Japan Bilingual Publishing Co.

**Classical Literature**

https://ojs.bilpub.com/index.php/cl

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Translation Methods for Food Culture-specific Expressions in David Hawkes' English Translation of the *Chu ci*

**Qingling Shi[1], Chuanmao Tian[2,*]**

1. School of Foreign Studies, Yangtze University, Jingzhou, Hubei 434023, China

ARTICLE INFO

*Article history*
Received: 5 March 2024
Revised: 27 March 2024
Accepted: 7 April 2024
Published Online: 23 April 2024

*Keywords*:
*Chu ci*
David Hawkes
Food culture-specific expressions
Translation methods
Implications

ABSTRACT

*The Chu ci*, a significant legacy of ancient Chinese culture, showcases a diverse range of culinary vocabulary that mirrors the lifestyle of the ancient Chu people and reflects the deep-rooted Jingchu culture of China. This paper focuses on analyzing the translation methods of food-related vocabulary in the *Chu ci*, with a specific focus on the pieces known as the "Da zhao" ("The Great Summons") and "Zhao hun" ("Summons of the Soul") in the canon, which serve as the primary research object in this study. The present study primarily investigates the influential translation of the *Chu ci* by the renowned sinologist David Hawkes, namely, *The Songs of the South* (1985). It aims to explores the methods employed by Hawkes in translating the food culture-specific expressions in the *Chu ci*. The research findings were that as a distinguished sinologist, Hawkes took into consideration the cultural background and cognitive habits of the target readers in translating. He utilized various translation methods such as interpretation, adaptation and communicative translation to effectively interpret the original text. Besides, the paper evaluates the shortcomings present in Hawkes' translation, including mistranslations and omissions. The goals of this study is to offer some insights and guidance for future translators, promote cross-cultural dissemination and understanding of Chinese culinary culture, and enhance global recognition and appreciation of the unique charm of Chinese civilization.

## 1. Introduction

*The Chu ci* is a collection of poems by the ancient Chinese poet Qu Yuan (屈原) and other followers, dating back to the Warring States period (5th century–221 B.C.E.) and the Han dynasty (202 B.C.E.–220 A.D.). As the first anthology of romantic poetry in Chinese literary history, *the Chu ci* is not only a treasure of Chinese culture but also a shining star in world literature. The food culture, as an essential component part of *the Chu ci,* is one of the key aspects in studying Chinese culture. In *the anthology*, food culture-specific expressions are primarily seen in the two

*Corresponding Author:
Chuanmao Tian, School of Foreign Studies, Yangtze University, Jingzhou, Hubei 434023, China;
*Email: tcm_316@163.com*

DOI: https://doi.org/10.55121/cl.v2i1.153

key pieces, "Zhao hun" and "Da zhao" (see Appendix1), reflecting the social eating habits and culinary techniques at that time, and showcasing the characteristics of Chinese food culture. For example, there are many food-related terms such as Chang Huang ( 餦餭 ) and Mi Er ( 蜜饵 ) which carry profound cultural heritage and convey the Chinese way of thinking.

However, research on the translation methods for the *Chu ci* lags behind other classical works, with a narrow research perspective and a limited number of relevant literatures, especially in terms of research on translation methods for food culture-specific expressions in it. David Hawkes, as the first translator to provide a complete English translation of the *Chu ci*, published his scholarly monograph on the canon in 1959, which underwent revisions and retranslation before being republished in 1985. Hawkes' translation, to some extent, represents the Western translators' perspective and translation approach, making it highly valuable for research purposes. Therefore, this paper focuses on David Hawkes' 1985 translation of the *Chu ci*, and aims to investigate the translation strategies for culinary vocabulary in the classic. Based on an analysis of Hawkes' translation methods, this study seeks to reveal the limitations in his translation, reflects on the translation methods employed in cultural dissemination and offers new perspectives and approaches for translators, contributing to the broad and extensive promotion of Chinese civilization.

## 2. Literature Review

As a great literary and cultural classic, the *Chu ci* has attracted the attention from translators and researchers. A number of foreign and Chinese scholars have studied the translation of the canon. In this part, we will introduce the research achievements on the the rendering of the anthology as well as the translation of culture-specific terms.

### 2.1 Studies on the Translation of Food Culture-specific Expressions

Food culture-specific expressions refer to the terms and phrases related to human daily eating and drinking behaviors [1]. China is a vast country with diverse cuisines, so food culture-specific expressions include those for tableware, dining places, cooking techniques, ingredients, flavors, dishes and so on. For example, food culture-specific expressions are rich in the *Chu ci* (see Appendix 2). Their English translation plays an important role in promoting the dissemination of Chinese culture and enhancing mutual understanding between China and foreign countries.

There is considerable research progress on the translation of food culture-specific expressions. For example, Xie Jun compared and analyzed the English translation of food culture-specific expressions in two Englsh versions of *A Dream of Red Mansions* ( 红楼梦 ) by Yang Xianyi and David Hawkes from the perspective of translation theory and cultural integration [2]. Based on functional equivalence theory, Ding Yuan examined Hawkes' translation practice of food culture-specific expressions in *A Dream of Red Mansions*, and explored its functional equivalence [3]. From the perspective of pragmatics, guided by purposive analysis, and based on the parallel corpus of Chinese-English translation of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Chen Yingying and Lin Lvfan compared and analyzed the translation differences in food-related content between the translations of the canon by Yang and Hawkes, and summarized the translators' translation principles and methods [4].

Most of these research papers have been published in the last two decades, reflecting that research on the translation of food culture-specific expressions translation has gradually received attention from scholars. However, the focus of the scholars' research is mainly on Ming and Qing dynasty novels such as *A Dream of Red Mansions*, indicating that further research on the translation of food culture-specific expressions in *Chu ci* is still needed.

