



Translating Dish Names: Food Cultural Representation in *Hong Lou Meng*

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Abstract

Dish name translation in literary texts is worth studying; it's different from restaurant menu translation. This article differentiates the two translations by Yang & Yang and Hawkes through studying on the translation of dish names in *Hong Lou Meng* and puts forward three principles and three suggestions from the linguistic level and cultural level, respectively.

Keywords

Food Culture in *Hong Lou Meng*, Dish Name Translation

Subject Areas: Literature

1. Introduction

After thousands of years of evolution, the meaning of diet has changed. It is not only a purely physiological need of man, but also a kind of unique culture. All individuals must eat in order to survive, but what people eat, when they eat, and how they eat are all patterned by culture. Study on Chinese menu or dish name translation has been made by a multiple of scholars in China, many of whom have written theses for degree of Master of Arts in which western theories were introduced and put into use, such as *On the Translation of Chinese Menu from a Functionalist Perspective* by Fang Xuelian [1], *On the Translation of Chinese Menus into English: A Functionalist Approach* by Ye Ying [2], *A Study on the Culture Default in Chinese Menu Translation from the Perspective of Relevance Theory* by Shi Xiaoya [3], *English Translation of Chinese Menu from the Perspective of Reception Theory* by Liu Jie [4], *On the Cultural Adaptation of Translation of Chinese Dish Names* by Wang Ai [5], *On Translation Strategies of Chinese Menu from the Perspective of Reception Theory—Based on the Analysis of Chinese Menu in English Version* by Zhang Zhouhui [6], *On English Translation of Chinese Dish Names from the Perspective of Adaptation Theory* by Li Wengang [7], *Chinese-English Menu Translation from a Multi-Perspective* by Liu Cuiwei [8], *On Translation of Chinese Menu in Light of Functionalist Approaches* by Qu Song [9], *Application of Adaptation Theory to Chinese Menu Translation* by Tang Lu [10], *The Enlightenment*

from *C-E Menu Translation for 29th Olympic Games and Expo 2010* by Shu Jinrong [11], *Comparative Study on the Translation of Hotel Menus from the Perspective of Skopostheorie* by Yuan Shu [12], and *A Study of Chinese-English Translation of Chinese Cuisine Names from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics* by Zhang Juan [13]. Nevertheless, dish name translation in famous literary work as *Hong Lou Meng* has never been discussed or studied. *Hong Lou Meng* is regarded as an encyclopedia of Chinese culture for its various aspects of cultural information, among which the Chinese food culture accounts for nearly one-third of the novel. The Chinese food culture in *Hong Lou Meng* is reflected in the following two aspects—rich and colorful diet activities and a multitude of dish names.

2. Food Culture and Dish Names in *Hong Lou Meng*

2.1. The Characteristics of Food Culture

As a Chinese idiom goes, “Food is the first necessity of man”. People in China attach much importance to food. From long time ago, Chinese food culture has become novelists’ favorite describing object in each era. Each of the literature works containing food cultural connotations is of its own characteristics of food. *Hong Lou Meng* is no exception. Wu Ping sums up the characteristics of food culture in *Hong Lou Meng* as delicacy, harmoniousness and gracefulness.

According to statistics, there are about 186 kinds of food in *Hong Lou Meng*, including staple foods, dishes, pastries, drinks, fruits to flavorings, which are so various and delicate that they are paid particular attention to the ingredient features, cooking methods and dietary functions, which can be taken as the main characteristics of the dishes.

2.2. The Cultural Indications of Dishes

Not only do stately mansions take enjoyment in eating, even ordinary people’s daily meals can be regarded as a great pleasure. People in China are always dainty about dishes which are characterized as exquisite ingredient feature, sundry cooking method, rich dietary function, regionality, variety and so on. These are well reflected in the cases of the dishes in *Hong Lou Meng*.

First, the family of the author Cao Xueqin has long been particular about the diet tradition and he was skilled in cooking, the dishes in *Hong Lou Meng* are of overall character of food culture in ancient China. In other words, particular attentions are paid to the ingredient features, cooking methods and dietary functions of dishes in *Hong Lou Meng*.

Second, since Cao Xueqin lived in a given period of history—the Qing Dynasty, dishes in *Hong Lou Meng* also have the individuality of food culture in this epoch, which is deeply influenced by the culture hybrid between the Han nationality and the Manchu, and the cultural communication between the south and the north China. That is the reason why there are so many types of dishes from different regions in *Hong Lou Meng*.

