Exploring Localization Translation Strategy under Cultural Compatibility Principle

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Abstract: In the context of globalization, multiculturalism is intertwined, and the importance of localization services is increasing. This paper observes the development of localization, analyzes different types of texts by referring to localized translation practices, and seeks localized translation strategies from the perspective of cultural compatibility. Results find that 1) the goal of localization is to integrate and expand into the target market, thus domestication should be the main translation strategy. 2) Given that source language products have many linguistic symbols that contain cultural connotations, the strategy of foreignization is also essential. Therefore, the contribution of this paper inspires translators wisely combine the translation strategies that of domestication and foreignization when translate, considering user's psychological acceptance and aesthetic orientation.

Keywords: localization, localized translation, translation strategies, cultural compatibility

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the global economy in the times of Artificial Intelligence, software and websites are using multiple languages to attract Internet users. It largely promotes the demanding growth of the localization industry. Localization is to minimize the foreign color of products in the eyes of end users to ensure the maximum acceptance of products or services in the local market. Therefore, localized translation has become crucial to the local attractiveness of products. To adapt products to local users and expand consumption, the principle of cultural compatibility should be followed when choosing translation strategies. "Cultural Compatibility" is defined as a good comprehension of cultural meaning, good reader reception, and good aesthetic judgment, which is an important concept in cultural translation [1]. This paper will propose localization translation strategies and techniques from the cultural compatibility perspective.

2. Localization and Translation

2.1. The Development of Localization

In this paper, localization can be defined as "the provision of services and technologies for managing multilingualism across the global information flow" [2]. This includes the industry, tool suppliers, and localization. To be more practical, localization prepares a product for use in a specific locale.

Translation is one of the core tasks in the localization process, which almost determines the user experience after product localization. From the translation perspective, the localization process can be divided into preparation before translation, translation, desktop typesetting, testing, and correction [3]. As a production activity, localization needs to consider relevant laws and regulations in addition to achieving the goal of enabling people from specific regions to use products in their language without difficulty. "Localization" is usually applied to software applications and websites. Other localization translation services include audio and video localization, multilingual dubbing, multilingual transcribing, and multilingual desktop typesetting. Ideally, localization should require minimal engineering effort.

To make sure local people can fully understand and accept the contents of a product or service, it is necessary to translate the introduction and promotion smartly. Also, it is critical to help these documents and other contents be translated into local languages. Localized translation also needs to be properly polished according to the local cultural context. This is why "微信" was finally translated as "Wechat" and "抖音" as "Tiktok". This cannot only be a mechanical transliteration outcome but a translation outcome rich in local cultural significance.

Localization is a complex process involving project management, translation and revision, quality assurance, online testing, timely updating, and reusing the previous content. In this process, the purpose of translation is to make it a domesticated product that conforms to the cultural customs of the target audience so that the target audience can easily access and use it.

2.1.1. Text Features of Localized Translation

The text types in traditional translation can be divided into informative text, expressive text, and operative text [4]. The informative text emphasizes semantic equivalence, and language accuracy should be pursued in translation. The expressive text emphasizes the aesthetic effect, and the translator should convey the aesthetic form of the translation. Operational texts emphasize the role of infection, and translators should consider non-verbal factors as much as possible.

The localized translation text is different from the traditional text. Its source text was usually translated by software, web pages, e-learning courseware, or electronic files such as video and audio. Such text is the synthesis of the above three text types, which is not only used to convey information but also to achieve the purpose of interacting with users. There are some features：(1) Due to the involvement of information technology; localized products need to be constantly updated according to market conditions, so the text changes from static to dynamic. Online search tools and Computer Aided Translation (CAT) software are usually used in the process of localized translation. (2) The large sentence structure of localized product text is usually composed of many short independent sentences, most of which appear in translation units and few texts or paragraphs, so the text to be translated becomes more fragmented. Such as software interface, game name, script lines, etc. (3) To meet the needs of users in different countries and at different levels in terms of culture and customs, it is necessary to reduce the ambiguity of understanding that may occur in the process of software multilingual localization translation. Therefore, the text of the source language software must be culturally neutral as a localization benchmark.

2.1.2. The Requirements for Localized Translators

Given the particularity of the localized translation text, the translator should pay special attention to the following issues: (1) Communicate and cooperate according to the process to ensure that the localized version information is updated synchronously. Flexible use of corpus is also a necessary skill. (2) Consider the differences in language habits between the two languages and be familiar with industry terms. Adjust the sentence structure properly during translation to ensure convenient and

accurate operation. (3) Based on maintaining the neutrality of the source text, it is necessary to embellish religion, gender, and race to avoid cultural conflicts. At the same time, add local cultural characteristics to achieve the desired effect on local target users.

3.   Cultural Compatibility

Both domestic enterprises and foreign companies have resorted to translation to achieve the purpose of publicity and promotion to the target language audience. Therefore, localized translation emphasizes cultural compatibility.

