

Translating and Doing Grounded Theory Methodology. Intercultural Mediation as an Analytic Resource

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Abstract: Language is a non-neutral, but powerful research tool. This article focuses on two issues:

1. methodological suggestions ensuing from the translation of the founding text of grounded theory methodology (GTM) in the light of the recent literature regarding the translation studies and 2. philosophical reflections and methodological implications about the use of a different language in doing GTM. Both these issues can be useful for GTM practitioners, in particular for native English speakers, since they can uncover some implications of the use of the language in doing research that are commonly taken for granted and underestimated.

The translation process has to do with the understanding and use of a social research method. In this sense, to translate, under certain regards, *is* doing research, a rigorous inquiry aimed at understanding a text. The similarities of these two parallel processes are closely reviewed. Moreover doing research in another language is a powerful analytic resource. Coding in another language requires continuous acts of interlinguistic translation so that it grows our own faculty to understanding. Differences are highlighted, by providing examples from research, among coding in English (an isolating language suitable for advanced coding and memoing) and in Italian (an inflectional language, more suitable for early coding and memoing).

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1. Foreword

"To translate means to serve two masters"¹

In this quotation, Franz ROSENZWEIG, a modern translator of the *Torah* together with Martin BUBER, refers to two masters: The stranger's text and the reader willing to comprehend that text. "Which is why nobody can do it [to translate, n/a]. Which is why it is, in practice, everybody's task, like all the other things nobody is able to do in theory. Everybody has to translate and everybody

1 Franz ROSENZWEIG is paraphrasing the Gospel's motto *Nemo potest duobus dominis servire*, which literally means nobody is able to serve two masters (Matthew 6,24), namely God and Satan.

does" (ROSENZWEIG, 1998 [1926], p.254). In other words to translate is an impossible task inasmuch as it is necessary (BENJAMIN, 1968 [1923]). [1]

More humbly, as a social scientist and non-native English speaker (in an English-dominated world), I have been confronted repeatedly with the dilemmas of translation, and theoretically dealt with the challenges of serving two masters. Yet, following Paul RICŒUR (2006a [1998]), if one elaborates the mourning of the impossibility of perfect translation then there is a gain. In other words, what translation imposes as a limitation, for those forced to do research (e.g. reviewing literature, collecting data and disseminating results) in a foreign language, can be made into an opportunity for methodological analytical work. [2]

I teach qualitative methods and I have been dealing with theoretical issues of translation for a number of years, especially in relation to Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM). The following thoughts stem² from three main sources. First, from my experience with translating "The Discovery of Grounded Theory" (GLASER & STRAUSS, 1967) into Italian³, and the opportunity to discuss some of my questions about the book with one of its authors, Barney GLASER⁴. This seminal text required two years of scrupulous translation work, as it is often the case with a well-known book about a complex subject. Second, from my status as an academic who is a non-native English speaker, the majority of the methodological literature I read is in English. This literature is also the main reference for the courses I teach, though they are mostly taught in Italian. Finally, from writing papers and making presentations about the research I conduct in Italian, thus translating interviews, codes, categories, and memos from Italian to English, the *lingua franca* of international research. [3]

Working as a member of international research teams has prompted me to deal with "translation theory" as well. When I wish to share my research data with non-Italian-speaking colleagues or, more specifically, when I ask them for an external audit of analyses originally written in Italian, I have to translate data and codes from Italian to English (or from English to Italian when I present international results to an Italian audience). There is also the need of collecting data with participants speaking a different language, which sometimes occurred to me in cross-cultural research projects I was involved in. [4]

Such consistent linguistic exercise, very common among non-English native scholars, prevents me from taking research-related translation issues for granted. As a bilingual researcher, I have come to consider the use of language a "non-neutral" research tool. Moreover, in this essay, I argue that dealing with

2 A shorter version of the present article has been previously published in the Festschrift book in honor of Barney GLASER (TAROZZI, 2012). Thanks to Brown Walker Press for the permission of reprinting.

3 "La scoperta della Grounded theory" (GLASER & STRAUSS, 2009), edited by A. STRATI, translation by M. TAROZZI.

