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### The National Image of Global Brands

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# The National Image of Global Brands

## ABSTRACT

As the Chinese use characters based on ideograms, international brands have to choose a proper Chinese name for the market. This paper presents the findings from a detailed study of the Chinese names of 100 international brands along three dimensions: translation methods, cultural values and brand positioning. The main findings are: a) in choosing a new name the meaning is given more emphasis than its sound though it is still desirable to maintain phonetic links to the original; b) after linguistic issues, the three most important factors affecting renaming are: reflecting product benefits, brand positioning and cultural values. The translation gives an international brand not just a Chinese name, but also a distinctive local image; c) global brand and local image is a paradox to be addressed. In the previous studies localising an international brand is largely viewed as a passive translation process. This study has shown that renaming can be a value-added process. It provides an opportunity to re-cast the brand in the new market, creating a unique global-local image that enhances the original's brand equity.

**Key Words** brand name, global brands, translation, cultural values, global-local paradox, China

## The National Image of Global Brands

### INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the Nineteenth Century, China was forced to open its doors by the gunboats from western powers. The introduction of foreign thoughts and literature followed the development of trade and other exchanges. Translation became not only a technique but a form of art. It still remains as a mystery today that while westerners were generally hated or feared by the people in the Middle Kingdom as ‘uncivilised barbarians’ or ‘foreign devils’, who brought to China nothing but suffering and humiliation, their countries were given glorious names in Chinese (Table 1). For example, China was forced to pay war reparations in mountains of gold and silver plus the lease of Hong Kong to Britain after the defeats in two Opium Wars. However, Britain was still given an image that it hardly deserved: *a Heroic Country blessed with good fortune*. The same flattering translation was also used to other western countries with one exception: Portugal, for some bizarre reason, was named as ‘*Grape Tooth*’ in Chinese.

Table 1 Translations in Chinese of the names of some countries

Country	Name in Chinese	Meaning
USA - American	美国 - 美利坚	Beautiful Country - Beautiful, good, strong
UK - English	英国 - 英吉利	Heroic Country - Hero, lucky.
France - French	法国 - 法兰西	Country of Law - Law, orchid, west
Germany -Deutsch	德国 - 德意志	Country of Virtue - Virtue, will.
Portugal	葡萄牙	Grape Tooth.

When China opened its doors again in 1979, it became what someone called the last and largest consumer market in the world. For many international companies entering the Chinese market, the first barrier they encountered was the language. As the Chinese use characters based on ideograms and the majority of people are unfamiliar

with the Roman alphabet, the international brand has to choose a proper Chinese name. This is a complicated task that requires a thorough understanding of Chinese culture as well as linguistic skills. Through the translation process, the international brand is given not just a new name, but also a local image and a different identity.

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH

A brand is widely defined as a name, logo, symbol or any combination of these that identify a product or service and differentiate it from competition. A brand name not only conveys a specific set of attributes and benefits to buyers, it also expresses the values of the producer and the positioning of the product in the market. Brand equity is the marketing and financial value associated with a brand's strength in a market. There are four major elements that underlie brand equity: brand name awareness, brand loyalty, perceived brand quality and brand associations<sup>1</sup>. Brand naming is central to any branding strategy. Over the past 20 years much has been written on the characteristics of and criteria for a good brand name (for example, Collins<sup>2</sup>; McNeal and Zeren<sup>3</sup>; McCarthy and Perreault<sup>4</sup>). Although these lists vary from their emphasis, there seems to be a consensus on the main characteristics that a good brand name should have: short, easy to pronounce, memorable, descriptive of product benefits and positive connotations. Robertson<sup>5</sup> suggests two basic dimensions upon which to create a *strategically desirable* brand name: 1) the inherent ability of the name to be easily encoded into, retained in, and retrieved from memory, and 2) the extent to which the name enhances the planned strategic positioning or image of the product. In particular, a good brand name should be simple, distinctive, meaningful and indicative of the product benefits.

Studies on the translation of foreign brand names are few and far between. McDonald and Roberts<sup>6</sup> use anecdotal examples to show the challenge of brand naming in the Asia Pacific Region. There are a number of specific problems that international marketers need to address: cultural sensitivity, symbolism, language and the vagaries of pronunciation, transliteration and linguistic aesthetics. In a study of 261 localised Chinese names of foreign brands in Hong Kong, Chan<sup>7</sup> finds that compared to their originals, most of these Chinese names are similar in length, sound similarly in Cantonese and contain dissimilar connotations to those of original names.

