



Childhood, Identity Politics, and Linguistic Negotiation in the Traditional Chinese Translation of the Picture Book *The Gruffalo* in Taiwan

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Translations for Children and the Identity Politics of Contemporary Taiwan

Written by Julia Donaldson and illustrated by Axel Scheffler, the picture book *The Gruffalo* was published in 1999 and has since become a huge international success. According to Donaldson's official website, the book won many awards in the UK, including the Nestlé Smarties Book Prize, the Blue Peter Book Award for Best Book to Read Aloud, and the Experian Big Three Award. It was adapted into a thirty-minute animated film that was broadcast on BBC One on 26 December 2009 on the tenth anniversary of the publication of the book. To date, the book has sold over four million copies worldwide and has been translated into forty languages, including Chinese. The Taiwan Mac Educational Company published the Chinese edition in traditional Chinese characters under the title 怪獸古肥獾 (*Gruffalo the Monster*) in 2006.¹ Any reader who is familiar with Chinese culture

will instantly recognize the story as a reworking of the Chinese fable “狐假虎威” (“The Fox that Borrows the Terror of a Tiger”). Ching-Yen Liu, the Taiwanese translator of *The Gruffalo*, mentioned in an email interview with me that he had recommended the book to the Taiwanese publisher for publication because he found the language of the source text playful and interesting, and because he found the book to bear a striking resemblance to the Chinese fable.

This fable has been traced back to the ancient Chinese compilation entitled 戰國策 (*Zhan Guo Ce*, literally *Strategies of the Warring States*), which records “the strategies and political views of the School of Diplomacy and reveals the historical and social characteristics of the Warring States Period” from 475 to 221 BC (“Zhan Guo Ce”). In this book, a minister of the Chu State tells a fable to the king about a hungry tiger catching a fox in an attempt to curry favour with him. In order to save its life, the cunning fox tells the

tiger that God has appointed the fox to be the king of the beasts and that all other animals should fear it. When the tiger observes that all the other animals scatter upon the approach of the fox (whom the tiger is accompanying), the gullible tiger is fooled into believing the fox's claim. By this fable, the minister flatteringly suggests that the king is the real reason the rival states respect and fear his top general. In other words, the fox is to the tiger as the general is to the king.

The Gruffalo tells the story of a mouse that outwits its predators in a similar way. While strolling through the forest, the mouse comes across a fox, then an owl, and then a snake, each of which invites the mouse to his home for a meal. Knowing the invitation to be a ploy, the mouse declines and scares each of them off by saying that it is on its way to have a meal with a Gruffalo and that each of them happens to be the Gruffalo's favourite meal. Later, by a strange coincidence, the mouse comes across a creature whose appearance conforms to its previous description of the Gruffalo. Seeing that the monster intends to eat it, the mouse claims to be the scariest animal in the forest and invites the disbelieving monster to see what happens when the other animals encounter the mouse. Like the animals in the Chinese fable, the beasts are frightened away at the sight of the monster walking behind the mouse, giving the monster the impression that they are frightened of the mouse.

The association between *The Gruffalo* and the Chinese fable is confirmed by Donaldson herself. During an interview published in *The Observer* in 2004, she explained that her story is a retelling of "a contemporary version of an Eastern folk tale about a child who cons a jungle tiger into submission by the cunning expedient of having it follow in her footsteps" (McCrum). On her official website Donaldson states that her book "was going to be about a tiger," but because she "couldn't get anything to rhyme with 'tiger,'" she invented the word "gruffalo" instead ("Information"). Donaldson gestures to the status of the Chinese fable as an earlier version of the Eastern folk tale and the source of her inspiration in an interview published in *The Times* in 2009, in which she admitted that her story "is based *loosely* on a Chinese folk tale about a fox and a tiger" (Burnside; emphasis added). The resourcefulness, responsiveness, and independent decision-making of Donaldson's mouse represent a characterization of the self that, according to psychologists Hazel Rose Markus and Shinobu Kitayama, Western culture associates with individual autonomy, self-achievement, and the capacity to meet the demands of the fast-paced and competitive modern world (226). In contrast, the cunning behaviour of the fox in the Chinese fable is intended to elicit disapproval, because it does not conform to the principle of collectivism that emphasizes an individual's obligations to others and

