

An Analysis of Cultural Adaptation in Video Game Localization

—A Case Study of Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty

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Abstract: This thesis examines the localization of the DLC "Phantom Liberty" in the video game "Cyberpunk 2077" using Yang Shizhang's cultural adaptation strategy. It explores four sub-strategies: cultural assimilation, cultural weakening, cultural transformation, and cultural beautification. The localization process faces challenges due to the extensive volume of game text and the inclusion of science fiction terminology and cultural references. Previous research on game localization and cultural adaptation strategies is reviewed, highlighting the significance of cultural adaptation in game translation. Factors such as playability, censorship, game experience, and business practices are considered. Through a case study of the Chinese localization of "Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty", focusing on subtitles and dialogue translations, it is concluded that the localization team effectively employs cultural adaptation strategies to enhance the immersion and enjoyment of Chinese players. The thesis suggests that the gaming industry should prioritize cultural adaptation patterns in video game localization.

Keywords: Cyberpunk 2077, Phantom Liberty, cultural adaptation strategy, game localization

1. Introduction

The focus of this study is the localization of the DLC(Downloadable Content) "Phantom Liberty" in the first-person perspective video game "Cyberpunk 2077," developed by CD Projekt RED. Drawing on Yang Shizhang's cultural adaptation strategy, this paper examines the translation in Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty.

Yang's cultural adaptation strategy consists of four sub-strategies: cultural assimilation, cultural weakening, cultural transformation, and cultural beautification. According to Yang [1], cultural adaptation strategy refers to the cultural translation strategy that involves changing or adjusting the imagery and even the meaning of the source language culture to fit the target language culture.

This study analyzes and evaluates the localization of Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty using the four sub-strategies of Yang Shizhang's cultural adaptation strategy. Released on September 26, 2023, Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty takes place within the confines of Dogtown, a prominent district situated in the futuristic metropolis of Night City, California, during the year 2077. The game follows

the story of V, who becomes entangled in the conflicts of Dogtown, ultimately leading them to pledge allegiance to the New United States of America(NUSA). To accomplish their mission, V partners with FIA agent Solomon Reed.

The localization process of *Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty* presents significant challenges, primarily due to the extensive volume of game text. As an open-world game, the narrative trajectory and multiple endings are determined by the player's diverse dialogue choices and behavioral decisions. Information is scattered throughout the game world, with the item observation and analysis system allowing players to discover additional clues while completing quests or freely exploring the game environment. Moreover, the game emphasizes a crowd and community system, where individuals from various professions lead their own daily lives within the game. These elements collectively contribute to a vast amount of game text. Furthermore, the presence of numerous science fiction terminology, jargon, and cultural references within the text necessitates the localization team to possess a broad knowledge base and understanding to accurately convey the game's intentions and emotions.

This study employs Yang Shizhang's cultural adaptation strategy to analyze the localization of *Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty*, focusing on the application of its four sub-strategies. The primary emphasis lies in the examination of subtitles and dialogue options within the game, while also encompassing the localization of character nicknames..

Yang Shizhang's cultural adaptation strategy has significantly contributed to the field of international translation research by focusing on the translation of conflicting cultural elements alongside other heterogeneous cultural elements. However, existing studies have yet to explore the realm of game localization.

The topic of cultural adaptation in video game translation has garnered significant attention and discussion in recent years. Due to the translation of creative products within the entertainment industry, which serves as the focus of research, and the exploration of multiple academic perspectives, there has been a surge in related terminology aimed at encompassing the particularities of translating such creative products. Terms such as localization, transcreation, adaptation, rewriting, transadaptation, and semiotranslation have emerged, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of translation practices. However, unfortunately, the overlap among these terms has led to confusion and has not been beneficial for translation theory. In the coming years, translation theory should strive to clarify the entire spectrum of translation practices and propose the most appropriate terminology for each reality [2].This study introduces Yang Shizhang's cultural adaptation strategy into the field of video game localization, aiming to elucidate cultural adaptation patterns in video game translation and provide insights for the gaming industry.

