



# A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of *Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring*

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**ABSTRACT:** The target readers of children's literature translation are children, whose reading proficiency, receptive capacity, and aesthetic needs differ markedly from those of adults. Reception Aesthetics, a literary and aesthetic movement that emerged in the 1960s, places the reader at the center of literary activity, focusing on the reader's holistic *A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring*. reception of the text and taking reception as the starting point of translation practice, thereby highlighting the active role of the reader in literary translation. Taking the Korean translation of *Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring* as the research object, this paper examines, at the lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical levels, the specific translation strategies adopted by the translator out of consideration for the child reader. On this basis, the paper further demonstrates the guiding significance of Reception Aesthetics for research on children's literature translation and summarizes transferable translation techniques, with a view to enriching the practice of children's literature translation. Ultimately, only a child-centered translation can, beyond facilitating the interaction between the translator and the original text, further realize the interaction between the target reader and the translated work—such a translation can truly satisfy children's horizon of expectations and make them genuinely willing to engage.

**KEYWORDS:** Reception Aesthetics, children's literature translation, *Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring*, Korean translation, horizon of expectations

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Children's literature translation is an important branch of literary translation. Compared with adults, child readers display distinctive characteristics in terms of reading proficiency, receptive capacity, and aesthetic needs (Fan Jing, 2019: 124). Children's literature not only emphasizes educational value and entertaining appeal, but also possesses intrinsic aesthetic value (Xu Longyang & Zheng Xia, 2023: 38). This requires that, in the translation process, the translator refrain from mechanically applying translation strategies designed for adult literature, and instead take full account of children's cognitive characteristics and aesthetic expectations, striking an appropriate balance between fidelity to the source text and accommodation to children's receptive capacity. The Korean translator of *Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring*, Kim Myung-hee, is a member of the "Gusī Chinese Literature Planning and Translation Team" and a graduate of the Department of Korean Language and Literature and the Department of

## **A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring**

Chinese Language and Literature at Korea National Open University, thus possessing solid linguistic competence in both Korean and Chinese as well as cross-cultural understanding. Her translations include such Chinese children's literary works as Ge Bing's *Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring* and Bei Dong's *The Thumb Cow*. Throughout her translation practice, she has maintained a creative stance of staying close to and understanding children—in her own words, listening to children's chatter in the works, where there are joyful stories, stories of quarrels with friends, and whispered secrets. It is precisely this deep insight into the inner world of children that has made her translations warmly received by Korean child readers. Taking Reception Aesthetics as its theoretical guide and adopting the child reader's perspective, this paper, through Chinese-Korean textual comparison and concrete case analysis, explores the reasons why Kim Myung-hee's Korean translation of *Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring* has been able to enter the hearts of Korean child readers—namely, the specific translation techniques and methods the translator employed in the translation process—thereby verifying the applicability of Reception Aesthetics to the theory and practice of children's literature translation, with a view to offering new perspectives and insights for research on children's literature translation.

### **2. AN OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT CATEGORIES IN RECEPTION AESTHETICS**

Against the backdrop of globalization, children's literature serves as a vital vehicle for cross-cultural communication, and the quality of its translation has a direct bearing on child readers' reading experience and cultural cognition. However, traditional translation theories tend to overlook the subjectivity of the target reader. Reception Aesthetics, which emerged in the 1960s and takes phenomenology and hermeneutics as its theoretical foundations, counts Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser among its principal representatives. By shifting the focus of literary studies from the "work-centered" paradigm to a "reader-centered" one, this theory foregrounds the active role of the reader in literary activity and offers a new theoretical perspective for the translation of children's literature.

Reception Aesthetics holds that, within the tripartite relationship of author, work, and reader, the reader by no means merely reacts passively; rather, the reader is an active constitutive element of history itself. The value of a literary work is neither fixed nor immutable; only through the reader's reading and transmission, and through entering the experiential horizon, can the work's value and life be sustained, and thereby can the reader's status be elevated. The principal contribution of Reception Aesthetics lies precisely in its recognition that the reader's reading response and creativity constitute the very foundation for understanding a literary work, thereby establishing the reader's central position in literary studies. Without the reader, the value of a literary work cannot be realized; the reader's reception of literature is a subjectively active and creative labor, and a process through which textual meaning is actualized.

The horizon of expectations is one of the core concepts of Reception Aesthetics. Building upon Gadamer's concept of "fusion of horizons," Jauss proposes that, prior to and during the reading process, the reader, due to a complex array of personal and social factors, already possesses a preexisting structural schema in psychological terms—this preexisting state of knowledge constitutes the horizon of expectations. A literary work can never present itself in an informational vacuum; it invariably evokes the reader's reading memories and expectations through such means as implication and foreshadowing. The horizon of expectations is by no means static; it develops and changes in tandem with the enhancement of the reader's literary cultivation, aesthetic taste, and appreciative capacity. The process by which the reader receives a literary work is precisely the process of continuously revising and transforming the horizon of expectations. The fusion of horizons emphasized by Reception Theory means that reception and understanding can only occur when the reader's horizon of expectations fuses with the horizon of the literary text.