Third, due to the particular personal experiences and the ebb and flow family history of the author, descriptions of food in *Hong Lou Meng* are not only of features of an aristocratic family but also of folk life.

In a word, what makes people speak highly of *Hong Lou Meng* is the various and profound food culture of ancient China reflected in the novel and most of the dish names in it are of deep meaning, refined language, deep cultural background and rich cultural information.

Translation builds up a bridge for people from different cultures for the reason that the activity of translation itself is the communication of culture. Translation is no longer considered as merely an inter-lingual activity at the level of language, it is more of an act of cross-cultural communication. Thus, cultural translation has always been attracting the attention of the scholars. As the peak of novels in ancient China, it is not hard to imagine how difficult the translation of *Hong Lou Meng* could be. Since there are so many cultural connotations that may be difficult for some Chinese readers to understand, not to mention the foreign readers whose mother tongue is totally varying from Chinese. Besides, reflections on different food cultures between China and the west can be found in their languages. In *Hong Lou Meng*, there are many terms and descriptions concerning food cultural information which cause big challenges in translation, because many of them are peculiar in Chinese and with no corresponding expressions in English. Such characteristics of *Hong Lou Meng* will lead to the difficulty in translation, especially for the translation of dish names in the novel, which are of deep meaning, refined language and abundant cultural information.

Because of the complexity in the process of translation, when translating the novel *Hong Lou Meng*, especially the dish names into English, the translator has to overcome the problems of bilingual differences between Chinese and English as well as the problems arising from the cultural gaps between the two nations whose food culture are quite different. That is to say, the translator should not only focus on the vocabulary, syntax and phonetics, but also on the different cultural characteristics. The translator should have cultural awareness of both the source language and target language cultures.

3. Comparative Study of Dish Name Translation

Dish names are widely seen in *Hong Lou Meng* and are of abundant information about Chinese traditional food culture. Much complexity is involved when it comes to the problem of how to deal with their translations. Since *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *The Story of the Stone* are the only complete English versions of *Hong Lou Meng*, they are distinguished from others by their compensation for cultural communication and far-reaching influential. The following sections will empirically explore the translation strategies and methods of dish names in the two versions.

3.1. Case Study

After an all-round analysis on all the translation of dish names in *Hong Lou Meng* in the two versions, six typical samples of dish names are selected for further discussion. A comparative analysis will be made according to the three categories of Chinese dishes: dishes revealing main ingredient, dishes emphasizing cooking method and dishes reflecting dietary function. For each category two dishes will be chosen, they include, 鸽子蛋 (Ge Zi Dan), 鸡髓笋 (Ji Sui Sun); 火腿炖肘子 (Huo Tui Dun Zhou Zi), 酒酿清蒸鸭子 (Jiu Niang Qing Zheng Ya Zi); 奶子糖粳米粥 (Nai Zi Tang Jing Mi Zhou), 茄鲞 (Qie Xiang).

3.1.1. Ingredient-Oriented Dish Name Translation

Example 1: 鸽子蛋 (chapter 40).

Yang Xianyi: pigeon's eggs [14].

Hawkes: pigeon's eggs (deliberately chosen for their mirth-provoking possibilities) [15].

The dish appears in the feast held by Grandmother Jia in Grand View Garden when Xifeng wanted to play tricks on Granny Liu who came from downtown in order to fawn on Grandmother Jia and show off their luxuries. “鸽子蛋” is not the author's fiction but a kind of imperial food in the palace of Qing Dynasty and moved into some luxury feasts in southern China. Pigeon's eggs are rare owing to its low egg laying rate. Hence it is no exaggeration for Xifeng to say “They cost one tael of silver each”.

Translation is deeply influenced by translator's choice. Rooting in Chinese cultural heritage, Yang usually takes loyalty as an indispensable principle in his translation practice. In this case, Yang's translation is a literal one with no explanation. By translating it into “pigeon's eggs”, the original meaning can be expressed enough. But with the purpose of popularizing *Hong Lou Meng* among the western readers, Hawkes regards readability and acceptability as the most important and translates it with the explanation inside the brackets, which makes the readers easy to understand Xifeng's motivation. When translating a sentence containing cultural images, literal translation at the linguistic level will inevitably lead to foreignization at the cultural level; free translation is quite the opposite. Therefore, from the perspective of Chinese traditional food culture, Yang's translation strategy here is foreignization while Hawkes' domestication.

