Translating food is translating culture: Australian English speakers' reception of food translation

Eve Jingwen Chen*, The Australian National University
Jia Zhang**, The University of New South Wales

ABSTRACT

The reception of culture-specific items has recently emerged as a key focus in empirical translation studies. Food is one of the most iconic culture-specific items, as it is regarded as a cultural product across its production, preparation, and consumption. Due to its culturally embedded nature, the quality of food translation depends significantly on how readers decode and respond to the culturally specific elements of foodstuffs and foodways. However, the reception of food translation by readers remains underexplored. This study examines the reception of food translation among Australian English speakers. Twenty-two participants were asked to read translated food-related content and articulate their understanding in semi-structured interviews. The study finds that domestication can lead to cultural misconceptions, while foreignisation may result in problematic lexical choices and stylistic inconsistencies. Nevertheless, readers tend to prefer foreignised translations of exotic food content, expecting only minimal explanation to avoid confusion. While generally tolerant of linguistic errors, readers are particularly sensitive to the precision of lexical choices in translation. This article offers empirical data on readers' cultural perceptions of culinary norms and their expectations to inform translators' decision-making in food translation.

KEYWORDS

Food translation, reception study, readers, Australian English, explicitation.

1. Food translation and food culture

Food translation is ubiquitous at all levels of food production and the food supply chain in today's globalised world (Desjardins, 2021). It appears on snack packaging, menus, cookbooks, online restaurant reviews, and social media posts, and is also present in films, food documentaries, celebrity chef reality shows, and online cooking videos. Food translation involves not only interlingual translation but also intersemiotic translation, as food can function as a set of "codes of communication" (Charron & Desjardins, 2011, para. 3) and be culturally adapted across different contexts. In this paper, our focus is on language related to food, or used to describe food, and its interlingual translation. Within this scope, we define food translation as the practice of conveying food-related content across language boundaries.

Translating food is challenging. On the one hand, specific words, phrases, and terminology are associated with particular food-related behaviours. Such language does not always have equivalents in other languages and is sometimes considered 'untranslatable,' posing significant challenges for translators. On the other hand, food is understood as a cultural product across its production, preparation, and consumption (Montanari, 2006). Food, along with dietary traditions and habits, undeniably reflects a nation's culture, values, and identities (Garzone, 2017; Zhang & Torres-Hostench, 2023). Therefore, food and its translation "are not only located in content meant to

---
* ORCID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9584-2352, e-mail: eve.chen@anu.edu.au
** ORCID https://orcid.org/0009-0008-4855-9387, e-mail: jia.zhang2@unsw.edu.au

entertain us, but are interconnected in ways that have real-world effects" (Desjardins, 2021, p. 90).

Although food translation is less explored than other areas within translation studies, scholarly attention has been paid to the translation of menus and cookbooks (e.g., Chłopicki, 2018; Desjardins, 2011; Fuentes-Luque, 2017; Paradowski, 2018). More recent strands have focused on the translation of food-related phrases and terminology (e.g., Gaspari, 2015; Jurado & Ponce, 2023; Zhang & Torres-Hostench, 2022; Zhu et al., 2024), offering solutions for translating dish names, ingredients, and preparation methods.

Notably, text analysis has been widely employed to study food translation. Researchers often qualitatively assess the textual features of food translation from a pragmatic perspective (e.g., Chłopicki, 2018; Jurado & Ponce, 2023; Panou, 2022). A prominent approach involves comparative analysis, examining source texts (STs) and target texts (TTs) to map out an (illusory) equivalence between cultures. More recently, quantitative corpus-based research on food translation has gained momentum, drawing attention to recurrent patterns in translational practice (e.g., Amenador & Wang, 2022; Li, 2019; Li et al., 2022; Paradowski, 2018; Ramírez-Almansa, 2023; Sauner & Parlak, 2023).

Nevertheless, in food translation, the practice often hinges on both process- and product-oriented perspectives, relying on the translator's perceptions of how food translation ought to be carried out and what the expectations of 'imaginary' readers might be. Although members of the source-language speech community are occasionally included in the discussion — offering ethnographic insights into the translation of their cultural foods (e.g., Ciribuco, 2021; Zhu et al., 2024) — actual target readers are rarely involved, as evidenced by the limited body of existing literature. This is apparent in Fuentes-Luque's (2017) translator-centred investigation. By surveying the perceptions of translators and translation agencies and analysing errors in translated menus, Fuentes-Luque argues that improved awareness and communication among stakeholders are essential for producing better menu translations. However, while restaurant owners, tourism authorities, translation trainers, agencies, and professional translators are included as stakeholders, there is no mention of restaurant customers — the target readers of the menus — on Fuentes-Luque's list.

Very few empirical studies on the reception of food translation have been conducted. As a result, it remains unclear in both practice and research how final translations are received and what real readers expect. This study empirically investigates reader reception of the translated product, providing authentic data from actual readers.

2. Reception studies

Reception, when first introduced in literary studies in the 1960s, marked a paradigm shift "from the text and the author to the reader [because] a text has no meaning without the contribution of the reader" (Brems & Pinto, 2013, p. 142). In contemporary translation studies, reception research that foregrounds the role of the reader has

similarly gained prominence, whether the readers are consumers of popular fiction, audiences of audiovisual products, or users of instructional manuals.

In literary translation, reception studies shed light on which elements — such as degree of immersion, faithfulness to style and content, and the use of paratexts — are preferred and valued by readers (Chen, 2023; Guo & Zou, 2023; Khoshsaligheh et al., 2020; Rovira-Esteva & Tor-Carroggio, 2020), as well as how reader enjoyment and engagement may vary between machine-translated, post-edited, and human-translated literary texts (Guerberof-Arenas & Toral, 2024).

Reception studies are also well established in relation to audio description (AD), dubbing, and subtitling within audiovisual translation. The reception of different AD styles and functions by vision-impaired communities contributes to advancing equity and accessibility measures for audiences with disabilities and special needs (Bardini, 2020; Chmiel & Mazur, 2022; Fernández-Torné & Matamala, 2015; Fidyka et al., 2021; Fryer & Freeman, 2013; Sanz-Moreno, 2019; Tor-Carroggio, 2020). Investigations into dubbing reception have highlighted the interconnectedness between viewers' attitudes towards dubbed audiovisual products and their cultural backgrounds and socioeconomic profiles (Cornelio-Marí, 2022; de los Reyes Lozano, 2020; Raffi, 2020). Reception studies on subtitling show that while amateur subtitles do not necessarily diminish the viewer experience when compared to professional subtitles (Ameri & Khoshsaligheh, 2021; Orrego-Carmona, 2016), machine-translated subtitles are significantly less preferred than post-edited ones (Guerberof-Arenas & Toral, 2024; Hu et al., 2020).

Methodologically, reception is studied primarily through two approaches. The cognitive approach gathers data using technological tools such as eye trackers (e.g., Di Giovanni, 2020; Kruger, 2012; Orrego-Carmona, 2016; Orrego-Carmona et al., 2018; Whyatt et al., 2023), while the textual approach relies on self-reported data collected through questionnaires, interviews, or focus group discussions (e.g., Božović, 2019; Fuentes-Luque, 2003; Guerberof-Arenas et al., 2024; Guerberof-Arenas & Toral, 2024; Matamala et al., 2017; Tang, 2008). Although both methods have their strengths, they also present certain limitations. Technological tools may increase precision and allow for detailed statistical analyses, but data collection and processing are time-consuming, and such tools are not readily accessible to all researchers. In the case of self-reported data, there appears to be a tendency in current literature to use closed-ended questions and large participant pools for quantitative analysis. As a result, participants' responses are constrained by the scope and scale of the pre-designed choices, and more elaborate or authentic reader viewpoints are often absent.

