# Writing a "Good" Autoethnography in Educational Research: A Modest Proposal

Ufuk Keleş
*Bahcesehir University, Istanbul*, ukeles@crimson.ua.edu

# Writing a "Good" Autoethnography in Educational Research: A Modest Proposal

## Abstract

In this paper, I first discuss what autoethnography is elaborating on an autoethnographic spectrum. Then, I draw on several scholars' understanding of what a "good" autoethnography is and propose a list of suggestions to contribute to autoethnography's conceptualization and operationalization in qualitative educational research in the future. Believing that a good autoethnography is the work of a scholar who aims for the witty hand of an artist and the sharp/critical mind of a social scientist, I suggest that a good autoethnography (a) creates a sense of transformation through a story of illumination, healing, understanding, and/or learning, (b) engages readers as a companion rather than passive audience through commonalities and particularities, (c) goes beyond personal confessions by mindfully offering autobiographical and background information, (d) uses appropriate tools and sources and explains why using them makes sense, (e) denaturalizes social issues by making invisible power dynamics visible, and (f) embraces the subjectivity of memory and interpretation. I explain each suggestion in more detail in subsections and provide some guiding questions for future autoethnographers to help them make mindful decisions before and during their autoethnographic endeavors.

## Keywords

autoethnography, evocative autoethnography, analytic autoethnography, crafting good autoethnography

## Creative Commons License

## Acknowledgements

# In an Effort to Write a "Good" Autoethnography in Qualitative Educational Research: A Modest Proposal

Ufuk Keleş
Bahçeşehir University, İstanbul

In this paper, I first discuss what autoethnography is elaborating on an autoethnographic spectrum. Then, I draw on several scholars' understanding of what a "good" autoethnography is and propose a list of suggestions to contribute to autoethnography's conceptualization and operationalization in qualitative educational research in the future. Believing that a good autoethnography is the work of a scholar who aims for the witty hand of an artist and the sharp/critical mind of a social scientist, I suggest that a good autoethnography (a) creates a sense of transformation through a story of illumination, healing, understanding, and/or learning, (b) engages readers as a companion rather than passive audience through commonalities and particularities, (c) goes beyond personal confessions by mindfully offering autobiographical and background information, (d) uses appropriate tools and sources and explains why using them makes sense, (e) denaturalizes social issues by making invisible power dynamics visible, and (f) embraces the subjectivity of memory and interpretation. I explain each suggestion in more detail in subsections and provide some guiding questions for future autoethnographers to help them make mindful decisions before and during their autoethnographic endeavors.

*Keywords:* autoethnography, evocative autoethnography, analytic autoethnography, crafting good autoethnography

## Introduction

Although a relatively new research methodology emerging from ethnography, autoethnography has become an established qualitative method of inquiry in educational research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Many scholars embrace autoethnography to explore their own stories "in a highly personalized style, drawing on [their] experience to extend understanding about a societal phenomenon" (Wall, 2006, p. 146). While doing so, they assume the dual role of the researcher(s) and the researched (Keleş, 2022a). As opposed to doing research 'on' the researched to understand a given phenomenon, autoethnographers turn to themselves to unveil, interpret, and/or critique the social structures and the underlying power dynamics through their own experiences (Keleş, 2022b). They try to uncover and express their emotions, thoughts, and beliefs by remembering, revisiting, and recreating their past experiences to "critique, make contributions to, and/or extend existing research and theory" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 36).

With its gained momentum, today autoethnographic writing continues (a) destabilizing the binary between the researcher and the researched, (Sparkes, 2000), (b) resisting the borders of the academic and literary genres by including poems, plays, stories, visual and performance arts in evocative ways (Ellis et al., 2011; Spry, 2001), (c) making "the personal political" by critiquing how power and privilege play out in interpersonal relationships within communities (Holman Jones, 2005, p. 765; Marx et al., 2017), and (d) decentering the center by voicing their

stories of marginalization (Yazan et al., 2020). In tandem with different epistemologies, autoethnography continues to allow researchers to roam in the periphery staying away from the center (Brock-Utne, 2018) to "de/colonize" these long-held binaries (Bhattacharya, 2018). Doing so, they problematize, blur, and alter the dichotomies in qualitative educational research, which oftentimes involve tensions, negotiations, and resistance.

To contribute to autoethnography's conceptualization and operationalization as an established research methodology research, in this paper, I offer some suggestions as to how to write "good" autoethnographies. At this point, I must note that I acknowledge the highly subjective nature of my understanding of what a good autoethnography is. However, I do not mean to offer a predetermined and objective set of criteria at all for two reasons. First, I neither have the expertise nor the desire to assume an authoritarian role in my proposal. Instead, I take a more dialogic and open-ended stance in my suggestions. Agreeing with Sparkes (2022, p. 274) who notes that "any list of criteria is never neutral in its construction or its use," I take a personal approach, which is something like: "How about we write our autoethnographies this way?" Second, I am fully aware and appreciative of the fact that, amongst all qualitative methodologies, autoethnography is perhaps the last one to follow criteria-based design. After all, its emergence/existence is founded on the freedom to revolutionize, personalize, and transform traditional academic discourses and styles. Autoethnography, in and of itself, enables autoethnographers to narrate their own stories using their own voice (Wall, 2008) and performing in their own styles (Beattie, 2022). *Only "the wisest fool" may try to chip off the wings of a flying bird, right?* That said, the underlying rationale for writing this highly subjective yet dialogical manuscript is that I wanted to provide novice autoethnographers with a starting point. Given the nebulous transformation autoethnography has undergone so far, they may start learning about autoethnography via engaging in a dialog with me and move forward to have a more nuanced and personalized style in telling, performing, and/or writing their autoethnographic works.

Before making a proposal, however, I first discuss what autoethnography is with several reputed autoethnographers through an autoethnographic spectrum (see Figure 1). Next, drawing on several scholars' understanding of what a "good" autoethnography is, I present my own suggestions to craft good autoethnographic works. Lastly, I explain each suggestion in subsections in a detailed way.
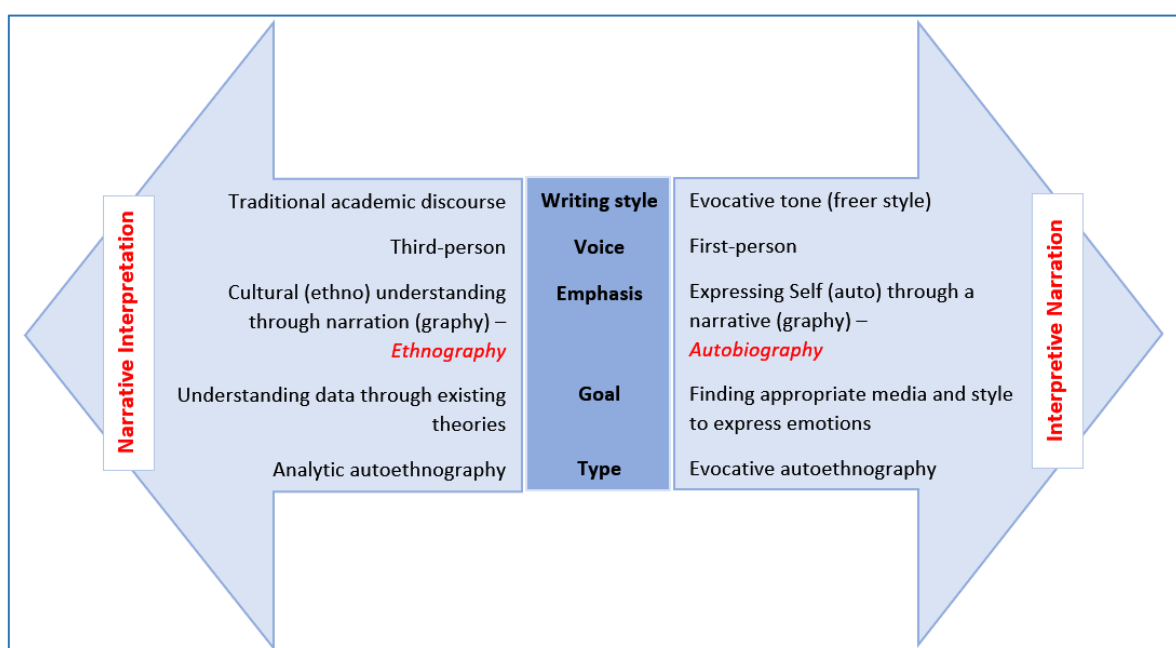
## Autoethnographic Spectrum

