Academic Journal of Management and Social Sciences
ISSN: 2958-4396 | Vol. 2, No. 3, 2023

On Intercultural Communication and Game Translation

-- Taking "League of Legends" as an Example

Huizhen Zhu

School of Foreign Languages, Southwest Petroleum University, Chengdu 610000, China

Abstract: With the development of globalization, international communication is becoming more and more frequent, and cross-cultural communication emerges as the times require. Translation is the hub of intercultural communication. Different text backgrounds show different translation styles. With the promotion of today's network technology, people's ability to access information is more efficient. The translated texts are no longer confined to books, newspapers, etc., and game translation has also poured into the public's field of vision. Many of today's hottest games have been developed by foreign companies and then introduced by Chinese companies. According to the China Internet Center, the number of online game users in China exceeds 420 million. As a result, people are increasingly concerned about the quality of game translation. From the cross-cultural perspective, this paper discusses the translation features of game characters and analyzes how game translation embodies the purpose of cross-cultural communication.

Keywords: Cross-cultural Communication; Game Translation; League of Legends.

1. Introduction

Translation plays an important role in the cross-cultural communication. Like the translation of books, newspapers, music and other texts, game translation is also a cross-cultural communication activity. The player's game experience is closely related to the quality of translation, so localization translation is particularly important in game translation. Game translation should not only be easy to understand, but also arouse the interest of players, so as to achieve the purpose of attracting more new players on the basis of maintaining old players.

In the search of the research literature on the translation of e-sports games, it is found that most of the papers discuss the object of game translation is relatively unpopular, and the text material of the game is not very novel, lacking some persuasiveness, which is not conducive to the understanding of young readers. League of Legends, developed by Riot Games in the US, is a national level MOBA game. In China, the game is managed and operated by Tencent. With 110 million registered players as of 2017, a conservative estimate is around 10 million monthly active users. League of Legends has attracted so many players not only because of its good gameplay, but also because of its well-designed backstory, cool skills, and unique hero names. Therefore, this paper takes League of Legends, the most popular competitive game in various countries, as an example to analyze the translation performance of hero characters in popular e-sports games from the perspective of cross-cultural communication.

2. Intercultural Communication and Game Translation

The concept of "intercultural communication" was first put forward by American anthropologist. It refers to the communication between people who speak different languages, and also refers to the communication between any people with different cultural backgrounds. Generally speaking, it is how to communicate appropriately with non-native speakers due to the differences in language and cultural background. And translation is an indispensable part of cross-cultural communication, is the hub of cross-cultural communication. Professor Wang Ning said in his speech: "Translation activity is a kind of cross-cultural and cross-language interpretation." Therefore, all translation activities are closely related to cross-culture. In order to make the target language receiver accurately experience the mystery of the source language and avoid the target language receiver being unable to understand the information accurately conveyed by the source language, translation should be fully in the cultural level of knowledge popularization and adaptive choice. Therefore, although the two sides of cross-cultural communication, it is undeniable that there are different cultural and historical backgrounds, and even different language features. The external language may have different forms of expression, but as far as the development trend of human destiny community is concerned, its internal meaning can be understood mutually, which is also a strong basis for the meaning of translation existence.

In the past, books, newspapers, magazines, music and so on were chosen as the texts for translation. They are indispensable links between translation and intercultural communication. And the translation of video games, like any other kind of translated texts, is a kind of cross-cultural communication. However, video game text is classified as a special purpose text, and it is important to pay attention to its main function when translating. It can be divided into two categories: providing information and conducting self-promotion. The text of the game is an instruction that tells the player how to play the game. If it is not fully and beautifully displayed to the player, it lacks the most important attraction and cannot achieve the purpose of retaining old players and attracting new players. The texts of these video games include the hero's name, the title of the summoner, the hero's skin and the creation story behind the skin, and the worldview conveyed by the game. So, without a great depiction of the source text, and when there is a communication gap in the local culture, it is impossible to attract more players. As a result, the game text in the source language needs a lot of reworking and some transformation, so as to be more

appropriate for the understanding of the target language readers.

In a word, the translation of video game texts should be connected with the concept of cross-cultural communication. Translators should not only simply deal with words, but should clearly follow the requirements of customers or clients, combined with the purpose of translation and the pointing function of game products, so that players of different cultural backgrounds can understand. Therefore, for the translators of e-sports games, the main problem they face and need to solve is how to cross the gap of cultural differences and convey the creative intentions of game makers to game players of different cultural backgrounds in detail.

