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**Difficulties of translation from Israeli Hebrew to American English:
An analysis of pronouns and power relations in interviews
with bus drivers who experienced terror attacks**

Abstract

This paper investigates both what can be 'lost' in language and in its translation to English, and what can be 'found' through a deep qualitative, semiotic analysis of the discursive patterns reflected in a number of interviews conducted in Hebrew with native Israeli interviewees by a semi-fluent American immigrant interviewer. Israeli Hebrew has a very complex pronoun system inflected for number, person, and gender. Masculine forms are considered to be unmarked and are used both generically and gender specifically, while feminine forms are marked and are only gender specific. The interviewees' uses of pronouns when talking with the female interviewer has several socio-psychological implications which can be 'lost' in verbatim English translation. In this paper, we will discuss the ways in which they can be 'found' through a more careful and language-attentive translation. This paper will explore the difficulties in—but nonetheless the necessity of—translation of diverse pronoun systems and other semantic terms that exist in the original language but not in the translated one. Finally, we will investigate a number of specific communicative strategies used by the interviewee; namely, 1) English words; 2) repetition; 3) the phrases, "you know," and "let's say"; 4) both the masculine and feminine forms of the second-person pronoun ("you"); and 5) the questions, "Do you understand?" and "Did you understand?". We have found that, when closely examined, the non-random distribution of these uses of language, both in form and content, allows us to 'find' myriad analytical insights about power dynamics and interview co-construction that would have been 'lost' without careful translation. This paper also discusses the necessity for a great deal of reflexivity in cross-language research such as this, and the need for the 'outsider' researcher to keep a constant and watchful eye on his or her strengths and limitations when involved in a process of attempting to understand the 'insider' perspective, and then to translate it into another language—both linguistically and academically.

Introduction

This paper presents a deep qualitative, semiotic analysis of discursive patterns and phenomena in interviews conducted in Hebrew by a semi-fluent American immigrant with native Israeli interviewees. We will explore both what can be 'lost' and what can be 'found' in a context such as this, within an analysis of the language of origin and its translation to English. The original

research was based on baseline and 3-year follow-up in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with eight Israeli bus drivers who experienced terror attacks on their buses, exploring their phenomenological experiences and investigating what characterizes discourse on coping, resilience, and heroism in this context. The qualitative analysis conducted was interdisciplinary in nature, combining narrative and discourse analysis techniques with sign-oriented linguistic techniques. The connection between grammatical forms and their individual and societal psychosocial implications was investigated, and hypotheses emerged regarding the linguistic meanings and extra-linguistic messages of the lexical, grammatical, and structural choices made by the interviewees in telling their narratives.

This paper was inspired primarily by our frustrations with regard to the translation of portions of our Israeli Hebrew interviews into American English texts, and our observations that the conventional translation techniques we were attempting to use simply were not 'getting the job done.' Although we generally attempted to avoid translating whenever possible—rather, conducting our analyses on the original texts and in the original language—we found that grappling with some of these issues became unavoidable when faced with the writing and publication process. The doctoral dissertation on this research is being written in English for an audience that will include both Israelis and Americans, and we simply have no choice but to translate at least the sections of text that we wish to present and explore in the final work itself. As such, throughout the translation process, we came to recognize three central difficulties that emerged repeatedly—posed, namely, by the disparity in the pronoun systems and unique semantic terms in Israeli Hebrew and American English, as well as an attempt to understand the unique power dynamics that occurred in a cross-cultural and cross-lingual context such as this one. We will suggest that, when closely translated and examined, the non-random distribution of use of language, both in form and content, allows us to 'find' a number of analytical insights with regard to the narrative, the interviewee himself, and the interview dynamics. Ultimately, we have found that, despite (or perhaps because of) the inherently problematic nature of both linguistic and cultural translation, it is possible to uncover rich information about expression and narrative choices, as well as the wide variety of issues inherent in interview dynamics and the construction of shared meaning. We hope that discussing our experiences with these difficulties and how we dealt with them, as well as what we both 'lost' and 'found' throughout the process, might be useful to other researchers/translators.

The interviewer: A reflexive perspective

One of the most essential components of qualitative research is the awareness of one's own reflexive perspective as a researcher, and the relationship between this consciousness and the experiences and perspectives of those individuals participating in the research. Indeed, as Charmaz (1990, 1169) asserts, "the researcher actively shapes the research process. The researcher creates an explication, organization, and presentation *of* the data rather than discovering order *within* the data. The discovery process consists of discovering the ideas the *researcher* has about the data after interacting with it." To this end, I will now discuss my positioning and reflexive perspective as a researcher/analyst in this context, as this is the lens through which both the process and results of this research will be viewed.

First and foremost, it is necessary to note that I (the first author and interviewer) was born and grew up in Seattle, Washington, in the United States, and that I immigrated to Israel in October of 2003, at the age of 26. As opposed to most North American immigrants to Israel, I had had very little prior background—either through formal education or personal experience—in the Hebrew language and Israeli history or culture. Both because I immigrated alone and because I am determined to learn about and understand Israeli society as best I can, I have invested much time and energy in exposing myself to 'native' cultural experiences, to speaking Hebrew as much as possible, and to limiting the time I spend with English-speaking friends.

Nonetheless, and try as I might to 'fit in,' I often come across to my Israeli friends as the quintessential American. I look American; I dress in American clothes; I speak Hebrew with a moderate but fully discernible American accent—it is clear to all who meet me, within a matter of minutes, that I am not a native Israeli. Indeed, I can be considered very much an outsider regarding both the participant population and the society under study in this research. Beyond conducting a thorough literature review on Israeli society and consulting with my native Israeli friends to get their (own socially influenced) perspectives, understanding the intricacies of the social phenomena that I am attempting to study will always be a challenge for me, but will also provide fruitful insights.

