「感じる絵本」のことば―中国語と日本語の比較分析

The Language of Kanjiru Picturebooks: Picture books that Invite Embodied and Affective Response—A Comparative Analysis of Chinese and Japanese Editions

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1. Introduction

After the Second World War, Japan initially sought to produce high-quality picture books by taking Western picture books as models. In the years that followed, many Japanese works came to receive international recognition and acclaim. For example, according to JBBY (Japan Board on Books for Young People, n.d), Suekichi Akaba and Mitsumasa Anno were awarded the Hans Christian Andersen Award for Illustration—often referred to as the "Nobel Prize of children's literature"—in 1980 and 1984, respectively. At the Bratislava Biennial of Illustrations (BBI), Yasuo Segawa's *Fushigi na takenoko* (Fukuinkan Shoten, 1963) won the Grand Prix in 1967; Etsuko Nakatsuji's *Yoru no yōchien* (Fukuinkan Shoten, 1998) in 1999; and Iku Dekune's *Amefurashi* (Paroru-sha, 2001) in 2003. In more recent years, Machiko Miroco's *Ore to kiiro* (WAVE Publishing, 2014) received the Golden Apple Award in 2015, followed by Maki Arai's *Tanpopo* (Kinnohoshi, 2015) in 2017 (National Diet Library, NDL Research Navi, 2023).

In recent years, international recognition has extended beyond Europe, North America, and Japan. In South Korea, Suzy Lee became the first Korean recipient of the Hans Christian Andersen Award (International Board on Books for Young People; IBBY, n.d), and picture book markets across Asia—including South Korea, China, and Vietnam—have shown increasing vitality and growth. In particular, in China, picture books—which had received relatively little attention until around the year 2000—experienced a boom in the translation and publication of foreign-language picture books in the mid-2000s. As a result, translated picture books came to be widely accepted in Chinese society in the late 2000s (Liu, 2022).

The rapid spread of picture books in China has been shaped by multiple social factors, including economic growth and educational reform. A major turning point was the easing of foreign investment regulations and the liberalization of retail and wholesale activities

for foreign companies in 2003. Taking advantage of these policy changes, the Japanese publisher Poplar Publishing established a local subsidiary, Beijing Poplar Culture & Development Co., Ltd., in 2004, and in the following year opened Poplar Picture Book House (蒲蒲蘭絵本館), China's first specialty picture book store, thereby entering the vast Chinese picture book market (Iida, 2020). This development can be seen as laying the groundwork for the third “golden age” of Chinese picture books, characterized by the publication of foreign picture books and theoretical works (Liu, 2022).

According to Iida (2020), foreign and private enterprises in China are generally limited to distribution, rights business, and editorial outsourcing, yet Poplar succeeded in entering the publishing business itself by partnering with state-run publishers. Inspired by Poplar Picture Book House, numerous profit-oriented bookstores specializing in picture books emerged across China, spreading not only in major cities such as Beijing and Shanghai but also in mid-sized cities, with approximately 2,800 stores nationwide by 2015 (Liu, 2022).

This growing demand was largely supported by translated picture books. Liu (2022) notes that translations increased sharply around 2006 and, although declining after a 2012 peak, have remained relatively stable. Between 2003 and 2018, 1,766 Japanese picture books were translated into Chinese. A notable feature of Chinese picture book publishing is the widespread practice of marketing picture books as part of series sets. For instance, in Dangdang's 2020 children's picture book rankings, *The 100-Story House* series (Kaisei sha, 2008-) by Iwai Toshio ranked sixth, while *The Tyrannosaurus Series* (Poplar, 2003-) by Miyanishi Tatsuya ranked ninth; the latter recorded cumulative sales of 8 million copies from 2004 to 2018. Alongside long-selling titles such as the *Guri and Gura* series (Fukuinkan shoten, 1967-) and *Nezumikun's Vest* series (Poplar, 1974-), numerous Japanese picture books have been translated and published. What issues arise, however, when a picture book is translated from Japanese into Chinese?

As Torikai (2021) notes, discussions of translation have long revolved around the oppositions of “literal,” “faithful,” and “free” translation. Viewing translation as a transformation of the original, Berman (1985) critiques Platonic thinking that prioritizes the reproduction of meaning while neglecting the material dimensions of language, such as letters, sound, rhythm, and form, and identifies twelve deforming tendencies inherent in translation. For Berman, translation is not mere reproduction but a form of metamorphosis that transforms both the source language and the receiving language. When two languages come into partial harmony through translation, a “third language,” neither source nor target, emerges, and it is within these limits that the true nature of the original is revealed. Translation is thus understood as an ethical act that preserves,

rather than erases, the otherness of the original (Berman, 2013, pp. 179-180).

Building on Berman's work, Venuti (1995) analyzes texts translated into English since the seventeenth century and shows that fluent translations which efface cultural difference are governed by a dominant norm privileging English-language culture through the invisibility of the translator. He criticizes such practices for promoting ethnocentric reading and articulates the cultural politics of translation through the concepts of domestication and foreignization.

Similarly, Yanabu (2004/2017) argues that the meanings of kanji in Japanese were reconstructed in ways that diverged from their original Chinese meanings, a process that supported the formation of modern Japan through the reception of Western culture. He further contends that translation is not a simple substitution of language and culture, but a process that generates a third element irreducible to either side—an indeterminate entity whose significance has often been overlooked (pp. 183-219). Translation can thus be understood as a practice that produces a "third culture," often in unnoticed ways.

