

Translation, Modernity, Acceptability—*From Language Reform to Cultural Resistance in Translation Practice in China*

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ABSTRACT

This paper compares the linguistic acceptability in the Chinese translations of Peter Pan from a diachronic perspective, in terms of how changing socio-cultural factors over different time periods influence the linguistic acceptability of the target text. Linguistic acceptability is defined in relation to the extent to which translation conforms to dominant conventions and expectations in the target language. Relating to the polysystem theory, the paper first analyses the different roles translated literature has played in the Chinese literary system from the 1920s to the present, highlighting how, as translated literature moves from a central to a peripheral position, the preferred method of translation changes from innovative methods compromising the acceptability of the target text to conservative methods prioritising high acceptability. As part of the target literature polysystem, translation practice inevitably bears the mark of history. Three translations of J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan, completed respectively in 1929 (Liang's), 1991 (Yang's) and 2011 (Ren's) are compared in terms of their linguistic acceptability, illustrating how the changed position of translated literature results in the change of preferred translating methods, signalling a move from language reform to cultural resistance in the prevalent translation norms in China.

Keywords: translation; polysystem theory; linguistic acceptability; language reform; China

LINGUISTIC ACCEPTABILITY IN TRANSLATION

The concept of acceptability in translation was first proposed by Toury (1980), who uses the term together with adequacy to refer to two hypothetical extreme possibilities in translation. As Toury (1995, pp. 56-7) argues, when translated literature occupies a central position, translators prioritise adequacy in translation by following the rules and conventions of the source language; when translated literature takes a peripheral position, translators prioritise acceptability in translation by conforming to the conventions of the target language. Following Toury's hypothesis, when translated literature occupies a central position in the target culture, translation is more constrained by the linguistic rules and conventions of the source text, producing unnatural, "foreign" texts with low acceptability. The situation changes when translated literature takes a peripheral position, encouraging smooth, natural target texts with high linguistic acceptability. Toury (1980) finds that in the Hebrew literary system, as translated literature resided to a secondary position, the linguistic acceptability of the target text increased. The hypothesis is also supported by findings from the Japanese literature of the nineteenth century: during the Meiji Period (1868-1912), modern Japanese literature was still weak when translations of foreign literature flourished. By adopting innovative strategies, translators introduced new linguistic features; the influence from translation was so paramount to the extent that it reshaped the linguistic structure of Japanese. Kinsui (1997) observes that the passive voice in Japanese was constructed through the aid of translation. Yoshihiro (2005) discusses how the Japanese literature of the Meiji period drew inspiration from translations of European texts to revitalise domestic literary traditions and the Japanese written language. As Yoshihiro (2005) points out, many features that are now commonly found in modern Japanese literature, both in terms of linguistic devices and rhetorical features, such as similes, personification, the three-part modifier and the new punctuation system were all first introduced through translation in the Meiji Period.

Four decades after the beginning of the Minji Period, in the first few decades of the twentieth century, the situation was replicated in China. Chinese literature went through a series of reforms and innovations, in the process of which translation played an important role. Domestic Chinese literature was, to borrow Even-Zohar's (1978/2004, p. 193) term, "young" and not yet "crystallised", relying heavily on translated literature to build up new literary genres and composition devices; translated literature thus took a central position in the literary system, helping to introduce new genres and new composition devices (Li, 2009). The central position of translated literature, reflected in translation methods, was the preference of "adequate" over "acceptable" translation, prioritising the linguistic rules and conventions of the source language. The influence from translation was so profound that it played a significant role in the New Culture Movement, reshaping modern written Chinese (commonly referred to as Vernacular Chinese) to a considerable extent. Among the advocates of the New Culture Movement, many were returned international students from Japan, who were familiar with the Japanese literary reform during the Meiji Period. As neighbouring East-Asian countries facing the industrialised modernity of Western Europe, Japan and China were similar in many ways, both in need of a new form of expression to encompass modernity. Drawing on the example of Japanese literature, it was believed that Vernacular Chinese could also benefit from translation activities and foreign languages.