acceptance of one's place in society. Indeed, this understanding has made the Chinese fable a common Chinese idiom “狐假虎威” (“The Fox that Borrows the Terror of a Tiger”), which refers to people who bully others for personal gain by making use of someone else's power or prestige. Donaldson's opinion of the fox in the traditional tale as “quite a bullying character, like a businessman, boasting that I'm in with so and so” (Burnside) accords with the typical moral implication of the fable in Chinese culture. Yet her revision of the Chinese fox into the mouse, the hero in her story, also suggests that a valuing of individualism is inherent in the Chinese fable. Both the ancient Chinese fable and the contemporary British picture book seem to encode the doubleness of values. In the *Readers' Guide* to the Chinese translation of *The Gruffalo*, translator Liu reports that, after he read aloud his translation to a group of children, the Chinese fable was invoked in their discussion, which focused on the cleverness of Donaldson's mouse as the positive side of the Chinese fox's deception. He also mentions in the email interview with me that, when he was invited to elementary schools to talk about the book, many teachers told him that they had taught the book as a modern version of the Chinese fable. In fact, Donaldson's book is so critically acclaimed that it was listed in 行政院新聞局推介中小學生優良課外讀物 (*Extracurricular Reading Materials for Primary and Middle School Students Recommended by the*

Government Information Office) in 2007.

The translation of *The Gruffalo* provides Taiwanese people with an opportunity to look beyond the values of collectivism, because it shows the susceptibility of Taiwanese childhood to the influence, through translation, of Western (especially English-speaking) cultures. Compared to books written in Chinese, texts translated from Western languages, mainly English, account for the majority of children's books in Taiwan's market (Bradbury and Liu 244–46), with picture books being the most popular genre (Hung 46). The mass importation of Western picture books has inspired local writers and artists to create their own books for children, largely in a bid to consolidate in them a localized sense of identity. Translated Western texts nevertheless exert a significant influence on the formation of the identity of Taiwanese children. Lawrence Venuti argues that translation can participate in domestic identity formation when it strategically provides something culturally recognizable for the target reader and when it coincides with the domestic agenda of identity politics: “The foreign text becomes intelligible when the reader recognizes himself or herself in the translation by identifying the domestic values that motivated the selection of that particular foreign text, and that are inscribed in it through a particular discursive strategy” (77). In contributing to identity formation, translating for children is a practice regulated by “pedagogical and didactic considerations”



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concerning cultural norms, linguistic conventions, and educational intentions (López 43). In Taiwan, many children's books are published with readers' guides as their appendices in order to encourage their use in educational settings, a phenomenon that attests to the importance of children's literature in Taiwanese classrooms. Before finalizing *The General Guidelines of Grade 1–9 Curriculum for Elementary and Junior High School Education* in 2003, for example, Taiwan's Ministry of Education implemented a preliminary version in 2000, which promoted a nine-year "integrated curriculum" that, according to the Ministry's web page "Pursuing Excellence, Setting an Example," encouraged teachers to integrate the teaching of concepts across a range of disciplines. Under this curricular model, many teachers and educational experts have explored the viability of using children's books as complementary materials for teaching.² In this context, the translation of *The Gruffalo* not only fits into the objectives of the contemporary Taiwanese educational system, but also responds to contemporary identity politics.

Identity politics in Taiwan are tightly connected to their overlapping histories of colonialization by China and Japan. Taiwan, an island off the southeastern coast of China, did not become part of Chinese territory until 1887, as Emma Jinhua Teng points out, when the Qing dynasty officially declared Taiwan to be a Chinese province when it was faced with "the Japanese challenge to [its] sovereignty over" the island; before this, in the mid-seventeenth century, China had started colonizing Taiwan through a policy of settlement and tried to placate the Taiwan aboriginal tribes who considered themselves to be the owners of the land (247). The island was later ceded to Japan

