

# การศึกษาการแปลชื่อสถานที่ในจังหวัดเชียงรายเป็นภาษาจีน

## A Study on the Chinese Translation of Place Names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand

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### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยมีวัตถุประสงค์ ดังนี้ 1) เพื่อศึกษาวิธีการแปลชื่อสถานที่ในจังหวัดเชียงรายเป็นภาษาจีน 2) เพื่อวิเคราะห์ปัญหาการแปลชื่อสถานที่ในจังหวัดเชียงรายเป็นภาษาจีน และ 3) เพื่อเสนอแนะแนวทางการสอนแปลชื่อสถานที่ภาษาจีนในหลักสูตรการแปลภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาจีน กลุ่มตัวอย่างที่ใช้ในการวิจัย ได้แก่ ชื่อสถานที่ในจังหวัดเชียงรายที่ปรากฏตามป้ายสาธารณะต่าง ๆ จำนวน 191 ป้าย วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติค่าเฉลี่ยและพรรณนาวิเคราะห์ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า วิธีการแปลชื่อสถานที่ในจังหวัดเชียงรายเป็นภาษาจีนที่พบบ่อยที่สุด คือ วิธีการแปลแบบถอดเสียง จำนวนร้อยละ 54.79 รองลงมา คือ การแปลตามตัวอักษร ร้อยละ 13.30 การแปลความหมาย ร้อยละ 12.77 การแปลถอดเสียงผสมการแปลความหมาย ร้อยละ 12.23 การแปลตามความนิยม ร้อยละ 1.06 และกลวิธีอื่น ๆ ร้อยละ 5.85 ในการวิเคราะห์ปัญหาการแปลชื่อสถานที่ในจังหวัดเชียงรายเป็นภาษาจีน พบว่า ปัญหาที่พบมากที่สุด ได้แก่ ปัญหาการแปลโดยใช้ภาษาไม่เหมาะสม ร้อยละ 54.81 การแปลไม่สอดคล้องกับข้อความภาษาไทย ร้อยละ 20.74 การแปลที่ไม่เป็นมาตรฐานเดียวกัน ร้อยละ 17.78% และปัญหาอื่น ๆ ร้อยละ 6.67 ข้อเสนอแนะในการจัดการเรียนการสอนวิชาการแปลภาษาจีน คือ 1) ควรมีการรวบรวมการแปลชื่อสถานที่ที่เป็นภาษาจีนไว้ในตำราการแปลภาษาไทย-จีนให้ครอบคลุม และ 2) ในรายวิชาการแปลควรเปิดโอกาสให้ผู้เรียนมีการฝึกปฏิบัติด้านการแปลให้มากยิ่งขึ้น งานวิจัยนี้สามารถใช้เป็นข้อมูลอ้างอิงสำหรับการรวมและเสนอเป็นแนวทางในการสร้างมาตรฐานการแปลชื่อสถานที่ในจังหวัดเชียงรายเป็นภาษาจีน

**คำสำคัญ:** ชื่อสถานที่ในจังหวัดเชียงราย การแปลชื่อสถานที่เป็นภาษาจีน

### Abstract

The purposes of the study are: 1) to examine the methods of the Chinese translation of Thai place names in Chiang Rai Province, 2) to analyze the problems in the

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Chinese translation of Thai place names in Chiang Rai Province, and 3) to make suggestions for teaching Chinese translation of place names in Thai-Chinese translation courses. The samples used in the research were 191 place names in Chiang Rai Province that appeared in various public signs. Data were analyzed by using frequency, percentage, and descriptive analysis. The results revealed that, the most frequently used Chinese translation method is the phonetic translation (54.79%), followed by literal translation (13.30%), free translation (12.77%), mixed phonetic and free translation (12.23%), and conventional translation (1.06%), as well as 5.85% of the unidentified translation methods. From the inductive analysis of problems in the Chinese translation of Thai place names in Chiang Rai, four main problems in the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand are found. The inconsistent Chinese translation is mostly found (54.81%), while the inappropriate application of Chinese translation methods (20.74%), the inconsistent translation of traditional and simplified Chinese characters (17.78%), and other Chinese translation errors (6.67%) are respectively found. Recommendations for the teaching Chinese translation of place names in Thai-Chinese translation courses are: 1) Incorporating Chinese translation of place names into Thai-Chinese translation textbooks, and 2) Place name translation teaching should give more emphasis to practice. In summary, the author intends to contribute a reference for the unification and standardization of Chinese translations of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand.

