

The Multiple Pragmatic Identity Construction of Huckleberry Finn in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* from Contextual Correlates of Adaptability

Xuechun Zhao

Nanning Normal University, China

Abstract

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huckleberry Finn shapes a unique individual image by adapting to various contexts, revealing the possibilities of self-realization and growth that humans seek in the face of challenges and difficulties. This paper analyzes Huck's multiple pragmatic identity construction from the perspective of contextual correlates of adaptability, aiming to address the following questions: (1) How does Huckleberry Finn conduct his multiple identities in the three contexts (physical world, social world, and mental world) through conversation? (2) What pragmatic functions does Huckleberry Finn perform in a specific conversation? (3) What are the influencing factors behind the construction of Huckleberry Finn's identity? Analyzing Huckleberry Finn's multiple identity construction from the perspective of contextual correlates of adaptability can help us gain a deeper understanding of how the work shapes Huck's complex and varied identity by adapting to different contexts, thus revealing the close connection between character growth and social change, as well as how literary works reflect and critique social realities through character identity construction. This research not only contributes to enriching the theoretical perspectives of literary criticism but also provides new insights for understanding the profound meanings and humanistic values of the work.

Keywords

Contextual Correlates of Adaptability; Multiple Pragmatic Identity Construction; Huckleberry Finn.

1. Introduction

As a classic work of Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* has attracted extensive attention for its unique narrative style and profound social implications. The novel's protagonist, Huckleberry Finn, is noteworthy for his multiple and complex identities. On one hand, he is an innocent and untamed teenager with curiosity and eagerness for the unknown world. He refuses to accept the rules and constraints of the adult world, pursuing freedom and independence. On the other hand, Huckleberry Finn is also a young man who gradually grows and forms his unique values through escape and adventure. He has experienced the cruelty and indifference of society, as well as the kindness and warmth of human nature. His interactions with black companions such as Jim have further deepened and expanded this identity.

Furthermore, the construction of Huckleberry Finn's multiple identities not only reflects his personal growth and change but also reflects the cultural values and interpersonal relationships of the society at that time. In the American South of the 19th century, racial discrimination and class oppression were widespread. However, in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huckleberry Finn establishes a deep friendship and trust with his black companion. This cross-racial friendship and trust were extremely rare in the society of the time, challenging

racial concepts and class systems and demonstrating the kindness and tolerance of human nature.

The targets of this paper mainly include the following aspects. Firstly, analyze Huckleberry Finn's speech acts in the text in detail to reveal how he constructs and expresses his different identities through speech acts. Secondly, analyze the influencing factors behind Huckleberry Finn's identity construction. Thirdly, explore the pragmatic functions that Huckleberry Finn performs in specific dialogues.

2. Related Research

2.1. Studies on Contextual Correlates of Adaptability

According to the Linguistic Adaptation Theory, language use is a process of language choice. Language choice is not always intended to conform to pre-existing environmental factors; in fact, it can also change the environment, or make the environment or reality conform to language choice (He., 2007:72). Adaptability includes contextual correlates of adaptability. In other words, it refers to communicative and linguistic contexts (Zhai et al., 2018). Regarding the relevant research on contextual correlates of adaptability, scholars mainly focus on three aspects: translation, foreign language teaching, and language use.

2.1.1. The Research on Contextual Correlates of Adaptability in Translation

As a means of expression that transforms language and cultural information, translation is a dynamic process of seeking cultural context adaptation. By studying adaptation in translation, the understanding of the creatively, ideologically, politically, and socially charged process of rewriting and reshaping all that is adaptation will be strengthened (Milton J., 2009). The level of adaptation is evaluated through Klingberg's theories because the meaning sometimes is different from that of the original text and the context is changed in some parts (Asghari M., et al., 2016). An analysis of adaptation as inter-semiotic and intermedial translation can give rise to the factors that condition the flow of narratives across media and cultures but also shed light on the relationship between cultural products and the socio-temporal context (Perdikaki K., et al., 2016). Malamatidou S. (2017) examined the role of adaptation in language changes caused by translation. Only based on contextual correlates of adaptability, effective understanding and communication between different cultures can be achieved (Ran, 2018). Other scholars have also considered the issue of adapting to the internal and external contexts of the text (Wang Min, 2020; Li Caixia et al., 2021; Qian Wenxin et al., 2024). Sang Wei (2020) and Wang Jun et al. (2023) explored the subjectivity of translators' language choices under the historical background.

Translation is a complex and delicate task that requires translators to possess profound language skills, rich cultural background knowledge, and keen cross-cultural awareness. Only by deeply understanding the cultural context of the source language and combining it with the characteristics of the target language cultural context, can translators make appropriate language choices and achieve effective translation.

2.1.2. The Research on Contextual Correlates of Adaptability in Foreign Language Teaching

Nilsenová M. et al. (2010) studied children's mastery of structural and lexical forms in dialogue and their adaptation to the tone of interlocutors. Sonia G. (2018) researched clear speech strategies when older children interact with peers with hearing loss. Based on the rule of language adaptation, foreign language teachers can adopt emotional motivation strategies, contextual construction strategies, and spatiotemporal expansion strategies to stimulate students' interest in language learning effectively (Wu et al., 2018). Valieva F. et al. (2019) explored the factors influencing social language adaptability of oral learners and proposed

methods to improve their oral expression ability. Zhang (2019) proposed an adaptive reading teaching model, aiming to help teachers better conduct reading teaching and improve students' reading comprehension ability. Han et al. (2021) found that students tend to neglect the adaptation of language structure or ignore the adaptation of linguistic context and communicative context when dictating, which can lead to incorrect language choices. He et al. (2021) believed that the process of college English translation teaching is a dynamic adaptation process of teachers guiding students to continuously make language choices under different consciousnesses to meet communication needs, making adjustments between language structure and context. Firman A D. et al. (2023) described immigrants' linguistic adaptability in phonology, morphology, and grammar.

These researches not only focus on students' language knowledge learning but also emphasize the learning and application of language in real communicative situations. Through these strategies, teachers can create a positive, rich, and flexible language learning environment for students, helping them better master and apply the language.

