

# Flexible Narrative in the English Translation of Chinese Online Games and the International Communication of Chinese Culture

## A Case Study of Black Myth: Wukong

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**ABSTRACT:** The overseas expansion of Chinese online games has become a new path for the subtle international communication of Chinese culture, yet traditional localization strategies often fall into the dilemma of cultural discount. Based on the theory of flexible narrative, this study explores the flexible application of English translation strategies from three dimensions: fragmented text integration, interactive dialogue adaptation, and symbolic metaphor construction, with Black Myth: Wukong as a case study. It is found that retaining the phonetic and semantic attributes of Chinese through elaborate translation design, keeping appropriate foreignization elements to maintain emotional resonance, and realizing soft cultural implantation via multi-dimensional audio-visual symbols can not only ensure the natural fluency of game narrative but also enable overseas players to accept Chinese culture imperceptibly in the game exploration. The translation strategy under the perspective of flexible narrative emphasizes reducing the translation cost of cross-cultural communication while retaining the subjectivity of Chinese culture, thus realizing the subtle global communication of Chinese culture.

**Keywords:** Black Myth: Wukong; Cultural Communication; Flexible Narrative; Game Translation and Localization; Online Games

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## I. Introduction

In recent years, the in-depth penetration of digital technology and artificial intelligence in the publishing field has fundamentally transformed the form of Chinese publications "going global". Digital contents such as online games, online literature and anime have gradually become the new main carriers of cultural export, replacing traditional books and periodicals. As an emerging digital publishing form, online games have not only achieved remarkable economic benefits but also demonstrated unique social and cultural values in carrying forward traditional Chinese culture and telling Chinese stories well [1]. However, the traditional cultural translation and communication model is marked by rigid publicity, which is difficult to touch the hearts of the target audience and easily leads to cultural discount and resistance. The inherent characteristics of online games, such as non-linear narrative, high interactivity and empathic experience, provide a new way to solve this practical dilemma. As a typical representative of Chinese online games going overseas, *Black Myth: Wukong* deeply excavates and integrates traditional elements such as *Journey to the West*, ancient Chinese folk customs, Taoism and Buddhism to construct a unique post-*Journey to the West* narrative world. It incorporates Northern Shaanxi storytelling, an endangered dialect art, in the auditory level, reproduces ancient architecture and grotto art in the visual level, and implants traditional cultivation methods such as alchemy and martial arts in the gameplay system. Its flexible narrative characteristics make the work a model for the subtle international communication of traditional Chinese culture in the digital age, and also provide a high-quality case for the study of game translation from the perspective of flexible narrative.

## II. Research Status of Game Translation

The in-depth penetration of digital technology and AI has greatly expanded the media landscape of Chinese culture "going global". As an emerging digital publishing form, online games show unique flexible characteristics in carrying multicultural images, but the academic research on them as cultural communication carriers still has structural imbalances.

In the field of game translation and localization research, the academic focus is shifting from the early simple technical conversion and text revision to a multi-modal and cross-cultural research perspective. Bernal-Merino's (2017) authoritative work has laid the academic foundation for game localization, clearly emphasizing the uniqueness of games as multi-modal products [2]. On this basis, domestic studies have deeply explored specific translation strategies such as creative translation, trans-translation and domestication [3], but the research still focuses on the corresponding analysis at the linguistic level, lacking a research perspective that deeply integrates game narratology and translation studies. The insufficient discussion on the interaction between the inherent narrative structure of games (such as plot design and character arc) and translation strategies leads to the fact that translation research often stays at the superficial language conversion and fails to fully deconstruct the narrative logic behind game texts [4].

In the field of digital games and Chinese cultural communication research, scholars mostly start from the macro communication perspective to discuss the cultural export function of games and the effect of national soft power enhancement [5]. Existing studies have paid attention to the integration path of game narrative and traditional Chinese culture, such as the Taoist and Buddhist cultural images in *Black Myth: Wukong*, and clarified the important role of games in telling Chinese stories well and spreading Chinese voices. However, such studies lack in-depth analysis of how micro-level translations construct flexible communication. Scholars rarely pay attention to how translators activate potential cultural identity in game texts through language selection, modal reorganization and other means, and construct a cross-cultural communication space with both functionality and philosophical thinking. The lack of this micro-medium research perspective limits the academic understanding of how games complete cultural construction and audience emotional resonance at the detailed level.

