10. Untangling Initial English Teaching Education from Pre-Service Teachers' Collaborative Autoethnographies

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Telling our stories is a way
for us to be present to each other,
provides a space
for us to create a relationship embodied
in the performance of writing and reading
that is reflective,
critical,
loving,
and chosen in solidarity
(Holman Jones, Adams, Ellis, 2013)

Introduction

In this chapter, I will introduce Collaborative Autoethnography (CAE), framed within *bricolage* (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011), as a valid methodological option to narrativize the meaning and implications of being a pre-service English-language teacher (PELT) and becoming a professional English teacher. In doing so, I will discuss (from my own story) the importance of having a critical position while examining PELTs' selves within the Initial English Language Teacher Education (IELTE) context, and the role they have as *knowing subjects* participating in research projects (Vasilachis de Gialdino,

2009). Before starting the discussion on this methodological option, I will explain my current research query.

Historically, IELTE has responded to agendas determined by specific organizations, such as the British Council and TESOL, which intend to establish ideologies about *how to teach*, *when to teach*, *what to teach*, and *who teaches whom* (Pennycook, 1998; Canagarajah, 1999; Phillipson, 1992). These ideologies establish a *pattern of actions* in IELTE that *constitute practices* maintained through regulations (Schatzki, 2002), thus leading to continuity and perpetuation of ways of being and doing.

In Colombia, for example, the National Ministry of Education - MEN (for its acronym in Spanish) provides the normativity that regulates IELTE programs. A governmental key regulation called Acuerdo 18583 (MEN, 2017) establishes that bachelor programs must provide pre-service teachers with knowledge in four main areas: general foundation, specific and disciplinary knowledge, pedagogy, and didactics. Regarding IELTE programs, Acuerdo 18583 decrees that a PELT who wants to receive his/her diploma and become a professional English teacher must reach a C1 proficiency as described by the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2002). Apparently, there is nothing wrong in having a desirable level of proficiency in the language; however, accepting such regulations and ideologies, and establishing them as *the law*, is something that has problematic implications. According to Guerrero Nieto (2010), this acceptance produces an adverse image on English-language teachers, who are usually portrayed as clerks, marketers, or technicians, yet not as professionals. This way of portraying the *must be* of the English teachers maintains a social order: knowledge is produced from a top-down approach and it is accepted as the only truth; then, PELTs become passive receivers (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). These passive receivers are embedded and constrained by normativities that respond to political and economic interests, thus producing apparent stability (Canagarajah, 1999; Pennycook, 1998; Phillipson, 1992).

This fact has also permeated the field of research in IELTE. Some Colombian scholars have shown an interest in investigating the intersections between theory and practice, with no intention to validate the theory but rather to promote greater participation of the PELTs (Méndez & Bonilla, 2016; Posada & Garzón, 2014). Some other scholars have used these reflections as a device to better understand the social and educational reality, so that to help PELTs improve their practices in the classroom (Aguirre & Ramos, 2011;

Camacho et al., 2012; Samacá, 2012). Some others have recognized PELTs as knowledgeable subjects (as stated by Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009), and have heard their voices using narratives that express opinions, expectations, dreams, regrets, and fears, among others (Castañeda-Peña, Rodríguez-Uribe, Salazar-Sierra, & Chala-Bejarano, 2016; Fajardo Castañeda & Miranda Montenegro, 2015). Yet, many other scholars conduct research on the basis of individuality, sometimes detaching from, or denying, the social nature that is integrated into this social activity; for the most part, research papers from this group of scholars assume the PELTs as informants (Aguirre, 2014; Cardenas & Suarez, 2009; Durán Narváez, Lastra Ramírez, & Morales Vasco, 2013); they are assigned a role that is limited to provide data to be collected and interpreted by researchers upon the basis of established principles, theories, and researchers' apparent objectivity; in the end, PELTs are not involved in the research finding analysis process or conclusions writing.

