Adapting transformative educational research for exploring mathematics education in/for Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Islamic societies were part of the Islamic Golden Age from the mid-8th century to the mid-13th century when they adhered closely to the principles and ethics of Islam. However, after colonialism when Islamic societies became somewhat uncritical followers of Western civilization, they lost their intellectual leadership position in the world. If Islamic societies want to regain a high standing in the modern world, it is clear that they need to take the path of modern science and technology but, importantly, a science that is ‘beholden’ to Islamic principles and views. In this paper we shall demonstrate that a transformation of the postgraduate education system of Saudi Arabia can enhance Islamic values in the education system of Saudi Arabia and that the inclusion of critical auto/ethnographic research can make a major contribution to this process. Critical auto/ethnography is a methodology produced by combining three major research paradigms: interpretivism, criticalism and postmodernism. This powerful methodology enables researchers to engage deeply in educational issues with/in their own culture (Taylor, Taylor, & Luitel, in press/2012). Drawing on doctoral research conducted by the first author, a mathematics teacher educator from a Saudi Arabian university, we shall illustrate this innovative approach to educational research as a tool for Saudi mathematics researchers that enhances and elaborates them to transform their professional practice within their own culture. “Critical auto/ethnography enabled me [first author] to be immersed deeply and reflectively in excavating key moments of my academic and personal life, coming to understand them closely and critically and representing them in ways that resonate with the experiences of others…providing an avenue for doing something meaningful for myself as a teacher educator and for the professional world surrounding me”.

Keywords: Transformative research, Critical auto/ethnography, Saudi education, Islamic values.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic societies had a great Islamic civilization (Islamic Golden Age, from the mid-8th to the mid-13th century) when they adhered to the principles and ethics of Islam. However, after colonialism, which resulted in loss of Islamic identity, and after becoming somewhat uncritical followers of Western civilization and ignoring their Islamic values, Islamic societies lost their intellectual leadership position in the world. If Islamic societies want to retain their high standing in the modern world, it seems clear that they need to take the path of science but, importantly, a science that is beholden to Islamic principles and views.
Saudi Arabia is one of the Islamic countries. Based on the basic law of Saudi government, Article 1 in Chapter 1 states that “the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab Islamic State”. Its religion is Islam. Its constitution is Almighty God’s Book, The Holy Quran, and the Sunna (Tradition) of the Prophet (PBUH). Article 7 in Chapter 2 states: Government in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia derives its authority from the Book of God and the Sunna of the Prophet (PBUH), which are the ultimate sources of reference for this Law and the other laws of the State. Article 8 in Chapter 2 states: Governance in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is based on justice, Shura (consultation) and equality according to Islamic Sharia.

Undoubtedly, Saudi Arabia needs development and prosperity via science and technology. Modern education is a cornerstone of the development of Saudi society and modern educational research offers a powerful approach for improving and transforming Saudi education systems. Having said that, as a Saudi researcher who wants to conduct research that aims to investigate issues in my country such as why pre-service mathematics teachers are not interested in practising what they learnt about innovative student-centred approaches or the extent to which objectivist thinking holds back transformative education, do I have to ignore my Islamic values to conduct that study? Do I have to work as a robot? Why do Saudi scholars conduct research only in an objective way - an approach that does not care for their Islamic culture - ? Can they look for an alternative approach that enables them to be aware of and maintain their Islamic values in this changing and challenging world? Is there any way of research allows them to conduct a research subjectively? In this paper we shall demonstrate such transformative educational research that can enhance Islamic values in education system of Saudi Arabia.

Critical auto/ethnographic inquiry is considered as a methodological example of transformative educational research. Critical auto/ethnography is a methodology produced by mixing three major paradigms: Interpretivism (how the world is), criticalism (how the world should be) and postmodernism (how the world could be). This innovative methodology provides science and mathematics researchers with an approach for engaging deeply in educational issues within their own culture (Taylor, Taylor, & Luitel, in press/2012). Drawing on doctoral research titled ‘transforming mathematics classroom culture in Saudi Arabia’ conducted by the first author, a mathematics teacher educator from Saudi Arabia, we shall illustrate this innovative approach to educational research as a tool for Saudi mathematics researchers that enhances and elaborates them to transform their professional practice within their own culture.