### 2.2 Studies on the Translation of the Chu ci Abroad

From the late 18th century to the early 20th century, there was a wave of translating Chinese classics into English in Europe. Up to now, more than 30 selections and complete translations of the *Chu ci* have been published both domestically and internationally (see Table 1). Most of these translations were done by Western sinologists, with works by British sinologists such as James Legge, Herbert Allen Giles, David Hawkes, and Arthur Waley being widely circulated and influential. In addition to the translations by these four famous British sinologists, some English and American sinologists such as Edward Harper Parker, Robert Payne, Stephen Owen, and Burton Watson have also translated some poems in the *Chu ci*. These translations complement each other in conveying the multi-dimensional value of the *Chu ci* and delineating a diversified image of Qu Yuan.

In 1895, Legge published an article titled "Li Sao and Its Author", in which he translated the "Li sao" ( 离骚 ) as the most important work in the *Chu ci* providing English-speaking readers with references to Chinese history, culture, philosophy, and religion. Giles published his masterwork of Chinese literature entitled *Gems of Chinese Literature* in 1884, in which he translated a few pieces in the *Chu ci*, such as the "Shan gui" ( 山鬼 ), "Bu ju" ( 卜居 ), and "Yu fu" ( 渔父 ). In 1923, the book was revised

and expanded to include some more pieces in the anthology, such as "Guo shang" ( 国殇 ) and "Li hun" ( 礼魂 ) featuring elegant and refined translations that emphasized diction, demonstrating profound scholarly expertise. Waley published his scholarly translation *Nine Songs: A Study of Ancient Chinese Witchcraft* in 1955, employing a domesticating translation strategy to produce concise and easy-to-understand translations. This book made a breakthrough contribution to the introduction and study of the *Chu ci,* profoundly influencing Hawkes' English translation and *Chu ci* research. Hawkes was a scholar-translator specializing in ancient Chinese literature. In 1959, he published his seminal work *Chu Tzu: The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology.* This work was later revised and renamed *The Songs of the South: An Ancient Chinese Anthology Poems by Qu Yuan and Other Poets* in 1985. This academic translation received wide attention from Western sinologists and, to a certain extent, represents the peak of *Chu ci* translation research in the western world [5].

**Table 1** Main English Translations of the ***Chu ci***

| Author | Title | Year |
|---|---|---|
| E.H. Parker | The Sadness of Separation | 1879 |
| Herbert A. Giles | Gems of Chinese Literature | 1884 |
| Joseph Edkins | On the Poets of China During the Period of the Contending States and of the Han Dynasty | 1889 |
| James Legge | The Li Sao Poem and Its Author | 1895 |
| L.A. Cranmer-Byng | A Lute of Jade | 1909 |
| Herbert A. Giles | Confucianism and Its Rivals | 1915 |
| Arthur Waley | A Hundred and Seventy Chinese Poems | 1919 |
| Arthur Waley | More Translations from the Chinese | 1919 |
| Eduard Erkes | The Chao Yin Shih (Calling Back the Hidden Scholar) | 1924 |
| F.X. Biallas | Kü Yuan, His Life and Poems | 1928 |
| Lim Boon Keng ( 林文庆 ) | The Li Sao, An Elegy on Encountering Sorrows | 1929 |
| Eduard Erkes | God of Death in Ancient China | 1939 |
| F.S. Drake | Sculptured Stones of the Han Dynasty | 1943 |
| Lien-sheng Yang | The Game Liu Po | 1945 |
| Robert Payne, Yu Mi-Chuan | The White Pony, Anthology of Chinese Poetry from the Earliest Times to the Present Day | 1947 |
| James R. Hightower | Topics in Chinese Literature: Outlines and Bibliographies | 1953 |
| Yang Hsien-yi ( 杨宪益 ) and Gladys Yang | Li sao and Other Poems of Chu Yuan | 1953 |
| Arthur Waley | Nine Songs, A Study of Shamanism in Ancient China | 1955 |
| Jerah Johnson | Li Sao: A Poem on Relieving Sorrows; a Prose Translation with an Introduction and Notes | 1959 |
| David Hawkes | Ch'u Tzu: the Songs of the South, an Ancient Chinese Anthology | 1959 |
| Cyril Birch | Anthology of Chinese Literature: From Early Times to the Fourteenth Century | 1965 |
| Shih-hsiang Chen | The Genesis of Poetic Time: The Greatness of Chu Yuan | 1973 |
| Wu-chi Liu and Irving Yucheng Lo | Sunflower Splendor: Three Thousand Years of Chinese Poetry | 1975 |
| John Turner | A Golden Treasury of Chinese Poetry | 1976 |
| Burton Watson | The Columbia Book of Chinese Poetry - From Early Times to the Thirteenth Century | 1984 |
| Stephen Field | Tian Wen: A Chinese Book of Origins | 1986 |
| Xu Yuanchong ( 许渊冲 ) | Chu ci | 1994 |
| Sun Dayu ( 孙大雨 ) | Selected English Translations of Qu Yuan's Poems | 1996 |
| Yang Hsien-yi ( 杨宪益 ) and Gladys Yang | Selected Elegies of the State of Chu | 2004 |
| Zhuo Zhenying ( 卓振英 ) | Chu ci | 2006 |
| Yang Chenghu, Zhou Jie ( 杨成虎，周洁 ) | Studies on the Dissemination of *Chu ci* and the Issue of English Context | 2008 |