As a scholar, I believe that it is necessary to open spaces where PELTs can establish a dialogic relationship with the context where they are involved, so that they construct their own understanding of what has meant, for them, to be members of a dynamic social activity (teaching English-language) while conucting investigation about it. In this sense, I will propose a collaborative research process where PELTs will play a role as researchers, with the purpose of understanding their transition from being PELTs to become professional English-language teachers.

In this chapter, I will discuss how my reflection about my experiences as a teacher-educator became the main reason why I decided to become a researcher. Then, I will discuss my critical position in research and will explain my using *bricolage* in this process. Connecting the two previous topics, the third section of this chapter will discuss why and how I intend to position PELTs as research partners instead of mere participants in my research study project. Finally, I will introduce Collaborative Autoethnography as the methodological alternative that would allow us (research partners) to intertwine our own personal narrations with their cultural interpretations.

How My Own Story Led Me to PELTs Research on IELTE

When I started my career as a teacher educator, back in 2012, I was assigned as a mentor[60] for a group of ten PELTs in the teaching practicum (TP). I need to confess that when I started performing in such role, I did not know exactly what to do because it was my first experience as a mentor. To make things even more complicated, my own experience in the TP as PELT had not been as successful as I expected due to a variety of reasons: it was an experience that lasted only four months (one academic semester); my own mentor visited me only twice during the time when I worked at the school assigned to me; I received no supervision in my classes, so I had to make my own decisions based on what I considered correct; I even needed to develop all my classroom materials in accordance with every specific topic in consideration, mainly because it was a public school with limited resources. I hardly paid any attention to the social context of this specific learning/teaching process, which was full of social issues including violence, insecurity, poverty, and child abuse, due to poverty of the community.

During my first semester as a mentor of the TP, I provided my students with clear directions about how to teach the English language and helped them to develop classroom materials according to the principles of the communicative approach. Additionally, my students and I developed shared plans and policies related to how to manage classroom groups based on rules enforcement, how to evaluate teaching/learning processes based on students' competences, and how to better organize contents on the blackboard, among others. Our decisions on these matters were based on our readings of authors considered fundamental for English-language educators.

Language teaching programs usually resort to canonical literature as the basis upon which syllabus are developed. As an example, Douglas Brown (2000, 2001, 2004), focused his work on explaining the principles of language teaching and language assessment; Harmer (1998; 2001), centered his work on presenting techniques to teach all the skills in an English-language class; Richards worked mainly on explaining language teaching methodologies (Richards & Renandya, 2002), as well as on exploring language teaching practices (Burns & Richards, 2012); Oxford (1990), while also examined language learning strategies that have been considered essential for language teachers for many years. Following ideas from these canonical authors, while in my role as a mentor I used rubric provided by my doctorate program to

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60   In this paper I use the term *mentor* to refer to the teacher supervisor of the PELTs' processes during their teaching practicum, as defined by Pennycook (2004)

evaluate each of the aspects considered essential for training of the PELTs. This rubric allowed me to determine the level of compliance with the program, although its scope was restricted to observation of technical issues, thus ignoring those related to teachers' human development.

Under such circumstances, I felt compelled to start collecting PELTs' reflections about their particular classroom situations, with the intention to better understand them, as well as the uncertainties, expectations, doubts, and problems that arose within their TP process. However, the only outcome of these efforts was a compendium of detailed descriptions of activities but nothing else. I ended up not having anything helpful to learn what my PELTs thought about their experiences or how they felt during their classes. That was the moment when I decided to change the way I approached them. This time, I started with providing my students with some specific readings[61] for them to reflect about and comment, which began a deeper process of reflection about their TP.

This attempt to gain deeper understanding of PELTs' experiences within their TP, was helpful to uncover some situations that had a direct impact on their performance and their process of becoming professional teachers. I detected the presence of some colonial traits that were perpetuated throughout the speeches, standardized through practices, spread throughout the language teaching programs, and, hence, exerted a strong influence on the performance of the PELTs in their teaching practices (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2018). In order to gain further insights that were in alignment with this specific viewpoint, I resorted to authors such as Philipson (1992) and Pennycook (1998), who had explained the implications of linguistic imperialism and colonization of English-language teaching on ELT education. Kumaravadivelu (2003) was another key author leading me to realize that thinking beyond established methods was possible and necessary, given his viewpoints regarding the need to also take into account those personal and social factors that might have an impact on language learning and teaching.

