

## **PRINCIPLE AND ANALYSIS OF THE BAR MENU TRANSLATION IN ZHYTOMYR**

In today's globalized world, a high-quality restaurant menu translation is a crucial element in the tourism and hospitality industry. A correct translation enhances clarity for international visitors, improves the establishment's reputation, and helps avoid communication misunderstandings. Conversely, poor translations can lead to confusion, humorous situations, or even legal issues, especially in cases of incorrect labeling of allergens or cooking methods. That is why our research aims to study the general overview of the bars, existing in the city of Zhytomyr, which seems to be rather topical as the city is located in the centre of Ukraine, close to its capital, and has numerous foreign visitors, arriving both for business and for pleasure. The study covers fifteen bars' menus and represents the analyses along with suggestions for improvement.

A study of 15 establishments in Zhytomyr revealed that only 4 had English bar menus, and of those, only 2 were without errors. The 'Choice' program offers a paid machine translation service, enabling all establishments to provide accurate English menus. This is particularly important given the current influx of foreign nationals into the city, as many staff members lack foreign language skills

We suggest some examples to illustrate our typology menu translation errors:

**Grammar & Consistency:** when translating a menu into English, grammatical mistakes, incorrect use of articles, and inconsistency in terminology are common issues. These errors affect the overall perception of the menu, making it confusing for English-speaking guests. Grammatical mistakes can distort the meaning or make the text sound unnatural. Articles are often missing or misused, which makes the text harder to understand. See Table 1 below:

Table 1. "Grammar & Consistency"

Incorrect	Correct	Comment
on the basis of rum with a berry-strawberry taste and noticeable sourness	A rum-based drink with a pronounced berry-strawberry flavor and noticeable sourness	"A rum-based drink" is more natural and fluent.
Tincture based on blackcurrant extract, with a pleasant sourness	A tincture based on blackcurrant extract, with a pleasant sourness	"A" is missing, which is a grammatical error. In English, most singular countable nouns require an article.

Another issue is the consistency in naming within a single menu, which includes avoiding mixing British and American English on a menu that can appear unprofessional. For example, a menu might contain "Whiskey Sour," which uses the American spelling

"whiskey," alongside "Light Pilsner (Spirit of the Czech Republic)," which employs British-style wording without American phrasing. To maintain stylistic consistency, it's better to choose one language variation and adhere to it throughout the menu. For instance, if using American English, "Light Pilsner" could be changed to "Light Lager" for better alignment. Correcting grammatical mistakes, using articles properly, and ensuring consistency in terminology will make the menu appear more professional and easier for international guests to understand.

**Clarity and Readability in Drink Menus:** Issues stem from overly literal translations that disregard context, or from lengthy descriptions that overwhelm the reader. Also, menu descriptions should be concise and informative at the same time. One more issue can arise from the usage of unnecessary or unclear words in descriptions. Some drinks are traditional to Ukrainian cuisine, but their names may be incomprehensible to foreigners. We have to consider the influence of culture on translation perception, because some drink names may be perceived differently depending on the cultural context. See Table 2 below:

Table 2 “Clarity and Readability in Drink Menus”

Incorrect	Correct	Comment
Tincture on cherry fruits, tart, aromatic	A tart and aromatic cherry-infused tincture	English does not use the preposition "on" in this context. The correct option sounds clearer to native speakers
Beer prepared on the basis of wheat malt, with light acidity and a citrus aftertaste	A wheat beer with a hint of citrus and refreshing acidity	The original description contains unnecessary words and is overloaded with a complex structure.
Spotykach	Traditional Ukrainian spiced liqueur (Spotykach) made with berries and aromatic herbs.	Use of specific terms without explanation. Without explaining what Spotykach is, a foreign guest will not understand what kind of drink it is. Adding a brief description makes the name clearer.
Infusion based on blackcurrant extract, with a pleasant sourness	A blackcurrant-infused drink with a pleasantly tart flavor	The word "infusion" can be associated with tea or herbal infusions, which does not always correspond to the context of an alcoholic beverage. Using "blackcurrant-infused drink" makes the description more accurate and appealing.

Clear and well-adapted drink descriptions make the menu more understandable, attractive, and aligned with international standards.

**International Menu Formatting:** a well-structured international menu should follow global standards, using standardized terminology and clear formatting. Here we provide the key principles for a clear menu, which include:

- Clarity & simplicity – concise, informative descriptions.
- Consistent structure – logical section order (beverages, appetizers, etc.).
- Standardized Names & Terms.
- Familiar formats – liquid volumes in milliliters (ml), dish weights in grams (g).
- Using internationally recognized names prevents confusion:
  - Alcoholic drinks – "liqueur" (not "tincture"), "brandy" (not "grape vodka").
  - Coffee names – "Espresso," "Americano," "Latte" (no literal translations).
  - Ingredient clarity – e.g., "Uzvar – traditional Ukrainian dried fruit drink."

Also, it is better to mark the menus, which differ by region like “Europe” – structured sections (e.g., separate hot & cold beverages), “the USA” – branding emphasis, simple names, or “Asia” – beverage images, cultural highlights (e.g., traditional teas).

Incorrect translations can lead to a loss of customers (Bassnett & Lefevere, Translation, History and Culture, 1990 – [11, p.11-15]). Confusing or absurd dish descriptions can drive away potential customers, especially foreigners. Mistaken orders lead to disappointment and negative feedback. Lost customers reduce profits, and menu corrections add costs. Negative reviews and viral translation errors can harm the restaurant’s reputation. Menu errors suggest unprofessionalism and negligence. Poor translation may be seen as disrespectful to international guests. Incorrect translations can strip dishes of their cultural uniqueness (Venuti L. , The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation, 1995 – [12, p.18-22]). Mislabeling allergens can pose health risks, making the restaurant legally responsible. Customers may sue for incorrect ingredient descriptions. Violating food labeling laws can lead to fines and penalties. To prevent these consequences, use professional translators and native speakers. Adapt translations to cultural expectations. Ensure clear descriptions and verify allergen details.

We aim to improve the general situation with the bar menu translation in our city, that is why we suggest a few translation recommendations, which include following:

- Professional language service providers, use specialists in gastronomy and native speakers with cultural expertise.
- Localization principles, demand collaboration with native speakers and specialists for cultural adaptation.
- Use of appropriate linguistic software and AI tools for quality checks and consistency.
- Testing to validate translations with customer surveys and native speaker focus groups.

The study allows us to conclude, that menu translation errors commonly appear in three main areas: grammar and consistency, clarity and readability, and international menu formatting. Regarding grammar and consistency, mistakes like incorrect articles, plural forms, tenses, and inaccurate phrase translations are frequent. For example, using "fresh juice" when "fresh juices" is intended can cause confusion. Clarity and readability issues stem from overly literal translations that disregard context, or from lengthy descriptions that overwhelm the reader. Finally, international menu formatting errors involve failing to adhere to global standards, omitting explanations for traditional dishes, and using incorrect culinary terminology.

Accurate menu translation is vital for restaurants catering to international customers. Translation literature stresses the importance of context, cultural nuances, and adaptation to the target audience. Errors can distort meaning and negatively impact customer perception. Avoiding these common mistakes enhances service quality and creates a positive impression.

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