The term "Europeanised Chinese" ("*Ouhua wen*") was coined to refer to the form of alienated Chinese with European (mainly English) sentence structures (Wang 1943/1985, p. 334), which, as Zhu (1935/2000) later argues, has become an important element in Vernacular Chinese. Translation was considered an effective way to introduce Europeanised sentence structures into Chinese. A group of translators, including Lu Xun and Zhou Zuoren, believed that translation was not meant to provide a rapid and effortless reading experience; rather, they should be used to reform and reshape Chinese. Lu Xun proposes the method of "*ying yi*" (hard translation), namely, to rigidly follow the sentence structures of the source text:

My translation is not intended to entertain the reader with a smooth reading experience. On the contrary, it often makes them feel uncomfortable, even bored, annoyed and irritated. ...now we have to translate foreign languages. It is thus necessary to establish new sentence structures — to put it straightforward, we need to literally create sentence structures from scratch. From past experience, I think compared to domestication, hard translation can better represent the conciseness of the original text. As it is still in need of modernisation, the old form of Chinese is imperfect.

(Lu, 1930/2005, my translation)

Lu Xun's idea of "hard translation" is in many ways comparable to the systems theory's conceptualisation of innovative translation methods (Even-Zohar 1978); the proposal for unnatural-reading target texts indicates the preference for translation with low acceptability. In early twentieth-century China, patronage, which Lefevere (1992) identifies as an important factor in translation, was often realised by influential intellectuals working in various literary societies (Li 2010). As an important literary figure and an active translator, Lu Xun's attitude had a significant influence in the translation field.

Towards the end of the twentieth century, the Chinese literary system was vastly different from what it was in the early decades of the twentieth century. Domestic modern literature, which was just emerging in the early decades of the twentieth century, had evolved into a much more mature state, encompassing modern literary genres for both adults and children with a rich legacy of literary works in poetry, drama, fiction and prose, and occupying a primary position in the literary polysystem. While translation still occupies an important position in the book market, domestic literature has centupled in amount, dominating the centre of the literature system. There are currently over a hundred literary

journals in China, fifty-three of which are listed by Peking University Library as “core journals” with high impact factors — within which only eight publish translated literature, with the rest committed exclusively to domestic literature.

With the rise of domestic literature comes the need for a national language “uncontaminated” by foreign languages. Chinese scholars no longer subscribe to the notion that Chinese should indiscriminately integrate foreign sentence structures into its linguistic repertoire. In their effort to advocate cultural nationalism, scholars call for preservation of Chinese linguistic distinctiveness and resistance to foreign influence. In one of the most insightful papers against Europeanisation, poet and essayist Yu Guangzhong (1987/2007) coined the term *English Chinese* to refer to Europeanised Chinese, which, according to him, is abnormal and unhealthy. Yu detests linguistic redundancy and over-Europeanised sentence structures, fearing that they would steal the beauty of conciseness, flexibility and sonority away from Chinese. Echoing Yu’s position, there has been extensive discussion about the linguistic purity of Chinese (Cao 2012, Wen 2012, Xie 2001). Concerns about linguistic purity are paramount in the field of Chinese translation studies. It is proposed that the target text should be free from translatese, or, in other words, texts with low acceptability that rigidly adhere to foreign sentence structures (Lei 2005, Ma 2008, Xiao 2006). Innovative translation methods that were prevalent in the early twentieth century are no longer the preferred method in translation.

