Reflexivity-Becoming: Lessons from Reflective Tasks

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Abstract Since reflection is regarded as an important skill for language learners and language teachers, I have often used reflective tasks in my work as a higher education instructor and preservice language teacher educator. To my mind, reflection (and 'reflexivity' as its derivative) is fundamental to a person's becoming. In this paper, my five thematically similar reflection-based studies which employed examples of different reflection-generating tools, such as critical incidents, language learner autobiographies, written narratives, metaphors and duoethnographic dialogues are reconsidered with a view to analysing the data obtained from the participants' texts in the light of how they might bring about the professional becoming, called reflexivity-becoming, of the study participants – language learners' and teacher-researchers'. The article hopes to encourage other language educators to incorporate reflective tasks into their language education programmes.

Keywords Reflexivity · Becoming · Reflective data · Language learners · Preservice teachers

1 Introduction

This article grew out of my reflections on how best to honour professor Anna Michońska-Stadnik. Her professional career has been of invaluable service to the theory and practice of learning strategies and autonomy (Michońska-Stadnik, 1996, 2008a, b, 2009, 2011), as well as beliefs (Michońska-Stadnik, 2013), research methods (Wilczyńska & Michońska-Stadnik, 2010), and reflection (Michońska-Stadnik, 2019), most of the topics which are also dear to me. With that in mind, the present contribution, based on my five reflection-stimulating studies, deals with

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reflection (and 'reflexivity' as its derivative), which, to my mind, is at the heart of professional becoming in language learning and teaching. In this chapter, I use the concept of becoming with a view to considering what the data obtained from the studies can do. In other words, my preoccupation is with a shift from the perception of what the texts in the data are to what they can bring about for language learners' and teacher-researchers' professional becoming.

To achieve this goal, I begin with a short introduction to the notions of reflexivity and becoming, both of which provide the theoretical framework for this book chapter. Next, the main body of the text is presented. It consists of a summary of the reflection-based studies carried out in my five thematically similar projects, the purpose of each project, a description of the participants and contexts, and conclusions drawn at the time of conducting the studies. This is followed by a discussion on what possible lessons can be learned from the studies in terms of the learners' and teacher-researchers' becoming.

2 Theoretical Framework

The foundations for the reflective approach are attributed to the early work of Dewey (1933) followed by Schőn's (1983) seminal contribution, which was later 'translated' to TESOL by Wallace (1991), where the reflective model was contrasted with the craft model and the applied science model. Wallace (1991) also introduced Schőn's concepts of reflection-in-action which refers to reflection while teaching and reflection-on-action which indicates reflection that occurs after a teaching situation. The model later provided inspiration for the concepts of reflection-for-action (Killion & Todnem, 1991) conceptualised as a follow-up stage of reflective practice as well as reflection-before-action (Michońska-Stadnik, 2019) which, by focusing on students' attitudes, beliefs and personal theories, can successfully serve as a stimulation for their in-depth discussions.

The consolidation of the reflective approach is still ongoing with many contributions offered from different perspectives (e.g. Pollard, 2005; Sellars, 2017). Perhaps the most well-known name associated with reflection in TESOL is that of Thomas Farrell's (2007, 2013, 2015, 2018, 2021). Another important contribution is the comprehensive monograph on reflective practice in English language teaching by Mann and Walsh (2017). Within the Polish TESOL context, Gabryś-Barker's (2012) insightful monograph with 'reflectivity' in its title should not be overlooked, along with Baran-Łucarz's (2014) edited collection on reflection in Polish. In addition, a special issue devoted to reflection appeared in the Polish language journal *Neofilolog* edited by Czura (2014), not to mention innumerable journal articles and theses written on reflective practice dimensions in ELT.