**Keywords:** Place names in Chiang Rai Province, the Chinese translation of place names

## Introduction

According to Duan (2019, p. 1), being a social phenomenon, place names contains a wealth of historical and cultural connotations, and studying the place names of a country or nation can shed light on the history, culture, language habits, and customs and environmental changes of that nation. Chiang Rai is one of the important tourist cities in northern Thailand. According to the Tourism Authority of Thailand's 2019 data on the ranking of foreign tourists traveling to Thailand, it was found that the number of Chinese topped the list at 142,183 arriving from Chiang Rai International Airport, while the number of Chinese topped the list at 255,163 arriving from Chiang Saen, and the number of Chinese arrivals from Chiang Khong Bridge was 11,964.

Nevertheless, there have been inconsistencies and irregularities concerning the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai, for example, "แม่สาย" is translated as "美塞",

“美赛” or “湄赛”, “แม่จัน” is translated as “湄占” or “篋真”, “บ้านดำ” is translated as “黑庙” or “黑屋” etc . The Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai is crucial for Chinese tourists, however, irregular and inconsistent Chinese translation of place names can confuse Chinese tourists.

Upon reviewing extensive literature, the author has discovered that Thai-Chinese translation studies primarily emphasize the translation of various literary forms, including syntax, grammar, and parts of speech, with little involvement in the Chinese translation of place names. For example, Cai (2013, p. 35) explored the characteristics and translation of economic and trade Thai vocabulary. Bi and Liu (2017, p. 76) studied Thai proverbs and put forward a few thoughts on Thai-Chinese translation. Sun (2018, p. 44) studied the translation practice and translation report on the Thai short story "Imaginary Line" (excerpt), etc. On the other hand, among the limited studies on the Chinese translation of place names, no discussion has been conducted on the solutions to the existing issues in the Chinese translation of such names. For example, Wang (2017, p.59) and Lin (2016, p. 83) mainly analyzed the Chinese translation methods of Thai place names and did not propose corresponding solutions. As a result, the author has researched by collecting 191 public signs of the Chinese translation of place names of Chiang Rai Province in Thailand. Through this study, the author intends to contribute a reference for the unification and standardization of Chinese translations of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand, thereby facilitating the dissemination of Chiang Rai's distinctive culture and the development of the tourism industry.

## Research Objectives

1. To examine the Chinese translation methods of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand.
2. To analyze the problems in the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand.
3. To propose suggestions for the Chinese teaching of place names in Thai-Chinese translation courses.

## Research Questions

1. What methods have been used for the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand?
2. What are the problems in the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai

Province, Thailand?

3. What are the suggestions for teaching the Chinese language of place names in Thai-Chinese translation courses?

## Research Scope

The scope of this study consists of the Chinese translation of tourist attraction names and major road names in Chiang Rai Province of Thailand, which are collectively referred to in this paper as “place names of Chiang Rai Province, Thailand”. The author conducted a survey of Chinese people who have been to Chiang Rai and found that everyone first came into contact with tourist place names and road names, and was deeply impressed by the problems in the Chinese translation of these place names.

Therefore, the author collected a total of 191 Chinese translations of tourist attraction names and road names from the public signs in Chiang Rai Province for the study of this article after field investigations and taking photographs.

## Literature Review

Lin (2016, p. 83) stated in her article *Research on Chinese Place Names in Bangkok, Thailand* that phonetic translation, free translation, mixed phonetic and free translation are the foundations of the Chinese translation of Thai place names. In her methods classification of Chinese place names in Bangkok, she adopted five categories: phonetic translation, free translation, mixed phonetic and free translation, self-derived and unidentified place names. Judging from her classification results, place names are most frequently translated by phonetic translation method, and place names derived from mixed phonetic and free translation method are the most distinctive.