3.1. Culture Turn

The traditional view of translation holds that translation is not creation, and the highest evaluation of the translator is "the translation is faithful to the original." André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett borrowed Hornby's concept "culturally oriented approach" and refined it into "cultural turn." They envisaged that "Neither the word, nor the text, but the culture becomes the operational 'unit' of translation" [5]. It is not translated languages but texts that are socially and culturally situated. Mary Snell Hornby wrote an article suggesting that scholars engaged in translation theory research abandon their "Scientism" attitude, regard culture rather than text as the translation unit, and incorporate cultural studies into translation theory research [6].

The cultural perspective of translation studies is rooted in deconstruction, which subverts the traditional idea of "faithfulness" of the translation to the original. There is no fixed translation standard, and translation studies should not insist on judging the translation following specific criteria. The "culture" in the theory of cultural turn refers to the cultural environment outside the text. It is different from the linguistic differences in cultural communication that traditional translation theorists such as Newmark and Nida pay attention to. The context they talk about pertains to the research category within the text.

With the further study of cultural translation, the cultural compatibility principle has come into translation studies on how to overcome cultural conflicts in the process of translation, appropriately transform the culture of the source language, and fully and accurately convey the schema image of the original text to the readers to make it conform to the receptive ability of the readers of the target culture. In translation studies, cultural compatibility is a kind of dynamic equivalence. Cultural compatibility does not mean that the source culture adapts to the target culture, nor does it mean that to achieve adaptation, foreign culture and local culture should be integrated without losing the original flavor of foreign culture.

3.1.1. Differences between Cultural Compatibility, Acculturation, and Cultural Adaptation

There are three definitions in this paper: the first definition is "Cultural compatibility," which refers to a good comprehension of cultural meaning, good reader reception, and good aesthetic judgment [1]. Then, "Acculturation," a psychological theory, refers to the cultural modification of an individual, group, or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture [7]. Lastly is "Cultural adaptation," which means the specific capacity of human beings and human societies to overcome changes in their natural and social environment by modifications to their culture [8].

The first definition refers to the coexistence of internal and external cultures, the second concept refers to the absorption of external culture by internal culture, and the latter refers to the cutting of internal culture to adapt external culture. Liu points out that the so-called "cultural compatibility" does not mean that the original language culture should be adapted to the translation culture, nor does it mean that the translation culture should be adapted to the original language culture [1].

Cultural compatibility is one of the values by which translators measure the quality of translation work. In the study of translation criticism, cultural compatibility should become an indispensable part of translation values theory to increase the importance of cultural translation. Cultural factors play a crucial role in localized translation, and the dynamic nature of cultural factors adds difficulty to translation. Cultural compatibility gives translations cross-cultural characteristics. That is, in the process of translation, actively learn, absorb, and be compatible with the common cultural characteristics of the two languages.

The cultural compatibility of translation is to consider the cultural status of the translated language and the target language and emphasize the cultural subject and cultural creation of the translator to achieve the best integration of the two cultures. Therefore, the translation should not only convey the language content of the original text but also convey the cultural information implied in the original text so that the charm of the foreign culture can infect the reader. But for culture to be translated, disseminated, and accepted by readers, translation requires cultural compatibility.

3.2. Localized Translation Ttrategies and Example

Regarding localized translation practice, translation strategies have to be mentioned. Domestication and foreignization are two common translation strategies. Domestication is an approach in which a translator adheres to the linguistic traditions of their own culture and returns to authentic native language expressions. As opposed to domestication, foreignization refers to the adaptation of the language characteristics of foreign cultures and the absorption of foreign expressions in translation methods.

3.2.1. Domestication

The word localization can be seen as a simple generalization of "linguistic and cultural factors" in translation theory. Since any language has its own grammar, idioms, context and its specific context in its historical accumulation and practice, it plants the difficulty of external word implantation, so the translation must accommodate the expression of the target language[9]. Plus, the purpose of software or website localization is to expand its commercial market and obtain more market value. Therefore, the localized product should not only conform to the acceptance psychology of target language users but also shorten the distance between users and products, which requires the adoption of domestication in translation.

The smaller the cultural load of a translation, the less the need for adjustment during translation; Conversely, the more cultural information it contains, the greater the adjustment [10]. The localized translation should conform to the aesthetic expectations of the target audience and the norms of the target language, thus gaining wider acceptance. Therefore, the localization translator often needs to rewrite the heterogeneous cultural factors in the original text from the perspective of the cultural tradition of the target language, making it closer to the form of the cultural norms of the target language or obtaining the corresponding translation through this means.

To conform to Chinese language habits, many game names are often translated into quadrisyllabic words. For instance, the game It Takes Two on the website steam is translated into 《双人成行》, and Layers of Fear is translated into 《层层恐惧》.

