

A Study of English Translation of Literature on Diet in Taihang Mountainous Areas from the Perspective of Skopos Theory of Translation

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Abstract

There are some differences in the diet of Taihang Mountainous areas due to different regions, food production, social customs, climatic conditions, and historical accumulation. As the names of Taihang Mountain Foods relate to historical and cultural factors, it has brought great difficulties and challenges to translators' translation. The translator's understanding of the original text during translation, the choice of translation principles and translation norms, and the translation strategies will make the translations different. Choosing a reasonable translation norm can standardize the translation, and regulating the factors that affect the translation process both inside and outside the text will promote the development of food outreach in the Taihang Mountainous areas. This paper explores the English translation of literature on diet in Taihang Mountainous areas, and points out the differences between Chinese and western thinking styles to find out ways to translate diet literature better from the perspective of skopos theory of translation.

Keywords

Diet, Literature, Skopos Theory of Translation, Strategies

1. Introduction

The Taihang Mountains, which are located in the densely populated areas of the Beijing-Tianjin and North China Plains, are making a name for themselves by domestic and foreign travel enthusiasts due to their unique beauty and strong cultural features. Food has been in a state of constant prosperity in the long history of the Chinese nation. It can be said that eating is a culture unique to each

ethnic group. Nowadays, in pursuit of high-quality, high-precision, high-price food, more and more people have begun to re-focus on the original and simple farmhouse coarse grain diet, which has set off a new wave of mountain cuisine. In recent years, the local governments along Taihang Mountains have stepped up efforts to develop tourism and cultural undertakings, and have issued a series of supporting policies to promote the tourism of Taihang Mountain. In order to ensure the quality of tourism, many local village committees near the Taihang Mountain also organized the establishment of farmhouse cooperatives, which formulated strict management standards in terms of food hygiene, accommodation conditions, and passenger registration. Therefore, choosing reasonable translation strategies to regulate the translation of dietary literature will promote the development of dietary outreach in the Taihang Mountainous areas.

2. Research Background

In foreign countries, some scholars have studied the Chinese diet. Friedrich J. Simoons is the author of *Food in China: A Cultural and Historical Inquiry*. The book describes the use of various foods in China in a taxonomic way, as well as the regional characteristics of cooking and traditional Chinese knowledge of nutrition and health. The first chapter of the book focuses on the relationship between food and the spiritual world of the Chinese nation, that is, how food and eating method reflect the spiritual temperament and mode of thinking of the nation. It deals with the central role of food in Chinese life, Chinese perception of food, health and disease, social status related to food and eating and the relationship between food and religion, beliefs and rituals, etc. (Simoons, 1991).

Jack Goody has made outstanding contributions in the field of food anthropology, and has published articles on Chinese diet, the globalization of Chinese food, the origin of Chinese food culture, and so on. He believes that the globalization of Chinese food is actually the globalization of world culture. The export of Chinese food adds a multicultural element to the process of globalization, which offsets the homogeneity of world culture caused by the mass production of some industrial foods. *The Globalization of Chinese Cuisine* was an important theme of his discussion. This article is included in *Diet and Love—Cultural History of East and West* (Goody, 1998).

In China, Cui Yonglu found that, in addition to the general principles and requirements in the translation of Chinese classic literature, the following issues should be paid attention to: first, preserve the features and originality of the Chinese culture; second, the artistic level and that of literary creative writing should be manifested in the translation; third, pay attention to the fluency of the language, with greater readability (Cui, 2007).

Zhu Jingyan pointed out that Chinese pasta has a long history and a wide variety of types. Although there have been many articles on such research on the English translation of Chinese food dish names, there is no specific research on the English translation of Chinese pasta names. The writer discussed the English translation of Chinese pasta names from the perspective of the Skopos theory,

and combined the differences between Chinese and Western ways of thinking to think about how to translate Chinese pasta names in order to be better accepted by foreigners (Zhu, 2012).

Using translation theory and translation skills, Luo Saiqun analyzed the cultural connotation of Chinese food culture recipes, combined cross-cultural communication and translation practice, and discussed the translation methods and techniques of recipes from several different angles. It has certain value and significance for translation teaching and research on the translation of Chinese cuisine and banquet interpretation (Luo, 1998).

Li Yuting analyzed the English translation of the Hexi Corridor's special dietary translation of publicizing abroad, pointing out that the translator's understanding of the original text during the translation process, the choice of translation principles and translation norms, and the tendency of translation strategies will make the generated translations different. Choosing a reasonable translation standard can regulate the translation, and regulate the factors that affect the translation process both inside and outside the text, which will promote the development of the Hexi Corridor's dietary translation of publicizing abroad (Li, 2019).

In short, whether it is at home or abroad, the research on Chinese food has become more and more popular, but there are still few studies on the translation of local special food literature. This article specifically studies the translation of food literature in the Taihang Mountains, and discusses the appropriate translation principles and methods from the perspective of skopos theory of translation.

3. Theoretical Foundation

German functional translation theory began in the 1970s. The representative figures are Katharina Reiss, Hans J. Vermeer and Christiane Nord. It was Katharina Reiss who first proposed and used its concept as the basis. She connected language function, text type and translation strategy to shape the prototype of functional ideological theory. On the basis of Rice, Hans Josef Vermeer, the famous German translation theorist, first created Skopos (Fu, 2010).

