

Localization of Translation Strategies of Game Websites from the Perspective of Eco-Translation Studies

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Abstract: With the rapid evolution of the Internet, the electronic sports culture industry has flourished. An increasing number of foreign online games have been introduced, yet there remains a dearth of research on effective translation strategies for localizing English game websites. The localization and translation of game websites encompass a multitude of elements, including game backgrounds, character skill dialogues, and cultural adaptation. Eco-translation studies offer translators a well-coordinated process of selection and adaptation, empowering them to present a superior localized version from multiple perspectives. Using the American online game “League of Legends” as a case in point, this study delves into how translators can employ eco-translation principles to attain effective communication and align with the intended audience by considering the translation ecosystem. The objective is to identify localization and translation strategies for game websites that elevate players’ gaming experience.

Keywords: Eco-translation, Game website localization, Translation strategies.

1. Introduction

Eco-translation studies underline the translator’s pivotal role within the translation ecosystem. Translators shoulder a dual mission in upholding the equilibrium of eco-translation. On one hand, they must contemplate the selection and constraints stemming from external ecological conditions before assuming the role of “processors” of the source text. On the other hand, having acquired the authority to reshape the “translated text”, translators must harmonize the requisites and preferences of diverse stakeholders within the ecological community. This endeavor pushes them to be inventive, opting for and forsaking various translation methods, all to align with the external ecological environment’s anticipations for the translated text. This transition from a mere “translator” to an “eco-person” marks a transformative process (Rodi Jiang, 2020: 16). For 12 years, “League of Legends” has operated in China, where translation has played a pivotal role. The Chinese rendition of “League of Legends” for the domestic servers exemplifies a journey of adaptation and curation. Be it in character names or their dialogues, the Chinese version of the game exemplifies the translator’s profound comprehension of Chinese culture. In comparison with the Taiwanese version, the Chinese iteration integrates traditional Chinese cultural imagery, bestowing the game with a richer artistic essence and significance. This, in turn, enables domestic players to delve deeper into the characters’ distinct traits. Given these circumstances, this paper adopts an eco-translation perspective and, by analyzing the English and Chinese iterations of “League of Legends”, investigates the facets that translators must account for within the translation ecosystem, alongside the translation strategies employed to harmonize varying ecologies.

2. Ecological Translation Studies

Eco-translatology was initially introduced by Professor Hu Gengshen. Rooted in the concept of ecological holism and drawing from oriental ecological wisdom, while anchoring itself on the adaptation/selection theory, this approach

provides a reasoned overview and depiction of translation. Eco-translatology envisions the translation system as an ecological system, wherein the original author, translator, reader, source work, translated work, original language cultural ecology, and target language cultural ecology each assume distinct roles and sustain a certain dynamic equilibrium. When information is translated from one language to another, it transitions into a new ecology. The source language and the target language inhabit different discourse ecological systems, each with its own language ecology, cultural ecology, and communicative ecology. Linguistic ecology constitutes the interrelation among various linguistic components in a text, while cultural ecology encompasses the array of cultural elements embedded within a text. Communicative ecology, on the other hand, pertains to the communicative function that underlies the text. The primary objective of eco-translatology lies in investigating the characteristics and disparities between the source language and the target language, thereby comprehending the principles and mechanisms governing the migration and transformation between them. It’s only by making judicious selections in terms of language, culture, and communication, and adeptly managing the interplay among these elements, that a translator’s work aligns with the cultural ecology of the target language and infuses fresh vitality into the target language’s cultural system. The translation ecological environment denotes the realm constituted by the source text and the translated text, the source language, and the target language. Within the context of external translation requisites, the translator assumes a transformative role, becoming the conductor of the translation ecological environment for the target text. While pursuing the ecological equilibrium of the target language, the translator employs a variety of translation strategies to facilitate the intercommunication within the “translation community”, while also grasping the fundamental constituents of the translation ecological environment. This approach optimizes the presentation of the translation.