Colonial situations have to do with oppression, dispossession, and an unbalance of powers that produce inequalities, discrimination, injustice, violence, exclusion, and silence, among others (Grosfoguel, 2011; Kumashiro, 2000; López-Calvo, 2016; Walsh, 2013). After my initial recognition of the coloniality traits above discussed, I ended up realizing that coloniality is a

61 The readings were focused on a variety of topics related to the teaching practicum (Lucero, 2016; Morales Cortés, 2016), pedagogical knowledge (Díaz, 2006; Pérez & Fonseca, 2011; Tezanos, 2007) and the systematization of experiences (Torres, 1999). PELTs read all the texts, wrote a critical comment, and selected some quotes to discuss in class.

practice that diminishes *the other*, which is made evident on how English-language teachers are portrayed in some key documents issued by the Ministry of Education, among other examples. Guerrero (2008; 2010), shows how colonial linguistic policies see EFL teachers, and how these policies perpetuate three images: *teachers are invisible*, *teachers are clerks*, and *teachers are technicians/marketers* (p.35). Although these images are not always visibly shown, they are normalized by universities' practices and discourses.

The fact is, coloniality is rooted in common sense. It is established through strong ideologies that have been perpetuated by means of specific colonial mechanisms; coloniality is also well and cautiously articulated to the social, cultural, and educative context to the point that they become imperceptible (Grosfoguel, 2011; Kumashiro, 2000; Kumashiro, 2009; López-Calvo, 2016; Estermann, 2014).

Nevertheless, I would be mistaken if I considered that PELTs were uncritical in analyzing what happened in their TP. As several scholars have discussed through many research articles, PELTs express their opinions, positions and actions towards teaching and learning through highly englihtening reflections (Castañeda-Peña, Rodríguez-Uribe, Salazar-Sierra, & Chala-Bejarano, 2016; Cote, 2012; Durán Narváez, Lastra Ramírez, & Morales Vasco, 2013; Gutiérrez, 2015). These authors have found evidence of different levels of personal agency among PELTs. Vallacher and Wenger (1989), have identified two basic levels of personal agency, high and low. Under their viewpoint, a high level of personal agency represents "the tendency to understand one's action in terms of its consequences and implications." In contrast, a low level represents "the tendency to see one's action in terms of its details or mechanisms" (p. 662).

In addition to my personal concerns regarding the influence of coloniality[62] on the training of English teachers, I grew interested in finding a research approach that could have a potential to uncover how colonial mecanisms exert such influence, while at the same time assuring that the interpretation of

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62 There is a clear distinction between coloniality and colonialism.Grosfoguel (2011), states that coloniality helps us to "understand the continuity of colonial form of domination after the end of colonial administrations, produced by colonial cultures and structures in the modern/colonial capitalist world-system" (p. 13); this author uses the term coloniality to refer to *colonial situations* in the current world "where colonial administrations have almost been eradicated from the capitalist world-system". Colonialism refers to the ideologies that justify and legitimate the asymmetric and hegemonic order established by the colonial power (Estermann, 2014); Grosfoguel uses the term "*colonialism* to refer to *colonial situations* enforced by the presence of a colonial administration such as the period of classical colonialism" (p. 14).

PELTs realities included their voices. Consequently, I focused my attention on clarifying my epistemological position. I learned that, if I wanted to empower and help PELTs free themselves from these colonial influences, I needed to take a critical stance.

