
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Translating Agendas in Children's Literature: Oscar Wilde's Fairy Tales in China

Yanjin Liu

Faculty of Humanities, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hung Hom, Kowloon, Hong Kong, China

Corresponding Author: YANJIN LIU, **E-mail:** yanjin.liu@connect.polyu.hk

ABSTRACT

Children's literature is recently regarded as an emergent vehicle for the expression of opposing political views (Simpson, 2020), becoming an up-and-coming part of contemporary political discourse. To examine the discursive properties of agendas and political discourse in fairy tales and their translation particulars, this study adopts the political and critical discourse analysis (Schäffner, 2004; Van Dijk, 2003) with the method of micro-textual lexis analysis and macro social-historical analysis. It is found that: 1) political discourse in children's literature exhibits a marked discursive property of substantial adjective usage; 2) denotation expansion, trivialization, and contrast explicitation are three recurrent translation strategies under the strategic functions of *dissimulation* and *delegitimization*; 3) translation initiation manifests political awareness with local, ideological, and political implications. The study, with a specific focus on the Chinese context, foregrounds the empowerment of translation with local, ideological, and political implications, highlighting the delicate strategies adopted by translators in a likewise delicate genre of children's literature.

KEYWORDS

Translation; political discourse analysis; children's literature; Oscar Wilde's fairy tales

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1. Introduction

Against the backdrop of the overwhelming necessity of economic exchange and dialogues among various countries, political discourse has become more salient in the research into discourse studies. According to Van Dijk (2003), "ideology, discourse, and politics form a triangle that poses interesting theoretical and analytical questions" (p.16), which further legitimates the study of political discourse analysis. For the definition of political discourse, Van Dijk (2003) identifies several genres that belong to the domain of politics, including government deliberations, party plans, parliamentary debates, and speeches by politicians. Conversely, the seemingly divergent genre of children's literature is "universal, ageless, therapeutic, miraculous, and beautiful" (Zipes, 2012, p. 1). They have always been a typology of powerful discourse, capable of being used to shape the attitudes and behaviour of children within different cultures. Despite the fact that children's literature does not explicitly assert political discourses, they may still politically affirm as well as oppose some claims or propositions in society (Ching, 2005). Consequently, this study first intends to shed light on the discursive properties of political discourse in children's literature. In respect of Oscar Wilde, it is propounded that "the most overt and explicit manifestations of Wilde's polar thematic structure appear in his fairy tales" (Carroll, 2005, p. 291). Such rich denotations in his fairy tales together with the affluent political components could be taken as one of the potential motivations behind the choice of his fairy tales as the present research priority.

The discursive properties of political discourse may also transcend cultural boundaries in cases where translations are involved. The social activity translation, viewed as a "cultural and political phenomenon" (Buden et al., 2009, p. 199), does have its stance on the political discourse, more specifically in this study, the political discourse in children's literature. This study, taking the example of Oscar Wilde's fairy tales, would therefore examine the patterns behind the alternations of discursive properties via translation performances and initiations with highlights on the local and ideological implications in the Chinese context.

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2. Literature review

The seemingly divergent genre, children's literature, is acknowledged as of equal significance to other genres, at least from the perspective of theoretical genre typology. The definitions of children's literature are also divergent, ranging from pragmatic ones focusing on texts intended to be published for children (Lathey, 2015) to the unlimited range of any text that children read. Courage, friendship, and love are always eternal themes in children's literature with educational (literacy) and instructional (religious and moral) functions (Hintz, 2019; Hunter, 2008; O'Dell, 2010). Having provided a general sketch for the notion of children's literature, we must as well clarify the complex, elusive, and at times fuzzy boundaries in notions of children's literature together with their relationship with the literature unity.

Although it is argued that children's literature is meant for children and political discourse rarely occurs in any of these texts taking the children's limited literal comprehensibility as well as the authors' ethical issues into consideration, the argument that we are all in a society where "politics cannot be conducted without language" (Chilton & Schäffner, 1997, p. 206) would offer a further counterpart discussion that the use of language could have potential political implications in some social groups, consciously or wittingly, spoken or written, formal or informal, in mass media or literature, and thus, identified as what is called "political discourse". Meanwhile, according to Van Dijk (1997), "most political actions are largely discursive" (p. 18) and "political discourse may be a way of doing politics" (P. 18), engendering legitimate consideration of certain discourse in children's literature as political discourse.