Example 2: 鸡髓笋 (chapter 79).

Yang Xianyi: bamboo-shoots with chicken marrow.

Hawkes: creamed chicken and bamboo.

In the evening of Mid-Autumn Day, Jia She specifically presented this dish to make up to Grandmother Jia. Although the character of Jia She is not so good, this time he has kissed the Blarney stone. No wonder Grandmother Jia ordered to send the other two dishes back but leave this, because “鸡髓笋” is a rarity of Hong Lou Dish, which is salty, fresh, crisp, tender, tasty and nutritious. The cooking method is to remove the chicken thighs and bones, crush out the bone marrow and then decorate the marrow on the fresh bamboo shoot.

Facing the culture vacancy phenomenon, Hawkes employs the domestication strategy to replace “鸡髓” with “creamed chicken” which is a kind of food that western people are more familiar with. However, Yang applies foreignization with the method of literal translation to “transplant” these words with cultural connotation into

English culture. As it was mentioned above, the main ingredient of the dish is bamboo shoot while the chicken bone marrow is used for decoration. It is better to use the concrete translation model of “main ingredient + with + subsidiary ingredient” to emphasize the main ingredient of the dish as Yang did in his translation.

3.1.2. Cuisine-Oriented Dish Name Translation

Example 3: 火腿炖肘子 (chapter 16).

Yang Xianyi: that bowl of fresh pork stewed with ham.

Hawkes: that piece of boiled gammon.

Xifeng shows solicitude for Jia Lian’s old wet-nurse Nanny Zhao and picks up “火腿炖肘子” with her elbow since Nanny Zhao can not chew other hard dishes with her aged teeth. Because the dish is supposed to be crisp and suitable for the appetite of elderly people, great emphasis is placed on its cooking method—“stew”. “Stew” is one of the various Chinese traditional cooking methods, which means “to cook food in the water slowly”. As we have discussed above, Yang’s translation is the transmission of Chinese culture in detail while Hawkes’ is to represent Chinese features to foreign readers in general. Yang’s version loosely copies the original text with the strategy of foreignization by using the past participle form of the verb (stew) as a modifier for the main ingredient, which can well introduce the cooking method of Chinese traditional cuisine to target language readers. Hawkes uses domestication and replaces the information with another expression “boiled”, which is different from “stewed”, with which the foreign readers are very familiar. Both Yang’s foreignization and Hawkes’ domestication are workable as for functional equivalence since they comply with their translation purposes respectively. But in terms of the transmission of culture reflected in *Hong Lou Meng*, foreignization strategy seems better.

Example 4: 酒酿清蒸鸭子 (chapter 62).

Yang Xianyi: steamed duck with wine sauce.

Hawkes: duck steamed in wine.

Hong Lou Dish is also very particular about eating light, so the dish “酒酿清蒸鸭子” shows another traditional cooking method—“steam”, which adds no other ingredients with no strong taste, and cooks slightly. All the nutritional value of food and the original taste and flavor can be retained by using this cooking method. Besides, much attention is paid to the freshness of materials of steamed dishes. After tasting various dishes, people yearned to the original flavor of dishes. In point of “酒酿清蒸鸭子”, duck steamed in wine can remove its smell of fish and be tasted more fresh and sweet.

Both Yang and Hawkes use the past participle form of the verb (steam) to modify main ingredient “duck”. Difference lies in that they use “steamed” as a pre-modifier and a post prepositional phrase respectively. As the words in the target language can be found to match and express the cultural information containing in the original text, the two translators may use the method of literal translation to convey the information. For if the source language is in accordance with the target language in cultural level, foreignization is domestication and domestication is foreignization, too.

3.1.3. Function-Oriented Dish Name Translation

Example 5: 奶子糖粳米粥 (chapter 14).

Yang Xianyi: milk and sweetened rice.

Hawkes: a few mouthfuls of milk.

“奶子糖” is actually a general term of dairy products for Manchu people, providing human bodies with high heat and energy, with the effect of replenishing *Qi* and blood, which is very conducive to fatigued people or people of insufficiency of vital energy and blood. “粳米” (japonica rice) is one kind of the top-rank rice that is rich in nutrition. Wang Xifeng is busy preparing the funeral of Qin Keqing recently, it is most appropriate for her to eat this medicinal congee. Diet cures more than the doctor. This is the charm of Chinese dietary function, namely the homology of medicine and food.