Indeed, there are both advantages and disadvantages to my background and positioning with regard to this research. As all interviews are the product of the relationship between the interviewer, interviewee, and interview context (Mishler 1991), it is clear that the interviews I have conducted were influenced by my outsider status. I felt that the interviewees were willing to be more open to me and my questions for the very reason that I am an outsider, and they also tended to take more time to come 'down to my level' to 'educate' me and aid my absorption into Israeli culture and society, explaining certain issues and phenomena that may be taken for granted by a native Israeli interviewer. In particular, I noticed that some of the interviewees were very concerned with making sure that I understood what they were trying to express to me, and they often went so far as to attempt to translate certain words for me (without my asking them to do so) or using what little English they had to encourage or clarify my understanding.

Similarly, while I am relatively fluent in Hebrew and constantly learning and analyzing its usage in daily discourse, it is not my mother tongue—and this also presents both advantages and disadvantages within the context of this research. I constantly attempted to conduct my translations as "mathematically" as possible—that is, to follow a one-to-one relationship between the languages, paying more attention to translating each word equivalently and less attention to metaphor, nuance, and implied and non-literal meanings. I felt this was warranted in order to not miss any specific words or literal meanings, but of course this presented a trade-off between what was 'lost' through the use of this method and what was 'found.' It has been stated that the challenges involved in the creation of a "perfect translation" are "insurmountable," as translations must simultaneously take into account issues of vocabulary, idioms, grammar, and conceptual levels of understanding (Ramirez-Esparza & Pennebaker 2006, 6). Because the research area of translation in discourse analysis is relatively under-theorized, however, it is difficult to judge just how much of an impact (either positive or negative) these issues may have had on the present work (Riessman, personal communication). I have spent a considerable amount of time consulting with native Israelis with regard to language use and equivalent translations, and this has been an ongoing effort within the current research.

Translation of the differences between the pronoun systems and specific semantic terms in Israeli Hebrew and American English: A sign-oriented semiotic approach

This research utilized as its analytical framework the semiotic or sign-oriented linguistic approach—inspired by de Saussure (1983 [1916]) and expanded upon by Tobin (1990, 1994/1995)—with a particular focus on the pronoun system (e.g., I, you, he, she), which must be understood, first and foremost, in terms of its invariant meanings, or Saussure's *signifiés*: *encoder* (first-person)[1], *decoder* (second-person)[2], and *other than encoder/decoder* (third-person). Perhaps the most central element of Modern Hebrew is gender and the constant linguistic choices that must be made in accordance. As Tobin (2001, 192) notes, "Gender is inherent, integral, and ubiquitous" in Hebrew, as all nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, and inflected prepositions either have an inherent grammatical gender or must be conjugated to agree with their collocated grammatical counterpart. This centrality of gender presents an ever-present requirement for speakers to choose the appropriate form to use throughout their discourse. In addition to nouns and adjectives having gender and number morphology, all verbs are conjugated

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[1] Viewed from a sign-oriented linguistic perspective, the first-person singular pronoun (*'ani'* in Hebrew; 'I' in English) signifies the *speaker/writer* (generally, 'encoder'), referring to the 'one who speaks/writes here and now,' and can be considered as the most proximate and personal pronoun, as it is ego-centered. It is also the most specific or 'known' pronoun, as its use leaves little ambiguity as to the identity or nature of the speaker. It is one of the few forms in Hebrew that is unmarked for (that is, neutral to) gender. This form is used to describe and express personalized events, actions, or states, and cannot represent a relation to anything or anyone but the encoder.

[2] The second-person masculine singular (MS) pronoun (*'atah'* in Hebrew; 'you' in English) signifies the *audience/listener/reader* (generally, 'decoder'), and may be viewed as one of the most general and neutral pronouns. It has two functions in Modern Hebrew: 1) the traditional usage to address specific male decoders; and 2) a more generic/general/impersonal usage corresponding roughly to the non-gendered, non-numbered 'you' in English. In the latter case, it functions as the unmarked form, customarily used in non-gendered discourse or relation to a non-specific subject (similar to, in English: "When *one* does this type of work…" or "When *you* wake up in the morning…"). However, in Hebrew the MS 'you' pronoun is also used in discourse that does not, or does not necessarily, call for the unmarked form. Indeed, it has been reported that two women will often use the MS 'you' with each other, even in such obviously gendered cases as, "When you (MS) are pregnant…" Based on this type of usage, one might therefore hypothesize that the use of the second-person MS 'you' serves to create a depersonalized or universalized sense of meaning, as the unmarked pronoun allows or creates a relation to 'one' or 'everyman.'

The second-person feminine singular (FS) pronoun (*'at'* in Hebrew; 'you' in English) also signifies the decoder, and also has two functions: 1) in addressing specific female decoders; and 2) a generic and/or general manner of usage between two females or in all-female groups and specific or generic gendered (female) situations and contexts (i.e., one might hear "When you (FS) are pregnant…" only in this context). Because it is marked for gender and number, this form is customarily utilized only in person- or gender-specific discursive situations, and therefore the choice to use the FS 'you' (rather than the standard neutral, unmarked MS form) may create a sense of greater proximity and less neutrality toward the female individual being addressed. In this sense, a male who uses the FS 'you' in speaking to a female about his own experiences may be showing a particular communicative strategy that may have certain implications with regard to his attitude toward what he is describing and/or toward the particular decoder.

for person, gender, and number as well.