According to a regulatory announcement on November 29, 2023, *Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty* has sold over 4.3 million copies. The achievement of such substantial sales figures on a global scale underscores the pivotal role of successful localization. Therefore, conducting an analysis of its localization case holds practical significance for the field of game localization, providing valuable references and insights.

2. Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of preceding research in the field of game localization and Yang Shizhang's cultural adaptation strategy. Furthermore, it delves into the concept of cultural adaptation in game localization.

2.1. Game localization

In the 1980s, the proliferation of computer application software developed in the United States led to the emergence of the industry practice known as "software localization"[3]. Initially, electronic games were primarily developed and consumed by the United States and Japan, with some games occasionally spreading to other countries in their English or Japanese versions. However, it was not until the mid-1990s that entertainment software companies began considering the possibility of creating fully translated versions for other countries [4]. Prior to this, due to various constraints such as technological and financial limitations, the game translation industry witnessed a significant number of low-quality and even absurd translations. With advancements in game technology and devices, game translation gradually became more standardized and comprehensive. Nowadays, many major releases come with versions in multiple languages, but the quality of production and final output varies greatly.

2.2. Yang Shizhang's cultural adaptation strategy

Translation is a cross-cultural communication activity, and the mere application of language translation strategies and text translation strategies does not guarantee the successful integration of the source text into the target culture. Faced with diverse and even conflicting heterogeneous cultures, it is necessary to adopt corresponding translation strategies, namely cultural translation strategies. Cultural translation strategies are the embodiment of translation strategies at the cultural level. More precisely, they are the coherent translation plans adopted by translators to achieve specific goals based on the cultural elements of the text. In practical translation, cultural translation strategies can be categorized into three types: cultural removal, cultural adaptation, and cultural addition. Cultural adaptation refers to the modification or adjustment of the cultural elements, imagery, and even meanings of the source culture to make them suitable for the target culture. Cultural adaptation strategies are primarily achieved through four approaches: cultural assimilation, cultural weakening, cultural transformation, and cultural beautification[5]. Cultural assimilation can be achieved through replacement, modification, and addition; cultural weakening can be realized through generalization, explanation, and deletion; cultural transformation can be achieved through replacement; culture beautification can be achieved through modification and addition.

2.3. Cultural adaption in Game localization

Translation is commonly perceived to exist between two poles: source culture and target culture, foreignization and domestication, literal translation and free adaptation, adequacy and acceptability. We cannot escape this reality as it is inherent to the communication between two culturally diverse systems. In game translation, translators often tend to lean towards the target culture.

The primary function of game translation is to entertain players. Therefore, if the localized version of a game contains culturally peculiar elements that are difficult for the target players to comprehend or may be offensive to them, their gaming experience may be negatively affected. In turn, this could hinder their immersion in the game and potentially lead to a lack of commercial success in the target market. Additionally, games may also be influenced by social, economic, ideological, and political factors of the target country[6]. Hence, cultural adaptation is a crucial aspect that needs to be carefully considered in game translation. It is also argued that different games require varying degrees of cultural adaptation to succeed in the target market, and extreme cultural adaptation may sometimes impede players' immersion in the game[7].

Through extensive research, the author has discovered that the consideration of cultural adaptation in game translation primarily stems from four aspects: playability, censorship, game experience, and business practices.

2.3.1. Playability

Bernal-Merino argues that the translation of electronic games requires "playability," just as the translation of plays (for the stage) and scripts (for television or film) must adhere to "performability"[8]. Game localization necessitates the concept of playability as a measure of quality[9]. Game text translators act as "cultural brokers," transforming any necessary cultural elements into something that players from other countries, speaking different languages, can not only understand but also enjoy. Cultural adaptation is crucial for ensuring the playability of localized versions, as players need to interact with the game to progress and derive enjoyment from the gaming experience[10].

Riddles in games exemplify the significance of playability in game localization. For instance, in the case of *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*, players are required to interact with four separate statues in the correct order after reading a poem to open a hidden passage. Failing to activate the statues in the correct sequence to solve the language puzzle means the game cannot proceed. Translators must create culturally relevant puzzles for each statue, while staying true to the spirit of the original English version. Conversely, poor translation decisions result in a loss of playability, rendering the game unplayable for players.