Drawing on the literature on food translation and reception studies, this study examines Australian English readers' reception of food translation. By analysing self-reported data collected through semi-structured interviews, we address the following research questions:

1) How do the translated texts influence readers' understanding of food-related content?

2) What expectations do readers have regarding the translations of food-related content?

The study aims to bridge the gap in reception research on food translation and to identify novel themes and perspectives emerging from readers. In doing so, we seek to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges readers face when interpreting food-related content and what they expect from its translation. We argue that such understanding has implications for improving food translation practice and may also support readers in navigating these challenges more effectively.

As the research was conducted in Australia, the target reader group was defined as Australian English speakers. In this study, we presented Chinese-to-English food translation texts to 22 participants. They were invited to share their understanding of the texts and insights into food translation as ordinary readers through one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded, and the transcripts were coded and analysed using NVivo. Key themes were identified and discussed, focusing on issues that influenced participants' comprehension and those that reflected their expectations of food translation.

3. Semi-structured interviews

The food-related translation samples were sourced from the official English subtitles of a well-regarded Chinese food documentary available on Amazon Prime and YouTube: *A Bite of Shunde* (Liu, 2016). The documentary introduces the culinary traditions of Shunde, China, and unfolds across three 50-minute episodes, each focusing on a distinct theme: the origin, innovation, and legacy of the region's food and culinary culture.

It is important to clarify that this study does not focus on documentary translation, audiovisual translation, or subtitling, nor is it concerned with the specific genre, application context, or quality of the food translations examined. Although the samples were taken from the subtitles of a documentary — and we acknowledge that subtitling is a constrained form of translation — the excerpts were reformatted as plain text, without reference to the non-verbal elements of the audiovisual product. In other words, the texts were not used or analysed as subtitles, and subtitling constraints had minimal impact on the study's aim: to investigate how readers process and receive food-related content translated from one language to another — in this case, from Chinese to English. Nonetheless, we acknowledge the potential value of exploring the audio and visual modalities of food translation, which could be a direction for future research.

The texts were selected because they originate from a source with a potentially large viewership and contain rich, varied food-related content. An additional advantage of using material from a documentary is that documentaries often adopt a storytelling approach to presenting food within cultural and social contexts, blending sentimental narratives with vivid, descriptive language that can easily evoke emotional resonance in readers (Zhao, 2020). The excerpted texts, therefore, were likely to be more engaging and to elicit more elaborate and thoughtful reflections, supporting the goals of a reception study. The data we collected confirms that the material was well suited to stimulating meaningful responses from participants.

We selected four subtitle excerpts, each between 100 and 200 words, from the first two episodes. These passages feature frequent references to dish names, specific tastes and textures, culinary processes, and culturally embedded food narratives. The high density of food-related content enabled us to engage participants in discussions about food translation and to elicit responses reflecting their reception of the translated texts. Each of the four excerpts describes food and food-related activities unique to the documented region — likely unfamiliar to the participants — but with slightly different emphases: on culturally specific ingredients, the dining experience, cooking techniques, and food preparation methods, respectively.

Moreover, we deliberately selected texts containing spelling mistakes, unusual word choices, awkward sentence constructions, and grammatical errors. These issues were likely the result of an inverse translation carried out by a native Chinese-speaking translator. Although not widely endorsed within the industry, inverse translation is commonly practised in Oceania due to the limited availability of native English-speaking Chinese-to-English translators (Fung, 2022; Wang, 2011). The increased difficulty of inverse translation compared to direct translation (Shi, 2013) makes such errors almost inevitable. Our decision to use texts containing errors aligns with Kuscu-Ozbudak's (2022) argument that imperfect translations are more likely to capture readers' attention and stimulate critical reflection.

Twenty-two Australian English L1 speakers aged between 18 and 64 (eight males, 13 females, and one non-binary individual) from various professional backgrounds, all of whom had not watched the documentary, were recruited through volunteer sampling via physical and online advertisements. Participants were required to have no Chinese heritage background and no knowledge of the Chinese language, so that their responses would be shaped primarily by the food-related translations. Each participant was assigned a four-letter reference code composed of the initial of their pseudonym, the initial of their gender (M/F/N), and the first two letters of their profession. The quoted participants' professions include (university) student, barista, policy analyst, swimming instructor, customer service officer, and self-employed individual, represented respectively by ST, BA, PO, SW, CU, and SE. Overall, the participant group reflects a broad demographic cross-section of the general public in Australia in terms of age, gender, and occupation, helping to ensure the diversity of responses.

The participant size was determined based on the recommendation of Hennink and Kaiser's (2022; see also Vasileiou et al., 2018) systematic review of qualitative research sample sizes for saturation. They suggest that 9–17 interviews are sufficient to reach 'meaning saturation' in "studies with relatively homogeneous populations and narrowly defined objectives" (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022, p. 1). Meaning saturation refers to "the point when we fully understand issues, and when no further dimensions, nuances, or insights of issues can be found" (Hennink et al., 2017, p. 594). Therefore, 22 participant interviews were deemed sufficient to reach meaning saturation while also allowing for potential interferences such as data errors, invalid data, or participant withdrawal.

The one-hour interviews, conducted in August and September 2023, consisted of two parts: (1) a discussion of the four selected texts, with a set of questions following the same procedure for each text; and (2) a discussion about food translation in general,

guided by a few open-ended questions designed to elicit experience-based responses from participants. Table 1 outlines the interview procedure and provides sample indicative questions.

At the beginning of the interview, each participant was briefed about the documentary and informed that the initial texts they would read were taken from the documentary subtitles and were Chinese-to-English translations. The discussion of the four selected texts followed the same procedure. For each text, the participant first read a printed copy and answered questions designed to prompt their understanding of the food-related content. We then provided an explanatory text that clarified the content to support a more accurate understanding. We produced these texts based on our intuitive understanding as cultural insiders originally from the same region of China depicted in the documentary. They were not intended as 'correct translations' but as assistive paratexts, offering participants informative details about the original content. With the explanatory text, participants were asked to reflect on their (mis)understandings of the food-related content before and after reading the explanation. After discussing all four texts, they also answered a few open-ended questions about food translation, first building on the earlier discussion, then expanding to more general aspects. In total, about 23 hours of audio recordings were collected, transcribed, and analysed.