Due to the subjective nature of the approach, I prefer to discuss it by using my voice instead of an objective third person voice.

WHAT AM I DOING?

During my PhD study when I talk about my research methodology, many times I have been asked: is what I am doing considered research? Should it be called research? Is what I have been doing really research?

These questions imply that what I am doing is not research or it is not considered as real research –from the questioners’ points of view, of course. More so, these questions are often asked in a way that involves scepticism, doubt, and even hostility or taunting. So, it was unhelpful for me to respond directly and simply to these questions in which my responses would be YES, it is, what I have been conducting is definitely considered real research –from my own point of view, of course.

Therefore, I think the best way to answer those questions is by identifying what I (Naif Alsulami) mean by research. On the one hand, those who
asked (or ridiculed) me about my research might not regard it as research, in which their thinking about and doing research has been applied in a particular way and from a specific perspective that dominates quantitative social science research, and it is sometimes called positivism (Willis, 2007). So, from their perspectives, if research does not follow their research epistemology, it would not be considered as research. Consequently, if one wants to judge my research, one has to judge it through its ideologies and lenses. Why I say that is because I do not agree with one shape of research which has to fit all types of diverse research purposes.

In responding these questions, I would say that for many people research should be objective, value free and involves finding absolute truths (or Truths). However, what if I claim that human knowledge cannot be independent of the human mind? What if I do not believe in absolute truth? What if I believe that all truths are “contingent on the describing activities of human beings” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 746)? Does this mean that I cannot conduct a research? In other words, am I unable to conduct research unless I accept an unquestionable Truth that needs to be discovered? I wonder: should I follow only one ideology and opinion in conducting research? Or should I follow what I think is valuable and appropriate for me and my inquiry? Basically and simply, what if I embrace an alternative epistemology?

As a Muslim, I do not believe in absolute truth unless it has been mentioned in The Quran by Allah or has been revealed to The Prophet. Imam Malik (A great Muslim scholar) said “everyone’s talk is takeable and rejectable except who is in this grave” (he was pointing to The Prophet’s grave in Medina). In The Quran, we are commanded to think, meditate and reflect about everything around us including ourselves. More so, The Quran has wondered about those who believe in something just because they have found their parents following that belief, without meditating about themselves and the world around them. How come we need to follow the conventional ideas of conducting research just because it has been established many years ago? We might follow it but, as mentioned in The Quran, after thinking carefully about it.

I wanna see the world by my own eyes ... not by others
I wanna hear voices by my own ears ... not by others
I wanna smell a smell by my own nose ... not by others
I wanna say a word by my own tongue ... not by others
I wanna understand an idea by my own mind ... not by others
I wanna do my research by myself which respect to my value, beliefs

Therefore, I began to ask myself: Why can I not adopt an alternative epistemology of research practice that provides me opportunities and means to transform my professional practice? I need to assert that with the hegemony of using only one perspective (whatever it is) and without the possibility of choosing and using alternative epistemologies that lead me to embrace alternative paradigms, the hope of development and transformation might have no place, the prospect of creative ability might disappear and the inspiration of the Islamic values are not allowed to appear.

**WHAT AM I LOOKING FOR?**

For those looking for an objective Truth, this kind of research is not compatible with their epistemology. I believe that no one knows the Truth except Allah. So, this methodology does not enhance me to look for Truth or even to aim to convince the reader (albeit I have tried). Rather, it allows me to build a new understanding of my learning and teaching experiences and to make meaning of certain educational aspects of my life lived in the context of an academic mathematics education culture in Saudi Arabia, in order to improve that context and my experiences, and to have
a change by providing transformative professionalism. Not surprisingly, the approach provides non-deterministic outcomes. It provides new contextually plausible and possible understandings.

He says: “What you are doing is not research”... I say: “I know your epistemology!! Do you know my epistemology??”... He says: “No”... I say: “You do not know my research, then” He says: “What is your research then?”... I say: “This is the right question, detective!!!”

WHAT IS MY RESEARCH?

Because I tend to deem that there is not a single research definition that can fit all kinds of research purposes and because research definitions have been usually written from specific epistemologies, ideologies and perspectives, seemingly by nobody and out of nowhere, they do not necessarily need to be compatible to mine, and might not help me or you to understand my research. Consequently, I need to define my research based on my own sense of purpose. Hence, I might define my research in the following way.

