

Article

A Critical Reflection on the Use of Translators/Interpreters in a Qualitative Cross-Language Research Project

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Abstract

Based on experiences from a qualitative research project on immigrant women's English language acquisition, we critiqued the traditional positivist model, and identified a number of issues related to the engagement of translators/interpreters in feminist and community-based research. The issues that we identified amount to serious questions about ambiguities and ownership of translated language content; assumptions about community familiarity and cultural similarity between researchers, translators, and participants; negotiation of power and authority in the research process; and the risks faced by translators. In the end, though individual research team members bear responsibility over these shortcomings and need to strive to make our research practices more inclusive and equitable, the institutional context of research imposes severe limitations on the ideal alternative model of working with translators and interpreters as co-researchers.

Keywords: Positivist paradigm, translators, interpreters, feminist research, community-based research, community researchers, cross-language research, critical reflection, institutional constraints

Introduction

Mainstream Social Science adheres to a positivist paradigm, a “traditional, value-free, un-reflexive model of the research process” (Edwards, 1998, p. 1). In this paradigm, researchers who conduct cross-language research continue to seek ways to control for the ‘effects’ of the interpreter/translator, to treat them as a threat to validity, and to make them invisible in the process and product.

In contrast to the positivist paradigm, the principles of feminist, community-based, social constructionist, and post-modern approaches to research highlight issues of collaboration, power, representation and reflexivity (Finlay, 2000; Flicker, Savan, Kolenda, & Mildenerger, 2008; Monk, Manning, & Denman, 2003). Feminist research generally “[i]s contextual, inclusive, experiential, involved, socially relevant, complete but not necessarily replicable, open to the environment and inclusive of emotions and events as experienced” (Sarantakos, 2004, p.55). Flicker and colleagues (2007) explain that “...CBR [community-based research] is not a method, but an approach to research that emphasizes the importance of collaboration, participation and social justice agendas over positivist notions of objectivity and the idea that science is apolitical” (p. 2). Even so, while these principles may be well established in these frameworks where researchers and research participants are concerned, the role of translator/interpreters in relation to these principles has received scant attention amongst community-based researchers. Some feminist researchers, however, have begun to unpack the role of translator/interpreters outside of a positivist approach (see, Edwards, 1998; Temple, 1997; Temple & Edwards, 2002).

For many feminist and community-based researchers, the primary reasons for lack of attention to such principles in relation to translators/interpreters may be related to institutional constraints, for example, short time frames imposed by funding agencies, university bureaucracies, and the juggling of research amidst teaching loads. Nevertheless, it is important to reflect on and challenge prevailing institutional constraints in order to create a truly participatory research environment for all those who contribute to a given project.

In this paper we identify key issues raised in the critique of the traditional positivist model for using interpreters, and reflect on lessons that emerged from a qualitative research project on the acquisition of English language proficiency by Urdu, Punjabi, Mandarin, and Cantonese immigrant women in Toronto, Canada. Feminist and community-based research (CBR) principles were implicit in our project, but the lack of their full articulation contributed to some of the issues we bring forward in this reflective paper. This reflection on our process is neither an attempt to lay blame nor erase bias, but rather should be viewed as a source of insight. It is undertaken with the intent of moving toward greater inclusivity and away from oppressive research practices in future cross-language research (Archibald & Crnkovich, 1995; Grossman, Kruger, & Moore, 1999). Equitable practices are also noted.

Project Background

Given the negative impact on immigrant women who do not speak either of Canada’s official languages (see, for example, Man, 2004), we sought to explore the obstacles and challenges for immigrant women in acquiring proficiency¹ in the English language upon arriving in Canada. This investigation was originally designed as a three-year project; subsequently we revised the project for granting purposes, thus reducing its time frame and cost. Some of the difficulties that ensued were the result of this last-minute re-design of the project.

Our research project unfolded in three phases. In the first phase we held focus groups with key informants (service providers, staff in community agencies); the second phase involved individual interviews with women who had become fluent in English since arriving in Canada in the past ten years; and, the third phase entailed holding focus groups with women who did not yet speak English.