Compared to other qualitative research methods, autoethnography is relatively new in educational research. Defining autoethnography is rather difficult since it is a broad term referring to a combination of method, research, and writing (Ellis, 2004), which denotes a large variety of methodological practices (Ellingson & Ellis, 2008) based on the authors' interrelated approaches to "ethics, knowing, and being –" in other words, their ethico-onto-epistemological stances (Barad, 2007, p. 185). Despite the variety in its emphasis, autoethnography has one shared tenet; that is, the relation between autoethnographers' goal to make meaning of their lived experiences with the culture(s) in which they are living, being, doing, and knowing.

Scholars interested in autoethnography converge on the idea that autoethnography enables them to explore their personal stories making critical connections between their lived experiences with(in) the broader society (Keleş, 2022b). Also, autoethnography can be viewed as self-narrative that gives researchers the freedom to incorporate different literary genres such as poetry to extend the limits of traditional qualitative inquiry (see Keleş, in press). In most of these definitions, the end goal of autoethnography is to better understand how cultural discourses shape and are shaped by individuals who inhabit, negotiate with, accept, and resist their immediate social groups.

Scholars conducting educational research have produced a plethora of dissertations, books, and conference presentations utilizing autoethnography (Hughes et al., 2012) contributing greatly to its increasing popularity (Oudghiri, 2021). Also, educational journals with high impact factors have published several autoethnographies, legitimizing its status as a credible qualitative research methodology in educational research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Hughes & Noblit, 2017). Against this backdrop, many different forms of autoethnographies have recently flourished (Cooper et al., 2022), such as "analytic" (e.g., Anderson, 2006), "art-based" (e.g., Guyotte et al., 2018), "critical" (e.g., Adams, 2017; Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Holman Jones et al., 2013; Madison, 2012; Reed-Danahay, 2017), "critical socialization" (e.g., Keleş, 2020), "community" (Pensoneau-Conway et al., 2014; Toyosaki et al., 2009), "evocative" (e.g., Bochner, 1997; Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Ellis, 2004), "impressionistic" (Skinner, 2003), "indigenous" (Whitinui, 2014), "interpretive" (Denzin, 2014), "meta-autoethnography" (Ellis, 2020), "poetic" (e.g., Faulkner, 2017; Furman, 2006; Speedy, 2015), "performance" autoethnography (Denzin, 2018), "performative" (e.g., Hamera, 2011; Holman Jones et al., 2013; Spry, 2011), "phenomenological" (Aguirre et al., 2013), "poetic" (Keleş, in press), and "psychoanalytic" autoethnography (Garratt, 2015). Also, along with single-authored authethnographies, many multi-authored works have been published under different names including "collaborative autoethnographies" (e.g., Chang et al., 2013), "joint autoethnographies" (e.g., Adamson & Mueller, 2018; Ellison & Langhout, 2016), "coautoethnographies" (Speciale et al., 2015), and "duoethnographies" (e.g., Hayler & Williams, 2020; Norris et al., 2012). Apparently, autoethnographic writing will maintain its popularity in educational research as scholars continue to frame teaching and learning as situated, social, multi-layered socio-political acts.

With so many different types, names, epistemological foundations, and styles, autoethnography literature may seem opaque for educational researchers (Marx et al., 2017). *I don't know about you, but it did seem chaotic to me!* Chang et al. (2013) conceptualize autoethnography via a spectrum to bring "order" to this seemingly chaotic mass – *or "mess" should I say?* At one end of this spectrum, there is "interpretation;" and at the other end "narration" (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1**
*Autoethnographic Spectrum*

According to Chang et al. (2013; Figure 1), some autoethnographers construct their autoethnographic work through "interpretive narration" presented mostly as evocative stories in first-person voice, while others use "narrative interpretation" in the form of conventional academic discourse in third-person discourse (p. 19). While interpretive narrators aim at finding appropriate media and style to emphasize their lived experiences, narrative interpreters analyze their autobiographical data in relation to existing theories. In their studies, interpretive narrators focus on the "self" (auto) and the story (graphy), while narrative interpreters put emphasis on the "cultural understanding" (ethno) through narration (graphy). As a third option, some other autoethnographers oscillate between the two ends to suit their needs in their research design. Nevertheless, all autoethnographers' preferred style most frequently aligns with their topic of inquiry, the breadth and depth of the available data, and what type of autoethnographic research they wish to conduct.

### Evocative vs. Analytic Autoethnography

To frame their autoethnographic work, autoethnographers frequently refer to the morphological constituents of the term: auto (self), ethno (culture), and graphy (narration; e.g., Adams et al., 2022; Canagarajah, 2012; Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005; Keleş, 2022a, 2022b; Lionnet, 1990). Chang (2008) and Reed-Danahay (1997) explain the differences in scholars' approaches to autoethnography through how much emphasis they put into these three morphemes. While some are on the "autobiography" end of the spectrum (Figure 1) focusing on the auto- and -graphy in their scholarship, those on the "ethnography" end put more emphasis on the ethno- component.

Le Roux (2017) views autoethnographic studies in a continuum with evocative autoethnography on one end and analytic autoethnography on the other. For her, evocative ethnography accentuates personal stories, vulnerability of the self, and emotional resonance with the readers with less emphasis on researcher objectivity and information, whereas analytic autoethnography leans towards more traditional data collection and interpretation methods, such as the use of empirical data, field notes, and systematic analysis.

As prominent supporters of evocative autoethnography, Ellis et al. (2011) confer that autoethnographers combine autobiography and ethnography to analyze their personal experiences within their particular social milieu. Advocating that autoethnography should not break away from its roots in ethnography, Anderson (2006), on the other hand, locates autoethnography in what he calls as "analytic ethnographic paradigm" (p. 374). Coming from two different orientations, these scholars have paved the way to the separation of autoethnography in two main strands: evocative and analytic (Anderson, 2006). While evocative autoethnography denotes a post-modern approach to doing research; analytic autoethnography is embedded in traditional qualitative research (Denzin, 2006).

Evocative autoethnography has a free form writing style that relies on emotions to connect with the audience (Bochner & Ellis, 2016; Ellis, 2007; Ellis & Bochner, 2000). Like the work of novelists, evocative autoethnographers pay attention to character building through dialogues and descriptions in well-described settings (Ellis, 2004). While doing so, they divert from the traditional "reporting" language of sociological analysis (Ellis & Bochner, 2006). Overall, evocative autoethnography focuses on incorporating personal experience and emotions with cultural practices in creative ways by incorporating different literary genres, such as poems, plays, short stories along with performance arts.

On the other hand, Anderson (2006) takes a more traditional ethnographic stance to avoid obscuring the compatibility of autoethnographic works within traditional ethnographic practices. According to him, analytic autoethnography refers to:

Ethnographic work in which the researcher is (1) a full member in the research group or setting, (2) visible as such a member in the researcher's published texts, and (3) committed to an analytic research agenda focused on improving theoretical understandings of broader social phenomena. (p. 375)

Although he does not explain further how and when the researcher is a "full" member, Anderson advocates for foregrounding the researchers' lived experiences in their ethnographic works. He also asserts that autoethnographers' primary goal is to support theory building through personal experience.

