

**PRAGMATIC POTENTIAL AND PRAGMATIC ADAPTATION IN THE
TRANSLATION OF FICTION: A CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract. This article examines the roles of *pragmatic potential* and *pragmatic adaptation* in fiction translation, focusing on their contributions to creating culturally relevant and resonant target-language texts. Pragmatic potential involves the interpretative flexibility that translators utilize to preserve communicative intent and cultural nuance, while pragmatic adaptation involves specific modifications to enhance comprehension and relevance for the target audience without compromising the original's impact. Using theories from Eugene Nida, Lawrence Venuti, Mona Baker, and Ernst-August Gutt, this article reviews practical case studies to illustrate how these strategies facilitate successful meaning transfer. The study highlights how translators function as cultural mediators, fostering cross-cultural understanding and the dynamic exchange of ideas through literary translation.

Key words: pragmatic potential, pragmatic adaptation, translation, translators' function, translation strategies.

**BADIIY ADABIYOT TARJIMASIDA PRAGMATIK SALOHIYAT VA
PRAGMATIK MOSLASHUV: MADANIYATLARARO NUQTAI NAZAR**

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada badiiy adabiyot tarjimasida pragmatik salohiyat va pragmatik moslashuvning o'zni ko'rib chiqiladi, ularning madaniy jihatdan dolzarb va ta'sirchan tarjima tilidagi matnlarni yaratishga qo'shgan hissasiga e'tibor qaratiladi. Pragmatik salohiyat tarjimonlar kommunikativ niyat va madaniy noziklikni saqlab qolish uchun qo'llaydigan talqin moslashuvchanligini o'z ichiga olsa, pragmatik moslashuv esa asl nusxaning ta'sirini kamaytirmagan holda maqsadli auditoriya uchun tushunish va dolzarblikni oshirish uchun maxsus o'zgartirishlarni o'z ichiga oladi. Eugene Nida, Lawrence Venuti, Mona Baker va Ernst-August Gutt nazariyalaridan foydalangan holda, ushbu maqolada ushbu strategiyalar ma'no uzatishni qanday osonlashtirishini ko'rsatish uchun amaliy misollar ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqotda tarjimonlarning madaniy vositachi vazifasini bajarishi, madaniyatlararo tushunishni va badiiy tarjima orqali dinamik fikr almashishni rag'batlantirishi yoritilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: pragmatik salohiyat, pragmatik moslashuv, tarjima, tarjimonlar vazifasi, tarjima strategiyalari.

**ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКИЙ ПОТЕНЦИАЛ И ПРАГМАТИЧЕСКАЯ
АДАПТАЦИЯ В ПЕРЕВОДЕ ФАКТИЧЕСКОЙ ПРОИЗВЕДЕННОСТИ:
КРАССКУЛЬТУРНАЯ ПЕРСПЕКТИВА**

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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается роль прагматического потенциала и прагматической адаптации в художественном переводе, с акцентом на их вклад в создание культурно релевантных и резонансных текстов целевого языка. Прагматический потенциал включает в себя интерпретационную гибкость, используемую переводчиками для сохранения коммуникативного намерения и культурных нюансов, в то время как прагматическая адаптация предполагает специфические модификации для повышения понимания и актуальности для целевой аудитории без ущерба для эффективности оригинала. Используя теории Юджина Найда, Лоуренса Венути, Моны Бейкер и Эрнста-Августа Гутта, эта статья рассматривает практические кейсы, чтобы проиллюстрировать, как эти стратегии способствуют успешному переносу смысла. В исследовании подчеркивается, как переводчики выступают в качестве культурных посредников, способствуя межкультурному взаимопониманию и динамичному обмену идеями посредством литературного перевода.

Ключевые слова: прагматический потенциал, прагматическая адаптация, перевод, функция переводчиков, стратегия перевода.