The Need for a Critical Stance in IELTE

At this point of my journey as a scholar within the field of English-language teaching, I started getting interested in what other Colombian scholars had written and published about PELTs. I also wanted to learn if and what aspects from those studies could contribute to my understanding of IELTE (Castañeda-Trujillo, 2018; Castañeda-Trujillo & Aguirre Hernandez, 2018). Inquiries about PELTs in Colombia have mainly followed qualitative approaches, where case studies are the most frequently published research studies. One of the reasons for using case studies as a preferred research method is that it allows to focus on the phenomenon during a specified period and on a determined context (Merriam as cited in Aguirre, 2014 and Camacho et al., 2012). Other scholars prefer the exploratory case study arguing that the topic of the study has not been sufficiently explored in Colombia (Cote, 2012; Gutiérrez, 2015). A few of them have used narrative approaches to explore what happens with PELT (Castañeda-Peña, Rodríguez-Uribe, Salazar-Sierra, & Chala-Bejarano, 2016; Durán Narváez, Lastra Ramírez, & Morales Vasco, 2013). Some other authors have used methods like phenomenology (Cardenas & Suarez, 2009) and grounded theory (Fajardo, 2013). Some of the instruments and techniques to gather the data that scholars used in their studies were field notes, reflective journals, autobiographies, narrative events, surveys, questionnaires, and interviews, among others.

Although the research approaches that other scholars used in their inquiries led me to gain some understanding of IELTE, as a scholar I advocated that we have to create "conditions for empowerment and social justice while inquiring with others" (Kincheloe, McLaren, Steinberg, & Monzó, 2018, pág. 421). My viewpoint implies that researchers must announce their interest in pursuing emancipation through "conscientização (following Freire's ideas), which is assumed to emerge from resulting dialogues where mutual respect and trust should lead to social transformation" (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011, p. 422). This critical research approach entails assuming language as the means to contribute to constructing realities through

discursive formations. Those discursive formations would be neither objective nor neutral so will not contribute to regulation and domination of such realities. On the other hand, it is possible to unveil such domination and to act towards a critical consciousness from a critical approach (Foucault, 1972; Granados-Beltrán, 2018).

In the same line of thinking, bricolage is an emancipatory research construct that is rooted on critical viewpoints. Bricolage guides researchers (also named bricoleurs) to see research not as a unique procedure where certain predetermined steps should be followed in order to reach the objective. Instead, bricolage has the intention to involve different approaches, thus contributing to the acquisition of a conceptual distance that leads towards a critical consciousness. This distance can be achieved by rejecting the passive acceptance of externally imposed research methods, which tactically certify ways that justify decontextualized, reductionist, and inscribed knowledge based on dominant modes of power (Kincheloe, McLaren, Steinberg, & Monzó, 2018; Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011).

In my inquiry, I intend to implement a bricolage by means of selecting approaches from different disciplines that specifically could contribute to an in-depth understanding of how PELTs experience the transition from being PELTs to becoming professional English-language teachers. To this end, I will need to assume the role of a bricoleur, who "becomes an expert on the relationships connecting cultural context, meaning-making, power, and oppression within disciplinary boundaries" (Kincheloe, 2001, p. 684). For that reason, it is essential to revise the role of participants in this research study.

Understanding The Participants or Understanding With Participants?

On my view, each study published by academics on the topic of ELTE or TP is valuable and fulfills the purpose of informing about what happens with the PELT. Researchers have used the voices of PELTs to support what they found, as well as to explain the phenomena they are investigating. According to Merriam (2009), under a qualitative research approach, "researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (p.5); by doing so, investigators adopt different positions and methods for conducting their

study (case study, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative inquiry, etc.).

Nevertheless, Vasilachis de Gialdino (2009) recommends paying careful attention to the possible ontological ruptures that may happen when the investigator focuses mostly on the *what to know* instead of on *who knows*. Seeing the researched subjects as finished products who do not have their own epistemology, leads to an objectification of the participants in a research study. This fact causes an epistemological gap between the researcher (knowing subject) and the subjects investigated (known subject) where researchers observe and listen to the researched subjects from what they consider to be the correct angle (methodology and instruments) and try to interpret the reality from their eyes objectively. Such a gap causes the investigator to become an impartial observer while the subject under investigation becomes a passive receiver of his gaze (Savage, as cited in Vasilachis de Gialdino, 2009). Such view entails that, to a degree, the PELTs' voices are not heard entirely and, consequently, PELTs become invisible, alienated, and sometimes objectified, which constitutes a form of oppression. The presence of this oppression becomes a colonial mechanism, which in terms of research methods and processes leads to the normalization of research methods and the standardization of how to interpret reality and present research findings. (Grosfoguel, 2011).

