

Children Run into the Future : A Study of Duality of Readers in Translation of Children's Literature

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Abstract: Duality of address which is prevalent in children's literature is compounded in translation workflow. This paper, therefore, aims to explore the invisible readers underlying children's work to delve into their identity, nature and role to understand their intricate power relations. By expounding the hidden readers in the translated children's literature, the paper emphasize the dialogical relation in power shared among readers, discusses the reason that accounts for the invisibility and explore how the children involve in the conflict and dialogue.

Keywords: Hidden Adult Readers, Power Relations, Children's Literature

1. INTRODUCTION

Double readership, a special phenomenon in children's literature, has a great shaping impact on the translation of children's literature, and has been discussed intensely by scholars (Frank, 2006; Tabbert, 2002; Van Coillie, 2008). Oittinen put forward "translating for children", emphasizing that the translation is a child-centered carnival where involves a dialogue of text, adults and children (Oittinen, 2000). This point is also echoed by Dollercup (2003), who sees the relationship among texts, adults, and children as fulfilling a narrative contract. Another proponent of Oittinen's viewpoint is O'Sullivan (2005), who explored the communication of different voices in children's literature from the perspective of narratology, and Lathley (2016, p22) proposed on the basis of this narrative communication model that the translator should have a dual-translator awareness in translation . However, it is worth mentioning that these scholars idealize children while acknowledging the dual readers and ignoring power asymmetries among the dual readers. Chinese Domestic research on dual readers of children's literature mainly focuses on: acknowledging the existence of implicit readers and their reading modes and acceptance mechanisms (Chen, 1998). Thereaders become implicit due to some extra-textual factors, such as commercial considerations, or intentional dual narratives (Wu, 2013). Previous theoriesbasically expounded children's literature creation, while in translation, relevant literature ,although there are translation studies that

directly is oriented to children literature, still concentrates on the study of the framework of translation criticism and translation norms (Xu & Jiang, 2011), and no special articles are available to explore the dual reader-centered dislocation and entanglement in the translation of children's literature. The unique phenomenon is worthy of academic discussion. This article starts with the power relationship of hidden adult readers and analyzes how they exert their power influences to control the process of text creation, translation and circulation, which in turn manipulates reading behavior of children, proceeds with children's anti-manipulation performance as a vulnerable group, and concludes with a dialogue in values and morals between adult readers and child readers. Foucault believes that "power" refers to control and dominance, and it is a kind of network relationship that pervades all areas of human existence. (Mao, 2014) He believes that people live in this network of relationships, in which power is expressed in the form of knowledge and truth, and social systems and power mechanisms have a non-negligible impact on discourse practice (Qin, 2001). Popitz believes that power is a universal condition for the survival of human beings (Popitz, 2017). He also categorizes power: 1. Behavioral power: which is especially referred to as the power that can inflict social, material or physical harm on others 2. Instrumental power refers to the long-term power that can continue to guide the behavior of vulnerable groups through threats and promises without time and space constraints; 3. Authority power: An internal power has a double recognition process (recognition of the superiority of others and hope to be recognized), where people have the willingness to voluntarily obey 4. Information integration power, which refers to the conquest of natural forces, with the capacity to determine the living conditions of other human beings through other things. He concluded that human beings will inevitably influence others through adjusting their expectations and standards. Power influence is not exclusive in political sphere, but prevalent in translation. Venuti (1995, pp.19) believes that translation can help rebuild the national identity of a foreign culture, and translation maintains or revises the literary standards of the target culture through the source text, so as to determine their cultural advantages in the target language culture, and at the same time, translation can also maintain or modify the mainstream conceptual paradigm and research methods in the target language culture. This relevance and effect are reflected in the importance of the target text where translation is a socio-political act and an ideologically constructed identity is an act of