Considering the drastic changes Chinese literature has gone through in the past century, as well as the reversed power relation between translated literature and domestic literature, it is therefore interesting to compare the degree of linguistic acceptability in translations completed in the early decades of the twentieth century to translations that were produced in the late-twentieth or early twenty-first century. One of the most insightful studies in this area is Xia’s (2010) diachronic comparison of the translation of novels from the 1910s to present, reporting that compared to translations completed in the 1920s and 1930s, a growing tendency of normalisation (translation strategies conforming to the rules of the target language, or, in other words, translation with high linguistic acceptability) can be observed in translations produced in the past few decades. Similarly, Li (2010) observes that Europeanised Chinese with low linguistic acceptability is less prominent in Lu Xun’s later translations compared to the translations completed in the early 1920s.

This paper compares the linguistic acceptability in the three Chinese translations of *Peter Pan* diachronically in order to determine if the tendency of growing linguistic acceptability can also be observed in the three translations. Based on previous research, the analysis shall focus on four linguistic features that are often affected by source text structures in translation, namely, noun phrases, conjunctions, indefinite articles and prepositions. For each linguistic feature, textual analysis is first provided as for how they influence the linguistic acceptability of the target text. Comparison is then made in the treatment of these linguistic features in different translations, in order to explore whether the linguistic acceptability of the target text increases in later translations.

THE DUPLICATION OF SOURCE TEXT STRUCTURES IN TRANSLATION

Traditional Chinese grammar relies heavily on parataxis; the relations between different parts of the sentence are contextually implied rather than morphologically or syntactically marked (Wang 1984, p. 481). As a result, complex sentence structures and function words were traditionally less frequent in Chinese (Wang & Hu 2008). This, however, was seen as a deficit of Chinese by intellectuals like Lu Xun (1932). In the early twentieth century, one of the direct results of using innovative translation methods and pursuing adequate translation

was that sentence structures of the source text were often duplicated in translation to promote a more precise and exact form of Chinese that is capable to express complex logical relations (Lu 1932). An often discussed example of this type is the replication of noun phrases with extended modifiers in translation with the aid of the modifier marker “的”.

THE TRANSLATION OF NOUN PHRASES

The word “的” is most commonly used as a modifier marker, which is roughly comparable to the possessive apostrophe *s* in English. The word is used at the end of a pre-head modifier (usually an adjective phrase) to separate it from the head. In writings before the New Culture Movement, “的” was used only sparingly in writing, since Chinese traditionally tended to use short pre-head modifiers, in which case the distinction between the modifier and the head was clear, and the modifier marker could often be omitted (Yu 1987/2007, p. 185). Since the New Culture Movement, “的” was frequently used in translation as a device to literally translate extended pre- and post-head modifiers in foreign source texts. As Wang (1943/1985, p. 351) observes, using the modifier marker “的” in writing can avoid breaking the sentence into several loosely connected clauses, increasing stylistic conciseness, the very discursive feature Lu Xun intended to promote through hard translation.

TABLE 1. Translation of noun phrases in *Peter Pan*: Example 1

Source text	Then she gave Mr. Darling such a look, not an angry look: she showed him <u>the great red tear that makes us so sorry for noble dogs...</u>
Liang's	她望着达林先生狠狠的看了一眼，并非怒视；她给他看看那使我们为好狗抱憾的大 <u>的红的</u> 眼泪..... (Then she gave Mr. Darling such a look, not an angry look: she showed him <u>the great, red, making-one-sorry-for-noble-dogs tear.</u>)
Yang's	跟着，她用那样的眼光望了达林先生一眼，那眼神不是愤怒，而是让他看到一滴又大又红的眼泪。 <u>我们看到忠厚的狗流这样的眼泪，总是为他难过。</u> (Then she gave Mr. Darling such a look, not an angry look: she showed him a drop of great red tear. <u>When we see noble dogs shed tears like this, we always feel sorry.</u>)
Ren's	接着它看了达林先生那么一眼，不是一种生气的眼光：它让他看到它眼睛里那么大的两滴红色泪水， <u>让我们为一条高贵的狗感到难过。</u> (Then it gave Mr. Darling such a look, not an angry look: it showed him two drops of great red tear in the eyes, <u>making us so sorry for noble dogs.</u>)