Popular as the words 'reflection', 'reflective', 'reflectivity' are, it is also important to note that some explorers of reflection distinguish between 'reflectivity' and 'reflexivity'. Finlay (2003), for example, claims that reflexivity is a linear extension of reflection as if the two were on one continuum. Nevertheless, Edge's (2011)

twofold distinction seems to be more precise. According to Edge (2011), one meaning of reflection encompasses all kinds of issues, including reflexivity. Reflexivity is, in this sense, only consciously accessible by reflection, whereas his other meaning of reflexivity is more interactively-oriented. While reflection assumes in it the continuing identity of the same individual doing the reflecting, reflexivity contests that continuity, focusing on the change-effect of reflection on the person involved and originating from what they have done to themselves (p. 38).

To better grasp the nuances of reflexivity, Edge (2011) made a distinction between its different dimensions – linguistic, psychological, philosophical, and ecological– and also suggested two pairs of useful binary constructs: prospective/retrospective reflexivity and vertical/horizontal reflexivity. The first pair refers to the effect of the person on the work (*prospective reflexivity*) and the effect of the work on the person (*retrospective reflexivity*) (p. 38), terms which reflect Dewey's *trying* dimension of experience and his *undergoing* its effects (p. 47). The second pair of concepts relates to experimenting with a theory (*vertical reflexivity*), for example implementing the contributions of positive psychology into the language classroom, to provide an example from ELT, or copying over its application to a related area of work (*horizontal reflexivity*) (p. 75), for example implementing the principles of well-being in one's life.

For the sake of clarity, a distinction between reflection and reflexivity can be introduced where reflection encompasses the knowledge of the subject matter, and the exchange of ideas, concepts, diverse perspectives, understandings, interpretations, responses and reactions, meaning making as well as 'languaging'. In other words, it is reflecting on how experiences are expressed and represented, and how perspectives are embedded in the linguistic choices that are made. By contrast, reflexivity is reflection on self and self in relation to others, consideration of one's own situatedness, positionings, assumptions, as well as developing consciousness as communicators and meaning makers. In the retrospection on the projects quoted in the text, this distinction, however, is not strictly followed.

Reflexivity can be related to a second important construct here, namely becoming. The word 'becoming' features in the titles of several full-length books in teacher education literature (e.g. Clarke et al., 2010; Doecke et al., 2014; Green, 2011), journal articles (Arshavskaya, 2017; Lee, 2013; Lee & Schallert, 2016; Mairitsch et al., 2021; Wolf et al., 2021), book chapters (e.g. Werbińska, 2021), but perhaps the greatest gift offered on this topic to the TESOL profession is, again, Julian Edge's (2011) contribution. Although he never explicitly refers to the concepts fundamental to Deleuze's philosophy of becoming, the term 'becoming' appears in the titles of five chapters of Edge's (2011) book dealing with becoming methodological, becoming technical, becoming theoretical, becoming intellectual, and becoming pragmatic, all linked to the concept of reflexivity.

Recently, 'becoming' has mostly been discussed with regard to its poststructuralist and non-representational understanding advanced by Deleuze, the philosopher of becoming *par excellence*, as, for example, reflected in the works by Orland-Barak (2016). One aspect that distinguishes Deleuze's philosophy of becoming is what he calls the double nature of becoming which splits the present into two simultaneous

streams of the in-itself past and the not-yet of the future (Bankston, 2017, p. 3). To express different shades of a single concept of becoming, Deleuze uses the language of generality and particularity, which is reflected in the countable (becomings, a becoming) or in terms of a single, absolute process (becoming) (Bankston, 2017, p. 8). These two expressions of becoming do not mean the same, as the concept of fragmentary and relative features of becomings stands for sensory becoming and pertains to expression in matter, whereas conceptual becoming is absolute becoming and pertains to events in ideation. Sensory becomings can be traced in Bergson's inspirations, whereas absolute becoming are to be found in Nietzsche's inspirations. For Deleuze, both of these apparently incompatible ontologies coalesce in a third term, the becoming of sensation which prevents the concept of becoming from lapsing into dualism (Bankston, 2017, p. 8).

