Abstract
Apart from the universal principles of politeness which drive different people to be courteous, generous and cooperative, there is an under layer of behaviour governed by deeply seated 'unexamined', 'routinized' and 'unselfcritical' commonsense assumptions that make every culture what it is. These cultural specificities do not just predispose us to divide reality in different ways, they also allow us to link different parts of reality in different ways (Williams, 1992, p.90). This, in turn, renders the task of translation relatively difficult. Politeness is culture specific and failing to translating it accurately, would give rise to a great amount of stereotypes, good or bad, about different people and nations. Can we, thus, translate politely? According to Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), communication is riddled with face threatening acts that require redressive strategies. For fear of losing the meaning of the source text through “foreignising” or domesticating, the view presented in this paper offers that the translator should assess the threat and redress it using the appropriate politeness strategy through three independent and culturally sensitive variables: Cultural distance (D), power (P) and ranking of imposition (R).

Keywords: Translation, Cooperative Principle, Politeness, FTA, Arabic.
1. INTRODUCTION

Translation is not simply a medium for forwarding information from one language to another. A good translation functions to build bridges and establish relationships between people from different sociocultural contexts. Frighteningly enough, a bad translation can be a cause for conflict and disruption. All things being equal, translation does not occur in a vacuum clearly because the texts that we translate are the product of socio-cultural situations that involve participants bearing socio-cultural relationships that need to be acknowledged, maintained and strengthened, hence the importance of politeness. Indeed, every text is a communicative message carrying tokens of courtesy or politeness which people bring about in order to appease their need for rapport and involvement.

In the field of linguistic politeness and by and large translation, the existence of politeness or the lack of it is not in question, but a common and accurate understanding of what politeness is, and how to account for it cross linguistically remains problematic. Among the main aims of this undertaking is to use translation as a communicative strategy in order to go beyond some of the widely held stereotypes about one culture or the other. For this purpose, an objective study of politeness from a pragmatically based vantage point to provide the set of tools necessary for the construction of a general theoretical framework for its translation is very much needed. Naturally, it is no mean feat since the concept being investigated (politeness) is itself culture-specific. Looking closely at the manifestations of politeness, we discover variations even within the same culture between various speech communities divided ethnically, geographically, politically, socially, gender wise and so on. It is also the case that different communities of practice involve a sense of politeness having different functions, meanings and linguistic behaviors for different groups of people (Wenger, 1998; Mills, 2002).

2. RATIONALE

Politeness or the manifestation of correct and socially expected behaviour has been the concern of interactional linguistics, social psychologists, ethnomethodologists, anthropologists, and more recently translation theorists. Although no consensus definition of politeness has emerged, it is generally agreed that politeness is a social and linguistic phenomenon which involves a certain conduct for keeping social interaction friction free, be it strategic in the sense that it is motivated by the individual’s personal gain or conventionalized normative in the shape of commonly used readymade templates made to measure for different occasions or situations. These
templates provide speakers and writers with the right thing to say in situations where it is felt that something should be said (Tannen. and Öztek, 1977). It is the case that many speech communities have a number of general purpose responses or formulae appropriate for a number of situations. For instance, Arabic tends to have what Ferguson (1977, p. 144) calls the “same or more so” principle which is endorsed in the Koran (Surah IV, verse 86) “If someone greets you, either return the greeting or greet them better for Allah takes everything into account”. The ‘same or more so principle’ is different from the ‘you too principle’ kind of response which is familiar to the English and used in many other speech communities.

In the context of translation, such cross-linguistic variations in the source language often challenge the social norms and value of the target language giving rise to cultural stereotyping. Leech (1983, p. 84) states that “I have been seriously told that ‘Poles/Russians/ etc. are never polite’ and it is commonly claimed that ‘the Chinese and the Japanese are very polite in comparison with Europeans’ and so on”. Lakoff (1972, p.908) also argues that English sounds ‘harsh’ or ‘impolite’ to the Japanese, while Blumkulka (1982, p. 31) reveals that “refusal is often expressed in Israel by a curt ‘NO’... a habit that probably contributes to the popular view about Israelis’ lack of politeness”. Thomas (1983, p. 97) cites several other stereotypes about ‘the abrasive Russian/German’, ‘the obsequious Indian/Japanese’, ‘the insincere American’, and ‘the standoffish Briton’.