as the result of the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–95. During their half-century occupation of Taiwan, the Japanese implemented various measures to force the descendents of Han Chinese immigrants and the aboriginal people to adopt the Japanese language and culture, and to consider themselves Japanese citizens. During the same period, the Qing dynasty was overthrown and the Republic of China was established in 1912 by the Chinese Nationalist Party, also known as the KMT. When the KMT gained control of Taiwan following the defeat of Japan in World War II, the island continued to be caught in the snare of colonialism, because the KMT wasted no time in consolidating its control of the island and quelling any resistance to its rule by declaring martial law in preparation for making the island into a secure redoubt. In 1949, shortly after its defeat by Communist forces in the Chinese Civil War, the KMT retreated to the island as its temporary base with the objective of reclaiming the mainland in the future. In the early days of the KMT's hegemony in Taiwan, Mandarin was made the national language and used as the exclusive medium of instruction at all levels of education, and the goal of literacy was to develop children's proficient use of traditional Chinese characters. Any other languages were forbidden in school and in the media, even though most of the island's inhabitants were native speakers of Taiwanese. Martial law in Taiwan was finally lifted in 1987. In the 1990s, the KMT began

a process of localization whereby power was gradually transferred to Taiwan-born party leaders. Over the past several decades, democracy has steadily taken root in Taiwan, and opposition parties now influence national policy-making and compete in presidential elections.

One result of all these changes is that the highly centralized educational system has been replaced with a decentralized one, which makes room for greater linguistic and cultural diversity in the curriculum, allows for an open textbook market, and gives teachers greater autonomy. As a result of a series of textbook deregulation measures that began in the late 1980s, Taiwanese children are now educated in an indigenized curriculum that aims to reflect the diverse ethno-geographic reality of Taiwanese society and to promote Taiwanese identity. This process is an attempt to assimilate the Chinese cultural legacy into a Taiwan-centred curriculum, according to Jyh-Jia Chen (61–68), and its effectiveness is due to the changing roles of Mandarin Chinese and traditional Chinese characters in education. Through its contact with local dialects over time, especially Taiwanese, the Mandarin Chinese of Taiwan has developed into a variant known as “Taiwan Mandarin,” which is widely spoken at all levels of Taiwanese society and remains the main medium of education in the indigenized school curricula.³ Consequently, Taiwan Mandarin, along with its corresponding written system of traditional Chinese characters, is generally favoured as a communicative

tool to circulate cultural values. In contemporary Taiwan, the identity politics of childhood are interlaced with changing educational policies that steer a winding course through Chinese values, local Taiwanese cultures, and Western influences. In this context, the Chinese translation of *The Gruffalo* in Taiwan becomes a paradigmatic text that demonstrates a context-bound discourse, one that seeks to incorporate and fuse heterogeneous cultural elements linguistically through the negotiation between the source language and the target language. As an animal story, the picture book offers no visual representation of culturally specific material environments in contemporary everyday life, so that cultural values are inscribed through language choices alone.

The Narrator's Voice in Translation and Cultural Politics in Taiwan

Linking translation studies to cultural studies, Susan Bassnett acknowledges “the importance of understanding the manipulatory processes that are involved in textual production,” which means that “a writer does not just write in a vacuum: he or she is the product of a particular culture, of a particular moment in time” (136). The translation practice of *The Gruffalo* is constrained by the Taiwanese children's book publishing industry. In Taiwan, many children's publishing companies are more willing to publish books translated from other languages than

works by local writers. Most foreign books selected for translation are award winners in their original context, distinctions that are regarded as guaranteeing quality and commercial success. Moreover, the time constraints and the costs associated with the production of translated books are considerably reduced because there are seldom long discussions between editors and authors about revisions, as they generally are in the case of the productions of books by local authors (Wang 85). Translators rarely consult the source-text authors about their meanings, so a foreign book is ready for publication once the person whom the editors select as the suitable translator completes the translation, which may be modified slightly by the editors in accordance with their judgments about the taste of the target audience. In the case of picture books, translators are usually requested by the editors to write the accompanying readers' guides (Chi 134–36) in an effort to make the translated books more marketable. As a practitioner of translation in such a publishing industry, Ching-Yen Liu, who has not only translated *The Gruffalo* but has also written its *Readers' Guide*, admits in the email interview that he painstakingly rendered Donaldson's rhyming prose into language that he thought Taiwanese children would understand, without sacrificing what he perceived to be its authorial meaning.