Table 1 illustrates how a noun phrase with both pre- and post-head modifiers is translated with contrasting strategies over different periods of time. In the source text, the head of the underlined noun phrase, *tear*, is modified by the pre-head adjective phrase *great red* and the post-head relative clause *that makes us so sorry for noble dogs*. A prolonged noun phrase like this often poses a challenge for translators, since post-head modifiers rarely occur in Chinese (Liu 2001). If the translator were to adopt innovative translation methods and follow the exact sentence structure of the source text, he or she would need to organise both the pre- and post-head modifiers into an extended modifier, with the aid of the modifier maker “的”, and place it in front of the head — which was the exact strategy adopted by Liang's translation. By using this method, the translation stays faithful to the sentence structures of the source text, compromising the linguistic acceptability of the target text.

When *Peter Pan* was retranslated in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century, noun phrases with extended modifiers were criticised by Chinese translators as being unnatural and cumbersome, reflecting a change of attitude in the preferred translation method (Lü 2002, Yu 1987/2007). In the example above, as a clear contrast to Liang, both Yang and Ren manage to avoid the low linguistic acceptability caused by extended pre-head modifiers. In Yang's, the relative clause is translated as a separate sentence: *when we see noble dogs shed tears like this, we always feel sorry*. Likewise, in Ren's, the relative clause is translated

as a complementing adverbial phrase, *making us so sorry for noble dogs*, and placed after the head. By breaking the source text into several simple sentences, Yang and Ren adapt the source text to suit the linguistic rules of the target language, increasing the linguistic acceptability of the target text.

TABLE 2. Translation of noun phrases in *Peter Pan*: Example 2

Source text	They live in nests on the tops of trees; and the mauve ones are boys and the white ones are girls, and the blue ones are just <u>little sillies who are not sure what they are</u> .
Liang's	他们住在树顶巢上，紫色的是男的，白色的是女的，蓝色的是自己也不知是男是女的糊涂东西。(They live in nests on the tops of trees; and the mauve ones are boys and the white ones are girls, and the blue ones are just <u>we-don't-know what-we-are silly things</u> .)
Yang's他们住在树梢上的巢里。绛色的是男的，白色的是女的，蓝色的是些小傻瓜， <u>说不准他们是男是女</u> 。(They live in nests on the tops of trees; and the mauve ones are boys and the white ones are girls, and the blue ones are just little sillies ; <u>[they are] unable to tell what they are</u> .)
Ren's	她们住在树顶的窝里，紫色的是男的，白色的是女的，还有蓝色的，他们只是些小傻瓜， <u>也说不准他们是什么</u> 。(They live in nests on the tops of trees; and the mauve ones are boys and the white ones are girls, and the blue ones are just little sillies; <u>[they are] unable to tell what they are</u> .)

Table 2 contrasts the treatment of another extended noun phrase in different translations. In the source text, the head of the underlined noun phrase, *sillies*, is modified by the pre-head modifier *little* and the post-head relative clause *who are not sure what they are*. Similar to the previous example, Liang preserves both the pre- and post- head modifiers, organising them into an extended modifier, “自己也不知是男是女的糊涂(的)” (*we-don't-know-what-we-are*), and places it in front of the head. In both Yang's and Ren's translations, the post-head relative clause is taken out of the noun phrase and translated as a separate sentence; its logical connection with the head is contextually implied. Both the employment of short sentences and the reliance on parataxis indicate an increased degree of linguistic acceptability in Yang's and Ren's translations.

