

An Analysis of the Translation of Cantonese Cuisine Names from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication

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Abstract: With the advancement of the current globalization trend, cross-cultural exchanges between China and foreign countries are becoming more and more frequent. Chinese cuisine plays an important role in intercultural communication. Especially in the context of the current strategy of "going abroad" of Chinese culture, the standardized English translation is indispensable for the dissemination of Chinese cuisine. However, due to cultural differences between China and foreign countries, the translation of Cantonese dishes has become a major difficulty in cross-cultural communication. Therefore, this study takes the English translation of Cantonese cuisine as the research object. Starting with the characteristics and cultural background of Cantonese cuisine and combining the differences between Chinese and Western cultures, we can translate the names of Cantonese cuisine by the translation strategies of domestication and foreignization, including literal translation, transliteration, free translation and amplification, explained translation and other translation methods to improve the validity of the international communication of Cantonese cuisine culture and help its internationalization.

Keywords: Cantonese Cuisine; Domestication; Foreignization; Intercultural Communication

1. Introduction

With the trend of globalization in the world nowadays, exchanges between China and foreign countries are becoming more and more frequent. From national politics and military to clothing, food, housing and transportation, China is inevitably exchanging and developing with other countries. Especially China has a history of 5,000 years, is a cultural power for

thousands of years, with cultural confidence, exchange and share culture with other countries is crucial. As an integral part of Chinese culture, Chinese cuisine is of great importance. The promotion of Chinese food not only allows the world to understand the charm of Chinese culture, but also contributes to the sustainable development of Chinese culture and trade.

2. Research Object and Research Significance

2.1 Research Object

Cantonese cuisine, also known as Guangdong cuisine, is one of the eight major Chinese cuisines. Cantonese cuisine originates from the Central Plains, and its scope should include the four major genres of Guangzhou cuisine, Chaozhou cuisine, Dongjiang cuisine and Hainan cuisine^[1]. Since Guangdong is located in the south of China, in the subtropical zone, and rich in material resources, Cantonese cuisine is famous for the selection of rare ingredients, exquisite side dishes, and flexible cooking according to the preferences of diners. Cantonese cuisine emphasizes on less but fine, and the production is fine for the pursuit of enjoyment, the amount of fine and fine, the ingredients are many and clever, the decoration is beautiful and colorful, and the dishes amount to more than 5,000 kinds of dishes. Compared with other cuisines, Cantonese cuisine is clear but not bland, fresh but not vulgar, and has a representative role in reflecting Guangdong's food culture. Therefore, in the process of translation, translators should actively understand the cultural connotation behind Cantonese cuisine and translate with their own unique insights so that more foreigners can understand and savor the deliciousness of Cantonese cuisine. Therefore, the accuracy and flexibility of the English translation of Cantonese cuisine are related to whether Cantonese cuisine can be carried

forward overseas and communicate and interoperate with overseas cultures. Cantonese cuisine inherits the traditional Chinese culture and is a true reflection of the eating habits of generations of Cantonese people. Only on this basis can the translation of Cantonese cuisine maximize its iconic role in spreading Cantonese culture!

2.2 Significance of the Study

As one of the eight major Chinese cuisines, many English-speaking countries have a strong interest in Cantonese cuisine, so accurate and accurate English translation of Cantonese cuisine has always played an indispensable role in intercultural communication. However, there is a lack of research on the standardized English translation of Cantonese cuisine, and Cantonese cuisine restaurants do not have a unified standard for the English translation of individual dishes, or even lack of English translation, which makes it difficult for foreign diners to understand Cantonese cuisine and order. There are two major problems in the existing English translation of Cantonese cuisine, one of which is that the English translation of the names is too direct or directly adopts phonetic translation, which results in difficult and incomprehensible translations of the dishes, causing confusion for foreign diners who do not know much about Chinese culture; and the other is that due to the arbitrariness of the translation of the dishes, the surface meaning of the language is inconsistent with the deeper culture, and it is impossible for foreigners to understand the vivid and original cultural images behind the names of the dishes^[2]. Especially now that China emphasizes cultural self-confidence, the internationally renowned Chinese cuisine culture should be promoted with confidence, so a standardized and accurate English translation should reflect the cultural connotation and characteristics of Cantonese cuisine, which can make people in English-speaking countries better understand the Cantonese cuisine culture, and thus promote the Cantonese cuisine culture to go out and improve the quality of the culture. In this way, it can promote the “going out” of Cantonese culture and enhance the influence and penetration of Chinese culture in international cross-cultural communication.

