

Original Paper

On English Translation Strategies for Chinese Dish Names from the Perspective of Eco-translatology-- *A Bite of China*

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Abstract

*This study takes the English translation of dish names in the documentary *A Bite of China* as its research subject, using Eco-translatology as the theoretical framework to analyze the characteristics and cultural connotations of various dish names in the film, as well as to explore the translation strategies and methods. These dish names carry the unique cultural connotations of Chinese food culture in aspects such as culinary techniques, regional characteristics, and folk traditions, showcasing the richness and ecological nature of Chinese cuisine. The research demonstrates that, during the translation process, translators can effectively convey the core information of the dishes and the essence of Chinese culinary culture by considering the cultural background and acceptance habits of the target audience, and by using a combination of translation strategies such as literal translation, free translation, transliteration, and annotation, while emphasizing adaptive shifts. Additionally, the use of adaptive strategies helps the translation better align with the linguistic habits of the target language, improving the readability and acceptability of the translation. The translation of dish names is not only a linguistic conversion but also a practice of cross-cultural culinary communication. This paper provides an ecological perspective on the translation of dish names in *A Bite of China* and offers useful references for the translation of other culinary culture documentaries, contributing to the international dissemination and exchange of Chinese culinary culture.*

Keywords

*Eco-translatology, Chinese dish names, Translation strategies, *A Bite of China**

1. Introduction

In the context of globalization, as China's cultural presence continues to rise on the world stage, more

and more foreign audiences are developing a strong interest in Chinese culinary culture. The documentary *A bite of China*, as a work showcasing traditional Chinese food culture, not only presents the diversity and uniqueness of regional dishes but also conveys the profound cultural significance of Chinese cuisine through its delicate depiction. As the documentary is broadcast globally, translating the dish names accurately and with cultural richness has become an important issue in cross-cultural communication. This study aims to explore the translation of dish names in *A bite of China*, particularly from the perspective of Eco-translatology, analyzing the translation strategies and methods, and revealing how these strategies effectively convey the core information of Chinese culinary culture.

Dish names, as an important part of culinary culture, carry rich cultural connotations and regional characteristics. Chinese dish names often showcase deep historical backgrounds, flavor characteristics, and regional cultures through their unique naming conventions. At the same time, due to the differences in language and culture, the translation of dish names often faces many challenges. Particularly when addressing the needs of cross-cultural communication, balancing linguistic accuracy with cultural transmission becomes a major issue in the translation process. Therefore, this study will explore how to fully consider the cultural background of the target language readers from the perspective of Eco-translatology, integrating strategies such as literal translation, free translation, transliteration, and annotation to ensure that the translation is both faithful to the original text and effectively conveys the unique cultural information to the target culture.

Eco-translatology, as a translation theory that focuses on the translation ecological environment and emphasizes adaptation and selection, provides a new perspective for the translation of dish names. Proposed by Professor Hu Gengshen, this theory stresses that translation is an adaptive transformation of linguistic forms, where the translator must make appropriate choices in both the source and target cultural and linguistic environments. In this study, Eco-translatology provides the theoretical framework for analyzing the translation strategies of dish names in *A bite of China*, especially in dealing with adaptive shifts in the translation of dish names. This framework helps translators make flexible adjustments to translation methods while respecting the source language culture and adapting to the needs of the target culture.

Research shows that when translating dish names in *A bite of China*, translators often consider the cultural background and reading habits of the target audience, adopting different translation strategies. For instance, when dealing with dish names rich in local features and cultural backgrounds, translators may choose literal or free translation to ensure that the cultural characteristics and culinary skills are conveyed. For names with no direct counterpart in the target language, strategies like transliteration or annotation are used to provide necessary cultural explanations, ensuring accuracy and cultural transmission. These strategies not only effectively convey the core information of the dishes but also make the translation more understandable and acceptable to the target language audience.