3. Analysis of the Translation of Popular Characters in League of Legends from a Cross-cultural Perspective

The inspiration for game creation also comes from life. The content of League of Legends, an e-sports game, can be simply summarized as the player controls the hero character of his choice in the game and forms a camp with the remaining four teammates, competes with the five-person team formed by the other party at the same time, protects his own defensive tower from physical damage and wins the final victory by knocking down the enemy's defensive tower. League of Legends has more than 100 hero characters in the video game. They all come from different regions, have different cultural backgrounds and different forms of speech. And it is precisely because of these differences, just shows that there are differences in cultural connotations. Therefore, in the translation of video game texts, we must choose and discuss the translated versions from the perspective of culture, so as to fully convey the purpose of video game creation.

3.1. Example 1: Zed

In the competitive game League of Legends, there is a game character named "Zed". His Chinese translation is called "劫". In United States culture, Zed's story is set in the background of an orphan and a martial arts ninja. In order to protect his motherland from invasion, he goes to an ancient temple to seek strength after asking his teacher to help him. However, he accidentally opens the forbidden treasure box and obtains the shadow ninja that will erode the mind. His strength exceeds his teacher, but he is expelled from the college. After a period of time, his mind is gradually affected by the shadow ninja, and finally killed his teacher personally, becoming a terrifying killing machine. In Chinese translation, the translated name is first true to the original text in phonology,"劫"and "Zed" pronunciation is similar. Secondly, it basically achieved the original intention. In China, there is a good saying in *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*: "And the people who want to go to hell will do it. Or use force to stop the robbery." That is,"劫"is the process of using violence or coercion to stop someone from leaving, and Zed himself is a ninja, he also wants to use powerful forces to stop the invaders. Finally, this translation in the extended meaning of the absolute can be called literary talent. The word"劫"means disaster, and from the background story, Zed's life is full of disasters: His parents died, his country was invaded, his mind was eroded by shadow ninjutsu, and he killed his teacher in madness. And he not only suffered many calamities, but also the calamities of others: he is the killer of the invaders, the evil disciple of the killer, and finally became a ruthless killing machine. Zed, who has gone through the disaster, finally becomes the embodiment of the disaster, destined to bring disaster to all living beings. Combining the Japan cultural background with the cultural expression in Chinese, it is the only choice to name him in this way.

3.2. Example 2: The Loose Cannon

Another hero in the game is called "The Loose Cannon". It is translated as "暴走萝莉". In fact, through literal translation, "The Loose Cannon" should be translated as "松散的大炮", which is more in line with Chinese expression habits. What is the reason for the big difference between the two translations? In the United States, people often use the phrase "The Loose Cannon" to describe a person who loses control, ignores authority, and breaks the rules, and often hurts himself and those who support, protect, and care for him. In the cultural backstory of video game language, the term "暴走" refers to the explosive power of the game's hero characters. It is usually triggered when a certain combat power condition is reached. Heroes with this ability can run in anger, are not controlled by other people's skills, and can even cause devastating damage to others in an unusual way. Through understanding and comparison, from the cultural dimension, "暴走"and "松散的大炮" do show parallel meanings. The word "萝莉" is also the Chinese name for Lolita. It originated from the famous novel *Lolita* by United States writer Vladimir Nabokov. Finally, it was incorporated into Japan animation, often appearing in the public eye as a cute little girl. Not only in Japan, but also in China's online language, the word "萝莉" is also very popular, highlighting the younger generation of Internet users to cute female image of love and pursuit. Although she has a naughty and cute appearance with a little ruffian, it is easy for others to relax their vigilance, and in the end, people will suffer unexpected attacks. The data shows that the current ratio of male to female players in the League of Legends is 67% to 33%. But the character quickly captured the hearts of all female players, becoming the most popular hero among female players. Therefore, from the perspective of understanding the cultural meaning of the source language, the translator of the game text translates "The Loose Cannon" into "暴走萝莉", combining her crazy mood and arrogant personality, which is the expression of understanding and full interpretation of the two cultures, which not only expresses the intention of the source language, but also adapts to the needs of China Internet users' culture, and then conveys the cultural background of this role.

