

# On Domestication and Foreignization in the Translation of Lure Fishing Gear

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**Abstract:** China is the largest fishing gear market around the globe at present, and the fishing gear export and production are both the first in the world. Under the influence of COVID-19 and increasing publicity by we-media, fishing has been favored by more and more people. Although lure fishing is a relatively novel fishing sport in China, but its market potential is huge. Different from the traditional fishing methods, lure fishing has not been introduced into China for long, so the translation of the names of these fishing gears is of vital importance. From the perspectives of domesticating and foreignizing translation strategies, this paper analyzes the characteristics of the original names and translated names of some lure fishing gears, and further realizes the similarities and differences between Chinese and English languages.

**Keywords:** Lure Fishing, Translation of Fishing Gear, Domestication, Foreignization.

## 1. Introduction

Due to the impact of COVID-19, entertainments in China mainland became limited in 2020. Whereas fishing, different from traditional sport, could avoid direct contact between people, which was accepted by more and more people as an escapism. Although the Fisheries Bureau issued a 10-year fishing ban along the Yangtze River Valley in 2020, it did not damp anglers' enthusiasm for fishing. Accord to the 2020 Douyin Data Report released on January 5, 2021, fishing had become the most popular leisure sport on Douyin app, and fishing related videos had received over 800,000,000 likes[1]. A Douyin blogger named Tianyuan Deng Gang (who uploads fishing videos to Douyin) even reached 10 million subscribers within only one month. The rising number of angler boosted the fishing gear market. In the first quarter of 2020 alone, the domestic sales of fishing gear on Taobao (A Chinese e-commerce website) exceeded ¥ 429,000,000, and lure rods accounted for 16.95% of the market share of fishing rods[2].

“路亚”(Luya: lure fishing) is the Chinese transliteration of “Lure”, which is a fishing technique using lures to catch carnivorous fishes. Lure fishing originated in western countries. It first emerged in Japan in Asia, and then gradually introduced into China. It was officially promoted in China in 2007, and became popular in 2016 due to the wide spread of we media[3]. As lure fishing originated in western countries, most of the fishing gears were introduced into China from abroad. Then, how to translate their original names into Chinese became quite a problem. During the spread of lure fishing gear over China, most of their Chinese names were settled. However, due the differences between Chinese and English languages, the Chinese and English names of one lure fishing gear may express different connotations. To understand the difference, this paper analyzes the E-C translation of lure fishing gears from the perspective of domestication and foreignization.

## 2. Domestication and Foreignization

Domestication and foreignization were proposed by Lawrence Venuti, an American translator, in his book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* in 1995.

Domestication is a strategy which requires the translator to express the source text in ways that target readers are familiar with. This strategy is “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home” (Venuti, 1995). That is, the translation must be authentic target language. Thus, domesticating translation helps readers to better understand the translated text by minimizing the strangeness of the source text.

Foreignization is a strategy which requires the translator to express the source text in ways that the author used. This strategy is “an ethnodeviant pressure on target-language culture values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad to have alien reading experience” (Venuti, 1995). In other words, foreignization requires the translator to draw close to the author and preserves the exotic customs for the readers.

Domestication and foreignization are concerned with cultural, linguistic and aesthetic aspects (Lian, 2007). Domesticating translation and foreignizing translation seem to be opposite, but, in fact, they are complementary. Domestication and foreignization will always coexist, both are indispensable (Guo, 1998).

## 3. Domestication and Foreignization in the Translation of Lure Fishing Gear

The translation of fishing gear is a special cross-cultural communication. With China's opening up to the world in an all-round way, lure fishing has become popular in China. During the spreading of lure fishing across China, translation is of vital importance. However, the names of many things are in abstract and general terms in English, while specific and concrete in Chinese[5]. Apart from language, China and western countries also differ in system, culture, custom, etc. Therefore, this paper analyzes the translation of lure fishing gear from the perspective of culture-oriented domestication and foreignization strategies.