The indeterminacy and blanks of meaning constitute another important concept in Reception Aesthetics, also referred to as the textual appeal structure. This concept denotes the relational gaps and uncertainties that exist between the phenomena described in a literary text and lived reality. Such indeterminacies and blanks prompt the reader to actively seek the meaning of the work, to invest the text with definite signification, and to fill in these semantic blanks during the reading process. There is no single absolute interpretation of the meaning of a literary work; although the sentences of the text remain unchanged, their meaning can vary over time with the reader's intervention. Textual meaning can only be generated when, in the course of reading and reception, the reader mobilizes and exercises their reading initiative.

Reception Aesthetics holds profound guiding significance for literary translation. In translation, the translator acts both as the

## A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring

reader of the source text and as the author of the translated text, and must confront two reception activities: the first is the interaction between the translator and the source text, which shapes the translator's understanding of the original and demands that the translator enhance their own receptive capacity so as to achieve the first fusion of horizons with the text; the second is the interaction and dialogue between the target reader and the translated text, which involves perceptual interplay and aesthetic-psychological reception. While pursuing the fusion of their own horizon with that of the text, the translator must also anticipate the receptive capacity and horizon of expectations of the target-language reader, and endeavor to facilitate the fusion between the target reader's horizon of expectations and the translated text. Since the ultimate purpose of translation lies in enabling the reader to read, the translator must give full weight to the reception of the target reader.

Children's literature translation possesses its own distinct particularities. It requires not only philosophical and literary theoretical support, but, more importantly, the vitality of language to stimulate children's psychological excitement and pleasure, opening up in young minds spaces for receptive imagination and creativity rich with color. Such psychological transformations often transcend the author's creative intent, embodying greater social and educational value. Even reception characterized by joyful enjoyment holds positive significance for children's psychological development. Translated children's literature benefits children by facilitating their reception of foreign cultures and broadening their horizons, thereby providing a profound accumulation of cultural knowledge for their adult lives. Literary reading in childhood may appear to be merely a matter of reception, but in substance the knowledge absorbed during this stage exerts a profound influence on their entire lives. Therefore, children's literature translation is a proposition that warrants sustained scholarly attention.

### 3. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE TRANSLATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF RECEPTION AESTHETICS

Reception Aesthetics advocates taking the reader as the center, which requires that, when sorting out the translation logic, the translator consistently treat the child as the core audience. In aspects such as wording, emotional expression, and grammatical integration, the translator should take full account of the linguistic developmental characteristics and emotional-cognitive patterns of children of different age groups, so that the translated text can more fully embody childlike delight and innocence (Xu Derong, 2017). The target readers of children's literature are children, whose distinctive mode of thinking dictates that the linguistic style of such works should be grounded predominantly in visually concrete and imagistic thinking. Therefore, during the translation process, it is necessary to adopt flexible translation strategies in accordance with children's unique psychological, cognitive, and receptive characteristics, and to give in-depth consideration to the particularities of children's literary reception. In light of this, taking Reception Aesthetics as its theoretical basis, this paper focuses on exploring effective approaches to the translation of children's literary texts from four dimensions—namely lexicon, syntax, rhetoric, and culture—striving to preserve, to the greatest extent possible, the beauty of sense, the beauty of sound, and the beauty of form in the translated text. An accomplished translator can not only produce a translation that is highly congruent with the meaning of the source text, but can also retain the rhythm, cadence, and formal features of the source language (Ma Lin, 2023: 35).

#### Case 1: Translation of Onomatopoeia

ST: 雨雨的肚子咕咕地叫起来, 他已经整整一天没吃东西了。他忍不住口内生津, 赶紧把一口口水咽进肚里。银筷子微笑着看着他: “想吃吗?” (P7)

(Yuyu's stomach began to gurgle. He had not eaten anything for an entire day. He could not help but salivate, hurriedly swallowing mouthful after mouthful of saliva. Silver Chopsticks smiled as he watched him: "Do you want to eat?")

TT: 하루 종일 아무것도 먹지 못한 유유의 배 속에서 **꼬르륵꼬르륵** 소리가 나기 시작했다. 위위는 고인 침을 꿀꺽 삼켰다. 은젓가락이 마소를 지으며 위위를 쳐다보았다. “먹고싶나?” (P15)

(From inside Yuyu's stomach, who had eaten nothing all day, a gurgling sound began to rise. Yuyu gave a dry swallow of his saliva. Silver Chopsticks looked at Yuyu with a faint smile and asked, "You want to eat?")

