# Investigating Expectancy Norms of English-Chinese Translation of Children's Literature in China

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## ABSTRACT

*The past decades have seen a growing trend both in the quantity and quality of the translation of children's literature (TCL). There have been a growing number of publications focusing on TCL. However, few studies have investigated TCL from the perspective of norm theory, and prior research has primarily concentrated on the implied reader while ignoring actual readers. This study aimed to investigate the expectancy norms of real readers of English-Chinese(E-C) TCL, Chinese children (12 and below) and adult readers (19 and above) and determine whether there are any differences between them. A list of 17 items was obtained according to the results of the semi-structured interviews and questionnaires conducted by Bijani et al. (2014) and Khoshsaligheh et al. (2020). An online questionnaire was conducted among 679 participants to gain insights into their attitudes towards E-C TCL. Key findings show that the highest-rated expectancy norms of children and adults differ, as does the priority of the top six expected features, suggesting that children and adults have diverse expectancy norm preferences. The top 3 highest ranked features of current Chinese children's readers are clarification of the ambiguous content, the plot of translations, and immersing themselves in the story, while the top 3 most important features for current Chinese adult readers are plot of translations, vivid illustrations, immersing themselves in the story. Children readers tend to place a greater emphasis on the educational values of the translated text, while adult readers prioritise enjoying their reading experience. These findings have implications for stakeholders such as publishers, translators, and educators who are involved in the production and dissemination of translated children's literature in China.*

*Keywords: expectancy norms; translation of children's literature; translation of adult literature; reception theory; Chinese readership*

## INTRODUCTION

In today's current era, translators would prioritise their readers' needs while making decisions during the process of translation. The dual readership of the TCL is one of the key distinctions between the TCL and the translation of adult literature (TAL). Children's literature and the TCL engage in both the child and adult systems simultaneously (Shavit, 1986, 2009, p.65). However, children and adults may have different needs and expectations when it comes to the TCL. The prevalent challenging issues in the practice and research of the TCL is to figure out what the dual readers expect respectively before and during the process of reading and what the differences are between their expectations. The solutions to the issues have significant implications for translators, publishers and teachers of the TCL.

Studies on the reception and expectations of children readers have just recently begun to emerge on a regular basis. The need for the TCL is growing along with the need for researchers to investigate ways to make the TCL accessible to international target readers. The TCL can provide more challenging issues than the TAL, requiring the translator to devote more time to theoretical and methodological considerations because it is governed by more particular norms, including didactic, pedagogical, and technical norms in addition to general principles (De Queiroga & Fernandes, 2016; Desmidt, 2014). However, owing to the peripheral status in the poly system, the study of the TCL is a relatively new subject of research (Farzaneh & Haratyan, 2017; Lathey, 2010; O'Sullivan, 2005; Pinsent & Reynolds, 2006).

Translation Studies (TS) must be both descriptive and evaluative, which can be achieved by investigating translation norms (Chesterman, 1993, p.63.). Both Gideon Toury and Andrew Chesterman have made significant contributions to the creation of the concept of norms in TS. The translation which adheres to the norms of the target language will be highly accepted by the target readers (Guo et al., 2020). Although the norm theory has been increasingly employed in TS, there is an overall lack of research regarding how to translate children's literature which conforms to the expectancy norms of children's readers. Empirical adult readers are now visible on websites, forums, blogs, etc. via direct expressions. However, empirical children's readers are a special group who are not as visible as adult readers in China. Meanwhile, contemporary research on the target readership has concentrated mainly on implied readers while ignoring real readers (Suojanen et al., 2014), especially young real readers.

Owing to the scarce empirical discussions on the topic, this study attempts to address the issues of the expectancy norms of TCL. It aims at identifying the expectancy norms of the real readers, Chinese children (12 and below) and Chinese adults (19 and above), for E-C TCL. Furthermore, it tries to determine whether there are any differences between the expectancy norms of children (12 and below) and adult (19 and above) readers in China. Specifically, this study addresses the following questions: 1). What are the current Chinese children's (12 and below) expectancy norms for E-C TCL? 2). What are the current adults' (19 and above) expectancy norms for E-C TCL? 3). Are there any differences between the expectancy norms of current Chinese children (12 and below) and adults (19 and above) for E-C TCL?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### READERS' RECEPTION IN TRANSLATION

The term "reception" is used to describe how a target culture responds to a translated text, its publication, and its contents (Karas, 2019). According to Skopos theory, the purpose of the translational interaction that takes place among the various participants of the interaction is the main factor influencing the choice of method and strategy in any translation process, which suggests that the meaning of a text is determined by its audience. According to Di Giovanni and Gambier (2018), audiences have always occupied a central position in theoretical, methodological, or pragmatic discussions about texts and readers of children's books. Other theories in TS have, at least in part, been interested in readers and readership, such as polysystem theory, descriptive TS and relevance theory. Reception has also been examined in the field of social psychology in terms of how translators predict readers' reactions and viewpoints. The frequently studied themes in reception studies have been humour, culture-specific contexts, and linguistic and stylistic issues (Jääskeläinen, 2012).