THE TRANSLATION OF CONJUNCTIONS

Another indicator of low linguistic acceptability in translation is the frequent use of conjunctions, which serve to increase both the complexity and density of a sentence (Yu 1987/2007). As discussed before, in their effort to reshape Chinese with Western sentence structures, writers and translators in the New Culture Movement endeavoured to produce texts with clearer, more explicit sentence structures. Subordinating and coordinating conjunctions, which are often omitted in Classical Chinese, started to be used in Chinese during the New Culture Movement to indicate the logical relations between clauses (Wang 1984, p. 480). This effort is clearly reflected in Liang's translation. Table 3 illustrates how a complex sentence in the source text is translated with the aid of conjunctions in Liang's:

TABLE 3. Translation of conjunctions in *Peter Pan*: Example 1

Source text	He had ticked <u>so</u> long <u>that</u> he now went on ticking without knowing that he was doing it.
Liang's	他自己嘀嗒嘀嗒的响了好久， <u>所以</u> 他现在一面响着，一面不自觉了。(He had ticked for a long time, <u>so</u> he went on ticking without being conscious of it.)
Yang's	他已经嘀嗒了很久， <u>现在</u> 继续嘀嗒下去已经不知不觉了。(He had ticked for a long time; <u>now</u> he went on ticking without being conscious of it.)
Ren's	他已经发出那么久的嘀嗒声， <u>现在</u> 发出嘀嗒声已经不知道自己在发出嘀嗒声了。(He had ticked for such a long time; <u>now</u> he went on ticking without knowing that he was doing it.)

In the source text, the subordinating conjunction *so that* is used to introduce the adverb clause *he now went on ticking without knowing that he was doing it*, indicating the result of Peter ticking for a long time. In Liang’s, the subordinating conjunction *so that* is preserved and rendered into its Chinese equivalent, “所以” (so), leading the adverbial clause “他现在一面响着，一面不自觉了” (he went on ticking without knowing that he was doing it). Yang and Ren, on the other hand, rely on conjunctions less often to organise complex sentences. Following the parataxis tradition of Chinese, contextually implied logical relations are resorted to instead to organise complex sentence structures. Both Yang and Ren use a group of simple sentences to render the same meaning, with the logical relations between sentences contextually implied, increasing the linguistic acceptability of the target text.

TABLE 4. Translation of conjunctions in *Peter Pan*: Example 2

Source text	There was the same excitement over John... <u>but</u> both were kept, <u>and</u> soon you might have seen the three of them going in a row to Miss Fulsom’s Kindergarten school, accompanied by their nurse.
Liang’s	约翰生后也有同样的恐慌，……； <u>不过</u> 这两个也都收养了， <u>并且</u> 不久你还可以看见三个孩子排成一队由保姆伴着到福尔孙女士的幼稚园去。(There was the same excitement over John... <u>but</u> both were kept, <u>and</u> soon you might have seen the three of them going in a row to Miss Fulsom’s Kindergarten school, accompanied by their nurse.)
Yang’s	约翰生下时，也遇到同样的风波，……。 <u>不过</u> 他们两个到底都还是留下养活了，不久你就会看见姐弟三个排成一行，由保姆陪着，到福尔萨姆小姐的幼儿园上学去了。(There was the same excitement over John ... <u>But</u> both were kept; soon you might have seen the three of them going in a row to Miss Fulsom’s Kindergarten school, accompanied by their nurse.)
Ren’s	在约翰生下后同样折腾了一番，……； <u>可</u> 他们两个都养活了，很快你就看到这三个孩子走成一排，去上富尔森小姐的幼儿园，由他们的保姆陪着。(There was the same excitement over John... <u>but</u> both were kept; soon you might have seen the three of them going in a row to Miss Fulsom’s Kindergarten school, accompanied by their nurse.)

The treatment of other conjunctions in the source text also demonstrates a similar contrast. In Table 4, the coordinating conjunction *and* is preserved in Liang’s, translated directly into its Chinese equivalence “并且” (and); whereas both Yang and Ren choose to omit the conjunction, relying on the context to indicate the coordinating relation. Note that, however, the other coordinating conjunction, *but*, is preserved in all three translations. Unlike *and*, which is used to indicate parallel or progressive relationship, *but* indicates contrasting relationship, which, if not overtly expressed, is hard to deduce from the context. As a result, all three translators chose to keep the conjunction *but*, translating it directly into its Chinese equivalent as “不过” or “可”.