3. Translation Strategies of Cantonese Cuisine from the Perspective of Intercultural Communication

3.1 Foreignization

In 1995, the American translation theorist Lawrence Venuti first proposed the concepts of “domestication” and “foreignization” in his book *The Translator's Invisibility*. He argues that foreignization “deviates from the dominant local values and preserves the linguistic and cultural differences of the original text^[3].” Such a translation strategy can maximize the retention of cultural differences in the English translation of Cantonese cuisine names, maintain the original flavor of the Chinese language, make the translation more credible, and contribute to the dissemination of Chinese culinary culture. The main translation methods under the foreignization strategy include literal translation and transliteration, and in order to maximize the meaning of the original text, phonetic/direct translation should be used as much as possible^[4]. Literal translation, transliteration or a combination of the two can be flexibly adopted when translating Cantonese cuisine names into English, which preserves Chinese cultural characteristics and facilitates the cross-cultural dissemination of Chinese culture.

3.1.1 Literal translation

In Cantonese cuisine, literal translation is the most commonly used method. The most important feature of literal translation is that it is faithful to the original text, which can appropriately show the guests the actual raw materials, recipes and main cooking methods required for the dish.

First of all, the most important feature of literal translation in English translation of Cantonese cuisine is that it can show the raw materials of Cantonese cuisine. For example, Grapefruit Salmon is used literal translation, which is vivid and direct that the ingredients of the dish are grapefruit and salmon. Another example is Minced Beef with Green Bean, where the translation “Minced Beef” lets foreigners know that this dish uses chopped beef rather than chunks and slices of beef^[5]. Taking this literal translation approach allows others to roughly visualize the dish when ordering, and also avoids ordering ingredients that are not loved or cannot be eaten due to

religious or other reasons.

Secondly, a large portion of the Chinese names of Cantonese cuisine is named in the form of “cooking method + ingredients”^[6], so this format can be retained through literal translation when translating Cantonese cuisine into English. For example, the dish Roasted Crispy Suckling Pig, which specifies that the cooking method is “roasted”, has a variety of Cantonese cuisines, including roasted, boiled, dipped, grilled, sizzled, deep-fried, stir-fried, and steamed, and there are numerous dishes in which pork is the main ingredient, so this dish can be translated by direct translation when transliteration. Therefore, this dish can be distinguished from other dishes by adopting the literal translation of roasted.

3.1.2 Transliteration

Transliteration also belongs to one kind of foreignization strategy, which is a method of translating some foreign words by using words with similar pronunciation. The essence of transliteration is to borrow the vocabulary of the output language and create new constraints on information transfer in the input language according to new cognitive and expressive needs^[7]. Guangdong is a coastal city, and since the reform and opening up, it has taken on the heavy responsibility of foreign exchange, in which the Cantonese language has constantly absorbed foreign vocabularies^[8]. Therefore, in the English translation of Cantonese cuisine, the transliteration method better preserves the original flavor of Cantonese cuisine names and plays an incomparable role in spreading culture.

For example, Cantonese Dim Sum can be known as a transliteration of Cantonese by its pronunciation. When using transliteration strategy, the most common is the translation of place names or people's names, such as Roast Yane Goose, Chaozhou Style in which both “Chaozhou” and “Yane” are translated phonetically. Chaozhou Style can be different from other roasted geese, and the transliteration of “Yane Goose” is used because on the surface of the word it refers to “wild goose” and “goose”. The phonetic translation of “Yane” is used because on the surface of the word, it means “wild goose” and “goose”, but the wild goose is not the main ingredient of this dish. Therefore, by using the transliteration of the word first, and then stating that only goose is the main ingredient,

the original flavor of the Chinese language is retained, and the essence of the dish is also fully demonstrated to other countries.

