

A Study on Translation Strategies for Localization of Chinese Elements in Black Myth: Wukong Based on Cultural Adaptation Theory

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Received: March 2, 2025 Accepted: April 11, 2025 Online Published: April 14, 2025

Abstract

In today's globalized world, the video game industry has become a major cultural and economic force. Therefore, successful game localization is crucial to bridge cultural gaps. Game localization isn't just simple language conversion, but a cultural collision. The lack of cultural content in games makes them lose their original meaning and style. Therefore, to make games popular in target markets and respond to the national call for promoting Chinese culture abroad, this paper studies the cultural adaptability in game localization to help them flourish in overseas markets.

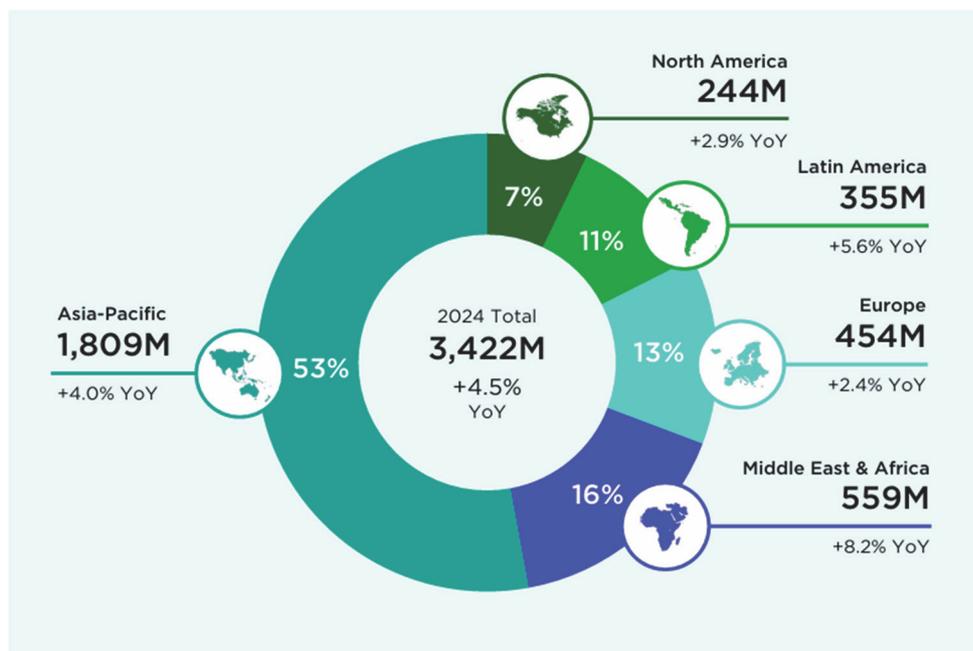
This paper takes Black Myth: Wukong, the first Chinese 3A game as a case study. Using the Cultural Adaptation Theory, it analyzes the localization strategies of traditional Chinese cultural elements in the game and how the localization team adapts traditional Chinese cultural elements for a global audience while keeping the essence of Chinese culture.

The research combines Cultural Adaptation Theory with game localization principles, exploring the challenges and solutions in balancing cultural authenticity and accessibility for non-Chinese players. It focuses on strategies for presenting mythological themes, translating cultural-rich language, and creating appealing visual elements. The findings stress the significance of culturally adaptive localization for enhancing the global appeal of Chinese-themed games and offer insights for future projects to bridge cultural gaps in the gaming industry.

Keywords: Black Myth, Wukong, cultural adaptation theory, game localization, Chinese elements

1. Introduction

In today's world, the video game industry has become a powerful medium for global cultural and economic exchange, with localization—the process of adapting a game for international markets—playing a key role in ensuring that culturally specific content resonates with players worldwide. Newzoo's latest report shows that the global gaming market is expected to reach \$34.22 billion in 2024, with the Asia-Pacific region serving as the main growth force[1]. This market trend highlights the growing importance of cultural exchange through video games. For Chinese game developers, game localization is a key step, it helps to promote Chinese culture globally and also enables them to attract players from various parts of the world.



(2024 global players/per region)

However, game localization is more than just a language shift. It is actually a complex process of cultural adaptation. If the game lacks cultural connotation, it will lose the meaning and style of the original game. As a result, the game loses its appeal to players. Therefore, it is important to find a balance between cultural authenticity and player acceptance. This balance is related to the success or failure of game localization. This study analyzes the localization strategy of Chinese cultural elements in the game *Black Myth: Wukong* by analyzing the Chinese cultural elements in the game.