The purpose of this study is not only to interpret the dish name translations in *A bite of China* from an ecological perspective but also to provide useful references for the translation of other culinary cultural

documentaries. At the same time, this research aims to support the international dissemination of Chinese culinary culture and promote cross-cultural exchange. As China's cultural internationalization accelerates, dish name translation is not just a linguistic conversion but an essential bridge for cultural exchange. Through a deeper study of the dish name translations in *A bite of China*, this research contributes to improving translation quality and promoting the transmission and exchange of culture.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Research Background and Current Situation of Dish Name Translation

Dish name translation, as a crucial area in cross-cultural translation, has received extensive attention from scholars in recent years. Dish names, as the core components of culinary culture, carry both linguistic functions and deep cultural connotations. With the international dissemination of Chinese culinary culture, the translation of dish names has gradually become a focal point of research. Scholars both domestically and internationally have explored dish name translation from various perspectives, including translation strategies, quality assessment, and cultural connotation transmission.

Domestically, many scholars have focused on the strategies and methods used to translate Chinese dish names. For example, He Wu (2010) analyzed the factors influencing the choice of translation strategies for Chinese dish names, arguing that translating dish names requires attention to the relationships between various factors, such as the source culture, language, and the target audience's expectations, to achieve effective cross-cultural communication. Jia Zhenzhen (2020) explored the translation of Chinese dish names in the context of China's "Cultural Export" strategy, evaluating the impact of cultural differences and suggesting that translations should account for these differences to avoid misinterpretations while maintaining cultural authenticity. Furthermore, Liang Lili (2016) conducted an Eco-translatological study on the English translation of Chinese dish names, emphasizing the need for multidimensional adaptation and selection in translation to ensure that the cultural significance of the dishes is preserved in the target language. In addition, Sun Guojin and Yan Jibao (2008) discussed the problems and solutions in translating Chinese dish names into English, highlighting the importance of balancing cultural adaptation with linguistic accuracy. Yang Youwen and Li Qin (2016) analyzed the linguistic and cultural aspects of Chinese dish names, suggesting that understanding the cultural context is essential for accurate translation. Lastly, Zhou Qilin (2016) examined the translation of minority cuisine from Guizhou from the perspective of Skopos theory, noting that the translator's purpose plays a critical role in deciding whether to domesticate or foreignize the dish names in translation.

Internationally, scholars have approached dish name translation from different angles. Saihong Li (2019) conducted a corpus-based study on the translation of Chinese dish names, proposing a multimodal translation approach that integrates text and images to help foreign readers better understand the cultural connotations behind the dish names. Stano (2016) analyzed the translation of "ethnic" food, asserting that food is a carrier of culture and identity, and its translation should address cultural and social functions. Giuliana Garzone (2017) examined the cultural values embedded in food, suggesting that the translation

of food names should consider the social significance of food in specific cultures, such as its role in festivals or social events.

Although there has been considerable research on dish name translation, specialized studies on the translation of dish names in *A bite of China* remain limited, and most of them focus on perspectives such as functional equivalence, Skopos theory, or pragmatics, without in-depth exploration from the perspective of Eco-translatology.

2.2 *The Development of Eco-translatology*

Eco-translatology, proposed by Professor Hu Gengshen, emphasizes the ecological nature of translation. It posits that translation is not merely the conversion of linguistic forms but an adaptive transformation influenced by various factors such as language, culture, society, and environment. The core concept of Eco-translatology includes “translation as adaptive transformation,” meaning that translators must make optimal choices within the ecological environments of both the source and target cultures. This framework offers a fresh perspective on translation, particularly in cross-cultural contexts, where the translator must achieve a balance between source and target cultures, ensuring effective communication and cultural transmission.

The core concepts of Eco-translatology include three main aspects: the adaptation of translation to cultural and linguistic environments, the multidimensionality of translation choices, and the dynamic nature of the translation process. This theory encourages translators to make adaptive choices that reflect the ecological environment of both languages and cultures, ensuring that the translated text can effectively survive and thrive in the target language culture.

In the context of dish name translation, Eco-translatology emphasizes the importance of considering the cultural differences between the source and target languages. Translators must choose appropriate strategies that respect the source culture while adapting the translation to the target culture. This involves not only linguistic adaptation but also cultural and communicative adjustments to ensure that the translation meets the needs and expectations of the target audience.