In picture book translation, this process becomes more complex due to the presence of illustrations shared across languages and cultures, as well as the involvement of readers at different cognitive and cultural levels—adults as readers and children as listeners. Because illustrations function as a form of visual narration, translated picture books generate a layered, multimodal translational space formed by the interaction of two languages and images. Moreover, since images and text are integrated through open-ended interpretation, and since picture books address a dual readership of children and adults, the question of what it means to translate a picture book cannot be fully addressed by conventional translation theories alone.

Against this background, this article examines *Donkuma-san* (Kakimoto Kōzō, illus.; Kuratomi Chizuko, text; Takeichi Yasoo, concept; Shikōsha, 1967) and its Chinese translation, *Diyici Jiao Pengyou* (*第一次交朋友*, lit. "The First Time to Make a Friend", Saruwatari Shizuko, Trans., Beijing United Publishing Company, 2018). Drawing on the translation theories of Berman and Venuti, and focusing on what is added or lost in translation, this study explores how the characteristics of Kanjiru Picturebooks are reconfigured in Chinese, with particular attention to the duality of child and adult readership.

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Foundation. The project is carried out in collaboration with Akihisa Mamizuka (Tokoha University), Keiko Yamaguchi (Niigata Seiryo University), Aiko Zhang (Odawara Junior College), Yung Schwendeman Faye Dorcas (University of Tsukuba), and Chan Chi Ying Michelle (Hong Kong Shue Yan University). The present study draws on the analytical perspectives on the Japanese edition proposed by Mamizuka and Yamaguchi, as well as the preliminary analyses of the Chinese edition conducted by Yung and Chan.

2. Shikōsha and the Concept of “Kanjiru Picturebooks”

After the war, Takeichi Yasoo—then a university student and future president of Shikōsha—joined his mother in launching a publishing venture amidst the ruins of Tokyo, where paper and printing facilities were scarcely available (Takeichi, 1986, 217). Aspiring to create books that could serve as sustenance for children deprived of reading materials, they established *Kodomo no Sekai*, a monthly picture book series distributed mainly to Christian kindergartens and preschools—an enterprise that remains foundational to Shikōsha today (This information was obtained through an interview conducted on June 20, 2025 with President Takeichi Haruki of Shikōsha and editor Konuma Misako).

Deeply engaged with history and philosophy, Takeichi (1986) continuously questioned the nature of picture books. He found in picture books a medium capable of realizing the theme he wished to pursue: “to feel the moment.” Anchored in a unique aesthetic and child-oriented philosophy, he aimed to produce “Kanjiru Picturebooks” (picture books that invite embodied and affective response). According to Takeichi (1986), Shikōsha’s picture books aspire to appeal to the “hidden beauty cultivated within the Japanese sensibility” while remaining accessible to readers worldwide (p. 220). Many international editions of hardcover picture books include the message “for all (feeling) children from ages 0 to 100.” However, the “children from 0 to 100” referred to by Takeichi do not denote a biological age group; rather, they signify the invisible inner child that is born within each person, continues to live throughout one’s life, and, with maturity, becomes all the more vivid and distinct (p. 11).

For Takeichi, “joukai” (情解)—understanding through emotion and the body—precedes intellectual comprehension. Thus, picture books should not prioritize logical clarity; rather, they should leave space for readers to feel freely, both visually and verbally (Takeichi, 1986, p. 37).

Picture books are a medium that allows readers to respond freely and deepen their interpretations. In recent years, particular attention has been given to expressive forms

such as wordless picture books and postmodern picture books. In particular, Sipe and Pantaleo (2008), synthesizing the arguments of multiple theorists in the introduction, identify six key characteristics of postmodern picture books together with Mary Ann McGuire: the hybridization of multiple cultures and genres and the blurring of boundaries among author, narrator, and reader; the subversion of literary traditions and conventions; textual interrelatedness exemplified by pastiche; the multiplicity and indeterminacy of meaning; playfulness; and metafictional self-reflexivity (p. 6)

A substantial body of scholarship has accumulated on these picture books, which reflect the cultural conditions of capitalist societies since the 1960s. For example, Nikolajeva and Scott (2001), who systematically outline changes in picture book techniques, propose an analytical framework based on four quadrants defined by the narrativity of text (narrating / non-narrating) and the narrativity of images (narrating / non-narrating). Within this framework, they analyze text-image relationships as symmetrical, complementary, enhancing or expanding, counterpointing, and sylleptic, in which multiple independent narratives unfold simultaneously (p.12). With regard to wordless picture books, Martínez-Carratalá (2022), drawing on a bibliographic database of 228 English-language articles published between 1975 and 2020, identifies trends such as the increase in the number of wordless picture books published during this period, the most frequently cited works, the journals in which such studies most often appear, and recurring research themes. According to Martínez-Carratalá, wordless picture books constitute an artistic form that goes beyond visual stimulation through devices such as gaze direction and recurring motifs, and are regarded as artistic proposals for the collaborative construction of meaning for readers of all ages. Similarly, Terrusi (2017) positions wordless picture books as active and productive spaces in which meaning is generated through readers' visual engagement, imagination, and interpretation, arguing that wordless picture books are not defined by the absence of language but should instead be understood as silent books centered on silence and transformation.

