

Localization Translation Strategies of Chinese Games from the Perspective of Skopos Theory: A Case Study of *Black Myth: Wukong*

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Abstract

With the rapid development of Chinese gaming industry, Chinese digital games have increasingly become important media for promoting fine traditional Chinese culture to the global stage. Released in 2024, the domestically developed 3A game *Black Myth: Wukong* has garnered widespread attention both domestically and internationally owing to its profound cultural heritage and high-quality localization translation. Based on the Skopos theory, this paper focuses on overseas players' immersive experience and the accurate dissemination of traditional Chinese culture. Through a qualitative comparison of 9 groups of typical subtitle texts and in-depth analysis of English translation examples of parallel and rhymed verses, culture-loaded terms and vernacular slang in *Black Myth: Wukong*, this paper explores the application of translation strategies such as functional equivalence and domestication in game localization translation, and concludes that translation priority varies with dialogues' communicative functions, with corresponding losses in semantics, cultural connotations or register, aiming to provide useful insights for the localization translation of Chinese games in the context of globalization.

Keywords

Black Myth: Wukong, Skopos Theory, Game Localization, Translation Strategies

1. Introduction

Driven by the dual forces of digital technology and the national strategy of cultural confidence, Chinese digital games have increasingly become important vehicles for carrying forward traditional Chinese culture and promoting its creative trans-

formation and innovative development, while the global expansion of domestically developed games has emerged as a new pathway for the overseas dissemination of Chinese culture. According to the 2025 China Game Industry Report (China Audio-Video and Digital Publishing Association Game Committee, 2025), the overseas revenue of China's self-developed games has demonstrated an overall upward trajectory. In 2025, the actual overseas sales revenue of Chinese self-developed games reached USD 204.55 billion, representing a year-on-year increase of 10.23%; with-in this aggregate figure, overseas revenue from self-developed mobile games amounted to USD 184.78 billion, with a year-on-year growth rate of 13.16% (see Figure 1). The overseas market for domestic games continues to undergo substantial expansion, with premium 3A games leveraging traditional cultural intellectual property emerging as pivotal growth drivers of overseas revenue, among which *Black Myth: Wukong* serves as a paradigmatic product emblematic of this industrial development trend.



Figure 1. Overseas market performance of Self-developed games.

As China's first 3A game, *Black Myth: Wukong* was simultaneously released in domestic and international markets on August 20, 2024. By August 22, the game had reached 2.22 million players on the Steam platform, sparking widespread attention in both the global gaming market and the field of cultural communication. (Cao & Yang, 2026) *Black Myth: Wukong* is an action role-playing game based on the narrative archetype of Journey to the West, one of China's four great classical novels. In addition to its sophisticated production quality, top-tier visual effects, and deeply immersive combat system, its profound cultural connotation and high-quality localization translation have also been driving factors in its journey overseas. Within the first month of its full-platform global release, *Black Myth: Wukong* surpassed 20 million units in aggregate sales, with overseas markets registering a conspicuously substantial contribution. Among these, the English-speaking regions—comprising the United States and the United Kingdom in particular—constituted the game's preeminent overseas consumer market, with overseas revenue accounting for over 30% of the game's total revenue generation. Eng-

lish-speaking players represent the most extensive and core overseas recipient demographic for this game, thereby rendering the localization translation practices targeting this population of considerable scholarly interest and analytical value.

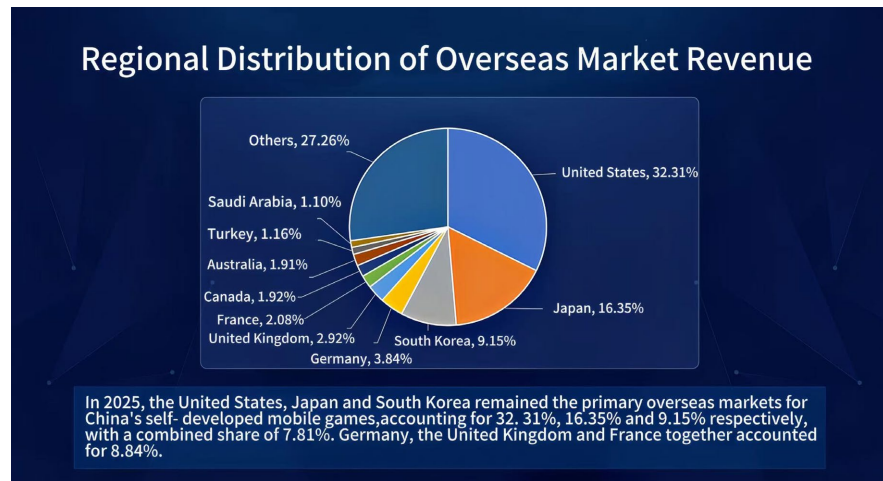


Figure 2. Regional distribution of overseas market revenue.