A significant amount of research into political discourse in children's literature has been conducted by scholars from both the discourse and literature domains, among which the political usage and construction of children's literature (Bradford, 2007; Simpson, 2020), the construction of the intentionally brought to the surface whiteness in children's literature (Rogers & Christian, 2007), and political discourses about national identity in children's literature (Ibaceta, 2014) are the most discussed subject matter. Subsequently, while contextualizing political discourse in children's literature, the first research question in this study could be: Is there any difference between political discourse in general and political discourse in children's literature? If any, what are the differences and prominent discursive properties of political discourse in children's literature?

Upon the unveiling of discursive properties of political discourse in children's literature, their shifts and alternation transcending of cultural boundaries via translation would naturally be another focal point in research. Scholarly studies of political discourse translation mainly focus on the news (Liu, 2021; Malkawi, 2012; Schäffner, 2009) and social media (Li & Xu, 2018; Todorova, 2018). However, it is of equal importance to probe into the realm of children's literature, which could help ensure that child readers in the target culture do not lose hidden, coded information that children understand in relevant political background materials (foreword, postscript, notes, etc.). Through the lens of translation, a myriad of research into children's literature has been devoted to the challenges and strategies encountered (Van Coillie & Verschueren, 2014). Some of the research consents to the linguistic and cultural perspectives; Weygandt (2021) explored the literary construction of England's literary narrative via the Russian translation of British children's literature. The genre-related features and the child-adult duality, and challenges and constraints encountered by translators in the context of translating for children are also discussed (Rędzioch-Korkuz, 2021). Other research involves the social-political perspective introducing some of the features and complexities of translating children's literature into minority languages (Cheetham, 2022; Tabbert, 2002) or proposing the obliged manipulation renderings by translators in politically difficult eras in times of war (Oittinen, 2014). Some of these are topics with political focus and viewpoints, which are to be further discussed as the research focus of this study. Additionally, the translation of a similar fairy tale by Hans Christian Anderson is discussed in terms of canonization as well as the process of the translators' negotiations with the fluid Chinese poetics and ideology of the twentieth century (Luo & Zhu, 2019). Inevitably, recontextualizing political discourse in children's literature across cultures:

2) How are the prominent discursive properties translated, especially in the English to Chinese context? What are the implications?

3. Methodology

3.1 Data

All the fairy tales produced by Oscar Wilde, including *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (1888) and *The House of Pomegranates* (1891), were collected together with their Chinese translations by *Lu Xun* and *Ba Jin* since 1909. The choice was made based on the rare brilliance and gorgeous rhetoric in Wilde's fairy tales as one of the most prestigious children's literature collections, together with the popularity of the translated stories in contemporary China with some of the tales listed on the Chinese Standard Experiment Textbook for Compulsory Education Curriculum. To analyze the political discourse in children's literature, keyword extraction is employed accordingly on a detailed examination of the segmented political discursive features: *king, prince, princess, emperor, priest, Thorne, Councillors, war, etc.* The character width of each concordance was set at 150 for the formation of this dataset, providing an overall 41,291 characters with 9,071 words. To compare the political discourse in general and political discourse in children's literature, the novel *Man Overboard; an Episode of the Red Sea* (1898) by former prime minister Winston Churchill was adopted as the comparative data.