Although transliteration can be a good way to spread the Chinese food culture, however, there is also a big disadvantage, transliteration is easy to make readers who are not familiar with Chinese culture confused, therefore, when translators take this method of transliteration, they can make it clear through appropriate supplementary explanations, for example, Gulaorou (Sweet and Sour Pork) first transliterates Gulaorou, and then makes it clear that the Gulaorou is made of sweet and sour pork. Gulaorou gets its name from the fact that when people eat it, the meat is elastic and there is a sound similar to “gulu” when chewing, therefore, using transliteration in the English translation allows English-speaking people to appreciate the essence of this dish, and at the same time, the supplementary description part also makes up for the main ingredients and flavors of this dish.

3.2 Domestication

Lawrence Venuti defines domestication as “adherence to the current mainstream values of the target language culture and the blatant use of conservative assimilation of the original text to make it cater to local canonical publishing trends and political demands.”^[9] Naturalization can minimize the exoticism, oriented to the target language audience, make the translation more understandable and easy to accept, and in intercultural communication, it can avoid misunderstanding and conflict due to cultural differences, and improve the effectiveness of the translation^[10]. The main translation methods under the domestication strategy include free translation and amplification. When the rich cultural connotations contained in a dish name cannot be fully conveyed, the translator should maximize the actual connotations of the dish name to the audience of the translated text, i.e.: the original ingredients, the appearance and the cooking method, etc.^[11]. For Cantonese cuisine with big cultural differences, free translation, amplification or a combination of the two should be used in the English translation, so as to avoid misunderstanding due to cultural differences and give foreign readers a better reading experience.

3.2.1 Free translation

Free translation literally means to translate according to the general meaning of words or sentences. As opposed to literal translation, Italian translation is not word by word and sentence by sentence, and is generally used when there is a big cultural difference between the original language and the target language, to avoid misunderstanding and conflict caused by cultural differences in intercultural communication.

Some Cantonese cuisines belong to the ideographic type, in which the names of these dishes and staple foods are derived from the color, aroma, taste and shape of the finished dish, together with metaphorical and other rhetorical devices^[12]. If the foreignization method is used to literal translate the names of such dishes and staple foods, foreign guests will be puzzled. Therefore, when translating such dishes and staple foods, the language and culture of translation cannot be treated separately. Linguistic translation is not only the conversion of the denotative meanings of language symbols, but also the mutual communication and transplantation of two different cultures, which involves not only two languages, but also two cultures^[13]. Literal translation fails to provide the basic information about the ingredients and cooking methods of the dishes, and many international friends cannot understand the cultural connotation of the names due to cultural differences, which makes the translation of the names of the dishes lose its proper function^[14]. Some Cantonese cuisines are named in a way that is related to the name of a place, but people in English-speaking countries may not recognize it, and forced literal translation may cause confusion. One example is the dish Stir-fried Rice Noodles. the reason of this name is because it was first produced in Shahe Town in Guangzhou City, so it is called “Shahe Noodles”, or River Noodles, for short. However, in fact, River Noodles is made by grinding rice into flour, then mixing the batter and steaming the rice into slices, and then finally slicing the rice noodles into strips, so free translation is more appropriate. Rice noodles are more appropriate and will not cause confusion to foreigners. Another example is Seafood Congee, which was created by water hobos in the Pearl River Delta, and has developed into a congee with a rich variety of seafood ingredients, including

sliced fish, shrimp, shredded egg, jellyfish, dried scallops, meat skin, etc. If the direct translation is Boat Congee, it would be more appropriate. If literal translation is translated as Boat Congee, but for those who are not familiar with Cantonese cuisine, it may be interpreted as a congee that can only be drunk on a boat, but now Boat Congee has long been popularized and improved, so according to the characteristics of Boat Congee-seafood abundance, it is free translation as Seafood Congee.