Shikōsha's Kanjiru Picturebooks share certain features with wordless and postmodern picture books, particularly in allowing freedom of reading and being enjoyed across age groups. However, whereas postmodern picture books deliberately guide readers into disorienting reading labyrinths and demand intellectual interpretation, Kanjiru Picturebooks differ fundamentally in that they invite readers to immerse themselves in the spaces of reading and to feel through an opening of the senses. In this sense, readers of postmodern picture books can be understood as subjects who gather and interpret multilayered, complex, and often provocative information, while readers of Kanjiru

Picturebooks are subjects who receive subtle and suggestive sensations that emerge from the interaction of images and text. As Takeichi (1986) suggests, such reading involves sensing images in which "the artist's feeling mind hovers about one millimeter above the surface of the picture, like the scent of flowers" (p. 219), together with texts that function as "living words (short codes) that the artist feels compelled to draw without resorting to logic" (p. 90).

Furthermore, from the perspective of reader duality, postmodern picture books are characterized by double address, simultaneously delivering different messages to children and adults, among readers themselves, or between readers and authors, thus orienting communication toward others. In contrast, Kanjiru Picturebooks are better understood as generating communication through an inner duality that addresses the reader and the invisible inner child within the reader.

On the basis of these considerations, Shikōsha's Kanjiru Picturebooks can be positioned as picture books that enable readers, in each moment of reading, to receive and feel the colors, shapes, sounds, pauses, and blank spaces that arise from images and text, thereby allowing resonance with their own inner child.

3. The Chinese Translation of *Donkuma-san*

Originally published in 1967, *Donkuma-san* (*Mr. Bear*) quickly found an international audience, being translated into seven languages with in the same year. It is said to have won the sympathy of readers around the world through the charm of its protagonist, Donkuma-san, who is portrayed as "easygoing, generous, strong, and full of kindness," offering a sense of comfort and reassurance (Kakimoto, Kuratomi, & Takeichi, 2015)

Particularly in the UK, *Remember Mr. Bear* (Macdonald Publishing) saw multiple reprints (repeatedly in 1973, 1978, 1984, and 1986) and read-aloud program on BBC radio; in Germany, the series was also read on WDR.

Although, rights sales declined after the 1990s, the series later gained attention in Asian markets. In 2018, eight titles—including *Diyici Zuo Haichuan* (*第一次坐海船*, "Mr. Bear Goes to the Sea," 1968), *Diyici Zuo Guojiang* (*第一次做果酱*, "Mr. Bear and Apple Jam," 1973), *Diyici Guo Shengdan Jie* (*第一次过圣诞节*, "Mr. Bear's Christmas," 1974), *Diyici Hua Hua* (*第一次画画*, "Mr. Bear's Drawing," 1975), *Diyici Zuo Mianbao* (*第一次做面包*, "Mr. Bear, Baker," 1981), *Diyici Bei Biaoyang* (*第一次被表扬*, "Mr. Bear's Done It," 1990) and *Diyici Dui Xueren* (*第一次堆雪人*, "Mr. Bear's Hot Winter," 1992)—were translated by Shizuko Sawatari who is known as the translator of the Chinese edition of *Totto-chan*,

(*Chuangbian de xiaodoudou*, "The Little Girl at the Window"), published in 2003 and selling 17 million copies, and were published as a set in China through collaboration between Beijing United Publishing and Jufeng Culture Co., Ltd. (See Figure.1)

Figure 1. Donkuma-san series Chicese Edition (Beijing United Publishing, 2018)

Given the Chinese market's preference for purchasing series in sets (Liu, 2022), the *Donkuma-san* series—which contains 26 volumes in Japanese—fit well with publishing needs. However, when Chinese and Japanese — languages embedded in different cultural contexts—are involved, translation inevitably entails transformation. As Berman (1985) points out, there is a risk that the source language's foreign or culturally specific elements may be assimilated into more familiar, easily comprehensible expressions aligned with the target culture. Moreover, as Venuti (1995; 1998; 2000) has argued in his critique of Anglo-American translation culture, the very foreignness of the source language may be erased through the translator's invisibility, resulting in the disappearance of its cultural otherness.

In this sense, the challenges of translation between Chinese and Japanese cannot be understood solely in linguistic or cultural terms, as picture books operate through a complex interplay of verbal and visual meaning-making. In addition to these linguistic considerations, picture book translation involves not only linguistic text but also images as a form of visual narration. The narratives and meanings generated by images contain an inherent indeterminacy that continually fluctuates through their relationship with readers. As a result, picture book translation—where the source language, the target language, and images intersect—creates a new, multilayered, and multimodal translational space.

Furthermore, children's literature and picture books presuppose a dual audience of children and adults; however, in translation, this dual address may be lost due to the norms of the receiving language culture or the editorial policies of publishers (O'Sullivan, 1993). In addition, as a diverse and continuous spectrum of readers is assumed rather than a simple dichotomy between children and adults (Cheetham, 2013), the translation of children's books entails a wide range of challenges and complexities.

For Kanjiru Picturebooks the invisible inner child is part of the implied readership, suggesting that translation must address not only child/adult binaries but the inner sensory dimension.