2.3 *The Application of Eco-translatology to Dish Name Translation*

The application of Eco-translatology to dish name translation is primarily concerned with how to make appropriate translation choices based on the cultural and ecological environment of the target audience. In the translation of *A bite of China*, translators need to consider the cultural differences between the source and target languages, employing strategies such as literal translation, free translation, transliteration, and annotation. This ensures that the translation not only faithfully conveys the dish's original features but also communicates its cultural essence to the foreign audience.

For instance, when translating dish names rich in local characteristics and cultural backgrounds, translators may opt for literal or free translations, ensuring that the cultural features and culinary skills are conveyed. For names that do not have direct counterparts in the target language, translators may use transliteration or annotation to provide necessary cultural explanations, ensuring both accuracy and cultural transmission. These strategies help to convey the dish's core information while making the

translation more accessible and understandable for the target language readers.

Eco-translatology also highlights the importance of adaptive transformation. In the translation of culinary documentaries like *A bite of China*, translators need to be flexible, adjusting their strategies based on the cultural and communicative needs of the target audience. For example, when translating dish names with strong cultural significance, translators must be careful not to distort the intended meaning while adapting the text to the target audience's expectations.

3. Application of Eco-translatology in the Translation of Dish Names in *A bite of China*

3.1 Introduction to Eco-translatology and its Application

Eco-translatology, as a translation theory proposed by Professor Hu Gengshen, emphasizes the ecological nature of translation and the adaptive choices made by translators within various environmental contexts, including linguistic, cultural, social, and communicative factors. According to Eco-translatology, translation is not merely a mechanical process of linguistic transfer but an adaptive transformation that accounts for the unique characteristics of both the source and target languages and cultures. This theory views translation as a process of selection and adaptation to the specific ecological environment of the target language community.

In the context of translating dish names in *A bite of China*, Eco-translatology provides a useful framework for understanding how translators adapt dish names to the cultural and linguistic environment of the target audience while maintaining the cultural connotations of the source dish. The dish names in *A bite of China* are often rich in cultural, regional, and historical significance, and their translation requires careful consideration of both the linguistic characteristics of the source language and the cultural expectations of the target audience. In this section, we will explore how Eco-translatology applies to the translation of dish names in *A bite of China*, considering the linguistic, cultural, and communicative dimensions of the translation process.

3.2 Linguistic Dimension of Dish Name Translation

The linguistic dimension of Eco-translatology refers to the adaptation of language forms during the translation process. This includes aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and phonology, all of which contribute to the overall meaning and impact of the dish name. In the translation of dish names in *A bite of China*, the linguistic dimension plays a crucial role in ensuring that the translated dish names are not only accurate but also comprehensible and culturally appropriate for the target audience.

When translating dish names, translators must consider the linguistic features of both the source and target languages. For instance, Chinese dish names often incorporate vivid and descriptive words that convey the appearance, taste, and cooking method of the dish. These descriptions may include sensory terms that are deeply embedded in Chinese culinary culture. However, when translating into English, these terms may not have direct equivalents that convey the same cultural nuances or sensory experiences. In such cases, translators must make adaptive choices that preserve the dish's essential meaning while ensuring that the translated name remains accessible and meaningful to the target audience.

For example, the dish name “红烧肉” (hóng shāo ròu), which refers to braised pork in a soy-based sauce, can be translated as “Braised Pork in Brown Sauce” to maintain the dish's descriptive elements. This translation is a literal one, preserving the essential meaning and the cooking method. However, the term “brown sauce” may not convey the full depth of the dish's flavor and cultural significance. In this case, a more culturally informed translation might involve adding a description that highlights the dish's rich, savory taste, such as “Soy-braised Pork” or “Soy-braised Pork Belly.” This adjustment ensures that the translation retains the original dish's essence while making it more relatable to the target audience.

