Methodological Challenges in Conducting Cross-Cultural/ Language Research with Spanish Speakers: The Role of the Researcher/Translator

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Abstract

With the increase in global research, it is common for researchers to investigate topics in intercultural settings, both in their own home countries and abroad. Although findings from this research are prolific, rarely are detailed examples given or practical suggestions offered, particularly in relation to the role of the translator/researcher. The significant and often undervalued role of the translator/researcher in cross cultural/language qualitative research warrants methodological considerations at the onset and throughout the research. Nonetheless, few qualitative studies transparently report the process of how the translation findings were developed. This paper addresses this gap by examining a Latinx postgraduate student's role in the qualitative research on teacher induction in Chile. I used reflexivity to assess my positionality of insiderness and outsiderness and its influence in the process of recruitment, conducting interviews, transcription, and translation. Interviews were conducted, transcribed and analysed in Spanish. Examples of data translation that can help to identify the main issues associated with reporting the findings in English are provided. These applied examples are used to illustrate the gaps and misinterpretations possible in intercultural research. The importance of researcher's culture competence, contextual skills and knowledge of the field of the study are highlighted.

Keywords

cross-cultural/language research, qualitative research, positionality, reflexivity

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With the increase in global research, it is common for researchers to investigate topics in intercultural settings, both in their own home countries and abroad. Although findings from this research are prolific, rarely are detailed examples given or practical suggestions offered, particularly in relation to the role of the translator/researcher. The significant and often undervalued role of the translator/researcher in cross cultural/language qualitative research warrants methodological considerations at the onset and throughout the research. Nonetheless, few qualitative studies transparently report the process of how the translation findings were developed. This paper addresses this gap by examining a Latinx postgraduate student's role in the qualitative research on teacher induction in Chile. I used reflexivity to assess my positionality of insiderness and outsiderness and its influence in the process of recruitment, conducting interviews, transcription, and translation. Interviews were conducted, transcribed and analysed in Spanish. Examples of data translation that can help to identify the main issues associated with reporting the findings in English are provided. These applied examples are used to illustrate the gaps and misinterpretations possible in intercultural research. The importance of researcher's culture competence, contextual skills and knowledge of the field of the study are highlighted.

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Introduction

Research crosses national and linguistic barriers as the world is becoming more globalized. Researchers whose native language is not English are conducting research in countries where English is the dominant language and culture (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2011). To share scientific knowledge globally, translation of research findings from one language to another becomes inevitable in non-English or cross-cultural research. All cross-cultural language research with non-English-speaking populations must contend with issues of translation, yet most literature in social science research fails to describe and explain translation processes that were used in detail (Yunus, et al., 2022). As a result, it is difficult to fully understand how translation procedures were implemented or adapted to maintain the scientific rigor of studies while being culturally sensitive to participants. The most telling criticism in conducting cross-cultural/language research is lack of acknowledgement by researchers' reports of the role translators play in the research process and consequently, their effects on the findings (Chidlow, et al., 2014; Plumridge, et al., 2012). Final research findings depend on a great deal of translation procedures (Mandal, 2018); however, language use is much more than vocabulary and grammar. In this line, Pérez Foster (1998), questions the assumption that

languages are purely interchangeable within the bilingual person and that any experience of the bilingual person can be expressed in either language.

As a Chilean cross-cultural researcher, I use reflexivity to assess my relative positions as insider and outsider during data collection of Chilean beginning teachers (i.e., recruitment, conducting interviews, transcription and translation) in the Research Beginning Teacher Induction project. In this study, I used reflexivity to describe my capacity for self-awareness that affects how I understood who I am, my values and how they influenced the study data collection process (Hickson, 2016).

