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Main Article:

Unraveling Researcher Subjectivity Through Multivocality in Autoethnography

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Abstract

This article analyzes and discusses the notion of including multivocality as an autoethnographic method to: (a) illustrate that there is no single and temporally-fixed voice that a researcher possesses, (b) unfix identity in a way that exposes the fluid nature of identity as it moves through particular contexts, and (c) deconstruct competing tensions within the autoethnographer as s/he connects the personal self to the social context. After providing a short, multivocal vignette based on the author's previous work assignment as a teacher educator in Kosovo, the author offers a reflective analysis of his approach. His analysis includes a critical discussion around the benefits and challenges of using such a method in autoethnography. The author concludes that research-oriented institutions might be resistant to validating multivocality as research practice given the myopic view that "voice" is linear, categorizable, and one-dimensional. In this way, the use of multivocality in autoethnography can also be understood as a way to liberate research practices from oppressive institutional rules and restrictions.

Keywords: autoethnography; multivocality; researcher; subjectivity; reflexivity

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1. Introduction

Without a doubt, connecting the personal self to the social context through autoethnography enhances "the representational richness and reflexivity of qualitative research" (Humphreys, 2005, p. 840). Through autoethnography, the qualitative researcher is able to utilize the nontraditional research practice of telling her or his

“relational and institutional stories” in order to reclaim a marginalized and self-reflective space in the research (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). One of its core strengths, within an evocative sense, is to have the reader reflect inwards within herself/himself and then move back outwards again to view the experience as ethnography (Ellis, 1998; Humphreys, 2005; Richardson, 2000). Concomitantly, autoethnography also doubles as a critique of traditional ethnography. Traditional forms of ethnography tend not to take into account or value the connected life experience of the researcher in the study (Ellis, 1998; Sparkes, 2000; Wall, 2006). Recognizing this deficit, autoethnography finds a place and presence for the researcher’s life experience that would otherwise be overlooked through traditional ethnographic methods.

One way to advance such research practices in autoethnography is through the use of *multivocality* within the research method. I define multivocality as providing representational space in the autoethnography for the plural and sometimes contradictory *narrative voices* located within the researcher. To shed light on these narrative voices means to provoke a deeper understanding of the often silent tensions that lie underneath observable behaviors in the story. While a story could be multivocal by way of focusing on the interaction among the researcher and the participants (Ellis, 2009), for this article I focus on the multivocality of the researcher. To illustrate this point, I have provided a multivocal autoethnographic vignette below to demonstrate how I inquired into understanding some of the ways that aspects of my identity and context shaped my behaviors and perspectives. Following Humphrey’s (2005) helpful work on writing autoethnographic vignettes, I adopt the same strategy because using vignettes in qualitative research “enrich the story, ethnography, or case study, and enhance the reflexivity of the methodology” (p. 853). With this in mind, I wrote the vignette through a reflective first-person lens so that readers can learn vicariously through my experience and try to imagine themselves in the encounter. All names in this vignette have been changed.

Afterwards, I identify three purposes of using multivocality in an autoethnography, followed by a literature review. For this section, I draw on Bakhtin’s (1981) use of “multi-voicedness” to demonstrate that a “plural consciousness” can be useful when writing a story. I then explain the method that I used to write my autoethnographic vignette, which was written as part of my doctoral dissertation troubling the expected neutrality of foreign educators working in an international development scenario. Lastly, I reflect on the benefits and challenges of using multivocality in autoethnography. It is my hope that from this article, autoethnographers will consider the richness and added-value of using multivocality within their autoethnography. Specifically, how such voices could be guiding, structuring and/or complicating the relational and institutional story that Ellis and Bochner (2000) suggest. One central research question guided this article: How does the inclusion of multivocal qualities in an autoethnography further shape understanding of the personal self in social context?

2. The Vignette and the Narrative Voices

Working in Pristina, Kosovo on an international development mission to train teachers has its awkward moments. What makes up for these moments is meeting the different kinds of people who stop into our office not only for meetings, but also for a friendly chat. While my job is far from being dull, when it is time to leave, I always seem ready for the break that “home” provides.

