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Emotions for, through, and in Autoethnography: Introducing a Dialogic (k)not-working Methodology

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ABSTRACT

In this dialogic article, we discuss the potential of autoethnography as a methodology to examine emotions in language education. We wrote this dialogue in such an 'organic' way that it reflects the snippet of our ongoing conversation around autoethnography. We did not have this dialogue in person; we just knew that we would be writing a dialogic article on using autoethnography to examine emotions in language education. We added the introduction and conclusion sections after the dialogue was complete. Our purpose in this writing is twofold: we would like to (1) nudge the conventional, confining, and restrictive boundaries of academic writing and (2) discuss the role and place of emotions for, through, and in autoethnography as a newer methodology compared to others such as ethnography or case study. Although our conversation digresses and takes detours at times, which is an inevitable characteristic of conversations, we keep the autoethnographic focus on the nexus of personal, professional, and political dimensions of our lives as practitioners of autoethnography in particular and qualitative research in general/personal.

Keywords: dialogic autoethnography; critical autoethnography; evocative autoethnography; emotions; tensions; identity construction; language education

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Introducing a (k)not-working Methodology

When Bedrettin invited me (Ufuk) to craft another dialogic manuscript in which we would discuss emotions for, through, and in autoethnography, I immediately agreed because it would be an extension of our ongoing conversations (Pentón Herrera et al., forthcoming; Yazan & Keleş, 2023, 2024a, 2024b). While composing these manuscripts, which we later called dialogic autoethnographies, we enjoyed the affordances that this blurred genre offered us dearly. I don't know what Bedrettin may say but I personally enjoy deconstructing the 'false' dichotomies of researcher/researched, body/mind, thoughts/emotions, scientific/artistic, fiction/non-fiction amongst others. I think/believe/feel that we have been able to finetune our voices over time and our co-construction of emotionally charged intellectual discussions. Doing so, we aim to challenge the existing academic discursive practices of the Global North hoping that our efforts to push our boundaries may help find alternatives to the "established," "normativized," and even "internalized" ways of doing... knowing... being... becoming... think/believe/feeling. For the time being, let's say:

Yıktık perdeyi eyledik vıran...

Bedrettin: To begin with, I'll admit that coming up with the title of this manuscript took me some time, but I'm sure it'll evolve as we continue our conversation. I should share some of the questions I had in mind when drafting that title: where are emotions located in the process of autoethnography writing? I was asking that question because we are interested in writing a dialogic article to discuss the role of autoethnography in exploring emotions in language education. I think my current answer led me to use multiple prepositions, i.e. "for," "through," and "in". Then, I was thinking about the call for the special issue submissions on the webpage of the *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*. Especially the part "Emerging Research Methods ..." drew my attention and I asked, is autoethnography an emerging method? I wasn't sure if we should present autoethnography as an emerging methodology since it has been used since 1960s (Hughes et al., 2012) and Pratt (1991) dates it back to the multimodal and translingual (in Quechua and Spanish) letter from the year 1613 by Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala to the King Philip III of Spain. Then, my response was the parenthetical addition in the second part of the title. Let's see how the paper is going to shape up.

Ufuk, my long-time critical friend and colleague, I know we've had a few conversations already about autoethnography, but I invite you to engage in another one because every conversation is chronotopic, intertextual, and multivocal (Bakhtin, 1981) and I don't think we've ever engaged in a full-length dialogue on emotions in relation to autoethnography. The closest one was the chapter Luis, you and I wrote in a dialogic fashion, but in that chapter, the focus was on the use of autoethnography in professional development. Anyways, I'll get this new dialogue started here and see if you're interested.

