



# The English Translation of Hanyin Cuisine Names

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## Abstract

Hanyin County is located between the Qinling Mountains and the Bashan Mountains. Hanyin cuisine combines the characteristics of Sichuan, Hubei, Hunan, Guangdong and other regions, making itself rich, colorful and profound. Since the new era of socialism, Hanyin has been rated as the “Hometown of Shaanxi Cuisine”, and Hanyin cuisine has ushered in a new era of development. In order to make Hanyin cuisine go global better and faster, it is necessary to standardize the English translation of Hanyin cuisine names. This article shall discuss seven translation methods in translating Hanyin cuisine names.

## Subject Areas

Linguistics

## Keywords

Hanyin Cuisine, Names, English Translation Methods

## 1. Introduction

Hanyin is located between the Qinling Mountains and the Bashan Mountains, blending the folk customs of Sichuan, Hubei, Hunan and Guangdong. With a rich and diverse diet, it is known as the “land of fish and rice”. However, the relatively closed geographical landscape makes Hanyin little known to the outside world. In 2012, Hanyin County was rated as the “Hometown of Shaanxi Cuisine”, ushering in a new era of development.

In 2023, there are over 5400 catering professionals in Hanyin, and it is expected that the total catering revenue in Hanyin will reach 500 million yuan by the end of 2023, vigorously promoting the integration of primary, secondary,

and tertiary industries. The Hanyin food industry has gradually become a pillar industry for enriching the people's livelihood. [1] Translating Hanyin cuisine names into English can help promote Hanyin cuisine culture and develop Hanyin tourism industry. There are seven translation methods in translating Hanyin cuisine names.

## 2. Translation Methods

### 2.1. Neutralization

Neutralization is substituting the source text element with a less or more extensive explanation of its meaning [2], which further fall into two categories, namely, description and particularization.

#### 1) Description

The description uses the cultural free word to describe or explain a source language cultural word, phrase and rhetorical expressions. For example, Xiu Qiu Bailinggu (绣球白灵菇) contains no silk balls at all, which calls for the detailed explanation about the cooking method and the ingredients. And in another dish Baihuoshi Cuan Tang (白火石氽汤), Baihuoshi (白火石) is not an ingredient but a quartz put inside the soup to render the dish fresh and cool. Therefore, the ideal translation of the these two dishes shall be Stir-Fried Bailing Mushrooms and Shiitake Mushrooms with Bok Choy (绣球白灵菇) and Minced Pork Soup with Quick-Boiled Quartz (白火石氽汤). For the dish Suan La Mian Yu Zhouzi (酸辣面鱼肘子), the word Mian Yu (面鱼) is rather confusing for it is not fish at all but "fish-shaped strip made of flour", which Hanyin people call Kemagudou (蝌蚂咕蚪[3]), namely, tadpole. Therefore, Suan La Mian Yu Zhouzi (酸辣面鱼肘子) can be translated into Steamed Sour and Spicy Flour Slices and Pork Chops with Sauce [4].

#### 2) Particularization

The particularization uses a specific word in place of a more generic or more general source text element (hypernym). For example, Hanyin food like Hanyang Zheng Penzi (汉阳蒸盆子[5]), Xi Mi Tu Zao Fan (晒米土灶饭) and Shuang Gan Chao La Rou (双干炒腊肉) all contain general words. That is to say, we have no idea what specifically it is made of. In the dish Hanyang Zheng Penzi (汉阳蒸盆子), Zheng Penzi is a general word referring to a hotchpotch, consisting of steamed chicken, pig's feet, soft-shelled turtle and lotus root. In the dish Xi Mi Tu Zao Fan (晒米土灶饭), Tu Zao Fan means the food cooked on the earthen stove. But what exactly the food is we don't know solely by literal translation. Thus it should be explained in detail as Squid, Sea Cucumbers and Fungi Soup and Fried Rice (晒米土灶饭). And for another dish Shuang Gan Chao La Rou (双干炒腊肉), there is a noun phrase Shuang Gan (双干) which sound rather general and confusing for its abstractness. Actually the phrase Shuang Gan, namely Double Gan, are Dried Tofu and Smoked Blood Curds. So a more detailed and favorable introduction to it shall be Sauteed Preserved Pork with Dried Tofu and Smoked Blood Curds (双干炒腊肉).

## 2.2. Amplification

Amplification is adding certain words in the translation. It should be noted that some dishes are added with ingredients like sauce and spice etc. But solely by their Chinese names we cannot grasp this key message, which, shall be illustrated in English translation by amplification. For example, Mi Xiang Yu Pian (米线鱼片) and Hongshao Huiyu (红烧鲶鱼) are both added with sauce as ingredients, so their translations shall be Deep-Fried Silver Carp with Rice in Sauce and Braised Longsnout Catfish in Sauce [6] respectively. In addition, for the dish Suan La Shengfa Fuzhu (酸辣盛发腐竹), which is made together with pickles but doesn't really show this character vividly in Chinese, shall be translated into Sour and Spicy Tofu Skin with Assorted Pickles (酸辣盛发腐竹).