### 2.3 Studies on the Translation of the Chu ci at Home

The first English translation of the *Chu ci* in China can be traced back to 1929, published by the Shanghai Commercial Press, titled *The Li Sao, an Elegy on Encountering Sorrows*, translated by Lim Boon Keng. Since then, overseas Chinese translators such as Wu-chi Liu and Lin Yutang, as well as domestic translators, have produced a number of English translations of the *Chu ci*. After 2000, Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang, Sun Dayu, Xu Yuanchong, and Zhuo Zhenying's English versions of the *Chu ci* were published domestically. These four versions all include reprints of previous translations and newly translated editions. Yang Xianyi and Gladys Yang's *Selected Elegies of the State of Chu* was reprinted by the Foreign Language Press in 2001, selecting and translating 24 poems in the *Chu ci* without prefaces or annotations by the translators, and readers who are unfamiliar with Chinese history and culture have to consult relevant materials. Sun Dayu's *Selected Poems of Chu Yuan* was reprinted in 2007, selecting and translating 21 poems by Qu Yuan, with annotations, illustrations, and photographs, which helps readers understand the ideological connotations and artistic value of the *Chu ci*. Sun's rendition shows that the detailed annotation mode has a demonstrative significance in the reconstruction of foreign cultures.

Domestic scholars' studies on English translations of the *Chu ci* basically started after 2000. Firstly, some scholars have concentrated on summarizing translators' translation practices at a micro level, such as Li Yiyin's "*A Brief Analysis of David Hawkes' Translation of the Chu ci*" (1992), and Zhu Zhenying and Yang Qiujun's "*Textual Research As a Sine Qua Non for Classics Translation: A Case Study of the Chu ci*" (2005). Secondly, some other scholars have emphasized analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of a specific translation and the characteristics of different translations, interspersed with introductions and comments on the translators, as seen in Yang Chenghu's article "*Research-Based Translation of Chinese Classics—A Comment on Advantages and Disadvantages of Some English Versions of the Chu ci*" (2004). Additionally, some scholars have conducted textual research on the general situation of English translations of the *Chu ci* in China and the Western world, summarized the current research status of domestic English translations of the canon, and provided outlooks for the future. Examples include Wei Jiahai's "*A Review of English Translations and Studies of Chu ci*" (2014), and Tian Chuanmao's "*Research on the Translation and Dissemination of the Chu ci in the West* (2019).

In the field of English translation of the *Chu ci*, although Chinese translators started later than Western sinologists and the number of translations is relatively small, the selected works are comprehensive, and the publication of single-volume editions facilitates the canon's reading. Furthermore, there has been an increasing amount of research on the English translation of the *Chu ci* and other classic literature, including the organization of national and regional academic conferences focusing on the English translation of classic literature, the training of postgraduate students in translation studies at universities, and the publication of research papers and books [6]. All of these factors demonstrate the vibrant development of the English translation studies of the *Chu ci* in China.

## 3. Translation Methods for Food Culture-specific Expressions in the Chu ci

In his translation of the *Chu ci,* Hawkes focused on the importance of poetic rhythm in preserving the essence of the original text. Through skillful transformations of sentence structure, he aimed to maintain the rhythm and cadence of the original poem in the translated text. This approach allowed the translation to read smoothly and melodically in the target language, evoking a sense of musical beauty. When dealing with rhetorical devices such as repetition and parallelism in the *Chu ci,* Hawkes not only accurately conveyed the meaning but also artfully recreated the sound and rhythm of the original poem.

When translating food culture-specific expressions, Hawkes primarily employed the strategy of domestication. He used methods such as paraphrasing, adaptation, and communicative translation to ensure that the translated text effectively conveyed the intended meaning, while also aligning with the cultural background and linguistic conventions of the target language readers. For food culture-specific expressions with specific cultural significance, he would incorporate explanatory notes into the translation to help readers better grasp the cultural nuances embedded within the text.

### 3.1. Paraphrase

Paraphrase refers to explaining the sense of the original words and phrases in context to the target language readers without translating word-for-word [7]. By utilizing this method, Hawkes is able to not only translate the essential characteristics of food but also enhance the readability of the *Chu ci* for the target language readers. For example:

**Example 1**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source text: | 粔籹蜜饵，有餦餭些。 [8] (Huang and Mei, 1984: 165) |
| Hawkes' translation: | Fried honey-cakes of rice flour and malt-sugar sweetmeats. [9] (Hawkes, 1985: 228) |

In example 1, the source text " 粔籹蜜饵 , 有餦餭些 " is from the "Zhao hun" or the Summons of the Soul. This sentence describes two common snacks made from rice flour in ancient Chu state. The famous *Chu ci* commentator Wang Yi held that Ju Nu 粔籹 , a traditional fried noodle dish originating from the ancient Chu state before the Qin Dynasty, is made by kneading water and flour into thin strips, twisting them into loops, and then frying them [10]. Additionally, Er 饵 refers to rice cakes, a food made mainly from rice flour [11]. The Han-Dynasty scholar Xu Shen proposed that " 餦餭 " refers to malt-sugar, also known as syrup, a sweet substance [12].

When we translate the source text in example 1, according to its distinct national cultural color, a direct translation may confuse target language readers because they may not have a deep understanding of the source language's cultural background. Additionally, adding annotations to maintain the translation's rhythm and conciseness may make the translation appear lengthy and less refined. Therefore, when dealing with such text, we need to find a strategy that can convey the original meaning, while maintaining the linguistic aesthetics. Thus, Hawkes used paraphrase to translate the source text, supplementing and enhancing the connotative meaning of the source language to express the original idiom's meaning in context. Hawkes focused on the ingredients and production methods of Ju Nu ( 粔籹 ) and added them to the translation, hence translating Ju Nu ( 粔籹 ) as "Fried honey-cakes of rice flour"; and as the essence of Mi Er ( 蜜饵 ) is a dessert, it was translated as "sweetmeats". This kind of translation not only allows target language readers to understand the essential characteristics of these two common Chu snacks, but also facilitates smoother cross-cultural communication, thereby to some extent avoiding ambiguity and misinterpretation, and enabling readers to better understand ancient Chu cuisine and Chinese traditional food.