My research involves ...

- Transformative learning about my own professional practices.
- Engaging myself in critical reflection about my past experiences.
- Examining critically my personal and professional values and beliefs.
- Reconceptualising my own professionalism.
- Committing to transform mathematics education culture (by transforming pedagogical practices, teachers and students’ roles, and curricula images) within my own institution.
- Building contextual understanding and making meaning of my professional practice.
- Engaging myself and others to rethink about some educational aspects.
- Designing a creative research structure.
- Using alternative paradigms, an alternative methodology, alternative epistemologies and alternative quality standards.
- Subjective, not value free, constructive, emergent, contextualized, narrative stories.
- Complex and dynamic processes.
- Not being isolated or static; reflecting on, interacting with and responding to new constructive knowledge.

My story and my life
(This is my story, this is me, Naif)

What is my story? What is my life?
Here it is my story; here it is my life...
This is my story; this is me, Naif.

My life is a story; my story is my life...
Saying my story; to know my life...
This is my story; this is me, Naif

I wanna say my story; it is my life...
Forgetting my story; losing my life...
This is my story; this is me, Naif.

Do you wanna know about me?
Looking for my story; to get my life...
Ignoring my story; ignoring my life...
This is my story; this is me, Naif.
What do I mean by Paradigm? A paradigm can be defined as a “comprehensive belief system, worldview, or framework that guides research and practice in a field” (Wills, 2007, p. 8). So, it is a worldview that guides me as a researcher and learner, and can be identified by its fundamental assumptions of ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba & Linclon, 1994; Willis, 2007). Ontology and epistemology are two major aspects of metaphysics (a branch of philosophy) and are essential aspects of a paradigm. Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality (or being or existence). It concerns what can exist or what is real. Epistemology is concerned with what we can know about reality and how we can justify our claim to know. Epistemology is about theories of knowledge (Willis, 2007). More details of my ontology and epistemology in this methodology are discussed in Interpretivism.

Interpretivism

I use three features of the research paradigm of Interpretivism (1) new research process, (2) alternative ontology and epistemology and (3) new understanding.

First, it allows me to embrace an open-ended research design process that allows me to welcome emergent research questions and an emergent mode of inquiry (Taylor, 2008; Taylor et al., in press/2012). I found Interpretivism appropriate for replacing the hegemony of conventional research that was restricting my thinking and writing in conducting and constructing a research.

   Interpretivism is like a salad...
   You have to put something on it to make it better,
   Interpretivism is like a farm...
   You can cultivate whatever you like,
   Interpretivism is like a garden...
   It is full of colours,
   Interpretivism is yours...
   You can construct it as you like,
   Interpretivism is like a bird...
   It keeps me flying,
   Interpretivism is like a sweet...
   It can’t be bitter
   Interpretivism is like going to heaven...
   You never want to return back,
   Interpretivism is like liberty...
   It doesn’t like restrictions.

Second, I was troubled by the limitations of the conventional ontological and epistemological aspects of research (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) - such as a materialist ontology in which reality, including thought and feeling, can be explained only in the material or physical world, and empirical epistemology in which I can come to know about the world only through experiments (Willis, 2007) - until I found an appropriate ontology and epistemology in Interpretivism.

An ontological position is about the nature or essence of the phenomena being studied (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). My way of seeing people is different from how I see the objects of natural science. The differences between the social and natural science objects are respected in this paradigm (Bryman, 2001) in which people can give their meanings of phenomena, unlike natural science objects which cannot. The objective methods of natural sciences do not help me to understand my educational problems.

My ontology in this methodology is that the current academic culture of mathematics education in Saudi Arabia is not external to me; it is not imposed upon my consciousness and not entirely
independent. Rather, it is a product of my consciousness. I live within it and in the process of fashioning. I have created it in my mind (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). As a constructivist, there is no reality other than what I construct in my own mind. Therefore, my reality could be experienced in a very different way by another consciousness. It might not be experienced in exactly the same way by different people. Therefore, I could say that the realities seen via this methodology are multiple (Guba & Linclon, 1994). Different ontological positions can lead to very different positions on my issue (Willis, 2007). Hence, my ontology articulates that the Saudi mathematics education culture is not a single objective reality produced seemingly by no-one and existing 'out there'. I state ontologically that I get to understand the academic culture of mathematics education in Saudi Arabia based upon a specific context as a result of my cognition of my learning and teaching experiences.