Prior to the third phase, women from the four language groups² were sought to facilitate, in their first language, focus groups with immigrant women who did not speak English. Four women, one from each language group, agreed to take on this role of focus group facilitator, transcriber, interpreter and translator, in essence, a community researcher. They subsequently attended a two-hour training session on facilitation where they were provided with the focus group protocol, based on data from the individual interviews, which had been reviewed by a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) that was brought together specifically for this research project. The protocols were not pre-tested in the four language communities; cost constraints limited the amount of time that facilitators could be engaged for the work. This training approach should be contrasted with the model employed by the Principal Investigator prior and subsequent to this particular project. This latter approach entails a full day of discussion and training with first-language facilitators from the community, as well as a full debriefing.

Issues of consent were also discussed and consent forms were reviewed. Key informants from Phase 1, interviewees from Phase 2 (including three of the four community researchers; the fourth community researcher was a research participant in a previous study conducted by one of the academic researchers), and members of the research team and their contacts also provided names of potential study participants for Phase 3. In the end, the majority of participants were recruited by the community researchers.

The focus groups were held in a variety of settings, including a private room in a local library, the home of a "host" from the community (a confidentiality agreement was signed), a "party room" of the apartment building, and a community researcher's apartment. A graduate student research assistant was present at all four groups to offer technical and moral support to each of the four community researchers; however, the project lead researchers were not present. The community researchers were given an honorarium for their time and for any for costs incurred while putting together the focus groups (snacks were provided), for translating the consent forms and protocols, for facilitating the groups, and for transcribing and translating the focus group transcripts. Their relationship to the lead investigators ended upon receipt of their transcripts, and payment for their services.

Criticism of the traditional positivist model and an alternative approach

A positivist approach is the predominant paradigm for using translators in social science research (Edwards, 1998; Temple, 2002). This approach conceals the interpreter entirely by treating the interpreter as merely a mechanical and potentially problematic part of the research process. For example, researchers who adopt this approach caution that the researcher must control the translator/interpreter through such processes as the use of 'back translation'³, a triangular seating arrangement, and checking and monitoring devices (Edwards, 1998; Temple, 2002; Temple & Young, 2004). Familiarity with the participant's culture is encouraged so that the researcher can ensure the interview is carried out appropriately (Edwards, 1998). Translation and interpretation is thus treated as a technical act; the concern is with eliminating errors (Shklarov, 2007).

In contrast to this approach, Temple (2002) calls for a social constructionist approach to

translation: translators are viewed as active producers of knowledge. She recommends that, like researchers, their intellectual autobiographies be explored and discussed, including their social location, perspectives, and specific skills and competencies. Edwards (1998) proposes that interpreters be considered key informants who provide information about the social setting under research and mediate between the researcher and the group under study. They should be included in discussions about social location, values and beliefs. Larkin, De Casterlé, and Schotsmans (2007) also make the case for making the translator visible by encouraging her/his presence and consultation in every step of the research process. The translator should be an “interpretive guide and co-researcher” (pp. 474-475). This inclusion of the translator as a key member of the team is said to strengthen the rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative cross-language research (Squires, 2009). For example, when a translator/community researcher involved in our project told one of the academics at a training session, “In my country, I was like you,” this statement could have been seen as an opportunity for further dialogue about her identity and how she viewed her role in the project.

Shklarov (2007) also urges that the importance of the translator’s role in human science research be acknowledged. In her cross-language research, Shklarov (2007) held what she describes as a “double role” (p. 530), acting as both researcher and translator, and discusses the benefits, challenges, and ambiguities of this approach. She asserts that “bicultural translators” can help negotiate different perspectives and cultural understandings, which she argues is an advantage from the point of view of the research process, both in protecting participants from harm, and maintaining research integrity. Translators can provide first-hand knowledge of the culture and community settings.

Although familiar with feminist research in the community context, this critical reflection demonstrates our unexamined assumptions regarding the use of translations and translators and illustrates why an alternative approach is needed.

Issues arising from the criticism of the traditional model and reflections on our project

Given that most of us enter into the realm of using interpreters/translators in the research process without any training (Edwards, 1998), it is important to reflect on our research practice, being informed (albeit belatedly) by the debate between the traditionalists and their critics. We will organize our reflections in the form of the following questions, which are based on the issues raised in the critique of the positivist model: Whose language is it? Whose community and culture is it? Whose power and authority is it? And, whose risk is it?

Whose language is it?

Those working within the traditional positivist model assert that translators pose a variety of problems. Some studies (see, for example, Aranguri, Davidson, & Ramirez, 2006) suggest that in the interpretation context more is being said than is getting translated, and, furthermore, interpreters change meanings by omission, revision, and reduction of content. They also caution that some aspects that are perceived by the interpreter as ‘informal’ are left out. Translators may thus produce knowledge that is not in keeping with the goals of the researcher. In this model, translators’ actions are treated as suspect and their influence on the translation process must be controlled through various means.