### 3.1. Domestication

Domesticating translation requires that the translated text should be as close to the target language as possible and easy

for the readers to read. Lure fishing gears are tools used by anglers when fishing. Therefore, when translating the name, it should be concise and to easy to understand, so as to avoid misinterpreting its purpose because of its name. The following are some examples of translating lure fishing gears using domestication strategy.

Example 1: Low Profile Baitcasting Reel--水滴轮/小乌龟 (Shuidi Lun/Xiaowugui: water drop-shaped fishing reel/little tortoise)

“Low profile” here means not as high or wide as other things of the same type, and in Oxford Advanced Learner’s English-Chinese Dictionary, “cast” means to throw one end of a fishing line into a river, etc. Thus the “Low profile” part of the name comes from its appearance, and the “Baitcasting” part is originated from how anglers using it to fish. Low Profile Baitcasting Reel was firstly translated to Xiaowugui, for there was no official term for it but to translate it in vernacular. The translated name of Xiaowugui was prevalent at the early time of introduction of lure fishing into China. Later on, Xiaowugui was gradually substituted by Shuidi Lun. English uses abstract words to express concrete meanings, while Chinese often uses concrete images to express abstract contents[5]. The phrase, low profile, is an abstract description of the fishing reel’s shape. Whereas, the translations of Shuidi Lun and Xiaowugui compare the Low Profile Baitcasting Reel to water-drop and tortoise, which are concrete objects. These two translations not only precisely depict the exterior of Low Profile Baitcasting Reel, but also are easy for anglers to understand for they are in vernacular.

Example 2: Baitcasting Rod--枪柄竿 (Qiangbing Gan: rod with a trigger-shaped grip)

Baitcasting Rod is used strictly with Baitcasting Reel. The name of Baitcasting Rod comes from the gear used with itself, Baitcasting Reel. However, when Baitcasting Rod was introduced into China, its name was translated to Qiangbing Gan. Many Chinese loanwords are translated in free translation or transliteration based on their images[5]. The origin of the name, Qiangbing Gan, comes from the trigger-shaped grip that is attached to the other side of reel seat (where the fishing reel is mounted). Different from the naming mechanism of Baitcasting Rod in English, the Chinese translation of the Qiangbing Gan tends to be named after the shape and form of the fishing rod itself. Although the translated Qiangbing Gan does not give the expression of the way of casting bait as Baitcasting Rod, it vividly highlights the appearance characteristic and conforms to the traditional use of Chinese.

Example 3: Spinning Reel--纺车轮 (Fangche Lun: fishing reel that works as spinning wheel)

Spinning Reel gets its name because of the rotating bail arms that goes around the spool when rewinding the fishing line[8]. It is noteworthy that the spool does not spin, but it does move up and down to allow the fishing line to be rewound on the spool evenly. Ergo, the name of Spinning Reel comes from its work mechanism. In contrast, though the Chinese translation of Fangche Lun also originates from the way the reel works, it compares the reel to an actual spinning wheel due to their similar work mechanisms. As R. Flesch once commented on Chinese language, “they formed the habit of expressing ideas by metaphors, similes, and allegories, in short, by every known device for making a thing plain by comparing it with something else[9].” Spinning wheel, as a traditional Chinese spinning tool, is well-known to Chinese people. Thus, compared with the name of Spinning Reel,

Fangche Lun is easier for Chinese angler to understand the reel’s characteristics and how it works.

Example 4: Spinning Rod--直柄竿 (Zhibing Gan: rod with a straight handle)

Spinning Rod collocates with Spinning Reel. The name of Spinning Rod, like Baitcasting Rod, also originated from the gear used together with itself, Spinning Reel. Similar to Qiangbing Gan, the Chinese translated name of Zhibing Gan is derived from the shape of its handle, too. Unlike Baitcasting Rod, there is no trigger-shaped grip that is affixed to the handle of Spinning Rod, the handle of Spinning Rod is straight and has nothing but a reel seat on it. According to Lian, modern Chinese characters are derived from the original hieroglyphs, many characters are imitations of natural objects, and a great amount of things are named based on their shapes[5]. Thus, the translation of Zhibing Gan conforms to authentic Chinese.

