

ABSTRACT

«Strategies of pragmatic adaptation in translating E.A. Poe and Chekhov's short stories into Chinese» Dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
Specialty 8D02302 – “Translation Studies (Western Languages)”

Shan Shiguo

Literary translation plays a crucial role in intercultural communication, ensuring the transmission not only of the semantic content, but also of the emotional and aesthetic impact of the original text. The short stories of A. P. Chekhov and E. A. Poe occupy a special place in world literature, serving as exemplary models of subtle psychological analysis, distinctive narrative structure, and profound cultural symbolism. When translating their works into Chinese, the translator faces the challenge of conveying implicit meanings, culturally conditioned imagery, irony, emotional tension, and the author's stylistic individuality. However, existing Chinese translations of these stories demonstrate varying degrees of success in preserving artistic expressiveness and the pragmatic effect of the original, which indicates the need for more effective translation strategies. In this regard, the application of the strategy of pragmatic adaptation makes it possible to conceptualize literary translation as a process of deliberate selection and coordination of linguistic, cultural, and interpretive choices aimed at achieving equivalence of reader reception.

Relevance of the Research.

The works of A. P. Chekhov and E. A. Poe hold a central place in world literature and have exerted a significant influence on the development of modern Chinese literature of the 20th–21st centuries. The short story, a genre in which both authors achieved their highest artistic expression, represents a complex artistic-communicative phenomenon that integrates irony, psychological depth, implicit meaning, cultural symbolism, and an individual authorial style. However, these elements undergo substantial transformation in the process of translation into Chinese, which makes the problem of preserving the pragmatic effect of the original text particularly relevant.

Despite the long history of translating Chekhov's and Poe's works in China, analysis shows that translators often rely either on formal equivalence or on domestication strategies, which leads to the loss of authorial subtext, artistic allusion, and emotional-psychological impact. At the same time, the Chinese translation tradition lacks a sufficiently developed model of pragmatic adaptation that would allow for a balanced consideration of the relationship between the author's communicative intention, contextual conditions, reader reception, and translator's interpretive decisions.

The relevance of this study is further reinforced by the growing interest of contemporary Chinese literary scholarship in multi-layered textual analysis and in achieving *equivalence of reader response*. In this regard, the application of Jef Verschueren's pragmatic adaptation theory to the translation of Chekhov's and Poe's short stories provides the foundation for comprehensive analysis of translation strategies and the development of a methodologically grounded approach to the transmission of artistic meaning.

Thus, the relevance of the present research is determined by the need to develop and empirically verify a strategy of pragmatic adaptation in translating the short fiction of A. P. Chekhov and E. A. Poe into Chinese, which will enhance the accuracy, expressiveness, and cultural meaningfulness of literary translation.

Purpose of the Research.

The purpose of the present study is to identify and substantiate the effectiveness of pragmatic adaptation (as conceptualized by Jef Verschueren) in translating the short stories of A. P. Chekhov and E. A. Poe into Chinese, on the basis of a comprehensive analysis of different translation strategies.

Research Objectives:

To achieve this purpose, the study sets the following tasks:

To analyze the history of the reception and translation of A. P. Chekhov's and E. A. Poe's short stories in China.

To clarify the concept of pragmatic adaptation as applied to literary translation and to define its theoretical foundations.

To develop a four-level model of pragmatic adaptation.

To conduct a comparative analysis of translations of Chekhov's and Poe's short stories produced in different historical periods and to identify the distinctive features of the translation strategies employed.

To test the proposed model of pragmatic adaptation in practice by producing optimized translations.

To evaluate the results of the optimized translations through reader survey data and NLPPIR-based linguistic analysis in order to confirm the effectiveness of the model.

Object of the Research. The object of the research is represented by the short stories of A. P. Chekhov — “The Man in a Case”, “The Chameleon”, “Vanka” and “Fat and Thin”, as well as the short stories of E. A. Poe — “The Black Cat”, “The Tell-Tale Heart”, “The Fall of the House of Usher” and “The Masque of the Red Death” — and their Chinese translated versions, which correspond to different stages of literary reception.

The translations of A. P. Chekhov's works are examined in the versions of:

Ru Long, produced and published in the 1950s–1960s, characterized by a literal translation strategy and an orientation toward semantic accuracy of the original text;

Shen Nianju, created in the 1980s, distinguished by academic equivalence and an effort to reconstruct the stylistic features of the author's writing;

Gu Guangmei, published in the 2000s–2010s, oriented toward a broad, including young, readership and rendering the content in a more accessible and fluent form.

The translations of E. A. Poe's works are analyzed in the versions of:

Jiao Juyin, published in the 1930s–1940s, executed in a literal manner and preserving the linguistic and stylistic features of the early stage of reception;

Chen Lianting, published in the 1980s, applying a strategy of domestication to facilitate the reader's comprehension in the target culture;

Cao Minglun, issued in the 2000s, distinguished by a high degree of semantic and stylistic accuracy, with careful attention to the poetics of the original text.

Subject of the Research.

The subject of the research is the application of the strategy of pragmatic adaptation in translating the short stories of A. P. Chekhov and E. A. Poe into Chinese and its effectiveness in comparison with established translation approaches. The study focuses on the translation of culturally marked units, figurative systems, psychological narrative features, and stylistic characteristics of the original texts, as well as on the reception of the translations by readers and the results obtained through NLPPIR-based linguistic analysis.