In contrast, rather than being a weakness and something for which researchers must control,

Edwards (1998) argues that translators' independent action can strengthen research, especially where sensitive subjects are concerned. Thus, the goal in this post-positivist approach is not to minimize such effects, but rather to engage in mutual consultation between researchers and translators in the translation process (Temple & Young, 2004). Indeed, Temple (1997) asserts that differences in perception between translators and researchers should be "investigated and debated, not hidden" (p. 615).

In the positivist model, ideally translators are supposed to be transmitting neutral messages; the primacy of the English language is not acknowledged or considered (Temple, 2002). Temple (2002, p. 610) suggests however that we may need to "convey meaning using words other than literally translated equivalents." Similarly, Kapborg and Berterö (2002) address the subtle differences in meaning between languages, and also call on the need for translations to be based on meaning rather than linguistic structure or words. Shklarov (2007) points out that there can be different definitions of the same concept and culturally specific expressions that defy universal meanings. Language is not neutral and the perspectives of translators need to be taken into account.

We assumed in our training that the community researchers should follow common English meanings and translate as 'accurately' as possible, an approach to translation that we later learned has been called 'assimilationist' (Temple, Edwards & Alexander, 2006). We did not go over the issue of different meanings in our training. Our advice to the community researchers about difficulties of translating specific English terms into their languages was to do the best they could, thus missing an important opportunity to explore the issue further with the input of the translators.

A crucial step recommended by Edwards (1998), Temple (1997) and other proponents of an alternate model, that of debriefing with the community researchers about their perspectives on the research and translation, was also missed. For example, a transcript was returned to a translator/transcriber because she was using what was deemed to be 'judgmental language.' She was asked to re-word her document. In this instance, we realize in retrospect that although we were alert to a particular perspective on the part of translator, we did not engage with this issue as fully as we should have. We simply saw it as bias and asked her to be more 'factual.' Indeed, Temple et al. (2006) make the case that the analysis of data solely collected and translated by community researchers shares similarities with secondary data analysis. These scholars demonstrate how "debriefing sessions after each interview and carrying out a final interview with field researchers can begin to open up and make accessible (albeit partially) the context of production for cross-language research" (section 7, paragraph 4). This underscores the importance of involving the translators in all phases of the research project. The fact that we did not engage in a debriefing raises issues related to power and authority (see discussion in subsequent sections).

Whose community & culture is it?

One of most difficult issues in doing CBR is the negotiation of differences between the cultures of researchers and participants. This has two elements: (1) Who is the insider in the community? And, (2) who is the cultural expert? Insiders do not necessarily have to be a part of the cultural group, but can offer important insight through their presence in a particular local neighbourhood. The latter are members of the actual ethno-cultural group. Each of these aspects is counter to the traditional view of the researcher as the expert. In the traditional model, there is an emphasis on the utility for researchers to be acquainted with their research participants' culture, so as not to "overlook or misinterpret the significance of certain responses or attempt to carry out the interview in an inappropriate manner" (Edwards, 1998, p.5). Researchers are to keep a tight rein

on the process, including controlling the translators prior to and during the interview. After this phase of the research comes the interpretation/analysis of data and the writing up of research accounts; traditionally translators are to play no role at this stage (Edwards, 1998).

With regard to the first of these, community insider status, three of the four community researchers lived in the same communities where they conducted the focus groups. Even prior to the collection of data, the translators played a key role in the project, more akin to 'community researchers' who have insider knowledge about the people, culture and community settings. Although the earlier account of our project sounds smooth and straightforward, as those who do feminist CBR have long known, recruiting minority women requires "labour-intensive strategies that require personal contact" (Weber Cannon, Higginbotham, & Leung, 1988, p.1). The community researchers in our project played a crucial role in recruitment of participants, thus acting also as gatekeepers to their communities.

Because we did not consider the translators' roles as being more than technical, however, we have no information about how the translators may have been perceived by community members, or whom they chose to approach for recruitment purposes. Did the women participate because the community researchers were respected members of the community? After all, the community researchers had learned English, while they had not. Or, conversely, were the community researchers seen as outsiders whom the participants were curious about? Who did the community researchers choose to approach, or not approach? What impact could these issues have had on participation, and on what was said (or not said) in the focus groups?