The considerable audience scale has concomitantly engendered a vast corpus of authentic overseas player feedback. According to the quantitative textual analysis data reported, which collected 53,468 non-Chinese player reviews on the Steam platform within the ten-week period following the game's release, of which 50,192 were classified as positive recommendations. Through Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling, the study revealed that 44.29% of the favorable reviews concentrated on Chinese intellectual property cultural symbols, encompassing Journey to the West mythology and the figure of Wukong, while an additional 9.22% of the comments specifically addressed the cross-cultural emotional resonance engendered by the game—indicating that overseas players were capable of effectively identifying and interpreting the traditional cultural concepts embedded within the game's narrative fabric (see **Figure 2**) (Zhang et al., 2026). Concurrently, negative reviews predominantly focus on technical and gameplay dimensions, including device performance and combat mechanics. No large-scale adverse feedback stems from obscure dialogue or cultural terminology translations. Synthesizing these two tiers of data yields a coherent and robust argument: sales and revenue figures substantiate the game's extensive communicative reach and salient commercial influence within the overseas players' world, qualifying it as a typical case with substantial research value. In parallel, quantitative thematic analysis of tens of thousands of player reviews on the Steam platform reflects overseas players' attention to the Eastern cultural narratives carried by the game and players' review is influenced jointly by artwork, plot, gameplay and other game features. As the core medium of cross-cultural mediation, the subtitles have played an important role in the external dissemination of traditional Chinese culture. This paper takes *Black Myth: Wukong* as its research object and explores the strategies adopted in its localization translation from the perspective of Skopos theory,

aiming to provide theoretical references and practical insights for the overseas expansion of Chinese games.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1. Skopos Theory

In the 1970s, functionalist translation theory emerged in Germany and gradually developed into the most influential school of translation studies in that period. Among its key contributors, Hans Vermeer put forward the core concept of functionalism-Skopos theory, which broke away from the traditional source-text-centered view and freed translation studies from excessive reliance on the original text. The term “Skopos” is derived from Greek, meaning “purpose, function, or intention.” According to Reiß and Vermeer (2014), translation is not merely linguistic conversion but a purpose-driven social action that requires integrated decision-making based on the source text’s intention, the translator’s strategies, and the target audience’s needs. They pointed out that the primary principle is the Skopos rule, that is to say “the purpose justifies the means.” The purpose of translation determines the choice of translation strategies and the translator must adjust the target text according to the target readers, cultural background, and communicative situation. In addition, two other rules are the coherence rule and the fidelity rule. The coherence rule requires that the target text be sufficiently coherent to be understood by the receiver and consistent with their reception context. In other words, the information must “make sense” to the receiver in a given context. The fidelity rule refers to the intertextual coherence between the source text and the target text, meaning that the translation should strive for a coherent transmission of the source text, integrating three parts of information: “the information encoded by the author in the source text,” “the information interpreted by the translator as a receiver,” and “the information re-encoded by the translator as a producer for the target audience.” Furthermore, the fidelity rule is subordinate to the coherence rule. In analyzing the subtitles translation strategies of *Black Myth: Wukong*, the three rules of Skopos theory will be used as analytical tools, following the evaluative hierarchy in which the skopos rule takes precedence, followed by the coherence rule, with the fidelity rule being the last.

