

# Reflections on the relational in translation as mediated interaction<sup>☆</sup>



Maria Sidiropoulou<sup>\*</sup>

*Faculty of English Language and Literature, School of Philosophy, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece*

Received 4 December 2014; received in revised form 2 March 2015; accepted 14 March 2015

## Abstract

The study attempts to broaden the conceptualization of the relational to include stage translation situations. It uses translator–trainees' evaluations (as the hearers' view) to assess rendition of im/polite exchanges in three retranslations of a twentieth century English play. Findings show that translator–trainees' evaluations of the way intimacy and offensiveness values are rendered in the three target versions of the play are a function of trainees' level of awareness with respect to the relational dynamics between characters in the play. Translator–trainees seem to increasingly prefer heightened intimacy (connectedness) and offensiveness (separateness), as they become aware of the relational dynamics in the play. Translator–trainees (native speakers of the target language) seem to appreciate instances manifesting the politeness orientation attributed to the target language (Sifianou, 1992), while awareness of the relational dynamics in the play seems to override the importance of polarity orientation concerns. Translation is claimed to be able to provide settings where the relational and the cognitive may be fruitfully researched.<sup>1</sup>

© 2015 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

*Keywords:* Im/politeness; Translation; Relational dynamics; Meta-theory; Collective analytic frame; Interactional achievement

## 1. Prototypical and non-prototypical features of the relational

The 'relational turn' in pragmatics has been concerned with reconceptualizing politeness "within the broader framework of relating or relationships" (Haugh et al., 2013:1), while various lines of research within pragmatics focus attention on interpersonal aspects of communication (Locher and Graham, 2010). It seems to have been widely acknowledged that the four prototypical features of interpersonal communication, namely, "(1) informal and unstructured interactions between (2) a minimum of two speakers in (3) close physical proximity exchanging (4) 'idiosyncratic, personal and psychological information'" (Haugh et al., 2013:2), overtly limit contexts in which interpersonal communication may occur. The following extract enumerates reasons why the above prototypical features have been assumed to be restricting a definition of interpersonal communication:

<sup>☆</sup> I would like to thank the Special Account Research Fund (ELKE) of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens for funding this research.

<sup>\*</sup> Tel.: +30 210 727 7813.

E-mail address: [msidirop@enl.uoa.gr](mailto:msidirop@enl.uoa.gr).

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to my anonymous reviewers for valuable comments.

However, as Knapp et al. (1994) go on to point out, such a view is overtly limiting given (1) interpersonal communication can also arise in institutional settings, such as between doctors and patients or in workplaces, (2) that “two-person interactions may be extensions of larger networks; the parties may have membership in a larger group and their conversation is subject to the structures and norms of that group” (p. 8), (3) that it is now obvious that interpersonal communication can just as easily occur via various mediating technologies, and (4) that “sociological and cultural information” can nevertheless play a key role in interpersonal communications (p. 9). (Haugh et al., 2013:2)

The set of events conceptualized as interaction tends to be widened. There have been attempts at broadening the notion of the relational. Spencer-Oatey (2007) in discussing the potential of constituting face interactionally argues that “it will be necessary to interpret the concept ‘interaction’ very broadly so that it includes not only synchronous face-to-face interaction, but also asynchronous communication and general public awareness” (2007:653). The question arises whether stage translation situations may be assumed to be interactional contexts. Interaction can be conceptualized as occurring at a meta-level, i.e. as occurring between translator and target audience, but also among fictional addressees, in the presence of audience/‘bystanders’. Stage translation is asynchronous in that the time of target version production is different from the time of reception and it does involve general public awareness. In addition if “face entails claims on the evaluation of others” (Spencer-Oatey, 2007:644), stage translation situations seem to rely heavily on audience evaluation. Translators’ ‘relational’ work aims at *appealing* to the audience, whereas communication among fictional addressees seems to conform to considerations of ‘interpersonal relationships’ in the play, which may vary between source and target communities of practice.

Audiences evaluating im/politeness in mediated interactions (e.g. on stage, film or television) have been claimed to be a type of meta-recipients engaging in a distinct meta-level of communication. Research in mediated interaction assumes a “distinct layer for analysis in im/politeness research” (Haugh, 2013:68). Goffman (in Haugh, 2013:68) has argued that the participation status of hearers is rather complex and attempts to intuitively distinguish them by drawing a parallel with ‘hearing’ (for unratiated participants) and ‘listening’ (for ratiated participants). Translator trainees are claimed in this study to be more involved in the interaction than a ‘hearer’ would be – they are assumed to be closer to ‘listeners’ in the sense that their position “entails some kind of responsibility to attend to or participate in the talk” (Haugh, 2013:68) through their ‘capacity’ as potential mediators.

Fig. 1 summarizes levels of interactional dimensions assumed in a theatre translation situation. Interaction can be occurring horizontally on stage, between fictional addressees, and vertically between translator and target audience. Both dimensions are made use of in this study. Translator–trainees constitute a different ‘audience’ category, in Fig. 1, in that they may not be physically attending or exposed to real interactants on stage. However, they are assumed to be able to compensate for their physical absence through their training, which has heightened their perception of the communicative potential of language options. The fact that translator–trainees may not have access to staging options (settings, costumes, etc.) is expected to free them from the impact director’s decision-making may have on audiences, allowing them to focus on the communicative potential of the target *verbal* options. In this sense, bystanders in attendance attempt to exploit a lay person’s intuition in judging the communicative validity of certain verbal options.

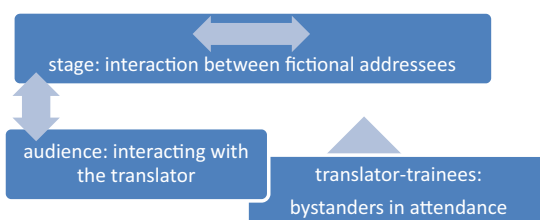


Fig. 1. Interactional dimensions in a theatre translation situation.

In what follows I shall focus on stage translation, its potential to enlighten the relational and benefit from the ‘relational turn’ in pragmatics.

### 1.1. The prototypical features of the relational and stage translation

The ‘informal and unstructured interaction’ criterion may be assumed to be partly met in the case of communication on the intercultural stage, in that interpersonal communication between interactants on stage may be informal but not unstructured; it may be intended by the playwright to have a particular structure contributing to the communicative

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/7298035>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/7298035>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)