In summary, the current game translation research has broken through the traditional technical level and entered a new stage of multi-modal and cross-cultural adaptation, but it still needs to be deepened in the intervention of narratological theory and the combination of micro translation practice and medium cultural communication. This study takes the flexible narrative theory as the framework and combines the Chinese-English parallel text of *Black Myth: Wukong* to explore the dimensions and strategies of game translation, aiming to fill this research gap and provide a new analytical path for game translation and the international communication of Chinese culture.

### III. Theoretical Framework

In the context of contemporary game translation research, the focus of scholars is shifting from technical restoration to in-depth analysis of the essence of game narrative. Based on the flexible narrative theory and combined with the non-linear, interactive and multi-modal media characteristics of online games, this study defines the flexible narrative of online games as a narrative model of interweaving explicit narrative and implicit narrative formed by fragmented text, interactive dialogue and symbolic environment construction with player agency as the core. Its core characteristics are concealment, emotional resonance and scene adaptability, and game translation and localization are the core carriers for the cross-cultural reconstruction of this narrative model.

The fragmented characteristics of flexible narrative are highly consistent with the content presentation form of online games. Different from the linear narrative of traditional literature, the flexible narrative of games constructs the worldview through micro-narrative carriers such as prop descriptions, environmental texts and fragmented plot nodes. Players need to complete the construction of narrative experience through independent exploration and information integration, which requires game translation to balance the integrity of information transmission and the concealment of cultural construction in the processing of fragmented texts.

The interactive core of flexible narrative determines the dynamic characteristics of game narrative. In online games, the explicit narrative composed of main quests and the implicit narrative composed of side quests, player-NPC interaction and environmental narrative are intertwined to form a multi-dimensional narrative network [6]. Interactive texts such as dialogue and instructions have become the key to building the emotional connection

between players and games, which requires game translation to have contextual flexibility and realize cross-cultural emotional empathy through dynamic translation methods adapted to different interactive scenes.

The symbolic expression characteristic of flexible narrative is the core carrier for games to realize cultural communication. Religious images, classical symbols, folk custom elements and other elements in games are all symbolic metaphors of flexible narrative. Translators are no longer just language converters, but cross-cultural constructors of flexible narrative space. The core task of translation is to make cultural symbols smoothly integrate into players' immersive experience through phonetic and semantic intertextuality, creative translation and other strategies, and eliminate cross-cultural conflicts while retaining cultural subjectivity, which is also the core principle of game translation from the perspective of flexible narrative.

Based on the three core characteristics of fragmented, interactive and symbolic metaphor of flexible narrative in online games, this study constructs three translation dimensions of fragmented integration, interactive dialogue and symbolic metaphor, and carries out specific analysis combined with the Chinese-English parallel text of *Black Myth: Wukong*, so as to realize the deep coupling of theoretical framework and case analysis.

#### **IV. Dimensions and Strategies of Chinese Online Game Translation From the Perspective of Flexible Narrative**

##### **A Case Study of the Chinese-English Parallel Text of *Black Myth: Wukong***

###### **4.1 Blank Leaving and Free Translation under the Dimension of Fragmented Integration**

###### **Adapting to the Fragmented Characteristics of Flexible Narrative**

The fragmented characteristics of flexible narrative make prop, equipment and environmental texts the micro-narrative carriers of the game worldview. The translation of such texts needs to ensure that players can quickly integrate information and complete narrative construction, and realize implicit cultural penetration through cultural blank leaving, avoiding the dilemma of word-for-word mechanical translation. It follows the flexible translation logic of function priority, cultural adaptation and contextual flexibility as the core [7].

The translation of "辟火罩" in *Black Myth: Wukong* is a typical practice of this logic. As the core artifact borrowed by Sun Wukong from 广目天王, this prop is the key carrier of the fragmented plot of "大圣借神器". Its translation is not limited to the mechanical conversion of literal meaning, but adopts the free translation scheme of "Fireproof Mantle" around the core function of fire prevention and protection and the scene attribute of fantasy equipment, which not only adapts to players' demand for rapid integration of fragmented prop information, but also completes the implicit implantation of Buddhist cultural elements through cultural blank leaving.