2.2. Game Localization Translation Studies from the Perspective of Skopos Theory

Localization refers to the process of altering digital content and products developed for one regional market (defined by geography, language, and culture) for sale and use in another regional market (Dunne, 2006: p. 4). In the research on linguistic localization for the cultural overseas promotion of domestic games, Zhao et al. define language localization as “the process of meaning reconstruction and acceptance of symbols (texts, images, videos, designs, etc.) contained in products and services in heterogeneous linguistic and cultural contexts (2024).” Magiron C and O’Hagan argue that comprehensibility and playability are crucial to

game localization given the current players of contemporary video games (Mangiron & O'Hagan, 2006). Therefore, regarding cultural references, puns, and jokes that may be difficult for target-language players to understand, translators may exercise considerable discretion to modify, adapt, or remove them, with the aim of creating an interesting and engaging translation (Zhang, 2013). This substantial freedom granted to translators distinguishes game localization from other types of texts' translation. The core principle advocated by the Skopos theory is highly compatible with game localization translation. As a digital medium that integrates entertainment, interactivity, and cultural elements, game localization is not only a simply linguistic conversion but also a functional activity centered on cross-cultural communication and audience reception. The Skopos theory advocates breaking free from the constraints of "source-text-orientedness" and prioritizes the communicative function and dissemination effect of the target text within the target language context. This forms a theoretical resonance with the inherent requirements of game localization, which must balance cultural authenticity, player experience, and market acceptance. *Black Myth: Wukong* contains the mythological system of Journey to the West, Eastern philosophical connotations, and rich culture-loaded terms. Its localization translation is directly related to the effective transmission of traditional Chinese culture and the success of international communication.

3. Research Methodology

All subtitle cases in this study are sourced from the official global release version (v1.0) of *Black Myth: Wukong*, which are native in-game dialogues and cutscene subtitles without third-party modification. Adopting stratified purposive sampling and qualitative comparative analysis, this paper selects nine groups of typical subtitle cases. Following the principles of typicality and diversity for case selection, the samples cover major chapters of the game, including diverse in-game scenarios such as ancient mountain temples and mortal villages, and involve multiple characters including the protagonist Wukong and Erlang, the Scared Devinity. Based on three criteria - formal rhythmic and syntactic features, distinctive cultural semantic connotations, and colloquial and emotional functions, all cases are categorized into three types: parallel and rhymed verses, culture-loaded terms, and vernacular slang. This categorized sampling method can fully reflect stylistic differences and cultural translation difficulties of game subtitles, ensuring the systematicness and representativeness of the analysis.

4. Case Study of Localization Translation Strategies in *Black Myth: Wukong*

Classic subtitles serve not only as tools to advance the plot and evoke emotions, but also as a core medium for shaping characters and conveying cultural connotations. The localization translation of classic subtitles directly affects overseas players' comprehension of the narrative logic, their emotional resonance with the

characters, and their perception of the embedded traditional Chinese cultural connotations. Rooted in the classical masterpiece *Journey to the West*, *Black Myth: Wukong* retains the classical literary features of the original work while possessing the interactive nature of modern game narration. This creates multi-layered discourses with striking stylistic differences and poses multiple challenges for localization translation.

From the perspective of the Skopos theory, the ultimate purpose of translation determines translators' strategic choices. Subtitle categories vary greatly in narrative function, linguistic form, cultural density and stylistic tone. A generalized analysis cannot identify the unique translation difficulties and corresponding adaptive strategies of each text type. Therefore, based on this theoretical framework, the following section will conduct a targeted analysis of the nine selected cases from the three text categories above.

4.1. Parallel and Rhymed Verses

Among the various types of dialogue in *Black Myth: Wukong*, parallel and rhymed verses stand out as one of the most distinctive yet challenging categories for localization translation. Drawing heavily from the rhythmic couplets, parallel prose, and poetic verses found throughout the original novel *Journey to the West*, this category is characterized by structural symmetry, tonal harmony, and rhetorical refinement. In the game, such verses often appear in character monologues, scene-setting narratives, and moments of philosophical reflection, serving functions that range from summarizing pivotal achievements to voicing existential lamentations. However, these very features pose significant challenges for English translation. The English language lacks the tonal system and structural parallelism mechanisms that underpin classical Chinese verse, making it difficult to replicate both the rhythmic cadence and the semantic density of the original. Moreover, these verses are frequently imbued with Buddhist and Taoist philosophical undertones, as well as allusions to the original novel, placing heavy demands on the translator's cultural literacy. Guided by the Skopos theory, the translators must not only convey the informational content and emotional tone of the source text, but also recreate its formal aesthetics within the constraints of English expression, all while ensuring that overseas players can grasp the meaning of these lines instantly during gameplay.