3.2 Analytical framework

Discourse and society are mediated by the agency in the academic viewpoints held by most critical discourse scholars. To examine the discursive properties of political discourse in children's literature together with their rendering process, the present study adopts the critical discourse analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (2013) that "brings the critical tradition of social analysis into language studies" (p.1). Within the framework of CDA, this study utilizes the political discourse analysis (PDA) proposed by Schäffner (2004) using the method of micro-textual lexis analysis (see Figure 1). Focusing on "critical reflection on the strategic use of political concepts or keywords for achieving specific political aims" (p, 121), Schäffner (2004) propounds four main strategic functions of political discourse analysis: 1) *Coercion*, "power can be exercised through controlling access to information" (p.144), 2) Resistance, opposition, and protest, "many of the discourse strategies used by the powerful for coercion may be counter-deployed by those who regard themselves as opposing power" (p.144), 3) Dissimulation, "quantitative or qualitative control of information" (p.145) and 4) Legitimation and delegitimization, "positive self-presentation and negative presentation of the others, explicitly or implicitly, by using specific translation strategies, by using and abusing texts for purposes of national ideologies" (p.145). Within the proposed framework, this study would combine the micro-textual lexis analysis and macro social-historical analysis to unfold the translation performances and rationales behind the translation of political discourse in children's literature.

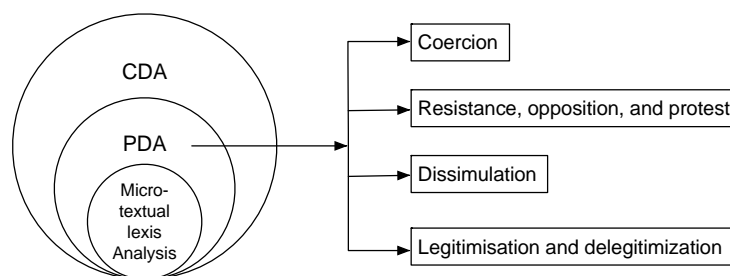


Figure 1. The Analytical Framework

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Discursive properties of political discourse in children's literature

This section entails the micro-textual lexis analysis of political discourse in general and political discourse in children's literature. The lexical word diversities of these two possibly different discourses are presented in terms of Lexical word variation (LV), Verb variation-II (VV2), Noun variation (NV), Adjective variation (AdjV), Adverb variation (AdvV), and Modifier variation (ModV). Utilizing the single mode of the web-based L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer (L2SCA) (Lu, 2012) developed at The Pennsylvania State University; this study compares randomly selected excerpts from *Man Overboard; an Episode of the Red Sea* (1898) and the equally arbitrary excerpts from the dataset of political discourse in Wilde's fairy tales. The comparison results are made explicit and visualized in Table 1 and Figure 2.

Table 1. Lexical word diversity of political discourse in fiction and children's literature

	LV	VV2	NV	ADJV	ADV	MODV
CHURCHILL	0.76	9.08	12.84	0.87	23.15	0.68
WILDES	0.75	7.76	10.98	0.84	19.32	0.57

Political discourse in fiction and children's literature indeed present trivial differences, as shown in Table 1. The overall lexical word variation exhibits the same pattern for nearly the same index of 0.75 and 0.76. Additionally, the two datasets are significantly correlated, $r = 1.00$, $p < .01$ (see Table 2). Meanwhile, their coefficient of determination score is computed to be 0.99, indicating a further strong correlation between the political discourse in general and political discourse in children's literature in terms of lexical words diversity, which justifies the comparability among these two datasets and performs as the prerequisite for the succeeding scrutinization.

Table 2. Correlations of Churchill and Wilde dataset

		CHURCHILL	WILDES
CHURCHILL	Pearson Correlation	1	1.000**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	6	6
WILDES	Pearson Correlation	1.000**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	6	6

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A detailed examination of the follow-up index on verb variation-II, noun variation, adjective variation, and others unfolds the overall greater diversity in Churchill's texts, which could be reasonably accounted for its intended intellectual audiences compared to Wilde's texts published for children. Meanwhile, the marked similarity in Adjective variation can be distinctly observed in Figure 2, where the two bars are almost the same, with the index being 0.87 and 0.84 with a difference of 0.03. The Adjective variation could therefore be identified in this case as the prominent discursive properties of political discourse in children's literature observed in this study.