4 Our discussion began as I was translating "Discovery," forty years after its appearance in English. It is summarized in *The Gounded Theory Review* (GLASER & TAROZZI, 2007) and as an appendix to "La scoperta della Grounded theory" (GLASER & STRAUSS, 2009). The conversation has been then translated into German (GLASER & TAROZZI, 2011).

translation while doing GTM should be viewed as a resource, a happy gain according to RICŒUR ("le bonheur de traduire est un gain"; RICOEUR, 2006a [1998], p.10) rather than a mere difficulty, since it offers the analyst an additional tool for analysis. [5]

Ironically, in the "constructivist" climate of the moment, where language's key role is somewhat overestimated, it surprises me that translation issues with few exceptions (SHKLAROW, 2009; ENZENHOFER & RESCH, 2011) are taken so much for granted or ignored. In this article, I intend to make the reader aware that GTM translation can be integral to research. [6]

2. Summary and Rationale

I intend to put the microscope under the microscope. In other words, I wish to take into account the cultural and linguistic implications of translation in research, particularly when using GTM. If I posit the translation process as a non-neutral tool, according to GTM it can be regarded as "data" and not as a means. I discuss two main issues: 1. methodological suggestions ensuing from my experience of translating the founding text of GTM, especially in the light of recent literature regarding translation studies as well as the philosophical thoughts about it and 2. methodological implications of a bilingual focus in doing GTM. [7]

I am not a radical constructivist, either at the epistemological level or in terms of translation studies. Although it is hard to ignore the key role of language in constructing, rather than simply conveying meanings, I do not believe that the problems raised by the translation process should force one to resort to a radical relativism and deem it impossible to say the same thing in two languages. DERRIDA's (1995 [1985]) deconstructionism in translation denies the possibility of the equivalent meaning of a word in one language and its correspondent in another, leaving the translator as the suspect author of an autonomous work, far from the original. According to DERRIDA "translation is another name of the impossible" (1998a, p.74)⁵. I disagree with DERRIDA's argument and I prefer Umberto ECO's (2003a) perspective, claiming that translators are inclined to the generic possibility of equivalence (fidelity), but limited as to "propositional content." ECO affirms that literal translation is impossible, as the failure of automatic translators demonstrates. However, in translating, he believes one can say *almost* the same thing. This "almost" is a propositional content and the result of linguistic and, above all, cultural negotiation (ECO, 2003b):

"To translate means to understand the internal system of a language and the structure of a given text in that language, and to build up a double of the textual system which, under a certain description, can produce analogous effects on the

5 Although DERRIDA argues that the impossibility of translation is related to the assertion that "in a sense nothing is untranslatable; but *in another sense* everything is untranslatable" (1998a [1996], pp.56-57) and therefore his statement is an invitation to translate, but always inventing in our own language if we want to understand the other's language.

reader on several levels: semantic and syntactic, stylistic, metrical, phono-symbolic and also emotional, where textually intended" (ECO, 2003a, p.16; my translation). [8]

To illustrate the impossibility of a translation devoid of linguistic and cultural negotiation processes, Italian readers can witness the pratfalls of automatic translation into Italian by applying either translate.google.com or Yahoo's Babelfish to the first paragraph of first edition of "The Discovery of Grounded Theory" (GLASER & STRAUSS, 1967). Readers of English may also enjoy the retranslation into English of Babelfish's robotic Italian.

Original	Automatic translation	Human-interpretive translation	Automatic re-translation
"The Discovery of Grounded Theory"	"La scoperta della teoria a terra"	"La scoperta della grounded theory"	"The Discovery of the Theory to Earth"
Most writing on sociological method has been concerned with how accurate facts can be obtained and how theory can thereby be more rigorously tested	La maggior parte di scrittura sul metodo sociologico è stato interessato con fatti precisi come può essere ottenuta come teoria e può quindi essere più rigorosamente testati	Quasi tutti i testi di metodologia della ricerca sociale si sono occupati prima o poi di come ottenere risultati fattuali precisi e quindi di come una teoria possa essere rigorosamente testata	The majority of writing on the sociological method has been interested with precise facts like can be obtained like theory and can therefore be more rigorously heads

Table 1: Translation and re-translation of the "The Discovery's" initial paragraph [9]

In this article, I show what kind of negotiation processes need analysis and interpretation in translation, according to the recent literature of translation studies. What is more, I argue that dealing with such issues is an exercise that can lead to a better understanding of the nature of the method and how to use it. [10]

3. Translating is Doing GTM

One of his "Essays", Italo CALVINO meaningfully titled "Translating is the True Way to Read a Text" (1995 [1982]). He recommends the exercise of translation to all good readers because he believes that one truly reads an author only by translating his/her work into a different language and comparing it with the original or by comparing different versions of the same text. The operations related to interlinguistic translation allow one to interpret and, thus, fully understand a text. When this is not only a non-fictional text, but also a sociological classic showing a revolutionary research method, such understanding can become a unique way of discovering the significance of that method's key concepts. In this statement by one of the most refined Italian

novelist and gracefully attentive translators echoes some thoughts of Walter BENJAMIN, when he says in his seminal text "Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers [The task of the translator]" (BENJAMIN, 1968 [1923]) that the translator succeeds where the individual reader fails. The latter establishes a simple relationship language-subject, whereas the translator poses him/herself at the service of language respecting its role and its goal: moving towards the pure and unique language. A language now unattainable but from which all languages descend and that makes possible each translation. [11]

