

# *Grey goes with the territory*

## *Certainties and uncertainties in public service interpreting*

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# The asset of knowledge

And they knew not that Joseph understood them, for he spake unto them by an interpreter.

(Genesis 42: 23)

# Problematizing the issue

“Washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral”

Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope*



# Problematizing the issue

The notion of neutrality is a troubling ethic for community interpreters. [...] Freire sees neutrality as siding with the oppressors. I believe it is fundamentally wrong for the interpreter to be engaged without regard for the communicative goals of the participants. This is very different ethically from “taking sides”.

Ben Karlin (on the Diversity list)

# Problematizing the issue

The emphasis on the use of the first person stems from the ideology of the interpreter as a translation machine.

(cf. Freud's image of a blank screen passively intercepting the patient's projections)

Bot (2005)

# Problematizing the issue

Strict adherence to a dry, formal, passive and detached interpreting style, though it might be in line with an idealised notion of professional conduct, is not always the best way to serve one's clients, especially when their intention is to engage in a friendly and co-operative dialogue.

Merlini & Favaron (2006)



# Problematizing the issue

**Patient:** I can't decide if I should have amniocentesis.

**Doctor:** I can't decide for you.

**Patient** goes home confused. Her lack of self-advocacy skills is problematic.

**Interpreter:** I know I mustn't initiate information-seeking or information-giving, but I would have liked to. This is all wrong.

Elaine Hsieh. 2006. Conflicts in how interpreters manage their roles in provider-patient interactions. *Social Science & Medicine* 62. 721 – 730.

# Problematizing the issue

I saw [in court] blatant inequality and disparity. I saw power juxtaposed with powerlessness; knowledge with ignorance; confidence with fear; arrogant control with humble submission; manoeuvring and manipulation with confusion and bewilderment. I saw character assassination at its worst.

Moeketski 1999 (cited in Rudvin 2004, Hansen et al., eds)



# Problematizing the issue

An interpreter has every right to set aside neutrality when that is clearly (in his/her conscience and professional experience) the right thing to do. That's called *advocacy* and it's a matter of the interpreter clearly identifying his/her role at the given point of time.

Marjory Bancroft (on the Diversity list)

“One way could be for higher education institutions to become actively involved in solving the problems, and to think of this not just as problem-solving but as a challenge to higher education”

Martinsen (2002)

# The asset of knowledge

The social change is based on an **asset** that the students possess, one that empowers them and enhances their sense of worth.

The asset was discovered to be

- Dynamic and open-ended rather than finite

- Valuable and not to be taken for granted

- A tool for decision-making and

- A tool for operationalizing ethical considerations

- Capable of doing harm as well as to good

- A common denominator for all communities represented

- A gift of previous generations

- Valued by those in need of it

- Socially enriching



## Training college students as community interpreters – an innovative model

Given their prior experiences as family "translators" who frequently spoke for others, it is quite surprising how comfortable they seem to feel in enabling others to speak for themselves. The students do not resist giving up their old roles, including that of the culture broker.

Michael and Cocchini (1997)

## Training college students as community interpreters – an innovative model

[...] However they do raise serious concerns about maintaining "neutrality." They ask: "How can I remain 'neutral' am I not supposed to feel for the patients?" They ask: "If I see something wrong, do I fix it?"

Michael and Cocchini (1997)

## Training college students as community interpreters – an innovative model

A student activist – when a doctor told a patient to learn English – said she was there to interpret medical information, not political statements.

Another felt that her site required a full time "human rights enforcer" and struggled over how to respond when she perceived patients were treated poorly or mistreated.

One student tells how hard it was having to restrain her natural inclination to “protect” a patient when she had to interpret a diagnosis of cancer.

Michael and Cocchini (1997)



# The twofold political agenda

To heighten students' awareness of power imbalances, in general, and of those related to language, in particular.

To encourage students to see themselves as potential agents of social change by appreciating the symbolic and instrumental value of their own knowledge, and capitalizing on skills they may have taken for granted.

Excerpts from students'  
weekly reports

Community interpreting course  
2007 – 2008

(translated from Hebrew)

# Rationalizing an expanded role

## O. – English – Immigration office

I had to change my tone of voice to drive home the point. The person I was trying to interpret for **was being very difficult** and refusing to listen. She thinks everyone's against her, and doesn't pay attention.