2.3.2. Censorship

In "The Game Production Handbook," it is mentioned that when developing localized versions of games, consideration should be given to the differences in how different countries and cultures perceive game content, and efforts should be made to avoid sensitive vocabulary and content [11]. Bernal-Merino argues that developers must modify certain aspects of the game to adapt to different regional age ratings. Some games may contain violent, bloody, or adult content, and different countries may require specific modifications or even ban the game within their borders if the regulatory bodies deem the game's themes inappropriate[12]. When localizing games, it is essential to consider the target culture and avoid offending the target players. Gong Zhiqiang suggests that Western game development teams may be influenced by social and ideological factors when creating game texts, and therefore, it is necessary to filter and adjust information that does not align with the national ideology and cultural norms[13]. Translators need to intervene in the text, removing controversial elements either due to ideological reasons or out of concern that the target audience may find certain cultural information offensive or unacceptable. At times, if translators perceive certain elements as negative for the target audience, they may need to manipulate or delete those elements[14].

2.3.3. Game Experience

Game translation requires a comprehensive understanding of culture and a focus on the player's experience in their chosen language and country. The goal is to "make the game feel like it was designed for anyone sitting in front of it, no matter where they are." This statement comes from a briefing by William Barnes, the Localization Senior Manager at Blizzard Entertainment, who was responsible for the localization of the sci-fi strategy game *StarCraft II: Wings of Liberty*. This aligns closely with Mangirón's viewpoint: game localization is a functional translation aimed at providing a similar gaming experience for players of the target version, enabling them to enjoy the game as the original version players do[15]. For players, opaque or offensive cultural references are likely to break their immersion and hinder their enjoyment of the game. Additionally, poor localization constantly reminds players that the game was not originally intended for them. Scholars such as Hasibuan argue that successful game localization must ensure that the translated text feels natural and that idiomatic expressions are translated in a way that does not disrupt the player's immersion in the game[16]. Yang Yingbo et al. suggest that translators must be native speakers of the target country/region and familiar

with its slang, idioms, and gaming terminology, which is crucial. Elements such as quizzes, jokes, puns, and even storylines may require redesign rather than simple translation [17]. At the same time, translators are also free to incorporate new cultural references, jokes, or any other elements they deem necessary to maintain the gaming experience. In games, giving names a strong impression is often more important than faithfully reproducing the original meaning; even correct names can be significantly altered to increase entertainment value, contrary to the norms of literary or film translation [18]. The localization of characters, storylines, or graphics may appear to distort the original work significantly, but the focus is not on the content itself but on the gaming experience. The emphasis in electronic games is on entertainment, and anything that may have a negative impact on the player's gaming experience will be changed or removed. In other words, if a string of text, a graphic texture, or a character would affect the gaming experience in a particular region, it can be modified for that region.

2.3.4. Business Practices

One of the primary challenges facing game localization companies is to provide a service that encompasses all possible needs of game developers and publishers, enabling them to successfully sell their products outside their home country. If the localized version of a game contains culturally peculiar elements that are difficult for the target players to understand or offensive, it may hinder their immersion in the game and potentially lead to a lack of commercial success in the target market. For a game product, being accepted by the target culture is far more important than its nationality. Ranford argues that popular games need to reach the widest possible audience in order to be profitable or have significant market penetration regardless of the development budget[19]. Therefore, these games not only need to carefully remove cultural barriers such as foreign names and unfamiliar/unpopular character types and relationships, but also need to supplement the text with domestic conceptual frameworks, significantly altering the meaning of the text.

In the game background of "Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty", a significant amount of American slang and cultural references are present. In order for players from around the world to fully immerse themselves in the intense game storyline, translators must bridge the gap between the source culture and target culture, making cultural adaptation a crucial consideration in the localization of this game. Drawing inspiration and experience from previous studies on game localization, this research analyzes the application of cultural adaptation strategies in game localization translation. Using the Chinese localization version of "Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty" as a case study, this research examines the implementation of four sub-strategies: cultural assimilation, cultural weakening, cultural transformation, and cultural beautification by the translators during the localization process.