Wang Shaodi (2012) summarizes three strategic orientations in Lin Yutang's poetic translation practice. Although this threefold typology was originally proposed for literary verse translation, it can serve as a descriptive analytical tool within the Skopos-theoretic framework to categorize the strategic trade-offs observed in game subtitles. The typology evaluates verse translation from two aesthetic dimensions: meaning and form, including form-over-meaning (sacrificing semantic accuracy in pursuit of formal beauty), meaning-over-form (prioritizing faithful reproduction of meaning while de-emphasizing formal requirements), and meaning-form balance (seeking equilibrium between meaning and form).

Example 1: 人，我保住了；经，我取到了。

Translation: My Master - safe! The Scriptures - sound!

In *Black Myth: Wukong*, “人，我保住了；经，我取到了” is spoken by Sun Wukong, summing up the completion of his journey to the West. The primary purpose of the translation is to portray Wukong as a decisive, unrestrained and resolute heroic figure, allowing overseas players to instantly perceive the power and tone embodied in the line. The original line uses parallel short clauses to emphasize two key achievements: protecting the master and obtaining the scriptures. The English translation uses dashes to connect the keywords “My Master” and “The Scriptures,” preserving the parallel structure of the original. By choosing the adjectives “safe” and “sound,” it accurately conveys the dual meanings of being unharmed and intact. Moreover, the alliteration of “safe” and “sound” adds a rhythmic quality to the translation, making it memorable and dramatically impactful.

Moreover, the translation takes full account of English players’ linguistic habits by adopting a concise and forceful style, avoiding overly complex sentence structures. This makes the dialogue feel more natural and fluid, thereby enhancing players’ immersion and emotional engagement. Overall, the translation strikes a sound balance between accuracy of information, simplicity of language, and optimization of the player experience (Schleiermacher, 2019).

Example 2: 动不如静，有才无命。

Translation: Act not and be still, thy gifts art thy ill.

This line carries a distinctly philosophical and fatalistic tone, reflecting the classical Chinese concept of non-action and the deep lament over unrecognized talent. The translators adopt a markedly different strategy—employing archaic English diction and syntax to evoke a classical register commensurate with the original. “Act not and be still” assumes a solemn, almost biblical cadence that echoes the compactness and gravitas of the four-character Chinese structure. The second clause, “thy gifts art thy ill,” uses the archaic pronoun “thy” and the verb form “art” to recreate the antiquated flavor of the source text.

The semantic and rhythmic force of the source line “动不如静” derives from the binary opposition between the two characters “动” and “静”. It represents a philosophical dichotomy deeply rooted in both Taoist and Confucian thought. The translation approximates this through the juxtaposition of “Act not” and “be still” both brief, almost imperative phrases that preserve the sententious weight of the original. As for “有才无命”, the translators neither adhere to a literal rendering nor domesticate it into a common English proverb. Instead, they craft an archaic epigram that formally echoes the conciseness of the source while conveying its core meaning. This example thus falls into the category of form-over-meaning—the translator prioritizes formal classical beauty and rhetorical force, making a conscious trade-off in semantic transparency and immediacy of comprehension.

Example 3: 走走走，游游游，甘为铜钱做马牛。

Translation: On the go, bent the toe, Life of human, all for gold.

This line originates from a folk ditty in *Journey to the West*, capturing the resigned yet wry outlook of ordinary people who toil endlessly for meager material gains. The source text features a tripartite structure: two repetitive, colloquial phrases “走走走，游游游” followed by a concluding, more reflective clause “甘为铜钱做马牛”. The translators preserve structural rhythm through the parallel fragments, “On the go, bent the toe” both of which are syntactically compressed and end with the same vowel sound, approximating the rhyme and repetitive cadence of the original. The concluding clause, “Life of human, all for gold” employs a concise, proverbial formulation that encapsulates the folk wisdom and self-mockery embedded in the original.

