

## **TRANSLATING TASTE: CATEGORIZING AND CORRECTING CRITICAL VOCABULARY ERRORS IN UKRAINIAN RESTAURANT MENUS. CASE STUDY: MAIN DISHES SECTION**

In the globalized hospitality industry, the accuracy of English translations in restaurant menus is more than a matter of language correctness — it is a matter of customer safety and trust. This is especially true in the context of main dishes, where poor translation choices can lead to serious misunderstandings related to ingredients, preparation methods, or dietary restrictions. In Ukrainian restaurants, particularly in non-tourist regions like Zhytomyr, many English-language menu translations still suffer from lexical inaccuracies that risk confusing or misleading foreign guests [4]. This study focuses on identifying and categorizing such vocabulary errors in the “Main Dishes” sections of local menus, highlighting how they affect the customer’s experience and potentially the restaurant’s credibility. Special attention is given to mistranslations that may result in health-related risks (e.g. allergens) or flavour misrepresentation. The research also includes suggestions for accurate reformulations, supported by reliable online dictionary entries and context-appropriate equivalents.

The provided "Pleasantville" menu offers a practical case study for understanding the nuances and potential pitfalls of menu translation. While generally comprehensible, the original text exhibits several areas for improvement, highlighting common errors and the importance of linguistic precision and cultural awareness.

Analyzing the corrections and feedback provided, we can categorize the errors as follows:

### **1. Reputational Risks:**

1.1 Grammatical Errors: The inconsistent use of "Serve with" instead of the standard "Served with" (passive voice) is a prime example. While seemingly minor, such inconsistencies can detract from the menu's professionalism. The correction to "Borscht with Ribs" ("Serve with" sour cream corrected to "Served with" sour cream) directly addresses this. The passive voice is standard in menus when describing how a dish is accompanied or served [6].

1.2 Stylistic Errors: The phrase "on a pillow of Borodino bread" for the "Paste" dish is noted as "poetic but not standard." While creative, it lacks the clarity and directness expected in a menu, potentially confusing customers. The correction to "on a bed of Borodino bread" is more conventional and easily understood. Menus generally favour clear and direct language over overly figurative or poetic phrasing to ensure easy comprehension [1].

1.3 Spelling and Punctuation Errors: The missing Oxford comma [10] in ingredient lists ("green oil and walnuts" corrected to "green oil, and walnuts" in "Hummus") and inconsistent capitalization [5] (e.g., "caesar sauce" corrected to "Caesar dressing") fall under this category. These errors, though small, can impact readability and the overall impression of care and professionalism.

1.4 Inconsistent Terminology: The use of "salad mix" in several dishes, which is corrected to the more standard "mixed greens," demonstrates a lack of consistent culinary terminology. Similarly, the fluctuation between "Caesar sauce" and "Caesar dressing"

points to this issue. Using consistent and widely accepted culinary terms avoids ambiguity and ensures that customers understand what they are ordering [8, p. 96].

1.5 Awkward Phrasing and Poor Flow: Phrases like "slices of lightly salted salmon" are identified as "wordy" and improved to "lightly salted salmon" for better flow and conciseness [2]. The restructuring of the "California" salad description also aims for improved phrasing and readability.

1.6 Standard English Usage: Choosing between British ("omelette") and American ("omelet") English highlights the need for consistency based on the target audience or the restaurant's branding [9].

2. Critical errors, leading to misunderstanding, are potentially harmful to the customers:

2.1 Likely Mistranslation: The note regarding "blue onions" likely being a mistranslation of "red onions" is a critical point [8, p. 101]. Incorrectly identifying an ingredient can mislead customers about the dish's flavour profile.

2.2 Lack of Description: The original entry for "Fishmak" lacks any description beyond weight, posing a significant risk of misinterpretation. Customers have no idea what they are ordering, potentially leading to dissatisfaction. The suggested addition provides crucial information ("Fish pâté made from herring and vegetables. Served chilled."). Providing sufficient information ensures clarity and manages customer expectations. This relates to the grammatical principle of completeness in communication.

2.3 Redundancy and Accuracy: The original "Julius" salad description using "Caesar sauce dressing" is redundant, as "dressing" is inherent to "Caesar." This highlights the need for precise and accurate language.

2.4 Terminology issues:

2.4.1. Terminology familiarity: The clarification of "Dorblu" as "(blue cheese) sauce" caters to an international audience who might not be familiar with this specific cheese [3, p.138].

2.4.3. Avoiding outdated terms: Replacing "alligator pears" with the more common "avocado" [7] reflects the need to use contemporary and widely understood language.

The case study demonstrates a number of errors of minor (reputational risks) and major (potentially harmful) severity. The latter are not as numerous as the minor ones. To summarize, the "Pleasantville" menu corrections exemplify several key linguistic aspects of menu translation: register and style, terminology standardization, grammatical norms, and clarity and conciseness. It is important to highlight that menus typically employ a clear, concise, and slightly formal register. The move from poetic ("on a pillow") to standard ("on a bed") reflects the appropriate stylistic choice. Also, the consistent use of established culinary terms like "mixed greens" and "Caesar dressing" over less common or incorrect terms is crucial for clarity and avoiding confusion among an international audience. An important reputational issue is adhering to standard grammatical rules, such as the use of passive voice for descriptions of how dishes are served ("Served with"), which ensures professionalism and readability. As for the stylistic recommendations, we recommend removing unnecessary words ("slices of lightly salted salmon") and restructuring sentences for better flow improves comprehension and makes the menu more user-friendly. While not explicitly detailed, some corrections hint at the importance of considering cultural differences

By analysing the menu and its corrections, we gain valuable insights into the various aspects of menu translation, emphasizing the need for linguistic accuracy, stylistic appropriateness, clarity, and cultural sensitivity to create effective and professional menus.

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