

ABSTRACT

The present thesis applies the sociolinguistic concepts of politeness and face on interpreting theory and practice. Interpreting is, in its essence, highly face-threatening, which is reflected in codes of ethics adopted by interpreting vocational associations. Having insight into two cultures, interpreters can use their communication competence to preserve the face of their recipients or the speaker. For the Western society, it is natural to protect one's own face in communication; however, such efforts can collide with the endeavour to convey the message faithfully and precisely. The thesis therefore studies the strategies that interpreters apply in face-threatening situations and presents examples of what interpreters do to save face, including such events when face-preserving outweighs conveying the message. There is also a discrepancy between the conventional role of a neutral or passive interpreter as a message conduit and the role of interpreters as active communication participants who take the initiative. By analysing interviews and an online survey, the study demonstrates that many interpreters believe that their role is an active one and their impact on the output of interpreted interactions is significant.

Keywords: face, politeness, interpreting, face-preserving strategies, interpreters' role, communication competence