An illustration of the problems caused by ignoring the perspective of translators relates to our choice of study participants. The reasons provided in our final report for including the three sets of study participants were as follows:

1) the KIs [key informants] would have a good overview of the situation of the women in each language group; 2) the now-fluent women from each language group would have a clear sense of the obstacles they had faced, and more importantly, how they had overcome them: what worked and what did not; and 3) the women who do not yet speak English would have the best insights of all into the limitations of the efforts at outreach and programming, which have not worked in their cases, and why this may be so. (Kilbride et al., 2009, pp. 12-13)

Notably, one of the community researchers was quite convinced prior to carrying out the focus group that the majority of women in her community *chose* not to learn English, and the community researcher told this to one of the lead researchers. Given what the researchers had heard from the now fluent women however, the lead researchers assumed that women who did not learn English were influenced by a number of institutional obstacles, not personal choice. The complexities of this issue are evident in, for example, Kouritzin's (2000) research. She reports that several of the women she interviewed did not want to immigrate to Canada but followed their husbands who wanted to do so. This, as highlighted by one of our community researchers, raises the possibility that some immigrant women chose not to learn English. The lead researchers did not explore with this community researcher how this perspective may have played out in the focus group or in the translation, and ultimately in the data we analyzed and interpreted. Involving the translators as cultural experts in all phases of the research project could have illuminated these issues.

Nevertheless, there are two key instances where the lead researchers heeded the advice of the community researchers. Initially, the team sought to host the focus groups at a social service agency serving immigrants, as was done with the key informant groups; however, independent of

each other, two of the community researchers clearly indicated to members of the research team that, given the language barrier, the women in their communities would not be comfortable taking public transit to the suggested focus group location. Therefore, with the approval of the University's Research Ethics Board the location was changed to those noted earlier in the paper. In hindsight it seems an obvious barrier for participation, but not one the lead investigators had considered. The second instance of heeding advice was when two of the four community researchers recommended we move particular research deadline dates due to the Muslim observance of Ramadan. In this instance, the community researchers provided the research team with crucial knowledge that was critical to the third phase of the project.

With regard to the second issue, cultural expertise, all of the community researchers were of the same ethno-cultural group as their focus group participants. Most researchers assert that cultural sameness between interviewer and interviewee is key in transcultural research (e.g. see Edwards, 1998; Kapborg & Berterö 2002; Merriam et al., 2001; Overing, 1987). Edwards (1998) also includes sameness in gender and religious characteristics. Therefore, in our project we elected to employ translators/interviewers of the same gender and ethnicity as the participants, as we believed this would likely facilitate the research process.

We should not, however, have assumed that translators who share a language with the research participants necessarily share or can represent their culture (Temple, 2002). The degree of diversity within ethnic groups is an important, but often neglected, factor for translation. Frequently this occurs because of a stereotypical understanding of cultures as fixed and homogeneous entities, such as "Western" or "Chinese" culture (Shklarov, 2007). Furthermore, as Shklarov (2007) points out, "[p]eople who routinely perform translations are, most often, long-time immigrants and have been educated in the Western tradition. This makes them, to some extent, culturally distant from their non-English speaking compatriots" (p. 531).

In our research, we trusted that the women we recruited as translators/community researchers were able to 'speak the language;' we did not consider issues of variation within language/cultural groups. While focus group participants were women who had come to Canada in the last 10 years, the translators may have lived here for much longer. The significance of this is that there could have been much more cultural distance between the translators and the participants than we initially assumed.

Whose power and authority is it?

Much has been written by post-modernist, feminist, and social constructionist qualitative theorists and researchers about the influence of the researcher's social location on the research process, the sharing of power, and the researcher and participants as co-constructors of knowledge. These issues however, are generally not taken into consideration when working with translators (Temple, 2002). For example, while the term 'subject' has largely been rejected and replaced by the term 'participant,' questions about appropriate terminology for the interpreter or translator in cross-cultural qualitative research remains. Possible terms include the following: community researcher, translator, interpreter, cultural broker, facilitator, key informant, interpretive guide, bi-cultural translator, and team member. Underlying all of these terms are considerations of difference in social status and perceived role.