Both reflexivity and becoming provide a framework for the present text. In the text, I call reflexivity and becoming *reflexivity-becoming*. I understand this concept as a *developmental process which can be triggered by the data in reflection-based and context-dependent tasks which provide new learning opportunities*. Reflection in all the studies that follow was both my pedagogical practice in my role as a teacher trainer and a tool for data collection when I played the role of a teacher-researcher.

3 Five Reflection-Based Studies

The studies selected for discussion in this book are all closely related. For more than a decade I have been involved in various qualitative research projects on L2 teacher and learner identity in which I collected data from my students in the form of course assignments. The participants of the studies were students of English as a major or minor subject. In the studies in which English was the participants' major subject, the participants were preservice teachers or novice teachers.

All five studies, presented chronologically here, rely on participant reflection. Each of them uses a different method, which at the same time stands here for a data elicitation technique: a narrative inquiry, critical incidents, metaphor processing, and duoethnography. They are all situated in the ecological paradigm (Priestly et al., 2016), as the data refer to three temporal dimensions: the influences from the past, the present orientation, and the engagement with the future, although different emphasis is given to each of the dimensions in particular studies. The participants' responses derive from some of their past achievements and understandings. By drawing on past experiences, they can usually better clarify their future goals, consider possible constraints and more realistically imagine their future action. At the same time, everything takes place in the present, in the face of potential threats and dilemmas, including the participants' perceptions of the risk of sharing their opinions in a given assignment. This understanding of context, augmented by the fact that the data collection took place during a scheduled university program, enhances the ecological validity of all five projects.

3.1 Study 1: Critical Incidents

Study 1 (Werbińska, 2009) was conducted as part of the research study on 244 novice English teachers who were also at that time my BA or MA students. All the participants worked in different schools, both primary and secondary, including junior high schools, which existed in Poland at the time of the study. Half of them simultaneously worked in the private sector, either offering private lessons or working in language schools. In the study, I was interested in finding out what ethical dilemmas the beginning English teachers encountered, whether there were problems common to a number of teachers, and what the teachers' opinions about these incidents were.

The teachers were asked to write about two problems they had encountered during their teaching practice that could be considered ethical. It was intended that these problems should relate to vividly remembered situations in which the novice teachers were uncertain about what they should do. The outcome of the task conducted in the years 2005–2007 was research material consisting of 429 examples of teachers' ethical problems. The memorable episodes reported by the respondents did not lie within the teachers' duties and obligations towards the school as stipulated by the formal regulations, for example in the Teacher Charter.

The problems generated were divided into six thematic categories. These referred to: English teachers' dilemmas related to teaching English as a subject (n = 86), teachers' relationships with students in the classroom (n = 155) and outside of the classroom (n = 50), teachers' relations with other people employed at school, such as those between teachers and their superiors (n = 35), teachers and their colleagues (n = 33), teachers and parents (n = 39), and finally, teachers' dilemmas concerning the contemporary school (n = 31).

In summary, Study 1 carried out over a decade ago provides evidence that beginning English teachers face numerous ethical situations, or critical episodes, which predominantly involve relationships with students which are difficult to predict in advance. The final decisions that the teachers made while encountering the problems were frequently successful solutions, yet there were also incidents in which the participants' attempts at solving their problem proved futile.

3.2 Study 2: Autobiography

Study 2 (Werbińska, 2010) was inspired by the ever-increasing interest in people's learning foreign languages, especially English, in Poland in the first decade of the new millennium. In the study, I attempted to identify different models of linguistic biographies produced by language learners. By obtaining material in the form of biographies centred around the fundamental theme of learning a foreign language, it was hoped that a significant amount of authentic information about the language learner could be obtained, including the participants' previous experiences of

learning a foreign language, and their possible plans for the future, as well as showing the person-in-context (Ushioda, 2009), which offers the possibility of a deeper interpretation of language learners' biographies.