With these theoretical concerns in mind, the following sections examine the cover and first opening of *Donkuma-san* and its Chinese translation *第一次交朋友*, analyzing additions, omissions, rhythm, pause, and the translation of sound-symbolic expressions.

3.1 Additions and Losses in the Title

All 26 books in the *Donkuma-san* series include the protagonist's name in their titles, establishing a coherent identity throughout. The name "Donkuma" combines *don* (鈍, dull or slow) with the Spanish honorific *Don*, expressing the protagonist's gentle clumsiness (Takeichi, 1986, p.150). While subsequent titles follow a pattern such as *Donkuma-san Goes to the Sea*, the first volume is simply *Donkuma-san*, emphasizing the character's presence rather than plot.

Figure 2. Slipcase front (left) and back (right)

In the Chinese version, however, "Donkuma-san" (笨熊 *Benxiong*) appears only on the external box containing the eight-book set (See Figre. 2), where the text reads "小笨熊的第一次," literally "Little Clumsy Bear's First Time." The individual book title *第一次交朋友* ("The First Time Making Friends") omits the protagonist's name entirely, foregrounding the *experience* rather than the character. This reveals two layers of translational transformation:

(1) Semantic interpretation of the proper name, and

(2) Deletion of the name in the per-book titles and the addition of "第一次" ("first time"), which does not exist in the original.

Research on proper-name translation (e.g., Fernandes, 2006) highlights the cultural and emotional charge embedded in names. Children's literature often requires strategies such as retention, adaptation, or semantic translation (Susanti & Kadarisman, 2019), with particular care for younger audiences. Venuti (1995) warns that fluency-oriented domestication risks erasing cultural specificity. In this case, the transformation of "Donkuma-san" into "笨熊" potentially overemphasizes "foolishness" while underrepresenting the warmth and dignity implied by the Japanese name.

According to Wang Huiyuan of Gǔfēng Press, who was involved in editing the Chinese edition, the localization into Chinese was carried out by the translator Sawatari. While carefully attending to the intentions of the source text, Sawatari repeatedly refined the translation so that the language would flow naturally when Chinese parents read it aloud to their children.

Moreover, in the process of translating and publishing this book, several factors were highlighted as key selling points: its position within a series, its proven track record of having already been translated into seven languages, and, above all, its universal themes—namely, that Donkuma-san's kindness, passion, willingness to help others, sense of humor, and strength can offer children hope and joy while conveying love and warmth (email response from Wang, November 10, 2025).

Furthermore, the narrative structure depicting a protagonist who grows through "first-time" experiences was seen as highly compatible with the educational values emphasized in Chinese families. Donkuma-san was thus expected to become a companion who grows alongside children (email response, April 15, 2025). These editorial policies can be understood as influencing not only the selection of the work for publication but also the concrete practices of translation itself.

With regard to the rendering of *Donkuma-san* as "Ben Xiong (笨熊)", an initial analysis by the author's collaborators suggests that this choice was not a literal translation but rather one that focused on the protagonist's characteristic "clumsiness," which stands out throughout the series (Yung & Chan, unpublished). This term reflects Donkuma-san's behavioral traits—namely, his tendency to cause unexpected commotion due to lack of knowledge or misunderstandings. At the same time, it carries the risk of fixing the pro tagonist's essence solely in terms of "foolishness." Conversely, for adult readers who perceive immaturity as a stage open to growth, the term may evoke a sense of warmth or affection, while for child readers it may foster familiarity and approachability.

According to the collaborators, although *ben*（笨）in Chinese literally denotes "foolishness," in actual usage it can also imply cuteness, childishness, or innocence (Yung & Chan, unpublished). Therefore, the translation choice "Ben Xiong (笨熊)" can be regarded as having achieved a certain degree of success as a strategy for presenting a character image that is appealing to children. However, it is also possible that insufficient consideration was given to the repeated visibility of a character name containing a lexically pejorative character throughout the series. In this respect, the choice may be seen as reflecting an aspect of the Platonic approach to translation criticized by Berman.

That said, the prominence of the literal negative connotation was mitigated by omitting "Ben Xiong" from the book titles and instead foregrounding the content of each episode. This strategy also had the effect of making it easier to distinguish among the eight volumes of the series, as intended by the editors.

Next, the addition of "*the first time*" (第一次) to the title constitutes an example of domestication, in which text absent from the source is introduced in response to Chinese

cultural and publishing demands. According to the editor of the Chinese edition, this phrase was deliberately added to the title in order to convey more clearly the significance of actively and courageously taking on new challenges (email response, November 10, 2025). In the *Donkuma-san* series, the protagonist is consistently portrayed not only as possessing the initiative to “want to try” and “go ahead and try,” but also as being motivated by a desire to be helpful to others. These qualities function, within the Chinese cultural context, as factors that enhance the meaning and value of “first-time experiences,” and can therefore be evaluated as a compensatory addition that offsets the removal of the protagonist’s name from the title.

In addition, the title of the first volume in the Chinese edition includes the phrase “*making friends*” (交朋友), explicitly indicating the specific experience depicted in the story. In the Japanese edition, only the first volume—*Donkuma-san*—bears a title consisting solely of the protagonist’s name, while all subsequent volumes include textual elements referring to the experiences depicted in each story. Because these volumes were published at different times, the difference between the first volume and the others does not appear particularly striking. By contrast, the Chinese edition was released as an eight-volume set sold simultaneously. From this perspective, the addition of “*making friends*,” which is absent from the original, can be understood as an adjustment necessary to maintain textual and structural balance within the series.