An epistemological position is about the nature of knowledge and its forms and how it can be acquired (Cohen et al., 2000). Also, it could be about the nature of the relationship between me as inquirer and what can be known. By the way, ontological and epistemological positions are interconnected in such a way that my view of any one constrains my view of the other (Guba & Linclon, 1994). So, when I conceive a situation under a study as a product of my consciousness, my claim that the knowledge produced is not an objective claim. Knowledge does not suddenly live in my mind or come by someone. Knowledge is built in my mind in a long, complex and complicated process of cognition. Therefore, I can say that I construct my knowledge based upon my understanding of my experiences.

My epistemology in this methodology sees knowledge as subjective, personal and based upon one's experience (Cohen et al., 2000). So, the quality and the viability of the information I produce via this approach does not depend on an objective correspondence to the “objective reality” “out there” (Kincheloe & Tobin, 2009, p. 524). Consequently, knowledge by critical auto/ethnography seems to be softer, more subjective and based on my experiences. Knowledge is not universal, it is contextualized. Knowledge is not common or standard; it is unique and personally experienced.

Third, the paradigm of Interpretivism authorizes me as a researcher to understand and reconstruct a new meaning of the academic culture of mathematics education in Saudi Arabia that we hold (Guba & Linclon, 1994) by interpreting and reflecting upon my own learning and teaching experiences within that culture, based on the context of my own and my participants’ thoughts, beliefs, values and associated aspects of the culture. So, my purpose is to generate a new contextual understanding. When I generate my data, I do not want to test an a priori theory; instead I want to construct fresh understanding. In other words, rather than seeking Truth in my inquiry, I intend to generate new understanding of the context of Saudi mathematics education. Interpretivism allows me to provide substantial descriptive details that are imperative in contextual understanding (Bryman, 2001).

However, it is important to state that my understanding does not have the status of objective truth. Rather, it is tentative and inter-subjective and still open to new interpretation (Guba & Linclon, 1994). My understanding needs to be understood in the light of particular circumstances, a specific context, and in the current situation (in which situations are changing, not fixed), in the light of my participants’ interpretations of their understanding of that academic culture, and in the light of the mathematics education context where I and my participants were/are part of it (Cohen et al., 2000).

Interpretivism, freedom to gain and freedom to share
Interpretivism, freedom to reflect and freedom to know
Interpretivism, freedom to imagine and freedom to learn
Interpretivism, freedom from wrong and freedom to be creative
Interpretivism, freedom from objective and freedom of subjective
Interpretivism, I’m free from you... I’ll say my view
Interpretivism, end to restriction... freedom of expression...
no conclusion... Truth is depression...
Criticalism

This research paradigm provides me with power that encourages me to deconstruct, reconceptualise and transform.

First, criticalism provides me with an essential power that helps me to deconstruct the hegemonic ideologies of mathematics education in Saudi Arabia which could be the major reason for holding back transformative education. I orient the power of this paradigm to revealing the assumptions of mathematics education that have been taken as granted. Deconstructing the hegemonic can be achieved by questioning (Cohen et al., 2000) and criticizing the status quo (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991) of Saudi Mathematics Education, the assumptions of teaching and learning ideologies, the assumptions of the prevailing images of curriculum, and by questioning aspect of mathematics education that have been taken as unquestionable. To have transformative education ideology critique should take place.

Second, criticalism contained with Interpretivism allows me to take a further step after deconstruction to create a new vision of mathematics education. It allows me to reconceptualise the academic culture of mathematics education in Saudi Arabia based on alternative assumptions of mathematics education that respect subjective knowledge but without privileging it. This combination of research paradigms enables me to reconceptualise the culture of mathematics education through critical reflection. So, many critical questions need be asked, pointing out flaws while interpreting to understand, leading me to generate a professional praxis (Taylor et al., in press/2012) for transforming the mathematics education culture, including its pedagogical ideologies, to make a difference, and to reconceptualise my thoughts about the mathematics education academic culture.

