

Translating the Names of Sichuan Dishes from the View of Skopos Theory

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Abstract: Sichuan cuisine is one of the eight major cuisines in China. It draws on the strengths of many families and forms the characteristics of “one dish, one style, and hundreds of dishes”. The culture of sichuan cuisine is extensive and profound. Under the background of the construction of ' the Belt and Road ' and the strategy of ' going out ' of Chinese culture, it is particularly important to understand and translate the cultural connotation of sichuan cuisine in order to make the translation of sichuan cuisine more faithful and reflect Chinese characteristics. Based on the cultural connotation of Sichuan cuisine names, exploring its effective translation strategies is conducive to promoting the wide spread and smooth acceptance of Chinese food culture in the world. The Skopos Theory opens up a new path for translation theory and provides a wide range of ideas and operability for translation practice.

Keywords: Sichuan cuisine, Skopos theory, Translation strategies, Food culture.

1. Introduction

Sichuan cuisine owns profound history. As one of eight cuisines, Sichuan cuisine occupies an irreplaceable position in the history. It draws the cooking ingredients extensively and takes advantages of spicy. With the unique style of cooking approaches and special local flavor, it also combines the characteristics of southwest and northwest, and is well-known both at home and abroad. The birthplace of Sichuan cuisine can date back to the ancient Ba and Shu States, it is mainly based in Chengdu, Chongqing where the excellent environment, rich and abundant resources provide the advantages for the formation and further development of Sichuan cuisine, which characterizes in its outstanding hot, sweet, oily, heavy flavor, chili, pepper, and fresh ginger.

Sichuan cuisine has been developed and innovated since the Qin and Han dynasties, when the "five flavours were harmonised", to the new Sichuan cuisine of today, and is now showing great vitality. While Sichuan cuisine is going international, the English translation of Sichuan dishes is also in need of standardisation and improvement. There are eight major cuisines in China, each of which is divided into different schools, and in the case of Sichuan cuisine alone, there are several branches. Although the Ministry of Culture of China has issued a series of substantive regulations on the English translation of dishes, and the chaos of the English translation of some dishes has been regulated, this is far from enough for Sichuan cuisine. The study of the English translation of Sichuan cuisine should also be based on the history and culture of Sichuan cuisine, the characteristics of the environment, the original techniques and the types of ingredients, comparing the flavours of Sichuan cuisine with the common tastes of foreign countries, and systematically summarising them with specific typical examples, so as to propose some suggestions for the English translation of Sichuan cuisine.

Throughout history, many excellent translation theories have become known and have facilitated intercultural communication, including Nida's functional equivalence theory, Newmark's communicative translation and semantic

translation, and the Skopos theory proposed by the German functionalist H.J. Vermeer. Skopos theory is the heart of functional translation theory and its core is “three rules”, including the Skopos rule, the coherence rule, and the fidelity rule. The Skopos rule is the first principle. According to Vermeer, "translation means translating for a specific recipient in a specific context and for a specific purpose", and this is the relevance of the skopos theory. It breaks through the shackles of traditional translation theory and puts forward a new concept: translation is not simply an interlingual conversion, but carries the translator's purpose, and highlights the role of the translator. Skopos theory opens up a new path for translation theory, and provides a wide range of ideas and operability for translation practice.

2. The Current Situation of Sichuan Cuisine Translation and Related Research

The different food cultures of the East and West have led to different methods of naming dishes, reflecting the different needs of each purpose. In Western menus, only the name of the dish is simply listed, and then the main and supplementary ingredients used and the cooking method and condiments accompanying the dish are indicated, giving a simple and practical sense of the party. In China, there is a wide variety of Chinese cuisine, and the names of the dishes are also extremely rich. The names of the dishes are very elaborate and distinctive. The names of Chinese dishes are allusive, metaphorical, exaggerated, symbolic, etc., making the names of Chinese dishes both beautiful and realistic, and these names pursue "beauty of form, sound and meaning" and are auspicious and festive, containing not only profound historical and cultural backgrounds, but also full of folklore and local customs (Ji Lifang 2009), which undoubtedly brings great significance to the translation of Sichuan dishes. This undoubtedly poses a great challenge to the translation of Sichuan cuisine names.

2.1. The Related Research of Sichuan Cuisine Translation

In the last decade, the translation and dissemination of Sichuan cuisine and Sichuan culture has been very disproportionate to the internationalisation of Sichuan cuisine, and can be summarised as "stagnant".