I asked the students I was teaching at that time to take part in the project. The students aged 20–50, pursued different modes of study (full-time and part-time), and represented three different fields of study, and the levels of language advancement. As a result, I obtained language learners' autobiographies from students of English Studies at upper-intermediate and advanced level (n = 168), students of Early Childhood Education with EFL at intermediate level (n = 90) and from students of Management at elementary level (n = 48). All the students participating in the project received the following topic: '*My journey with a foreign language' – describe your story of learning foreign languages.* There was no word limit for the assignment and students had from 2 to 3 months to complete their work. I hoped to extract the main narratives and the participants' systems of meanings, to gain access to facts and themes important to the students, as well as to define the relations in and between the obtained data. I was interested in the participants' personal theories, their paths to language development, and thereby, in establishing their biographical affordances and constraints that influence success or failure in their English language learning.

In my analysis of the findings, I relied on the creation of biographic networks which were arranged chronologically (as a vertical set of events concerning learning English) or conceptually (as a horizontal set of factors influencing success and failure in English language learning). The main contribution of Study 2 was my identification of three features, models, or preliminary hypotheses for each of the investigated groups of students which I labelled as engagement, postponement and withdrawal.

The engagement model was typical of English Studies students who seemed to have already taken an interest in learning languages in their early years. In the primary school they attended private lessons, whereas in the secondary school they often took part in courses with a view to obtaining a language proficiency certificate. Learning English was pleasant for them and they were convinced of their language learning giftedness. They planned to combine their future lives with English, even if they had previously graduated from other fields of study.

The postponement model was more characteristic of students of Early Education with EFL. Although EFL was part of their study curriculum, thus providing them with formal qualifications to teach, most of them felt uncertain about their roles as English teachers. They seemed motivated but they were more aware of their language inadequacies, in comparison with the students of English Studies. Some of them, treating the possibility of English teaching with due responsibility, seriousness and care, tended to postpone the decision to teach English classes until they felt more confident in English. In contrast to the students of English Studies, English had never been the most important school subject for them. Interestingly, their biographies presented more personal theories on the nature of teaching, more reflection on the negative influence of the frequent rotation of language teachers at that time, the importance of moral issues in teaching and the relevance of children's well-being.

The withdrawal model was most common among my Management students. For many of them, it was their first encounter with the 'serious' study of English, as in the previous stages of their education they had not enjoyed learning foreign languages. A lot of them associated learning English with anxiety, although they did perceive the practical benefits that a knowledge of English could bring (e.g. communicating in English while travelling, understanding computer software instructions, etc.). They tended to claim that once an opportunity presented itself, they would continue learning English. In most cases, however, such affirmations were empty promises.

3.3 Study 3: Written Narratives

Study 3 (Werbińska, 2011a) was similar to Study 1 and Study 2. It was like Study 1 in the sense that it also included teachers (n = 64), most of whom, alongside studying to become English teachers, had recently completed their first year of work. Using Study 3 was also similar to Study 2 because it used the narrative inquiry approach; though this time not a linguistic biography but an imposed theme to reflect upon.

What interested me in this study was the participants' transformation period from being a student to being a teacher, and the extent to which novice teachers give up their previous identities and assume new identities. In particular, I was intrigued about what identities (called subjectivities in the study) the novice teachers were contributing to the new situation, what subjectivities they were negotiating, what new subjectivities they were acquiring, which of their old subjectivities they were maintaining and which they were abandoning.

I asked the teachers who were then my MA programme students to describe their first year of working as a school English teacher. I adopted written narrative inquiry as I strongly believed that such a tool would best accommodate the school's contextuality and idiosyncrasy. I also hoped that such a reflection-based assignment could encourage the participants to talk about their successes and failures and, therefore, to speak with their 'authentic' voices.

Although I obtained many examples offering interesting insights into the research questions on novice teacher identities, the overall finding was that the teachers in the induction year fluctuate between their different subjectivities (Who to side with? Which strategy to adopt?), experience dilemmas concerning their community of practice (Do other teachers in this school have the same problem?) or concerning autonomy in its traditional understanding (Am I allowed to do this? Will my superiors or colleagues still accept me if I disagree?) before they finally find their informed professional style. In a word, I found confirmation for the poststructuralist researchers' claims that novice teacher identities, as related to their emotions, beliefs and experiences, are dynamic, changeable, and all the time shifting between being an English language teaching learner and being an English language teacher. The other issues that emerged from the participants' recollections was the

discrepancy between the university culture and the school culture, the participants' reported behaviour and their actual practice, the nature of the relationships between novice teachers and their colleagues, the poor effect of the mentoring system, and some teachers' resistance to change.