In a nutshell, analytic autoethnography focuses on connecting personal experiences with existing research, moving away from a solely emotional response to reach a scholarly analysis (Cook, 2014). Dissimilarly, the purpose of evocative autoethnography is to find new ways of expressing emotionally charged experiences and narrating them in relation to the pertinent socio-cultural milieu. Nevertheless, they both emphasize the central role that the researcher's personal experiences play in understanding the cultural practices that shape those experiences[1].

**So… What Is "Good" Autoethnography?**

*"To evaluate autoethnography in a genuinely useful way, you have to open yourself up to being changed by it, to heeding its call to surrender your entitlement."*
Gingrich-Philbrook (2013, p. 618)

As part of my dissertation studies, I engaged with several autoethnographic works, including books, book chapters, peer-reviewed journal articles, dissertations, and conference proceedings starting broadly from the ones in social sciences to educational research and from there to those in applied linguistics, and particularly in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). My main goal was to review recent autoethnographic works in the field of applied linguistics as the first paper of my three-paper dissertation. Upon my EBSCOHost and Google Scholar search, I came up with 40 articles. To effectively review these works, I first looked for a list of criteria for good autoethnographies to start working on my paper. To my surprise, I could locate only two sources; namely, Chang's (2016) and Hughes et al. (2012) articles.

In their study, Hughes et al. (2012) had a four-point rubric to evaluate the studies I selected for my review. Acknowledging autoethnography as an emerging genre, these scholars provided a set of criteria to translate autoethnography as empirical research in relation to AERA standards. According to them, to have a "publishable autoethnography," autoethnographers needed to:

- formulate a social scientific problem,
- facilitate critical, careful, and thoughtful discussion of methodological choices and claims,
- offer multiple levels of critique, naming privilege, penalty, units of study, and classifications; and criteria for selected units and classifications, [and]
- [present] credible analysis and interpretation of evidence from narratives and connecting them to researcher-self via triangulation, member-checks, and related ethical issues. (p. 2016)

---

1 For a more detailed discussion of evocative and analytic autoethnography, readers may refer to a special issue of *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* (2006; volume, 35; issue number, 4).

However, as I continued reading the articles I selected for my review, I realized that it was almost impossible to evaluate some of them using Hughes et al.'s (2012) rubric. *I object, your honor! Particularly the third and the fourth criteria are not commensurable with all autoethnographies, your honor! Allow me to elaborate on that, your honor!* Hughes et al.'s (2012) criteria required autoethnographic works to fit into predetermined standards no matter how carefully knitted the pieces were. Discussing Hughes et al. (2012), Gannon (2017) notes:

> The arguments of their case for autoethnography, unsurprisingly given their purpose to bring autoethnography into the fold, rely on establishing similarities with authorized methods, rather than making a case for the radical and necessary difference that autoethnography might bring to educational research. (p. 12)

Agreeing with Gannon's criticism of Hughes et al.'s (2012) criteria for being restrictive and prescriptive, I noticed that such criteria were applicable only to "analytically-oriented" and/or traditionally formatted studies. However, I knew that not all autoethnographers followed such conventions. *On the contrary, many autoethnographers – your honor! – choose autoethnography to look for new and sometimes radical ways of conducting qualitative research in the first place.*

Likewise, Chang (2016, p. 448) provided a set of criteria for autoethnographic studies which also leaned towards the analytic end of the spectrum:

- *Authentic and Trustworthy Data*: Does the autoethnography use authentic and trustworthy data?
- *Accountable Research Process*: Does the autoethnography follow a reliable research process and show the process clearly?
- *Ethics Toward Others and Self*: Does the autoethnography follow ethical steps to protect the rights of self and others presented and implicated in the autoethnography?
- *Sociocultural Analysis and Interpretation*: Does the autoethnography analyze and interpret the sociocultural meaning of the author's personal experiences?
- *Scholarly Contribution*: Does the autoethnography attempt to make a scholarly contribution with its conclusion and engagement of the existing literature?

At this point, it is important to note that Chang (2016, p. 445) already acknowledged that her criteria aligned with the analytic autoethnographies. For her, such criteria would not resonate with "more fluid approaches of evocative and narrative autoethnography."

Soon I realized that for me to be able to review the select articles in my paper, neither Hughes et al. (2012) nor Chang's (2016) criteria offered a holistic view. I was sure the reason why some autoethnographers chose autoethnography was because they rejected traditional ways of doing science (Ellis, 2004), and because they wanted to tell their stories in new, creative, and flexible ways to engage with their readership according to their own conditions. Therefore, expecting them to follow pre-determined criteria would create a colonizing effect on their work since it would denote the presence of an outsider/intruder who would teach insiders how best to present their lived experience according to the outsider/intruder's taste instead of the insiders' own likes (Pham & Gothberg, 2020). Bochner and Ellis (2016) also acknowledge the need for different criteria for autoethnographies that land on different spots in the spectrum. They also accept that any evaluation criteria for an analytic autoethnography "should be more social scientific, such as considerations of validity, data collection, categorization processes, and generalizability across cases" (p. 212). Yet, since evocative

autoethnographies lean towards interpretive narration end of the spectrum with creative/artistic elements, such concerns are irrelevant and cannot be used to evaluate evocative works. As a result, Bochner offers his personal opinion-based criteria for good autoethnographies:

- I look for abundant, concrete details. I want to feel the flesh and blood emotions of people coping with life's contingencies.
- I am attracted to structurally complex narratives that are told in a temporal framework representing the curve of time.
- I also reflect on the author's emotional credibility, vulnerability, and honesty.
- I also prefer narratives that express a tale of two selves, one that shows a believable journey from who I was to who I am, and how a life course can be reimagined or transformed by crisis.
- I hold the author to a demanding standard of ethical self-consciousness.
- I want a story that moves me, my heart and belly as well as my head. (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, pp. 212–213)

Although Bochner's list above gave me a good start in evaluating autoethnographies according to predetermined criteria, it did not fully address the question of how especially newcomer autoethnographers should craft their manuscripts technically. In a way, he provided information as to what an autoethnography (after being written) needed to make him feel, think, and experience while reading it.

In time, I came to realize that autoethnography was an umbrella term with a broad spectrum of characteristics, and there was no consensus among scholars as to how it should be done, or be represented (Sparkes, 2020). Furthermore, I saw that different researchers conceptualized and operationalized autoethnography differently as its functions varied among researchers as Qutoshi (2015) noted:

> [Autoethnography] works as: (1) *an 'un-locker' that opens* hidden windows to view unseen things; (2) *a revealer* that exposes sociocultural delicacies and/or intimate secrets of self/others; (3) *a healer* that creates empathy and sympathy for being victimized and/or marginalized; (4) *an energizer that empowers* the powerless to fight against inequalities; (5) *a challenger who fights to* disrupt canonical ways of seeing, believing and doing things as taken for granted; (6) *an enabler* that develops capacities in self/others; and *a change agent* who creates feelings of emancipation in society. (Italics original, p. 162)

Unlike other traditional research methods, Qutoshi (2015) remarked that autoethnography offered multiple affordances, which could be used by researchers in several ways. For some, it could be a key to open their inner worlds imbued with personal beliefs, thoughts, and emotions. For others, writing an autoethnography would be a process of transformation, healing, and illumination. It could emancipate marginalized individuals whose voices are muted, and whose stories remain untold so that they were able to tell their narratives in their own voice. It could empower social critics to denaturalize power imbalances and social injustices, as well. Likewise, according to Adams at al. (2015, p. 102), good autoethnographies accomplish four goals, which are "making contributions to knowledge; valuing the personal and experiential; demonstrating the power, craft, and responsibilities of stories and storytelling; and taking a relationally responsible approach to research practice and representation".

