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A Touch of Chinese Culture in the Czech Public Space: Chinese Restaurant Names in Prague

Abstract

Chinese food is a cultural export product consumed almost all over the world. The reason for this is, among other things, the fact that Chinese restaurants are among the leading businesses run by the Chinese abroad. Generally speaking, all foreign restaurants can be seen as sources of new concepts entering the host country. These are not limited to regional food preparation traditions, but also include such issues as ideas transmitted through the restaurant names. This is because name givers often tend to emphasize the different origins of their establishment by using an eloquent name. This paper examines the current naming practices of Chinese restaurants in the capital of the Czech Republic. It aims to identify the most common culturally based concepts shared with the host country through the restaurant names. The findings indicate that Chinese cultural values often inspire restaurant names. The choice of linguistic codes, however, often keeps them hidden from the local consumers. Despite this, restaurants tend to use clear indications which enable consumers to identify them as establishments that offer cuisine of Chinese origin. These include highly informative generic components in Czech or English and Chinese versions of the names provided in the specific writing system. On the whole, the most essential feature of the restaurant names seems to be a strong tendency for multilingual combinations.

Keywords

commercial names, Chinese restaurant names, multilingualism, cultural values

1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, languages interact on many different levels. One of the important channels through which new language elements are introduced to other languages is, without doubt, gastronomy. Names of foreign ethnic dishes, beverages, and ingredients represent a noticeable group of vocabulary that has a tendency to penetrate the local language. They are not, however, the only medium that allows the locals to encounter a foreign language, and even, as the case may be, experience a foreign culture. This study deals with restaurant names as language units that also tend to adopt foreign elements. In comparison with common names, they are characterized by three main features. The first is grounded in their function: they are designated to identify a single entity. The second lies in their location: they are displayed in the public space. Finally, their existence is determined by a specific objective: they are supposed to attract consumers and help the restaurant owner gain maximum profit.

Restaurant names belong to a large group of proper names that are referred to as *commercial names*. Previous studies have shown that many factors impact the creation of commercial names and, consequently, there are many perspectives on how to approach them. An onomastic examination has revealed that commercial names are significantly determined by the country's culture and the particular language in use (Sjöblom, 2016, p. 458). In this sense, brand names are, for instance, regarded as sociolinguistic symbols that carry cultural meanings (Li & Shooshtar, 2003, p. 4). In light of this, restaurants offering foreign cuisine inevitably face the dilemma of choosing whether to adopt local naming strategies or not. What is important is that those who decided to follow the second approach play an essential role as promoters of a foreign culture through its specific element in the public space.

This paper focuses on the naming strategies adopted by one of the main groups of ethnic restaurants in the Czech Republic. The aim is to provide a linguistic analysis of Chinese restaurant names in Prague, where the highest number of them are located, and understand which concepts are selected to promote Chinese cuisine. In particular, it addresses two research questions: 1) whether the foreign cultural and linguistic environment influences the choice of name, and consequently, 2) which aspects of Chinese culture are shared in the host country's public space by the use of linguistic means?

2. Background

The research described in this paper was inspired by a previous study on naming practices of Chinese restaurants in Los Angeles County. Through an analysis of 423 names collected on the online consumer site Yelp, Chen (2017) concluded that they “not only help serve as markers of restaurant type but also showcase the regional diversity within the Chinese culinary tradition” (p. 3). Simultaneously, they “paint a culinary portrait that assimilates elements of American-ness and modern European influence” (p. 4). Chen also highlights that the results broadly apply to Chinese restaurants located in other cities in the United States (p. 12). This statement raises a question about the naming practices adopted in countries with different histories and circumstances of Chinese migration.¹ Considering the specific features of the host country, the Czech Chinese community looks unique even compared to similar frameworks in Southern and Western Europe, and all the more so when compared to elsewhere in the world (Horálek et al., 2017, pp. 277–279). Its main characteristics can be summarized as follows: small and young in age (Sluka et al., 2018, p. 89); diverse despite its relatively compact place of origin, evolving in terms of its internal composition, geographically dispersed and not very communal (Horálek et al., 2017, pp. 263, 265).