Wang (2017, p. 59) examined the translation of 77 Thai provincial names into Chinese and indicated that Thai provincial names are usually translated by using four methods: phonetic translation, free translation, mixed phonetic translation and free translations, and conventional translation, with the phonetic translation method being the most utilized. She revealed that there are inconsistencies in the Thai-Chinese translations of provincial names, accounting for 48.05% of the total. Specifically, it included the cases where the pronunciation was the same but with different Chinese characters, and the pronunciation was different with different Chinese characters, accounting for 35.14% and 64.86% respectively. Among them, the case where the pronunciation was the same but the Chinese characters used were different, which means that the Chinese translation

results were different by using the phonetic translation method.

Gao and Li (2009, p. 129) used four methods: phonetic translation, free translation, mixed phonetic and free translation, and conventional translation to translate Thai place names and proper nouns into Chinese.

Li (2000, p. 94) used “faithfulness, expressiveness, and elegance” as the standard, combined with the characteristics of Chinese characters “sound, meaning, and form” to analyze the problems in Thai-Chinese translation. Among them, it is especially emphasized that there are too many phonetic translations in Thai-Chinese translation, and the problem of the phonetic translation does not consider the “elegance” of Chinese characters.

In summary, in addition to phonetic translation, free translation, conventional translation, and mixed phonetic and free translation, the author thinks literal translation should be added.

## Conceptual Framework

This study integrated the principles and methods of the Chinese translation of place names. The China Encyclopedia Geography Editor Committee (1990, p. 37) has proposed the following principles for the translation of foreign language place names are: 1) the principle of Mandarin Chinese and simplified Chinese characters, 2) the principle of name from the master, and 3) the principle of the convention. Then, combining phonetic translation of Li (2000, p. 94), free translation, mixed phonetic and free translation, and conventional translation Gao and Li (2009, p. 129); Lin (2016, p. 83); Wang (2017, p. 59). In short, the methods of the Chinese translation of Thai place names used in this research are: 1) phonetic translation, 2) literal translation, 3) free translation, 4) mixed phonetic and free translation, and 5) conventional translation.

Several methods of the Chinese translation of Thai place names are explained below: 1) The phonetic translation method is based on the pronunciation of Thai place names, and the morphemes whose pronunciation is the same as or close to that of Thai are selected from Chinese, such as เชียงของ is translated into “Qing Kong (清孔)”. 2) The literal translation method is to directly translate the content and form of Thai place names into Chinese, such as สามเหลี่ยมทองคำ literally translated as "Golden Triangle (金三角)". 3) Free translation is a translation method that preserves the original content, but does not maintain the original form. For example, วัดร่องเสือเต้น is translated into "Blue Temple (蓝庙)". 4) The mixed phonetic and free translation method is a combination of phonetic translation and free translation, such as ไร่ชาฉุยฟง, which is translated as "Cuifeng Tea

Garden (翠峰茶园)", where 茶园 is the free translation of "ไร่ชา", 翠峰 is the transliteration of ฉุยฟ่ง. 5) The conventional translation method is based on the characteristics or special circumstances of the place names, and some translation names are formed according to people's agreement. After a period of practice and use, they have been unanimously recognized by people, and are followed and used by everyone, and are fixed down. For example, when แม่น้ำเจ้าพระยา was first translated into Chinese, because the Thai name was particularly complicated and difficult to pronounce, Chinese only remembered แม่น้ำ, so the phonetic translation was "Mei Nan (湄南)". Although in terms of translation theory or methodology is unreasonable, but because it has been unanimously recognized by people and is followed and used by everyone, the translation of แม่น้ำเจ้าพระยา as "Mei Nan River (湄南河)" will not be changed.

## Research Methodology

### Population and Samples

The fieldwork revealed that the most representative Chinese translations of place names in Chiang Rai are mainly the Chinese translations of tourist attraction names and road names. Therefore, this paper adopts a subjective sampling method to collect research subjects to study the Chinese translations of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand.

The author collected 191 examples of Chinese translations of tourist attraction names and road names from the public signs in Chiang Rai Province by the field survey and taking photographs. 112 examples of typical Chinese translated name texts of tourist attractions in Chiang Rai province and 79 cases of Chinese-translated road name signs were summarized and provided with statistical information for this study.