2.1.3. The Research on Contextual Correlates of Adaptability in Language Use

The use of language does not exist in isolation but is deeply rooted in specific contexts. Contextual correlates of adaptability refer to the flexible selection and adjustment of language expressions by language users based on the specific communication environment to achieve the purpose of effective communication. Al-Gublan B K. (2015) analyzed the characteristics of politicians' speeches, considering them as the result of selection, negotiation, and linguistic adaptation. Zolfagharian M. (2017) explored the importance of language choice and usage norms for employees in the service industry. Roberts S G. (2018) explored how language adapts to external selective pressures through cross-cultural databases. Hanna V. (2019) discussed the issue of language integration and adaptation of refugees in modern international spaces. Cych L. et al. (2021) proposed that both linguistic and cultural factors should be considered in early language intervention. Subjective context determines that the essence of adaptation is an intentional activity driven by multiple contextual factors and psychological desires (Shi, 2022). Discourse markers are a linguistic mechanism that can only achieve effective discourse communication by adapting to constantly changing communicative contexts (Zhu, 2022). Marty P. et al. (2024) explored the importance of incremental changes in probabilistic expectations in the process of contextual adaptation for initiating meaning.

Contextual correlates of adaptability provide us with a new perspective to understand and analyze language communication, which is of great significance for improving our pragmatic ability, reducing pragmatic errors, and achieving effective communication. In future language learning and application, we should pay more attention to the role of contextual factors and strive to cultivate our contextual awareness and meta-pragmatic awareness to achieve more harmonious and effective language communication.

2.2. Studies on Identity Construction

Fei Xiaotong (1998), a sociologist, pointed out that society is not a collection of individuals, but a construction of identity. Identity is a basic element of social structure which is manifested as identity construction. American sociologist, Jonathan. H. Turner mentioned the relationship between self and role. He thought that a person's understanding of the "self" is based on the "role" that one plays in front of others, but a "role" is not "identity", because the degree to which the self is attached to the role is not always the same. Zimmerman (1998:87-91) pointed out that identity is a contextual element in a conversation and proposed that "identity is context". Bamberg, et al. (2007) thought that the study of construction of pragmatic identity is not only the central stage of social science but also has become a foreword of pragmatic studies. Throughout the existing literature, the study of identity construction from the perspective of pragmatics is generally reflected in the following three aspects.

2.2.1. The Negotiation of Identity Takes Place within Discourse

Identity can be constructed through different linguistic means, as well as a means of connecting with a society. Centering on the role of language and discourse in identity construction, it was found that only a deeper understanding and insight into how registered nurses construct their professional identities will enhance recruitment and retention programs (Niamh M, 2021). By combining research on identity from a sociocultural linguistic perspective with epistemic using Conversation Analysis, student activists can learn how to construct shared political identity through their majors and career plans (Sylvia, 2023). Through feminist critical discourse analysis, the Irish teachers' identities and gender constructions can be addressed and the possibility of broader egalitarianism and emancipation can be generated (Mooney. G. S, 2023). Based on Kiesling's (2011) discussion on the consistency of gender discourse construction, how male identity is constructed was studied (Jungyoon. K, 2023).

People can express their identity, values, and personal beliefs through various linguistic means, thereby shaping and maintaining their self-identity. At the same time, identity construction is not an isolated process; rather, it is a process that is profoundly influenced by the socio-cultural context.

2.2.2. The Byproduct of Interpersonal Communication Dynamics

The interaction in conversation and the change of the communicative unit at the linguistic level of the participants' roles display different interpersonal relationships, which are reflected in the professional discourse interaction. By discussing the relationship between narrative and constructive dialogue in political discourse, the way of shaping the image of dialogue participants was revealed and a spiritual temperament of receptive politicians was constructed (Truan N, 2021). By examining the discourse construction of identity belonging in the multi-text discourse produced in the context of the Francophone party leaders' debate before the 2018 provincial election in Quebec, and following the CDA, the racial bias about the Quebec identity was weakened in the official discourse of the Quebec government (Yulia B, 2021). Based on the discourse analysis, it is found that identity is a dynamic and negotiable process that takes place in specific interactive situations (Agnieszka S, 2022). Focusing on the interrogation in clinical supervision sessions, Samantha S., et al. (2023) sought to explore how and in what way supervisory interactions affect the professional development of clinical psychology interns.

Through in-depth analysis of discourse in different conversational scenarios, researchers can reveal the complex interpersonal relationships and identity dynamics behind discourse. This approach not only helps us understand how individuals shape their identities in specific social contexts but also provides us with the tools to understand and cope with the complex interpersonal relationships in modern society. In addition to this, the commonalities and differences in discursive interactions in different domains can be further explored, and how these interactions are influenced by broader social, cultural, and historical factors.

2.2.3. The Impact of Choice Made within a Given Context

Identity is the result of choice in a specific context to serve a specific communicative purpose. Disha M (2023) deals with how the institutional discourse affects the construction and negotiation of gendered identities regarding the discourse of body image and appearances endorsed by the institutional agents. Based on the student's gender identity construction, it is found that identity construction is a complex adjustment process. In other words, it has been a swing between the personal experience of individual choice and inequality, and the perception of group needs. Sexism in textbooks will also have an impact on students' construction of gender identity (Alicia B. et al, 2022; María A.T. L.D. et al., 2022). Fizza F. et al. (2021) excavated the diversified constructions of vloggers' online identities using two theoretical approaches to explaining identity construction: micro-hegemonies and the investment model. It helps to

understand how Pakistanis present a complex hybrid identity that can compete with the dominant narrative in the media.

It is evident that the construction of gender identity and the diversity of online identity are intricate and multifaceted processes. These processes are shaped not only by traditional media outlets, including institutional discourse and textbooks but also by emerging media platforms like social media and online culture. Consequently, in our efforts to foster gender equality and cultural diversity, we need to pay more attention to the role of the media in it, and how it shapes and influences our identity and expression. At the same time, we also need to encourage individuals to actively express themselves in the media to achieve a more equal, diverse and inclusive socio-cultural environment.