A closer examination reveals that the translation of the first two phrases departs significantly from their literal meaning. “走走走” and “游游游” are rendered as “On the go” and “bent the toe”. Neither of these corresponds directly to the source. This is a case of functional adaptation: the translator prioritizes the rhythmic and auditory effect of the original over literal semantic fidelity, choosing phrases that can be easily vocalized and remembered, thereby achieving a comparable effect of folk-song-like lightness and repetition. The slight distortion of English syntax further contributes to a colloquial, almost nonsensical charm that mirrors the rustic, unpolished quality of the original folk tune. In this case, the translator clearly prioritizes rhythmic effect and auditory quality over semantic accuracy, making substantial adjustments and omissions in meaning. This example can therefore also be classified as form-over-meaning—the translator actively abandons literal semantic correspondence in order to recreate the rhythmic beauty and auditory appeal of the original folk ditty.

The differentiated strategies-meaning-form balance and form-over-meaning are not merely literary rhetorical choices, but viable localization strategies for Chinese games going global. The translators prioritize different aesthetic and semantic goals in response to distinct communicative purposes within gameplay. This insight precisely captures the core challenge of translating parallel and rhymed verses. The translators do not pursue some idealized “perfect equivalence”; instead, they make conscious balance between meaning and form according to the specific communicative purpose of each line in the game’s narrative. When the primary purpose is character portrayal and narrative summation, the translation tends toward balancing meaning and form. When the primary purpose is to convey philosophical gravity or evoke folkloric atmosphere, the translation tends to prioritize formal effect to achieve the goals of emotional transmission and aesthetic experience. This flexible and strategic approach precisely embodies the core principle of the Skopos theory, which states that “the translation purpose determines the translation strategy.” In doing so, the translation not only conveys the informational content of the original but also reconstructs, to the extent possible within English linguistic constraints, its formal aesthetic and cultural texture.

4.2. Culture-Loaded Terms

The global launch of *Black Myth: Wukong* introduces Chinese mythological her-

itage to international gaming players. Nevertheless, culturally embedded content integrated into character dialogue constitutes a critical bottleneck for translation localization, which is primarily manifested through culture-loaded terms. As special lexical items that embody the essence of a nation's culture, culture-loaded words contain profound historical significance, religious implications and folk connotations. They frequently lead to the cross-cultural dilemma of lexical vacancy. No exact equivalent expressions exist in the English context to convey their distinctive cultural meanings (Bao & Bao, 2004). Fundamentally, culture-loaded terms serve as distinctive symbols of national culture with exclusive ethnic features. Rather than functioning as isolated lexical units, they act as core carriers within the overall cultural system and often generate multi-layered semantic and cultural implications through metaphorical extension (Zhang & Shi, 2008).

In *Black Myth: Wukong*, culture-loaded terms pervade character dialogues, with most derived from Taoist and Buddhist doctrines, folk proverbs and mythological allusions. Literal translation often fails to reproduce their implicit cultural connotations and may cause confusion among overseas players. From the perspective of the Skopos theory, translation is not a mechanical pursuit of formal correspondence. Game subtitle localization need to ensure players' unobstructed narrative comprehension and facilitate the overseas dissemination of traditional Chinese culture. These goals do not serve as fixed translation purposes for every single line of text. Instead, each in-game utterance carries context-specific communicative intentions that determine translators' strategic choices. Translators prioritize either immediate readability or cultural authenticity according to situational demands. They may adopt foreignization, domestication or a combination of the two strategies so as to achieve a sound balance between cultural preservation and immersive gaming experience for global players.

Example 1: 心急吃不着热面皮，暂且助你一臂之力。

Translation: Haste makes waste. I'll lend ye a hand.

As a well-known Chinese folk saying, “心急吃不着热面皮” is rich in mundane life atmosphere. It metaphorically implies that rushing for instant results always leads to failure. By adopting the semantically equivalent English proverb “Haste makes waste”, which fully preserves the philosophical implication of the original line and conforms to the linguistic cognition and expressive habits of overseas players. The latter part “暂且助你一臂之力” is concisely rendered as “I'll lend ye a hand”. The archaic pronoun “ye” fits the ancient mythical style of the game, reproduces the intimate and casual tone of the original utterance, and its colloquial syntax well matches the conversational rhythm of in-game dialogue.

Overall, the translation strictly abides by the core principle of the Skopos theory and adopts a domestication strategy of functional equivalence. Instead of rigidly adopting literal translation for concrete images such as “热面皮”, the translator takes facilitating overseas players' comprehension of the plot and maintaining an immersive in-game experience as the fundamental translation goal. Meanwhile, the translation also follows the coherence and fidelity principles of the Skopos

theory. It effectively conveys the semantic meaning and communicative intention of the original text, while taking into account the preservation of cultural characteristics and audience acceptability. Therefore, it achieves a fine balance between the external dissemination of Chinese folk culture and overseas players' emotional resonance with the plot.