Black Myth: Wukong offers a great example for research on game localization. While many previous games have simplified cultural connotations to cater to the western market, *Black Myth: Wukong* strikes a balance between cultural authenticity and universal appeal. The game organically combines elements of Chinese mythology, classic characters and stories with philosophical ideas. This approach addresses the barriers of cross-cultural communication while preserving the essence of Chinese culture, providing a successful example of localization practices in the game industry.

Three key factors guide this paper's choice of *Black Myth: Wukong* as a case study. First, as China's first globally recognized 3A-level game, it marks a revolutionary turning point from earlier Chinese games that tend to compromise cultural particularity to cater Western preferences. The success of *Black Myth: Wukong* in the global market proves that maintaining cultural authenticity and global accessibility can be balanced, and also making it a prime case for studying game localization strategies. The game combines many traditional Chinese cultural elements, such as mythological figures, philosophical ideas, and artistic styles. These elements offer a comprehensive framework to analyze how to adapt cultural content for different cultural background players. Also, its localization approach actively aligns with China's national strategy of enhancing cultural soft power overseas. At the same time, this responds well to the Chinese national call that promoting Chinese culture abroad, which can ultimately enhance cultural exchanges and improves China's cultural soft power.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Previous Studies on Game Localization

A key component of the worldwide game localization has attracted more scholarly interest lately. Game localization, a crucial aspect in the global game industry, has drawn increasing academic attention in recent years. Understanding how to change games to various cultural and linguistic settings has become highly important as the game market grows worldwide.

Jiang Junjun's paper [21] discussed in depth the use of the cultural adaptation theory in the localization translation of *Call of Duty: Mobile*. Cultural adaptation has three steps: cultural filtering, overcoming cultural interference, and cultural adjustment. By means of case study, Jiang Junjun showed how processes are used to manage cultural

differences in game translation. When translating the names of game modes, in order to avoid the violent connotations that a literal translation like “Battle Royale” might bring and be rejected by Chinese culture, the translator adopted the translation “使命战场” (Mission Battlefield), which combines characteristics of the game with cultural connotations, embodying the role of cultural filtering. When dealing with achievement names containing violent-meaning words like “kill”, the translator used the cultural weakening strategy, substituting them with milder words to reduce the negative impact on young players while ensuring the gaming experience.

Foreign research on game localization primarily focuses on practical aspects. In the process of game localization, the presentation of food - related content represents a significant application area of the cultural adaptation theory. Luo and Mangiron [10] pointed out in “Journey to the East: Cultural adaptation of video games for the Chinese market” that when it comes to making games more compatible with the cultural backgrounds and acceptance habits of Chinese players, the translation and setting of food - related terms in games often undergo adjustments in line with the cultural adaptation theory.

Luo and Mangiron [10] analyzed the localization of Don't Starve in “Journey to the East: Cultural adaptation of video games for the Chinese market”. To enhance the gaming experience for Chinese players, the translators replaced many foreign food names with those of typical Chinese dishes. For example, “Meatball” became “红烧狮子头”, “Turkey Dinner” was translated as “白切鸡”, and “Pierogi” was rendered as “东北水饺”. These translations evoke a sense of familiarity among Chinese players. For fictional foods like “Wet Goop”, the translator creatively translated it as “爱的味道”, which is both humorous and context - appropriate, increasing players' acceptance and preference for the game. This case demonstrates the effective application of cultural adaptation strategies in game localization.

In recent years, scholars have begun to focus on the impact of artificial intelligence on cultural adaptation in game localization. For example [17], found that machine learning algorithms can dynamically optimize in-game language and dialogue, by analyzing feedback from players who come from different cultural background, such as in the localization updates of The Witcher 3 for Asian markets.

Additionally, non-textual localization elements such as visual symbolism and character design have gained scholarly attention [6], therefore it highlights the significance of culturally adaptive visual design in improving player immersion. These finds fit with larger industry tendencies toward multi-modal localization plans [13].

All things considered, earlier research on game localization has established a strong basis. Still, some restrictions remain. the emphasis of Cultural Adaptation Theory's implementation is different. While Luo and Mangiron's work concentrates on particular-element localization, Jiang Jinjun's studies stresses translation - based techniques.