3.4 Study 4: Metaphors

Study 4 (Werbińska, 2011b) was a metaphor-based research project carried out at a private higher school of management. The participants (n = 184) were students in their late 20 s learning foreign languages as a course subject: 75 students studying English, 64 studying German and 45 studying Russian. All the groups had obligatory language lessons for five terms, with 24 lessons in each and the classes took place every 2 or 3 weeks on average and lasted for three or four 45-min periods.

Study 4, as it is referred to in this text, focused only on speaking skills in the context of the language the students were learning. In addition, I was interested in investigating possible differences in the participants' views, as I expected that different views would emerge with regard to speaking each of the three languages. To achieve this aim, all the participants were asked to complete the following sentence: "Speaking English (German, Russian) is like …". I divided the accumulated data into three groups, according to the languages spoken by the participants (English, German, Russian), looked for key words, categorised the obtained metaphors into three semantically similar groups representing 'main' metaphors in the data, and, finally, considered the implications (*entailments*) of the main metaphors by examining to what extent they were expressed in the data. As a result, I obtained 184 examples of metaphors presenting how students understand speaking in a foreign language (75 relating to the understanding of speaking English, 64 German and 45 Russian).

I analysed the results in terms of concept, grammar and discourse. Conceptually, speaking English was associated with a difficult challenge, which was confirmed by the use of such metaphors as "walking along a bumpy road", "working in a mine", "balancing on a line" but also pleasure indicated by such metaphors as "music, swimming and ripple", "pleasant memory", "eating chocolate ice cream", "buying sweets – pleasant and bringing joy", a natural thing ("natural conversation in Polish", "speaking Polish"), but there were also students for whom speaking English, as reflected in their accounts, touched upon the issue of identity change, such as "being part of England", "becoming a native English person", "trying to be someone different", or "walking one step further in the contemporary world".

Speaking German was also associated with difficulty but the metaphors the students adopted were even more picturesque than those used by the students learning English, for example "breaking the language", "crossing the desert", "calling for help", "writing in Chinese". Students also talked about the shrill sound of German speaking ("a hailstorm", "a barking dog", "noise in the city", "heavy metal songs", "expressing emotions with the help of your jaws") which suggested dynamism and,

in contrast to these, the effect of slowness produced on the students, when they compared their speaking German to "moving like a snail on the road" or "thinking about an answer". Other associations of speaking German concerned the necessity of regularity in the process of language learning: "running – the more training, the fewer problems", "constant learning of new words"; learning by heart: "reciting poems"; pleasure: "breaking a tongue, but pleasant", "talking to your best friend"; something incomprehensible: "baby's babbling", "muttering something under your breath", "the sound of people under the influence of alcohol", "gibberish"; the pace of the words uttered: "sport for the tongue when you pronounce very complicated words", "making poems at a very fast pace". There were also references to a person's identity change in such examples as "changing into another person" or "getting to know a different culture".

The vast majority of the students of Russian provided many positive associations. Speaking Russian meant to them listening to a nice sound: "poetry", "singing", "a nice melody", "listening to your favourite music"; pleasure: "good fun", "a walk", "drifting on the calm sea", "savouring a delicious dish", "careless playing with a dog"; ease: "bread and butter", "almost speaking Polish". The students also mentioned the communicative aspect linking speaking with communication, such as "approaching people other than Poles", "a need to communicate", as well as the retrospective element – "returning to the times of primary and secondary school", "meeting after many years", "bringing back memories of your youth".

In summary, Study 4 indicated that most speaking metaphors are used to articulate students' difficulties and tensions, that the languages under discussion could be slightly differently perceived by the learners, and that a large number of the metaphors expressed other associations of speaking skills than communicating with other people.