Hawkes directly translated it into milk with the strategy of domestication. Milk is common for breakfast in western countries and rich in nutrition. Hawkes pays much on the content, the target readers’ reception and the target culture. While considering the target readers’ reception and basing on the culture of source language, Yang uses domestication combining with foreignization and translates it into milk and sweetened rice, which not only conveys the information of western nutritional breakfast—milk, but also preserves the image of Chinese traditional breakfast—porridge (sweetened rice).

Example 6: 茄鲞 (chapter 41).

Yang Xianyi: fired egg-plant.

Hawkes: dried aubergine.

“Hong Lou Dishes” are rich in nutrition and of the function of nourishment maintenance after a superb cooking process. It is different from medicine in the sense that it is refined by the cuisine (except for drinks, candy, etc.). Herbs are cooked into tasty foods; meanwhile foods are cooked in a way to enhance the efficiency of herbs. This can be well represented by the dish “茄鲞”, which is written in the most detailed and most vivid way in *Hong Lou Meng* and reflects the dietary characteristics of Chinese dishes. It not only insures the color, flavor and shape of Chinese dishes, but also retains the nutrition and therapeutic function of ingredients after complicated cooking process.

The two translators use “egg-plant” and “aubergine” to express the main ingredient “茄子”. Besides promoting blood circulation by removing blood stasis, “茄子” could improve the gastrointestinal blood perfusion, reinforce the spleen and increase the discharge of urine. Moreover, the multifarious subsidiary ingredients of the dish, such as apricot, peach seed, peanut, sweet chestnut, newborn shoots, and mushrooms etc., also have their dietary functions. However, both of Yang and Hawkes don’t mention the dietary function of “茄鲞” because it seems to be the most difficult problem for translator to deal with in Chinese dish name translation. In this case, these translations of Yang Xianyi and Hawkes will be difficult to be understood by foreign readers because of the lack of relative cultural background. Thus the readers may regard it as ordinary egg-plants.

3.2. Summary: Different Translation Strategies Applied in Dish Name Translation

Foreignization and domestication are two major strategies applied to solve the cultural conflicts between the source language and target language. Attempting to translate such a culture-based novel as *Hong Lou Meng*, Yang Xianyi and Hawkes are faced with the frequently addressed issue of foreignization and domestication. In line with the statistics and the above analysis on the concrete translation examples, Yang Xianyi incline to use strategy of foreignization to handle with the cultural differences in order to preserve the Chinese cultural features as reflected in *Hong Lou Meng*. Yang succeeds in fulfilling his translation purpose for most of the time. By contrast, for the purpose of conveying to the reader even a fraction of the pleasure the Chinese novel has given him, Hawkes puts more weight on the readability of version and the acceptability of target language readers. But from the perspective of culture, Hawkes sometimes seems to neglect to convey some important features of Chinese traditional food culture. It is discovered that, from the perspective of Chinese traditional food culture, foreignization in translation of dish names in *Hong Lou Meng* keeps more advantages than domestication.

4. Principles of Dish Name Translation in *Hong Lou Meng*

It is commonly accepted that the difficulty in translation mainly comes from two aspects. One is the difference between the source language and the target language at linguistic level; the other is the difference between the two cultures contained in them respectively. In a word, translation is not simply a transfer of language pattern but that of culture. In translation of literary works, such as dish names in *Hong Lou Meng*, the most difficult problem is the cultural barrier rather than the linguistic barrier.

4.1. Principles

Although the translation of Chinese dish names is difficult, especially of those in literary works like *Hong Lou Meng*, we find some clues from the above examples. The following principles are the specific ones in translation of Chinese dish names summed up according to the previously mentioned three categories of Chinese dishes.

4.1.1. Headwords for Revealing the Main Ingredients

In Example 1, it is obvious that there are no or just little cultural differences between the source language and target language attached on dish names like “鸽子蛋”. In this condition, functional equivalence, which means to produce similar association in the brains of both the source language receptor and the target language receptor, can be reached through the translation of the conceptive meaning of the dish name by the method of literal translation. In Example 2, the dish name “鸡髓笋” also reveals the main ingredient of the dish. But because of the lack of cultural images like “鸡髓”, the translator is supposed to use foreignization strategy to “transplant”

these words with cultural connotation to English culture and literally translate them into English. On the whole, in translating dish names which focus on the main ingredient, it is better to use foreignization strategy and literal translation method. Try to make the main ingredient of dish headword with the concrete translation model of “main ingredient + with/in + subsidiary ingredient” reveal and emphasize the main ingredients in the translation.