That is why a process of understanding is implicit in every translation. Or, as George STEINER put it, "understanding *is* translation" (2004 [1975], p.32). The acts of analysis and interpretation are not only embedded in translation between two texts, but also between the two cultural and linguistic encyclopedias in which they are rooted. [12]

The idea that every translation is both a transfer of words from one language to another and an intercultural connection is not only a product of the post-modern cultural turn in translation studies. In the first century B.C., CICERO wrote in "De optimo genere oratorum" [On the best kind of orators] (1960 [46 BCE]) that it is not appropriate to translate word for word (*verbum pro verbo*). What is necessary is to keep alive the power and the efficacy of the terms, even when this requires the translator to move away from the original word. [13]

To translate a text like "Discovery," familiarity with the original language is not enough, it is essential to know the topic. When CICERO translated DEMOSTHENES and other Attic orators from Greek to Latin, he claimed that it was necessary to do so *ut orator*, as an orator him- or herself. Similarly, I rendered GLASER's and STRAUSS's book into Italian first as a social researcher and then as a translator. Although his command of English was better than mine, the professional translator who began translating "Discovery" became quite often enmeshed in misunderstandings and misconceptions typical of those not acquainted with the sociological topic and the cultural and scientific setting which brought the book to light. [14]

I believe it is not enough to know the cultural *milieu* of the text in order to adequately translate an abstract and not always fluent methodological book. What is essential is that the translator has direct knowledge of and specific experience with the research so that he or she can clarify terms and concepts that would otherwise remain ambiguous or decontextualized. That is the value of having "lived experience," as opposed to being widely read, in this or other methods. One has to have undergone the same process in order to deeply understand and accurately translate the meaning of endogenous expressions, textual examples and nuances.

theoretical sampling	theoretical	<i>teorico</i>	common use, equivalent to "conceptual"	<i>campionamento teorico</i>
theoretical sensitivity		<i>teoretico</i>	philosophical equivalent to "speculative"	<i>sensibilità teoretica</i>

Table 2: Comparing two different Italian translations of "theoretical" [15]

Contemporary translation studies concur in considering translation an act of intercultural mediation. The language-culture link has several implications:

1. If ignored, it may cause misunderstandings: meanings always reflect cultural models: the Italian proverb "Chi dorme non piglia pesci" [He who sleeps doesn't catch fish] which is similar to "The early bird catches the worm." But the Italian idiom can be extrapolated to include laziness and presupposes the understanding that laziness is a socially and culturally negative attitude. Otherwise it cannot be understood. Similarly, the English expression "It's raining cats and dogs" cannot be understood by someone who, even knowing the Queen's English, does not share a common cultural background. But once again the difficulties of intercultural understanding behind the processes of interlingual translation, do not prevent the possibility of translation itself; that would stop in front of those untranslatable expressions that DERRIDA has called *shibboleth* (1998b, p.75). Rather it makes fascinating the challenge of translating that must always be within the horizon of dialogism mentioned by RICŒUR (2006b [1999]).
2. More frequently, the semantic power of a translation that ignores cultural settings is impoverished and it loses dramatically its semantic power. A good example is the translation of a key term like "grounded," which doesn't have an exact equivalent in Italian. "Grounded" is untranslatable mechanically (Babelfish translates it as "teoria al suolo," literally, "theory to the ground/soil"). As it is, grounded has countless shades of meanings. The past participle of the verb *to ground* can mean "rooted or based," but also "a ship or boat that touches the bottom of the sea and is unable to move off," or "an aircraft not allowed to take off: to teach first rudiments, to prepare the background of a drawing." So grounding a theory in data has radical as well as material reverberations; it is the vital, occasionally even violent, rooting of creative epistemology in the fertile humus of experience. At the same time, it needs to be a rooting so precise and punctual that it can serve as the basis for further constructions, the ground on which to build complex formal theories. A theory like this is not only based on facts or empirically derived from data. To grow organically, it requires the mulch and compost of lived experience.
3. I have analyzed these shades of meaning, without taking them for granted, only because I had to translate the text. However, interrogating and searching the semantic area of the term "grounded" allowed me to better understand its

relevance, meaning and workability as well as the way to apply this key notion which qualifies the specific nature of the method inaugurated by GLASER and STRAUSS. In this sense, translating was the "true" way to read "Discovery" and to grasp the meaning of some of the method's key concepts: What is a theory? What does it mean to create a theory? How can a researcher work theoretically? What is theoretical sensitivity? All these issues were raised by the need to develop all the meanings intertwined in the word "grounded" which before I took for granted and used naively, without any special attention.

