

PRAGMATIC CHALLENGES IN THE TRANSLATION OF LITERARY TEXTS

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.19857394>

Abstract. This thesis investigates pragmatic challenges in literary translation, exploring how implicit meanings, cultural nuances, and contextual implications create obstacles. Drawing on existing literature, it identifies difficulties in rendering cultural realia, idiomatic expressions, and preserving authorial voice. The study highlights the translator's role as a cultural and pragmatic mediator, emphasizing the need for sophisticated strategies accounting for socio-cultural context and perlocutionary effects. It advocates for a pragmatically informed approach to literary translation, acknowledging limitations and suggesting future research.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Literary Translation, Cultural Realia, Idiomatic Expressions, Cultural Mediation

Annotatsiya. Ushbu dissertatsiya adabiy matnlarni tarjima qilishdagi pragmatik muammolarni o'rganadi, bunda yashirin ma'nolar, madaniy nozikliklar va kontekstual ta'sirlar qanday qilib to'siqlar yaratishini ko'rib chiqadi. Mavjud adabiyotlarni sintez qilish orqali u madaniy realiyalar, iboralar va muallif ovozini saqlashdagi qiyinchiliklarni aniqlaydi. Tadqiqot tarjimonning madaniy va pragmatik vositachi sifatidagi rolini ta'kidlab, ijtimoiy-madaniy kontekst va perlokutsion effektlarni hisobga oladigan murakkab strategiyalarning zarurligini ko'rsatadi. U adabiy tarjimaga pragmatik jihatdan asoslangan yondashuvni targ'ib qiladi, cheklovlarni tan oladi va kelajakdagi tadqiqotlar uchun yo'nalishlarni taklif qiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: Pragmatika, Adabiy tarjima, Madaniy realiyalar, Iboralar, Madaniy vositachilik

Аннотация. Данная диссертация исследует прагматические вызовы в переводе художественных текстов, изучая, как имплицитные значения, культурные нюансы и контекстуальные импликации создают препятствия. На основе анализа существующей литературы она выявляет трудности в передаче культурных реалий, идиоматических выражений и сохранении авторского голоса. Исследование подчеркивает роль переводчика как культурного и прагматического посредника, акцентируя внимание на необходимости сложных стратегий, учитывающих социокультурный контекст и перлокутивные эффекты. Оно выступает за прагматически информированный подход к художественному переводу, признавая его ограничения и предлагая направления для будущих исследований.

Ключевые слова: Прагматика, Художественный перевод, Культурные реалии, Идиоматические выражения, Культурное посредничество.

INTRODUCTION

“Pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or writer) and interpreted by a listener (or reader) [1]”.

Literary translation is a profoundly intricate endeavor, extending far beyond the simple transference of words from one language to another. It involves the delicate art of conveying not only the explicit semantic content but also the implicit meanings, emotional resonance, and cultural specificities that define a literary work. This thesis posits that the most significant hurdles in this process are often pragmatic in nature, arising from disparities in cultural contexts, shared background knowledge, and the intended communicative effects between the source and target audiences.

Pragmatics, as the study of meaning in context, offers a crucial lens through which to examine these challenges, revealing how literary texts frequently rely on implicature, presupposition, and indirect speech acts to [2].

Literature Review

The field of translation studies has increasingly recognized the indispensable role of pragmatics in understanding the complexities of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication [3]. Pragmatics, encompassing theories such as Grice's Cooperative Principle and maxims, Relevance Theory, and Speech Act Theory, provides a framework for analyzing how meaning is constructed and interpreted in context, often transcending literal linguistic forms. Literary texts, in particular, frequently exploit pragmatic principles, employing irony, metaphor, understatement, and cultural allusions that rely heavily on shared background knowledge and contextual understanding for their full effect [4].