Example 2: 三界六道，不就毁在这四个字上？

Translation: All realms and beings have ruined themselves for that word.

The original phrase “三界六道” is a concept unique to Chinese Buddhist culture, embodying a distinctly Eastern philosophy. A literal translation would lead to an overload of cultural connotations and create comprehension barriers for foreign players. Therefore, the translator adopted a strategy of cultural simplification, translating it as “all realms and beings.” While abandoning obscure religious literal imagery, it fully retains the core implication of all living creatures in the world and meets the fundamental purpose of plot communication.

Furthermore, the translation features a compact sentence structure and intense tone, conforming to the syntactic norms and logical expression of English monologue. It matches the rhythm of game scenes and character dubbing perfectly, achieving textual coherence and complying with the coherence principle of the Skopos theory. Instead of being mechanically faithful to the formal cultural images of the original text, the translation stays true to the emotional core and questioning stance of the line. Under the guidance of the priority of purpose, it strikes a proper balance between cultural preservation and audience acceptance.

Example 3: 可惜你的葫芦不中用，我这葫芦又认主。

Translation: Shame, your gourd serves little purpose, and mine answers solely to me.

The gourd is one of the abundant magical artifacts in Chinese mythological tradition. In the game, “葫芦” and “认主” are both culture-loaded terms rooted in Taoist folklore and classic fantasy narratives. Far more than an ordinary calabash, the gourd functions as a powerful magic treasure within the world of *Black Myth: Wukong*, capable of capturing enemies. The expression “认主” refers to a widely accepted rule for magical artifacts in Chinese fantasy. Enchanted treasures establish an innate spiritual bond with their master and will acknowledge no other possessor. The translator adopts literal translation and renders “葫芦” as “gourd”. This approach retains the exotic imagery of the artifact, yet it cannot spontaneously convey the full mythological connotations familiar to Chinese players. For “认主”, the translation “answers solely to me” employs domestication. This anthropomorphic wording aligns with English narrative conventions for magical or loyal entities, allowing international players to grasp immediately that the gourd obeys only its master. Guided by the Skopos theory, the primary objective of in-game dialogue translation is to sustain uninterrupted gameplay and deliver instant comprehension. By retaining “gourd” to preserve the distinctive mythic imagery of *Black Myth: Wukong* while domesticating “认主” for pragmatic clarity, the

translator implements a mixed translation strategy. This method avoids cumbersome explanatory annotations that would undermine immersive gameplay, striking a compromise between cultural transmission and readability.

In conclusion, the localization of culture-loaded terms is of great significance for the overseas dissemination of Chinese video games. It serves not only as a medium to break linguistic barriers and facilitate cross-cultural communication, but also as a crucial tool for character shaping, enriching narrative depth and strengthening players' immersive experience. The three case analyses above demonstrate that the translators move beyond the conventional pursuit of word-for-word equivalence. Guided by the Skopos theory, the translators adopt three flexible translation strategies, namely domestication rooted in functional equivalence, cultural simplification, and the hybrid approach combining foreignization and domestication. With such strategies, the translation preserves the philosophical undertones of Chinese culture and the aesthetic appeal of Eastern traditions, while maintaining narrative immersion and fostering emotional resonance among international players.

4.3. Vernacular Slang

Vernacular slang represent a prevalent textual form in Chinese domestic games. Unlike informative text that conveys objective facts, such conversational utterances focus primarily on depicting character emotions and interpersonal interactions, thereby posing distinctive difficulties for game localization. In *Black Myth: Wukong*, vernacular slang constitute a functionally oriented text category. This category includes invectives, bantering remarks, and combat taunts. Their core communicative function lies in shaping character traits and intense emotional states rather than transmitting complex semantic information.