From the perspective of function transmission, "Fireproof" directly anchors the core protective attribute of the prop, abandoning redundant expressions such as "Fire-blocking" and "Flame-resistant", ensuring that players can quickly identify the use of the prop in the intense game process, which conforms to the core requirement of

efficient information transmission of fragmented texts in flexible narrative. The choice of "Mantle" is highly consistent with the typical morphological cognition of protective equipment in Western fantasy culture. Compared with words such as "Cover" and "Shield", it can arouse players' scene association of wearable protective artifacts, avoid functional misunderstanding caused by cultural cognitive differences, and allow players to smoothly integrate prop information into game narrative. This translation method breaks away from the literal constraint of the Chinese character "罩" (cover) and realizes the efficient narrative of fragmented prop texts through the double matching of functional attributes and morphological cognition.

In terms of cultural implantation, the proper noun translation strategy of "广目天王" is adopted for "Virupaksa" associated with "Fireproof Mantle", without adding additional explanatory contents such as "Buddhist deity" and "Heavenly King". This cultural blank leaving treatment is not the omission of cultural information, but the core embodiment of the concealment characteristic of flexible narrative. In the fragmented plot of understanding the origin of the prop, players will imperceptibly contact Buddhist cultural elements, which not only avoids the acceptance resistance caused by cultural preaching, but also lays a foreshadowing for the expansion of the Buddhist cultural system in the subsequent worldview, realizing the organic unity of information transmission and cultural communication, and conforming to the flexible communication principle of subtle influence in cross-cultural translation.

From the perspective of contextual adaptation, "Fireproof Mantle" dynamically responds to the dialogue situation through the flexible adjustment of articles and possessive pronouns in different scenes: the definite article "The" is used to clarify the specific reference of the prop in the basic identification scene, the article is omitted to focus on the use guide in the function prompt scene, and the possessive pronoun "your" is added to strengthen the action direction in the emergency instruction scene. This flexible translation treatment not only ensures the consistency of translation, but also adapts to the expression needs of different contexts through detailed adjustments, avoiding the stiffness caused by mechanical translation, making the fragmented prop texts naturally connect in different narrative scenes, and showing the core characteristic of contextual sensitivity in game translation.

#### **4.2 Empathy and Rewriting under the Dimension of Interactive Dialogue**

##### Anchoring the Interactive Core of Flexible Narrative

With player agency as the core, flexible narrative makes the interactive dialogue between players and NPCs the key to building emotional connection and promoting narrative process, as well as the core carrier of realizing cross-cultural emotional resonance. The translation of such texts needs to closely follow the interactive and emotional resonance characteristics of flexible narrative, narrow the cross-cultural psychological distance through colloquial and localized dynamic translation methods, realize cross-cultural emotional empathy between players and game characters, and allow overseas players to smoothly participate in narrative interaction and complete the emotional construction of narrative experience.

The translation of the title of the character "土地公" in Black Myth: Wukong is a typical example of dynamic flexible translation based on interactive scenes. The Chinese "土地" corresponds to three English expressions in different interactive scenes, and the flexible adjustment of the title adapts to the narrative needs of different interactive situations to achieve the three goals of identity transmission, cultural adaptation and emotional regulation, as shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Translation Strategies and Flexible Narrative Adaptability of "土地公" in Black Myth: Wukong**

Chinese Original	English Translation	Usage Scenario	Translation Strategy	Flexible Narrative Adaptability
黑风山的土地	the Keeper of Black Mountain	Wind introduction scene	Combined naming of function + region	Accurately convey the core function of the Earth God to guard a region, allowing players to quickly establish character identity cognition and pave the way for subsequent interactive narrative  Transform the Buddhist cultural concept of "Little Western Paradise" into a regional identifier
小西天土地	the Keeper of the New West	Regional identification scene	Localized transcription of cultural concepts	of understandable to Western players, avoiding cultural barriers affecting the interactive narrative experience
土地老儿	Keeper	Familiar interaction scene	Colloquial simplification title	Convey the intimacy between characters through the simplification of the title, enhance the emotional authenticity of the dialogue, and conform to the emotional resonance characteristic of flexible narrative