Former Czechoslovakia opened its borders for Chinese migration only in the 1990s (Obuchová, 2002, p. 9). Although the first Chinese restaurant was established already in 1958 (Ebr, 2008, p. 27), the four-decade-long period of Communist rule (1948–1989) is, generally speaking, characterized by the sporadic arrivals of the Chinese and, as a matter of fact, of foreigners in general (Horálek et al., 2017, p. 265). The Chinese flow after the fall of the Iron

¹ The Chinese diaspora to North America has a long history dating back to the mid-19th century and is associated with a significant shift in the class dynamics within the Chinese community (cf. Chang, 2003). A change in the immigrant community's socio-cultural background can consequently also be observed through the Chinese restaurant business. Liu (2015) describes a transformation from 19th century simple eating places providing meals for local male labor workers staying in the United States without their wives, through assimilated restaurants that up until the 1950s gave priority to Western preferences while serving Americanized Cantonese dishes, to a boom of new Chinese restaurants serving different Chinese regional cuisines in the mid-1960s and the late 1980s.

Curtain came about within the so-called “new wave” of Chinese international migration that began in the late 1980s (cf. Liu, 2005). Statistics indicate that, in particular, Europe has become an increasingly attractive destination for Chinese immigrants (Latham & Wu, 2013, p. 18). Although Czechia accounts for only a tiny part of the total, the growth rate of the Chinese population has increased significantly. Horálek et al. (2017, p. 269) identify the period between 1991 and 1995 as the Chinese boom during which the number of Chinese rose sixteen times from 261 to 4,210. The place of their origin, namely Qingtian County and the city of Wenzhou in Zhejiang Province, was significant because the experiences of the first migrants prepared the ground for consequent migration from the same regions. It is also noteworthy that Czechia has been perceived as a “gate to Europe” along with other post-socialist countries in the area. A considerable number of Chinese migrants remained in the country because of the perspective of promising business opportunities, mainly choosing Prague as the place to settle down (Moore & Tubilewicz, 2001, p. 614).

As in other countries, the restaurant business is one of the main sectors of activity for Chinese immigrants. Therefore, although the Chinese community is small, a significant number of these establishments in the Czech Republic can be found. Moore & Tubilewicz (2001, p. 618) mention that the number of Chinese restaurants in Prague increased from one in 1988 to almost 40 in 1994. In addition, a shift in the typology of restaurants can also be observed. While Bakešová, in an article from 1996 responds to the question as to why Czech Chinese restaurants rank among the most expensive establishments (p. 364), Horálek et al. (2017) two decades later write that most of the several hundred restaurants run throughout Czechia are “low-cost” restaurants offering dishes that have been altered to suit Czech tastes (p. 269). In light of this, they manifest themselves differently from the American Chinese restaurants which, as Chen’s (2017) study indicates, tend to serve a wide variety of regional cuisines.

3. Materials and methods

The data are composed of Chinese restaurants located in all ten districts of Prague. A preliminary survey has shown that the online image of the restaurants may significantly differ from the self-presentation in the external space. Restaurants usually promote their service on more web portals, such as online restaurants guides or food delivery platforms. What is somewhat surprising is that the name of a particular restaurant is often presented in different forms regarding the use of the generics. The generics might be omitted on one platform while given on another. While a simple term ‘restaurant’ or ‘fast food’ might appear on one platform, it might be modified by the adjective ‘Chinese’ on another. The research therefore required a different approach to data collection than was adopted in the case of the analysis of American Chinese Restaurants (Chen, 2017). It was not limited to online sources, but the two web portals Tripadvisor and google.maps were used only as a starting point to obtain a list of establishments. The analysis of the restaurant names was based on the subsequent photo documentation of their exterior signage.² The photographs were taken in August 2020. In total, data on 155 restaurants were collected. To answer the research questions, their names were examined from two perspectives: 1) the language selection and linguistic structure of the name, and 2) the semantic features of the name.

² The author of this text would like to express gratitude to two students from the Department of Asian Studies, Palacký University in Olomouc, namely Mgr. Michaela Frydrychová and Mgr. Terezie Kadlecová, for taking photographs of the restaurant exteriors. The collection was not associated with a high demand on quality. For this reason, the photos used in the appendix of this paper were retaken in September and October 2022 by the author.