Third, following deconstructing and reconceptualising, Criticalism allows me to take action and create change (Cohen et al., 2000; Willis 2007). Criticalism does not provide me only with the power to criticize the current culture of mathematics education in Saudi Arabia but also to transform that culture (Guba & Linclon, 1994). Critical turn is necessary to emancipate (Cohen et al., 2000) myself (my thoughts, beliefs, consciousness, awareness) from the current academic culture, the artificial boundaries, of mathematics education around me into which I have been encultured, to rid myself of the hegemonic situation of the conventional teaching and learning in mathematics education, and thus to be personally transformed. This research paradigm empowers me to link my research to the ideal of emancipation that could free me from viewpoints that restrict and control me in following a specific research perspective that does not have my own interests (Vinden, 1999). This emancipation seems to be a crucial point of transformation. Without this power, I may find it impossible to think creatively and critically, to understand subjectively and contextuality, or to change and be transformed.

Postmodernism

Postmodernism seems to be controversial in its definition and its features. To the best of our knowledge, there is no only one definition for postmodernism. Postmodernism does not and cannot provide fundamental answers to questions about its meaning (St. Pierre, 2000). When I state a clear literal meaning of it, I - at the same time - break its essence because postmodernism entirely rejects objective truth. It refuses classifications and doctrines (e.g., right or wrong). It respects pluralism. It dissolves definitions.

However, a proper explanation of how postmodernism fits my inquiry could be that provided by Lyotard: “incredulity towards metanarratives” (Meynell, 1999), of that has been taken as granted. On the Holy Book: Allah (SWT) questions those who follow what has been taken for granted without thinking. Allah says “when we ask them to follow what Lord commands, they respond: we found our
fathers on a constitution and we on their tracks are guided. What! Even if their fathers did not use their reasons at all, and were devoid of all guidance”. (Holy Qur’an, 1:170). So, I am not going to say as those who Allah SWT deprecated their saying; I found people on a situation and I am on their tracks. Rather, I say I am going to use my mind, my reasoning to think of the ways of conducting a research that has been using. I am not going to follow others without thinking. I might follow others and might take something for granted but I need to use my mind, to think, to question, reflect and judge if it is make sense for me or not.

This paradigm opens my mind to think critically, and more importantly, freely about what I am doing without sticking to following obediently what I was doing, to think carefully about what I have taken as granted in the way of conducting research. Moreover, the ideas of validity and reliability of research have become the subject of my sceptical view of what comes as typical and trusted research.

Postmodernism brings to our attention the very important concept of ‘representation’ (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) and research based on Art (McNiff, 2008; Eisner, 2008). Postmodernism welcomes me to use figurative form such as pictures, poems and poetry to convey the meanings I want to express (Eisner, 1981, 1997) and to extend our understanding of the Other (Bryman, 2001). It enables me to break the hegemonic role of scientific writing of research. The reason for writing unscientifically is that I need to write in a way that allows readers to understand and feel my particular version of mathematics education being described (Denzin, 1997).

Postmodernism encourages me to use powerful new logics such as metaphorical logic that facilitates me to capture the complexity of teaching and learning aspects by engaging in multi-schema envisioning, and new genres such as the narrative genre that also helps me to richly depict the complexity of my experiences in mathematics education by speaking from my lived storied perspective, foregrounding its contexts, events and people (Taylor et al., in press/2012). By using both, I will be able to make new sense of my experiences of a complex study of mathematics education in Saudi Arabia.

**CRITICAL AUTO/ETHNOGRAPHY**

My experiences in school life are neither simplicity nor linearity. They are rich and complex in quality. Capturing the richness, complexity and the quality of my school life cannot be achieved by quantitative tools and methods alone. It entails me – Naif Alsulami; a researcher and learner – to use an alternative form of inquiry to capture them. Drawing on the aforementioned paradigms I construct a critical auto/ethnographic methodology.