Part 1: A discussion of the selected texts (each text followed the same procedure) • Text 1: pig tripe soup • Text 2: *yum cha* food and meal • Text 3: Shunde-special fish dishes • Text 4: stuffed bitter gourd, peppers, and dace fish	
Step 1: The participant read an excerpted text from the documentary subtitles.	Questions: 1. What do you think this text is about? 2. Based on what you read, can you mentally visualise this dish/food/cooking technique/preparation process/food-related activity and describe it in your own words? 3. Follow-up questions about the food-related details, e.g., what do you think is the texture or taste of the dish? Where do you think this food activity usually happens?
Step 2: The participant read an explanatory text of the content.	Questions: 1. From 1 to 10, how would you rate your understanding of the food-related content in the original text before and after reading the explanatory text, respectively? 1 is "I completely misunderstood the content" and 10 is "I understand all the details accurately." Why did you give this rating? 2. What did you understand correctly? What did you misunderstand? What do you think caused your misunderstanding? 3. Follow-up, if needed: Is there anything you found particularly confusing or misleading in the original

	text? What do you believe caused the confusion or misconception?
Part 2: A discussion about food translation in general, after the text discussion	
1. What is your overall impression of the translated texts we showed you? 2. Would you change the original texts to help English speakers like you better understand the food-related content? What kinds of changes would you make? 3. In your everyday life, have you encountered any food translations that you found impressive, interesting, strange, confusing, disgusting, etc.? What made them good or bad? 4. What do you expect to see in a good translation of food-related content? What do you think is the most important quality of such translations? (Offer prompts if needed, e.g., interesting, accurate, explicit, etc.)	

Table 1. Interview procedure and sample questions.

To analyse the readers' responses, we have drawn on theoretical components of Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2011, 2017), a linguistic paradigm that examines the nexus between language and culture. It shares a core principle with Cognitive Linguistics — namely, that meaning is conceptualisation (Sharifian & Sadeghpour, 2021) — and adopts Cognitive Linguistics' descriptive practices for deconstructing conceptual mechanisms (Wolf & Polzenhagen, 2024). However, while Cognitive Linguistics investigates the universal relationship between language and the human mind, Cultural Linguistics focuses on how culture-specific knowledge and experience shape language use and meaning-making. It foregrounds the view that conceptualisations encoded in language are culturally shaped and reflect a speech community's collective 'cultural cognition,' rooted in the unique worldviews and traditions. With its stronger emphasis on the cultural basis of language, Cultural Linguistics favours "interpretive, qualitative approaches [utilising] the theoretical toolbox" (Wolf & Polzenhagen, 2024, p. 112) of cultural model, cultural category, cultural schema, and cultural metaphor to unpack language and cognition.

Integrating the Cultural Linguistics framework into this reception study of food translation allows us to explain, at a cognitive level and where necessary, the culturally structured conceptual mechanisms that inform the Australia-based readers' understanding and interpretation of the translation samples. The cultural underpinnings shaping the readers' conceptual process also help account for the rationales behind the nuances or discrepancies between the intended meanings and the meanings received in the translations.

We follow the Cultural Linguistics convention when presenting relevant conceptual components: all abstract conceptual frames, domains, and schemas are indicated in small capitals.

4. Australian English speakers' reception of food translation

We identified notable discrepancies between the intended meanings and the readers' understanding of the food translations. In the following subsections, we elaborate on how cultural misconceptions, problematic word choices, and stylistic variation affected reader comprehension, using illustrative data examples.

4.1. Cultural misconceptions

Instances of misconceptualised food content — where readers were misled by the translations and formed mental images that differed significantly from the actual food items — were plentiful. Table 2 presents selected examples, including the ST, TT, intended referents, and readers' common misconceptions.

Source text	Target text	Intended referent	Readers' misconceptions
早茶	morning tea	a Cantonese *yum cha* meal	1. tea 2. drinking tea in the morning 3. a mid-morning tea break
点心	refreshments	Cantonese *dim sum*, food consumed at a *yum cha* meal	1. beverage 2. fruit and sweet pastries 3. light finger food
凉拌鱼皮	fish skin salad	a cold-tossed fish skin dish	a green salad with fried fish skin as garnish

Table 2. Examples of cultural misconceptions.

One prominent example is the translation of a common Cantonese dining experience, *yum cha*, where people enjoy a social meal of assorted sweet or savoury small dishes — i.e., *dim sum* — served with tea in a restaurant setting. In the documentary, this experience is introduced as 早茶 (*zǎochá*), literally translated as 'morning tea.' The term 点心 (*diǎnxīn*), which refers to the food consumed during such a meal, is translated as 'refreshments,' even though its Cantonese transliteration, *dim sum*, has been borrowed into English and is reasonably well known among many English speakers.

When asked to visualise 'refreshments,' most participants described items such as fruit or sweet pastries, typically served with tea, common catering options at Australian social events. In their initial reading of the translation text, half (11 out of 22) interpreted 'refreshments' as refreshing beverages served alongside or instead of tea. No participants associated the term with food served as part of a meal.

After reading the explanatory text, all participants indicated that the content was not what they had initially assumed, mainly because the word 'refreshments' was significantly misleading. It created a substantial cognitive gap between the intended food items and what participants understood from the translated text. Additionally, 68% (15 out of 22) considered that translating a substantial restaurant meal as 'morning tea' also contributed to their misunderstanding. In fact, 95% (21 out of 22) interpreted 'morning tea' as either a synonym for 'tea' or a simple morning tea-drinking ritual.

The gap between the readers' perceptions and the meaning the translator intended to convey with 'refreshments' is likely due to the translator's unawareness of the distinct conceptualisations this word elicits among (Australian) English speakers, especially within the misinterpreted context of 'morning tea.' The participants' interpretations reveal a salient tendency to draw on conceptual imagery associated with an

AUSTRALIAN MORNING TEA, instantiating a familiar social practice involving networking and casual interaction over tea, coffee, and sweet finger foods in the mid-morning. This concept evokes prototypical Australian schemas of A CASUAL LOCATION (such as a home, a tearoom in the workplace, or a small café) accommodating A SINGLE INDIVIDUAL or A SMALL, ACQUAINTED GROUP engaged in A PRIVATE ACTIVITY or A LIGHT SOCIAL EXCHANGE for purposes of REVITALISATION or RECREATION. The following participant comment reflects this prevalent cognitive processing:

> Usually, we use 'refreshment' to mean drink, but clearly, you wouldn't have tea and a drink. So 'refreshment' means something, like a side thing that you eat with tea. Um. Crackers, cake […], presumably something sweet, probably little types of cake. I suppose it could be in some kind of tea shop, or it could be in somebody's office or living room perhaps […] it can probably happen in all different types of places, like French cafés sort of thing. But also, maybe in an office where you have the people come in and then your secretary serves it (DFAU).

We can plausibly infer that the translator chose the word 'refreshments' for its semantic sense, "a light snack or drink" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.), which partially aligns with the literal meaning of 点心 (*diǎnxīn*), understood as 'small hearty food,' and its presentation in small portions on plates or steamers. However, this choice is inaccurate in that 'refreshments' can also refer to drinks and beverages, which are not part of the referential scope of 点心 (*diǎnxīn*). More importantly, the translator overlooked the highly distinctive cultural connotations of the source and target terms, which differ markedly in their typical contexts of use — such as a substantial public meal setting versus a private or informal social setting — and in their real-life referents, namely sweet and savoury meal dishes versus sweet finger foods.

A similar case of misconception is the translation of the cold dish 凉拌鱼皮 (*liángbàn yúpí*), literally 'cold-tossed fish skin.' This dish consists of poached fish skin, seasoned and tossed with herbs and spices, and served at room temperature. It was translated as 'fish skin salad.' Of the 22 participants, 91% (20) indicated that, in their mental image, raw vegetables were the main ingredients, with fish skin seen as a specialised topping or garnish added for crispiness.