4. Language selection and linguistic structure

The Chinese restaurants' outdoor signage is characterized by multilingualism and manifests a high diversity level among the restaurants. Czech as the local language is often accompanied and sometimes even replaced by Chinese or English texts. Generic components indicating the type of business entity are primarily provided in Czech or English. The popularity of the latter confirms the previous observation of English as the language that "pervades commercial names" (Sjöblom, 2016, p. 462). In the case of Chinese, two writing systems are used, i.e., sinograms and their official romanization system Pinyin. As concerns the structure of the names, terms such as '(Chinese) restaurant' or '(Chinese) fast food' in one or more languages often appear on the signs. It is also quite frequent that more (not necessarily identical) signs are used (see Figures 1 and 2 in the appendix). Their presence raises the question of whether they are supposed to be considered generic components of the names or not. As has already been mentioned above, the self-promotion of the restaurants in the online world is inconsistent and thus not helpful. To avoid subjective treatment of the issue, words indicating the type of business were considered part of the name when they form a coherent whole with the specific. The following text first discusses the language of the specific, then the use of multilingual generic terms.

Five main groups can be distinguished based on the language of the specific. Four of them contain names with the specific written in the Latin alphabet, but it is not uncommon to have sinograms provided as well.³ Surprisingly, five restaurants, included in the fifth group, do not provide the specific in the local set letters at all. Nevertheless, all of them are accompanied by a generic in Czech or English.

- (1) Czech: 31 restaurants, 22 of them also given in sinograms;
- (2) Pinyin: 91 restaurants, 84 of them also given in sinograms;
- (3) English: 18 restaurants, 9 of them also given in sinograms;
- (4) others: 10 restaurants, 6 of them also given in sinograms;
- (5) sinograms: 5 restaurants.

³ Simplified sinograms are more frequent than their traditional form, limited to 14 restaurants. Two of them provide their name in both simplified and traditional sinograms.

It is apparent that most of the restaurants prefer romanized Chinese names. Their semantic content is going to be discussed later. It should be mentioned at this point that they adopt naming strategies typical for Chinese chrematonyms. Being the most progressive word-formation method in modern Chinese (e.g., Norman, 1998, pp. 86–87; Yip, 2000, p. 90; Ceccagno & Basciano, 2009, p. 478), compounding also dominates the creation of restaurant names,⁴ in which case innovative or imaginative combinations of stems are often developed. Many of them are left-branching structures typical for noun phrases, mainly composed of two or three characters. Although Czech is still the second most chosen language, it constitutes less than one-fifth of the sample. With several exceptions, the Czech specifics are composed of either one-word or two-word modifier-noun phrases. The same structures are also characteristic for English specifics. The fourth group labeled ‘others’ gathers mixed names and new creations, such as *Hoja Pot* (the Taiwanese word ‘eat one’s fill’ + English word for a round container used for cooking), *Nový Shang Hai* (Czech word ‘new’ + Chinese toponym), or *Mr. Bao* (explained later in the text).

As concerns the generics, only 21 names without a Latin alphabet word specifying the type of business in immediate contact with the specific can be found. Generics written in the Latin alphabet are provided in two languages, used separately or simultaneously: in Czech (68), in English (24), or both (40). The most common generics include *čínská restaurace* (83), *čínské bistro* (15) and *restaurace* (15) in Czech and *Chinese restaurant* (39), *restaurant* (18) and *China restaurant* (4) in English. Apart from this, generics often appear in the sinogram versions of the names. They can be found in 66 out of the 126 sinogram names distributed across the five groups mentioned above. Different Chinese words carrying the meaning ‘restaurant’ are used, the two most frequent being 饭店 (41) and 酒家 (10). The quick-service restaurant concept is captured using the term ‘fast food’ 快餐 (5). It is noteworthy that the generics in sinograms are never transliterated using Pinyin.

The described language plurality on the specifics and generics indicates an essential feature of the restaurant names: they tend to join together components from different languages and scripts. Only about 10% of the names

⁴ The prevailing practice of putting spaces between the syllables of the Pinyin specifics might give the wrong impression of more-word combinations. This can be ascribed, however, to the complicated status of words in Chinese arising from the character of its writing system and consequently to the ambiguous orthographic rules in Pinyin.

are monolingual and monoscriptal at the same time. All the others incorporate more linguistic codes in more than thirty different combinations. The following table displays the most popular arrangements. Example photos of each of them can be found in the appendix. In the interest of simplification, the overview does not consider whether the sinogram name includes the generic or not.⁵

Table 1. Prevailing language combinations

Combination	Total
C1 Pinyin specific + Czech generic + sinograms	44
C2 Pinyin specific + Czech and English generics + sinograms	25
C3 Pinyin specific + English generic + sinograms	13
C4 Czech specific + Czech and English generics + sinograms	10
C5 Czech specific + Czech generic + sinograms	8

Source: own work.