“Ready to go?” James asks as 5:30 p.m. rolls around. It is getting dark outside because of the time change and with that comes a sudden drop in temperature and an increased number of power-outages, which make walking in the dark an even more unsafe endeavor. Kosovar sidewalks are full of cracks and potholes, which makes for an unstable journey home. I agree and begin to shut down my computer with the hope that there will be some light remaining on the streets before I get home. James is a senior member of the team and, as such, is an authority figure. In spite of that, we seem to be more like friends than anything else. He is only here for a couple of weeks to “check-in” on our progress and to lend assistance where need be. He seems pleased with my work in Kosovo.

Employee Voice/Safety Voice: James’ presence, as an authority figure, sharply reminds me of my current employment situation. Living contract-to-contract instills a certain degree of fear. I’m fearful that if I say or do something that has serious consequences for the organization that there would be no more contract extensions. So, every 3 months I reluctantly prepare to go home and plan out my life post-Kosovo. Just when I feel like my contract will not be renewed, James swoops in with another contract extension for an additional 3 months. Should I feel rewarded? Admittedly, I am flattered that the organization wants to keep me around, but at the same time, they could decide my fate in a quick moment and then I am back on a flight to Toronto, which, of course, I would need to pay for. “Such is the life of contract staff,” is a phrase I hear often from many international workers in Kosovo. It is an unsteady life that calls for constant readjustment.

We begin to prepare to leave for my apartment because that is where James is staying during his visit. It’s the fifth move that the organization has asked of me and I have not been too pleased over being moved to a new apartment every month. The constant feeling of unsettlement makes it harder to adjust to life in Kosovo because I need to repeatedly re-familiarize myself with my surroundings, the neighbors and the power-outage schedule that varies from quadrant to quadrant. Well, hopefully my current apartment is where I will remain through the rest of my time here.

I walk outside the office and notice that the sun is about to set. The streetlights are on, which means that there is power still in this part of the city. At the same time, I notice in the far distance that the neighborhood where I live is completely dark. I enjoy the light while I can.

As we pass by several dark streets, James begins a new topic. “I had an interesting conversation with Riyadh today.” Riyadh is another Project Assistant, a very friendly fellow who is well-liked around the office.

I peer back at James. “Oh yeah?”

“He asked me if you were gay.”

“Really? What did you tell him?” James knows I’m gay but he has kept it from everyone else in the office.

“I told him that it was nobody’s business and that was not the type of question that should come up in a professional context. But I also realize that he is a generally open person, so I also told him that is a question he needs to ask you if he had a genuine reason why he needs to know.” I immediately feel mixed about this response.

Homophobic Control Voice: When such a common response is given in a professional setting, I do not see how it benefits the “suspect” gay man. I notice some anxiety around this response because it just locks out discussions of sexuality altogether at the expense of learning about relationships of power and difference. Furthermore, given how the workplace is often constructed along heterosexist lines, I do not seem entirely convinced that straight guys who have their sexuality under question are treated in the same way.

Homophobic Control Voice/Safety Voice: I wonder how I will respond if Riyadh comes asking me. James has now put me in an awkward situation.

Educator/Safety Voice: I question just what he is actually protecting: the integrity of the organization by having a gay person work in a deeply homophobic society or my actual “secret.” My fear focuses on the ramifications about what could happen if my “secret” becomes public knowledge and how it might affect my contract renewals.

Counter-Voice: Perhaps James is protecting me and this is the only way he knows how to do it. After all, James and I are friends, as well as colleagues.

Employee Voice: My thoughts also circulate around where to proceed with James over this one. I know that he has positive intentions, but, perhaps, he could have probed why Riyadh was asking the question and what Riyadh’s response would be if it were a “yes.”

“I guess that is the best way to handle it, but I don’t know what I would say if he did come to me asking,” I clarify.

James keeps walking and doesn't offer much.

(Workplace) Safety Voice: I wonder if James is telling me this story in order to assess if I would ever come clean about my sexual identity and some of my experiences relating to it. Because I am living contract-to-contract, perhaps it is best that I show first my allegiance to the organization.

Educator Voice: If colleagues or students come asking, I will just have to wing it and consider it as a "simultaneous teachable moment" where I am learning how to handle such questions and educating my colleagues or students at the same time.

Attention Voice: Is James paying attention to the situation and to my response? He does not seem to be saying much, which is why I am feeling unheard.

"Well, in my old job at the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre, it was an occupational hazard for me not to be out," I quip.

James smiles. I can tell that he's still interested in the conversation.

"Yeah, I remember reading on your résumé that you worked there."

Activist Voice: I think I was being somewhat rebellious when I wrote about my queer-community-building work.