4. Finally, I wish to stress that translating is a way to keep in contact with both the culture-source and the culture-target. Translating "Discovery" was a way to introduce GTM in Italy. This purpose was very clear to those who promoted this cultural enterprise⁶. In this sense, STRATI, the book's editor, and I debated whether the translation should pay philological respect to the original, now considered a classic, or would be better regarded as a living work with practical value for contemporary Italian readers. [16]

This is a typical translator's dilemma of which there are distinguished historical examples like Martin LUTHER's translation of the Bible into German. Umberto ECO (2003a) observes that in describing his work, LUTHER used *übersetzen* [to translate] and *verdeutschen* [to Germanize] interchangeably. In so doing, evidently, LUTHER saw translation as cultural assimilation. [17]

When translating a text from another culture, there is always a choice between *domesticating* and *foreignizing* (rendering foreign) (VENUTI, 1995). When "domesticating" a translation, translator and editor decide to play down cultural differences as much as possible by bringing the original text within the philological parameters of the target culture, eliminating every roughness and vanishing the translator. It is a kind of cultural assimilation work, ethnocentric to some extent, in which the dominant culture prevails. While "foreignizing" means purposely maintaining some "estranging" elements of the parlance of the culture of origin which, though they may undermine the overall fluency of the text, serve to remind the reader of its difference and distance from the host culture. This process has to do with the *paradigm of the translation* (RICŒUR, 2006c [2004]). In his words:

"When the translator acknowledges and assumes the irreducibility of the pair, the peculiar and the foreign, he finds his reward in the recognition of the impassable status of the dialogicity of the act of translating as the reasonable horizon of the desire to translate. In spite of the agonistics that make a drama of the translator's task, he can find his happiness in what I would like to call *linguistic hospitality*" (p.10). [18]

By renouncing the myth of the *absolute translation*, which resets the roughness of the source language, the translation becomes a gain by accepting equivalence without adequacy. More, by saying almost the same thing within a negotiated

6 The translation was sponsored and supported by Professor Roberto CIPRIANI from the University of Roma Tre.

dialogic horizon, the translator experiments also an ethical follow-up or consequence: the condition of "linguistic hospitality" of the foreigner. [19]

Such a distinction, *domesticating* vs. *foreignizing* is important *per se*. It could be very helpful for a GTM user to think about the cultural implications of the translation process. Moreover, the aforementioned alternative has been adopted and applauded by postcolonial scholars as a way of underlining the importance of avoiding cultural assimilation to a dominant Western model (BASSNETT-McGUIRE & TRIVEDI, 1999) . In our case, the risk was the opposite. As Italians, we were in jeopardy of being encompassed by the double hegemony of the Anglo-Saxon culture of social science and the current dominance of the English language in the scientific community. We were translating "Discovery" from American English, the "dialect" of the sociological mainstream. Texts coming from a powerful culture tend to be translated with key words of the original language intact, even if this makes them less intelligible for a target-culture audience. [20]

In fact, in contrast with some other European languages⁷, we decided not to translate the expression "grounded theory" into Italian but to leave it in English, in the title and in the text. This expression is now so widespread among academics and laymen that to translate it would be to create a kind of pseudo-foreignness or an estranging or even comic effect. There is no need to artificially introduce a new expression after more than forty years of saying it English and not only for historical reasons. While searching for terminological correspondence, the translator must renounce some word's properties, saving only those relevant to the context. As we have seen, "grounded" is a term too rich in semantic variations to render into Italian with a single word. Since this is the key-notion and the core concept of the whole book, we preferred to use the original English, without choosing only one meaning in Italian words. A translator forgoes his duty, in this case, honorably, without surrender, since this is part of the processes of intercultural negotiations that every translation requires. [21]

Apart from postcolonial claims, the *domesticating* vs. *foreignizing* distinction reminds us of ECO's dictum: "A good translation is always a critical contribution to the understanding of the translated work" (2003b, p.247). It is also why there is never a unique possible translation or a universal lexicon for translators. The meaning of a word or proposition is not only a linguistic construction; it is also pragmatic, historical, semiotic and, in a broader sense, cultural. Enlarging the practice of translation to the semiotic sphere (before it was narrowed to mere linguistic practice) is due mainly to Roman JAKOBSON (1959). However, in the case of the translation of a text about research methodology (and particularly this book), the translation process does not limit itself to invading the semiotic sphere. It has just as much to do with the understanding and the use of a method of