4.1.2. Modifiers for Emphasizing the Cooking Methods

In Examples 3 and 4, the names of the above two examples partly represent the cooking methods in China. Chinese cuisine is noted for its multitude of cooking methods, such as 炖 (stewed, simmered), 烧 (braised, broiled, grilled), 炒 (fried), 炸 (deep-fried), 蒸 (steamed) and 腌 (pickled) etc. As these Chinese dish names contain the cooking methods, the concrete translation model can be “main ingredient + cooking method + subsidiary ingredient” or “cooking method + main ingredient + subsidiary ingredient”. The past participle form of the corresponding verb of cuisine can be the pre-modifier while the relative V.P.P phrase can be a post-modifier of the ingredients of the dish, just like Yang’s and Hawkes’ translations in the examples, “fresh pork stewed with ham” (火腿炖肘子) and “steamed duck with wine sauce”, “duck steamed in wine” (酒酿清蒸鸭子). Such translation expresses not only what the dish is but also how the dish is cooked, which is conducive to realize the common association both in Chinese and English.

4.1.3. Annotations for Demonstrating the Dietary Functions

Dishes with medical or dietary functions are traditional food therapies dating back to ancient China. The traditional Chinese diet emphasizes the medical function of the food for health. The ancient Chinese people seek the way of maintaining health through food. “The final purpose of the Chinese diet is to pursue longevity”. In *Hong Lou Meng*, Cao Xueqin depicted the tradition of Chinese dietetic culture carefully. In the Examples 5 and 6, “奶子糖粳米粥” and “茄蚶” show that people in Jia Family know a lot about the medical function of dishes, which is an important part of Chinese food culture. Whereas in the west, there is no such proposition on the healthy diet and mostly people have bread, butter, coffee and so on. Thus it will be difficult to be understood because of the lack of relative cultural background. In this case, literal translation still works, but relevant explanations or addition of related words become necessary. Such dishes with dietary functions are best rendered by brief factual translation + notes, that is, literal translation with connotation. Annotation is helpful to supplement the necessary cultural background and to reduce the difficulty of reading caused by the difference between Chinese and English culture.

Of course, the explanation can only be employed when the situation allows. It is useful in the translation of dish names in literary works but is obviously too long to be used in today’s menu since people pay much attention to the concise and comprehensive of the menu which leaves little space for English translation.

5. Suggestions of Dish Name Translation

The preceding three principles in translating dish names are in fact more inclined to the level of language. But inasmuch as translation is a kind of cross-cultural communication in the final analysis, the translators should consider translation from cultural perspective. To achieve this, translators are supposed to follow the three points below.

5.1. Understanding Source Language Culture and Target Language Culture

In order to yield a successful rendition, the translator should understand both of source language culture and target language culture. Because of differences between them not only lie in linguistic aspect, but also in their cultural features. On one side, to accurately translate dish names, translators should understand the knowledge and the cultural information contained in original text first for the reason that dish names in literary works, such as those in *Hong Lou Meng*, contain not only a large number of characteristics of one nation, but also the historical and cultural background of the nation. Misunderstanding may lead to mistranslation. On the other, in addition to correctly grasp and use proper translation theories and skills, the translator should be familiar with the use of the target language and culture. The translated version will devalue the Chinese dish names itself if the target language readers fail to understand the translation. Take Yang Xianyi for example, his proficiency of English and knowledge of Western culture lay a good basis for him to introduce Chinese culture with Western ways of thinking and reading tastes, which is conducive to enhance the readers’ receptivity of his translation.

5.2. Faithfulness to the Original Text

Faithfulness is an important principle of translation. Both in China and abroad, scholars and translators maintain that translation should be faithful to the original text. Set Yan Fu's triple-element principle as an example, that is, faithfulness, expressiveness and elegance, among which faithfulness is emphasized to be the most important one. To be faithful to the original is the duty of translators. The same is true in translating the Chinese dish names in *Hong Lou Meng* into English, that is, the principle of faithfulness should also be emphasized to retain the traditional Chinese food culture and original color in this novel. Faithfulness to the original text means not to domesticate the culture-specific images of the original text to those belonging to the target language culture. The faithfulness is mainly oriented to the original text producer, to the cultural sense of the original text and to Chinese culture.

