From Romanian "Soul" to English "Heart": Dilemmas of Cultural and Gender Representation in Translating Qualitative Data

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Abstract: In this article I argue that translation in cross-cultural research leads to the construction of a certain linguistic hierarchy, wherein the English language subordinates the Romanian language. I illustrate my arguments with examples from 47 qualitative interviews with Scottish and Romanian fathers on the topic of love. To situate this argument, I describe how in my role as an Anglo-Romanian bilingual interpreter I inadvertently contributed to the creation of this hierarchy. This happened through translation as I was fitting Romanian into English to disseminate the meanings, values and emotions of Romanian fathers to a primarily English-speaking audience. At the same time by employing emotional reflexivity and focusing on gender matters in the context of shared responsibility of constructing knowledge, I resolved some linguistic tensions. Paradoxically, by carrying emotional meanings across into another language, there is the main positive consequence of moving the focus in research from the center to the margins, as it increases the visibility of a usually overlooked sample of people from a specific cultural background.

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1. Introduction

> "(...) a quiet revolution is occurring. This revolution is defined by the politics of representation, which asks: What is represented in a text, and how is it to be judged?" (DENZIN & LINCOLN, 2005, p.xiv)

The debate on the quality of qualitative research began with considerations of the validity of qualitative data (REICHERTZ, 2000) in relation to economic resources (BREUER, 2000), aesthetics (HUBER 2001), and contextualization (KIENER & SCHANNE, 2001). It then evolved as BREUER and REICHERTZ (2001) have considered the standards of social research and their cultural implications, LAUCKEN (2002) tackled the political underpinnings of constructing quality criteria in humanistic research, and ROST (2003) mapped out trends in how researchers analyze empirical data. In addition, quality was assessed across a variety of different areas of research, such as in health studies through participatory approaches (SPRINGETT, ATKEY, KONGATS, ZULLA & WILKINS, 2016), in the presentation of findings in open access journals (MARDONES, ULLOA MARTINEZ & SALAS, 2018) and in the methodological challenges posed by qualitative data analysis software (ZHAO, LI, ROSS & DENNIS, 2016). If perspectives on ethnographic research in Ibero-America in conjunction with concerns about the relevance of qualitative data were debated (see AGAR, 2006a, 2006b; GROEBEN, 2006; ROTH, 2006; SCHREIER & BREUER, 2006), it is essential to note that attention should be widened to include Eastern-European languages, to further explore the cultural implications of translation. [1]

In bridging this understanding, a more recent thread that emerged from the fruitful scholarly conversations on quality is related to the ethical and analytical challenges proposed by translation (ROTH, 2013). These have been analyzed in relation to the intricacies of conducting grounded theory research (TAROZZI, 2013; TOLHURST, 2012) but also to problematize how researchers interpret both the social and the societal in their translations, and as such maintain or loose the implications of theoretical paradigms in the process of converting material from a language into another (ROTH, 2018). However, in this debate gender often has been excluded from the conversation. Reflecting on gender and the potential "othering" perspective of the researcher (BRONS, 2015) might bring new insights into what constitutes the quality of data or impediments to achieving it, particularly in the context of cross-cultural research. In line with this current gap in knowledge, the present article adds to the debate by shifting the focus onto gender and culture, not from the position of a change perspective (BREUER, 2003) but from the sociological perspective of a researcher's positionality. As the personal characteristics of the social researcher inevitably intrude into qualitative research (with respect to choosing a topic, gathering interviews, considering ethics etc.), it is important to shed light on the implications of translating material from one language into another in considering the limits of subjective bias. I expand this argument below by taking account of how in my role as a researcher I was influenced to convert the meanings of Romanian words into English to present and disseminate my findings, and how through this action I contributed to the creation of a dominant linguistic, cultural hierarchy. However, I also show how

as a Romanian woman I subverted this and kept the specificity of the Romanian language while writing and disseminating the findings of my doctoral research. [2]