I'll start with the first preposition i.e. emotions "for" autoethnography so that we can situate autoethnography within the field of language teaching research because the place of autoethnography has been emotional and ideological. I've recently been to three international conferences with similar topics (i.e., RELC, AALAL, TESOL), meaning all are interested in language education and I was part of conversations with colleagues about autoethnography as a pedagogical activity to support teacher learning or research methodology to explore topics in language education. Based on those conversations, and other encounters virtually or in person, I'd like to share some emotions that inhabit or surround the use of autoethnography. I used the concept of "tension" to discuss those emotions in a recent book (Yazan, 2024). However, one tension I didn't talk much about is this (stemming very much from my personal and subjective observations): scholars in language teaching tend to seem or feel "excited" or "joyous" about the

potential of autoethnography and commend emerging scholars on their autoethnographic work, but on the other hand, simultaneously there's this predominant tendency to not assign autoethnography the research value, utility, and power typically assigned to "regular" quantitative and qualitative methods. You can easily find out about that tendency by checking the percentage of autoethnographies or autoethnographic components in doctoral dissertations in broader applied linguistics (perhaps we should do that via ProQuest). I think this one is an ideological and identity tension we're currently grappling with as a field. I also believe that such tensions are organic rhizomatic development of a field and push us into different directions in our pursuit of knowledge generation.

I'll begin with a "negative" emotion around autoethnography: uneasiness. I think this emotion emerges from the auto- dimension of autoethnography where the researcher is also the researched. That dimension directly threatens the binary or neatly imagined separation or distance between researcher and researched, which has kept the traces or legacy of post-positivism in our research practices even when researchers position themselves as interpretivist or constructivist. As autoethnography requires the ethnographer to think about their own identities and experiences through their interactions in the communities, the shift from an ethnographer to an autoethnographer is a challenging one, not only for the ethnographer to grasp but also for the reader to turn down objective-truth-seeking voices. That requirement is how autoethnography emerged from the questioning of ethnography about the situatedness and reflexivity of the ethnographer in their fieldwork. The shift I noted above could be one of the main sources of uneasiness. How come I can collect data from my own life history? (Ufuk, you would call this mystery) (Keleş, 2023a). And how come such data can count as research data? How about my biases? Can my memory serve me well? What if I can't remember everything from my lived experience? Such questions usually come from the existing "canonical" research methodological literature, because researchers would expect colleagues to evaluate their autoethnographic work based on the work in that literature. This evaluative aspect takes me to another potential source of uneasiness: the existing divergences or disagreements in the circles of autoethnography regarding what a "good" autoethnography should include or be like. When colleagues intend to start an autoethnographic investigation, they can easily find themselves confused about what and how of autoethnography, which is completely understandable.

One more thing about the uneasiness around autoethnography: we, those who engage in autoethnographic research, tend to agree that it is an innovative methodology crossing or spanning the borders ideologically patrolled in our field, but at the same time, we're not always certain about how we can present and represent autoethnography, not only in writing and publishing but also in presenting at conferences. We present autoethnography as part of efforts to decolonize research methodologies (Paris & Winn, 2014), but when it comes to sharing it with colleagues or public, we restrict ourselves to the "writing" and "speaking" structures or traditions we inherited from the colonizing history that shaped the emergence of our field (see Pennycook, 1998).

Ufuk, I'll pause here for you to respond to what I've said so far.

[Three days later]

Ufuk: Hocam, I am sorry for my late reply. I have been juggling with my teaching load, midterm exams, and supervising responsibilities at the university. Working in Turkey's academia, as you know, leaves very little time and space for my research commitments, unfortunately. I finally finished with my grading and feedback yesterday; on the last day of the work week.

Right now, on a Saturday morning...

I am sitting at a bakery/cafe right next to the mechanic shop I took my car to for its (overly delayed) routine maintenance. I had been postponing this errand for a while but since my wife is getting impatient and since I soon will be driving for about five hours to participate in a conference in Ankara, I could not hold it off any longer.

Right now, at the bakery/cafe...

It is packed with families with kids having brunch - happily... unlike me, Senem (my wife), and Deniz (our son). I had to leave them at home, to make time to compose my response to you while at the same time waiting for my car to be serviced. I have about five hours - great, is it not?

It was Deniz's birthday yesterday, you know, and honestly, I would like to be taking a boat trip over the Bosphorus with them, having a kağıt helva, and talking about the luxury houses by the sea. But no... instead... I am trying to concentrate on my reply to your opening to this dialog. Don't get me wrong, Hocam. I am glad that you and I have this critical friendship and that we pro/ad/e/vocate each other's scholarship through dialogical autoethnography. I love our dialogs - really do! Yet, it feels like I am stealing from my family(s) time...

