A Corpus-Assisted Study of Nominalization in Translated and Non-translated Judgments

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Xinyuan Liu, Kanglong Liu, and Andrew K. F. Cheung

1 Introduction

In common law systems, court decisions in the form of judgments play a crucial role in the administration of justice. As the foundation of the common law systems, judgments have the equal status and same force as statute laws. Judgments provide "the mechanism by which judges communicate with one another, at the same time providing guidance to prospective litigants and the practicing bar" (Green & Yoon, 2017, p. 683). In view of the exceptional importance of judgments, there has been an increasing amount of research efforts devoted to exploring the language features and functions of judgments. One of the driving forces for this line of inquiry is the Plain English Movement, which encouraged the use of plain language in legal documents. The Hon. Michael Kirby (former Justice of the High Court of Australia), who is a staunch supporter of Plain English Movement in the Australian judiciary, argued that the Plain English Movement not only contributes to "the theoretical objective of improving the understanding of the law by lawyers", but also serves "the noble objective of making the law speak with a clearer voice to the people who are bound by the law" (Kirby, 2009, p. 61). The movement has also made an influence on the Hong Kong judiciary. Against such a background, research on judgments has received much scholarly attention both at home and abroad. For example, various studies have been conducted to examine the linguistic features (Cheng & Cheng, 2014; Yu, 2020)

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and readability (Pearson, 2013) of judgments in relation to the legal functions of judgments. However, most of these studies were done in a monolingual context, focusing on English judgments in the Anglophone jurisdictions practicing common law. Comparatively, little was done to examine the language features of translated judgments in bilingual jurisdictions, particularly in the Hong Kong context. As Hong Kong implements a bilingual legal system where both Chinese and English are the statutory official languages, translated judgments (particularly from Chinese into English) play an important role in the city by serving as references for other common law jurisdictions. Although some studies have been conducted to examine the features of judgments translated from English into Chinese (Cheng & He, 2016; Poon Wai-Yee, 2006) in the Hong Kong context, studies examining the lexical, grammatical and syntactic features of judgments translated from Chinese into English are far and between.

In order to address the research gap, this study attempts to study how nominalization as an important syntactic feature is represented in the translated English judgments (Hong Kong Translated Judgment Corpus or HKT) as opposed to the non-translated English judgments (Hong Kong Non-translated Judgment Corpus or HKN) in Hong Kong and the non-translated judgments (Australian High Court Judgment Corpus or AHC) in Australia. The reason why nominalization is chosen as an indicator is that it has been frequently found as a feature characterizing legal text type (Tiersma, 1999). Another reason is that in the Multidimensional Analysis proposed by Biber (1988, p. 119), nominalization is listed as one important feature for differentiating text types with highly abstract and formal content from text types with concrete and situation-dependent content. Despite frequently investigated in the field of linguistics, nominalization has seldom been studied in translated legal texts in the Chinese context. As translation has always been treated as an important factor for affecting the profiling of translated language (Liu & Afzaal, 2021), we deem that a systematic comparison of the distribution of nominalization in translated and non-translated legal corpora can help generate more insights to inform both translation and legal research.

2 Previous Research on Judgments

As an important register in legal texts, judgments have attracted considerable scholarly attention from researchers of various fields. Some major issues under investigation are the linguistic features of judgments, the readability level, and legal reasoning or judicial argumentation in judgments.

In particular, scholars have always been interested in the unique language features of judgments. Macko (2012) analysed the typical collocations in the appellate judgments of the European Court of Justice and found that these collocations differed from the general English language not only in frequency but also in semantic characteristics. Cheng and Cheng (2014) conducted a corpus-driven study to investigate how epistemic modality is represented in civil court judgments in Hong Kong and

Scotland and found that both jurisdictions showed a similar pattern in employing subjective and objective epistemic modality to express probability. Yu (2020) carried out a comparative study to examine how reporting verbs are represented in court judgments as opposed to general English and identified that the two text types differ significantly in this regard. As legal discourse is a practical text type that is unique in many ways, research in this area has always linked the investigation of the language features to its legal functions.

Besides, due to the influence of the Plain English Movement, researchers have also taken an interest in examining the readability of judgments. Pearson (2013) studied the readability of New Zealand judgments by examining 45 Court of Appeal judgments over three time phases and found a steady increase in readability from 1990 to 2012. Geerlings and van Montfort (2020) found that court judgments written using plain language are better received by general readers than the original judgments written by judges in the Netherlands, thus highlighting the importance to increase the readability and comprehensibility of court judgments. Williams (2020) observed a recent trend of court judgments in Canada and the United Kingdom being written in plain language to meet the needs of the common people who are affected by the rulings. Overall, readability as an important indicator has always been attached great importance by both language and legal scholars.

Lastly, another prominent research area concerns how legal reasoning and argumentation are reflected in the linguistic and textual quality of judgments. For example, Cheng et al. (2008) employed genre analysis to compare the moves and rhetoric of Chinese and American court judgments and found that the two differed greatly due to the different legal cultures. Mazzi (2010) revealed that judges in the US Supreme Court employed diversified strategies to achieve legal reasoning by using varied argumentative discourse. By carefully studying judgments collected from the Supreme People's Court (SPC) and local people's courts in China, Wu and Cheng (2020) discovered that conditional reasoning was less used than causal reasoning, and causal reasoning was also used to a larger extent in civil judgments than criminal and administrative ones. Lu and Yuan (2021) found that legal reasoning of Chinese judgments representing the continental law system differed categorically from the common law judgments in terms of textual strategies.

From the translation perspective, researchers also placed some attention to the textual features of translated judgments. Specifically, translation researchers are interested in the textual quality of translated judgments, and in what aspects translated judgments differ from non-translated ones. Pontrandolfo (2020) carried out a comparative study to examine whether Spanish constitutional court's judgments translated into English contain some translation-inherent features in comparison to the original Spanish judgments and non-translated English judgments delivered by the UK Supreme Court (UKSC). The study was based on the Translation Universals framework proposed by Baker (1996) which claim that translations possess some unique features setting them apart from non-translations. By investigating various translation universals including simplification, explicitation and normalization, Pontrandolfo revealed that translated English judgments are simpler in terms of lexical variety and density, more explicit in terms of overusing linking adverbials compared to

the Spanish judgments. In the same vein, Vesterager (2017a, 2017b) investigated whether explicitation and implicitation exist in Spanish-into-Danish translations of judgments by professional and novice translators. She found that explicitation is a common technique and professionals tended to explicitate source text elements than novices, whereas implicitation is not identified in the translated judgments. Relatively, little is done in the translated judgments in the Hong Kong context. Some earlier research such as Poon Wai-Yee (2006) focused on the translation quality of judgments translated from English into Chinese. She found that the Chinese translations failed in many ways due to the overuse of complicated Chinese idioms and translators' insufficient command of legal knowledge. Cheng and He (2016) also focused on translated Chinese judgments in Hong Kong and argued that some of these translation issues can be solved from a sociosemiotic approach.

Based on the foregoing review, we can see that translated judgments are less investigated for their features than non-translated ones. In particular, there is a lack of research on translated English judgments in bilingual jurisdictions. As a bilingual common law jurisdiction, Hong Kong has witnessed an increase of court cases conducted in Chinese since China resumed the exercise of sovereignty of the region in 1997. The Chinese judgments have been translated into English serving as references for other jurisdictions and informing the English speakers in the city. In the current study, we aim at examining to what extent the translated judgments differ from the non-translated ones using nominalization as a point of departure.

3 The Current Study

3.1 Nominalization

Nominalization is defined as "the process of forming a noun from some other WORD-CLASS or [...] the DERIVATION of a noun phrase from an underlying CLAUSE" (Crystal, 2008, p. 328; spelling and capitalizations in the original). Nominalization is a technique used in registers targeting maximum precision and accuracy of expression. As a linguistic feature connected with formal registers, nominalization has particularly contributed to "conceptual abstractness" (Biber, 1988, p. 227) and achieving certain legal functions (Bhatia, 1993; Gotti, 2003; Mattiello, 2010; Vesterager, 2017a) in legal writing. The extant research has shown that nominalization is frequently employed in various legal genres such as "legislation, briefs, contracts, professional articles, opinions, and textbook" (Gozdz-Roszkowski, 2011, p. 202).

In the following examples of judgments, a high density of nominalizations (see [1] and [2]) results in the verb-less, compact and impersonal style compared with the alternatives (see [1a] and [2a]). If the bold nominalizations in [1] and [2] were changed into the underlined adjectives and verbs, or even omitted in [1a] and [2a], the impersonal and abstract tone and semantic complexity would be reduced to a much lower level.