2.1. The Guiding Significance of Eco-translatology to Game Translation

Due to the entertainment nature of games, translation should convey the playability and entertainment of games to the target language users. Translators need to consider the adjustment and adaptability of the game environment, allowing target language users to have the same gaming experience as local players, rather than focusing solely on linguistic equivalence. Moreover, as an art form, translation should be creative, and the virtual nature of game texts requires translators to engage in creative translation of the original texts. Throughout the translation process, translators need to be responsible both to the original work and to the readers. Eco-translation requires translators to adapt to the target language's ecological environment on multiple levels, including language, culture, and communication, rather than being strictly faithful to the source text. To achieve this goal, translators must play a significant role in coordinating the relationships between the translation ecosystem, textual ecosystem, and translation community ecology. Therefore, from the perspective of eco-translation, it can provide valuable guidance for game translation. Online games are a unique form of cultural product deeply intertwined with contemporary lifestyles and psychological states. Online game localization is generally seen as an aggregation of various assets. Singular language media is gradually being replaced by composite media consisting of language, images, sounds, etc. Eco-translation studies involve various aspects such as language, communication, culture, society, authors, translators, and readers, making it highly suitable for studying platforms like game websites with multiple elements. Eco-translation theory is suitable for the study of game website localization since game content, characters, stories, game modes, translation, translators, etc., are undergoing changes. Developers often make adjustments based on the needs of users, paying attention to user feedback and selecting factors that best suit their preferences based on the feedback. The elements accepted by readers have been preserved through years of operation and evolution. After years of adaptation and decision-making, translators finally achieve a harmonious balance with the translation ecosystem. This process aligns well with eco-translation studies.

3. Three-dimensional Adaptation and Selection in Website Localization Translation

From the perspective of eco-translation, translation is not merely copying and transforming the source text or language. It is a dynamic, continuous process of adaptation and selection. Therefore, a good translation is not simply equivalent or equal in the traditional sense but involves multidimensional adaptation and selective transformation. To create a good translation, translators must achieve multidimensional adaptation and at least achieve three-dimensional (linguistic, cultural, and communicative) selective transformation. When translating a website, translators need to immerse themselves in the context of the game, familiarize themselves with character personalities, scene settings, cultural backgrounds, and achieve dynamic adaptation and decision-making to obtain high-quality website translations.

3.1. Linguistic Adaptation and Selection

Source Text	Target Text
By my will, this shall be finished.	犯我德邦者，虽远必诛 (Those who invade Demacia, no matter how far, shall be punished)
Know the loom. Be the stone.	命数如织，当如磐石(Let fate weave, be as solid as a rock)
World ender	大灭(World destruction)

Linguistic adaptation refers to the transformation of language forms in translation (Hu Gengshen, 2008). Linguistic adaptation requires translators to appropriately transform sentence structures and language forms in the translation process to fit the language ecosystem of the target language. English and Chinese come from different systems with significant differences. Therefore, translators need to pay attention not only to the order and structure of sentences but also to changes in voice to accommodate the language habits of the target language users. Additionally, game texts rely on digital media, where each sentence occupies a fixed space. Translating sentences within limited space is a significant challenge in game translation. The translation of "League of Legends" breaks the structure of the original text and undergoes localization processing, making it suitable for Chinese expressions and easily understandable. The Chinese translation creatively used idiomatic translations. For example, "By my will, this shall be finished" was translated as "犯我德邦者，虽远必诛" (Those who invade Demacia, no matter how far, shall be punished), which showcases the dominant nature of Jarvan IV as the prince of Demacia. Translating it literally as "我将按照我的意思结束这一切"(I will end everything on my turns) would fail to convey the commanding and authoritative atmosphere during intense battles. The Chinese translation cleverly used Chinese allusions, capturing the essence of the character. Another example is the translation of Xayah's skill, "Know the loom. Be the stone" which was translated as "命数如织，当如磐石" (Let fate weave, be as solid as a rock). Directly translating it as "我把石头当织机"(I treat stones as a loom) would be awkward and comical. There are many examples of using idiomatic translations, such as the translation of Lillia's skills. Her passive skill, "Dream-laden bough" was translated as "梦满枝" (Branch full of dreams), evoking imagery similar to famous poems in Chinese literature. The Q skill, "Blooming blow" was initially translated as "飞花一击" (Flying flower strike), but later changed to "小杀四方"(Small kill in all directions) to better match the character's personality. Translations on the linguistic dimension show adaptability and selection while considering the target language's linguistic ecosystem.