complying with or violating discourse values and institutional constraints. The "violent" transformation effect exists in the process of translation and reception, and it has different manifestations in cultural and social structures in different historical periods. In the translation of children's literature, what influence do power, ideology and cultural effects have on translation choices and techniques? Children's literature conveys a variety of complex cultural and political signals, which are beyond the comprehension of children's readers. These messages are meant to sow seeds in the hearts of children's readers, where they will inevitably take root in their hearts as children grow up or some are bound to die halfway. Power can be found in different genres of children's literature whether be a picture book, a bedtime story or a literary book for teenagers, where the author often reveals ideology and values to the readers, or intervene to augment their personal subjectivity so the power status of adults and children cannot be equal, considering a wealth of social, cognitive, cultural and linguistic factors. Puurtinen contends that ideology is an unavoidable factor in creating children's literature, which is always thought to present itself in literature in various ways such as serving power and determining adult domination through language (Puurtinen, 1998). Knowles & Malmkjær claims that the relationship between adults and children is ultimately a relationship of power, through language such as syntax and vocabulary choices (Knowles & Malmkjær, 2002). Authors can describe events or shape characters to determine the beliefs, values, and power relationships.

Translation of children's literature is a way of socializing power relations between adults and children and gaining insights through language-learning traditions (Lathey, 2010). Both Puurtinen and Knowles & Malmkjær explore the relationship among ideology, power and subject in children's literature from the perspective of linguistics, but power is not only limited to the text proper but is yet to be explored, so this article intends to explore hidden reader group behind the text, who are neither a specific reader group nor the author's ideal group, but they exist in the process of creation, translation and circulation where they have manipulated and shaped the workflow of children's literature (Xiao, 2019). As one of the dual readers of children's literature, adult readers influence creation, translation and circulation of children's literature as invisible readers, such as parents who buy books for children's readers, or adults who read books aloud, or those who have a childlike innocence and love to read children's literature, or editors, publishers or translators.

2. INVISIBLE ADULTS

Children's literature always leaves people with the illusion that it is created for children's readers, and apparently there is no systematic classification of children's literature, leaving space for invisible adults. The invisible adult is a concept proposed by Nodelman (2008) to analyze the characteristics of children's literature. He believes that children's literature proper is a dual contradiction with readers comprehending hidden text. For example, picture books contain shadow text with no linguistic information but rich aesthetic and emotional message (Caroli & Pomante, 2016). Therefore, the text is the mouthpiece of adult readers, created to exercise power on children on behalf of adults. So how many invisible adults are there in children's literature texts?

2.1 Parents who Read Aloud

Children's parents not only exercise the power of purchasing and sorting out children's books for their children. They have actually exercised the reader's privileges in children's place. But children of different ages actually adopt different reading strategies. For preschool children, Oittinen believes that children need to be respected, and adults need to listen to children's choices and needs, so translators cannot just anticipate or talk to children but listen, join children, and participate in this carnival with children (Oittinen, 2000). Although Oittinen does not admit the existence of adult authority in this process, she actually emphasizes the existence of adults who read books to children. Echoing Oittinen's point of view, Dollercup (2003) believes that translators should consider the "read aloud" applicability principle, emphasizing that although children's literature seems to be written for children, admittedly adult readers are authors, illustrators, publishers, distributors, reviewers, researchers or parents who buy books for children. The adult prejudice and orientedness has inherently been conceived and created since the birth of children's literature (Van, 2006). Dollercup sees reading aloud as a narrative contract, where children are the motivators of this kind of reading aloud. In the contract that involved a narrator and an audience who are willing to listen to the story, children ask adults to read stories aloud. In order to make it easier for everyone to understand the behavior of the receiver and sender of the entire narrative contract, he argues that the contract continues if the parties are satisfied, and otherwise, the contract is terminated (Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 2003). Clearly this narrative contract

involves various narrative exchanges among the adult reader, the narrator of the text or translator, and the children as listeners, in which each interprets text from their own perspectives. In the contract, adults are the spokespersons of young children's readers by exercising the power to read, choose and appreciate texts based on their value orientation, cognition level and preference level. A narrative feast is a cast of adults and audience of children. Prior to this feast, adult readers disguise themselves as authors, translators, publishers and editors. Their complex and diverse roles leave children's roles gradually marginalized and weakened.