INTRODUCTION

The translation of fiction requires more than the mere transfer of words from one language to another; it necessitates an understanding of cultural nuances, social contexts, and the expectations of the target audience. Fictional texts often contain cultural references, idiomatic expressions, and implicit meanings that require adaptation to preserve their intended impact. *Pragmatic adaptation* involves modifying these elements so that they resonate within the cultural framework of the target audience, drawing on principles of communicative equivalence as proposed by Eugene Nida (1964). Nida's dynamic equivalence emphasizes that translation should aim to produce the same response in the target audience as in the original audience, a concept fundamental to pragmatic adaptation in literary contexts.

Pragmatic potential, as theorized by Ernst-August Gutt (1991), builds on relevance theory by focusing on the interpretative choices a translator can make to align with the expectations and understanding of the target culture. Gutt (1991) argues that by maximizing relevance, translators achieve resonance in cross-cultural contexts, effectively bridging language and culture. Moreover, Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958)

research on oblique translation underscores how pragmatic adaptation – modifying structure and idiom to preserve meaning – works to navigate cultural differences in translation. Mona Baker (1992) also addresses this issue by asserting that a translator's choices in interpreting pragmatics can often make or break cultural understanding, particularly in fiction, where meaning is often layered and subtle.

Objectives

The primary aim of this study is to explore how pragmatic potential and pragmatic adaptation contribute to the effectiveness of literary translation, specifically in fiction. This research addresses the following questions:

1. How does pragmatic adaptation contribute to the retention of meaning and cultural resonance in translated fiction?
2. How does pragmatic potential enable a broader interpretive scope that respects the cultural expectations of the target audience?

By addressing these questions, this article contributes to ongoing discussions in translation studies on how translators can act as cultural facilitators, expanding the reach of literary works and enabling them to be appreciated across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

METHODS

Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative approach to examine the theoretical framework around pragmatic potential and adaptation, integrating a review of relevant literature and analysis of case studies. Theoretical perspectives from translation scholars, including Nida (1964), Gutt (1991), Venuti (1995), and Baker (1992), serve as the foundation for examining the process of adaptation in fiction translation.

Data Collection and Sources

The data for this study were collected from three distinct case studies, each focusing on the pragmatic adaptation and translation of culturally and linguistically specific elements in fictional narratives across different language pairs: Russian-to-English, English-to-Uzbek. This data selection provides insight into the complexities of translating fiction across varied linguistic, cultural, and sociocultural contexts.

1. Russian-to-English Translation:

For this case study, a contemporary Russian novel was chosen to examine the challenges translators face when conveying idiomatic expressions, culturally specific references, and nuanced emotional tones to an English-speaking audience. The novel's dense cultural context, including references to Russian traditions, colloquial expressions, and historical background, offered valuable material for analyzing pragmatic potential and adaptation. In this translation, data were analyzed to understand how the translator applied strategies such as dynamic equivalence (Nida,

1964) and relevance theory (Gutt, 1991) to maintain the narrative's emotive power and relatability for English readers.

2. English-to-Uzbek Translation:

The second case study focused on the English-to-Uzbek translation of an American novel featuring Western cultural references, idiomatic language, and traditional events that are unfamiliar to an Uzbek-speaking audience. Uzbek, as a Turkic language with unique sociocultural norms, presents challenges when adapting English expressions related to cultural festivities, social norms, and idioms. This case study used the source text and its Uzbek translation to evaluate the application of pragmatic adaptation, analyzing how the translator modified culturally specific items to align with Uzbek cultural analogs. This data illustrates how pragmatic adaptation strategies, such as cultural substitution and modulation (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1958), help preserve the text's intended impact while making it accessible to Uzbek readers.

Data Analysis

For each language pair, key excerpts from the source texts and their translations were selected, focusing on passages that contained culturally embedded references, humor, idioms, and expressions requiring pragmatic adaptation. These passages were then analyzed to assess how translators used pragmatic potential to maintain the original meaning and effect. Data analysis involved close readings of both the original and translated texts to compare how pragmatic adaptation strategies were employed, allowing an in-depth exploration of the translators' techniques in achieving equivalent pragmatic impact across cultures.

Procedure

The case studies were analyzed by examining the translator's use of pragmatic adaptation techniques, shifts in culturally specific references, and the strategies employed to maximize pragmatic potential. Each example was assessed based on its success in preserving the original's intent and achieving cultural resonance in the target language, with specific focus on idiomatic phrases, humor, and cultural allusions.