Did someone ask about emotions in language teacher education?

Right now, on a Saturday morning...

Right now, at this bakery/cafe...

This is how I feel. Does this response count? Am I going too personal? Off-topic? Well... Frankly, I don't think so. Identifying as a qualitative educational researcher... as an autoethnographer coming from the global south... as a language teacher educator overwhelmed by his workload... as a husband and a father who feels guilty for not spending enough time with my family... I feel entitled to blend my emotions in this... and in my scholarship in general. So, I don't really care whether autoethnography is an "established" or an "emerging" methodology... To me, autoethnography is a way of life... a way of being, becoming, knowing, thinking, speaking, listening, feeling, healing, dealing with life. It liberates me from the conventions, epistemes, and expectations of the global north academia. It empowers me to express mystery in my own voice and in my own style (Keleş, 2023a). It helps me SEE my thoughts/beliefs/emotions as a whole rather than compartmentalizing mystery... my life... myself!

[Will continue - I think I need to take a break, Hocam, as it got unbearably noisy here.]

[The next morning] Right now, I am at another location, another cafe. Senem and Deniz were sleeping when I left home early to attend a workshop I had promised a friend to accompany some time ago. I have an extra hour to spare for our dialog now. Vakit nakit! I must use it wisely and do my best to respond to you. I had read/listened to your introduction a couple of times before yesterday. You made several remarks for me to ponder. So... Allow me to focus on each remark separately.

First, you questioned those who think/believe/feel that autoethnography is an emerging methodology. Dating its modern version back to 1960s and earlier version (i.e., testimonio) to as early as 1600s, you implicitly criticized these people's reductionist approach to autoethnography. I partially agree with you on this. In a methodological review study, I noted that although autoethnography had been accepted as an established methodology in social sciences, it was relatively new in educational research; and quite a new - or emerging should I say - methodology in applied linguistics and language teacher education (Keleş, 2022). That said, I agree with your comment on the scarcity of autoethnographic dissertations. I, as one of the few PhDs with an autoethnographic dissertation, encounter subtle criticism by fellow scholars for not conducting "a large-scale research study." Usually, they are somewhat "okay" with me having written "qualitative research study," but they "have difficulty in understanding how my memory - and my memory alone - could be the primary data source in my doctoral dissertation. They do not directly reveal such comments, but their question(ing)s make it clear that they are not familiar with autoethnography. Going through such experiences constantly remind me that autoethnography is an emerging methodology and still not well-received in applied linguistics.

[From here to Bedrettin's response... The following part was added after Bedrettin completed his response below]

As you know, I have been organizing workshops and making presentations at conferences held in Turkey, giving guest lectures to graduate students in various universities, and accepting to be a guest speaker on social media channels to introduce autoethnography to language education scholars in Turkey. On one hand, some appreciate the novelty of autoethnography's onto-ethico-epistemological foundations and see its potential to transform our understanding of qualitative research, but on the other hand, others criticize it for being narcissistic (Ellis, 2009), fostering unproductive relativism (Delamont, 2009), foregrounding emotions over coherent, rigorous analysis (Anderson, 2006), and lacking transferability of the findings (Tarisayi, 2023). Given that such criticisms stem from our colleagues' traditional approach to qualitative research, I agree with you... that autoethnography is "uneasy" on them. That I believe that it must be me to tell mystery in my own voice and in my own style is not a matter of narcissism but heightened awareness. Also, autoethnographers do not only focus on "auto" but scrutinizes the society (ethno) and all the accompanying dynamics, practices, and discourses, right? So, by definition, a good autoethnography cannot be narcissistic - as it focuses on the intricate entanglements of the self and the society.

As for the criticism that autoethnography fosters unproductive relativism... Well, autoethnographers do not aim to achieve any form of objectivity. On the contrary, they embrace their own subjectivity (Keleş, 2022). This perspective is what distinguishes autoethnography from other types of research. According to Adams and Herrmann (2020), autoethnographers utilize subjectivity and personal experience to describe, interpret, and represent the sociocultural beliefs, practices, and identities. So, if one goes for "normal distribution" to represent large numbers of people, they should not approach autoethnographers, right? They can go for traditional quantitatively-oriented research designs in such cases. The power of autoethnographic stories rely on the particularities they have. By reading a particular autoethnography, however, the reader/listeners may compare their own stories with the autoethnographers, right? Even though mystery is not transferable to others' narratives, spotting similarities help reader/listeners to have a comparative outlook while reading mystery.

