NEURODIVERGENT LEARNER'S PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EFL:
AN AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Yasushi Miyazaki PhD

September 11, 2021

JALT CUE 2021 conference

Neurodivergent

(e.g. autism spectrum, learning disabilities, AD/HD, ...)

Outline

◦ Self-disclosure

◦ Literature (some)

◦ Methods: Autoethnography

◦ Reading (a part of) autoethnography

◦ Analysis

◦ Lessons for teachers

◦ Limitation and prospects

Self-disclosure

◦ Diagnosed as Pervasive Developmental Disorder in 1997
  ◦ Sensory issues
    ◦ Too sensitive with sounds
  ◦ Time management difficulties
    ◦ Tend to do big stuff at last minute
  ◦ Emotional issues
    ◦ Used to be easily anxious and quick-tempered
    ◦ Even could not imagine how emotion management was like
◦ Current statuses: Post-doc, part-time academic jobs, quasi-bilingual

2021/9/11

Literature

- **Methodology**
  - Ellis et al (2011)
  - Wall (2008)

- **Autoethnography and language education**
  - Yazan (2019)

- **Autoethnographies of academicians with disability**
  - Hughes (2012) : Researcher with Asperger's Syndrome
  - Skinner (2011) : "Dyslexic" mom and university lecturer
  - Robinson (2015; 2017): "Black" scholar with dyslexia

Methods: Autoethnography

◦ Autoethnography: doing ethnography to **self (auto)**

◦ Textbook: Poulos (2021)
    ◦ Write and revise again and again!

◦ Intensive memory mining and writing (and revising)

◦ Third-person interview(s), textual analysis, and other data collection methods can be used (this research will include such data in the future…)

https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/essentials-of-autoethnography

2021/9/11

Now, it is a time to read the autoethnography

◦ Focusing on my two years in master's program of a Japanese university (2005-2007)

◦ This term was a pivotal moment to transform my language skill to (a kind of) working level

◦ The original one is longer, but due to our time limitation, I present just some excerpts here

◦ Today, I would not talk so much about my research at graduate school. Rather, I focus on my meta-experiences in graduate school life because these are important for my career development and professional growth

Analysis
Triple identity theory (Robinson, 2015; 2017)

Dr. Miyazaki's case:

Race→ Japanese

(majority in Japanese university, but minority for a supervisor)

Dyslexia→ PDD

Giftedness→ language savant?

Inappropriate assessments and identifications: narrow view about autism ignoring talents (e.g. job hunting difficulties and NEET discourse)
Underrepresented Cultural Mismatch Achievers: Over evaluated English skills (because several students were not confident) (e.g. A professor's harshness)
Hidden Talents Misunderstood: Wrongly used languages according to the context (e.g. speaking too much in class)

Lessons for language teachers

◦ Give opportunity, even if the student is neurodivergent

◦ Notify the students' needs, because he/she is not able to express sometimes

◦ Let students learn generic and transferable communication skills, regardless of language (his/her first language or English)

  ◦ Be a good mentor regarding communications

→ **Throughout all the experiences, students will learn about their abilities and others'**

→**Throughout all the experiences, students will gain self-esteem even sometimes been faced with obstacles**

Limitation and prospects

- **Multidimensional data needed**
  - Field notes, third-person interview, documents...
    - Access to those data have been limited due to pandemic

- **Lifelong analysis?**
  - Pre-college?
  - College years?
  - Post-schools?

→ **Suggestion for lifelong learning**

Bibliography

Ellis, C., Adams, T. E., & Bochner, A. P. (2011). Autoethnography: an overview. *Historical social research/Historische sozialforschung*, 273-290. https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.36.2011.4.273-290

Hughes, P. (2012). An autoethnographic approach to understanding Asperger's syndrome: a personal exploration of self-identity through reflexive narratives. *British Journal of Learning Disabilities, 40*(2), 94-100. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-3156.2012.00738.x

Poulos, C.N. (2021). *Essentials of Autoethnography*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Robinson, S. A. (2015). *Navigating the academic systems through three perspectives: A twice exceptional Black male with dyslexia. An auto-ethnographic account* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Cardinal Stritch University, Milwaukee, WI.

Robinson, S. A. (2017). Phoenix rising: An autoethnographic account of a gifted Black male with dyslexia. *Journal for the Education of the Gifted, 40*(2), 135-151. https://doi.org/10.1177/0162353217701021

Skinner, T. (2011). Dyslexia, mothering and work: intersecting identities, reframing,'drowning'and resistance. *Disability & Society, 26*(2), 125-137. https://doi.org/10.1080/09687599.2011.543859

Wall, S. (2008). Easier said than done: Writing an autoethnography. *International journal of qualitative methods, 7*(1), 38-53. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F160940690800700103

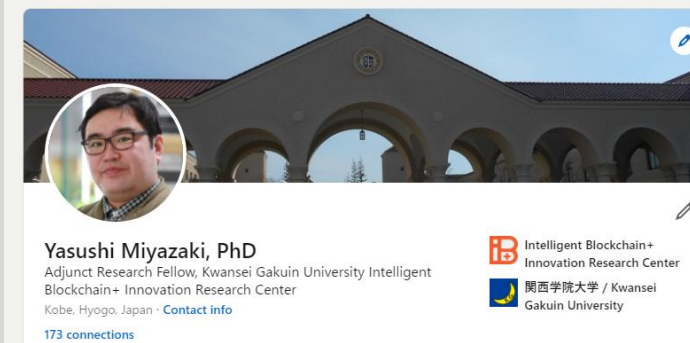Yazan, B. (2019). An Autoethnography of a Language Teacher Educator. *Teacher Education Quarterly, 46*(3), 34-56.

Thank you!

○ **Yasushi Miyazaki PhD**

○ yasushi.miyazaki@gmail.com

○ http://researchmap.jp/myzkyss/

○ http://www.linkedin.com/in/ymiyazak

○ http://twitter.com/ymiyazakEnglish

2021/9/11