To sum up, after summarizing and counting the Chinese translations of place names collected in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand. This paper conducts a relevant study with 191 cases of Chinese translations of place names.

### Data Analysis and interpretation

The percentage formula used by the author in classifying the methods and statistical problems of the Chinese translation of place names are as follows:

$$\sum (X) = \frac{N}{N_A} \times 100\%$$

The article analyzes the data of 191 cases with the percentage formula. On the one hand, the percentage can clearly show the proportion of certain translation

methods, such as 103 cases using phonetic translation, accounting for 54.79% of the total 191 cases. On the other hand, the percentages can clearly show the seriousness of the problems of certain kinds of translation, such as 74 cases of inconsistent Chinese translation results, accounting for 54.81%.

## Research Results

The research results consist of three parts: Chinese translation methods, problems of the Chinese translation of Thai place names in Chiang Rai, and suggestions for teaching Chinese translation of place names in Thai-Chinese translation courses.

### 1. Analysis of the Chinese translation methods of place names in Chiang Rai.

The author categorizes the 191 cases of place names into five classifications: phonetic translation, literal translation, free translation, mixed phonetic and free translation, and conventional translation. In the case that none of the above five translation methods are applicable, it is classified as "unidentified". The following table presents the results:

**Table 1** Statistical table of classification of Chinese translation methods of place names

Chinese Translation Methods	Phonetic Translation	Literal Translation	Free Translation	Mixed Phonetic & Free Translation	Conventional Translation	Unidentified
Numbers	103	25	24	23	2	11
Percentage	54.79%	13.30%	12.77%	12.23%	1.06%	5.85%

As shown in Table 1 above, phonetic translation accounts for the largest number of Chinese translation with 103 names (54.79%), followed by literal translation of 25 names (13.30%), free translation of 24 names (12.77%), mixed phonetic and free translation of 23 names (12.23%), as well as conventional translation of 23 names (12.23%). Additionally, there are 11 unidentified Chinese translation cases, representing 5.85% of the total.

### 2. Problems in the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai.

From the 191 place names, there are 135 place names have problems in Chinese translation. The proportion of each problem is illustrated in the following table:

**Table 2** Problems and percentages in the Chinese translation of place names

Problems	Inconsistent Chinese Translation	Inappropriate Application of Chinese Translation Methods	Inconsistent Translation of Traditional & Simplified Chinese Characters	Other Chinese Translation Errors
Numbers	74	28	24	9
Percentage	54.81%	20.74%	17.78%	6.67%

As can be seen from Table 2, the inconsistent Chinese translation of place names (54.81%) represents the most serious issue, followed by inappropriate application of Chinese translation method (20.74%), inconsistent translation of traditional and simplified Chinese characters (17.78%), and the last is other Chinese translation errors (6.67%).

### 2.1 Inconsistent Chinese translation of place names

There are two types of inconsistencies regarding the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand. The first type is the same Chinese translation method with different results, and the second type is different Chinese translation methods with different results.

Table 3 shows the frequency and percentage of the same Chinese translation method with different results. From the 74 place names, there are 58 place names with the same Chinese translation method with different results.

**Table 3** The percentage of the place name with the same Chinese translation method with different results

Problems	Phonetic translation	Literal Translation	Free Translation	Mixed Phonetic and Free Translation
Numbers	41	2	6	9
Percentage	70.69%	3.45%	10.34%	15.52%

According to table 3, there are four cases where the same Chinese translation method with different results: phonetic translation accounts for the largest number of Chinese translation with 41 names (70.69%), followed by mixed phonetic translation and free translation of 9 names (15.52%), free translation of 6 names (10.34%), literal translation of 2 names (3.45%).