While Porter (1994) alerts us to the issue of similarities in the social position of researchers and translators in that they may share insecure short-term employment or have similar institutional constraints on their freedoms, there are notable differences between the social status of researcher and translator. These differences may create tensions around respective limitations and issues of

power and control, regardless of the terminology used to describe the translator. In order to overcome these limitations, Edwards (1998) recommends some form of matching regarding the research knowledge of the interpreter and the researcher, which she argues, can be addressed through suitable training. Temple and Young (2004, p.173), however, point out the difficulties linked to this recommendation: "How can you train translators in a short time span often available to hold their own in issues of research methodology?"

In our project, the issue of time was a definite factor: we had less than one year to complete the project, a time-line imposed by the funding agency. An extensive training schedule for the translators was therefore impossible. Whereas, in keeping with the standard CBR process, we had a community advisory board, the translators were only brought in after the second phase of the project. Even though a brief training session was held, by this time the protocols were established. The limited communication arising from this treatment of community researchers may have resulted in a typical hierarchical employer-employee relationship whereby the employee seeks to please the employer (e.g., the translator screening or censoring interview data in order to please the researchers).

In relation to the research process, typically discussion of translator-researcher-participant dynamics is in relation to one-on-one interviews. However, our project differed from such an approach in that our research did not involve a three-way process (Edwards, 1998). As stated earlier, none of the lead academic researchers were present during the collection of data, and the method used was a focus group rather than an interview. Why does this matter as far as power is concerned? It can, for example, be argued that it is a way of reducing the authority of the academic researchers. For instance, feminist researchers Archibald & Crnkovich (1995) argue that given the choice, they would not use an interpreter but would prefer to have women conduct research in their own communities. In addition, a focus group is said to be a context where participants may be empowered to speak up (Gibbs, 1997). As stated earlier, however, three of the four community researchers were known by the participants; furthermore, we are unaware of the role/status of the community researcher in the community and how that might have influenced the results.

In addition to the collection and interpretation of data, Temple and Young (2004) ask how else the translator could or should be involved in the research process. In our project we gave the authority of recruiting and conducting the focus groups to the translators, in this sense they were community researchers. However, the authority for going over the focus group research protocol, which was created by the academics, was given not to the translators or research participants, but to a CAC made up of representatives from community agencies serving newcomer women and families. The CAC primarily consisted of CEOs, Executive Directors, Settlement Counselors and Program Directors. The fact that the CAC was pulled together to help provide support and advice in the design and implementation of the focus groups, and to review the interview protocols and suggest revisions in the less than twelve-month period allotted by the funder is rather miraculous. However, as stated, no translators or research participants were part of the CAC.

As indicated in the section 'Whose language is it?', issues of power and authority also come into play in translating terminology. Even if debriefings and discussions take place between the academics and translators, who, in the end, has the intellectual authority to define the terminology (Temple, 1997)? In our research project, this authority rested with the academic research team. We did not solicit input from translators on the meaning or definition of 'language proficiency.' Instead, we relied on meaning as it emerged subjectively from the focus group participants, while ignoring the mediating effect of the translators. Nor did we adequately discuss the idea of 'proficiency' with the translators. In the end, we are not able to determine how much this

omission influenced our understanding of the data.

Whose risk is it?

Risk in the research process can be the direct result of ignoring issues related power. One aspect of risk which is not usually addressed is the potential risks/harms posed to translators. Research ethics boards tend to protect research participants, but to our knowledge little is being done to safeguard community-based translators/interviewers. This is all the more important given that they are generally paid low wages, not in realistic measure to their work. Potential problems for translators include confidentiality, small size of the community, and the risk of making the community look bad and or looking bad in front of the community (Edwards, 1998; Freed, 1988). Additionally, translators may provide services in the community creating awkward client-provider relationships. King (1981) pointed out years ago that community factionalism may make the translator's life more difficult. Finally, as Reinharz and Chase (2002) and others have noted, the interview process may also impact the interviewer by raising difficult issues and uncertainties. These types of risks are of particular concern in our project given that three of the four focus group facilitators live in the same community as the participants. We do not know whether our translators had any difficulties or faced any negative reactions from the community after the research was done. A debriefing between the lead researchers and the community researchers may have allowed such issues to surface and be properly addressed.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Continuing Conundrums

Based on our experiences and review of the critique of the traditional model, we have identified a number of issues related to the engagement of translators in CBR. The issues that we have identified include serious questions about ambiguities and ownership of translated language content; assumptions about community familiarity and cultural similarity between researchers, translators, and participants; negotiation of power and authority in the research process; and the risks faced by translators. These are important concerns that researchers need to consider when embarking on cross-cultural or cross-language research.