In another example, the dish name “佛跳墙” (fó tiào qiáng), which literally means “Buddha Jumps Over the Wall,” refers to a complex, luxurious soup made from various ingredients. The literal translation “Buddha Jumps Over the Wall” preserves the dish's cultural reference but may confuse foreign audiences unfamiliar with the story or symbolism behind the name. To make the dish more accessible, a translator might choose to provide additional context, such as “Buddha Jumps Over the Wall Soup,” or even further explain its cultural background in an annotation. This adaptation ensures that the translation remains faithful to the source while considering the linguistic and cultural context of the target audience.

3.3 Cultural Dimension of Dish Names Translation

The cultural dimension is a key element of Eco-translatology, as translation is inherently a cultural act. Translators must take into account the cultural connotations embedded in the source language and culture while ensuring that the target language translation conveys similar meanings in the target cultural context. This is particularly important when translating dish names, as food is deeply intertwined with cultural identity, history, and social practices.

In *A bite of China*, many dish names carry cultural significance that goes beyond the mere description of the food itself. For instance, dish names often reference traditional cooking techniques, regional specialties, or even folklore and historical events. Translating these names without considering their cultural connotations can lead to a loss of meaning or even cultural misrepresentation. Therefore, Eco-translatology encourages translators to adopt strategies that preserve cultural nuances while adapting them to the target language's cultural framework.

Take the dish “毛豆腐” (máo dòufu), which translates to “Hairy Tofu.” This name refers to a type of fermented tofu with a white, fuzzy coating that gives it its distinctive appearance. While “Hairy Tofu” is a literal translation, it may evoke negative connotations in English, as the word “hairy” often implies something unpleasant. A more culturally sensitive translation might be “Fermented Tofu” or “Molded Tofu,” which accurately reflects the dish's preparation while avoiding unintended negative associations. By making this adaptation, the translator ensures that the cultural significance of the dish is preserved, while also making it more palatable for the target audience.

Similarly, the dish name “鱼香肉丝” (yú xiāng ròu sī), which literally translates to “Fish-Fragrant Shredded Pork,” refers to a popular Sichuan dish that features pork cooked in a spicy, garlic-flavored sauce. The term “fish-fragrant” refers to a cooking style traditionally used for fish, but it is not meant to imply that the dish contains fish. In translating this name, a direct translation such as “Fish-Fragrant Pork”

might confuse English-speaking audiences. A more effective translation might be “Shredded Pork in Fish-Fragrant Sauce,” which clarifies the intended meaning while preserving the cultural connection to Sichuan culinary traditions.

3.4 Communicative Dimension of Dish Name Translation

The communicative dimension of Eco-translatology refers to the transfer of meaning between the source and target languages within a specific communicative context. In translation, it is not enough to focus solely on linguistic or cultural accuracy; translators must also ensure that the translation effectively communicates the intended message to the target audience. In the case of *A bite of China*, dish name translation is not just about linguistic or cultural accuracy; it is about creating a translation that resonates with the target audience and facilitates cross-cultural communication.

When translating dish names, translators must consider how the target audience will interpret the dish names. For example, in Chinese culinary culture, dish names often evoke strong sensory imagery and emotional responses. These names are designed to attract attention and generate interest. However, the communicative function of the dish name may not always be immediately clear to foreign audiences. Therefore, translators need to adapt the dish names to ensure that they are both informative and appealing to the target audience.

For instance, the dish “红油抄手” (hóng yóu chāo shǒu), which refers to a type of spicy dumpling, can be translated as “Spicy Wontons in Red Oil.” The translation “Red Oil” refers to the oil-based chili sauce that the dish is often served with, but it may not immediately convey the dish’s intended meaning to English-speaking audiences. To make the translation more communicative, the translator might opt for “Spicy Wontons in Chili Oil,” which more clearly communicates the dish’s flavor profile while preserving the original concept.