3.3. Example 3: Xayah and Rakan

Another couple of hero characters in this video game: Xayah and Rakan. When the couple were introduced, their story background was simple. They are a couple from a declining tribe who want to save their tribe. In a nutshell, it was nothing more than a matter of handsome men and beautiful women with extremely high sugar content entering the enemy. However, in the translation of the Chinese version of the game, the translation of their names and titles is really eye-catching—"霞" and "洛";"逆羽" and "幻翎". First of all, from the phonological point of view, this translation does not seem to be faithful. The pronunciation of these two names should be close to "泽雅" and "瑞肯", but this translation has

another subtlety. In the United States, close friends do not call each other by their full names, but by abbreviations, just as Harry Potter's mother, Lily, calls Severus Seaver. "霞" and "洛"were a couple, so they naturally wouldn't address each other by their full names. It was also a shorthand form of address. "Xa" and "霞", while "Ra" and"洛"had similar pronunciations. The translation of these two names not only achieves homophonic, but also takes into account the relationship between the characters and foreign customs. This translation is very exquisite. And then continue to explore the title of the two, Xia's title is Rebel, meaning rebel; Luo is Charmer, which means magician. And the two titles "逆羽" and "幻翎" of the "reverse" and "magic" two words just correspond to the meaning of rebellion and magic, and the two words also fit their feathered image, both their appearance, but also its inner meaning, have to say that the translation is smooth and fluent. Finally, look at the extended meaning of the translated name, "霞" and "洛" are both from the *Preface to Tengwang Pavilion*: "落霞与孤鹜齐飞，秋水共长天一色". The two people are covered with feathers in the image. In the game, there is no lack of them floating in the air, cooperating with the scene of killing the enemy, which is very similar to the above "齐飞". Moreover, the tribes that Xayah and Rakan came from were gradually declining. They were fighting to revitalize their tribe. There was a kind of feeling that they were dancing in the desolate autumn scenery, facing the autumn chill water and facing the sky. This translation has both form and spirit, and the artistic conception of the allusion and the mood of the character. In this way, the translated name well reflects the cultural characteristics behind the role and shows the translator from the perspective of cross-cultural communication to interpret the text background.

3.4. Example 4: Ivern

In League of Legends, the game character "Ivern" is also deeply rooted in the hearts of game players. The English name comes from the actual place name--Inverness in Shakespeare's famous play *Macbeth*, which is finally translated as "艾翁" in Chinese game version. In Chinese, the word "艾" has the meaning of vegetation, while "翁" is an old man, which is very consistent with the characteristics of the game characters. In Chinese, it can be understood as an old man with the surname "艾". In ancient China, Ouyang Xiu called himself Zui Weng and Liu You called Fang Weng. They were both poets. This is the story of "艾翁". The translation of the title "翠神" is very entangled. It is called "The Green Father". The name is easy to translate, but conveys a deeper meaning. Literally, "Green Father" may make people think of "绿爸", but this is not in line with socialist core values, and the translation seems to imply something. In the West, "Father" in addition to "父亲", there is the meaning of clergy, combined with cultural background, cannot be directly translated as "爸"or "爹", at most can be called "父"--the priest. If the word "Green" is directly translated into "绿" in the Chinese, it will not only sound bad, but also have a subtle embarrassment. After all, United States designers do not know what happens in Chinese culture when "绿" and "父" are together. Since the word "父"cannot be used, the word "神" can only be used in translation. In the end, it is found that "翠神" is more catchy. Moreover, the word "翠神" is not a common and inherent word, nor does it produce unnecessary conflict, so the translation can be called appropriate.

3.5. Example 5: The Steel Shadow

The hero of "The Steel Shadow" literally translates as the shadow of steel, but the title is too masculine. "Steel" in the West also has the meaning of describing people's determination. The China version of the game was eventually translated as "青钢影". Added a "青" in front of the word, with the meaning of green steel, looks more feminine characteristics. At the same time, it also reminds people of the image of the ancient China sword, the green steel sword, which also conforms to the character skill of The Steel Shadow, showing the sharp attack of The Steel Shadow and being very elegant. And it also matches the translation.