On the whole, as is observed from the examples above, Liang tends to represent the source text more literally. By rendering most of the conjunctions into their Chinese equivalent, the logical relations between clauses are overtly expressed, making the sentence structure clearer to the reader. This, however, compromises the linguistic acceptability of the text. In the examples shown from both Yang’s and Ren’s translations, the parataxis tradition in Chinese is resorted to more often; complex sentences in the source text are often broken into several short clauses, with the coordinating or subordinating relations implied by the context. The employment of shorter clauses and the compliance with target language linguistic conventions work together to enhance the linguistic acceptability of the target text.

THE TRANSLATION OF INDEFINITE ARTICLES

Indefinite articles, which were previously non-existent in Chinese, were also introduced into Chinese as a result of innovative translation strategies during the New Culture Movement.

Traditionally in Chinese, “一” (one) was used exclusively as a numeral rather than the indefinite article. In instances when the indefinite article might be used in English, the classifier “个” is used instead. For instance, if the clause *when she was a girl* was to be translated into idiomatic Chinese, the translation would be “她还是个姑娘时”, with the indefinite article *a* replaced by the classifier “个”. During the New Culture Movement, to represent indefinite articles in the source text, innovative methods were used in translation, borrowing the numeral “一” (one) and using it together with the classifier “个” to translate indefinite articles; gradually “一个” started to function as an indefinite article, becoming another feature of Europeanised Chinese (Wang 1984, p. 461).

TABLE 5. Translation of indefinite articles in *Peter Pan*: Example 1

Source text	...the many gentlemen who had been boys when she was a girl discovered simultaneously that they loved her.
Liang's当她还是一个女孩子的时候, 有许多先生们那时不过是些男孩子, 他们同时发现他们都是爱他, (...the many gentlemen who had been boys when she was a girl discovered simultaneously that they loved her.)
Yang's她还是个女孩的时候, 周围有好些男孩, 忽然一齐发现他们爱上了他, (...the many gentlemen who had been boys when she was [a] girl discovered simultaneously that they loved her.)
Ren's当她还是个姑娘的时候, 当然也还是小伙子的好多位先生同时发现, 他们爱上她了, (...the many gentlemen who had been boys when she was [a] girl discovered simultaneously that they loved her.)

Table 5 illustrates how indefinite articles are translated with innovative versus conservative strategies in different versions. In Liang's, the indefinite article *a* in the clause *when she was a girl* is rendered faithfully into its Chinese equivalence as “一个”. Both Yang and Ren, on the other hand, employ conservative strategies and replace the indefinite article with the classifier “个”.

TABLE 6. Translation of indefinite articles in *Peter Pan*: Example 2

Source text	If he had <u>a weakness</u> , it was for thinking that all his life he had taken medicine boldly ...
Liang's	假如他有一个缺点, 那便是他自以为他一生总是勇敢的喝药..... (If he had <u>a weakness</u> , it was for thinking that all his life he had taken medicine boldly ...)
Yang's	要说他有什么弱点的话, 那就是, 他自以为他一生吃药从来都很勇敢. (If he had <u>some kind of weakness</u> , it was for thinking that all his life he had taken medicine boldly ...)
Ren's	如果有缺点, 那就是他认为自己一生吃药水都是勇敢的..... (If he had [<u>a</u>] <u>weakness</u> , it was for thinking that all his life he had taken medicine boldly ...)

The example in Table 6 shows a similar contrast. In the source text, the indefinite article *a* is used to modify the abstract noun *weakness*. The indefinite article is preserved in Liang's and used together with the classifier “个”. In Yang's, the noun phrase is translated as “什么弱点” (some kind of weakness), avoiding the indefinite article and the classifier altogether. The indefinite article is also omitted in Ren's version.