The classic image of Sun Wukong is defined by rebellious temperament and irreverent verbal wit, a stylistic feature fully inherited in the game adaptation. The protagonist delivers arrogant and contemptuous remarks against enemies while exchanging seemingly vulgar yet affectionate banter with companions. The localization of such colloquial expressions presents a unique dilemma. Rooted in regional dialects, traditional appellations and specific historical backgrounds, Chinese vernacular speech loses its stylistic charm through literal translation. Excessive domestication, in contrast, may dilute the unruly and wild temperament that defines the character of Sun Wukong. From the perspective of the Skopos theory, translators should prioritize functional equivalence in translating colloquial game dialogues. The core translation goal is to enable international players to perceive equivalent emotional effects including offence, humour and intimidation, instead of rigidly adhering to literal textual fidelity.

Example 1: 你他娘的杀我猴子猴孙。

Translation: You bastards killing my kind!

Uttered by Sun Wukong, this line falls into the typical category of invectives.

The source expression “你他娘的” is a vulgar Chinese colloquialism marked by intense emotional tension. Its primary function lies not in conveying information, but in releasing rage and reproach. The translator renders “你他娘的” as “bastards”, achieving pragmatic equivalence. As an English invective laden with hostility and moral condemnation, this term can deliver a comparable level of offensiveness to target readers. In contrast, “猴子猴孙” is a distinctive appellation rooted in the Huaguo Mountain context of Journey to the West, referring to Sun Wukong’s monkey descendants and clansmen. Simplified as “my kind”, this translation erases the ethnic connotations of Huaguo Mountain and the cultural features inherent to the identity of the Monkey King.

Such translation demonstrate the primacy of the Skopos rule over the fidelity rule within the Skopos theory. In combat scenes prioritizing immediate emotional communication, accurate cultural allusions give way to instantaneous emotional impact. Retaining the fragmented sentence structure of the source text, the translation adopts a hurried rhythm to echo Sun Wukong’s fury and discomposure upon witnessing the massacre of his clansmen. Battle invectives in Chinese domestic games aim for immediate emotional resonance. For this reason, translators often abandon partial cultural markers to secure instant emotional responses from international players.

Example 2: 这么多年了，除了那只猪头，就数你最会扯淡，最能逗老孙开心。

Translation: All these years, except for that pig, you’re the one who talks the tallest tales. Good, I am entertained!

This line appears in the prologue as Sun Wukong’s retort to the surrender demands put forward by Erlang, the Sacred Divinity. Assuming the posture of a victor, Erlang, the Sacred Divinity offers to spare Sun Wukong on condition that he kneels and confesses his wrongdoing. Even so, Huaguo Mountain is doomed to annihilation irrespective of the battle’s result. Sun Wukong’s remark constitutes a contemptuous rebuttal to the persuasion, delivered in a tone of pre battle defiance and relish for combat. In the source text, “猪头” functions as Sun Wukong’s derogatory nickname for Zhu Bajie. Its literal translation “that pig” preserves the original derogatory function. Even lacking prior contextual knowledge of Zhu Bajie, international players can readily recognize “that pig” as a taunt directed at a specific character. From the perspective of the Skopos theory, the translation prioritizes the instant perceptibility of mockery rather than supplementing background information about the character. “扯淡” is a vernacular expression from northern Chinese dialect, referring to boasting. The translators employ the English idiom “talks the tallest tales”. This rendition aligns with the original semantic meaning and retains the colloquial teasing quality at the register level, achieving dual equivalence in semantics and register. “老孙” is Sun Wukong’s self appellation, which conveys a bold, self assured tone and acts as a cultural identity symbol. The translation substitutes this term with the neutral pronoun “I”, thereby erasing the full cultural specificity inherent in the self appellation.

Guided by the Skopos theory, the translators prioritize arousing amusement for international players amid combat scenarios over retaining this culture loaded item. Accordingly, the translator gives precedence to eliciting amusement among international players during combat rather than preserving the cultural connotations embedded within this self appellation.

Example 3: 管他娘的，老子先尝两。

Translation: Who cares anyway! I'll gobble ye up first!