5.3. Intention of Cultural Transmission and Exchange

The cultural purpose of translation largely determines the strategies applied in the translation. Whether using domestication strategy based on the purpose of promoting local culture or using foreignization in order to perpetuate foreign culture, the ultimate goal of translation is to facilitate cultural exchange and promote cultural development. As a cross-cultural communicator, the translator is not only responsible for the conversion of two languages, but also for the transformation of two cultures as well as for building a bridge between the two cultures. That is to say, it is necessary for translators to have the intention of cultural exchange and development and possess the profound cultural awareness. From the perspective of Chinese traditional food culture, no matter what methods are used to translate dish names in *Hong Lou Meng*, literal translation or free translation, the translator is supposed to use the strategy of foreignization, which may help to present the traditional food culture with Chinese characteristics to the world and make Chinese traditional food culture advance towards the world.

6. A Comparison to Restaurant Menu Translation

From the above Hong Lou dish translation, both of the two translators paid much attention to the translation of the main ingredients in dishes and cooking methods. The translated dish names can never be too long or cumbersome. Neither can restaurant menu translation. In comparison, the differences mainly lie in the following.

First, Hong Lou dish names should be simplified and fuzzified. When translating, the translator should dwell on the abstract and avoid the real. The above Example 6 may demonstrate this point. Although both of the two famous translators did not mention dietary function of the dish, which might lead to failure in understanding due to the lack of related culture background of target readers, it needs to be simplified and fuzzified and highlight the main ingredients only; restaurant menu translation tends to be stylized, as translated into prepositions + auxiliary material and proper names + style; prepositions phrases served as post-modifiers; verb past participles served as pre-attribute or post-attribute; the combination of pre-modifiers and post-modifiers; main ingredients + main ingredients; main ingredients + with + seasonings; main ingredients + with/in + soups; cooking method + main ingredients; cooking method + main ingredients + with + seasonings; cooking method + main ingredients + with/in + soup; shape/taste + main ingredients; cooking method + shape/taste + main ingredients (+seasonings); person names/place names (+cooking method) + main ingredients; cook method + main ingredients + person names/place names + style; (cooking method) + material (+in/on) + feeder.

Second, communication should be taken into consideration when Hong Lou dish names are translated. The translation should be target-language-culture-oriented and domestication strategy is supposed to be used, such as Hawkes' translation in the above Examples 3 and 5. For restaurant menu translation, domestication and foreignization are usually used at the same time. For those hard to find equivalences in the target language, foreignization is usually adopted, as shown in the above Example 4, Hawkes used transliteration method to show Chinese special dietary culture to the world.

Third, generally, no notes are added in Hong Lou dish translation because readability of the literary text and limitation of page space have to be considered, otherwise the readers' interest of reading might be influenced. For restaurant menu translation, notes and cultural allusions are usually added. Those dish names with huge cultural differences or with historical allusions interpretation might be used for accurately translating dish names and for target readers learning more about the cultural background information.

When translating dish names in literary works as *Hong Lou Meng*, the features of the dishes should be embo-

died, and the literary flavor of Chinese traditional food culture should be kept as well. Both of the literariness and artistry should be represented to achieve best communicative function of the text.

7. The Perspective of Western Translation Theories

7.1. Reception Aesthetics

Scholars of reception aesthetics believe there are two stages in the process of Chinese dish name translation. One is the reception of the source text by translators; the other is the reception of English version by target readers. In the first stage, the translator plays two roles in the reception process. The translator is not only the “reader” of the source language but also the producer of the target language. In the first stage, like other ordinary readers, the translators have their own expectations and aesthetic judgments to the source language. As a result, the translators already have their own understanding of the source text. Because of the distinctive goals, translators’ reception of the source text is different from that of the target readers of the translation of Chinese dish names. The translators need to fully understand Chinese dish names, including the features, cooking methods, and cultural backgrounds to make sure that an actual and precise meaning can be transferred.