As pointed out in the previous section, changes in the Taiwanese education system reflect identity politics

in contemporary Taiwan. As a dialogical process, translation necessarily involves cultural appropriation by dealing with cultural values encoded in the target text. Emer O'Sullivan notes that the translator, who knows the source language and culture, "creates the target text in such a way that it can be understood by readers in the target culture with language, conventions, codes and references differing from those in the source culture" ("Narratology" 102). Because the translator's language choice "creates a different implied reader from the one in the source text" (102), the voice of the target-text narrator must be different from that of the source-text narrator. The peculiar narration of the target text manifests the way the translator "positions her/himself in relation to the translated narrative" (99). In other words, the translator's implied presence and voice can be found in "the voice of the narrator of the translation" (105). At the same time, however, both "the voice of the narrator of the source text and the voice of the translator" are discursively present in a translated text (104). Drawing on M. M. Bakhtin's theory of dialogism, O'Sullivan argues elsewhere that "the translator tries to allow not only the unavoidable presence of his or her own voice to be heard in the text, but also the various other voices as they were heard in the original" (*Comparative* 80–81). To borrow Bakhtin's words, a translation is a discourse that "has a twofold direction—it is directed both toward" the source text as "the referential object of speech" and

"toward another's discourse, toward someone else's speech" (185), indicating the target culture represented by the translator's discursive presence.

In *The Gruffalo*, the story reaches its climax when the gruffalo makes its appearance. Before this moment, the gruffalo appears to be a fictional being invented by the mouse, as suggested by the inquiries of the first three animals: "A gruffalo? What's a gruffalo?" The use of the article "a" and the question word "what" communicate that the monster is an unidentified being. The mouse's derisive comment on each animal's reaction further suggests that the gruffalo is nothing more than a figment of his imagination: "Doesn't he know? There's no such thing as a gruffalo." Thus in the English version the gruffalo is posited as purely fictional. In the Chinese translation, however, the animals' questions are translated as follows: "古肥獾？誰是古肥獾？" ("Gruffalo? Who is Gruffalo?"). Thus, "a gruffalo" becomes "Gruffalo," which amounts to giving the creature a proper name. In telling children's stories in Taiwan Mandarin, it is conventional to use the name of an animal species as the animal's proper name by omitting the article.⁴ The question word "who" implies that "Gruffalo" could be a person. Compared with the unidentified status of "a gruffalo" in the source text, "Gruffalo" in the target text is presented as *someone* with a distinct identity and a solid existence. This anticipates the forthcoming appearance of the monster in the translation, despite the mouse's derisive



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insistence on its non-existence. When the monster finally appears in front of the mouse, the words of the English source text read: “*But* who is this creature with terrible claws and terrible teeth in his terrible jaws?” (emphasis added). The contrasting conjunction in the source text reveals the presence of the narrator to a higher degree, suggesting that the narrator is as surprised as the mouse is by the unexpected monster and hastens to refute the mouse’s assumption that the monster is unreal. The contrasting conjunction “*but*” is not in the Chinese text, which merely reads: “這是誰啊？” (“Who is this?”). This suggests an indifferent tone that underscores the target-text narrator’s prior knowledge about the monster, making the target text resonate with the Chinese fable in which the existence of an ultimate predator is an accepted fact.

In the source text, when describing the mouse’s encounter with the fox, the narrator first uses the common noun “a fox” to refer to the first animal that the mouse meets. However, when speaking to the fox, the mouse addresses the animal as “Fox,” suggesting that this is the animal’s proper name. From then on, the narrator uses “Fox” rather than “the fox” in its narration. This shift of usage indicates that the narrator picks up the mouse’s view and mainly tells the story from the mouse’s perspective. The same shift also appears in the mouse’s conversations with the owl and with the snake. The narrator’s verbal alliance with the mouse is also strongly suggested by the typeface in the source text. Sans-serif fonts are used for the mouse’s direct speech and the narration, whereas italics are used for the speech of the monster and of the other animals.