The underlying logic of this dynamic translation method is the in-depth adaptation to the interactive characteristics of flexible narrative: replacing the literal translation "土地公" with "Keeper" not only accurately conveys the core function of the 土地公, but also avoids the deviation of Western religious cultural association, allowing overseas players to complete the cross-cultural construction of character identity based on their own cultural cognition [8]. The switch between the full title and the simplified title makes the interactive dialogue more in line with the logic of real communication, realizing cross-cultural emotional empathy and allowing players to obtain a natural narrative experience in the interaction with NPCs.

At the level of colloquial interactive expression, the translation also closely follows the emotional resonance characteristic of flexible narrative, realizing the dual transmission of cross-cultural semantics and emotions through cultural concept reconstruction. For example, the Chinese sentence "大哥真是有口福" is translated as "Well well! Luck's around the corner.", which transforms the Chinese dietary cultural concept of "有口福" into

the concept of "Luck" familiar to Western players, not only retaining the semantic core of gaining a good experience, but also restoring the teasing tone of the original Chinese sentence through the interjection "Well well!", avoiding the cultural barrier caused by the literal translation of "有口福", and allowing overseas players to accurately capture the emotional color in the dialogue. Another example is that the Chinese sentence "指不定是从哪个山头上滚下来的" is translated as "Seems like it just fell from a fruit tree here.", which replaces "山头" with "fruit tree" in a scene-based way, not only retaining the core semantics of accidental falling, but also making the expression more in line with the conciseness requirements of English dialogue, allowing players to complete the narrative advancement in a relaxed interactive context, which conforms to the characteristic of implicit emotional connection in flexible narrative.

### **4.3 Phonetic and Semantic Intertextuality and Creative Translation under the Dimension of Symbolic Metaphor**

#### Activating the Cultural Communication Function of Flexible Narrative

The symbolic expression characteristic of flexible narrative makes high-density cultural symbols such as proper nouns, poems and spell terms the core carriers of game cultural communication. Such symbols are not only an important part of game narrative, but also the embodiment of traditional Chinese culture. The core of translation in this dimension is to closely follow the concealment and cultural adaptability of flexible narrative, balance the retention of cultural core and the threshold of cross-cultural understanding through phonetic and semantic intertextuality, creative translation, iconic translation and other strategies, make cultural symbols an organic part of game narrative, and realize progressive cultural communication, allowing overseas players to accept Chinese culture imperceptibly in the immersive narrative experience.

#### **4.3.1 Rhythm Reconstruction of Poetic Texts**

##### Retaining the Aesthetic and Narrative Value of Symbolic Metaphors

Classical poems in games are dual carriers of cultural symbols and narrative expression. Their translation needs to not only convey semantic connotation, but also restore rhythmic beauty, making the symbolic metaphors of poems an aesthetic part of flexible narrative. The classic Chinese poem "凤兮凤兮" in *Black Myth: Wukong* is translated as "Hailed bird, hailed bird!", which not only realizes the cross-cultural transmission of semantics and images, but also conforms to the concealment characteristic of flexible narrative, avoiding the rigid implantation of cultural symbols. Instead of the literal translation "phoenix", the translation uses "hailed bird" to convey the sacred attribute of the "凤凰" as a divine bird, and avoids the cultural association deviation of "phoenix" in Western mythology, retaining the symbolic metaphor connotation of the Chinese "凤凰" image. At the same time, the rhythmic beauty of Chinese reduplication is restored through the repetitive structure of "Hailed bird, hailed

bird!", which conforms to the principle of formal equivalence in poetry translation, making poems realize aesthetic expression in game narrative and complete the flexible transmission of cultural images, allowing overseas players to naturally contact Chinese cultural symbols while feeling the narrative aesthetic.

