**Title of the Paper:**

“Decoding” Allusions in Translation: Navigating Complexities of Allusive Texts for Student Translators in Both Directions

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**Abstract**

Translation between languages as diverse as Chinese and English presents evident complexities, particularly when dealing with allusions. Allusions, as inter-textual and culture-specific expressions, pose a puzzling challenge for translators, often causing "cultural bumps" due to their activation of intended meanings from the source culture, which may not be readily apparent in the target culture. The unique cultural backgrounds of Chinese and English contribute to the deep embedding of allusions within their respective linguistic and social contexts and therefore “decoding” these allusions become a critical task for the translator.

Meanwhile, the directionality issue in translation studies adds another layer of complexity. Traditional translation approaches from the translator's foreign language to their first language raise concerns about whether translators, as "outsiders" to the source language, can fully grasp the connotations of foreign allusions. This concern becomes particularly significant when translating literature, poetry, or other creative works rich in allusions and cultural references. Aspiring translators are required to possess knowledge, skills, and strategies to proficiently navigate these challenges, exemplified by their ability to decode allusive texts. Thus, translation pedagogy needs to evolve to accommodate these complexities and provide comprehensive training that fosters cultural sensitivity, linguistic expertise, and adaptability in the face of changing translation practices.

This study investigates the translation process of allusive texts by Chinese student translators, employing eye-tracking experimental translation practice and cue-based retrospective interviews. The research aims to address the challenges encountered by student translators by examining their cognitive allocation and self-reflection when translating allusions between English and Chinese in both directions. The paper will commence by outlining the design and implementation of the eye-tracking procedure. To ensure the selection of appropriate text materials and participants, specific criteria will be established. The subsequent data analysis will encompass fixation data, translation production, and verbal feedback, with particular emphasis on applying four predefined criteria for filtering eye-data.

The study discusses the impact of directionality on allusive texts, finding that L2 translation is more demanding and concerning for Chinese student translators than L1 translation. In L1 translation, allusion comprehension requires more cognitive effort than non-allusion phrases, while no significant difference is found in L2 translation. GLMM analysis identifies factors influencing cognitive allocation, such as translation direction, Skopoi, and visits to external resources. Allusion type and source context length significantly affect L1 translation but not L2 translation.

Findings further identified the potential factors that motivated the novice translators' decision-making process and summarized the translation competence and awareness of the translators reflected in the translation process and how it could be implemented in translation training. These factors include competence in allusions and connotations, competence in external searching, utilization of the source text's contextual meaning, command of translation strategies, fine-tuning of the target text, and awareness of Skopos and readership.

Apart from providing empirical data for allusion translation studies, this research offers a fresh perspective from student translators. It contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the cognitive allocation and decision-making involved in allusion translation, serving as a reference for translation pedagogy practices, including targeted training programs for the complexities of translating allusions in L1 and L2 translation.

**Keywords**

Translation of allusions; Directionality; Translation training and education; Interdisciplinary studies

**Biographical Note:**

Dr. Haimeng Ren is a teaching fellow in the Department of Language, Culture and Linguistics at the University of Southampton. Her research interest focuses on the cognitive approach to the translation of culture references with specific emphasis on the application of eye-tracking to investigate the translation process of allusive text and the decision-making process of the translators across different levels.