Chesterman (2007) proposed that the reception of translation could be investigated from three broad aspects, namely reactions, responses and repercussions, among which readers' responses are the most relevant to the current study. Within this framework, readers' responses refer to the reviews about a particular translation, which may be professional reviews or ordinary readers' online opinions. The reviews form one aspect of the quality assessment of a translation. However, Gambier (2018) challenged this claim by arguing that the three aspects can be distinguished more precisely, and it is the repercussion that describes audience reactions in terms of preferences and expectations for audiovisual translation studies. No matter how differently they interpret these terms, it shows the importance of the readers' attitudes or reviews regarding a translated text in the study of the reception of translation.

In terms of methodology, Nord (2012) admitted that it is simple to discuss readers' expectations but far more challenging to get empirical evidence of what readers actually expect. Suojanen et al.(2014) stated that studies on real readers' attitudes could be discovered by instruments of social sciences, such as questionnaires and interviews. Pitkäsalo (2018) discovered that the focus group method could be an excellent way for analysing readers' comprehension and appreciation of comics. Wang and Humblé (2020) used reader evaluations on Amazon to assess readers' attitudes towards Anthony Yu's self-retranslation of *The Journey to the West*, a classical Chinese novel. Kruger & Kruger (2017) based on the two cognitive processes involved in reading, reviewing, or listening to the translated products and focused mainly on the reception of the written form of translation and subtitling. In this vein, they argued that the intertwined relationship between translators' decision-making process and target readers' responses to the decisions must be examined theoretically, empirically and particularly in translation studies. Lee (2020) investigates misogynistic paratexts of translations that were published in South Korea to demonstrate how gender ideology may influence the reception and revision of paratexts. Chen (2022) offered fresh insights into translation reception by investigating the reception of Xiao Mao's online translation quantitatively and qualitatively. She argued that the translation reception had become dynamic and socially located currently and found that the individual and collective reception of Xiao Mao's translation was interrelated.

Previous studies have shown that readers' responses and expectations are important indicators of TCL. However, most studies focus on adult readers rather than children's readers, and compared to audiovisual translation, empirical research on readers' reception in other fields have generally received much less attention.

## EXPECTANCY NORMS FOR THE TCL

According to Chesterman (2016), readers of translated texts have certain expectations regarding the "text-type and discourse conventions, the text's style and register, the appropriate degree of grammaticality, the statistical distribution of all types of text features, collocation use, and lexical choice." Expectancy norms, which are higher than professional norms, are established by the expectations of target readers about what a translation should look like and what a target text (TT) should be like in terms of grammaticality, acceptability, appropriateness, style, textuality, and preferred conventions of form or discourse (Chesterman, 1993, 2016). They serve as a problem-solving role and are solutions to the issues created by specific translation situations. On the one hand, when translators translate according to the expectations of readers, their translations will be recognised as good or appropriate works. Therefore, the expectancy norms help assess the

translations to some extent. On the other hand, the expectations come from both the norm authority, such as an expert in the field, a teacher, and the real readers.

Bijani et al. (2014) investigated quantitatively how Iranian readers' primary expectations of a specific literary translation are formed by constructing and validating a questionnaire. They created a taxonomy of translation expectations using a mixed-methods approach, including source cultural items, target text preface, visualisation, target text language, authorial loyalty, and target culture. Through a quantitative method, Khoshsaligheh et al. (2020) also looked into common Iranian readers' expectations of a well-received translation of foreign fiction into Persian. Their findings cast some doubts on Venuti's foreignisation and domestication strategies used in Iranian literary translation. In their findings, all participants feel that it's essential to be faithful to the original author's style and writing style. Most of the participants favour a foreignising strategy for translating culture-related elements, and immersion in the translations is the most important dimension for Iranian readers.

Faber and Hjort-Pedersen ( 2013) looked into the usage of explicitation and implicitation in legal translation. Three English translations of the same Danish legal text were evaluated by Danish translators and legal experts according to Chesterman's classification of norms into professional and expectancy norms. The findings show that norms may not be consistent or even contradict each other and could be valuable in legal translation training. Their study, to some extent, testifies to Chesterman's statement about legal texts as "overt" translation because the "overt" translation is differently expected by the target readers.

Marčetić (2016) examined viewers' attitudes in subtitling for television towards strategies for translating culture-specific objects and vulgarisms in Croatia. Their results show that Croatian audiences are not very tolerant of translators interfering with the ST or deviating from it in any way that can be seen as unfaithful, and the views' expectations may be affected by "gossip" in regard to the translation titles and the transposition of culture related terms and are different from accepted translation practices.