**Example 2**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source text: | 瑶浆蜜勺，实羽觞些。 [8] (Huang and Mei, 1984: 165) |
| Hawkes' translation: | Jade-like wine, honey-flavoured, fills the winged cups. [9] (Hawkes, 1985: 228) |

The Song-Dynasty *Chu ci* commentator Hong Xingzu believed that the terms Yu Shang ( 羽觞 ) refers to a type of drinking vessel with feathers inserted on top to facilitate quick drinking [13]. On the other hand, Hu Hongqiong proposed that the term Yu Shang ( 羽觞 ) was derived from the presence of "ears" on both sides of the cup, resembling the wings of a bird [14]. The term Er Bei ( 耳杯 ), used by contemporary scholars, was named based on the inscribed character " 栝 " (*bēi*) found on lacquered ear cups unearthed from Western Han Dynasty tombs, as well as their characteristic shape with two handles resembling semi-circular ears [15]. Ear cups gained popularity during the Warring States period and became representative of lacquered wares in the Jingchu region during the Han Dynasty. The prevalence of ear cups during the same period as the creation of *Chu ci* poetry aligns with a large number of lacquered ear cups with similar shapes and varying sizes unearthed in Hunan in 1972 and the discovery of the Double Phoenix Lacquered Winged Cup from Jingshan, Hubei in 1982 [15]. Therefore, the majority of scholars today support the theory that ear cups are synonymous with Yu Shang ( 羽觞 ).

Hawkes chose to translate Yu Shang ( 羽觞 ) as "winged cups" rather than "ear cups", employing a paraphrase translation method. This not only vividly describes the external characteristics of the cup, making it easier for Westerners to understand and accept the target text, but also bridges the gap caused by historical and cultural differences between China and the West, avoiding cultural conflicts. Due to a lack of understanding about Chinese dining utensils, Western readers may be confused by the term "ear cup", and even mistakenly assume that the word "ear" literally refers to the human ear, which may lead to cultural clashes between source and target cultures.

### 3.2.Variational Translation

As an important translation method under the umbrella term of domestication strategy, variational translation plays a significant role in cross-cultural communication. It refers to making certain modifications and changes to the form or content of the original text during translation to adapt to the political context, cultural background, or technical norms of the target country or readers, in order to achieve the desired translation purpose [16]. Therefore, the translated content or main idea via the method of variational translation may differ from that in the original text.

In his translation, Hawkes employed the variational translation method, making certain modifications to both the content and form of the original text to adapt it to the cultural background of the target readers, and enhancing the nature of cross-cultural communication. For example:

### Example 3

| | |
|---|---|
| Source text: | 吴酸蒿蒌，不沾薄只。 [8] (Huang and Mei, 1984: 176 – 177) |
| Hawkes' translation: | And sour Wu salad of artemisia, not too wet or tasteless. [9] (Hawkes, 1985: 234) |

In example 3, the source text " 吴酸蒿蒌 " means "fermentable pickles made from fragrant mugwort of Wu State" [8]. Hao Lou ( 蒿蒌 ) refers to the fragrant mugwort that is edible [8]. In the process of translation, Hawkes clearly employed the variational translation approach in dealing with the expression " 吴酸蒿蒌 ". Instead of translating it literally, he chose to flexibly translate it as "sour Wu salad of artemisia". Although the source and target dishes have inherent differences, this approach does not necessarily constitute a mistranslation. Hawkes' variational translation may be due to his cultural perspective that the target readers might find it difficult to understand the dish " 吴酸蒿蒌 " and its place in the source language culinary culture.

In Chinese culture, " 吴酸蒿蒌 " is a common snack prepared when the ancient Chu people gave a banquet. Historically, it is a local specialty of the Chu state. From a historical perspective, it was commonly found on the dining tables of ancient Chu people, accessible to both the nobility and commoners. From a nutritional standpoint, it has the dietary effect of promoting digestion, stimulating appetite, and increasing food intake [17]. In the target language culture, from a historical perspective, The practice of eating mixed greens with dressing dates back to ancient Rome and Greece, where the term "salad" originates from the Latin "salata," meaning "salted" [18]. In terms of consuming classes, both commoners and nobility can come into contact with and consume it. In terms of nutritional value, Salads, particularly those enriched with a variety of vegetables, stand as an excellent source of essential vitamins, including A, C, and K, along with minerals like iron and potassium, crucial for the maintenance of healthy vision, skin, immune system, and blood pressure levels. [19]. Thus, from the perspectives of history, consuming class, and nutritional value, the role and status of " 吴酸蒿蒌 " in the diet of ancient Chu people and "salad" in the target language culture are somewhat similar. Therefore, Hawkes adopted the variational translation method, attempting to make the translation easier to understand for target readers, enabling them to better experience the emotions and meanings experienced by the source language readers.

To ensure the effective transmission of information, translators sometimes need to employ domestication strategies and appropriately rewrite the original text. This not only helps improve the readability and reception of the translation but also assists readers in better understanding and appreciating the cultural connotations of the original work. In conclusion, in the process of translation, Hawkes translated " 吴酸蒿蒌 " as "sour Wu salad of Artemisia" to better adapt to the cultural background and understanding of the target readers. This does not signify a betrayal or neglect of the original text but rather aims to better convey the meaning and emotions of the original text, ensuring smooth cross-cultural communication.