However, the original *Donkuma-san* is a picturebook that invites readers to sense the charm of the protagonist—his sincerity, warmth, and other personal qualities glimpsed through the unfolding process—rather than to focus primarily on the visible “experience” itself. Throughout the series, the very name *Donkuma-san* functions as the core of the “comforting quality” that Kakimoto sought to depict. In the Chinese translation, the removal of the protagonist’s name from the cover title and the rational verbalization of growth-oriented “experiences” risk filling in, through explanation, the ambiguity and open spaces that characterize Kanjiru Picturebooks, thereby potentially distorting the distinctive qualities of the original.

In sum, an examination of the cover titles confirms that the removal of the proper name and the addition of “*the first time*” redistribute the focus of the protagonist and the narrative toward “experience.” In the following section, attention turns to the first opening spread, examining—on the basis of the structure of the Japanese edition—how this redistribution, initiated at the level of the title, relates to the interaction between image and text on the double-page spread, and to the generation of openness and indeterminacy that characterize Kanjiru Picturebooks.

3.2 Relationship Between Image and Text in the Japanese First Opening

The first opening of *Donkuma-san* features a poetic text—five stanzas of three lines each—set against a deep green background. The text depicts the quiet loneliness of Donkuma-san's life deep in the mountains, expressed through white lettering that evokes isolation and autumnal air. (See Table 1)

Figure 3. *Donkuma-san* (illustrated by Kakimoto Kōzō, written by Kuratomi Chizuko, conceived by Takechi Yasuo, Shikōsha, 1967), first spread.

The facing illustration, also used on the cover, shows Donkuma-san stepping forward as he sets off on his journey (See Figure 3). Behind Donkuma-san stretches a large expanse of white space. The scenery and atmosphere evoked by the text are not visually depicted. As a result, this white background functions as a "sensory space," inviting readers to bodily perceive wind, sound, stillness, and solitude, while the generation of meaning beyond the text is entrusted to the reader.

Although text and image appear complementary, they narrate different temporal and affective dimensions. The text reveals Donkuma-san's inner world—loneliness, desire for a friend, the scent of wild chrysanthemums—while the picture captures only the bodily action of departure. (See Table 1, Figure 3)

The temporal gap (poetic interiority vs. narrative action), perspective shift (omniscient narrator vs. character focalization), and semantic division create a contrapuntal relationship, where two independent narrative lines coexist. Within this structure, readers integrate the atmosphere and inner fluctuations sensed through the text with the sense of exhilaration at departure presented by the image, projecting their own sensations and imagination into the surrounding white space.

To what extent, then, does the Chinese edition preserve this visual composition and its contrapuntal structure, and at what points does it give rise to clarification or reorganization of meaning? Focusing on the same first opening spread, the following analysis examines these issues by attending to differences in layout and narrative voice.

3.3 The Chinese First Opening: Shifts in Image-Text Dynamics

The Chinese version retains the five-stanza structure and page layout; the text consists of five stanzas, each comprising three lines, and the overall composition—text on the left-hand page and image on the right-hand page—remains the same. Moreover, while the text

narrates, in the first four stanzas, the internal dimension leading up to the journey — describing the environment, sounds, smells, and feelings—and reaches the moment of departure in the fifth stanza, the image presents only a single moment after the journey has begun. This contrapuntal structure is, in principle, preserved (see Figure 4 and the right column of Table 1).

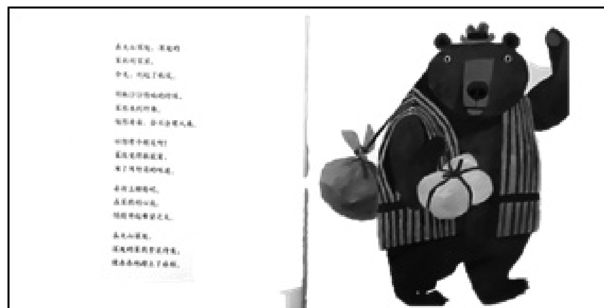

Figure 4.『第一次交朋友』（藏富千鹤子・文、柿本幸造・图、武市八十雄・策划，猿渡静子・译，北京联合出版公司出版，颶風社絵本，2018，Shikōsha，1967）

However, significant differences can be observed in the visual layout and narrative mode. In the Japanese edition, white lettering is placed against a deep green background, and the text is positioned near the center of the double-page spread (Figure 3). By contrast, in the Chinese edition the text appears on a white background, with black characters placed at the center of the left-hand page. As a result of this difference, the text in the Japanese edition is experienced less as an external, explanatory voice and more as a narrative that draws readers closer to the protagonist's world, resonating with their own inner voices. In contrast, the text in the Chinese edition is more readily perceived as an explanatory narration delivered by a third party at some distance from the protagonist. In other words, the image generation that was entrusted to readers in the original is, to a certain extent, narrowed in the translated version.