And for some Hanyin dishes there is no evidence indicating the cooking method, which shall be explained in translation by amplification. For example, for the dishes Larou Hongshu Fentiao (腊肉红薯粉条), Dao Jian Wanzi (刀尖丸子), and Mi Zhi Xianggu (秘制香菇), we don't know how exactly these dishes are made but we shall illustrate it in English translation by amplification. So they can be translated into Stir-Fried Preserved Pork and Sweet Potato Vermicelli, Deep-Fried and Steamed Pork and Tofu Balls and Steamed Rice Noodles with Sauce. And more translations of Jiyu Hebaodan (鲫鱼荷包蛋), Ru Xiang Tudou (乳香土豆), Suan La Huixiang Xiaoyu (酸辣茴香小鱼), Suan La Doufu Jinzi (酸辣豆腐巾子) and Suan La Haishen (酸辣海参) shall be added with exact cooking methods, and their English translation shall be rendered Fried Crucian Carp with Poached Egg, Deep-Fried Potatoes with Fermented Tofu, Braised Sour and Spicy Sharp belly with Fennel, Braised Sour and Spicy Tofu Skin and Fried Sour and Spicy Sea Cucumbers.

And for some dishes we even don't know what it's made of, thus requiring further explanation. For example, Zheng Mian (蒸面), which is not made of flour but rice powder. So Zheng Mian (蒸面) shall be translated into Steamed Rice Noodles with Sauce. For Zhen Xi Yangdujun (臻熙羊肚菌), there are more than one ingredients in this dish, namely, pork, morel mushrooms, broccoli and pumpkins. Thus it could be translated into Steamed Pork Wrapped in Morel Mushrooms with broccoli and pumpkins. In addition, for the dish Moyu Tang (墨鱼汤) which contains more than Moyu (墨鱼), other ingredients shall be amplified, thus the translation is Dried Squid and Minced Pork Soup. What's more, the ingredients for Jianchi Hui MianPian (涧池烩面片) are flour, vegetables and pork. So it's translated into Flour Wrappers and Vegetables and Pork Soup.

## 2.3. Intracultural Adaptation

Intracultural adaptation is to replace the culture-specific items of the source text with another source-language term that is more familiar and acceptable in the target culture.

For example, the name of the dish Hanyin Jia Yu (汉阴假鱼), literally means

fake fish. However it contains no fish at all. The truth is that so-called fish here is made from minced pork wrapped in tofu skin. Also, the dish Yangyu Guoguo Chao Ji Rou (洋芋果果炒鸡肉) actually contains no fruit at all. In reality, the word Guoguo (果果) is the dehydrated sliced food. Because the word-to-word translation of the names of these two dishes will lead to ambiguity, so intracultural adaptation is required to make it more acceptable and familiar to the target readers. Therefore, Hanyin Jia Yu (汉阴假鱼) can be translated into Steamed Minced Pork Wrapped in Tofu Skin with Sauce, and Yangyu Guoguo Chao Ji Rou (洋芋果果炒鸡肉) into Braised Chicken with Dried Sliced Potatoes. As for the dish Zha Xiang Chun Yu (炸香椿鱼) there is no fish at all. The so-called yu (鱼) is but stir-fried Chinese toon sprouts in the form of fish. To avoid misunderstanding, the word yu (鱼) shall be replaced by Chinese toon sprouts.

#### 2.4. Substitution

Cultural substitution refers to the use of translated language expressions that do not have exactly the same meaning as the source language but have a similar impact on the target language readers, to replace expressions with cultural characteristics in the source language. This translation method helps to translate some Chinese dish names without cooking methods or ingredients, allowing foreigners to understand the cooking methods and ingredients used in the dishes. [7] For example, in the dish Liangban Shao Fen Pizi (凉拌苕粉皮子), there is a special ingredient Shao Fen Pizi (苕粉皮子), which is made of sweet potatoes and steamed into semi-solid. In English there is a term jelly, which is a substance having the consistency of semisolid foods. Thus an ideal translation of Liangban Shao Fen Pizi (凉拌苕粉皮子) shall be Sweet Potato Sheet Jelly with Sauce.

#### 2.5. Omission

Omission is removing culture-specific items that are considered unimportant and redundant from the translation. Due to the differences in histories, geographic locations, local customs, religious belief and so on, there are some translation obstacles in communication which hinder people from understanding each other properly. Accordingly, it is very important to overcome the obstacle of cultural differences in cross-cultural communication [8].