### Example 4

| | |
|---|---|
| Source text: | 鹄酸臑凫，煎鸿鹇些。 [8] (Huang and Mei, 1984: 165) |
| Hawkes' translation: | Geese cooked in sour sauce, casseroled duck, fried flesh of the great crane. [9] (Hawkes, 1985: 228) |

Archaeologists unearthed three jade geese in the Fuhao tomb of the Shang Dynasty in Anyang, Henan Province, indicating that the domestication of swans in China occurred before the Shang Dynasty [20]. Moreover, the mention of " 畜凫驾鹅 " (The common birds have each their place in flock, skein or gaggle) in the Seven Remonstrances ( 七谏 ) of the *Chu ci* indicates that during the Warring States period, geese and swans were already raised as poultry and consumed by the people of Chu. Therefore, the consumption of swans in China has a long history, with the species generally being the Whooper Swan (Cygnus cygnus), also known as the Eurasian Swan, which is the most common swan in China, referred to by ancient people as Hu ( 鹄 ) [21]. However, for an individual like Hawkes, who is a British, the consumption of swans seems somewhat inconceivable. Swans hold a special status and are legally protected. Intentionally killing a swan can result in a six-month prison sentence or a fine of £5000 [22]. Under such regulations, residents in the UK dare not harm or come into contact with swans.

Therefore, due to significant differences between Eastern and Western dietary cultures, and to avoid potential cultural conflicts and backlash from target language readers, it is a reasonable approach for Hawkes to translate Hu ( 鹄 ) as "geese", as illustrated in example 4.

### 3.3 Communicative Translation

Communicative translation is one of the two translation modes proposed by the British translation theorist Peter Newmark, aiming "to make the effect of the translation on the target language reader the same as that of the original text on the source language reader" [23]. Hervey and Higgins used communicative translation in their co-authored work *Thinking Translation: A Course in Translation Method: French to English* (1992) to describe one form of cultural exchange. They define communicative translation

as a type of free translation where "cultural equivalents appropriate to the target language context/situation are substituted for the original expression", meaning that "the translation does not use literal translation but instead uses an expression that is suitable for the target language culture" [24]. Since the translator's goal is to achieve specific communicative effects and oriented toward specific groups of target language readers, the translation will inevitably go beyond the limitations of the original text. For example:

**Example 5**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source text: | 吴醴白蘖，和楚沥只。 [8] (Huang and Mei, 1984: 177) |
| Hawkes' translation: | And white yeast has been mixed with must of Wu to make the clear Chu wine. [9] (Hawkes, 1985: 235) |

In example 5, the sentence " 吴醴白蘖 , 和楚沥只 " subtly implies that the Chu Kingdom is abundant in geographical diversity, rich cultural heritage, and advanced brewing techniques. The Qing-Dynasty *Chu ci* commentator Wang Fuzhi proposed that Wu Li ( 吴醴 ) refers to the sweet wine of the Wu kingdom [25]. The Wu kingdom, located in the present-day Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces, has always been known as a land of plenty. The abundant rice harvest here provides high-quality raw materials for brewing. Wang Fuzhi also proposed that Nie ( 蘖 ) refers to sprouted rice; thus, Bai Nie ( 白蘖 ) specifically denotes tender, white, and pure sprouted grains [25]. In *The Book of Rites*, it is stated that "Li ( 醴 ) is liquor made from rice" (" 醴者 , 稻醴也 "). Use of rice and white sprouts to produce a lightly sweetened liquor with a mild flavor results in what is known as Li ( 醴 ) (rice liquor).In translating the source text in example 5, Hawkes adopted the communicative translation method under the umbrella term of free translation. Hawkes translated Wu Li ( 吴醴 ) as "must of Wu". According to the Collins English Dictionary published in 2011, "must" is defined as "the newly pressed juice of grapes or other fruit ready for fermentation" [26], which is different from the original meaning of Bai Nie ( 白蘖 ) : the liquor brewed with grains. Hawkes' translation of "must of Wu" as a fermentable fruit wine differs from the original text in order to achieve better cross-cultural communication effects.

There are significant differences between China and the West in terms of geographical environment, climate conditions, and crop cultivation. China is a major grain-producing country and the birthplace of crop cultivation and agricultural culture. Particularly in the ancient Chu region, the unique natural conditions made it an important production area for grain alcohol. Western countries, on the other hand, are more suitable for grape cultivation and wine production due to their geographical and climatic conditions. For the target language readers, grain alcohol may seem too unfamiliar and distant, so translating it as "must of Wu" that is closer to the target language culture makes it easier for target readers to understand and accept the translation. This enhances the readability of the translation and to some extent promotes the dissemination of dietary culture in the *Chu ci*, achieving an equivalent cultural experience and communication effect between the source language and the target language. For example:

**Example 6**

| | |
|---|---|
| Source text: | 华酌既陈，有琼浆些。 [8] (Huang and Mei, 1984: 165) |
| Hawkes' translation: | Here are laid out patterned ladles,and here is sparkling wine. [9] (Hawkes, 1985: 228) |

The phrase Qiong Jiang ( 琼浆 ) in example 6 often refers to fine wine. In Hawkes' translation, Qiong Jiang ( 琼浆 ) is translated as "sparkling wine". "sparkling wine" is a type of wine that contains carbon dioxide bubbles and is often used in celebrations or special occasions to bring joy and happiness. Firstly, we need to understand the meaning of Qiong Jiang ( 琼浆 ). As an important civilization in southern China, ancient Chu mainly used grains rather than grapes as raw materials for brewing [27]. Ancient Chu did not produce grapes, so at that time there was no technology or materials for making sparkling wine. Therefore, Qiong Jiang ( 琼浆 ) is usually made from grains, unlike sparkling wine which is made from grapes.