5. Semantic features

While the previous section discussed the formal structure of the restaurant names, this one focuses on the lexical units used (morphemes or words) that are grouped according to their denotative meaning. It should be noticed, however, that many of them carry various culturally shared connotative meanings simultaneously. Since their thorough analysis as items of the complex world of Chinese symbolism⁶ would shift attention to a matter beyond the scope of this study, their description is focused on basic concepts supposedly

⁵ The justification for this simplification is that the typical Czech consumer cannot distinguish whether the sinogram name includes generics or not.

⁶ Complex symbolic meanings can be traced in books such as *Outline of Chinese Symbolism and Art Motives* (Williams, 1976) or *A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols: Hidden Symbols in Chinese Life and Thought* (Eberhard, 1986).

relevant to restaurant naming practices. It should also be emphasized that the following groups do not cover all the lexical units occurring in the sample but attempt to depict the general tendencies. If not explained in the text, English translations of Czech and Chinese names are provided in brackets. Complex pinyin names are translated morpheme by morpheme to avoid misinterpretations. Sinograms are given in those cases when they are part of the exterior signage. With a few exceptions of complex names, generic components are not included in the provided examples since they are irrelevant for this part of the analysis.

5.1. Chinese toponyms

The choice of toponyms indicates that they are supposed to represent China as a whole rather than distinguish a specific local cuisine in China. Most frequent are names of Chinese cities, including the two cities with ‘special administrative region’ status, *Hongkong* and *Macao*;⁷ three of the four direct-administrated municipalities *Peking* 北京, *Shang Hai* 上海 and *Tian Jin* 天津; and popular tourist prefecture-level cities *Guilin* 桂林, *Xia Men* 厦门 and *Cheng De* 承德. Two municipalities also occur in a form extended by the modifier ‘new’, i.e. *Nový Peking* 新北京 and *Nový Shang Hai* 新上海. The latter is also incorporated in a more complex name *Shanghai Duo Wei* 上海多味, in which case the municipality is followed by the morphemes ‘many’ and ‘taste, flavor’. Parts of the cities are represented by the beach resort *Beidaihe* 北戴河, shopping street *Wang Fujing* 王府井, former imperial garden *Summer Palace* 颐和园 or classical Chinese garden located in Suzhou *Yi Yuan* 怡园. Several choronyms can also be found in the analyzed sample, such as *Taiwan* 台湾, *Shan Xi* 山西 and *S’chuan* 四川,⁸ the last also mentioned in the form of the more complex name *Čínská restaurace po sečuánsku* 川王府.⁹ Apart from this, one of the names is a combination of two ancient states in today’s Sichuan province, i.e., *Bašu* 巴蜀.¹⁰ The name *Jiu Zhou*

⁷ Both of them are used in Czech spelling.

⁸ *S’chuan* is a non-standard transliteration of the Chinese province Sichuan.

⁹ The Czech name means ‘Chinese restaurant in the Sichuan style’, English name ‘Sichuan King’s Residence’.

¹⁰ Two different transliteration systems are combined in this name: Pinyin for the first state and the Czech transliteration system for the second state.

in all probability references an old symbolic term for China, i.e., 九州 ‘Nine Regions’. One of the restaurants utilizes the Czech term for the entire continent, i.e., *Asijská restaurace* 亚洲食府 (‘Asian restaurant’) and one the general English terms for the Eastern World in relation to Europe, i.e., *Oriental restaurant* 東方飯店. Finally, two hydronyms represent natural geographical features: the river Yangtze, i.e., *Yang Zi Jiang* 扬子江, and the East China Sea, i.e., *Dong-hai* 東海.

5.2. Places with a positive ambiance

One of the strategies adopted by name givers is evoking an image of a special place associated with eating and drinking. The most frequent of them is the garden that, historically, had multiple functions in China. It was a calm place expressing the harmony between man and nature and used for contemplation, and a venue for social activities such as family gatherings, reception of guests, music or theater performances, banquets, or celebrations (Olivová, 2008, p. 96). The Czech or English word ‘garden’ was chosen as a name for two restaurants, i.e. *Zahrada* 花園 and *Garden* 花园, and used as a component of several other names, such as *Zelená zahrada* (‘Green Garden’), *Bambus zahrada* 竹园 (‘Bamboo Garden’), *Lotos zahrada* 莲香园 (‘Lotus Garden’ in Czech, ‘Lotus Fragrant Garden’ in sinograms)¹¹ or *Císařská zahrada* 宫苑 (‘Imperial Garden’). The term ‘garden’ is sometimes provided in sinograms, but omitted in the Latin Alphabet name, e.g., *Metropolis* 翠园 (‘Emerald Green Garden’ in sinograms) or *Leknín* 夏莲园 (‘Water Lily’ in Czech, ‘Garden of Summer Water Lilies’ in sinograms). The term ‘garden’ also appears as a component of Pinyin names, such as *Ju Feng Yuan* 聚丰园 (‘gather’ + ‘abundance’ + ‘garden’), *Ju Le Yuan* 聚乐园 (‘gather’ + ‘pleasure’ + ‘garden’) or *Fu Yuan* 福园 (‘good fortune’ + ‘garden’). These names clearly show a recurrent pattern in which the characteristic of the garden is described.