Selecting a good brand name is one of the major tasks in building corporate and brand identities in the Asia Pacific. Particularly in China, a good name should have desirable connotations, desirable sound and tonal associations, as well as attractive calligraphy<sup>8</sup>. Further studies<sup>9, 10</sup> conducted in China and US show that differences between the Chinese and English writing systems affect perceptions and mental representations of names, product categories and communications. Specifically, Chinese native speakers tend to encode verbal information in a “visual mental code”, and judge a brand name based on its visual appeal; whereas English native speakers rely primarily on a “phonological code” and judge a brand name based on whether the name sounds appealing.

The existing literature referred to above have treated the renaming of international brands in the foreign market as either a passive translation process<sup>11</sup> or part of corporate identity issue<sup>12</sup>. These studies are based on the data in congregate form, a single case or anecdotes. No research has examined the renaming process in detail and from multiple perspectives. It is the purpose of this paper to address this gap.

#### THE SAMPLE AND STUDY

100 international brands were selected mainly from the two lists compiled by Interbrand<sup>13</sup>: “the World’s Most Valuable Brands 2000” and “the World’s 100 Top Brands”. The following brands were excluded in the study: a) those brands with Japanese and Korean origin that already have a kanji name, for example, Toyota and Samsung; b) those brands that do not have an officially adopted name in Chinese: IBM and AT&T; c) those brands that are not well known in the Chinese market, such as Gap and Bacardi. 10 brands (10% of the total) that are not on the Interbrand lists were also included for comparison purpose.

The Chinese names of these 100 brands were found from various Chinese sources, including major Chinese portals Yahoo!Chinese and Sina.com, and then checked with the firms’ official Chinese websites if they had one. These names are based on the simplified version of Mandarin Chinese used in the mainland of China (PRC). Variations in other Chinese speaking regions such as Hong Kong and Taiwan are beyond the scope of this study though some examples are used for comparison. Giving an international brand a new name in Chinese is a much more complicated task than just simple translation. There are three closely related aspects in the translation/renaming process: linguistics, cultural values and branding considerations. In the study these brands were analysed to find out: (1) What translation methods were used? (2) What factors influenced the renaming? (3) What implications did the new name have on the brand equity of the original?

## THE FINDINGS

### Translation Methods

Three methods are commonly in use to translate a foreign name into Chinese.

1. Direct translation or transliteration. The Chinese equivalent sounds closely to the original, but has no specific meaning.
2. Free translation. The foreign name is translated according to its meaning or meaning in Chinese, regardless of its original pronunciation.

3. Mixed translation. Both sound and meaning are considered. The pronunciation of the original name dictates the sound (phoneme/syllable) of the new name; the meaning of the name is chosen after the sound.

There are some cases when foreign brands are left un-translated either deliberately or due to difficulty in finding a suitable name. Typically these brands have following characteristics: short (M&M); or in business sector (IBM); or have an upmarket image (Bang & Olufsen).

Tables 2 and 3 summarise the results. From the sample of 100, the mixed method was mostly used (46%), followed by free translations (29%) and direct translation (25%). Direct translation maintains the phonetic link between the new name and the original, i.e., the former sounds like or close to the latter, but the new name has no specific meaning in Chinese. Free translation, on the other hand, gives a meaningful Chinese name but loses the phonetic link with the original. The Mixed method seems to be the most popular one among the three as it creates a new name in Chinese that both sounds like the original and has a meaning. This result confirms that the sound of the original name is the starting point in the translation process, but the meaning of the new name is a more important concern. Three quarters of the sample used either mixed or free translation.

The length of the name is another key factor: the shorter a name, the easier it is remembered. The majority of names have two or three syllables (52% and 38% respectively), with only a handful having four or five syllables (9% and 1% respectively). When the sound of the new name is decided, there are two more considerations. Firstly, a Chinese syllable can be pronounced with four different intonations. A two-syllable name like Fute (for Ford) could potentially have 16 different tone combinations. Choosing the right tone not only determines the easiness of pronunciation but gives the new name either positive or negative connotation. This

is not examined in the study due to its linguistic complexity. Secondly, after the sound and tone are decided, different combinations of characters can be selected that all have the same pronunciation but give totally different meanings. For example, Ford sounds ‘Fu<sub>2</sub>te<sub>4</sub>’ in Chinese, can be written as 福特 or 伏特, while 福 means ‘happiness’ 伏 means ‘bending over’. In this case, 福特 is the chosen name for Ford although the name itself has no specific meaning. While the meaning is given priority in a new name, direct translation is not without merits. For instance, Disney is translated into 迪斯尼 (pronounced as Disini in Chinese), which not only sounds very close to the original, but also generates a distinctive foreign or western image. This is particularly relevant in maintaining the country-of-origin effect. This will be discussed later in more detail. When compared with an early study<sup>14</sup> the results are very close in the length and pronunciation of the new name. 90% names have a “reasonable length” (2-3 Chinese characters) compared with 93.9% in Chan’s study; 71% Chinese names sound similar to the original foreign brands compared with Chan’s 69.3%.

