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**School of Languages & Comparative Cultural Studies**  
**Master of Arts in Chinese Translation and Interpreting**  
**CHIN7180 - Thesis**

**Translation of Short Texts: A case study of street names in Hong Kong**

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**June 2010**

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## **Abstract**

The topic of this research paper is “Translation of Short Texts: A case study of street names in Hong Kong”. It has been observed that existing translation studies literature appears to cater mainly for long texts. This suggests that there may be a literature gap with regard to short text translation. Investigating how short texts are translated would reveal whether mainstream translation theories and strategies are also applicable to such texts. Therefore, the objectives of the paper are two-fold. Firstly, it seeks to confirm whether there is in fact a gap in the existing literature on short texts by reviewing corpuses of leading works in translation studies. Secondly, it investigates how short texts have been translated by examining the translation theories and strategies used. This is done by way of a case study on street names in Hong Kong. The case study also seeks to remedy the possible paucity of translation literature on short texts by building an objective and representative database to function as an effective platform for examining how street names have been translated. Data, including street names in English and Chinese, are collected by way of systematic sampling from the entire data population. All entries in the database are analysed to identify their respective source language and the translation method used. The findings suggest that sound translation is the most frequently used method regardless of the direction of translation between English and Chinese. It is also found that mainstream translation theories such as the linguistic approach and the seminal translation concept of “equivalence” are applicable to street name translation. Furthermore, other major translation issues encountered are revealed. The findings of the paper will provide direction and inspiration for future studies in the area of short text translation.

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# Chapter 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

This paper investigates translation strategies for short texts using a case study on street names in Hong Kong. Street names have been chosen because they represent a typical type of short text. Further, street names in Hong Kong are presented in both English and Chinese, thus facilitating data collection.

## 1.2 Rationale

A major motivation for this study stems from the observation that existing translation literature appears to cater mainly for “long” texts, suggesting a possible literature gap with regard to “short” text translation. Investigating how short texts are translated by way of this case study will help fill this possible gap.

Since the 1950s, different translation theories and strategies have been proposed by scholars such as Vinay and Darbelnet, Nida, Catford, Reiss, Vermeer, Newmark, and Baker. Translation theory seeks to establish general principles to help handle translation problems, which arise because no two languages are identical. Newmark (1995, p. 9) claims that “no problem, no translation theory” and that “translation theory is concerned with minutiae ... as well as generalities”. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that translation theories and the resultant strategies are applicable to all translation tasks.

According to Munday (2001, p. 4-5), the term “translation” may refer to “the product (the text that has been translated)”, or the process of changing the source text (ST) written in the source language (SL) into a different text (i.e. the target text (TT)) written in a different language (the target language (TL)). In any event, “text” is the key focus of translation. The length of a text may vary from very long (e.g. a multi-volume encyclopedia) to very short (e.g. a street name). Newmark (1995, p. 6) says

that “everything without exception is translatable”. Accordingly, a text of any length (long or short) should be translatable.

Texts are made up of words. Newmark (1995, p. 36) has refuted the view that “you should never translate words, you translate sentences or ideas or messages”, believing instead that translation may start with words because all that a ST contains are words, and “all you have is words to translate” (Newmark, 1995, p. 37). Baker (1992, p. 10-11) also suggests that translation of texts should start at the word level because a word, loosely defined, is the smallest unit in a stretch of language that is expected to possess individual meaning. Therefore, translation theories and strategies should apply regardless of the length of the text because all texts are made up of words and translation starts with words.

However, it appears that most translation studies literature has more relevance to long texts than short texts. The linguistic approach proposed by scholars such as Vinay and Darbelnet, and Catford emphasizes making small linguistic changes in the areas of grammar, sentence structure, word order or word class. The functional approach proposed by Reiss emphasizes the need to classify texts into different text types, e.g. informative (e.g. a report), expressive (e.g. a poem), or operative (e.g. an advertisement). A variation of the functional approach proposed by Vermeer focuses on the purpose of the translation, e.g. whether the TT is required for academic, commercial or political reasons.

The emphases of these translation approaches have little relevance to short texts. Street names have little to do with grammatical structure, word order or word class and are also difficult to classify into a particular text type. Furthermore, there may not be any specific purpose to translating street names apart from regulatory reasons (e.g. a government requirement under a country’s official language policy). This observation has prompted the questions: Are there any academic studies directly addressing the translation of short texts such as street names? Do “mainstream” translation strategies also apply to short texts?

Preliminary searches through libraries’ printed collections and electronic databases as well as through the Internet (e.g. Google Scholar) have yielded only a few items that

contain direct and sometimes relevant discussions on street name translation. Even relaxing search criteria to include other types of proper names such as personal, place and geographical names has not resulted in more relevant results. This preliminary finding supports the observation of a possible literature gap on short texts. A detailed investigation is conducted in Chapter 2 to establish whether such gap in fact exists.

To help fill the possible literature gap, a case study on street names in Hong Kong is conducted, attempting to identify the theories and strategies used in translating street names. The findings will provide answers to the research questions set out in the following section.

### **1.3 Research Question**

On the one hand, the discussion in Section 1.2 has established that translation theories and strategies should be applicable to all texts regardless of their length. On the other hand, a preliminary review of some major works in the translation field has suggested that mainstream theories and strategies have more relevance to long texts than short texts and that little relevant literature on short texts can be found.

This paper therefore seeks to provide answers to the following research questions:

- (1) Is there a gap in the existing translation studies literature with regard to short texts?
- (2) Are “mainstream” translation theories and strategies also applicable to short texts?
- (3) What are the methods used in translating street names and which are more frequently used?
- (4) What are the major issues encountered when translating street names?

## **1.4 Hong Kong – Background**

All street names in Hong Kong are presented in both English and Chinese. This facilitates data collection for the case study. Both the English and Chinese versions of street names are legally recognized as a result of the territory's dual language policy which first came into effect in 1974. The bilingual street names reflect Hong Kong's colonial history.

### **1.4.1 Brief History of Hong Kong**

Hong Kong in its early days was a collection of fishing villages with a small population of a few thousand people. As a result of the two Opium Wars and a series of treaties and conventions between 1840 and 1898, Hong Kong Island and the Kowloon Peninsular were ceded to Britain and the New Territories together with the outlying islands were leased to Britain for 99 years (from 1898).

Hong Kong is made up of Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, and the New Territories which include 235 outlying islands (Hong Kong Tourism Board, 2010). It was under British rule for over 150 years until 1 July 1997, when sovereignty was returned to China. However, in many aspects including language, the "English" influence post-1997 continues very strongly in people's everyday life.

### **1.4.2 Language Policy in Hong Kong**

Under Section 3 of the Official Languages Ordinance, both Chinese and English are official languages in Hong Kong and enjoy equal status (Hong Kong Legal Information Institute, 2010). The Ordinance came into existence in 1974. However, the Chinese language did not enjoy the same footing as English in terms of range of official use in Hong Kong until the signing of the Joint Declaration between China and Britain in 1984, according to which Hong Kong would return to China (Chen, 2001, p.116-117). It follows, therefore, that English had dominated Hong Kong as the de facto sole official language over 140 years (1841 to 1984).

According to By-census 2006 (Census and Statistics Department, 2010), Hong Kong then had a population of 6,864,346, of whom 95% were ethnic Chinese. 91% of the population spoke Cantonese as their usual language while 2.8% spoke English. Furthermore, 42% spoke English as a second language. Similar trends were recorded in previous By-censuses in 1996 and 2001. The statistics indicate that Cantonese has always been the mainstream language spoken by the masses in Hong Kong.

The fact that a high proportion of the population in Hong Kong (45% in total as per the 2006 census) is able to speak English explains why the English language is able to maintain its importance in Hong Kong. Street names in Hong Kong are a typical example of bilingualism under the aegis of the official language policy.

### **1.4.3 Naming of Streets – Official Procedures and Public Consultation**

Naming of streets in Hong Kong has been the responsibility of the Lands Department since 2000 (Lands Department, email communication, March 12, 2010). The official procedures for naming of streets are governed by Part XA (sections 111A-D) of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance. Under the Ordinance, the public, organizations and government departments (regarding public streets) or land owners (regarding private streets) may make naming requests to the Lands Department. Public consultation will be conducted through relevant District Offices to solicit views and opinions from local groups. The Official Languages Division of the Civil Service Bureau and other relevant government departments will be consulted before the proposed street names are declared in the Gazette to complete the formalities. A detailed description of street naming procedures is given in Appendix 1-1.

### **1.4.4 The Lands Department's General Naming Principles**

The Lands Department follows a set of general naming and translation principles. The name for an unnamed street is often rendered in Chinese first, which is then transcribed into English. The Department generally prefers transliteration because this helps communication, especially between people who are not conversant with each other's languages. However, on rare occasions, translation by meaning has been

adopted. The Department has an internal guide which provides guidance on Cantonese Romanization to ensure consistency, but declined my request for a copy.