Names with other place terms adopt the same structure. These include architectural objects that, traditionally, also served as social gatherings involving food and drinks. Unlike the garden, their use is limited to names provided in Chinese. The most popular is the general term *lou* 楼 ‘building’,

¹¹ The names *Bambus zahrada* and *Lotos zahrada* deviate from the Czech grammatical rules since the words preceding the noun ‘zahrada’ do not manifest the adequate inflection change.

such as *Fu Gui Lou* 富贵楼 ('wealth' + 'honor' + 'building') or *Yu Xiang Lou* 玉香楼 ('jade' + 'fragrant' + 'building'). The names of three restaurants share the same idea of 'a building full of' something, specifically of 'gold' *Jin Man Lou* 金满楼, 'happiness' *Fu Man Lou* [福满楼]¹² and 'nice smell' *Xiang Man Lou* 香满楼. Another repeatedly used term is *ge* 阁 'pavilion' as a particular type of building, such as *Hui Bin Ge* 会宾阁 ('meet' + 'guest' + 'pavilion') or [*You You Ge*] 悠悠阁 ('leisurely' + 'pavilion'). Apart from this, both 'building' and 'pavilion' appear once only in the sinogram version of the Latin alphabet specific name: *Moon* 明月楼 (in sinograms a combination of 'bright' + 'moon' + 'building') and *Nebeská vůně* 天香阁 ('Heavenly Smell' in Czech, in sinograms used as an attributive to 'pavilion'). This is also the case for the term *fu* 府 'residence' used in the already mentioned name *Čínská restaurace po sečuánsku* 川王府. In addition, three more types of buildings appear within the Pinyin names, i.e., *Tong Shun Ju* 同顺居 ('same; together' + 'in the same direction; smooth' + 'residence'), *Jin Man Tang* 金满堂 ('gold' + 'full' + 'hall') and *Hua Long Zhai* 华龙斋 ('magnificent; China' + 'dragon' + 'study, studio'), as well as a place containing many buildings, i.e., city, such as *Mei Li Cheng* 美丽城 ('Beautiful City').

Another way to address consumers is by creating a feeling of warmth and familiarity. This is expressed through the polysemous term 家 'home; house; family', especially popular in the Pinyin names. Two restaurants use a reduplicated version of this term, implicating the meaning 'every family'. One of them joins this pattern with the term 'good fortune', i.e., *Jia Jia Fu* 家家福, the other with 'pleasure' *Jia Jia Le* 家家乐. The concepts of family and a feeling of enjoying something are also linked together in other names, i.e., *Jia Le Yuan* 家乐园 ('family' + 'pleasure' + 'garden') or *Jia Jia Le* 嘉家乐 ('good' + 'family' + 'pleasure'). Only one restaurant makes the motif accessible, however, by translating the Chinese name into a Latin alphabet language, i.e., *Family* 壹家人 (in Chinese literally 'people of one family').

¹² Square brackets indicate that part of the name can only be found on the restaurant web pages.

5.3. Positive expectations

One of the naming practices pervading many levels of the Chinese naming system is including the name giver's priorities, wishes or aspirations in the name.¹³ The examples listed in the previous group already provide a hint about their popularity in the establishment names. One of them is creating the restaurant's image as a place bringing customers enjoyment and happiness. It is usually induced through the use of the term *le* 乐 'pleasure'. Names that have not yet been mentioned above include, for instance, *Jia Le* 佳乐 ('good, fine' + 'pleasure'), *Baile* 百樂 ('hundred' + 'pleasure') or *Le Xin* 樂鑫¹⁴ ('pleasure' + 'prosperous').