3. Case Study

This chapter undertakes an analysis and discussion of the cultural adaptation strategy employed in the official Simplified Chinese localization of "Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty". Specifically, the focus is on the subtitles and dialogue translations found within the game, examining the approaches taken by the translators in dealing with the heterogeneous cultural elements present.

3.1. Cultural Transformation

Cultural transformation refers to the process whereby a translator employs a different cultural aspect in the target language to effectively convey the intended meaning of a cultural element from the source language. This strategy involves the utilization of a culture-specific entity, commonly referred to as a cultureme, within the target culture to replace the corresponding cultureme in the source culture.

Although direct equivalence may not be attainable, these cultural elements serve as effective means of achieving similar understanding and facilitating comparable pragmatic results.

Example 1

Source Text: This is one elaborate haze or a fuckin' lifeline.

Target Text: 要么蒙我...要么菩萨显灵了。

This dialogue takes place at the beginning of the plot, where the game protagonist V receives a mysterious phone call. The caller, "songbird," assigns him a task and expresses, "I can save your life." At this point in the game's storyline, V's body is being corroded by the Relic and he is facing an almost certain death. After some internal deliberation, V decides to take the risk and accept the assignment. After hanging up the phone, V mutters to himself, "This is one elaborate haze or a fuckin' lifeline."

The word "lifeline" typically carries a metaphorical or symbolic implication, representing a means of support, assistance, or survival in difficult or challenging situations. It is often used to describe something or someone that provides crucial help or support, much like a literal lifeline would save a person from drowning. The term is commonly associated with situations where one's well-being or existence is at stake, and the lifeline serves as a vital source of hope, rescue, or sustenance. Additionally, it can also refer to a physical line or rope used for safety purposes, such as in rescue operations or rock climbing, to prevent accidents or provide a means of escape.

In this particular line, "lifeline" refers to "songbird," and V believes, with a gambling mindset, that "songbird" can truly save his life. In the Chinese translated version, the line is rendered as "菩萨显灵" (Bodhisattva's manifestation). "Bodhisattva" is a term used in Buddhism to describe individuals who have progressed in their practice to a level just below that of a Buddha. They possess the ability to perceive and alleviate the suffering of all sentient beings. In Chinese culture, a "Bodhisattva" is also used to symbolize someone with a kind and charitable heart, often associated with acts of virtue and benevolence. "菩萨显灵" (Bodhisattva's manifestation) is a phrase commonly used to describe extraordinary, miraculous events, suggesting that some divine power has intervened in people's lives, bringing good luck, blessings, or miracles. This phrase can also be used to describe someone unexpectedly receiving help or rescue in a difficult situation, as if it were the intervention of a deity. The translator's approach in this context is more contextually appropriate, conveying "V's" complex state of mind towards the appearance of "songbird," and it is more aligned with the cultural identity of Chinese gamers, while also adding an element of amusement.

Example 2

Source Text: Struck gold with roulette, really.

Target Text: 咱可真是瞎猫碰死耗子。

In the given context, V and Reed are tasked with locating a pair of French hacker siblings at a grand hotel party in order to obtain their identity information. Just as V is about to set off to find them, Reed remarks that the siblings are quite noticeable and that he had noticed them playing roulette nearby. At this moment, the assistant, Alex, expresses in the radio, "Struck gold with roulette, really."

The literal meaning of "strike gold" is "to discover gold, as in a gold mine." Figuratively, it means "to discover a source of wealth or success, sometimes implying that it was discovered by chance or luck." In this context, Alex is marveling at the exceptional luck and smooth progress of the two protagonists in finding their targets. Moreover, since the targets are engaged in gambling, their emotions are more volatile, making it easier for the main characters to gather their identity information and proceed with their work.

In the Chinese version, the translator renders "Struck gold with roulette" as "瞎猫碰死耗子" (literally, "a blind cat stumbles upon a dead mouse"). This is a Chinese proverb that conveys the idea of a cat being skilled at catching mice, but if its eyes are blind, it can only stumble upon dead mice,

which it did not catch through its own abilities. It implies a fortuitous coincidence and carries a certain degree of irony, suggesting that "although lacking the ability, one unexpectedly achieves something through luck." This translation aligns well with the context and facilitates comprehension for the audience.

