

mail@researchingmultilingually.com

REFLECTIONS ON EXPERIENCES OF TRANSLATING RESEARCH DATA

Abstract

This paper grows from my reflections on a qualitative research study (narrative inquiry) which I conducted in the context of Pakistan. The focus of this paper is on the challenges of translating the research data from three perspectives: First, translation from one language to another; translation and representation of the data and third, translation of the stories emerging from the data and situating them in a social context. I used a framework for data collection and analysis based on three simple questions: (a) what are the challenges? (b) how do I address them? (c) What did I learn from them? This framework is based on the discussion on reflections and reflexivity developed over years (Schon, 1983; Gibbs 1988; Rolfe et al 2001). The analysis of my reflective entries in my reflective journal demonstrate three important lessons for a qualitative researcher: translation from one language to another require accuracy and proficiency in both the languages; meaning making and representing the data is a complex process; and situating the stories in social context require in-depth knowledge and understanding both by the researcher and by the participants of the study.

Key Words: Reflexivity, Research Journal, Qualitative Methodology, and translation of data

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