The central difference between the pronoun systems in Israeli Hebrew and American English thus lies in level of markedness for gender and number. While the first-person pronominal forms ('I' and 'we') in Hebrew are gender-neutral, the second- and third-person forms are not. The masculine pronouns are the unmarked forms, as they can be used to refer to both male and female objects generically and are generally neutral in form, while feminine forms require additional obligatory endings or suffixes. Essentially, this means that the unmarked masculine pronominal forms can be used in all contexts (all-male, mixed, and even all-female groups), while the marked feminine pronominal forms are customarily used only in all-female groups or in relation to a specific female decoder (and even then, the feminine forms can and frequently are replaced by the unmarked masculine forms for use in expressing generic and/or general messages).

While the first-person singular pronoun appears to have the same function and usage in both languages, in Hebrew it is always collocated with a gendered form. Thus, while the pronoun itself appears unmarked for gender, the verb closely following it will always reveal the gender of the speaker in question. In addition, while in English the second-person 'you' is unmarked for both number and gender (i.e., there is no difference between the masculine singular, feminine singular, masculine plural, and feminine plural forms), in Hebrew, there are four distinct forms for the second-person 'you,' each marked for both gender and number. These distinct differences between the pronoun systems in Israeli Hebrew and American English present a number of challenges for a researcher attempting to translate texts from one language to the other. Indeed, even more than the actual literal translation, it is important to illuminate and clarify the centrality of gender markedness in Hebrew and its attendant consequences on the use of the language.

Analytically speaking, therefore, it is crucial to pay attention to the structure and nature of these gendered usages and choices in spontaneous discourse—particularly if patterns emerge as unusual or unconventional, or predominantly consistent or inconsistent. A fundamental assumption here is that these choices are not made arbitrarily, and the meanings of and relationships between the marked and unmarked pronouns as well as choice of tense may be considered to function as analytical 'flags,' thus spurring and facilitating a deeper analysis of the

social discourse surrounding an individual or event. A view of these choices as communicative strategies utilized by the speakers may provide a background for the understanding of the individual and the larger social implications surrounding their lived-worlds.

The following two excerpts[3] allow us to demonstrate these linguistic phenomena in Dani's[4] discourse, particularly in his uses of the second-person singular pronouns of both genders. The first is part of a narrative Dani was telling about going back after the shooting terror attack to pick up his bag, which had been taken by the bus company for safekeeping when Dani had been taken to the hospital.

> *You (FS) see the bus*, after I went to the [bus company] branch, because my bag was still there, everything, [they (MP)] took my bag. Two weeks later, I, for no particular reason, am getting [my things] organized, I see tons of glass shards inside the bag. Tons of glass. (4) In the end, and *you (FS) see the bus*, God help us, it is full of holes, I am telling no, God, I, really, I ow-, owe God my life. *Understand (FS)?* (3) A huge miracle, *let's (FS) say that*. A big miracle happened here, in my case, that I wasn't hurt. There are some who *you (FS) know*, were killed, PLEASE, III. (3:116-120)[i]

There is something about this text section that seems to reflect a need to connect with the (female) interviewer, both discursively and emotionally. We can see this in a number of facets

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[3] In all text excerpts throughout this paper, all italics are mine, and have been added to the texts to emphasize particular linguistic phenomena. All other indications in the texts follow conventional transcribing rules: underlined text signifies that the interviewee was speaking in a louder voice relative to the rest of his interview; **boldface** signifies relatively emphatic speech; {words within curly brackets} signify speech that is relatively softer or quieter; and words that include multiple letters signify that the interviewee elongated the indicated syllables or parts of these words in some manner. Additionally, (numbers within parentheses) signify the amount of seconds that a particular pause in speech lasted; (notes within parentheses) are extra-linguistic or contextual clues; and [notes within square brackets] are additions of words or explanations for the reader with regard to potentially unclear phrases in the interviewee's discourse. Similarly, with regard to pronoun and verb gender and number, "(MS)" signifies "male singular"; "(MP)" signifies "male plural"; and "(FS)" signifies "feminine singular". WORDS ORIGINALLY SPOKEN IN ENGLISH are capitalized.

[4] A native-born Israeli, "Dani" was 29 years old and single at the time of the interview. He did not excel in his studies, and did not finish high school. He served in the border patrol in the Jerusalem area during his compulsory army service, and had been working as a bus driver in Jerusalem for six years at the time of the interview. He had experienced three different terror events over the course of his employment: once when a terrorist opened fire with an automatic weapon on his bus while it was standing at the bus stop, wounding a number of his passengers; once when he witnessed a bus in front of him explode from a bombing; and once when a single bullet was fired at his bus as he was driving. He was working as a bus driver at the time of the interview, and he proudly reported that he had never taken more than a two-day break after any of the incidents he experienced.

within the form of his discourse here—and particularly in the fact that in five separate places, Dani utilizes the feminine form of the verb of his choice.

First, he employs the phrase, "you (FS) see the bus," twice in the exact same formulations. Dani is willing to make an 'I' statement to describe seeing glass shards inside his bag, in addition to declaring that *he*, and no one else, owes God his life. But with regard to his experience of seeing his bus after the attack that occurred, Dani twice chooses the feminine form of the pronoun. This pattern may be viewed as a communicative strategy to draw in the female decoder (myself) to the account of the experienced events, as if Dani is attempting to make this a shared experience, or at least to allow us to create a shared understanding of the experience through the interview.