The Chinese onomatopoeia "gugu" (咕咕) imitates the sound of intestinal rumbling, but different languages have different conventions for mimicking the same sound. In Korean, the sound made by a hungry stomach is conventionally expressed as "kkoreureuk" (꼬르륵), which the Standard Korean Language Dictionary defines as "a sound produced inside the stomach when one is hungry or digesting." If the word were translated literally as "gugu" (구구), it would not only fail to conform to Korean

## A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring

onomatopoeic conventions but would also create an excessive aesthetic distance—when Korean young readers encountered "gugu," what might spring to mind could be some other sound entirely, rather than the rumbling of a hungry belly. By directly employing this native Korean onomatopoeia in its reduplicated form "kkoreureuk-kkoreureuk" (꼬르륵꼬르륵), the translator extends the perceived duration of the sound through syllable repetition, rendering Yuyu's persistent, unbearable hunger more concrete and palpable, and thereby satisfying the child reader's reading expectation of "hearing" the sound. From the perspective of blanks of meaning, although the phrase "the stomach gurgled" already provides a sound description, for children with limited life experience, "how it gurgles" and "how intensely it gurgles" still require imagination to complete; the reduplicated form fills this acoustic blank in the source text more fully. Moreover, "kkoreureuk" is not a fleeting neologism but a word with a long-standing tradition of use in Korean children's literature—a choice that also ensures the translation will not rapidly become outdated with shifts in linguistic fashion.

### Case 2: Translation of Mimetic Words

ST: 雨雨跟在后面：“为什么叫我七号，是因为我前面已经有六个了吗？”“是有六个，可是你见不到他们了。”“都走了？”  
癞头吞吞吐吐：“好像是，我也不太清楚。”（P3）

(Yuyu followed behind. "Why call me Number Seven? Is it because there were six before me?" "There were six, but you won't be able to see them." "They've all gone?" Scabbyhead hemmed and hawed: "It seems so. I'm not too sure either.")

TT: 위유가 뒤따라가며 물었다 “왜 나를 7 호라고 부르라는 거지 내가 오기 전에 여섯 마리가 더 있었어” “있었지 하지만 다서는 볼 수 없을 거야” “모두 떠났어야”  
“아마 그럴걸 나도 잘 몰라” 부스르미가 우물쭈물하며 대답했다 (P11)

(Yuyu followed and asked: "Why do they call me Number Seven? Were there six more before I came?" "There were. But you won't ever see them again." "They've all left?" "Probably so. I don't really know either." Scabbyhead answered haltingly and evasively.)

"吞吞吐吐" (to hem and haw) is the narrator's summary of Scabbyhead's manner of speaking, and constitutes abstract narrative language. The Standard Korean Language Dictionary defines "umul-jjumul" (우물쭈물) as "a state of being unable to speak or act clearly and hesitating repeatedly." Through vowel alternation, the word forms a rhythmic repetition, and its very pronunciation carries a sense of mumbling and prevarication. It differs from "to hem and haw" rather than an abstract concept that requires decoding, it is a vocal manner that can be directly "heard." From the four characters of the Chinese idiom, child readers know that Scabbyhead speaks with reluctance, but what his exact expression is, what his voice sounds like, and what rhythm his speech takes all these require the readers to imagine for themselves. For children whose life experience and reading experience are still limited, constructing a vivid conversational scene solely on the basis of an abstract idiom is, in fact, quite difficult. By replacing the narrative description in the source text with the mimetic word "umul-jjumul," the translator makes directly perceptible what readers would otherwise have to imagine on their own, lowering the threshold for young readers to enter the scene. What is interesting, however, is that the translator does not thereby spell everything out: what exactly Scabbyhead is concealing, and why the words stop at the tip of his tongue these suspenseful elements of the plot are preserved intact. The blanks that need filling are filled; the suspense that needs keeping is kept. This sense of measure is precisely the most difficult thing to grasp in the translation of children's literature.

### Case 3: Translation of Modal Particles

ST: 雨雨说：“您说过，不能吃。”“我只是那样说说，你吃一点儿没关系。”银筷子说着，用黑亮的眼睛锐利地打量着雨雨，从头看到脚，“其实你的骨架是很不错的。”（P9）

(Yuyu said: "You told me I couldn't eat it." "I just said that casually. It wouldn't matter if you ate a little." As Silver Chopsticks spoke, he scrutinized Yuyu sharply with his gleaming black eyes from head to toe: "Actually, your bone structure is quite good.")