They say autoethnography foregrounds emotions, founding their argument on the Cartesian ways of knowing that centralizes intellectual production while leaving emotions at the periphery (Miyahara, 2019). This perspective has maintained its dominance in applied linguistics as well (Swain, 2013). However, it has recently been challenged first by the "affective turn" (White, 2018), which rightfully attributed feelings importance given that both language teaching and learning are emotionally-loaded experiences. Likewise, Bochner and Ellis say "sometimes hugs mean more

than words” (2016, p. 163), meaning that emotions play a central role in showing your compassion, empathy, and humaneness for yourself and others. Instead of trying to comfort people with our words, being “there” gives them the emotional support they need. Showing them that you feel for them is better than saying that you understand them.

Bedrettin: *[I don't know how many days after Ufuk's response]* Thank you Ufuk for accepting this invitation to engage in such a dialogue with me. I can only imagine the workload you have in your current position and how you're navigating the challenges in your setting. Thank you for making the time to be my sound board or critical friend or writing partner in this endeavor.

I think how you are sharing glimpses from your personal life is a great example for potential ways to humanize qualitative research. I've been lately reading this book *Humanizing research* (Paris & Winn, 2014) for my doctoral class this semester. And we discussed in class that we can humanize the researcher, the research process from conception to publication and afterwards, and the communities being researched or contributing to the research. What you did in your response is an illustrative example to present yourself as a breathing, feeling, living human being with emotions and personal life that transcends the limited professional research persona we are expected to construct superficially in our research.

I'll leave a few questions here to which I don't have answers: When will autoethnography become an established research methodology for applied linguists and when will doctoral advisors stop feeling uneasy (which I did) when their students decide to go for autoethnography in their dissertation research? What do we need to see happening in the field that would be the proof of widespread endorsement for autoethnography's legitimacy? Do we really want autoethnography to become entirely established or legitimized? Or would we (secretly or not) like autoethnography to be in the margins of the research methodology literature?

Just a comment on emotions... They have long been considered a legitimate dimension of language learning and teaching in language education research (see Benesch, 2013; De Costa et al., 2018; De Costa & Nazari, 2024; Derakhshan & Yin, 2024; Dewaele, 2010; Mercer & Kostoulas, 2018). I'm not sure if such a comparison makes sense, but in terms of legitimacy or recognition, emotions are in a “better” place than autoethnography. Of course this is my subjective observation of the field, but look at how many special issues have been published on learners' and teachers' emotions in language education and how many on autoethnography. Well, we can argue that publications aren't the only criteria, but they are at least an indicator of interest in the circles of scholars in the use of autoethnography and efforts to bring more attention to it.

Now moving on ... I'm going to discuss the next preposition we have in the title, emotions “through” autoethnography. I have a few things in mind when I say “through.” First, the process of conducting autoethnography is an emotional endeavor, i.e. the autoethnographer digs into their past or recent lived experiences to find answers to their research questions and that digging will bring up emotions associated with those experiences.

[Just had dinner. Sitting back at my desk to keep writing.]

Needless to say, the autoethnographer could be remembering or feeling a variety of emotions as they generate autoethnographic data, analyze it, and write about it. Happiness... sadness... anxiety... excitement... hopelessness... hopefulness... frustration... helplessness... joyfulness... What's important is that doing autoethnography will include engagement with those emotions at varying degrees. Especially when revisiting past trauma, the autoethnographer would be processing their emotions as part of their autoethnographic investigation which might lead them to pause or quit working on the research. For example, in several times I've used critical

autoethnographic narrative as identity-oriented teacher learning activity, some teachers had challenges processing their traumatic experiences with language learning and understandably they were selective in narrating and analyzing certain stories over others. I believe you had similar experiences, Ufuk, with your qualitative research students.