For example, the term *sasayabu*, "thicket of bamboo grass", in the original is unfamiliar to many young children and is not visually depicted in the illustrations. As a result, space is left for readers to imagine, through bodily sensation, a scene in which an autumn breeze stirs and produces a soft *saya-saya* sound. In contrast, the corresponding passage in the Chinese edition is translated as *竹林*, "bamboo grove", thereby concretizing the source of the sound. In the draft version of the book provided by Shikōsha, the phrase was translated as *树叶沙沙作响*, literally, "the leaves rustle softly", but following Sawata ri's instructions it was revised to *竹林沙沙作响的时候*, literally, "when the bamboo grove rustles softly", thus explicitly delimiting the scene.

Similarly, the original phrase "*Donkuma-san wa sabishisō*", "Donkuma-san looks lonely", is rendered as *笨熊觉得很寂寞*, "Ben Xiong feels very lonely", replacing the non-assertive expression of the original with an explanatory statement that explicitly identifies the emotion as loneliness. Furthermore, "*potchiri yume ga hi o tomosu*", "a small dream lights a flame", is translated as *悄悄升起希望之火*, literally, "the fire of hope quietly rises",

in which a faint, emerging dream is reformulated as the noun phrase “the fire of hope.” While such clarification, explication, and nominalization of metaphor supplement the text by supplying concrete imagery, they may also reduce the space in which readers can expand their own imaginative engagement.

In addition, attention should be paid to the fact that a shift in temporal structure occurs in the translation of the fifth stanza. In the Japanese version, “*Donkuma-san wa yosoiki de / nossori nossori tabi ni deta*”, the presentation of state (*yosoiki*, “dressed up”) and the action (setting out on a journey) are narrated as belonging to the same past event. By contrast, in the Chinese version, “*深处的笨熊整装待发，／慢吞吞地踏上了旅程*”, the phrase “*整装待发*” translates as “having finished preparing and waiting to depart.” As a result, the original state description “dressed up” is replaced by a depiction of concrete actions—preparation and waiting—prior to departure. When this is juxtaposed with the following line, “*慢吞吞地踏上了旅程*”, “slowly set out on the journey”, and with the image that depicts a moment after departure, a state of waiting (pre-departure) and a state of having departed (post-departure) are placed side by side within the same stanza, producing grammatical and semantic tension. A Chinese international student who read the book pointed out that, in Chinese—a language in which temporal aspect is clearly marked through vocabulary and grammatical form—this makes the passage difficult to read.

This discrepancy may be interpreted not simply as a mistranslation but as generating, in reading, an implication of hesitation or wavering—“having prepared but not departing immediately”—which could be seen as reflecting Donkuma-san’s character. However, when this implied delay is combined with the third line’s *慢吞吞* (“slowly”), it risks reinforcing a negative impression: among the two connotations of *don* in Donkuma-san’s name, the sense of dullness or slowness (鈍) is emphasized, suggesting that the protagonist finally begins to move only sluggishly.

In the Japanese version, hesitation in the fourth stanza is transformed into anticipation of departure, and in the fifth stanza a continuous sequence of actions unfolds from “stillness” to “movement.” The expression *nossori nossori*, which describes the slow movement of a large body, carries no negative connotation.

Accordingly, while the Chinese version preserves the formal framework of the visual poetic structure (five stanzas of three lines) and the double-page spread, as well as the structural isomorphism created by the repeated use of *深处* (“deep within”) to convey spatial depth, it can be understood as having reconfigured the text in a relatively more explanatory direction through lexical choice. As a result, the indeterminacy maintained in the original—namely, the open space that invites readers’ sensibility to “feel”—is reduced.

At the same time, this strategy may have functioned as a form of consideration for young readers by bridging cultural and linguistic distance. Moreover, the grammatical awkwardness can be attributed to features specific to picture books that are read aloud —sound, rhythm, and temporal structure. In the Chinese version, the translation's emphasis on making causal relations between actions explicit may have destabilized the temporal position from which the voice reads aloud, thereby disrupting rhythmic continuity within the stanza. The following section examines such transformations of temporal structure in translation from the perspective of auditory elements—sentence endings, onomatopoeia, and pauses.

Table 1. Comparison between *Donkuma-san* and *Diyici Jiao Pengyou* in Translation

Japanese edition 『Donkuma san』	Description	Chinese edition 『第一次交朋友』
Yama no oku no mata oku no Donkuma-san no ouchi nimo kyou wa akikaze fukimashita	The first stanza Setting & season	在大山深处，深处的 笨熊的家里， 今天，刮起了秋风。
Sasayabu sayasaya naru tabi ni Donkuma-san wa soto ni dete dareka kita ka to sagashimasu	The second stanza Wind, sound, expectation	竹林沙沙作响的时候， 笨熊来到外面。 他想看看，会不会有人来。
Boku mo tomodachi hoshii na to Donkuma-san wa sabishisou Nogiku no nioi o kagimashita	The third stanza Loneliness & smell	好想有个朋友啊！ 笨熊觉得很寂寞， 闻了闻野菊的味道。
Machi made itte miyou kana Donkuma-san no kokoro ni wa pocchiri yume ga hi o tomosu	The fourth stanza A small decision & hope	去街上转转吧。 在笨熊的心底， 悄悄升起希望之火。
Yama no oku no mata oku no Donkuma-san wa yosoikide nossori nossori tabi ni deta	The fifth stanza departure	在大山深处， 深处的笨熊整装待发， 慢吞吞地踏上了旅程。

3.4 Sentence Endings, Onomatopoeia, and "Ma" (Pause) in Translation

1) Sentence Endings

Japanese stanza endings follow a rhythmic pattern (-ta / -su), producing gentle cadence and stabilizing flow. Chinese translations convert these into prose-style endings without rhyme. However, the alternation of nasal endings (-eng), open vowels (-ai, -ao), and

rounded vowels (-uo) creates a different type of dynamic rhythm. This reflects a shift from Japanese poetic stillness to Chinese narrative motion.