TT: “먹지 말고요 하셨잖아요” “그건 그냥 해본 소리야 조금 먹는 건 상관없어” 은젓가락은 반짝이는 까만 눈으로 위유를 머리에서 발끝까지 날카롭게 훑어보았다  
“사실 네 골격 구조는 꽤 쓸만해 딱 좋아” (P19)

("You did tell me I couldn't eat it, you know." "I just said that offhand. It doesn't matter if you have a little." Silver Chopsticks ran his gleaming black eyes sharply over Yuyu from head to toe, scrutinizing him. "Actually, your bone structure is quite something. Just right.")

## A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring

"You told me I couldn't eat it" is, in the source text, an objective statement. Yuyu is explaining why he did not sneak any food—not because he didn't want to eat, but because there was a prohibition in place. But is there something else beneath this sentence? Perhaps a trace of suspicion about Silver Chopsticks' "test," or a faint hint of grievance? The source text does not spell this out, and readers may perceive it at different levels. Adult readers might sense Yuyu's complex psychology from the context, but child readers may not necessarily capture these nuances from a plain declarative statement. The Korean ending "-janayo" (잖아요) is highly frequent in spoken language and conveys a tone of shared understanding—"as you know," "isn't that what we agreed on"—carrying an inherent sense of intimacy and dialogue. Instead of using the neutral "haseosseoyo" (하셨습니다), the translator chose "haseotjanayo" (하셨습니다), which gently shifts Yuyu's utterance from an "objective report" towards a "friendly reminder"—as if to say, "You said so yourself; surely you remember." This treatment adds no new information absent from the source text, yet it provides young readers with a clue for sensing the emotional coloring of the characters, making the dialogue sound more like an authentic, warm interaction rather than a dry statement. Adult readers may not need such pragmatic hints to grasp Yuyu's psychology on their own, but for young readers whose reading experience is still limited, such modal cues serve as a bridge into the relationships between characters.

### Case 4: Translation of Interjections

**ST:** 在鼠洞的拐弯处，一个高大的影子忽然闪出来。“啊，金刚！”癞头惊慌地叫道。挡在他们面前的人头鼠，身身体壮，一副凶神恶煞的样子：“你竟敢把我的臭鸡蛋献给老人头鼠？”（P4）

(At a bend in the rat hole, a tall shadow suddenly flashed out. "Ah! King Kong!" Scabbyhead cried out in alarm. The human-headed rat blocking their way was tall and burly, with a vicious, menacing look: "You dared to offer my rotten egg to the Old Human-Headed Rat?")

**TT:** 그때 동굴 모퉁이에서 불쑥 커다란 그림자가 나타났다. 부스르미가 놀라 허둥대며 소리쳤다. “앗! 금강장사다!” 육중한 몸집에 악마같이 흉측하게 생긴 인간쥐 한 마리가 부스르미와 위위의 앞에 나타나 떡 버티고 섰다. “네가 감히 내 썩은 달걀을 훔쳐 대왕에게 갖다 바쳐?” (P12)

(Suddenly, at a turn in the cave, a large shadow loomed. Startled and flustered, Scabbyhead shouted, "Aht! It's the Mighty Kong!" A human-headed rat with a heavy-set frame and a hideous, demon-like appearance planted himself squarely in front of Scabbyhead and Yuyu. "You dare steal my rotten egg and present it to the King?")

The Chinese interjection "a" (啊) is a highly versatile exclamation. It can express surprise, it can express exclamation, it can express doubt, sudden realization, or even a sigh of relief—all can be rendered with "a." In the source text, "a" is paired with "cried out in alarm" (惊慌地叫道); adult readers can quickly determine that this is a cry of fright. But for young readers, the polysemy of "a" creates a small uncertainty—they need to associate the interjection with the narrative cue that follows and make a judgment. The Korean interjection "at" (앗), by contrast, is a more functionally concentrated exclamation reserved specifically for moments of sudden fright; the very sound of "at" signals that something has gone wrong. The translator did not choose the more functionally broad "a" (아), which corresponds more closely in range to the Chinese "a," but opted for the fright-specific "at." In this way, even if young readers do not pay close attention to the words "cried out in alarm," the single word "at" is enough to instantly construct in their minds the perception of a sudden, unexpected event. The reasoning behind this choice is straightforward: the more direct the emotional signal, the better for the child reader. They should not need to confirm a character's emotion through complex contextual inference the interjection itself should be an express lane straight to the emotion.

Taken together, the four cases, from different lexical dimensions, point collectively to a core translation strategy: the translator consistently takes the receptive capacity of Korean child readers as the anchor, transforming expressions in the source text that are abstract, broad, or cross-linguistically mismatched into native Korean lexical forms that are more concrete and carry clearer emotional signals. This transformation is not a simple linguistic substitution, but a search for balance between "helping children understand" and "preserving the textual appeal structure," so that the translation lowers the threshold of reading without depriving young readers of the right to feel and imagine on their own.