Clearly, such views are the product of a range of beliefs, customs, values, social experiences and expectations culturally and individually constructed. In this context, I refer to Rokeach’s (1968, p. 160) statement that values are ‘internalized... standard(s) for guiding action in an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally and socially preferable to alternative modes of conduct or end-state of existence’. The question is whether it is reasonable, however, to assume that some modes of conduct are more or less polite in one language than another or that cultures in which linguistic constructions show a high degree of formality and restraint are more or less polite than those who are more inclined toward directness. In fact as Sifianou (1992, p.2) puts it “no nation may be objectively verified as more or less polite than any other, but only polite in a different culturally specific way.”

On what being ‘polite’ means, Leech says that “some illustrations are (e.g. orders) inherently impolite, and others (e.g. offers) are inherently polite” (1983, p. 83). Lakoff (1972, p. 11) wonders whether it is possible to talk about universal conditions governing the use of politeness markers. Should this
be possible and politeness be considered as an undivided concept the significance of which is common to all groups of people, then a translation would be a straightforward and automatic task. Since this is not the case, the sorts of stereotypes mentioned above remain vital indices of important issues worthy of further investigation. For Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 1), the significance of politeness phenomena goes even further, ‘for they raise questions about the foundations of human social life and interaction’.

While all excesses in attitudes favoring universality and ones favoring relativity regarding language and culture have been discarded in recent years and a more moderate perspective of the relation between language and culture has been developed, new forms of linguistic determinism and therefore new stereotypes (eg. language and class, language and gender, language and war, language and racism, language and political controversies) have emerged. Seen from a pragmatic perspective, they stand as complex rather than simple resources of ways of communicating between people and therefore of ways of expressing politeness. Therefore, as Thomas (1983, p. 107) argues, “every instance of national or ethnic stereotyping should be seen as a reason for calling in the pragmaticist and discourse analyst”. The investigation of politeness could benefit from being placed in the framework of postmodern approaches to (linguistic) politeness (Eelen, 2001; Haugh, 2007; Locher, 2006; Watts, 2003) where politeness is not deemed to be static but dynamic, and not predetermined but constructed by participants through discourse/interaction. However, to put this paper in an exhaustive theoretical framework, we simply cannot afford to miss out on discussing some major theories in the literature of politeness. I will present and discuss some views of politeness and postulate accordingly a theoretical framework for cultural translation.

3. THE LOGICALITY OF CONVERSATION

Grice did not set out to account for politeness in language use but a side remark he made in his paper 'Logic and conversation' (1975) about the fact that other maxims than those he proposed for the "aesthetic, social and moral" Co-operative Principle (1975, p. 49) need to be formulated in order to account for pragmatic meaning. Hence, the politeness maxim 'be polite'.

Grice observed that conversation is based on co-operation between the participants, which makes the participants recognise common aims and specific ways to achieve them. He says that conversation is governed by what he calls the Co-operative Principle. In accordance with this principle,
participants “make [their] conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which [they] are engaged” (Grice, 1975, p. 45). This principle is associated with four maxims which follow from it: quantity, quality, relation and manner.