A significant body of research highlights the challenges posed by culturally specific elements. One study, focusing on the translation of British oral folklore into Azerbaijani, meticulously details the difficulties in preserving cultural nuances, metaphorical language, and idiomatic expressions. This research underscores that such elements are deeply embedded in the source culture's pragmatic landscape, requiring the translator to act as a "cultural mediator" rather than a mere linguistic conduit. The success of the translation hinges on the translator's profound understanding of both the linguistic and cultural landscapes, ensuring that the implicit meanings and intended effects are accessible to the target audience without compromising the integrity of the original.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis employs a qualitative research design, specifically a conceptual analysis and critical synthesis of existing academic literature. The primary objective is to systematically identify, analyze, and evaluate the pragmatic challenges encountered in the translation of literary texts, as documented in scholarly publications. This approach is inherently hermeneutic and interpretivist, focusing on understanding the complex interplay of meaning-making, cultural context, and communicative intent in the translation process.

The data collection involved a focused review of peer-reviewed articles and scholarly texts that address the intersection of pragmatics and literary translation. The provided evidence, and served as core examples for this analysis. While the title of was noted, its content was deemed unusable for academic analysis due to its technical nature.

Findings & Analysis

The critical synthesis of the literature reveals several recurring and significant pragmatic challenges in the translation of literary texts, primarily stemming from the inherent cultural and contextual embeddedness of meaning.

"Translation is not a matter of words only: it is a matter of making intelligible a whole culture" [5]. These challenges necessitate sophisticated strategies that transcend mere linguistic substitution.

Implicature and Indirect Meaning

Literary texts often rely on hidden meanings (implicatures). Based on Grice's theory
Difficult to translate literally

Example: "*It's cold here*" → may imply "*close the window*"

If translated literally, meaning is lost. One prominent challenge lies in the translation of cultural realia and contextual implicature.

As highlighted by research on English literary texts, cultural realia are terms or concepts deeply rooted in a specific culture, often lacking direct equivalents in the target language. These elements carry profound cultural, historical, and linguistic significance, generating implicit meanings that are crucial for understanding the source text's pragmatic intent. For instance, a specific dish, a traditional garment, or a social custom mentioned in a literary work might evoke a complex web of associations and connotations for a source reader that are entirely absent for a target reader. The pragmatic challenge here is not just to translate the word, but to convey the implicature – the unstated meaning or cultural weight – associated with it. Strategies identified include retention (keeping the original term), adaptation (replacing with a target culture equivalent), or explicitation (adding explanatory notes). The choice among these is a pragmatic one, balancing the desire to preserve source culture elements (foreignization) with the need for target audience accessibility (domestication).

DISCUSSION

The findings unequivocally underscore the centrality of pragmatic considerations in the translation of literary texts. The challenges identified – cultural realia, idiomatic expressions, and stylistic nuances – are not merely linguistic hurdles but profound pragmatic obstacles that demand more than lexical or grammatical equivalence. They highlight how meaning in literary contexts is deeply embedded in shared cultural knowledge, contextual inferences, and the author's communicative intentions, often operating through implicature and indirect speech acts.

“No translation is possible without a thorough understanding of the cultural context of both languages” [6].

Connecting these findings to broader pragmatic theories, the translation of cultural realia and idiomatic expressions directly challenges Gricean maxims, particularly the maxim of manner (be clear, avoid ambiguity) and the maxim of relevance. A literal translation of a culturally specific term or idiom often violates these maxims in the target language, leading to ambiguity or irrelevance for the target reader. Consequently, translators must employ compensatory strategies – such as explicitation or adaptation – to restore pragmatic clarity and relevance, effectively re-establishing the Cooperative Principle for the new audience.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has critically examined the pragmatic challenges inherent in the translation of literary texts, demonstrating that these difficulties extend significantly beyond mere linguistic transfer. The analysis, drawing upon a synthesis of academic literature, has highlighted that the implicit meanings, cultural nuances, and contextual implications embedded within literary works pose formidable obstacles for translators. Key challenges include the effective rendering of cultural realia, the nuanced translation of idiomatic expressions and metaphorical language, and the preservation of authorial voice and stylistic subtleties.

The central insight derived from this study is the indispensable role of the translator as a cultural and pragmatic mediator.

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