3.2. Cultural Adaptation and Selection

Source Text	Target Text
Kindred the Eternal Hunters	永猎双子千珏(Eternal Hunting Twins Qianju)
Xayah & Rakan	霞&洛 (Xia & Luo)
Never one without the other	执子之魂，与子共生 (Holding each other's souls, living together)

“Cultural adaptation and selection” in translation refers to the transmission and interpretation of bilingual cultural connotations in the translation process. This cultural dimension of adaptation and selection mainly focuses on the differences in essence and connotations between the source language and the target language. It involves integrating the source language’s understanding with the target language’s cultural ecosystem, incorporating familiar cultural imagery for the target language readers, deepening connotations, and creating a more profound impact. Kindred the Eternal Hunters, the original English name of Qianju, has undergone continuous optimization as the game and translation have evolved. The translator ultimately translated it as “千珷”(Qianju). “珷” means twin jade, corresponding to the relationship between the wolf spirit and the lamb spirit. Initially, the term “琴德莉” was used as a transliteration of “Kindred” to represent blood relations. However, it caused confusion among players. The translator explained why commonly used translations like “绝”(Jue) or “角”(Jiao) were not considered for the latter part of “Kindred’s” pronunciation, “dred”. The translator stated that it was because of the Chinese characters’ semantic function. According to “Shuo Wen Jie Zi”, “珷” means two jade pieces combined. It further illustrates its meaning and is consistent with “Kindred’s” background story. Although there was consideration that players might confuse “珷” with “钰”(Yu), it was ultimately decided that Chinese characters should not be afraid of being misread and give up such an excellent translation coincidence. After all, each Chinese character should have the right not to be misunderstood, as they carry valuable information and emotions that have endured for thousands of years and are difficult to erase. As for the character “千”(qiān), firstly, there is no corresponding character in Chinese for the sound “Kin”. The common practice is to use characters like “琴”(qín) or “金”(jīn) which have the same initial sound. However, these options may seem too common for naming purposes. Therefore, we looked for a character that has a similar pronunciation and found “千”(qiān). The translation of dialogue for this character is equally remarkable. One of the character’s lines, “执子之，魂与子共生”(zhí zǐ zhī, hún yǔ zǐ gòngshēng), can be compared to the line “同生共死”(tóng shēng gòng sǐ) in the Taiwan server version. Instead of directly translating it as “to live and die together” the translation in the mainland China server version creates a sense of spirit and longing. This line is similar to a

line from “The Book of Songs” specifically from the poem “Bei Feng: Ji Gu” “死生契阔，与子成说，执子之手，与子偕老”(sǐ shēng qì kuò, yǔ zǐ chéng shuō, zhí zǐ zhī shǒu, yǔ zǐ xié lǎo), which is a war poem about soldiers going to battle and longing for their return. It is fitting for the character’s background as a personification of death. Given that they have likely become desensitized to violence, using this line reflects their desire to “lay down their weapons” and no longer participate in conflicts. The translation in the mainland China server version not only matches the character’s image but also incorporates cultural allusions from the target language, successfully achieving adaptation and selection in terms of cultural dimension. As for the heroes Xayah and Rakan, their names in the American server are directly translated as “Xayah” and “Rakan”. In the American context, these may seem like ordinary names for a couple. However, in the mainland China server, it was desired to make this couple more distinctive. Therefore, the characters “落”(luò) and “霞”(xiá) were taken from the line “落霞与孤鹜齐飞，秋水共长天一色”(luò xiá yǔ gū wù qí fēi, qiū shuǐ gòng zhǎng tiān yī sè) in the preface of The Tengwang Pavilion and used to name them. The inclusion of “孤鹜”(gū wù), which is highly relevant to Xayah’s background and character, and the phrase “秋水共长天”(qiū shuǐ gòng zhǎng tiān), which adds a touch of desolation, align well with Rakan and Xayah’s fallen heritage. The translator combined these elements with traditional Chinese culture and considered the cultural background of the target language, thereby fully showcasing the beautiful love story of these two characters. This translation not only enriches the characters’ personalities but also emphasizes their essence, rather than providing a simple summary. The charm of Chinese characters lies in the fact that each character can convey profound meaning and heritage with just one word, allowing players in China to better immerse themselves in the game and have a more enjoyable gaming experience. Compared to traditional translation, game localization involves an additional step of “internationalization” on top of the existing translation process, resulting in an intermediary discourse between the source and target texts. The modified English translations not only maintain similarity to the original texts but also reflect the unique cultural features of the target region.