Materials and Sources of the Research.

The material of the study consists of the short stories of A. P. Chekhov and E. A. Poe and their Chinese translations produced in different historical periods by three translators of each author. The analysis is based on the original texts of the stories, as well as on the translations by Zhu Lun, Shen Nianju, and Gu Guangmei (for the works of A. P. Chekhov), and the translations by Cao Minglun, Chen Lianting, and Jiao Juyin (for the works of E. A. Poe). The theoretical foundation of the research is the concept of pragmatic adaptation developed by Jef Verschueren.

Hypothesis of the Research.

The hypothesis of the study is that the application of the strategy of pragmatic adaptation in translating the short stories of A. P. Chekhov and E. A. Poe into Chinese ensures a higher degree of textual accuracy, stylistic expressiveness, and readerly comprehensibility compared to traditional translation approaches. The proposed four-level model of adaptation (contextual adaptation, structural-linguistic adaptation, dynamic adaptation, and translator's awareness regulation) is methodologically coherent and practically applicable. Its implementation leads to an improvement in translation quality, which is confirmed by the results of reader surveys and NLPPIR-based linguistic analysis.

Methods of the Research.

Analysis of scholarly literature — used to systematize the history of the reception and translation of A. P. Chekhov's and E. A. Poe's works in China and to establish the theoretical foundations of pragmatic adaptation.

Case analysis — applied to examine specific translation decisions in different Chinese versions of the stories and to identify the mechanisms through which pragmatic adaptation is implemented.

Comparative translation analysis — used to compare the ways in which the pragmatic potential of the source text is conveyed in various Chinese translations and to evaluate differences in translation strategies.

Audience-oriented analysis — used to account for reader perception and to determine the degree of equivalence in the reception of the source text and the translated text.

To verify the research results, the study employs:

- Questionnaire survey to collect feedback from native speakers and target readers;
- NLPPIR-based linguistic analysis tools to obtain objective measurements of lexical, stylistic, and structural parameters of the translations.

Scientific Novelty of the Research.

For the first time, a comprehensive comparative analysis has been carried out of

the Chinese translations of the short stories by A. P. Chekhov and E. A. Poe produced in different historical periods, which makes it possible to identify stable patterns of reception and translational interpretation within the Chinese cultural context.

A four-level model of pragmatic adaptation is proposed and substantiated (contextual adaptation, linguistic-structural adaptation, dynamic adaptation, and regulation of the translator's interpretive stance), which clarifies the mechanisms of applying Jef Verschueren's adaptation theory to literary translation.

The practical effectiveness of this model is demonstrated for the first time on the basis of optimized translations, confirmed both by reader survey data and by the results of quantitative linguistic analysis using the NLPPIR-master tool.

The study reveals the possibility of integrating theoretical modeling, translation practice, and empirical verification, thereby expanding the methodological potential of pragmatically oriented translation studies.

Scientific and Practical Significance of the Research.

The theoretical and practical significance of the study lies in clarifying and developing Jef Verschueren's strategy of pragmatic adaptation as applied to literary translation. The four-level model of adaptation proposed in the dissertation expands the explanatory potential of contemporary translation theory and provides a systematic framework for analyzing the transfer of culturally marked elements, ironic tone, and psychological narration in translation.

The practical value of the model is confirmed by optimized translations evaluated through reader surveys and quantitative linguistic analysis using the NLPPIR-master tool, which demonstrates its effectiveness in achieving equivalence of reader perception between the source text and the translation.

The results of the study can be used in the training of literary translators, the development of teaching materials in translation studies, the editorial assessment of translations, and the selection of translation strategies for texts with a high degree of cultural markedness.

The following key propositions are submitted for defense:

The strategy of pragmatic adaptation represents a methodologically grounded approach to literary translation, enabling consideration of the interrelation between language, context, and reader perception.

The proposed four-level model of adaptation demonstrates practical applicability and ensures a more accurate rendering of artistic imagery, psychological expressiveness, and culturally marked elements of the source text.

The comparative analysis of Chinese translations of the short stories by A. P. Chekhov and E. A. Poe shows that traditional translation strategies often limit the transmission of cultural and pragmatic information, whereas the application of pragmatic adaptation reduces semantic loss and interpretive distortion.

Optimized translations produced on the basis of the pragmatic adaptation strategy exhibit a higher degree of equivalence of reader perception compared to existing translations, which is confirmed by the results of the target-audience questionnaire.

Quantitative analysis using the NLPPIR-master tool objectively verifies the effectiveness of the proposed model, demonstrating improvements in lexical-stylistic parameters, informational entropy, and overall reader comprehensibility of the

translation.

Approbation of the Research.

The main provisions and results of the dissertation research have been presented in four publications by the author. Among them: one article (as the first author) published in a peer-reviewed journal indexed in Scopus, and three articles (first author) published in journals included in the list of the Committee for Quality Assurance in the Sphere of Education and Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan (KOKSON). These publications confirm the scientific validity and practical significance of the results obtained.

The dissertation consists of an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a list of references. The total volume of the dissertation is 245 pages.