Some Hanyin cuisine names contain culture-specific items (CSI) which rarely find its equivalence in the target text and thus require the removal of the cultural referent by neutralization. For example, for the dish Bao Weng Jun Jiao (抱瓮菌饺), there is an ancient story behind it. The story goes that Zhuangzi saw an old man using a jar to fetch water from a well in Hanyin. In confusion he asked the old man why he didn't use machine to fetch water, and the old man replied, "I would rather discard my worldly thinking and follow my natural heart." Hanyin people stuff the dumplings with fungi, which taste fresh and natural and even name this dish after the old man to show the world their pursuit of naturalness. However, it is very difficult for foreigners to understand the name of the dish

that is closely related to traditional Chinese culture, so neutralization is adopted to render the dish name Bao Weng Jun Jiao (抱瓮菌饺) into Dumplings Stuffed with Fungi in Sauce. For another dish Dao Jian Wan Zi (刀尖丸子), which goes through two production processes, namely frying and steaming. Firstly deep fry the meatballs in the oil until they turn golden, then take them out of the oil and put them in a bowl, cage and steam them for half an hour. And in English translation the noun phrase Dao Jian (knife point) shall be omitted because it has nothing to do with the cooking method or the ingredients. So it is translated into Deep Fried and Steamed Pork and Tofu Balls.

## 2.6. Retention

Retention is retaining the phonetic/graphic form of the culture-specific items of the source language, namely transliteration. Mimo (米馍) and Kangkangmo (炕炕馍) are two famous dishes in Hanyin. Given that “Jiaozi” and “Jianbing” have specialized pinyin translations, similarly, Mimo (米馍) and Kangkangmo (炕炕馍) can also be transliterated into Mimo and Kangkangmo, with English explanations added after each respectively.

What’s more, in translation domestication shall be applied to deal with some culturally similar words, for example, Kangkangmo (炕炕馍) can find its equivalence in Western culture, namely, cracker. According to Oxford English Dictionary, cracker is a thin and hard biscuit. And biscuit is a small baked unleavened cake, typically crisp, crumbly, flat, and sweet, and usually made from a mixture of flour, sugar, butter, and flavorings... And Kangkangmo is crisp, crumbly, flat baked food made from flour with sesame. So in order to make it easier for Western people to appreciate the flavor and the beauty of this food, the name Kangkangmo can be substituted with baked sesame cracker.

## 2.7. Literal Translation

Literal translation is a word-for-word translation that involves borrowing the lexical item’s structure rather than the phonetic form. In the literal translation of the food names, the emphasis is on the “cooking method” of the food and the ingredients of the main dish. For example, Dou Ban Jiang (豆瓣酱) and Doushi are made from fermented broad beans and fermented soybeans respectively. However, this is not reflected in Chinese names, which is related to the Chinese emphasis on meaning rather than form. English is a language that values form and logic, so in English translations, the “main ingredients” of the ingredients must be shown: Fermented Broad Beans (豆瓣酱), Fermented Soybeans (豆豉) and Fermented Bean Curd (豆腐乳), Stir-Fried Shredded Pork and Garlic Sprouts (蒜苔炒肉丝), Stewed Catfish with Tofu (野鲮鱼炖豆腐), Stewed Chicken with Bamboo Shoots (山笋炖土鸡), Stir-Fried Shredded Pork and Garlic Sprouts (蒜苔炒肉丝), Deep-Fried Rice Dumplings (油炸米饺), Steamed Corn Bun (浆巴馍), Steamed Wormwood Bun (蒿子馍馍), Smoked Bean Curd (豆腐干), Scrambled Eggs with Chinese Toon Sprouts (香椿烘蛋) and Stewed

Pork Ribs, Potatoes and Green Beans (土豆豆角炖排骨). In addition, Hanyin people bring their homemade wine to visit relatives and friends during festivals and holidays. For example, Gan'gan Jiu (杆杆酒), Guaizao Jiu (拐枣酒), Baogu Jiu (苞谷酒), which is made from sorghum, raisin tree and corn respectively. Therefore, they are translated into sorghum liquor (杆杆酒), raisin wine (拐枣酒) and corn wine (苞谷酒).

### 3. Conclusion

Hanyin cuisine is rich and profound. Due to the differences in languages and culture, the East and the West view and treat cuisine names differently. When translating and introducing Hanyin cuisine to the outside world, it is necessary to fully respect the different characteristics of Chinese and English languages and their culture, adhere to the authentic culinary characteristics of Hanyin cuisine, truthfully depict the characteristics of the cuisine and let readers at home and abroad experience the charm of Hanyin cuisine.

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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