As the study from which examples are unfolded crosses the boundaries of continents, language and culture, I was increasingly aware of methodological issues regarding translation. I noticed that one of the main issues was a lack of guidelines on reporting the translation process in qualitative research. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to provide methodological insights into the process of conducting research in Spanish and publishing the results in English. There are issues, which affect the quality of translation, and hence knowledge, such as: ambiguity, one´s own cultural and professional background and lack of equivalence. By acting as translators, cultural brokers or mediators, researchers are acknowledged for inherently shaping qualitative research processes and outcomes (Caretta, 2015). In this account, I became part of the process where meanings were shared and co-constructed by both the researcher and participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Therefore, in this article, I describe my experience and reflections on translation in qualitative induction research to illustrate the complexity of the process and provide recommendations for preserving the trustworthiness in qualitative research. First, I will describe my study and its methodology. I introduce the perspective of reflexivity and positionality, which provide the basis for discussing the process of this Chilean cross-cultural research.

The Study

The research study from which this experience has been drawn and that has been used to illustrate the main topic in this article was undertaken in Chile. The research was composed of three interrelated studies, each of which sought to investigate different aspects of induction in the Chilean context. As a doctoral student in Australia, I was involved in the research project as interviewer, researcher/translator and in the data analysis and reporting process (Hyland, 2016; Shimpuku & Norr, 2012). Furthermore, in this study I used the notion of "practice architectures" that enable and constrain the practices of professionals to explore induction practices (Kemmis & Grootenboer, 2008). With Spanish words as data, translating these data into English became a formidable methodological challenge.

Qualitative approaches are deep-rooted in a tradition that acknowledges the importance of reflexivity and context (Temple & Edwards, 2002). Therefore, in this study, adopting a perspective that acknowledges differences in the way the social world is seen is relevant to translation as I played such a direct and intimate role in both data translation and analysis. Another dimension that needs to be explored within this article relates to my own position as a practitioner, and as a Chilean doctoral student in Australia conducting cross-cultural/language research in Chile. Therefore, I will examine issues of transcribing and translating faced while conducting the study by considering the influence of the insider/outsider position in the translation act. Thus, the specific aim of this article is to discuss: (1) the researcher/translator's role; (2) the challenges experienced translating data; and (3) the strategies used to overcome these challenges.

The Approach of Reflexivity and Positionality

Reflexivity is a term that has emerged from qualitative and ethnographic research (Hickson, 2016). Reflexivity recognizes the influences of the researcher's background, assumptions, and expectations on the research process and outcomes (Hickson, 2016). In cross-cultural/language research meaning could get lost (Abfalter et al., 2020; Miquel-Verges, et al., 2011; Nasri, et al., 2020), misinterpreted, and transformed in the transfer process of research questions or outcomes. Cross-language qualitative researchers have the responsibility to maintain the integrity and credibility of translated qualitative data. To do so, researchers need to consider the importance of translation in the process of knowledge transfer (Lamb, et al., 2016). This requires from researchers intense and continuous contextual and methodological reflexivity, discovering and evaluating the gap and differences (Valentine, 2008) in language, culture and field of study.

Being an Insider/Outsider Researcher

Positionality has been defined as where one stands in relation to "the other" and where researchers have been rather "insiders" or "outsiders" (Merriam et al., 2010). There have been several researchers who have examined the insider/outsider status within qualitative research (Asselin, 2003; Merriam, et al., 2010). Traditionally, the topic of insider status and outsider status has been discussed as two distinct and dichotomous variables, in which cross-cultural research are often treated as insider researchers. However, further classifications, such as "Partial-insider" (Subedi, 2006), reflect that the level of insiderness depends on the extent to which researchers hold the values, perspectives, behaviours, beliefs and knowledge of their cultural community. In this study I explore the experience of being both an insider and an outsider, which can be considered as insider/outsiderness continuum (Dhillon & Thomas, 2019). I will focus specifically on the advantages of being an insider when translating data and interpreting meaning (Thomas, et al., 2000).

As a Chilean primary school teacher my own perceptions of beginning teachers' induction have been shaped by my personal experiences. Such personal experiences relate not only to my work as a teacher but also as a Head of Department who was involved with induction workshops provided to beginning teachers within the school. All this suggests that I might have inevitably brought some biases to the conduct of this study. Therefore, although I made every effort to ensure objectivity, these personal features might have shaped the way that I undertook this study and influenced the way that I saw, interpreted and translated the data in the light of my own experience.