[1] A **consequence** of the **rejection** of an absolute requirement of "direct perception" is the need for **consideration** in the particular case of the ordinary principles of the law of negligence in **accordance** with which a duty of care either is established or denied. (Gifford -v- Strang Patrick Stevedoring Pty Limited [2003] HCA 33[1]).

[a] [1a] If an absolute requirement of "direct perception" is rejected, the particular case of the ordinary principles of law of negligence under which a duty of care either is established or denied will need to be considered.

[2] Since the claim fails, there is a **liability** in principle for sums owed to RBS by the Partnership, but the **quantification** of such sums is for subsequent **determination**. (CJ And LK Perks Partnership & Ors v Natwest Markets Plc [2022] EWHC 726[2]).

[b] [2a] Since the claim fails, the Partnership is liable in principle for sums owned to RBS, but (the court) determines to quantify such sums subsequently.

As can be seen from the above examples, the overuse of nominalizations results in a more informationally dense style which is inclined towards conceptual abstractness and structural complexity. As most jurisdictions have advocated the use of plain English, we are interested in knowing if such a trend is also reflected in the translated English judgments.

3.2 Classification of Nominalization

In the research field, there is a lack of consensus concerning the definition and classification of nominalization despite a frequently-investigated phenomenon in the field. The term "nominalization" has been defined and conceived in various ways. Over the years, the structural and lexical perspectives represent two important theorization. Inspired by Chomsky's transformational-generative grammar, Lees (1963) conceived nominalization as mainly a transformational phenomenon operating at the syntactical level in which "the nominals generated by the (nominalization rules) are not themselves sentences, but rather they are noun-like versions of sentences (p. 54)". Ten years later, his transformational model of nominalization was challenged by Chomsky (1970) who argued that there exist numerous syntactic and semantic differences between nominalizations and sentences. He stated not all nominals are derived in the syntax and most nominals are formed through lexical transformation. Chomsky categorized three types of nominals: gerundive nominal (e.g., John's refusing the offer), derived nominal (e.g., John's refusal of the offer) and mixed forms which can be treated verbal nouns (e.g., John's refusing of the offer). Chomsky believed that while gerundive nominals can be treated as transformed from the underlying sentence-like propositions of subject-predicate form, derived nominals are inherently phrasal. Thus, he labelled his approach as "lexicalist" in order to distinguish from Lees' "transformationalist" approach. Both approaches have exerted some influences on later researchers. In the case of Quirk et al. (1985, p. 1288), they seemed to take

on a hybrid approach by defining nominalization as "a noun phrase […] which has a systematic correspondence with a clause structure" whereas "the noun head of such a phrase is normally related morphologically to a verb or to an adjective". Specifically, Quirk et al. distinguished between two types of nouns in the nominalization process: verbal nouns and deverbal nouns, with the former using gerund ("-ing" ending) to form nouns and the latter involving morphological transformation using suffixes.

In the field of corpus linguistics, researchers have attached more importance to the lexical property of nominalizations as they have to operationalize some rules for detecting nominals. In the Multidimensional Analysis (MDA) which has been widely used to explore register variation, Biber (1988) identified nominalizations as words ending in "-tion, -ment, -ness, or -ity (plus plurals)" (p. 214). Likewise, nominalizations are defined by Wydick (2005, p. 24) as words ending in "-al, -ence, -ancy, -ity, -ment, -ion, -ency, -ant, -ent, and -ance". To a large extent, corpus linguists see nominalizations as derived from verbs and adjectives through morphological transformation.

Over the years, all the abovementioned typologies have been adopted to study nominalization. In Hou's (2013) study, the author employed Lees' typology (1963) and categorized nominalizations into gerundive nominalization, derived nominalization, and zero-derived nominalization, and identified their structural patterns "as adverbial", "in the position of the subject", and "in the position of the object" in the English translation of Chinese prose works (p. 50). Baratta (2010) counted gerunds and derived nominalizations to study how students acquired nominalizations in academic writing. Hartig and Lu (2014) detected nominalizations in expert and novice learners' legal memos using a combined typology drawing from Wydick's (2005) and Biber's (1988). They used the Stanford Part-of-Speech (POS) Tagger and the Morpha lemmatization tool to identify words ending in "-al, -ence, -ancy, -ity, -ment, -ion, -ency, -ant, -ent, and -ance" and manually excluded the irrelevant nominalized words.

As the traditional method of extracting nominalizations requires a lot of manual work and might also fall short in terms of consistency, researchers have developed automated methods for such purposes. In particular, Nini (2019) has developed the Multidimensional Analysis Tagger (MAT) for extracting the linguistic features used in Biber's (1988) MDA owing to its popularity. Nini's (2019) MAT is based on the Stanford Tagger (Toutanova et al., 2003) which can automatically parse and annotate the texts. In the current study, we also made use of MAT to retrieve the nominalizations. The reasons why we chose to use MAT are twofold. First, in view of the vast amount of data, it is unlikely that we can use manual methods to retrieve and analyse nominalizations. Thus, the use of automated software can greatly facilitate our work. Second, MAT has been widely used in the field of linguistic and translation research (e.g., Hyland & Jiang, 2021; Kruger & van Rooy, 2016). Thus, our research findings can be compared against relevant studies on nominalization.

3.3 Research Questions

Based on the foregoing review, nominalization in legal translation, particularly in judgment translation, has largely remained underexplored. It is unclear whether a significant difference exists between translated and non-translated judgments in the use of nominalizations. Meanwhile, most of the previous corpus-based studies in judgment translation have been confined to closely-related European languages, and the findings may not be generalizable to other genetically distant languages such as English and Chinese. Besides, as a common law bilingual jurisdiction where both Chinese and English are official languages, Hong Kong can provide a unique perspective for the investigation of the use of nominalizations.

To fill this research gap, this study aims to examine nominalizations in translated and non-translated judgments by addressing the following two research questions:

1. Do translated English judgments in Hong Kong differ from non-translated English judgments in Hong Kong and Australia in terms of the use of nominalizations?
2. To what extent do the translated English judgments differ from the two non-translated ones (Hong Kong and Australia) in the four types of nominalizations (words ending in -ion, -ment, -ity, -ness and their plurals) proposed by Biber (1988)?

3.4 Compilation of Judgment Corpora

To make our datasets comparable, we collected judgments in Hong Kong[3] and Australia[4] where both regions share similar common law traditions and advocate plain and accessible legal language (see Chan, 2018, 2020; Williams, 2007). We compiled three comparable corpora to explore the nominalization phenomenon in translated and non-translated judgments. Upon completion, the corpora have a total of 3,310,666 running words. The non-translated English judgment corpus, i.e., Australian High Court Judgment Corpus (AHC), consisted of judgments downloaded from the website of the Judgments—High Court of Australia.[5] We collected 200 judgments ranging from 2000 to 2020. The Hong Kong English judgments were also collected from the High Court of Hong Kong to ensure comparability. Specifically, the Hong Kong Non-translated Judgment Corpus (HKN) consists of 200 judgments written in English from 2000 to 2020 released on the website of Hong Kong Judiciary.[6] To ensure comparability in time and selection criteria, we collected the English translations of Chinese judgments with jurisprudential value from the same website (Legal Reference System) to compile the translated judgment corpus, i.e., Hong Kong Translated Judgment Corpus (HKT), which also consists of 200 judgments. Some text noises such as judgment dates, judges' names, title pages and signatures were removed from the original files as they are irrelevant to the study of nominalizations. All 600 files in the corpora were then converted into plain text files to allow automatic processing by the MAT software (Nini, 2019) (Table 1).

Table 1 Description of the three corpora

Corpus	Total tokens[a]	Year range	Average tokens	St. deviation
HKT	565,633	2000–2020	2,828	553
HKN	757,130	2000–2020	3,787	1,324
AHC	1,987,903	2000–2020	9,939	4,875

[a]Tokens in texts were calculated by the WordSmith

Table 2 Nominalization scores of the three corpora based on MAT

	Corpus	Min	Max	Mean	Std. deviation
NOMz	HKT	0.94	7.26	3.46	1.11
	HKN	1.56	7.38	3.94	1.05
	AHC	1.64	8.65	4.73	1.27

3.5 Analytical Framework

We first used the MAT software to tag nominalizations (the tag NOMZ was used to tag nominalizations) and generate nominalization scores for each judgment corpus (see descriptions in Table 2 and Fig. 1). Based on the nominalization scores, a One-way ANOVA test analysis was conducted to examine whether a significant difference exists in the three judgment corpora, followed by a Tukey–Kramer (Tukey's W) multiple comparison analysis to find out if significant differences exist between all three groups.