As Vasilachis de Gialdino (2009) proposes, a close epistemological relationship between the researcher and the subject under investigation, is needed for an active participation in the research process where both epistemologies, voices, and subjectivities interact to build knowledge. Within the same perspective, bricolage highlights the relationship between a researcher's way of seeing and the social location of his/her personal history (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg, 2011). That means that in my role as a bricoleur, my story also counts and has an influence on the development of the research project, as stated by Kincheloe, McLaren, Steinberg, and Monzó (2018 p. 435) citing Smith (2012):

> Researchers in bricolage are also deeply critical and reflective of their own research practice and scholarly activities, recognizing the power embedded in, and the legitimacy granted to, knowledge stemming from the academy.

Being critical in research implies adopting a democratic approach, which demands an active and responsible role from all individuals. Then, the ethic

dimension involved in this way of acting is understood as "consideration for the others in our social interactions through the inquiry," meaning "to embed a social ethical of care into everyday experiences as educators (and) researchers" (Phillips & Zavros, 2012, p. 53).

Critical and democratic research approaches, support that "interrelationality, agency, interconnectivity, and evolving creative processes of researchers and participants forming knowledge together, offer scope for reimagining participants" (Phillips & Zavros, 2012, p. 62). Under these premises, participants become co-investigators and share places with researchers throughout the process of data collection, data reduction, data organization, and concluding data, which encourages the authentic inclusion of voice, authorship and signature, and not rhetorical statements. This process of empowering research participants advocates addressing the injustices they encounter in a particular social context, which allows them to reconstruct experiences in a more fluid, mutual, complex and nuanced way (Probst, 2016).

The new positionalities of researcher and participants above discussed, demand a research approach that allows for a multiplicity of connections, which can be mapped and intertwined to create a story related to the *selves* within differentiated contexts. Here, Collaborative Autoethnography (CA) comes to be a valid research approach that should lead to the achievement of this purpose, which is discussed below.

The Path Towards Conducting Collaborative Autoethnography

Some academics resist the idea that autoethnography can be taken as a valuable research method because of its strong emphasis on the *self* (Méndez, 2013). They assert that this characteristic converts autoethnography into a controversial, even self-compliant genre that seems to be closer to the autobiographical narrative, lacking rigor and ethically weak. (Allen-Collinson & Hockey, 2008).

Regarding the ethical issue, Ladapat (2017) mentions that, due to the lack of distance resulting from the fact that the participant and the researcher are the same person, it becomes difficult to translate a personal experience into sociocultural and political action, and consequently the study foci is very

limited. Winkler (2017) explains that some scholars reject autoethnography because it does not rely on objectivity while resorts to memory as the only source of data. However, despite the complexities encountered in autoethnography, it has gained increasing popularity, which allows us to find more advantages than challenges.

As Ellis, Adams, and Bochner (2011) state, autoethnography is a research method to have researchers' voices heard. One inspiring example can be found in Archana Pathak's (2010) article where she describes the autoethnography of her journey towards having her voice heard. While I was reading this essay, I could not help but envision myself doing my own autobiography as an English-language teacher, a TP mentor, a scholar, a Ph.D. student, a religious person, a husband, a father, and so on, while at the same time doing a "cultural interpretation of the connectivity between self (my self) and others" (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013, p. 18). This method should allow me to start a research process where I should be in position to articulate the interplay among the self (auto), the culture (ethno), and the research process itself (graphy) (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2013). In Pathak's essay, she explored her *self* and looked for the moments in her life when she had experienced new beginnings as a scholar and as a racialized woman (Pathak, 2010).