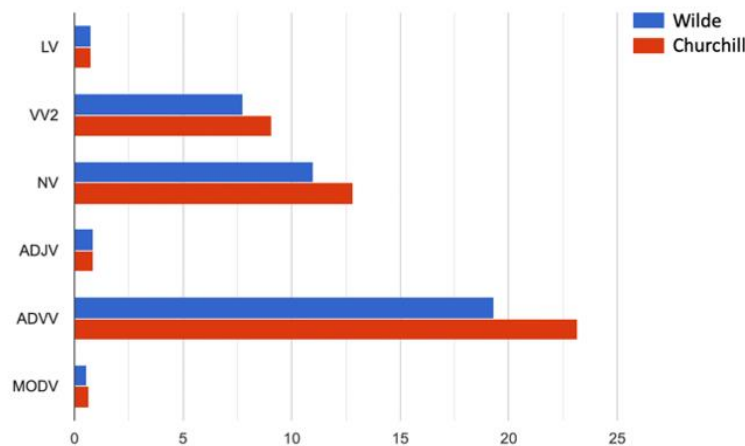


Figure 2. Lexical word diversity of political discourse in fiction and children's literature

The application and usage of adjectives vary across authors and genres, and we could expect with good reason the richer occurrences of adjectives in children's literature compared to other genres (Chen, 2020). The translation of adjectives, therefore, requires more considerations for translators behind their translation choices which might have potential social implications. How would translators tackle such richer occurrences of adjectives? Will they interpret the adjectives in accordance with the source text, or might there be a reduction and alteration in the frequency of adjectives that appear? To unravel the authentic translation choices and patterns, I will successively discuss how the renderings are operated in terms of the recurrent translation strategy involved in the observed prominent discursive properties.

4.2 Translating the prominent discursive properties

In a more connected world economy and society where language and culture interweave with each other, the status and importance of translation become increasingly salient. Translators, as connectors among languages and cultures, work in various and specific socio-political contexts and then produce target texts for specific purposes (Chesterman, 1998). The target text produced by translators would be the most convincing and a good tool to unfold and describe the translation activity. "Translations are facts of target cultures; on occasion facts of a peculiar status, sometimes constituting identifiable (sub)systems of their own, but of the target culture in any event." (Toury, 1995, p. 23) This section would therefore integrate a micro-textual lexis analysis of translation performances and, thereupon, traverse the macro social-historical odyssey concerning the translation initiation of different translators.

4.2.1 Translation performance: delicate genre, delicate strategy

To deconstruct the translation performances in the translation of political discourse in children's literature, three recurrent translation strategies in the adjective renderings are qualitatively observed through concordance examination together with a close comparison of the target text and source text.

Denotation expansion is observed as the most frequent translation strategy in the dataset. Denotation expansion is generally regarded as the extension of meanings denoted in the target language and has been observed in the translation of different genres like conversations and novels (Hasyim & Kuswarini, 2020; Partee, 2009). Through the lens of denotation expansion, many translating activities and agendas are achieved. The denotation of adjectives in the target texts of Wilde's fairy tales is frequently expanded in the translation process compared to their original counterpart. The denotation expands on many aspects of the Chinese renderings, the most salient of which would be referents and degrees for this study.

The denotation expansion of adjectives in referents and degrees is indubitably a process of information selection and control by the translator. For the quantitatively expanded translation of the fairy tale's title, the *happy prince*, into 安樂王子 (*Safe and Happy Prince*) by Zhou Zuoren in 1909, the translated Chinese character 安 (*Safe*) is spotlighted as the expanded denotation, entailing the meaning of 1) stable, safe; 2) stop and stand still; 3) comfortable, ease. This denotation expansion refers to the notion of *dissimulation* (Schäffner, 2004) that information is quantitatively controlled. The expanded *Safe* denotation echoes the translator's expectation for a safe environment at home in the Late Qing Dynasty when this literature was introduced and made accessible to the Chinese public.

The degree of denotation expansion in the adjective transfer is another facet identified within this frequently appearing translation strategy. Figure 3 exhibits the concordances in Wmatrix4 with the keyword *great*, whose translations are 榮耀 or 大的 in the renderings by translators. The two Chinese expressions do entail the meaning of *great*, while the denoted extent and degree are greater than the word *great*, rather like *glorious* or *splendid* in the Chinese context if back translated into English. In this case, the strategic function of *dissimulation* (Schäffner, 2004) is explicit in terms of qualitative control of information. Therefore, the referent and degree of translated adjectives are observed with regard to both the qualitative and quantitative control of information by translators out of their own hidden agenda.

Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the	great	King . The King is there himself in his painte
ebony , and worships a large crystal ; of the	great	green snake that sleeps in a palm-tree , and h
y six reindeer . The sledge was shaped like a	great	golden swan , and between the swan 's wings la
of much use to him , but it was considered a	great	honour , and was duly published in the Court G
The Prince and Princess sat at the top of the	Great	Hall and drank out of a cup of clear crystal .
tural . So at the end of the King 's garden a	great	stand had been set up , and as soon as the Roy
ous usage of the day , and had retired to the	Great	Hall of the Palace , to receive a few last les
ht of him kneeling in real adoration before a	great	picture that had just been brought from Venice
it was threaded with a thread of gold . And a	great	terror seized upon him , and he said to the we
n chamber , and through the window he saw the	great	honeycoloured moon hanging in the dusky air .
d bathed himself in clear water , he opened a	great	painted chest , and from it he took the leathe
attired he passed out of his chamber into the	Great	Hall , where the nobles were waiting for him .
afraid and left him . And when he reached the	great	portal of the cathedral , the soldiers thrust
ore of them . The burden of this world is too	great	for one man to bear , and the worlds sorrow to
He knelt before the image of Christ , and the	great	candles burned brightly by the jewelled shrine

Figure 3. Concordances with the keyword *great*

In the subsequently observed translation strategy of trivialization, the adjectives are further portrayed in more detailed and exhaustive ones in the translated target text. Trivialization in the target text refers to the strategy meant for the audience to get a specific representation of others with which they are not familiar. The strategy adopted in the political discourse of children's literature offers the Chinese audience an additional representation of the negative description (*misery vs. poverty and misery*) of the foreign society, at least described in a foreign context.

Example 1:

ST: And now that I am dead, they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the *misery* of my city, and though my heart is made of lead, yet I cannot choose but weep.

TT: 我死了, 他們就把我放在這兒, 而且立得這麼高, 讓我看得見我這個城市的一切醜惡和窮苦, 我的心雖然是鉛做的, 我也忍不住哭了。

BT: I am dead; they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and evil, *poverty and misery* of my city, and though my heart is made of lead, yet I cannot choose but weep.

As one of the subcategories of adjectives, the nominalized adjectives in Example 1 are identified in the source text in the political discourse of Wilde's fairy tales. It could be observed that the word *misery* in the source text is rendered into 窮苦 (*poverty and misery*) in the target text, sketching an atmosphere of the poor living environment of the others (for the inherent exotic nature of

translation). Additionally, the word *ugliness* is translated into 醜惡 (*ugliness and evil*), utilizing a combination of the trivialization strategy as well as the denotation expansion strategy and indicates the overlap of the strategic function when it comes to the specific translation activities. Altogether, *delegitimization* (Schäffner, 2004) is highlighted for the negative presentation of the others in the target texts.

The third most frequently observed strategy in the translations is contrast explicitation. The contrasts identified in political discourse in children's literature in this dataset mainly involve the goodness and evilness in social activities conducted by politicians or the contrasting social phenomena.

Example 2:

ST: "He is as beautiful as a weathercock," remarked one of the Town Councillors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes; "only not quite so useful," he added, fearing lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

TT: 一個市參議員為了表示自己有藝術的欣賞力，說過：「他像風信標那樣漂亮，」不過又害怕別人會把他看作一個不務實際的人（其實他並不是不務實際的），便加上一句：「只是他不及風信標那樣有用。」

BT: A Town Councillors wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes and said: "He is as beautiful as a weathercock," but fearing lest people should think him unpractical (actually he is not unpractical), he added, "only not quite so useful."

Example 3:

ST: I have told thee of the *joy* of the world, and thou hast turned a deaf ear to me. Suffer me now to tell thee of the world's *pain*, and it may be that thou wilt hearken.

TT: 我對你講過了世界上的快樂，可是你裝着聾不肯聽我。現在讓我告訴你世界上的痛苦，也許你要聽的就是這個。

BT: I told you about the world's happiness, but you pretended to be deaf and refused to listen to me. Now let me tell you about the world's pain; maybe that's what you want to hear.