When analyzing the data, 1) most of the phonetic translation method is the same but the Chinese translation results are different, accounted for 70.69%. Since there are many homophones or near-phonetic characters in Chinese, only the pronunciation is

taken during phonetic translation, and there is no uniform standard when using characters, so there will be the phenomenon of the same phonetic translation method but different results. For examples, (อำเภอ) เวียงชัย is translated as “Yang Cai (County), 央猜(县)” and “Yuan Cai (County), 渊猜(县)”, etc. 2) Different Chinese translation results for the same literal translation method applied, accounted for 3.45%. The place names “Jade Buddha (Temple), 玉佛(寺)” and “Chiang Rai Jade Buddha (Temple), 清莱玉佛(寺)” are both the literal translation of the Thai place name (วัด) พระแก้ว, differing only in adding the regional attribute of "Chiang Rai" or not. As there is another Jade Buddha Temple in Bangkok, Thailand, it would be better to add it for the sake of differentiation in expression. 3) The same free translation method gives different translation results, accounted for 10.34%, such as the free translation of the place name (วัด) ร่องเสือเต้น into “Chiang Rai Blue (Temple), 清莱蓝(庙)” and “Blue (Temple), 蓝(庙)”, as there is no need to specifically distinguish between regional attributes, which can be translated as "Blue (Temple)" will do. 4) The mixed phonetic and free translations method is the same but the Chinese translation results are different, accounted for 15.52%. That can be evident in the case of ไร่ชาฉุยฟง being translated as “Cui Feng Tea Garden, 翠峰茶园” and “Cui Feng Tea Mountain, 翠峰茶山”.

Table 4 shows the frequency and percentage of the different Chinese translation methods with different results. From the 74 place names, there are 16 place names with different Chinese translation methods with different results.

**Table 4** The percentage of the place names with the different Chinese translation methods with different results

Problems	Phonetic translation/ Literal Translation	Phonetic translation/ Free Translation	Literal Translation/ Free Translation
Numbers	6	4	6
Percentage	37.5%	25%	37.5%

From Table 4, among the different Chinese translation methods with different results, there are relatively few instances compared to the same Chinese translation method with different results. The 6 names or 37.5% are translated by the phonetic translation and literal translation methods, 6 names or 37.5% are translated by free translation and literal translation methods, followed by phonetic translation and free translation methods of 4 names (25%).

When analyzing the data, it was found that: 1) the two different methods of

phonetic translation and literal translation lead to 37.5% variation in the Chinese translation results. One example can be found by the phonetic translation of the place name บ้านใหม่, which can be associated with purchasing or buying. In fact, the literal translation of "New Stockade Village, 新寨村" or "New Village, 新村" would be more than appropriate, and such obvious place names should also be translated directly or meaningfully. 2) Two different methods of phonetic translation and free translation account for 25% of the difference in the Chinese translation results. For example, แม่ฟ้าหลวง can be transliterated as "Ye Fa Luan, 夜发鸾", "Mei Fa Luan, 湄法鸾" and "Mei Hua Luan, 美华鸾", while should be free translated as "Empress Dowager, 皇太后". As can be observed, the phonetic translation of แม่ฟ้าหลวง is rather difficult to be consistent, but the free translation offers only one result, which is more standardized and well developed. Therefore, it would be more accurate to translate แม่ฟ้าหลวง as "Empress Dowager, 皇太后". 3) Two different methods of translation, free translation and literal translation, resulting in 37.50% of the different Chinese translation results. An example is the "Black Temple, 黑庙" which is free translated from the word บ้านดำ. This translation gave people the wrong impression of a black temple as the main style, but in fact, it is a museum instead, whose full name is พิพิธภัณฑ์บ้านดำ. The literal translation would be more appropriate as "Black House Museum, 黑屋博物馆", as Thai locals are used to omitting พิพิธภัณฑ์, therefore, we can abbreviate it as "Black House, 黑屋" as well.

## 2.2 Inappropriate application of Chinese translation methods for place names

Inappropriate application of Chinese translation methods not only confuses people, but also creates misunderstandings in communication. Table 5 shows the frequency and percentage of the inappropriate application of Chinese translation methods from 28 place names.

**Table 5** the frequency and percentage of the inappropriate application of Chinese translation methods for place names

Problems	Phonetic translation	Free Translation	Mixed Phonetic and Free Translation	Literal Translation
Numbers	15	6	5	2
Percentage	53.57%	21.43%	17.86%	7.14%

From table 5, there are four cases of inappropriate application of Chinese translation methods for place names: 15 place names or 53.57% are translated by the phonetic translation method and literal, followed by 6 place names or 21.43% are translated by free translation method, 5 place names or 17.86% are translated by

phonetic translation and free translation method, and 2 place names or 7.14 % are translated by the literal translation method.

