

## *Original Paper*

# Study on English Localization Translation of Domestic Games—Taking the Opera “The Divine Damsel of Devastation” in Genshin Impact as an Example

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### ***Abstract***

*In recent years, the demand for game enterprises to explore overseas markets has been growing. Not only have more high-quality foreign games been imported into China, but Chinese games have also become an important part of Chinese culture “going out” and “telling good Chinese stories”. This paper takes the global high popularity game Genshin Impact as an example, and combines the Skopos theory to update the research on game localization from the perspective of Chinese-English translation, and analyzes the application of translation and creation in the process of localization translation of drama.*

### ***Keywords***

*Game localization, Genshin Impact, Traditional opera, Translation and Creation*

## **1. Introduction**

In December 2022, “Genshin Impact” won the “TGA 2022 Players’ Voice” award, and was nominated for the “TGA 2022 Best Mobile Game” and “TGA 2022 Best Continuously Operating Game” awards,

steadily ranking among the world's popular mobile games. In addition, after the results of the Google Play Best Application Selection came out, Genshin won the 2022 Google Play Best Continuously Influential Game of the Year in the United States. It can be seen that Genshin has very good overseas popularity. Video games are booming in contemporary China, market demand continues to expand, and related discussions on social media are heated.

The "2022 China Game Industry Analysis Report" shows that from 2019 to 2021, the overseas annual revenue of electronic games developed in China was 11.59 billion, 15.45 billion and 18.01 billion US dollars respectively, while in the first half of 2022 it reached 8.99 billion US dollars. The scale of domestic game users continues to expand, and the social influence of my country's e-sports industry continues to increase, and social attention has increased significantly compared with the past. News reported on January 13, 2022: "At a time when the epidemic has repeatedly made it difficult to go out, going overseas through virtual worlds has become a new trend for Chinese culture and Chinese stories to go out". However, due to the uneven quality of video game translations on the market, apart from The outstanding localization translation teams of major game companies, and the English translations of games produced by some small game companies use machine translation methods. The quality is rough or mechanical, and it is difficult to fully convey the cultural connotation of the game itself to players, which has become one of the reasons that affects the overall experience of overseas players.

## 2. Relevant Background Information

### 2.1 Opera and English Poetry

Chinese opera is a comprehensive stage art style with a long history. It is mainly composed of folk songs and dances, rap and comedy, and originated from primitive songs and dances. It aggregates many art forms under one standard and embodies their individuality in the common nature. After long-term development, it gradually formed a hundred Chinese operas with the five major opera types of "Peking Opera, Yue Opera, Huangmei Opera, Ping Opera, and Henan Opera" as the core. Opera culture embodies the essence of aesthetic thought of traditional Chinese culture and constitutes a unique view of drama.

There are pressures from all sides in the development of contemporary Chinese opera, but the vitality of opera that has been passed down for thousands of years is tenacious. New-era opera continues to enrich and develop itself, actively explore and learn from new art forms, and innovate based on the audience's appreciation taste and the trend of the times. From a certain perspective, the combination of opera and games is also an attempt at innovative forms.

English poetry has the characteristics of prose, but it is not prose. English poetry is divided into lines and is shorter than prose. English poetry describes characters, events, nature, etc., but it is different from novels or other forms of literature. The word order of English poems often changes, or the verb comes earlier, or the adjective is placed after the noun being modified, or the subordinate clause is placed before the main clause, etc. This may be due to rhythm and rhyme, or sometimes due to the

omission of an element.

The musicality of English poetry is not expressed through notes, but through the combination and arrangement of words. This combination and arrangement of words is what we call rhythm, or meter, rhythm, rhyme, etc. English narrative poetry is more casual and free, often with a final rhyme.

The English translation of the opera involved in this article can be said to be an English narrative poem. Opera contains a large number of allusions, and the transformation of opera into narrative poetry is a collision between culture and culture. The essence of allusions, whether in Chinese or English, is implicit and concise. In the process of translation, allusions must be handled carefully and flexibly. They cannot be translated mechanically and rigidly, let alone derive meaning from the text.

## *2.2 Teleology and Localization*

According to the principle of Skopos theory, before starting translation, it is necessary to clarify the target audience of the translation and look for parallel texts. The target audience of Genshin is young overseas players. In order to cater to this target audience, it is necessary to use simplified, easy-to-understand language that is consistent with local culture.

As a form of interactive entertainment, video games are the primary purpose of translation to improve the player's gaming experience. The translator not only aims to transmit information at the textual level, but also to restore the sense of immersion in the game as much as possible. Excellent translators not only need to have good translation literacy, but also have an in-depth understanding of the game itself. For example, the translator responsible for the localization of Genshin needs to be very familiar with the open world game mechanics, including the use of common names and places in Genshin, character characteristics, implicit humor, and puns. In addition, the translator also needs to understand various allusions in the game and have a certain understanding of other types such as two-dimensional memes. In addition, the translator should pay attention to the subjectivity in the translation process, that is, "the translator is subject to the influence and constraints of the marginal subject or the external environment and his or her own vision, in order to meet the cultural needs of the target language and express it in the translation activity." (Tu & Zhu, 2003). This means that game localization is not only more perceptual and active as a translation activity and translation project, but also has stronger vitality in the "translation process", that is, the conversion of text and language symbols, especially text content involving traditional culture, subjective initiative and conscious awareness can largely avoid the non-presence of the translator caused by the translator's over-reliance on modern information technology such as machine translation software during translation. (Lan, 2017) Of course, translators should also pay attention to propriety to avoid deviating from the original text due to overly flexible interpretation.