Counter-Voice: I did have doubts about putting that on my résumé, though. A queer person is stigmatized for a reason. Nonetheless, I was still hired.

Foreigner Voice: I am not sure how a Canadian institution would regard my work here in Kosovo in the same way I wonder how the Kosovo organization would regard my previous work with the Gay and Lesbian Community Centre. Both could be considered foreign job assignments.

I stumble a bit on the sidewalk. My ankle buckles and I can feel a sharp pain in my ankle. I recover quickly and try to resume walking normally by ignoring the pain. I still cannot seem to see the pavement very clearly so I need to be a bit more careful. It is hard to focus on two important matters at once.

"Careful," James reminds me.

Safety Voice: I do not know if he is telling me about being careful with my walking or my course of action with respect to "coming out" in the workplace.

“Yeah, I recognize that as a controversial move on my part,” I respond trying to recapture the conversation.

“If I worked at a Gay and Lesbian Community Centre, I would put that on my résumé. I wouldn’t think it was a big deal,” James offers.

“I think that it can really pigeonhole me and, to some extent, blind people to what I can actually contribute to an organization. If people see the fact that I worked for a gay organization, they automatically believe that I’m gay, and then they are immediately confronted with their values. It could be hard to get past their values in some cases, and in effect, reject my application despite my qualification for the job,” I explain.

James seems to agree but remains silent.

Attention Voice: Again, I wonder if I am being listened to here.

Cultural Sensitivity Voice: I think he is trying to be polite by allowing me to speak and to tell my story. I do not think he has seen this side of me before or perhaps even heard about a limitation of an “out” educator.

Foreigner Voice: I have not felt any kind of overt homophobia from the internationals with whom I work. There has been some degree of ageism, but not homophobia. What I feel most is a significant degree of loneliness. I noticed that I feel alone because I do not know how to handle sensitive matters that emerge around sexuality. I cannot voice how difficult the adjustment to Kosovar life and job has been and that I do not know who I can go to for support. When I think about asking a colleague, I become too nervous to ask in fear of not getting a contract extension or of risking a show of weakness.

James and I arrive at my blacked-out apartment. I immediately light the candle by the front doorway and use the flashlight to start the generator. My ankle is a bit sore from the stumble that I had along the way so I sit down to give it a massage. I can feel the temperature dropping. No electricity equals no heat, and our generator cannot power a space heater. As I carefully rub my sore ankle, James asks, “Dinner out? I think the restaurant across the street has power from its generator.”

“Sure, let’s go,” I reply.

3. Analysis of the Vignette and the Narrative Voices

The use of multivocality in my autoethnographic writing has three distinct purposes. First, the use of multivocality illustrates that there is no single and temporally-fixed voice that a researcher possesses; rather, there are several past and present narrative voices that interact within and reflect on the researcher’s subjectivity. Second, multivocality deconstructs competing tensions within the autoethnographer as s/he connects the

personal self to the social context. Finally, multivocality unfixes identity in a way that exposes the fluid nature of identity as it moves through particular contexts. Identity involves two socially constructed dimensions: (a) identity can reflect upon one's perception of self (Marshall, 1998)--in other words, to identify means to name and place ourselves in social categories, such as "I teach therefore I am a teacher," and (b) identity diverges into a hybrid of interwoven identities that interact with each other in a wider social context. Racial identity, gender identity, and sexual identity are a few which form an overall identity (Marshall, 1998). These three purposes are used as reference points throughout this article.

3.1 Literature Review

The notion of multivocality is not entirely a new concept in social science. One origin can be traced to Bakhtin's (1981) work on language. Critiquing the use of a single voice as being a "monologic" discourse, he situates a "dialogic" discourse that emerges through the exercise of writing (Bakhtin, 1981). Bakhtin's notion of dialogism involves using the novel to locate, organize, and include multiple identities, desires, and voices within the human subject. He writes:

Authorial speech, the speeches of narrators, inserted genres, the speech of characters are merely those fundamental compositional unities with whose help heteroglossia can enter the novel, each of them permits a multiplicity of social voices and a wide variety of their links and interrelationships (always more or less dialogized). (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 263)

For Bakhtin, the novel might not need "multi-voicedness" to create authentic prose but the author's individuality, as reflected through language and speech, is "indispensable" to the writing style. The "plural consciousness" that embodies multivocality "create[s] the background necessary for his own voice, outside of which his artistic prose nuances cannot be perceived, and without which they 'do not sound'" (p. 278). In other words, the cacophony of voices within the artistic expression of writing give rise to a social dialogue that resonates in many aspects of discourse through both content and formal structure in which it is deployed.