Grice explains that the first three maxims refer to what is said while the fourth one refers to how something is said. He adds that these maxims characterise ideal exchanges regardless of the subject matter and type of speech acts, but observes that they do not have equal weight; lacking brevity for instance is less serious than lying. He also goes further to illustrate that the maxims are operational in any co-operative, rational human activity, such as mending a car or helping to prepare a cake. However, Grice is careful to explain the possibility that people do not always follow the observance of these maxims for a variety of communicative purposes. These departures require specific interpretation which he calls ‘conversational implicature’. That is to say, instead of consistently observing the maxims, the speaker may flout one of the maxims to imply something rather different from what s/he actually says. Thus, the addressee is ‘forced’ to look for a specific point in the conversation to help him or her interpret the addressee’s intended meaning, which has not been stated explicitly. Grice’s famous example of implicature through the flouting of the maxim of quantity refers to a recommendation letter written for a student who has applied for a philosophy job. The letter, which says ‘Mr X’s command of English is excellent, and his attendance at tutorials has been regular’, provides irrelevant or little information and is therefore not satisfactory for the addressee’s expectations. In consequence, it implies that the student is not suitable for the post.

Grice describes the observance of the co-operative principle and the systematic exploitation of the maxims as reasonable and rational human behaviour and therefore universal. However insightful Grice’s principles of conversation are, they have the character of prescribed rules that are grounded on efficiency and informativeness which leave no room for the expressive aspect of language. A great deal of day-to-day linguistic exchanges do not aim at purely effective exchanges of information and, consequently, any suitable framework for a theory of language use should be able to provide for the variety of other purposes language use serves. Informative speech stands as the exception rather than the rule in the case of Moroccan Arabic.

Even in very formal contexts where informativeness is expected to be attended to, its application may vary cross culturally. Take for instance the
following letter of an Arab student seeking enrolment in an Australian University:

The Name of Allah The benefecent, the Mirciful.
My Dear respected Master x University Good morning or after good night. [greeting]
I hope to complete my university studies. I begged to accept my application in your university.[Introduction and request]
I gained beshelor (Licence of Arts and Education). My Department is Arabic Language. [Elaboration of introduction].

(Clyne, 1991, p. 214)

This calquing of the Arabic structure in English is likely to be seen by the English native speaker as insincere, desperate or odd to say the least. This parallel structure attributed by Saádeddin (1989) to “aurally developed discourse” is evidence to the fact that the informativeness principle does not apply universally as claimed by Grice. Should it be possible, the task of the translator would be much easier.

In his analysis of randomly selected letters from South-Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Srilankan, Bangladeshi) and Arab (Egyptian, Kuwaiti, Libyan, Moroccan, Lebanese) students requesting entrance information from an Australian university, Clyne (1994, pp. 173-174) observed that the letters generally demonstrate a high level of creativity. All of them gave an introduction and an expression of interest before coming to the actual request. They also contained expressions of deference such as (I beg to state, I have the honour to intimate, your esteemed university or my dear respected master x University) which are not considered appropriate in English. Among the routines supporting their request for information are desperate appeals for pity. Clyne notes that in some of the letters, the author's face is boosted by family, academic and financial status descriptions. Vocatives of address (Respected Sir, Please Sir) introduce every segment or request of the letters. In a number of letters they omitted the head altogether, devised a personal opening routine or used a mixture of formal and informal registers. This shows that the Relation maxim (Be relevant) can be interpreted according to different focuses of relevance. In Anglo discourse, relevance is closely linked with linearity, and to some extent with symmetry. It is not so in cultures such as Arabic which has the characteristic of ‘discourse subordination’, ‘repetition’, ‘redundancy’ and a ‘rhythmic balance of parallel propositions in contrast or similarity’ (Kaplan, 1972; Ostler, 1987).
The maxim of quality 'try to make your contribution one that is true' has also little meaning if put in a cultural context. Although it probably applies in many ordinary conversations, it is usually the case that other values such as kindness will override the rational sincerity required by the maxim of quality. Harris (1984, p. 191), in her study of Egyptian politeness and truth-telling behaviour, concludes that truthfulness is ‘a sociolinguistic variable’ and that like phonological variables, it depends both on the relationship between the participants and on the socio-cultural groups to which they belong.