Table 2 Translation methods used

Direct	25
Mixed	46
Free	29
Total	100

Table 3 Length of the new name

Number of characters / syllables	
2	52
3	38
4	9
5	1
Total	100



### Factors influencing the naming

Other things being equal, a brand name that has some meaning to the consumer will be more easily recalled<sup>15</sup>. Of 100 brands, three quarters are given a meaningful new name. In addition to linguistic issues, other factors that affect the translation/naming process are identified as follows (see Table 4 and Appendixes for details):

- Reflecting product benefits or industry characteristics,
- Quality and brand positioning,
- Links to logo or packaging,
- Country of origin effect,
- Traditional values,
- Beliefs and customs,
- Patriotism.

Reflecting product benefits and brand positioning are the two largest groups. It is interesting to note the use of folklore or idioms in re-naming car brands: BMW as a horse, Citroen as a dragon and Rover as a tiger. All these animals are powerful symbols in Chinese legend: the horse is related with speed, the dragon with power and the tiger with prestige. It is also worthwhile to compare Coca Cola with Pepsi Cola. In their Chinese names 可口可乐 (Palatable and Enjoyable\*) and 百事可乐 (Hundred Things Enjoyable), the last two characters are the same. However, the difference in the first two characters set them apart. Coca Cola's name has a clear link with product benefits (可口); the repetition of character 可 makes the name rhythmic that enhances the name recall. In contrast, Pepsi's name is a poorer imitation without any distinctive feature. In all 100 cases, Glaxo-Wellcome (葛兰素维康) is the only long name with five syllables. Despite its length, the name itself is unique and easy to remember. The first part Glaxo is translated as 葛兰素, in which the last character 素 is commonly

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\* The Chinese names of international brands in the study have been reverse-translated into English literally. The translation may appear odd in English because a) they are coined in such a way as a brand name; and b) Chinese characters used in these names may have various interpretations in meaning,

used in Chinese for medicine names. The second part Wellcome is rendered as 维康 (Keep Healthy), clearly describing the product benefits.

Table 4 Factors influencing the new name

Factor	Example	Total = 75
Reflecting product benefits or industry characters	Benz (1), Coca Cola (12), Procter &Gamble (29), Pampers (30), Colgate (33), Nivea (34), Avon (38), Reebok (42), Lego (44), Ikea (48), Polaroid (62), Hewlett Packard (67), Zeneca (82), Glaxo-Wellcome (83), Schindler (87), Cisco (89), Master Card (91), General Accident (95)	18
Quality / Brand positioning	Saab (3), Volvo (4), Lexus (8), Burger King (17), Budweiser (24), Johnson &Johnson (36), Reebok (42), Duracell (47), Body Shop (49), Gucci (54), Baume &Mercier (59), Tag Heuer (61), Canon (63), Minolta (64), General Electric (85), Goodyear (86)	16
Linking to logo/ packaging	Nescafe (19), Wigley's (23), Remy Martin (26), Shell (80)	4
Country of origin Effect	L'Oreal (35), Starbucks (28), Citybank (93)	3
Traditional values	Xerox (66), Ericsson (72), Prudential (94), Arthur Anderson (96), Deloitte & Touche (97)	5
Beliefs /customs	BMW (2), Citroen (7), Rover (9)	3
- Lucky names	Pepsi Cola (13), 7Up (21), Kellogg (20), Cadbury (22), Heineken (25), Marlboro (27), Kimberly-Clark (37), Amway (39), Carrefour (51), Dunhill (55), Breitling (60), 3M (74), Amex (92)	13
Patriotism	Unilever (31), Aiwa (65), Henkel (88)	3
Other	Peugeot (6), Pizza Hut (15), Lux (32), Compaq (68), Microsoft (78), Olivetti (84)	6
Same/similar to the original meaning	Volkswagen (10), KFC (16), Apple (77), BP (79)	4