Then we applied the AntConc program (Anthony, 2022) to compute the grammatically annotated texts to generate lists of nominalizations ending with the four suffixes and their plural forms across the three corpora. Also, we collected the raw frequency of each type and calculated the normalized frequency per 1,000 words. We made three key lists (HKT vs AHC, HKN vs AHC, and HKT vs HKN) to identify the overused nominalizations in HKT and another three key lists (AHC vs HKT, HKN vs HKT, and HKN vs AHC) to determine the underused nominalizations in HKT with the four suffixes using WordSmith Tools (Scott, 2020).

In order to continue investigating the extent of different use of the four types of nominalizations across the three corpora, we chose some specific nominals from the abovementioned key lists that could demonstrate the similarities and differences among HKT, HKN and AHC. Additional concordance searches were conducted to retrieve relevant examples for analysis.

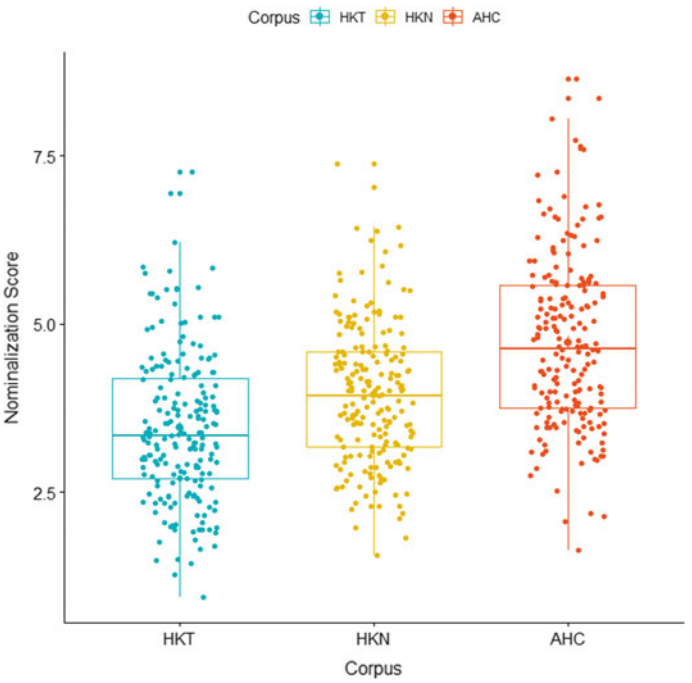

Fig. 1 Nominalization scores of the three corpora based on MAT

Table 3 One-way ANOVA results

NOMz	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	Sig
Corpus	164,788	2	82,394	<0.001*
Residuals	783,159	597	1,310	

*means $p < 0.05$

4 Results

4.1 The Quantitative Differences of NOMz Across AHC, HKT, and HKN

The One-way ANOVA result indicated that there was a statistically significant mean difference in the three groups (HKT, HKN, and AHC). The use of nominalizations was significantly different between the translated (HKT) and the two non-translated judgments (HKN and AHC) (see Table 3).

Table 4 Multiple comparisons results

(I) Category	(J) Category	Mean difference	Std. error	Sig.
1	2	−0.487*	0.11453	<0.001*
	3	−1.272*	0.11453	<0.001*
2	3	−0.785*	0.11453	<0.001*

*means $p < 0.05$
1 = HKT, 2 = HKN, 3 = AHC

To further detect the degree of difference between all three corpora, additional Tukey post-hoc multiple comparisons tests were also used. The result suggested that the mean nominalization value was significantly different among the three groups. The first comparison was between the translated and the two non-translated corpora. There was a statistical difference in mean frequency of nominalizations between the translated and the non-translated judgments in Australia (i.e., HKT and AHC, $p < 0.001$*, 95% C.I. = 1.4970, −1.0471), and between the non-translated in Hong Kong and the non-translated judgments in Australia (i.e., HKN and AHC, $p < 0.001$*, 95% C.I. = −1.0104, −0.5605). The second comparison was between the translated and the non-translated judgments in Hong Kong, namely HKT and HKN ($p < 0.001$*, 95% C.I. = −0.7115, −0.2617), indicating that the two differed significantly in the use of nominalizations (Table 4).

The quantitative results confirmed that the use of nominalizations in the translated judgments in Hong Kong was significantly different from the two non-translated judgments in Hong Kong and Australia in terms of frequency.

4.2 Four Types of Nominalizations Across HKT, HKN, and AHC

Raw Frequency and Normalized Frequency of Nominalizations

We identified a total of 141,285 nominalizations in AntConc by retrieving NOMZ tags in the three corpora. The overall normalized frequency per 1,000 words in the four types of nominalizations differed greatly across the three corpora. In each corpus, nominalizations ending with "-ion(s)" ($HKT_{nf} = 20.13 < HKN_{nf} = 21.22 < AHC_{nf} = 29.84$) and "-ment(s)" ($HKT_{nf} = 9.12 < AHC_{nf} = 9.35 < HKN_{nf} = 11.53$), both largely derived from verbs, appeared more frequently than the other two types, i.e., "ness(es)" ($AHC_{nf} = 1.21 < HKT_{nf} = 1.83 < HKN_{nf} = 2$) and "-ity(-ities)" ($HKN_{nf} = 3.39 < HKT_{nf} = 3.54 < AHC_{nf} = 5.85$) which mainly derived from adjectives. Across the three corpora, nominalizations ending with "-ion(s)" appear much more

frequently per 1,000 words in AHC than in HKN and HKT. Comparatively, HKT showed the least frequent use of nominalizations in the suffixes of "-ion" ($HKT_{nf} = 17.76 < HKN_{nf} = 18.32 < AHC_{nf} = 25.29$), "-ions" ($HKT_{nf} = 2.37 < HKN_{nf} = 2.90 < AHC_{nf} = 4.55$) and "-ments" ($HKT_{nf} = 1.28 < AHC_{nf} = 1.76 < HKN_{nf} = 1.77$); nouns ending with "-ness(es)" in HKT and HKN were surprisingly more frequent per 1,000 tokens than those in AHC ($AHC_{nf} = 1.21 < HKT_{nf} = 1.83 < HKN_{nf} = 2.00$) (Table 5).

As far as the types of nominalizations are concerned, AHC used far more types of nominalizations (N = 1,705) and its normalized type counts per 1,000 words was the highest ($AHC_{nt} = 77.43$), which greatly exceeded HKN (N = 986, $HKN_{nt} = 65.69$) and HKT (N = 778, $HKT_{nt} = 65.91$) (Table 6).

Both HKT and HKN demonstrated reduced use of nominalizations in both frequencies and types compared to AHC. In particular, the translated judgments used the least nominalizations in both frequencies and types.

Table 5 Raw frequencies vs normalized frequencies (per 1,000 words) of nominalizations in HKT, HKN and AHC

Suffix	HKT(raw)	HKT_{nf}	HKN(raw)	HKN_{nf}	AHC(raw)	AHC_{nf}
-ion(s)	11,389	20.135	16,067	21.22	59,319	29.84
-ment(s)	5,154	9.112	9,596	11.53	18,591	9.35
-ness(es)	1,035	1.830	1,514	2.00	2,414	1.21
-ity (-ities)	2,004	3.543	2,568	3.39	11,634	5.85

HKT_{nf} = the normalized frequency of nominalization per 1,000 words in HKT
HKN_{nf} = the normalized frequency of nominalization per 1,000 words in HKN
AHC_{nf} = the normalized frequency of nominalization per 1,000 words in AHC

Table 6 The raw type counts vs normalized type counts per 1,000 words

Suffix	HKT(raw)	HKT_{nt}	HKN(raw)	HKN_{nt}	AHC(raw)	AHC_{nt}
-ion(s)	456	38.63	552	36.78	924	41.96
-ment(s)	143	12.11	186	12.39	268	12.17
-ness(es)	50	4.24	66	4.40	136	6.18
-ity (-ities)	129	10.93	182	12.13	377	17.12

HKT_{nt} = the normalized frequency of nominalization types per 1,000 words in HKT
HKN_{nt} = the normalized frequency of nominalization types per 1,000 words in HKN
AHC_{nt} = the normalized frequency of nominalization types per 1,000 words in AHC

Overuse and Underuse of Nominalizations in HKT

We further compared the translated word list (HKT) against the reference word lists (HKN and AHC), to form three 500-word key word lists in order to identify the overuse and underuse of nominalizations in HKT compared to HKN and AHC (see Tables 9, 10 and 11 in Appendix).

Further examination of the key nominalizations (see Table 7) shows that nominalizations ending in "-ion", which originated from verbs, are the most prominent. According to the frequency ratios and the statistics of keyness value, i.e., log likelihood (Log. L), the translated judgments presented highly frequent use of nominalizations such as *prosecution('s)*, *conviction(s)*, *consumption*, *mitigation*, *intimidation*, *deception*, *imprisonment*, *enhancement*, *culpability*, *quantality*, *identity*, while the two non-translated reference corpora did not or seldom employed these nominals. In the next section, the examples are used to further illustrate the differences.