Chinese food culture has a long history and rich connotation, and behind every Chinese dish there is a deep cultural flavor, which is the part that translators should pay attention to and effectively disseminate in the process of translation^[15]. Therefore, some Cantonese cuisines are named in a way that is related to Chinese cultural allusions, but English-speaking countries do not have this kind of expression, and literal translation does not achieve the effect of spreading culture. For example, Congee with Lean Pork, Liver and Kidney (Jidi Congee), in Chinese, “Jidi” has the meaning of “academic success”, but using the foreignization strategy, no matter whether it is literal translation as academic or transliteration as Jidi, it is hard to be understood for people from other countries. However, in the alienation strategy, neither the direct translation as academic nor the phonetic translation as Jidi can be understood by people from other countries, so free translation can be used to directly translate the ingredients of this dish, such as lean pork, liver, and kidney. Another example is Steamed Sliced Chicken with Mushrooms and Vegetables (Qilin Chicken). The Qilin is a mythical beast in ancient Chinese mythology, but there is no such symbol in the Western mythological system, so translating it as Qilin Chicken may cause foreigners to misunderstand whether it is a new variety of Chinese chicken, and lead to false advertising. If translated as Qilin Chicken, it may cause foreigners to misunderstand whether it is a new variety of Chinese chicken, which may lead to false propaganda. Therefore, a free translation is made, in which this dish is steamed, the main ingredient is sliced chicken, and the auxiliary ingredients are mushroom mushrooms and vegetable vegetables, so that the foreigners can have a preconceived notion of this dish, which is conducive to the

popularization and dissemination of Cantonese cuisine.

3.2.2 Amplification

Amplification refers to adding some words, phrases or sentences to the translation according to the different ways of thinking, language habits and expressions of the two languages, so as to express the meaning of the original text more accurately^[16]. Similarly, in the English translation of Cantonese cuisine, appropriate amplification can help the English readers to understand more about the dish and distinguish it from other similar dishes. The most common type of amplification in the English translation of Cantonese cuisine is the addition of cooking methods. For example, Steamed Chicken Stuffed with Glutinous Rice and Braised Chicken with Satay Sauce in Casserole are both chicken dishes with chicken as the main ingredient, but in addition to the difference in the ingredients, it is obvious that the cooking methods are different. In addition to the difference in ingredients, it is also obvious from the English that the practices are also different. Glutinous Rice Chicken is steamed while Braised Chicken with Satay Sauce in Casserole is braised, which is easy for English readers to differentiate.

4. Summary

In intercultural communication, translation assumes a certain role as a bridge and is one of the important means of cultural communication. The translated names of dishes are related to the promotion and publicity of our culture in the world, and the level of translation is directly related to the popularity and public acceptance of this cuisine in foreign countries, and it also affects the development of our catering industry in foreign countries. Therefore, this study discusses analyzing and discussing the culture and Chinese names of Cantonese cuisine dishes under the perspective of cross-cultural communication, examining different methods of translating Cantonese cuisine into English and giving examples. Based on two translation strategies, domestication and foreignization, this paper gives four different translation methods, which are literal translation, transliteration, free translation and amplification. Different translation methods are chosen according to different naming styles of Cantonese cuisine, or several

methods are combined, focusing on conveying the core information of the dish name and on the treatment of cultural differences. It is necessary to consider the writing habits of dish names in the audience's country, but also to explain the ingredients, cooking methods, tastes, etc., so as to facilitate the understanding of the audience and maximize the satisfaction of the requirements of the audience group, which also requires the translator to avoid looking at the meaning of the word when translating, and to actively understand the culture behind each dish. The English translation of Cantonese cuisine can help people in English-speaking countries to better understand the culture of Cantonese cuisine, and help to reduce the confusion and conflict in intercultural communication caused by cultural differences.

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