

LOST IN STYLE: GRAMMAR AND IMAGE RISKS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF BAR MENUS

The quality of English translations in public spaces often serves as an unofficial marker of a venue's professionalism and cultural sensitivity. As we claimed in our previous paper, 'a correct translation enhances clarity for international visitors, improves the establishment's reputation, and helps avoid communication misunderstandings' [3]. The errors may result in unpredictable situations, even in dangerous ones, causing visitors' health problems, a restaurant's reputation risk, or legal issues. An efficient way to avoid such problems is a detailed analysis of the menus, collecting and correcting the errors, and making suggestions to the restaurant owners. The first task after the error collection is their categorization, which helps not only to improve the available menu, but to ensure the proper menu design in the future.

This study explores the grammar and style-related translation errors found in the English versions of bar menus in Zhytomyr. While seemingly minor, such errors can significantly affect the institution's reputation and international appeal.

The research focuses on two main types of errors:

- 1 Reputation risks (errors of minor severity):
 - 1.1 Grammatical inaccuracies (e.g., article misuse, verb tense errors, plural/singular confusion);
 - 1.2 Stylistic inconsistencies and register mismatch (e.g., awkward wording, excessive literalism, inappropriate tone).
- 2 Potentially dangerous, incorrect meaning (major/critical errors) (e.g.: vocabulary, incorrect presentation of the ingredients, lack of nutritional awareness, etc).

The authors collected and analysed real-life examples of erroneous menu items from the local bars and categorized the mistakes based on their impact on customer perception. Particular attention is given to how such errors may project unprofessionalism, cultural detachment, or even unintentionally humorous meanings. Among the various bars located in Zhytomyr, only three of them have their menu in English: Pleasantville, Dim Trybelia, and Mario Pizza. We present the results of the case study of the bar at Pleasantville, and the error categories with the appropriate explanation.

- 1 Reputation risks (errors of minor severity):
 - Capitalization (e.g.: "The original" instead of "The Original" – title capitalisation; "light with a currant-violet..." – initial word in the sentence) [4];
 - Clarity and readability (e.g.: "refreshing drink based on rhubarb-grapefruit puree with passion fruit flavor" – overly formal or unusual constructions, the excessive use of complex or obscure words and complicated sentence constructions [5]; "unusual taste of the fruits of the Brazilian grape tree in combination with grapefruit juice" – too wordy [2]);
 - Punctuation (e.g.: absence of periods at the end of descriptions);
 - Overuse of phrases such as "based on" or "flavor"[5].
- 2 Potentially dangerous, incorrect meaning (major/critical errors):

- Incorrect identification of drink/ingredient (e.g.: "Captain Morgan Dark" (This is not the correct name, in the picture and according to the description it is rum BUMBU [1]))
- Lack of translation: "alcohol" (without translation);
- Possible discrepancy between description and actual taste (Descriptions of taste qualities e.g.: "strong, bitter, and astringent taste", "vanilla-apple notes, reminiscent of American apple pie", "delicate, sweet aftertaste", "almond and tropical notes");
- Risks of incorrect content (e.g.: "date vodka" and "tropical fruits" – these terms may not be specific enough for customers with allergies or specific taste preferences).

Though the errors of the first category are much more frequent, they can be qualified as errors of minor severity, because they do not damage the client's health. The percentage of such errors is 85%, while the major errors, caused by the incorrect translation, can really lead to serious consequences. In particular, an incorrect cocktail name can lead to confusion and disappointment for the customer expecting a specific taste or composition. The absence of translation may be incomprehensible to some customers. Although subjective, an inaccurate or misleading taste description can disappoint the customer. An incorrect product name can lead to the customer receiving something they didn't expect, especially if they are familiar with these brands.

Each mistake is accompanied by suggested corrections, with explanations referencing credible English grammar sources (e.g., Cambridge Grammar, Purdue OWL). The study emphasizes the importance of using context-appropriate language and consulting native-level references when preparing multilingual materials for public use.

Ultimately, the findings advocate for greater attention to linguistic quality control in hospitality and service industries, where every word can shape the customer experience.

REFERENCES

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