While Bakhtin asserts that multiple voices within the author do not merge, I assert that in an autoethnography voices can, in fact, layer and (en)counter each other. To put it differently, when I write a multivocal autoethnography, the narrative voices encounter and build upon what each is saying and, through this process, they situate themselves either in agreement or contradiction with each other. Sometimes they do so purposefully with the intention to express harmony, vulnerability, or conflict, and sometimes they just stand alone for consideration as part of a chorus. The shared goal here is that by bringing attention to narrative voices, an open orientation towards the reader emerges whereby the reader may become emotionally involved with what is being said.

The value of multivocality, in the way that Bakhtin conceptualizes, has not gone unnoticed in autoethnography, although what has been written has been quite brief. Ellis

(1997, 2004, 2009), describes how giving “voice(s)” to the researcher enables a more contemporary perspective on social science inquiry. In addition, Wall (2006) argues that through enabling researcher “voice” and “representation” in qualitative research, s/he is then better able to describe in much greater detail her or his connected life experience. She continues, “Those who complain that personal narratives emphasis [*sic*] a single, speaking subject fail to realize that no individual voice speaks apart from a societal framework of co-constructed meaning” (Wall, 2006, p. 155). Although Wall refers to a singular voice, her point here is well-taken. However, what I suggest here is that such a societal framework could also work to bind the researcher’s voice according to what Bakhtin (1981) refers to as “monologic discourse.”

Effectively, multivocality can (a) highlight power differences in a research scenario between the researcher and participants, (b) encourage the researcher to consider how competing aspects of her or his identity shape relationships, and (c) expose underlying researcher vulnerabilities or tensions. As I elaborate below, my identity remained in flux and expressed itself through narrative voices that were constantly shifting, speaking, and stirring my various subject positions. As a result, I arrived at a richer understanding of the complexities that underlined human interactions within the particular context I was researching.

3.2. Methodological Inquiry

Re-living and writing the past with the multiple narrative voices in mind was a difficult and painful experience that also doubled as a form of healing. As I have said elsewhere (Mizzi, 2009), the foreign aid worker is not immune to local politics and beliefs of the culture s/he is living in and by writing an autoethnography with multivocal considerations I was able to better understand why certain events were so deeply troubling to me.

I came to write my autoethnographic vignette with a multivocal focus by beginning with Chang’s (2008) suggested writing exercises that are designed to better access and reflect on life experiences. She writes, “Through writing exercises of chronicling, inventorying, and visualizing self, you are encouraged to unravel your memory, write down fragments of your past, and build the database for your cultural analysis and interpretation” (p. 72). Like ethnographers, I considered my autobiographical data with “critical, analytical, and interpretative eyes to detect cultural undertones of what is recalled, observed, and told” (Chang, 2008, p. 209). Keeping along this line of thinking, I built my database for my cultural analysis based on three data sources that underpinned my autoethnography: my memories, journal entries that I kept at the time, and sharing the story with a former colleague with whom I worked with and trusted in Kosovo in hopes of receiving feedback of some kind. In addition, following Ellis’ (2007) useful advice to consider relational ethics while writing a story, I received permission from James to write the experience we shared together. I did not need approval from my university’s department of research ethics in this case. I was sensitive to the fact that James is still my friend and I needed to respect his feelings in the matter and address concerns around maintaining his anonymity.

After compiling the information and forming earlier drafts of the story, I decided to write the vignette as a “narrative truth”:

Narrative truth seeks to keep the past alive in the present; through narrative we learn to understand the meanings and significance of the past as incomplete, tentative, and revisable according to the contingencies of present life circumstances and our projection of our lives into the future. (Ellis, 1997, p. 129)

I interpreted Ellis’ concept of narrative truth as meaning that I position the vignette in the present in order to extrapolate past meanings and revisit them according to my present circumstance as an ethnographer. When writing the vignette, I found my narrative voices emerging and wanting to break their silences to reflect the “plural consciousness” that Bakhtin (1981) described. What I mean is, there were many narrative voices that underlined my voice within the story. To ignore them meant that I was silencing parts of me that could explain what kind of underlying anxieties and considerations existed and how they interrelated with each other. Through this approach, I was able to bring to light how identity was not simply one dimensional, temporally-fixed, or static; rather, there were several competing, shifting, and differing voices that cross space and time shaping my identity.