Xie Xianze, Pan Yanqiang and Du Li (2006) proposed three major principles for the translation of Chinese dish names: the first principle is that the language should be simple and clear; the second is to provide the basic information needed by guests when choosing a dish, such as the main ingredients, production process or main features; the third is that expressions are usually expressed by noun phrases, with the main ingredients being central words and key words, the production process or method being expressed by past participles, the main features being expressed by The main ingredient is the central word, the key word, the process or method of production is the past participle, the main feature is the adjective, and the ingredient or condiment is the prepositional phrase with or in. In addition, for the translation of names of dishes derived from historical allusions and culturally significant, an explanatory note or page may be added as appropriate.

Ji Lifang (2009) also proposes a realistic translation of Sichuan cuisine names, which is mainly applicable to the translation of dishes highlighting the cooking methods, main and supplementary ingredients, flavour characteristics and regional characteristics, while the latter is applicable to the translation of names derived from historical allusions and culturally significant dishes.

Zhang Dongmei and Lin Hong (2009) propose a pinyinisation strategy for the names of special dishes in Sichuan cuisine from the perspective of brand originality and internationalisation, for example, “麻婆豆腐(Ma Po Dou Fu)”, “担担面(Dan Dan Mian)” and “宫保鸡丁(Gong Bao Ji Ding)” can be translated as MapoTofu Dandan Noodles, and KungpaoChicken respectively. If the main ingredient of the dish is a unique traditional Chinese food, then the pinyinisation of the main ingredient is also unique, for example, Jiaozi, Baozi, Mantou, and Tofu. The translation must also pay attention to the aesthetic awareness: firstly, the length of the dish name, secondly, the differences in food concepts, and thirdly, the preservation of exoticism. The two views represent a breakthrough from previous related studies.

Yang Lengqiu and Chen Da (2010) discuss the principles of translating Sichuan cuisine names guided by Yan Fu's standard of “Faithfulness”, “Expressiveness” and “Elegance”, and propose the methods of direct translation, direct translation with interpretation, phonetic translation, phonetic translation with interpretation, and meaning translation according to the characteristics and connotations of different dishes.

The “English-Japanese and Korean Translation of Famous Sichuan Dishes and Snacks” drafted by the Chengdu Municipal Bureau of Quality Supervision puts forward the general principles for the translation of Sichuan dishes: the translation of famous Sichuan dishes and snacks should conform to the principles of internationalization and follow the language habits of each language, while taking into account the cultural heritage of the dish names. The basic pattern of the English translation of famous Sichuan dishes and snacks is generally: "cooking method (past participle of

verb) + main ingredient + ingredients + with/in + soup".

On 10 March 2010, the final result of the project “Translation of the names of classic Sichuan dishes”, a large book entitled “Chinese Sichuan Cuisine”, was officially published by Sichuan Science and Technology Press, commissioned by the Sichuan Provincial Government and organised by the Sichuan Research Centre. The book is a good example of the heritage of Sichuan cuisine translation, which directly translates the well-known elements of Sichuan cuisine such as “麻辣”, “串串(串串香)”, “担担(担担面)”, “钵钵(钵钵鸡)” into “mala”, “chuanchuan”, “dandan” and “bobo”. As a result, “夫妻肺片(Fu Qi Fei Pian)” is directly translated as “FuciFeipian” with a note (Slicedbeef &offal in chili sauce) for foreigners to understand. The publication of this book aims to standardise the preparation and translation of classic Sichuan dishes, and is a landmark achievement in the research and practice of translating Sichuan dish names, as well as being the first time in the field that expert translators, media organisations and booksellers have worked together.

2.2. The Current Situation of Sichuan Cuisine Translation

There are manifold and various differences in language, diet, social customs and cultural background between China and western countries, which have given rise to the lack of culinary words in English counterparts. This results in tremendous impediment on translating the Chinese dishes into English appropriately and precisely. Furthermore, the regional features, the excellent culinary art and terms in Sichuan cooking, and cultural denotative behind dishes altogether translate the translation of Sichuan dishes into a challenging task. As a result, there are a variety of problems in translating Sichuan dishes. The following are a few of the most typical issues occurred in previous translation activity.

2.2.1. Translation without Comprehensive Understanding

A few of the translators haven't fully figured out the specific information behind names, translating names only through their surface meaning. For example, the Chinese name: Fuqi Feipian, was once translated by someone into “Husband and Wife's Lung Slice”. But it is widely known that the lungs are not really from human beings, so the more applicable translation is “Pork Lungs in Chili Sauce”. “Fuqi Feipian” is a well-known Sichuan dish, which owns a specific cultural background. On the grounds of a book, a couple in Chengdu ran a snack shop, specializing in processing pork's lungs with a distinctive flavor. So, if translating the name only according to their surface meaning (literal translation), foreign customers may not get the real meaning of this dish, and worst of all, they could be terrified when hearing it.