An even more popular concept is a wish for continuous flow of good fortune, often expressed through the term *fu* 福 'good fortune', such as *Fu Lin Men* 福臨門 ('good fortune' + 'arrive' + 'door'), *Baifu* 百福 ('hundred' + 'good fortune'), *Fu Da* 福达 ('good fortune' + 'reach'), *Fu Yuan* 福源 ('good fortune' + 'source') or *Ke Lai Fu* 客来福 ('guest' + 'come' + 'good fortune'). Two of the restaurants decided for a combination of 'pleasure' and 'good fortune', however, in a different order [*Fu-Le*] 福乐 and *Lefu* 乐福. Several more terms suggesting a positive and successful future can also be found. One of the restaurants uses a compound of two synonymous stems 'auspicious, lucky' *Ji Xiang* 吉祥. The second appears again in combination with another concept, i.e., *Xiang Long* 祥隆 ('auspicious' + 'prosperous'). Only one restaurant links the Chinese idiom 'good luck' with the corresponding Czech translation, i.e., *Štěstí* 鸿运. The feeling of good fortune is closely associated with the impression that everything is happening as one wishes, such as *Baishun* 百顺 ('hundred' + 'smooth').

Another concept typical for the Chinese naming system is a desire for prosperity. As can be seen in the following examples, different terms appear in the names in order to elicit this expectation, such as *Jin Xin* 金鑫 ('gold' + 'prosperity'), *Xin Hua* 鑫华 ('prosperity' + 'magnificent; China'), *Xin Fu* 鑫福 ('prosperity' + 'good luck'), *Ding Sheng* 鼎盛 (literally 'tripod'¹⁵ + 'prosperous',

¹³ These practices are very popular in given names as well (cf. Kałużyńska, 2008; Slaměniková 2017, 2018).

¹⁴ The use of a sinogram 鑫 is tied to proper names. It is composed of a triplicated component 金 'gold', a precious metal that also belongs to popular motifs used in restaurant names.

¹⁵ Tripods acquired significance as vessels used on state occasions. They are regarded as a symbol of good luck (Eberhard, 1986, p. 373).

figuratively ‘a period of great prosperity’) or *Xing Wang* 兴旺 (‘prosperous’). The idea of prosperity is also associated with abundance and wealth, such as *Hui Feng* 匯豐 (‘gather’ + ‘abundance’), *Ding Feng* 鼎豐 (‘tripod’ + ‘abundance’), *Da Fu Hao* 大富豪 (‘big’ + ‘rich’ + ‘person of extraordinary talents’), *Cai Shen* 财神 (‘God of Wealth’) or *Man Yi Ge* 满溢阁 (‘full’ + ‘overflow’ + ‘pavilion’).

5.4. Plants and animals

The Czech specific names manifest a strong tendency to draw inspiration from the botanical world. Lotus and bamboo have already been mentioned as components of compounds with ‘garden’. Apart from these, flowering plants also include lily, water lily, and peony, such as *Lilie* 香百合 (‘Lily’), *Leknín* 蓮花 (‘Water Lily’) and *Pivoňkové zátiší* 牡丹 (‘Peony Still Life’ in Czech, ‘Peony’ in sinograms). Fruits are represented by peaches, cherries and dragon fruit: *Broskev* 蜜桃 (‘Peach’ in Czech, ‘Honey Peach’ in sinograms), *Třešeň* 红樱 (‘Cherry’ in Czech, ‘Red Cherry’ in sinograms) and *Pitaya*. As a popular ingredient of Chinese cuisine, the red chili pepper also appears in one of the Pinyin names, i.e., *Hong La Jiao* 红辣椒 (‘Red Chili Pepper’).

Animal motifs are not as popular as botanical ones. Their occurrence in Czech names is limited to one restaurant called *Zlatý orel* 金鹰 (‘Golden Eagle’). Three more animals, i.e., crane, swan, and dragon, were identified in Pinyin names, e.g., *Jin He* 金鹤 (‘Golden Crane’), *Fei He* 飞鹤 (‘Flying Crane’), *Hua Long Zhai* 华龙斋 (‘magnificent; China’ + ‘dragon’ + ‘study, studio’) or [Hong Shun] 鸿顺 (‘swan, wild goose’ + ‘smooth’).