The translation of Skopos Theory opens up a new perspective for translation studies. The theory holds that translation is a very purposeful cross-cultural communication behavior. The core point of view is that the communicative purpose of the translation determines the method of translation. In translation, the translator should adopt appropriate translation strategies according to the purpose of translation. The standard of translation is dynamic and changes with the purpose of translation. As long as the translation can fully meet the requirements of translation, and can fully exert its communicative function in the context of the target language, it is a good translation that meets the standards. There are three principles in translation skopos theory: the principle of purpose, the principle of coherence and the principle of faithfulness. The skopos rule refers to the purpose of translation to determine the choice of translation method and translation strategy;

the coherence rule refers to that the translation must conform to the expression habits of the target language and can be understood and accepted in the communicative environment of the target language; The fidelity rule requires that the translated text and the original text should maintain inter-lingual coherence and maximize the semantic meaning of the original text (Huang, 2017).

The primary principle followed by all translation activities is the “Principle of Purpose”, that is, translation should be able to function in the context and culture of the target language in the manner expected by the target recipient. Therefore, under teleology, a faithful translation may not be good. Translations, truth-seeking and pragmatic translations are not necessarily good translations; translations that achieve faithfulness, expressiveness, elegance are not necessarily good translations. Only the translations that achieve the purpose of translation are the best translations. Nord further perfected the theory and put forward the principle of “function plus loyalty” as a supplement to the teleology, that is, to require translators to be responsible for all participants in the translation process in the course of translation, and strive to coordinate the relationship between the parties.

The main purpose of the English translation of the names of Taihang Mountain Food is to provide food information, induce and attract foreign friends to taste the delicious food of Taihang Mountain, and at the same time increase the understanding of Taihang Mountain food culture. However, due to the particularity of the dietary name, both the social ideology of China and the West and the expectations of the readers in different cultural contexts must be considered when translating, and a flexible translation strategy must be selected to achieve the purpose of translation.

4. The Principles and Strategies of English Translation of Literature on Diet

Skopos theorists of translation believe that translation is a communicative act, and the purpose of the translation act determines the entire process of translation, that is, the “Purpose determination” (Nord, 2018). “Translation strategy must be determined according to the purpose of translation” (Jia, 2004). The translation of food and beverage has a clear purpose. The purpose is not only to convey its culture to foreigners, but also to convey this information as accurately as possible, so that foreigners can understand the name and understand the ingredients of this food, and then taste it. Therefore, when translating dietary literature, translators should use translation skopos as a guide to correctly view and flexibly use translation strategies.

4.1. Literal Translation and Annotation

According to translation skopos theory, the purpose of translation determines the method of translation. As long as the purpose of translation can be effectively achieved, the specific method to be adopted can be flexibly selected. The advantage of literal translation is that it can directly convey the textual information

of the original text. The beauty of free translation is to express the contents of the original text in a smooth and euphemistic manner.

In the translation process of food culture, everything is guided by the purpose of translation. Translators should effectively combine literal and free translation, and grasp the distinction between literal and free translation, so that the translation can achieve the best communicative function. When using the method of literal translation, it is difficult for foreign tourists to understand the social and cultural background without adding annotations. Therefore, the combination of literal translation and annotation can solve this problem very well.

For example, Qi Chang:

It looks similar to ordinary sausage. It is cut into thin pieces with the purest lean meat of pork, added with 26 seasonings and the old soup of boiled meat. It is refined and tastes tender and delicious. The name can be translated into “sausage”, followed by annotations.

4.2. Free Translation

When translators translate the food literature, they must consider both the understanding ability and thinking habits of the foreign tourists, as well as the curiosity of the foreigners to the Chinese food culture. During the translation process, the translator should keep a sober mind, remember to take the translation skopos theory as the basic translation criterion, try to use the graceful translation to reproduce the style, meet the cultural needs of appreciation, and give full play to achieve cross-cultural communication purpose. Chinese people like to use similes, metaphors, exaggerations and puns to name food names. These words should be translated freely to make it easier for foreign friends to understand.

For example, Longhudou:

If literally translated, it becomes “fighting between dragon and tiger”, but this will confuse foreign friends. It is best to use the method of free translation. In fact, this is the food braised with rice, millet, and small beans. Because the Chinese characters “dou (means fighting)” and “dou (means bean)” sound the same, and rice and millet are compared to dragons and tigers, they are called “dragon and tiger.” It should be translated into rice, millet and red bean porridge.

4.3. Transliteration

Some dishes and staple foods are unique to a certain region and have ethnic characteristics. These words and phrases are often transliterated so that they can maintain the original Chinese cultural information.

For example, Lu Yinger:

It is a famous specialty snack at the north end and east foot of Taihang Mountain. If directly translated, Lu is deer and Yinger is tail. But this is far from the essence of this dish. We can use Chinese pinyin transliteration, and add relevant cultural introduction in English. Therefore, it can be translated with Chinese Pinyin: Lu Yinger (a dish made of pig intestine filled with sesame sauce, firewood eggs, and more than 20 seasonings and residual sauce).

5. Conclusion

The English translation of the special diet in the Taihang Mountainous areas is restricted by the translation norm theory. It is more difficult for translators to translate the names of the diet. The translation strategies of literal translation, free translation or transliteration annotation can no longer achieve the purpose of translating English for dietary outreach. The translation of local food vocabulary must start from the language level, and also take into account the differences in ideology, thinking habits, social environment and other aspects caused by cultural differences. At the language level, the English translation of food should try to convey the information about the food ingredients and practices contained in the food to English readers. At the cultural level, it is necessary to let the local culture carried by the food go out and enhance the local soft cultural strength.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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