Along with a variety of goals for using it, the researcher's own onto-ethico-epistemological understandings, topics of interest, and methodological choices all helped shape an autoethnography's design. To me, they all made sense in their own way as I always bore in

mind that autoethnography was born as a reaction to traditional ways of doing qualitative research (Bochner & Ellis, 2016). Therefore, prescribing a set of criteria that foregrounded the qualities of a certain paradigm, autoethnography, writing style, or else would contradict with my personal view of this revolutionary and emancipating inquiry. That said, this view however does not mean that I could not appreciate (or criticize) "good" (or "not-so-good") autoethnographies. *Of course, such appreciation (or criticism) will be subjective, which I am totally cool with, but before having an opinion and taste, it is wise to check what others say, right? So, anyone? I need some help!*

In my quest for coming up with a set of criteria for "good" autoethnographies, I compiled a list of characteristics of a good autoethnography in multiple academicians' scholarship. I organized their personal opinions of what a good autoethnography is in Table 1.

**Table 1**
*Suggested Characteristics of a "Good" Autoethnography*

| Citation | Suggested characteristics of a "good" autoethnography |
| --- | --- |
| Bochner (2012, p. 212) | The best autoethnographies weave a sense of the good into an unfolding story of a life that points backward into the past and forward into the future |
| Denzin (1997, p. 200) | [Good autoethnographies are] capable of being respected by critics of literature as well as by social scientists. |
| Ellis (1997, p. 2) | A good autoethnography always speaks beyond itself [...] Follow the autoethnographic mantra show instead of telling. Understand self to understand others. |
| Ellis (2002, p. 401) | Good autoethnography works towards a communitas, where we might speak together of our experiences, find commonality of spirit, companionship in our sorrow, balm for our wounds, and solace in reaching out to those in need as well. |
| Ellis (2004, p. 330) | Good autoethnography consists of 'thinking like an ethnographer, writing like a novelist'. |
| Goodall (2000, p. 7) | [Good autoethnography] strives to use relational language and styles to create purposeful dialogue between the reader and the author. |
| Gould (2012, p. 458) | Good autoethnography involves doing good, deep, rich introspection. |
| Jensen-Hart and Williams (2010, p. 450) | Good autoethnography is a unique way of accessing knowledge within intersubjective realities, which simultaneously generates a form of critical reflection. |
| Manning and Adams (2015, p. 206) | Good autoethnography happens when the researcher has something deeper to say about an experience, and that something deeper should go beyond simply pointing out how personal experience aligns with or defies a theory or common research finding. |
| Richards (2016, p. 172) | Good autoethnography is scholarly. It is well theorised and well contextualised. It is analytical. Its academic goals are clearly defined. It is useful to others (both academic and non-academic). |
| Spry (2001, p. 713) | [First], the writing must be well crafted. [Second], a good autoethnography is emotionally engaging and self-reflexive, as well as critically self-reflexive of one's sociopolitical interactivity. [And lastly], good autoethnography is not simply a confessional tale of self-renewal; it is a provocative weave of story and theory. |

Although the scholars cited in Table 1 differed in their emphasis on what makes an autoethnographic work "good," they all pointed to several important aspects. So, I decided to incorporate their descriptions of what 'good' autoethnography is in a list of suggestions –*which is of course subjective*. In brief, for me, a good autoethnography should:

- create a sense of transformation through a story of illumination, healing, understanding, and/or learning.
- engage readers as a companion rather than passive audience through commonalities and particularities.
- go beyond personal confessions by mindfully offering autobiographical and background information.
- use appropriate tools and sources and explain why using them makes sense.
- denaturalize social issues by making invisible power dynamics visible; and
- embrace the subjectivity of the memory and interpretation.

In listing these suggestions, I took Gingrich-Philbrook's (2005) advice that aspiring autoethnographers could benefit from a checklist which outlined the qualities and affordances of a "good" autoethnography. However, he noted that such checklists made sense only if they were flexible, open to adaptation and development over time and experience to suit the needs of different writers, projects, and goals. In the following, I explain each suggestion in more detail hoping that other scholars will contribute to the list via their insightful suggestions, constructive feedback, and any sort of criticism. Given that I am not well-versed in arts-based, performance, performative autoethnographies, I especially believe autoethnographers with relevant knowledge base may offer their insightful perspectives about and criticism of my list. *– So, here we go! Vira Bismillah [Godspeed*!].

### *A Good Autoethnography Should Create a Sense of Transformation through a Story of Illumination, Healing, Understanding, and/or Learning*

Autoethnography profoundly alters the writer's (your) insights of the past, enlightens your present, and re-envisions your future if you are conscious and open to its transformative effects (Custer, 2014). On learning to practice autoethnographic works, Wall (2006, p. 146) writes: "I was confronted, challenged, moved, and changed by what I learned." This short yet precise statement reveals the transformative power of autoethnography for you as autoethnography encourages self-awareness and self-discovery (Raab, 2013). For transformation to occur, though, you need to show the courage to reveal your inner world to your readers (Custer, 2014), and as Pelias suggests (2004), you need to learn to write from your heart.

Engaging in autoethnography may also be transformative for those who read your accounts (Starr, 2010) to listen to your heart. Those who have gone through similar experiences may benefit from your narrative to make sense of their own experiences (Adams et al., 2015). In doing so, they may use what they learn from your autoethnography to cope with their own lives (Ellis & Adams, 2014). Even though the readers come from a different background with little commonalities with you, they may reflectively and critically participate in the process of introspection and contemplation with you in the most empathetic and meaningful ways.

To me, a good autoethnography is a good story of transformation both for you and your readers. Therefore, while creating your autoethnographies, you may introspectively ask yourself: "How can I best design my study to be able to show my story of transformation to my audience?" "How can I present my story of transformation so that it resonates with my

readers' personal experiences?" and "What important elements are there in my healing process that may also be beneficial for my readers?"

### *A Good Autoethnography Should Engage Readers as a Companion rather than Passive Audience through Commonalities and Particularities*

Autoethnography is "a relational, rather than individual, practice" (Adams et al., 2022, p. 11) and "an enlarged conversation" between you and your readers (Goodall, 2000, p. 11). Through autoethnography, you invite readers to imagine themselves in your shoes (McIlveen, 2008). Conversing with them, you may want to encourage your readers to look through your own lens by making your stories accessible, transparent, and vulnerable to others' evaluation (Madison, 2012). One way to achieve this aim is to use first- (or second-) person voice instead of traditional third person voice.

Those who prefer first-person voice acknowledge that autoethnography "diverges radically from the analytic, third-person spectator voice of traditional social science prose" (Bochner & Ellis, 2016, p. 82). They note that traditional written academic discourse follows the conventions of third person academic voice. Doing so, they aim to distance their readers from the text, and to make the readers accept the author's analysis as thorough and factual (Adams et al., 2015).

Writing in first-person voice may help you refrain from assuming a "God's eye" view, which prevents you from achieving a conversational tone of voice. Like most autoethnographers, especially the ones on the interpretive narrative end of the autoethnographic spectrum (Figure 1), you may also deliberately use first-person voice in your writing style to "disrupt taboos, break silences, and reclaim [your] lost and disregarded voices" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 36). This way, you may benefit from the decolonizing effect of autoethnography (Bhattacharya, 2018), and avoid silencing and marginalizing your readers.

Personally, when I read through an autoethnographic study, I feel more connected to the author in a less formal and more friendly ways. That is, I oftentimes find myself saying: "Me, too!" "I agree!" "I feel for you!" "That's not what I would do!" "Did you really say that?" or "No way!" Listening to their stories, I reflect on mine. When I agree with their rationalization, I reframe my own justifications of my own choices; when I disagree with them, I produce counterarguments in my mind. In brief, I feel like I am having a conversation with the author rather than reading their manuscript. In return, I feel that I am reading for pleasure rather than for information.

