"In The Name Of God"

SHEIKHBAHAEE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES

VARIATION OF 'POLITENESS STRATEGIES' BY TRANSLATORS' GEDNER AS MANIFESTED IN ENGLISH TO PERSIAN TRANSLATIONS OF A BOOK NAMED 'THE THORN BIRDS'

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIRMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION STUDIES

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THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE CONTENT, FORMAT AND QUALITY OF PRESENTATION OF THE THESIS SUBMITTED BY

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ENTITLED:

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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF M.A. IN TRANSLATION STUDIES IS ACCEPTED AND APPROVED BY THE THESIS COMMITTEE.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated otherwise in the text. This work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified.

To my supportive parents and my soul mate.

Acknowledgment

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Abstract

The present thesis is an in-depth study of politeness strategies proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987), used in a book named *'The thorn birds'* and two Persian translations of it by two different translators, one by a male translator called Mehdi Ghabrayi and the other by a female translator called Fereshteh Taheri. In different cultures and languages around the world, people make use of some principles in conversations to avoid being impolite. However, because of different ideologies and social norms, different social groups and more importantly, members of different gender groups in different countries, may give priority to diverse norms of politeness. According to what some theorists believe, the translators transmit their own cultural perspective in the process of translation and conform the politeness strategies to those that are acceptable for the target language. Weatherall (2002) believes that the identity of translators as special users of language can cloud every aspect of thought and behavior. Therefore by comparing the English and the Persian versions of the book, this study seeks to investigate how politeness strategies are applied in English and Persian in dealing with face-threatening-acts. Moreover, by comparing the two Persian translations by a man and a woman, the researcher seeks to identify how gender of the translators affects the application of politeness strategies.

Keywords: politeness strategies, face-threatening-acts

Table of Contents

Chapter3: Research Methodology

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter5: Discussion and Conclusion

List of Tables

List of Figures

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1.   Overview

Yule (1996:3) states that pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning. According to him, pragmatics is concerned with the study of meaning as communicated by a speaker (or a writer) and interpreted by a listener (or a reader) so that it involves the interpretation of what people mean in the particular context and how the context influences what is said. People usually communicate their ideas through conversations. In a conversation, people are advised to be careful about using suitable strategies especially politeness strategies in order to maintain the communication and make the utterances more acceptable for others.

1.2.   Background of the Study

In different cultures around the world, considerate participants use some principles in conversations to avoid being impolite. However, different social groups and more importantly, members of different gender groups in different countries may give priority to diverse norms of politeness. It can be said that language and translation are directly affected by culture and ideology. Therefore, a question arises that if different languages (English and Persian in this case) which possess different ideologies and social norms, make use of politeness strategies in the same way or according to what some theorists believe, the translators transmit their own cultural perspective in the process of translation and conform the politeness strategies to those that are acceptable for the target language (Persian).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Overview

The study of politeness is a fast growing field and over the last 30 years an extensive research and literature on politeness have been conducted therefore the researcher chooses this pragmatic issue in order to identify the differences that may exist in application of politeness strategies in two different languages and different gender groups.

In this chapter some theories about politeness, drawn from different literature, are provided and discussed.

2.3.4. Strategies for doing FTAs

Brown and Levinson argue (p.68) that "any rational agent will seek to avoid these face-threatening acts, or will employ certain strategies to minimize the threat." They place the choices of strategies in relation to FTAs on a scale of risk to face in this way:
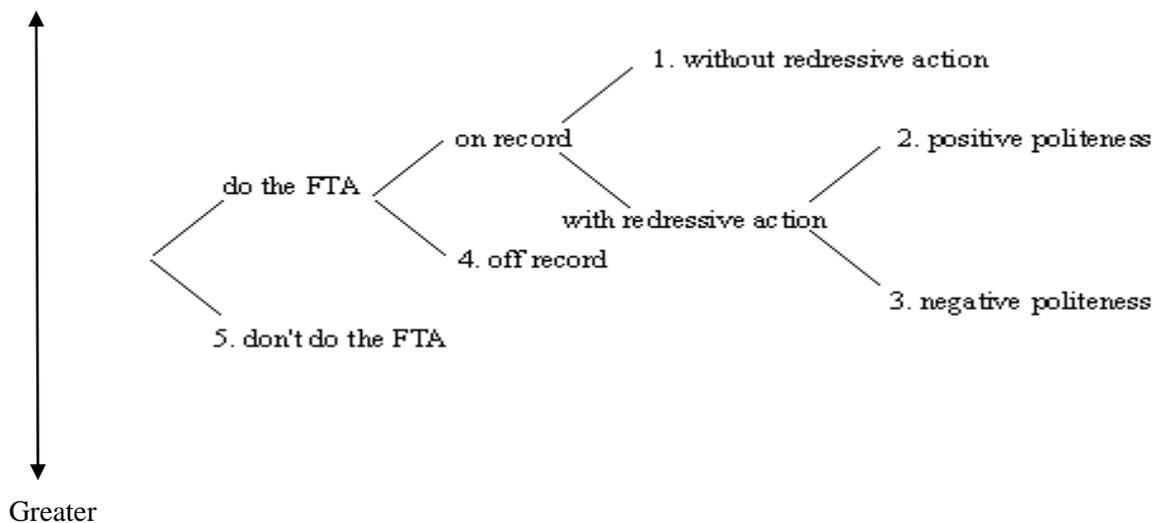
Estimation of risk of face loss