3. Background on Identity Construction and Contextual Correlates of Adaptability

3.1. Identity Construction

In literary studies, the identity construction of characters is not only an individual's positioning in society but also a multiple set of self-cognition and self-presentation in different contexts. In recent years, with the deepening of pragmatic studies, pragmatic identity theory has gradually attracted the attention of scholars. Tracy (2002) and De Fina (2006) proposed that identities are constantly constructed in the process of communication, which is dynamic and situational. Benwell & Stokoe (2006) argued that identity and personality, role, status, self, and personal growth have the same meaning. Chen Xinren (2013) proposed that pragmatic identity is the actual embodiment, application, and even fiction of a specific social identity in the context of linguistic communication. The contextualized identity of the self or the other chosen by the language user intentionally or unintentionally and the other identity of the social individual or group mentioned by the speaker or author in their discourse are collectively referred to as pragmatic identity. The construction of identity involves the constraints of specific contextual factors such as the role, status, and power of communicators on the linguistic form of identity matching (Jiang et al., 2009). The idea of identity emergence has a direct impact on the understanding of the meaning of discourse because it is possible to correctly grasp the meaning of discourse only by correctly grasping the identity used by the speaker to send out the specific discourse and the conception of the identity of the listener (Chen Xinren, 2013). In communication and interaction, communicators will flexibly adjust and adopt different identities to conduct conversations according to different communication needs and purposes, and this flexible and dynamic adjustment process can be called pragmatic identity construction.

3.2. Contextual Correlates of Adaptability

Based on the pragmatic representation of the identity construction of characters, Verschueren (1999) proposed the linguistic adaptation theory in an attempt to explain the fuzziness and extensiveness of pragmatic definitions from a new perspective. He believed that language is a continuous process of selection, and the reason for selection lies in the three properties of language, changeable negotiability, and adaptability. In communication, there is the reproduction of self-identity and the identity of others, as well as the language forms consistent with the identity (Ran Yongping, 2007).

To explain a linguistic phenomenon in the round, we need to focus on how contexts are flexibly applied, how linguistic structures adapt to change, and the role and depth of consciousness in these adjustments. Contextual correlates of adaptability include the physical world, social world, and mental world of language users. Firstly, the number of speakers, e.g. monologue or dialogue, and the types of speakers, e.g. the speaker is the only source of information or the speaker is one of the sources of information, will affect the expression and understanding of

words in daily communication. The tone in which the addresser, as the source of information, speaks is crucial. In the physical world, the position of communicators and the relative spatial distance between them have an impact on language choice. Besides, the postures and gestures of communicators and even the characteristics of foreign trade also involve physical factors. Secondly, the interpreter of the utterance, as the receiver of the information, may play a different role, due to the difference of society, culture, and rules. In addition, language is a tool for communication between one brain and another in daily communication. By judging the utterer's mental world, the interpreter can speculate on the one's personality, motivations, intentions, etc. These factors contained in the communicative context and linguistic context will influence the utilization and comprehension of language by users to differing extents. The specific formation mode is shown in Figure 1 below.

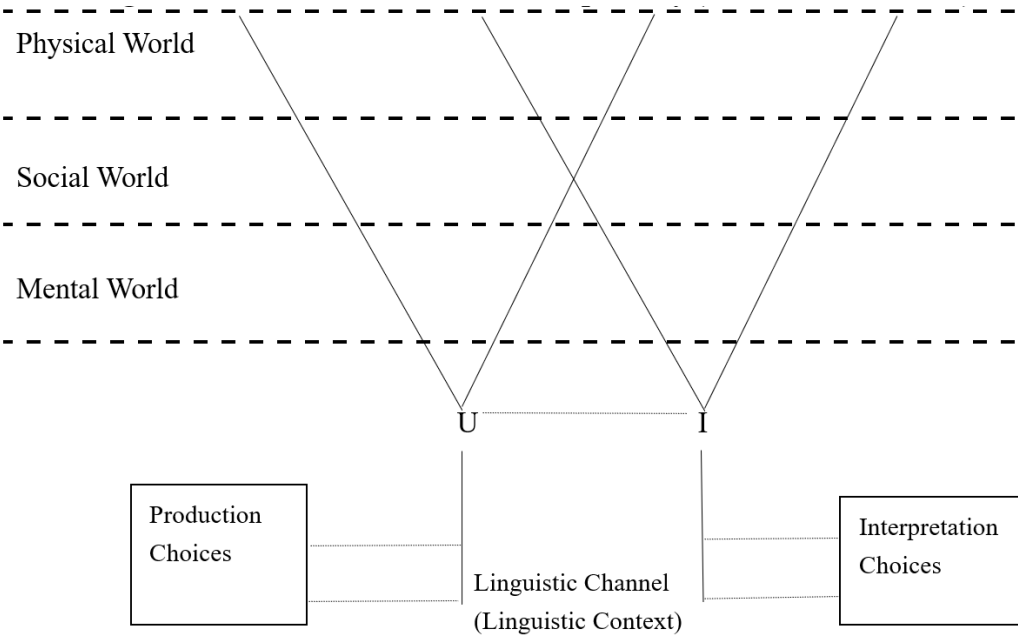


Figure 1. Contextual Correlates of Adaptability (Verschueren, J. 1999)

As shown above, U stands for the utterer and I stand for the interpreter. To adapt to a specific context, the utterer will choose the appropriate way of expression to convey the message to the interpreter. Correspondingly, the interpreter will make interpretations based on their understanding of the information. In this process, the “V” formed by the utterer and the interpreter reflects their limitations in different contexts, which are made up of a variety of factors.

The three dotted lines in the figure reveal the close connection between the physical, social, and mental worlds, indicating that they do not exist in isolation, but are intertwined and mutually influencing. In the process of adapting to the communicative environment, communicators often need to consider these three aspects comprehensively to ensure the effective transmission and understanding of information. Therefore, the identity is constructed through adaptation to various factors of the context in communication. The linguistic channel is often accompanied by non-verbal channels, like gestures or eye contact, which can be divided into spoken and written. The influence of language context on language choice is also multifaceted, like the choice of cohesion and the sequence of discourse. In sum, language needs to adapt to a variety of contextual factors, and context is not static, but a combination of dynamically developing components.