In addition to the factors listed above, there may be other factors, historic or accidental, which also affect the choice of a brand name. Lux is called 力士 (Strong Man) in the PRC, a name contradicting the image of a young lady on its package. When the brand first entered the PRC market in the early 1980s, a Hollywood actress was employed in one of earliest western TV commercials. While bathing herself in a large bathtub (certainly an exotic scene to the Chinese viewers at the time), she said in a soft seductive voice “ I only use *Strong Man*. How about you?” This proved to be a huge success and Lux became a household name within weeks. In Taiwan Lux is

called 丽士 (Beauty), a name that matches with the image of young lady. Both names are pronounced with the exactly same sound and tone. In the end Lux has two different names with totally different images in the same language and culture. An explanation can be found from the ideological differences existing in the two parts of China. While 丽士 (Beauty) would be an acceptable name in the PRC today it was certainly a problem back in the 1980s. Under the orthodox communist doctrine, “beauty” was related to the decadent bourgeoisie aesthetics. A similar example is Johnson & Johnson. It is called 强生 (Strong Life) in the PRC and 娇生 (Tender/Delicate Life) in Taiwan. Considering the ‘One Child’ policy in China, it is understandable that every parent would want his or her baby *strong* rather than *delicate*. Besides 娇 also has the negative meaning of being pampered or spoilt.

#### Comparing the new name with the original

Some important findings are presented in Table 5 when the Chinese names are compared with their originals in term of meaning. Not surprisingly, with an emphasis on creating a meaningful name in Chinese through translation, 56% Chinese names have a positive connotation that the originals do not have. There is not a single case where the original has positive meaning while the Chinese name does not. In 7% of the sample both Chinese names and original names have almost an identical meaning. Take Volkswagen as an example. Its name in Chinese 大众 means “the masses” or “the people”. There are 12 cases (12%) in which Chinese names have a different connotation from the original names, for instance, Yahoo! is 雅虎 (Elegant Tiger) in Chinese. A quarter of Chinese names like their original counterparts have no meaning;

this is because they were all translated by the direct method (with one exception: Starbucks).

Table 5 Comparison with the original name

1	Chinese name has positive connotation, original does not	56
2	Chinese name has no positive connotation, original does	0
3	Chinese and original name both have the same connotation	7
4	Chinese name and original name have different connotations	12
5	Neither Chinese name nor original has positive connotation	25
Total		100

## DISCUSSION

The essence of a brand is that it is a name in the memory of consumers. It is a perceptual map of positive and negative associations, a symbolic language, a network of associations. Brand creates meaning and identification<sup>16</sup>. A good name has an enormous power in today's over-crowded marketplace. The findings of this study provide a strong empirical support for the literature<sup>17, 18, 19</sup> suggesting that a good name should be short, easy to pronounce, distinctive, suggestive of product benefits and not have any negative connotations. However, there are always exceptions such as Lux. The ultimate test is the acceptance by the target market. A good brand name enjoys a high level of consumer brand awareness and commands strong consumer preference<sup>20</sup>.

### Balance between sound and meaning

The findings indicate that the mixed translation is the most popular method used in the naming process. This is in line with the literature<sup>21</sup> that Chinese names place more emphasis on meaning than sound. Table 6 shows some comparisons of adopted names and alternative names. Mercedes Benz is a good example. Its official name in the PRC is far better than its old translation (which sounds like a western name with no other meaning), or the names that are still used outside the PRC. The sound and visual

image of two characters (particularly, 驰 with a horse as radical) generate associations of speed, dynamism, performance and capability - the exact attributes that the brand symbolises. Similarly, Polaroid has such a unique name in Chinese 拍立得 (Shoot Get Instant Photos) that accurately describes the product's benefit. This is again a better name than 宝丽莱, which has no particular meaning and can be easily confused with other "lucky" names. In the case of Canon and Minolta, although the old translations sound closer to the original pronunciation, the adopted names 佳能 and 美能达 are *strategically desirable*<sup>22</sup>: they have the inherent ability to be recalled easily from memory and establish a distinctive, quality brand positioning. Renaming a brand in another language/culture involves more than simple linguistic issues. Brand positioning is perhaps a more important consideration here. A good localised name like 佳能 (best calibre) with 'built-in' image could add value to its original brand equity and make brand positioning in that market a relatively easier task.

Table 6 Choosing the right name

Brand	Name adopted in the PRC	Alternative name	Comment on the alternative
Mercedes Benz	奔驰 Speed On	本茨, 平治, 宾士 all have no meaning	The first is an old name used in the PRC, other two are still used in Hong Kong and Taiwan.
Polaroid	拍立得 Shoot Get Instant Photos	宝丽莱 no meaning	Name used in Hong Kong, confusing with other "lucky" names.
Canon	佳能 Best Calibre	卡依 no meaning	Old translation
Minolta	美能达 Beauty Can Reach	米诺它 no meaning	Old translation

### Problems with ‘lucky names’

The result in Table 4 has shown a large group of so called ‘lucky names’. Good luck is a pervasive value in the Chinese culture. As consumers find a lucky brand name more appealing, it is not surprising to see the proliferation of using certain lucky words or characters in naming a brand<sup>23, 24</sup>. This, however, can be a mixed blessing. With some “lucky” characters being over-used, a lucky brand name may find similar names already existing in the market. So the brand has neither distinctiveness nor extra appealing. On the contrary, it could easily cause confusion not only between an international brand and local Chinese brands, but also among some international brands, for example: Cadbury (吉百利) and Kimberley-Clark (金百利), Kellogg (家乐氏) and Carrefour (家乐福). In both cases, two out of three characters are the same.