Less

Figure.2.1 Possible strategies for doing FTAs

2.4.4. Gender and Politeness

Trudgill (1972) claim that this is because women tend to gain prestige through appearance and linguistic behavior, since they cannot gain status through their job or income (Trudgill, 1972) Brown argues: 'it seems reasonable to predict that women in general will speak more formally and more politely, since women are culturally relegated to a secondary status relative to men and since a higher level of politeness is expected from inferiors to superiors' (Brown, 1980: 112). She goes on to ask why and how women are more polite than men and she suggests that 'women are either (1) generally speaking to superiors, (2) generally speaking to socially distant persons, or (3) involved in more face-threatening acts, or have a higher assessment than men have of what counts as imposition' (Brown, 1980: 117). Cameron comments:

> Brown's argument, however, is not that politeness works differently for men and women. It is that while both sexes must make the same calculations about the same variables (e.g. social distance, relative status, degree of face-threatening inherent in a communicative act), the different social positioning of men and women make them assign different values to those variables, and therefore behave differently. If Brown had explained the women's 'more polite' behavior as a simple consequence of either their feminine gender or their powerlessness she would not have been able to explain the fact that they are differently polite to male and female interlocutors (if it were only femininity, why should there be any difference? If it were only powerlessness, why be polite to your equals – other women – at all?). (Cameron, 1998a: 444)

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overview

In this chapter, the researcher would like to present the research methodology. It contains the research design, data and source of data, sample and sampling technique, instrument of the research, research procedures, technique of analyzing data and technique of coding data.

CHAPTER IV

RESULT

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents the data analysis which is discussed based on Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness. The researcher employed Brown and Levinson's politeness strategy to describe how PSs were used in English and Persian. Therefore a contrastive analysis was done. For examining the effect of the translator's gender on the applicaiton of PS for redressing the FTA, two translations by a man and a woman were chosen. The book named 'The Thorn Birds' was examined and the purposive data collection was used to gather the relevant data from the conversations.

The researcher tried to answer two research questions. For each research question cases without and with significant differences were presented by statistics and some examples. In the last part some FTAs are presented with the PSs applied for expressing each.

4.2.1.1. Cases with no significant differences

Table 4.1.Frequency of cases with no statistically significant differences

Super trategies of Politeness Applied in ST and TT	Sub-strategies of politeness Applied in ST and TT	Frequency in ST	Percentage in ST	Frequency in Taheri's translation	Frequency in Ghabrayi's translation	e percentage in the two translations
Positive politeness	Notice or exaggerate	32	3.1	26	30	2.7
	Use In-group Marker Identity	39	3.8	42	37	3.8
	Avoid disagreement or seek agreement	18	1.7	25	16	1.9
Negative Politeness	Question	24	2.3	19	21	1.9
	Apologize	7	0.6	7	7	0.6
	Give overwhelming reasons	13	1.2	14	11	1.1
	Dissociate Sand H from a particular imposition	3	0.2	5	2	0.2
Off-record politeness	Give Hint	11	1.0	12	15	1.2
Total		147	14.3	150	139	13.9

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Overview

This chapter will present the discussion and conclusion of the thesis. This thesis is the study of politeness strategies used in a book named *'The thorn birds'* and the two Persian translations of it by two different translators; a man and a woman. The objectives of the thesis are: to identify how politeness strategies (PSs) are applied in Persian and English, and to compare and contrast two translations of a book by a male and a female translator in order to identify the role of gender in application of PSs. The research questions are as follows;

1. What politeness strategies are applied for rendering FTAs in Persian and English languages?

2. How does the gender of the translators affect the application of Politeness Strategies?

5.5. Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of this study was the scarcity of research studies on the topic that made it difficult to cite prior research studies that could be the basis of the literature review and help lay a foundation for understanding the research problem. There were only few studies that compared the PSs proposed by Brown and Levinson in two languages and also the translation of them by two gender groups.

5.6. Recommendations for Further Research

Based on the analysis and conclusion of the research, the researcher would like to give some suggestions about doing research on politeness strategy proposed by Brown and Levinson.

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چکیده

تحقیق پیش رو استراتژی های ادب(Politeness Strategies) ارائه شده توسط برون و لوینسون (Brown and Levinson,1978) را در کتاب پرنده های خارزار بررسی می نماید. در این تحقیق دو ترجمه از این کتاب توسط یک مترجم زن و یک مترجم مرد به نامهای فرشته طاهری ومهدی غبرایی بررسی می شوند.

با مقایسه نسخه های فارسی و انگلیسی این کتاب استراتژی های بکار رفته در مقابل اعمال تهدید کننده ی وجهه(Face-Threatening Acts) در انگلیسی و فارسی بررسی می شوند. بعلاوه با مقایسه دو ترجمه ی فارسی توسط مترجم مرد و زن این تحقیق در نظر دارد که تاثیر جنسیت مترجم در بکار بگیری استراتژی های ادب را در یابد.

کلمات کلیدی: استراتژی ادب، اعمال تهدید کننده وجهه

دانشگــــــاه شیــــــخ بهائی

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بررسی تفاوتهای استراتژی های ادب در انگلیسی و فارسی در کتاب پرنده های خارزار و تاثیر جنسیت مترجم در بکارگیری آنها

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