When analyzing the linguistic choices made by Huckleberry Finn in Mark Twain's novel *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, we can draw parallels to Verschueren's theory of pragmatic adaptation. How Huckleberry uses language is a continuous process of linguistic choices grounded in both internal and external motivations, often with varying degrees of consciousness. Huckleberry's diverse linguistic choices stem from language's inherent variability, negotiability, and adaptability. In the case of Huckleberry Finn, contextual correlates of adaptability are particularly salient, as his use of language is intricately tied to the context of his surroundings. As a young protagonist navigating the complexities of the American frontier in the 19th century, Huckleberry's linguistic choices must take into account the dynamic adaptation of the context and language structure.

The communicative context surrounding Huckleberry Finn is vast, encompassing factors such as the language users he encounters, the social norms and conventions of his time, his mental state and emotional journey, as well as the physical world he inhabits. Among these elements, the language user, in this case, Huckleberry himself, is paramount. The adaptation of the mental world, social world, and the physical world relies heavily on Huckleberry's cognitive framework and how he interprets and responds to his surroundings.

In this analysis, we will delve into how Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identities adapt to the physical world he traverses, the mental world he inhabits, and the social world he navigates. By exploring these adaptations, we gain a deeper understanding of Huckleberry and the linguistic strategies he employs to communicate in his unique and challenging environment.

4. The Multiple Pragmatic Identity Adaptation of Huckleberry Finn

In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the author skillfully demonstrates the multiple pragmatic identities of Huckleberry Finn. Huckleberry Finn, an innocent teenager, gradually shows his complex identity during his growth. He is a social rebel, skeptical of traditional moral concepts and social order; he is also a nature lover, full of awe and curiosity for nature; at the same time, he is a brave adventurer who is not afraid of the unknown world. These different identities are intertwined and influence each other during Huck's adventure, forming a rich, colorful, and multi-faceted character.

The research questions are as follows.

- (1) How does Huckleberry Finn conduct his multiple identities in the three contexts (physical world, social world, and mental world) through conversation?
- (2) What pragmatic functions does Huckleberry Finn perform in a specific conversation?
- (3) What are the influencing factors behind the construction of Huckleberry Finn's identity?

4.1. Identity Construction Adapting to the Physical World

From the perspective of adaptation theory, the physical world within a communicative context primarily encompasses time deixis and space deixis in a conversational exchange. Moreover, it incorporates the communicator's body posture, gestures, physical appearance, and physiological traits. Time and space deixis are the two most used and obvious ways of language selection in the physical world (Verschueren, 2000). Because communicators will be affected by time and space to choose the topic and expression of the conversation. The following examples will explain how Huckleberry's pragmatic identity adapts to time and space.

4.1.1. Adaption to Time

Time, though an abstract entity imperceptible to sight or touch, profoundly influences human communication. According to the adaptation theory, time deixis includes the time of utterance, event time, and reference time. In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, there are many occasions

involving time, and they all embody Huckleberry Finn's adaptation to time in the construction of pragmatic identity

Huckleberry Finn: "I been setting here talking with you all night till you went to sleep about ten minutes ago, and I reckon I done the same. You couldn't 'a' got drunk in that time, so of course you've been dreaming."

Time adaptation focuses on how the arrangement and use of time in a narrative affect the audience's perception of the narrator's identity and narrative content. In these words, Huckleberry Finn uses time words, like ten minutes, all night, and in that time, to construct the state of his narrative. He said that "I been setting here talking with you all night". This statement first created a situation of long companionship, giving the impression that they spent a long night together. He then said, "Till you went to sleep about ten minutes ago". The time span suddenly narrows, in stark contrast to "all night" before. This jump and compression in time make the narrative absurd and unbelievable. Finally, Huckleberry Finn used the phrase "in that time" to describe a time situation in which Jim may be drunk or dreaming, further emphasizing the brevity of time. It diminishes the possibility that Jim may be drunk or dreaming. This clever timing not only makes his narrative seem absurd but also adds elements of humor and banter. These few words allow Huckleberry Finn to successfully construct an identity that is playful, witty, flexible, and energetic. He uses the time words to convince Jim that he has experienced an impossible event, that is, the two of them talked all night when in reality it was just a joke. This manipulation and distortion of time reveals Huckleberry Finn's ingenuity and mischievous personality, while also deepening his friendship and intimacy with Jim.

The woman: "Hungry, too, I reckon. I'll find you something."

Huckleberry Finn: "No'm, I ain't hungry. I was so hungry I had to stop two miles below here at a farm; so I ain't hungry no more. It's what makes me so late."

Huckleberry Finn pretended to be a girl and cleverly used temporal words to construct his identity when explaining to the townspeople why he arrived so late. Through the analysis of time adaptation, we can understand how Huckleberry Finn used temporal narratives to enhance the credibility of his disguised role and conceal his true identity.

Firstly, Huckleberry Finn mentioned, "I was so hungry". The verb past tense "was" is not specific, but it is enough to convey a recent event where he had to stop and rest due to hunger. This narrative provides a reasonable explanation for his late arrival and elicits sympathy and trust for his identity as a poor child who may encounter difficulties during his journey to seek relatives. Then, he further explained, "I had to stop two miles below here at a farm". The specific distance of "two miles" combined with the verb past tense adds a specific spatial and temporal background to his narrative. Such a description makes his story more vivid and credible; while also showcasing the difficulties and hardships he may have encountered as a helpless child. Finally, he concluded, "So I ain't hungry no more. It's what makes me so late." The present tense of the verb "ain't" echoes the previous temporal narratives, indicating that he has solved the problem of hunger, and the reason for his late arrival has been reasonably explained. Such a narrative not only enhances his credibility but also demonstrates his resilience and adaptability as a traveler.

In this dialogue, Huckleberry Finn successfully constructed the identity of a child who was seeking refuge with relatives and was helpless during the journey. He used temporal words to build the background of his story, providing a reasonable explanation for his late arrival and demonstrating the difficulties and hardships he might have encountered during his journey. Such a narrative not only enhanced his credibility but also concealed his true identity and purpose. This clever identity construction allowed Huckleberry Finn to smoothly obtain information from the townspeople, while also showcasing his characteristics as a smart, witty, and adaptable character.

Through the above two examples, it can be seen that Huckleberry Finn's discourse reflects his adaptation to time through the use of temporal markers and their impact on character relationships. These discourses not only help readers establish the timeline of the story but also showcase Huckleberry Finn's growth and changes over time, thus constructing his pragmatic identity and reflecting dynamic adaptability to varying degrees.