# Rationalizing the expanded role

## M.– Arabic – Municipal hospital

1. When the doctor came I asked for the patient's CT results, because **he was anxious to find out**. The doctor got the results from the computer and we went to explain them to the patient.
2. One of the family members wrote down a lot of questions. I asked the doctor all the questions and I wrote down all the answers and gave it to the patient.

# Rationalizing an expanded role

I received a Polish woman. Since nobody here speaks Polish, they figured that **my Russian is better than nothing**, but I could hardly understand a thing. In the end, we managed though. (M., NGO)

[...] I interpreted from Spanish and it was hard, cause I don't really know Spanish well enough, but **I got the general idea and they were happy**. I know I shouldn't have done it, but I couldn't say no. (M., NGO)

# Rationalizing an expanded role

## E.– Arabic – Municipal hospital

I also helped them outside the hospital. For example, I took the glasses of one of the people to be fixed because they're not allowed to leave the hospital premises. Lately the hospital added an Arab social worker to the staff and she helps them but **she can't do it all herself** because there are a lot of patients and accompanying people so it isn't enough to have just an interpreter.



# Rationalizing an expanded role

## A.— Amharic – well-baby clinic

As soon as the mothers see me they start telling me things that have nothing to do with what the nurses was asking. They say the children have a lot of power, because they know the language and the mothers don't. One mother told me her son said if she didn't give him what he wanted he'd tell the police she was hitting him. **It hurt me**, so I told the boy that what he was doing was wrong, and I talked with the mother too.

# Rationalizing an expanded role

## M.– Russian – Social services

It's hard not to take things to heart when people are in such dire straits. It's hard to explain to new immigrants all about bureaucratic procedures. They tell me about the run-around and I've got to say the bureaucracy gets on my nerves too. **The clerks don't really deal with the problem** the way they should. There's always another document that someone should have brought, but didn't know about. If they need to fill out a form, I help them, and if I don't understand something I make the clerk explain it again, just to be sure.

# Rationalizing an expanded role

## M.– English – NGO

[...] There was this Filipino worker who hadn't received her maternity allowance from National Insurance Institute, and they were giving her the run-around. I went with her and it turned out that they'd sent the money to the wrong account. She'd never have managed to get that information without my help. My problem was that **the clerk was very condescending** towards my "client" and it made me very angry, so finally I told her off. I know I wasn't supposed to do that, but I couldn't stand the way she was talking.



# Rationalizing an expanded role

## N.— English — Well-baby clinic

[...] The nurse asked the mother to be tested for HIV, and the mother started crying. The nurse asked me to explain to her that it was a standard procedure, and that she shouldn't be worried or offended, so I took her aside, and explained it until she calmed down. Maybe this isn't something I should be doing, but I felt it was the right way, especially since **nobody else could have done it.**

# Frustration goes with the territory

## M.– Russian – Social services

A lot of times, people need to come back because they didn't understand what they were supposed to bring. People get upset at me and they don't understand that I'm just there to help them and to interpret.

# Frustration goes with the territory

## M.– Arabic – Municipal hospital

[...] I knew that if the doctors followed their usual pattern for making the rounds, going from room 1 to room 9 in sequence, two of my patients would wind up without an interpreter, because I had to leave soon, and “my” two patients were in rooms 7 and 9. I debated for a long time, and finally I asked the head nurse if the doctors would consider changing the sequence, and starting with rooms 7 and 9, so that “my” patients would have interpreting. The nurse told me not to interfere with their routine.



# Frustration goes with the territory

## **M.– Russian – NGO**

In class, we talked about the boundaries of the role. Every time I come here, I'm torn over that question. I want to give as much help as possible. I sympathize and identify, but sometimes there's nothing you can do. There were times when I just wanted to escape, to ignore the dilemma. But then I remembered my own experiences, and I stayed.

# Frustration goes with the territory

## **B.– Amharic – Social services**

All of the rules and the principles that we study in class – I can't see how they help us, because when you're out there it's a whole different story. The people I work with don't now those rules, and won't follow them.

# Frustration goes with the territory

## **N.– Russian – Social services**

It was so hard to tell someone he wasn't entitled to any payments. It's depressing when you have to turn someone down even though they're in need. [...] A woman had looked after children for 7 years and the employer fired her and didn't give her any severance pay. She kept crying and it was really hard to interpret and to hear what she was going through. It's very difficult psychologically to deal with the way people are shoved around. I can't help identifying with the people who come in for help.