That said, I suggest you align your preference for what voice you would like to use with your methodological choices. "Do you want to inform your readers about your autoethnography with an 'objective' and 'authoritative' tone?" or "Would you like to converse with them in a sincere and emotional way?" Either way, for you to convince your readers, you need to make this choice mindfully as it is crucial for your study's design as well.

### *A Good Autoethnography Should Go Beyond Personal Confessions by Mindfully Offering Autobiographical and Background Information*

Most autoethnographers overtly foreground their own ideas and emotions regarding the cultural structures of the society in which they live (Adams et al., 2015). I find Carolyn Ellis' conceptualization of autoethnography very illuminating:

> […] autoethnography is not simply a way of knowing about the world; it has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, reflexively. It asks that we not only examine our lives but also

consider how and why we think, act, and feel as we do. […] It asks that we rethink and revise our lives, making conscious decisions about who and how we want to be. And in the process, it seeks a story that is hopeful, where authors ultimately write themselves as survivors of the story they are living. (Holman Jones et al., 2013, p. 10)

According to her, there is more to autoethnography than bolstering, confessing, or simply expressing the lived experience in an idiocentric way. Such a viewpoint may be criticized for being narcissistic (Ellis, 2009).

As an autoethnographer, you are not only responsible for walking your readership through your thoughts, beliefs and experiences but also drawing them into the ways you analyze, question, and criticize your narrative consciously, emotionally, and reflexively. Such an endeavor accords with the morphological components of auto-ethno-graphy. While the "auto" is about the self that includes lived experiences, remembering, feelings, and thoughts, the "ethno" component cannot be disregarded as it accounts for the circumstances, social structures, and underlying power dynamics (Manning & Adams, 2015). To create a balance, your manuscript (graphy) should include an adequate amount of information about your inner world, which shapes and is shaped by their understanding of the society in which you live. One way to achieve this balance is the provision of autobiographical information. *The more I know about you, the more I will listen and talk to you, and in return, the more I will feel you, understand you, and be with you.*

Given that several autoethnographers are members of historically marginalized groups (Chávez, 2015), I think their experiences and surroundings have unique characteristics that need unpacking. Therefore, the need for "thick description" (Geertz, 1973, p. 10) of yourself and the settings in which you come into being and knowing becomes crucial for you. Such information may help readers understand how you accepted, negotiated with, and resisted to the practices and discourses in your social world. Therefore, you need to ask yourself: "Do I provide readers with an adequate amount of autobiographical and background information so that they are able to make sense of my feelings, thoughts, and experiences?"

### A Good Autoethnography Should Use Appropriate Tools and Explain Why Using Them Makes Sense

As a borderland genre, autoethnography "inverts binaries between individual/social, body/mind, emotion/reason, and lived experience/theory in academic work" (Gannon, 2006, pp. 475-476). It accommodates an unlimited number of possibilities of creativity, flexibility, and conformity (Marx et al., 2017). In this vein, it allows you to use a rich variety of tools (Keleş, 2022a). These tools may vary from conventional data collection tools including interviews, documents, and observations to literary and artistic works such as poems, stories, photography, fine or performance arts, and digital sources as well as memory work. You may also opt for various "genres" (literary, artistic, or academic), "voices" (first-, second-, or third-person), and "writing styles" (free form, informative, conversational, exploratory, descriptive, or else).

With an abundance of tools and liberty to use them to collect data and/or create an autoethnographic work, it may be difficult for you to choose the most effective tools for achieving your goals. First, just like all other research methodologies, you need to decide what existing tools will cater best to design your study and present your work. Also, thinking outside the box, you may consider repurposing conventional literary tools to accommodate your communication needs. Furthermore, you may take one step further and create your own tools. Remember that autoethnography allows for the flexibility to experiment with alternative tools

if it makes sense to you. That way, you will see what works and what does not during the design process.

As for your readers, you need to convince them by clearly articulating your justification for why you opted for certain tools. Therefore, the following questions beg for answers: "Did you use them for personal, practical, or theoretical reasons?" "What did you aim to achieve by using them?" "Did you actually achieve your goals?" "What other tools could you have used and why did you not use them any ways?" More importantly, "to what degree did using these tools make sense for you?" If your autoethnography includes answers to these questions either implicitly or explicitly, it is more likely that you will be more convincing, and in return, your readers will engage with you more profoundly.

### A Good (Critical) Autoethnography Should Denaturalize Social Issues by Making Invisible Power Dynamics Visible

In general, critical autoethnographers seek to describe and systematically analyze their personal experience to make meaning out of cultural experiences (Anderson, 2006; Ellis, 2004; Holman Jones, 2005). Often, as Neumann (1996) notes, autoethnographic works "democratize the representational sphere of culture by locating the particular experiences of individuals in tension with dominant expressions of discursive power" (p. 189).

Autoethnography "confronts dominant forms of representation and power in an attempt to reclaim, through self-reflective response, representational spaces that have marginalized those of us at the borders" (Tierney, 1998, p. 66). Assuming the double roles of the researcher and the researched simultaneously, autoethnographers blur lines between the researchers and the researched (Gannon, 2006), hence, subvert the uneven power relations in between them (Hughes et al., 2012). For Adams et al. (2015), autoethnographers incorporate their personal experience to understand and critique the existing beliefs and ongoing practices in the society they live in, through deep and careful self-reflection.

To achieve self-reflection, as an autoethnographer, you may try to uncover your emotions/thoughts/beliefs by remembering/revisiting/recreating your past experiences and connect them with the society (Holman Jones, 2005). Doing so, you may help extend existing scholarship in your field of research in your own words (Adams et al., 2015). Focusing on injustices, marginalization, and/or suppression you have experienced first-hand or observed closely, you may choose to write an autoethnography to reveal such incidences of unfair treatment, which oftentimes occur in subtle ways, yet on institutional and systematic ways. To that end, holding a critical mindset may help you create convincing narratives. You may ask: "What are the underlying power dynamics that lead to such experiences?" "Who benefits and who suffer from the social norms embedded in the ongoing practices?" "How do I perceive such practices mentally and emotionally?" "How should such practices be perceived by others; and why?" and so on.

### Denaturalize Social Issues by Making Invisible Power Dynamics Visible
### A Good Autoethnography Should Embrace the Subjectivity of Memory and Interpretation

Many traditional scholars approach memory data with caution for they believe "memory work" is highly subjective. For them, people experiencing the same event may recall what happened differently, thus are likely to create different "versions" of a story (Tullis Owen et al., 2009). However, according to Bochner and Ellis (2016), autoethnographic works draw:

> […] attention to meanings rather than facts, readings rather than observations, and interpretations rather than findings. Autoethnography gives up any illusion

of producing an unmediated mirroring of reality. Instead, it acknowledges that all attempts to speak for, write about, or represent human lives are partial, situated, and mediated. (pp. 239-240)

I agree that memory work is partial and subject to self-positioning and self-interpretation (Bochner, 1997). Past experiences are always open to reinterpretation and so are the personal narratives (Ellis, 2009). What you know to be a "fact" may stem from your memory's dynamic process of change. What you remember now about an event which happened ten years ago may be different from what you remembered about it five years ago. However, autoethnography does not aim to produce "accurate," "static," and "consistent" stories as no story are exempted from the interpretation of the researcher. For instance, if you interview me about my socialization experiences as an English language learner/speaker, I will answer your questions as honestly as possible. That you record, transcribe, code, and analyze my responses does not mean that you will reach a more "accurate version" of my story (Wall, 2008). After all, "who knows better the right questions to ask than a social scientist that has lived through the experience?" (Ellis, 2009, p. 102) What makes your memory-based narrative powerful is not its precision or accuracy but how you relate to the (re)construction of your past (Hayler, 2010). Therefore, you should embrace your personal memories fully in the process of data collection and consider them as equally valuable to the field notes, recorded interviews, or otherwise collected information by a researcher (Winkler, 2018).