3.2. Cultural Assimilation

Cultural assimilation is a strategy that entails incorporating cultural components from the original text into the target language with specific cultural elements that align with the target language culture. The implementation of this strategy often utilizes techniques such as substitution and modification to minimize instances of cultural ambiguity and discordance in translations. It is crucial to note that while cultural transformation and cultural assimilation both involve the use of the term "cultural element," they fundamentally differ from each other. Cultural assimilation entails the replacement of the original cultural element with a specific cultural element in translation, resulting in a complete alteration of the meaning of the original cultural element. Essentially, cultural assimilation can be seen as a form of rewriting. In contrast, the goal of cultural transformation is to preserve the meaning of the original cultural element and achieve a similar pragmatic effect in the target language.

Example 3

Source Text: Eight's my magic number. So... Gonna go with eight!

Target Text: 发不发，全看八...就它了！

This line is spoken by an unnamed character in the game as they prepare to make a guess at the gambling table. The original meaning of "magic number" refers to a number that represents a combination of wins for a leader and losses for a contender, ensuring the leader's victory in a championship, such as in a baseball pennant race. Nowadays, the meaning of this phrase varies depending on the context, but it is generally regarded as a positive number that brings good luck. Interestingly, the character's "magic number" in the original text is 8.

In Chinese culture, the number "8" and the word "发" (pronounced as "fa") are closely associated due to their similar pronunciation and auspicious meanings. The number "8" is considered lucky because it sounds similar to the word for "wealth" or "prosperity" (发财, pronounced as "fa cai"). It is believed that having the number "8" in one's life or business endeavors can bring good fortune and financial success. Therefore, many Chinese people prefer to have phone numbers, license plates, or addresses that contain the number "8". Thus, it is entirely reasonable for a gambler who desires to win more wealth to place their hopes of winning the gambling game on the number 8.

Furthermore, the Chinese translation of this line, "发不发，全看八" (literally, "8 could definitely decide if you can be rich"), adapts a Chinese agricultural proverb and employs end rhyme, making it catchy and easy to remember. It is worth mentioning that this translation to some extent alters the original meaning, as in the original text, 8 represents the character's own magic number, whereas in the translation, 8 seems to symbolize everyone's magic number, thus modifying the original text. However, coincidentally, this translation aligns well with the cognitive concepts and aesthetic identification of Chinese readers.

Example 4

Source Text: Seven...seven fucking years in this shithole!

Target Text: 七年……你知道这七年我是怎么过的吗？

In the game plot, V meets Reed at a bar. The bar is owned by Alex, who has been trapped in Dogtown for seven years since a failed mission with Reed, believing that he was responsible for her predicament. As soon as Alex sees Reed, she becomes agitated and forcefully evacuates the bar patrons. She then pulls out a handgun and points it at Reed's head, interrogating him: "Seven...seven fucking years in this shithole! Cause o' you, Solomon Reed!" This dialogue demonstrates Alex's

strong dissatisfaction with Dogtown and her current life, as well as her anger towards Reed. In the Chinese version, the translator did not provide a literal translation of this line, but instead used a famous movie quote: "七年……你知道这七年我是怎么过的吗? (Seven years…do you know how I spent these seven years?)" This quote is from the film *Sao Du* (The White Storm) directed by Benny Chan, where the character Zhang Ziwei struggles for five years after a failed mission. It is an angry question he asks when he meets his former partner years later, which bears a striking resemblance to Alex's situation in the game plot. It is worth mentioning that due to the actor's excellent performance, this quote has gradually evolved into a meme on the Chinese internet, being used in various contexts. Its use as Alex's dialogue in the Chinese version is highly contextual and also adds an extra layer of amusement for Chinese players.

3.3. Cultural Beautification

Cultural beautification refers to the strategies employed to enhance the cultural elements of the source language based on the aesthetic preferences of the target culture. This process often manifests as aesthetic adaptation within literary translations. Additionally, cultural beautification occasionally entails transforming source language cultural elements that lack imagery into target language cultural elements with imagery, thereby providing the translated text with additional visual appeal.

