In this presentation I will unpack the dilemma of authentic representation in qualitative and ethnographic research and writing drawing on my research with multilingual immigrant and refugee youth. Using samples of transcribed, translated written and digitally recorded audio files I will problematize the idea of data as text, which is comprised of multiple interpretations of language and discourse (Butler & Scott, 1992; Scott, 1986, 1992). How is experience translated, transformed and projected in a second or third language? To what extent does the act of writing shape the interpretive experience? What gets lost in the act of writing across languages? What is potentially gained?

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