As part of this process, the researcher performs an act of emotional diminishment to fit the requirements of their own culture into a pre-determined dominant linguistic structure. Even if unmentioned in ethical guidelines where participants are referred to in universal terms, gender alongside culture influence the process of translating qualitative data: both that of the researcher and that of the participants. Being a woman translating men's words is an activity which implies both care and power. On the one hand, during fieldwork I was given the power to be an advocate for fathers' emotional concerns in the process of interpreting their emotional experiences, while, on the other hand, I was colluding with the dominant linguistic perspective of translating my data into English during the writing of my thesis. But before I illustrate this argument with examples from my research on love and fatherhood, it is necessary to briefly introduce the word *translation* and sketch some linguistic differences between English and Romanian. [3]

2. Background Distinctions Between Romanian and English

Etymologically, the word "translation" stems from Latin, were as the verb "transferre" it denotes the act of "carrying something across" (CHESTERMAN, 2006, p.5). Furthermore, "The Oxford English Dictionary" (SIMPSON & WEINER, 1989) offers three pathways to define the act of translating. One refers to the actual *rendering* of the meaning of a word or text in another language, the other refers to the *conversion* of something from one form of medium into another, and finally it specifies the process of *moving* something from one place to another. It is the second part of this definition, the *conversion* aspect, which I am tackling analytically in this article. As such I define translation as a form of interpretation, which can be hegemonic. My aim is to show that in the act of linguistic transformation, a language is subordinated by another more dominant one. Paradoxically, I also show that in the movement from a source language to a target language, there is also the positive consequence that the marginalized and converted language becomes visible and known to a wider audience, even if still *filtered* through English. [4]

Certain obvious distinctions exist between the English and the Romanian language. English is the third-most spoken language in the world after Mandarin Chinese and Spanish containing 171,476 words in current use (HSIUNG, 2012). By comparison, and according to the second edition of "The Orthographic, Orthoepic and Morphologic Dictionary of the Romanian language" (ACADEMIA ROMÂNĂ, 2010), the Romanian lexicon comprises only 62.000 words and is spoken as a primary language by approximately 24 million people in the world. Therefore, it is difficult to assert that both languages should have an equal spread and cultural popularity across the globe, and it would make sense for a text to be converted into English while hoping to increase its reach to the public. And yet what might "make sense" can also serve to increase the naturalization of a dominant language over another. This problematic aspect echoes feminist

arguments about the persistence of patriarchy as a system of hierarchical social relationships (RAMAZANOĞLU & HOLLAND, 2002), but this time at the level of language representation. Even if one adopts a feminist approach to research which prioritizes cooperation, care and creativity while unmasking gendered inequalities (ibid.), there is still a heightened risk of reproducing Eurocentric concepts of feminism (GREWAL & KAPLAN, 1994), as Virginia OLESEN writes with respect to the publishing process of academic research: "Translation difficulties and marketing pressures make English language publication necessary" (2005, p.258). [5]

As a methodological background to the research, it is important to mention what was translated as part of my research. The data excerpts discussed in this article stem from a group of 47 recorded and transcribed qualitative interviews, which were designed and analyzed following grounded theory methodology. Coding was done paragraph-by-paragraph rather than line-by-line to move efficiently through the large volume of data (which at 13 to 15 pages per interview, totaled approximately 700 pages of verbatim self-transcribed material for analysis). Once categories and themes were identified, case-studies were compiled for each participant by incorporating field-notes with the most relevant quotes and often occurring themes from the interviews. The transcription, analysis and compiling case studies was done entirely by myself in the writing up and dissemination stage. One caveat to this is that the Romanian interview guide was adapted based on the Scottish one, which was developed from the first seven pilot interviews collected in Edinburgh with Scottish fathers. Yet the data was collected in English for the Scottish[1] participants and in Romanian for the Romanian participants. At times, there were differences in the grammatical structure of the two languages that obstructed a verbatim translation. The main transcription issues I encountered were knowing how to render the non-verbal elements of the interviews and preserve participants' emotions. I expand on these matters in the examples presented in the following section. [6]

3. Constructing a Cultural Hierarchy Through Linguistic Adjustments

Concerns about translation have been expressed in anthropology for decades. For example, Ruth BEHAR (2003) and Catherine LUTZ with Lila ABU-LUGHOD (1990) have written about translating from the outsider's perspective, and the dissolution of the boundaries between subject and object in narratives which can potentially destabilize colonial inheritances. It has been discussed, that culture is not only created through narratives but once power is also included into the analytical frameworks, then marginalized perspectives can help us rethink dominant cultural scripts (SPIVAK, 1992). Furthermore HSIUNG (2012) convincingly argues that scholars from the periphery should maintain a distinct