Additionally, we compared the two non-translated keyword lists against the translated keyword list to investigate the possible underuse of nominalizations in HKT (see Tables 12, 13, 14 in Appendix). The results corroborated our previous findings that HKT was the least diverse in using nominalizations, reflected in the underrepresentation of nouns ending with "-ion(s)". Using HKT as the reference corpus, 78 (AHC vs HKT) and 62 (HKN vs HKT) nominalizations were identified to be underrepresented in HKT. For example, AHC used *decision* exceptionally frequent with a raw frequency of 3,124 (normalized frequency: 1.57) while the same word only appeared 279 times (normalized frequency: 0.49) in HKT. Besides, HKT did not use nominalizations such as *corporations*, *migration*, *prohibition*, *notion*, *organisation*, *characterisation*, *specification*, *conception*, *extinguishment*, *plurality*, *finality*, *invalidity*, which were highly frequent nominals in AHC (Table 8).

It can be noted that although the overall normalized frequency and diversity of nominalizations in the translated judgments were the lowest among the three corpora, certain nominalizations were still overused, particularly those that are related to decision-making.

4.3 The Qualitative Comparisons of Nominalizations Across HKT, HKN, and AHC

We did a further qualitative analysis to see how the four types of nominalizations were similar and varied across the three corpora. First, we compared the similar use of nominalizations in the four types. Then the highly frequent nominalizations in HKT were analysed in detail.

Table 7 Nominalizations in the study corpus with its reference corpus (1)

NOMz	HKT(SC) vs AHC(RC)	HKT(SC) vs HKN(RC)	HKN (SC) vs AHC(RC)
-ion(s)	prosecution('s)	prosecution	injunction(s)
	conviction(s)	conviction(s)	affirmation(s)
	explanation(s)	prosecution('s)	allegation
	caution	probation	completion
	consumption	consumption	inspection
	discussion	mitigation	misrepresentation
	probation	deception	negotiations
	allegation	compensation	preparation
	mitigation	immigration	documentation
	deception	definition	dissipation
	mention	regulations	hesitation
	transliteration	investigation	
	confession	intimidation	
	inspection	contravention	
	intimidation	subsection	
	affirmation		
-ment(s)	imprisonment	imprisonment	payment(s)
	management	indictment	settlement
	repayment	enhancement	management
	enhancement	punishment	investment
			assignment
			repayment
			disbursements
-ness(es)	witness(es)	seriousness	business
		unfairness	
-ity (-ities)	identity	culpability	facilities
	quantity	quantity	
	safety	identity	
	culpability	vicinity	
	facilities		

SC = the Study Corpus
RC = the Reference Corpus

Table 8 Nominalizations in the study corpus with its reference corpus (2)

NOMz	AHC(SC) vs HKT(RC)	HKN(SC) vs HKT(RC)	AHC(SC) vs HKN (RC)
-ion(s) (top 20)	decision(s)	action(s)	section
	relation	injunction	provision(s)
	construction	affirmation(s)	prosecution
	jurisdiction	jurisdiction	operation
	operation	litigation	commission
	legislation	determination	legislation
	questions	termination	constitution
	determination	completion	questions
	protection	declaration	compensation
	proposition	obligation	decisions
	obligation(s)	proposition	conviction
	convention	obligations	direction
	considerations	valuation	expression
	obligation	provisional	protection
	litigation	description	occasion
	functions	representation	regulations
	limitation	misrepresentation	function(s)
	distinction	assertion	limitation
	migration	preparation	corporations
	communication	option	distinction
-ment(s)	punishment	agreement(s)	payment
	entitlement	documents	settlement
	enforcement	payment	management
	development	settlement	payments
	enactment	payments	investment
	judgments	development	assignment
	settlement	investment	repayment
	extinguishment	amendments	disbursements
	agreements	assignment	
	impairment	entitlement	
		comment	
		instruments	
-ness(es)	fairness	businesses	fairness
	correctness		correctness
-ity (-ities)	authority	quality	majority
	liability	indemnity	possibility

(continued)

Table 8 (continued)

NOMz	AHC(SC) vs HKT(RC)	HKN(SC) vs HKT(RC)	AHC(SC) vs HKN (RC)
	majority	facility	community
	possibility	equity	validity
	validity	reality	responsibility
	responsibility	validity	activity
	entity		entity
	equity		incapacity
	incapacity		plurality
	plurality		immunity
	immunity		
	finality		
	invalidity		

SC = the Study Corpus
RC = the Reference Corpus

Similar Use of Nominalizations

From the identified nominalizations, most of the high-frequency words ending with "-ion" and "-ment" were closely related to decision-making (*e.g., action, conviction, prosecution, imprisonment, judgment*), requests (*e.g., application, statement, injunction*), and argument (*e.g., affirmation, question, agreement*). For example, *prosecution* in HKT has a normalized frequency of 1.90 while *prosecute* only 0.02. Although *prosecution* was seldom used in AHC (normalized frequency: 0.59) and HKN (normalized frequency: 0.02), the two corpora used the verb *prosecute* (AHC: 0.28; HKN: 0.01) much less frequently than the nominalization *prosecution.*

The normalized frequency per 1,000 words of *judgment* as nominalizations in HKT (1.12), HKN (1.39), and AHC (0.91) was similar. In general, HKT, HKN, and AHC used more nominalizations than verbs to describe decision-making (see example [1]), avoid repetitions of the previous contents (see example [2]), and facilitate the flow of legal reasoning or judicial argumentation (see example [3]).

[1] (…the court entered **judgment** for the Petitioner on 20 June 2003, and the four defendants including the Bankrupt were ordered to pay the Petitioner…). As the Bankrupt had failed to satisfy the **judgment**, the Petitioner issued a "statutory demand" against him on 14 July 2003. (HKN)

[2] **Judgment** was entered against the defendant with damages to be assessed. (HKN)

[3] As a matter of practical experience, these are the sorts of cases in which third parties can be expected to be disadvantaged by the making of a sequestration

order based on a **judgment** which was not the outcome of the rigorous processes of adversarial litigation. The same concern may also arise in a case where the **judgment** was obtained in circumstances which suggest a failure on the part of the **judgment** debtor to present his or her case on its merits in the litigation that led to the **judgment**. (AHC)

When comparing the normalized frequency per 1,000 words, both HKT (1.44) and HKN (2.27) used *application* more frequently than AHC (1.27). Further examination of the corpus occurrences across the three corpora showed that *application* often appears in the form of *application for leave*, which is most prevalent in the non-translated judgments (see example [5]). Such a collocation is also used quite frequently in HKT and AHC. This trend shows that legal writing and legal translation share some similarities in the use of certain nominalizations.

[4] In light of the above reasons and analysis, we dismiss the applicant's **application** for leave to appeal against conviction. (HKT)
[5] That judgment was unsuccessfully appealed from to the Court of Appeal and followed up by an unsuccessful **application** for leave to appeal to the Final Court of Appeal from which there was a further unsuccessful **application** for leave to appeal to the Final Court itself which delivered its ruling refusing leave on 6 December 2007. (HKN, text)
[6] The Full Court dismissed an **application** for leave to appeal from this order. (AHC)

HKT (1.10) used *witness* as nominalizations more frequently per 1,000 words compared with HNK (0.53) and AHC (0.80). However, three corpora showed zero use of *witness* as verbs. In most cases across the three corpora, *witness* annotated as nominalization referred to the person who testifies in a judicial proceeding.

[7] We need to once again remind judges who hear criminal cases that they cannot consider the evidence of a **witness**, who is a police officer, in this way. (HKT)
[8] He did not in his **witness** statement allege the defendants or either of them had "enticed away" any of the other agents, but from the witness box was taken to this pleading. (HKN)
[9] …it could discredit the **witness** but it was incapable of contradicting any fact upon which proof of the opportunity which the **witness** had of observing the accident depended. (AHC)

Different Use of Nominalizations

In what follows, we will discuss the four nominalization patterns by relating to some typical examples extracted from the three corpora. Specifically, we will look at the overused as well as underused nominalizations in HKT.
(1) "*-ion"*

The use of long-letter nominalizations to introduce acts of punishment (see Table 9) was the most common in HKT. Interestingly, as inferred from the Tables 9 and 10, the use of *conviction*, *prosecution*, *mitigation*, *intimidation*, *deception* and *consumption* in HKT is not found in both HKN and AHC, particularly the use of *prosecution('s)* and *conviction(s)*. The normalized frequency of *conviction* was 1.19 in HKT, which is three times that of AHC (0.40) and 119 times that of HKN (0.01) respectively. Meanwhile, HKN recorded no instances of using the verb *convict* while HKT and AHC used both the verb and noun form. Some instances are extracted to show the use of *conviction* in HKT and AHC (see examples 10–12).