Despite my fears of how such a multivocal approach would be considered by my doctoral committee members, I welcomed each narrative voice to emerge in the writing of my experience and observed how they flowed through the vignette. I decided to name my narrative voices and included a space for them that could possibly be meaningful to me and to the readers. During this process, I found that certain voices were more intense than others, and, responsively, I attempted to capture this intensity by positioning those narrative voices with a heightened strength closer to the top of the list of voices. This approach enabled me to not only vocalize the “content” of the voices, but also demonstrate the power-filled “structure” in which they spoke within and against each other.

As my writing took shape, sometimes the narrative voices spoke together, such as Employee Voice/Safety Voice. The blending of voices indicated not only their existence of competing and contradictory narrative voices, but, overall, the use of multivocality produced a harmony of voices. What was most useful here was that the fluid nature of narrative voices frees them to constantly move in relation with each other in ways that sometimes opposed or joined them together. As a result, a complex space emerged that showed a “plural consciousness” within a fragmented identity. Desires, fears, histories, and values competed and blended with each other in order to be heard and considered when I had to make a decision about what I should (not) reveal in the conversation with James.

3.3. Benefits and Challenges of Using Multivocality

Based on my experience of writing the autoethnographic vignette, there are significant benefits and challenges that I have observed that are particular to using a multivocal approach within autoethnography.

3.3.1. Benefits

There are generally two benefits to using multivocality in autoethnography that I can determine: (a) more focused translation of the complexity of human experience to the readers, and (b) self-discovery of what lies “underneath.” I will explain each in turn.

First, the general vantage for using multivocality in an autoethnography is to both inform and interpret the narrative voices within the “relational and institutional stories.” As I have mentioned earlier, through multivocality I can better provide a context in which the stories situate themselves and interpret underlying tensions that complicate life experiences. Since one encounter can be experienced from various perspectives, multivocality helps to name and unravel these perspectives in order to understand what is shaping the researcher’s practices, anxieties, and beliefs.

Second, multivocality in autoethnographic research can take place in many different ways. I engaged with a variety of narrative voices that stem from my emotions, anxieties, history, values or background as they (dis)connected to the context in which that I was living. I do not envision that every autoethnographer will experience the same voices. Rather, diverse interpretations of human experience can enrich the plural nature of using multivocality and expand the ways we can perceive and inquire into an encounter. For example, in my vignette, I identified with a total of nine different narrative voices originating from two trajectories, (a) *identity and background* (foreigner, educator, colleague, employee, and activist), and (b) *concerns and values* (cultural sensitivity, safety, homophobic control, and attention). I included the latter consideration as an attempt to move beyond confining identity into tightly bounded categories. Each narrative voice was constituted by emotional responses to the situation. For example, during my conversation with James, I would feel a variety of emotions that would guide or structure my response. At times, I would allow these voices to speak out, and, at other times, I would silence them if I thought they would disadvantage me in some way. In some instances, I relied on my available privileges, such as being a white Westerner in a Western-controlled region and/or having an “expert” status in a professional setting, to navigate through “sticky” situations that could have put my safety at risk. My point here is that each narrative voice reflects on my identity as it constantly shifts and moves through circumstance. By using multivocality in my autoethnography, I summon these voices to deepen the discussion, express an emotion, or ask a question that I might not have considered before.

3.3.2. Challenges

Based on my experience, there are three limitations to incorporating multivocality into autoethnography: (a) the presence of silent voices, (b) the overwhelming intensity of emotions, and (c) the institutional resistance to engaging with multivocality. I will explain each in turn. First, what can be understood by those voices that do speak? For example, in the introductory vignette, I noticed that the majority of voices came from a workplace orientation, rather than, for instance, a queer orientation. My concerns related to anxieties around “security” that could have stemmed from my constantly changing accommodations and/or James’ continual silent moments. In addition, while I engaged with various narrative voices, there were still other narrative voices, such as gender, that remained silent. What were the barriers that keep them silent and how could I, as the autoethnographer, create a “safe space” for them to present themselves? I do not have a response to this question other than to acknowledge the presence of silent voices in multivocality and to encourage autoethnographers to question why such silences persist.