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1 There as well the problematic aspect of considering the valuable particularities of Scots, the Scottish dialect, as a language distinct from English, but nonetheless often represented in research in the category "English language." In this article, I chose for lack of space to focus primarily on how English subordinates Romanian, but it should be kept in mind that Scots might suffer the same conversion. In my research, I resisted this strategy and retained in the data excerpts the distinctive aspects of the Scottish language, even if I had to provide explanations at times.

and collective identity which should challenge the dominant Anglo-Saxon center of qualitative research (KUSHNER, 2003) and the roots of the English language (WATTS, 2011). While I agree with the sentiment, it should be emphasized that the case of migrant researchers has not been considered in-depth. When a researcher has lived and studies in a certain country and culture situated at the margins and then becomes active in the academic and research environment of a country at the North-Western center, then a *hybrid cultural identity* is formed. This transitional identity complicates the process of translating and disseminating research in both the Western and the Eastern part of Europe (specifically referring to my example). As such it is not only as HSIUNG (2012) argues that knowledge produced in the center is consumed in the periphery, but that some researchers from the periphery feel more valued and are more visible in the center and help produce certain types of knowledge that not only serve to be consumed by the periphery but can as well represent it. It is a mediated process due to the dominance of research opportunities, funding and other types of structural benefits experienced in the West compared to other parts of Europe. As English is the dominant language in which the research is written, presented and disseminated, Romanian then becomes a subordinate language which requires adjustments, translation and modifications to not only become visible but also *representative* to English audiences. Below I provide six examples to show how this has been achieved pragmatically in the process of translating the data. [7]

3.1 Example 1

Firstly, as I translated I tried to retain some of the original Romanian words and expressions and have introduced them next to the translated word in the body of the thesis, for example, in my explanation of the double meaning of love in the Romanian language:

> "In the Romanian language, 'love' as a noun, has more than one meaning, so it can be expressed as either 'dragoste' or as 'iubire' (Iluţ, 2015). Even if differences in meaning are rather liminal, Romanians would use 'dragoste' as a type of romantic love, while 'iubire' is a general term meant to represent the love one has for the family as well. Often and when used in common language, the terms are blended and resist clear differentiations" (MACHT, 2017, p.14). [8]

At the recommendation of my supervisor, I offered an additional footnote as well to clarify further:

> "To give an example, one would translate 'I love you' as 'Te iubesc'. Romanians use 'dragoste' to describe the experiences of falling in love 'm-am îndrăgostit', but also to express what they deem to be worthy of love and hold dear: 'drăguţ' as 'cute' or 'draga mea/dragul meu' as 'my dear'. One would translate 'I love my parents' as 'îmi iubesc părinţii', again by using 'iubire', even if for romantic partners the terms used would have the same lexical root as 'iubita/ul meu' or 'my loved one'. When used in a family context however, the meaning is devoid of any sexual romantic feelings. The two words are used to differentiate between sexual and romantic love, according to

context. In this sense the Romanian fathers in my research have used the more familial term 'iubire' to refer to their children" (ibid.). [9]

It did puzzle me that something so significant to my thesis had to be relegated to a footnote, but this could be a potential indication of ongoing processes of marginalization. On the other hand, specifically including Romanian words in the text from time to time, breaks the dominion of the English language if only temporarily. It re-orients the reader's attention to there being a textual difference that needs to be attentively considered. [10]