The translation adopts the same typeface pattern, which communicates that its narrator also sympathizes with the mouse. In

the target text, however, the manner of addressing the animals does not follow the pattern of the source text. The source text's "a fox saw the mouse" is rendered as "狐狸看見老鼠" ("Fox saw Mouse"). According to the semantic convention of Mandarin concerning bare nouns mentioned earlier, it can be said that the narrator of the target text transforms the common nouns "fox" and "mouse" into proper nouns (the same goes for the owl and the snake). In the target text, even before the mouse addresses its interlocutors with bare nouns as their proper names, the narrator has referred to the animals in this way. This comparison between the source text and the translation shows that the source-text narrator does not adopt the mouse's voice and viewpoint until the middle of the story, whereas the language of the target text implies that its narrator does so from the beginning.

The rendering of the source text's "a fox" as "狐狸" ("Fox"), which could have been rendered more faithfully as "一隻狐狸" ("a fox"), signals the manipulation of the target-text narrator. This is congruent with the double-voiced discourse Bakhtin theorizes, which encompasses another person's speech. The formation of this kind of discourse characterizes "an intention on the part of the author to make use of someone else's discourse in the direction of its own particular aspirations" (193). Referring to the animals with Chinese bare nouns right from the beginning, the narrator of the target text seems to perceive them as

persons by adopting the source-text mouse's speech/address to the animals from the beginning of the translation. This gesture exhibits an intention that coincides with a trend that Cho-cheng Liao observes in the narratives of contemporary children's stories in Taiwan: the third-person narrators typically introduce the reader to the story by naming and commenting on the characters (18–23). In this context, by personifying the animal characters with bare nouns, the narrator of the Chinese translation of *The Gruffalo* lessens the distance between the reader and the story in an effort to encourage the reader to identify with the animal characters and the cultural values they carry.

Linguistic Negotiation and the Manifestation of Hybrid Cultural Values

Like many conventional children's stories, the story of *The Gruffalo* has animals as its characters, among which a mouse assumes the central role. Encountering different predators in the story, the mouse, as with the miniature characters common in children's literature, "can be seen to function as [a] vivid visual metaphor . . . for the adult-perceived vulnerability of children" (Hancock 19). In other words, the mouse is a childlike figure. As mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the mouse also exhibits the qualities of individual autonomy and resourcefulness, characteristics regarded as important in contemporary Western culture.

The principle of individualism is also considered

to be one of the requisites for modern life in contemporary Taiwanese culture, and so not surprisingly the autonomy and resourcefulness displayed by the mouse is promoted and implicitly celebrated in this translation of *The Gruffalo*. In Taiwan, too, mastery of the English language is associated with prestige, progress, and enhanced social status. By far the most widely studied foreign language in Taiwan, English is regarded by the Taiwanese government as an essential bridge to the international community, and knowledge of the English language is given much emphasis. In order to prepare children better for their future participation in the global community, the first year for compulsory English education was lowered to grade five nationwide in 2001 and to grade three in 2005, as a result of a decision made by the Ministry of Education in 九年一貫課程改革實施兩年總檢討報告 (*The Overall Evaluation of Grade 1–9 Curricular Reform Implementation Two Years So Far*) in 2002.⁵ The great importance given to English encourages the embrace of Western culture, and Taiwanese children are exposed to Western lifestyles through much of the content of the English textbooks used in elementary school (Ma 61–65) in addition to translated English-language children’s books. This emphasis on English reflects the fact that Western cultures play a key role in the process of the transformation of Taiwan into a more democratic and modern society. In such a climate, it is important to find a way to reconcile Western values with Chinese

cultural norms, which are appropriated as Taiwanese traditional values. *The General Guidelines of Grade 1–9 Curriculum for Elementary and Junior High School Education* states that social studies textbooks should help children develop such core competencies as the capability to “appreciate and respect different groups and cultures, and understand the history and culture of one’s own country as well as those of others”; to “think independently and reflectively”; and to “solve problems and resolve conflicts” effectively (5–6). The *Guidelines* represents a consensus of the Taiwanese public to move toward a multicultural society in which a transcultural identity emerges from accessing reconfigured cultural norms and values. The story of *The Gruffalo* praises the mouse’s cleverness, which imparts the value of individualism, but it seems to be at odds with the norm of collectivism, one of the deeply rooted traditional values in Taiwanese society.

