

CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES REFLECTED IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF CHINESE DISHES' NAMES INTO THAI

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Abstract: *This paper presents Cultural Perspectives Reflected in the Transformation of Chinese Dishes' Names into Thai. Difference speech group of people have their distinctive language and cookery, Food naming is well reflect the different of the culture, based on different cultural background. This paper discussed about how different of Chinese and Thai culture reflect on the transformation of the dish names, which collected from 10 popular and well-known Chinese dish names among Thai people which always appears in Chinese restaurants' menu and always be rating on the internet and social media. The Research found that there are 5 major phenomena and changes when Chinese dish names are transformed into Thai: 1) Reduction and addition of the lexemes referred to cooking process, 2) Implication of Thai name implying various raw materials, 3) Loss of historical values and important cultural implications, 4) Common name different dish, 5) Differences of spiciness implied in Chinese and Thai names. When the traditional dish names are transformed into Thai. The dish does not effectively convey cultural identity of the original one, and might affect the understanding of people on Chinese food and Chinese food culture. To maintain its cultural information and historical values, it is necessary to gain deeper insight into Chinese culture, and find the proper way to interweave both during the transformation process.*

Keywords: *Chinese Dishes, Dish Naming, cross cultural*

INTRODUCTION

The cuisine of the most dominant Chinese dialect or regional group in particular Southeast Asian country is often call

“Chinese cuisine” by the local [1]. Chinese food has had a long history in Thailand since the early group of Chinese migrants moved into Thailand in 13th century during the Sukhothai Kingdom. As the world longest history nation, Chinese diet has a long history as their civilization. Chinese cuisine is one of the most important parts of Chinese culture. Also, Chinese dish names play an important role in transmitting the Chinese image and culture to the world.

Difference speech group of people have their distinctive language and cookery, Food naming is well reflect the different of the culture, based on different cultural background. There are some previous studies discussed about language structures used in translating Thai Food Names from Thai to English [2]. However, there is no scholar studies Chinese dishes' names transformed into Thai. How the Chinese dish names are presented; and if the dish name is presented in the same way of the original one drew the attention of this paper. This paper focused on 10 popular and well-known Chinese dish names among

Thai people which always appears in Chinese restaurants' menu and always be rating on the internet and social media. The author first summarized the principle of Chinese dish naming and Chinese cuisine culture, and then made a detailed comparison between Chinese and Thai dish names to explore changes and differences. Comparison between similar food names in china and in the Chinese diaspora (Thailand)

is a useful area of research that will inform us much about the changing and localization of “traditional” dish names, and will tell us about the dynamics of a culture.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON “FOOD, LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL”

A. Cultural Factor Consideration Taking

Many Chinese dish names include cultural loaded words and historical stories. Their cultural connotation and metaphorical references are always discussed among scholars. Chinese dish names are special because they convey Chinese images and transmit Chinese hospitalities to the world. However, presenting the dish names in the place with different cultural backgrounds is not just one language to language, but it is a transfer of two cultures. It is regarded as the intercultural communication. Therefore, in order to take a cross cultural perspective, it is very important to take the cultural factor into consideration. In the trend of “cultural turn”, close relationship between culture and language cannot be neglected. In order to understand the influences on their thought and decisions, not only cultural source of language, society and some other cultural backgrounds have to be concerned, language matters also have to be considered because cultural identity can be marked by language, although language can be used to refer to other processes and development.

In Thailand, “Chinese cuisine” refers to Chinese cookery which is made up of distinctive regional flavors, styles and dishes. The cuisines of the most dominant Chinese dialect or regional group of Chinese migrants are originated from different regions of China such as Minnan food, Chaozhou food, Cantonese food, Hakka food, Hainanese food, etc.

Comparison between similar foods in China and in the Chinese diaspora is a useful area of research that will inform us more about the continuing change, symbolism and localization of “traditional” Chinese food items. It has much to tell us about the dynamics of a culture and cultural change, influenced by interethnic interaction and localization. Moreover, it expresses the local identity and shows that culture is enriched by cross cultural interaction [3].