2.2 Previous Studies on Cultural Adaptability in Game Localization

The cultural adaptability in game localization is an emerging type of translation that has increasingly gathered scholarly attention within the field of translation studies. One of the first definitions of game localization was provided by Chandler who describes it as “the actual process of translating the language assets in a game into another language”, focusing on the translation process[5].

Cultural adaptation can take place at two levels: macro and micro level[14]. At the macro level it can affect the overall design of the game, such as the game mechanics, graphics, character design, and the storyline. Adaptation at micro level refers to textual changes made to the in-game text, the script and dialogues, the text in graphics, and printed materials [14]. In addition, the level of cultural adaptation will depend on the overall localization strategy adopted by developers and publishers, mainly domestication or foreignization in Venutian terms [20], as well as the game theme and genre. In the case of video games, domestication is likely to make players feel they are playing a game developed in their mother tongue, while foreignization allows them to experience the foreign flavors of a game. If the localization strategy tends towards foreignization, cultural references of the original game are usually maintained, generating an exotic feeling and presenting a foreign culture to the players. Conversely, if the main localization strategy is domestication, the game content is generally adapted [8]. In any case, when localizing a game, it is important to take into account the target culture and avoid offending target players. For example, skeletons and bloody scenes that Western players are accustomed to may be considered taboo in certain regions of Asia. Such cultural differences require the development team to make necessary modifications in localization, such as replacing sensitive images or adjusting plot backgrounds, to avoid offending target market players [24].

Cultural adaptation in video games involves the process of modifying a game's content, characters, and storyline to make them more relatable and appealing to players from different cultural backgrounds. It needs a thorough grasp of cultural nuances, values, and sensitivities since it goes beyond simple translation. Game developers can provide a more interesting and inclusive experience for gamer all around by including cultural adaptation [18]. If

the development team fails to implement the adjustment, it may cause alienate players and damage the reputation of game among its target audience or even worse.

Cultural adaptation in game localization usually needs adjustments to game contents, mainly including changing game content, figures, and storyline to make them more fit with the foreign cultural preferences and appealing to the target players. For example, western players are familiar with humorous expressions like punchlines and puns. But if the right localization methods are not used, these expressions may not work well in the Asian market[24]. In the game localization, a good cultural adaptation is highly important, so that players from different cultural backgrounds can understand and love the game content. The strength of video games is in their capacity to close cultural divides and promote cross-cultural awareness. Game creators can realize the full potential of video games as a medium for cultural exchange and narrative by means of cultural adaptation[12]. This approach calls for a thorough awareness of the cultural background in which the game will be distributed in addition to language translation.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Overview of Cultural Adaptation Theory

Cultural adaptation in game localization is complex and draws on multiple theories. Concepts like the original cultural adaptation idea and Berry's Acculturation Theory help in understanding and implementing localization strategies, especially when dealing with culturally - rich games such as Black Myth: Wukong.

Anthropologist Franz Boas first introduced this concept in 1911 in his work *The Mind of Primitive Man* [3]. He studied the cultural changes of primitive tribes. He found that when different cultures interact, their internal structures also change. Also, in particular the study notes that each person's choices are important in this process. For example, in some tribes, their way of life, art forms and social structure slowly changed as they came into contact with other cultures. Tribal members either actively or passively changed their behaviors and beliefs as well. These findings laid the foundation for subsequent studies on cultural adaption. Also, it has become an important topic in cross-cultural research.

In 1992, psychologist John W. Berry [2] extended the cultural adaptation theory. From a psychological view, he proposed four adaptation strategies: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization.

Assimilation means giving up one's original culture to blend into the mainstream, as second - generation immigrants often do [16]. It involves modifying cultural elements to align with the target culture. For example, replacing culturally specific terms with familiar equivalents. Separation, however, is when individuals keep their original culture and avoid the mainstream (e.g. retaining mythological names with annotations). Some communities with unique beliefs and traditions do this by staying within their own groups and having little external interaction[7].

The integration strategy is seen as an ideal cultural adaptation form. People keep their cultural uniqueness while integrating into the mainstream, like in multicultural cities where diverse residents share traditions and absorb from other cultures through festivals and activities [9], or blending Eastern philosophy with universal values.

Marginalization is a real cultural dilemma. People will fall into this situation when they cannot identify with their native culture, but also are difficult to blend in the mainstream culture. War refugees are a classic example. They are forced from their homes and they often find themselves in a crisis of cultural identity, so in the new environment, these groups often feel at a loss and cannot find a sense of belonging [4].