3.2 Example 2

Secondly, I tried to represent the Romanian language in its grammatical correctness. The Romanian alphabet contains a set of unique letters introduced in writing through syntactical labels called diacritics [*diacritice*], and these letters are: *ă, î, ş, ţ, â*. However, it is common practice amongst some Romanians to write in everyday written exchanges *tatal* [father] rather than the correct spelling of *tatăl*, because it is a quicker way of typing (especially if keyboards have not been set to the local linguistic parameters but remain on the factory model which arrives normally with the US/UK English default setting). Writing the word in this way, still conveys the meaning of the word 'the father' across, and it could be one of the reason for the enduring quality of this erroneous practice. Personally, I had to consciously work through this action, and labored against convenience by making sure I represented these specific letters of the Romanian language. To my mind, this type of practice could preserve authenticity during translation. In addition, part of this process was not misrepresenting the meanings of the fathers' words, which could have fallen under negative apprehensions as they came across in the English translation, such as being labeled "uneducated" or "uncultured." Building upon this aspect, LARKIN, DIERCKX DE CASTERLÉ and SCHOTSMANS (2007) used a metaphor of four constituent aspects to illuminate the multi-lingual translation process, composed of: cohesion, clarity, congruence and courtesy. Among them, courtesy is one I had to struggle with to reproduce through the fathers' narratives as I tried to carry across a sense of "cultural decorum." Much like in the example offered by LARKIN and his colleagues, where an Italian member of their team had to translate a question from English in an adapted form to include *Lei* as a form of politeness, I also had to transform the universal English pronoun "you" (or its more formal and impersonal "one") with the formal Romanian substitute for *tu* as *dumneavoastră*. This was especially evident, in the interviews I conducted with older Romanian fathers, such as Bogdan[2] (a 50-year-old father). I compare below the first question I asked Bogdan at the start of our interview with the same question I asked Petre[3] during his interview (a 28-year-old father) to the English translation, which absconds the distinctions between formal and informal nuances:

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2   I used pseudonyms to ensure the participants' confidentiality and anonymity.

3   Petre specifically asked me to use informal speech in our interview, as he felt uncomfortable using polite forms because of our similar ages at the time of the interview.

Romanian (formal): Ce puteţi să-mi spuneţi despre copilul dumneavoastră?
Romanian (informal): Ce poţi să-mi spui despre copilul tău?
English: What can you tell me about your child? [11]

Maintaining the distinctions between such specific forms of politeness and the universalizing pronouns in English, helped in preserving further authenticity in the process of translating the data of the research, but also helped me maintain appropriate levels of respect during the interactions with my participants, contributing directly to the construction of the collected data. [12]

3.3 Example 3

Even if I struggled to maintain certain authentic aspects, there were inevitably losses in the emotional tone of the quotes, as they crossed over into a different language. In everyday Romanian informal speech there are words which are assumed and implied. If this is relatively unnoticeable in conversations between Romanians themselves, it appears obvious when having to translate or explain the meaning of sentences into another language such as English. Concise Romanian expressions laced with humor and irony were transformed into formal English equivalents that resonated emotionally in different ways. Furthermore, verbs are occasionally implied in the Romanian informal speech, and such cultural idiosyncrasies are hard to translate verbatim (DAM & EYLES, 2012). To resolve this, a process of clarifying assumptions takes place, where the researcher must "fill in certain gaps." This appears evident in a segment of my interview with Nelu, the father of a son whom I interviewed on a park bench in Bucharest. I asked him what kind of positive moments he experiences in the relationship with his son, to which he replied:

English: (...) even this one is a positive experience [referring to being in the park on a Sunday].There are a lot of positive [moments] and it is easier to gain them, if at the moment when we both wake up in the morning, this to me is a positive thing [laughter] (...) If I am proud of him, I would be—how do you call it—dishonest, [because] a big merit belongs to her [referring to his wife, as having raised their son] *I'm just some guy there*, no matter how I spin it, *I'm just some guy there* eventually. Yes, I'm a mother's assistant.
Romană/Romanian: (...) şi asta este o experienţă pozitivă. Pozitive sunt multe şi e uşor să le obţin. Mi se pare că din moment ce ne trezim amândoi dimineaţa e pozitiv (...) Dacă sunt mândru de el, sunt – cum îi spune – fraudulos, că un mare merit e al ei. *I'm just some guy there*, ştii oricum aş da-o, *I'm just some guy there*, până la urmă. Da, eu sunt asistent de mamă. [13]

Nelu's account is significant as he easily shifts from Romanian to English with the repeated expression "I'm just some guy there." He renders as such something which added a certain emotional weight to the conversation as he self-excluded himself from the cohesive narrative in the process of *doing* of family, identified by David MORGAN (2011) in research with a British population, although he was

also making fun of the seriousness of his fathering responsibility. As an interpreter, I had to "emotionally transplant" the Romanian expressions which fathers have used into English, and there was a level of tacit knowledge inherent in transplanting meanings across cultures. I had to remain aware of my own bias as I translated, by rendering what the Romanian fathers had said but also by interpreting their words to preserve their emotional meanings. Even if fathers stammered or faltered to explain or make their assumptions clear I tried with a minimum change possible to bring this out as I translated, and sometimes I added clarifications in brackets for the reader to understand; such a convention was utilized to remind the reader that the clarification was my own. [14]