# Frustration goes with the territory

## D.— Russian – NGO

I had a heartbreaking case today. A foreign worker who has been here for 8 years. He has a 4-month old baby from his Filipino girlfriend. They won't extend his visa, and **we** [sic] can't do anything to help him. You can't go against the Ministry of Interior. It's very sad. I went from one person to another in the office trying to figure out what to tell him, and when I told him it was impossible, he nearly cried. Sometimes it's so discouraging!

# Frustration goes with the territory

## Y.— Russian – National Insurance

When people get a refusal, they want me to listen to their disappointment, to tell them what to do next and so on. It's hard to explain to them that I'm "just" the interpreter.

# Frustration goes with the territory

## **B.– Amharic – Social services**

People expect me to solve their problems, and I keep trying to explain that I'm just the interpreter, especially when it's over the phone. A lot of times they want me to explain what their rights are. They all have problems and they want me to help them solve them. [...] It's really tough not being to help them, especially when I can see they're being given the run-around and they expect me to help them and all I can do is translator. It's really tough, emotionally.



# Whose side are you on?

## **B.– Amharic – Social services**

In our community it's really important not to interrupt someone. It's a matter of showing respect. But we don't have so much time and if I interrupt them they probably think I'm disrespectful and that I don't want to help them.

# Whose side are you on?

## S.– Amharic – Social services

This woman came and asked me if it was true that there were no funds, because she had just been refused some financial help. I told her my job was just to interpret and that I didn't know about the budget, but she was suspicious as if I was colluding with the clerks or not telling the truth.

# Whose side are you on?

## **A.— Amharic – Social services**

I feel that the parents regard the social worker as “the bad guy” who wants to take away their child. Now I have doubts about my job. Did I do what I was supposed to do? The family really needed an advocate and I didn’t do it. The social worker helped them in the end, but if she hadn’t, they would have lost their chance to get custody. Then I found myself defending the social worker because the family was suspicious as if they thought the social worker was against them. I tried to tell them it wasn’t that way at all, that maybe I hadn’t interpreted well and maybe they hadn’t understood, but they said they had understood fine.



# Whose side are you on?

## T.– Arabic – well-baby clinic

[...] Then he turned to me and said: If they don't understand, because they're from a different culture, you at least should understand! You should tell my wife to obey her husband. That's when I had to speak up and say I was there as an interpreter and my job was just to transmit information, not to introduce my personal opinion. I don't know if I did the right thing, but I think that's what we learned.

(Background: husband was being advised that another pregnancy would endanger his wife.)

# Whose side are you on?

## **M.— Russian – Ministry of Interior**

A woman needed to fill out some forms to get a visa. She looked at me and said "You know what I should write to improve my chances. Just fill it out the way you think it will do me the most good." Of course I explained to her that this wasn't the way it worked. In truth, I translated correctly, but I did not tell the clerk about these special requests.

# Whose side are you on?

## **Y.— Russian – National Insurance**

A woman asked me what answers she should write on her application, but I told her to just write the truth, and I warned her that they check everything so it wouldn't be a good idea to lie.



# Whose side are you on?

## **M.– Arabic – Municipal hospital**

A mother and her 14-year old son arrived. He'd been hit by a rocket. And she told me what had happened. Then she said "The Jews – with one hand they kill you and with the other hand they save lives", and the doctor asked me "What did she say?" and I answered "She just explained what happened," and I didn't tell her the whole sentence.

# Whose side are you on?

## **M.– Arabic –Pediatric hospital**

The nurse told the doctor that the mother had given her daughter a double dose of insulin by mistake. The doctor looked at me, and asked me why I hadn't said anything. The mother had told me about it in the waiting room, but she hadn't said anything about it to the doctor, so I didn't say anything either.

# Whose side are you on?

## **Y.— Russian – National Insurance**

A woman submitted some forms but didn't know there were others she had to submit. The clerk told me she wasn't going to process the forms. I found the woman's phone number. I offered to call her, so she could bring in the missing forms, but the clerk said not to do it, so I didn't. I don't know if I should have given in so easily, but I didn't want to argue with the clerk.



# Whose side are you on?

## **S.– French – NGO**

Some of the Filipinos have a custom of putting gloves on the baby's hands. The doctor told me to tell them not to do this anymore. The father said they would stop and the mother said they wouldn't, and I didn't know what to tell the doctor. Then the father saw I was confused, so he told me: just tell her that we won't do it anymore, and then he told his wife that when they were at home they could do whatever they wanted. I didn't know how much of that to translate.