Berry put forward four acculturation strategies (assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization). These strategies give an important framework for localizing games. But these categories are static. They might not grasp the changing nature of cultural interactions. taking the integration strategy. It wrongly supposes that developers can precisely balance the needs of the source and target cultures. In fact, tech constraints and market preferences make cultural elements in games change. As Touiserkani [19] noted in his study on video game localization, a case study of *Civilization*, "the adaptation of cultural elements in video games is a dynamic process that requires continuous negotiation between the source and target cultures to achieve a balance that is both culturally appropriate and marketable" (p. 123).

The marginalization strategy is rarely actively chosen in gaming. Instead, it's often a passive avoidance due to cultural sensitivity. Pangea Localization Services (n.d.) stressed the importance of cultural sensitivity in game localization, stating that "localization teams must navigate a rich tapestry of cultural norms and values, adapting content to be culturally respectful and relevant, avoiding stereotypes and misconceptions, and ensuring that the game is inclusive and sensitive to the cultural nuances of each market" [15]. Blizzard's *World of Warcraft* modifications in the Chinese market exemplify this.

Ultimately, the success of game localization success in international markets depends on cultural adaptability. Developers should give it top priority as the industry shifts. Additionally, Berry's theory also has to be used carefully in regard to the particular qualities of the gaming sector.

3.2 Application in Game Localization

In game localization, Boas and Berry's cultural adaptation theories are widely applied, shaping how games are tailored for global audiences.

Drawing on Boas' concept of cultural adaptation, game developers and localization teams must first grasp the complex cultural interactions. Similar to real - world cultural exchanges, game content with its unique cultural essence should interact harmoniously with the target culture. For example, when localizing "Genshin Impact" for Western markets, which has a rich blend of Chinese cultural elements, developers and game localizers need to consider how Western cultural values and preferences will interact with the original content.

In "Genshin Impact", the names of characters and items often carry deep cultural meaning, so the localization team took the cultural background of the target players into account. They replaced the direct Chinese translation with terms related to Hinduism. Since Western players may be more familiar with Hindu deities, this adaptation allows them to better understand and engage with the game's content. By using these terms, the game can resonate more effectively with Western players, just as in cultural exchanges, we use expressions that are easily understood by the target group to convey meaning[23].

Berry's four cultural adaptation strategies are useful in game localization.

Assimilation in game localization. When using this strategy, developers may change cultural elements in the game. The aim is to make the game suit the target culture. Take game currency as an example. Suppose the original game has a currency name specific to a certain culture. When localizing the game for Western markets, developers might change it to something more familiar.

Separation is a common strategy adopted in game localization. The core of this approach is to maintain the original cultural characteristics of the game, while providing the necessary explanations for the target players. In this way, the game's cultural uniqueness will be maintained, and foreign players can learn about these interesting cultural elements.

Integration fuses a game's original cultural traits with those of the target culture. Take racing games as an example. in the localization process, the develop team will change local cultural elements for the different regional versions. For example, in the Chinese version, players may see the Great Wall or the Forbidden City on the track; The Italian version may be replaced with scenes of the Colosseum or the water city of Venice. In addition, the sound design will also fit the local characteristics.

Marginalization does not get used often in game localization. However it can happen, Mangiron & O'Hagan [11] pointed out that that making decisions about cultural elements in game localization is really complex. One aspect of game localization is that the develop team may weaken or eliminate cultural features that are not relevant to the target market and will not affect the core gameplay. While this is not directly stated in this paper, an analysis of translation strategies suggests that this marginalization does exist.

Overall, Boas and Berry proposed cultural adaptation theories. These theories offer comprehensive and profound theoretical guidance for game localization. Thanks to these theories, the game industry can better meet the needs of players from different cultural backgrounds in the age of globalization. As a result, these theories boost the global spread and exchange of game culture.

4. Analysis of Localization Strategies for Chinese Elements

4.1 Introduction of Black Myth: Wukong

Black Myth: Wukong is a role-playing game developed by Game Science, a Chinese game development studio. Black Myth: Wukong is inspired by Chinese mythology and rooted in the story of Sun Wukong from Journey to the West by Wu Cheng'en. Through the adventure story of Wukong, the game shows three core themes: the unyielding spirit of fighting against the destiny of heaven, the persistent pursuit of immortality, and the ultimate transformation of self-awakening. These stories are deeply rooted in traditional Chinese mythology and philosophy, presenting players with a fantasy world full of Chinese cultural charm.