Ma (2017) investigated how Zeng Hu, the translator of *The Thorn Birds,* adhered to these norms and how they affected his translation and came to the conclusion that the success of Zeng's translation is because of its adherence to the expectancy norms and professional norms. Liu (2015) analysed the expectancy norms in the English-Chinese translation of commercial drug names and discovered four expectancy norms: mental expectancy norms, cultural tradition norms, translation tradition norms, and law norms. In this context, Geng (2016) looked at translation norms in *Ai Xi La Ge*, the first complete Chinese translated text of *The Isles of Greece* by Byron, in light of social-cultural contexts and the translator's translating habits.

Di Giovanni and Gambier (2018) focused on the reception of audiovisual and accessible media texts and offered a thorough approach to the theoretical and empirical study of reception. A wide range of qualitative and quantitative approaches was employed to investigate the relationship between reception studies and audiovisual translation, such as interviews, focus group discussions, observations, eye-tracking, self-report questionnaires, and discourse analysis with a large amount of data, press reviews, fan letters and blogs, film archives, which provide new perspectives for the research of expectancy norms of the TCL.

All the studies mentioned aboveinvestigated translation norms, especially the expectancy norms of adult readers, from different perspectives and mainly in Iran, Croatia and China, respectively, which accounts for a very small portion compared to its significance to translation studies. So far, research into the expectancy norms of the TCL in China has been scarce. The expectancy norms formulated by applying Chesterman's theory to the TCL could not only be

taught to potential translators of children's literature but they could be used to assess the quality of the TCL as well. In addition, the research findings can be used by the publishing industry to more effectively address the needs of the general child readership and hence increase its own long-term gains.

Children's literature is different from adult literature in three aspects which have a significant impact on the TCL: dual readership (including children's readers, who are primary target readers, and adult readers, who are taste-setting background authority); didactic norms as well as ideological, ethical, moral, and religious norms, which determine the kind of literature children are provided with; and the special characteristics of the children's readers (their comprehension and reading abilities, their experience of life and knowledge of the world) (Puurtinen, 1997). Therefore, translators of children's literature are commonly permitted more flexibility to manipulate the source text (ST) to conform to the norms of the target literary system.

The TCL, as a norm-governed activity, has both similarities and differences with the TAL. In terms of similarities, the majority of the issues confronted when translating adult literature, such as faithfulness/smoothness, domestication/foreignisation, and specific cultural references, are faced by translators of children's literature. In terms of the differences, Desmidt (2014) confirms that children's literature should be translated differently than other genres. The TCL is more complicated than that of adults because not only do general rules play a role in this process, but it is also governed by specialised norms such as didactic, pedagogical, and technical norms. However, compared with the study of children's literature and the TAL, less study of the TCL, especially the expectancy norms of the TCL in China, has been conducted. The TCL is commonly acknowledged as a relatively new field within TS (Lathey, 2010; Emer O'Sullivan, 2005; Pinsent & Reynolds, 2006; Thomson-Wohlgemuth, 2014).

By focusing on readability, Puurtinen (1997) analysed syntactic norms in children's literature written in Finnish and translated from English into Finnish. In his quantitative investigation, he discovered that Finnish originals tended to favour finiteness, whereas the translation tended to favour nonfiniteness. This syntactic discrepancy is thought to be caused by the existence of various sets of norms for translated and originally Finnish children's books. As is commonly the case in the social sciences, the study of translation norms of children's literature is burdened by a lack of uniformity in the terminology, operationalisation, and conceptual scope of fundamental notions across studies of the TCL.

Mejdell (2011) found in his research of norms and taboos in Arabic translation that the translator of the children's novel, *Nattfuglene*, had to adhere to the norms of the TCL on stylistic, functional, and textual levels and to satisfy young readers in the target culture, translation norms for children's literature have generally been extremely tolerant of all types of modifications mostly because of the permissiveness of children's literature.

In the context of postcolonial/neocolonial cultural and linguistic hybridity in South Africa, Kruger (2013) examines how Afrikaans children and adults process and respond to potentially linguistically and culturally foreign textual aspects in translated picture books by using eye-tracking and short structured questionnaires or interviews.