The contrast between beautiful and practical are made evident in the translated texts of Example 2 to present the unpractical characteristic (which appears two times in TT while one time in ST) of the Town Councillors, a position providing a bridge between the community and the council. The notion of unpractical is generally down-toned in Chinese culture, somehow framing a negative representation of others under the concept of *delegitimization*. Much the same as Example 2, a highlighted contrast in Example 3 between joy and pain is made salient via the inverted phrase structure from the *joy of the world* to *world's joy*. The explicitation of contrast highlights the suffering *status quo* of the protagonist of the fairy tale, the epitome of real society. Both the two typical cases (Example 2 and Example 3), through the nuanced translation strategy of contrast explicitation, upraise the literary tension of the translated literature and, in turn, portray a negative representation of the foreign society. Translated literature *per se* involves the intercultural context where we have reasonable grounds to anticipate the comparison made by Chinese readers among different political systems. The negative representation of others will then conversely promote a positive representation of society with different social systems in 1948 when the translation emerged.

To recap, denotation expansion, trivialization, and contrast explicitation are observed as the recurrent translation strategies under the overlapping strategic functions of *dissimulation* and *delegitimization*. The three dedicate strategies are in accordance with the peculiarities of Wilde's fairy tales, generally categorized as children's literature which has the "simplicity of diction and the straightforward nature of style" (Nodelman, 2008, p. 8). Although many of Wilde's later critics disregarded his fairy tales, the "subversive potential" (Zipes 2012) in his fairy tales does challenge Victorian values and therefore fits into Wilde's canon. Meanwhile, his fairy tales were written during the years when he published most of his prevailing and critical works, and many of the reviewers of Wilde's time "praised highly the artistic qualities of *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*" (Aransáez, 2014). The delicate genre, together with the likewise dedicate works by Oscar Wilde, contributes to the translations in the Chinese context. Based on the examination of the examples, the overlap within the political discourse analysis framework is identified between *dissimulation*, where the information is quantitative and qualitative controlled, and *delegitimization*, where the image of others is negatively presented.

4.2.2 Translation initiation: political awareness in translators with local, ideological implications

Initiation in translation refers to the selection of texts or literature to be introduced and translated by the translators, also known as the agendas hidden in the pre-translation. In the translation of Wilde's fairy tales in China, the initiations are typically encapsulated explicitly in the preface or epilogue of the published translations. One of the first translators (Zhou Zuoren 1909) elucidated in the preface that the agenda for their translating or introducing Wilde was to reshape society.

When we were studying in Japan, we had a faint hope: thinking that literature can reshape our temperament and society. Out of this consideration, the thought of introducing foreign new literature naturally comes to me. (Zhou Zuoren 1909)

The translator of the first complete translations of Wilde's fairy tales, Ba Jin, also propounds his translation philosophy in the preface of his translation of Oscar Wilde's fairy tales that translation is an outlet of the translators' own hearts and ideas; the rationale behind the translation activity *per se* entails the translators' good wishes of their works on the potential benefaction towards the society they live in.

I translate the works of foreign predecessors because I have something to say, and I hope that my pen will play a role in the society in which I live. When I translate the works of my predecessors abroad, I just borrowed the words of others to speak my own heart. (Ba Jin 1988)

The early twentieth century was an era of huge intellectual ferment in the introduction of western ideals, characterized above all by the translation of copious new literary genres, including children's literature, into classical Chinese (Luo & Zhu, 2019). The translator themselves are vigorous in selecting source texts to be made available in their society, thus "appealing to the Chinese people to rise to the national crisis resulting from China's humiliating defeat in the wars" (Li, 2014, p. 122). Situated within the context of a society where foreign new literature is regarded as weapons against feudal thoughts, the translator's choice in the initiation is a manifestation of coercion (Schäffner, 2004) to present their power in controlling information access.