### 3.2 Syntactic Level

Significant differences exist between the syntactic structures of Korean and Chinese. Korean is an agglutinative language that relies on particles and suffixes to express grammatical relations, with sentences generally following a subject-object-predicate word order and frequently using connectives to mark the logical relationships between clauses. Long and complex sentences are

## A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring

fairly common in everyday written Korean. Chinese, by contrast, is an isolating language in which grammatical relations are primarily expressed through word order and function words. The sentence structure is relatively flexible, favoring parataxis over hypotaxis, with fewer connectives and a greater prevalence of short sentences and run-on structures. Children are generally active and have short attention spans. To engage young readers, translators of children's literature must therefore pay close attention to syntactic adjustment, making the syntax both lively and full of rhythmic bounce (Ma Yatong & Hou Guangxu, 2015: 127). According to Reception Aesthetics, when translating children's literature, the translator should take the target-language reader as the center and select appropriate modes of expression. Chinese does not rely heavily on connectives, whereas Korean makes extensive use of them to express the logical links between sentences (Wang Mingliang & Zhou Fa, 2023: 17). Consequently, when translating from Korean into Chinese, it is necessary, in accordance with children's receptive capacity, to convert long and complex sentences from the source text into short, easy-to-read sentences, thereby leaving children space to think while also stimulating and sustaining their reading interest (Jiang Huiping, 2013: 173).

### Case 5:

**ST:** 金刚攥着拳头，绷紧了肌肉，强健的体魄使他很快恢复了自信和骄傲。（P14）

（King Kong clenched his fists and tightened his muscles; his powerful physique quickly restored his confidence and pride.）

**TT:** 금강장사는 두 주먹을 볼근 쥐고 근육에 잔뜩 힘을 주면서 자신감을 보였다（P25）

（King Kong clenched his two fists tightly and, putting all his strength into his muscles, displayed his confidence.）

The Chinese source text unfolds in three clauses in run-on style, connected only with commas and without any overt connectives. The first two clauses depict actions clenching fists and tightening muscles while the third clause presents the result the restoration of confidence and pride. The causal logic between the actions and the psychological change is implicit, requiring readers to supply it through their own linguistic intuition. The Korean translation integrates the three clauses into a single tightly-knit sentence: it uses "~go" (고) to link the two parallel actions of "jida" (쥐다; to clench) and "juda" (주다; to give/put), and uses "~myeonseo" (면서) to introduce an accompanying state, compressing the two clauses "clenched his fists" and "tightened his muscles" into a coherent action chain. More notably, the causal statement in the source text "his powerful physique quickly restored his confidence and pride" is entirely omitted in the translation, with the sentence concluded simply by "displayed his confidence" (자신감을 보였다). The translator discards the abstract reasoning about causality and converts the psychological description of the source text into an observable presentation of external action. This treatment shortens the logical chain of the sentence, reduces the cognitive load on child readers in processing causal inference, and makes the narration more direct and visually vivid, aligning with children's receptive characteristic of thinking predominantly in concrete images.

### Case 6:

**ST:** 雨雨站在中央，一大群人头鼠围住他，都狠狠地盯着他，眼光像锥子一样。（P2）

（Yuyu stood in the center. A large crowd of human-headed rats surrounded him, all glaring at him fiercely, their gazes like awls.）

**TT:** 지하 동굴 광장 한가운데 서 있는 위위를 인간쥐들이 매서운 눈빛으로 노려보고 있었다（P9）

（The human-headed rats were staring fiercely at Yuyu, who stood in the very center of the underground cave plaza.）

The Chinese source text consists of four clauses, sequentially presenting Yuyu's position (stood in the center), the rats' action (surrounded him), their demeanor (glaring fiercely), and a figurative description (their gazes like awls). The clauses advance naturally through word order alone, in a typical Chinese run-on structure. The Korean translation compresses these four clauses into a single sentence: it converts the first clause into a relative clause modifying the object with "seo itneun Yuyu-reul" (서 있는 위위를, Yuyu who was standing); it fuses the clauses "glaring fiercely" and "their gazes like awls" into a single structure consisting of the adverbial "maeseoun nunbicheuro" (매서운 눈빛으로, with fierce eyes) plus the predicate "staring" (노려보고 있었다). Whereas the Chinese builds a tense atmosphere step by step through four independent clauses, the Korean compresses the information densely through the preposing of the relative clause and the compression of the adverbial, transforming the core skeletal structure of the sentence from "distributed narration" to "focused narration"—all the information is organized around the single core predicate "were staring" (노려보고 있었다). This represents a syntactic reorganization from an expansive narrative style to a focused narrative

## A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring

style.