#### **4.3.2 Iconic Translation of Religious Places**

##### Strengthening the Scene and Narrative Attributes of Symbolic Metaphors

Religious places are important scene carriers of game narrative. The translation of their cultural symbols needs to balance the scene recognition function and cultural attribute retention, and make cultural symbols an organic part of scene narrative rather than independent cultural annotations through a composite structure of transliteration + common noun. The translation of "观音禅院" in *Black Myth: Wukong* adopts a flexible strategy of hierarchical processing: it is translated as "Guanyin Temple" in the full title scene, with the mode of transliteration (Guanyin) + common noun (Temple), which not only retains the core attribute of the Buddhist cultural proper noun, but also allows players to quickly identify the scene function, conforming to the principle of narrative priority for scene symbols in flexible narrative. It is simplified to "the temple" in the context with a clear meaning, realizing the balance between translation economy and accuracy under the contextual constraint of "我重建了观音禅院", avoiding the aesthetic fatigue of players caused by the repeated mention of cultural symbols. This hierarchical translation method makes the cultural symbol of "观音禅院" a carrier of game scene narrative, and realizes the implicit implantation of Buddhist culture through the transliteration of "Guanyin", conforming to the principle of flexible communication.

#### **4.3.3 Cultural Fidelity of Spell Terms**

##### Realizing the Progressive Cultural Communication of Symbolic Metaphors

Spell terms are the dual core of game gameplay narrative and cultural communication. Their translation needs to ensure the accuracy of terms and clarity of concepts, and make cultural symbols an organic part of game gameplay narrative through Sanskrit transliteration, cultural proper noun retention and other methods, while realizing progressive cultural communication. The translation of "Samadhi Wind" for "三昧神风" is a flexible translation practice of cultural fidelity and narrative adaptation: "Samadhi" (三昧) adopts the Sanskrit transliteration of Buddhism, accurately conveying the religious connotation of the meditative state, avoiding the semantic misunderstanding caused by the literal translation of "Three Poisons", and retaining the cultural core of Chinese spell terms. "Wind" (风) clarifies the natural attribute of the spell, forming a clear conceptual structure of religious state + natural element, allowing players to quickly understand the spell function and conforming to the needs of game gameplay narrative. In the narrative process of using this spell, overseas players will gradually become familiar with the core Buddhist term "Samadhi", and then gradually understand the underlying Buddhist

cultural system, realizing the progressive cultural communication and making cultural symbols come alive naturally in game narrative [9].

#### **4.3.4 Transformation of Implicit Cultural Concepts**

##### **Integrating Cultural Metaphors into Narrative Context**

Implicit cultural concepts in games (such as idioms and folk custom connotations) are not independent cultural expressions, but metaphorical symbols hidden in dialogue narratives. Their translation does not require literal restoration, but realizes the transmission of cultural connotations through contextual transformation, making cultural connotations an organic part of dialogue narratives and allowing players to accept cultural connotations naturally in the process of understanding the dialogue. For the unspoken idiom "惺惺相惜" (mutual appreciation between like-minded people), the game does not provide a literal translation, but realizes the connotation transmission through the implicit transformation of dialogue context. For example, the concise responses such as "His spitting image..." and "I'd say." in the character dialogue indirectly realize the connotation transformation of the idiom of mutual appreciation and recognition through the visual expression of "spitting image" (酷似) and the attitude transmission of "I'd say" (我认为). This translation method not only avoids the cultural barrier caused by the literal translation of idioms, but also makes the implicit cultural concepts a part of the dialogue narrative, allowing players to naturally accept the emotional connotation of the Chinese cultural concept of "惺惺相惜" in the process of understanding the interactive relationship between characters, which conforms to the core characteristic of the concealment of cultural metaphors in flexible narrative.

### **V. Implications of Flexible Narrative Translation for the International Communication of Chinese Culture**

The translation practice of Black Myth: Wukong closely follows the three core characteristics of fragmented, interactive and symbolic metaphor of flexible narrative in online games, integrating cultural communication deeply into the whole process of game translation, and realizing the transformation of Chinese cultural communication from passive indoctrination to active perception across cultures. This practice not only provides a feasible strategic reference for online game translation and localization, but also opens up a new path for the international communication of Chinese culture in the digital age from three dimensions of communication logic, communication mode and communication carrier, and its core implications are deeply echoed with the three dimensions of game translation from the perspective of flexible narrative mentioned above.

