

Session Plan – Translating Face-to-Face Interaction

Learning outcomes: Textual 2, 3, 4

Stage II or III

Preparation needed:

Multimedia with overhead projector and screen or PCs.

Video or recording of interviews, one in the TL and one in the SL.

Transcripts of the interviews. Websites to find suitable material can be the BBC, the White House, as well as many other radio stations. If transcripts are unavailable, these will have to be done by the teacher, at least partly.

For homework, students will be assigned specific programmes containing interviews in the TL and the SL.

Groups:

Groups of 4 are an appropriate size. For the interview role play, the members of the group can take turns, with the rest making note of modes of interaction, forms of address and turn-taking and its control by the interviewer/discussion host

Time

2 hours

Background for lecturer (bibliography, anticipated difficulties)

The classic source is Brown, R. and A. Gilman (1960), "The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity" in *American Anthropologist* 4 (6): 24–39. Also found in *Language and Social Context: Selected Readings*, ed. by P. Giglioli (1972). Some knowledge of Politeness Theory can also be very useful. Since this is a vast subject, the focus can be limited to FTAs (face threatening acts) and the linguistic means of their avoidance in the kind of public interactions under discussion. Here the classic source is Brown, R. and S. Levinson (1987), *Politeness*, Cambridge UP. Subsequent critical perspectives and elaborations can also be taken into account.

Activities (lead-in, main and debrief, where needed, Follow-up/homework)

1. Lead-in: 15 minutes

The teacher briefly introduces the main points in the two theoretical sources given above, the notion of FTA and the tu-vous distinction. Alternatively, the article can be set for homework. For Brown and Levinson's *Politeness*, there is a wide choice of websites containing summaries.

2. Main: 45 minutes

Groups of 4

Students watch or listen to the two interviews, in the SL and the TL and discuss the forms of address used in them, noting any changes that might have occurred in the course of the dialogue. They place their findings in the context of the dominant norms of forms of address in public interactions in their own culture (tu-vous distinction in pronouns, where applicable, first name vs. surname or other, titles such as Mr, Mrs, Ms, Mr President, General etc) compared to that in the target culture.

3. Debrief: 30 minutes

The students report their findings, comparing their forms of address, modes of turn-giving and turn-taking and their violation, if observed, and the relevance of these findings to the linguistic expression of power and solidarity and FTAs when the students place themselves in their own culture and, through role taking, in the target one.

4. Follow-up: 30 minutes

Role play: One person is assigned the role of the interviewer and another of a personality known to the students, who will be the interviewee. In a linguistically homogeneous class, two such interviews can be held, one in SL and the other in TL, with the rest of the group taking notes of forms of address and ways of dealing with face.

Adaptations for an integrated approach:

This session can be useful in courses in screen or literary translation. The students can be assigned the translation of a dialogue from a movie, where the tu-vous distinction is of importance. Especially appropriate are scenes where the characters meet for the first time before developing a closer relationship. The same focus can be placed on literary texts. In either case, the choice of pronoun will be seen to have an impact on other aspects of the discourse such as register. A discussion on the translation choices is likely to bring out cultural differences in attitudes towards age, gender and class, among others.