So, before translating, it is necessary for translators to comprehensively apprehend cultural background, and get to know the cooking ingredients and cooking methods behind the names. While translating dishes' names they also must observe some rules, the first of which is to make customers understand the ingredients of dishes, and cooking methods. Thus, the normal translation “Pork Lungs in Chili Sauce” reaches this standard. Compared with the original name, the translation reflects its taste, conveying more specific information, and if customers want to know more about it, they could ask waiters about its historical allusions and significance.

2.2.2. Lacking Theoretical Guidance

A lot of translators are destitute of theoretical guidance while translating dishes' names and haven't taken the target readers, the target context, and readers' cultural background into consideration. So, applying the Skopos Theory during the process of translation is necessary for each translator.

According to the Skopos Theory, translation is a communicative activity with purpose and outcome. The perfect translation must be commensurate with the original context in a notional sense, the language format, and communicative function. Analyzed from Nida's text type and functional equivalence theory, the names of dishes are crucial to the application of information text; they can not only convey meaning, but also own infinite mercantile value. Thus, the first priority that needs to be given when translating names of dishes is to let foreign customers understand the meaning of names of dishes, followed by translating their cultural deposits. Only in this way can the commercial value of dishes' names be fully and accurately represented, which is also the translation purpose of dishes' names. For example, "Koushuiji", was translated by someone into "Slobbering Chicken", which baffled some foreigners from time to time. In fact, this dish is usually served cold with various condiments, and is characterized by its spicy, tender taste, and fresh smell. The reason why it was named as "Koushuiji" is because there is a lot of chili peppers in it; your tongue will feel numb when tasting this, making your mouth dribble. Therefore, from the perspective of Skopos Theory, the more applicable translation of this dish is "Steamed Chicken with Chili Sauce".

2.2.3. Cultural Vacancy

Cultural vacancy is a phenomenon that occurs when the counterpart in another language doesn't have equivalent meaning. It is widely known that China is an ancient country with a long history and a splendid culture, so there are various idioms and stories that can't be found in English culture. For example, "Yuxiang Rousi" is a traditional Sichuan dish well-known for its unique flavor, but how to translate it to let foreign customers understand what it is the key point, reckoning that this dish is made from fish instead.

It is widely known that in English culture, this dish doesn't have a corresponding name, so when translating this dish, it is necessary to let customers know its ingredients and cooking method. The Yuxiang flavor is derived from the pepper bubble, garlic, ginger, vinegar and sugar in it. So the more proper translation is "Yuxiang Shredded Pork in Chili Sauce". Language is the carrier of culture, and culture is transmitted through language, so nothing short of appreciating culture contained in language can facilitate cultural transmission. Thus, translators have to explore correct methods and apply the translation theory for further cross-culture communication. There are some suggestions: first, before translating it is indispensable to do some research and figure out whether there already are acceptable and recognized translations, if they already exist, we can directly apply those translations; second, figure out the correct meanings, ingredients, cutting techniques, utensils, and culinary process of dishes; finally, be acquainted with corresponding culinary terms, such as, "Pian"- "Slice", "Kuai"- "Chunk", "Shao"- "Braise", "Zheng"- "Steamed".

For better translating names of Sichuan dishes, there is a need to adopt some translation approaches, they are literal translation, free translation and transliteration.

3. The Skopos Theory

The Skopos theory is a functionalist theory, born in Germany in the 1970s. The word "skopos" is Greek word, which means goal or purpose. According to this theory, the skopos of translation determines the method and strategy of translation. Katharina Reiss, a pioneer of the Skopos theory, has looked at the function of the translation and found that the purpose of the translation is sometimes different from that of the original, in which case the function of the translation becomes more important than that of the original. Reiss argues that different types of texts correspond to different translation strategies, which helps translators to choose their translation methods and strategies. Hans Vermeer, a proponent of skopos theory, argues that all human actions have a specific purpose, and translation is the same. Translation is "the production of a discourse for a purpose and for an intended audience in the context of the target language". He proposed three important principles in translation: the Skopos rule, which states that the act of translation is subordinate to the purpose of translation; the Coherence rule, which makes the translation readable and meaningful; and the Fidelity rule, which maintains the semantic coherence between the translation and the original. The latter two principles must be subordinated to the Skopos rule.