First of all, concerning the inappropriate use of Chinese translations of place names in Chiang Rai Province, the most critical issue is improper phonetic translation, accounting for 53.57% of the total. Due to the absence of a standardized Chinese phonetic translation system for Thai place names, the Chinese phonetic translation of many Thai place names ignores the meaning of the words, but only considers the sound of the words, which may confuse Chinese people and create ambiguity or negative associations. For example, "Ban Mai (办买)", which may be associated with purchasing or arranging things, is the phonetic translation of บ้านใหม่.

Secondly, among the inappropriate use of Chinese translation methods for place names in Chiang Rai, improper free translation accounts for 21.43%. In comparison with other Chinese translation methods, free translation is highly creative. It is possible to adopt free translation on certain long and obscure place names by their characteristics for better communication and easier memorization. However, this may also lead to errors or inappropriate place names that may be caused by subjective or creative free translation. In this paper, concerning the improper use of Chinese translation methods, the proportion of improper free translation ranks second only after the improper phonetic translation. It can be evident from the example of the "Black Temple (黑庙) (บ้านดำ)".

Thirdly, of all the inappropriate translations of place names in Chiang Rai, Thailand, improper mixed phonetic and free translation represent 17.86%. The mixed phonetic and free translations integrate phonetic translation and free translation, making it a more efficient method of Chinese place name translation. Yet, it is also observed that there are some inappropriate cases involving the use of such a translation method. For example, by applying the mixed phonetic and free translations, ผาหมี is translated into "Mi Ya (谜崖)", in which "ผา" means rocks, cliffs or stones, while "หมี" sounds like "Mi (谜)", it may be misunderstood as a mysterious cliff. In fact, "หมี" means "bear", which provides a meaning of "Bear Rock" or "Bear Cliff" after putting the two parts together. As a result, "Mi Ya (谜崖)" will not be accurate by applying the mixed phonetic and free translation.

Finally, among the inappropriate use of Chinese translation methods for place names in Chiang Rai Province, 7.14% belong to the literal translation. For example, บ้านห้วยปลาถุ้ง is directly translated into "Fishbone Valley Village (鱼刺沟村)", which means that บ้าน is being directly translated as "village (村)", ห้วย as "valley (沟)", ปลา as "fish (鱼)" and

กั้ง as “bone (刺)”. It is obviously inappropriate to use the literal translation for some place names like this.

### 2.3 Inconsistency of traditional and simplified Chinese characters

In the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai, Thailand, there is another non-negligible situation, in which the simplified and traditional characters are not uniformly applied in the Chinese translation. For instance, the translation of (วัด) ร่องเสือเต้น is expressed in traditional Chinese as “清萊藍 (廟)”, whose simplified version should be “清萊蓝 (庙)”. Therefore, the author argues that emphasis should be placed on the unified standard of Mandarin and simplified Chinese characters when translating place names into Chinese.

## 3. Suggestions for Teaching in Thai-Chinese Translation Courses

Liang (2009, p. 89) found that Translation practice has demonstrated that regardless of whether it is Thai-Chinese or Chinese-Thai translation, or whether it is translation of literary or non-literary works, it is inevitable to encounter a large number of place names. Therefore, taking into account the issues in the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand, the author will propose some teaching suggestions in Thai-Chinese translation courses.

### 3.1 Incorporating Chinese translation of place names into Thai-Chinese translation textbooks

Since there is no unified Chinese translation manual for Thai place names, the Chinese translation of place names in Thailand has been a mess, ranging from daily oral communication, billboards, public places, tourist attractions, and road names, to Chinese translation of place names everywhere. However, in the current Thai-Chinese translation textbooks, there is basically no content explanation on the Chinese translation of place names, or it is just a simple summary, which lacks comprehensiveness and penetration. Therefore, it is necessary to include the Chinese translation of place names as an independent chapter in the Thai-Chinese translation textbook. The main contents shall contain the significance of place names, principles, and methods related to Chinese translations of place names, positive and negative examples provided, with adequate exercises for translations.