The maxim of manner is no exception. The Gricean maxims are culturally relative even in academic work where one would expect greater uniformity among cultures. Loveday (1983, p.181) argues that the maxim of manner is rarely attended to in Japanese because in most contexts clarity and explicitness of expression could be easily interpreted as “offensively assertive”. Clyne (1994) speaks of the Vietnamese tolerance for ambiguity and explains that ‘orderliness’ is a concept of form-oriented cultures as the English as opposed to content-oriented cultures where the more knowledge provided, the better. Similarly, in her study of the differences between English and Polish speech acts and their connection with different cultural norms and assumptions, Wierzbicka (1985, p. 175) argues convincingly that the attested universality of the ‘logic of conversation’ seems ethnocentric and that “any community will have some orientation to the dimension of quality (truthfulness), of quantity (informativeness), of relevance, of manner (clarity)”. And since the principles of conversation are based on the propositional content of the utterances, they are far from being suitable translation strategies to an effective rendering in which the socio-cultural context of the source text is accurately identified and must be lexically encoded in the target text.

Different cultures have their own way of observing and expressing maxims for particular situations not to mention the immediate contextual factors which affect the way each individual will co-operate during a particular situation. Situational, individual and cross-cultural variations affect the maxims of conversation. Qualities such as those included in the description of the maxims are extremely difficult to determine or define even within the same culture, let alone across a variety of cultures. Should we take their universality for granted, then speakers of the same, let alone different, languages would be expected to be able to infer exactly the same meaning from any given utterance most of the time. Naturally, this is not the case.
Generally, explicitness and clarity work in parallel, i.e. the more explicit, the more clear, and vice versa. However, varying degrees of explicitness may not produce the same level of clarity, and the same degree of explicitness may produce varying levels of clarity depending on the type of discourse participants (age, gender, education etc.), situation and culture.

It is essentially maintained, even by Grice, that politeness is one of the communicative purposes responsible for the flouting of the CP maxims. Although he does not expand on the issue of politeness, he has provided a strong incentive for other linguists such as Lakoff, Leech and Brown and Levinson to do so.

In the context of translation, the CP and politeness are both relevant depending on the text’s object of concern: if it is mainly interested in the communication of a certain message as is the case in scientific and legal texts, the translator will concentrate on the clarity and informativeness of the end product; whereas, if the text is more concerned with social or cultural issues including the status of the interlocutors and/or the situation at hand such as political and literary texts, then even if politeness may not be the main purpose, the expression of it would be crucial. No matter how different and distant two cultures are, it all comes down to how politely we translate this difference. Assuming the importance of translation in the process of transmitting meaning and culture, as language is probably the most important vehicle serving this purpose, Hjelmslev (1943) concludes that understanding between the West and the East is in the last analysis largely a problem of translation (Aabi and Meghrab, 2003) We would go further and say that it is largely a problem of translating politely. Given the vital role of translation in cross-communication, adopting domestication of the text as a strategy to prevent clashes would not serve its ultimate communicative purpose. Although it may expediently make the two texts closer, it does not really achieve its purpose of intercultural rapprochement in the long run. On the contrary, it provides a homogenous, usually modified, account of the source language and culture, and therefore reinforces the cultural values of the target language. Let us consider the following example:

مرض السيدا يس
Literal translation: Aids, may Allah protect (us/you/everyone)

The Arabic (السيدا يس/ الله يستر) is a formulaic religious expression usually uttered following the announcement of some sort of calamity or the telling of some pitiful situation from which the speaker wishes to distance themselves, hence the prayer imploring protection from God. Now, saying prayers for the benefit of the speaker, the interlocutor or even a third party is very important.
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in Arabic and Moroccan culture. And failing to say the appropriate prayer/formula when appropriate would scream of poor social decorum or be simply an instance of impoliteness. Evidently, translating this example, religious formula and all, might sound slightly awkward with the risk of sounding impolitically correct vis a vis the people suffering from Aids. Should the religious formula be omitted, the text will lose a piece of its socio-pragmatic make which distinguishes it from any other standard text.