Social psychologists have demonstrated that emotions are connected to language (LINDQUIST, MacCORMACK & SHABLACK, 2015). Emotional meaning can be conveyed as well in shifts between one language into another, as what might be painful to articulate in your own language can invoke a momentary emotional detachment, by borrowing expressions from a different language. In this way it might be easier to detach from emotionally significant things in a foreign language, as Nelu's example portrayed above. [15]

3.4 Example 4

In another example there was the difference between replacing the Romanian word *suflet* literally translated into English as "soul," with the word "heart" as it contained a better emotionally expressive equivalent into English. Alexandru, a Romanian father was discussing the love he feels for his only child, Mia, his daughter, and spoke for both him and his wife by saying "deşi putem spune că ambii părinţi o iubim din tot sufletul nostru"; I translated this as "although I can say that we both love her from all of our hearts." The word "heart" in this context *embodies* the meaning of love to a larger extent than the word "soul" would have. The difference might be minimal in terms of meaning, but it is represented differently. Even though this conversion would have been correct as an *ad literam* translation, I tried to maintain linguistic equivalence simultaneously with retaining emotional expressivity, as the meaning transferred from the Romanian into the English context for the same narrative. However, in this process the Romanian *soul* was converted into English *heart*, pointing again to an adjustment. [16]

3.5 Example 5

Emotional content represented through inflexions, innuendos and metaphors was lost in translation, as others have emphasized previously (VAN NES, ABMA, JONSSON & DEEG, 2010). For example, in translating a data excerpt from Cosmin, a Romanian father describing how his father influenced his parenting style with his own son, he used the expression "a fi împăcat cu sine." This is an interesting expression as its translation is connected to the bigger concerns of the research (love and social constructionism). One way to translate it, would have been to adopt a locution which is expressive enough to convey an aspect of love and retains some of the emotional qualities of the quote, as "to set one's heart at ease." However, I opted for this version: "we have to reconcile with ourselves,"

because it made more sense in the contextual aspect of the quote, as Cosmin was discussing this detail as part of a strategy of emotional repression that he learned from his father. Moreover, Cosmin was one of the few fathers to be sceptic of the idea that he is loving his son, choosing instead to say that he is responsible for him, and has a friendship with him. In this sense, what would have worked linguistically, was differently represented when interpreted in context and based on information Cosmin had shared earlier in the interview. A verbatim translation would have ignored this aspect, and as might have appeared "impossible" if too precisely rendered (ROTH, 2013). Julia BRANNEN has argued that in translating research on fatherhood from Polish to English, a focus on contextualization is essential, as: "a critical part of a multi-method strategy in creating and making sense of data (...) in terms of the development of research instruments and question wording and in the interpretation of people's responses in a given national context" (2005, p.182). I agree, and would add that this is not only the cultural context but also the emotional experiences that can certainly enhance discursive communication. It mattered not only what fathers had said but also how they said it as well, and it was through these *affective atmospheres* (GUTIÉRREZ RODRÍGUEZ, 2007) reproduced through father's narratives, which challenged the construction of the cultural hierarchy by preserving authenticity. [17]

4. Obstacles in the Formation of a Hierarchy: Emotional Reflexivity, Gender and Shared Responsibility

In the first section, I hoped to have made a case for how I participated and slightly impeded the process of creating a linguistic cultural hierarchy. In this second part, I elaborate on how I have obstructed this process in translating Romanian to English. As an integral part of this socially-constructed process, in my role as a bilingual woman researcher, I not only converted but also worked to diminish this hierarchical division, and to recalibrate power imbalances during fieldwork and within the text of my doctoral thesis (MACHT, 2017). What has helped me in this process has been a focus on emotional reflexivity and cross-gendered interactions, in moving from sole to shared responsibility. [18]