#### **1.4.5 Chinese Script and the Chinese Version of Street Names in Hong Kong**

In general, there are two main types of Chinese script: the traditional characters (繁體字) and the simplified characters (簡體字). Traditional characters are commonly adopted in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. Simplified characters are used in China. The Chinese version of street names in Hong Kong is always presented in traditional characters. This paper has also adopted traditional Chinese characters where appropriate.

#### **1.4.6 Romanization System for Translating Street Names in Hong Kong**

Where street names are transliterated in Hong Kong, Cantonese romanization is adopted. This is different from the *Hanyu Pinyin* (漢語拼音) system used in China. For example, “花” is transliterated into “fa” in Cantonese romanization whereas it is “hua” in *Hanyu Pinyin*.

Chinese characters are monosyllabic and tonal. While *Hanyu Pinyin* is China’s official romanization system, there is no “official” romanization system in Hong Kong. Many different systems have been proposed and used in the territory, details of which are given in Appendix 1-2.

The use of different Cantonese romanization systems by different parties at different times during Hong Kong’s history has given rise to inconsistencies in romanization between Chinese and English. For example, “利” has been romanized into Lee, Li and Lei; and “新” into San and Sun. “Sutherland” has been romanized into “新達蘭” (sun-dard-lan) and “修打蘭” (sau-da-lan).

Unless otherwise specified, romanization in this paper is based on the Cantonese pronunciation interpreted by the author.

## **1.5 Chapter Summary**

The discussions in this Chapter have indicated that there may be a literature gap with regard to short text translation. In order to investigate how short texts are translated, a case study is conducted to examine the methods used in translating street names in Hong Kong. Chapter 2 will focus on reviewing general translation literature and reflect on its applicability to short texts.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Discussions in Chapter 1 have indicated a possible literature gap on short text translation, and preliminary searches for literature on street name translation have returned limited results. Although the subject of the case study is street names, the paucity of relevant translation literature on street names has made it necessary to expand the scope of this literature review to cover proper names, a broader name-group.

This chapter examines in detail leading academic works in the translation field to investigate the extent to which literature is lacking on the translation of proper names and street names. General translation theories and strategies that may be applicable to street names or other proper names are reviewed. Although limited in number, literature containing specific discussions on the translation of street names or other proper names is also reviewed for the benefit of the case study.

### **2.2 Major Translation Textbooks / Reference Books – Paucity of Discussion on Short Texts**

In this paper, references are made to books written by Newmark (1981, 1995), Baker (1992) and Munday (2001) because these works are regarded as authoritative in translation circles. However, they contain only limited discussion on short text translation, particularly on street names and proper names. This situation is equally true for translation literature in the Chinese corpus such as Hao, Li & Bai (2006), Ko (2008), Yang (2006), Tan & Cai (2005), and Shen & Dai (2002).

Newmark has devoted one chapter in his book (1995, p.193-220) to discussing “shorter items”, of which only 2½ pages (1995, p. 214-216) contain discussion on translation of proper names. In this small section, only people’s names, names of objects and geographical terms are discussed but not street names. Similarly, one

chapter in Newmark's other book (1981, p. 70-83) has been spared to discuss proper names and institutional and cultural terms. Street names are only mentioned once (1981, p. 73). Another mention of proper names is found in a short paragraph (p. 151), and one mention of "addresses" appears among a very short discussion on transcription (p. 154).

In Baker's book (1992), there is no direct discussion on translation of proper names. The same is true of Munday (2001): the only reference made to a street name is in an example (p. 66-69) which attempts to illustrate the process of translating a travel brochure using the linguistic approach proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet.

Among the translation literature in the Chinese corpus, only two books contain references to proper names. In Hao, Li & Bai (2006, p. 92-104), the focus is on the translation of personal and geographical names, although a brief discussion on translating an address, which includes a street name, is included in the appendix to that particular chapter. Ko (2008, p. 45-47) has presented a discussion on proper names including personal and geographical names. Although a street name is mentioned once in the context of translating an address, no discussion has been given on the method used to translate it.

### **2.3 Paucity of translation literature on proper names and its implications**

The investigation in Section 2.2 has shown that there is a general paucity of translation literature on street names and proper names. This revelation has prompted the question: What causes such paucity? Most proper names carry meaning and are worthy of being translated; all are translatable one way or another. The current paucity indicates that the study of proper name translation has been neglected and that a literature gap does in fact exist. This implies that the area of proper name translation (including street names) is in need of further academic attention. General translation theories and strategies are therefore examined below in search of those that could be applied to proper names, particularly street names.

## 2.4 Literature on General Translation Theories and Strategies That May Be Applicable to Street Names

### 2.4.1 The Western Corpus

The linguistic approach to translation is one of the major translation theories proposed in the 1950s. The classical model developed by Vinay and Darbelnet has had extensive influence in translation studies. Their work was based solely on French and English. Although their model is linguistics-oriented, some parts of their strategies and procedures may be applicable to proper names and street names.

One such strategy involves making small linguistic changes during translation processes. These changes are called “shifts” by Catford and include changing the word class and word order (Munday, 2001, p. 60, 57). Although linguistic changes may seem to have little relevance to street names due to lack of linguistic features, the strategy may apply to those street names that contain directional references (called “localizers” by Yim (2008)). For example, “大王西街” is translated as “Tai Wong Street West”, indicating a change in the word order. The directional reference “西” (literally “West”) has been “moved” from the middle of the street name in Chinese to the end position in the English translation in order to comply with the normal form of a street name in English.

Another strategy proposed by Vinay and Darbelnet possibly relevant to street name translation is called “equivalence”, which involves making changes to the ST in order to create the same message in the TT. Munday (2001, p. 58) pointed out that this procedure is particularly useful in translating idioms and proverbs, but cautioned that “the use of equivalence in this restrictive sense should not be confused with the more common theoretical use” of this term by scholars such as Nida and Newmark. Although the equivalence procedure may not be directly applicable to street name translation, the idea of equivalence, i.e. “describing the same situation by different stylistic and structural means” (Munday, 2001, p. 58), indicates some relevance. Chinese and English are not from the same language family. In order to achieve an equivalent effect in street name translation, the translator may consider translating the

ST by sound, meaning, or a combination of both. For example, “Nelson Street” is translated by sound into “奶路臣街” (“Nelson” is romanized into “nai-low-sun”; “Street” is translated by meaning as “街”); “Arsenal Street” is translated by meaning into “軍器廠街”; and “Magazine Gap Road” is translated partly by sound (Magazine → 馬己仙 (romanized as “ma-gay-seen”)) and partly by meaning (Gap → 峽 ; Road → 道) into “馬己仙峽道”.

“Equivalence” is a major concept in translation, and has been widely studied and debated by scholars such as Nida, Newmark and Baker. Nida’s seminal concepts of formal and dynamic equivalence and the principle of equivalent effect, Newmark’s semantic and communicative translation, and Baker’s equivalence concepts at the different levels (word, phrase, text and so on) represent some of the major work on “equivalence”.

Nida’s concept of formal equivalence “focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content ... One is concerned that the message in the receptor language should match as closely as possible the different elements in the source language” (Munday, 2001, p. 41). The concept of dynamic equivalence emphasizes the effect of the message created on the TT readers (Munday, 2001, p. 42). The concepts of formal and dynamic equivalence are oriented towards the receptor (or reader).

Communicative translation as proposed by Newmark (1981, p. 39) “attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original”, while semantic translation “attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original”. Newmark (1995, p. 45-47) says that among the eight translation methods he discusses, only communicative and semantic translation methods fulfil the two main aims of translation: accuracy and economy. Both communicative and semantic translation emphasize the importance of TT readers (Munday, 2001, p. 46). Munday (2001, p. 44) points out that Newmark’s communicative translation “resembles Nida’s dynamic equivalence in the effect it is

trying to create on the TT reader, while semantic translation has similarities to Nida's formal equivalence".

Baker advocates achieving equivalence at different levels, starting with words and phrases rather than with the text. People who are not trained linguists may find this approach easier to follow. Baker, however, cautions that equivalence is relative because "it is influenced by a variety of linguistic and cultural factors" (Baker, 1992, p. 6).

The preceding discussions on Nida, Newmark and Baker's ideas of equivalence indicate that the concept of "equivalence" is fundamental to translation studies, and has direct relevance to street name translation. The ultimate aim of all concepts of equivalence is to achieve equivalence between the ST and TT. In translating street names between Chinese and English, the translator may seek to achieve equivalence from the perspectives of sound, meaning or a combination of both.

The focus of translation studies moved to the functional approach in the 1970s and 1980s. Reiss built on the concept of equivalence and proposed a functional approach to translation. She believed that equivalence should be achieved at the text level rather than the word or sentence level (Munday, 2001, p. 73-75). Three text types have been proposed: informative (a report), expressive (a poem) and operative (an advertisement). Each text type has a corresponding language function, and the translation strategy to be used will depend on the text type. In the case of street names, the text type would be "informative" because it is a "plain communication of facts" (Munday, 2001 p. 73). The "language function" of this particular text is to represent the street concerned. Accordingly, the translation should be in "plain prose" (Munday, 2001, p. 74).

