

Extremely emotional. Issues of register

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Abstract

PSIs work in places that other interpreters don't reach. We work in places other interpreters have no wish to reach. But we think that we are dealing with the priceless: the lives, liberty, aspirations, physical and emotional wellbeing of ordinary people in difficult circumstances. We deal in respect for the law, and human rights. It sounds so .. well, glamorous. Actually it's often smelly and always technically very demanding. In some ways we have more in common with AHPs (allied health professionals) than we do with other interpreters.

Register in language is a major issue for us. We may not skirt round it. The emotional content of an utterance is a very large proportion of the meaning carried by it. Our job is to relay the whole of the message. If there is one thing that PSIs may not permit themselves, it is a judgemental attitude to other people's choice of language.

The presentation will discuss the cognitive aspects of interlocutor roles, and how that impacts on impartiality and the interpreter's duty to relay the whole message. This is often a 'rude' profession. 'Rude' language will be used and discussed.