The game blends the traditional Chinese art style with modern game technology, to show players with a visually striking game experience. This combination offers players a visually stunning experience. Besides, the game not only shapes the image of classic mythical figures such as Wukong, but also integrates the philosophical thoughts with Chinese characteristics. In traditional Chinese culture, the image of Wukong has a special place in people

heart. The character is both revered for her extraordinary abilities and widely recognized for spirit of defiance. However, such a deep cultural connotation as a challenge for game localization. How to accurately convey these contents with distinctive Chinese characteristics to international players has become a key problem that the development team needs to solve.

The key point to studying the localization strategy of Chinese cultural elements in *Black Myth: Wukong* is to satisfying the expectations of players from different countries while maintain Chinese cultural characteristics, as the game go abroad.

4.2 Localization of Chinese elements in *Black Myth: Wukong*

4.2.1 Literal Translation of Mythological Figures

This section reflects Berry's separation strategy. By retaining original names, the game preserves cultural uniqueness while providing contextual explanations. "The translation of game text, particularly the rendering of character names, significantly influences the game's dissemination and acceptance within the broader public sphere." [22].

In *Black Myth: Wukong*, the characters drawn from Chinese mythology play a central role in both the narrative and the gameplay. However, compared to other domestic games, the translation of character names uses more transliteration methods for literal translation [27].

Therefore, literal translation not only avoid the homogenization of cultural symbols, but it also stimulates foreign players' curiosity and exploratory desire for Chinese culture.

Example 1: 孙悟空 Sun Wukong

Literal translation: Wukong

Analysis: The character name "Wukong" carries deep philosophical and religious significance. Derived from *Journey to the West*, "Wukong" is a dharma name meaning "emptiness" symbolizing the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment and freedom from worldly attachments. Translating it as "Monkey King" would diminish its cultural and philosophical depth. The decision to keep "Wukong" in its original form helps preserve its meaning and establishes a strong cultural connection with international players, while remaining true to the game's roots. As the producer, Feng Ji, noted, "Wukong" is both clear and culturally resonant [25].

Example 2: 唐三藏 Monk Tripitaka

Literal translation: Tang Sanzang

Analysis: Tang Sanzang, based on the historical Buddhist monk Xuanzang, is a key figure in *Journey to the West*, tasked with retrieving sacred scriptures from the West. The name "Sanzang" refers to the Buddhist scriptures: the Tripitaka, Vinaya, and Abhidharma. The literal translation "Tang Sanzang" retains the character's cultural and religious significance, maintaining both historical depth and spiritual meaning. Also the separation strategy maintains the connection to Buddhist scriptures, supplemented by in-game descriptions like "Tripitaka Master".

As Zeng Cheng analyzed in his master's thesis "A Study on Cultural Default and Translation Compensation in Anthony C Yu's English Version *The Journey to the West*" [26], literal translation has advantages in conveying the cultural connotations of the original work. An alternative like "Monk Tripitaka" might convey his monastic role but loses the richness of his connection to Chinese Buddhist tradition and history.

Example 3: 观音菩萨 Goddess of Mercy

Literal translation: Guanyin Bodhisattva

Analysis: The literal translation "Guanyin Bodhisattva" preserves the deep cultural and religious context of the character. The name "Guanyin" specifically refers to the Bodhisattva's compassionate act of listening to the cries of the world, which carries significant religious and cultural meaning in Chinese Buddhism. If translated as "Goddess of Mercy", while it conveys the idea of compassion, it loses the unique religious and cultural depth of the original term. Therefore, the literal translation maintains the original spiritual significance and better reflects the character's role in Chinese Buddhist tradition while also avoiding weakening the religious connotations.

Based on Berry's separation theory, this part examines the literal translation strategy of mythological character names in *Black Myth: Wukong*. The game mostly adopts direct translation, which is more prominent compared to other games in China. Taking Wukong, Tang Sanzang and Guanyin as examples, the literal translation avoids the homogenization of cultural symbols and preserves the deep philosophical, religious and historical cultural connotations of the characters.