In the case of “宫保鸡丁” (gōng bǎo jī dīng), known as “Kung Pao Chicken” in English, the translation is not only a linguistic conversion but also a cultural adaptation. The name “Kung Pao” refers to the dish’s connection to a historical figure, Ding Baozhen, who was a governor in Sichuan during the Qing Dynasty. While this cultural reference may not be immediately clear to Western audiences, the name “Kung Pao Chicken” has become a widely recognized term in Western cuisine, effectively bridging the cultural gap. The translation works communicatively because it retains the essence of the original while adapting it to a form that is familiar to target language speakers.

3.5 Adaptation Strategies in Eco-translatology

Eco-translatology stresses the importance of adaptive shifts in translation, where translators make conscious adjustments to ensure that the translation is appropriate for the target language environment. In dish name translation, this involves making decisions that reflect the linguistic, cultural, and communicative needs of the target audience. The goal is to produce a translation that is both faithful to the source and effective in the target culture.

In *A bite of China*, translators employ a variety of adaptation strategies, such as literal translation, free translation, and the use of annotations, to ensure that the dish names are culturally appropriate and

communicatively effective. By considering the ecological environment of the target language, translators are able to make choices that enhance the readability and appeal of the translation while preserving the cultural essence of the original dish.

4. Case Analysis

4.1 Case Study 1: “红烧肉” (*Hóng shāo ròu*) – Braised Pork in Brown Sauce

“红烧肉” is one of the most famous traditional Chinese dishes, made from pork belly braised in a rich soy sauce-based mixture. The literal translation of the name, “Red-braised Pork,” would be accurate in terms of the cooking method (braising) and the characteristic reddish color of the sauce. However, this literal translation may not fully communicate the depth of flavor or the cultural significance of the dish to a foreign audience, as the term “red-braised” is unique to Chinese cuisine and may not be widely understood in the West.

To maintain the dish's cultural meaning while making it comprehensible to an English-speaking audience, the translation chosen in *A bite of China* is “Braised Pork in Brown Sauce.” This translation captures the core information about the dish – its primary ingredient (pork) and the cooking method (braised), while substituting “red” with “brown” to better fit the target audience’s understanding of the dish’s color and appearance. Additionally, “brown sauce” is a more familiar term to Western audiences, where it is used to describe various types of savory sauces in dishes like Chinese takeout. The adaptation strategy here is an example of how Eco-translatology encourages translators to make adjustments for the target culture without losing the essence of the source.

Furthermore, the dish’s deep cultural significance, rooted in Chinese history and family traditions, is maintained by highlighting the “braised” cooking technique. In Chinese culinary culture, braising is often used to soften tougher cuts of meat and infuse them with rich flavors. Translating this dish as “Braised Pork in Brown Sauce” helps to communicate both the cooking method and the dish's savory flavor profile, which is crucial for an English-speaking audience unfamiliar with the specific cultural nuances of the source name.

4.2 Case Study 2: “佛跳墙” (*Fó tiào qiáng*) – Buddha Jumps Over the Wall

“佛跳墙” is a complex, luxurious dish made with a variety of ingredients like sea cucumber, abalone, ginseng, and chicken, all cooked together in a rich broth. The literal translation of “Buddha Jumps Over the Wall” is quite dramatic and reflects a well-known legend about the dish: it is said that the aroma of the dish was so enticing that even Buddha, who had renounced all earthly pleasures, could not resist jumping over the wall to taste it.

While the direct translation “Buddha Jumps Over the Wall” is accurate in terms of the name's literal meaning, it may confuse foreign audiences who are unfamiliar with the cultural reference or the story behind the dish. This can make the translation less effective in conveying the dish’s significance and might even lead to misunderstanding.

In *A bite of China*, the translation “Buddha Jumps Over the Wall Soup” is used to provide additional

context by emphasizing the dish's soup-based nature. This translation strategy retains the cultural reference to Buddha, while making it more accessible to a Western audience by explicitly indicating that it is a soup. Additionally, the translation uses the word "soup" to clarify the dish's form and appeal to audiences who may not be familiar with the complex, multi-ingredient preparation.