3.6. Example 6: Kindred

Kindred is a companion character in League of Legends whose body is a sheep. The companion body is the Wolf, called the Wolf spirit. Unlike many popular game heroes, the name itself is a specific English word meaning "亲属、家人、同血缘的" in Chinese and thus echoes the concept of Gemini. In the process of English-Chinese translation of this game role, the Chinese mainland's translation is different from that of Taiwan's. The Chinese mainland version does not simply use the transliteration method, the translation adopted is quite Chinese color "珏". Referred to in the Chinese ancient prose *Zuo's Commentary on The Spring and Autumn Annals*--"皆赐玉五瑴，马三匹". Lu Deming explained:"瑴，字又作珏". According to *Shuo Wen Jie Zi*, "珏" means the unity of two jade, whether from the point of view of hieroglyphics or understanding, it conforms to the companion image of the Sheep Spirit and the Wolf spirit. And "千" is the ancient character of sheep, representing the spirit of sheep as the main body. Although the pronunciation of the word "千" has changed, it is first seen from the image of the word "羊" some similar, secondly, "千" has a kind of elegant and mysterious feeling, especially the pronunciation makes people feel with ancient meaning (in the ancient text, "千" is pronounced sharply). The Chinese Taiwan version of the game has a different translation. Kindred is translated as "镜爪" in the Taiwan version of China. In addition to the transliteration method, more Chinese colors are given to the font meaning in the process of searching for corresponding Chinese characters. "镜" also has double meaning, just refers to the Wolf sheep double soul. "爪" refers to their different forms.

In contrast, the Chinese mainland version of the game translation makes great efforts in the cultural level. While ensuring the smooth transformation of the language level, it uses the cultural connotation of the cultural system of the target language to perfectly explain the image of the source language. Without missing the meaning, it enriches the cultural color of the translation to the greatest extent. This also achieves the goal that readers of both source language and target language can understand the inner cultural background of the game characters, which is also the significance of cross-cultural communication.

3.7. Example 7: The Judicator

The Chinese the mainland of China of the game is translated as "审判天使", and its original meaning is "审判者". In view of the fact that most of the translations of the

titles of the characters in the game are four-character phrases, in order to maintain the consistency of the translations, the translations are transcribed in combination with the characters' images. Other translations include "The Purifier" translated as "圣枪游侠", "The Boy Who Shattered Time" translated as "时间刺客", etc. The biggest change for the closely watched Kyle after the hero role redo is the title change. Kyle was known as The Judicator in the old version, and translated as "正义天使" in the Taiwanese version of the game. In the previous backstory, she was more of a judge. In the new background story, it is more prominent her justice nature, Kyle's title has been changed to The Righteous after the redo, the corresponding Chinese name has also been adjusted to "正义天使". Therefore, the mainland of China version of the translation does not have a "审判天使", only a title of "正义天使", which corresponds to Morgana's "堕落天使". The original text of Kyle W skill is Celestial Blessing, the mainland of China game did not translate into "天降恩典" or "天赐恩典", but chose "星降恩典", which is also a detail of the translation. The translator said that if Kyle in the League of Legends universe is a single judge, then it is not impossible to translate it as "天降", because in people's cognition, "天降" often means the only thing, such as the Father, God and so on. However, it is precisely because of the existence of Kyle's sister Morgana that Kyle's words and deeds are no longer the only explanation for the laws of the world. Using "天降" at this time seemed to indirectly determine that Morgana was not on the right path, and it was not fair to her. After all, Morgana and Kyle were two opposing sides. They both came from the power of the star spirits, and there was no absolute right or wrong. So in the balance, the translator decided to use the more neutral, more distant "星降" word. In a word, the translators of the game versions in the mainland of China are all from the cross-cultural perspective, based on the understanding of the target language readers, to arrive at the final version.

3.8. Example 8: The Swift Scout

This game role in the game is the positioning of the shooter, and assassin. He is the leader of the scouts in charge of Bander City's security and is also one of the most famous special forces in Bander City. He was loved by the players because of his cute appearance. The mainland of China game is translated as "迅捷斥候", and its original meaning is "敏捷的侦察兵" in Chinese. "斥候" is the name of the scout army in ancient China. This army originated from the Han Dynasty of China and was directly under the princes, so it was named "斥候". The translation chooses to integrate the role positioning into the ancient China war background, so as to achieve cultural localization, profound connotation, and also easy for Chinese gamers to understand. This kind of game translation based on cross-cultural connotation is of great significance to players from all over the world.

3.9. Example 9: The Enlightened One and the Mad Chemist

In the Chinese version of the game, it is translated as "天启者", but the original meaning is "启蒙的人". "天"is an imaginary but dominant image of nature in Chinese Taoist traditional culture, which is close to Jesus in Western culture. Here the task of enlightenment falls on the image of "天", which is in line with the traditional Chinese culture's reverence for nature and worship to heaven and earth. Some suggested that this is a hero of Indian style and should be translated into the corresponding Buddhist scriptures with the Hindi meaning, but it was too obscure to be adopted. The Enlightened One also had various translations of "悟明尊者", "悟明行者" in the beginning. "悟" is an active act, which does not correspond to the passive voice in the text. In Chinese, passive is rarely used in phrases, which can make up the logical subject to be active. And then with the religious background, it's easy to turn it into "天启者". Another hero, The Mad Chemist, literally means "疯狂化学家", but the mainland Chinese translator of the game's version used the foreignizing method to translate it as "炼金术士". "术士" is some people of the ancient Western countries , delusion through this method to obtain gold. However, in the eyes of the Chinese "炼金术" and the above Western countries "炼金", is not the same thing. The "炼金术" in ancient China was a special technique for making elixir, or "金丹术". The translator connected with the ancient Chinese alchemy culture and retained the ancient western culture. It aptly restores the hero's image and conveys the mystery of the game's characters.