#### **2.4.2 The Chinese Corpus**

There is a large amount of literature on translation between Chinese and English. Ko (2008, p. 22) points out that the majority of translation theories came from the West. While Tan & Cai (2005, p. 9) claims that "strictly speaking, translation theory in its true sense in China originated from Yan Fu (严复). He proposed the famous triple

principle for translation, namely faithfulness (信), expressiveness (达), and elegance (雅)”, Ko (2008) remarks that Yan did not take these principles further to develop them into a theory of translation.

The common translation approaches discussed in the Chinese translation literature include 直譯 (literal or direct translation), 意譯 (free, liberal or meaning translation), 音譯 (sound translation, transliteration), and 形譯 (shape or pictographic translation, e.g. concave → 凹; convex → 凸). However, there are no uniform definitions for “直譯” and “意譯”, resulting in inconsistency in the English translation of these terms. Ko (2008, p. 22-26) notes that many terminologies have been proposed and used to refer to similar ideas or concepts. For example, terms such as direct translation, literal translation, word-for-word translation, and faithful translation have been used to refer to “直譯” while free translation, sense-for-sense translation, idiomatic translation, and meaning-based translation have been used to refer to “意譯”. Among the common translation approaches discussed in the Chinese corpus, 意譯 (meaning translation) and 音譯 (sound translation) appear to be more appropriate for the translation of street names between Chinese and English.

Some street names may contain personal and geographical names, which are usually transliterated or translated by sound (Hao, Li & Bai, 2006, p. 92-101). Loanwords (i.e. words that have been borrowed from the SL into the TL) are absorbed into the TL in different ways: by meaning (hotdog → 熱狗), sound (coffee → 咖啡 (romanized as “gar-fair”)), and a combination of sound and meaning (mini-skirt → 迷你裙, where “mini” is transliterated into “迷你” (“maai-nei”)); and “skirt” is translated by meaning as “裙”. These methods can be used to translate street names.

## 2.5 Literature on Translation of Proper Names and Street Names

### 2.5.1 Personal Names

Newmark (1995, p. 214) notes says that “people’s first and surnames are *transferred*, thus preserving their nationality”. This view is also stated in his other book: “the principle stands that unless a single object’s or a person’s name already has an accepted translation it should not be translated but must be *adhered to*” (Newmark, 1981, p. 70). Transference refers to the process of transferring a SL word (e.g. an English word) into a TL text (e.g. Chinese), and it includes transliteration (Newmark, 1995, p. 81). Accordingly, street names should, in the majority of cases, be transliterated. Hao, Li & Bai (2006, p. 92-94) claims that transliteration is usually adopted for translating personal names from English into Chinese and vice versa.

### 2.5.2 Geographical Names

Newmark (1995, p. 216) suggests that geographical names in their original forms are to be respected in the translation process. A general approach to translating geographical names is by transference. Where the SL and TL systems are different, as in the case of Chinese and English, transliteration should be adopted, a view supported by Hao, Li & Bai (2005, p. 95). Some geographical names, however, are translated by meaning, e.g., Black Sea is translated as “黑海”. Some other geographical names are partly translated and partly transliterated, e.g., New Zealand is translated as “新西蘭” where “New” is translated by meaning as “新” and “Zealand” is transliterated into “西蘭” (romanized as “sai lan”).

Ko (2008, p. 45) remarks that transliteration is appropriate for translating personal and geographical names from English into Chinese. If the names already have fixed or accepted translations, those should continue to be adopted (e.g. Paris is always translated as “巴黎”).

### 2.5.3 Street Names

Newmark (1981, p. 73) suggests that “names of streets and squares are not usually translated ... (they) remain untranslated if they are written as addresses”. In the case of Hong Kong where both Chinese and English are official languages, all street names are transcribed.

Li (2004, p. 151-152) claims that transliteration is the most common approach to translating street names in China. There are many different street classifiers, e.g., in English: street, road, avenue, lane; and in Chinese: 街, 道, 路, 巷. In China, some street names are transliterated, including street classifiers, e.g. “長江西路” is transliterated into “Changjiang Xi Lu” where “Lu” is the *Hanyu Pinyin* of “路”, which would have been better if translated as Road or Street. In addition, different street classifiers refer to different features of the street. Therefore, features of streets should be appropriately reflected in the translation. Translators may consider using the more descriptive street classifiers such as Pedestrian Street, Flyover, Overpass, or Ring Road if appropriate.

Yim’s study (2008) focuses on onomastics translation using Hong Kong street names. The study found that in the early days of Hong Kong, the English proficiency of the Chinese officials was unsatisfactory, leading to incorrect translation of street names and the common practice of transliteration (p. 148-151). In analysing the Chinese-English translation of street names, “the syntactic structure of Chinese can be rather complex. It is partly because each Chinese character can carry a number of word classes itself, on top of its monosyllabic nature, contributing to high flexibility in word-formation” (p.88). It was also noted that the incorrect positioning of the “localizer” (i.e. the directional reference word) in the translated street name may cause a shift in meaning. For example, “山頂道西” is translated as Peak Road **West**. The localizer “西” (west) describes the western section of the Road. If the localizer was positioned in another place, the meaning of the name would be different: West Peak Road may imply “the western part of the peak” or that the peak is called “West

Peak”. In the analysis of English-Chinese translation of street names, it was found that “the tendency to adopt the means of transliteration ... has the potential of largely undermining the socio-cultural stratum of the street names” (p. 121). Transliteration of “Lock Road” into “樂道” (romanized as “lock-dough”) has led to a loss of the historical content of the ST in the TT which no longer reflects the fact that the street was named after the Lock Hospital located there up till World War I. The essential challenge for street name translation lies in the process of embracing linguistic and cultural features in a confined number of words.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, it has been established that there is a need for greater academic effort to fill the literature gap on the translation of short texts including street names and other proper names. The relevant Western and Chinese corpus of translation literature has been reviewed. General translation theory and strategies appear to have some degree of applicability to proper and street name translation, particularly the linguistic approach and the concept of “equivalence”. Literature on proper and street name translation suggests that sound translation and meaning transliteration are currently the most common approaches. Chapter 3 will describe in detail the methodology for conducting the case study research.

## Chapter 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Case Study – Translation of Hong Kong Street Names

This paper seeks to investigate translation strategies for short texts by way of a case study examining how street names in Hong Kong have been translated. Street names in Hong Kong have been chosen because all street names in the territory are presented in both English and Chinese as a result of the territory's dual official language policy. This special characteristic of Hong Kong has facilitated data collection for the case study.

### 3.2 Data Collection

For the purpose of the case study, the principal data collected are street names in Hong Kong, in both English and Chinese. These have been used to construct a prototype database in the form of an Excel spreadsheet, subsequently expanded to facilitate various analyses which are described in Section 4.

#### 3.2.1 Source of data

The data on street names and street locality are sourced solely from *Hong Kong Directory* (1998), a major street directory published by Universal Publications, Ltd in Hong Kong. This dated edition is used because of difficulty in locating a more recent edition of this publication in Australia and because street names do not usually change over time. The suitability of using data from a dated publication is discussed below. Alternative sources of data are limited. They include *Hong Kong Guide: Streets & Places* published by the Lands Department of the Hong Kong SAR Government, and *Hong Kong Guidebook*, also published by Universal Publications (2010). Both of these publications are unavailable in Australia. Some on-line sites such as *Hong Kong Yellow Pages* (2010) and *Topweb Design* (2010) claim to offer information on street locations. However, these websites are in fact on-line "street finders" and do not provide a full list of all street names in Hong Kong and their respective localities.

Therefore, they are not appropriate sources for obtaining the data required for the case study. All of these factors contributed to the decision to use *Hong Kong Directory* (1998) as the sole source of data for the case study.

### **3.2.2 Suitability of Source Data**

Although a single source is used to obtain data on street names and localities and the source publication is a dated edition, data from this source are considered acceptable for the purpose of this case study. Street names in Hong Kong, both English and Chinese, are made official by way of Part XA (sections 111 A-D) of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance. Once gazetted, they will remain unchanged except on rare occasions where applications for name changes have been approved by the Lands Department under this Ordinance. Therefore, it can reasonably be assumed that the vast majority of street names will remain unchanged. Under this assumption, street names and localities shown in the 1998 edition of the Hong Kong Directory should not differ from those published in its more current edition (the latest being the 2010 edition). The only difference is that the current edition contains names of “new” streets built since 1998. This difference does not impair the objective and representative nature of the database.

### **3.2.3 How were data chosen from the source?**

Street maps in the *Hong Kong Directory* (1998) are organized into three groups of localities – Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and “Other”. The “Other” locality includes the New Territories and the Outlying Islands. A list containing the names (English and Chinese) of all streets in Hong Kong is presented in pages 244-259. This source name list is compiled in English and arranged in an alphabetical order. Each entry in the list comprises a street name in English followed by its corresponding name in Chinese and the map reference. For example, the entry for “Nathan Road” in Tsimshatsui District will appear on the list as “Nathan Road 彌敦道 94D3”, where “94D3” refers to Map 94 and the coordinates, row D and column 3, help locate Nathan Road on the map.