In addition, Dani again asks if I understand what he is saying, as well as using the colloquial (but personalized for me) "you (FS) know" phrase. He also chooses to bring in the female gendered "let's (FS) say" in another possible bid to both pull me into the narrative and co-create a shared understanding of the described events. First, he states that he owes God his life, immediately after which he attempts to confirm that I understand—or agree with, or empathize with, or validate—what he is saying and how he feels. Directly after that, he offers his explanation of what he has experienced (that is, the result of his process of meaning-making after the event): that it was "a huge miracle" that his life was spared. This suggestion is presented by Dani as a shared explanation, by use of the phrase, "let's (FS) say." He could have prefaced or followed his stated belief with "I think," "I feel," "I believe," or any number of ego-centric phrases that would have placed the focus solely on himself. Instead, he chose, throughout this section of talk, to use language that served to forge a sense of togetherness between the interviewer and the interviewee—a sense of co-creation of meaning, and of shared understanding (literally, 'let's say this together'). This gendered linguistic strategy is uniquely accomplishable only in the Hebrew language, and this observation is something that would be 'lost' in a translation to English that would not make prominent the gendered nature of Hebrew.

In the second excerpt, we see Dani's apparent need to make sure that he is being understood. We also—perhaps not coincidentally—see discursive behavior that is the exact opposite of the previous section of text.

A: Hmm, okay. Annnd how, how did you feel, what were you thinking in the moment that you got onto a bus the first time afterwards?

D: **The truth**, (1) in, on that line specifically, when I switched over from that, a little, *you (FS) know, you (MS) are looking, you (MS) are on edge,* **on edge**. *You (FS) know what that is?*

A: Uhh, yes.

D: *On edge is like, YOUR, YOUR HEART BEATS, you (MS) are looking, you (MS) are expecting something,* a different line like doesn't interest me, what, what, *but when you (MS) pass by from there, then you (MS) know, you (MS) are reminded, you (MS) say* 'Wow, God, what a miracle I had here.' *You (MS) look you (MS) say* 'My Lord, right here it happened to me. Right here where I stopped, exactly that,' I try to, to get into it.

A: Hmm.

D: *You (FS) understand?* To get into th-, mem-, memory. (3:164-173)[ii]

Here, rather than using the feminine verb forms to connect and co-create meaning with me, he uses the masculine verb forms repeatedly, and the discourse comes across as detached, impersonal, and universalized. He switches to the feminine form only for his direct questioning of me as to whether I understand. This communicative strategy serves to depersonalize and universalize Dani's experience of being "on edge," creating a sense that the Israeli 'everyman' is experiencing and feeling these things. It seems that Dani's motivation here is to collectivize these difficult feelings and experiences, and the use of the masculine 'you' is a well-documented strategy for accomplishing this. It is unclear to me, however, whether the universal, collective, generic 'you (MS)' includes or excludes me. While the feminine 'you' would be a mechanism to draw just the two of us—interviewer and interviewee—into a shared creation of meaning, the masculine 'you' brings the meaning out to the wider world—which may, in Dani's mind, mean the wider world of all Israelis (which would include me), or perhaps only the wider world of Israeli males, or perhaps only Israeli male bus drivers. Nonetheless, it is clear here—and

particularly in the notable disparity between this section and the previous section—that Dani was not solely interested in bringing me into the experience of what it means for him to be "on edge." In the excerpt below, Dani describes his experience of witnessing a bombing on the bus directly in front of him:

> A second. Exactly a second, like a second of thought, to cross the intersection, I could have crossed, but God says to me 'No, stay (MS). What is the big deal? So two more minutes.' 9:05 at night. (1) That's the third terror attack. Like, that *I really saw in LIVE, **in LIVE I saw it, in LIVE***, are you (FS) familiar with, line 21 takes a left toward [street name], line 4 also takes a left, line 4 crossed the intersection, stands/stood[5] at the stop, just barely passed the stop, exploded, went up, and I am still standing here and seeing the whole scene, maybe 30 meters away from me, and hearing **everything**. God told me 'Get out of there, what do you (MS) need? Again to, to be reminded of blood, what blood?', what do I need these things? (3:241-247)[iii]

From this section alone, it sounds as if Dani was standing on a sidewalk, alone, watching these events unfold. In reality, however, he was on duty at this time, at the wheel of a bus full of passengers who all witnessed the same event. There is a collective nature to this experience to which Dani's discourse here does not attest, and the picture he paints is a wholly solitary one, with no mention of those who shared the picture with him. It seems here that Dani has a particular interest in presenting this story in this manner, and his use of English only further emphasizes how important and dramatic this experience was for him—he reiterates three times in a row that he saw the bus explode in front of him "in live."

It is notable here that Dani makes little use of either the masculine or feminine forms of "you," in stark contrast to the previous two excerpts. Indeed, this section is overwhelmingly narrated from within 'I' statements—what he himself saw, heard, and experienced. He is interested neither in collectivizing and universalizing this experience, nor in bringing me into it as a 'co-understander.' Here, his use of English is aimed at creating a picture of a singularly influential experience, and his singular claim to it. The other communicative strategies that have emerged from previous excerpts are not at work here, as his motivations for telling the story in this

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[5] Because of the structure of the Hebrew tense system, it is not possible to ascertain here whether Dani was using the past or present tense form of this verb.

manner have taken precedence over an apparent need to be understood or to connect with his interviewer.

We can see from the above two texts the richness of the insights revealed if one takes care not just to translate the words, but also to make visible the structure and uniquenesses of the original language. If every *'atah'* ("you (MS)") and *'at'* ("you (FS)") had been translated into the English simply as "you," much of the richness of the text—as well as the analytical information garnered about the speaker and how he views and interacts with the interviewer—would have been entirely lost in the transfer.

Another notable difference between Israeli Hebrew and American English—one that can hold true in the translation from nearly any language to another—lies in the field of specific semantic terms. Throughout the analysis of these interviews, we repeatedly came across words and phrases in Hebrew that simply did not translate clearly into English, and we constantly grappled with the choices necessarily involved in pushing, pulling, and prodding the original texts into consistent, coherent, and comparable texts in English. Because the interviewees utilized a variety of semi-equivalent alternatives, we presumed that unique meaning lies in these choices, and thus, we have attempted to translate these sections of text as literally (albeit clumsily) as possible, in hopes of conveying clearly these differences.