Lian wrote that English has a hypotaxis emphasis and Chinese parataxis[10]. That is to say, the logic of English is explicit, while Chinese put emphasis on covert coherence. Such as examples 3 and 5, Baitcasting Rod and Spinning Rod are named after their corresponding fishing reels, so that people can easily tell that Baitcasting Rod and Baitcasting Reel is one type of fishing gear set, Spinning Rod and Spinning Reel is a different type of fishing gear set. This is the overt cohesion of English language. The Chinese translations of Qiangbing Gan and Zhibing Gan have no explicit relations with Baitcasting Reel and Spinning Reel. This is because Chinese language lays emphasis on implicit coherence, and often arranges meanings and objects in natural order, leaving the reader responsible for understanding their interrelations[5].

Example 5: Floating Pencil/Z Dog--之字狗 (Zhizi Gou: 之-shaped dog)

Z Dog is the common parlance of Floating Pencil. The word “pencil” comes from its shape. This kind of lure has a small head and a long and slender body, which looks like a pencil, so it is named as pencil. As for the name of Z Dog, operating Floating Pencil is known as “walk the dog” in America. According to Jeff Samsel, “walking the dog” refers to making a surface lure move rhythmically from side to side by repeatedly twitching the rod tip[11]. And the “Z” part of the name is from the Zig Zag movement of Floating Pencil when fishing. The Chinese name of Zhizi Gou is translated from Z Dog, the word “Dog” is literally translated as “Gou”, the “Z” part, however, is localized and translated as “之”(Zhi), for “Z” and “之” have similar shapes. “之” is a Chinese character, instead of “Z”, “之” is more in line with the tradition of Chinese language.

Example 6: Rubber Jig--胡须佬 (Huxu Lao: bearded guy)

Jig is a kind of lure which consists of a hook and a lead sinker molded onto it. Rubber Jig is a kind of jig with rubber skirt attached to its lead sinker. Thus, Rubber Jig is named by its material. Different from the English naming strategy, the Chinese name of Huxu lao is the description of its appearance. The rubber skirt is akin to beard, therefore, people connect the rubber skirt to the image of beard. “佬”(lao) is a Chinese character meaning adult or grown man. The name of Huxu Lao gives Chinese anglers quite an impression on its appearance.

Example 7: Buzzbait--拖拉机 (Tuolaji: tractor)

Buzz means making a long and continuous sound, like the noise a bee makes when it is flying. Buzzbait is a kind of

topwater lures that features a propeller with cupped blades that spin thanks to the water pressure exerted against them as the angler reels. Buzzbait makes commotion and noise on water surface to attract fish when retrieving it. This is why Buzzbait gets its name. Whereas the Chinese translation compares the noise it makes to the noise that tractor makes when running, and it gets the name of Tuolaji. The name, Tuolaji, vividly depicts the lure's characteristics, and it uses a concrete object, tractor, to express the noise Buzzbait makes, which conforms to Chinese.

### 3.2. Foreignization

Foreignizing translation is a strategy which requires the translated text should be as close to the original language as possible and retain the exotic culture. As lure fishing has been introduced into China for a short time, and most of lure fishing gear has also been introduced into China from abroad, thus, the translation of lure fishing gear nowadays mostly adopts the foreignization strategy. Transliteration and literal translation are the most used translation methods. Some examples of translating the names of lure fishing gears with foreignization strategy are as follows.

Example 7: Lure Fishing--路亚 (Luya)

Lure means a thing that is used to attract fish or animals, so they can be caught. Luya is the Chinese transliteration of Lure. Transliteration is the process of converting texts from one script to another based on the phonetic similarity. This process is only concerned with the pronunciation of the text rather than going into its meaning. That is, the translated word of Luya does not have the same meaning in Chinese context as Lure in English context, even though these two words sound similar. However, Luya, as a loan words, has been semantically connected to the act of Lure Fishing during its spread in China. Unlike other traditional fishing methods in China, which are named with affixes as “钓” or “钓法” (fishing), Luya, as an introduced fishing method from abroad, does retain its the exotic feature.