Moreover, Japanese sentence-final particles such as 「な」 and 「かな」 convey affective indeterminacy―crucial to Kanjiru Picturebooks Chinese equivalents (“啊”, “吧”) often convey more direct emotion or softened commands (Moriya, 1995, p.118) , reducing ambiguity but aiding comprehension for children.

2) Onomatopoeia

On the first opening spread, three types of onomatopoeia are used: *saya-saya* (second stanza), *potchiri* (fourth stanza), and *nossori-nossori* (fifth stanza). In Japanese, onomatopoeia are expressions closely tied to everyday life, and in children’s books a wide variety of mimetic and sound-symbolic words are flexibly employed as verbs, adverbs, and adjectives. However, it has been noted that their sensory usage is difficult for speakers of other languages to grasp (Zhang, 2002).

The term *saya-saya* is rendered in the Chinese edition through a relatively literal equivalent, *shāshā* (沙沙). This onomatopoeia denotes a fine frictional sound and corresponds, at the auditory level, to the rustling of bamboo leaves brushing against one another in the wind. Nevertheless, it has been pointed out that it does not fully reproduce the musical rhythm characteristic of the Japanese expression (Yung & Chan, 2025, unpublished).

Potchiri is a distinctly Japanese example of sound symbolism that emotionally captures the visual nuance of a faint, gentle light, and there is no corresponding onomatopoeia in Chinese. In the translation, the adverb *qiāoqiāo* (悄悄), which conveys meanings such as “quietly,” “softly,” or “stealthily,” is employed. While this substitution into an explanatory adverb weakens the emotive quality of the original, the repetition in the pinyin (*qiāoqiāo*) generates a rhythm that is pleasurable to the ear, indicating an attempt to retain a degree of phonetic sensibility.

Nossori-nossori is a mimetic expression that allows readers to visualize Donkuma-san’s large body taking one step at a time. According to Yung and Chan (2025, unpublished), the reduplicated form *tūn tūn* itself denotes fumbling or dawdling movements; when combined with *màn* (“slow”), it transforms the steady, weighty gait of a large animal into a halting and dilatory motion. In the pre-publication draft, *mànman de* (慢慢地) had been adopted. While *mànman de* is a neutral mimetic expression meaning “slowly,” its AAB-type pinyin pattern produces a weaker reading rhythm than the ABB-type *màn tūn tūn*. As a result, *màn tūn tūn* was selected in the final version in apparent prioritization of

phonetic pleasantness. However, this choice may have caused Donkuma-san's departure to begin with a depiction of hesitant, dilatory movement that foregrounds the sense of "du llness" associated with *Ben Xiong* (笨熊).

3) Translation of "Ma" (Pause)

The first opening spread is structured in a poetic form of five stanzas of three lines each, and the spaces that emerge between the stanzas create a visual "pause." Within these pauses, readers are able to imagine scenes from the words they have heard and to attune themselves to the voices arising within their own minds. Although the Chinese edition visually preserves the poetic structure itself, as discussed in Section 3-3, processes of explication and clarification render the rhythm more prosaic, thereby transforming the quality of these pauses.

In particular, the repeated phrase "*yama no oku no mata oku no*" ("deep in the mountains, deeper still") in the first and fifth stanzas generates spatial and temporal depth through the repetition of the particle *no*. By placing *no* between nouns, *yama* ("mountain") and *oku* ("depth") are gently linked, producing a visual and experiential sense of expanding space and time. In contrast, the Chinese version—"*在大山深处，深处的笨熊的家里　在大山深处*"—employs a grammatical structure in which noun phrases are directly concatenated, thereby relatively reducing the Japanese-style silence and blankness between words. While this shift is an unavoidable consequence of grammatical differences, it also marks a moment in which the Kanjiru Picturebooks—like interval that allows readers to release their senses into the spaces between words is replaced by a different kind of reading rhythm.

Accordingly, the transformation of "pause" in the Chinese edition should be understood not simply as a loss, but as a redesign of reading rhythm made possible by the characteristics of the receiving language.

In sum, a comparison of sentence endings, onomatopoeia, and pauses reveals that whereas the Japanese edition maintains a static poetic quality and lingering resonance through regular rhyme and the indeterminacy of sentence-final forms, the Chinese edition is reconfigured toward greater accessibility of emotions and events through the use of modal particles and lexical clarification. As a result, musicality and the quality of open space are transformed into a more dynamic narrativity. While this shift may entail a reduction of Kanjiru Picturebooks—like elements insofar as it weakens the ambiguity of the source language, it may also function, in contexts of reading aloud, as a form of scaffolding that supports young children's comprehension. The following discussion

considers, in an integrative manner, how such additions and losses are meaningfully experienced by readers—adults, children, and the "inner child."