[10] There was a real risk that the **conviction** was reached by the jury being put under pressure of time. (HKT)
[11] The Applicant sought leave to appeal against **conviction** and sentence on charge 1. (HKT)
[12] The references to **conviction** and sentence are clearly conjunctive … This is so as a matter of construction of the language used in s 44(ii). (AHC)

(2) "*-ment"*
Imprisonment is another example that is overused in HKT. The normalized frequency per 1,000 words of *imprisonment* in AHC (0.18) and HKN (0.01) were far less than that of HKT (1.58). All three judgments tended to use the nominal *imprisonment* instead of the action verb *imprison* to denote the length of punishment (see examples [13], [14] and [15]). Despite the differences in frequencies across the three corpora, the use pattern was relatively consistent in which the noun form is always prioritized over the verb form in all three types of judgments.

[13] He was convicted and sentenced to 6 years' **imprisonment** after trial before Deputy Judge Pang with jury. (HKT)
[14] As Mr D has expressed it: "the relevant provisions in the Ordinance already provide for adequate criminal sanctions of fines and **imprisonment**…" (HKN)
[15] The disqualification operates on a person who has been convicted of an offence punishable by **imprisonment** for one year or more and is under sentence or subject to be sentenced for that offence. (AHC)

(3) "*-ity"*
The word *culpability* was not found in HKN (only one instance using *culpable*), and its normalized frequencies are 0.11 in HKT and 0.02 in AHC, respectively. This nominalization describes the state of a person being *culpable*, as illustrated in Examples 16–19. Overall, we found that there was a preference of using the adjective *culpable* in AHC (normalized frequency of *culpable* was 0.05 and *culpability was* 0.02), whereas HKT preferred the nominalization *culpability* (normalized frequency: 0.11) to *culpable* (normalized frequency: 0.08).

[16] …the Court of Appeal was of the view that the **culpability** of the defendant of a phone deception case was more serious than that of the defendant of a street deception and thus adopted the starting point of 4 years. (HKT)
[17] We are of the view that the **culpability** of those who pay others to act as substitutes should at least be regarded as similar to that of the substitutes. (HKT)
[18] Thus, where the accused seeks to induce a witness to give false evidence or not to give evidence by using force, bribery or improper pressure, there is no doubt that the act is **culpable** as an attempt to pervert the course of justice. (HKN)
[19] If you find the accused guilty of **culpable** driving causing death you do not need to make a determination of whether he is also guilty of dangerous driving causing death; it is an alternative. (AHC)

(4) "*-ness"*
It has been previously confirmed that HKT is characterized with the lowest density of nominalizations in general, with the exception of nouns ending in "-ness(es)", particularly *witness(es).* Interestingly, another nominalization *fairness* was much underused in HKT, as the normalized frequency of *fairness* in HKT (0.03) was far less than that of AHC (0.15). Altogether, we identified 65 occurrences in the translated judgments using *fair* (Normalized frequency: 0.11), compared to 15 occurrences using *fairness* (Normalized frequency: 0.03).

[20] Court is of the view that the directions were just, **fair** and balanced. (HKT)
[21] In broad terms, these concerns may be said to be with the **fairness** and reasonableness to the appellants in the application of s 136AD(1). (AHC)

The examples above seemed to indicate a tendency in the translated judgments to nominalize the words concerning decision-making, even though these words were not typically used as nominalizations in the other two judgments, such as *conviction*, *prosecution*, *imprisonment*, and *culpability*. On the other hand, the translated judgments preferred verbs to nominalizations when expressing the concept of request (e.g., *apply*).

In sum, the quantitative analysis revealed that the translated judgments were less complex than the other two judgments in terms of the frequency and types of nominalizations. However, further qualitative analysis also shows that the translated judgments also overused certain nominalizations that were somehow underrepresented in the other two non-translated corpora.

5 Discussion

5.1 Simplification in Legal Language

In this corpus-assisted study, we have explored the use of nominalizations across three corpora of judgments. Our findings indicated that translated English judgments in Hong Kong are significantly different from non-translated English judgments in Hong Kong and Australia in this aspect. As the use of nominalizations is associated with more complex use of language (Mattiello, 2010), the overrepresentation of such a language feature can render the legal texts more complex while an underuse can make the texts relatively simpler and more readable. As the translated judgments had the least frequent and diverse nominalizations among the three corpora of judgments, it could be safely postulated that the translated judgments are characterized with simpler lexical and syntactic features (note that nominalizations often appear with passive constructions, see Biber (1988) for more details). In the field of translation studies, researchers have often assumed that translated language tends to be simpler in lexical and syntactical features than non-translated native texts (Baker, 1996). However, previous research on simplification was mainly conducted with general text types such as news, academic writing and fiction (Liu & Afzaal, 2021) while little was done using legal texts. Our study represents one of the few efforts to attest to translational simplification using Chinese-English legal translations, specifically translated judgments, using nominalization as an indicator. Besides, our study has also corroborated Pontrandolfo's (2020) finding that simplification exists in translated English judgments from Spanish.

5.2 Legal Functions of Translated Judgments

According to Biel et al. (2019), judgments have the adjudicating, interpretative, and regulative functions. However, such functions seem more applicable to non-translated written judgments with jurisprudential values. In bilingual common law jurisdictions, the functions of judgments are relatively more complex. In 2003, Hong Kong Legislative Council set out the policy on the translation of judgments.

> The fundamental principle is that the authentic and the only authentic version of a judgment is the one in the language in which the judgment is delivered, be it English or Chinese. The translated version of a judgment has no legal status as a judgment. (Legislative Council, 2003, p. 1)

This policy has clearly stated the legal status of both written and translated judgments in Hong Kong. Only the written judgements are given the legal status. Clearly, we

can see that translated judgments do not assume the same functions as the written ones. Instead, the translated judgments only serve an informational function. This is evidenced in the same policy stating that the Hong Kong Judiciary adheres to a pragmatic approach in dealing with the translation of judgments, which should be "carried out to meet the needs of the judges, the legal profession, the litigants and the public at large" (Legislative Council, 2003, p. 1). Such a purpose guides both the translation of judgments into Chinese and English. As far as translation of judgements into English is concerned, the Legislative Council (2003) also specifies that:

> With the increasing use of Chinese in courts, including the higher courts, there may be occasions where judgments of jurisprudential value are written in Chinese. Translating such Chinese judgments into English would enable judges and lawyers in and outside Hong Kong who do not know Chinese to understand such judgments through an English translation. (p. 2)

In view of the above, we can tell that translated English judgments in Hong Kong are mostly used as references rather than "authentic" case laws. Thus, it is highly possible that the simpler lexical and syntactical structures reflected by the underuse of nominalizations might be related to such a purpose. As Hong Kong is an international financial centre with a considerable English-speaking population, the translated English judgments also perform a "social function" (Poon Wai-Yee, 2006, p. 557) to inform the diverse audience (from the experts to the laymen) to understand the decisions that the court has made. As argued by Biber et al. (2020, p. 584), "the situational context and communicative purposes of texts" directly influence the use of linguistic features and linguistic variation. It is very likely that the informational function underlying translated English judgments has resulted in an underuse of nominalizations.

5.3 Influence of Plain English Movement

Another reason for the significant difference in nominalization distribution across the three corpora can be attributed to the influence of the Plain English Movement advocating plain language use in legal settings. Specifically, most advocates of this movement agree that texts can be rendered less complex and more readable through the avoidance of nominalizations and passive constructions (Williams, 2011). In this regard, the Hong Kong Judiciary has put in some consistent efforts to foster the use of plain English. Such efforts have continued against the background of plain legal English (Chan, 2018), and clearly played a key role in affecting the translation of judgments in Hong Kong. Liu and Zhu (2021) also found that the latest version of Hong Kong Companies Ordinance promulgated in 2014 (Cap. 622) showed a simplification trend by using more "*if*" but less other variants (e.g., where, in case) as a conditional connective compared with the previous version of Companies Ordinance.

They ascribed the simplification trend in Hong Kong's legal drafting practice to the influence of the Plain English Movement. In 2012, the Law Drafting Division and Department of Justice (2012) released the *Drafting Legislation in Hong Kong: A Guide to Styles and Practices*, which explicitly stated to "avoid nominalization by using a base verb to show the action" (p. 89). The guide has explicitly discouraged the use of nominalization and encouraged simple language use. It is highly likely that such a guide has exerted some influence on the writing and translation of judgements in Hong Kong.