Another example is Miller Beer (美乐 “Happy Enjoyable”) and Domino Pizza (多美乐 “More Happy Enjoyable”). If these similar lucky brand names happen to be in the same sector, it could be even more confusing.

### Names with potentially negative connotations

Renaming a brand in a foreign language is a process prone to errors. It has to take into account of various factors and weigh over the subtle differences between alternatives. Examples in Table 7 demonstrate that a poorly conceived name could cause confusions to consumers or harm the brand’s equity. Peugeot is 标致 (Pretty) in Chinese. The name bears no link to the product function or benefits, and sounds too feminine. In China a car is generally regarded as a masculine product that should have a masculine name to match. In fact there is a better alternative. Considering 雄狮

(Lion): it stands for power, speed and hero. This name not only creates positive associations but also aptly relates to the company's logo. This is also in line with other car brands mentioned afore such as BMW and Citroen. In the case of Duracell, the Chinese name 金霸王 (Gold Overlord) has a potentially negative meaning as "Overlord" suggests a tyrant during feudal times; even though it is currently trendy to use words such as "lord" or "king" in brand names in China. In Taiwan Duracell is called 金顶 (Gold Top), a much better name as it has a link with the packaging and positive association: 'Top' reflects the brand positioning.

Table 7 Names with potentially negative connotations

Brand	Name and meaning in Chinese	Comment
Peugeot (6)	标致 Pretty	Too feminine, no link to product benefits.
Pizza Hut (15)	必胜客 Must Win Customers	Sounds desperate, confusing.
Duracell (47)	金霸王 Gold Overlord	Overlord is a derogatory term.
Marks & Spencer (52)	马莎 Sounds like a western female name	Feminine, suitable only if related to lady's fashion.
Dunhill (55)	登喜路 Ascend Happy Road	Philistine, incompatible with the up-market image.
Rolex (58)	劳力士 No specific meaning	The first two characters literally mean "labour".
Compaq (68)	康柏 Healthy Cypress	Cypress symbolises the aged or old, incompatible with a hi-tech image.
Microsoft (78)	微软 Tiny Soft/Weak	Implies "tiny and weak", contrary to its status of the world's largest firm.
Olivetti (84)	好利获得 Good Profit Gained	Who gains profit? What about customers?

Dunhill is another example in which a lucky name might cause problems in its brand positioning. Its Chinese name 登喜路 (Ascend Happy Road) is similar to Marlboro's



万宝路 (Ten Thousand Treasure Road). But unlike the latter as a mass brand, this “lucky” name generates a rather vulgar image that is incompatible to the brand’s up-market status. The cases of Compaq and Microsoft highlight the dilemma in finding a good name. The Chinese name of Compaq is 康柏 (Healthy Cypress), which is close to the original in sound, easy to pronounce and remember. However, the second character 柏 (cypress) is a tree symbolising the aged or old in the Chinese culture, a far cry from the dynamic and hi-tech image of the original. Microsoft is a different case. On the surface, its Chinese equivalent 微软 is a truthful rendition of “micro” and “soft”. In the original brand name, “micro” is shortened from “micro-computer” and “soft” from “software”. Unfortunately all these connotations are lost in the translation as the Chinese name means literally “tiny and weak”, which is totally incompatible to the brand’s position of the world’s largest corporation. The worst case is Olivetti. Its name in Chinese 好利获得 (Good Profit Gained) has almost everything of a bad name: long with four syllables, sounds odd, negative connotation, no links to either product or country or origin. The name generates an image of a company so profit-oriented that it cares about nothing else.

#### The global-local paradox

Brand image refers to the perception of consumers, a picture in the mind of the beholder. A brand’s name is the foundation of its image. Though global brands may exist, it remains a question whether there is any global image as the perception of global brands is conditioned strongly by various factors at national level such as cultural and socio-economic market environment<sup>25</sup>. The translation process gives an international brand not just a Chinese name, but also a distinctive local image. Take

BMW as an example. To millions of Chinese consumers, BMW is a ‘Treasure Horse’ rather than “*the ultimate driving machine*”. A horse is generally perceived as a heroic creature in Chinese culture: there are dozens of idioms and legends describing its feats and it is a popular subject in traditional Chinese paintings. By adopting such a name, the brand can tap into the rich cultural deposits and create a favourable mental image in the consumer’s mind.