Second, autoethnography is an intimate methodology that requires the researcher to scrutinize their personal life history to examine the pertinent cultural structures dominant in the sociopolitical context. That kind of scrutiny into one's own personal life has its emotions. That is, the autoethnographer might not always be comfortable or might be experiencing tensions in making "the personal political" (Holman Jones, 2005). I think that dimension of autoethnography is what usually makes us say that autoethnography is easier said than done (Wall, 2008). The introduction to autoethnography might initially feel like it is an easier way of conducting ethnographic research because the researcher doesn't have to spend time and energy reaching out to communities, establishing rapport, and collecting data. However, when the researcher actually begins seriously thinking about autoethnography, they can easily realize that examining the self is way more complicated than usually anticipated.

Third, tensions around the legitimacy of autoethnography might be another emotional layer. That is, as the autoethnographer works on their work or even after they complete it, they might be judging their work based on the external rubrics of 'robust' research in qualitative research which doesn't allow space for autoethnography. The fact that autoethnography doesn't have legitimacy as a methodology could lead the autoethnographer to feel the same lack of legitimacy in their researcher identity. In the last chapter (Tuck & Yang, 2014) of *Humanizing research*, Gingrich-Philbrook's (2005) stance is cited. He questions autoethnographers' ongoing desire for mainstream qualitative research circles to accept or recognize autoethnography, i.e., constant pursuit to "justify the presence of the self in writing to the patriarchal council of self satisfied social scientists" (p. 311). Self-doubt would be a common emotion that the autoethnographer would be experiencing in relation to such tensions.

I'll pause here for you to chime in and share your thoughts.

Ufuk: [Two days after reading Bedrettin's response] Well, Hocam! You never told me you felt "uneasy" while advising me with my dissertation. I always thought you were all on board with my decisions about my dissertation. I remember you cautioning me that it would be difficult for me to find a job with an autoethnographic dissertation, but that was it. When I said I was willing to take that risk, you did not object to it. I am actually glad you did not. Nevertheless we should definitely talk about that.

To answer your questions, let me attend to them one by one.

You asked: When will autoethnography become an established research methodology for applied linguists and when will doctoral advisors stop feeling uneasy (which I did) when their students decide to go for autoethnography in their dissertation research?

I don't think I feel uneasy - not at all - for my students than you did for yours. You see, I can always be there for them to defend their choices using the *my-dissertation-is-autoethnographic-too-so-what?* card. Since my PhD diploma is legitimate, so will my students'. So, before pressuring my students, the critiques of autoethnography will dare to confront me first. [Laughter] You see, your feeling of uneasiness has been transformed into "self-confidence" for me. So, in a way, by writing an autoethnographic dissertation, I have eventually helped with the legitimization of autoethnography.

I think my response also answered your second question, which was: What do we need to see happening in the field that would be the proof of widespread endorsement for autoethnography's legitimacy? More and more autoethnographic dissertations, publications, presentations... i.e., dissemination of autoethnographic works will solidify the status of autoethnography, Hocam. This is how I think/believe/feel about its future.

As for the last question: Do we really want autoethnography to become entirely established or legitimized? Or would we (secretly or not) like autoethnography to be in the margins of the research methodology literature? I must say that I would love autoethnography to be fully established in applied linguistics. Yet, I do not want it to become a mainstream research methodology. Agreeing with Qutoshi (2015), I believe that autoethnography may allow for the emancipation of marginalized individuals whose voices are muted, and whose stories remain untold and empower them to denaturalize power imbalances and social injustices they experience firsthand. Additionally, "autoethnographers speak against, or provide alternatives to, dominant, taken-for-granted, and harmful cultural scripts, stories, and stereotypes" as Adams et al. (2017, p. 3) point out. Well, against this backdrop, Hocam... I mean... Autoethnography should remain in the margins... in the hands of the marginalized so that they have a unique methodology to bring forward social ills, contradictory issues, and problems especially when mainstream research and scholarship deliberately ignore them. Given that oppressed, marginalized, and/or expelled people go through (in)tense emotions, they may use autoethnography to raise their voices and be heard. This is the reason why I was drawn to autoethnography in the first place. I had some stories of marginalization, in-betweenness, and otherization. If I had not met autoethnography, I would not be able, entitled, and attracted to crafting an autoethnographic dissertation.

