

The Representation of Interpersonal Dynamics in Interactions in Translation and Interpreting

In translation and interpretation facilitated activities, it is important not only to represent the meaning – what is said, but also the interactional dynamics – how things are said. The representation of interpersonal dynamics in translation and interpreting will have significant impact on translation and interpretation service users because it offers the crucial clue for participants to form an idea of the others' personalities, attitudes and intentions, and to develop corresponding interactional strategies . Therefore, to a large extent, it dictates how interactions between participants unfold.

The presentation will firstly introduce the concept of 'face' which encompasses interpersonal components in relationship management. Then it will move on to examine how face is represented in audiovisual translation. It is shown in the audience response experiment ,which I undertook with British and Chinese subjects, that face management strategies are changed in translation. This contributes directly to Chinese and British viewers' different impressions of protagonists' personality, attitude and intentions. A two minute film sequence from the film Kramer vs. Kramer will be played to demonstrate the changes and ensuing impact on viewer response. It is also demonstrated in the experiment that viewers rely on body language to facilitate their understanding but they have difficulties in reading the messages expressed via body language cross-culturally.

Research into representation of face in political interpreting also discovers that interpreters negotiate their stance by exploiting different face strategies from those used by speakers. For example, when interpreting for Chinese speaking journalists where high-level government officials do not rely on the interpretation to understand questions initiated to them,

interpreters omit in the interpretation honorifics, collective pronouns for highlighting solidarity which are used by journalists to show deference to officials. Negative politeness is also changed to direct on-record strategy in the interpretation. These reduce the interactivity demonstrated in the journalist's style of communication, and indicates the interpreter's lack of concern of face threats, and their detachment from the journalists and their questions. However, when interpreting for English speaking journalists where officials do rely on the interpretation to understand the questions, interpreters constantly adopt a deferent term 您 to address the officials and change direct face threats in the question into indirectness to protect their own face and officials' face. Under such circumstance, face concern seems to become the number one priority compared to clarity. When interpreting for officials, the collective pronoun 'we' is frequently added by interpreters. This demonstrates interpreters' claiming solidarity with their institutional employer.

The implications of the studies are as follows:

For translators and interpreters, it is important to build and enhance awareness and knowledge of face. Faithfulness in translation and interpretation should not be restricted to the semantic level, but be extended to the interpersonal level, in order to help translation and interpretation service users to understand each other's interactional attitudes and goals.

For translation and interpretation service users, it is important to develop the understanding that translators and interpreters are not mere language conduits. They are human agents that will negotiate their stance through their professional activities and they cannot be expected to play a 100% neutral and nonpartisan role all the time. It is important for the users to develop effective strategies when using translators and interpreters to achieve pre-identified or desired effects.