Presumably, the translator chose the word 'salad' to highlight that the fish skin is not a hot dish cooked over heat, corresponding to the source word 凉拌 (*liángbàn*), meaning 'cold-tossed.' However, they neglected that 'salad' and 凉拌 (*liángbàn*) belong to different word classes — noun versus adjective — and translating 凉拌 (*liángbàn*) as 'salad' shifts the semantic focus, incorrectly elevating an attributive in the ST to a thematic nominal in the TT. Most importantly, this semantic shift inaccurately activates the cognitive processing related to the conception of a typical WESTERN SALAD in readers, leading them to believe they are learning about "a cold dish of herbs or vegetables (e.g., lettuce, endive), usually uncooked and chopped up or sliced, to which is often added sliced hard-boiled egg, cold meat, fish, etc., the whole being seasoned with salt, pepper, oil, and vinegar" (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). This causes significant confusion. Our participants indeed expressed such confusion:

> I think the lack of clarity was in the salad, what other elements of the fish skin salad are and how big an element the fish skin is (LNBA).

174

> It's a mix of ingredients, but as opposed to what I would think of a salad, which is, you know, primarily vegetable-based and less cooked. I think salad must have vegetables (JFAU).

As shown, readers may associate certain features of the fish skin dish with a salad they are familiar with, such as its cold nature and mixture of ingredients or seasonings. However, they are still likely to be baffled by the lack of vegetables and the overwhelming amount of 'side garnish' in the actual 'fish skin salad,' leading to difficulties in comprehension.

4.2. Problematic word choices

Problematic word choices in the translations are another issue that can significantly affect readers' understanding of food-related content. This often occurs in the translations of dish names, culture-specific ingredients and culinary techniques, as well as cuisine-specific tastes and textures. Table 3 lists some typical examples alongside the ST, TT, and the intended referents.

Source text	Target text	Intended referent
鱼生	*yusheng*	a traditional Cantonese dish made with raw freshwater fish slices
酿	*niang*	a food preparation technique of stuffing one ingredient into a hollow space of another ingredient
鲮鱼	dace	a Chinese freshwater fish
弹牙	punky	a bouncy texture (of pig tripe)

Table 3. Examples of problematic word choices.

Transliteration is used in multiple instances when translating dish names, employing the Romanised *pinyin* forms of the Chinese characters. One example is the translation of 鱼生 (*yusheng*), a traditional dish made with raw freshwater fish slices. In this case, *yusheng*, the *pinyin* form of the dish name, is used in the translation.

The participants gave diverse answers when asked what *yusheng* was, based solely on the translated text. Only nine (40.1%) understood it as a possible dish name, although four of them said they were simply making a wild guess. Five (22.7%) interpreted it as the name of a Chinese fish, three (13.6%) thought it was a type of spice or seasoning, one (4.5%) considered it a method of preparing fish, another (4.5%) read it as a fish-eating ritual, and the remaining three (13.6%) admitted they had no idea what the word meant.

A similar case is found in the translation of the Chinese food preparation method 酿 (*niàng*), which involves stuffing one ingredient into the hollow of another. Participants struggled to understand what *niang* meant.

Nevertheless, some participants supported keeping the transliterated forms in the translation, despite the confusion they might cause. One participant explained why he appreciated this word choice when discussing *yusheng*:

> I think it's great to have a Chinese word for a distinctive freshwater Chinese fish. You just need one of those common phrases right up front, so we're confident about [what] *yusheng* [is] […] And I think it's really cool […] probably not just me that's interested in this incredibly old continuous culture. So it's great to give it that sense of history, the original flavour and a lot of its working [with the transliteration] (JMPO).

The above elaboration partly reflects readers' possible positive reception of using transliteration in food translation. However, it also clearly shows that transliterated forms alone are insufficient to facilitate understanding.

In contrast to transliteration, we also found cases where the translator used uncommon English words for unique Chinese food items. A typical example occurs in the same text that introduces *niang*. A fish dish made with the *niang* method, 酿鲮鱼 (*niàng língyú*), was translated as 'stuffed dace.' 'Dace' is the English name for the native Chinese freshwater fish 鲮鱼 (*língyú*), but when asked to share their understanding of the dish, only twelve participants (54.5%) recognised the word 'dace' and offered some insights. Specifically, five (22.7%) said they knew the word 'dace,' while seven (31.8%) understood it from the context but did not personally know the term. The other ten participants (45.5%) admitted they could not visualise the dish or its cooking process because they did not know the word 'dace.' A few sample reader reactions to the word 'dace' are presented below:

> Dace? What is a dace? I don't know […] fish mince […] So, I suppose dace is a fish (BFCU).

> [Researcher: Are you familiar with dace?] Is it a type of fish? [Researcher: So, you know what it is.] Yes, but I don't think a lot of people do (BFSE).

> Stuffed daa-ce? Dace? [Researcher: Dace is actually an English word.] Oh, really (PFST)?

As indicated, although the participants are native English speakers, most were unfamiliar with the word 'dace.' One likely reason is that 'dace' belongs to a highly specialised lexical category — names of fish — which is not common knowledge for the general public. While the context helped some participants, overall, using an uncommon English word to translate a culture-specific food item can make comprehension challenging.

Choosing a word from an English variety unfamiliar to the readers can also be problematic. In a text introducing a pig tripe soup, the texture of the pig tripe is described as 弹牙 (*tányá*). Finding a full English equivalent for this texture is difficult, but 'bouncy' is a close alternative. However, the chosen word in the TT is 'punky.' Since pig tripe is unfamiliar to many Australian readers, they rely heavily on the description in the translation. Our Australian participants were highly perplexed by the word 'punky.' None of them knew the word. Apart from some wild guesses unrelated to food texture, such as "pungent" (FFAU, JFAU), "chunky" (BFSE, GFPO), and "funky" (LNBA, GFSW) — likely inspired by the phonetic features of 'punky' — no participant managed to verbalise the texture.

With the help of the Oxford English Dictionary, we found that 'punky' is not only an uncommon word but is also used restrictively in North America to describe a powdery and spongy consistency (Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Putting aside the question of whether a word meaning 'spongy' accurately captures a 'bouncy' texture, it is

176

concerning that the translator was likely unaware of the lexical differences across English varieties. An American English word may not exist in Australian English or may carry a completely different meaning. When a Chinese-to-English translator is unaware of variation among Englishes, their translations may make sense to one group of English speakers while utterly confusing another.

4.3. Cross-linguistic variation on stylistic devices

The third issue that may affect readers' reception is the variation in stylistic devices between Chinese and English writing. This issue is more nuanced but can still have a substantial impact. In the text on 'morning tea' and 'refreshments,' the two ill-chosen lexical items are the primary sources of misunderstanding. However, the structure of the Chinese narrative and how it was translated into English also contributed to the challenges in comprehension. Table 4 outlines the key sentences that scaffold the stylistic structure in both the ST and TT.

Source text	Target text (grammatical errors are original)
另一种饮食习惯 同样无法撼动 茶 开启了滋味丰富的一天 […] 早茶 是顺德人社会关系的粘合剂 […] 茶并非主角 人们更看重茶点 […]	There is also another dietary habit which is unshakable and unbeatable. Tea starts a tasteful day. […] Morning tea is the binding agent for Shundian's social relations. […] Tea is not the leading actor in this People values the refreshments that goes along with the tea better. […]

Table 4. Source and target texts of Text 2.