4.2.2 Adaptive Translation of Mythological Storyline

Example 1: Wukong's self-awareness and personal growth

In *Journey to the West*, the story of Sun Wukong is one of rebellion and submission, evolving from criminal to sage. This transformation is primarily driven by Wukong's realization and submission to the will of the heavens, which is influenced by the traditional Chinese concept. But in *Black Myth: Wukong*, the adaptation of the storyline puts more emphasis on internal conflicts and personal development of Wukong. In the game, his adventure is not just about getting stronger through battles. It is also about finding self-awareness as he pursues freedom and tries to shape his own fate, so the story does not just focus on religious awakening anymore. Instead, it explores character of Wukong a more relatable way. It highlights his longing for freedom and his resistance against conventional standards. This adaptive translation does two things. First, it gives the game a more modern feel. Second, it helps the story connect with the values of players around the world. Wukong wants freedom, to control his own destiny, and to grow as a person. These themes are easy for global players to understand and like. As a result, the story in the game becomes much deeper and players also can experience the charm of traditional Chinese culture.

Example 2: The dilemma of rebellion versus redemption

Black Myth: Wukong deepens the story of Wukong's inner struggle. At the begin of the game, Wukong challenges higher status, which is exactly the image of Sun Wukong in Chinese traditional mythology. And in the game, the players can decide for himself the next path of Wukong, whether to continue to rebel, or choose redemption. The game combines a lot of Taoist and Buddhist ideas. For example, some of the important choice players have to make are actually what Buddhism calls "karma". By experiencing the consequences of these choices, players gain a deeper understanding of these Eastern philosophies. This design makes the game not only fun, but also meaningfully.

Example 3: The path of enlightenment and personal sacrifice

As the game progresses, Wukong's philosophical growth is tested through decisions between enlightenment and sacrifice. Will he continue to pursue power and control, or will he choose to cultivate himself, be humble, and be free of earthly desires? This narrative design combines the Taoist concept of "non-action" and the Buddhist idea of "breaking down attachment," translating Eastern philosophical teachings of balance and selflessness into moral propositions that players around the world can understand.

The part of this paper cited earlier shows the integration approach blending Eastern philosophy with Western individualism. Traditional stories such as "rebellion and redemption" are adapted into universal themes like "free will and self-growth".

4.2.3 Dynamic Localization of In-Game Dialogues and Poetry

For dynamic localization of dialogues in game, the localization team adopts an assimilation strategy. Buddhist terms are generalized into Western-friendly expressions to reduce cultural barriers. In *Black Myth: Wukong*, the dialogues between Wukong and others are based on traditional Chinese philosophy like Buddhist. Chinese players know them well, but others may not. Take Chapter Three, White Snow, Ice Cold as example:

Example 1:

Original (Chinese):

吃斋念佛，诵经打坐。又有几个真的心如止水，清静无为。你看看你，这大风大雪的，还要这么拼命，一定也是为了那个玩意儿。你来之前，我算过一卦。你猜猜写的是啥？动不如静，有才无命。既要送死，也不拦你。小西天土地，在此恭迎天命人。变！

Translation (English):

"Faith and devotion, quite the notion. Yet how many can claim a mind so pure, still and sure? Look at you, through the heavy snow you roam, desiring that thing, no doubt. I read your fortune before you came. Care to hear? 'Act not and be still, thy gifts are thy ill.' If you seek your own end, I shall not stop you. I, the keeper of the New West, welcome the destined one! Now fly!"

Analysis:

This dialogue is rich in Chinese cultural elements, including Buddhist practices, Taoist philosophy, fortune-telling customs, and mythical role names. The dynamic localization strategy needs to take into account the cultural differences between Chinese and Western cultures to make the translated text understandable and acceptable to the target audience.

In this translation, “吃斋念佛，诵经打坐” is translated as “Faith and devotion, quite the notion”. Instead of a literal translation of the exact Buddhist practices, it uses a more general expression of religious piety. This is more appropriate for Western audiences, who would be less likely to be familiar with the exact Buddhist practices, so would be more likely to understand the meaning of behind the text.

In this translation, salient features from the original Chinese text are rendered in more familiar terms in Western cultural. “吃斋念佛，诵经打坐” is not translated literally but rather as a general term for “Faith and devotion, quite the notion”. This choice is more than the actual Buddhist ceremonies and is targeting the general concept of religious piety. By doing so, it bridges the cultural gap for Western audiences who might lack knowledge of the detailed Buddhist rituals, making the text more relatable and comprehensible.

For “心如止水，清静无为”, the translation “Yet how many can claim a mind so pure, still and sure?” avoids the direct introduction of the advanced Taoist concept. Instead, it focuses on the core idea of internal peace and tranquility in a way that resonates with Westerner” understanding. This approach would not cause confusion that would be generated by the comparatively abstract Taoist philosophy.

The translation of “算过一卦” as “I read your fortune” is a common Western expression for fortune - telling. It aligns with the Western cultural context, so that Western readers grasp the intended meaning naturally without being misled by the particular Chinese fortune - telling traditions.