Although some research has found ample evidence that consumers in Europe and USA increasingly favour national brands over brands from other countries<sup>26</sup>, the situation in China is different and more complicated. On the one hand, Chinese consumers prefer localised international brand names that carry positive meaning as examples from this study showed; on the other hand, they also favour international brands over real local brands as the former are perceived to have either better quality or higher status. No wonder hundreds of indigenous Chinese companies deliberately gave their products a brand name that sounds like translated foreign name to benefit from the appeal of foreignness. Some went even further by simply adopting an English name; for example, TCL is the leading consumer electronics brand in China. The dilemma faced by the international brand is not about whether to choose a suitable Chinese name (it is a necessity in the majority of cases), but whether to maintain a western image or to create a more localised image. For example, Nike and Reebok have adopted very different brand image strategies. Nike maintains a standardised “fitness and performance” image in all of the markets it serves. Nike is translated into Chinese directly as 耐克, a name that has no specific meaning (though the first character means “durable”) but has a distinctive foreign or western image and sounds more appealing. Its rival Reebok, on the other hand, customises its image on

the basis of national differences. It is rendered as 锐步 (Dashing Step), a meaningful name but having no foreign image.

From a broader perspective, the global brand-local image paradox is part of the debate of globalisation and adaptation<sup>27, 28, 29, 30</sup>. The challenge for international branding is to find a fine balance between the two strategies, as there are risks at both extremes. A pure global image that is alien to the national culture will not appeal to local consumers. On the contrary, a totally localised image will not benefit from brand assets of the original and find it hard to differentiate itself from the local competition. Unilever is a good case in point. A global brand, according to its chairman Michael Perry, is simply *a local brand reproduced many times*<sup>31</sup>. The company has been for years actively pursuing localised branding strategy in China, localising all its international brands and acquiring successful local brands. Most Chinese consumers probably have no idea about Unilever's origin, it is perceived as a multinational company with a Chinese identity as its name suggests: 联合利华 (United Benefit China). The company has recently launched its first localised corporate identity (CI) in China in April 2001<sup>32</sup>. The new logo places the original Unilever logo against the shape of a house with the slogan on the top: *Where there is a home/family, there is Unilever*. This is in accordance with Chinese emphasis on family values<sup>33</sup> and provides an example of a well-balanced and integrated global-local image.

## CONCLUSION

Brand naming is a difficult task in one's own culture. Brand renaming in a foreign culture is even harder due to the complexity in linguistic and cultural differences. The managerial implications of this study are as follows. Firstly, no simple rule could guarantee the finding of a good name, but an understanding of the issues discussed in

this study will help the company avoid the pitfalls, at least to prevent the costly blunder of choosing a wrong name. Secondly, more attention should be given to the meaning of the new name than to its sound. A meaningful name is crucial in developing both a mental image and favourable associations. Finally, the international brand has to decide which image (western or localised) will be emphasised in the new name. While a name with western image benefits from the country of origin effect and is in more consistency with the original, a name with local image may have more appeal in the market due to the fact that consumers find it more easily to identify with. However, it depends on individual cases, as there are gains and losses on both sides.

In the previous studies, renaming an international brand in the local market is largely viewed as a passive translation process with concerns mainly on linguistics. Through translation some features of the original name are inevitably lost. This study has illustrated that renaming can be a creative and value-added process when cultural issues and brand positioning are taken into consideration along with linguistic factors. It provides the international brand a rare opportunity to re-cast the brand in the new market, create a unique global or local image with built-in positioning attributes that enhance the brand equity of the original. Although this study is based on a small non-random sample, it is believed the pattern of renaming that it identified and the main issues discussed can be generalised largely to other cases. Further research is needed to look at the global-local paradox especially in relation to brand values. Some of the translated names clearly do not immediately conjure up visions of the brand as recognised by westerners, which raises a number of issues: To what extent does the new name enhance or undermine the brand equity of the original? Does the new name communicate the same value in China as the original does in the west? Does it matter

if the perceived values of the global brand differ in different markets? What is the impact of such differences on the company's global branding and communication strategy?