# Perceptions of professionalism

## **Many of the students' reports**

People get confused when I use the first person, so I often shift to third. E.g. D.— Arabic — NGO (telephone interpreting): When I interpret over the phone, people often don't understand that I'm the interpreter, and I have to explain. If I use the first person, it gets too confusing.

# Perceptions of professionalism

## **M.– Arabic –Pediatric hospital**

I was asked to help out with a new patient in the diabetes clinic. At first the father didn't want me there because he said he knew Hebrew. He said he didn't need a woman to interpret for him, but the social worker insisted, and it turned out he hardly knew Hebrew at all.



# Perceptions of professionalism

## **E.– Arabic – Municipal hospital**

Everyone who is bilingual knows how to say "the teacher wants all the kids to go to the bathroom before we get on the bus" but not everyone knows how to translate "The patient in the intensive care oncology ward needs to have surgery because his clotting factor is too high [sic]".

# Perceptions of professionalism

## **M. – French – NGO**

When I signed up, I didn't understand how there could be a whole course dealing with translation... I mean, I thought either you know a language or you don't.

# Perceptions of professionalism

## **M. – Arabic – kindergarten**

When the mother cried, I kept silent. I wanted to respect her pain. On the other hand, I found it difficult not to say anything. I wanted to respond to her crying, and to ask some questions, but I managed to maintain the boundaries of my role. Maybe it's because the counselor was doing a good job, and maybe it's because I realize that I'm not a psychologist.



# Perceptions of professionalism

My problem is that the workers prefer to “manage” in their broken English and don’t call me. Also, they put me in a room where nobody sees me. (B.)

May I accept a lunch invitation from someone I’ve translated for? (O.)

Some of their stories are really terrible, and they want to talk to me even when I’m off duty. I don’t know what to say. I think we need to receive better preparation for this kind of thing. Maybe interpreters need to be trained in social work too.

# Agents of change?

## A.— Arabic – mental health clinic

I grew up in a family where we always spoke both languages. But this year, I realized how depressing it can be for people not to know the language, how it prevents them from standing up for themselves, how it forces them to depend on others (and sometimes they can't even find anyone to turn to).

# Agents of change?

## A.— Russian – Social services

The course gave me a lot, and I made a difference, but I think that the system owes it to these people to give them a social worker who speaks Russian.



# Agents of change?

## M. – Arabic – kindergarten

The very fact that a person's language has a presence in institutions gives *him* a sense of belonging, of dignity, or power. This can boost *people's* morale and give a more comfortable feeling. It can help people feel secure enough to use *their* language in public institutions and perhaps even to insist on their basic rights. It might reduce the sense of inferiority and alienation, and would make *us* feel proud.

# Agents of change?

## **M. – Arabic – kindergarten**

When I enabled a mother to express her joy, or her anger, I felt how important language was, and how important I was in the situation. Still I kept asking myself: am I empowering my community or weakening it? When I volunteer, am I collaborating with the State in its avoidance of responsibility? When I interpret for the wives, do I change the balance of power in the home or add to their duties which are very heavy to begin with?

# Agents of change?

## **M. – Arabic – kindergarten**

When NGOs and well-intentioned volunteers do things that the government should be doing, they let the government shirk its responsibility. Besides, if we continue to "solve the problem" by having interpreters, this will weaken the resolve of the Arab population to insist on their right to use their own language. The government owes it to us to employ a higher percentage of clerks who speak Arabic and to provide more services in Arabic. The existence of interpreters perpetuates the current situation. People won't insist on their basic right.



# Agents of change?

## **M. – Arabic – kindergarten**

There are people around who really need help in overcoming the language barrier and they need it now. How are those people going to manage when we finish the course? Should these people have to rely on student volunteers? Aren't they entitled to professionals? I'm not saying there's anything wrong with volunteering, but these questions really bother me. I think that interpreters can empower the Arab community but at the same time the state has to look after the interests of the language minorities and enable them to communicate without feeling inferior.

# Agents of change?

## **T.– Arabic – well-baby clinic**

I'm determined to help my community, which needs my humble contribution. I've always believed, and I still believe that there is no life without a wish to change and be changed, and to grow. The course gave me self-confidence and the courage to speak up and to say out loud: We exist, and in order to communicate with us, we need both languages. The course made me feel I belong, and the people at the well-baby clinic strengthened my faith in peace and co-existence. All we need is an open heart and a helping hand, and the desire to change things. To my people, the work I did was like oxygen.