As for “小西天土地” translating it as “the keeper of the New West” is a compromise. While “keeper” does convey a sense of guardianship, which is understandable to Westerners, it fails to fully capture the rich and unique cultural connotations of the original Chinese mythical role. This translation sacrifices cultural specificity in the name of general comprehension.

Finally, “天命人” is translated as “the destined one”. This translation is literal and simple. It can successfully convey the concept of a person who having a special destiny, Western players don’t need to know much about Chinese cultural beliefs. Still they can understand it easily. Generally, this kind of translation sacrifices certain cultural nuances. Its purpose is to help Western readers understand the content better. It makes the translation more adaptable to Western culture.

Example 2:

Then for dynamic localization of poetry, Chapter Three, “White Snow, Ice Cold” can also cited as an example. The class example is the heretic monk Yellowbrow who speaking in breach of Buddhist precepts in this chapter.

Original (Chinese):

不杀生，仇恨永无止息。
不偷盗，强弱如我何异。
不邪淫，一切有情皆孽。
不妄语，梦幻泡影空虚。
不馋酒，忧怖涨落无常。
不耽乐，芳华刹那而已。
不贪眠，苦苦不得解脱。
不纵欲，诸行了无生趣。

Translation (English):

Thou shalt kill, lest feuds instill.
Thou shalt snatch, a fair play in a fair match.
Thou shalt lust, before all loves turn into dust.
Thou shalt boast, for prestige and legacy it doth host.
Thou shalt drink, and drenched unease shall sink.
Thou shalt revel, prime years shan’t be spent to settle.
Thou shalt dream, to reach in bleak void the sole gleam.
Thou shalt indulge, or life is but a scourge!

Analysis:

In Christianity, the Ten Commandments are well - known with phrases like “thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet, thou shalt not commit adultery” The English translation of the original Chinese monologue cleverly uses the opposite “Thou shalt.” structure. This contrast not only grabs the attention of Western players but also helps them quickly associate with the familiar religious cultural context. It reduces the cultural distance and makes the content more accessible, enabling Western players to better understand the rebellious ideas expressed in the monologue.

The translator makes semantic adjustments according to Western cultural thinking. For instance, the original idea of “not killing, but hatred never ceases” is translated into “Thou shalt kill, lest feuds instill”. This way of expression conforms to Westerners’ habit of considering the consequences of actions. By presenting the content in a way that Western players are familiar with, it effectively overcomes the understanding barriers caused by cultural differences and helps them immerse themselves in the game plot.

The translation keeps Wukong’s rebellious attitude towards traditional Buddhist rules. At the same time, it changes some abstract Buddhist ideas into common Western ones. For example, “邪淫” is turned into “lust” (adultery), and “贪眠” is changed to “dream” (slothful). But, in this way adding Western cultural elements may cause the loss of some of the original Buddhist cultural meaning. Although it promotes the acceptance of the game content by Western players, it also makes it difficult for them to fully understand the profound meaning of Buddhist precepts.

4.2.4 Cultural Adaptation of Philosophical Concepts

In Black Myth: Wukong, Daoist philosophy is integrated into the game’s aspects, it features concepts of harmony. This addition enriches the gaming experience. Also, it allows global players to better understand Daoism game interactions.

Example 1:

Daoist ideals: The unyielding spirit of “self-improvement”.

Wukong in the game creates as a tough hero. He has gone through many hardships, but he has always pushed his limits, this role reflects the Daoist idea from the I Ching (Book of Changes). The text states, “The movement of heaven is powerful and strong, so a gentleman should strive ceaselessly to improve himself”, this philosophy emphasizes perseverance and perseverance in the face of natural and social change.

Analysis:

Black Myth: Wukong shows the Daoist core concept of “self-improvement” to players around the world through the story of Wukong’s growth. There are three ways in which players can experience by themselves: first, the combat system requires players to hone their skills through repeated failures; Second, the players need to make key choices, as different decisions that affect the development of the story; Lastly, the character grows, and Wukong will gradually become stronger as the story progresses, these designs all reflect the wisdom of Daoism. Therefore, video games turn abstract principles into real gaming experiences, allowing players from different cultural backgrounds to understand the true meaning of self-improvement.