2.2 Editors and Publishers as Hidden Readers

Editors and publishers who work through the translation process of children's literature, cannot hide their subjectivity and power in text decision-making and circulating, which, on the contrary, is magnified in entire translation process of children's literature. Bisiada researched published manuscripts and translator's manuscripts from the corpus method to explore the intervention of editors in translation (Bisiada, 2018). By analyzing the parallel corpus, the editors are said to analyze the grammatical rhetoric of the text, especially the usage of nominalization, to understand the impact of editing on translation. One of the findings is that a large number of nominalizations are re-assigned to verbs by editors. This finding also shows that translation is an activity of multiple participants, involving intervention, manipulation and asymmetry of power relation (Enciso, Wolf, Coats, & Jenkins, 2010). The complication is compounded in translations of children's literature. If a published text is the ultimate text released in the market, then this ultimate text is likely to be different from the translator's translated text (Puurinen, 1995). This also shows that translation is a kind of subjective manipulation to some extent, mingling the intention of the translator with that of the publisher and editor through ideological censorship. For example, Thomson-Wohlgemuth (Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 2003) discusses the translation and publishing situation in East Germany during the Cold War, where ideology in socialist countries is mainstream benchmark to censor translation and publication of children's books (Nord, 2003). Similarly Mdallel (2003) pointed out that children's literature in the Arab world is imprinted with morality, preaching, and ideology. The translation of children's literature in the Arab Islamic world truly reflects the values and images of children, and the text contains heterogeneous cultural elements, which pose a threat to local cultural particularity. To resolve the contradiction, editors and publishers basically

resort to ideological manipulation (Ivanković, 2016).

2.3 Translators as Hidden Readers

For a long time, some scholars have been paying attention to the issue of the degree of freedom of translators in children's literature (House, 2015; Lathey, 2010; Van, 2006), discussing their translation strategies and cultural filters in translation. Translation is not an individual behavior, but more like lump sum of power consciousness and relationship of these hidden community members. Venuti (1995, pp.1) believes that the translator's covertness is the illusion effect of the text, and it is the translator's own manipulation behavior (Venuti, 2017). A translated text, accepted by most publishers, critics and readers, leaves the impression even with the absence of linguistic and stylistic features, that the translation embodies a writer's distinct personality, intentions, or expresses the main meaning of the text, or that one does not read the translation but the original. This illusion of transparency is the effect of fluent discourse, where it is the translator's efforts to ensure the legibility of the discourse and transformation, retaining continuous grammar and precise meaning. However, behind this illusion lies a variety of translator's disguise, as Venuti (1995) attributes the translator's invisibility to authorship (Venuti, 2017). The translator's intervention in the text leaves the impression that the smoother the text, the more obvious the translator's invisibility or the less visible the author's intention or the traces of the source text. There is a reason for the invisibility of the translator, who creates derivative works or rewrites the original text in the guise of an "author" (Venuti, 1995, pp. 9). The author can maneuver translator since the publication of the text. The authorship here refers to the creation of a certain form or medium as language originality. In addition, Lathely (2016) believes that the social status of translators also explains why they have to be invisible and translator's creativity has not been fully recognized. In many cases, priority will be given to the copyright of the author with the rights of the translators sacrificed. Nord (2003) selected five translations of *Alice in Wonderland* (German, Developmental, Spanish, Brazilian, Portuguese, and Italian) to analyze the form and function of proper nouns in children's works to explore the translation techniques and strategies in different proper nouns, and the translation strategies adopted by different translators to communicate with different audiences to highlight implicit creation of the text to cater to different reader orientations. Translators choose to hide their identities for a kind of compromise or a last resort. In order to hide their own creations, many translators adopt strategies like omission or mistranslation, which turns out

a lot of alienated texts, which also undermine the translation creed of children's literature --- readability like nouns of animals and flowers, when there are no natural symmetric words in target language so translators will choose not to translate and retain the heterogeneity of the original text.