3.5 Study 5: Duoethnography

Study 5 (Werbińska, 2021) was longitudinal in the sense that it embraced one academic year. It was piloted on different student cohorts (Werbińska, 2018), and then carried out on BA teacher-candidates (n = 20, ten dyads). The purpose of the study was to find out how the participants negotiated and shaped their identities in terms of language learning and teaching experiences – who they were at the moment of data collection and who they were (becoming) as future professionals. Although the study reported here had not originally intended to focus on positive psychology, aspects related to positive psychology were one of its serendipitous insights. As a result, attention was narrowed down to the exploration of the kind of positive psychology-related teacher identities the participants were developing and might develop in the future.

The study comprised of three stages. In the first stage, for which the time limit was 1 month, the students were introduced to duoethnography, its genealogy and the benefits of its use. Each student was to find a person in the group, who was

different from them in a significant way and conduct an interesting conversation with them, talking to that person about their beliefs on language learning and teaching, recording the conversation and handing in the written transcription of the talk and the recorded text. The second stage was initiated with my distribution of the students' transcripts and asking the participants to read the dialogues carefully. On the basis of the meanings produced by their own words, they wrote a one-page interpretation of what kind of teacher they might become, supporting their claims with examples from what they said in the dialogues. Once this was completed, they were to read the original transcripts again, but now focusing on their partners' words. As before, they produced a one-page interpretation of what kind of teacher their conversation partner might become, again supporting their opinions with examples from the conversation. Finally, they compared both interpretations and discussed the similarities and differences. The last stage of the project was focused on gaining feedback about the effectiveness of the study and the lessons learnt. With the reference to the purpose of the study, stage one of the project related to the emergence of their teacher identities at that present moment (who they were), whereas stage two was used to confirm and verify the data from stage one (who they might become?).

Using Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) Three-Dimensional Space Narrative Structure, made up of the dimensions: interaction, continuity, and situation, ten themes emerged from the students' discussions in stage one of the project. They included personal memories of language teachers, motivation issues, positive perception of the teaching profession, positive memories of school placement, learning English as passion, teaching/learning skills and systems, the English classroom, private tutoring, participants' meaningful decisions and the value of education and English learning, which comprised at least one of the three positive psychology concerns: positive emotions, positive individual traits and positive social institutions. Drawing on Gee's (2005) framework and the idea of Discourses which are constantly being reconstructed, I also identified seven discourses evident in the participants' self and their partner's analysis accounts to answer the question of who they might become with reference to Seligman's (2011) PERMA (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment) model. These included: the teaching vision discourse (positive emotions, engagement, meaning), the teacher as an authority discourse (positive emotions, accomplishment), the English as a passion discourse (positive emotions), the teacher becoming discourse (engagement), the helping others discourse (relationships), the autonomy discourse (meaning), and the meaningfulness discourse (meaning).

In summary, Study 5 demonstrates that who the teacher is (becoming) and who they might become begins at the micro level with cognitive processes within an individual person and their personality traits. It is further shaped by communities of practice at the meso level which offer or limit access to particular experiences, and is still further affected by the wider social context at the macro level with its orientations towards teacher belief systems and values.

4 Discussion

The studies summarized above were based on five reflection-generating assignments that employed four qualitative research methods: narrative inquiry, critical incidents, metaphor processing, and duoethnography. I will restrain from discussing the benefits of each of these research tools separately, as they are accessible in many sources, including full-length monographs devoted to them (e.g. Barkhuizen, 2013; Barnard & Burns, 2012; Cameron & Low, 1999; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Farrell & Baecher, 2017; Lowe & Lawrence, 2020). Rather, in the following, I focus on the potential of the data generated from these reflection-based assignments for tracing the study participants' 'reflexivity-becoming'.