The site of the study was my own original home city in Chile, a situation that proved favourable when obtaining access to the schools that agreed to participate in the research. Being a Chilean primary school teacher and therefore, part of the culture under study that shares an identity, the language and experiential base with the study participants placed me as an insider researcher (Asselin, 2003). Like native researchers who have been able to capitalize on their cultural knowledge, language ability, and social connections in their research (Al-Makhamreh & Lewando-Hundt, 2008; Cui, 2015), I did not face any challenge in recruiting participants. As argued by Kanuha (2000), having an insider perspective enhances the depth and breadth of understanding participants' experiences. My knowledge of the language, the culture, and the educational system constituted clear advantages, particularly during the process of translating participants' words. In addition, the prior experiences with the educational system enabled me to be more sensitive to participants' experiences. On the other hand, it has been argued also that 'outsiders' are likely to have greater degree of objectivity. For example, it has been widely argued that as an insider it is easy to take for granted everyday issues in practice (Vulliamy,

1990). However, as stated by Mullings (1999) the insider/outsider binary "in reality is a boundary that is not only highly unstable but also one that ignores the dynamism of positionalities in time and through space" (p. 340). Although I could no longer consider myself an insider in the community, I was not completely an outsider either. Within the study, I was vulnerable with participants disclosing my experience as a teacher. Research participants who were in distress may have felt more comfortable with a researcher who has knowledge of their specific culture and experience.

Drawing upon my experience whilst conducting interviews with beginning teachers and principals, I argue that it is very difficult to consistently remain as an insider. Yet rather than experiencing a solely insider or outsider status I experienced "insider moments" wherein my interests and those of participants converged and we were able to share meaningful insights (Buford, 2014, p. 117). Furthermore, my experience of moving between insider and outsider positions might be explained using Australian research conventions, and the application of theoretical understandings developed in the Anglophone research, which gave me the necessary distance to see the wider perspective. Being both an insider and outsider proved to be particularly helpful when translating and interpreting the data in this study.

Collecting and Transcribing Data in Spanish

Twenty-nine Chilean beginning teachers who were monolingual native Spanish speakers agreed to be part of the study. Interviews lasted 45-60 minutes and were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Using semi-structured interviews in the first language of the participants proved to be a valuable method of qualitative data collection in this research. My prior familiarity with the language and the culture of the people under study represented an obvious advantage. For example, conducting interviews in my native language allowed me to carry out follow up questions, which contributed to the richness of the data. However, it is important to note that when I was analyzing the tapes, I discovered that, on some occasions, my familiarity with the language prevented me from asking participants to clarify some terms and expressions that they used, and which have a particular meaning in our culture.

Since I transcribed interviews in Spanish, the quality of the transcript did not create difficulties in the interpretation and analysis of data (Twin, 1997). However, one of the challenges related to the characteristics of the Spanish language. It is not uncommon in Spanish to omit the subject, omit periods or lack clear endings to sentences. Analysis of the data, the development of categories and the seeking of patterns were done using the Spanish written transcription. This allowed me to preserve the contextual meaning of participants' responses, which diminished the difficulties commonly implied in translation. Creswell (2003) and Silverman (2005) contend that data collection and data analysis must be included in a simultaneous process when carrying out qualitative research. Consequently, conducting the interviews and transcribing them in Spanish allowed me to be immersed in the data to achieve a better sense of participants' words.

Moreover, the language barriers between researchers and participants argued by Larson (1998) and Temple (2002) were not present in this study. Although such language barriers did not exist, this study faced methodological challenges of conducting research in one language and reporting the findings in another. So, I must correctly translate the names and themes and categories, especially the citations. In this case methodological issues surrounding translation were still present.