#### **5.1 Communication Logic: From One-way Cultural Output to Two-way Cross-cultural Empathy**

##### **Anchoring the Emotional Resonance Characteristic of Flexible Narrative**

With player agency as the core, the interactive characteristic of flexible narrative determines that game cultural communication is not a one-way information transmission from translators to players, but a two-way cross-cultural dialogue based on emotional resonance, which forms a core echo with the empathy and rewriting strategy under the dimension of interactive dialogue mentioned above. The traditional cultural translation is often oriented to one-way cultural output, focusing on the accurate correspondence of terms and the direct explanation of cultural concepts, but ignoring the emotional experience and cultural cognitive habits of the target audience, which is easy to cause cultural barriers and acceptance resistance. However, game translation from the perspective of flexible narrative takes cross-cultural emotional empathy as the core logic, transforming the core of Chinese culture into a universal emotional experience in the world.

For example, the translation of Chinese cultural concepts such as "取经", "修行" and "天命" in Black Myth: Wukong does not provide straightforward cultural annotations, but transforms them into universal emotional themes of human beings such as growth and struggle, perseverance and sacrifice through game interactive narrative. The colloquial and localized rewriting of daily dialogue also allows overseas players to naturally perceive the emotional expression of Chinese interpersonal communication in the interaction with NPCs. This communication logic makes Chinese culture no longer a displayed symbol, but an experience content that can arouse the emotional resonance of overseas players. In the process of participating in game narrative and obtaining emotional experience, players will take the initiative to understand and accept the underlying cultural connotations, realizing the communication upgrade from one-way output to two-way empathy.

## **5.2 Communication Mode: From Explicit Cultural Implantation to Implicit Scene Penetration**

### Fitting the Concealment Characteristic of Flexible Narrative

The fragmented and symbolic metaphor characteristics of flexible narrative determine that the best way of game cultural communication is implicit penetration, which forms a direct connection with the blank leaving and free translation under the dimension of fragmented integration and the phonetic and semantic intertextuality under the dimension of symbolic metaphor mentioned above. The traditional digital cultural communication often adopts the mode of explicit cultural implantation, presenting cultural elements centrally and emphasizing them deliberately, which not only easily interrupts the audience's immersive experience, but also makes cultural communication fall into the dilemma of preaching. However, game translation from the perspective of flexible narrative disassembles cultural elements into fragmented micro-narrative carriers, hiding them in all details of game narrative such as props, scenes, dialogues and spells, and allowing players to discover, interpret and integrate them actively in the process of exploration, interaction and experience.

For example, the translation of "辟火罩" and "广目天王" implants Buddhist elements naturally with the prop narrative through cultural blank leaving; the Sanskrit transliteration of "三昧神风" makes Buddhist terms gradually familiar to players with the gameplay narrative; Chinese cultural symbols such as classical poems, architecture and music are also deeply integrated with the visual, auditory and textual narrative of the game,

forming a communication effect of culture everywhere and penetration in every aspect. This mode of implicit scene penetration not only avoids the stiffness of cultural communication, but also stimulates the exploration desire and curiosity of overseas players, prompting them to take the initiative to consult cultural backgrounds and spread cultural contents, making cultural acceptance shift from passive indoctrination to active acquisition, and greatly improving the depth and durability of cultural communication.

### **5.3 Communication Carrier: From Single Text Communication to Multi-modal Collaborative Communication**

#### **Adapting to the Multi-modal Attribute of Flexible Narrative**

As a typical multi-modal medium, online games' flexible narrative is jointly constructed by text, image, sound and interaction, which determines that game cultural communication must break the limitation of single text and realize multi-modal collaborative communication, which is also an overall extension of the three translation dimensions mentioned above. Whether it is fragmented text, interactive dialogue or cultural symbols, their translation effect must be adapted to the audio-visual and interactive scenes of the game. Traditional cultural translation mostly focuses on the conversion of text, ignoring the coordination with other communication carriers, leading to the lack of overall sense and immersion in cultural communication. However, game translation from the perspective of flexible narrative regards translation as an organic part of multi-modal narrative, requiring text translation to be highly consistent with the visual symbols (ancient architecture, grottoes, costumes), auditory symbols (Northern Shaanxi storytelling, folk music, Sanskrit) and interactive symbols (alchemy, martial arts, task process) of the game in terms of style, genre and cultural connotation.