### 3.2 Place name translation teaching should give more emphasis to practice

In Thailand, the majority of Chinese learners requires to apply what they have learned rather than to study pure language theories. As can be seen, in the course of teaching Chinese translation of place names, it is more important for most students to

master the methods and skills required to translate place names into Chinese properly. Thus, teachers should primarily concentrate on cultivating students' basic translation skills, increase the proportion of translation practice, and specifically train students' Chinese thinking to upgrade students' Chinese proficiency and translation ability. For example, free translation is usually used in two cases. 1) Most common names in place names are translated into Chinese by free translation, such as จังหวัด (province, 府), อำเภอ (country, 县), ถนน (road, 路), แม่น้ำ (river, 河), etc. 2) When place names have obvious meanings, free translation is usually used for Chinese translation, such as ถนนบ้านใหม่ (New Village Road, 新村路), ถนนเกาะลอย (Floating Island Road, 浮岛路), etc. This is what teachers should teach their students in the classroom.

In addition, phonetic translation is the most used in Chinese translation, but there are more homophones in Chinese. Therefore, teachers should help students to avoid using Chinese characters with obvious commendatory and derogatory meanings, avoid using Chinese characters that are prone to associate meaning, and avoid using rare characters in the process of the Chinese translation of place names.

## Discussion of Results

According to the results, this paper gives a clear understanding of the methods and problems of the Chinese translation of place names in Chiang Rai Province, Thailand and makes some suggestions for teaching Chinese translation of place names in Thai-Chinese translation courses.

First of all, the methods of translation of place names in Chiang Rai Province are summarized that the phonetic translation (54.79%) leads the list of Chinese translation methods, followed by literal translation (13.30%), free translation (12.77%), mixed phonetic translation and free translation (12.23%), conventional translation (1.06%), and unidentified translation (5.85%). The results are consistent with the earlier researches of Lin (2016, p. 83) which found that place names are most frequently translated by phonetic translation method, and Wang (2017, p. 59) which examined the translation of 77 Thai provincial names into Chinese, and indicated that the phonetic translation method is the most commonly utilized.

Secondly, the problems in the Chinese translation of the place names of Chiang Rai Province appears that inconsistent Chinese translation of place names (54.81%) represent the most serious issue, followed by inappropriate application of Chinese translation methods (20.74%), inconsistent translation of traditional and simplified Chinese characters (17.78%), and

the last is other Chinese translation errors (6.67%). The results are consistent with the research of Wang (2017, p. 59) which also found that there are inconsistencies in the Thai-Chinese translations of place names, accounting for 48.05% of the total. Specifically, it included the cases where the pronunciation was the same but with different Chinese characters, and the pronunciation was different with different Chinese characters, accounting for 35.14% and 64.86% respectively. Among them, the case where the pronunciation was the same but the Chinese characters used were different, which means that the Chinese translation results were different by using the phonetic translation method. The author argues that it is necessary for the translator to know the real meaning of the place names and the emphasis should be placed on the same standard of Mandarin and simplified Chinese characters when translating place names into Chinese.

From the results of the study, the author would like to provide suggestions for teaching Chinese translation of place names in Thai-Chinese translation courses by incorporating Chinese translation of place names into Thai-Chinese translation textbooks, focusing on the students' basic translation skills, the proportion of translation practice, and specifically students' Chinese thinking to enhance students' Chinese proficiency and translation ability.

## Suggestions

Recommendations for the application of this paper and suggestions for further research are presented as follows:

### Recommendations for the Application of the Paper

1. The research ideas and methodology of this paper can be applied to Thai-Chinese translators, Chinese teachers, and toponymists for reference.
2. This paper offers suggestions for the teaching of Chinese place names in Thai-Chinese translation courses. Thai-Chinese translation textbook editors, Chinese language teachers and Thai place name translators are welcome to employ the materials according to their actual needs.

### Suggestions for Further Research

1. Given the author's limited knowledge of the Thai language, it is expected that researchers interested in the Chinese translation of place names will gather more and thorough materials for an in-depth study into the origins of place names.
2. This paper only serves as an introduction to the Chinese translation of certain place names in Chiang Rai Province. It is hoped that interested researchers may utilize the ideas and methodology in this paper for the study of the Chinese translation of county,

district, or village names in Thailand, thereby contributing to the Chinese translation study of Thai place names and the standardization and unification efforts in this field.

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