the localization of Chinese in Southeast Asia and their invention of local Chinese food as well as the adoption of local non-Chinese food, and divided it into two main types of such food, namely the innovation based on existing Chinese culinary knowledge and the innovation derived from local culinary knowledge combined with Chinese culinary knowledge. For example, the case of such popular Southeast Asian Chinese food is kway teow. One cannot say it was definitely invented by the Chinese in Malaysia or the Chinese in Thailand. The term kway teow is not a Cantonese or Minnan term as it is not used in Fujian, Taiwan, or the Cantonese-speakers in Hong Kong and Guangdong. Thus in both Hong Kong and Taiwan kway teow is used as a loanword from Southeast Asia, written as 贵刁 (guidiao in Mandarin) in Hong Kong. Actually, the rice-flour noodle is known to the Cantonese-speakers in China as hohfan, but eggs and shrimps are Southeast Asian in origin and hence the loanword. Perhaps the Chaozhou Chinese in Malaysia and Thailand introduced this dish which is known in Chaozhou dialect by that name and written as 𠵼𠵼𠵼𠵼/kw̍ ai t̍iaw/ 粿条 (guotiao in Mandarin). In addition, it has become part of the everyday language of Thai people presently [3].

Moreover, others Chinese dialect names of particular words and dishes often enter the local Thai vocabulary. For example, Thai word for 豆腐/ dòufu / ‘tofu’ is “/tâw hû:” and fried spring roll (春卷) is called “Chūnjuǎn” in Mandarin, but in Thailand it is called 𠵼𠵼𠵼𠵼/pò: piá/, which is based on Hokkien (i.e., Minnan) pronunciation.

Different cultural backgrounds and geography make people have their own style of eating and calling their food name. Dish name and dish naming method, as a language, have played an important role in conveying the identity of one culture in each region. It well reflects derivation, cultural meaning, conception and belief of people in the community.

B. Traditional Naming Method of Chinese Dishes

The naming of Chinese food is very complicated. Chinese dish names not only reflect a great deal of ingredients method, cooking methods, taste, appearance, aroma, color of the dishes, but also reflect some cultural elements such as the dish creators, stories, places, legends, which combine more association.

There has been a wide variety of Chinese food dish. The name of the dish is also extremely rich. There are many different ideas that define the naming method of Chinese dish. Yang and Li have divided Chinese dish names into two groups: descriptive dish name and dish name of aesthetic senses. Another, there are two main approaches in naming Chinese dishes [4]. First, it is realistic, including the name of raw materials,

the way of cutting, cooking method, cuisine color, smell, taste and the founder. Second, the impressionistic of romanticism, means using allusion, metaphor, hyperbole, and symbolism in a variety of ways to make the name of dish, which is not only beautiful but also vivid.

In addition, in Chinese food naming there are many dish names compounded Chinese cultural and traditional background. This can be seen from the following examples.

Dish names which include people's name such as 东坡肉 / Dōng pō ròu / (DongPo+meat), 宫保鸡丁 / Gōng bǎo jī dīng /, 麻婆豆腐 / Mǎ pó dòufu/ etc. It is one of the characteristic features of Chinese cuisine culture. Many dishes are included their inventors or relevant people in Chinese history.

Dish names which include place such as 北京烤鸭 / Běijīng kǎoyā / (Beijing+roast+duck) 'Beijing roasted duck', 重庆火锅 / Chóngqìng huǒguō /, 兰州拉面 / Lánzhōu lāmian / etc. China is a very big country. In different places, there are many different typical famous dishes. Place names included in the dish names effectively reflect their typical flavor, because they were especially delicious in these places or the original places of this food

Dish names which include auspicious characters: such as 喜 'happiness', 寿 'long life', 财 'wealth or money' etc. Chinese people always believe in auspicious, so many Chinese dishes consist of some auspicious characters or Chinese idioms For example, 寿比南山, 百年好合, 年年有余, 彩云飞凤 always appears in celebration such as Chinese New Year or someone's birthday party.

Dish names which included numbers: These numbers have a specific meaning in Chinese culture such as 地三鲜 (Dì sān xiān), 八宝全鸭 (Bā bǎo quán yā), 八宝饭 (Bābǎofàn) etc.

Dish names which include folks, rumors, legends and Chinese poems: such as 佛跳墙 (Fótiaopiáng), 过桥米线 (Guò qiáo mǐxiàn), 鲤鱼跃龙门 (Lǐyú yuè lóngmén) etc. This kind of dish names normally has background of a story or a poem; one story for one dish

As the information mentioned above, we can see that Chinese dish names consist of a variety of cultural backgrounds that reflect cultural identity of Chinese food.