Example 8: Minnow--米诺 (Minuo)

Minnow is a kind of small freshwater fish. The lure of Minnow resembles the minnow fish, therefore, it gets the name of Minnow. The Chinese name of Minuo is also transliterated from Minnow. Transliteration can function as the complement of lexical gaps between Chinese and English. When lexical gap occurs, transliteration may act as a bridge in communication. Before the Minnow lure was introduced into China, there was no the name of Minuo. Thus, the emergence of Minuo fills the lexical gap. Consequently, the word Minuo fully retains the exotic color of English.

Example 9: Popper--波爬 (Bopa)

Popper means a thing that pops. In the field of lure fishing, it refers to a kind of topwater hard bait that makes thuds and ripples when maneuvering it. Although transliterated from Popper, the Chinese word of Bopa do have symbolic meaning. The “Bo” part symbolizes both thuds and ripples, while “pa” denotes its movement. This is the sinicized transliteration. “Every language has its intrinsic pattern, so every language has to undergo a process of modification as it absorbs elements from other languages. The transformation of Chinese in the process of absorbing foreign words is generally called sinicization[12].”

Example 10: Texas Rig--德州钓组 (Dezhou Diao zu)

Texas Rig are usually composed of three parts: bullet weight, offset hook, and soft bait. Texas Rig was evolved

from the traditional fishing method in Texas, USA, hence the name Texas Rig. Rig here means gear used in fishing. The Chinese name of Dezhou Diao zu is literally translated from Texas Rig, Dezhou is the short version of Dekesasi, which means Texas, and Diao zu is the fishing rig. Chinese anglers can be informed of its exotic origin by the name of Dezhou Diao zu. There are some other fishing rigs which are translated in this way, such as Carolina Rig (Kaluo Diao zu) and Alabama Rig (Alabama Diao zu).

There are other examples of translating fishing gears by literal translation, pencil--铅笔 (Qianbi), worm--软虫 (Ruanchong), etc. Their translation strategies and methods are similar to that of Texas Rig, thus, they are not discussed.

Example 12: VIB Lure--VIB

VIB is the abbreviation of vibration, VIB Lure vibrates to attract fish when reeling it back, hence the name VIB Lure. However, the translation method is distinctive when translating the name of this lure into Chinese, that is zero translation. The concept of zero translation was proposed by Qiu in 2001. According to Qiu, zero translation refers to translating words from the source language without using words that are available in the target language, which covers two aspects, 1) leave the words untranslated, 2) translate the words from source text without using words in the target language[13]. Qiu thinks that there are two corresponding translation methods, ellipsis and transference. Transference is employed in the Chinese translation of VIB, and transference refers to transferring the original words into the target text intact. Qiu believes that this seemingly random copy of the original text is the most accurate translation, zero translation eliminates the untranslatability[13].

## 4. Conclusion

From the analysis of the above examples, we can see that in translation of fishing gear using domestication strategy, both Chinese and English languages naming fishing gears according to their shapes and appearances. The distinction is that English uses abstract words to depict the shape of fishing gear, while Chinese often uses concrete images to describe them. In translation of fishing gear using foreignization strategy, literal translation and transliteration methods are usually employed, besides them, there is zero translation method. As lure fishing is a fishing method introduced from abroad, the translation of fishing gear mostly adopts foreignization strategy. And fishing is a folk recreation with a massive number of angler, without official translation guide, that may lead to non-standard translation of fishing gear names. Thus, the phenomenon of one gear with multiple names often occurs.

In conclusion, domestication translation makes it easier for domestic anglers to understand the characteristics and uses of fishing gears for they are translated in words that are familiar to Chinese, while foreignization translation allows the exotic features of lure fishing to be introduced into China, so that domestic anglers can further understand the sport of lure fishing. Domesticating translation and foreignizing translation are complementary and will always coexist, both of them are indispensable.

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