### Case 7:

**ST:** 银筷子虽然很老，头顶都秃了，但全身的毛雪白雪白的，牙齿亮亮的，一点儿不像是老人的牙；他的眼睛也很亮。（P6）

(Although Silver Chopsticks was very old and the top of his head was bald, the fur all over his body was snow-white, his teeth were gleaming and did not look at all like an old man's teeth; his eyes were also very bright.)

**TT:** 은젓가락은 나이가 들어 머리가 다 빠졌지만 온몸이 눈처럼 새하얀 털로 뒤덮여 있는 데다 노인 같지 않게 빛나는 이빨과 반짝이는 눈을 갖고 있었다 (P13)

(Silver Chopsticks, although advanced in age and wholly bald on top, had a body entirely covered in snow-white fur, and in addition possessed gleaming teeth and sparkling eyes that did not befit an old man.)

The Chinese source text is a complex sentence with multiple layers of transition, divided into two halves by a semicolon. The first half uses "although ... yet ..." to form a concessive transition, embedded with several short clauses—"the top of his head was bald," "the fur all over his body was snow-white," "his teeth were gleaming," "did not look like an old man's teeth" with rich layering but loose connections, consistent with the narrative rhythm of Chinese run-on sentences. The Korean translation compresses all this multi-layered information into the framework of a single sentence: it uses "~jiman" (~지만) to correspond to the concessive transition in the Chinese, uses "~neun deda" (~는 데다) to overlay additional progressive information (not only was the fur white, but the teeth and eyes were bright as well), and fuses the three clauses "his teeth were gleaming," "did not look like an old man's teeth," and "his eyes were also very bright" into the unified predicate structure "possessed gleaming teeth and sparkling eyes" (빛나는 이빨과 반짝이는 눈을 갖고 있었다). Information distributed across six clauses in the source text is compressed in the translation into a hypotactic complex sentence composed of a subject-predicate-object core with multiple nested layers of connectives, markedly increasing the informational density of the sentence and making its grammatical layering more clearly defined. This represents a syntactic compression and reorganization from a multi-layered run-on sentence to a hypotactic single sentence.

### 3.3 Rhetorical Level

Children often approach literary works with an expectation of strong readability and vividly engaging plots. The use of rhetorical devices such as simile, personification, parallelism, and hyperbole precisely answers to this horizon of expectations. Rhetoric not only makes storylines more vivid and lively but also captures children's attention while guiding their divergent imagination, thereby playing a subtle edifying role in elevating their aesthetic horizons and cognitive levels (Cao Wanying, 2024: 106). The literary attributes of children's literature are, to a large extent, embodied in the deployment of rhetorical devices: personification endows expression with a sense of life, parallelism imparts rhythm and momentum to language, and hyperbole can highlight the distinctive features of things and arouse curiosity—when rhetorical devices are used aptly, the children's literariness and engaging quality of the translated text are preserved (Xiao Fen & Feng Huihui, 2021: 93). Grounded in children's horizon of expectations and their need for childlike delight, the translation process should consciously enhance the child-oriented characteristics of linguistic expression (Fan Jing, 2019: 127), drawing on rhetorical devices such as personification, simile, repetition, contrast, and hyperbole to present the distinctive "spirit" and "delight" unique to children's literature (Zhang Yuexin, 2025: 12). Rhetorical devices function as a catalyst, not only capturing children's attention and curiosity, but also, in the process of stimulating their imagination and creativity, deeply shaping their inner world and cultivating their aesthetic sensibilities and values.

### Case 8: Simile

**ST:** 雨雨站在中央，一大群人头鼠围住他，都狠狠地盯着他，眼光像锥子一样。（P2）

(Yuyu stood in the center. A large crowd of human-headed rats surrounded him, all glaring at him fiercely, their gazes like awls.)

**TT:** 지하 동굴 광장 한가운데 서 있는 위유를 인간쥐들이 매서운 눈빛으로 노려보고 있었다 (P9)

(The human-headed rats were staring fiercely at Yuyu, who stood in the very center of the underground cave plaza.)

The source text employs the explicit simile "their gazes like awls," using the sharpness of an awl to convey the ferocity of the

## A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring

stares—a vivid and visually intuitive image well suited to children's concrete mode of perceiving hostility. The Korean translation does not retain the vehicle "awl" (锥子), but instead transforms it into an adverb of comparable intensity, "maeseoun" (매서운, fierce, piercing), using "maeseoun nunbicheuro" (매서운 눈빛으로, with fierce eyes) to directly modify "noryeobogo itseotda" (노려보고 있었다, were staring). The mimetic adverb "maeseoun" itself carries, within the Korean language, a blade-like sharpness of tone, achieving a similar perceptual effect to the sharp imagery of "awl" in the original. This transformation does not constitute a "loss" of the simile, but rather conveys an equivalent rhetorical effect in a way more natural to the Korean language. Viewed from the perspective of Reception Aesthetics, what the translator has taken into account is this: a literal translation such as "songgot gateun nunbit" (송곳 같은 눈빛, awl-like gaze), though possible in Korean, would lack idiomatic naturalness and might create an aesthetic distance in comprehension; by converting it into "maeseoun nunbicheuro," the translation preserves the sense of menace and sharpness while conforming more closely to the receptive habits of Korean child readers, thereby allowing the rhetorical effect to reach the reader more directly.