3.3. Adaptation and selection in the dimension of communication

Source Text	Target Text
Pick up 50 and get 10 free	获赠 50+10 份 Get 50+10 copies
Celebrate this frightful season with Halloween Terror Loot Boxes	用万圣夜惊魂战利品庆祝这个恐怖的节日吧 Celebrate the spooky holiday with Halloween Horror loot
The League...is designed to celebrate only the best of the best...Though it currently comprises hand-picked champions...but it’s the League of Legends community that really makes the competition top-notch...	《英雄联盟》是电子竞技的最高殿堂；各战队由精挑细选的选手组成；是推动这场电竞盛宴的关键；最终在暴雪嘉年华上演巅峰对决。 “League of Legends” is the highest hall of e-sports; each team is composed of carefully selected players; it is the key to promote this e-sports feast; and finally staged a peak duel at the Blizzard Carnival...

From the perspective of communicative dimension, adaptive transformation refers to the transformation of communicative connotation in translation. It requires the

translation to be consistent with the communicative purpose of the source text (Hu Gengshen, 2008). Liu Ming (2013: 45) believes that localization is driven by the market, and it has

the characteristics of economic driving force and technological supremacy. One of the main purposes of establishing a game's official website is to promote the brand and attract consumers who have not purchased the game to buy the game ; to attract returning players to play online during the event to increase traffic ; and to strengthen the brand effect. Therefore, translators need to realize the transformation of the communication dimension, that is, the communication dimension , according to the communication purpose of the game website, that is, product promotion, brand effect and context construction. "Claim 50 and get 10 for free" is translated as "获赠50+10份". The new translation is simpler and clearer , and the translator has deliberately adapted to the simplicity of website advertising in the translation ecosystem. The second example comes from an ad promoting the sale of in-game currency. "Celebrate ... with..." literally translates as "用万圣夜惊魂战利品庆祝这个恐怖的节日吧", game operators want players to buy in-game items, but it's not appropriate to directly urge them to spend money. Therefore, the translator did not directly translate it into the word "buy", which is a successful translation in terms of language and communication. Advertisement in the website is a unique text. Its goal is first to arouse the reader's attention, to increase the audience's interest, to stimulate the audience's desire, and finally to arouse the purchase action. In order to achieve this goal, the translator translates "the best of the best" as "最高殿堂"; translates "hand-picked" as "精挑细选". These target texts are all four-character words, which are catchy and make the audience feel excited. Creative translation is the business field that best embodies the concept of "translator-centered" in eco-translatology.

4. Epilogue

In recent years, with the improvement and promotion of the e-sports event system, China's e-sports has entered an era of rapid development. With the rapid development of the game industry, the demand for localization is also increasing. Localization translation is actually a business activity of translation or adaptation based on economic benefits. Therefore, translators should adopt flexible translation without compromising the experience of players. In the process of discussing the localization translation of "League of Legends", by studying the translation of character names, character skills and game lines, we can find that the most commonly used translation strategies for character names and lines are free translation and transcreation, which is to fit on the basis of character characteristics, art reprocessing is

carried out to achieve the purpose of localization, in line with the ecological environment of the target language, so as to realize the adaptation and choice from the perspective of language and culture. Localized translation is different from traditional translation. It requires a high degree of integration of translation, marketing, business management and other factors, and localizes "imported" things to conform to the local cultural environment, so as to overcome the problems caused by "imported" products. The resulting cultural barriers, so as to truly meet the needs of local consumers, so as to achieve the market value of the product. If localized translations want to make profits in the local market, they need to pay more attention to the actual fit between the translation and the target language regional culture. Therefore, in the communicative dimension, translators mostly use four-character words, which are catchy and attract players to recharge and upgrade.

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