Our main recommendation is that, within the parameters of respectful relationships between all members of the research team, translators/interpreters be incorporated as research partners in all phases of qualitative projects. Issues of power cannot be authentically addressed if the role of the translator is not carefully considered at a project's onset. Optimally, one might consider translator involvement in the earliest stages of planning. In our project, the community researchers were not part of the CAC; they were only brought in after the second phase of the project, by which time research protocols were established; furthermore, no debriefing took place after the focus groups were completed. Consultation is crucial.

Having said this, we need to be alert to two sides of the issue. The first one has to do with the individual shortcomings and the responsibility that lies with the academic team members. First and foremost, overcoming or examining one's social location is an on-going and never completed project. Along with our social location goes the privilege of socially acknowledged expertise. Had we solidly adhered to principles of participatory or community-based and feminist research, we might have realized the importance of discussing the protocols with the translators and incorporating their feedback fully. Our practices, however, simply maintained academic ownership of expertise. Our translators' training was cursory and, in the end, insufficient. We generally assumed that the translators/interviewers were working 'for' us rather than 'with' us. In other words, we were 'using' the translators, rather than 'working with' them.

Instead of attempting to exert control over the translator and the translation process, it is time that researchers reconceptualize translators as partners in the research process (Edwards, 1998; Larkin et al., 2007; Temple & Young, 2004) and acknowledge the many roles they may play above and beyond translator (roles which include, for example, focus group facilitator, transcriber, interpreter, or community researcher). To neglect this issue has consequences. The lack of partnership with the translators, for example, limited our data analysis. A better working relationship with translators as research partners may have allowed us to do an in-depth analysis, uncovering nuances that we missed.

We count ourselves amongst scholars who are sensitive to issues of power differentials, and who respect community-based knowledge. This is reflected in our research topic, the selection of participants, and our work with a CAC. Nevertheless, we still overlooked the knowledge, skill set and potential research role of the community researcher/translator.

Furthermore, rather than focusing solely on individual (or team) shortcomings in research practices, it is important to pay attention to and challenge the institutional framework within which we conduct research. Notably, whether we are trained within a positivist paradigm or not, we constantly struggle against the positivistic discourses which are part of the institutional structure and dominant ideology of the academy. Our experience suggests that although academics may think of themselves as having high status based on their professional credentials, this does not amount to actual power, especially where qualitative and community-based researchers are concerned.

Indeed, some of the problems identified in this paper illuminate the power hierarchies evident in universities and funding agencies. Academics are typically constrained by funding sources, deadlines, and the requirements of professional advancement, which may - especially when entering new areas of research - prevent consideration of all requirements of the project. While previous scholars have made a convincing case for a wider contribution by translators in the research process (Edwards, 1998; Temple, 2002), this would involve longer time commitments and higher costs, something that is not typically viewed favourably by funding agencies (Edwards, 1998; Temple & Young, 2004). Thus, a primary issue arising from our reflections relates to the requirements of funding bodies. The parameters for our research, including the short time frame, compromised the quality of this qualitative study.

It is, therefore, critical for research to emerge that makes the role of interpreters visible, even if it is in the post-project stage. We are doing this now, with the hope that our experiences and reflections will guide us and other researchers in the future.

Notes

1. Female immigrants' lack of English proficiency does not mean they are poorly educated; their education may not have included English or French. In our project the definition of proficiency was left up to the participants. The research team and the advisory board thought that a subjective definition of proficiency would overcome some of the problems of testing the participants' English language proficiency.
2. In order to identify the four target groups based on their need for acquiring proficiency in English, data from Citizenship and Immigration's Landing of Immigrants Data System showing language proficiency at point of immigration, were compared with data from Statistics Canada on language proficiency at time of

census enumeration. Looking at the data on adult women in the large language groups gave us four groups in which women were still not proficient in English at least five years after their arrival. The four largest groups arriving in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area also contributed the four largest groups of non-English speaking women: between 1996 and 2005, they totaled almost 72,000 women in the CMA alone (they also did not speak French). These groups were the Mandarin-speaking, Cantonese-speaking, Urdu-speaking, and Punjabi-speaking women.

3. Edwards (1998) explains that 'back translation' involves an interpreter translating a piece of spoken or written English into another language, then another interpreter translating that version back into English, after which time the two versions are compared and discussed.

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