Translating Data from Spanish to English

While the data collection and the transcriptions in this study were done in Spanish, the final report had to be written in English. Moreover, one quality criterion essential to the reporting of qualitative research is the inclusion of participants' quotes in the findings section (Walsh & Downe, 2006), to give readers of the research the opportunity to "see for themselves" what participants "look like" (Wolcott, 1994).

Translating quotations needed to decide between a "literal" (i.e., translating word-by-word) and a "free" translation, that is, translating a text in such a way that it reproduces the general meaning of the original text. As suggested by Honing (1997, p. 17) a word-by-word translation could perhaps be seen as doing more justice to what participants have said and "make one's readers understand the foreign mentality better." However, such practice reduces the readability of the text. On the other hand, creating readable quotations implies editing, which always involves the risk of misrepresenting the meaning of the participant (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 273).

Concepts in Spanish that have a Different Meaning in English

When translating data, the most critical issue at stake was not only to be able to do a literal translation of language – which resulted to be the less efficient form of translation – but also, to be able to gain conceptual equivalence or comparability of meaning (Squires, 2008; Temple, 1997). To determine equivalence between two languages the corresponding words in the source language and the target language need to be examined. This is called lexical equivalence (Baker, 2011). The problem with lexical equivalence is that sometimes a specific word in the source language may not have an equivalent word in the target language or the word may have more than one equivalent word. Also, there are cases of no equivalence (Larkin et al., 2007). Therefore, changes to language occur during the process of translation, then achieving conceptual equivalence is the goal. Conceptual equivalence refers to the similarity between concepts or ideas between two languages rather than exact similarity of lexical meanings across languages (Neuman, 2011).

In this study, most of the time, it was impossible to do a literal movement from Spanish to English. In many cases there was not an exact match for a word. Instead, there were several possible word combinations that could be used to convey meaning. In addition to the complexity of managing data when no equivalent word exists in English; the influence of the divergent grammatical structures of Spanish and English was also a challenge. Therefore, translation proved to be more than an exchange of words from one language to another. The inevitable consequence of this was that I had to use words that were not spoken by participants. Since it was not possible to develop a translation that represented the exact words used by participants; my goal in this study was to use an approach to translation that would be as close to reality as possible. Notwithstanding, any language and culture will have their own distinctive features, which make it impossible to attain absolute equivalence (Baker, 2011; Kenny, 2009). In many cases there is no equivalent English word capable of capturing the subtle nuances in meaning of the original language and vice versa. For Spanish words that have a different meaning in English; or English words that do not exist in Spanish (such as the word "mentoring" translated by some Chilean scholars as "mentorazgo" which is not recognized by the Real Academia Española[1]), the contextual meaning of each word or phrase was used. Another example is the word "accountability" that is translated as "responsabilidad," however

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1. Real Academia Española (RAE – Royal Spanish Academy): The Diccionario de la lengua española de la Real Academia Española or DRAE is the most authoritative dictionary of the Spanish language.

the meaning of the word in English encapsulates a more complex definition, so the expression "rendición de cuentas" has been used when translating "accountability" into Spanish.

In education language, sometimes a concept well understood and employed in one culture may be lacking altogether in another culture, or it may appear at least with a different meaning. For example, the concept "professional practice" in Spanish Chilean has a different meaning from English. While in English the concept of practice is generally understood as what a professional does in Spanish Chilean – particularly in the field of education – "professional practice" relates to the part of the course of teacher education consisting of practical work within a school setting. Therefore, when beginning teachers and principals in this study referred to "professional practice," even though I knew what they meant, I asked for clarification of the term. It was important to make intelligible what participants understood by the concept, particularly when it has a different meaning in English. Thus, when a poor translation occurs, the researcher may lose the conceptual equivalence of or find the meanings of the participants' words altered because of how the translation was performed (Fredrickson, et al., 2005; Gee, 1990).