Yossi's[6] discourse most profoundly demonstrated these semantic phenomena and the attendant translation difficulties. From the beginning of his baseline interview, Yossi frequently appeared to be personalizing his bus and the events he had experienced through the use of first-person possessive pronouns, referring to certain objects as his own or even as himself. Interestingly, Dani made a similar statement in his narrative of the terror attack he experienced, when he said, "…my people were wounded."[iv] This phrase proved particularly difficult to translate into English, but it will have to suffice to note that the construction of this phrase in Hebrew is highly personalized, protective, and perhaps even military in nature—something that an army

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[6] A native-born Israeli, "Yossi" was 55 years old and married with three children. He completed twelve years of schooling and had served in the armored corps during his compulsory army service. He had worked as a bus driver in Jerusalem for 35 years without a single break, until a bombing took place on his bus approximately nineteen months prior to the interview. The terror attack was extensive, with many casualties and injuries, and Yossi experienced a partial loss of hearing as a result. He was not working at the time of the interview, and appeared to be still suffering from fairly serious post-traumatic symptoms.

commander might say in reference to his unit, or a school teacher about his or her students. This provides another example of the complexities of translation of specific semantic terms—especially, as seen in this instance, the translation of military terms from a language used within a highly militarized society such as Israel, to a language used within a society without an integrated civilian army, such as America.

As part of our comparative analysis of Yossi's discourse in his baseline and follow-up interviews, we created the following table, which focuses particularly on his discourse with regard to personalization and ownership.

Interview 1 (Baseline)	Interview 2 (Follow-up)
"Now *I was wounded* in the Yom Kippur War, (4) I received a direct hit, and *I had [li] two casualties* (MP)."[v]	"In the Yom Kippur War I got a direct hit, from an artillery shell, *I had [li] two guys who were killed* {and I}, *I was lightly wounded...*"[vi]
"*My door* was warped, gashed. Everything was gashed. I grasped the door, **by force**, opened a little…"[vii]	"I grasped *th'door* and by force opened it and it was {warped, and I managed to open it}."[viii]
	"I opened *th'door*, I got really God-given **strength** (1) that I opened *th'doors*…"[ix]
"Two girls got *onto me [li]* [my bus], (2) and I remember it well, that t- got (FS) *onto me [li]*, two girls and an older man got on."[x]	"Two girls, and an old man (1), *got on at me [etzli]* [my bus]. (1)"[xi]
	"Annd there were people who *got on to me [elai]* to the bus, a story from what happened to me…"[xii]
	"A bit after the some one or two stops, [they] *got on with me* and I got up, and continued to drive."[xiii]
	"Now. Uhh, the old man who *got on at me [etzli]*, (2) the girl who sat behind who I know got up and let him sit down…"[xiv]

As we can see, these semantic terms create unique difficulties in translation here, making many of the above sentences clearly clumsy. However, the analysis of Yossi's use of this type of discourse made it crucial to distinguish between the related terms—particularly given the observation that his discourse in the follow-up interview was decidedly less personalized than in the baseline interview. Had we not paid special attention to translating these terms as comparably as possible, we would never have noticed Yossi's transition from consistent use of the *'li'* expression (the most personalized) in the first interview to a more pronounced use of the *'etzli'* and *'elai'* expressions, in addition to the expression for "with me" (all of which may be

considered less personalized than *'li'*). This, when viewed alongside Yossi's clear choice to depersonalize other statements (such as "the door" instead of "my door," and "I had two guys who were killed" instead of "I had two casualties"), presents a compelling picture of an individual who, three years later, seems to view these experiences quite differently than he did at the time of the first interview. Indeed, we can hypothesize from this semantic analysis that Yossi may have more fully processed and accepted these experiences (as part of life, or as something that did not affect only him) by the time of the second interview.

'Translation' of the power dynamics negotiations between an Israeli interviewee and an American interviewer

In addition to the importance in translation of paying attention to and making apparent the structural and other unique differences inherent in the original language, we have 'found' that there may emerge other, equally important issues that require careful understanding and 'translation.' Throughout my interview with Dani, I felt that 'something interesting' was going on with regard to the dynamics between us. Perhaps it was because he was very close to my age, as opposed to the rest of the interviewees, who were all at least 20 years older than me. Perhaps it was because the interview was conducted in his bedroom, as he lives with his parents. Or perhaps it was because he was the only one of the interviewees who inquired as to my background and why I came to Israel. Regardless, our dynamics proved worthy of further analysis, to which we will turn now here. In order to delve deeper into what may have been 'lost' as well as 'found' in the interview with Dani, we will present here perhaps the most central narrative of the interview—that of the terror attack he experienced most directly and personally:

> I am driving, line 22, it was winter, February, rain. (1) Approach the bus stop, take on the passengers, take, *you (FS) know*, [bus] passes, *money, MONEY.* Suddenly I see someone come to a standstill in front of the bus. (1) I do to himmm like 'Go past.' (2) Because I want to put on the blinker and leave the bus stop. *And then he winks, winks his eye at me, does like this*, I do to him like 'What?', [he][7] takes out the zipper, coat, takes out a rifle and 'Brrrrrr' ((makes a sound of automatic weapon firing in succession)). And I, am I

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[7] When the specific pronominal form is not indicated with its collocated verb, the pronoun equivalent (or possible equivalents, where certainty is not possible) will be noted in [square brackets] preceding the verb.