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APPENDIX Global brands and their names in Chinese

A1 Car Brands

	Brand	Name in Chinese / Pronunciation in Pinyin	Meaning	Translation method	Length/ (Syllable)	Comparison with the Original
1	Mercedes Benz	奔驰 Benchi	Speed On	Mixed	2	1
2	BMW	宝马 Baoma	Treasure Horse	Mixed	2	1
3	Saab	绅宝 Shenbao	Gentleman's Treasure	Mixed	2	1
4	Volvo	富豪 Fuhao	Tycoon	Free	2	1
5	Porsche	保时捷 Baoshijie	No meaning	Direct	3	5
6	Peugeot	标致 Biaozhi	Pretty	Free	2	1
7	Citroen	雪铁龙 Xuetielong	Snow Iron Dragon	Mixed	3	1
8	Lexus	凌志 Linzhi	High Aspiration	Free	2	4
9	Rover	路虎 Luhu	Land Tiger	Mixed	2	1
10	Volkswagen	大众 Dazhong	The masses	Free	2	3
11	Ford	福特 Fute	No meaning	Direct	2	5

## A2 Food/Drink Brands

	Brand	Name in Chinese / Pronunciation in Pinyin	Meaning	Translation method	Length/ (Syllable)	Comparison with the original
12	Coca Cola	可口可乐 Kekou kele	Palatable, Enjoyable	Mixed	4	1
13	Pepsi Cola	百事可乐 Baishi kele	Hundred Things Enjoyable	Mixed	4	1
14	McDonalds	麦当劳 Maidanglao	No meaning	Direct	3	5
15	Pizza Hut	必胜客 Bishengke	Must Win Customers	Free	3	4
16	KFC	肯德鸡 Kendeji	“Kende” Chicken	Mixed	3	3
17	Burger King	汉堡王 Hanbaowang	Burger King	Free	3	3
18	Heinz	亨氏 Heng shi	No meaning	Direct	2	5
19	Nescafe	雀巢 Quechao	Nest	Free	2	3
20	Kellogg	家乐氏 Jiale shi	Home Happy	Free	3	1
21	7Up	七喜 Qixi	Seven Happiness	Free	2	3
22	Cadbury	吉百利 Jibaili	Lucky Hundred Good	Mixed	3	1
23	Wigley’s	箭牌 Jian pai	Arrow Brand	Free	2	4
24	Budweiser	百威 Baiwei	Hundred Prowess	Mixed	2	1
25	Heineken	喜力 Xili	Happy Power	Free	2	1
26	Remy Martin	人头马 Rentouma	Centaur	Free	3	4
27	Marlboro	万宝路 Wanbaolu	Ten Thousand Treasure Road	Mixed	3	1
28	Starbucks	星巴克 Xingbake	No meaning	Mixed	3	5



### A3 Consumer Brands

	Brand	Name in Chinese / Pronunciation in Pinyin	Meaning	Translation method	Length/ (Syllable)	Comparison with the original
29	Procter & Gamble	宝洁 Baojie	Treasure Clean	Free	2	1
30	Pampers	帮宝适 Bangbaoshi	Help Baby Fit	Mixed	3	1
31	Unilever	联合利华 Lianhe lihua	United Benefit China	Mixed	4	1
32	Lux	力士 Lishi	Strong Man	Free	2	1
33	Colgate	高露洁 Gaolujie	High Dew Clean	Free	3	1
34	Nivea	妮维雅 Niweiya	Girl Keep Elegance	Mixed	3	1
35	L'Oreal	欧莱雅 Oulaiya	European Elegance	Mixed	3	1
36	Johnson & Johnson	强生 Qiangsheng	Strong Life	Mixed	2	1
37	Kimberly-Clark	金佰利 Jinbaili	Gold Hundred Good	Mixed	3	1
38	Avon	雅芳 Yafang	Elegant Fragrant	Mixed	2	1
39	Amway	安利 Anli	Safe Benefit	Mixed	2	1
40	Gillette	吉列 Jilie	No meaning	Direct	2	5
41	Nike	耐克 Naike	No meaning	Direct	2	5
42	Reebok	锐步 Ruibu	Dashing Step	Mixed	2	1
43	Adidas	阿迪达斯 Adidasi	No meaning	Direct	4	5
44	Lego	乐高 Legao	Happy High	Mixed	2	1
45	Barbie	芭比 Babi	No meaning	Direct	2	5
46	Swatch	斯沃琪 Siwoqi	No meaning	Direct	3	5
47	Duracell	金霸王 Jinbawang	Gold Overlord	Free	3	1
48	Ikea	宜家 Yijia	Good for Home	Free	2	1
49	The body Shop	宝地商店 Baodi shangdian	Treasure Place Shop	Mixed	4	1
50	Benetton	贝纳通 Beinatong	No meaning	Direct	3	5

51	Carrefour	家乐福 Jialefu	Family Happy Fortune	Mixed	3	1
52	Marks & Spencer	马莎 Masha	Sounds like a western female name	Direct	2	4