A closer examination reveals, however, that while encouraging the reader to accept the value of individualism embedded in the story, the Chinese translation negotiates the conflicting norms of individualism and collectivism by framing the narrator’s voice in such a way that the linguistic representation of the mouse constitutes a discourse that forms the basis of a transcultural identity.

In the English source text, the cleverness of the mouse is conveyed by the way in which it misleads the other three animals (the fox, the owl, and the snake)



The mouse, in
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and the monster. It uses a wordplay on the adjective "good," which the first three animals use to express their assumption that the mouse would make a tasty meal. For example, "a fox saw the mouse and the mouse looked good." Later, upon seeing the mouse, the monster declares: "My favourite food! . . . You'll taste good on a slice of bread!" Sensing the danger, the mouse exclaims: "Good! . . . Don't call me good! I'm the scariest creature in this wood." Here, in an attempt to divert the monster's thoughts toward another direction, the mouse performs a Bakhtinian dialogic manoeuvre. The mouse, in Bakhtin's words, "make[s] use of someone else's discourse for his own purposes, by inserting a new semantic intention into a discourse which already has, and which retains, an intention of its own" (189). Here the word "good" becomes a polyseme containing both the monster's intention of devouring the mouse and the mouse's attempt to survive. Hence it is double voiced. With a verbal sleight of hand, the mouse proactively deflects the monster's attention.

While the source text consistently uses the adjective "good" to refer to the predators' assumptions about the taste of the mouse, the translation employs the phrase "可口的食物" ("delicious food"). When the monster sees the mouse, the sentence "You'll taste good on a slice of bread" is translated as "把你夾在麵包裡，吃了一定很滿足" ("I'll make you into a sandwich and eat it. That will surely be satisfying"). To this, the mouse responds: "我不可能讓你滿足！我是森林裡最可怕的動物" ("I can't possibly satisfy you! I am the scariest animal in the wood"). In the email interview, translator Liu acknowledged that a marked gap between the source text and the target text in terms of wordplay exists here, even if he made an effort to achieve dynamic equivalence between the

source text and the target text on the whole. Indeed, although the target-text mouse projects the image of a clever manipulator, this image is not as effective as its source-text counterpart, for it is disrupted by the slightly disjunctive semantic transition between the concepts of being “unsatisfying” and “scary” in comparison with the smooth transition between “not good” and “scary.” The rupture in semantic coherence constitutes an ambivalence that symptomatically points to the existence of the source text. The diction of the Chinese translation was largely determined by the translator’s lexical choice to mirror the rhyme pattern of the source text, in order to reproduce its lively rhythm and reinforce the mouse’s fast wit through the global effect of the textual components. According to Homi Bhabha, the foreignness inherent in translation mediates cultural communication as “the configuration of the disjunctive rewriting of the transcultural, migrant experience” (324). In the case of the translation of *The Gruffalo*, this semantic disruptiveness is tantamount to a site of creative confrontation and negotiation.

Belén González Cascallana suggests that “the translatability of allusive wordplay, which implies lexical, grammatical or situational modification, depends on the extent to which the allusion is embedded in its own specific culture” (106). From this perspective, the individualistic values in the source text are accentuated by the mouse’s quick thinking, which enables it to use the adjective “good” as a clever