As Li (2014) posits that "no literary movement can escape the influence of the domestic social, political, and poetical contexts within which it happens" (p.120), the imported works under the literary movement are assuredly influenced by the elements mentioned above. In other words, the investigation into the macro level where translation policy is involved requires a consideration of the holistic social-cultural context as well as the specific domestic literary context. In this case, British children's literature (i.e., fairy tales of Oscar Wilde) is first imported as a weapon to call on the Chinese people to come forward to the national crisis caused by China's humiliating defeat in the war. The latter, adopted in 2016, confirms the booming needs and curiosity of foreign cultures of the new generations in China.

Many Chinese writers like Ye Shengtao began their fairy tale creation careers in the 1920s. They were influenced by imported Western works written by writers such as Andersen and Wilde (Luo & Zhu, 2019). These works were introduced to China before and after the May 4th Revolution. Therefore, it is necessary and meaningful to investigate the translation and acceptance of the political discourse of fairy tales in China from the perspective of politics and ideology. Indeed, in the translation of the political discourse in children's literature, the imported works showcase a tendency to influence the ideology of Chinese children with reasons being possibly twofold: 1) the translated fairy tales are published with the approval of potential authorities, i.e. the Ministry of Education in China, 2) some translated fairy tales become best-sellers under the promotion of prestigious publishing houses and the renowned reviewers who would hold their hidden agenda and preferences for propaganda. The widespread popularity of translating fairy tales with political discourse in the late Qing Dynasty in China (France & Haynes, 2006; Li, 2019; Shen, 2014) could therefore be accounted for the social-historical demand from both the authorities and also the masses. As Wilde discloses his social criticism of Victorian society in one of his fairy tale collections, the Chinese translators wittily sniffed the power entailed in his fairy tales in the Chinese context, leading to the emergent translations of his fairy tales in China for a long period.

Outside the overall translating activity and initiation, individual translators also have a role and are even more noteworthy for their subtle but powerful micro-textual control of the information to be conveyed. It is regrettably unfeasible for the study to conduct lively and compelling interviews with the esteemed translators for the reason that they live eternally with their works in the late Qing Dynasty. Alternatively, their agendas and considerations could be observed via well-organized written words in the preface, footnotes, or postscript for every writer. The following excerpts from the preface in Ba Jin's (1988) translation could be strong support for the argument that translators do possess political awareness while translating political discourse in children's literature.

I write only to fight. In the beginning, I attacked everything decadent and backward, fought against feudalism, autocracy, and oppressive superstition. I needed to use all kinds of weapons, and I could learn from more martial arts teachers. (Ba Jin 1988)

His writings with political implications are overtly presented in "attacked everything that is decadent and backward" and "fought against feudalism, autocracy, and oppressive superstition". Together with the translation initiation and performances discussed, the considerations and motivations of translation are partially shaped and coordinated by the political and ideological awareness of translators. The translators of Oscar Wilde's fairy tales possess political awareness with local, ideological implications, giving grounds for the conceptualisation and integration of *coercion*, *dissimulation*, and *delegitimization* as a whole.

5. Concluding remarks

Compared to other prescriptive studies proposing to get rid of some adjectives in the English translation of Chinese political discourse for the proposed reason that they are overused and therefore redundant (Wu, 2010), this study adopts a descriptive perspective under the framework of political discourse analysis within the domain of critical discourse analysis using the method

of micro-textual lexis analysis to unfold the discursive properties between political discourse in general and political discourse in children's literature.

The marked adjective diversity in children's literature of Oscar Wilde is identified and further probed into via three recurrent translation strategies and the translation initiation. By operationalizing the strategic functions of political discourse analysis, this study has shown that *dissimulation* is a useful means for explaining the denotation expansion of adjectives translation; the function of *legitimation* and *delegitimation* apply to the discussion of trivialization and contrast explicitation in the Chinese target texts; *coercion* is not detected in the translation process but is explicit in the translation initiation, i.e., the selection of introduced literature. These functions properly explained the translators and their performances involved as active actors with the local and ideological implications, political awareness, and delicate strategies in the delicate genre of children's literature.

The present study limits itself only to a fragmented period without touching upon the diachronic analysis of translated political discourse in children's literature, which would possibly contribute to the framing of the holistic translation of political discourse in children's literature in the Chinese context.

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ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1296-3942>

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