The reasons underlying the choice of botanical and zoological terms are related to their symbolic meanings in Chinese culture. Many of them are regarded as traditionally auspicious plants or animals. Bamboo, crane and peach are emblems of longevity (Williams, 1976, p. 38; Eberhard, 1986, pp. 86, 280). As one of the so-called Eight Buddhist Treasures, the lotus represents purity (Eberhard, 1986, p. 203). The lily is said to help forget one’s troubles (p. 195). The peony is a symbol of wealth and distinction, but also represents feminine beauty (pp. 284–285). The eagle symbolizes strength and is regarded as emblematic of boldness and keen vision (Williams, 1976, p. 175). The dragon is, first and foremost, a symbol of China itself. In Chinese culture, it is linked to various heterogeneous concepts, including strength and great power, as well as goodness and good luck (cf. Williams, 1976, pp. 132–141; Eberhard, 1986, pp. 97–101).

5.5. Precious substances

Jade, as the most valued gem in China, was adopted by two restaurants: *Yu Xiang Lou* 玉香樓 ('jade' + 'fragrant' + 'building') and *Jin Yu Lou* 金玉樓 ('gold' + 'jade' + 'building'). The second combines jade with another natural resource of high value, i.e., gold, which can be seen in several more names. As mentioned above, the phrase 'full of gold' is used as a component modifying the heads 'building' and 'hall'. Another place term, i.e., 'city', is combined directly with the stem 'gold', i.e., *Jin Cheng* 金城 ('Golden City'). 'Gold' also appears as a modifier of two zoological names, one provided in Pinyin and one in Czech. It was also identified in combination with the term 'prosperity'. Finally, pearls, as additional objects that are highly valued for their fine quality, are provided in two Czech names, i.e., *Zářivá Perla* ('Bright Pearl') and *Perly Asie* 亚洲明珠 ('Pearls of Asia').

5.6. Specialties

Choosing English as the language of the specific is often based on an incorporation of the specialty in the name. General references can be found describing the origin of the meal or the used cooking pot, i.e., *Oriental Food* or *Wok Food*. The Cantonese loanword for the food preparation equipment also appears twice in combination with another loanword, i.e., *Wok Sushi* and *Wok & Sushi*. It should be noted that the traditional Japanese dish prepared of vinegar rice also ranks among the popular items on Chinese restaurant menus in the Czech Republic, despite the different country of origin. It is also used by one of the two restaurants that included noodles, one of the staple foods of Chinese cuisine, in their name: *Happy Noodles & Sushi* and *Noodle Box*. Names derived from different pieces of dough wrapped around a filling were also identified, such as the shortened *Dumpli* or the combination of the English male title and a Chinese term, i.e., *Mr. Bao*. Bao is not only used as a surname but, more importantly, refers to a specific sort of dumplings. The same kind of filled dumplings appears again in Pinyin names, i.e., *Bao Zi Wang* 包子王 ('King of Dumplings'). Different balls of dough belong to a broad range of small Chinese dishes. The Chinese loanword 'dim sum' referring to all kinds of snacklike foods is also included in one of the restaurant names, i.e., *Dim Sum Spot*.

6. Discussion

The previous section demonstrated that the spectrum of motifs employed within the name creation process is quite broad. Of interest is the fact that the observed semantic features follow the recommended strategies for the restaurant or commercial names described in different Chinese handbooks for name creation (cf. Mao & Wen, 2003, pp. 94–95; Chen & Sun, 2011, pp. 279–284; Dong Y., 2012, pp. 193–199). They also demonstrate similarities with the tendencies observed for brand names regarding the importance of positive connotations, especially those implying good wishes and fortune (cf. Chan & Huang, 1997; Chan & Huang, 2001; Chan et al., 2009; Basciano, 2015).

Table 2 summarizes the occurrence of the semantic areas that seem to enjoy widespread popularity. The interpretation should be associated with the fact that one name can include more informative semantic elements and thus bear the characteristics of more than one semantic group. The most common combinations are as follows. Firstly, name givers tend to incorporate more positive expectations into the name. Secondly, they manifest a tendency to allocate these expectations to a particular place as a symbolic substitute for the restaurant itself. Thirdly, they assign positive connotations to the place through culturally shared auspicious symbols, especially plants and precious substances. Names covering more semantic groups are numbered in each of them.¹⁶

Table 2. Semantic groups

Semantic group	Total
Chinese toponyms	29
Ambiance	34
• Garden	14
• Building	8
• Pavilion	5
• Home, family	6
• Other	7

¹⁶ This is why this group's total is lower than the total of its subgroups.

Semantic group	Total
Positive expectations	36
• Good fortune	16
• Prosperity, wealth, abundance	16
• Enjoyment, pleasure	10
Plants and animals	15
Precious substances	12
Specialties	11

Source: own work.