THE TRANSLATION OF PREPOSITIONS

The frequent use of prepositions is also observed as an indicator of low linguistic acceptability (Yu 1987/2007, Xie 2001). An often discussed example is the preposition “在” (at), which is commonly used to literally translate the English preposition phrase *at this time*, the adverbial clause marker *when* and other preposition phrases (Li 2012), and observed as a

typical feature of Europeanised Chinese with low linguistic acceptability (Li 2012, pp. 97-101, Yu 1987/2007). Table 7 shows how adverbial phrases are translated with contrasting methods:

TABLE 7. Translation of prepositions in *Peter Pan*: Example 1

Source text	How thorough she was <u>at bath-time</u> , and up <u>at any moment</u> of the night if one of her charges made the slightest cry.
Liang's	在洗浴的时候她是非常的驯良，在夜里无论什么时候孩子们稍微有一点声响立刻就起来。(At bath-time she was very dutiful; [and she would be] up at any moment of the night if one of the children made the slightest noise.)
Yang's	给孩子们洗澡时，她是多么认真不苟啊。夜里不管什么时候，她看管的孩子只要有一个轻轻地哭一声，她就一跃而起。([When she was] bathing the children, how thorough she was. Whatever time at night, she would leapt up if one of the children in her charge made the slightest cry.)
Ren's	给孩子们洗澡时它是多么认真周到啊。深夜里不管什么时候，只要它照顾的那些小不点有一丁点哭声，它就会走过来查看。([When she was] bathing the children, how conscientious thorough she was. Whatever time at night, she came to check on them if one of the little ones made the slightest cry.)

In Liang's translation, the two adverbial phrases in the source text, *at bath-time* and *at any moment of the night* are both rendered into Chinese rigidly following the original sentence structures, with the adverbial phrase marker *at* translated literally as “在”. Yang and Ren's translation avoid rigid adherence to source text sentence structures, assimilating the text into more natural expressions in Chinese.

TABLE 8. Translation of prepositions in *Peter Pan*: Example 2

Source text	But she was never quite sure, you know. There were, however, many adventures which she knew to be true because she was <u>in them</u> herself, and there were still more that were at least partly true, for the other boys were <u>in them</u> and said they were wholly true.
Liang's	但是你们知道，她并不敢十分相信。有许许多多的冒险奇迹，她是相信的，因为她自己也 <u>在里面</u> ，还有许多的险事只有一部分真，因为别的孩子 <u>在里面</u> 而他们说是全真的。(But as you know, she was never quite sure. There were, however, many adventures which she knew to be true because she was <u>in</u> them herself, and there were still more that were at least partly true, for the other boys were <u>in</u> them and said they were wholly true.)
Yang's	不过温迪对彼得的故事，从来不敢全信。有许多冒险故事她知道是真的，因为她自己也 <u>参加了</u> ；更多的故事，她知道那至少一部分是真的，因为别的孩子 <u>参加了</u> ，说那全是真的。(But Wendy was never quite sure about Peter's stories. There were, however, many adventures which she knew to be true because she <u>participated</u> (in them) herself, and there were still more that were at least partly true, for the other boys <u>participated</u> (in them) and said they were wholly true.)
Ren's	不过你知道，温迪从来拿不准是真还是假。不过有许多历险她知道是真的，因为她也亲身 <u>经历了</u> ，有许多冒险故事是真的，至少部分是真的，因为其他男孩 <u>经历了</u> ，说它们全是真的。(As you know, Wendy can never tell if it is true or not, you know. There were, however, many adventures which she knew to be true because she <u>experienced</u> them herself, and there were still more that were at least partly true, for the other boys <u>experienced</u> them and said they were wholly true.)

