

EXPLORING SURFACE CUES FOR DEEP LESSONS IN
CHILDREN'S STORIES: A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS WITH
AESOP'S FABLES

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ABSTRACT

Stories are typified and distinguished from other genres structurally and semantically by their specific coherent relations and characteristic goal conflicts respectively. As a special kind of stories, fables are often additionally associated with a moral. Storytellers deploy different lexico-grammatical constructions, rhetorical devices and discourse strategies within specific narrative structures, enabling the stories to be retold in numerous ways with the intended message invariably conveyed. To this end, we are particularly interested in how one might leverage various surface linguistic devices to probe the deep lessons in fables, especially before immersing oneself in sophisticated reasoning with comprehensive world knowledge. In this paper,¹ we introduce a bilingual corpus compiled from different published versions of Aesop's Fables in English and Chinese, detailing the annotations done at the structural, semantic, and emotional level; and with particular reference to the Chinese texts, discuss the role of some surface linguistic properties in the realisation of the moral and thus their potential contribution in story understanding.

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40 **PART I** ANALYSES AND APPLICATIONS

KEYWORDS

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Surface linguistic properties Aesop's Fables

由淺入深：從表層語言特徵探索寓言故事的深層意義

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提要

故事是一種獨特的體裁，其篇章結構與意義亦有別於一般敘事文本，而寓言更會透過故事的情節表達深層的含意。只要在一定的敘事結構或框架中，作者可以運用不同的詞彙句式、修辭手法以及篇章策略去闡述故事內容，表達中心思想。要充分理解寓言故事，豐富知識和深度推理固然重要，但表層語言特徵發揮的作用也不少，值得探索。本文介紹一個新構建的中英雙語故事語料庫，該語料庫取材自不同版本的伊索寓言，附有結構、意義、及情感等方面的標註；並探討幾項表層語言特徵與深層意義的關係，以及它們對讀者理解寓言故事的功用。

關鍵詞

敘事結構 故事理解 語料庫標註 表層語言特徵 伊索寓言