The full list of street names in the *Hong Kong Directory* (1998) contains approximately 3,200 entries. For the purpose of the case study, every fifth entry on the list, starting from A through to Z, was selected. The systematic selection of street names is intended to ensure that (1) the data selection process is objective; and (2) data used in the case study are representative of streets in Hong Kong. In accordance with the selection process described above, 648 entries were selected from the list of street names, and then input into an Excel spreadsheet to construct a database.

### **3.3 The Database – Objectivity and Representativeness**

As described above, a database containing 648 entries of street names in Hong Kong was constructed to form a platform for conducting analyses for this research. The entire database spreadsheet is attached as Appendix A. Data were selected from the full list of street names by way of systematic sampling. This type of random sampling method is suitable for the case study because the data population is large and it does not have any known or specific characteristics. Walliman (2005, p. 276) pointed out that “random sampling techniques give the most reliable representation of the whole population”. Accordingly, the database constructed for use in the case study can reasonably be described as objective.

Walliman (2005) holds the view that “no sample will be exactly representative of a population” (p. 281), and “as with all samples, the larger the sample, the better” (p. 276). The database used in this case study contains approximately 20% of the entire data population. The database’s representativeness of the entire population is strengthened by the systematic sampling method.

### **3.4 The Database – A Platform for Analyses**

A database in the form of a spreadsheet constituted an effective platform for performing analyses, particularly quantitative analyses. Firstly, a prototype database was constructed based on the collected data as described above. Then, the prototype database spreadsheet was expanded to incorporate analyses on translation methods.

### 3.4.1 Prototype Database

Each entry selected from the list of street names contains three components, i.e. the street name in English (using the example quoted above, Nathan Road), the street name in Chinese (彌敦道), and the street’s corresponding locality reference (94D3).

The information for each component was input into the Excel spreadsheet, with the English and Chinese names of each street input into separate columns under the headings “Name in English” and “Name in Chinese”. With regard to the locality reference, only the map number was recorded for the purpose of identifying which locality group each street belongs to. There are three locality columns in the spreadsheet: “HK Island”, “Kowloon”, and “Other”. The map number of each street was entered into the appropriate locality column. Up to this point, the Excel spreadsheet thus completed had become the prototype database for the case study. It comprised 5 columns and 648 rows. Each row contained information specific to one street. The two columns of names were used for the purpose of analysing translation methods (see Section 3.2.2). The three locality columns were included in the spreadsheet to identify the number of entries in each of the locality groups. This information was used to justify whether the data selection process has produced an objective database. An extract from the prototype database spreadsheet is shown in Figure 1 below:

Street Names in Hong Kong		<----- Locality of Street ----->		
Name in English	Name in Chinese	Hong Kong Island	Kowloon	Other
		(Maps 30-69)	(Maps 70-101)	(Maps 102-139)
A Kung Kok Shan Road	亞公角山路			109
Aberdeen Main Road	香港仔大道	57		
Albany Road	雅賓利道	34		
Alnwick Road	安域道		74	
Anton Street	晏頓街	36		
Austin Avenue	柯士甸路		94	
Baker Street	必嘉街		91	
Basel Road	巴色道	44		
Bauhinia Road W	紫荊西路			117
Begonia Road	海棠道		82	

Figure 1: Prototype Database – Street Names in Hong Kong (identified with locality)

### 3.4.2 Expanded Database Spreadsheet

The prototype database served as the foundation from which the spreadsheet was expanded to facilitate analyses on translation methods. As all streets in Hong Kong are presented in both English and Chinese, it is necessary to identify which version of the street name is the ST. A new column was added to the prototype spreadsheet with the heading “Source Text (Eng / Chi)”. The English and Chinese names of each street in the entire database were examined to determine whether the ST was English or Chinese. The new column was then marked with the letter “E” or “C” accordingly.

The next step was to analyse the translation methods used on street names in Hong Kong. Translation methods for street names, as revealed in Chapter 2, may take a number of forms: by sound, meaning or a combination of both. To facilitate this analysis, the prototype spreadsheet was further expanded by adding 5 more columns with the following headings: (1) sound; (2) meaning; (3) part sound & part meaning; (4) perfect sound & meaning; (5) neither sound nor meaning. The ST of each street name in the database was examined against the corresponding TT to determine which translation method was applied. The result was then marked in the appropriate column.

As an example, “Pottinger Street” was analysed in the following manner. The English and Chinese names of this street are “Pottinger Street” and “砵典乍街” respectively.

The ST is English because the street was named after Sir Henry Pottinger, the first British Governor of Hong Kong (Kwong, 2003). The street name was translated by sound into Chinese. Therefore, in the database where the entry for Pottinger Street was recorded, the letter “E” was marked in the “Source Text” column to signify that the ST was English; and the “sound” column was marked with “x” to signify that the translation method used was “by sound”. An extract from the expanded database spreadsheet is shown in Figure 2.

Street Names in Hong Kong										
		Translation Methods						Locality of Streets		
Name in English	Name in Chinese	Source	Text		part sound	perfect	neither	HK	Kowloon	Other
		(Eng / Chi)	sound	meaning	& part	sound &	sound nor	(Maps	(Maps	10-29 &
					meaning	meaning	meaning	30-69)	70-101)	102-139)
A Kung Kok Shan Road	亞公角山路	C	x							109
Aberdeen Main Road	香港仔大道	E					x	57		
Albany Road	雅賓利道	E	x					34		
Alnwick Road	安域道	E	x						74	
Anton Street	晏頓街	E	x					36		
Austin Avenue	柯士甸路	E	x						94	
Baker Street	必嘉街	E	x						91	
Basel Road	巴色道	E	x					44		
Bauhinia Road W	紫荊西路	C		x						117
Begonia Road	海棠道	C		x					82	

Figure 2: Expanded Database – Street Names in Hong Kong (identified with locality, ST and translation methods)

From the expanded database, statistics were compiled to justify the objectivity and representativeness of the database. Statistics on the number of selected streets for each of the five translation methods have provided the answer to one of the research questions “Which translation strategies are more frequently used?” The other research questions were answered by way of qualitative analysis. For example, to answer the question “Are ‘mainstream’ translation theories and strategies also applicable to short texts (street names)?”, the database was reviewed to see whether any entries could be identified as reflecting, say, Vinay and Darbelnet’s linguistic approach to translation. Furthermore, to address the other research question “What are the major issues encountered when translating street names?”, translation issues (e.g. equivalence, culture, dialect diversity) were firstly identified and entries taken from the database were used to demonstrate the issues involved in street name translation.

### 3.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the research methodology has been described in detail. It entailed the construction of a database which enabled quantitative analyses to be performed on translation methods. The next chapter examines the statistics compiled from the database. Furthermore, qualitative analyses will be discussed. The outcome of both the quantitative and qualitative analyses provides answers to the research questions given in Chapter 1.

## Chapter 4 Findings and Analysis

### 4.1 Objectivity and Representativeness of the Database

As described in Chapter 3, data were selected into the database by way of systematic sampling to ensure objectivity. The findings, as illustrated below, have shown that there is an even distribution of data among the three locality categories of Hong Kong, indicating the database's representativeness.

<u>Locality</u>	<u>Streets in Database</u>	
	(No.)	(%)
Hong Kong Island	228	35.2%
Kowloon	198	30.6%
Other	222	34.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>648</b>	<b>100%</b>

The above suggests that the database is both objective and representative. It also represents a reliable platform based on which analyses are performed and conclusions drawn for the case study.

### 4.2 Components of Street Names

In general, each street name comprises two components: the name and the street classifier, as illustrated in the following table:

Street Name    “Name” Component    “Street Classifier” Component

ST: Cameron Road	Cameron	Road
TT: 金馬倫道	金馬倫	道

In the above example, “Cameron / 金馬倫” (i.e. ST/TT) represent the “name” component of the street names whereas “Road / 道” represent the street classifier component. Analyses on translation methods used for the “name” component of street names are given in Section 4.3 while discussion on street classifier translation is given in Section 4.4.

### **4.3 Translation Methods – the Name Component**

As described in Chapter 3, all the entries in the database have been reviewed in detail to determine their respective source text (i.e. whether SL is English or Chinese), and to identify translation methods used for translating the name component of the street names.

#### **4.3.1 Determining the Source Text**

Although the source of data (*Hong Kong Directory*, 1998) provides street names in both English and Chinese, no indication has been given with regard to the SL of each of the street names. According to Hong Kong’s Lands Department (email communication, March 12, 2010), there is no official record documenting the SL of each street name.

For the purpose of this research, each of the entries in the database has been analysed to ascertain what the SL is, giving consideration to historical links, geographical features and the naming practice of the streets in the neighbourhood. Some street names present more clues than others in reflecting the SL.

For example, it is found that English is the SL for Queen's Road Central because the street name represents the royal title of Britain's Head of State (Leung, 1992, p. 33). Some streets such as Sugar Street are found to have strong links with historical establishments in Hong Kong (Leung, 1992, p. 100). According to Leung (1992), these streets were named in Chinese (representing the SL) when first built.