The studies selected for the discussion were not equally powerful in stimulating reflection in the sense of Deleuze's sensory becoming. Yet, in all of them, be it critical events, or looking for metaphors, or narrative accounts, or linguistic autobiographies, not to mention duoethnographies, *emotions* triggered by language learning and teaching processes were present. Study 1 and Study 2 were illustrative of how novice teachers dealt with their emotions and, as revealed in the studies, negative and tension-producing emotions were more apparent than positive and satisfying emotions. The metaphor-based Study 3 showed the relationships with the language that the students were learning, in which the shrill sounds of German ("a barking dog", "heavy metal songs") and canorous sounds of Russian ("a nice melody", "listening to your favourite music") were particularly marked. Study 4 enabled participants to take a global look of their lives and the place of languages in them, whereas Study 5 provoked them to reconsider their views on a topic as a result of the resonances or new understandings derived from juxtaposing meanings in joint discussions. It could be said that the last two studies were more conceptual and heuristic; yet, the 'heureses' that emerged from the data also derived from the participants' experiences of emotions in the past (Deleuze's sensory dimension of becoming) and attempts at rationalizing them in dialogues (Deleuze's conceptual dimension of becoming).

All the emergent emotions, such as experiencing pleasure, anxiety, shame, guilt, etc. are relevant to the context of ELT, as they all surfaced from the studies. For teacher-researchers they are invaluable as they provide information on language learners' affective states. In short assignments, like the metaphor study, participants come up with their immediate implicit associations and interpretations, but if asked to focus explicitly on them again, especially with their fellow students and teachers (for example, the second stage of the duoethnographic study), there is potential for new meanings and reinterpretations, and deeper reflection not on what emotions are but what they do to people, or what powers lie behind them. As I argued elsewhere (Werbińska, 2017), the encounter of ruptures, tensions (called by me "discontinuities") and explicit reflection on them may in the long run result in better understandings of what people are doing and this has the power to change who they are and how they feel and think. All in all, reflection-based studies provide rich opportunities for learning about learners' emotions, which is invaluable at every educational stage, but especially important for newly-qualified teachers' professional becoming.

Aside from emotions, I also stress in these studies the *affordances* that can be encountered in the data from reflection-based studies. Thanks to investment in reflection on a selected area of interest, new ideas may arise, which are likely to create more powerful images if consolidated by discussions with others. Study 4 was especially important as it revealed that in most of the autobiographical narratives a significant number of non-specialist EFL students postponed or withdrew from learning English, since they may never have encountered any affordances on their learning paths. Writing a linguistic biography and discussing it with others may completely transform a person into an individual who has considered different aspects of language learning and who therefore might become someone different in the future. This is reflexivity-becoming which may result in participants' experiencing transformations in thinking and writing about themselves.

By providing encounters with affordances, reflective tasks enable the learners to consider alternative ways of thinking about reality that would not be possible were it not for completing a particular task and approaching it with the reflection needed for its realisation. Here, the implications are paramount – the need to direct learners' attention to their lived experience, stimulating their forward thinking, creating what-if events in which learners/study participants adopt new language learner subjectivities (Study 2) and, possibly, bringing these subjectivities to life. This could open the way for future reflexivity-becoming, as having encountered an affordance in the form of a task, analogous to Edge's (2011) retrospective reflexivity, and using it successfully, participants could be ready to notice other affordances and, in turn, be open for immanent encounters that yield indeterminate future becomings. In a way, the reflection-based assignments empower those who are involved in them, so that they can be used as pedagogies in the act (Ravindran & Ilieva, 2021).

As reflection-based assignments require authentic engagement from participants if their responses are to represent serious data, they serendipitously create valuable *relational encounters*. Such (relational) encounters may originate between a participant and a classmate partner with whom they discuss the data (Study 5), with the reader of their narratives or ideas (instructors, other fellow students), or even with themselves at a particular time and place (reading the same data from a reflection-based study after a lapse of time). To achieve this, it would be advisable for teacher-researchers to conduct their research not 'on' their participants but 'with' them and 'for' them, never criticising what participants disclose but always supporting and inspiring them. In this way, teacher-researchers will be able to highlight in their data not what participants are or what they should be, but what potential they have in order to become. If this happens, teacher-researchers may gain the participants' trust and respect. Then, the study participants are more likely to become more receptive to language learning and learning teaching while the teacher-researchers, in turn, can become more open to gaining invaluable knowledge about the intricacies of language learning and learning teaching from them. It is worth stressing once again that what is important here is not the literal meaning of the data but the processes – the improvement of human relations – that they can foster.