# Agents of change?

## **M. – French – NGO**

We started getting a lot of people from the Ivory Coast and Congo, and I found myself interpreting constantly the whole four hours. When we had to refer people to a different place for tests or treatment, they got very worried. They were afraid they wouldn't be understood. One day I was asked to go with someone for some tests at the municipal hospital. The woman in Information spoke only Hebrew. The signs were in Hebrew too. I asked myself: why don't they do something about it? I mean I don't expect them to have interpreters in every department, but there must be a better way!



# Agents of change?

## **B.– Amharic – Social services**

Sometimes there's a long line, and the social worker doesn't have time to see them all, and it's really tough for me to tell them that. She's really pleased that I've learned the "system". I'm supposed to find out in advance what the people want and to screen the ones who don't really need to see her. She expects me to give them a short answer outside her office and send them away. I don't know if this is right because it means that I'm assuming a lot of responsibility. She says it makes her workload more manageable.

# Agents of change?

## **B.— Amharic – Social services**

There was this woman who came to ask for something from the social worker and didn't get what she wanted. She saw me as an authority and as someone who could influence the social worker. It was hard for me to deal with it. I knew she really needed the help but there was nothing I could do, except interpret what the social worker was saying. The woman started getting mad at me because it's easier for her to show her emotions to me than to the social worker. Actually I was caught in the middle.

# Agents of change?

## **B.– Amharic – Social services**

That day I was also at a staff meeting where they decided not to give out a Passover gift to the “Ethiopians” because “they don’t pay high taxes and they have a good income”. I didn’t know whether or not to say anything. I know perfectly well what kind of a “good income” the Ethiopians have, from my personal experience and from my family. I didn’t know if I should side with my community and try to say that the information was wrong, even though they’re the social workers and they’re supposed to have the facts, or to side with the staff.



# Agents of change?

## T.– Amharic – Well-baby clinic

The immigrants don't understand the system. They don't know the difference between the various offices. The nurse was surprised to find out how little they knew, and we had to work hard to get the message across. For instance, there is no term in Amharic for "child development" so I had to explain to the nurse why I was taking so long to translate the term. And when the nurse told them to return in a month, I explained that she should tell them to count four Sabbaths and then come back.

# Agents of change?

## A.– Amharic – Social services

My question: am I allowed to volunteer information to the family. If they phoned the Tabeka Association that helps Ethiopian immigrants, they would probably get a lot of help, but they don't know it. At least they'd get information about what their rights are.

# Agents of change?

## **M.– Russian – NGO**

I came to Israel at the age of 12. The language problem turned out to be a major shock for me. When I first came to [the NGO], it all came back to me. I saw again how important language is – for getting advice, for being able to agree, to defend oneself, to plead, to interact, to socialize, to get things. This course gave me a chance to undo some of the damage that was done to me, to go through a healing process. When I helped people here, I was helping myself and I was helping my parents. Each time when I went home, I would tell my parents about the kind of things that I was doing.



# Agents of change?

## **M.– Russian – Ministry of Interior**

My impression after this year is the State of Israel tries to present Hebrew as the only national language and pays no attention to the difficulties of new immigrants or Arabic speakers who don't know the language. It is as if the State is trying to force people to learn Hebrew. Maybe this makes sense in the case of new immigrants but it is definitely unfair when it comes to Arabic speakers.

# Agents of change?

## **M.– Russian – Ministry of Interior**

My being there, even if it was only four hours a week, made things faster, calmer, friendlier and more pleasant. My parents' friends are reluctant to go to the different offices and sometimes they just don't go, because they know they won't get help in Russian. Having an interpreter there is a good idea, although having a Russian-speaking clerk would be even better. Then again, having only Russian might upset the Arabic speakers. Basically, there should be more ways to get served in your own language. In my opinion, this profession should be paid for by the State.

# Agents of change?

## **A.– Arabic – National Insurance Inst.**

The course boosted my self-confidence. I felt I can do something for my community. It was a beautiful experience. I want to apply to do this in the future as a profession. I don't know how to explain it, but this course bonded me with my community.



# Agents of change?

## **Y.– Russian – National Insurance Institute**

The service I performed as a community interpreter is vital to the Russian-speaking community. I saw that they desperately need interpreting and translation when they come to any public office. I don't have the statistics, but my guess is that many of those who arrived after the age of 40 can't really manage at all, even though they've been here for years. Obviously they need an interpreter whenever they go to a government office. Many times, they ask for one, and they keep saying that there should be one. I think placing interpreters on duty at the National Insurance Institute would be a good idea.