Street names such as "Seahorse Lane / 海馬徑 (literally, sea-horse-lane)" may present difficulties in interpreting what the SL is because both versions of the names are perfect translations of each other by meaning. However, close examination of the relevant street map (*Hong Kong Directory*, 1998, p. 139C6) reveals more information about the streets in the neighbourhood, which assisted in confirming that Chinese is the SL of these streets.

The presence of Cantonese romanization in the English version of a street name is an obvious clue that the SL is Chinese. The above examples are more clearly illustrated in Table 4-1 below:

Street Name (in English)	Street Name (in Chinese)	Source Text (ST)	Supporting Clues / Reasons
Queen's Road Central <sup>1</sup>	皇后大道中	English	> Named in memory of <b>Queen</b> Victoria of Great Britain
Pottinger Street <sup>1</sup>	砵典乍街	English	》 Name of the first British Colonial <b>Governor</b> of Hong Kong.
Jardine's Crescent <sup>1</sup>	渣甸坊	English	> Named after a <b>company</b> (Jardine Matheson Group) which > developed the area where the street is located.
London Lane <sup>1</sup>	倫敦里	English	》 Named after a <b>city</b> (London, U.K).
Sun, Moon, Star Streets <sup>1</sup>	日、月、星街	Chinese	> Named after the three major sources of light in memory of > The Hongkong Electric Co. Ltd.'s first power station which > was located in the area where the three streets are. > <b>(Historical links)</b>
Sugar Street <sup>1</sup>	糖街	Chinese	》 Named in memory of Hong Kong's first sugar factory which > was located in the street. <b>(Historical links)</b>
Causeway Road <sup>1,2</sup>	高士威道	English	> Named after "Causeway Bay". The Bay was originally > named by the British navy after sighting a causeway along > the bay. <b>(Geographical feature)</b>
North Point Road <sup>1,2</sup>	北角道	English	》 Named after the area called "North Point", which was > originally named by the British navy because it is the > northernmost point of Hong Kong Island. <b>(Geographical feature)</b>
Seahorse Lane <sup>3</sup>	海馬徑	Chinese	> The name has the same Chinese character "海" as two > other streets in the area (i.e. in a series); The three street > names have consistent meanings in Chinese but not in > English. <b>(Neighbourhood practice)</b>
A Kung Kok Shan Road <sup>4</sup> and Lai Tak Tsuen Road <sup>4</sup>	亞公角山路 勵德邨道	Chinese	》 "A Kung Kok" is the <b>romanized place name</b> of "阿公角", > and "Lai Tak Tsuen" is the <b>romanized name of a residential estate</b> , "勵德邨".
Po Shan Road <sup>1,4</sup>	寶珊道	Chinese	> Named after a <b>person</b> - in memory of Wai Po Shan (韋寶珊), the first HK-born Chinese who studied abroad in Britain, > and became a distinguished achiever in banking, public > services and politics > "Po Shan" is the <b>romanized</b> name of "寶珊".
Dai Kwai Street <sup>4</sup>	大貴街	Chinese	》 "大貴" is <b>romanized</b> into "Dai Kwai", which does not have > any connotation in English.

Table 4-1 Determining the SL of street names - Examples of supporting clues and reasons  
Legends: (1) historical links; (2) geographical features; (3) neighbourhood factors; (4) others e.g. romanization.

### 4.3.2 Identifying Translation Methods – Name Component

The case study has found that five translation methods have been used in translating the name component of street names:

- (1) sound translation
- (2) meaning translation
- (3) translation partly by sound and partly by meaning
- (4) perfect sound and meaning translation where sound and meaning are both achieved
- (5) translation reflecting neither sound nor meaning

These findings are in line with common translation approaches discussed in the Chinese corpus, as described in Chapter 2. In addition, Chapter 2 has also established that sound translation and meaning translation are the two major translation methods for general application. The method of translating partly by sound and partly by meaning is in line with a common method applied to loanwords (Hao, Li & Bai, 2006, p.97).

In terms of the mainstream translation theory and strategies proposed by western scholars (including Vinay and Darbelnet, Nida, Newmark, Baker, Munday and Reiss), in particular the concept of equivalence, the above identified translation methods for street names can be viewed as being in line with achieving, to a certain extent, equivalence in the translation. The discussion below demonstrates with examples how this equivalence is achieved:

- (1) Translation by **Sound**:

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Name Component</u>	<u>Street classifier</u>
ST 1a: Kadoorie Avenue	Kadoorie	Avenue
TT 1b: 嘉道理道	嘉道理 (romanized as gar-doe-lei)	道

ST 1b: 金錢路	金錢 (literally, money or wealth)	路
TT 1b: Kam Tsin Road	Kam Tsin	Road

In example (1a), “Kadoorie” is transliterated into “嘉道理 (romanized as Gar-doe-lei)”. This achieves good equivalence in Cantonese sound. Chinese characters are monosyllabic. “Kadoorie” is a trisyllabic word. Therefore, in addition to achieving equivalence in sound, the TT also achieves equivalence in terms of the syllabic feature of the ST. “Kadoorie” is a personal name and has no connotations. Therefore, transliteration is appropriate. The transliteration by way of Cantonese romanization means that the ST has been, in Newmark’s terms, “adhered to” or “transferred” (1981, p.70).

In example (1b), the ST, “金錢” (literally, money, or individually gold-wealth), is transliterated into “Kam Tsin”. Transliterating this two-character expression into two monosyllabic “words” achieves equivalence in terms of the ST’s syllabic and phonological features. However, the semantic meaning (i.e. money) carried by the ST is lost in the TT. Therefore, the translation has failed to achieve equivalence in this respect.

(2) Translation by **Meaning**:

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Name Component</u>	<u>Street classifier</u>
ST 2: King’s Road	King’s	Road
TT 2: 英皇道	英皇 (ying-wong)	道

In example (2), the ST, “King’s”, has achieved some degree of equivalence in meaning. The translation, “英皇”, has a literal meaning of “the King of Britain”. Given the history of Hong Kong, this translation is appropriate. However, “King” does not contain semantic references to the King of “Britain”. Therefore, it may be

more accurate to translate “King’s” as “國王”. Despite achieving semantic equivalence, phonological resemblance is lacking.

(3) Translation by **Sound and Meaning**:

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Name Component</u>		<u>Street classifier</u>
ST 3: Morrison Hill Road	<b>Morrison</b>	<b>Hill</b>	Road
TT 3: 摩理臣山道	<b>摩理臣 (mor-lei-sun)</b>	<b>山 (san)</b>	道

In example (3), the ST comprises two components: “Morrison” (a personal name), and “Hill”, a generic term. “Morrison” is appropriately transliterated into “摩理臣” (romanized as mor-lei-sun). “Hill”, has been translated by meaning into “山” (san), because it is usual practice to translate generic terms by meaning. More examples are given in Appendix 4.3.2-1. It is noted that this “middle-of-the-road” method does not fully remedy the shortcomings of the previous two methods because it only achieves partial sound and partial meaning equivalence.

(4) **Perfect** Translation by **Sound and Meaning**:

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Name Component</u>	<u>Street classifier</u>
ST 4: Link Road	<b>Link</b>	Road
TT 4: 連道	<b>連 (leen)</b>	道

In this example, “Link” and “連” (romanized as “leen”) have achieved a bi-directional perfect equivalence. Semantically, “連” carries the meaning of link or connect.

Syntactically, “連” can be used as a verb or a noun. The word “Link” also possesses exactly the same semantic and syntactic features. Furthermore, “Link” and “連”

display close resemblance in sound. Therefore, this is a perfect example for street name translation with full equivalence in phonology and semantics.

**(5) Non-Sound and Meaning Translation:**

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Name Component</u>	<u>Street classifier</u>
ST 4: Queensway	<b>Queensway</b>	-
TT 4: 金鐘道	<b>金鐘 (gum-juong)</b>	道

In this example, the ST and TT do not display any resemblance in sound nor equivalence in meaning. Investigation into the relevant history of Hong Kong or the specific area may uncover some clues.

Phonological resemblance in street names plays an important part in verbal communication. People who are not conversant with each other's language may find it difficult to convey the street name to the other party if the street name is in a semantic form (e.g. Silver Stream Path / “銀泉徑” (romanized as “ngan-chuen-g'ing”)).

Transliterated street names (e.g. “Ngan Chuen G'ing”) would greatly ease the situation.

From the socio-cultural perspective, semantic translation would make the street name in the TL more informative. For example, “漁市場道” (literally, Fish Market Road) has been transliterated into “Yue Shi Cheung Road”. The semantic or historical content of the SL name is lost in the TT. More examples of this kind are given in Appendix 4.3.2-2.

The above discussion has highlighted a dilemma. Meaning translation achieves semantic equivalence but not phonological equivalence. On the other hand, sound translation achieves phonological equivalence (or even full equivalence as in the case of “Kadoorie”) but fails to achieve semantic equivalence, resulting in a loss of historical or other semantic content embodied in the ST.

The “middle-of-the-road” method of translating by sound and meaning does not help remedy the shortcomings of the two methods. “黃泥涌峽道” has been translated by

sound and meaning into “Wong Nai Chung Gap Road”. The semantic content of the SL place name (i.e. a stream with muddy coloured water) is lost. Translating “峽” by meaning into “Gap” provides only minimal phonological resemblance.