Although studies of reception and expectancy norms have been investigated in the previous decades, they have gained relatively little attention in TS. Their empirical research is a new field and is still not sufficient, especially in the field of TCL. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the expectations and attitudes of children and adults towards TCL. To achieve this objective, a mixed-methods research design will be employed, using a combination of questionnaires and interviews to collect data on participants' expectations of the features of the TCL. By analysing

and comparing the reviews of children and adults, this study seeks to identify children's and adults' expectations towards the TCL and their differences. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of how translations can be optimised to meet the expectations of both children and adults, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and enjoyment of the TCL for its target readers.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of the study is based on Chesterman's (1993) norm theory of translation. There are two types of norms: expectancy norms and professional norms. Expectancy norms are developed by the expectations or attitudes of target readers about what a translation should be like with regard to grammar, acceptability, appropriateness, style, textuality and etc. A particular culture at a given time has its own syntactic, semantic and pragmatic expectancy norms. They are validated by their existence in the target language. If the translation meets the expectations of the target readers, it will be regarded as a good or appropriate translated work. On the other hand, professional norms, which are governed by expectancy norms, include not only acknowledged methods and strategies used in the process of translation but competent professional behaviour as well. They are established by the professional behaviour of those competent translators and validated by qualified professional translators as well as norm authorities, including translators, translation teachers, critics and those who assess translated works. An ideal TCL should be one that both adheres to the expectancy norms of target readers and the professional norms of competent translators.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to develop, verify, and present a questionnaire to evaluate the expectations of current Chinese children (12 and below) and adult (19 and above) readers towards the E-C TCL. The research, which is a mixed-methods study, is divided into two phases: the qualitative phase and the quantitative phase.

### RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

The qualitative phase included semi-structured interviews with both children and adults who have experience reading the TCL. The purpose of these interviews was to generate suitable questionnaire items that could be used to identify the attitudes of Chinese children and adults towards the TCL. Based on the results of the interviews, a valid and reliable questionnaire was developed to measure attitudes towards the TCL.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted among five children, who are 10, 11, 12, 12, and 16 years old, respectively, and five adults, who were encouraged to answer a series of open-ended questions in detail about their thoughts and experience of reading the TCL, including the number of the TCL they have read, their knowledge about the TCL and the translators, and their purpose of reading the TCL.

The interviews were transcribed and analysed manually. Based on the findings of the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire conducted by Bijani et al.(2014) and Khoshsaligheh et al. (2020), the authors developed a questionnaire consisting of 17 items, which are 17 features of the TCL.

The questionnaire contains two sections: Section A for demographic information and Section B for items related to the study of children's and adults' expectations toward the TCL. These items include: "The content of the TCL is exactly the same as its original text," "The TCL retains the exotic style of foreign countries," "The TCL includes appropriate footnotes," "The TCL retains the cover of the original work," "The TCL has vivid illustrations," "The TCL has a translator's preface," "The translator and the original work could be learned through the translator's preface," "Readers could improve their Chinese by reading the TCL," "The TCL has smooth language," "Ambiguous content in the original children's literature are clearly expressed in the translation," "The language of the TCL helps children's readers immerse themselves in the story," "The TCL removes content that is not suitable for children to read in the original text, such as death, violence, bad habits, profanity," "The TCL has an engaging storyline," "The original author is well known," "The translator is well-known," "The TCL is recommended or required reading from the Ministry of Education or school," and "The time of TCL when the translation was published."

The quantitative phase involves the development and validation of a closed-ended questionnaire to fulfil the study's objectives. The questionnaire used a six-point scale ranging from 1 (Extremely not expecting it), 2 (Somewhat not expecting it), 3 (Not expecting it), 4 (Expecting it), 5 (Somewhat expecting it), 6 (Extremely expecting it). To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, an initial draft was reviewed and revised by experts as well as potential participants. After receiving comments and feedback, the researcher applied for wide-range data collection. A reliability and validity test was carried out to make sure that all of the questions in the questionnaire were reliable indicators to measure the important variables in the study.

RESEARCH PROCEDURE AND SAMPLE SIZE

The questionnaires were administered via online Wenjuanxing, a Chinese platform for data collection. Participants—both children and adults—were reminded of the study's research aims and objectives prior to completing the online questionnaire. Moreover, it was stressed that their answers in the questionnaire were not rated as correct or incorrect, and they could consult their teachers or parents for assistance if they didn't understand the items. Six hundred seventy-nine participants completed the questionnaire, among whom 228 (33.6%) have never read any translations or don't know whether they have read translations. After excluding those who selected the options of "Never read any translation works" and "I don't know", 451 participants who have read translated works succeeded in indicating their expectations of the TCL.

The number of participants aged 12 and below is 127, aged 13 to 15 is 90, aged16 to18 is 28, and aged 19 and above is 206. This study mainly focuses on the age groups of 12 and below (children) and 19 and above (adults), which helps us clearly see the differences between children's expectations and adult expectations for the TCL.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to analyse the completed questionnaires using descriptive statistics. The results were tabulated according to the items, frequency (f), percentages (%), and mean ($\bar{x}$) scores.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY TEST

According to the results of the reliability analysis in Table 1, it can be seen that Cronbach's Alpha based on standardised items is 0.95 in the expectation of the main characteristics of the TCL. The reliability value range is between 0 and 1, and the closer it is to 1, the higher the reliability. According to Cronbach's Alpha, if an item is deleted, it can be seen that they are less than the overall 0.95. It shows that the overall reliability of the questionnaire is very high, which is a prerequisite for evaluating its validity. Therefore, the items of the content dimension of the expectation towards the main features of the TCL do not need to be adjusted.

The exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was run to test the validity of the questionnaire by using the SPSS24 version. The value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) (Kaiser, 1970, 1974) is used to check the adequacy of the sample, while Bartlett's test of sphericity is used to measure the strength of the relationship between variables (Bartlett, 1954).

TABLE 1. Reliability Analysis of the Expectations of E-CTCL

| Items | Scale Mean if Item Deleted | Scale Variance if Item Deleted | Corrected Item-Total Correlation | Squared Multiple Correlation | Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted | Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardised Items |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Faithfulness of content | 77.91 | 261.83 | 0.67 | 0.52 | 0.946 | |
| Faithfulness of exotic style | 77.65 | 263.31 | 0.69 | 0.58 | 0.946 | |
| Footnotes | 77.64 | 260.97 | 0.69 | 0.54 | 0.946 | |
| Faithfulness of the cover | 77.67 | 260.45 | 0.70 | 0.59 | 0.946 | |
| Vivid illustrations | 77.58 | 259.56 | 0.74 | 0.59 | 0.945 | |
| Translator's Preface | 77.82 | 259.31 | 0.71 | 0.67 | 0.945 | |
| Introduction of the translator and the original work in the translator's preface | 77.65 | 259.22 | 0.76 | 0.71 | 0.945 | 0.950 |
| Improving their Chinese level | 77.75 | 259.94 | 0.74 | 0.60 | 0.945 | |
| Smooth language in TT | 77.70 | 259.70 | 0.72 | 0.57 | 0.945 | |
| Clarification of the ambiguous content | 77.56 | 260.90 | 0.76 | 0.72 | 0.945 | |
| Immersing themselves in the story | 77.48 | 259.65 | 0.80 | 0.78 | 0.944 | |
| Taboo | 78.16 | 258.97 | 0.57 | 0.43 | 0.949 | |
| Plot of translations | 77.39 | 260.09 | 0.79 | 0.69 | 0.944 | |
| Well-known original author | 77.97 | 260.48 | 0.67 | 0.61 | 0.946 | |
| Well-known translator | 78.15 | 259.23 | 0.67 | 0.64 | 0.946 | |
| Recommended books | 77.78 | 257.80 | 0.73 | 0.61 | 0.945 | |
| Publishing time | 78.09 | 259.29 | 0.65 | 0.54 | 0.947 | |

According to the results of the above EFA, it can be seen that the value of the KMO test is 0.953, which ranges from 0 to 1. According to Kaiser (1974), a value between 0.9 and above means the validity of the questionnaire is very good.

According to the significance of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, it can be seen that the significance of this test is infinitely close to 0, as shown in Table 2, supporting the factorability of the correlation matrix and factor analysis, which was therefore suitable for the sample data. The null hypothesis is rejected, so the questionnaire has good validity.

TABLE 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. | | 0.953 |
|---|---|---|
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 5503.615 |
| | df | 136 |
| | Sig. | 0 |

## FINDINGS

### SURVEY

The numerical features of demographic variables represent the distribution of the surveyed objects. The central tendency is represented by the mean. Volatility is represented by the standard deviation. It can be observed from the frequency analysis results of each variable that it essentially fits the sampling survey standards. In the gender survey results, for example in Table 3, the proportion of males is 38%, and the proportion of females is 62%. It is clear that the survey's findings are heavily skewed toward female expectations.

TABLE 3. The demographics of survey participants

| variables | items | Frequency | Per cent | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | male | 171 | 38% | 1.62 | 0.49 |
| | female | 280 | 62% | | |
| Age | 12 and below | 127 | 28% | 2.69 | 1.30 |
| | 13-15 | 90 | 20% | | |
| | 16-18 | 28 | 6% | | |
| | 19 and above | 206 | 46% | | |
| education level | primary school | 129 | 29% | 2.71 | 1.32 |
| | middle school | 89 | 20% | | |
| | high school | 18 | 4% | | |
| | Bachelor's degree or above | 215 | 48% | | |

To address the three research questions, descriptive statistics, including the mean and the standard deviation of the ratings of the questionnaire items, were computed. The means of children (12 and below) and adults (19 and above) were sorted from high to low.