3. ANTI-MANIPULATION OF CHILDREN READERS

Foss(Foss, Foss, & Trapp, 2014) believes that power is not only meant for confrontation but also has a constructive function, which promotes the interaction and communication of various subjects in the power relationship. Therefore, it is necessary for us to examine the unequal power relations between children and adults and explore the impact of these unequal relations in translation. As an inferior group, children readers are not incapable under the strong interference of adults. "Vulnerable groups use channels of disseminating diversified information and extensive social resources to achieve partial deconstruction of the authoritative discourse of powerful groups" (Mao, 2014). In power contests, children are always placed in a weak status, and they are the objects of adult education and influence. Children are always believed to be located at the end of power chain. They are influenced by adults like choosing books , especially preschool children, due to their own cognitive and literary abilities,so parents as adults will inevitably interfere. Adults choose books that they think are most suitable for their children according to their own values, knowledge structure and expectations. At the same time, they also help to read the content of the book, and observe and verify the correctness of their choices through reading .Even when they can read on their own, adults will influence their children's choices in various ways. Parents will ensure their children read books that help them develop physically and mentally, and have less or no exposure to violence, religion, sex, etc. Publishers, translators, and editors have long overtaken parents in intervening in the children's choices. Therefore, to a certain extent, adults are weaving a protective net to purify children in hope that children will develop in the direction of setmoral values and ideology. However, Beavais analyzed the relationship between adults and children in terms of time and power from an existential perspective (Beavais, 2015). He made it clear at the beginning that children are powerful, which subverts the traditional concept of child-adult power. He reversed the child-adult power relationship, and this idea that children are powerful based on the relationship between children and time. Children belong to the future and

are unpredictable. They may also reshape the future according to the works created by adults. There are all possibilities, so it is said that children are powerful because they have more time, and children's authority means that they have more time, (Beavais, 2015) Therefore, he reinterpreted the concept of childhood from the concept of time and existence, where children can "run" into the future and children are open to future and existence because they are aware of the relationship between existence and time. In terms of the didactic function of children's literature, he also believes that the didacticity of children's literature does not lie in its reproduction of lifeless structures, but in the potential of children to construct the future. "Powerful" children have the potential of future behavior. It is also the adults who expect them to do something through the didactic content of the work. Beavais discusses children's power relationship from the perspective of existentialism, which allows us to view the power relationship in children's literature more dialectically. This relationship is unequal and constantly changing. Adults can only view this relationship from a developmental perspective in order to correctly handle the power potential. With the advent of the electronic publishing age, many paper publishers also losing their audience and have to consider that the works they publish are worthy of the time and money. Compared with the publishing of popular literature, the market for children's literature is changing rapidly, with only a handful of children's literature publishers surviving in the ever-changing market environment, which can be seen from the annual children's book fairs around the world. Many ambitious translators often go there to learn about the trends of books in the whole world, which can help them understand the current situation of book translation. Lathley took *Harry Potter* as an example and argued that the role of the translator outweighed that of the publisher. However due to the success, any publisher who owns the copyright of this book hopes to undermine the roles of the translator and narrow time gap in publishing *Harry Potter*. When the "Potter" effect occurs, this gap can not filled effectively, so readers rebel against the publishing giant's control of *Harry Potter*. Impatient readers were unwilling to wait for the authorized publication of translation, so they even skipped the translation and read the original English work directly, so *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* ranked the first among sale of the original book, which forced many publishers who bought translation rights to resort to the law, suing the physical stores and websites that published the original books. Some readers also choose to read the online version of the translation because they cannot afford to wait for the publication of the book. The situation

described by Lathley is not uncommon. Regardless of form and value, readers' attitudes directly threaten publishers' wallets. In the context of globalization and international packaging of children's culture, publishers adopt the strategy of "early reading" in order to retain readers and attract readers' attention or online and offline interactive activities before publication to keep readers motivated and informed. Therefore, publishers no longer manipulate children's books and in the context of globalization, they also have to concede some of their power (what, when and how to publish) to readers. Only from sharing this power with readers can publishers profit and the children's book market continue to develop.