## **3. Translation and Creation in Opera Translation**

The text in the game, especially the localized translation involving culture, is to a large extent a kind of "re-creation" by the translator. Localization is not just a simple translation, it requires secondary

creation based on the habits and cultural differences of the target language, that is, a transcreation strategy, which involves omitting and replacing relevant content of the original text to eliminate cultural barriers. Here are some excerpts of lyrics and external translations from “The Divine Damsel of Devastation” as follows:

《神女劈观》（节选）

可叹

秋鸿折单难复双

痴人痴怨恨迷狂

只因那邪牲祭伏定祸殃

若非巾帼拔剑人皆命丧

凡缘朦朦仙缘滔

天伦散去绛府邀

朱丝缚绝烂柯樵

雪泥鸿迹遥

鹤归不见昔华表

蛛丝枉结魂幡飘

因果红尘渺渺

烟消

The Divine Damsel of Devastation (Excerpt)

Alas alas

Two loving souls by death cruelly parted

In madness and grieve, a dark path started

Calamity was drawn, ritual subverted

But by her cold steel was death averted

Mortal ties broken, with the adept she went

Their abiding place filling paternal bonds rent

To her red strings of binding they sent

And they dwelt long together, content

The crane returned to a home without luster

The cobwebs overgrown, the grave-shroud a fluster

But one bond upon her

This world could not muster

Below I will briefly analyze the application of transcreation from the word and discourse levels. The word level mainly involves the choice of Chinese and English corresponding words when translating allusions.

“秋鸿” is a legendary bird that has only one mate in its life. The translation is two loving souls, which chooses the most direct meaning; “巾帼” refers to a heroine, and here is used as a simplified expression;

“华表” originally means a city gate Huabiao Zhu, here is a literal translation of “昔华表”, understood as the gorgeous appearance of the past. “凡缘”, “天伦”, “绛府” are all related to gods, “天伦” refers to Mortal and secular kinship, “绛府” refers to the residence of gods in the sky, abiding place in translation refers to a place where feelings are loyal and unswerving, and paternal bonds refer to “天伦”. Because the mortal ties broken, she decided to follow the immortal to leave. Next is the understanding of “烂柯樵” and “雪泥鸿爪”, which are two legendary stories. “烂柯樵” is an allusion that in the story, a woodcutter went up the mountain to collect firewood and saw an immortal playing chess. He was fascinated by it. After the game, he found that his ax was rotten. It turned out that a whole century had passed, not a day. This story is used to describe people who have been away from their hometown for a long time, and also refers to people who have experienced changes in the world. “雪泥鸿迹遥” uses the two images of snow mud and claws. The bird leaves its claw marks on the snow. It is also a story of discovering the passage of time and lamenting the vicissitudes of time. These two sentences themselves have a sad tone, but the English translation changes it to say that one immortal and the other have lived together contentedly for many years, which is always a bit inappropriate. This is also because there will inevitably be information loss in the process of converting Chinese poems, lyrics and citations into English, and it is difficult for us to express them perfectly in one-to-one correspondence. Finally, the red dust of cause and effect refers to the mortal world, and the vanishing smoke indicates that the connection between the crane and the mortal world is getting weaker and weaker. The English translation means that there is no longer a fetter in the world that makes her nostalgic.

Judging from the overall text, this English narrative rhymes very smoothly and explains the events clearly. The translation begins with the rhyme ert/art-ed (parted~started~subverted~averted), gradually and smoothly changes to -ent (went~rent~sent~content), and then -uster (luster~fluster~muster). This is a relatively simple rhyme scheme, somewhat similar to the rhyming method of aaaa, bbbb, cccc, dd of a sonnet, that is, four four four two.

The following sentence in “The Divine Damsel of Devastation” is also translated very smoothly. The meaning of “曲高未必人不识，自有知音和清词” is very similar to that of another poem, that is “莫愁前路无知己，天下谁人不识君”. This is a word of advice and encouragement that advises people not to be afraid of the long road ahead, there will always be someone who will understand yourself. The translation is: From the world she seems apart, but there are those who know her heart. The translator Mr. Fei Bai once made such a metaphor for poetry. He compared the phonology and artistic conception of poetry to the wings of a bird. This translation basically manages to grasp the phonology and artistic conception at the same time. It is vividly interpreted and catchy. It can be called an excellent localization, which greatly enhances the sense of immersion and playability of the game.

#### 4. Conclusion

After half a century of development, games are no longer just entertainment, but have become works of

art. “The Divine Damsel of Devastation” sings from the tender thoughts of a daughter to the pride of a heroine. The screen is filled with applause, including many overseas audiences. Some foreign friends said that they had never known that Chinese opera culture was like this before. Some People also go to official websites related to Chinese drama to watch and learn. There are also some foreign players who have a little understanding of traditional Chinese culture, and they have begun to popularize and introduce opera culture, becoming the “tap water” of Chinese culture. Of course, the success of this opera is not due to the translation, but because the work itself is outstanding and eye-catching. In the final analysis, translation is just a bridge, allowing people with different languages a chance to have a glimpse of the civilization of other countries.

In recent years, many researchers have paid attention to the problem of ideological penetration behind the localization of domestic games. Today’s Chinese translators, while disseminating foreign culture, must clearly understand their own responsibilities in disseminating their own national culture, improve their own quality through continuous learning, and strive to guide Chinese ideology abroad with the help of diversified channels in the information age. This is not only a requirement to enrich the spiritual and cultural life of young people, but also one of the important ways for Chinese culture to cross cultural barriers and go global.

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