It goes without saying that given the essential role of translation as a means to open up to other cultures and world views, foreignisation is a highly desirable strategy as it resists homogenisation and preserves the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text (Berman, 2004; Ricoeur, 2006; Venutti, 1998). Foreignisation is not however the magical tool that would rapidly make cross-cultural misunderstandings go away, and may prove counter effective. Graphically translating a Muslim holding his hands high up and praying to Allah to let him die a martyr (ربى نتفني شهيدا), might produce undesirable effects such as the feeling of threat and/or doom. Conflict and clash are part and parcel of the human nature of doing things between individuals belonging to the same community, let alone between nations and cultures. Somehow, we manage not to be constantly at each other’s throat. We often tend to come to a mutual understanding through politic and polite behaviour. The same applies to translation. Translators tread on dangerous grounds and for their communicative venture to be successful, they must be excellent politic and polite mediators.

4. THE POLITIC OF CONVERSTION: RULES AND MAXIMES

In this context politic conversation means the ability to carry out conversational exchanges tactfully and diplomatically in order to avoid friction and keep the conversation smooth and easy. It is within this perspective that Lakoff (1973) devised her pragmatic rules and Leech (1983) built up his scale of maxims.

Lakoff (1973) suggests that Grice's maxims should be reformulated as pragmatic rules to determine the pragmatic well-formedness of deviant utterances which present neither syntactic nor semantic problems. She says that pragmatic rules will help judge whether the form of an utterance is polite or not. She suggests two rules of pragmatic competence: be clear and be polite.

Leech (1983) proposes pragmatic scales which have a "bearing on the degree of tact appropriate to a given situation" (1983, p. 123). Leech's
approach sets out to relate between the domain of semantics concerned with the logical meaning or sense of a sentence and the domain of pragmatics concerned with the sense of sentence and its pragmatic force. Although distinct, semantic sense and pragmatic force are related in that the pragmatic force of an utterance involves its semantic sense. ‘Can you play the piano?’ is an indirect request made to the addressee to actually play the piano. It is not a question about the ability of the addressee to play the piano.

To establish a link between sense and force, Leech expands Grice’s co-operative principle (CP) with its four maxims (quality, quantity, relation and manner) through the addition of a Tact Maxim. The Tact Maxim comes under the Politeness principle (PP) along with other maxims such as the Generosity, Approbation, Modesty, Agreement and Sympathy maxims. Leech says that in communication, Grice’s CP interacts with his proposed politeness principle. He insists on the importance of the politeness principle as a necessary complement to the Co-operative principle, not just an addition to it, in the treatment of cases that cannot be satisfactorily handled by the co-operative principle alone. In other words, the CP and its maxims are used to explain how an utterance may be interpreted to convey indirect messages and the PP and its maxims are used to explain why such indirectness may be used (see Leech 1983: 104). Similar to Lakoff and Grice, he admits that the CP and the PP can conflict. When this happens the speaker will have to sacrifice one of them. If the speaker sacrifices the PP in favour of the CP, s/he will be putting at risk the maintenance of “the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being co-operative in the first place” (1983, p. 82). In this respect, Brown and Levinson (1987, p. 5) comment that Grice’s CP and Leech’s PP have different status given that no violation of Grice’s maxims occurs without a reason, whereas Leech’s politeness maxims constitute such reasons for violations.

Whereas Leech is concerned with how politeness provides the missing link between the Gricean CP and the problem of how to relate meaning to force within a more general pragmatic theory, Brown and Levinson are more interested in a theory of politeness in which linguistic devices are realisations of specific politeness strategies aimed at the management of face. Brown and Levinson’s model has been the most influential in providing a paradigm that goes beyond a mere extension of the Gricean maxims (Watts, 1992, p. 7). The degree to which Brown and Levinson’s theory relates to actual interaction and the fact that their discussion of data is taken from a range of languages other than English render their model less abstract and more functional than the preceding theories.
5. WHEN FACE IS AT STAKE: BROWN AND LEVINSON