7 In the German translation of the "Discovery" book, "grounded theory" remains in its original English form but can also be translated as "gegenstandsverankerte Theoriebildung". In French, it is rendered as "l'analyse par théorisation ancrée." In Spanish, it is "teoría fundamentada," in Polish, "teorii ugruntowanej" and, in Swedish, "grundad teori." I have eliminated any reference to these words since I refer here not to the authors or books but to the words widely used in the literature.

social research. To some extent, translating "Discovery" was like doing GTM, as an extension of GLASER's claim that writing the book was *ipso facto* GTM. In our conversation, speaking about the sense of the Italian translation and referring to the genesis of "Discovery," he said: "The book itself is a grounded theory. It wasn't thought up. It was based on doing *Awareness* and *Time for Dying*⁸. So it was grounded in research. That has tremendous grab" (GLASER & TAROZZI, 2007, p.22). By the same token, translating is doing GTM because every translation is a form of interpretation, an investigation of meaning, a rigorous inquiry aimed at understanding a text. [22]

As I said, I do not belong to the hermeneutic tradition. As far as I am concerned, there is no perfect coincidence between interpreting and translating, the whole nature or the social reality is not only a text, but one cannot deny that translation is a form of interpretation which uses language as a medium, and that interpretative acts always precede it (ECO, 2003a). This same process occurs in doing research: an interpretive event of social/psychological/educational ... phenomena using language as a medium, after interpretive acts. In fact, even though translation does not overlap with the practice of research, the two are so closely related that they can be a mutual source of useful methodological suggestions, especially within a GTM framework. [23]

The following table outlines correspondences between these two parallel processes:

Translation process	GTM process
Reading (the source text)	Data collection and open coding
(Semiotic) analysis of the source text	Focused/selective coding
Interpretation	Theoretical coding
Elaboration in the target text	Integrating theory
Writing in the target text	Writing the report

Table 3: Similarities between translation and GTM analytic processes [24]

Translation is a process of understanding meanings, which requires the translator to exercise interpretive and analytical acts in the source language as well as elaboration and writing in the target language. I believe it is not an exaggeration to compare the translator's preliminary reading to data collection and simultaneous open coding and the subsequent semiotic analysis as well as the interpretation phase to a more advanced and theoretical analysis. Reading the source text is an encounter with the other, the foreigner: in qualitative research, the participants. If such encounter does not take place in the reassuring mother tongue but in the inadequacy, inaccuracy, dissatisfaction, and within continuous

8 GLASER refers to two books, "Awareness of Dying" (GLASER & STRAUSS, 1965) and "Time for Dying" (GLASER & STRAUSS, 1968). In these books the two sociologists published the results of their well-known research about dying in hospital.

processes of adjustment required by the use of another language (DERRIDA, 1998b), this is not just a difficulty. But it invites the researcher who "collects" data to provide interpretive and analytical acts in the source language that reminds us of "linguistic hospitality" (RICŒUR, 2006a [1998]) of the participant as foreigner in our own language. This is a powerful tool for deepening the relationship between the researcher and the researched, to fill the gap with the other which allows to collect rich and meaningful data. [25]

Moreover, translation requires negotiation skills to constantly mediate the inevitable gap of equivalence between cultural and linguistic systems. These negotiation skills, which are not systematized by guidelines, procedures, or structural educational courses, remind me of the characteristics of theoretical sensitivity that have to do with momentum, insight, and seeing possibilities. [26]

4. Coding in Another Language is an Analytic Resource

Doing research in another language is a powerful analytic resource, when the researcher is using an inductive and comparative method aimed at generating theory. This assertion makes sense since, as we said, translation and inquiry processes are closely related as epistemic and interpretive acts. [27]

In 1959, Roman JAKOBSON wrote an essay "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation," making an important contribution by comparing translation to other disciplines like semiotics, cultural anthropology, narrative studies, etc. In this essay, JAKOBSON distinguished three well-known types of translation:

1. *Endolinguistic* (or intralinguistic): The interpretation of signs throughout other signs of the same language. It is translation within the same linguistic system, by means of reformulation; for example bachelor=not married; or transcription of an oral message in its written form. This is called *rewording*.
2. *Interlinguistic*: The interpretation of signs throughout the signs of another language. It is the transposition of signs by means of different linguistic systems. This is *translation proper*.
3. *Intersemiotic*: The interpretation of verbal signs throughout non-verbal sign systems, like the transposition of a novel into a movie. Within this type of translation lies also the *ekphrasis*: the exercise of the ancient rhetoric that consisted of a written translation of a visual work of art⁹. [28]

These three types share the same characteristic: every full equivalence between the cultural and linguistic systems of the starting and arrival text is impossible, as is clearly demonstrated by the huge difference that exists when a translated text is retranslated into its original language. As if, for example, someone would re-translate in Italian the classical French version of DANTE's "Inferno," edited by Emile LITTRÉ (DANTE & LITTRÉ 1879). The final effect would probably be far from the original (STEINER, 2004 [1975]). [29]

9 See, for example, the description of the famous picture *Las meninas* by VELASQUEZ, in the introduction of FOUCAULT's (1966) book, "Les mots et les choses."