Bearing that memory work is subjective, and embracing that our memories are oftentimes elusive, you may consider refraining from approaching your past experiences as factual and accurate accounts. Acknowledging that your telling is nothing more than "your version" in an honest way and leaving room for criticism may help you achieve equal grounds with them. At best, you should go for convincing your readers. While telling your version, asking yourself these questions will likely guide you along the way: "What items exist for me to remember this particular event (social media posts, photos, documents, or else)" "How did I interpret (or commented on) this event right after I experienced it?" "Are there any differences between my immediate interpretation and my interpretation now? If yes, what changed?" "How do (or would) others who experienced this particular event interpret it?" "How would the readers reflect on it if they had lived it themselves?" and so on.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Ever since I encountered autoethnography, I have been fascinated by its emancipatory, de/colonizing, and revolutionary power. Feeling fully entitled to tell my own stories in my own voice and style, I continue producing more autoethnographic works. I introduce it to my students taking my qualitative research methods course; talk about it with my colleagues. However, when I encounter studies from scholars who call their work an autoethnography simply because their data stem from their lived experiences. Although, in these works, the *auto* and *graphy* components are strong, the authors may neglect the *ethno* element. The absence of the ethno may, as Bradley and Nash (2011) point, pose the risk of egocentrism in the analysis of self-reflections. Many critics already accuse autoethnographers of being lazy (Delamont, 2009), self-indulgent (Haynes, 2011) and even narcissist (Rees, 2015). Here, Gregersen's (2022, p. 255) words speak to and from my heart:

I am not the gatekeeper for autoethnography. However, I do worry that autoethnography may turn into a buzzword, thrown into research papers with little consideration of its background, or the rigour required to craft a piece that satisfies both literary and scholarly expectations.

*Well, I feel worried, too.* Considering that the term "autoethnography" is increasingly referring to so many different understandings, definitions, interpretations, types, attributions, styles, and voices, it is possible to turn into a buzz word –*perhaps it already has.* On one hand, coming from the periphery, I am drawn to autoethnography because it offers people like me so much freedom to resist, disrupt, subvert from, and decolonize mainstream qualitative research founded on Eurocentric traditions. On the other hand, I worry that it may be exploited by those whose research designs are poor, theoretical/conceptual frameworks are weak, and manuscript sloppy. You may have heard about Karl Andersson's article titled "I am not Alone – We are not Alone: Using Masturbation as an Ethnographic Method in Research on Shota Subculture in Japan" published in *Qualitative Research.* After reading the essay before it was retracted by the editorial board, I felt even more worried. Will there be more people using "autoethnography" as a way of justification of their poorly designed, weak, and badly crafted manuscripts just because the manuscript has some form of *auto* elements? *I worry that novice autoethnographers may fall from the sky like Icarus did because he did not know that wax was not the best adhesive to keep his artificial wings intact under the sun.* Yes, autoethnography does not mandate you to prepare and submit pages long IRB applications. Yes, you do not need to manage the practical challenges of data collection. And yes, you have the freedom to choose from multiple scholarly and literary tools to write up an autoethnographic paper. *Yes, autoethnography lets you fly high – but alas!* Although it may seem rather easy for some reasons, autoethnography is much more than writing about the self within the society. The more you practice it the more it becomes clear that autoethnography is "one of the most challenging qualitative approaches to attempt" (Wall, 2008, p. 38), and you need to be a "darn good" writer to write one (Moro, 2006).

A good autoethnography is the work of a scholar who aims for the witty hand of an artist and the sharp/critical mind of a social scientist. Remember that an autoethnography is good when it is appreciated by both literary critics and social scientists at the same time (Denzin, 1997). Against this backdrop, I believe novice autoethnographers may benefit from my suggestions before they set out an autoethnographic journey.

Throughout the manuscript, as you have already realized, I assumed the role of an informed reader and reflected on my own process of learning how to write and appreciate autoethnographic texts. It is highly subjective as well - a product of my own academic, literary, and artistic taste. While crafting it, I had a dialogic and informal style and deliberately used first- and second-person voices informally because I wanted to show my readers (you) that it is a "modest proposal" rather than a work of a scholar with authorial authority. Against this backdrop, this paper takes a different stance than Hughes et al.'s (2012) paper. Unlike their paper, which was written in traditional academic discourse with an authoritative tone, I aimed for a friendly dialog for I believe that good autoethnographers treat readers as active companions rather than obedient recipients. Another point is that Hughes et al. dictate a pre-determined set of criteria to those who want to produce publishable autoethnographies. However, following Sparkes and Smith (2009) and Gingrich-Philbrook (2005), I argue that no evaluation criteria that are fixed and universal may determine the quality of an autoethnography since "criteria always have a restrictive, limiting, regressive, thwarting, halting quality to them, and they can never be completely separated from the structures of power in which they are situated'' (Bochner, 2000, p. 269). Therefore, I make suggestions that are rather open to revision, reinterpretation, and rewording as times, conditions, paradigms, and research purposes change. Likewise, I present my suggestions relying on my own understanding of what constitutes "good" in autoethnography, which may lean towards both the evocative and the analytic end of the spectrum. In short, I take an inclusive stance as opposed to Hughes et al.'s exclusive criteria because I do not want to come up with a list of criteria that "privilege some

voices and research projects while discouraging and silencing other voices and projects" (Adams et al., 2015, p. 102).

Epistemologically speaking, although I personally lean towards more recent paradigms, my suggestions draw on a large range of paradigms. As a result, I do not favor one type of autoethnography over another (i.e., evocative vs. analytic), but approach all autoethnographic works as different colors on a palette, which allow for mixing and meshing to produce other colors with unique shades in a broad spectrum of light waves. This perspective stems from the best advice I have ever received from one of my qualitative research professors, Dr. Stephanie Ann Shelton, who would always say in her qualitative educational research courses, "As long as it makes sense to you, and as long as you can articulate your justifications, you can go for whatever you think will work in your research." *That makes sense, right? To me, it certainly does.*

As a final remark, I would be pleased if you approached this paper as a "purposeful dialogue" between you and me (Goodall, 2000, p. 7). I hope that our conversation will serve as a beacon for those who may wish to tell, write about, or perform their own stories using autoethnography in the future. Bearing in mind that my suggestions are not fixed, I whole-heartedly welcome all criticism and contributions coming from you. How about we enlarge this conversation by adding to, removing, or editing this list of suggestions from time to time while we maintain its modesty?

## References

Adams, T. E. (2017). Critical autoethnography, education, and a call for forgiveness. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, *19*(1), 79-88. http://sci-hub.tw/10.18251/ijme.v19i1.1387

Adams, T. E., Holman Jones, S., & Ellis, C. (Eds.). (2022). *Handbook of autoethnography* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

Adams, T. E., Holman Jones, S., & Ellis, C. (2015). *Autoethnography*. Oxford University Press.

Adamson, J., & Muller, T. (2018). Joint autoethnography of teacher experience in the academy: Exploring methods for collaborative inquiry. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *41*(2), 207-219. https://doi.org/10.1080/1743727X.2017.1279139

Aguirre, R. T., & Duncan, C. (2013). Being an elbow: A phenomenological autoethnography of faculty-student collaboration for accommodations. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, *33*(4-5), 531-551. https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2013.827611

Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 35*(4)*,* 373-395. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241605280449

Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the universe halfway: Quantum physics and the entanglement of matter and meaning*. Duke University Press.

Beattie, L. (2022). *Symbiotic autoethnography: Moving beyond the boundaries of qualitative methodologies.* Bloomsbury Publishing.