However, Hawkes' translation of Qiong Jiang ( 琼浆 ) as "sparkling wine" is not a mistranslation but rather a communicative translation. He focused more on the emotional purpose conveyed by Qiong Jiang ( 琼浆 ) and aimed to make the target readers understand its general meaning. In this case, Hawkes' translation choice is obviously free translation, downplaying the specific meaning of Qiong Jiang ( 琼浆 ) in the original text and focusing more on the emotional resonance effect. Through the translation of "sparkling wine", Hawkes might hope that target language readers could feel the joyful atmosphere of the Chu people's banquet, stimulating their rich imagination of the scene. In addition, sparkling wine is a celebratory drink in English culture, which has some similarity to the symbolic significance of Qiong Jiang ( 琼浆 ) as a banquet wine in Chinese culture. This approach not only shows Hawkes' understanding of the original text but also demonstrates his keen insight into the target language culture. Therefore, from a communicative perspective, Hawkes' translation choice is reasonable and achieves the goal of "making the effect of the translation on the target

language reader the same as that of the original text on the source language reader".

In summary, although Hawkes' translation of Qiong Jiang ( 琼 浆 ) as "sparkling wine" does not completely conform to the traditional Chinese way of brewing, his translation focuses more on the emotional resonance value and successfully triggers the target language readers' feelings and imagination of the joyful atmosphere of the Chu people's banquet. This translation approach is helpful for bridging cultural differences and making the target language readers better understand and feel the emotions and meanings conveyed in the original text.

## 4. Discussion and Implications

However, Hawkes' translation strategy also has some shortcomings. In order to pursue the rhyme of poetry, he sacrificed some accuracy of information in certain cases, resulting in partial mistranslation. For example, when translating " 肥牛之腱 , 臑若芳些 " Hawkes rendered it as "Ribs of the fatted ox, tender and succulent" [5]. This translation method does indeed reflect the rhyme between words and phrases, but it lacks accuracy in terms of conveying information. The character Fang ( 芳 ) in the original text describes the fragrance of food, indicating that the tendons of the fatted ox were stewed so tender as to exude a delicious aroma. However, in Hawkes' translation, this Fang ( 芳 ) character is not fully represented, emphasizing only the texture of the food as "tender and succulent", without highlighting its fragrance, which to some extent results in a mistranslation of the original text.

Furthermore, due to Hawkes' lack of in-depth understanding of certain cross-cultural differences in Chinese culinary culture, his translations occasionally contain instances of misinterpretation. For example, when translating the line " 四酎并孰 , 不涩嗌只 ", Hawkes rendered it as "Four kinds of wine have been subtly blended, not rasping to the throat" [8]. This translation clearly does not accurately convey the meaning of the original text. Hong xingzu proposed that Zhou ( 酎 ) refers to a type of time-honored wine that has undergone multiple fermentations, similar to age-old or vintage wine today (Hong xingzu, ). Si Zhou ( 四酎 ) specifically denotes wine that has been brewed four times [28]. Therefore, this line of poetry actually describes the brewing process and quality of wine, rather than Hawkes' interpretation of "Four kinds of wine", which may lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of Chinese culinary culture on the part of the target language readers.

Overall, while Hawkes' translation strategy does have its merits in pursuit of rhyme and linguistic elegance in dealing with culinary vocabulary in poetry, his lack of in-depth understanding of cross-cultural differences in Chinese culture results in some instances of partial mistranslation and misinterpretation in his translations. In order to more accurately convey the information and meaning of the original text, translators need to not only focus on linguistic expression but also have sufficient knowledge of relevant cultural and background information.

In the field of translation, Hawkes' translation of the *Chu ci* has received considerable attention. He focuses on the reception of the target language readers and extensively adopts domestication strategies, making the translated text fluent and easy to understand. However, this approach also leads to the loss of the unique cultural characteristics of the source language, resulting in a certain degree of "Westernization" of the unique cultural imagery in the *Chu ci* during the translation process.

With the increasing frequency of exchanges between China and other countries, there are higher requirements for disseminating the uniqueness and charm of Chinese culture. Therefore, it is particularly important to maintain the authenticity of Chinese culture in the translation process. This not only helps to spread the essence of Chinese culture but also enables the world to have a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation of its charm.

In order to maintain the independence and uniqueness of Chinese culture, future translators can adopt foreignization strategies and use translation methods such as literal translation, transliteration, transliteration plus annotation, and zero translation. These methods can preserve the characteristics of the source culture, while ensuring the readability and accuracy of the translated text. For example, for the unique cultural imagery and expressions in the *Chu ci*, a literal translation can be used to preserve their original meaning. For words or expressions with profound cultural connotations, transliteration plus annotation can be used to explain their cultural background and significance. And for words or expressions that cannot be directly translated, the zero translation approach can be employed to maintain their unique cultural flavor.

In conclusion, it is crucial to maintain the authenticity of Chinese culture in the translation process. This not only helps to spread the essence of Chinese culture but also enables the outside world to have a more comprehensive understanding and appreciation of its charm. Therefore, future translators should focus on adopting appropriate translation strategies and methods to preserve the independence and uniqueness of Chinese culture in its international communication, showcasing the irreplaceability of Chinese civilization.

## 5. Conclusion

In the wave of globalization, the influence of Chinese culture on the world is increasingly remarkable. The *Chu ci*, as an important carrier of Chinese culture, contains rich cultural heritage in its food culture-specific expressions, and conveys the Chinese way of thinking. How to accurately translate these terms into foreign languages using appropriate translation methods is a major challenge to translators.

This article aims to delve into the translation methods used in Hawkes' translation and provide a tentative analysis and some reflections, in order to provide useful references and inspirations for future translators. It also hopes to further promote cross-cultural dissemination and understanding of Chinese culture, allowing the world to better understand and appreciate its unique charm, and jointly promote the prosperity and development of human civilization.