However, JAKOBSON's three types of translation interest us because they reinforce the correspondence between the translation process and the GTM analytic process and reveal it as a powerful analytic resource. For example, the transformation-into-text of data taken from facts, events and phenomena can be understood as an operation of intersemiotic translation. When I use observation as an instrument of data collection, I am transmuting the acts of some subjects within a context into a text that can be elaborated and analyzed. It is a similar exercise to the *ekphrasis*. The transcription of an interview is always a translation act, whether recorded in field notes (as GLASER [1998] suggests) or tape-recorded. Some claim that the transposition of an oral message in its written form is a "transcription" or a "notation" and only a "translation" in the metaphorical sense (MOUNIN, 1965). However, regarding the transcription of interviews aimed at an analysis within a GTM, I believe that every transcription is also a translation. There is nothing automatic about transcription. It is the first analytical level, since it is an interpretive job that reduces complex verbal and non-verbal communication to a unique textual dimension (TAROZZI, 2008, p.86). [30]

Moreover, every time we use a different language as a research instrument, by interviewing, coding, and writing in another language, there are evident difficulties in transposing these data and thoughts into another linguistic-cultural context, as well as remarkable benefits and extra resources, that need to come with some warnings. [31]

In sum, at the narrowest methodological level, we cannot take for granted the question of translation from a non mother tongue in doing GTM. In particular, coding in another language requires continuous acts of interlinguistic translation that increase our facility to comprehend, and offer sophisticated interpretive instruments, helping to refine analysis. Every interlinguistic translation is the result of elaborate acts of decoding, in the source language, and re-coding in the target language, which occur at several levels: semantic, syntactic, and pragmatic. Therefore these continuous processes of de-coding and re-coding support and make more effective the various coding phases that GTM requires for data analysis. [32]

For example, a few years ago I took a troubleshooting seminar with Barney GLASER to which I brought my research data to discuss with him and the group. Having to translate my first chaotic code map (see Figure 1, below) into English put into effect the subtle operation of interlinguistic translation to which I refer above, allowing me to clarify it, to let relevant categories emerge, to individuate principal links among them, to define ambiguous concepts by identifying some of their properties and even to recognize, although still in a rough form, the conceptual area in which the core category was embedded.