6 Conclusion and Limitations

This corpus-assisted study explored the nominalization phenomenon by comparing translated English judgments with two non-translated ones. The translated judgments displayed less use of nominalizations compared with the two non-translated judgments in Hong Kong and Australia. Our study contributes to the Legal Translation Studies from a new perspective of judgment translation in the Hong Kong context. It should also be noted that judgment translation, particularly Chinese-English direction, is still a much "uncharted domain in legal discourse" (Cheng & He, 2016, p. 59). As Chinese and English differ enormously in grammatical and syntactical features compared with European language pairs, the findings can provide some new insights into judgement translation.

It should also be pointed out that our research also has some limitations. First, the choice of written judgments from Australian High Court might have some impact on our results. Although Australia is a monolingual common law jurisdiction inheriting from the British legal system, some cultural and historical factors might play a part in affecting its use of language structures including nominalizations. For example, there have always been controversies over the use of Plain English in legal settings in Australia. Some legal professionals support plain English use (Asprey, 2003; Turnbull, 1990) while others hold opposing views (e.g., Assy, 2011). Thus, it is always important to link the findings to the broader cultural and historical background in corpus-assisted studies. In a similar vein, the linguistic profiling of the translated judgments in Hong Kong is also affected by some similar cultural and historical factors. Second, the use of MAT software, though has greatly facilitated the extraction of nominalizations, might still fall short in accuracy. Bearing this in mind, we have tried to use other corpus tools to help with our qualitative analysis. Future research can use more advanced methods to detect nominalizations in corpus studies. Lastly, we only focused on four types of nominalizations (-ion, -ment, -ity, -ness and their plurals), future studies can also explore other categories of nominalizations.

Appendix

See Tables 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14.

Table 9 Key NOMz in HKT in comparison with AHC

Key word	SC(HKT) Freq	%	Texts	RC(AHC). Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
prosecution	955	0.17	137	1,139	0.06	557.81	<0.001*
conviction	536	0.09	130	651	0.03	304.79	<0.001*
convictions	136	0.02	60	151	0.01	87.81	<0.001*
explanation	124	0.02	60	134	0.01	82.98	<0.001*
caution	105	0.02	55	129	0.01	58.69	<0.001*
prosecution's	104	0.02	47	40	0.00	162.68	<0.001*
consumption	102	0.02	16	27	0.00	187.93	<0.001*
discussion	95	0.02	80	98	0.00	67.44	<0.001*
probation	94	0.02	16	15	0.00	202.86	<0.001*
allegation	93	0.02	54	112	0.01	53.55	<0.001*
mitigation	88	0.02	38	34	0.00	137.34	<0.001*
deception	82	0.01	10	41	0.00	110.61	<0.001*
mention	78	0.01	44	37	0.00	108.67	<0.001*
transliteration	76	0.01	39	0	0.00	228.53	<0.001*
confession	66	0.01	14	65	0.00	49.55	<0.001*
explanations	53	0.01	20	18	0.00	88.03	<0.001*
inspection	52	0.01	13	15	0.00	92.65	<0.001*
intimidation	46	0.01	12	3	0.00	117.26	<0.001*
affirmation	43	0.01	12	14	0.00	72.79	<0.001*
imprisonment	895	0.16	135	354	0.02	1,380.06	<0.001*
management	140	0.02	22	144	0.01	99.75	<0.001*
repayment	62	0.01	12	35	0.00	77.18	<0.001*
enhancement	48	0.01	11	7	0.00	105.93	<0.001*
witness	402	0.07	88	449	0.02	257.49	<0.001*
witnesses	209	0.04	60	238	0.01	130.37	<0.001*
identity	131	0.02	23	126	0.01	101.10	<0.001*
quantity	116	0.02	36	100	0.01	100.85	<0.001*
safety	107	0.02	24	126	0.01	63.66	<0.001*
culpability	63	0.01	32	46	0.00	64.13	<0.001*
facilities	76.00	0.01	12.00	52.00	0.00	81.76	<0.001*

*means $p < 0.001$
SC = the Study Corpus
RC = the Reference Corpus

Table 10 Key NOMz in HKT in comparison with HKN

Key word	SC(HKT) Freq	%	Texts	RC(HKN). Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
prosecution	955	0.17	137	16	0.00	1472.06	<0.001*
conviction	536	0.09	130	9	0.00	826.06	<0.001*
convictions	136	0.02	60	0	0.00	230.31	<0.001*
prosecution's	104	0.02	47	1	0.00	165.94	<0.001*
probation	94	0.02	16	0	0.00	159.19	<0.001*
consumption	102	0.02	16	2	0.00	155.21	<0.001*
mitigation	88	0.02	38	9	0.00	99.17	<0.001*
deception	82	0.01	10	10	0.00	86.81	<0.001*
compensation	176	0.03	23	70	0.01	82.63	<0.001*
immigration	65	0.01	14	5	0.00	79.65	<0.001*
definition	86	0.02	35	24	0.00	57.11	<0.001*
regulations	50	0.01	19	11	0.00	39.42	<0.001*
investigation	72	0.01	45	25	0.00	39.22	<0.001*
intimidation	46	0.01	12	10	0.00	36.55	<0.001*
contravention	34	0.01	17	6	0.00	30.48	<0.001*
subsection	43	0.01	22	14	0.00	24.95	<0.001*
prosecutions	18	0.00	15	3	0.00	16.62	<0.001*
imprisonment	895	0.16	135	4	0.00	1468.82	<0.001*
indictment	55	0.01	15	1	0.00	84.23	<0.001*
enhancement	48	0.01	11	1	0.00	72.64	<0.001*
punishment	22	0.00	17	1	0.00	30.15	<0.001*
seriousness	43	0.01	25	4	0.00	49.94	<0.001*
unfairness	25	0.00	12	5	0.00	20.90	<0.001*
culpability	63	0.01	32	0	0.00	106.69	<0.001*
quantity	116	0.02	36	22	0.00	100.00	<0.001*
identity	131	0.02	23	48	0.01	67.46	<0.001*
vicinity	20	0.00	16	4	0.00	16.72	<0.001*
intention	97	0.02	43	160	0.02	−2.80	0.094
exception	16	0.00	15	35	0.00	−2.85	0.091
allegation	93	0.02	54	155	0.02	−2.97	0.085
remuneration	18	0.00	12	40	0.01	−3.44	0.064

*means $p < 0.001$
SC = the Study Corpus
RC = the Reference Corpus

Table 11 Key NOMz in HKN in comparison with AHC

Key word	SC(HKN) Freq	%	Texts	RC(AHC). Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
injunction	630	0.08	62	65	0.00	1,233.09	<0.001*
affirmation	339	0.04	79	14	0.00	764.50	<0.001*
allegation	155	0.02	58	112	0.01	108.39	<0.001*
completion	123	0.02	35	39	0.00	163.20	<0.001*
inspection	114	0.02	24	15	0.00	210.61	<0.001*
affirmations	113	0.01	41	0	0.00	291.09	<0.001*
misrepresentation	72	0.01	25	32	0.00	77.74	<0.001*
negotiations	71	0.01	24	22	0.00	95.34	<0.001*
preparation	67	0.01	29	36	0.00	62.52	<0.001*
confirmation	52	0.01	20	37	0.00	36.99	<0.001*
documentation	50	0.01	19	29	0.00	43.65	<0.001*
dissipation	49	0.01	11	0	0.00	126.23	<0.001*
injunctions	34	0.00	19	13	0.00	40.54	<0.001*
negotiation	32	0.00	18	10	0.00	42.78	<0.001*
hesitation	27	0.00	22	8	0.00	37.09	<0.001*
payment	602	0.08	117	409	0.02	450.27	<0.001*
settlement	221	0.03	43	154	0.01	160.87	<0.001*
management	209	0.03	68	144	0.01	154.01	<0.001*
payments	187	0.02	55	129	0.01	137.61	<0.001*
investment	116	0.02	49	96	0.00	68.78	<0.001*
assignment	108	0.01	28	59	0.00	99.37	<0.001*
repayment	85	0.01	30	35	0.00	96.68	<0.001*
disbursements	27	0.00	10	4	0.00	48.29	<0.001*
facilities	89	0.01	28	52	0.00	77.18	<0.001*
business	689	0.09	117	446	0.02	541.73	<0.001*