Bhattacharya, K. (2018). Coloring memories and imaginations of "home": Crafting a de/colonizing autoethnography. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, *18*(1), 9-15. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708617734010

Bochner, A. P. (1997). It's about time: Narrative and the divided self. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *3*(4), 418-438. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049700300404

Bochner, A. (2000). Criteria against ourselves. *Qualitative Inquiry, 6*(2), 266–272. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800 40000600209

Bochner, A. P. (2012). Suffering happiness: On autoethnography's ethical calling. *Qualitative Communication Research*, *1*(2), 209-229. https://doi.org/10.1525/qcr.2012.1.2.209

Bochner, A. P., & Ellis, C. (2016). *Evocative autoethnography: Writing stories and telling lives*. Routledge.

Boylorn, R. M., & Orbe, M. P. (Eds.). (2014). *Critical autoethnography: Intersecting cultural identities in everyday life*. Routledge.

Bradley, D. L., & Nash, R. (2011). *Mesearch and research: A guide for writing scholarly personal narrative manuscripts*. Information Age Publishing.

Brock-Utne, B. (2018). Researching language and culture in Africa using an autoethnographic approach. *International Review of Education*, *64*(6), 713-735. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-018-9746-6

Canagarajah, A. S. (2012). Teacher development in a global profession: An autoethnography. *TESOL Quarterly*, *46*(2), 258-279. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.18

Chang, E. (2008). *Autoethnography as method*. Left Coast Press.

Chang, H. (2016). Autoethnography in health research: Growing pains? *Qualitative Health Research*, *26*(4), 443-451. https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315627432

Chang, H., Ngunjiri, F., & Hernandez, K-A.C. (2013). *Collaborative autoethnography*. Left Coast Press. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315432137

Chávez, M. (2015). Let's meet in Nepantla: The possibility of thirdspace as a place "others" call home. *Journal of Latinos and Education, 14*(4), 336-344. https://doi.org/10.1080/15348431.2014.1000543

Cook, P, (2014). To actually be sociological: Autoethnography as an assessment and learning tool. *Journal of Sociology, 50*(3), 269-282. https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783312451780

Cooper, R., & Lilyea, B. (2022). I'm interested in autoethnography, but how do I do it? *The Qualitative Report, 27*(1), 197-208. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5288

Custer, D. (2014). Autoethnography as a transformative research method. *The Qualitative Report*, *19*(37), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2014.1011

Delamont, S. (2009). The only honest thing: Autoethnography, reflexivity and small crises in fieldwork. *Ethnography and Education, 4*(1), 51-63. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457820802703507

Denzin, N. K. (1997). *Interpretive ethnography: Ethnographic practices for the 21st century*. SAGE.

Denzin, N. K. (2006). Analytic autoethnography, or déjà vu all over again. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *35*(4), 419-428. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241606286985

Denzin, N. K. (2014). *Interpretive autoethnography* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Denzin, N. K. (2018). *Performance autoethnography: Critical pedagogy and the politics of culture*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315159270

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2018). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed.). SAGE.

Ellingson, L. L., & Ellis, C. (2008). Autoethnography as constructionist project. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of constructionist research* (pp. 445-456). Guildford.

Ellis, C. (1997, November). *What counts as scholarship in communication? An autoethnographic response*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, Chicago, IL.

Ellis, C. (2002). Being real: Moving inward toward social change. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *15*(4), 399-406. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518390210145453

Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. AltaMira Press.

Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate

others. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *13*(1), 3-29. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800406294947

Ellis, C. (2009). Fighting back or moving on: An autoethnographic response to critics. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, *3*(2), 371-378. https://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2009.2.3.371

Ellis, C. (2020). *Revision: Autoethnographic reflections on life and work*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429259661

Ellis, C., & Adams, T. E. (2014). The purposes, practices, and principles of autoethnographic research. In P. Leavy (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 254–276). Oxford University Press.

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A.P. (2011). Autoethnography: An overview. *Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, *12*(1), 273-290.

Ellis, C., & Bochner, A. P. (2000). Autoethnography, personal narrative, reflexivity: Researcher as subject. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 733-768). SAGE.

Ellison, E. R., & Langhout, R. D. (2016). Collaboration across difference: A joint autoethnographic examination of power and whiteness in the higher education anti-cuts movement. *Race, Ethnicity and Education*, *19*(6), 1319-1334. https://doi.org/10.1080/13613324.2016.1150825

Faulkner, S. L. (2017). Poetry is politics: An autoethnographic poetry manifesto. *International Review of Qualitative Research*, *10*(1), 89-96. https://doi.org/10.1525/irqr.2017.10.1.89

Furman, R. (2006). Autoethnographic poems and narrative reflections: A qualitative study on the death of a companion animal. *Journal of Family Social Work*, *9*(4), 23-38. https://doi.org/10.1300/J039v09n04_03

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. Basic Books.

Gannon, S. (2006). The (im)possibilities of writing the self-writing: French poststructural theory and autoethnography. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, *6*(4), 474-495. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708605285734

Gannon, S. (2017). Autoethnography. *Oxford research encyclopedia of education* (pp. 1-21). https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/978019 0264093.013.71

Garratt, D. (2015). Psychoanalytic-autoethnography: Troubling natural bodybuilding. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *21*(4), 343-353. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800414542699

Gingrich-Philbrook, C. (2005). Autoethnography's family values: Easy access to compulsory experiences. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, *25*(4), 297-314. https://doi.org/10.1080/10462930500362445

Gingrich-Philbrook, C. (2013). Evaluating (evaluations of) autoethnography. In S. Holman Jones, T. E. Adams, & C. Ellis (Eds.), *Handbook of autoethnography* (pp. 609– 626). Left Coast Press.

Goodall, H. L. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. AltaMira Press.

Gould, S. J. (2012). The emergence of Consumer Introspection Theory (CIT): Introduction to a JBR special issue. *Journal of Business Research*, *65*(4), 453-460. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2011.02.010

Gregersen, E. (2022). Telling stories about the law school: Autoethnography and legal education. *The Law Teacher*, *56*(2), 241-256. https://doi.org/10.1080/03069400.2021.1949182

Guyotte, K. W., Hofsess, B. A., Wilson, G. J., & Shields, S. S. (2018). Tumbling from embodiment to enfleshment: Art as intervention in collective autoethnography. *Art Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal*, *3*(2), 101-132.

Hamera, J. (2011). Performative ethnography. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The*

*SAGE handbook of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 317-330). SAGE.

Hayler, M. (2010). Autoethnography: Making memory methodology. *Research in Education, 3*(1), 5-9.

Hayler, M., & Williams, J. (2020). *Being a teacher educator in challenging times: Negotiating the rapids of professional learning* (Vol. 22). Springer Nature.

Haynes, K. (2011). Tensions in (re)presenting the self in reflexive autoethnographic research. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management, 6*(2), 134-149. https://doi.org/10.1108/17465641111159125

Holman Jones, S. (2005). Autoethnography: Making the personal political. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 763-791). SAGE.

Holman Jones, S., Adams, T. E., & Ellis, C. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of autoethnography*. Left Coast Press.

Hughes, S., Pennington, J. L., & Makris, S. (2012). Translating autoethnography across the AERA standards: Toward understanding autoethnographic scholarship as empirical research. *Educational Researcher*, *41*(6), 209-219. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X12442983

Hughes, S., & Noblit, G. (2017). Meta-ethnography of autoethnographies: A worked example of the method using educational studies. *Ethnography and Education*, *12*(2), 211-227. https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2016.1216322

Jensen-Hart, S., & Williams, D. J. (2010). Blending voices: Autoethnography as a vehicle for critical reflection in social work. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, *30*(4), 450-467. https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2010.515911

Keleş, U. (2020). *My language learning, using, and researching stories: Critical autoethnography of socialization* [Doctoral dissertation, The University of Alabama].