dreaming? *I DREAM?* {What? What?} Straight away, like [they (MP)] taught me in the
army, I bent down underneath the steering wheel, I am small. The bullets passed me over
my head, *he fired in a burst, in automatic, not single shots, ONE ONE, in a burst.* I went
down underneath, with the steering wheel, and I started to drive. I wanted to run him over,
but he got away. Now I look, I see him pump full of bullets thhhe people who were at the
bus stop. (2) What did I do, I got out of there, I went to the right towards [the hospital],
there was a hospital nearby, I went off the route, my people were wounded, tons of blood
on the bus. I said 'I have to get the bus out, otherwise he is tearing us apart,' *understand
(FS)?* And so, the real story is, I wanted to go back, like, that's it, I saved the bus, now I
want to go back to that place, like, *how do they say?* To see whaat is the condition of the
terrorist, to see if they killed him, didn't kill him, what he is doing, maybe it is possible to
bring him under control. *You (FS) understand?* There is no fear in me, I am not afraid. I
didn't go into shock, no nothing. You can ask [the psychologist]. They came, something
like 30 reporters, [she] says to me 'Are you able to talk?', I told her 'Yes.' And two days
later I went back to work. (1) There is no fear in me, there is no fear in my lexicon, I don't
have it. (2) (3:66-80)[xv]

Perhaps the most interesting phenomenon here is Dani's use of English throughout this brief
section of talk, and his choice of which words and/or concepts to translate for me—"money," "I
dream," and "one one." He follows the same pattern for "money" and "I dream," first saying it in
Hebrew and then reiterating it with the English translation. With regard to the third use of
English in this text section, Dani uses multiple means in both the form and content of his
discourse to assist my understanding of the concept of an automatic weapon and the attacker's
use of it. His first attempt lies in his use of a sound effect ("Brrrrrrr"), followed by five separate
attempts, one after the other, to clarify this for me ("he fired in a burst, in automatic, not single
shots, ONE ONE, in a burst"), with the second to last attempt being in English (in addition to his
use of the Hebrew-icized word for "automatic," which actually is derived directly from English
and sounds almost exactly the same).

While there is always the possibility that Dani used this communicative strategy because he
thought or felt that I did not understand him, I nonetheless find it hard to believe that he was
uncertain if I would understand the Hebrew word for "money," in particular. I was, after all,
conducting an interview with him in Hebrew, and he was aware that I had lived in the country for

a reasonable amount of time. Similarly, while it is also possible that Dani's use of English words came as a reaction to some unconscious message I may have sent that may have reflected a lack of understanding (such as a confused facial expression or uncertain body language), I again find it hard to believe that I had furrowed my brow when he used the Hebrew words for "money," and "am I dreaming," which I did indeed have in my vocabulary at the time.

Nonetheless, it seems apparent from this text section that Dani may be expressing a need to make sure that he is being understood. This emerges in places even where he does not use English words, such as when he physically demonstrates to me what winking is ("And then he winks, winks his eye at me, does like this"), and in his frequent direct questioning of me as to whether I understand or understood him. I would suggest here that there was something else going on in this section of discourse, and in the interview at large. It is well-known that communicative strategies such as repetition and emphasis serve as markers that something important is being expressed. Dani uses these strategies, and it seems likely that his use of English words is another manner of marking significance in his discourse.

Indeed, it is possible that Dani's use of English words comes as a reaction to the power dynamics at work between us. In this sense, it may have been essentially irrelevant to Dani whether I actually know the Hebrew words for "money" or "dream"—what appears to have been important is that he *does* know the English word for it, and therefore, he uses it in order to show his intelligence and worldliness. Of course, there is still a selection mechanism at work here, with regard to why he chose to use these communicative strategies at these particular times in these particular contexts. I would postulate that his use of English, as well as his repeated questioning of whether I understand or understood him, are also attempts on his part to 'level the playing field' with regard to the power dynamics between us. It cannot be overlooked that, while Dani and I are close to the same age, we share neither the same gender nor nationality. Additionally, Dani is a bus driver and I introduced myself as a Master's student in social psychology (which most Israelis seem to consider indistinguishable from clinical psychology, and therefore, in his eyes I am 'a therapist'). Thus, it is conceivable that there was a significant power imbalance between us—which, I would assert, he sought to correct and redistribute at every possible opportunity.

Discussion: Connections between the 'lost', the 'found', and the context

We will now turn to a more structured discussion of the analysis that has been conducted and the examples illustrated here, along with an attempt to connect these findings to the larger social psychological context and discourse surrounding Dani, myself, and the cooperative interview dynamic. Through our in-depth analysis of the above and other excerpts of Dani's interview, we have found a number of communicative strategies and patterns. One of the basic tenets of sign-oriented linguistic theory states that one must treat discursive phenomena not simply as "the way in which people talk," but rather, as a marker of the inner world and motivations of the encoder/speaker. Indeed, as Tobin (1990, 1994/1995) suggests, we must look at an individual's talk with a focus on the non-random distribution of the discursive phenomena at work, and remember that choices—whether conscious or unconscious—are always being made which drive this non-random distribution.