Drawing on Goffman’s (1955) notion of face as a “positive social value a person claims for himself by the line others assure he has taken during a particular contract” (Goffman, p.213), Brown and Levinson (1978) base their pragmatic theory on the premise that a model rational person is concerned about his/her face and recognises that other rational model people have similar face wants. Brown and Levinson say a model person has both a “the public self-image” that every member wishes to project to other group members (Goffman, 1967, p. 4) and the need to act without being impeded by others (Brown and Levinson, 1978, p. 66). Brown and Levinson elaborated on Goffman’s notion of face which is reformulated as ‘positive face’. They added the notion of ‘negative face’ which represents the model person’s desire for freedom of action. Central to Brown and Levinson’s concept of politeness, is a rational model person who would know to deviate from the Grice maxims of conversation without the risk of threatening the addressee’s positive or negative face and in the process his or her own. At this point, the model person has the choice of going bald on-record to commit a face threatening with the possibility of minimising or redressing it using a variety of politeness strategies.

6. STRATEGIES FOR TRANSLATING POLITELY

It is clear that the study of politeness plays a crucial role in providing the tools necessary for the construction of a cultural framework for translation. There must be, therefore, a scale responsible for the evaluation of the degree of politeness required in a specific situation. Evidently, the degree of politeness will naturally depend on the assessment of the seriousness of, to borrow B&L’s expression, the face-threatening act (FTA) between addressee and addresseeor. Acts such as requests, orders, threats, suggestions and advice are said to restrict the addressee’s independence and freedom of action because they put pressure on him or her to act in a certain way irrespective of one's will and therefore threaten the person’s negative face. Thanks, acceptance of thanks, offers and so forth also threaten the person's negative face because they entail they bring people to accept debt and humble their own face. Apologies (regretting a committed FTA) and compliments are seen as FTAs to the speaker’s positive face because s/he feels compelled to reciprocate them in one way or another.

Since translation is also a communicative transaction between the source language producer and target language reader, FTAs will be defined in
this context as those acts which by nature run contrary to the face wants of the source language producer and target language reader. The degrees of politeness are measured in terms of the degree of redress to face in the translation of FTAs. Using Brown and Levinson’s terminology, the argument goes that the translator’s use of redressive strategies should depend on three independent and culturally-sensitive variables.

**Cultural Distance (D)** between source language and language: The less culturally related the two languages are, the greater the potential face threat of the act. Plainly presenting placentophagy, eating the placenta which by strict definition would be considered cannibalistic, may not be to everybody’s taste regardless of how ancient, popular or trendy the practice is and would probably cause great uneasiness. Mentioning it would be an FTA that requires redressing. The translator might redress the degree of face threat through mitigation strategy such as presenting local peculiar habits or softening the impact with scientific evidence that the placenta is not eaten raw but in the form of medicinal pills in order to prepare the reader/viewer to acknowledge difference.

However, in other instances of cross-cultural distance, where religious or sexual taboos come in play, redress may require more that softening or mitigation. The word “gay”, for example, extends its meaning from the adjective gay meaning happy as its denotative. In Arabic, on the other hand, the phrase ‘sha:dh jinsiyyan’ (lit. sexual pervert) is used for the same referent. *sha:dh* denotes extremity and deviance from the norm. The reference to the same concept in English and Arabic represents two divergent cultural assumptions, causing a cultural conflict when substituting one for the other.

**Power (P)** is the second variable relating to the relative power relation between the two languages; the more power a language has in respect to the other, the greater the face threat. Power is not just a relation between people but a relation between texts and meanings that often passes over unnoticed and is scarcely perceived by the parties involved (Fairclough, 2003). Such a relation usually takes the form of ‘common sense’ assumptions that are actually ideologies seeking to legitimize existing power relations (Fairclough, 2001). In the process, diverse realities are converted into one single and most advocated version inspired, produced and imposed by the powers that be. If so, translation can be conceived as knowledge made of a set of
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presuppositions about the world that forge the perspective from which a social group views the world.

Translation must, therefore, be read as “records of cultural contestations and ideological struggles, rather than as simple linguistic transpositions or literary creations” (Tymoczko, 2006, p.443). Redressing the condescending force of the more powerful language is an inescapable duty for the translator.