The ST follows a common Chinese writing style in which the main theme only surfaces after layers of scene setting. The narrative here is about the importance of 早茶 (*zǎochá*, transliterated as *yum cha*) and the expanding varieties of 点心 (*diǎnxīn*, transliterated as *dim sum*). However, in the Chinese narration, *yum cha* is only introduced after an opening discussion of 'tea,' and the core element, *dim sum*, appears last, following a transitional verse that notes tea is not the main focus. This structure was carried over directly into the TT.

Multiple participants found the translation confusing, as it is structured in a way that differs markedly from common English writing, which typically introduces the main theme with a topic sentence at the outset. Because tea is mentioned immediately in the opening sentence, participants assumed the text was about drinking tea in China. Their expectations were then abruptly disrupted by the statement "tea is not the leading actor." This shift caused confusion, as reflected in participants' self-reported interpretations:

> I did understand it was about tea, it did start with tea, but it got […] I totally misconstrued what the activity was. I think I diverged from the actual activity earlier on (JFAU).

[It's about] tea and the social function of tea, and how ancient it is, and what a big part of Shunde life tea is. But then it really takes a strange turn and contradicts itself […] and says, but what really matters is the food you have with the tea. And then it says nothing more about the tea. So there's a central confusion for me. Is this about the tea, or is this about the food that goes with the tea? […] Also, this abrupt change — "Tea is not the leading actor in this." It's too dramatic and it's a bit weird […] and it makes me confused about what the point of this information is (JMPO).

The readers' comprehension can also be impeded by the literal translation of Chinese figurative expressions into English. In the text on *yusheng*, many participants were confused by the sentence "*Yusheng* is the *live fossil* of Chinese cuisines," which was directly translated from its Chinese ST 鱼生是中国美食的*活化石*. The Chinese sentence compares *yusheng* to a living fossil, illustrating the long-lasting popularity of this traditional dish. However, the LIVING FOSSIL metaphor does not exist in English, and half of the participants understood the sentence literally, leading them to either perceive *yusheng* as an ancient animal or plant eaten in modern Chinese cuisine or become deeply perplexed. Table 5 summarises similar examples where participants struggled to comprehend due to unfamiliar stylistic or figurative transference.

Source text	**Target text (all grammatical errors are original)**
鱼生是中国美食的活化石。	*Yusheng* is the live fossil of Chinese cuisine.
底料在成就汤的精彩后常常隐身幕后。	When backing materials has provide the broth with the flavour, they often goes back behind the scenes.
另一种饮食习惯同样无法撼动。	There is also another dietary habit which is unshakable and unbeatable.
早茶是顺德人社会关系的粘合剂。	Morning tea is the binding agent for Shundian's social relations.

Table 5. Examples reflecting direct stylistic or figurative transference between ST and TT.

Identifying culture-specific stylistic features in the ST and adapting the TT into a writing style more familiar to the readers may not always be a priority for translators in practice. However, participant responses suggest that overlooking this issue may have a greater impact on comprehension than it initially appeared.

5. Australian English speakers' expectations of food translation

Building on the findings, this section explores readers' expectations and their implications for food translation strategies.

5.1. Do readers want less or more?

The translation techniques for food-related items in our chosen texts align with Li's (2019) findings on menu translation. The three main techniques are substitution, literal translation, and transliteration. Substitution, a typical domestication strategy, replaces an ST concept with a TT concept familiar to readers. Literal translation and transliteration are common foreignisation techniques, where the TT deliberately retains the foreignness of the original (Venuti, 2008). Literal translation is a word-for-word

rendering that preserves as much of the ST lexical structure as possible. Transliteration retains the phonetic form of the ST — *pinyin* in Chinese-to-English translations. Table 6 lists the three strategies with examples.

Strategy	Technique	Source text	Target text
domestication	substitution	凉拌	salad
		茶点 / 糕点 / 点心	refreshments
foreignisation	literal translation	文火	mild fire
		配料	side ingredients
foreignisation	transliteration	鱼生	*yusheng*
		酿	*niang*

Table 6. Translation strategies and examples.

Domestication can be misleading. Using an item familiar to the TT readers to replace the ST item is believed to help readers understand faster and better. However, as shown in Section 4.1, familiar items can evoke readers' own culture-specific conceptual frameworks, leading to cultural misconceptions. Moreover, when readers are fully aware of the foreignness of the ST content, substituting with culture-specific TT items can instead cause confusion, as one participant commented on 'refreshments':

> To someone who speaks English as the first language, that conjures up a very particular image in my head. That's clearly not what's intended by the text […] It might be technically correct, but it doesn't really do the job of getting the point across to me (MMST).

Foreignisation may not contribute to the readers' comprehension either. It is indeed common in the era of globalisation to use foreign words in food-related translation (Lakoff, 2006). Foreignisation can introduce exotic experiences to TT readers when dealing with culture-specific items and can serve as a tactic for cultural promotion. However, as discussed in Section 4.2, foreignisation can also be incomprehensible and seen as 'problematic' by readers.

Our participants considered literal translation and transliteration acceptable, as they already expected exotic experiences from the translation. However, they also expected elaboration and explanation from the translators where necessary:

> [Researcher: Would you still call it *yusheng*?] Yeah, I think so. But I'd like the text to emphasise that *yusheng* is the Chinese word for raw fish (PFST).

> [Transliteration is okay] […] I don't know if it's just English speakers, but I think we like it explicit. Explanation — and this didn't have it. So it was just a bit confusing to me (GFSW).

This expectation reflects the concept of explicitation in translation studies. The explicitation hypothesis, initially proposed by Blum-Kulka (1986), suggests that cohesive explicitness in the TT increases compared to the ST due to the cognitive process involved in translation, "regardless of the increase traceable to differences between the two linguistic and textual systems involved" (p. 19). Explicitation was later defined more broadly as a shift in translation from what is implicit in the ST to what is explicit in the TT (Murtisari, 2016). Translators tend to explicitate for the benefit of their

readers and to facilitate communication (Pym, 2005). Such explicitation may also be attributed to stylistic preferences in specific languages and text types (Zhang et al., 2020).

Klaudy (1998) classified explicitation into four categories: obligatory, optional, pragmatic, and translation-inherent. Pragmatic explicitation addresses cultural differences between the ST and TT (Klaudy, 1998, p. 83). Our participants expected only *a bit more* explanation — no more, no less. They were aware of the rich culture embedded in the words and did not expect full understanding from translation alone. Therefore, they advocated for only the necessary and straightforward amplification.

One solution proposed by our participants was generalisation — mentioning the category of the culture-specific item. For example, they felt that adding the category term 'preparation method' would benefit their understanding of *niang*. Similarly, 'dace' would be more comprehensible if translated as 'dace fish.'

Optional explicitation can also address the text-building issue discussed in Section 4.3. It involves "the difference in text-building strategies" and "stylistic preferences between languages" (Klaudy, 1998, p. 83). Unnatural sentences that reflect the ST style or figurative devices can be rephrased more explicitly. For example, participant GFCO suggested rewriting "*Yusheng* is the live fossil of Chinese cuisines" more clearly as "It is a very traditional dish."