Furthermore, to preserve the cultural connotation of the dish's luxuriousness and rarity, a translator could consider providing additional annotations or explanations in the subtitles or voiceover, offering a brief history of the dish and its cultural context. In this way, Eco-translatology's focus on adaptive transformation is clearly reflected, as the translation is adapted to fit the target audience's cultural understanding while maintaining the dish's original symbolism.

4.3 Case Study 3: “毛豆腐” (*Máo dòufu*) – *Hairy Tofu*

“毛豆腐” is a traditional fermented tofu dish from Huizhou, known for its distinct appearance, where the tofu is covered in a white, mold-like coating. The literal translation “Hairy Tofu” might evoke negative or unpleasant connotations in English-speaking audiences, as the word “hairy” can have undesirable associations in many cultures, including the idea of something being dirty or spoiled.

To ensure that the dish is presented in a positive light and to better communicate its culinary significance, the translation “Fermented Tofu” is used. This translation accurately conveys the dish's preparation method, where tofu is fermented to develop its unique flavor and texture, and avoids the negative associations that the term “hairy” might generate. This is a prime example of how Eco-translatology encourages translators to adapt the translation in a way that respects both the source culture's intention and the target culture's expectations.

By using “Fermented Tofu,” the translation emphasizes the dish's unique process, which is central to its identity in Chinese cuisine. Additionally, this translation approach also allows for the inclusion of cultural explanations in the documentary, further clarifying the dish's importance in Huizhou cuisine and its distinctive characteristics.

This case demonstrates Eco-translatology's focus on cultural adaptation, where the translation must not only be linguistically accurate but also culturally appropriate and communicatively effective. Translators must make conscious decisions about how to present the dish name in a way that resonates with the target culture, avoiding misunderstandings while preserving the original dish's essence.

4.4 Case Study 4: “宫保鸡丁” (*Gōng bǎo jī dīng*) – *Kung Pao Chicken*

“宫保鸡丁” (Kung Pao Chicken) is one of the most famous dishes in Chinese cuisine, especially popular in the West. The name “Kung Pao” refers to Ding Baozhen, a Qing Dynasty official who is said to have created the dish, and “鸡丁” (*jī dīng*) refers to diced chicken. The dish is known for its combination of chicken, peanuts, and spicy sauce.

The translation “Kung Pao Chicken” is widely recognized and has become the standard translation for this dish in the English-speaking world. Interestingly, this translation does not directly convey the dish's cooking method or its ingredients, but it does effectively maintain the dish's cultural identity and familiarity in the West. The use of “Kung Pao” in the translation preserves the cultural reference to the

historical figure Ding Baozhen, while the word “Chicken” makes it clear that the dish’s main ingredient is poultry.

This translation represents Eco-translatology’s principle of adaptation to the target culture. While the translation is not a literal rendering of the original Chinese, it has been adapted to suit the target culture’s familiarity with the dish. “Kung Pao Chicken” has become a term widely accepted in international culinary contexts, and its usage helps promote Chinese cuisine to global audiences by preserving the dish’s unique name while making it accessible to foreign consumers.

Despite its widespread recognition, the translation could be further enriched by providing annotations or context within the documentary, explaining the historical background of the dish and its connection to Ding Baozhen. This would enhance the cultural understanding of the dish and allow audiences to appreciate its full significance beyond the name.

4.5 Case Study 5: “麻婆豆腐” (*Má pó dòufu*) – *Mapo Tofu*

“麻婆豆腐” is a classic Sichuan dish made from tofu in a spicy, peppercorn-based sauce. The name “麻婆” (*Má pó*) refers to the old woman (*pó*) who created the dish, known for her distinctive spicy cooking style. The word “麻” (*má*) refers to the numbing sensation from Sichuan peppercorns.

In the English translation “Mapo Tofu,” the name is transliterated, retaining the cultural reference to the creator of the dish while simplifying the rest of the name. This approach reflects Eco-translatology’s focus on adaptation to the target language’s communicative needs. The translation “Mapo Tofu” retains the historical and cultural connection to the original dish, while removing the complex elements of the name that might be confusing for non-Chinese audiences.