With the development and application of reception aesthetics in translation, readers get involved in the process of reading with their horizons of expectation. In this process, the vital point of judging whether readers accept the translated version related to the degree of satisfaction of their horizons of expectation. As a result, the change of aesthetic distance and horizon happens among the readers when a certain literary work is accepted by generations and generations. According to Jauss, aesthetic distance refers to “the difference or separation between the horizon of expectations and the work or as the “change of horizons”. It can be measured by the “spectrum of the reader’s reaction and criticism’s judgments” [16]. Therefore, it commonly occurred in the translation of Chinese dish names. In the practical translation, this needs the translators to choose appropriate translation methods according to the readers’ changes of aesthetic distance and horizons of expectation.

Scholars of reception aesthetics view readers’ role and status as an indispensable part of translation activities, and they claim that a literary work can be called an art only if the readers’ significant role in the reproduction process is considered. A successful translation of Chinese dish name is produced by the cooperated efforts of the translators and the readers rather than the mere translators. Readers gain an important position, and their comments and appreciations of a certain work are closely related to its quality. From this sense, readers are the creator rather than the receiver, and they have their own unique expectations of the literary work. The aesthetic values and functions of the translation of the Chinese dish names lie in the impact on the customers.

Since a certain number of Chinese dish names acquire historical background and images which are difficult for the foreigners to understand, in this case, translators should take the customer-oriented strategy to transfer source context to the target customers and achieve the realization of both communication and commerce purposes. With the development of globalization and international communication, the customers’ receptive abilities and aesthetic expectation of the translation of Chinese dish name have changed and more and more foreigners have more interest and desire to learn about Chinese food culture. According to the theory of reception aesthetics, horizons of expectation are of great significance in the translation of Chinese dish name, and will be changed by their aesthetic experience. As Harland argues that in 1999, “the specific norms and assumptions brought to bear by the audience of a specific period—norms and assumptions derived from previous literary encounters and socio-cultural determinations generally” [17]. Without the active reception of the readers, the aesthetic values of the work can not be successfully achieved. Only a complete and continuous re-understanding of the target readers time by time will the translated work make refreshment for their horizons of expectation [18]. During the process of reception, the readers will adjust their own expectations and evaluations from the previous aesthetic experience. If they meet the images in the translations which they are not familiar with, they will reconsider their previous aesthetic experience and make a new judgment. It is true of the translation of Chinese dish name. Foreigners may realize the unfamiliar elements even they have never heard about before, they will make great effort to understand and relate them with their own previous experience and knowledge according to the given information. Meanwhile, their expectation will change time by time. The readers meet the images which are similar with their own culture, it will refresh their related memory and accept the original context gradually. During the process of reception, the readers are not just receivers of information, but receptors and re-creators of the work.

Therefore, in the case of the translation of Chinese dish names which convey a large number of particular

cultural images, the customers will do a great deal of re-reading to gain the profound knowledge and full understanding. As a result, the readers' demands and horizons of expectation to the translated names will be changed. At this time, translators should pay attention to the readers' shift of horizons of expectations of the work and other translation methods to meet their demands.

7.2. Skopos Theory

Translation brief is one of the important concepts of H. Vermeer's Skopos theory. Translation brief "specifies what kind of translation is needed". Therefore, the translation brief formed the foundation of the Skopos theory. Under the guidance of the translation brief, translators select certain information from SL and process it according to the rules or conventions of TL. Therefore, the target audience can choose useful information by themselves. Thus, the TT may be understood by the receivers, that is, "the receivers interpret it as being sufficiently coherent with their situation" [19]. As for the Chinese dish name translation, when foreign customers enter a restaurant, their primary purpose is to have dinner, and the function of the dish name is to provide the customers with the dish's basic information and briefly advertise the dish. Therefore, simplifying some comparatively redundant expressions and making foreign customers to have a better understanding of Chinese food culture is quite necessary [20].

According to German Functionalist Approaches, the purpose, termed as skopos, which is the prime principle of any translation process, determines the overall translational action. Therefore, the skopos of Chinese dish name translation is very important. The skopos of dish name translation is to achieve the equivalent function the replication of the ST into the TT. To fulfill this purpose, some sub-skopos should be followed.

- 1) The TT should be as much informative as the ST.
- 2) The TT should be as appealing and motivating as the ST.
- 3) The translated dish name should be as user-friendly as the original.

The skopos and sub-skopos can be achieved by appropriate use of translation strategies, careful choice of words and reasonable typesetting of the TT.

