

Abstract

This work examines through pragmatic analysis the speech patterns constructing face in the discourse of Hannah and Michael, the protagonists in the novel *My Michael* by Amos Oz (1968), and compares it to the speech patterns constructing face in the discourse in the English translation by Nicholas de Lange (1972). The underlying hypothesis which calls for this comparison states that face is a key element in the discourse of Hannah and Michael and so, it is assumed that in order to transfer the overall meaning as conveyed in the discourse in the source, politeness related components in the target language should carry similar functions to those presented in the source language. In that respect, differences between the source language and the target language are potentially harmful as to understanding the complex relationship between the two main characters as reflected in the novel.

I conducted pragmatic analyses of 11 segments of dialogs between Hannah and Michael and their 11 English counterparts and later compared the findings while focusing on the differences that were found. Each analysis was carried out in terms of face and politeness theories as suggested and defined by Penelope Brown & Stephen C. Levinson (1987), and Ron Scollon & Suzanne Wong Scollon (1995) and focused on the linguistic means which constructed face in the discourse. Finally I related to whether the differences that were found have any implications for the characterization of Hannah and Michael and for the overall impression concerning the couple's relationship. A close comparison between the 11 segments and their translation counterparts reveals a few differences, some of which are indeed significant but by most accounts they don't constitute a substantial alteration in comparison to the source.