Example 2:

Daoist concept of harmony with nature: “The way follows nature”

In Black Myth: Wukong, the vividly natural scenes demonstrates the Chinese philosophy of “Dao follows nature” (Dao Fa Zi Ran 道法自然). However, nothing in the game is simple decoration: the forest provides shelter, the cave behind the waterfall holds secrets, and even the weather can affect the battle strategy. These designs allow players to experience the truth of “adapting to the weather”. This clever way of integrating Daoist ideas into the game experience not only shows the great power of nature, but also allows players around the world to intuitively understand the Chinese wisdom of “the unity of heaven and man”.

Analysis:

Black Myth: Wukong conveys the Chinese philosophy of “Dao follows nature” to Western players through game settings and gameplay design. The develop team has carefully constructed a game world that follows the laws of nature. For example, players can use the terrain advantage in the battle, observe the weather change to choose the best time, these designs reflect the idea of “adapting to weather”. In the game, players can understand the wisdom of Daoism in pursuing harmony between heaven and man and following the laws of nature, without the need to deliberately understand difficult philosophical theories. In this way of teaching and entertaining successfully transcends the cultural differences between the East and the West.

Example 3:

Heaven's way and balance: philosophical meaning in combat

In *Black Myth: Wukong*, every battle is not only just a contest of strength, but also a the pursuit of balance and harmony in "heaven" (天道). The game's design combines natural elements and enemies, this highlights the combat and the natural environment interact. In Daoist philosophy, the way of heaven is the fundamental law that governs the universe, and balance and harmony are the ideal states of this law. The game's combat mechanics convey this Daoist concept through the interaction of natural forces.

Analysis:

Western players usually get used to heroic stories that centered on individual victories. But in *Black Myth: Wukong*, the combat and environmental integration make the abstract Daoist concept of "heaven's way" more concrete. Players experience balance and harmony not only as challenges but as philosophical elements embedded in the gameplay. This allows players to understand and appreciate Daoist wisdom while they are in combat, they can make their actions match the rhythm of nature. And it strengthens the idea that humans and the world are united.

5. Conclusion

The localization of *Black Myth: Wukong* showcases a unique way to the global spread of Chinese mythological and philosophical elements. We can conduct an in - depth study of the game's mythological figures, storyline, and dialogue. From this study, it becomes clear that the game strikes a fine balance during cultural adaptation. At the same time, it ensures that these cultural elements can be understood and engaged by players around the world.

Black Myth: Wukong did a successfully localization, The game use literal translate the main figures names to maintain cultural identity, meanwhile, some philosophical concepts are fit into the game mechanics and narrative. This approach not only avoids cultural misinterpretation, but also conveys the core meaning of Buddhist and Daoist ideas through interactive experience rather than preaching. This case provides a valuable reference paradigm for the modern presentation and cross-cultural communication of traditional cultural elements.

In addition, *Black Myth: Wukong* effectively combines traditional Chinese moral and philosophical concepts into the game, allowing players to naturally come into contact with these cultural contents while playing. The game cleverly expresses these profound truths, such as through the story of Wukong's growth, allowing players to think about what self-growth is and how to make the right choices. This indicates that as long as our methods are appropriate, these profound contents in Chinese culture can be fully understood and accepted by foreign players.

This study also has some limitations: First, it mainly focuses on the localization of language and narrative level, and the discussion of visual and auditory elements is insufficient; Second, there is a lack of research on the actual experience of overseas players; Finally, localization strategies may change as games are updated, which was not fully considered in the study.

Future studies can explore how players from different backgrounds react to the game. They can also think about the feelings and understanding that could be understand by such a study in localization. Also, future research can work on the concept of how gameplay applications can use AI to be more appropriate to the unique cultures. To sum it up, it is a practical and useful source of knowledge for the purpose of global game localization that seeks to preserve its cultural heritage and reach a large audience.

Acknowledgments

As I come to the last chapter of my paper, i find myself overwhelmed with a lot of people who have supported, guided and inspired me all the time, this paper is not only a graduation thesis but also a chance for me to express my gratitude to them.

First and foremost, i want to express my sincere appreciation to my supervisor Professor Liu Jie for her support in completing this paper. When i was confused about determining the outline of this thesis, with her professional knowledge and experience, she guided me to find a direction that aligns with my interests and has research value. Hence, she is the person who i most feel thankful to in this whole process.

Then to my family, thank them for always being my rock. Their unconditional love and belief in me have given me the strength to persevere. They shaped me into the person i am today, and for that, i will be grateful forever.

Heartfelt thanks go to friends who are the most indispensable part of my four years' college life, and i cherish the bonds we have built.

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