This line is spoken by Tiger Vanguard in Chapter Four. From the perspective of the Skopos theory, the translation of “管他娘的，老子先尝两” as “Who cares anyway! I'll gobble ye up first!” takes as its primary purpose enabling English-speaking players to instantly perceive the character's recklessness and brutality. The vulgar Chinese expletive “管他娘的” is rendered as the rhetorical exclamation “Who cares anyway!”, which maintains the colloquial register while reduces the offensive intensity of the original profanity. The boastful self-reference “老子” is domesticated into the neutral pronoun “I”, which erases its swaggering and domineering jianghu style connotations. Meanwhile, the verb phrase “gobble ye up” amplifies the predatory implication embedded in “尝两”, and the archaic second person pronoun “ye” compensates for the rough, outlaw like register of the source text. Overall, the translation realizes equivalent transmission of semantic meaning and communicative intention, at the cost of losing the layered nuance of profanity as well as the character defining markers carried by the original self appellation.

These cases also provide practical implications for the future localization of slang within Chinese domestic games. Such game dialogues focus on character building and emotional delivery. Literal translation would erase the stylistic charm of the source text, while excessive domestication may dilute characters' unique dispositions. From the perspective of the Skopos rule, which takes precedence over the fidelity rule, translators pursue pragmatic-functional equivalence. By means of domestication, target language idioms and appropriate register adjustment, they ensure international players can instantly perceive emotions including anger, mockery and intimidation, at the expense of certain culture specific appellations, allusions and subtle semantic nuances of profane language. Accordingly, translators should first clarify situational communicative intentions, adopt target language expressions consistent with the game's worldview, accept justifiable cultural information loss, avoid intrusive annotations that undermine gameplay immersion, and strike a rational balance between character depiction and cross cultural acceptability.

5. Conclusion

As a hybrid system of commerce and culture, the video game serves as a media platform where globalization and localization coexist (Zhang, 2012). In this context, Chinese games undertake the important mission of spreading fine traditional Chinese culture, with localization translation serving as a critical bridge for their

successful overseas dissemination. *Black Myth: Wukong* has showcased to the world not only the creativity of Chinese developers, but also the allure of Chinese culture. Taking the representative domestic 3A game *Black Myth: Wukong* as the research object, this paper adopts German functionalist the Skopos theory to conduct an in-depth analysis of the localization translation strategies for parallel and rhymed verse, culture-loaded terms, and vernacular colloquialisms in the game.

The paper finds that *Black Myth: Wukong* follows closely the principles of the Skopos theory throughout its localization process. Guided by the Skopos theory, the translators flexibly adopted diverse translation strategies. For parallel and rhymed verses featuring literary aesthetics and philosophical implications, the translators balance semantic fidelity and formal prosodic beauty, flexibly choosing strategies to either coordinate meaning and form or prioritize form over meaning. This approach reproduces the elegant temperament of traditional Chinese literary discourse while accommodating the instantaneous reading nature of game subtitles. For culture-loaded terms carrying unique religious, folk and mythological connotations, the translators prioritize eliminating cross-cultural lexical vacancies. By applying domestication, cultural simplification and hybrid translation strategies, the translators coordinate audience accessibility and cultural output and prevents comprehension barriers brought by excessive exotic cultural information. For vernacular slang that performs emotional expression and character-building functions, the translators focus on pragmatic functional equivalence. Redundant cultural markers are sacrificed to restore the original emotional tension, interpersonal intimacy and confrontational intensity of the source text, ensuring authentic characterization and smooth situational interaction in the game. Overall, the translators do not rely on rigid translation modes. Instead, translation strategies are dynamically adjusted according to the situational communicative purpose of different text types, achieving a reasonable balance among narrative fluency, players' immersion and the inheritance of traditional culture.

The localization translation of *Black Myth: Wukong* offers valuable experience and insights for the cultural dissemination and localization translation of domestic games under globalization. Nevertheless, this study also has certain limitations. Centering on the textual analysis of subtitle cases from *Black Myth: Wukong*, the summarized translation strategies and practical insights are genre-specific and context-bound, which are applicable to localized translation research of similar traditional cultural games but cannot be arbitrarily generalized to all types of domestic game localization scenarios. In the process of going global, domestic games should fully recognize the importance of localization translation. Translation is not merely linguistic conversion, but also requires an in-depth understanding of the cultural background and players' demands of target markets. Guided by the Skopos theory, translators should flexibly select appropriate strategies to seek a dynamic balance between cultural authenticity and audience acceptance. Only in this way can domestic games gain wider recognition in the international market, realize the effective dissemination of fine traditional Chinese culture, and promote

the vigorous development of the domestic game industry amid the wave of globalization.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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