

Five-spice Powder, Bubble and Squeak, and the Whole Enchilada – Teaching ESP and Specialised Translation with Genre Corpora

Michał B. PARADOWSKI
Institute of Applied Linguistics
University of Warsaw
Warsaw, Poland
michal.paradowski@uw.edu.pl

Today's frequent intercultural contacts and migration bridge earlier cultural gaps and carry recipes across more than ever before. With the launching of new all-cookery television channels on the continent, exigency has arisen for skilled translators in the culinary field. The shows, chiefly Anglosphere imports, have in turn provoked interest in cookbooks penned by English-speaking celebrity chefs, while domestic publishers try going ahead with anglicised culinary bestsellers.

Cookery books, however, do not merely call for a language expert; they are governed by their own laws not only in the choice of vocabulary and fixed expressions, but also grammar and style, and require specialised knowledge of the culinary arts in both source and target cultures. Their translation should accordingly not only be linguistically impeccable and technically accurate, but also sound like written by a pro.

How can the translation profession, especially pre-service translators, and persons training to join the HoReCa (food and beverage service) sector be assisted in the face of the new demands? I will demonstrate how recipe portals and cookery software, susceptible to instantaneous examination with corpus analysis tools help choose the most appropriate and universally acknowledged collocation or turn of phrase from among superficially synonymous ones, validate hypotheses concerning crucial but non-salient grammatical choices, and spelling and punctuation conventions. The smorgasbord of snares lurking for the unsuspecting translator will be exposed with the help of a self-compiled corpus, key characteristics of English-language recipes discussed, and several concrete examples vindicating the brownie points gained through falling back on recipe portals and cookery software—though in ways somewhat remote from the ones envisaged by their creators—in teaching ESP and specialised translation presented from the author's enduring practice.

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