Table 8 is of a similar nature. In the source text, the preposition phrase *in them* occurs twice. In Liang's, both preposition phrases are preserved, translated literally as “在里面”. In both Yang's and Ren's, verb phrases are used to replace the preposition phrase. Yang uses the verb “参加” (participate) to render the preposition phrase; in Ren's, the verb “经历” (experience) is used. By replacing preposition phrases with verb phrases, Yang's and Ren's translations avoid rigid adherence to the source text sentence structure, thus increasing the linguistic acceptability of the target text.

TABLE 9. Translation of the prepositions in *Peter Pan*: Example 3

Source text	“ <u>About</u> the prince who couldn’t find the lady who wore the glass slipper.”
Liang’s	“关于那个王子寻不到那个穿玻璃鞋的女郎。” (“ <u>About</u> the prince who couldn’t find the lady who wore the glass slipper.”)
Yang’s	“□□ <u>讲</u> □□□□找□□□□玻□□□□□” (“[It] tells [about] the prince who couldn’t find the lady who wore the glass slipper.”)
Ren’s	“ <u>讲</u> 那个王子找不到那个穿玻璃鞋的小姐。” (“[It] <u>tells</u> [about] the prince who couldn’t find the lady who wore the glass slipper.”)

Another frequently discussed preposition as an indicator of low linguistic acceptability is “关于” (about), which is often used to translate the English preposition *about* literally (Yu 1987/2007). In Table 9, the source text uses an extended preposition phrase starting with the preposition *about*. Liang follows the source text sentence structure strictly, translating *about* literally into its Chinese equivalent “关于”. In Yang’s and Ren’s, verb phrases are used instead of preposition phrases, enhancing the linguistic acceptability of the target text.

CONCLUSION

By applying the polysystem theory to interpret the changes in the preferred translation methods in China diachronically, this paper has analysed how the position of translated literature in the Chinese literary polysystem affects the linguistic acceptability of three translations of *Peter Pan* produced at different socio-historical moments. Liang’s translation, completed in the 1920s during the New Culture Movement, employs innovative translation methods through the duplication of source text sentence structures, resulting in a target text with low linguistic acceptability. Yang’s and Ren’s translations adapt source text sentence structures to suit Chinese linguistic norms, producing target texts with high linguistic acceptability. The change in translation methods is a reflection of the changed position of translated literature in the Chinese literary polysystem: as translated literature moved from a central to a peripheral position in the Chinese literary polysystem, conservative methods prioritising high linguistic acceptability became the prevalent norm in translation. The paper has also highlighted how patronage can affect the preferred norm in translation. As a significant writer in Chinese literary history and a leading figure in the New Culture Movement, Lu Xun’s open advocacy of “hard translation” encouraged translators to adopt innovative translation methods to reshape the Chinese written language.

The findings of this study contribute the academic discourse that endeavours to promote a more horizontal form of cultural interaction in the era of globalisation. As Tymoczko (2010a, p. 10) points out, for cultures that are already flooded with translations from the West, foreignising translation strategies do not necessary help to achieve a balanced cultural exchange. Since subaltern cultures and literatures have been and still are underrepresented globally, domesticating strategies that preserve the norms of their own culture would help to induce equality in cultural exchanges. Considering the strong influences the Chinese language and literature have received from the West, breaking away from Western linguistic norms indicates a stage of maturation. In this sense, “conservative” translation strategies can be considered as a form of cultural resistance, helping to counterbalance Eurocentrism and linguistic imperialism. Adding to research about translation activism (Tymoczko 2010b), translation and ELF (Taviano 2013), multilingual creativity on the Internet (Zhang 2015), and user-generated fan translation on the social media (Aisyah 2017), the study serves to unpack the dynamics in today’s translation practice that challenge

institutionalisation, authority as well as established cultural and social hierarchy. Considering the subaltern status of most Asian cultures, more research is needed to uncover the dialogue between the West and the East in translation, which will shed new light on the agency and subjectivity of underrepresented cultures, literatures and social groups.

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