This was also important when translating direct quotes. To avoid confusion instead of using "professional practice" (the concept used by participants), I had to use the term "practicum" or "professional experiences." Thus, being an insider was particularly important transferring concepts across cultures. When translating data, it is not enough to speak the relevant language, it is important also to be familiar with the culture and the field of study. This helped me to contextualize participants' words to preserve the integrity of the data. In this study, the researcher's cultural background and experience in the field, affected the quality of translations produced and become especially important during the qualitative coding and data analysis processes. Poorly translated concepts will change what emerges from the analysis and may not reflect participants' meanings.

The following vignette exhibits an example of how I addressed the translation of concepts in Spanish Chilean that have a different meaning in English (see Table 1).

Table 1
Translation Process: Considering the Context rather than Words in Deciding Equivalence or Difference in Meaning

Spanish	English Translation (the contextual translation is included in square brackets for clarification)
"Yo hice la practica profesional en este mismo colegio y me tocó una profesora muy buena, joven como yo…"	"I did the professional practice, [I undertook the practicum] at this college [school] and I had a very good teacher [collaborating teacher], young like me…"

In the example shown above, it was extremely difficult to determine the equivalence between two languages. When translation was performed, I translated how the word related conceptually in the context (Gee, 1990). The context may be the sentence itself, or the place where the person speaks it. In this case, the context was the field of education in Chile and how "professional practice" is used and understood in that context. Something similar happened with the word *colegio* which English translation would be "college." An unpublished experiment carried out by a Chilean tin tank found that changing school name from Spanish to English and introducing uniforms in public schools resulted in increased public schools' enrolments (Winkler & Rounds, 1996). This might explain that private and private subsided

schools in Chile are generally named "colleges" instead of "schools." By contrast the term "school" is generally used in the public system.

The Influence of Grammatical-Syntactical Styles when Translating Data

Still another problem in translation arises from the fact that languages differ widely in their grammar and syntax and these differences influence translation. Although Spanish is a much more heavily inflected language than English, there are many aspects of verb grammar that are similar. Therefore, the use of the tenses when translating the quotes did not present a major difficulty. Although the use of tenses was not a major challenge, there were other aspects of the Spanish language that required special attention. For example, Spanish is a language that clearly defines the relationship between the speaker and the person who is being addressed. Relationships are defined through status and role. Thus, in Spanish, there are two versions of the word "you" (*tú* and *usted*). The correct word is determined by formality, respect, or familiarity. This is not the case in English. Problematic when translating direct quotes from Spanish to English was the absence in the former of an auxiliary in the formation of interrogatives or negatives. Moreover, the subject pronoun "it" is understood or assumed in Spanish. Thus, Spanish speakers often omit "it." Additionally, Spanish word order is generally Subject-Verb-Object, like English. However, Spanish allows more flexibility than English, and generally places at the end of the sentence words that are to be emphasized. Therefore, attempting to do word-by-word translation from Spanish to English resulted in nonstandard syntax. The following vignette shows a word-by-word translation, which clearly reduces the readability of the text (see Table 2).

Table 2
The Influence of Grammatical-Syntactical Styles in Word-by-Word Translation

Spanish words used by the participant	Word by word translation
"Yo creo que se le debe dar más importancia a los problemas actuales, no quedarnos tanto en Vygotsky en todo ese cúmulo de teóricos de la psicología de antaño, sino analizar los nuevos problemas como el *bullying* que si bien es cierto se hablaron pero no se tocaron, no hubo nunca talleres en la universidad con respecto a eso y a los males que están presente."	"I believe that there should be given more importance to the actual problems, not stay us so much on Vygotsky and all that pile of theorists of the psychology from the past but analyze the new problems such as bullying that while it is true were discussed but not touched, there were never workshops at the university regarding this and the ills that are present."

In this case, the literal translation from Spanish to English ended in a text that was difficult to read and understand. It is worth noting that the beginning teacher used the word "bullying" in English. This can be explained by the fact that in Spanish Chilean there is not a word with the same conceptual equivalence, and the English word "bullying" is commonly used to refer to the action of hurting or frightening someone smaller or less powerful.