Something relevant here is to acknowledge that "reflexivity involves being aware of one's backgrounds, contexts, and predilections and realizing how it affects the way we research" (Mitra, 2010, p. 14). This reflexivity takes the autoethnographers to an understanding of the particularities of their own stories. As Pathak (2010) mentions about herself, "as an autoethnographer, <u>my story is unique</u> because <u>it is mine</u>; it is a lived experience, and also because <u>I have the academic training to examine it critically</u>"[63] (p. 2). A unique story written by the person who lived it, that is analyzed by the same person, should allow to show his/her passions and struggles while creating a "sense-making situations" that embodies life (Holman Jones, Adams, & Ellis, 2013, p. 433). "That serves as a foundation for future scholarship . . . to disrupt the colonial mindset that method exists a priori, without the need to articulate its roots, its assumptions, and its origins" (Pathak, 2010, p. 9).

An interesting contribution to better understand the potential of autoetnographies as a research approach, can be found in Hernandez, Sancho, Creus, and Montané (2010) article, which describes how more than one voice was integrated in an autoethnographic study. These authors concluded that, by

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63   My underlining.

doing an autoethnography in isolation, a researcher would be risking alienation of *the other* because *the other* is fundamental to the construction of the self. Also, as Ellis and Bochner (2006) discuss, an autoethnography helps to position the author, but this positionality cannot happen if *the other* is not included; only by "including the author doesn't make something autoethnography" (p. 432). Furthermore, Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) state that "autoethnography is both process and research", since researchers use principles of "autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography" (p. 1).

In addition, Roth (2009) explains that the term autoethnography advocates an ethical commitment because the composite name has a particular implication. According with this author, *auto* denotes *one's own*, i.e., that whenever the author writes about himself/herself, it is not another person writing; there would not be a writer/protagonist dichotomy but rather a writer-him/herself. The second part of the term, *ethnography*, is composed of *ethnos* that means *nation*, and *graphy* that means *describe* (writing). Thus, the etymological meaning of this word is a *description of a nation*. Autoethnography "is the writing of a people where the writer is himself/herself a member; it is, actually, the people writing the people, similarly to an autobiography, which is where the author and protagonist are models of each other" (Roth, 2009, p. 3).

Winkler (2017) calls the attention to the relation above discussed regarding *auto* and *ethno*. The author explains that a balance between these two aspects of autoethnography is required in order to avoid potential ruptures. On the one hand, an emphasis on the component of *auto*, might make the writing excessively person-centered, thus converting it into an autobiography that would account for only personal moments and would violate ethical conditions by neglecting to acknowledge *the other*. On the other hand, by placing the emphasis on the *ethno* component, the essence of the person would vanish, thus transforming the writing in a series of general events without the evocative aspect of autoethnography so that the writing could become an ethnography[64]. Consequently, according to Winkler (2017, p. 2):

> The crux to the matter, however, is to determine how to balance the study of personal lives, on one hand, and the focus on how these stories are embedded in an informed by a cultural context on the other hand.

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64 Ellis and Bochner affirm that ethnography refers to the connection between ethnographers and the people in the communities, so ethnographic studies entail *coactivity* and *co-performance*; however, this relation takes distance from autoethnography because it looks for "the embrace of intimate involvement, engagement and embodied participation" (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 433).

Winkler's quote clearly presents a key challenge to researchers who might be interested in conducting autoethnographies: finding a balance that may allow the author's voice (evocation[65]) to be informed by the culture (society).

Finding the balance in autoethnography permits "undercut conventions of writing that foster hierarchy and division that have been caused and preserved by the elite class of professionals who wittingly or unwittingly divide the world into those who see the light and those kept in the dark." (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 438). Nonetheless, autoethnography, in itself, does not allow me to connect my *self* with my participants' *selves*. It was only after reading Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2011) when I found that community autoethnographies "facilitate *community-building* research practices" and "also make opportunities for 'cultural and social intervention' possible" (p. 7).