RESULTS

Case Study 1: Russian-to-English Translation

In the Russian-to-English case study, the translator faced challenges in adapting culturally specific idioms and expressions that would be unfamiliar to an English-speaking audience. For instance, a Russian idiom with culturally specific connotations was translated into a more universally understandable English phrase. Using Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence, the translator prioritized the communicative effect over a literal translation. This approach echoes Gutt's (1991) relevance theory, where relevance is maximized to foster target audience engagement.

The functional equivalence in House's (1997) model supports this approach, suggesting that meaning transfer should focus on maintaining the communicative

function of the text, even if linguistic structures differ. By broadening pragmatic potential, the translator enabled English-speaking readers to experience similar cultural resonance without losing the text's intended nuance.

Case Study 2: English-to-Uzbek Translation

Translating fiction from English into Uzbek requires an understanding of cultural context, as some English expressions or cultural references may not be familiar to Uzbek readers. In this case study, a novel containing expressions related to Western cultural references (such as idiomatic phrases about sports or Western holidays) was translated into Uzbek, with careful attention to retaining the story's resonance for an Uzbek audience. For instance, references to "Thanksgiving" were replaced with phrases related to traditional Uzbek celebrations to provide a more culturally relevant reference (for instance "hosil bayrami").

This approach aligns with Vinay and Darbelnet's (1958) modulation technique, where translators adjust the structure or expression in the target language to convey the same meaning effectively. This adaptation also employs Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence, aiming to achieve a similar emotional and cultural impact on the Uzbek-speaking audience as on the original English readers. Such adaptation highlights the translator's role as a cultural mediator, where preserving the narrative's intended tone and cultural relatability is prioritized over literal translation.

By adjusting pragmatic potential and adapting language to align with regional sensibilities, the translator preserved humor and informal tone, making the narrative more relatable for all readers while maintaining the original's spirit.

DISCUSSION

The findings from the case studies underscore the importance of pragmatic potential and pragmatic adaptation in the translation of fiction, particularly in contexts where cultural differences significantly impact the reception of translated narratives. Pragmatic potential and pragmatic adaptation are essential not only for achieving semantic accuracy but also for conveying the emotive, cultural, and aesthetic qualities of the original text. Through this lens, translators become interpreters and cultural mediators, responsible for reshaping texts in a way that preserves their essence while making them accessible to new audiences.

Both pragmatic potential and pragmatic adaptation emphasize the translator's dual responsibility in creating a translation that honors the original while respecting the target culture's conventions and values. In fiction, this dual responsibility is particularly important, as the genre often relies on emotive power, implicit messaging, and cultural authenticity. Through pragmatic adaptation, translators perform the role of cultural facilitators, ensuring that the translated narrative resonates emotionally and intellectually with readers from diverse backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

In translating fiction, the concepts of pragmatic potential and pragmatic adaptation are indispensable tools for achieving a meaningful and culturally relevant translation. This study highlights how pragmatic potential gives translators the interpretative flexibility to retain the essence and emotive power of the original text while allowing for context-sensitive modifications that cater to the target audience's expectations. Using pragmatic adaptation, translators can make deliberate adjustments to culturally specific references, idiomatic expressions, and humor, thereby creating a target text that maintains the narrative's integrity and accessibility.

Moreover, the findings affirm that pragmatic adaptation is not merely a mechanical process; it is an interpretive act that requires cultural awareness, linguistic sensitivity, and creativity. In line with Venuti's (1995) theories on domestication and foreignization, translators of fiction should aim to strike a balance between preserving the cultural uniqueness of the original and making it accessible to the target audience. The study suggests that translators who successfully navigate this balance foster greater cross-cultural understanding and enable readers to experience the richness of world literature.

Future research could further explore how pragmatic potential and adaptation operate across different literary genres and cultural contexts, examining, for instance, how these concepts apply to non-fiction genres or to languages with particularly large cultural divides. By continuing to investigate the nuances of pragmatic adaptation, translation studies can develop more refined strategies for bridging linguistic and cultural gaps, thus contributing to a more interconnected and culturally aware global readership.

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