With this in mind, we have arrived at the following summary of Dani's discursive choices and communicative strategies, as well as a number of possible explanations therein:

Discursive phenomena	Possible explanations
Use of English	Demonstration to me that he can speak English – possible sign of his desire for approval, admiration, and inclusion in the 'English-speaking world'
	Reflection of his sense of inferiority – possible sign that he is trying to correct or redistribute the power imbalance between us
	Reflection of his sense of superiority – possible sign that he is trying to make me aware of my inferior Hebrew or help me understand up to his level
	Attempt to explain more clearly to me – either because he thinks I don't understand or because he wants to make sure that I do
	Demonstration of added emphasis, which may be a sign of a subject, concept, story, or issue that holds particular importance to the encoder/speaker

Use of repetition	Well-documented discursive sign of a subject, concept, story, or issue that holds particular importance to the encoder/speaker Attempt to explain more clearly to me – either because he thinks I don't understand or because he wants to make sure that I do
Use of "you (FS) know" and "let's (FS) say"	Attempt to create a discursive coalition between us – toward a shared creation of meaning and understanding Attempt to bring me into the story and/or experience
Use of "you (FS)"	Demonstration of a need to connect and create a shared experience, both discursively and emotionally
Use of "you (MS)"	Attempt to depersonalize, universalize, and collectivize to a larger context world – but unclear how inclusive this world is in his eyes (Israelis, or Israeli males, or Israeli male bus drivers, etc.) Possible attempt to exclude me from the context or experience
Use of "Do/Did you (FS) understand/understood?"	Demonstration of a need to make certain that he is being understood Demonstration of added emphasis, which may be a sign of a subject, concept, story, or issue that holds particular importance to the encoder/speaker Demonstration of his uncertainty that I can ever really understand – perhaps as a result of one or more of the following reasons: 1) my gender; 2) my education level; 3) my less-than-fluent Hebrew; 4) my status as an immigrant and non-native Israeli; 5) my not having served in the army; 6) my not having experienced a terror attack

Any number of these possible hypotheses could be at work at any given time, influencing Dani's discursive choices in various ways, and it is impossible to know with certainty which of these

explanations have motivated the communicative strategies used here. Again, it is possible that Dani simply enjoys using the English words that he knows, and that while it didn't necessarily assist our communication and shared understanding, it made him feel that it did. And yet, a deep analysis of these excerpts shows that there was nonetheless a pattern—rather than a series of random discursive whims with no 'rhyme or reason'—underlying Dani's choices at certain points in his talk and not at others.

Conclusion

This study brought together an American-born, relatively new immigrant and hence primarily English-speaking 'outsider' researcher with native Israeli, Hebrew-speaking 'insider' participants. This unique pairing yielded a number of advantages and disadvantages, and an even greater number of questions that have been grappled with throughout the research; such as, "How can a researcher who is not an inborn member of the culture or native speaker of the language profess to understand what her participants are speaking about?"; "How much is 'missed' because of these 'deficiencies,' and how much is 'gained' or viewed anew through 'outsider' eyes?"; "How can a 'foreign' researcher successfully analyze (and then translate for her audiences) not only the words and phrases used by her interviewees, but also the sentiments, unspoken understandings, and dynamics throughout the interview?".

As we have seen through the examples presented here, cross-language and cross-cultural interviews can present a number of challenges. In particular, the translation of the pronoun systems and specific semantic terms, along with the understanding of the cross-cultural and cross-language negotiation of power dynamics from an Israeli Hebrew interview context to American English texts must be done carefully and with a watchful eye to the uniquenesses and cultural contexts of both languages.

When attention was paid to a language-sensitive translation of the pronoun system in Israeli Hebrew, for instance, we 'found' that the interviewees' non-randomly distributed use of the second-person singular masculine and feminine pronouns ("you" (MS) and "you" (FS)) sends and reflects an insightful message about the narrative as well as the narrator. Indeed, it was

hypothesized here that the use of the masculine "you" serves to depersonalize, universalize, and collectivize the statement being made, while the feminine "you" serves to connect and create a shared experience between the speaker and listener. Because the English language does not have these gendered pronoun versions, this particularly interesting finding would not have been 'found' if the interviews had not been conducted in the interviewees' mother tongue, or if attention had not been paid to the shifts in pronoun use in the English translation (through the use of the MS and FS code). Additionally, when an attempt was made to translate the texts in such a way as to preserve evidence of the power dynamics between the interviewer and interviewee, we 'found' a number of different strategies used by the interviewees for getting their point across and managing the interview relationship.

Of course, by the same token, not conducting the interviews in the interviewer's mother tongue led to the 'loss' of some level of understanding of the nuances and perhaps even outright concepts that may be involved in the 'insider' experience. This may indeed have had an effect on the interview dynamic and the interviewees' sense that they were being understood. The translation of interview excerpts for this paper also poses clear pitfalls and problems, especially when executed by a non-native speaker of the language. And yet, we have seen here the emergence of a rich array of discursive patterns and strategies, suggesting that it may nonetheless be possible to wade our way through translated interviews and texts, and come out the other side with meaningful and significant results. This can only be accomplished, however, alongside a watchful eye and reflexive perspective on the problematic nature of this endeavor, as well as a commitment to creative strategies that allow the structure and unique characteristics of languages to come alive and be visible in the translations we carry out.

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i

"את רואה את האוטובוס, אחרי זה הלכתי לסניף, כי התיק שלי נשאר שמה, הכל, לקחו לי ת'תיק. אחרי שבועיים, אני, סתם. עושה סדר, אני רואה מלא זכוכיות בתוך התיק. מלא זכוכיות. (4) בסוף, ואת רואה את האוטובוס, אלוהים ישמור, כולו חורים, אני אומר לא, אלוהים, אני, באמת, אני חי-, חייב לאלוהים ת'חיים שלי. הבנת? (3) נס גדול, בואי נגיד ככה. נס גדול היה פה, במקרה שלי, שלא נפגעתי. יש כאלה שאת יודעת, נהרגו, please, נהרגו, אנייי."