Considering the Cultural Meaning which Language Carries

Examining definitions from both Spanish and English dictionaries is a first step in determining similarities and differences in the meaning of a word. However, as argued by Phillips (1960, p. 291), "almost any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings, and values that the speaker may or may not be aware of but that the field

worker, as an outsider, usually is not." Importantly, differences in the Spanish language depending on country of origin, or social class and education level results challenging for translators (Sprowls, 2002).

In this case, as an insider I was familiar with the cultural meaning of the Spanish Chilean language therefore I was able to understand the vernacular used by participants in the interviews. The following vignette exhibits an example of how I used the context to translate vernacular expressions and slang terminology (see Table 3).

Table 3
Vignette Exhibits

Translation Considering the Meaning of the Words Only:

"En cuanto a mis clases no, no me cuesta motivarlos, porque yo soy bastante hincha podría decirlo …"

This participant used the word *hincha* in the following manner *yo soy bastante hincha*

hincha: partidario, entusiasta de un equipo deportivo (Real Academia Española online Dictionary) English translation for the word *hincha* would be *fan* (someone who admires and supports a person, sport, etc.)

The literal translation would it be: *I am very fan*

This translation proved to be inadequate. Then I decided to use the cultural meaning rather than words.

Translation Considering the Cultural Meaning rather than Words:

"En cuanto a mis clases no, no me cuesta motivarlos, porque yo soy bastante *hincha* podría decirlo …"

This participant used the word *hincha* in the following manner *yo soy bastante hincha*

hincha is a slang used in Chile to mean insistent, so the participant was actually referring to her own ability to state things forcefully.

Then probably the best translation possible would it be *I am a very persistent teacher*

The study from which the examples are unfolded attempted to understand teacher induction from the perspective of novice teachers. Thus, to express the richness of their experiences, participants used metaphors. However, the way that metaphors are used varied widely from culture to culture. Having an intimate knowledge of the context can facilitate capturing the meaning of participants' experiences of induction (see Table 4).

Table 4
Metaphor Example

Metaphor used by participants	English translation
Nosotros no tenemos prácticas profesionales en que podamos aprender las cosas administrativas. Piensan como se dice que ´en el camino se arregla la carga´	Beginning teachers do not have professional experiences in which we could strengthen our knowledge about administrative issues. There is a general belief on what we call "fix things up as you go."

When accounts are translated into a different language it is useful to try to convey meaning, using words other than literally translated equivalents. This might be easier to do if the translator considers the context and the culture and tries to obtain conceptual equivalence without concern for grammatical or lexical comparability (Temple, 1997). To capture the richness of experience in language, participants in this study commonly used metaphors. Metaphors vary from culture to culture and are language specific (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). For example, in Spanish the expression "on the way the load is fixed" (*en el camino se arregla la carga*) is a common saying to express the lack of planning before starting a project. This expression is not easily understandable for native English speakers. To make the distance between the meanings as experienced by the participants and the meanings as interpreted in the findings as close as possible, translation involved interpretation. Therefore, my interpretation of the metaphor *en el camino se arregla la carga* was transferred into the target language as "fix things as up you go." My option in this study was to discuss concepts rather than just words. In doing so, I opted for a free translation using the context in which the words were spoken and my knowledge about the culture and the field of the study. Translation between languages involved interpretation as well. Challenges in the interpretation and representation of meaning seem to be more complicated when cultural contexts differ and interlingual translation is required.

Thus, I was constantly making decisions about the cultural meaning that language carries, trying to decide equivalence or difference. This demonstrates the importance of understanding the way language represents local realities within fields of study. It is noteworthy that translating metaphors used by participants required also recognition of the importance of the literary forms of language, which not always have the same meaning between languages.

The free translation is more thorough, allowing for a greater understanding of the participant's meaning. Moreover, using the context makes it possible to overcome issues of conceptual equivalence reaching "sufficient similarity" (Rogler, 1999) which makes the text readable and at the same time does justice to what the participants have said. The following vignette exemplifies how direct quotations were translated in this study using free translation (see Table 5).