Example 5

Source Text: Slippery motherfucker.

Target Text: 真是个老油条…

This dialogue occurs during the first encounter between the protagonist V and Reed. As a cautious and experienced agent, Reed immediately gains control over V at their first meeting. In fact, V does not even catch a glimpse of Reed's face until after Reed confirms V's identity and agrees to meet at a different location before promptly departing. Subsequently, Johnny Silverhand, the digital personality residing in V's Relic, describes Reed as a "Slippery motherfucker." Johnny's language style is characterized by its vulgarity and aggressive tone. However, considering that Reed's storyline has just begun and players are not yet familiar with Reed, the use of derogatory language may create a preconceived and stereotypical impression, which is not conducive to the subsequent narrative. Therefore, it is necessary to somewhat refine this line of dialogue. In this translation, the term "Slippery motherfucker" is rendered as "老油条", which refers to a long, hollow, deep-fried dough stick in Chinese cuisine. It has a crispy yet chewy texture and is also used metaphorically to describe someone who is experienced and smooth in their dealings. This approach beautifies Johnny's description, enabling players to better understand Reed's character and facilitating the development of the game's storyline.

Example 6

Source Text: Bullheaded Betty- that's what we called her.

Target Text: 过去我们私下里都叫她"一粒傻白"。

In the game's narrative, V guides President Myers through a street named Elizabeth Kress Street. This street is named after the former president of NUSA, and as the current president of NUSA, Myers expresses significant dissatisfaction with the former president's leadership style and length of tenure, referring to her as "Bullheaded Betty." The term "Bullheaded" connotes a foolishly stubborn attitude, while "Betty" is a nickname for the English name Elizabeth, often associated with a carefree and somewhat naive girl with golden hair. For a president, "Bullheaded Betty" clearly carries a distinct ironic and satirical tone. Therefore, in the translation process, a literal rendering that simply combines an adjective and a nickname falls short in effectively conveying the intended ironic meaning. In the Chinese version, the translator skillfully alters the former president's name by transliterating it to "一粒傻白" (literally meaning a silly and innocent girl), which has the exact same pronunciation as

"Elizabeth" in Chinese. This translation approach draws upon the Chinese concept of "傻白甜," which refers to someone who is overly naive, gullible, and inexperienced in the ways of the world. It is used to describe the president, seemingly embellishing the original text, but further reinforces Myers' disdain for Elizabeth Kress's personal abilities, while also contributing to the portrayal of Myers as a ruthless and cunning politician.

3.4. Cultural Weakening

Cultural weakening denotes a deliberate tactic aimed at diminishing the efficacy or distinctiveness of cultural components present in the source language. Employing the Cultural Weakening strategy serves the purpose of skillfully managing divergent micro-cultural elements. When translators encounter such elements, they resort to employing alternative expressions and employing linguistic techniques such as euphemism and ambiguity. These approaches assist in alleviating any culturally sensitive information contained within the source language that may potentially evoke aversion, controversy, or even conflict in the target language culture. The implementation of this strategy offers a means to mitigate clashes between cultural systems, thus facilitating the circumvention of challenges linked to cultural overload.

Example 7

Source Text: What, can't miss our daily dose of fearmongerin'?

Target Text: 怎么，不想错过晚上的新闻直播？

In the game's storyline, V rescues President Myers during a crisis and takes her to a safe hiding place without electricity. After confirming the safety of the hiding place, the President politely requests V to fix the power switch so they can listen to the radio. V expresses confusion, saying, "What, can't miss our daily dose of fearmongerin'?" President Myers explains that she genuinely needs to understand the "situation on the ground." The term "fearmonger" is derived from the combination of "fear" and "monger," meaning to spread fear or a person who spreads fear. The phrase "daily dose" originates from the Defined Daily Dose (DDD), which refers to the assumed average maintenance dose per day for a drug used for its main indication in adults. In the game's setting, news reports often focus on violent conflicts, traffic accidents, and other malicious events to create public panic and manipulate public opinion. V finds it perplexing that the President, who has just escaped danger, wants to listen to the frightening events reported in the daily news. However, the deeper connotation of this dialogue is not crucial to the overall plot, and it is challenging to express a similar meaning in Chinese with the same sentence length (due to dubbing considerations, the translation should be close in length to the original text). Therefore, in the Chinese version, the translator downplays the elements in this sentence and translates it as "怎么，不想错过晚上的新闻直播？"(literally, "What, you don't want to miss the news tonight?") which conveys V's tone and emotions, contributes to the progression of the storyline, and eliminates potential comprehension issues for players.