The game scene can explain the region of the game story, the time and space transition, and carry the movement of the game characters, is an important part of attracting game players. The scene setting of League of Legends is also very beautiful. There are three map modes to choose from, as well as scenes of various buildings and plants. Turret and Inhibitor, for example, are buildings in the game scene.

Turret translates to "防御塔" in the mainland version of the game, while its original meaning is "塔楼、炮楼". In China, the word "炮楼"is mainly used to refer to the military fortifications invaded by the Japanese army during the Anti-Japanese War. If this word is chosen as the translation, Chinese players will easily be associated with the history of the Anti-Japanese War. Due to the factors of national emotion, the game will be opposed, which is not conducive to the promotion of the game, so it is more appropriate to use "塔". Here, the incremental translation method is used. The incremental translation of "防御" as an attribute also concretizes the building function, indicating that its attribute is defense rather than aggression and other attributes.

Inhibitor translated as "召唤水晶" in the Chinese mainland version of the game, but its original meaning is "抑制者". Its function is to summon siege soldiers to the battlefield at a given point in time, equivalent to a barracks. In order to express the meaning of the word accurately, it can be considered as "兵营" here. However, the setting of the game must be virtual, and if the game is merely a copy of reality, the game will not have much appeal. Therefore, combined with the specific image of the barracks in the game, the final translation effect is better.

4. Conclusion

As a new economic growth point in today's era, the e-sports industry has risen rapidly, especially after the Chinese team IG won the championship in the 8th Global Finals of League of Legends in 2018. The national sense of honor is soaring. As the most important component of e-sports industry, the translation level of online games has a far-reaching impact on the development of the whole industry.

Due to the variety game texts, the traditional equivalence translation theory can no longer meet the requirements of game translation. Moreover, the strategies of foreignization and domestication in game translation are not systematic and standardized. With the rapid development of the Internet, the game industry is in the ascendant, and more excellent games will be introduced into China in the future. More research on game translation is needed to provide theoretical basis for future game translation. All of these need to be based on cross-cultural communication, understanding the cultural background of the source language and the target language, in order to accurately convey the meaning of the translation.

The strategies and approaches involved in game translation are not the same as the translation of literary or scientific texts. Especially for international games like League of Legends, servers are spread all over the world, with both Chinese and Western cultural characteristics. The servers in each competition area need to be translated in combination with different cultural backgrounds. Although the examples listed above are just a drop in the ocean, translators of Chinese game versions have adopted the strategy of domestication translation and adopted words with parallel meanings in Chinese culture to translate the characters, which not only makes the images of heroes more vivid, but also makes the game characters popular among a large number of Chinese game players. It can be said that the purpose of cross-cultural communication has been achieved.

References

[1] Liu Chang, Yang Weixiu: A Study on Online Game Localization Translation--A Case Study of League of Legends, Overseas English, 12 (2019) No.3, p.30-32.

[2] Li Peijia, Chang Ying: Localization of Plants vs. Zombies from the Perspective of Translation, College English (Academic Edition), 1 (2019) No.5, p. 207-215.

[3] Tan Jinlei, Yang Yu: A Study on C-E Translation of mobile games from the Perspective of Skopostheorie--A Case Study of Honor of Kings, English Square,7 (2020) No.6, p. 21-24.

[4] Wang Qiyu: Research on Localization Translation Strategies of Games from the Perspective of Functional Equivalence (MS., Hebei University of Science and Technology, China 2018), p.54.

[5] Xin Yue: Game Translation from the Perspective of Translation Creation--Taking the Game League of Legends as an Example (MS., Beijing Foreign Studies University, China 2019), p.28.

[6] Yang Yingbo, Wang Huawei, Cui Qiliang: Introduction to Localization and Translation (Peking University Press, China 2011).

[7] Zhang Weiwei, He Shan: Review of Game Localization Translation Studies from Different Perspectives, Overseas English, 3 (2017) No.9, p. 96-97.