C. Traditional Naming Methods of Thai Dishes

In Thai dish naming, Anantaya Comitin divided Thai dish naming method into 2 methods. First is the direct method which includes ingredient, cooking method, type of food and their characteristics. Second is the comparative method [5]. Chanokporn Angsuviya stated that Thai southern part dish names were divided by word structure and headword, which could be classified in to 4 categories: 1) type of food, 2) cooking method, 3) the main ingredient and 4) characteristics of the food [6]. In addition, Sasithron Sinthawonkul divided the format of Thai food name into 2 formats: main section + extension (modifier word), and main section + extension + extras; except some dish names which use symbolism in a variety of ways to make the name of dish not only beautiful but also interesting. Normally, dish names mainly include words or phrases as presented below [7]:

- 1) Type of food such as Soup, Rice.
- 2) Cooking method such as Boiling, Stewing, Steaming and Frying.
- 3) Taste such as Sweet, Sour, Spicy, Salty
- 4) Raw materials such as Chicken, Pork, Beef
- 5) Characteristics of food which are words or phrases, describing the characteristics of the food like seeing from pictures

FINDINGS

Based on different cultural backgrounds, how the dish name is presented; and if the dish name is presented in the same way of the original are what the author is interested in. After reviewing all 10 Chinese dishes (samples), except some dishes that present in the same way in both languages by using the name of raw materials in the dish along with the cooking method, such as 炒饭 / chǎofàn / (stir fry+rice) 'fried rice', ข้าวผัด / k^hâ:w p^hàt / (rice+stir fry) 'fried rice' in Thai and 炒面 (chǎomiàn), "/p^hàt mì:/", the author found some phenomena and changes which are very interesting.

A. Reduction and addition of the lexemes referred to cooking process

Chinese dish names presented in Thai language always add cooking method into the dish names which the original ones do not have. For example 糖醋排骨 / táng cù páigǔ / (sugar+vinegar+pork rib) 'sweet&sour pork ribs' is presented in Thai as "/mǔ: t^hô :t rât sôt: t p^hāw wǎ:n/", and 宫保鸡丁 (gōng bǎo jī

dīng) is presented in Thai as “/kàj p^hàt t^hùà lisǒŋ/”. For Thai dish names, “/t^hô :t/” (deep fried) and “/p^hàt/” (stir fried) were added into the names, but these did not show up in the original names in Chinese. On the other hand, in some dishes such as 北京烤鸭 /Běijīng kǎoyā/ (Beijing+roast+duck) ‘Beijing Roast Duck’, which the original dish name was added with cooking method “烤” (roast), but it was reduced when presented in Thai เป็ดปักกิ่ง/pèt pàk kīng/ ‘Peking duck’.

B. Implication of Thai name implying various raw materials

As the information mentioned above, when dish name is transformed into Thai, not only cooking method is added on. In some dishes, the raw materials are also varied. Its original Chinese name refers to particular raw material. However, Thai name implies general raw materials, similar to the particular raw material to which the original name refers to. For example, 糖醋排骨 (Táng cù páigǔ) is presented in Thai as “/mǔ: t^hô :t rā:t sǒ:t prāw wǎ:n/”, 排骨 /páigǔ/ ‘Pork ribs’, raw material of the dish is presented as “/mǔ: t^hô :t/” (Fried Pork), which makes change to the raw material of the dish.

Cutting style of the raw material is one of the important features of Chinese cookery and Chinese dish naming method, but when it is presented in Thai, something is missing in this feature. For example, 宫保鸡丁 (Gōng bǎo jī dīng) is presented in Thai as “/kàj p^hàt t^hùà lisǒŋ/”, 鸡丁 (jī dīng), diced chicken meat. In Thai it is only presented as “/kàj/” (chicken). This changes the particular raw material and the character of the dish from the original one.

C. Loss of historical values and important cultural implications

Many Chinese dish names presented in Thai are losing their inventors or relevant people in Chinese history. As the information presented above, many Chinese dish names are normally named in honor of their inventors or relevant people in

Chinese history, but when it is presented in Thai, the important cultural information of the dish is neglected. It only presents the character or raw material of the dish without mentioning its inventor. This makes the dish name lose their historical values and cultural information. For example, two Chinese dish names are often seen in Chinese restaurants in Thailand: 宫保鸡丁 (Gōng bǎo jī dīng). In fact, it is named after Ding Baozhen, a constable and prince’s tutor in Qing Dynasty. People called him Ding Gongbao (Kung Pao in Cantonese), who favored spicy food and made this dish on the basis of paste diced chicken accidentally. But in Thai, it is presented as “/kàj p^hàt t^hùà lisǒŋ/” which only shows the character of the dish without mentioning its inventor or the story behind.