4. Discussion

This article presents a comparative analysis of *Donkuma-san* and its Chinese edition, *Diyici Jiao Pengyou (第一次交朋友)*, both published as part of Shikōsha's Kanjiru Picturebooks series—picture books that invite embodied and affective response. Focusing on the cover titles, the relationship between image and text on the first opening spread, and the additions and losses in the translation of sentence endings, onomatopoeia, and pauses, this article examines how translational shifts reconfigure meaning and reader engagement in picture book translation.

As its theoretical foundation, this study draws on translation theories that emphasize respect for linguistic and cultural otherness. Venuti (1995; 1998; 2004) advocates a strategy of "foreignization," which preserves the strangeness of the source text so that readers remain aware that they are encountering a foreign work. Similarly, Berman (2004) underscores the importance of respecting other cultures in translation and strongly criticizes assimilation that destroys the source culture, referring to it as domestication. According to Venuti (2005, trans. Torikai), foreignization emerged as a critical response to the transparency imposed on foreign texts when translated into dominant Anglo-American culture, a process by which texts are made to appear as if they were products of the target culture itself (p. 440).

In the case of Japanese, the language developed through the historical reception of Chinese characters alongside the emergence of uniquely Japanese kana scripts, forming the modern Japanese language through a division of roles between these writing systems (Yanabu, 2004/2017). When translating Japanese into Chinese, where Chinese holds linguistic and cultural dominance, questions of how Japanese should be rendered inevitably arise. In the context of picture books, the presence of young child readers further encourages domestication that prioritizes fluency and readability.

However, in the picture book translation examined in this study, visual narration through images, the act of reading aloud, and readers' bodily sensations are inseparably involved. Consequently, picture book translation cannot be reduced to a simple binary opposition between source and target languages, or to a value judgment between foreignization and domestication. Rather, it emerges as a "multilayered and multimodal translational space" in which multiple modes—language, visuality, sound, and bodily

sensation—intersect. The indeterminate cultural product described by Yanabu (2004/2017) as "C that is neither A nor B," generated through the translation process, takes on a particularly complex and dynamic form in picture book translation, where images, text, sound, pauses, and reader experience intertwine. The concept of a multilayered and multimodal translational space proposed in this article refers precisely to such a space.

In the Chinese edition, *第一次交朋友*, there are many transformations including the removal of the proper name, the addition of "第一次", lexical clarification, verbalization of emotions, a shift from poetic rhythm to prosaic narrative, and the reorganization of sentence-final forms, onomatopoeia, and pauses. While these changes may be interpreted as losses that diminish the indeterminacy and open spaces characteristic of Kanjiru Picturebooks they can also be understood as a reconfiguration aligned with the conditions of reader experience in Chinese cultural contexts.

For example, the naming of the protagonist as *Ben Xiong* (笨熊) and the addition of "the first time" convey a series-wide narrative in which a clumsy bear accumulates first-time experiences across eight volumes. Modal particles and exclamatory expressions clarify emotional states for young readers, while features specific to Chinese phonological structure generate a different rhythm that provides narrative momentum. In this sense, the translation can be seen as constructing pathways that open toward a different sensibility.

To feel—that is, sensibility—is composed of sensation and emotion, forming a sequence that moves from sensory stimuli entering the sense organs, through cognitive processing in the brain, to emotional response (Masuyama, 1989). Both the emotions that arise from stimuli and the content of what is felt vary according to individual experience and environment. Therefore, the circuit of completion established in the Japanese edition does not need to be reproduced identically in the Chinese edition. The open spaces lost through translation may be reconstituted through sound, rhythm, modality, and cultural values, or supplemented through the visual narration of images, allowing for reorganization rather than simple disappearance.

Shikōsha's Kanjiru Picturebooks addresses not only a dual audience of children and adults but also the invisible child residing within each reader. The analysis in this article has shown that the Japanese edition encourages dialogue with the inner child through fluctuations in sentence-final forms, poetic rhythm, and sensory evocation created by background white space. By contrast, the Chinese edition prioritizes shared understanding between adults and children by clarifying emotional states and causal relations of actions and by altering reading rhythm. In other words, two orientations have been identified:

one that opens the act of feeling inwardly within the reader, and another that presents the story as a narrative shareable with others. These orientations are not mutually exclusive. Rather, picture book translation may be understood as an act of reconstruction that shifts its center of gravity according to cultural context.

In conclusion, this study has argued that the translation of Kanjiru Picturebooks should be understood as a highly complex, multilayered, and multimodal translational space—an attempt to open up possibilities of feeling in a different form. Methodologically, this article is limited to a close reading of a restricted portion of a single picture book, namely the first opening spread, and does not offer a comprehensive discussion of translation strategies across the entire series. Nevertheless, the opening spread is the site where sensibility and interpretive frameworks are most densely concentrated in a picture book. The theoretical insights derived from its analysis may therefore be applicable to the translation of other pages and other picture books as well.

Notes

Research Ethics

This study was conducted with the approval of the Ethics Review Committee of Shizuoka Eiwa Gakuin University. Prior to participation, all participants were fully informed, both in writing and orally, about the purpose and content of the research, the required time commitment, the handling of personal information, and the voluntary nature of participation. Informed consent was obtained from all participants.

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