### Case 9: Parallelism

**ST:** “你会偷东西吗？”“你会打架吗？”“你会坑蒙拐骗吗？”“你会说奉承话，讨好大王吗？”（P2）

（"Do you know how to steal?" "Do you know how to fight?" "Do you know how to swindle and cheat?" "Do you know how to flatter and curry favor with the King?"）

**TT:** “야 너 물건 훔칠 줄 알아”“싸움은 할 줄 아냐”“남을 속이는 건 어때 할 수 있어”“대왕님 비유를 잘 맞추면서 아무 떨 수 있어”（P10）

（"Hey, you know how to steal stuff?" "Can you fight?" "How about deceiving others——can you do that?" "Can you butter up the King while sweet-talking him?"）

The source text presents a quadruple barrage of questions addressed to Yuyu by the human-headed rats. The parallel structure formed by "Do you know how to ...?" creates a tight rhythm and an escalating sense of pressure, conveying the aggressive, overbearing manner of the rat horde. The Korean translation preserves the overall structure of the four consecutive questions, but introduces flexible variations in the sentence patterns: the first and second questions maintain the interrogative pattern "~jul ara?" (줄 알아), the third shifts to the suggestive form "~geon eottae" (건 어때), and the fourth adopts the consultative form "~su isseo?" (수 있어), thereby avoiding the monotony that would result from repeating the same interrogative pattern four times in succession. In children's literature, the strength of parallelism lies in its rhythmic momentum and forcefulness; however, if the same sentence pattern is mechanically reproduced in the target language, it may paradoxically undermine the pleasure of reading aloud through sheer repetitiveness. By varying the question forms, the translator maintains both the propulsive rhythm characteristic of parallelism and the cumulative effect of the four successive questions, while allowing the intonation of each question to fluctuate slightly, yielding a reading experience closer to authentic conversational tones and better stimulating young readers' sense of participation as they follow the rhythm and ask along with the questions. This balancing act between "preserving the overall structure" and "avoiding mechanical correspondence" is grounded precisely in a consideration of child readers' expectations regarding phonetic aesthetics.

### Case 10: Hyperbole

**ST:** 金刚打得更加凶狠，他的拳头很重，雨雨甚至都听到了骨裂的声音。（P4）

（King Kong struck even more viciously; his fists were so heavy that Yuyu could even hear the sound of bones cracking.）

**TT:** 그러나 금강장사는 들은 체도 하지 않고 뼈가 부러질 정도로 사정없이 부스르리를 두들겨 팼다.（P12）

（However, King Kong, acting as though he hadn't heard a thing, mercilessly pummeled Scabbyhead to the point where bones would break.）

The source text constructs hyperbole with the phrase "could even hear the sound of bones cracking," emphasizing the sheer weight of King Kong's blows and the brutality of the violence. In reality, whether the fists actually caused bone fractures, and whether Yuyu could actually hear the sound of bones cracking—these questions are irrelevant. The core function of the hyperbole is to make the child reader "feel" the intensity of the pain. This auditory hyperbole of "the sound of bones cracking" transforms abstract suffering into perceptible sound, exemplifying the typical approach in children's literature of conveying intense sensations through concrete sensory means. The Korean translation transforms this hyperbole into "ppyeoga bureojil jeongdoro" (뼈가 부러질 정도로, to the point where bones would break), structurally converting the narrative clause of the source text

## A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring

into an adverbial modifier directly embedded into the main clause to modify "dudeulgyeo paetda" (두들겨 팼다, pummeled). At the same time, the translation proactively adds "deureun chedo haji anko" (들은 체도 하지 않고, acting as though he hadn't heard a thing), a supplement that completes the portrayal of King Kong's cold-bloodedness—he not only strikes with brutal force, but is also utterly indifferent to the pleas of the one being beaten. In effect, "ppyeoga bureojil jeongdoro" preserves the hyperbolic force of the original, while the addition of "deureun chedo haji anko" lends a more three-dimensional and visually impactful atmosphere of terror to the violent scene, enabling child readers to perceive more intuitively, in the act of reading, both King Kong's ferocity and Scabbyhead's helplessness.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Taking Reception Aesthetics as its theoretical framework and Kim Myung-hee's Korean translation of *Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring* as the research object, this paper has examined, at the lexical, syntactic, and rhetorical levels, the ways in which the translator has accommodated the receptive characteristics of child readers during the translation process.