However, while the name “Mapo Tofu” is widely recognized in international contexts, it may still lack clarity for audiences unfamiliar with Sichuan cuisine. To address this, additional context in the documentary could be provided, explaining the significance of the name and the key ingredients. By doing so, the translation can more fully convey the dish’s unique characteristics, balancing the need for adaptation with the goal of cultural education.

4.6 Case Study 6: “酸菜白肉” (*Suān cài bái ròu*) – *Pickled Chinese Cabbage with Plain Boiled Pork*

“酸菜白肉” is a northern Chinese dish featuring pickled cabbage and pork. The dish’s name “酸菜” (*suān cài*) refers to pickled Chinese cabbage, and “白肉” (*bái ròu*) means plain boiled pork.

The translation “Pickled Chinese Cabbage with Plain Boiled Pork” effectively communicates the main ingredients and preparation method, with “pickled” and “plain boiled” clearly describing the dish’s features. This translation strategy adheres to the principle of Eco-translatology, which emphasizes accuracy and clarity in translation while ensuring that the dish name is accessible to the target audience. While the translation is straightforward, additional cultural context could be included in the documentary to explain the significance of pickled vegetables in Chinese cuisine and their historical importance in northern Chinese diets. This would help foreign audiences appreciate the dish’s cultural background and its place within Chinese culinary traditions.

5. Conclusion

The translation of dish names from *A Bite of China* through the lens of Eco-translatology demonstrates a comprehensive approach to preserving both the linguistic and cultural essence of Chinese cuisine while ensuring that it resonates with a global audience. Chinese dish names are often descriptive and reflect the core aspects of the dish, with the primary function being to convey essential information about the food, such as its ingredients and cooking method. The secondary function of dish names is to transmit the cultural significance embedded in the cuisine. This dual purpose is evident in how dish names are structured in Chinese culinary traditions—though their primary aim is informational, the names often carry rich cultural connotations and convey an aesthetic dimension of Chinese food culture.

In Eco-translatology, this concept of balancing linguistic accuracy and cultural transmission is crucial. The theory encourages translators to make adaptive choices that consider both the language of the source and the ecological context of the target audience. For example, translating dish names such as “红烧肉” (Braised Pork in Brown Sauce) or “麻婆豆腐” (Mapo Tofu) involves not only describing the dish's primary ingredients and cooking methods but also preserving the cultural backdrop that gives these dishes meaning. This approach moves beyond mere translation of words into the target language; it incorporates the dish's historical, regional, and culinary significance, making it comprehensible to foreign audiences while maintaining its original cultural context.

Dish names in *A Bite of China* also reflect a broader cultural phenomenon—the way food is perceived and named varies across different cultural groups. In China, food is deeply tied to social practices, cultural norms, and regional identities. Each cultural group, whether it is the elite or common people, creates dish names that reflect its own cultural experiences and values. This diversity in naming conventions highlights how food culture is intricately woven into the fabric of daily life and cultural heritage. The challenge of translating these names lies not only in conveying the literal meaning but in representing the cultural identity that each dish name embodies.

Eco-translatology addresses this challenge by focusing on the adaptive strategies required for translation. While the basic function of a dish name is to convey information about the food, the cultural significance often extends far beyond the dish itself, drawing from a deep reservoir of cultural practices and regional traditions. By considering these factors, translators can make informed decisions that respect the source culture while adjusting the translation to the norms of the target language. For instance, “佛跳墙” (Buddha Jumps Over the Wall), with its rich cultural backstory, may be translated literally but often requires additional context in the form of annotations to fully convey its significance.

In conclusion, Eco-translatology provides a powerful framework for the translation of dish names in *A Bite of China*, balancing linguistic accuracy with cultural sensitivity. While it faces certain challenges, particularly in terms of cultural overload and subjective translation choices, the benefits of this approach in enhancing cross-cultural communication and promoting a deeper understanding of Chinese culinary traditions are undeniable. The theory's focus on adaptation and cultural transmission ensures that dish names retain their cultural significance while becoming accessible to foreign audiences, fostering mutual

appreciation and respect across cultures.

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