5.2. Is being accurate enough?

The participants noted some apparent typos and grammatical errors in the selected texts. However, they believed these mistakes did not cause significant difficulty in comprehension, despite requiring extra effort and time to process the information:

> I think [that] it distracts me is the problem. I might see the typo and pause to focus on that and make sense of it […] [But] it's not a big deal (MMST).

> [The typo] makes me overanalyse everything, whereas it is just straightforward […] [the impact is] significant but small (RFST).

The participant insights align with findings from eye-tracking studies. Numerous studies (e.g., Braze et al., 2002; Hallberg & Niehorster, 2021) have shown that syntactic and morphosyntactic anomalies often lead to increased regressions and longer reading times, indicating greater cognitive effort. However, comprehension is generally preserved, suggesting that such errors disrupt processing but not meaning construction. The participants' largely accurate understanding of most ungrammatical sentences supports this view. For example, in the 'dace' text, the sentence "take out [the] dace's bone, cut *it* into thin slices, then chop *it* into mince" contains a pronoun misuse: grammatically, 'it' should refer to 'bone,' but here it clearly refers to 'the dace.' Despite this, most participants successfully decoded the intended meaning. This indicates that the impact of lexical and syntactical errors on readers is limited, if not minimal.

The readers emphasised the importance of precision in word choices over accuracy. Some translations may be accurate but lack sufficient precision. Table 7 presents

examples of translations that are seemingly accurate but imprecise, alongside more precise alternatives recommended by the participants.

Source text	Target text	Participant recommended translation
吃鱼的方法	ways to cook fish	ways to prepare fish dishes
揉搓（猪肚）十分钟	rub the pig tripe for ten minutes	wash/knead
反复摔打	bash it	hit/knead/throw/pound it
佐料	seasonings	toppings/other ingredients

Table 7. Accurate versus precise translations.

The phrase from the TT, "ways to cook fish," is a good example to explain this matter. Taken from the text on *yusheng*, the sentence "there are a variety of ways to cook fish" caused unexpected confusion among the participants. They were unsure whether *yusheng* was eaten raw. Some pointed out that the word 'cook' was confusing because, to them, 'cook' means 'being heated':

> It's sort of like sashimi […] and it's not cooked. But it says here, "there's a variety of ways for people in Shunde to cook fish," but it's not being cooked (BFSE).

> Well, the fact that they say cook fish, the first one's not cooked at all […] It's misleading (BFCU).

There are many reasons why imprecision occurs. As analysed in Section 4.2, translators' choice of uncommon words and a lack of awareness of variation across Englishes can contribute to this issue. However, avoiding precise wording can sometimes be a deliberate decision, especially when translating exotic ingredients that readers may find unpalatable. In such cases, translators may choose an accurate but seemingly less precise alternative to soften or obscure potentially unpleasant referents, as illustrated in Table 8.

Source text	Target text	Participant recommended translation
猪肚	pig tripe	pig stomach
鱼肠	fish bowel	fish intestine

Table 8. Unpalatable ingredients and their translations.

Unpalatable ingredients rarely consumed in the TT culture may evoke unpleasantness (Dupas de Matos et al., 2025; Garzone, 2017), but TT readers today are no longer completely unfamiliar with other cultures. Responses from our participants, such as the one from RFST below, show that they prefer a precise and professional translation to a disguised substitution, even if the precise translation evokes unpleasant culinary imagery. They want to make an informed decision about the food based on the most accurate understanding.

> 'Stomach,' like, straight away, you're like, "It's scary." It is not pleasant, but it gives you what it is (RFST).

Previous studies (e.g., Amenador & Wang, 2022; Oster & Molés-Cases, 2016) have overlooked the precision of word choice. As our findings suggest, the nuances of words

can add to the perplexity already caused by foreign cultural elements, and readers expect translations to be both accurate and precise.

6. Conclusion

In this study, we interviewed Australian English speakers to investigate their reception of, and expectations for, food translation. A close analysis of participant responses reveals three major issues in the English texts that hinder accurate understanding of food-related meanings and may affect the reader's experience: (1) cultural misconceptions, (2) problematic word choices, and (3) cross-linguistic variation in stylistic devices.

Our findings indicate that readers expect brief but essential information to be added to foreignised translations of culture-specific items. They favour explicitness in meaning-making and, to our surprise, prefer precise word choices — even for unpalatable food items unfamiliar to their culture.

While this exploratory study offers initial insights into food translation reception, several limitations suggest directions for future research. First, our participant sample primarily consisted of individuals from similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Future research could engage a more diverse range of readers to capture a broader spectrum of responses. Second, this study adopted a qualitative approach. Building on our findings, quantitative methods, such as surveys or experimental designs, could be employed to triangulate the results. Third, the source material consisted of uncontextualised plain texts of food translation. Future studies could focus on specific culinary genres, such as menus, cookbooks, food blogs, or promotional materials, to better gauge reception among their contextual readers.

On a practical level, the findings highlight the need for heightened sensitivity to target readers' cultural perceptions in food translation. Rather than focusing solely on linguistic fidelity, translators may need to consider how textual choices align with, or challenge, readers' culturally constructed culinary norms. This invites a re-evaluation of translation strategies and their potential effects.

From a social impact perspective, accurate and culturally sensitive food translation can promote intercultural understanding, reduce stereotypes, and foster inclusivity in public discourse. Thoughtful translation choices can also enhance consumer engagement. The findings of this study have implications for translation practice not only in the domain of food but also in the translation of other culturally specific items. They can inform how translators negotiate the balance between fidelity to the source culture and accessibility for the target readership.

At a theoretical and methodological level, the study contributes to the growing body of work that situates translation within reception contexts. It highlights the value of incorporating reader responses as a critical lens for evaluating translation effects and offers a more empirical and ethnographic methodological model that encourages culturally grounded explorations of reader reception.

References

Amenador, K. B., & Wang, Z. (2022). The translation of culture-specific items (CSIs) in Chinese–English food menu corpus: A study of strategies and factors. *SAGE Open*, *12*(2), 1–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221096649

Ameri, S., & Khoshsaligheh, M. (2021). An experiment on amateur and professional subtitling reception in Iran. *SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation*, *14*(2), 2–21.

Bardini, F. (2020). Film language, film emotions and the experience of blind and partially sighted viewers: A reception study. *Journal of Specialised Translation*, *33*, 259–280. https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2020.556

Blum-Kulka, S. (1986). Shifts of cohesion and coherence in translation. In J. House & S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.), *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication: Discourse and Cognition in Translation and Second Language Acquisition Studies* (pp. 17–35). Narr.

