

A Brief Analysis of Shannxi Cuisine's English Translation - Taking Menu Translation as an Example

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Abstract: Dissemination of Chinese culinary culture is important for Chinese culture to go global. Shannxi, a western province of China, features abundant cuisine which is representative of Shannxi local's lifestyle. However, there are many spelling mistakes and other translation mistakes in some time-honoured Chinese restaurants' English menu. Appropriate translation strategies, including domestication, foreignization and Pinyin, a phonetic transcription system for Chinese characters, should be adopted to explore practical and feasible translation of the culinary culture.

Keywords: Menu, China, Chinese restaurants, Translation

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1 Introduction

At present, studies on Shannxi's culinary culture feature limited perspectives, which are on a micro scale rather than a macro scale, and these studies are not systematic. Based on a cross-culture perspective, the paper analyzes problems in English translation of Shannxi's culinary culture and proposes its translation strategies, so as to promote the dissemination of Chinese culinary culture.

2 Mistakes in translation of Shannxi culinary culture

Taking the example of menu translation in time-honoured local restaurants, the paper analyzes mistakes in menu translation and intends to explore better translation methods and strategies.

As capital of Shannxi, Xi'an attracts thousands of

tourists all over the world every day. They come to Xi'an to experience local lifestyle and culture, including culinary culture. According to research findings, there are many mistakes in menu translation in time honored restaurants.

2.1 Spelling mistakes

For example, "Peannut with mutton". "Peannut" should be replaced by "peanut". In addition, "Squirrels whole fith". "fith" should be replaced by "fish". Besides, "Asuteed beef" represents three different dish. Whether "Asuteed" should be replaced by "sauteed" is still a question.

2.2 Inconsistency in upper case and lower case

"Spicy mutton with skin", "Sweet Fried hairtail", "Norishing TanYang", "Stir-friedDuSi", "Agaric Gailan", "KaiYang double bacteria", "Boiled chichen DanGeng".

2.3 Punctuation mistakes

There is no "、" in English. However, "、" appears frequently in menu, such as "Taste: acid、 hot、 salty、 spicy" and "Taste: salty、 sweet、 hot".

2.4 Inconsistency in translation of the same dish

For the same dish, there are two different translation: "Stir-fried pancake" and "Starch part bubble". For the same dish mutton, there are three translation: "mutton", "lamb" and "goat".

3 Translation strategies

Menu translation should be concise, practical and it should convey local culture to target readers. Before translation, translators should decode local dish names and recreate in translation process.

In 1813, German philosopher Schleiermacher published *On The Different Methods of Translating*^[1]. He proposed that source text readers and target text readers are at two ends of translation process. Either translators guide readers to keep close to writers, or translators guide writers to keep close to readers. The first case is about transferring readers and the second case is about transferring writers. In *Translating and Text Transfer: An Essay on the Principle of Intercultural Communication*^[2], Anthony proposed that translator is intermediary of two culture and languages. Translation is intended to facilitate target text culture and source text culture and mutual understanding so as to reap mutual benefits.

There are two strategies to translate “Rou Jia Mo”, a famous local cuisine. First, transferring readers, “Rou Jia Mo”. Second, transferring writers, such as Shaanxi Sandwich, Chinese Sandwich and Stewed Pork Burger. Generally speaking, there are three ways to translate cuisine.

3.1 Pinyin plus annotation

There are four ways to cook lamb Pao-Mo Soup. Methods for translating these four ways could be Pinyin plus annotation: “Kou Tang”, “Gan Pao”, “Shui Wei Cheng” and “Dan Zou”.

3.2 Foreignization

For food that coexists in Chinese and English culture,

“foreignization” method can be adopted. For example, “sauces beef” “Spicy Chicken Wings”, and “Sauces duck neck”. However, due to differences in ways of expression, sometimes we need to invert the original order of Chinese dish name when translating certain dish. For example, “shredded tripe with chilli sauce” and “Mutton with chopped chilli”.

3.3 Domestication

This strategy includes addition, deletion, interpretation and recreation, etc. For example, “Fried prawns with salad cream”, and “Sauces fish with the shape of squirrel”, “Fungus rolls” and “Corn soup”, “Fried and steamed lobster”, “Nutritious mutton (from sheep raised in Ningxia and Gansu)”, and “Cream pumpkin”.

As the beginning of ancient silk road, Xi’an is also representative of modern culture. The paper suggests that in order to facilitate the spread of Shannxi culinary culture, translators should enhance their translation proficiency. Besides, government should also support this endeavor.

References

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