Example 8

Source Text: Kurt Hansen...You saw, right? He was totally eye-banging me at the Sapphire.

Target Text: 库尔特·汉森...你见过的，对吧？在宝石青，他肯定对我有意思。

The dialogue belongs to the character Aurore Cassel, a French female netrunner in the game. The original French text reads as follows: "Kurt Hansen... Tu l'as vu, n'est-ce pas ? Il était grave en train de me reluquer au Sapphire." The term "reluquer" used in French refers to an informal act of looking at someone with a strong desire or interest, often inappropriately or disrespectfully. It signifies a lingering gaze or a leering look, suggesting attraction or appeal. However, it is important to note that "reluquer" carries a slightly negative connotation, as it implies objectification or voyeurism. Therefore, it is generally considered impolite or rude to "reluquer" someone without their consent, as

it can make them feel uncomfortable or violated. In the English translation, "reluquer" is rendered as "eye-banging," which preserves the original meaning but may appear too abrupt in the Chinese context. Considering the differences in language use and cultural norms, the Chinese translation modifies the dialogue to "在宝石青，他肯定对我有意思"(literally, "At Sapphire, he definitely has an interest in me.") thereby weakening the sexual connotations and choosing a more subtle expression. This translation maintains the essence of the original context and also aligns better with the Chinese language and cultural context.

4. Conclusion

This study analyzes the cultural adaptation in the localization of the game "Cyberpunk 2077: Phantom Liberty" using Yang Shizhang's cultural adaptation strategy. The research materials primarily consist of dialogues and subtitles in the game. The conclusions drawn from above are as follows.

Firstly, the subtitles demonstrate a high level of localization quality. The translators fully consider the adaptation methods for heterogeneous cultural elements within the game context and employ different sub-strategies, resulting in a well-adapted translation.

Secondly, the localization team utilizes translation methods such as "replacement" and "modification" to achieve cultural adaptation. They carefully consider the differences between American English and Simplified Chinese, incorporating numerous unique Chinese concepts, vocabulary, and references to better showcase character personalities and efficiently convey information. The ultimate goal is to provide players with sufficient immersion and enjoyment in the game world.

Thirdly, the subtitles in the game are more important than the original content. Within the premise of not affecting players' gameplay, a certain degree of omission, embellishment, and rewriting of the original text is acceptable and sometimes necessary.

The developer of "Cyberpunk 2077", CD Projekt RED, places great emphasis on the quality of game localization and invests significantly in this aspect. Their previous game, "The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt," released in 2015, had excellent localization quality. By the end of 2022, CD Projekt RED added full Chinese voice acting to "The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt," receiving widespread praise from Chinese players. In fact, even before the release of the DLC "Phantom Liberty" for Cyberpunk 2077, the game's outstanding localization quality was already highly regarded by players. For example, the iconic line "滴滴，你个王八蛋"("beep-beep, motherfucker") spoken by the intelligent taxi Delamain humorously adapted a Chinese ride-hailing brand name. Additionally, many mission names in the original version were named after classic Western rock songs, while the Chinese version combined the mission content and meaning, renaming them after Chinese rock songs. The localization of this DLC maintains a high level of quality. Apart from the examples mentioned above, there are numerous interesting cases, such as "怎么，说都不会话了吗？" (disrupting the order of verbs and nouns in the sentence, which translates to "What, You can't even word a whole speak?"), used to mock two police officers who struggle to speak coherently due to a failed mission. To avoid excessive length and excessive plot spoilers, this article has selected a limited number of examples, mostly from the early parts of the story, which will not negatively impact the gaming experience of readers who have not played the game. Furthermore, incorporating interviews and reports from the localization team into the research would enhance its objectivity.

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