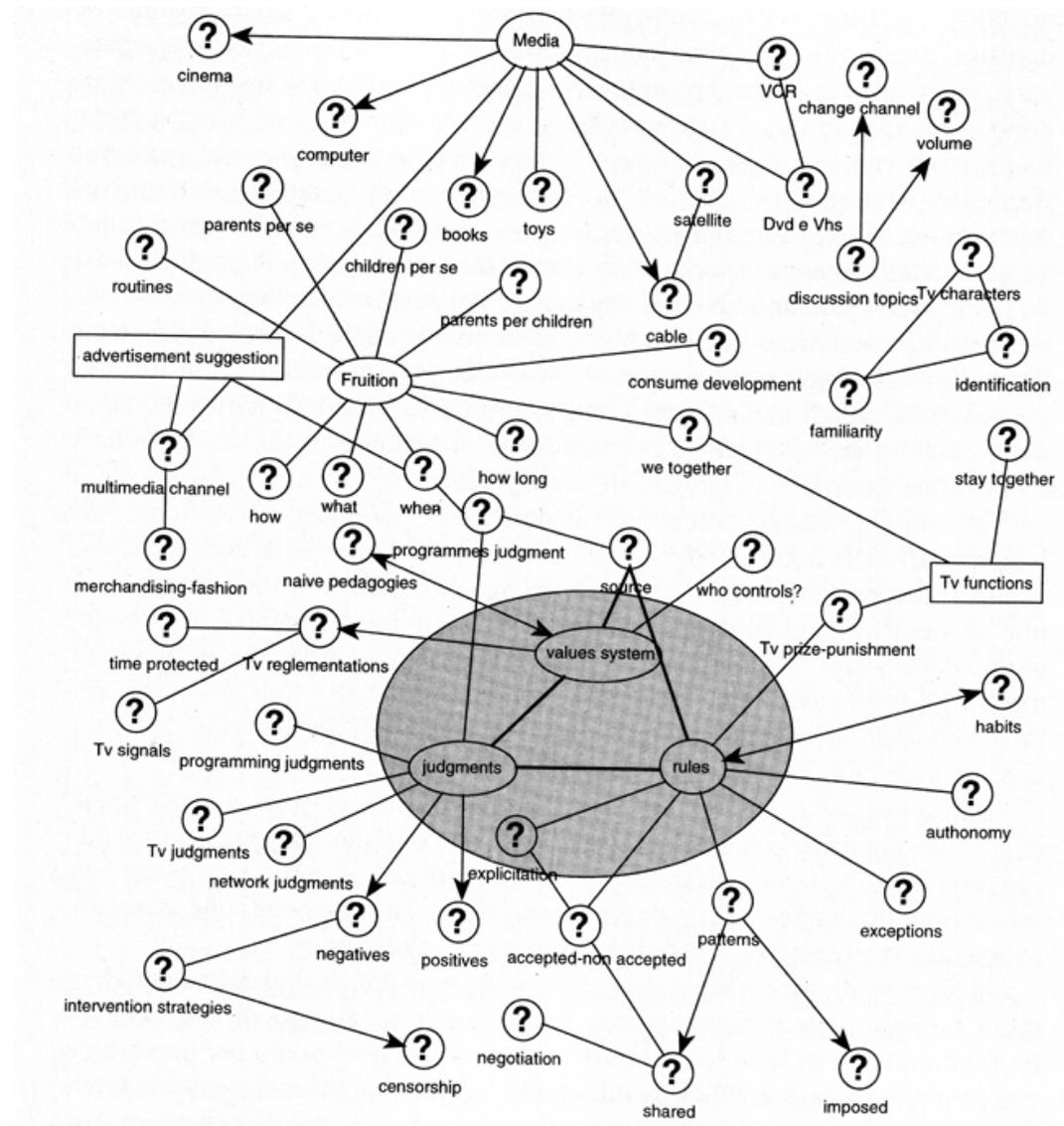


Figure 1: First code map of a GTM research (TAROZZI, 2007, p.28) [33]

In this case, the usually boring and time-consuming work of translating the data from one language to another and became further and welcome instrument of analysis. When it takes place in cross-cultural studies or in cross-cultural research teams, the continuing acts of decoding and re-coding in the two languages can represent an extra coding level, parallel to the open or initial coding in GTM. This is a very powerful procedure that allows the researcher to make sense of his/her data, even better than word-by-word coding step suggested by GLASER (1978). [34]

Because translation always presupposes a process of understanding-interpretation-analysis, it can represent a precious new instrument in the researcher's hand to deal with data. It is another field of constant comparison that represents and strengthens the heuristic foundation of GTM. We can add the comparison among different sign systems that express data and categories to the

ordinary comparison among data, data and categories and categories among them. This produces new conceptualizations, promotes the emergence of insight, and trains theoretical sensitivity. [35]

5. Coding in Italian, Coding in English

While doing GTM in a language different than the mother tongue is generally a resource for the researcher, we have to take seriously into account the characteristics of the language. Italian is particularly suitable for supplying careful, rich, and refined descriptions. For that reason, I think Italian is more suitable than English for the first phases of research and memos. That may be why English has been called an "isolating" (or analytic) language, whereas Italian is more "inflectional" from the morphological point of view (COMRIE, 1989 [1983]). Italian has several declensions to express grammatical relations, relational categories such as gender and number for nouns and lots of variation in verb conjugations that enlarge the possibility of precise description. [36]

On the other hand, English is a more conceptualizing language than Italian, and has greater propositional power. Therefore, it seems more suitable for making propositional statements, binding concepts, expressing complex and tricky categories with synthetic nomenclature. Because of this, I prefer English for more advanced coding, where it is necessary to label concepts. In the early stages of analysis (open and initial coding) Italian is particularly suitable because it corresponds more closely to the original data. Not only because they are originally produced in Italian, but also because Italian can better describe meaningful segments of text with long and accurate codes. The more the analysis proceeds into selective and theoretical coding, the more English becomes appropriate for sorting and conceptualization.

English	Isolating	Analytic	Suitable for advanced coding and memoing
Italian	Inflectional	Descriptive	Suitable for early coding and memoing

Table 4: Isolating vs. inflectional languages and their use in GTM analysis [37]

One could enter into prolonged discussions about the comparative, cultural, and anthropological, implications of using a language that tends to organize, systematize, and code the world within propositions which trap concepts into true-false assertions, rather than employing a more descriptive, narrative language which is both creative and versatile. [38]

