teapot", which not only conveys the leisurely mood in the "fairyland", but also indicates the identity of the "pot". The translation is a masterpiece

The word "仙人" is also a typical Chinese cultural load. As early as the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, there was a belief in immortals in China, often referring to those with supernatural powers. The

translator here creates the word "Adepti" (plural Adeptus) from the Latin word adipiscor, which is usually translated as "divine power" or a (person) skilled in the occult. For English-speaking players, the Latin is a more "high class" translation. Therefore, such translation is more localized and more convenient for English players to understand "仙人".

In short, transcreation is more in line with the reading habits of the players of target-language and allows them to better understand what the source language is trying to say.

3.2 Foreignization

3.2.1 Transliteration

Transliteration is the most common translation strategy of the foreignization approach, allowing for a better output of the culture contained in the source language, as well as stimulating the interest of the players of the target language in the culture of the source language.

Example 5: Names of people and places (partial)

name	translation	place	translation
香菱	Xiangling	无妄坡	Wuwang Hill
凝光	Ningguang	渌华池	Luhua Pool
北斗	Beidou	奥藏山	Mt. Aocang

The names of people and places in Genshin Impact are all transliterated. Although the Chinese context is lost when translated into English, the translation cannot be fully equivalent.

Therefore, the appropriate use of transliteration strategies can arouse the interest of players of the target language in Chinese and motivate them to take the initiative to understand the cultural connotations behind the Chinese names, further promoting cultural export.

3.2.2 Omission

Example 6: The original:正好我也想看看，陆上叱咤风云的旅行者，是不是也有在海上翻云覆浪的天分。

The translation: I'm curious to see if you'll take the sea by storm in the same way you have on land.

The phrase "叱咤风云" is from the Book of Liang - The Chronicle of Emperor Yuan, and is used to describe a person who is a sensation. The phrase "叱咤风云" and "翻云覆浪" are both used to describe the fame of a player. "Take sth by storm" is a direct translation of "to create a storm in a certain area", and by extension, "to conquer completely". The translator does not repeat the translation here, but omits the former and directly translates it as "take the sea by storm", which not only matches the Chinese phrase "翻云覆浪", but also conveys the meaning of a mighty wind.

4. THE ROLE OF GAME TRANSLATION IN CROSS-CULTURE COMMUNICATION

In the context of globalization today, mass media has profoundly influenced people's social life and ideology.

As a new "ninth art", video games are one of the most intuitive and vivid cultural carriers, and their cross-cultural communication meets the trend of the times, becoming one of the important forms of cultural export. Unlike ordinary written translations, which can only convey content through textual symbols, video games can convey content in more diverse ways. On the one hand, the game text can effectively interpret and convey cultural content, and on the other hand, the audio-visual information synchronized with the text can help to understand cultural content. The multimedia nature of video games therefore creates many favourable conditions for overcoming cultural differences and promoting intercultural communication.

Looking at the video game market, it is easy to see that nowadays the world's best-known works are still dominated by Japan, Europe and the United States, and the values and ideologies conveyed therein are subtly influencing their audiences. As a major cultural power, China has exported very few outstanding works to overseas. How to seize the opportunity and meet the challenge is a topic worthy of deeper consideration for our national electronic entertainment industry. For this reason, the huge success of Genshin Impact overseas is worthy of emulation by other game practitioners. It wraps Chinese culture in a fantasy world that is accessible and enjoyable to players around the world, from campaign quests to character voices, all of which are a subtle export of Chinese culture. In the process of translating the game, the localization team's various translation ingenuity has also been adapted to the expression habits of overseas players. Proper translation bridges the gap of cultural differences, respecting the audience's gaming experience while spreading traditional Chinese culture. It not only realizes its commercial value, but more importantly, takes on the important task of cross-cultural communication.

5. CONCLUSION

This thesis takes the translation of cultural-loaded words in games as the object of study, and finds that the translator uses demostication as the main focus and foreignization as a supplement to achieve a proper interchange between the source language and the translated language.At the same time, the specific translation strategies for culture-loaded words in games should be divided into three cases. When no alternative expressions can be found in the translated language, paraphrase or omission can be used; when alternative expressions can be found in the translated language, replacement or transcreation can be used; for the translation of personal names and place names, transliteration can be used.

All in all, localized translation plays a pivotal role in the overseas dissemination of games. This thesis hopes to try to explore the English translation strategies of culture-loaded words in domestic games, so as to give a reference to future domestic games going abroad and help Chinese culture go out better.

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