At the lexical level, when dealing with onomatopoeia, mimetic words, modal particles, and interjections, the translator consistently tends to choose expressions that are native to Korean and carry clearer emotional signals. The conversion of the source text's "gugu" (咕咕) into "kkoreureuk-kkoreureuk" (꼬르륵꼬르륵), of "hemmed and hawed" (吞吞吐吐) into "umul-jjumul" (우물쭈물), the narrowing of "a" (啊) to "at" (앗), and the adjustment of "said" to "hasyeotjanayo" (하셨습니다)—these seemingly subtle lexical shifts all point towards a common goal: transforming expressions in the source text that are abstract, overly broad, or cross-linguistically mismatched into linguistic forms that child readers can directly perceive. This transformation does not involve indiscriminate simplification or filling in, but rather selectively provides concrete clues where comprehension requires assistance, while maintaining restraint where plot suspense and emotional blanks are involved, thereby embodying a balanced awareness between "helping children enter the text" and "respecting children's own feelings." The combined force of these four types of lexical strategies brings the translation closer to the receptive habits of Korean child readers in terms of acoustic effect, visual vividness, and emotional appeal.

At the syntactic level, the translator has systematically restructured the run-on sentences of the source text. Chinese features many short sentences, favors parataxis, and uses few connectives, whereas Korean features more complex sentences, favors hypotaxis, and employs numerous connectives. The translator compresses the expansive narration of the source text into a focused structure, makes implicit causal logic explicit through grammatical components, and simultaneously boldly omits certain causal reasoning that is too abstract for children (such as the deletion of the sentence "his powerful physique quickly restored his confidence" in one case), thereby rendering the narration more direct and visually vivid. From the perspective of syntax, what the translator has accomplished is not a simple linguistic conversion, but a rearrangement of the mode of information presentation with reference to the cognitive load of the child reader.

At the rhetorical level, the translator displays flexible strategies of transformation when handling rhetorical devices such as simile, parallelism, and hyperbole. The explicit simile "their gazes like awls" is transformed into the more natural Korean expression "maeseoun nunbit" (매서운 눈빛); the parallel structure of the four consecutive questions retains its overall architecture but varies the sentence patterns to avoid monotony; the hyperbole "heard the sound of bones cracking" is transformed into "ppyeoga bureojil jeongdoro" (뼈가 부러질 정도로) and supplemented with "deureun chedo haji anko" (들은 체도 하지 않고) to intensify the atmosphere. These treatments demonstrate that the translator does not take formal correspondence as the primary goal in rendering rhetorical devices, but rather measures the success of the translation by whether the rhetorical effect can be realized in the target-language reader the sharpness of the simile, the rhythmic momentum of the parallelism, and the impact of the hyperbole are all re-actualized in ways suited to the perceptual habits of Korean children.

Taken together, the analysis at the three levels reveals that the translator's strategies consistently revolve around a core principle: taking the reception of the child reader as both the starting point and the ultimate destination of translation activity. This is not a simplistic "child-ification" or "infantilization," but a conscious choice grounded in a deep understanding of children's cognitive characteristics, linguistic developmental levels, and aesthetic expectations. The concepts emphasized by Reception Aesthetics "reader-centeredness," "horizon of expectations," "fusion of horizons," and "indeterminacy and blanks of meaning" find verifiable realization in the translator's concrete operations: through the concretization of lexis, the translator reduces the

## A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring

difficulty for children in filling textual blanks; through syntactic reorganization, the translator accommodates children's cognitive rhythm; and through the transformation of rhetoric, the translator preserves the text's engaging quality and its power of appeal. The two reception activities of translation the translator's interaction with the source text, and the target reader's interaction with the translated text are effectively linked and integrated in this process.

Admittedly, this study has certain limitations. The case analysis focuses on the three dimensions of lexis, syntax, and rhetoric, while the treatment of translation at the cultural level has yet to be systematically explored. The cases selected are all drawn from one and the same translation of a single work, and the generalizability of the conclusions awaits verification through comparative studies of more translations. Furthermore, although Reception Aesthetics takes "reader-centeredness" as its theoretical core, a more accurate assessment of the reception effects among actual child readers still requires supplementation through empirical methods such as corpus analysis and reader surveys. These represent not only the limitations of the present study, but also directions for further research to expand upon. Children's literature translation is a field worthy of sustained and intensive cultivation, and it is hoped that more scholars will enrich the exploration of this proposition from different perspectives.

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## A Study on Children's Literature Translation from the Perspective of Reception Aesthetics: A Case Study of the Korean Translation of Yuyu's Peach Blossom Spring

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