The top 6 highest ranked features of current Chinese children's readers are as follows: (1) clarification of the ambiguous content (M= 5.1575); (2) plot of translations (M= 5.1575); (3) immersing themselves in the story (M=5.1417); (4) recommended books (M=5.0787); (5) improving their Chinese level (M=5.0315); (6) vivid illustrations (M=5.0157). The top 6 lowest ranked features are taboo(M=4.5906), publishing time(M=4.6772), well-known translator(M=4.7165), smooth language in TT(M=4.7559), faithfulness of content(M=4.7795), and translator's preface(M=4.8425).

The top 6 most important features for current Chinese adult readers are as follows: (1) plot of translations (M= 5.2039); (2) vivid illustrations (M= 5.1068); (3) immersing themselves in the story (M= 5.0874); (4) smooth language in TT (M= 5.0437); (5) introduction of the translator and the original work in the translator's preface (M= 4.9757); (6) clarification of the ambiguous content (M= 4.9757).

The top 6 lowest-ranked features are publishing time (M= 4.4369), well-known translator (M= 4.4466), the well-known original author (M= 4.5437), taboo (M= 4.5825), faithfulness of content (M= 4.6359), and improving their Chinese level (M= 4.6796).

## EXPECTANCY NORMS AT DIFFERENT AGES

According to the above results of one-way ANOVA, six features which have significant differences are chosen and shown in Table 4 because their significance values are 0.01, 0.025, 0.026, 0.071, 0.073, and 0.054 respectively, and are obviously less than 0.1 among the 17 features of expected characteristics of translated works of children's literature.

TABLE 4. Analysis of Each Variable at Different Ages

| variables | options | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | F | sig | Multiple comparisons |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Improving their Chinese level | 12 and below | 127 | 5.03 | 1.28 | 0.11 | 3.80 | 0.010 | 1>2 |
| | 19 and above | 206 | 4.68 | 1.35 | 0.09 | | | |
| Clarification of the ambiguous content | 12 and below | 127 | 5.16 | 1.24 | 0.11 | 3.15 | 0.025 | \ |
| | 19 and above | 206 | 4.98 | 1.22 | 0.08 | | | |
| Immersing themselves in the story | 12 and below | 127 | 5.14 | 1.29 | 0.11 | 3.12 | 0.026 | \ |
| | 19 and above | 206 | 5.09 | 1.22 | 0.08 | | | |
| Taboo | 12 and below | 127 | 4.59 | 1.63 | 0.15 | 2.36 | 0.071 | \ |
| | 19 and above | 206 | 4.58 | 1.58 | 0.11 | | | |
| Well-known author | 12 and below | 127 | 4.91 | 1.35 | 0.12 | 2.34 | 0.073 | 1>2 |
| | 19 and above | 206 | 4.54 | 1.38 | 0.10 | | | |
| Recommended books | 12 and below | 127 | 5.08 | 1.33 | 0.12 | 2.57 | 0.054 | 1>2 |
| | 19 and above | 206 | 4.82 | 1.35 | 0.09 | | | |

*\* Note: 1 represents 12 years old and below, 2 represents 19 years old and above*

## DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to find out what current Chinese children (12 and below) and adult readers (19 and above) expected from a translation of foreign children's literature into Chinese in terms of the 17 characteristics of TCL mentioned in Table 1. The analysis generated a number of significant findings that may add to our understanding of the translation reception of children's literature, which has long been decided by adults.

The first research question in this study investigated the current Chinese children's (12 and below) expectancy norms for TCL. It was discovered that the top 6 highest ranked features of current Chinese children's readers are as follows: (1) clarification of the ambiguous content (M=5.1575); (2) plot of translations (M=5.1575); (3) immersing themselves in the story (M=5.1417); (4) recommended books (M=5.0787); (5) improving their Chinese level (M=5.0315); (6) vivid illustrations (M=5.0157). The mean value of the top six ranking features is all more than 5. Children consider both the clarification of the original ambiguous content in TT and the interesting plot of translations as the most important features (M=5.1575). They expect that TCL should have easy-to-understand language, an interesting plot, and vivid illustrations so that they can immerse themselves in the story and enjoy reading without too many difficulties. At the same time, they expect that they can learn something from reading translations, such as good Chinese expressions. They also hope to read translated works that are recommended by the Ministry of Education or their schools, probably because they may improve their test scores after reading them.

Among the 17 items, the six least expected items are taboo, publishing time, well-known translation, smooth language in TT, faithfulness of content, and translator's preface. The deletion of taboos in the translation is the least expected, suggesting that they are confident in their ability to avoid the negative consequences that adults fear or that they are curious about them. Compared to the other features of TCL, children do not care much about the publishing time of a translation, whether the translation was translated by well-known or unknown translators, whether the translation is faithful to the original content, and the translator's preface. One of the reasons might be because of their limited knowledge about the nature of translation and the difference between reading an original Chinese book and a translated version.