# Gratification

## **E.– Arabic – Municipal hospital**

My presence was very important because these people were from Gaza and they didn't know Hebrew at all. My translation made them feel better because now they understood what was going on and what they were supposed to do. We often just talked about things. They kept telling me I should hurry up and get married.

# Gratification

## **M.– Russian – Social services**

What makes me happy is that there are people there who really need the translation. They know me already, and they come directly to me. The truth is that a lot of the time my job is to help them fill out forms. There are a lot of open questions, and the answers can make a difference when it comes to the size of their allowance.



# Gratification

## **L.– French – Well-baby clinic**

[...] The doctor said he hadn't been able to get any information from them on their previous visit, because they spoke nothing but French. Their baby was losing weight and he didn't know why. When I arrived, they were very happy. They explained that the baby was allergic to milk and wasn't able to digest it. The doctor hadn't known this. Once it became clear, he was able to tell me what to tell them to do [...]

# Gratification

## M.– Russian – Social services

This lady came in. She had looked up all the words in the dictionary and thought she knew what the allowance was called in Hebrew, but the term she was using was funny and nobody understood her. Luckily they remembered I was there, and we worked it out.

# Gratification

**T.– Arabic – well-baby clinic**

We had a first-aid course and I interpreted everything. The mothers were in seventh heaven, and I felt very very powerful!



# Gratification

## Y.— Arabic – municipal hospital

They sent me to the ophthalmological ward and there was a woman there who was about to be discharged. I got there just in time, because they didn't know how to explain to her what she was supposed to do.

# Gratification

## S.– Amharic – Social services

1. I helped a woman whose husband wasn't paying alimony for their 8 children. She needed to fill out all sorts of forms and she was soooooo happy that I was there.
2. I was with this woman whose daughter had defaulted on a loan and the woman was a guarantor and now she was afraid she'd lose her apartment. The clerk suggested that the daughter could interpret, but the woman said No. She wanted me to interpret, and said that the daughter was why she got in this mess in the first place.

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## **R.– Arabic – Pediatric hospital**

The father was very upset. He wanted to complain, but he needed to write the complaint in Hebrew. I helped him write the letter, and we faxed it right away. Of all the cases where I've helped people by interpreting, this one was the most meaningful to me. I could feel how frustrated and hurt he was and all he wanted was justice! After that he couldn't stop thanking me and I was very happy I'd been there, to help him express his anger. I hope the ambulance people take his complaint seriously.

# Gratification

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# Attitudes towards "other" languages

[...] a community that included a number of individuals who were simply unable to hear should make full use of their abilities rather than exclude them. The continual use of sign language [by everyone] in the up-Island communities seems to have fostered a free and easy exchange of ideas and concerns among all members of the community.

Groce, N. E. 1985. *Everyone here spoke sign language.*

# Attitudes towards "other" languages

## **M.– Russian – Immigration office**

A lot of people from Russia complain there should be someone who knows Russian, but if they never need to use Hebrew, how are they going to learn? If we keep having community interpreters, people may not be motivated to learn. True, it's a lot more difficult for the older people, but my parents learned Hebrew and so did my grandparents and everyone I know – which means it's possible. Of course it makes sense to help people who have just arrived but the clerk I work with says that if someone has been here for a long time they should speak Hebrew, and I should only help if they need a word.

## Anonymous questionnaire

I think the course strengthens the connection between the university and society at large, and gives students an opportunity to volunteer in places where we wouldn't ordinarily go. The course brings the university closer to the rest of the population. This kind of course simply helps people and I think it's very important.



## Anonymous questionnaire

The discussions with the other students gave me an opportunity to see that other communities have their problems too and they also feel that they're being marginalized.

## **Anonymous questionnaire**

Unanimously: the fact that the course included people from many different ethnic communities was an advantage and an eye-opener.

Approximately 80%: Community interpreting should be recognized as a profession.

[...] it needs to be better established during the education of interpreters that **grey goes with the territory**, and that would-be professionals had better learn to live with it, and indeed to embrace it. Being able to act competently within the grey zone is an integral part of their professionalism.

Tate and Turner ([1997]/2002)



While some students, because of maturity and skill, are more successful than others in handling the range of situations they confront, all students seem changed by the experiences they have as interpreters.

(Michael and Cocchini, 1997)

I feel like an angel. The course helped me enormously and gave me a feeling of satisfaction and of really helping my community. The course affected my life and was a significant turning point in empowering me and giving me a chance to make a real different.

(Anonymous questionnaire, 2007)