

DIRECTIONALITY IN THE TRANSLATION OF ALLUSION: A FOCUS ON TRANSLATION STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

Allusion, as the inter-textual and culture-specific expression, could be a puzzle that causes “cultural bumps” to translators. It simultaneously activates two texts and embedded with intended meaning from its source culture, but not necessarily in the target culture. Although the translation of culture-specific expression has been growingly taken into account in translation studies in recent decade, the allusion has rarely been touched upon. Since most translations are done from a foreign language to the first language in most cases, it would be concerned that whether translators could understand and the intended meaning of the foreign allusions or even recognise them. Therefore, it would be worth finding out how novice translators deal with allusions in both directions of translation to achieve the goal and what kinds of translation strategies are applied in each direction, respectively. This paper aims to answer the research question: What strategies are used in translating proper name and key-phrase allusion in two directions, and how far do they differ according to the direction? Thirty novice translators, all Chinese native, went through three phases of experiments, including pre-test survey, experimental translation practice, and post-test retrospective interview to show their attitudes, translation process, and reflective self-evaluation on the translation of allusive texts between English and Chinese in both directions. Strategies that students resorted to during the experimental test have been qualitatively analysed following Leppihalme (1997)'s summary of translation strategies on allusions, with minimum changes as possible. The retrospective interview (in Chinese) has been transcribed and coded by Nvivo to review the strategies employed and the participant's reflection on the motive for choosing a particular strategy during the process. The results suggested that there are potential differences in the choice of translation strategies to deal with two types of allusions due to translation directionality: Dealing with proper-name allusions, novice translators are more likely to apply retentive strategies in L1 translation (English to Chinese) and modifying strategies in L2 translation (Chinese-English), while in the translation of key-phrase allusion, they resorted to modifying strategies in both directions. The analysis further induced the potential factors that motivated the novice translators' decision-making process and summarized the translation competence and awareness of the translators that might influence the decision-making of the participants doing the translation of allusion and allusive sentences.

Keywords: Translation of allusion, directionality, translation strategies, novice translators

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