4.1.2. Adaption to Space

Spatial deixis encompasses two principal categories: absolute spatial relations and relative spatial relations. These incorporate not just the physical space occupied by the speaker, but also the space referenced by the conversation, as well as the positioning of the two communicating parties within the physical world. Furthermore, body language associated with speech acts, such as bodily posture, gestures, physical attributes, and appearance, all play a pivotal role in shaping the language choices of the participants. Consequently, these factors influence the diverse language strategies adopted by the communicators. In *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Huckleberry Finn's discourse choices reflect his adaptation to space, which not only mirrors his living environment but also further constructs his pragmatic identity.

Huckleberry Finn: "Away down there somewhere I hear a small whoop, and up comes my spirits. I went tearing after it, listening sharp to hear it again. The next time it come I see I warn't heading for it but heading away to the right of it."

This is a description of Huckleberry Finn's living environment. When facing a strange and dangerous environment alone, Huckleberry Finn appears as a "highly alert explorer" to readers. He observes every detail around him keenly, whether it's a small whoop or sharp sounds, nothing escapes his ears. He knows that in this unknown world, any small negligence can bring fatal consequences. In this strange environment, Huckleberry Finn not only shows his courage and wisdom as an explorer but also demonstrates his perseverance and resilience as a survivor. He proves the unlimited potential and strength of humans when facing difficulties and challenges through his practical actions.

Stranger: "Boy, that's a lie. What is the matter with your pap? Answer up square now, and it'll be the better for you."

Huckleberry Finn: "I will sir, I will, honest—but don't leave us, please. It's the—the—gentlemen, if you'll only pull ahead, and let me heave you the headline, you won't have to come a-near the raft—please do."

Through the words such as "pull ahead" and "won't have to come", Huckleberry Finn cleverly emphasizes his identity as a liar in specific situations. He did this to protect Jim and prevent him from getting into danger due to the truth. Among these spatial vocabularies and tense, Huckleberry Finn attempted to create an illusion of continuity and non-stop action, making listeners believe that everything he said was true. His linguistic strategy was actually aimed at confusing and misleading those who might threaten Jim's safety, ensuring that Jim could safely escape from danger. Huckleberry Finn's identity as a liar was not motivated by malice but by his deep emotions and sense of responsibility for his friend. He knew that in this world full of injustice and prejudice, Jim's situation was very difficult, so he was willing to do whatever it took to protect Jim and ensure his safety and freedom. This strong friendship and selfless dedication laid a solid foundation for the deep friendship between Huckleberry Finn and Jim.

Huckleberry Finn's language reflects his adaptation to space, which is not only evident in the direct description of his living environment but also in the shaping of his character and behavior by space, as well as the correlation between spatial changes and his personal growth. These elements collectively constitute Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identity, making him a unique and distinctive literary figure.

4.2. Identity Construction Adapting to the Social World

The social world is a key contextual element, that greatly shapes individuals' language choices. It includes broader factors such as social status, environment, and interpersonal relationships, all of which affect and govern the way speakers express their principles and norms. Any language chosen by the speaker or listener must conform to the established norms and conventions of a specific communication situation. Failure to adapt to these norms can hinder effective communication and make it difficult for one's message to be easily accepted by the target audience.

4.2.1. Adaptation to Power and Solidarity

In the evolution and development of human society, power and solidarity have always been two indispensable and intertwined elements. Whether in the political, economic, or cultural fields, both play a crucial role. Especially in Western countries, the identity adaptation to power and solidarity reflects their unique social structure and values. Power implies a significant difference in social status, and this difference exists at least between two discourse users.

Huckleberry Finn: "I hain't got only a dollar, and I want that to—"

His father: "It don't make no difference what you want it for—you just shell it out."

From the perspective of power relations, Huckleberry Finn's father obviously holds a higher power status. This power stems from his status as Huckleberry Finn's father, naturally enjoying authority and decision-making power, especially on finance and resource allocation issues. His statement "It don't make no difference what you want it for—you just shell it out." directly reflects his authority and unquestionable decision-making power. Under such a power relationship, Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identity is constructed as a relatively disadvantaged individual who needs to comply. His statement "I hain't got only a dollar, and I want that to—" attempts to explain and defend his actions, but these efforts seem powerless and weak in the face of strong paternal authority. His pragmatic identity reflects his subordinate position in the family power structure, and his words are more about responding to and adapting to his father's demands, rather than engaging in dialogue on an equal footing. However, although Huckleberry Finn is in a disadvantaged position in the power relationship, his words also demonstrate a certain degree of resistance and self-assertion. He did not directly hand over the money but tried to explain and defend himself to fight for his rights and interests. Although this resistance is weak, it reflects Huckleberry Finn's existence and value as an independent individual. Therefore, this dialogue expresses that Huckleberry Finn is a disadvantaged individual who needs to comply with his father's authority but an independent individual with a certain degree of resistance and self-assertion. This complex pragmatic identity construction reflects Huckleberry Finn's real situation and inner struggle in the family power structure.

Jim: "Doan' let's talk about it, Huck. Po' niggers can't have no luck. I alwuz'spected dat rattlesnake skin warn't done wid its work."

Huckleberry Finn: "I wish I'd never seen that snakeskin, Jim—I do wish I'd never laid eyes on it."

Jim: "It ain't yo' fault, Huck; you didn't know. Don't you blame yo'self'bout it."

From the perspective of solidarity, Huckleberry Finn expresses concern and worry for Jim in the dialogue. He mentions, "I wish I'd never seen that snakeskin, Jim—I do wish I'd never laid eyes on it." 'It' refers to the rattlesnake skin, implying his anxiety about the misfortune related to Jim. This concern reflects Huckleberry Finn's care for Jim and the shared hardships and experiences between them. Their solidarity is strengthened through facing difficulties and challenges together. Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identity in the dialogue is constructed as a caring and responsible friend. Meanwhile, Jim's words also demonstrate their friendship and trust, as he understands Huckleberry Finn's feelings and is willing to give him support and encouragement. Therefore, Huck is portrayed as a caring, responsible, and loyal friend. This pragmatic identity not only reflects the deep bond between Huckleberry Finn and Jim but also

embodies their solidarity in facing hardships and challenges. This identity construction helps deepen readers' understanding and sympathy for Huckleberry Finn's, while also showcasing the author's praise for friendship and solidarity.