## Author Contributions

Qingling Shi is an undergraduate student of the School of Foreign Studies, Yangtze University, and as the first author, she finished the writing of the draft manuscript; as Shi's supervisor, Chuanmao Tian revised and polished it in ideological content, language and style; he is a distinguished professor of translation studies at Yangtze University with a PhD degree in Translation and Intercultural Studies. He is an advanced member of the Translators Association of China. His area of interest is translation theory and practice. He has published over ten articles concerning translation in major scholarly journals at home and abroad, such as *Chinese Translation Journal, Across Language and Cultures, Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice Critical Arts: South–North Cultural and Media Studies, Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies, LANS-TTS, Babel, English Today.*

## Conflict of Interest

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

## Funding

This article was supported by Yangtze University's College Student Innovation Training Project (Grant No.: Yz2023270).

## References

[1] Zhao, R.G., 2018. An Introduction to Chinese Food Culture. Higher Education Press: Beijing. pp. 1–38. (in Chinese)

[2] Xie, J., 2013. A Study on the English Translation of Food and Drink Words in Dream of the Red Chamber. [Ph.D. thesis]. Hubei: South-Central Minzu University. (in Chinese)

[3] Ding, Y., 2018. Translation of Food and Drink Words in Dream of the Red Chamber from the Perspective of Functional Equivalence Theory. [Ph.D. thesis]. Lanzhou: Lanzhou Jiaotong University. (in Chinese)

[4] Chen, Y., Lin, L., 2020. A Comparative Study on the English Translation of Food and Drink Words in Dream of the Red Chamber from the Perspective of Pragmatics—Taking the Translations by Yang Xianyi and Hawkes as Examples. Scientific Consulting. 1, 81-82. (in Chinese)

[5] Zhang, X., 2013. A study on the English translation of Chu Ci [Ph.D. thesis]. Hunan: Human Normal University. (in Chinese)

[6] Yan, X.J., 2017. A Study on the Chinese Traditional Poetic Translation Theory of English Translations of Chu Ci. The commercial press: Beijing. pp. 1–248. (in Chinese)

[7] Fang, M.Z., Dictionary of Translation Studies. The commercial press: Beijing. pp. 1–826. (in Chinese)

[8] Huang, S.Q., Mei, T.S., 1984. The Complete Translation of Chu Ci. Guizhou People's Publishing House: Guiyang. pp. 1–313. (in Chinese)

[9] Hawkes, D., 1985. The songs of the south—An anthology of ancient Chinese poems by Qu Yuan and other poets. Penguin Books: London. pp. 1–352.

[10] Wang, Y., 2017. Chapters and Sentences to the Chu ci. Shanghai: Shanghai Ancient Books Publishing House. pp. 1–422. (in Chinese)

[11] Huang, L.G., 2007. Annotations on Chu ci Chapter and Sentences. Zhonghua Book Company: Beijing. pp. 1–2648. (in Chinese)

[12] Xu, S., Xu, X., 2021. Analytical Dictionary of Characters. Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House: Shanghai. pp. 1–744. (in Chinese)

[13] Hong, X.Z., 2006. Supplementary Notes on Chu Ci. Beijing: Zhonghua Book Company. pp. 1–328. (in Chinese)

[14] Hong, X.Z., 2018. Wine vessel "shang" in Chinese characters. Xungen, 1, 46–50. (in Chinese)

[15] Li, K., 2007. On the jade ear cup: the relationship between "wine cup", "feathered wine cup", "ear cup". Cultural Relics and Museology. 5, 34–37. (in Chinese)

[16] Huang, L.Z., 2002. Translation Variation Theory: A New Translation Theory. Foreign Language Teaching. 1, 19–22. (in Chinese)

[17] Cheng, S., Zang, J., Wang, Q., et al. 2022. Isolation, Identification, and Probiotic Properties Exploration of Lactic Acid Bacteria Isolated from Xichuan Pickles in Henan Province. Chinese Condiments, 2, 60–63, 68. (in Chinese)

[18] Davidson, A., 2014. The Oxford companion to food (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press: Oxford. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/acref/9780199677337.001.0001

[19] Liu, R.H., 2003. Health benefits of fruit and vegetables are from additive and synergistic combinations of phytochemicals. The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition. 78(3), 517S-520S. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/78.3.517S

[20] Chen, Z.D., 1985. Livestock and Poultry in the Late Shang Dynasty. Agricultural Archaeology. 2, 288–295. (in Chinese)

[21] Zeng, L., 2015. Discussion on the Word Relationship of Modern Chinese Characters – Taking "yan", "hu", "yuan" as Examples. Journal of Anhui University (Philosophy and Social Sciences). 4, 103–109.

[22] Wang, X.F., 2023. The British police provoked the swan. 1, 49. (in Chinese)

[23] Newmark, P., 1976. The theory and the craft of translation, Language Teaching and Linguistics: Abstracts, 9(1), 5–26. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444800002913

[24] Hervey, Sándor, and Ian Higgins. Thinking Translation: A Course in Translation Method: French to English. 1st ed. Routledge, 1992. DOI: https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203417973

[25] Wang, F.Z., 1975. A general interpretation of the Chu ci. Zhonghua Book Company: Beijing. pp. 1–320. (in Chinese)

[26] Collins, 2011. Collins English Dictionary. HarperCollins Publishers Limited: Scotland. pp. 1–1984.

[27] Liu, G.H., 2017. On the wine culture of the Chu state: Taking "Chu Ci" and Chu bronze wine vessels as examples. Journal of Jingchu University of Technology. 5, 11–14.