ii

א: אהם, אוקיי. ו:איך, איך הרגשת, מה חשבת ברגע שאתה עלית לאוטובוס בפעם אחרי זה?
ד: **האמת,** (1) ב-, בקו הזה הספציפי, כשעברתי מהזה, קצת, את יודעת, אתה מסתכל, אתה דרוך, **דרוך**. את יודעת מה זה?
א: אהה, כן.
ד: דרוך זה כאילו your, your heart beats, אתה מסתכל, אתה מצפה למשהו, קו אחר כאילו לא מעניין אותי, מה, מה, אבל כשאתה עובר משם, אז אתה יודע, אתה נזכר, אתה אומר "וואי, אלוהים, איזה נס היה לי פה". אתה מסתכל אתה אומר "יאללה, בדיוק פה זה קרה לי. בדיוק פה שעצרתי, בדיוק זה", אני מנסה ל-, להחדיר את זה.
א: אהם.
ד: את מבינה? להחדיר ת'-, זכ-, זכרון.

iii

"שנייה. בדיוק שנייה, כאילו שנייה של מחשבה, לעבור תצומת, יכלתי לעבור, אבל אלוהים אומר לי "לא, תישאר. מה קרה? אז עוד שתי דקות". תשע וחמישה בלילה. (1) זה הפיגוע השלישי. כאילו, שממש ראיתי ב-live, **ב-live** ראיתי את זה, ב-live, את מכירה, עשרים ואחת לוקח שמאלה לכיוון [שם של רחוב], קו ארבע גם לוקח שמאלה, קו ארבע עבר תצומת, נעמד בתחנה, עבר את התחנה טיפה, התפוצץ, התרומם, ואני עוד עומד פה ורואה את כל המחזה, אולי שלושים מטר ממני, ושומע **הכל**. אלוהים אמר לי 'תברח, מה אתה צריך? עוד פעם ל-, להיזכר בדם, מה דם?', מה אני צריך ת'דברים האלה??"

iv "...סטיתי מהמסלול, נפצעו לי אנשים, מלא דם באוטובוס."

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[v] "עכשיו אני נפגעתי במלחמת יום הכיפור, (4) קיבלתי פגיעה ישירה, והיו לי שתי הרוגים."

[vi] "במלחמת יום הכיפורים חטפתי פגיעה ישירה, של פגז, היו לי שני חֲבֵרֶה שנהרגו {ואני}, נפצעתי קל..."

[vii] "הדלת שלי הייתה מעוותת, קרועה. הכל היה קרוע. תפסתי את הדלת, **בכח**, פתחתי קצת..."

[viii] "תפסתי ת'דלת ובכוח פתחתי אותה והיא הייתה {מעוותת, והצלחתי לפתוח אותה}."

[ix] "פתחתי ת'דלת, קיבלתי **כוח** ממש עליון (1) שפתחתי ת'דלתות..."

[x] "עלו לי שני בחורות, (2) ואני זוכר את זה יפֶה, שעלתה לי שְ-, עלו שני בחורות ואדם מבוגר."

[xi] "(1) **עלו אצלי**, (1) *שני בחורות*, וקשיש." Interestingly, here Yossi makes the exact same grammatical 'error' as he did three years ago. Again, the grammatically correct form of this sentence would have had "שתי" rather than "שני". Here again, all grammatical 'errors' have been re-checked with the original interview and text, and their appearance here signifies that they were made by the interviewee as part of his original speech, and not byproducts of either the transcription or analysis processes.

[xii] "ו:היו אנשים שעלו אלי לאוטובוס, סיפור מתוך מה שקרה לי..."

[xiii] "קצת אחרי ה- איזה תחנה או שניים, עלו איתי וקמתי, והמשכתי ליסוע."

[xiv] "עכשיו. אהה, הקשיש שעלה אצלי, (2) הבחורה שישבה מאחורה שאני מכיר אותה קמה ונתנה לו לשבת..."

[xv]

"אני נוסע, קו עשרים ושתיים, היה חורף, פברואר, גשם. (1) מתקרב לתחנה, קולט ת'נוסעים, קולט, את יודעת, כרטיסיות, כסף, money. פתאום אני רואה מישהו נעמד מול האוטובוס. (1) אני עושה לווו 'תעבור'. (2) כי אני רוצה לתת וינקר ולצאת מהתחנה. ואז הוא קורץ, קורץ לי בעין, עושה לי ככה, אני עושה לו 'מה?', מוציא ריץ'-ריץ', מעיל, מוציא רובה וברררררר. ואני, אני חולם? I dream? {מה? מה?} ישר, כמו שכאילו לימדו אותי בצבא, התכופפתי מתחת להגה, אני קטן. הכדורים עברו לי מעל הראש, הוא ירה בצרור, באוטומט, לא בבודד, one one, בצרור. ירדתי למטה, עם ההגה, והתחלתי לנהוג. רציתי לדרוס אותו, אבל הוא ברח. עכשיו אני מסתכל, אני רואה אותו תופר ת':אנשים שהיו בתחנה. (2) מה עשיתי, ברחתי, נכנסתי ימינה לכיוון [שם של בית חולים], היה שם בית חולים ליד, סטיתי מהמסלול, נפצעו לי אנשים, מלא דם באוטובוס. אמרתי 'אני חייב להוציא ת'אוטובוס, אחרת הוא קורע אותנו לגזרים', הבנת? ואז, לסיפור, רציתי לחזור, כאילו, זהו, הצלתי ת'אוטובוס, עכשיו אני רוצה לחזור למקום הזה, כאילו, איך אומרים? לראות מהה המצב של המחבל, לראות אם הרגו אותו, לא הרגו אותו, מה הוא עושה, אולי אפשר להשתלט עליו. את מבינה? אין אצלי פחד, אני לא מ'פחד. לא נכנסתי להלם, לא כלום. את יכולה לשאול את [שם של הפסיכולוגית]. באו, אולי שלושים עיתונאים, אומרת לי 'אתה מסוגל לדבר?', אמרתי לה 'כן. ואחרי יומיים חזרתי לעבודה. (1) אין אצלי פחד, אין אצלי בלקסיקון פחד, אין לי. (2)"