The second research question explored the current Chinese adults' (19 and above) expectancy norms for TCL. According to the results, the top 6 most important characteristics for current Chinese adult readers have both differences and similarities with children. They are (1) plot of translations (M=5.2039); (2) vivid illustrations (M=5.1068); (3) immersing themselves in the story (M=5.0874); (4) smooth language in TT (M=5.0437); (5) introduction of the translator and the original work in the translator's preface (M=4.9757); (6) clarification of the ambiguous content (M=4.9757). The mean value of the top four ranking features is more than 5, which suggests that adults place more emphasis on enjoying their reading experience. For example, the translated work should have an interesting plot, vivid illustrations, and smooth language so that they can immerse themselves in the book, which has no different from their expectation towards the original work.

The six least expected items of adult readers are publishing time, well-known translator, well-known original author, taboo, the faithfulness of content, and improving their Chinese level. Adults target readers do not care too much about when the translation is published, whether it is translated by a famous translator and whether the original writer is famous, which may be because they pay more attention to their reading experience mentioned above. Adult readers unexpectedly do not expect taboo content to be removed from the translated works.

The third research question looks at the differences between current Chinese children's expectations and adults' expectations towards TCL. Firstly, according to the results of multiple comparisons in Table 4, it can be seen that children at the age of 12 and below have significantly different expectations for items, such as improving their Chinese level, clarification of the ambiguous content, immersing themselves in the story, taboo, well-known author, and recommended books from adult readers (19 and above). Children prefer Chinese translations, which can help them enhance their Chinese language proficiency, those that are translated from famous writers and those recommended by their school or teachers over adult readers, which might indicate that children put more emphasis on learning something from the translated books than adults do.

Secondly, the top 6 most important characteristics for Chinese children and adult readers seem to indicate that while adult readers prioritise enjoying their reading experience, children typically place a greater emphasis on learning something from the translated text. Children place a higher value on translations recommended by the Ministry of Education or their schools, and they hope to improve their Chinese by reading translations of foreign children's literature, while adults put more emphasis on the translators' preface, probably because they think children need the information in it. Among the six least expected items of both children and adults, children exhibit lower expectations with regard to the presence of a translator's preface and the fluency of the target text, while adults place less importance on the original author's fame and the potential impact on the reader's proficiency in the Chinese language. The removal of taboo elements in a translation is the least expected by children's readers, while among adult readers, the different version or the timing of publication is the least expected factor.

Thirdly, except for the differences in the top 6 expected features between children and adults, Figure 1 also shows that children hope to read translations of famous writers' works more than adults, whereas adults want translations that retain the exotic style of ST and have a smooth language than children.
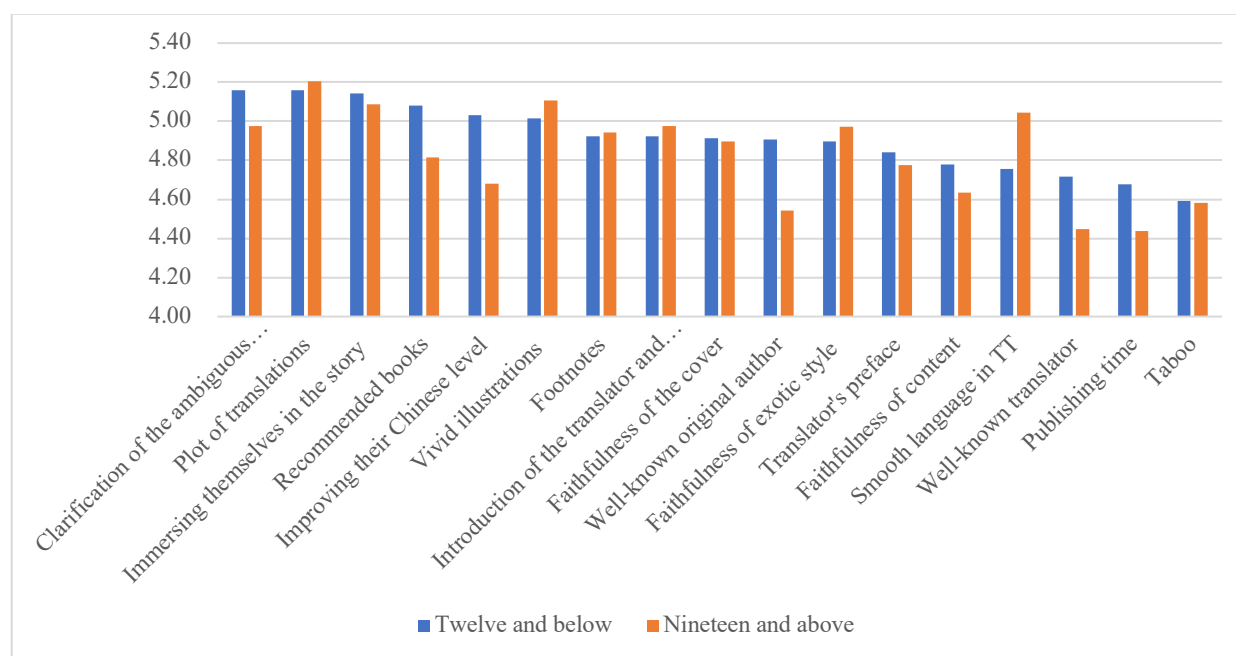


FIGURE 1. Comparison of Means of Expectation between Children and Adults

Overall, the highest-rated expectancy norms of children and adults differ, as does the priority of the top six expected features, suggesting that children and adults have diverse expectancy norm preferences.