#### A4 Luxury Brands

	Brand	Name in Chinese / Pronunciation in Pinyin	Meaning	Translation method	Length/ (Syllable)	Comparison with the original
53	Chanel	香奈尔 Xiangnaer	No meaning, but the first character means 'fragrant'	Direct	3	5
54	Gucci	古姿 Guzi	Classic Looks	Mixed	2	1
55	Dunhill	登喜路 Dengxilu	Ascend Happy Road	Mixed	3	1
56	Armani	阿玛尼 Amani	No meaning	Direct	3	5
57	Louis Vuitton	路易维登 Luyi weideng	No meaning	Direct	4	5
58	Rolex	劳力士 Laolishi	No meaning	Direct	3	5
59	Baume & Mercier	名仕 Mingshi	Celebrity	Free	2	1
60	Breitling	百瑞灵 Bairuiling	Hundred Auspicious Fairies	Mixed	3	1
61	Tag Heuer	豪华 Haohua	Luxury	Free	2	1

### A5 Technological Brands

	Brand	Name in Chinese / Pronunciation in Pinyin	Meaning	Translation method	Length/ (Syllable)	Comparison with the original
62	Polaroid	拍立得 Pailide	Shoot Get Instant Photos	Mixed	3	1
63	Canon	佳能 Jianeng	Best Calibre	Mixed	2	1
64	Minolta	美能达 Meinengda	Beauty Can Reach	Mixed	3	1
65	Aiwa	爱华 Aihua	Love China	Mixed	2	1
66	Xerox	施乐 Shile	Give Happiness	Mixed	2	1
67	Hewlett Packard	惠普 Huipu	Benefit All	Free	2	1
68	Compaq	康柏 Kangbai	Healthy Cypress	Mixed	2	5
69	Motorola	摩托罗拉 Motuoluola	No meaning	Direct	4	5
70	Intel	英特尔 Yingteer	No meaning	Direct	3	5
71	Nokia	诺基亚 Nuojiya	No meaning	Direct	3	5
72	Ericsson	爱立信 Ailixin	Love Build Trust	Mixed	3	1
73	Philips	飞利浦 Feilipu	No meaning	Direct	3	5
74	3M	三茂 Sanmao	Three Prosperities	Mixed	2	1
75	Dell	戴尔 Daier	No meaning	Direct	2	5
76	Kodak	柯达 Keda	No meaning	Direct	2	5
77	Apple	苹果 Pingguo	Apple	Free	2	3

## A6 Corporate Brands

	Brand	Name in Chinese / Pronunciation in Pinyin	Meaning	Translation method	Length/ (Syllable)	Comparison with the original
78	Microsoft	微软 Weiruan	Tiny Soft/weak	Free	2	4
79	BP	英国石油 Yingguo Shiyou	British Petroleum	Free	6	3
80	Shell	壳牌 Qiaopai	Shell Brand	Mixed	2	3
81	Boeing	波音 Boyin	No meaning	Direct	2	5
82	Zeneca	捷利康 Jielikang	Good for Health	Mixed	3	1
83	Glaxo- Wellcome	葛兰素维康 Gelansu weikang	Keep Healthy	Match	5	1
84	Olivetti	好利获得 Haoli huode	Good Profit Gained	Free	4	4
85	General Electric	奇异 Qiyi	Extraordinary	Mixed	2	1
86	Goodyear	固特异 Guteyi	Strong Special Different	Mixed	3	1
87	Schindler	迅达 Xunda	Quick Arrive	Mixed	2	1
88	Henkel	汉高 Hangao	China High	Mixed	2	1
89	Cisco	思科 Sike	Think Science	Mixed	2	1
90	Yahoo	雅虎 Yahu	Elegant Tiger	Mixed	2	4
91	Master Card	万事达 Wanshida	Ten Thousand Things Reach	Free	3	1
92	Amex	运通 Yuntong	Good Luck	Free	2	1
93	Citibank	花旗 Huaqi	Flower Flag	Free	2	4
94	Prudential	保诚 Baocheng	Protect (Insure) Honest	Free	2	1
95	General Accident	保众 Baozhong	Protect (Insure) Masses	Free	2	1
96	Arthur Anderson	安达信 Andaxing	Safe Reach Trust	Mixed	3	1
97	Deloitte & Touche	德勤 Degin	Virtue Diligence	Mixed	2	1
98	Disney	迪斯尼 Disini	No meaning	Direct	3	5

99	Guinness	吉尼斯 Jinisi	No meaning	Direct	3	5
100	Hilton	希尔顿 Xierdun	No meaning	Direct	3	5