polyseme. These values are also underlined by the way in which the word “good” connotes a personality trait. In the target text, however, the rendering of the adjective “good” as “satisfying” pre-empts the polysemic potentiality of allusion to a personality trait. It also restricts the semantic connotation to the mouse’s functionality as a contributor to the needs of others. While the speech and the actions of the target-text mouse can still be seen as manipulative, its image reflects the cultural norm of collectivism, which prescribes that an individual’s merit resides in his or her social role to the benefit of others. Therefore, the mouse is reproduced as a hybrid bearer of different cultural values. Needless to say, its hybrid nature is the result of linguistic negotiation: on the one hand, in mirroring the rhyme pattern of the source text generally to emphasize the mouse’s fast wit, the selection of Chinese words reduces the effectiveness of the mouse’s image as a clever manipulator; on the other hand, the rendering compensatively endows the diminished image with mixed cultural values and recreates it as a contextually appropriate one. The narrative of the translation of *The Gruffalo* hetero-linguistically frames cultural values encoded in the source text with Chinese linguistic choices. Stuart Hall points out that identity formation is subject to the narratives that work to mediate representation, narratives that “are not free of the play of power, internal division and contradictions, cross-cutting allegiances and difference” (299). In

this sense, the translation of *The Gruffalo* echoes the identity politics of contemporary Taiwanese culture in its attempt to unify contradictions through what Hall calls “a *discursive device* which represents difference as unity or identity” (297).

Identity is an important social issue in contemporary Taiwan. It is also a complex process that depends on many socio-political factors, any one of which can influence Taiwanese people’s understanding of themselves in relation to foreign cultures. As heterogeneous these factors are or infinitesimal

some of them may seem, they mutually respond to each other through language and knowledge. This is evidenced in my analysis, which moves between such large scales as political history and educational policy and the very small scale that the linguistic differences manifested in translation for children represents.

The Chinese translation of *The Gruffalo* in Taiwan demonstrates a willingness to cooperate with current cultural discourses and contributes to the process of forming a Taiwanese identity suitable for participation in a global society in the twenty-first century.

Notes

¹ As the corresponding written system of Mandarin Chinese, traditional Chinese characters are used in Taiwan and some other Mandarin Chinese-speaking regions. They retain the complex form of Chinese characters in contrast to the simplified characters, which are used in Mainland China and in other countries such as the United States, where the simplified version is becoming popular.

² For example, Su-Yen Chen notes that from 2001 to 2002 she conducted a web project “to present the theoretical framework, instructional units, a discussion board, and a questionnaire, all aimed at elementary school teachers.”

³ Schools and teachers, however, are free to teach the native languages spoken in their local communities in a limited number

of class hours. There are three main local dialects spoken in Taiwan: Taiwanese, Hakka, and the aboriginal languages. June Teufel Dreyer explains that Taiwanese and Hakka are locally spoken by two different Han Chinese ethnic groups, the Hoklo and the Hakka, respectively. These two groups have been in Taiwan far longer than the Mandarin-speaking mainlanders who mostly arrived with the Chinese Nationalist Party around 1949. Beginning in the seventeenth century, the Hoklo immigrated to Taiwan from Fujian Province in southeastern China. They brought with them their local dialect, Hokkien, which nowadays is commonly referred to as “Taiwanese” because they make up the majority of Taiwan’s population. The Hakka also came to Taiwan several hundred years ago, mainly from China’s Guangdong Province. The Aborigines of Taiwan have inhabited the island for thousands of years, and

there are currently nineteen officially recognized tribes. Despite extensive sinicization, many Aborigines continue to speak their tribal languages (386–90). The aboriginal languages are linguistically classified as Austronesian languages. For a more complete account of the linguistic situation in Taiwan, see Zheng; Blunbell.

⁴ Immersed in this convention, Mandarin-speaking children in Taiwan tend to name their animal characters in this way when relating stories. Wen-Hui Sah's study on how five-year-old Taiwanese children responded to a wordless picture book suggests that the children made up a conversation between the boy and the deer, in

which the latter identifies itself as "Little Deer" (86).

⁵ The Ministry of Education had authorized local governments to pilot English teaching in their schools from various grades in different time periods according to local needs, before its full implementation of English education policy. Chin-yun Huang's survey reveals that elementary schools in some cities and counties across Taiwan had started to teach English before 2001, including Taipei City, Taipei County (now upgraded to New Taipei City), Keelung City, Taoyuang County, Yilan County, Hsinchu County, Miaoli County, Chiayi City, Tainan City, Kaohsiung City, and so on (28–30).

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