The ideal translation method is to achieve full equivalence in both sound and meaning, as in the case of “Link Road” / “連道”. However, perfect sound and meaning translation may not always be possible because of the differences between the English and Chinese language systems. Therefore, there is no “best method” for translating street names.

Some examples of perfect sound and meaning translation have been found to face a crossroads in translation, e.g. “北京道” / “Peking Road”. “北京” is now more commonly known as “Beijing”, which is derived from *Hanyu Pinyin*. Therefore, it may seem appropriate to adopt “Beijing Road” as the transliterated version of “北京道”. However, this would be inconsistent with the practice in Hong Kong where Cantonese romanization is usually employed. Although “Peking” is the dated anglicized version of the city’s name, it is still widely recognized and acceptable. Furthermore, “Peking” has more phonological resemblance to the Cantonese sound of “北京” (“buck-g’ing”) than “Beijing”. Therefore, “Peking Road” remains a more appropriate transliterated name of “北京道”. Some further examples of this kind are given in Appendix 4.3.2-3.

It is noted that “安徽街” has been transliterated into “Anhui Street” using *Hanyu Pinyin*. This represents a typical example of inconsistency in street name translation, especially in the older days of Hong Kong’s history.

### **4.3.3 Ascertaining the Frequency of Applying the 5 Translation Methods**

In order to ascertain how frequently these translation methods are applied in translating street names, each entry in the database has been analysed. The findings are presented below in Table 4-2.

Translation Methods (name component of street names) – Frequency of Use							
		←----- Translation Methods ----->					
					Part	Perfect	Neither
		Total No. of Entries	sound	meaning	sound & meaning	sound & meaning	sound nor meaning
(1)		100%					
<b>Master Database</b>	(No. of Entries)	648	537	75	18	10	8
	(% of Total Entries)	100%	82.9%	11.6%	2.8%	1.5%	1.2%
	Ratio of Sound : Meaning		7.2	1			
(2)		20.7%					
<b>Sub-Database:</b>	(No. of Entries)	134	92	29	8	3	2
<b>(ST = English)</b>	(% of Total Entries)	100.0%	68.7%	21.6%	6.0%	2.2%	1.5%
	Ratio of Sound : Meaning		3.2	1			
(3)		79.3%					
<b>Sub-Database:</b>	(No. of Entries)	514	445	46	10	7	6
<b>(ST = Chinese)</b>	(% of Total Entries)	100.0%	86.6%	8.9%	1.9%	1.4%	1.2%
	Ratio of Sound : Meaning		9.7	1			

Table 4-2 Translation Methods (Name Component of Street Names) – Analysis on Frequency of Use

Part (1) of Table 4-2 represents analysis of the entire master database. The findings indicate that sound translation is the most frequently used method for translating the name component of street names. Of the entire database of 648 entries, 537 entries or 83% of the total are translated by sound, followed by meaning translation (75 entries or 12%).

Two supplementary reviews have been conducted by reorganising the master database into two sub-databases, one containing only entries where English is the ST, the other containing only entries where Chinese is the ST. Both sub-databases display similar trends to those of the master database. In other words, the most frequently used translation method is sound translation regardless of what the SL is. This is in line with the current practice by the Lands Department of Hong Kong, as described in Section 1.4.4. Furthermore, 79% (514 entries) of the entire database represents street names where Chinese is the SL. This finding is consistent with the Lands

Department's current practice whereby streets are generally named in Chinese first and then transcribed into English.

#### **4.4 Translation Methods - Street Classifiers**

In Hong Kong, street classifiers are always translated by meaning, although there are a small number of exceptions where sound translation has been used. Examples are shown in Appendix 4.4-1

Table 4-3 shows all street classifiers identified from the database. Classifiers in Chinese are listed across the columns on the top and those in English are listed down the rows on the left of the table. More classifiers have been identified from the *Hong Kong Directory* (1998), and are shown in Appendix 4.4-2. A list of all the identified street classifiers and their corresponding expressions in the other language is laid out in Appendix 4.4-3. There are more types of classifiers in English than in Chinese.

This explains the prevalent use of common classifiers such as 街 (street), 路 (road) and 道 (road). As pointed out by Li (2004), more consideration should be given to the features of the streets to produce accurate classifier translation.

Findings from Table 4-3 show that the majority of street classifiers are appropriately translated with a few exceptions, which are discussed in Appendix 4.4-4.

A further interesting finding from the study is that the English versions of some streets do not have classifiers, e.g. Smithfield is transliterated into “士美非路” where “路” (Road) is “added” to the Chinese version. More discussion is given in Appendix 4.4-5.

#### **4.5 Translation Methods – Directional “Localizers”**

Some street names contain directional references (referred to as “localizers” in Yim (2008)), such as North, East. Altering (as necessary) the positioning of localizers in

the TT in order to better suit the TL system, in fact, represents a form of linguistic change (or “shift”) as per the terms used by Vinay and Darbelnet, and Catford.

#### 4.5.1 Localizers – Different Sections of the Same Street

Streets, particularly major thoroughfares, that are very long and pass through a number of neighbouring areas, are usually named by sections.. The localizer together with the street name then becomes the formal name of that part of the street.

<u>Street Name</u> (ST)	<u>Localizer</u> (ST)	<u>Street Name</u> (TT)	<u>Localizer</u> (TT)
Queen’s Road Central	Central	皇后大道中	中
Queen’s Road East	East	皇后大道東	東
Queen’s Road West	West	皇后大道西	西

The SL localizers have been translated by meaning. The location of the localizers in the TT parallels that in the ST, representing a good translation practice because it achieves equivalence in the positioning of the localizers. Furthermore, the localizers are generic terms and therefore applying meaning translation is appropriate.

Hong Kong Street Names – Street Classifier Translation													
Classifier in Chi --->	路	公路	道	大道	繞道	街	大街	里	圍	台/臺	徑	巷	坊
(Literal Meaning of	(Road)	(Highway)	(Road)	(Main Rd. /	(Bypass)	(Street)	(Main St. /	(Lane /	(Circuit /	(Terrace)	(Path /	(Lane /	(Square)
Classifier in Chinese)				Avenue)			Avenue)	Alley)	Close)		Walk)	Alley)	
Classifier in Eng:													
Alley	v Austin Avenue (柯士甸路)					x	< Tsz Mi Alley (紫薇街)						
Avenue	x		X	< Peace Avenue (太平道)		x	< Dyer Avenue (戴亞街)						
Bypass		Kwun Tong Bypass (觀塘繞道) >			x								
Circuit						x	< Braga Circuit (布力架街)		x	< Chi Fuk Circuit (置福圍)			
Close									x	< Hing Tin Close (慶田圍)			
Court									x	< Tak Ching Court (德政圍)			
Crescent	v Cotton Tree Drive (紅棉路)									Jardine's Crescent (渣甸坊)>		x	
Drive	x		X	< University Drive (大學道)									
Highway		x		< Yuen Long Highway (元朗公路)									
Lane								x	< Cross Lane (交加里)		x	< Seahorse Lane (海馬徑)	
Main Road				x	< Aberdeen Main Road (香港仔大道)								
Main Street							x	< Stanley Main Street (赤柱大街)					
Path	x	< Li Po Lung Path (李寶龍路)				x	< Sha Tsui Path (沙咀街)				x	< Hau Yuen Path (校園徑)	
Pathway	v Tai Po Road (大埔路)		v Cairn Road (堅道)							Circular Pathway 弓弦巷) >		x	
Road	x	x	X	x	< Queen's Road C (皇后大道中)								
Row		^ Castle Peak Road (青山公路)				x	< Lower Lascar Row (摩羅下街)		x	< Minden Row (緬甸臺)			
Square										Yue Man Square (裕民坊) >		x	
Strand						x	< Bonham Strand W (文咸西街)						
Street						x	< Eastern Street (東邊街)						
Terrace							Ying Wa Terrace (英華臺) >		x	< Yu On Terrace (遇安台)			
Walk										x	< Lambeth Walk (琳寶徑)		

Table 4-3 Hong Kong Street Names – Translation of Street Classifiers between English and Chinese  
(Street names in bold print represent possible mistranslated street classifiers)

#### 4.5.2 Localizers – Different Streets

It is not uncommon to find streets with similar names in the same area, which are only distinguished by a localizer in the name. Unlike the streets discussed in Section 4.5.1, which are different sections of the same street, the streets described in this section are different streets in the same neighbourhood.

<u>Street Name</u> (ST)	<u>Localizer</u> (ST)	<u>Street Name</u> (TT)	<u>Localizer</u> (TT)
健康中街	中	Healthy Street Central	Central
健康東街	東	Healthy Street East	East
健康西街	西	Healthy Street West	West

These three streets are parallel to each other. The localizers in the ST are positioned before the street classifier, signifying they are different streets and not sections of the same street. However, the localizers in the TT are positioned at the end of the street name, and hence fail to achieve equivalence. Furthermore, the end position misrepresents the streets as different sections of the same street. Instead of “Healthy Street East”, it would be better to say “East (or Eastern) Healthy Street”.