4.2.2. Adaptation to Social Setting and Culture

The language users are people who live in real life, and their speech behaviors are confined by social and cultural norms (Verschuere, 1999). In a diverse cultural context, speakers not only convey information but also inadvertently display their identities. Whether it is the choice of language, preference for topics, or communication style, they all reflect the values, beliefs, and customs of the social group the speaker belongs to. Therefore, understanding and respecting different social backgrounds and cultures is crucial for building a harmonious communication environment. By listening to and accepting different voices, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the world and promote exchanges and integration among different cultures.

Huckleberry Finn: "Now you think it's bad luck; but what did you say when I fetched in the snakeskin that I found on the top of the ridge day before yesterday? You said it was the worst bad luck in the world to touch a snakeskin with my hands. Well, here's your bad luck! We've raked in all this truck and eight dollars besides. I wish we could have some bad luck like this every day, Jim."

Jim: "Never you mind, honey, never you mind. Don't you git too peart. It's a-comin'. Mind I tell you, it's a-comin'."

In this dialogue between Huckleberry Finn and Jim, we can observe that Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identity construction is complex and multifaceted, deeply influenced by the social background and culture of that time. Firstly, Huckleberry Finn's words are filled with optimism and a spirit of adventure, reflecting the unwavering perseverance and daring spirit of adventure in the culture of the American Westward pioneers of that era. He holds a positive attitude towards finding the snakeskin and unexpected wealth, considering these "curses" as symbols of luck. This embodies his unique perspective on fate and unknown things and also reflects his admiration for opportunities and adventures in the culture of that time.

However, Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identity is also challenged by racial and class prejudices in society. Although he has established a profound friendship with Jim, their social status and racial identity remain an unbridgeable gap. In the dialogue, Jim's reminders and warnings may also reflect the unfair treatment and discrimination towards black slaves in that society. Although Huckleberry Finn tries to transcend these prejudices through optimism and adventure, his pragmatic identity is inevitably influenced by these prejudices.

Huckleberry Finn: "Did you want to kill him, Buck?"

Buck: "Well, I bet I did."

Huckleberry Finn: "What did he do to you?"

Buck: "Him? He never done nothing to me."

Huckleberry Finn: "Well, then, what did you want to kill him for?"

Buck: "Why, nothing—only it's on account of the feud."

Huckleberry Finn: "What's a feud?"

Buck: "Why, where was you raised? Don't you know what a feud is?"

Huckleberry Finn: "Never heard of it before—tell me about it."

First, Buck mentions "feud" as the reason why he wants to kill someone, reflecting the deep-seated conflicts and hatred between families, tribes, or races in that society. This hatred may stem from various reasons such as historical disputes, land grabs, uneven distribution of resources, or cultural conflicts. In Buck's view, this hatred is passed down from generation to generation, almost becoming an unshakeable belief. However, Huckleberry Finn lacks an understanding of the concept of a "feud". His question "What's a feud?" shows that he is not familiar with or has no direct experience of it. This reaction may suggest that Huckleberry Finn

comes from a different social background or living environment from Buck. Huckleberry Finn is a runaway boy living along the Mississippi River, and his growth environment and educational experience may be disconnected from traditional social norms and values. Secondly, a character like Huckleberry Finn, may not have had the opportunity to come into contact with these complex ethnic or family relationships, thus lacking understanding of this concept. Furthermore, Huckleberry Finn's personalities also make him more likely to maintain a certain distance from such traditional concepts. He is curious, but also rebellious and unconstrained. He may prefer to focus on his survival issues and inner feelings rather than being overly entangled in the constraints of traditional concepts.

Through this dialogue, Huckleberry Finn's identity can be constructed as a relatively ignorant but curious youngster who lacks an understanding of certain traditional social concepts or customs but is willing to broaden his horizons through inquiry and exploration. This identity trait sets him in stark contrast to Buck, who is deeply influenced by traditional and ethnic concepts. Moreover, Huckleberry Finn's curiosity and thirst for knowledge demonstrate an open and inclusive mindset, willing to accept and understand different viewpoints and cultures. Such a trait may not have been common in the social context of that time, thus making Huckleberry Finn's identity relatively unique and prominent.

4.3. Identity Construction Adapting to the Mental World

In communication, the mental world plays a pivotal role, encompassing elements such as motivation, intention, belief, personality, emotion, and desire. Verschueren argues that verbal interaction is essentially a communication between minds, and we must recognize that these minds are "minds in society". This implies that our thoughts, feelings, and ways of expression are deeply influenced by our social environment. Therefore, when understanding and analyzing languages, we must fully consider these mental and social factors. Verbal communication is not just an exchange of language, but a reflection of the intertwining of deep-seated mental and social factors. Everyone is influenced by their mental world in communication, and these mental factors are inevitably influenced and shaped by the social environment. Therefore, to truly understand the essence of verbal communication, we must take into account the communicator's mental world and the social environment they are in.

4.3.1. Adaption to Emotion

Emotion represents a complex psychological state that incorporates an individual's intricate feelings and behavioral responses. It serves as a psychological tool for humans to adapt and survive in their environments. It can range from simple to intricate, subjective to objective, and manifest in various forms such as love, hatred, joy, anger, and anxiety. As rational yet emotional creatures, humans are susceptible to the influence of emotions on their language. Specifically, when emotions become overwhelming and beyond an individual's control, they can significantly impact their linguistic output, causing them to deviate from their typical expressions or linguistic strategies.

Jim: "Lawsy, I's mighty glad to git you back ag'in, honey."

Huckleberry Finn: "All right—that's mighty good; they won't find me, and they'll think I've been killed, and floated down the river—there's something up there that'll help them to think so—so don't lose no time, Jim, but just shove off for the big water as fast as ever you can."