It is apparent that Chinese restaurant names in Prague share an entire range of cultural values and symbols with the host country. The problem is that the local consumers can recognize only part of them. The reason for this is the prevailing popularity of Pinyin names. It can be reasonably assumed that the perceptiveness of the local community is limited to the generally known Chinese destinations. Czech or English specifics are not as favored, in contrast, and cover only three semantic areas in a more considerable fashion: botanical symbols, the garden concept and international loanwords for specialties.

The use of generics, however, on the outdoor signage indicates that restaurants place emphasis on the provision of clear clues about the line of business they are running. Moreover, they add an apparent signature of Chinese cuisine. Two linguistic means are used to achieve this. The first of them are Czech and English derivatives of the word China. In most cases, they are part of the generic term. They also occasionally appear on additional texts highlighting the type of business or the sort of offered products, such as *čínské speciality* ('Chinese specialties') or *čínská kuchyně* ('Chinese cuisine'). The other way restaurants create a reference to Chinese cuisine is through texts in sinograms that usually present their names. Although it is unlikely that Czech consumers will be able to read them, they probably can identify them as a Chinese writing system.

In summary, the use of language on outdoor signage reveals interesting implications. First, it is evident that name givers do not abandon Chinese naming strategies. Above all, this approach is demonstrated by emphasizing semantic aspects to present a culturally-rooted positive connotation. Nevertheless, the fact that the name givers do not adjust the formal presentation of the ideas leads to a situation when most of them are hidden from the local consumers. On the other hand, two of the main strategies seem to be met. First,

previous studies on different types of Chinese commercial names identified a strong preference for clues in terms of the kind of the products and places of origin (cf. Chan & Huang, 2001; Qian & Wang, 2005; Leng, 2013; Chen, 2017). In Prague, Chinese restaurant names are explicitly represented by the generics ‘restaurant’ or ‘fast food’, often modified by the word ‘Chinese’. Second, it is quite common that the original locality is implied through the graphic representation of their names in sinograms.

7. Conclusion

Through choice of name, restaurants create a particular image of themselves. Therefore, those that offer foreign cuisine have to consider whether they accept the local naming conventions or favor foreign practices. This study contributes to the current onomastic literature by examining naming strategies adopted by Chinese restaurants in the Czech Republic. Despite the relatively short history of Chinese immigration, Chinese food ranks among one of the most common ethnic cuisines offered in the Czech business establishments serving food. The research is based on the outdoor signage displayed by 155 Chinese restaurants in the capital of Prague.

It was determined that the names communicate with the local consumers through three different languages and two scripts. Apart from the Czech and English texts in the Latin alphabet, the official romanization system Pinyin for the Chinese language is widely popular, even to such an extent that it dominates the specific components of the name. In addition, sinograms, i.e., the graphemes of the Chinese writing system, often accompany the Latin alphabet names. From the semantic point of view, name givers prefer to choose names that suit the values of Chinese culture. The main semantic areas include toponyms, places with a positive ambiance and literal or symbolic implications of good wishes and fortune. Owing to language preferences, however, name givers keep most of them hidden from the local consumers. Thus, the most crucial information that generally seems to be promoted is the type of the business entity and, due to the higher occurrence of the word ‘Chinese’ in Czech and English generics, the origin of the served food. This, in other words, means

that, as in the case of American Chinese restaurants (cf. Chen, 2017), names in Prague tend to highlight the authenticity of the dishes they offer. What is different is the generality of the approach that emphasizes the region of origin in general, not its diversity. This finding can be understood as a reflection of the observation that most Chinese restaurants in the Czech Republic offer similar dishes customized to Czech taste (cf. Horálek et al., 2017).

On a final note, linguistic analysis of the names is just one perspective from which the discussed topic can be approached. The collected photo documentation demonstrates that they are part of a multimodal outer presentation of Chinese restaurants. In light of this, other factors also deserve attention, such as the arrangement of the texts in different linguistic codes on individual signs, typographic qualities such as color and size of type elements, or use of decorative non-linguistic symbols. Chinese restaurants seem to create specific “micro spaces” in the Prague linguistic and semiotic landscape. However, multimodal analysis of not just linguistic but also visual and spatial discourses needs to be undertaken to support and further develop this observation.

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Appendix

(all pictures by Tereza Slaměňíková)



Figure 1. Identical multiple signage



Figure 2. Non-identical multiple signage



Figure 3. Combination C1



Figure 4. Combination C2



Figure 5. Combination C3



Figure 6. Combination C4



Figure 7. Combination C5