#### 4.6 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, findings from the case study have been presented and analysed. The database has been found to be objective and representative of the data population.

The case study has identified five translation methods for street names. These include translation by sound, meaning, or a combination of both. Sound translation is the most frequently used method for translating the name component of street names. Street classifiers are translated by meaning. These findings are found to be in line with the translation approaches proposed among the Chinese corpus of literature described in Chapter 2. In terms of the western translation theories, particularly the

concept of equivalence, the identified translation methods are found to be capable of achieving different levels of equivalence although each method has its own weaknesses.

The case study also found that some street names contain directional localizers. These are usually translated by meaning. Hence, only partial equivalence has been achieved. It has also been found that small linguistic changes have been made in rendering translation of localizers. Finally, the case study has revealed some major issues encountered when translating street names.

Chapter 5 will discuss the implications of the above findings in detail.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

It has been shown in this thesis that each street name contains a “name” component and a street classifier. Some street names also contain a localizer (directional reference).

The case study has found that five methods have been employed in translating the name component of street names. These methods are: sound translation, meaning translation, partial sound and partial meaning translation, perfect sound and meaning translation, and non-sound and meaning translation. Furthermore, the findings have suggested that sound translation is the most frequently used strategy (83% of the database) regardless of the direction of translation between English and Chinese. The next most common strategy is meaning translation (11%). Street classifiers are found to be translated by meaning most of the time, as is the usual practice for generic terms. On rare occasions, sound translation has been applied to classifiers (e.g. “坊” is transliterated into “Fong” instead of “Square”).

In general, the identified translation methods for street names, with the exception of non-sound and meaning translation, are found to be in line with the mainstream translation theories and strategies discussed in Chapter 2. In particular, these methods have echoed the translation approaches proposed in the literature in the Chinese corpus described in Section 2.4.2. The findings have also revealed that western mainstream translation theories such as the seminal translation concept of “equivalence” are generally applicable to street name translation. The linguistic approach, in particular where word order changes are involved, is more applicable to translating localizers because inaccurate positioning of localizers may cause a shift of meaning in the street name. It is also found that the non-sound and meaning translation method has more relevance to the historical and/or socio-cultural background of Hong Kong and does not involve general translation theories.

Sound translation attempts to create phonological equivalence; meaning translation seeks to deliver semantic equivalence; partial sound and meaning translation is

intended to provide equivalence partly in phonology and partly in semantics. However, it is found that each of these methods presents translation issues which blemish their respective effectiveness, thus creating a dilemma.

Sound translation can create phonological resemblance but fails to achieve semantic equivalence, resulting in the loss of historical or other semantic content embodied in the ST (e.g. “西洋菜街” – the semantic content of watercress is lost in the TT, “Sai Yeung Choi Street”). Sound translation is capable of achieving full equivalence where there is no semantic content in the ST (e.g. “Kadoorie Road”). Similarly, meaning translation is capable of achieving semantic equivalence but does not deliver phonological equivalence, compromising effectiveness in communication between people who are not conversant with each other’s language (e.g. “銀泉徑” (romanized as “ngan-chuen-g’eng”) has no resemblance in sound with its TT “Silver Stream Path”). The “middle-of-the-road” method, partial sound and partial meaning translation does not remedy the weaknesses caused by partial equivalence (e.g. “黃泥涌峽道” / “Wong Nai Chung Gap Road”).

Perfect sound and meaning translation is the ideal solution to this dilemma because full equivalence in phonology and semantics is achieved (e.g. “Link Road” / “連道”). However, some of these “perfect” translation examples may face romanization issues (e.g. Should “北京道” be “Peking Road” or “Beijing Road”?).

The findings have also uncovered instances of inconsistencies regarding Romanization (e.g. “安徽街” has been transliterated into “Anhui Street” using *Hanyu Pinyin* instead of “On Fai Street” (Cantonese romanization). The absence of an official Cantonese romanization system in Hong Kong has given rise to inconsistency in Chinese-English Romanization. (e.g. “利” has been romanized into Lee, Li and Lei). Inconsistencies have also been found in English-Chinese street names (e.g. “Sutherland” Avenue / Street have been transliterated into “新達蘭路” and “修打蘭

街” respectively where totally different Chinese characters were used. Translation issues in relation to street classifiers have also been encountered. In some instances, “街” has been inaccurately translated as “Alley” and “Path” instead of “Street”; “Crescent” has been mistranslated as “坊” (literally, Square).

The case study has shown that sound translation accounts for 83% of the database. This finding implies a strong tendency to adopt transliteration. Possible reasons may include simplicity and a lack of language proficiency on the part of Chinese officials in the early days of Hong Kong’s colonial history. The Land’s Department’s current general practice, which favours rendering street names firstly in Chinese and adopting the anglicized versions of the Chinese street names rather than translating by meaning, has also contributed to the dominance of sound translation among all translation methods.

It has been found that the ideal method for translating street names is perfect sound and meaning translation. However, this only accounts for a fraction (1.5%) of the entire database. While it is acknowledged that the main difficulty in achieving full equivalence in sound and meaning stems from the language differences between English and Chinese, it is believed the low percentage is partly due to lack of sufficient attention to historical and socio-cultural content and other intended meaning of the ST, language proficiency issues and the absence of an official Cantonese romanization system in Hong Kong. The same factors have also led to the occurrence of inconsistency, inaccuracy and erroneous translation.

As described in Chapter 2, after in-depth searches, investigation and review of corpora of translation literature, it has been established that there is a gap in the existing translation literature on short texts, including street names and other types of proper names. This is an important finding and thus this thesis represents a valuable contribution to the field of translation studies. This research has not only shown that there is a paucity of translation literature on short texts, but has also highlighted the need for further academic efforts to be channelled to this area of study in the future. Furthermore, this research paper has helped fill the gap by way of conducting a case

study on the translation of street names in Hong Kong. The findings from the case study have contributed to the translation field a better and fuller understanding of how street names have been translated, and highlight the major translation issues encountered

This paper, however, has certain limitations. Firstly, the source of data may be considered dated. However, full justifications have been made in Chapter 3 to support the argument that the data source is both appropriate and reliable. The availability of a newer edition (e.g. 2010 edition) of the *Hong Kong Directory* would only mean that the database could include more “new” streets built in recent years. Secondly, the database represents approximately 20% of the entire data population. As is true for all statistics, the larger the sample, the more representative it is of the data population. Thirdly, since there are no official records showing and confirming the ST of each of the streets in Hong Kong, the case study involved a degree of subjectivity in terms of determining the ST of some of the streets in the database. To avoid or remove this subjectivity would require extensive and detailed research through relevant sources such as Government gazettes and other historical papers well beyond the timeframe allowed for this project.

It is hoped that the major issues identified in this paper, together with the limitations discussed above, will provide some direction and inspirations for future studies in this area.

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## **APPENDIX 1-1**

### **Naming of Streets in Hong Kong – Official Procedures**

Street naming in Hong Kong is governed by Part XA (sections 111A-D) of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance. The naming procedures under the Ordinance are as follows:

- The public, organizations, government departments (regarding public streets) and land owners (regarding private streets) may propose to the Director of Lands Department a name for an unnamed street, or a change to the name of a named street.
- In the case of a proposed name for an unnamed street, the proposal will be put up for public consultation of 30 days through relevant District Offices. These government bodies will solicit views and suggestions from local groups and individuals, including relevant Area Committees, Mutual Aid Committees, Owners' Incorporations, and village representatives and Rural Committees if the case involves streets within village areas.
- If there is no objection from the public, and after consultation with related government departments including the Official Languages Division of the Civil Service Bureau, the proposed name will be declared in the Gazette and the formality is complete.
- In the case of a proposal to change an existing street name, the proposal will be put in the Gazette for 30 days, and notices in both Chinese and English will be posted in prominent places in or near the street concerned. If there is no objection from the public, the proposal for a street name change will be put in the Gazette a second time to complete the formalities.

## APPENDIX 1-2

### Cantonese Romanization Systems in Hong Kong

The Linguistic Society of Hong Kong has proposed the Jyutping (粵拼, or literally, Cantonese *Pinyin*) system (Linguistic Society of Hong Kong, 2010). The Education and Manpower Bureau of Hong Kong government has approved the use of Standard Cantonese *Pinyin* system (in Chinese, “常用字廣州話讀音表” or “教院式 拼音方案”) by primary and secondary schools. Other commonly used Cantonese romanization systems in Hong Kong include the S.L. Wong Phonetic and Romanisation systems (which were developed based on International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) symbols), Cantonese Yale romanization system, Sidney Lau romanization system, and Meyer-Wempe romanization system.