I believe I should stop here now that I answered your questions in the most successful ways possible. Oh, sorry! I wanted to add to your discussion of how autoethnography may bring out secondary traumas by merely revisiting perhaps the long-buried memories (Chatham-Carpenter, 2010), which usually pertain to sadness, depression, failures, fear, worries, lack of self-esteem, and all. Here, let me quote Bochner and Ellis (2016) directly: "We bleed not so much because we have to relive the painful events of which we write, but because of the obligation we feel to produce a truthful account of the past" (p. 243). In that case, it is the autoethnographer's ethical responsibility to remain truthful no matter how hard it might be to revisit the past. Nevertheless, we should also take the therapeutic effect of writing an autoethnography. I mean, Hocam, as Bochner and Ellis note, when we undergo a crisis, what we first do mainly is that we try to resolve the emerging problems or at least cope with them. However, when we revisit those memories, we do so to make sense of it. Here, Le Guin's (2004, p. 264) words resonate with my point: "Fiction results from imagination working on experience. We shape experience in our minds so that it makes sense. We force the world to be coherent – to tell us a story". Such fictionalization of the memory is therapeutic both for the autoethnographer(s) (Keleş, 2023b) and the reader/listeners (Yazan & Keleş, 2023). Interestingly, there is a word for this - catharsis... the process of releasing, and thereby providing relief from, strong or repressed emotions through fiction. Reading/listening to our dialogs, narratives, and compositions, they also make parallels or comparisons with their own. In a way, they become part of this (k)not-working inquiry.

In short, thanks to autoethnography, remembering, revisiting, and reliving our memories, experiences, and stories no matter how traumatic they can be helps us recollect, reevaluate, and reorganize our thoughts/beliefs/emotions. Let me stop here.

Bedrettin: Let me unpack me being uneasy about advising you in your dissertation. Before all, I'm so glad my uneasiness didn't show and it translated into such self-confidence on your end! Mission accomplished. First, I hadn't advised an autoethnography dissertation, nor had I written a dissertation like that myself. I wasn't sure whether the feedback I was providing was meaningful, enough, or good enough, or whether somebody with more experience in autoethnographic

dissertation research, perhaps Dr. Robin Boylorn on the same campus, would've been a much better advisor for you to write a successful autoethnography. So part of my uneasiness was stemming from me not feeling as a doctoral advisor. I'd used autoethnography as an identity-oriented teacher learning activity and published my own autoethnography already. However, such experience didn't suffice to help me feel entirely confident in advising you in the research study of your life, the one which was staying between you and your graduation and returning to your family and home. If now I had a student coming to me with the decision of conducting autoethnography, partially or entirely, for their dissertation research, I'd still be on board with that decision, like I was five years ago with yours, but additionally, I'd be feeling more self-confident as an advisor supervising such a dissertation. Especially after teaching a doctoral course specifically on autoethnography in my current institution, doing collaborative work with you and other colleagues, and publishing a longer manuscript on the use of autoethnography (Yazan, 2024), I feel more confident in serving that role with no uneasiness.

Second, the fact that I felt uneasy (which is actually an emotion I'm naming right now as we have been writing this dialogue, interesting ha!, i.e., I wasn't necessarily conscious of that emotion at the time) doesn't and actually didn't mean that I wasn't completely on board. As you could easily tell, I was on board with your decision to engage in autoethnography as your dissertation and supported you to the fullest.

Third, what I felt specifically uneasy, like you said and I had shared with you at the time, was the potential reception of your autoethnographic dissertation during your job market experience. I knew you'd be looking for jobs in Turkey and the US, and in both academic contexts of applied linguistics or TESOL, autoethnography was (or is still) either so new or frowned upon or dismissed as navel-gazing. I was concerned that you'd be facing additional challenges due to your dissertation decision. That concern was what I felt uneasy about.

Before I get started with the review of recent autoethnographies that are specifically looking at emotions in language education (which would be the last preposition, emotions "in" autoethnography), I'd like to stick here a question which kept me thinking recently: how do emotional and critical dimensions of autoethnography align with each other? In other words, how does emotionally-charged nature of autoethnography support the goal or purpose of criticality in doing autoethnography? Perhaps we should come to these questions after we provide a review of several studies published recently.