Božović, P. (2019). How should culture be rendered in subtitling and dubbing? A reception study on preferences and attitudes of end-users. *Babel*, *65*(1), 81–95. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.00082.boz

Braze, D., Shankweiler, D., Ni, W., & Palumbo, L. C. (2002). Readers' eye movements distinguish anomalies of form and content. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, *31*(1), 25–44. https://doi.org/10.1023/a:1014324220455

Brems, E., & Pinto, S. R. (2013). Reception and translation. In Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies: Volume 4* (pp. 142–147). John Benjamins Publishing Company. http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/anu/detail.action?docID=1574380

Charron, M., & Desjardins, R. (2011). Introduction: Food, language, and identity. *Cuizine: The Journal of Canadian Food Cultures / Cuizine : Revue Des Cultures Culinaires Au Canada*, *3*(1). https://doi.org/10.7202/1004725ar

Chen, X. (2023). The role of spatial changes to paratext in literary translation reception: Eleven Chinese editions of Charlotte's Web. *Translation Studies*, *17*(2), 299–313. https://doi.org/10.1080/14781700.2023.2231959

Chłopicki, W. (2018). Translation of Menus: Labour of Sisyphos, squaring the circle or marrying water and fire? *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore*, *71*, 155–178. https://doi.org/10.7592/FEJF2018.71.chlopicki

Chmiel, A., & Mazur, I. (2022). A homogenous or heterogeneous audience? Audio description preferences of persons with congenital blindness, non-congenital blindness and low vision. *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*, *30*(3), 552–567. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2021.1913198

Ciribuco, A. (2021). Okra in translation: Asylum seekers, food, and integration. *Language, Culture and Society*, *3*(1), 9–33. https://doi.org/10.1075/lcs.20010.cir

Cornelio-Marí, E. (2022). Watching dubbed television: Audiences in Italy and Mexico. *Television and New Media*, *23*(3), 276–292. https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476421989785

de los Reyes Lozano, J. (2020). Straight from the horse's mouth: Children's reception of dubbed animated films in Spain. *Journal of Specialised Translation*, *33*, 233–258. https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2020.555

Desjardins, R. (2011). L'étude du menu comme représentation de l'identité culinaire québécoise: Le cas des menus au Château Frontenac. *Cuizine: The Journal of Canadian Food Cultures / Cuizine : revue des cultures culinaires au Canada*, *3*(1). https://doi.org/10.7202/1004729ar

Desjardins, R. (2021). Food and translation. In Y. Gambier & L. Van Doorslaer (Eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies* (Vol. 5, pp. 88–93). John Benjamins Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1075/hts.5.foo1

Di Giovanni, E. (2020). Eye tracking and the museum experience in Italy. *Altre Modernita*, *24*, 10–24. https://doi.org/10.13130/2035-7680/14511

Dupas de Matos, A., Chen, A., Maggs, R., Godfrey, A. J. R., Weerawarna N. R. P., M., & Hort, J. (2025). Cross-cultural differences and acculturation in affective response and sensory perception: A case study across Chinese immigrants and local consumers in New Zealand. *Food Quality and Preference*, *122*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodqual.2024.105299

Fernández-Torné, A., & Matamala, A. (2015). Text-to-speech vs. human voiced audio descriptions: A reception study in films dubbed into Catalan. *Journal of Specialised Translation*, *24*, 61–88. https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2015.323

Fidyka, A., Matamala, A., Vilageliu, O. S., & Arias-Badia, B. (2021). Audio description in 360° content: Results from a reception study. *SKASE Journal of Translation and Interpretation*, *14*(1), 14–32.

Fryer, L., & Freeman, J. (2013). Cinematic language and the description of film: Keeping AD users in the frame. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology*, *21*(3), 412–426. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2012.693108

Fuentes-Luque, A. (2003). An empirical approach to the reception of AV translated humour: A case study of the Marx Brothers' "Duck Soup." *The Translator*, *9*(2), 293–306. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2003.10799158

Fuentes-Luque, A. (2017). An approach to analysing the quality of menu translations in southern Spain restaurants. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *38*(2), 177–188. https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2016.1187154

Fung, Y. M. (2022). Directionality in post-editing: Implications for future training of professional Chinese–English translators in New Zealand. In J. Wakabayashi & M. O'Hagan (Eds.), *Translating and interpreting in Australia and New Zealand: Distance and diversity* (pp. 241–263). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group. http://doi.org/10.4324/9781003150770

Garzone, G. (2017). Food, culture, language and translation. *Journal of Multicultural Discourses*, *12*(3), 214–221. https://doi.org/10.1080/17447143.2017.1364255

Gaspari, F. (2015). Exploring Expo Milano 2015: A cross-linguistic comparison of food-related phraseology in translation using a *comparallel* corpus approach. *Translator*, *21*(3), 327–349. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2015.1103099

Guerberof-Arenas, A., Moorkens, J., & Orrego-Carmona, D. (2024). "A Spanish version of EastEnders": A reception study of a telenovela subtitled using MT. *Journal of Specialised Translation*, *41*, 230–254. https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2024.4724

Guerberof-Arenas, A., & Toral, A. (2024). To be or not to be: A translation reception study of a literary text translated into Dutch and Catalan using machine translation. *Target*, *36*(2), 215–244. https://doi.org/10.1075/target.22134.gue

Guo, J., & Zou, D. (2023). Reception study: The omission of narrative text in the English translation of Mo Yan's *Life and Death Are Wearing Me Out*. *Frontiers in Communication*, *8*, 1–13. https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2023.1063490

Hallberg, A., & Niehorster, D. C. (2021). Parsing written language with non-standard grammar. *Reading and Writing*, *34*(1), 27–48. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11145-020-10040-6

184

Hennink, M. M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample sizes for saturation in qualitative research: A systematic review of empirical tests. *Social Science & Medicine*, *292*, Article 114523. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523

Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Marconi, V. C. (2017). Code saturation versus meaning saturation: How many interviews are enough? *Qualitative Health Research*, *27*(4), 591–608. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732316665344

Hu, K., O'Brien, S., & Kenny, D. (2020). A reception study of machine translated subtitles for MOOCs. *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*, *28*(4), 521–538. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2019.1595069

Jurado, M. Á., & Ponce, G. P. (2023). Contrastive study of translation techniques used in agri-food translation of food labelling: The product's name (Spanish–French). In I. P. Gil & M.-T. O. Antón (Eds.), *Interpreting and Translation for Agri-food Professionals in the Global Marketplace* (pp. 119–139). De Gruyter Brill. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111101729-007

Khoshsaligheh, M., Kafi, M., & Ameri, S. (2020). Fiction translation expectancy norms in Iran: A quantitative study of reception. *Translation and Interpreting*, *12*(1), 74–89. https://doi.org/10.12807/TI.112201.2020.A05

Klaudy, K. (1998). Explicitation. In M. Baker & K. Malmkjær (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (pp. 80–85). Routledge.