Table 5
Free Translation Example

Free Translation to Make the Text more Readable	
Aunque se habló [de esto] en la carrera, no se ahondó en el tema, nunca hubo talleres en la universidad sobre esto y los males que están presentes en las escuelas hoy en día.	Although [this] was talked about in the course, the topic was not delved into, there were never workshops at the university about this and the evils that are present in schools today.

The table above exemplifies a free translation approach instead of a word-by- word one. I used this approach because there were words in Spanish that have different meaning in English. When translating the expression *Aunque se habló en la carrera,* I faced two different challenges. The word *carrera* can be translated as "career" or "race," depending on the context. Furthermore, in Spanish we use *carrera* as synonym for "profession" or "undergraduate program" Additionally, because in Spanish it is possible to omit the subject, I had to add words to the quote that were not said by the participants. In a word-by-word approach, the literal translation would it be: Although was talked in the race (career). Then probably the best translation possible would it be: "Although [this] was talked in the course."

Recommendations

Translation in qualitative research is complex and there are several challenges that need to be overcome. Issues of trustworthiness to preserve transparency and the validity of findings are among these. There are also common translation procedures used in qualitative research which all have their own advocates. Being the discussion of equivalence is its main concern. Language contains meanings rooted in a specific culture; thus, the precise meaning of research findings may get lost or changed because translators may lack information on the specific context, culture and field of study of the findings.

Translation of participant's quotes can undermine the presentation of context and contextual meanings. However, translating quotes makes visible the views and perspectives of non-English speaking under researched population, which is particularly useful for the field of education.

Translating quotations requires deciding between a "literal" (i.e., translating word-by-word) and a "free" translation. Choosing a free translation data means that the researcher/translator plays a crucial role in the knowledge creation of qualitative research since he or she informs the contextual meaning of the participant's words. My option in this study was to discuss concepts rather than just words. In doing so, I opted for a free translation using the context in which the words were spoken and my knowledge about the culture and the field of the study. Using a free translation approach provided me repeated opportunities to reflect on the translating process, including ethics and ongoing review of similarities and discrepancies between the different languages.

My approach to translation exhibits the strengths of researchers' culture to produce deeper understanding and dialogue around cultural and language subtle differences that enhanced the validity of findings. Translation is context dependent and the person who does the translation influences the method and quality of translation product. Thus, knowledge transfer is not equivalent to translation. If the translator only knows the participants' language but not their culture, there is a danger of misunderstanding meaning (van Rosse, et al., 2016). Indeed, knowing participants' culture allows for better understanding of concepts, literary and vernacular language, which diminish risk of affecting trustworthiness.

Finally, comprehensive and transparent reporting about the researcher/translator and his/her contribution—as well as the rationale behind decisions— is paramount to establish trustworthiness (Wallin & Ahlstrom, 2006). As in my experience, this will drive researchers to reach a deeper understanding of the meanings underlying participants' experience and to handle data more sensitively.

Conclusion

This study discussed the various issues related to translation in cross-culture/language qualitative research. The main purpose was explicitly articulate the rationale behind the translation procedure applied, the role played by the researcher/translator, and the mitigation of issues found during the process to preserve trustworthiness of the research findings. Traditionally, language translation has often been viewed as a value free process. This study offers insights into useful components of a cross-culture/language research strategy. A cross-language strategy should specify, as much as possible, the epistemological perspective favoured by the researcher and the role of the researcher/translator through the research process.

In cross-culture/language research, meanings are constructed by the researcher's cultural brokerage work and knowledge of the research field. While the translation process requires them to engage in subtle negotiation and mediation of meanings between cultures, the

bilingual researchers' double-bounded role and position means that their decision-making and the final outcomes of translation cannot be isolated from the field of study and the cultural context in which the study is conducted.

Indeed, translation in cross-cultural/language research depends strongly not only on translator/researcher adequate language skills but also on researchers' culture competence, contextual skills and knowledge of the field of study.

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