People adjust their emotional expressions according to the emotional state of the other party during communication, to establish emotional connections and resonance. First, Huckleberry Finn's emotional state appears anxious and urgent. He mentioned his desire to escape from the situation with the Grangerford family immediately, which also implies that he experienced the oppressive feeling of Buck's death. This emotional state is reflected in his words, as he urges Jim, "Don't lose no time" and instructs him to "just shove off for the big water as fast as ever you can". This urgency and decisive attitude indicate that Huckleberry Finn is a person who can

respond quickly to difficulties and has a strong sense of decision-making. Secondly, Huckleberry Finn's identity is constructed as a young man who has experienced hardships and possesses an adventurous spirit. His words reveal his fear of the unknown and his desire for freedom. He tries to escape from the current predicament and seeks a safer and freer environment. This adventurous spirit and pursuit of freedom construct his identity as a brave and unyielding youth. In addition, Huckleberry Finn also demonstrates trust and reliance on Jim. He reveals his situation and plan to Jim and requests his help. The establishment of this trust relationship further consolidates Huckleberry Finn's role as a character who needs others' support and assistance.

One of the two gunmen: "Well, there's five niggers run off tonight up yonder, above the head of the bend. Is your man white or black?"

Huckleberry Finn: "He is white."

The primary emotion displayed by Huckleberry Finn in the dialogue is a sense of protectiveness. He realizes that if he tells the gunman that Jim is black, Jim might face danger or even life-threatening situations. Therefore, he chooses to lie, which reflects his concern and protection for Jim, as well as his loyalty and courage as a friend. By lying to protect Jim, Huckleberry Finn constructs an identity as a brave protector in this dialogue. He chooses to stand on Jim's side and provide him with protection regardless of his safety. This behavior embodies his bravery and firmness and also brings him closer emotionally to Jim. In terms of emotional compliance and moral choices, although lying is generally unacceptable in moral concepts, in this specific situation, Huckleberry Finn's lie is based on his concern and protection for Jim. He follows his inner emotions and makes a choice that he believes is right. This emotional compliance reflects his independent thinking and choice ability in moral norms.

4.3.2. Adaption to Intention

A person's intention is his inner state of mind to achieve a certain goal. This intention act as a motivation is the driving force that drives a man to make a particular language choice in communication. Intentional adaptation emphasizes the adaptation between the speakers' intentions and their speech acts in the communicative process, and how these speech acts interact with the listener's understanding to co-construct meaning.

(11) Huckleberry Finn: "Can you spell, Buck?"

Buck: "Yes," he says.

Huckleberry Finn: "I bet you can't spell my name," says I.

Buck: "I bet you what you dare I can," says he.

Huckleberry Finn: "All right," says I, "go ahead."

Buck: "G-e-o-r-g-e J-a-x-o-n—there now." he says.

Huckleberry Finn: "Well," says I, "You done it, but I didn't think you could. It ain't no slouch of a name to spell—right off without studying."

First of all, Huckleberry Finn intends to test whether Buck can correctly spell his false name and hopes that he can remember the name so that he can correctly answer when needed. This intention reflects his preset preparation and plan for a certain situation (possibly to avoid being discovered of his real identity). In the dialogue, Huckleberry Finn initiates the communication process by asking Buck whether he can read and spell his name. His words are not only inquiring about Buck's ability but also hinting that his name may be difficult to pronounce and spell. This implication could be a strategy aimed at observing Buck's reaction and testing his ability. When Buck pronounces Huckleberry Finn's false name (even though it is wrong, Huck doesn't know it either), Huckleberry Finn's reaction shows his surprise and satisfaction. His surprise may stem from underestimating Buck's ability, while satisfaction comes from Buck

meeting his expectations. This reaction further embodies Huckleberry Finn's intention in communication, that is, to ensure that Buck can accurately pronounce and spell his name.

From the perspective of identity construction, Huckleberry Finn exhibits an image of being resourceful, strategic, and attentive to details in this dialogue. He ensures that his plan can proceed smoothly by testing Buck's ability, reflecting his foresight and coping ability for possible future situations. Meanwhile, his surprise and satisfaction also showcase his emotional reaction and emotional expression in interpersonal communication. These elements collectively constitute Huckleberry Finn's identity characteristics in this specific context.

(12) *Huckleberry Finn: "Let's land on her, Jim."*

Jim: "I doan' want to go foo'n 'long er no wrack. We doin' blame' well, en we better let blame' well alone, as de good book says. Like as not dey's a watchman on dat wrack."

Huckleberry Finn: "Watchman your grandmother," I says; "there ain't nothing to watch but the Texas and the pilothouse; and do you reckon anybody's going to resk his life for a Texas and a pilothouse such a night as this, when it's to break up and wash off down the river any minute?"

First of all, Huckleberry Finn exhibits the identity of an adventurer. His proposal to explore an abandoned ship is inherently a behavior-seeking thrill and adventure. He attempts to convince Jim by describing the scenario of the ship potentially breaking apart, aiming to arouse Jim's curiosity and adventurous spirit. This adventurer's identity is reflected in his interest in unknown things and his ability to tolerate risks. Secondly, Huckleberry Finn also demonstrates his logical reasoning and analytical abilities. When Jim suggests that there might be someone on watch, Huckleberry Finn promptly rebuts, pointing out that in the dead of night and under dangerous conditions, it is unlikely that anyone would be willing to stay on watch for the uppermost deck cabins and the pilot house. This analysis not only showcases his intelligence and wit but also strengthens his identity as a leader and decision-maker. Additionally, Huckleberry Finn also exhibits the identity of a persuader and motivator. He tries to arouse Jim's interest through words and urges him to take action. Although Jim initially holds a skeptical attitude towards Huckleberry Finn's proposal, Huckleberry Finn successfully makes Jim reconsider the issue through a series of reasonable arguments and logical reasoning. Finally, Huckleberry Finn also demonstrates his emphasis on friendship and loyalty. Despite having disagreements with Jim on certain issues, he still tries to persuade Jim and hopes to share this adventure with him. This valuing of friendship and desire for shared experiences further consolidates his identity construction in the dialogue.

5. Conclusion

5.1. Major Findings

This study, with contextual correlates of adaptability and pragmatic identity construction as the theoretical framework, analyzes the language behaviors, linguistic strategies, and influencing factors involved in Huckleberry Finn's construction of different identities.