[28] Tan, J.B., 2012. The wine culture in Qu Yuan's works. Journal of Yun Meng. 4, 53–54. (in Chinese)

# Appendixes

## Appendix 1

| Source Text (“Da zhao”) | Target Text (The Songs of the South by David Hawkes, 1985) |
|---|---|
| 五谷六仞，设菰梁只。 | The five kinds of grain are heaped six ells high,and the corn of zizania. |
| 鼎膗盈望，和致芳只。 | Cauldrons seethe to their brims,wafting a fragrance of well- blended flavours: |
| 内鸽鸽鹄，味豺羹只。 | Plump orioles, pigeons and geese, favoured with broth of jackal’s meat. |
| 魂乎归来！恣所尝只。 | O soul, come back! Indulge your appetite! |
| 鲜蠵甘鸡，和楚酪只。 | Fresh turtle, succulent chicken, dressed with the sauce of Chu; |
| 醢豚苦狗，脍苴蓴只。 | Pickled pork, dog cooked in biter herbs, and ginger-favoured mince, |
| 吴酸蒿蒌，不沾薄只。 | And sour Wu salad of artemisia, not too wet or tasteless. |
| 魂兮归来！恣所择只。 | O soul, come back!Indulge in your own choice! |
| 炙鸹烝鳧，捎鹑敶只。 | Roast crane next is served, steamed duck and boiled quails, |
| 煎鲼臛雀，遽爽存只。 | Fried bream,stewed magpies, and green goose,broiled. |
| 魂乎归来！丽以先只。 | O soul,comeback! Choice things are spread before you. |
| 四酎并孰，不涩嗌只。 | Four kinds of wine have been subtly blended, not rasping to the throat: |
| 清馨冻饮，不歠役只。 | Clear,fragrant, ice-cool liquor, not for base men to drink; |
| 吴醴白蘖，和楚沥只。 | And white yeast is mixed with must of Wu to make the clear Ch’u wine. |
| 魂乎归来！不遽惕只。 | O soul, come back and do not be afraid! |
| Source text (“Zhao hun”) | David Hawkes-Songs of the South-1985 |
| 稻粢穱麦，挐黄粱些。 | Rice, broom-corn, early wheat, mixed with yellow millet; |
| 大苦醎酸，辛甘行些。 | Bitter, salt, sour, hot and sweet -there are dishes of all flavours: |
| 肥牛之腱，臑若芳些。 | Ribs of the fatted ox, tender and succulent; |
| 和酸若苦，陈吴羹些。 | Sour and bitter blended in the soup of Wu; |
| 胹鳖炮羔，有柘浆些。 | Stewed turtle and roast kid,served up with yam sauce; |
| 鹄酸臇凫，煎鸿鸨些。 | Geese cooked in sour sauce, casseroled duck, fried fesh of the great crane; |
| 露鸡臛蠵，厉而不爽些。 | Braised chicken, seethed terrapin,high-seasoned, but not to spoil the taste; |
| 粔籹蜜饵，有餦餭些。 | Fried honey-cakes of rice flour and malt-sugar sweetmeats; |
| 瑶浆蜜勺，实羽觞些。 | Jade-like wine, honey-favoured, fills the winged cups; |
| 挫糟冻饮，酎清凉些。 | Ice-cooled liquor, strained of impurities, clear wine, cool and refreshing; |
| 华酌既陈，有琼浆些。 | Here are laid out patterned ladles, and here is sparkling wine. |
| 归来反故室，敬而无妨些。 | O soul, come back! Here you shall have respect and nothing shall harm you. |
| 肴羞未通，女乐罗些。 | Before the daintics have left the tables, girl musicians take up their places. |
| 敶钟按鼓，造新歌些。 | They set up the bells and fasten the drums and sing the latest songs: |
| 娱酒不废，沈日夜些。 | Day and night ane swallowed up in continuous menriment of wine. |
| 酎饮尽欢，乐先故些。 | In wine they attain the heights of pleasure and give delight to the dear departed. |

## Appendix 2

| Source Text ("Da zhao") | Target Text (The Songs of the South by David Hawkes, 1985) |
|---|---|
| 五谷 | The five grains |
| 菰粱 | Corn of zizania |
| 鼎臑盈望 | The cauldrons seethe to their brims |
| 和致芳 | Blended savours yield fragrance |
| 鲜蠵甘鸡 | Fresh turtle, succulent chicken, dressed with a sauce of Ch'u; |
| 豺羹 | Broth of jackal's meat |
| 楚酪 | A sauce of Chu |
| 醢豚 | Pickled pork |
| 苴蓴 | Zingiber-flavoured mince |
| 蒿蒌 | Salad of artemisia |
| 炙鸨 | Roast crane |
| 烝 | Steamed |
| 粘鹑 | Broiled quails |
| 煎鳙 | Fried bream |
| 臛雀 | Stewed magpies |
| 四酎 | The four kinds of wine |
| 吴醴 | Must of Wu |
| 白蘖 | White yeast |
| 楚沥 | Chu wine |
| Source text ("Zhao hun") | David Hawkes-Songs of the South-1985 |
| 醢 | paste |
| 五谷 | The five grains |
| 丛菅 | dry stalks |
| 稻粢穱麦 | Rice, broom-corn, early wheat, mixed all with yellow millet |
| 黄粱 | yellow millet |
| 肥牛之腱 | Ribs of the fatted ox |
| 吴羹 | the soup of Wu |
| 胹鳖炮羔 | Stewed turtle and roast kid |
| 柘浆 | yam sauce |
| 鹄酸臇凫 | Geese cooked in sour sauce, casseroled duck |
| 鸿鹄 | the great crane |
| 露鸡臛蠵 | Braised chicken, seethed tortoise |
| 粔籹蜜饵 | Fried honey-cakes of rice flour |
| 餦餭 | malt-sugar sweetmeats |
| 瑶浆蜜勺 | Jadelike wine, honey-flavoured |
| 挫糟冻饮 | Ice-cooled liquor, strained of impurities, clear wine |
| 琼浆 | Jadelike wine |
| 娱酒 | menriment of wine |
| 酎饮 | In wine they attain the heights of pleasure, and give delight to the dear departed |