Another example is “麻婆豆腐” (Má pó dòufu). Indeed, according to Chengdu Records, Má pó dòufu (Original called Chen Mapo tofu) was regarded as one of the most famous Chengdu foods at the end of the Qing Dynasty. It was the story about Chen Chunfu’s wife. Who have a lot pocks on her face, she was called Chen Mapo (woman with pocks on the face (meaning in Chinese)). With a unique way of cooking tofu. The tofu she made looked, smelled and tasted good, so Chen Mapo doufu became famous. In Thai, the dish is presented as “/tāw hū: sǒŋ k^hrāŋ sa ta:j sǎ: chǔan/” which neglected “Mapo”, who was the inventor of this dish, and the dish’s Thai name does not reveal the idea that its original Chinese name does.

D. Common name different dish

There is a confusion of dumpling and wonton. 饺子(Jiǎozi) (dumpling) and 馄饨(Húntún) (wonton) are always presented as “/kíaw/” in Thai. This might affect people’s understanding in both dishes. In Thai, “/kíaw/” is described as a food that consists of small pieces of dough wrapped around a filling. But in fact, in Chinese, both were divided clearly; 饺子 and 馄饨 are totally different in raw material and eating method. You will never get wonton when you order /kíaw/ (Jiǎozi) in China. If we compare between traditional cooking method of Jiǎozi and Húntún, there are a lot of differences between them. First, 饺子 (Jiǎozi) is made by a piece of dough, normally a round dough, but 馄饨 (Húntún) is normally made by square shaped dough which has different thickness from 饺子 (Jiǎozi). Second, a filling raw material is also different. Normally, a filling of 饺子 (Jiǎozi) is made by mincemeat (pork, beef or lamb) mixed with vegetables such as Chives, green onion, and sometime vegetables can be used instead of mincemeat. On the other hands, 馄饨 (Húntún) filling is always made from mincemeat or shrimp without any vegetables mixed with raw material. Third, it is cooking method. There are a lot of methods to cook 饺子 (Jiǎozi) such as frying, steaming or boiling, and it is normally eaten with topical seasoning such as Chinese vinegar. But 馄饨 (Húntún) is normally boiled and served with soup.

E. Differences of spiciness implied in Chinese and Thai names

After many waves of migrations with more variety of Chinese migrants, they have brought more and more dishes along with into Thailand. Therefore, the numbers of Chinese dishes in Thailand are increasing and more varied. This includes Sichuan cuisine. Now, Sichuan cuisine is one of the most popular Chinese cuisines in Thailand because of its special taste “麻辣”. This is reflected by the large number of restaurants that are spread in every part of the city in Thailand.

“辣” means spicy in Chinese cuisine and “麻” is also one of the special tastes “spicy” in Chinese dish. In Chinese dish name, two of these are always used together as “麻辣”. “麻辣” is well known among Chinese people as “spicy”, and it represents the dish from Sichuan province in China. The taste of “麻” comes from one kind of Chinese seasoning called “花椒” (huājiāo) (Sichuan pepper). Sichuan pepper flavor is not hot or pungent like chili pepper and other peppers. Instead, it has slight lemony overtones and creates a tingly numbness in the mouth that sets the stage for hot spices. In China, there are a hundred of Chinese dish names starting with the word “麻辣” such as 麻辣豆腐, 麻辣火锅, 麻辣鱼, 麻辣烤鱼, 麻辣烧烤.

In Thailand, there are two popular “麻辣” dishes among Thai people: first, 麻辣烧烤 (Málà shāokǎo) is present in Thai as

“/m̃ a: lâ:/”. In this case, “麻辣” is a special and exceptional case of Chinese dish naming in Thailand when it is presented in Thai. Because of the different term in taste of “spicy” between Thai and Chinese, there was no conformable word to express “麻”. This taste is mentioned in Thai dish naming method, so it directly uses the loan word “mala” to present the dish name without reflecting any raw materials of the dish and cooking method as the others have done. Second, 麻辣火锅 (Málà huǒguō) is presented in Thai as “/ m̃ a: lâ: cha: bu:/” and “/su kî: m̃ a: lâ:/”. In this case, even though Thai name reflects cooking method of the dish, this cooking method (Chabu and suki) is not really Thai or Chinese traditional cooking method.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the information presented above, there are some phenomena and changes in Chinese dish names in Thailand. Chinese diet culture is profound in cross-cultural communication and lacks of deep-understanding of the original dish name. Naming method and related cultural information affect when it is transformed into Thai. The dish does not effectively convey cultural identity of the original one, and might affect the understanding of people on Chinese food and Chinese food culture. To maintain its cultural information and historical values, it is necessary to gain deeper insight into Chinese culture. To present the dish name in Thai language, if it is presented in the same way as the original, the dish name in Thai might be very funny. So, this is the point for further study to seek how to present the dish in a proper way.

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