A second challenge to using multivocality in an autoethnography is experiencing an intensity of emotions while summoning past encounters. Reflecting on, learning from, and writing the past as an autoethnography is not a simple and commonplace task. Accompanying such a process is the stirring of old, buried emotions and blending them with new emotions that inevitably creates fresh tensions to work through. During the writing of my autoethnographic vignette, I experienced, once again, deep emotional stress with the event that I thought I had dealt with effectively. I felt strong emotions such as sadness, anger, guilt, vulnerability, and shame as I worked through my past experience. I did not adequately prepare for the resurgence of such strong emotions that would sometimes overcome me. This led me to question why it would be a useful step to re-surface old wounds. Despite these feelings, I have come to understand that I would not have reached the critical reflections and a certain degree of healing if it were not for revisiting the past. To re-experience such emotions and events in an effort to deepen understanding requires patience with oneself and supporters as the painful past is being recalled.

Lastly, there may be some institutionalized resistances surrounding the use of multivocality in autoethnographic research. This type of resistance is something that autoethnographers might be too familiar with given the turbulent history autoethnography has in being regarded as a respectable research methodology (Tierney, 1998) The challenge, then, is to deconstruct meaning in a way that does not end up classifying, structuring, describing, and identifying multivocality according to a pre-determined set of institutional rules. Staunæs and Søndergaard (2008) usefully point out that multivocal articulation of findings is not so readily acknowledged by institutions that act as gatekeepers to what is considered “legitimate” research. They suggest that the criteria set out for institutions to legitimize research stems from “modern, realist and neoliberal discourses” that colonize and oppress innovative forms of inquiry.

With this in mind, going against the grain is never a simple task and for autoethnographers there might be slippage into traditional forms of conducting and

expressing research even within a non-traditional form of inquiry. For instance, it became quite easy for me to become caught up in packaging narrative voices into neat and tidy categories such as “foreigner voice” or “educator voice” so that they receive some degree of legitimacy from a gatekeeping institution. There clearly needs to be some conscious effort on the autoethnographer’s part to resist following entrenched patterns of expressing and classifying knowledge according to rigid institutional rules.

Significantly, using multivocality also can double as a decolonizing and liberating act that relieves the institution’s conception of how the notion of “voice” within research practice is not simply linear, categorizable, or one dimensional. In fact, institutional recognition of multivocality can lead to a heightened awareness of human behaviors and relationships involved in the study. However, a secondary challenge for using multivocality in this regard is that the autoethnographer needs to ensure not to re-position existing barriers only to create new ones. Structural oppression possesses a long and pain-filled history and if there is any movement to shake out the old guard of traditional ethnography, we must first be wary that new guards might emerge in the struggle to defeat imaginative research practices. One way to address this cycle is to introduce creative and pluralistic forms of expressing narrative voices that expand the rich potency of multivocality. For example, the enhancement of innovative technologies could enable multivocality to speak out in multi-modal ways. This step may help support narrative voices to articulate their meaning and intensity and, at the same time, resist the oppressive nature that institutions adopt when validating only certain research methodologies.

4. Concluding Thoughts

I was able to gain such rich detail from writing an autoethnography into my research topic. Through the use of multivocality, I was able to take a closer look at the underlying tensions during my job as a teacher educator who worked in post-conflict Kosovo and how I handled such tensions. I learned that narrative voices could be situated in continual conflict, contradiction, silence, construction, destruction, confusion, and invariably complexity. As a result, each voice contributed to the story that I was telling and, at the same time, noticeably layered, countered, and/or competed against each other. Multivocality, therefore, helped towards unfixing my identity by teasing out these voices and illustrating how events are immersed in subtext that often goes unnoticed in traditional ethnography. Navigating through these voices can be emotional work, and yet, can lead to a richer inquiry into how phenomena cross time and space.

Multivocality as a method within autoethnography can work as one way towards giving voices to already fragmented and marginalized researcher subjectivity. By acknowledging their existence, autoethnographers can critically reflect on what these narrative voices are saying and what can be learned from them. Awareness and interrogation of the roots that embody these voices provide an opportunity to advance research practice. What may become a persistent and significant challenge is finding institutional acceptance of multivocality in autoethnography as an important and useful methodological consideration. The disenfranchising ways in which such institutions determine what counts as knowledge may cause autoethnographers to be tentative with

the use of the multivocal and/or adhere to forms of categorizing and classifying narrative voices. However, autoethnographers need to find a healthy balance that meets their research intentions and enables narrative voices to loudly speak through their life experiences.

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