Here I limit myself to warning researchers about the consequences of the use of a language that tends to organize the world in one way or another, in terms of the construction of an interpretive theory of a certain phenomenon. In either case, I

warrant it worthy of further research that two investigations of the same object, with the same method but carried out in different languages, will produce slightly different theories. For example, in recent years I have carried out a GTM aiming at exploring to what extent cultural context influences the application of qualitative methodologies. In practice, we wanted to analyze the research process of ethnoscience (FIELD & MORSE, 1985; LEININGER, 1985) and to inquiry the methodological steps to comprehend if and what "cultural" and linguistic influences could be found in different contexts. This research has taken shape within a broader cross-cultural study, coordinated by Karin OLSON, within the International Institute of Qualitative Methods in Edmonton, University of Alberta. The study intended to investigate the cultural implications of the notion of fatigue in cancer patients, by replicating what had been done in Canada in Thailand, Italy, and the UK. While the overall aim of the team was to comparatively explore the ways in which participants use language to describe the fatigue (PONGTHAVORNKAMOL et al., 2012), I have focused on the methodological implications of applying the same qualitative approach in different contexts and using different languages (TAROZZI, 2011). [39]

With regard to the implications of typical features of language in research practice, the use of the gerundive "-ing form" is emblematic of GTM. First GLASER (1978) and then CHARMAZ (2006) have invited its use as a form to express categories in coding and in writing memos. According to CHARMAZ, it "fosters theoretical sensitivity because these words nudge us out of static topics and into enacted processes" (p.136). [40]

A gerund is the present participle of a verb used as a noun implying action (in this sense very similar to the basic use of gerund in the classical Latin). But this form does not exist in Italian or in many other neo-Latin languages (i.e. Spanish and French) where gerund exists but with other linguistic functions (support in building periphrastic propositions and serves as adverbial subordinate). In its place, we use the infinitive form that freezes our conceptual labels into rather icy and fixed descriptions. While coding in Italian, we must make do with these more static grammatical forms, which neither connote the dynamic movement of a concept, nor disclose the action's power. [41]

Very often, while we are working in Italian, it occurs to me to code in English, exactly because of the flexibility of the language in expressing synthetically dense concepts and to better emphasize processes. Otherwise, in Italian, we have to resort to nouns that are more flexible or expressions that lack grammatical accuracy; but these, in turn, allow us to preserve the intensity and evocative power of a code. [42]

As English is more synthetic than Italian and condenses meaning with fewer words, it is perfect to create titles and slogans, as well as categories. On the other hand, these syntheses are less precise than in Italian, which gives the researcher more linguistic "pixels" to denote a concept or a category with greater clarity and expressive power. [43]

6. Conclusion

In this paper I deal with the methodological implication of considering the language as non-neutral tool. My argument is rooted both in my experience as translator of "Discovery" by GLASER and STRAUSS and in my existential and professional condition of non-English native speaker operating in the academia. To translate is an intercultural mediation act aiming at saying "Almost the Same Thing" (ECO, 2003a) which implies negotiation processes between the source and the target text. This non-endless interpretive effort is a fruitful exercise that leads to a better understanding of the essence of the GTM and how to apply it, to such an extent that can be said that translating GTM is doing GTM. Secondly my argument was grounded in the deep belief that collecting data and coding in another language could be a rewarding resource for a social scientist. I developed this argument following JAKOBSON's threefold translation theory and providing examples from my research practice. [44]

In sum, for a non-native English-speaking researcher, in an English-dominated world, the translation cost can be a gain rather than a loss. Furthermore, in this field, serving two masters—the foreigner in his text and the reader in his willingness to enter the text—is not only possible, but it is also a desirable and necessary methodological exercise to positioning ourselves as researchers and to make explicit our own philosophical stance in which a GTM is embedded. [45]

Over the past forty years, the GTM methodology has proposed and propagated a specific research language. Currently, expressions like "theoretical sampling," "core category," "saturation," and "constant comparison" are in worldwide circulation and have become part of the technical language of social science. They have also contributed in delimiting the originality and uniqueness of this methodology. Nevertheless, Barney GLASER (2009) sees the worldwide circulation of the GTM "jargon" as a trivialization of his method. Ironically, jargon legitimates and credentializes as it trivializes and narrows the complexity of the world. GLASER sees the considerable success of GTM as, thus far, tied to the widespread use of its legitimizing expressions: a nomenclature that otherwise would have survived a more substantial use of the method itself. After four decades, he believes these expressions are worn out and have lost their "grab" or original conceptual power. I am not sure whether or not this is true but I believe that, by translating these conceptually dense expressions in a different cultural and linguistic system, we can revitalize that power by simultaneously preserving and renewing their semantic meaningfulness. [46]

If, when translating these key notions for contemporary social research, we cannot find the word that most faithfully corresponds to the original, we can say almost the same thing. This "almost" includes not just the aforementioned negotiation processes but also the possibility of renovating the method itself by critically rethinking it from a perspective 10,000 kilometers (6,300 miles) and 45 years away but, experientially, very close to the place where it was generated. [47]

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