I'd like to start with Song (2022) which explores the author's emotional experiences in switching to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. In her autoethnography which she called "my self-exploration," Song's professional identity as a language teacher educator is predominant but she makes connections with her identities as "Asian female and non-native English speaker." She addresses two research questions in her study:

(1) What are the main sources of my vulnerability of teaching online that reflect major pedagogical challenges and identity struggles unique to online teaching? and (2) How does my understanding of and experiences with my own vulnerability point out the role of emotion and emotional reflectivity in a language teacher's enculturation process in online contexts? (p. 4)

Although she cites Chang (2008) and Ellis et al. (2011), her approach to autoethnography mostly reflects Chang's (2008) recommended methodological procedures. Ufuk, I need you to share your thoughts on this, but I see Chang somewhere between Anderson and Ellis, Adams, Bochner, Holman Jones. That is, Chang agrees that autoethnography should be specifically and explicitly examining cultures critically but doesn't prescribe autoethnography like Anderson (2006) did, which I think opens up space for what Ellis and colleagues are advocating.

Song (2022) shares these findings from her self-exploration: “Emotional reflexivity on vulnerability in online teaching” and “from emotional reflexivity to pedagogy.” More specifically, she discusses her emotions around her vulnerability about online teaching and student participation and vulnerability about her identity as a non-native speaking teacher educator as well as “female and international/ minority scholar/teacher.” Later in the second part of her autoethnographic findings, she talked about how her emotional reflexivity helped her make changes in her online teaching practices to address her vulnerabilities. That is, she used synchronous sessions to create “space for a strong social presence” (p. 7) and “increas[ed] students’ [mostly inservice teachers] online presence and advocat[ed] for divergent forms of participation” (p. 7).

I think Song’s study is a great example of autoethnography’s use in exploring emotions. What is explicit is the way she examines the intersection of personal and professional identities. That is, the personal and professional dimensions of teaching are clearly addressed, but the political dimension which is the crux of the matter in autoethnography is more implicitly present. She makes connections to the ways in which ideologies operate in her emotions around her vulnerability in teaching online by attending to institutional cultures and sociocultural norms, through Kelchterman and Ballet’s (2002) work on “micropolitical literacy.” Her critical approach to the intersection of personal and professional, e.g., being a non-native speaker teacher, is also an example of addressing the ideological structures in examining emotions.

The second study I’d like to review is by Selleck (forthcoming) who examines her emotions as a teacher of English as a new language (ENL) in the US in an urban public high school, recently on national news due to the violence. Inevitably connected to her lived experience as a teacher and student, she collected data for a month primarily focusing on her emotions. Her data collection included detailed daily journaling in which “[e]ach entry was prefaced by the most impactful event for the day and the most prominent emotion felt for the day” by following Rodríguez and Ryave (2002). Such an approach made it possible to focus on day-to-day emotional experiences of ENL teachers in the US, especially those who are serving urban populations with fewer resources. Selleck’s findings included: “(1) exhaustion due to confusion and unmet expectations; (2) joy in connections and self-efficacy and (3) disappointment/grief in perceived failure.” For example, she was feeling exhausted, drained, and anxious because her responsibilities at school were changing, she was not getting paid for the additional work she took on, and her IRB application was removed without approval.

Focusing on the intersection of personal and professional to a large extent, Selleck’s autoethnography presents a portrayal of an ENL teachers’ emotional responses to instructional and non-instructional experiences. Similar to Song’s (2022) autoethnography, I found myself asking about the political dimension which I think is there implicitly. That is, situated in an urban public high school, Selleck’s emotions are inevitably related to the sociopolitical forces shaping the educational context. Considering the critical nature of autoethnography, I was wondering how Selleck can engage that dimension further in her autoethnography.

Ufuk: Before annexing your review, Hocam, I must tell you that I am glad that you shared your “uneasiness” about my dissertation. This, I guess, is a bit like a “better late than never” disclosure. Now that I have my own advisees, though, I understand how you felt back then; I must tell you this. Also, please know that I have always enjoyed your supervision and it helped me a great deal. I can’t thank you enough for that. That said, let me add more to your review of autoethnographies on emotion labor.