For example, the translation of "观音禅院" in Black Myth: Wukong not only retains the core attribute of Buddhist culture through text, but also echoes with the ancient architectural visual scene and Sanskrit auditory scene of the temple in the game, jointly creating the atmosphere of Chinese Buddhist culture. The rhythm reconstruction of poem translation is also matched with the corresponding scene sound effects and picture shots in the game, integrating the cultural aesthetic of poems with the audio-visual experience of the game. This multi-modal collaborative communication method constructs an all-round and immersive cultural narrative space, allowing overseas players to perceive the charm of Chinese culture in a three-dimensional way through the multiple experiences of vision, hearing and touch, realizing the cultural cognitive upgrade from text understanding to sensory experience, and making cultural communication more infectious and penetrating.

## **VI. Conclusion**

Based on the flexible narrative theory and combined with the media characteristics of online games, this study defines the flexible narrative of online games with three core characteristics of fragmented, interactive and symbolic metaphor, and constructs three corresponding translation dimensions of fragmented integration,

interactive dialogue and symbolic metaphor. Taking the Chinese-English parallel text of *Black Myth: Wukong* as a case study, it systematically discusses the specific strategies and practical paths of online game translation from the perspective of flexible narrative. It is found that excellent online game translation is not a simple language conversion, but a cross-cultural reconstruction of flexible narrative space. With the core of retaining cultural subjectivity and the goal of realizing cross-cultural empathy, translators make Chinese cultural elements naturally embed in the fragmented narrative, interactive dialogue and symbolic expression of games through flexible strategies such as blank leaving and free translation, empathy and rewriting, phonetic and semantic intertextuality, which not only ensures that overseas players can smoothly complete the game narrative experience, but also enables them to accept, understand and spread Chinese culture imperceptibly in the immersive game play.

The translation practice of *Black Myth: Wukong* proves that as an emerging carrier of the international communication of Chinese culture in the digital age, the core advantage of online games lies in the uniqueness of flexible narrative. The non-linear narrative structure, high player agency and multi-modal expression form make cultural communication break away from the traditional dilemma of preaching and realize the effect of subtle cultural communication. The translation strategy from the perspective of flexible narrative is the key to activating this advantage: it makes games no longer just pure entertainment products, but a bridge for Chinese culture to communicate with the world; it makes cultural symbols no longer just isolated expression elements, but narrative carriers that can arouse cross-cultural emotional resonance. This provides an important implication for Chinese online games going overseas: the core of game overseas expansion is not a simple localization adaptation, but the organic integration of cultural connotation and international expression with flexible narrative as the link, making Chinese culture truly come alive in the digital world.

This study still has certain limitations, which can be further deepened from three directions in the future. First, the study only focuses on the Chinese-English parallel text of *Black Myth: Wukong*. In the future, it can be expanded to multi-language translation practices, comparing cultural adaptation strategies of different languages to improve the universality of the research. Second, the study is mainly based on text analysis and does not combine the empirical feedback of overseas players. In the future, the actual communication effect of flexible narrative translation can be investigated through overseas forum comment analysis, player questionnaires and in-depth interviews to verify the effectiveness of the strategy. Third, the study's discussion on game multi-modal narrative still focuses on text. In the future, it can further combine the translation and adaptation of multi-modal carriers such as vision, hearing and interaction to construct a more complete theoretical framework of flexible narrative translation for online games.

The international communication of Chinese culture in the digital age needs new perspectives, new carriers and new strategies. The flexible narrative translation of online games provides a feasible and replicable path for it: taking players as the core, emotions as the link, and multi-modality as the carrier, making Chinese culture realize real communication and inheritance in cross-cultural dialogue. This is not only an inevitable trend of Chinese online games going overseas, but also an important exploration of telling Chinese stories well and spreading Chinese voices in the digital age.

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