4. DUALITY OF TRANSLATION

From the perspective of cognitive and emotional development, children's literary ability is nurtured in accordance with growth process, social background and education level. Writers and psychologists attempt to classify children's literature according to their developmental stages, the developmental ability and educational level. However, such classification is challenged by duality of readers. For example, children's literary ability is influenced by their families, such as adulthood. The picture books that adults read to their children are also influenced by their literary ability, and the differences where the text structure are clarified through text analysis and the children's own experience. In the early research on children's reading patterns, the reading process is just a decoding process, starting from the basic form of the text to sensory stimulation, then to vocabulary, syntax and semantics, and then to the process of acquiring sentences and even chapters. Different from this bottom-up model, the top-down model emphasizes the reader's existing knowledge system, the reading context, attitude and expectation, which constitute the basis of reading, so children understand literary translation through their knowledge about the world, the non-literary schema, and their understanding of the aesthetic and fictional content of literature. O'Sullivan's analysis reveals that children's readers have many congenital deficiencies, but their abilities are not casually underestimated, and adults' underestimation of children's abilities is outcome of their utilitarian behavior and lack of cognition of children, complicated by duality of many literary works itself. This duality of text features different levels of meaning and complexity, where in some texts children can literally comprehend their stories, while some are more complex or ironic and beyond children's

ability. The text could only be understood by adults. Even those one-sided texts may require readers of different ages and educational levels to interpret and read to understand the multi-layered meanings. For instance, the double-sidedness revealed by the works is the ingenious combination of pictures and texts. Although the author intentionally incorporates multiple meanings into the original text, due to the marginality of children's literature in the pluralistic system, the translator adapts it at will, skipping or simplifying the translation to to exaggerate textual multiplicity . Writers who recreate literature are not part of the target audience and thus have limited knowledge of the audience. They were children, but he is no longer a child reader group, so adults can't conceive what children contemplate, and don't understand their way of expression. Some authors are obviously trying to please the hidden reader (adults) at the same time and children readers, so these contradiction also happens in translation. The openness of the text leaves the scope for readers to determine interpretation of the text. The blanks and uncertainties of the text require readers to participate in the construction of the meaning of the work. Readers use the "uncertainty" and "blanks" in literary works to use their own imagination to fill this blank, so as to realize the re-creation of the text and give the text a new meaning. The meaning of a work depends on the recipient (the endowment of the Translators of children's literature have insufficient awareness of the actual needs and preferences of young readers. In most publishing houses, few full-time children's translators specialize in translating children's literature or have gained professional qualifications , failing to adequately understand the entertaining, didactic use and content of children's literature, which must be acquired through highly specialized training specific to the culture. Furthermore, the particularity of children's literature is that children's literature does not only fulfill its function in literary value, but also social and educational norms. Even so, if children's literature translation works are only created to reflect function as its social education with no regard to literary system and value, it will also be despised by readers, because every reader also has psychological expectations and expectations about children literature. Readers also want to appreciate the aesthetic, cultural and literary value, so many of our works are often translated with their literary types or literary values. For example, Feral investigated *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* in France and found that due to the consideration of French ideology and cultural realities, various strategies were adopted to translate British values like adaption or omission, based on the moral considerations of the target readers (Feral, 2006). The function of the translation determines that the translator

obliterates the heterogeneity of Britain in translation and strengthens magicality through this translation strategy. However, it weakens the credibility and familiarity of the discourse community, and the perspective of translation has changed from the perspective of children in the original text to the perspective of adults. Therefore, there are a lot of abbreviated translations, which also greatly reduces the authenticity of the protagonist and the scene so it is not surprising that the novel has changed from a fantasy genre to a fairy one to meet French market (House, 2014). Through a series of discussions on the power disposition of hidden readers in text translation, hidden readers actively participate in construction, translation and circulation. Children's literature have dual audiences: adult readers as well as children. The duality also presents many problems and difficulties to text translation. Only by understanding the ability and role of adult manipulation and children's anti-manipulation can we effectively strike the balance of the actual circulation and dissemination of children's literature. Translators must always have a dual reader awareness that dual readers do not have absolute power to dominate the text construction, and they coexist in a dialogue environment of mutual negotiation. Both the subject and the object of understanding exist in history, so the text understanding also cannot get rid of the particularity and limitation of history.

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