The Skopos rule, the first and main rule that all translation activities should follow. The entire translation process, including the choice of translation methods and translation strategies, is determined by the skopos to be achieved by the act of translation. The Skopos theory summarizes the skopos to be achieved by the act of translation into three kinds, namely the skopos of the translator, the communicative skopos of the translated text and the skopos to be achieved by using a particular translation methods.

The Coherence rule refers to the need for a translation to be intratextual coherence, both within the translation and in relation to the culture of the language into which it is translated. The translation needs to be coherent, presenting information that fits the context of the recipient, so that it can be understood and accepted by the recipient, and be readable and acceptable.

The Fidelity rule refers to the requirement of intertextual coherence between the translation and the original, which refers to the coherence that exists between the target language and the original text, i.e. that the meaning of the translation is closely related to the original, reproducing the information in the original and maintaining some degree of reciprocity.

4. Analysis of Sichuan Cuisine Translation from the Skopos theory

Sichuan cuisine, one of the eight major cuisines, is already well known throughout China and even in many other countries. A good translation of Sichuan cuisine helps to 'go global'. As such, Sichuan cuisine is not only a tourism add-on, but also a cultural heritage. The translation of Sichuan cuisine is not only the translation of a dish, but also the promotion of Sichuan culture. Therefore, the translation of Sichuan cuisine is not a one-off task, not a "one-trick pony", but should follow the purpose of Sichuan cuisine translation and adopt corresponding translation methods and techniques for dishes with different characteristics, so as to ensure that the content of the dish is conveyed while also spreading the culture behind the dish.

The names of Sichuan dishes can be broadly divided into the following categories: realistic ones: “麻婆豆腐(Ma Po Dou Fu)”, “水煮肉片(Shui Zhu Rou Pian)”, “鱼香肉丝(Yu Xiang Rou Si)”, etc.; those named after the seasoning plus the main ingredients. “糖醋鱼(Tang Cu Yu)”, “麻辣牛肉(Ma La Niu Rou)”, “椒麻鸡块(Jiao Ma Ji Kuai)”, etc.; named after the cooking method There are also dishes named after the main ingredients: “清蒸鱼(Qing Zheng Yu)”, “水煮牛肉(Shui Zhu Niu Rou)”, etc. There are also dishes with a more meaningful name, such as “鸿运鳝丝(Hong Yun Shan Si)”, “四喜丸子(Si Xi Wan Zi)”, “富贵鸡(Fu Gui Ji)”, “夫妻肺片(Fu Qi Fei Pian)”, “口水鸡(Kou Shui Ji)”, etc.. There are numerous categories and the names of the dishes are distinctive. In addition, Sichuan cuisine includes a wide variety of flavours, such as five spice, spicy, fish spice, sour and spicy; and many cooking methods, such as braised and dry-fried. The translation of dishes is a practical translation, not only to make it understandable to foreigners and avoid the embarrassment of confusing diners to order, but also to avoid the trouble or even conflict caused by inaccurate translation. The translation process therefore needs to pay more attention to its functional purpose, to the delivery of information and to the acceptance of the audience.

When translating the names of Sichuan dishes, the translator must first understand the dishes, accurately grasp in detail their specific main ingredients, auxiliary ingredients, practices, cutting methods, shapes, tastes and other substantive content, correctly interpret the historical origin and cultural meaning of the naming of each dish, the naming method, the naming background, etc., and then consult the relevant literature according to the context of Sichuan food culture to eliminate bias in the understanding of details, and finally choose the appropriate vocabulary for In order to improve the accuracy and acceptability of the translations, Sichuan cuisine and its culture can be better promoted to foreigners. For some dishes with a cultural background, their historical origins and cultural implications are greater than the English translation of the dish itself, so it is important not to directly translate the dish in isolation from its culture and history, but to choose the most appropriate translation method according to the specific characteristics of the dishes.