*means $p < 0.001$
SC = the Study Corpus
RC = the Reference Corpus

Table 12 Key NOMz in AHC in comparison with HKT

Key word	SC(AHC) Freq	%	Texts	RC(HKT). Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
decision	3,124	0.16	186	279	0.05	480.08	<0.001*
relation	1,405	0.07	184	101	0.02	269.49	<0.001*
construction	1,256	0.06	141	111	0.02	195.37	<0.001*
jurisdiction	1,201	0.06	106	71	0.01	269.84	<0.001*
operation	1,136	0.06	154	102	0.02	173.49	<0.001*
legislation	1,017	0.05	146	72	0.01	197.74	<0.001*
questions	969	0.05	149	76	0.01	171.18	<0.001*
determination	757	0.04	139	32	0.01	209.17	<0.001*
decisions	685	0.03	138	36	0.01	166.82	<0.001*
protection	526	0.03	91	41	0.01	93.49	<0.001*
proposition	485	0.02	133	16	0.00	150.36	<0.001*
obligations	481	0.02	89	10	0.00	174.33	<0.001*
convention	476	0.02	25	4	0.00	205.18	<0.001*
considerations	463	0.02	129	38	0.01	78.09	<0.001*
obligation	459	0.02	101	25	0.00	109.19	<0.001*
litigation	458	0.02	84	29	0.01	97.71	<0.001*
functions	370	0.02	67	4	0.00	153.87	<0.001*
limitation	353	0.02	73	16	0.00	93.94	<0.001*
corporations	352	0.02	36	0	0.00	177.05	<0.001*
function	349	0.02	96	14	0.00	99.03	<0.001*
distinction	335	0.02	114	14	0.00	93.11	<0.001*
migration	323	0.02	20	0	0.00	162.46	<0.001*
communication	309	0.02	30	10	0.00	96.55	<0.001*
exception	299	0.02	84	16	0.00	71.97	<0.001*
arbitration	284	0.01	17	3	0.00	118.53	<0.001*
termination	263	0.01	21	23	0.00	41.40	<0.001*
contribution	258	0.01	23	2	0.00	112.33	<0.001*
description	244	0.01	108	15	0.00	53.25	<0.001*
declaration	243	0.01	56	20	0.00	40.87	<0.001*
detention	237	0.01	20	20	0.00	38.81	<0.001*
acquisition	234	0.01	28	4	0.00	89.10	<0.001*
resolution	230	0.01	89	11	0.00	59.36	<0.001*
presumption	205	0.01	46	14	0.00	41.12	<0.001*
prohibition	205	0.01	61	0	0.00	103.11	<0.001*
assumption	191	0.01	88	6	0.00	60.40	<0.001*
relations	184	0.01	25	5	0.00	61.39	<0.001*
publication	162	0.01	24	3	0.00	60.51	<0.001*
satisfaction	146	0.01	63	7	0.00	37.62	<0.001*

(continued)

Table 12 (continued)

Key word	SC(AHC) Freq	%	Texts	RC(HKT). Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
notification	142	0.01	17	2	0.00	56.36	<0.001*
notion	141	0.01	70	0	0.00	70.92	<0.001*
limitations	130	0.01	47	4	0.00	41.44	<0.001*
causation	127	0.01	16	2	0.00	49.26	<0.001*
implication	127	0.01	51	4	0.00	40.12	<0.001*
qualification	125	0.01	52	1	0.00	54.21	<0.001*
recognition	124	0.01	59	2	0.00	47.84	<0.001*
competition	121	0.01	15	2	0.00	46.43	<0.001*
organisation	116	0.01	17	0	0.00	58.34	<0.001*
propositions	106	0.01	57	1	0.00	44.99	<0.001*
qualifications	100	0.01	39	1	0.00	42.08	<0.001*
valuation	98	0.00	10	1	0.00	41.12	<0.001*
characterisation	83	0.00	47	0	0.00	41.75	<0.001*
specification	80	0.00	18	0	0.00	40.24	<0.001*
conception	78	0.00	27	0	0.00	39.23	<0.001*
punishment	429	0.02	41	22	0.00	106.12	<0.001*
entitlement	384	0.02	79	11	0.00	125.75	<0.001*
enforcement	273	0.01	47	17	0.00	59.00	<0.001*
development	262	0.01	59	19	0.00	49.86	<0.001*
enactment	262	0.01	74	6	0.00	92.37	<0.001*
judgments	239	0.01	64	10	0.00	66.39	<0.001*
settlement	154	0.01	28	4	0.00	52.18	<0.001*
extinguishment	152	0.01	12	0	0.00	76.45	<0.001*
agreements	126	0.01	28	3	0.00	43.90	<0.001*
impairment	108	0.01	22	2	0.00	40.34	<0.001*
authority	1,206	0.06	148	118	0.02	165.67	<0.001*
liability	1,132	0.06	88	61	0.01	271.21	<0.001*
majority	779	0.04	124	53	0.01	156.76	<0.001*
possibility	407	0.02	128	38	0.01	59.32	<0.001*
validity	282	0.01	82	4	0.00	111.76	<0.001*
responsibility	266	0.01	82	24	0.00	40.39	<0.001*
entity	180	0.01	28	2	0.00	74.53	<0.001*
equity	123	0.01	33	4	0.00	38.36	<0.001*
incapacity	122	0.01	16	2	0.00	46.90	<0.001*
plurality	100	0.01	39	0	0.00	50.30	<0.001*
immunity	85	0.00	23	1	0.00	34.86	<0.001*
finality	83	0.00	25	0	0.00	41.75	<0.001*
invalidity	70	0.00	28	0	0.00	35.21	<0.001*
fairness	299	0.02	55	15	0.00	74.98	<0.001*
correctness	122	0.01	59	2	0.00	46.90	<0.001*

*means $p < 0.001$
SC = the Study Corpus
RC = the Reference Corpus

Table 13 Key NOMz in HKN in comparison with HKT

Key word	SC(HKN) Freq	%	Texts	RC(HKT) Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
action	1,378	0.18	181	175	0.03	746.23	<0.001*
injunction	630	0.08	62	2	0.00	682.02	<0.001*
affirmation	339	0.04	79	43	0.01	183.72	<0.001*
jurisdiction	318	0.04	69	71	0.01	106.72	<0.001*
actions	225	0.03	40	32	0.01	113.04	<0.001*
litigation	141	0.02	66	29	0.01	51.72	<0.001*
determination	136	0.02	64	32	0.01	42.92	<0.001*
termination	124	0.02	31	23	0.00	50.32	<0.001*
completion	123	0.02	35	14	0.00	71.10	<0.001*
declaration	117	0.02	38	20	0.00	51.02	<0.001*
obligation	113	0.01	45	25	0.00	38.32	<0.001*
affirmations	113	0.01	41	10	0.00	74.15	<0.001*
proposition	85	0.01	42	16	0.00	34.02	<0.001*
obligations	84	0.01	37	10	0.00	47.31	<0.001*
valuation	84	0.01	10	1	0.00	84.91	<0.001*
provisional	80	0.01	19	4	0.00	64.22	<0.001*
description	78	0.01	37	15	0.00	30.59	<0.001*
representation	74	0.01	34	13	0.00	31.52	<0.001*
misrepresentation	72	0.01	25	5	0.00	52.10	<0.001*
negotiations	71	0.01	24	5	0.00	51.12	<0.001*
assertion	68	0.01	42	15	0.00	23.13	<0.001*
preparation	67	0.01	29	5	0.00	47.20	<0.001*
option	58	0.01	16	10	0.00	25.11	<0.001*
reputation	57	0.01	17	14	0.00	17.05	<0.001*
confirmation	52	0.01	20	5	0.00	32.83	<0.001*
documentation	50	0.01	19	0	0.00	56.00	<0.001*
dissipation	49	0.01	11	0	0.00	54.88	<0.001*
representations	41	0.01	13	4	0.00	25.70	<0.001*
communications	39	0.01	15	1	0.00	36.02	<0.001*
consolidation	38	0.01	12	0	0.00	42.56	<0.001*
liquidation	35	0.00	17	1	0.00	31.76	<0.001*

(continued)

Table 13 (continued)

Key word	SC(HKN) Freq	%	Texts	RC(HKT) Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
injunctions	34	0.00	19	0	0.00	38.08	<0.001*
objections	26	0.00	17	0	0.00	29.12	<0.001*
exclusion	20	0.00	14	0	0.00	22.40	<0.001*
explanation	133	0.02	68	124	0.02	−3.00	0.083
considerations	34	0.00	24	38	0.01	−2.84	0.092
education	11	0.00	10	16	0.00	−2.92	0.088
agreement	1,464	0.19	133	178	0.03	814.28	<0.001*
documents	1,109	0.15	116	214	0.04	433.54	<0.001*
payment	602	0.08	117	149	0.03	178.35	<0.001*
settlement	221	0.03	43	4	0.00	214.15	<0.001*
payments	187	0.02	55	42	0.01	62.34	<0.001*
development	121	0.02	59	19	0.00	56.52	<0.001*
investment	116	0.02	49	18	0.00	54.68	<0.001*
amendments	111	0.01	25	23	0.00	40.41	<0.001*
assignment	108	0.01	28	8	0.00	76.30	<0.001*
agreements	98	0.01	28	3	0.00	87.84	<0.001*
entitlement	88	0.01	28	11	0.00	48.13	<0.001*
comment	82	0.01	20	21	0.00	23.23	<0.001*
instruments	32	0.00	11	4	0.00	17.50	<0.001*
replacement	28	0.00	14	3	0.00	16.73	<0.001*
disbursements	27	0.00	10	0	0.00	30.24	<0.001*
assignments	17	0.00	10	0	0.00	19.04	<0.001*
requirement	69	0.01	42	69	0.01	−2.83	0.093
quality	101	0.01	32	17	0.00	44.62	<0.001*
resolution	99	0.01	42	11	0.00	58.00	<0.001*
indemnity	95	0.01	24	12	0.00	51.62	<0.001*
facility	48	0.01	13	5	0.00	29.11	<0.001*
equity	46	0.01	25	4	0.00	30.42	<0.001*
reality	37	0.00	21	3	0.00	25.21	<0.001*
validity	34	0.00	22	4	0.00	19.28	<0.001*
businesses	40	0.01	12	2	0.00	32.11	<0.001*