4.1 Emotional reflexivity

The identity and role of the researcher influence the validity and reliability of the study and the findings (TWINN, 1997). At an epistemological level, conducting research in English as a dominant language, influenced how I was developing a definition of paternal love. I counteracted this by keeping a diary wherein I reflected upon my emotions and not only the ideas that my research and interactions with the participants created. According to Mary HOLMES emotional reflexivity is "an emotional, embodied, and cognitive process in which social actors have feelings about and try to understand and alter their lives in relation to their social and natural environment to others" (2010, p.140). Stated otherwise, social actors first understand what they feel to act in the social world, and *vice versa*, how they act can influence their feelings. By consciously acknowledging my emotions, I worked to reduce bias and maintain a resilient approach to the uncomfortable findings of my research. By preserving the social exchanges

present during the research process, I tried to capture the psychological and philosophical cultural specificities (ROTH, 2018) that might otherwise get lost in translation; however, this was linked directly to the participants' narratives rather than to the translation of Romanian sociological theory. [19]

Because I adopted a social constructionist perspective, it was important to explain my positionality and how this might influence the quality of the data. As qualitative interviewing is a time-consuming but also an emotionally consuming endeavor (CAMPBELL, 2003), it was certainly important to employ emotional reflexivity. However, to a large extent I was uncomfortable with employing emotional reflexivity as a female researcher. DEY and NENTWICH (2006) discussed the gendering of qualitative and quantitative research, and I did consider whether employing emotional reflexivity to retain bias from the data was a "feminized" endeavor in that it should be expected from all researchers but is preponderantly employed by female researchers, a situation which is particularly evident in the field of critical studies of men and masculinities (DE BOISE & HEARN, 2017). [20]

There are however difficulties in employing emotional reflexivity on the field. One of the reasons is that there are no institutional guidelines for how to best translate research across genders and cultures. For example, in the UK the [British Sociological Association's Statement of Ethical Practice](#) (2017) and the [Academy of Social Sciences' Five Ethical Principles](#) (2015) do not focus on potential cultural and gender concerns which might arise during fieldwork. In addition, the Oxford Brookes University's [Code of Practice for Research Ethics for Research involving Human Participants](#) only refers to gender in one aspect: "Any cultural, religious, gender or other differences in a research population should be sensitively and appropriately handled by researchers at all stages" (2016, p.3). However, guidelines for how to pragmatically apply this "sensitivity" are missing. Even other academic articles that tackle ethics and power do not include a discussion of gender matters in translation (MARSHALL & BATTEN, 2004). [21]

4.2 Gender matters

From a gendered perspective, I underwent frequent considerations of why I was studying fatherhood in the first place and questioned whether by translating Romanian into English I was complicit in reproducing linguistically, the patriarchal structures of ruling (OLESEN, 2005). [22]

How language is gendered is significant from the point of view of the analysis, however in certain cases it is difficult to translate these distinctions. Words such as "child" and "boy" which are masculine nouns in Romanian, or "girl" which is feminine, appear in English as gender-neutral due to the universal use of the definite and neutral article "the" (WATTS, 2011). Because of this detail, those moments when Romanian fathers were using "the child" instead of the words "daughter" or "son," I interpreted as a form of emotional detachment. However, these Romanian words were lost in translation, further obscuring certain linguistic constructions of patriarchal dominance. [23]

The problematic layer of studying men's experiences from the lens of a female feminist researcher has been previously discussed in the literature (ARENDELL, 1997; KIMMEL, HEARN & CONNELL, 2005; LEE, 1997; MORGAN, 1992; PINI, 2005). Concerns are mainly centered upon the fact that male researchers studying men might inadvertently create knowledge which reproduces hegemonic discourses. Therefore, as a female researcher, a constant reflection on self-positionality at the crossroads between the "mother tongue" and the "learned tongue" was frequently employed in my study in an effort to acknowledge where narratives became fused, especially when sharing the same language (DAM & EYLES, 2012). For example, I was born and I grew up in Bucharest, the place where I recruited my Romanian participants, and I have been speaking Romanian as a mother tongue from birth. At seven years of age I began learning English in school, a language I then studied intensively up until I graduated from college. I felt so comfortable speaking English that in conversations with friends and family relatively early on I began utilizing it as much as I was speaking Romanian—at home but also in public places, shifting easily between the two dialects. In the context of moving from Romania to Scotland for my degree and conducting an empirical piece of research in two different languages, I acted as an interpreter in two realms I was familiar with. As such, these experiences are not that easily situated on either the insider/outsider dimensions. It always felt empowering to speak English because it offered me access to a prestigious educational environment. However, only at the stage of dissemination of my research—by noticing how the academic public perceived it—did I become aware that I was indeed an outsider (and despite not necessarily considering myself one). I uncomfortably had to reshape the different meanings I was accustomed to expand upon in Romanian into the distinct scripts of English, as demonstrated in the above data excerpts. [24]