Chinese adult readers also have similarities with children in terms of their expectancy norms, as shown by their rankings of the items in Figure 1. The results suggest that both children and adult readers believe it is critical for a translation to have an engaging plot, vivid illustrations, and easy language. Both of them place high expectations on translations, which makes readers immerse themselves in the story. They also do not value reading translations by well-known translators, maybe because they trust the translators' professional literacy and censorship of publishers; or they may think that all the translation quality is good and that different translators make little difference, or because of the low historical regard of translators among Chinese readers, which may be implied by 39% of the participants who have paid no attention to the translator of a translated work.

Among the top 6 least expected items, they have four in common, which are faithfulness of content, well-known translator, publishing time and taboo. The publishing time of translated works, which is the second least expected feature of TCL by children, is the least expected feature for adults. Both adults and children don't care about when the version was published, probably because they think there are no differences among the versions at different times or maybe because they simply ignore the differences.

In Iran, similar research (Bijani et al., 2014; Khoshsaligheh et al., 2020) looked into adult readers' expectancy norms for fiction, which is more different and less similar to this study. All the findings show that helping readers immerse in the story is considered extremely crucial. However, Bijani et al. (2014) reported seven dimensions of a well-received Persian translation of Western fiction, among which none of them was considered "very important" by the adult participants. Immersion, faithfulness, and footnoting are regarded as the top three most important dimensions of foreign fiction translation for the Iranian sample of the study. The result is quite different from the current study, in which the top six most important expected norms are all regarded as extremely important by Chinese children, and four of them are regarded as extremely important by Chinese adults. Furthermore, neither children nor adult respondents in this study placed enough importance on the faithfulness of content and style, which has historically been emphasised, while Khoshsaligheh et al. (2020) found that faithfulness was the second most important dimension in their study. Besides, interestingly, most respondents in Khoshsaligheh et al.'s study were uncertain about the paratext of translation and believed discussing the challenges of translating the text in paratext is of little value, while the vivid illustration is considered the second most important expectation by the adult respondents in the current study.

This study has shed light on the concept of expectancy norms towards E-C TCL from Chinese children and adults. The results indicate that the Chinese children readers' expectations towards E-C TCL differ from those of Chinese adult readers in various aspects. Specifically, our findings reveal that Chinese children exhibit a preference for elements that are conducive to the success of their school life over those that are not, while Chinese adults more emphasise their reading experience. These findings may contribute to our understanding of children's and adults' expectancy norms and their impact on behaviour and decision-making.

## CONCLUSION

The current investigation has made a valuable contribution to the existing body of research on the expectancy norms of target readers in the field of translation studies. The findings align with the previous research on expectancy norms, which has suggested that target readers hold syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic expectations towards TCL. The findings especially show that Chinese children's readers have different priority structures of expectancy norms towards E-C TCL compared to Chinese adult readers.

The current research has important implications for the translation and publishing of children's literature in China. Adults can select translated works from the perspective of children if they are aware of their expectations for the translations they read. On the other hand, translators can improve and make their translations more acceptable if they understand both children's and adults' expectancy norms and their disparities. Furthermore, translation educators can better create curriculum and training programs to guide and train competent translators if they realise what the target readers expect and accept as good translations. Translation students and other potential translators can avoid unsuccessful translations in their future professions. Publishers can use the findings of this and other similar studies as well and require translators of foreign children's literature to translate with translation guidelines based on children's expectations so that they can censor and ensure that the translations reach their intended audience after publication, finally boosting their profits.

The present study, like most of the others, has a couple of (de)limitations. Although a large sample of children and adult readers was investigated for the study, the findings may have been enhanced by the recruitment of larger samples based on random selection and at the macro level. This study also highlights the need for further research into the expectancy norms of various genres of TCL specifically, as this could provide a more nuanced understanding of the expectations of Chinese readers in the translation of diverse literary works and contribute to the development of effective translation strategies and practices for each genre of children's literature. In addition, the study of norms is as broad as any other subject in the field of linguistics and needs more extensive and varied research projects and empirical evidence, involving different types of data collection and analysis, with findings that can be triangulated and cross-validated and thus reveal more generalisable results.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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