5.1.1. Language Behaviors

Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identity in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* is a dynamic process that evolves with the development of the story and changes in his own experiences. He may choose different identities in different situations to handle challenges and opportunities, reflecting his flexibility and adaptability. To achieve a certain communicative purpose or meet the needs of the communicator in a specific context, he consciously or unconsciously selects appropriate forms of linguistic expression, which give him diverse identities, such as a fugitive, an adventurer, a rebel, a freedom seeker, and so on. These identities intertwine and influence each other, collectively forming his complex identity system.

5.1.2. Linguistic Strategies

In terms of linguistic strategies, Huckleberry Finn employs humor, irony, and other techniques in his language to express his identity recognition and sense of belonging. For instance, when faced with difficulties or criticism, he often uses humor and irony to defuse embarrassment or express dissatisfaction. This linguistic strategy demonstrates his wit and rebellious spirit, contributing to the construction of his identity as a rebel and freedom fighter. When interacting with friends and trusted individuals, Huckleberry Finn tends to use direct and candid language to express his thoughts and feelings. This linguistic strategy helps deepen his emotional bond with these characters and establish his identity as a loyal friend. This gives Huckleberry Finn's identity a sense of multiplicity.

5.1.3. The Influencing Factors that Shape Huckleberry Finn's Identity Construction

The influencing factors that shape Huckleberry Finn's identity construction mainly include personal background, social expectations, and the network of relationships formed with others during his adventures. Firstly, Huckleberry Finn's adventure experiences and growth have a significant impact on his construction of different identities. Living in a restrictive environment, especially under the constraints of his alcoholic father, he cannot bear the routine of dressing neatly, dining formally, and attending lengthy sermons at church. This rejection of "civilized" life fuels his desire for freedom. Huckleberry Finn is naturally inclined towards adventure. His friendship with Tom and past adventures further ignite his curiosity for the unknown world. He aspires to escape the monotony and boredom of daily life and experience a more exciting and interesting lifestyle. In the novel, Huckleberry Finn encounters Jim, a black slave, and becomes his friend. Jim's tragic experiences and yearning for freedom deepen Huckleberry Finn's understanding of social injustice and inequality. He hopes to fight for Jim's rightful freedom and dignity through his actions. The various people and events he encounters on his journey, as well as the difficulties and challenges he faces, not only temper his will and courage but also make him more mature and resilient. He transforms from an innocent youth into a thoughtful and responsible young man.

Besides, society has different expectations and norms for different identities. Huckleberry Finn's family environment and interpersonal relationships also influence his decision to embark on adventures. His strained relationship with his father and inability to endure his father's brutality and abuse, along with rejection and mockery from his peers in the town, contribute to his feelings of loneliness and misunderstanding. This drives him to seek a place where he can be accepted and understood. During his adventures, he encounters various people and events, gradually finding a sense of belonging and identity. Additionally, Huckleberry Finn's encounter with Jim, a black slave, and their profound friendship pose a challenge to societal expectations and moral values. In the context of the time, black slaves were viewed as inferior, with their freedom and dignity denied. Huckleberry Finn's sympathy for Jim and rejection of societal expectations motivate him to protect Jim and fight for his freedom. This desire further fuels his decision to embark on adventures, challenging and transforming societal injustice through his efforts. Social expectations have a profound impact on Huckleberry Finn's adventures. They constitute the motivation for his adventures, along with conflicts in individual roles, moral values, self-perception, and interpersonal relationships. Huckleberry Finn's adventures reflect his courage and determination to challenge societal injustice, pursue his true self, and find a sense of belonging and identity. This adventurous spirit not only embodies his bravery and resolve but also provides us with profound insights into social expectations and individual growth.

Finally, Huckleberry Finn's network of relationships with different characters is also a crucial factor in his identity construction. He needs to select appropriate language and behavior based on his relationships with these individuals to establish and maintain these bonds. Each

encounter with others represents an exploration and shaping of identity, not only demonstrating Huckleberry Finn's unique interpersonal communication abilities but also revealing his distinctive perspectives and profound thoughts in constructing his self-identity. This process of identity construction not only shapes his characteristics as an independent.

5.2. Limitations

First, the author's analysis of Huckleberry Finn's character construction mainly focuses on the first twenty chapters of the novel, which means that besides the identity of Huckleberry Finn described above, there are probably other identities. In addition, this article analyzes Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identity construction from the perspective of contextual correlates of adaptability, while the linguistic adaptation theory also includes other aspects that are not analyzed and involved in this article, such as phonological features, gesture language involved in the text, etc. If the above content is included, the pragmatic identity construction of Huckleberry Finn will be more comprehensive. Finally, since *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* involves differences between Chinese and Western cultures, such as the differences in values, and ideological concepts, it is impossible to perfectly integrate them to a certain extent.

5.3. Suggestions for Further Study

Firstly, for Huckleberry Finn's identity construction, future research can be further expanded to cover the entire novel, rather than being limited to the first twenty chapters. Through a comprehensive analysis of the entire novel, we can gain a deeper understanding of the various identities that Huckleberry Finn exhibits at different stages and in different situations, as well as how these identities intertwine and influence each other to form his complex and multifaceted personality traits.

Secondly, in the study of pragmatic identity construction, future research can further explore other aspects of linguistic adaptation theory, such as phonological features and gesture language. These non-verbal language elements also play an important role in character portrayal and identity construction. By comprehensively analyzing these elements, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identity construction and how he expresses his personality, emotions, and position through language.

In addition, future research on the cultural differences between Chinese and Western cultures in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* can delve deeper into how these differences affect character portrayal and storytelling. By comparing the different values and ideologies between Chinese and Western cultures, we can better understand how Huckleberry Finn's identity construction and behavioral choices are influenced by different cultural backgrounds, and how these choices affect his life trajectory and story development.

Lastly, future research can also consider cross-cultural comparisons of Huckleberry Finn's pragmatic identity construction with other literary works or cultural phenomena. By comparing similar characters or stories from different cultural backgrounds, we can gain a deeper understanding of how different cultures influence character portrayal and identity construction, and how these influences shape different literary traditions and cultural characteristics. Such research not only helps us comprehend the classic literary image of Huckleberry Finn more comprehensively but also deepens our understanding of the commonalities and differences between different cultures.

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