I believe Hillman et al.'s (2024) recent work deserves a mention as well. Through collaborative autoethnography, these scholars scrutinized each other's emotion labor as expatriate English instructors in an engineering transnational university in Qatar. Critically introspecting into their own ideologies, identities, and practices, they found out that they needed a great amount of emotional labor in motivating their reluctant students to become engineers despite their awareness of the fact that their role in their institution was directly pertinent to the broader neocolonialization of the education sector in the Middle East. Such questioning of their roles resulted in emotion labor that they needed to navigate in their professional life.

Another noteworthy study is Cinaglia et al.'s (2024) article, which employed collaborative autoethnography to explore tensions between commitments to students, colleagues, institutional and curricular obligations, and individual pedagogical values by revisiting their own and the collaborating teachers' experiences. The authors note that such tensions resulted in feelings of frustration and irritation at their institution where they worked as teacher educators. Their study also showed that an analysis of language teacher educator emotion labor via autoethnography could generate reflexivity and emotional capital.

Our brief review reveals that autoethnography has been a valuable methodology in focusing on emotion labor in applied linguistics. In a way, it allows the scholars in this field to reflect on their experiences both emotionally and critically. As a result, they are able to draw a bigger picture of their personal/professional/academic identities, ideologies, and practices. Likewise, our own experiences here in this manuscript and elsewhere (Pentón Herrera et al., forthcoming; Yazan & Keleş, 2023, 2024a, 2024b) also revealed that dialogical autoethnography fosters us to be truthful to ourselves, each other, and others; to embrace the subjectivity of our emotions; and revealing and acknowledging our vulnerabilities and unhappy memories. In return, we are able to make sense of our lived experiences. Each time we take turns, we tie a knot in the net. In a way, autoethnography works well as a (k)not-working methodology in our network of emotional labor.

(Re)citing Bochner and Ellis (2016) again, let us say that after all "sometimes hugs mean more than words" (p. 163), we may finalize this dialog with a found poem as a summary/conclusion hoping that it will contribute to our discussion of emotions for, through, and in autoethnography.

Fr-a-g-m-e-n-t-e-d yet LOUD emotions for, through, in a (k)not-working methodology

An extension of our ongoing conversations deconstructing the 'false' dichotomies of

researcher/researched,

body/mind,

thoughts/emotions,

scientific/artistic,

fiction/non-fiction

Yıktık perdeyi eyledik viran...

to share some emotions that inhabit or surround the use of autoethnography

How come I can collect data from my own life history?

How come such data can count as research data?

Right now, at the bakery/cafe...

It is packed with families with kids having brunch - happily... unlike me,

I love our dialogs - really do!

Yet, it feels like I am stealing from my family('s) time...

Did someone ask about emotions in language teacher education?

When will autoethnography become an established research methodology for applied linguists?

Do we really want autoethnography to become entirely established or legitimized

I don't really care

Autoethnography is a way of life...

a way of being,

becoming,

knowing,

thinking,

speaking,

listening,

feeling,

healing,

dealing

with life.

Of course this is my subjective observation of the field

others criticize it for

being narcissistic

fostering unproductive relativism

foregrounding emotions over coherent rigorous analysis

lacking transferability of the findings

the autoethnographer could be remembering or feeling a variety of emotions

Happiness...

sadness...

anxiety...

excitement...

hopelessness...

hopefulness...

frustration...

helplessness...

joyfulness...

autoethnography is easier said than done

My-dissertation-is-autoethnographic-too-so-what?

More and more autoethnographic dissertations, publications, presentations

emancipation of marginalized individuals

remain truthful no matter how hard it might be to revisit the past

fictionalization of the memory is therapeutic

catharsis...

the process of releasing, and thereby providing relief from, strong or repressed emotions

autoethnography as an identity-oriented teacher learning activity

the potential reception of your autoethnographic dissertation during your job market experience

so new

frowned upon

dismissed as navel-gazing

autoethnography fosters us

to be truthful to ourselves, each other, and others;

to embrace the subjectivity of our emotions; and

to reveal and acknowledge our vulnerabilities and unhappy memories.

After all, "sometimes hugs mean more than words

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