## APPENDIX 4.3.2-1

### Translation by Sound and Meaning – further examples

The following are some more examples of sound and meaning translation:

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Name Component</u>		<u>Street Classifier</u>
	<u>Name (Part 1)</u> (Place/Personal name) Translation by sound	<u>Name (part 2)</u> (generic term) Translation by meaning	
ST3a: 灣仔峽道	<b>灣仔</b> (place name)	<b>峽</b>	<b>道</b>
TT3a: Wan Chai Gap Rd	<b>Wan Chai</b>	<b>Gap</b>	Road
ST3b: 石壁水塘路	<b>石壁</b> (place name)	<b>水塘</b>	<b>路</b>
TT3b: Shek Pik Reservoir Road	<b>Shek Pik</b>	<b>Reservoir</b>	Road
ST3c: Margaret Hospital Road	<b>Margaret</b>	<b>Hospital</b>	Road
TT3c: 瑪嘉烈醫院道	<b>瑪嘉烈</b> (personal name)	<b>醫院</b>	<b>道</b>

The above examples have demonstrated that equivalence has been achieved to a great extent by applying both sound and meaning translation. The first part of the street names represent “names” that have no connotation, and therefore transliteration has achieved full equivalence. The remaining imperfection relates to the meaning translation of the generic part of the names because of the absence of sound equivalence. Since English and Chinese are not from the same language family, perfect sound and meaning translation would be rare. Yim (2008) pointed out a good example of perfect translation:

## APPENDIX 4.3.2-2

### Examples of transliterated street names - historical content in the SL name is lost

The names of the following streets in the famous Mongkok area in Hong Kong have been transliterated. TL readers who are interested in finding out more about Hong Kong's history would benefit from the semantic translation of these street names instead of trying to make sense from the romanized forms:

<u>Street names (ST)</u>	<u>Street Name (TT)</u> (transliterated)	<u>Alternate Street Name</u> (translation by meaning)
西洋菜街	Sai Yeung Choi Street	Watercress Street
通菜街	Tung Choi Street	Water Spinach Street
洗衣街	Sai Yee Street	Laundry Street
染布房街	Yim Po Fong Street	Dyehouse Street
白布街	Pak Po Street	White Cloth Street
黑布街	Hak Po Street	Black Cloth Street

The “alternate” street names would provide traces of interesting history to the TL readers. The areas where Sai Yeung Choi Street and Tung Choi Street are located used to be farmland that grew watercress and water spinach. Sai Yee Street used to be an area where there was a little stream providing water for women who earned a living by doing laundry work for people. Yim Po Fong Street, Pak Po Street and Hak Po Street are located in areas where there was a dyehouse and a high concentration of fabric dyeing businesses, particularly those focusing on producing white and black coloured fabrics.

### APPENDIX 4.3.2-3

#### Examples of Perfect Sound and Meaning Translation – romanization issues

The TT of the examples shows the anglicized names of the Chinese cities whereas the alternative street names show the cities' name in *Hanyu Pinyin*. These cities are more commonly known by the *Pinyin* version in the modern days.

<u>Street names (ST)</u> (with Cantonese romanization)	<u>Street Name (TT)</u> (anglicized)	<u>Alternate Street Name</u> (transliterated: <i>Hanyu Pinyin</i> )
廣東道 (guong-dong-doe)	Canton Road	Guangdong Road
南京街 (narm-g'ing-guy)	Nanking Street	Nanjing Street
甘肅街 (gum-soak-guy)	Kansu Street	Gansu Street
山東街 (sarn-dong-guy)	Shantung Street	Shandong Street

## APPENDIX 4.4-1

### Street Classifiers - Translation by Sound (rare cases)

In the rare cases where street classifiers in Hong Kong are translated by sound, Cantonese romanization is used. Examples are shown below. Discussion in this section focuses on street classifiers only.

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Street classifier</u>
ST 1: 蘭桂坊	坊 (literally, “square”)
TT 1: Lan Kwai Fong	Fong
ST 2: 九華徑	徑 (literally, “path”)
TT 2: Kau Wa Keng	Keng
ST 3: 仁宇圍	圍 (literally, “circuit”)
TT 3: Yan Yue Wai	Wai

Classifiers, “坊”, “徑” and “圍” are translated by sound into Fong, Keng and Wei respectively. In example (2), “徑” would be more accurately transliterated into “Geng” instead of “Keng” because the Cantonese sound of “徑” is not aspirated whereas “K” is an aspirated consonant in “Keng”.

## APPENDIX 4.4-2

### Street Classifiers – further examples

In addition to the street classifiers shown in Table 4.3, more classifiers (in bold print) have been identified from the *Hong Kong Directory* (1998). Examples of these classifiers are shown below.

<u>Street Classifier</u>		<u>Street Name examples</u>	<u>Street Name examples</u>
(English)	(Chinese)	(English)	(Chinese)
<b>Approach</b>	道	Railway Approach	順風道 ST
<b>Bazaar</b>	街	Jardine's Bazaar ST	渣甸街
<b>Boulevard</b>	大道	Royal Palms Boulevard	加州豪園大道 ST
<b>Corridor</b>	走廊	Island Eastern Corridor	東區走廊 ST
<b>Embankment</b>	堤	West Embankment	西堤 ST
<b>Expressway</b>	快速公路	West Kowloon Expressway	西九龍快速公路 ST
<b>Quadrant</b>	街	Rutland Quadrant ST	律倫街
<b>Ride</b>	馳馬徑	Lady Clementi's Ride ST	金夫人馳馬徑
<b>Rise</b>	道	King's Park Rise ST	京士柏道

### APPENDIX 4.4-3

#### List of street classifiers identified from the database and *Hong Kong Directory* (1998)

<u>Street classifier (English)</u>	<u>Corresponding expression (Chinese)</u>
Alley	街
Avenue	路、道、街
Bazaar	街
Bypass	繞道
Circuit	街、圍
Close	圍
Court	圍
Crescent	坊
Drive	路道
Highway	公路
Lane	里、徑
Main Road	大道
Main Street	大街
Path	路、街、徑
Pathway	巷
Quadrant	街
Ride	馳馬徑
Rise	道
Road	路、公路、道、大道
Row	街、臺
Square	坊
Strand	街
Street	街
Terrace	臺、台
Walk	徑
<u>Street classifier (Chinese)</u>	<u>Corresponding expression (English)</u>
路	Avenue, Drive, Path, Road
公路	Highway, Road
道	Avenue, Drive, Road, Approach
大道	Main Road, Road, Boulevard
繞道	Bypass
街	Alley, Avenue, Circuit, Path, Row, Strand, Street

大街	Main Street
里	Lane
圍	Circuit, Close, Court
臺/台	Row, Terrace
徑	Lane, Path, Walk, “Keng”
巷	Pathway
坊	Crescent, Square, “Fong”
走廊	Corridor
堤	Embankment
快速公路	Expressway

## APPENDIX 4.4-4

### Street Classifiers – examples of mistranslation

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Street classifier</u>
ST 1: 紫薇街	街 (literally, “street”)
TT 1: Tsi Mi Alley	Alley
ST 2: Jardine’s Crescent	Crescent
TT 2: 渣甸坊	坊 (literally, “square”)
ST 3: 沙咀街	街 (literally, “street”)
TT 3: Sha Tsui Path	Path
ST 4: 李寶龍路	路 (literally, “road”)
TT 4: Li Po Lung Path	Path
ST 5: Braga Circuit	Circuit
TT 5: 布力架街	街 (literally, “street”)

It is assumed that the ST of street classifiers appropriately reflects features of the streets. In examples (1), the ST, “街” (literally, “street”), has been translated into “Alley”. This does not deliver equivalence in meaning because “Alley” indicates a narrow passageway whereas “街” in the SL implies a thoroughfare. Therefore, this represents a mistranslation. “Street” would be a more correct translation for “街”. Similarly, in example (2), the ST “Crescent” has been mistranslated into “坊”

(literally, Square). A crescent implies a curve-shaped object. “圓” would be a more correct translation. The other examples can be analysed in a similar way.

## APPENDIX 4.4-5

### Examples of street names with no street classifiers

Some streets in Hong Kong have no street classifier. Examples include “Queensway”, “Smithfield”, and “Broadway”.

<u>Street name</u>	<u>Street classifier</u>
ST 6: Queensway	Nil
TT 6: 金鐘道	道 (literally, “road”)
ST 7: Smithfield	Nil
TT 7: 士美非路	路 (literally, “road”)
ST 8: Broadway	Nil
TT 8: 百老匯街	街 (literally, “street”)

The above are main streets in the areas of Admiralty, Kennedy Town and Mei Foo in Hong Kong. In fact, the name of a thoroughfare does not necessarily have to end with the word “street”. It has been mentioned in Chapter 2 that “street” is defined under Section 3 of the Interpretation and General Clauses Ordinance of Hong Kong to mean “any highway, street, road, bridge, thorough-fare, parade, square, court, alley, lane, bridle-way, footway, passage or tunnel” (Hong Kong Legal Information Institute, 2010). Therefore, it is justified for these streets not to have classifiers in the ST. Furthermore, each of the three street names - *Queensway*, *Smithfield* and *Broadway* - contains the morphemes “-way” or “-field”, which denotes a road, a track or a path. As such, these street names, in their English forms, do not need classifiers. However, the translated names in Chinese contain classifiers, “道”, “路” and “街” (literally, “road” and “street”). Such addition is considered appropriate because these classifiers

reflect the fact that these streets are thoroughfares in the areas where the streets are located and the expressions conform to the usual practice in the Chinese language.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Database – Excel Spreadsheet**