Kruger, J.-L. (2012). Making meaning in AVT: Eye tracking and viewer construction of narrative. *Perspectives*, *20*(1), 67–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2011.632688

Kuscu-Ozbudak, S. (2022). The role of subtitling on Netflix: An audience study. *Perspectives*, *30*(3), 537–551. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2020.1854794

Lakoff, R. T. (2006). Identity à la carte: You are what you eat. In A. De Fina, D. Schiffrin, & M. Bamberg (Eds.), *Discourse and Identity* (pp. 142–165). Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511584459.008

Li, S. (2019). A corpus-based multimodal approach to the translation of restaurant menus. *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*, *27*(1), 1–19. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2018.1483408

Li, S., Li, Q., & Hope, W. (2022). Translating (and rewriting) Jane Austen's food across time and space. *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, *9*(2), 201–216. https://doi.org/10.1080/23306343.2022.2106068

Liu, S. (Director). (2016). *A bite of Shunde* [Documentary]. NewTV. https://www.amazon.com/A-Bite-of-Shunde/dp/B07L72XJGT/ref=cm_cr_arp_d_product_top?ie=UTF8

Matamala, A., Perego, E., & Bottiroli, S. (2017). Dubbing versus subtitling yet again? An empirical study on user comprehension and preferences in Spain. *Babel*, *63*(3), 423–441. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.63.3.07mat

Montanari, M. (2006). *Food is culture* (A. Sonnenfeld, Trans.). Columbia University Press. https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7312/mont13790

Murtisari, E. (2016). Explicitation in translation studies: The journey of an elusive concept. *The International Journal of Translation and Interpreting Research*, *8*, 64–81. https://doi.org/10.12807/ti.108202.2016.a05

Orrego-Carmona, D. (2016). A reception study on non-professional subtitling: Do audiences notice any difference? *Across Languages and Cultures*, *17*(2), 163–181. https://doi.org/10.1556/084.2016.17.2.2

Orrego-Carmona, D., Dutka, Ł., & Szarkowska, A. (2018). Using translation process research to explore the creation of subtitles: An eye-tracking study comparing professional and trainee subtitlers. *JoSTrans: The Journal of Specialised Translation*, *30*, 150–180. https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2018.200

Oster, U., & Molés-Cases, T. (2016). Eating and drinking seen through translation: A study of food-related translation difficulties and techniques in a parallel corpus of literary texts. *Across Languages and Cultures*, *17*(1), 53–75. https://doi.org/10.1556/084.2016.17.1.3

Oxford English Dictionary. (n.d.). *Oxford English Dictionary* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press. Retrieved June 26, 2025, from https://www.oed.com

Panou, D. (2022). Possibilising food translation in children's literature: With a focus on Greek translations of *Captain Underpants*. *Babel*, *68*(6), 890–912. https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.00294.pan

Paradowski, M. B. (2018). What's cooking in English culinary texts? Insights from genre corpora for cookbook and menu writers and translators. *Translator*, *24*(1), 50–69. https://doi.org/10.1080/13556509.2016.1271735

Pym, A. (2005). Explaining explicitation. In K. Klaudy, K. Károly, & Á. Fóris (Eds.), *New Trends in Translation Studies: In Honour of Kinga Klaudy* (pp. 29–34). Akadémiai Kiadó.

Raffi, F. (2020). The impact of Italian dubbing on viewers' immersive experience: An audience reception study. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, *10*(3). https://doi.org/10.30935/ojcmt/8371

Ramírez-Almansa, I. (2023). Agri-food translation within the vitiviniculture field: Wine language metaphors from Spanish into English. In I. P. Gil & M.-T. O. Antón (Eds.), *Interpreting and Translation for Agri-food Professionals in the Global Marketplace* (pp. 47–65). De Gruyter Brill. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111101729-003

Rovira-Esteva, S., & Tor-Carroggio, I. (2020). N. de la T.: Dícese de un elemento controvertido. Análisis de la recepción de las notas del traductor en la traducción del chino de Diarios del Sáhara [Taking note of translator's notes: Analysis of the reception of the translator's notes in the Chinese translation of *Stories of the Sahara*]. *Onomazein*, *50*, 47–70. https://doi.org/10.7764/onomazein.50.02

Sanz-Moreno, R. (2019). Competencia cultural del receptor normovidente y audiodescripción. Estudio de caso [Normal viewer's cultural competence and audio description: A case study]. *Hikma*, *18*(2), 257–275. https://doi.org/10.21071/hikma.v18i2.11681

Sauner, M. H., & Parlak, I. B. (2023). Challenges of translating food in multiparallel corpus: Beverages and mealtimes in Balzac's human comedy (*La Comédie Humaine*). *Food and Foodways*, *31*(2), 108–134. https://doi.org/10.1080/07409710.2023.2197166

Sharifian, F. (2011). *Cultural conceptualisations and language: Theoretical framework and applications*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Sharifian, F. (2017). *Cultural linguistics*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Sharifian, F., & Sadeghpour, M. (2021). Cultural linguistics and world Englishes: An overview. In M. Sadeghpour & F. Sharifian (Eds.), *Cultural Linguistics and World Englishes* (pp. 1–14). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4696-9

Shi, J. (2013). Inverse translation in China: A necessary choice or a necessary evil. *I-Manager's Journal on English Language Teaching*, *3*(1), 15–21. https://doi.org/10.26634/jelt.3.1.2146

Tang, J. (2008). A cross-cultural perspective on production and reception of Disney's *Mulan* through its Chinese subtitles. *European Journal of English Studies*, *12*(2), 149–162. https://doi.org/10.1080/13825570802151413

Tor-Carroggio, I. (2020). T(ime) T(o) S(tart) synthesising audio description in China? Results of a reception study. *Journal of Specialised Translation*, *34*, 171–191. https://doi.org/10.26034/cm.jostrans.2020.142

Vasileiou, K., Barnett, J., Thorpe, S., & Young, T. (2018). Characterising and justifying sample size sufficiency in interview-based studies: Systematic analysis of qualitative health research over a 15-year period. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, *18*(1), 148. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12874-018-0594-7

Venuti, L. (2008). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation* (2nd ed). Routledge.

Wang, B. (2011). Translation practices and the issue of directionality in China. *Meta: Journal Des Traducteurs / Meta: Translators' Journal*, *56*(4), 896–914. https://doi.org/10.7202/1011259ar

Whyatt, B., Witczak, O., Tomczak-Łukaszewska, E., & Lehka-Paul, O. (2023). The proof of the translation process is in the reading of the target text: An eyetracking reception study. *Ampersand*, *11*, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amper.2023.100149

Wolf, H.-G., & Polzenhagen, F. (2024). Cultural linguistics: Some disciplinary and terminological considerations. In A. Korangy (Ed.), *The Handbook of Cultural Linguistics* (pp. 109–134). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-3800-1

Zhang, X., Kotze (Kruger), H., & Fang, J. (2019). Explicitation in children's literature translated from English to Chinese: a corpus-based study of personal pronouns. *Perspectives*, 28(5), 717–736. https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2019.1689276

Zhang, X., & Torres-Hostench, O. (2022). La traducción al español de las técnicas culinarias chinas [Translating Chinese food preparation methods into Spanish]. *Hermeneus*, *24*, 483–514. https://doi.org/10.24197/her.24.2022.483-514

Zhang, X., & Torres-Hostench, O. (2023). Chinese gastronomic nomenclature: Culture and translation. In I. P. Gil & M.-T. O. Antón (Eds.), *Interpreting and Translation for Agri-food Professionals in the Global Marketplace* (pp. 29–45). De Gruyter Brill. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783111101729-002

Zhao, J. (2020). Interpreting the cultural symbols in Chinese documentaries: Taking *A bite of China* and *Beautiful China* as examples. *Frontiers in Educational Research*, *3*(11).

Zhu, H., Ang, L. H., & Mansor, N. S. (2024). Are mouse noodles actually made from mice? Touring street food name translations. *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, *11*(1). https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-024-03041-1

Data availability statement

The data supporting the findings of this study, including audio recordings and corresponding transcripts, are not publicly available due to ethical restrictions. The Human Research Ethics Committee of the Australian National University (Protocol No. 2023/154) has stipulated that these data cannot be shared publicly, even in anonymised form, without explicit participant consent. As such consent was not obtained, the data cannot be made available.