*means $p < 0.001$
SC = the Study Corpus
RC = the Reference Corpus

Table 14 Key NOMz in AHC in comparison with HKN

Key word	SC(AHC) Freq	%	Texts	RC(HKN) Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
section	2,773	0.14	174	339	0.04	520.25	<0.001*
provisions	2,061	0.10	171	145	0.02	634.05	<0.001*
provision	1,572	0.08	169	135	0.02	418.29	<0.001*
prosecution	1,139	0.06	80	16	0.00	607.64	<0.001*
operation	1,136	0.06	154	97	0.01	303.67	<0.001*
commission	1,028	0.05	93	42	0.01	417.39	<0.001*
legislation	1,017	0.05	146	11	0.00	563.03	<0.001*
constitution	982	0.05	81	9	0.00	554.45	<0.001*
questions	969	0.05	149	90	0.01	241.39	<0.001*
compensation	700	0.04	57	70	0.01	162.98	<0.001*
decisions	685	0.03	138	60	0.01	179.36	<0.001*
conviction	651	0.03	68	9	0.00	348.17	<0.001*
direction	538	0.03	75	48	0.01	138.73	<0.001*
expression	532	0.03	129	27	0.00	196.61	<0.001*
protection	526	0.03	91	42	0.01	148.10	<0.001*
convention	476	0.02	25	12	0.00	225.50	<0.001*
definition	469	0.02	87	24	0.00	172.64	<0.001*
considerations	463	0.02	129	34	0.00	138.41	<0.001*
election	404	0.02	24	35	0.00	106.74	<0.001*
occasion	372	0.02	91	49	0.01	63.48	<0.001*
regulations	371	0.02	54	11	0.00	168.06	<0.001*
functions	370	0.02	67	6	0.00	192.71	<0.001*
limitation	353	0.02	73	34	0.00	85.12	<0.001*
corporations	352	0.02	36	2	0.00	207.65	<0.001*
function	349	0.02	96	27	0.00	100.57	<0.001*
distinction	335	0.02	114	28	0.00	91.08	<0.001*
migration	323	0.02	20	0	0.00	208.47	<0.001*
interpretation	322	0.02	80	40	0.01	59.24	<0.001*
television	308	0.02	12	5	0.00	160.38	<0.001*
exception	299	0.02	84	35	0.00	59.04	<0.001*
regulation	280	0.01	53	5	0.00	143.26	<0.001*
contribution	258	0.01	23	21	0.00	71.60	<0.001*
division	258	0.01	86	11	0.00	102.98	<0.001*
contravention	256	0.01	40	6	0.00	123.50	<0.001*
investigation	254	0.01	37	25	0.00	60.03	<0.001*

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Key word	SC(AHC) Freq	%	Texts	RC(HKN) Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
omission	238	0.01	49	32	0.00	39.50	<0.001*
detention	237	0.01	20	3	0.00	128.44	<0.001*
acquisition	234	0.01	28	28	0.00	45.04	<0.001*
identification	231	0.01	76	27	0.00	45.69	<0.001*
subsection	231	0.01	72	14	0.00	77.83	<0.001*
conclusions	222	0.01	98	14	0.00	73.10	<0.001*
prohibition	205	0.01	61	6	0.00	93.22	<0.001*
assumption	191	0.01	88	14	0.00	57.17	<0.001*
sections	190	0.01	81	24	0.00	34.23	<0.001*
relations	184	0.01	25	9	0.00	69.19	<0.001*
immigration	165	0.01	28	5	0.00	74.26	<0.001*
convictions	151	0.01	34	0	0.00	97.46	<0.001*
exceptions	145	0.01	56	12	0.00	39.73	<0.001*
notification	142	0.01	17	6	0.00	56.89	<0.001*
notion	141	0.01	70	4	0.00	64.70	<0.001*
prosecutions	137	0.01	46	3	0.00	67.16	<0.001*
cancellation	134	0.01	17	6	0.00	52.41	<0.001*
limitations	130	0.01	47	4	0.00	58.24	<0.001*
competition	121	0.01	15	4	0.00	52.99	<0.001*
imposition	118	0.01	48	7	0.00	40.24	<0.001*
qualifications	100	0.01	39	6	0.00	33.88	<0.001*
federation	90	0.00	25	0	0.00	58.09	<0.001*
recommendations	89	0.00	17	2	0.00	43.37	<0.001*
recommendation	88	0.00	20	1	0.00	48.41	<0.001*
rejection	86	0.00	52	2	0.00	41.57	<0.001*
characterisation	83	0.00	47	0	0.00	53.57	<0.001*
conception	78	0.00	27	0	0.00	50.34	<0.001*
subdivision	68	0.00	12	0	0.00	43.89	<0.001*
notions	62	0.00	40	0	0.00	40.02	<0.001*
assumptions	60	0.00	35	0	0.00	38.73	<0.001*
parliament	669	0.03	98	3	0.00	401.06	<0.001*
punishment	429	0.02	41	1	0.00	265.34	<0.001*
imprisonment	354	0.02	54	4	0.00	194.88	<0.001*
element	320	0.02	87	31	0.00	76.75	<0.001*
elements	266	0.01	80	21	0.00	75.53	<0.001*

(continued)

Table 14 (continued)

Key word	SC(AHC) Freq	%	Texts	RC(HKN) Freq	Rc. %	Log_L	*P*
enactment	262	0.01	74	5	0.00	132.30	<0.001*
judgments	239	0.01	64	26	0.00	51.15	<0.001*
arrangements	216	0.01	65	25	0.00	43.20	<0.001*
indictment	168	0.01	33	1	0.00	98.75	<0.001*
extinguishment	152	0.01	12	0	0.00	98.10	<0.001*
impairment	108	0.01	22	1	0.00	60.91	<0.001*
majority	779	0.04	124	73	0.01	192.54	<0.001*
possibility	407	0.02	128	41	0.01	94.10	<0.001*
community	289	0.01	64	13	0.00	112.80	<0.001*
validity	282	0.01	82	34	0.00	53.79	<0.001*
responsibility	266	0.01	82	24	0.00	67.94	<0.001*
activity	240	0.01	55	6	0.00	113.94	<0.001*
entity	180	0.01	28	17	0.00	44.18	<0.001*
incapacity	122	0.01	16	5	0.00	49.47	<0.001*
plurality	100	0.01	39	0	0.00	64.54	<0.001*
immunity	85	0.00	23	0	0.00	54.86	<0.001*
fairness	299	0.02	55	17	0.00	104.34	<0.001*
correctness	122	0.01	59	2	0.00	63.42	<0.001*

*means $p < 0.001$
SC = the Study Corpus
RC = the Reference Corpus

Notes

1. Excerpted from https://lawcasesummaries.com/wp-content/uploads/kalins-pdf/singles/gifford-v-strang-patrick-stevedoring-pty-ltd-2003-hca-33.pdf.
2. Excerpted from a judgment by England and Wales High Court (Commercial Court) Decisions. Available at http://www.bailii.org/ew/cases/EWHC/Comm/2022/726.html.
3. In Hong Kong, the structure of a judgment typically comprises of an introduction, prosecution case (the applicant's stance and evidence, and the verdict of the trial judge), the trial judge's reasons for sentence, grounds of appeal, and discussion.
4. Structured judgments in Australia generally includes information such as case name, parties, court name, jurisdiction, place of delivery of judgment, catchwords, case references, arguments, conclusion etc. (Olsson, 1999, p. 30).
5. High Court of Australia provides free-of-charge access to the judgments. Once the judgments are delivered, they will be included in the High Court Judgments Database. Details can be obtained from the website https://eresources.hcourt.gov.au/.
6. The Hong Kong Judiciary provides judgments, reasons for verdict, reasons for sentence, practice directions and specimen directions in jury trials on the Legal Reference System. Details can be obtained from the website https://legalref.judiciary.hk/lrs/common/ju/judgment.jsp.

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