Sichuan cuisine is both national and global. Sichuan cuisine itself defines a strong position in today's food culture. Nowadays, the translation of Sichuan cuisine is no longer just an accessory to tourism, but also has the general mission of spreading culture, and the aim of Sichuan cuisine translation is to present Chinese culture to the world. Therefore, the translation should be based on a strong cultural vision, and the method of phonetic translation or phonetic translation of characteristic elements + direct translation of common elements should be used for all Sichuan cuisine and the characteristic elements of Sichuan culture, except for those that are conventionally used. For example, transliteration, such as Mala, Chuanchuan, Douhua, Huoguo, Guokui, Mantou, Baozi, Jiaozi and Tangyuan; as well as Huiguo Pork, Dandan Noodle, Bobo Chicken, Sandapao RiceBall and Jiangxiang Beef, which are results of transliteration and literal translation. Secondly, the translation of special terms and allusions in Sichuan cuisine and Sichuan culture must be unified, especially the English expressions of the compound taste types, cooking methods and knife work of Sichuan cuisine must be unified, and the characteristic elements in them are still mainly phonetic, such as mala, jiangxiang,

yuxiang, shuizhu, etc. Where human and historical allusions are involved, transliteration or literal translation with notes may be used consistently. For example, “开门红(Kai Men Hong)” can be translated as tender fish head with red pepper (kairnenhong, literally means a goodstart); “夫妻肺片(Fu Qi Fei Pian)” can be translated as Fuqi Feipian (Slicedbeefin spicysauce); and “东坡肘子(Dong Po Zhou Zi)” can be translated as Dongpo HogHock(Afamous Sichuan dish first made by Sichuan's Famous poet-Su Dongpo(1037~1101)). And then, for the translation of general or conventional foodstuffs, it is important to ensure that the name fits the reality, and should be in line with the psychological expectations and habits of the target language readers, and the translation should refer to the names of foodstuffs and ingredients officially marked in supermarkets in English-speaking countries and apply them uniformly in the translation work. For example, “葱(Cong)” should be translated as green onions, not scallion; “猪肚(Zhu Du)” is hogmaw, not pigstomach; “肥肠(Fei Chang)” is called chitterlings, not intestines (which is the name of the human anatomy); “子鸡(Zi Ji)” is gamehen, not small chicken or spring chicken; “豆豉(Dou Chi)” is blackbean, not fermented soybean. Therefore, when translating, it is important to follow the purpose of the translation and pay attention to the cultural differences between China and the West.

5. Conclusion

Cuisine, runs a common refrain, being the new oil in the 21st century for international communication. To let the globe know more about China, it is necessary to embrace the world, and Sichuan food, as an important component, owning history over thousands of years, is known for its smell, rich taste, prominent cooking techniques, numerous verities and special styles, playing a key role in this exchange. With foreign communication booming, more and more foreigners gravitate to Sichuan cuisine, and there are a lot of Chinese people that go abroad to open their own Chinese restaurants. Therefore, it's necessary to highlight the importance of accurate dish translation, because these names are the means of transmitting information and traditional culture, analyzing the names of dishes not only is necessary but also owns realistic meaning.

In this paper, the writer analyzes nowadays English translation of Sichuan cuisine from the view of skopos theory. In the course of cultural communication, translation, as the tight bond of languages, effectively improves the development of the different culture. Many translators think that it is challenging for them to deal with the translating unaccountable kinds of Sichuan cuisines. Although various linguistic scholars have summarized some relevant translating strategies and methods, the translation of Sichuan cuisine should not only consider the basic function and aim, but also consider the need of conveying the cultural information behind these names.

Translation of Sichuan cuisine offers effective guidance for people from any other countries, and satisfy the main aims of profit of food industry. It also meets foreign customers' demand of understanding the meaning of Sichuan cuisine. Furthermore, this kind of translation activity caters for the development of food industry and the transmission of the Sichuan cuisine culture and profound historical culture behind their names.

An accurate and appropriate translation of Sichuan cuisine

is a good calling card for its internationalization, and a good translation is a guarantee for the spread of Chinese culture. When translating Sichuan cuisine, it is important to refine the details of the name of the dish on the basis of the translation guidelines, not only to know what the English words corresponding to its various ingredients are, but also to consider how the flavours of the dish are to be conveyed to foreigners in English in a specific and accurate way. China has a vast territory and abundant resources. Some of the unique ingredients used in Sichuan cuisine can make the translation of Sichuan cuisine more distinctive. Because of the local and specific nature of Sichuan cuisine, and the fact that it contains factors such as dialect and culture, it is not advisable to fully rely on existing standards to translate Sichuan cuisine. Moreover, each place has its own unique local culinary characteristics, the cultural background of which needs to be taken into account. China's culinary culture is not at all inferior to that of other countries, and Sichuan cuisine, with its endless charms, is bursting with life. As an integral part of Chinese cuisine, Sichuan cuisine plays a vital role in spreading Chinese culture, building China's image and highlighting its culture.

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