The participants' data can also be invaluable for the development of reflexivity-becoming in teacher-researchers as they can be regarded as affordances (van Lier, 1996) providing individual teacher-researchers' with learning opportunities. They can be seen in relation to the researchers' own experiences, their deliberations about their teaching, and their learning of the profession, or their ruminations about the effects of a reflection-generating task on the learners' responses. Much of the information gained in the data may confirm or disconfirm instructors' prior impressions about their students, the (in)congruity of their teaching practice with their students' future goals or current understandings. These can be reconsidered and further explored, providing teacher-researchers with a number of open endings and inspiring them to detect their "final vocabulary", which Edge (2011), conceptualised as the key to who a person is in the sense of central, pivotal, and indicative lenses for their perceptions and bases for their actions (p. 9). Such encounters with the data, being attentional rather than intentional to them, may allow for being astonished by the world a study participant reveals (which was my case in Study 3 when I learnt that a well-known principal in one of the best schools in town uses sophisticated workplace mobbing targeted at novice teachers). Reading the data as if walking with no goal or waiting for something that is not yet given, may bring about an epistemological reorientation.

The teacher-researcher's attitude is important here in the sense that reflection-based tasks should not be assigned just for the sake of giving a task. Instructors should not be afraid to hear the participants' voices and meet their worlds and words, but treat these as invitations, questionings, responses, not mere representations. What is important is what is hidden behind the words, how the meaning was produced, what questions it would be appropriate to ask, rather than 'What does it mean?'. Changing the question into 'How does it mean?' could stimulate reflexivity-becoming that can only be attained through the teacher-researcher's rapt attention to the participants' doings, practices, and performances in the data. It is in this way that novel ways are generated, new stories created, intellectual fascinations stimulated – all leading up to a creative tension with what was once raw, polyvocal, different, and sometimes even criticised, to become calm, unified, harmonious and, above all, recognizable through the research on reflection.

5 Implications

I hope that this text may encourage other language teacher educators to introduce reflection-generating tasks in their language classrooms and, thereby, gain insight into what can be achieved by doing so. The prerequisite on their part is, yet, to be sensitive, alert, and read or listen to the texts between and beyond the lines provided by the students. Then, students' emotions are visible, affordances and constraints accompanying their learning emerge, the task data provide information for developing better rapport with learners, and teacher educators may keep abreast of the developmental process of their students' learning. As a result, the focus is placed on the nuances of the learning process rather than the end product.

6 Conclusion

This text was based on my five reflection-generating studies carried out over the last decade. I tried to illustrate what the data from the reflection-based studies contribute to the study participants and teacher-researchers apart from what they represent at face value. The study resulted in the identification of reflexivity-becoming, a concept inspired by my reading of literature, especially in the works by Deleuze (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004) and Edge (2011). It transpires that reflection-driven study data can serve as a dynamic force. Open-ended, indefinite, unpredictable, they embrace knowledge that is not yet known either to the recipient or the producer. The data from reflection assignments create direct access to people's emotions and all that can be gained from this, providing the potential for future affordances and positive relational encounters. By making students reflexive and bringing their beliefs into conscious consideration, teacher-researchers also learn as they negotiate with themselves. Students' constructions of knowledge may introduce modifications in teaching epistemological paradigms and may even help teacher-researchers explore new territories and possibilities connected with the process of language learning and teaching.

All in all, it can be said that although reflection-generating studies are not without shortcomings (Mann & Walsh, 2017, p. 15), the data that they produce can serve as powerful artefacts that mediate both language learners' and teacher-researchers' professional becoming.

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