3.2.2. Foreignization

Lawrence Venuti proposed in his book *The Translator's invisibility* that foreignization is a translation strategy that expresses the linguistic and cultural differences of foreign texts by reducing the pressure of their own culture on foreign cultures, and it allows readers to directly contact foreign languages [11]. It is not easy to seek "cultural compatibility" in heterogeneity. When it involves the

"accumulation" in the deep structure of culture, heterogeneity tends to be more arduous to deal with, thus it is most difficult for people with different cultural backgrounds to understand. If the readers of the target language lack enough acceptance of the cultural heterogeneity the translator handles, it requires the translator to find equivalents in the target language as much as possible. However, sometimes this kind of equivalent is difficult to find all at once. Therefore, using transliteration and paraphrasing in translation is feasible.

Literal translation refers to word-for-word translation. It can reflect the exotic flavor of the source language. Literal translation with annotation is also widely used in foreignization strategy, which aims at providing a necessary complementary explanation and information of source language. In the localization of movies or games, in addition to character dialogues, there are a large number of proper nouns (e.g., personal names, place names, scene names, family names), which are the embodiment of cultural characteristics. Place names and personal names are usually based on their unique cultural background. Hence, if the translator insists on using "domestication," it may lead to obscure translations and make it impossible for the audience to empathize, so foreignization is demanded or combined. Literal translation and literal translation with annotation are then applicable in such context.

Regarding software localization, the text is usually the name of the functional module with informationality. The use of transliteration alone often makes it impossible for users to understand the product's functionality. Therefore, translators often combine literal translation with transliteration——transliterate brand names and transliterate their specific functions. For example, the "微信运动" in the WeChat interface is translated as "WeRun".

3.2.3. League of Legends: Hallowed seamstress------ Gwen

The game localization market expanded with the game industry sweeping the world. League of legends, which has gone a rival in China in recent years, is a good example of game localization. The following will take Gwen, the hero of the League of Legends, as an example to analyze the translation strategies of game localization under the principle of cultural compatibility.

Example 1:

Sour Text: Original version: Hallowed seamstress------ Gwen

Target Text: Chinese version：灵罗娃娃——格温

In Example 1, Starting from the name "Gwen," she is a puppet doll made by Queen Isolde, wife of Viego. She obtained spiritual knowledge after the Ruination(a novel of League of Legends). The designer reckons that players in the UK and the US will naturally associate names like "Isolde" and "Gwen" with the ancient legend of King Arthur. The name "Gwen" is a direct reference to King Arthur's Queen Guinevere. The game design team borrows it from King Arthur's legend to indirectly render the tragic event of Shadow Isles (a region in the universe of the League of Heroes). The name translates to "格温," thus retaining the special meaning that the name was injected by the designer when it was designed. From the point of view of cultural compatibility, this transliteration retains the cultural characteristics of the source language and is an embodiment of the foreignization strategy.

Gwen's title "hallowed seamstress" can be literary translated as "神圣的裁缝." Gwen is not a tailor, but her master, Isolde, is. "Hallow" is directly related to "Halloween," which is slightly different from the "purity, nobility, perfection" and other connotations usually carried by the word "神圣" in Chinese. On the contrary, it is more similar to such words as "幽灵、鬼怪" in temperament. In addition, Gwen was originally a sewn puppet, which had a natural connection with the word "绫罗绸缎." Therefore, the translator used this homophonic way to cope.

Interestingly, the original meaning of "绫罗绸缎" refers to four kinds of fabrics. Still, when the localization team changed it to "灵罗," the word "Luo" here vaguely took on a verb meaning similar to "framing up." This is equivalent to putting the object "Ling" in front of a phrase, thus giving this

coined word an inexplicit but perceptible meaning, which can better convey the artistic conception of Gwen's role. Although the method of domestication is adopted here, the use of words with too strong ethnic and cultural color in Chinese is also avoided. The word "灵" contains an exotic flavor so that it can make players think of western ghosts. In this way, the translation not only carries the cultural connotation of the source text but also considers the Chinese user's sense of game experience.

4. Conclusions

Translation is one of the critical processes of localization, and the quality of localized translation has a huge impact on product globalization. Due to the intervention of information technology, localized texts are given more characteristics that are different from traditional translated texts, which puts forward more targeted requirements for translators. Under the principle of cultural compatibility, using domestication or foreignization translation strategies alone cannot guarantee the achievement of localization goals. Therefore, translators should combine the two so that they can keep the differences between different cultures and the cultural information attached to the words. Localized translators should focus on communicating the communicative intent to the user of the target version and interact with the user during the conversion process. While retaining the cultural connotation of the source language, the localized version should also consider the user's psychological acceptance and aesthetic orientation to create an immersive sense of use for the user. Much importance has to be mentioned in translation is keeping up with the times as language is constantly evolving.

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