Author's response to reviews

Title: Translating language and culture: A key issue in international public health research

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

MS: 1585133461457189 – International public health research involving interpreters: a case study from Bangladesh

We were grateful to receive the comments of both external reviewers on our revised manuscript. We feel that the paper is now improved and hope that you will consider it for publication in BMC Public Health.

The following changes were made in response to the reviewers’ comments:

Reviewer 1
1. As requested we have provided further information to assist the reader in understanding why the differences in translations highlighted were not considered to be significant for purposes of our study. There is a precedent for this in the area of transcribing interviews, some researchers do not transcribe their interviews word for word, but simple summarise key points and phrases, others transcribe the interview word for word, yet again others are highly accurate, including every single pause, sigh and hmm in the interviewees’ narrative account. We have added an additional paragraph to the section now headed transcribing, interpreting and translating. This paragraph explains that our study was largely concerned with experiences at the group level rather than the level of the individual. We have fully acknowledged that there are other academic fields where the detailed analysis at the individual level is very important and hence in these cases the differences between translations may be more significant. Importantly, one of the conclusions reached from our case study is that further work is needed around the accuracy of the translation and level of analysis needed in specific public health research.
2. We have made the difference in class position between the research/interpreter and participants more explicit and have highlighted differences in relative wealth and educational attainment.
3. All the suggested changes with regard to sentence structure and correct use of tense have been made.

Reviewer 2
1. We have reflected on the best terms to use to describe the different models of working with an interpreter and have opted for ‘passive interpreter model’ and ‘active interpreter model’. We feel this accurately and simply conveys the key difference between the two.
2. We have also replaced ‘translating’ with ‘interpreting’ and ‘translator’ with ‘interpreter’ when referring to oral word-to-word translation.

Overall, we feel we have addressed the reviewers’ comments thoroughly and are hopeful that the paper will now be accepted for publication.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely
Emma Pitchforth, Edwin van Teijlingen