7.2.1. Skopos of Chinese Dish Name Translation

The skopos of the Chinese dish name translation are listed as follows: the primary purpose of the translation activity is to introduce the basic information of the dish, arouse the customer's appetite and desire to order the dishes. Middle level purpose is to help the restaurant or the hotel to raise public awareness of the dishes and improve their images. Highest purpose is to reflect profound cultural foundation of China, increase cultural exchanges with other countries.

7.2.2. Translation Brief of the Chinese Dish Name Translation

Once the purpose of Chinese dish name translation has been considered, the translation brief or specific requirements of the translation tasks should be clarified. A translation brief for the Chinese dish name translation should contain information about:

- 1) the sender's intention: informative function to introduce the information of the dishes to the foreign visitors; operative function to arouse the appetite and encourage the consumption;
- 2) the addressee: foreign visitors who wants to order the Chinese dishes in restaurants or hotels;
- 3) the place of text reception: it is commonly set in restaurants or hotels;
- 4) the medium over which the text will be transmitted: the bilingual texts which contains a list of dish names and their prices;
- 5) the motive for text production or reception: three different levels of purposes.

7.3. Pragmalinguistics in Translation

Pragmalinguistics in translation is a study on pragmatic force or language use in the context from the linguistic sources viewpoint. Pragmatics force is the intended meaning for a given information. It composed two main kinds of pragmatic force, implicit under the surface and unstated, and on the surface and stated. To identify the implicit forces as they appear in their various social contexts is very important, for frequently, the apparent intention of a message is not the same as the actual intent [21]. Dish name translation refers to translating food of the source language into the target language, which transmits information to people the different cultures. Dish

name translation involves different culture, custom, psychology, linguistics and so on. In order to keep the functions and features of the dishes in the target language, pragmatic translation, especially the pragmatic equivalent principle is applicable. Pragmalinguistic equivalent effect translation needs the translator to choose the appropriate form of languages to convey the intended meaning of the given message. To achieve the pragmalinguistic equivalent effect, the translated dish names should unify the beauty in sound, form, image and be acceptable [22].

Dish name translation is not a simple procedure from the source food name in the target languages, but a complicated process which aims at producing the target dish name as the result of adaptation. From source dish name to a target dish name the adaptation process must be used, that is, a successful dish name translation has to go through three steps before its translation is conducted: preliminary investigation, linguistic transmission and adaptation. Translation performance is widely accepted as intercultural communication. Therefore dish name translation cannot possibly be separated from the interpretation of the interwoven relationship of language and culture. The discussion of translation equivalence provided guiding principles and criteria for evaluating dish name translation [23].

8. Conclusions

After shedding light on the factors affecting translators' choice of translation strategies, that is, cultural orientation and translation purpose, and reflecting the food culture in *Hong Lou Meng* and its influence on the translation of dish names, we attempt to make a comparative study of dish name translation in the two complete English versions of *Hong Lou Meng* by Yang Xianyi and Hawkes.

Yang Xianyi gives priority to foreignization since his cultural orientation is deeply influenced by the Chinese traditional culture and his purpose of translation is to maintain the foreignness of the novel and introduce Chinese traditional culture to the world; while affected by the European ethnocentrism, Hawkes tends to use domestication, basing on the purpose of pleasing target language readers. Although in most cases, the English readers are easier to understand Hawkes' translation, as often as not the implied cultural information is inevitably lost. From the perspective of Chinese traditional food culture, foreignization keeps more advantages than domestication when translating great literary works abundant with various cultural connotations like dish names in *Hong Lou Meng*, with the purpose of introducing Chinese traditional culture to the target language readers.

Basing on the above analysis, this article puts forward three principles and three suggestions at linguistic level and cultural level, respectively. That is, the principles of using headwords for determining the main ingredients, modifiers for emphasizing the cooking methods and annotations for demonstrating the dietary functions along with the suggestions for translator to possess understanding of both the source language culture and target language culture, faithfulness to the original text, intention of cultural transmission and exchange.

This article has some limitations. Translation of Chinese dish names is a continuous process of practice and exploration. As people's living standards improved and dietary structure changed and integration trend of the Chinese food and Western food increased, the traditional naming method of Chinese dishes will change, which will bring many uncertainties to translation. But as long as we master the essentials of the above mentioned principles and suggestions in translating dish names in *Hong Lou Meng*, we can continuously improve the quality of dish names translation so as to spur Chinese food culture to advance towards the world. We hope this article may bring about a new perspective in the translation of Chinese dish names and also some enlightenment for further study on this issue.

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