As a feminist female researcher studying men, I felt I was hardly "protected" from gender bias, but reflexively I worked through a balanced approach in how I have collected and analyzed the data. For example, I was also acutely aware of falling into the trap of providing a critically pessimistic account of masculinity. The extent to which I have achieved this is debatable, as gender being the subject under study was dynamic, and took the form of the object of knowledge-construction, a topic I presented in-depth in a previous paper (MACHT, 2018). It has been argued that in moving across language, the female bilingual translator can be perceived as enacting a "betrayal" particularly (ALARCON, 1994 [1989]) in relation to the power afforded by contributing to the knowledge production experience. One way to circumvent power, is by focusing on preserving the humorous moments. It has been argued that humor loses its significance more easily when "carried over" into the cultural demands of a different linguistic system (ROTH, 2013). As a researcher I have tried to emphasize in the transcription stage when either I or a participant [*laughs*], or when both of us simultaneously experienced *[laughter*] during our recorded encounters. This helped break at times, the difficult emotional tensions described, and reminded the readership that emotions are socially-constructed at the level of language, which leads me to my next point. [25]

4.3 Shared responsibility

The researcher undoubtedly has an increased responsibility in how he/she handles the process of translating, particularly if he/she is bilingual, as Virginia OLESEN writes:

> "Even though researchers and participants both shape the flow of silences and comments, the researcher, who writes up the account and has responsibility for the text, remains in the more powerful position (…) Merely letting the tape recorder run to present the respondent's voice does not overcome the problem of representation, because the respondent's comments are already mediated when they are made in the interview" (2005, pp.251-252). [26]

However, as a feminist researcher my considerable responsibility and power was rather limited. I experienced it as a non-linear and fluctuating aspect of the research process. As OLESEN suggests, I often felt I had a diminished power on the field, but an increased power in the writing process, as I struggled to accurately represent fathers' voices. The tension was because my participants were simultaneously part of a privileged group of White men, and yet they were also a minority group whose voices have been excluded from the literature on fatherhood. In addition, it has been hypothesized that power rests in how translation is executed and integrated into the research design not just *per se* (TEMPLE & YOUNG, 2004), so by choosing to focus on marginalized fathering experiences I thought I contributed to de-centering Western perspectives. [27]

Furthermore, I wondered if I was "reverse othering" my male participants. In an intricate analysis, BRONS (2015) argued that one cannot speak of a reversal of the position of othering, but of the transcendence of othering. This is because rather than it being the act of doing something upon somebody, it is more of a mirroring of the researcher into the experiences of the participant. I agree with this perspective as it relies upon the mutual co-construction of the discourse, the reality and the relationship between participant and researcher; it is in line with the theoretical framework that I have used to design the doctoral research (BURKITT, 2014), which conceives of emotions as social relations rather than inward and private experiences. As such, it was not only the data at hand that was socially constructed between myself and the participants, but once it passes into the dissemination stage, the interpretations of my findings are also socially constructed in the communication with editors, reviewers, and the readership (VAN NES et al., 2010). The process of constructing meaning continues to interact with the reader's and reviewers' assumptions even after publication (SQUIRES, 2009). [28]

As I have undertaken all the interviews, transcribed and translated them, that might be a sign of coherence and as such increased reliability, and yet it should be taken into account that the data is then analyzed and disseminated from solely one individual's perspective. Such a perspective ties in with the notion of *subjective culture* (BUSCH, 2009), which, when applied to translation, means that the researcher is only able to translate from her/his own *situated position of*

knowledge (both linguistically and epistemologically). Because situations where the researcher can fluently speak the languages of those she is working with are rare, it is essential then to focus on the overt but also the hidden components of translation (TEMPLE & YOUNG, 2004). This means that representatives from the same culture attribute each other discursive positions in dialogue wherein assumptions usually remain unquestioned. As such, the researcher has to work through elucidating them by maintaining an *intercultural sensitivity* (HAMMER, BENNETT & WISEMAN, 2003). [29]