Keleş, U. (2022a). Autoethnography as a recent methodology in applied linguistics: A methodological review. *The Qualitative Report, 27*(2), 448-474. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5131

Keleş, U. (2022b). Long-term washback effect of university entrance exam: A critical autoethnography of socialization. In D. Köksal, N. Kavaklı, & S. Arslan (Eds.), *Handbook of research on perspectives in foreign language assessment.* IGI Global. [Manuscript submitted for publication].

Keleş, U. (in press). Exploring my in-betweenness as a growing transnational scholar through poetic autoethnography. In L. J. Pentón Herrera, E. Trinh, & B. Yazan (Eds.), *Autoethnographies of doctoral students in applied linguistics*. Sense Publishers. [Manuscript submitted for publication].

Le Roux, C. S. (2017). Exploring rigour in autoethnographic research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, *20*(2), 195-207. https://doi.org/10.1080/13645579.2016.1140965

Lionnet, F. (1990). Auto-ethnography: The an-archic style of dust tracks on a road. In H. L. Gates (Ed.), *Reading black, reading feminist* (pp. 382-413). Meridian.

Madison, D. S. (2012). *Critical ethnography: Methods, ethics, and performance* (2nd ed.). SAGE.

Manning, J., & Adams, T. E. (2015). Popular culture studies and autoethnography: An essay on method. *The Popular Culture Studies Journal*, *3*, 187-221.

Marx, S., Pennington, J. L., & Chang, H. (2017). Critical autoethnography in pursuit of educational equity: Introduction to the IJME special issue. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, *19*(1), 1-6. http://sci-hub.tw/10.18251/ijme.v19i1.1393

McIlveen, P. (2008). Autoethnography as a method for reflexive research and practice in vocational psychology. *Australian Journal of Career Development*, *17*(2), 13-20. https://doi.org/10.1177/103841620801700204

Moro, P. (2006). It takes a darn good writer: A review of The Ethnographic I, by C. Ellis. *Symbolic Interaction, 29*(2). 265-269.

Neumann, M. (1996). Collecting ourselves at the end of the century. In C. Ellis & A. P. Bochner (Eds.), *Composing ethnography: Alternative forms of qualitative writing* (pp. 172-198). AltaMira Press.

Norris, J., Sawyer, R. D., & Lund, D. (2012). *Duoethnography: Dialogic methods for social, health, and educational research* (Vol. 7). Left Coast Press.

Oudghiri, S. (2021). Negotiating tensions: An autoethnographic account of classroom-based research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, *34*(10), 915-927. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2021.1930260

Pelias, R.J. (2004). *A methodology of the heart.* AltaMira Press.

Pensoneau-Conway, S. L., Bolen, D. M., Toyosaki, S., Rudick, C. K., & Bolen, E. K. (2014). Self, relationship, positionality, and politics: A community autoethnographic inquiry into collaborative writing. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, *14*(4), 312-323. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708614530302

Pham, D. T., & Gothberg, J. E. (2020). Autoethnography as a decolonizing methodology: Reflections on Masta's what the grandfathers taught me. *The Qualitative Report, 25*(11), 4094-4103. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2020.4362

Qutoshi, S. B. (2015). Auto/ethnography: A transformative research paradigm. *Dhaulagiri Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *9*, 161-190.

Raab, D. (2013). Transpersonal approaches to autoethnographic research and writing. *The Qualitative Report, 18*(42), 1-19. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2013.1516

Reed-Danahay, D. (1997). *Auto/ethnography*. Berg.

Reed-Danahay, D. (2017). Bourdieu and critical autoethnography: Implications for research, writing, and teaching. *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, *19*(1), 144-154. http://sci-hub.tw/10.18251/ijme.v19i1.1368

Rees, E. (2015, March 19). Self-reflective study: The rise of "mesearch". *Times Higher Education*. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/self-reflective-study-the-rise-ofmesearch/2019097.article.

Richards, R. (2016). Subject to interpretation. Autoethnography and the ethics of writing about the embodied self. In D. Pillay, I. Naicker, & K. Pithouse-Morgan (Eds.), *Academic autoethnographies* (pp. 163-174). Sense Publishers.

Skinner, J. (2003). Montserrat Place and Mons' rat Neaga: An example of impressionistic autoethnography. *The Qualitative Report*, *8*(3), 513-530. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2003.1884

Sparkes, A. C. (2000). Autoethnography and narratives of self: Reflections on criteria in action. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 17*(1), 21-43. https://doi.org/10.1123/ssj.17.1.21

Sparkes, A. C. (2020). Autoethnography: Accept, revise, reject? Reflections of an evaluative self. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 12*(2). 289-302. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2020.1732453

Sparkes, A. C. (2022). When judgment calls: Making sense of criteria for evaluating different forms of autoethnography. In T. E. Adams, S. Holman Jones, & Ellis, C. (Eds.), *Handbook of Autoethnography* (2nd ed., pp. 263-276). Routledge.

Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2009). Judging the quality of qualitative inquiry: Criteriology and relativism in action. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise, 10*(5), 491-497. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2009.02.006

Speciale, M., Gess, J., & Speedlin, S. (2015). You don't look like a lesbian: A coautoethnography of intersectional identities in counselor education. *Journal of LGBT Issues in Counseling*, *9*(4), 256-272. https://doi.org/10.1080/15538605.2015.1103678

Speedy, J. (2015). *Staring at the park: A poetic autoethnographic inquiry*. Routledge.

Spry, T. (2001). Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry, 7*(6), 706-732. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780040100700605

Spry, T. (2011). *Body/paper/stage: Writing and performing autoethnography*. Left Coast Press.

Starr, L. J. (2010). The use of autoethnography in educational research: Locating who we are in what we do. *Canadian Journal for New Scholars in Education*, *1*(3), 1-9.

Tierney, W. G. (1998). Life history's history: Subjects foretold. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *4*(1), 49-70. https://doi.org/10.1177/107780049800400104

Toyosaki, S., Pensoneau-Conway, S. L., Wendt, N. A., & Leathers, K. (2009). Community autoethnography: Compiling the personal and resituating whiteness. *Cultural Studies ↔ Critical Methodologies*, *9*(1), 56-83. https://doi.org/10.1177/1532708608321498

Tullis Owen, J. A., McRae, C., Adams, T. E., & Vitale, A. (2009). Truth troubles. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *15*(1), 178-200. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800408318316

Wall, S. (2006). An autoethnography on learning about autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *5*(2), 146-160. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690600500205

Wall, S. (2008). Easier said than done: Writing an autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *7*(1), 38-53. https://doi.org/10.1177/160940690800700103

Whitinui, P. (2014). Indigenous autoethnography: Exploring, engaging, and experiencing "self" as a native method of inquiry. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *43*(4), 456-487. https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241613508148

Winkler, I. (2018). Doing autoethnography: Facing challenges, taking choices, accepting responsibilities. *Qualitative Inquiry, 24*(4), 236-247. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800417728956

Yazan, B., Jain, R., & Canagarajah, S. (Eds.). (2020). *Autoethnographies in ELT: Transnational identities, pedagogies, and practices*. Routledge.

## Author Note

Ufuk Keleş works at Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul, Turkey. As a Fulbright grantee, he completed his Ph.D. studies in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Alabama, USA. Before this, he was an English teacher for fifteen years at a university in Turkey. His research interests include transnational socialization, social justice in ELT, multicultural education, and qualitative research in education. He has presented his research in multiple national and international conferences and published his work in several international peer-reviewed journals and edited book volumes. He is married with a son called Deniz (Mare Nostrum). Please direct correspondence to ufuk.keles@es.bau.edu.tr.

## Article Citation

Keleş, U. (2022). In an effort to write a "good" autoethnography in qualitative educational research: A modest proposal. *The Qualitative Report, 27*(9), 2026-2046. https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2022.5662