The absolute ranking (R) is the third variable. It relates to the ranking of impositions is in a particular culture and the degree of imposition intrinsic to a particular act: the more imposition an act involves, the more threatening it becomes to the speaker and/or hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987) consider this variable as culturally-dependent since it is assumed that cultures rank acts with reference to their degree of imposition, which will vary according to the culture. What is appropriately regarded as an expression of generosity in one culture may be inappropriate and imposing in another.

It is quite common for Moroccan hosts to insist that their guest eat a great deal. The invitation to eat would be incessantly repeated throughout the meal with the host telling the guest they are not eating enough. The insistence on the part of the host that the guest should eat profusely certainly aims at showing hospitality. However, it might translate as imposing to someone to whom such practice is not familiar.

Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that attending to face (positive or negative) and the choice of a politeness strategy depends on the weightiness of the imposition. The view adopted here is that the equation of the weightiness of imposition and type of politeness varies cross culturally. Let us look at the following example which involves a contrast between British and Moroccan norms:

Someone (S) at home answers the door to an unexpected visitor (V) at meal time. The two are friends but not intimates. S invites V in to eat. V hesitates. S begins persuasion. Strategy 1 and strategy 2 offer two alternatives.

**Strategy 1 (Moroccan)**
- Please, do stay.
- It's not much, but accept us.
- Whatever we have, you share it with us.

**Strategy 2 (English)**
- It's no trouble at all.
- There's plenty of food.
- We're used to people popping in.

Both strategies attempt to attenuate V’s embarrassment and fear of imposition, but they do this in different ways (lack of food vs. abundance of...
food). Besides, while strategy 1 instantiates positive politeness, strategy 2 instantiates negative politeness. The pragmatic force of strategy 1 is that any damage to S’s negative face is compensated by the intimacy of sharing with such an ‘important’ person. Enthusiasm at the prospect of the invitation and explicit repetition of the invitation are saying ‘you are important to me, I wish closer contact with you’. This is anointing of positive face, paying attention to V’s want to be recognised as belonging or in Brown and Levinson’s terms to be appreciated. Strategy 2, on the other hand, stresses that no damage to negative face is involved. It gives attention to the want to be recognised as an individuated person who would neither be imposing nor incurring a debt.

Let us consider the situation in a cross-cultural context. If V is used to receiving Strategy 1 in this situation but is given Strategy 2, it is their positive face that will be damaged. S/he will be affronted that S could treat them in such a casual avoidance-based manner. They may even interpret mention of abundance of food as boasting. If, on the other hand, V is used to receiving Strategy 2 but is given Strategy 1, it is their negative face that could be damaged. The visitor may not recognize the intention of the apology in the lack of food, and may interpret it as a debt. Whether, there is little food or the opposite, does not indeed matter much. A Moroccan host or hostess, who lays a variety of dishes on the table, will, while serving the dishes to the guests, still apologise for the lack of food and beg them to accept what they are offering.

One area of meaning that should be balanced in translation is the different strategies of politeness of politeness used in the source language and required in the target language. Comparing politeness strategies across the boundaries of speech communities should be considered by the translator who may find it necessary to operate a shift or switch between strategies in order to avoid getting the target reader confused.

7. CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of translation text is not lost, maintained, or enhanced solely on the basis of certain pre-set normative rules. It is a complex transaction of social values, beliefs and ideologies. It can become a more difficult task when it involves texts from widely distant cultures, conflicting ideologies and inherently varying degrees of (im)polite acts. The role of the translator is that of a negotiator in a highly complex politial transaction. He has to diagnose the FTA, assess its gravity, and recommend the appropriate
solutions. Each situation requires a different path of action, and the
translator cannot afford the luxury of being a neutral observer. S/he serves as
an agent of a cultural practice where meaning is not easily mediated without
the intervention of the translator. The translator’s task cannot be an exercise
in neutrality but requires to a great extent an interactive mediation for which
words and structures are never merely passive but active factors in a living
and polite exchange.

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