Furthermore, Rafat ALWAZNA (2014) argues that there are two broad opposing views in the debate on the ethics of translation: one that purports strict adherence to the original text even if the overall results sound foreign, whereas the other promotes a type of adaption of the source material into the cultural demands of the target language. The author considers that the better ethical stand is situated at the intersection of this approach. For something to be deemed "successful" it must be incorporated into the dominant language, otherwise it will not be referred to and cited as a core text, and therefore widely distributed. However, even in this context, gender is usually a neglected ethical concern. In this article, I empirically added to the theoretical contributions of ALWAZNA's balanced approach to ethical dilemmas in translating. [30]

5. Conclusion: Representing the Cultural Margins or Reproducing Linguistic Dominance?

Andrew CHESTERMAN (2006) considers that the cultural researcher is primarily a mediator, who fulfills multiple functions in the translation process: analyzing the data for cultural sameness and difference, deciding what is excluded and included, considering equivalence and adaptation as a freer form of translation, and establishing correlations between semantic features and translation norms. As part of my research design, I served as a bilingual mediator, and inadvertently created cultural hierarchies in the process of translating from the marginalized Romanian language into English as the dominant language of research, with the aim of increasing the visibility of my participants' representation. TEMPLE and YOUNG argue that researchers should emphasize the silence between linguistic logic and rhetoric: "The fundamental issue is how the expediency of translation reinforces the invisibility of the source language—an issue that is both political and methodological" (2004, p.166). In this contribution to the debate on the quality of qualitative data, I have problematized this "silence" in the present article, as not only being logical but also the emotional and frequently linked to the unconscious actions of our research. As such I add and update the viewpoints expressed by FAHRENBERG (2003) and BREUER (2003) in this journal, who have considered positionality from a psychological dimension. I, however focus on the social aspects of the relational, in-between space where a researcher creates knowledge with his/her participants, a knowledge which is inevitably subjected to a hierarchy as it is translated. Therefore, I have presented how the quality of the research can be enhanced by employing emotional reflexivity, because it considers in-depth the researcher's role and his/her gendered and cultural positions in the process of constructing knowledge. [31]

However, as TAROZZI (2013) argues, translating a text into a dominant language is not only an act of conversion but of reinterpretation, as the source language might have certain specific characteristics which enable the qualitative researcher to reinterpret how English is used in the process of translation. So, the target language, in this case English not only dominates the marginal and source language (here Romanian) but it is also reshaped by it, in contact with a different syntactical and semantic structure. To fulfil my role in the quality of the qualitative process, I showed through examples how I tried to preserve the idiosyncrasies and specificities of the Romanian language in translation. Furthermore, as ROTH (2018) explains in an analysis of how MARX is translated, converting meanings strikes at the core of an epistemological reflection and is not just a linguistic transformation. According to him qualitative researchers should be especially careful to the philosophical and psychological values that are being "morphed," as these transfer into another (and as I argued) more dominant language. [32]

Reflecting on the data presented in this article, I hope that it adds a focused view on the many roles of the researcher as an essential part of the research process and contributing as such to the wider debate on quality. Translation is connected to the researcher's persona, to the gender and culture of the researcher, and this aspect should not be ignored by social researchers. Interpretation is at the core of qualitative research (FAHRENBERG, 2003), but cross-cultural studies should continue to make the process overt (TEMPLE, EDWARDS & ALEXANDER, 2006), and furthermore reflect on the intersection of gender and culture in their analyses of their own persona and of those of their participants. I offered my personal example as a case study in this article, of translating Romanian data into English, as a starting point of opening to a wider discussion. It would be interesting to observe what insights I might have gained from reversing the process: by translating the findings of my research from English to Romanian and disseminating to a Romanian audience. Ultimately, I argue that the universally accepted role of English as the primary language of research should continue to be challenged rather than simply assumed. In its current dominance it can simplify the complexity of research and the social relationships that support it and continue to propagate an impoverished scholarly understanding of a social landscape replete with valuable and distinct cultural perspectives. [33]

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