Community autoethnography is another name to what Chang, Ngunjiri and Hernandez (2013) called collaborative autoethnography (CAE). According to these authors, CAE allows a group of researchers to work collectively and cooperatively to interrogate themselves about a phenomenon they live in common. CAE "position(s) self-inquiry at a center stage" (p. 22), so that researchers would gain a deeper understanding of society and self (Ngunjiri, Hernandez, & Chang, 2010), by keeping *self-focused, researchers-visible, context-conscious and critical-dialogic.*

In CAE, *self-focused* implies that the researcher has an additional role as a participant, which Andersen (as cited Chang, Ngunjiri and Hernandez, 2013) called "complete member researchers." Additionally, the researcher becomes the instrument and the data source at the same time. This self-focused leads to critical self-reflection, which permits the "researcher to turn the lens inwards to make personal thoughts and actions visible and transparent to the audience." Consequently, autoethnographers can "make the inner workings of their mind visible" (p. 22), i.e., make *researchers-visible.*

Context-conscious in CAE happens when the researcher, as part of a broad social context, can shape the context through the autoethnography by "focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experiences." Simultaneously, autoethnographers also shape their self by "looking inward. In this way, they expose a vulnerable self that is moved by and move through, refract, and resist, cultural interpretations" (Ellis and Bochner cited in Chang, Ngunjiri and Hernandez, 2013, p. 23).

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65 Ellis and Bochner (2006) explain that one of the goals of autoethnography is evocation, but an evocative text is not necessarily an autoethnography.

Finally, CAE is *critically dialogic* since it permits "the researcher to become an active instrument and participant in creating meaning and structuring values" (p. 23). It should be possible to develop, through autoethnography, a productive dialogue from the perspectives of both, the researcher and the participant; such dialogue is to be enriched by "each member's occupation of these dual spaces as well as the dialogue that is created in community," which leads to "create a rich space for meaning-making and analysis" (p. 23).

At this point, I need to acknowledge that embracing this research path seems not easy; I understand that there is much more to explore, but I also believe that this is a good start. CAE has many advantages such as: this research method permits a collective exploration of researcher subjectivity; it helps to reduce, to a certain extent, the power tensions that can happen while researching in collaboration, so the researchers-participants share the power; it produces an enrichment in the investigation process since researchers-participants can benefit from the different insights the others provide, given that theses insights possess different characteristics and knowledge in themselves; it consolidates the sense of community since each researcher-participant shares personal accounts that become part of the social construction of the community.

However, there are two key disadvantages that autoethnographers have to overcome. The first one is trustworthiness, which might be at risk when participants are not willing to be transparent with each other. A second key disadvantage is related to logistical issues that could interfere with the moments when all the participants must get together for sharing, since face-to-face communication is vital in this exercise. These two aspects are essential to be taken into account before starting the process of collaborative autoethnography (Ladapat, 2017).

CAE allows me to see PELTs' not as participants but rather as co-researchers, where we will work together to denounce what has caused oppression and dispossession of the self along our process of becoming English-language teachers. CAE also permits to find a synergy between the experiences that people involved in the process live, and the context, culture, and other factors that affect them and adds a multidisciplinary lens to the research inquiry. Those attributes permit the reduction of criticism about the lack of rigor, narcissism, and self-indulgence (Ladapat, 2017; Roth, 2009; Winkler, 2017).

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I intended to bring CAE closer to English-language education research discussions. Across several sections, I also discussed some personal experiences when illustrating the process that led me to select CAE as the best approach for my research interests, a process that took place within a specific context that ended up determining my preference. CAE offers the opportunity to gain knowledge through the co-construction of stories located within a particular context, thus allowing for integration of the evocative and the analytical dimension of the human experience. On my view, there is not doubt that when using CAE, it will be possible to advocate for a freer way of doing research. It should also allow to open spaces where to exercise the right to write about what is right, and to inquire about oneself and the other, through a horizontal, fluid and relational dialogue (Yazan, 2018). However, using CAE also brings over uncertainties related to what the co-researchers bring to the floor, their particularities, and ways of being and doing. These, and any other ethical challenges must be solved along the co-research process.

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