

ERRORS IN ZHYTOMYR RESTAURANTS' MENU TRANSLATION: LINGO-CULTURAL APPROACH

A correct menu translation is a crucial component of a successful restaurant business, especially in the era of globalization. However, errors in English menu translations are a widespread phenomenon that can lead to awkward situations, loss of customers, or even legal issues (Venuti L. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*. – London: Routledge, 1995. – 353 p).

This article examines the main causes of such errors, their consequences, and possible ways to correct them. We have studied the main course menus of fifteen Zhytomyr restaurants. The research is important for our city because we have many international visitors arriving to support Ukraine and to enjoy our beautiful nature (Nezdoymynov, S., Iaromenko, S., Bedradina, G. *Safety and Quality of Restaurant Service as Factor of Restoring Tourist Mobility in the Gastronomic Tourism Destination of Ukraine.. Almatourism-Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development*. 2023. T. 13 : 24. 117–137 p.).

We regard the causes of errors in menu translation, discuss the consequences of incorrect translation along with examples of common errors, and conclude with suggestions on the ways to fix the situation (Li, S. *A corpus-based multimodal approach to the translation of restaurant menus. Perspectives*. 2019. T. 27 : 1. C. 1–19).

During our research, we have found the following causes of errors in menu translation: use of automatic translators without editing, literal translation without considering the context, lack of knowledge of culinary terminology, absence of professional translators or native speakers, and use of outdated or inappropriate dictionaries. For the study, 15 establishments were selected, and in total, about 30 establishments in the city were examined. While conducting the research, we found only 4 restaurants with English-language bar menus: “Pleasantville BBQ Pub”, “Mario Pizza”, “Shultz V2.0”, and “Dim Trybelya.” Of these four, only two have menus without errors.

Many restaurants rely on automatic translation tools without proper editing, leading to unnatural or incorrect phrasing. Literal translations, which do not consider the cultural and linguistic context, often distort the intended meaning of dish names. A lack of knowledge of culinary terminology can also result in inaccurate translations, as many local dishes require precise descriptions that generic translations fail to capture. Additionally, the absence of professional translators or native speakers in the translation process increases the likelihood of mistakes. Finally, the use of outdated or inappropriate dictionaries may lead to the inclusion of archaic or misleading terms, further complicating the menu's readability and accuracy.

As most scholars indicate, incorrect menu translation can lead to serious consequences, starting from comic situations that cause misunderstandings or laughter, to reputation risks due to loss of trust from foreign guests (House, J. *Translation Quality Assessment: Past and Present.. London: Routledge*. 2015. 171-230 p).

The most serious consequences can be: possible allergic reactions due to incorrectly translated ingredients, a decline in the establishment's reputation and negative online reviews and legal risks in cases of misleading customers (Newmark, *A Textbook of*

Translation, Prentice Hall, 1988, p. 1–292; Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, Routledge, 2018, p. 1–370)

Comical mistranslations may amuse customers but also cause confusion and misunderstandings, making it difficult for foreign guests to navigate the menu. Such errors can result in a loss of trust, as diners may question the restaurant's professionalism and attention to detail (Karaban, *Translation of English Scientific and Technical Literature*, Nova Knyha, 2004, p. 383–473)

Moreover, incorrect ingredient descriptions can pose serious health risks, leading to potential allergic reactions or dietary restrictions being overlooked. A poorly translated menu can also harm a restaurant's reputation, with dissatisfied customers leaving negative reviews online, deterring future patrons (Nida & Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, Brill, 1982, p. 22–50)

In extreme cases, misleading translations may even lead to legal repercussions if customers feel deceived about what they ordered. Addressing these issues is essential to maintaining a restaurant's credibility and ensuring a positive dining experience for all guests.

We suggest some examples of common errors: "Борщ з пампушками" translated as *Borscht with slippers* instead of *Borscht with garlic buns*. "Оселедець під шубою" translated as *Herring under a fur coat* instead of *Dressed herring*. "Курка в соусі" was translated as *Chicken in sauce*, which is too general, instead of *Chicken with creamy garlic sauce*.

Many restaurants make critical translation mistakes that result in confusion or unintended humor. For example, the Ukrainian dish "**Борщ з пампушками**" has been mistakenly translated as *Borscht with slippers* instead of the correct *Borscht with garlic buns*, completely altering the meaning. Similarly, "**Оселедець під шубою**" has been translated too literally as *Herring under a fur coat* rather than the more accurate *Dressed herring*, which better conveys the dish's culinary context. Another common mistake is translating "**Курка в соусі**" as *Chicken in sauce*, which is too vague and does not provide enough detail for the dish's description. A better translation would be *Chicken with creamy garlic sauce*, specifying the type of sauce and making the dish more appealing to English-speaking customers. Such errors highlight the need for careful and culturally appropriate translations.

After having conducted our research, we suggest the following ways, able to fix the situation. First of all, the restaurants should consider the possibility of hiring professional translators and editors. Also, if possible, it would be efficient to consult with native speakers. The most important option is checking terminology in authoritative sources, in particular, using high-quality bilingual dictionaries and specialized resources. We would also advise the owners and/or managers testing the translation with native speakers before printing.

To avoid translation errors in restaurant menus, several effective strategies can be implemented. First and foremost, hiring professional translators and editors ensures accuracy and cultural appropriateness. Consulting with native speakers further refines the translations, making them more natural and appealing. Additionally, verifying terminology in authoritative sources helps prevent inaccuracies, especially in culinary descriptions. Before finalizing the menu, testing the translation with native speakers allows for feedback and necessary adjustments. Lastly, using high-quality bilingual dictionaries and specialized resources guarantees precise and up-to-date language use, reducing the likelihood of outdated or misleading terms. By following these measures, restaurants can

enhance their international reputation and provide a seamless dining experience for all guests.

A high-quality menu translation is an essential component of a restaurant's positive impression. Carelessness in translation can lead to negative consequences, whereas a professional approach can enhance the establishment's prestige, attract foreign guests, and ensure a comfortable perception of dishes.

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