This methodology allows me to emphasize on myself (auto), my culture (ethno) and the inquiry process (graphy) (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Auto/ethnography connects my personality (auto) to my culture (ethno) in which the distinctions between both become blurred. It allows me to breach the conventional separation of myself and my research by making myself the object and the instrument in conducting research (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

Critical auto-ethnography, however, seems to be sometimes a loose term. It can be used in many research situations. There are some commonly used terms that provide a sense of the range of methodologies associated with autoethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). It can be used, for example, as a narrative inquiry. Critical auto-ethnographers are not like objectivists. They are very flexible in moving under several terms of inquiries. I found that Taylor’s definition is appropriate to me. Taylor (2010) said: “Critical auto/ethnography is situated at the nexus of ethnography, writing as inquiry, arts-based research, narrative inquiry, evocative autoethnography, anthropological poetics, philosophical inquiry, critical hermeneutics and practitioner inquiry” (p. 7). So, critical auto/ethnography can be understood as non-positivist research.
Critical auto/ethnography provides me with an approach to immerse myself deeply in the moments of my (academic as well as personal) life, to understand them closely and critically. It makes my life and experiences in school the focus of the research (Reed-Danahay, 1997). So, I am allowed to make my own experiences as a student, a mathematics teacher and a teacher educator a “topic of investigation in its own right” (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 733). My experiences have not been isolated; rather they interacted with others who became part of my experience. So, other experiences could be involved in the inquiry. Moreover, my experiences and others’ were not isolated from our society, they were reflected within it. So, features of our society and their influence upon us could also be embedded in the inquiry. Furthermore, this approach allows me to indicate to our Holy Book (The Qur’an) and our Prophet (Mohammad PBUH) that we are inspired by them to demonstrate and show the culture behind our experiences, noting that our social culture is mostly derived from Islamic culture. Auto/ethnography provides me with an avenue for doing something meaningful for both me and the world surrounding me (Ellis & Bochner, 2000).

My experiences are not static; they are changing and evolving. They are unique and should be studied in their contexts; they are non-generalizable (Cohen et al., 2000). Therefore, this methodology allows me to emphasize significant details and necessary accessories surrounding my experiences with mathematics education. They are very important and crucial in contextual understanding (Bryman, 2001).

This culturally inclusive approach to educational research allows me to generate my data through stories, my personal experiences and participants in an actual college setting and to discuss the meaning of those stories and experiences (Creswell, 2008) by reflecting critically upon them in order to understand deeply. What makes this approach to knowledge production legitimate is that it is inspired by the Holy Quran. In the Qur’an, there is a chapter (28) by the name of Al-Qasas (Narratives/Stories). The entire chapter (12) Yusuf (Joseph) has been devoted to the story of Yusuf (Joseph), Yaqub (Jacob), Zulaikha and the brothers. In the beginning of the chapter, Allah (SWT) says: “We narrate to you O’ Prophet the most excellent of the narratives by (means of) what We have revealed to you this Qur’an”. (Holy Qur’an, 12:3). In the concluding verse of this chapter, Allah (SWT) says: “In their histories there is certainly a lesson for men of understanding. It is not a narrative which could be forged, but a verification of what is before it and a distinct explanation of all things and a guide and a mercy to a people who believe”. (Holy Qur’an, 12:111). In several places in the Quran Allah (SWT), after telling a story, says “that they may reflect”, “perhaps they understand”. These are characteristics of transformative learning which lie at the heart of transformative educational research.

My aim in using this innovative research is to understand and portray my and others’ lived experiences which demonstrate subjectivity and personal accountability which I employ as ‘direct testimony’ to justify my own inquiry (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). My goal in telling my experiences is not to portray the facts of what happened to me precisely, rather, my purpose is to convey the meaning of my lived experiences in mathematics education. I am telling stories to engage the reader to enter and feel part of them. I am writing in a way to evoke the reader to feel and think about my experiences and about his/her experiences in relation to mine. I want the reader to experience my experiences that I am writing about (Ellis & Bochner, 2000). This research methodology requests me to be the one who is generating the data, gathering related information and evidence, presenting my past and present experiences, criticising them, reflecting upon them and coming to understand them deeply. In this type of research I recognize myself as a self-ethnographer as I am sharing my stories with others in mathematics classrooms. My subjectivity and personal accountability are dynamic in this approach. I need this kind of understanding due to the complexity and competitively of my educational inquiry. It goes without saying that my aim is to explain the complexity of experiences through verbal description rather than testing hypotheses with numerical value.
My writing...

Critical auto/ethnography considers writing as a method of inquiry (Taylor, 2010), as a method of generating my data, and as a way of finding out about myself and my topic. Writing is a way of knowing. I inquire as I write (Richardson, 2000).

It is vital writing... Not static here is my own voice... Not the omniscient one I’m writing in the first voice... Not the third one.

My voice is known... Not hidden I’m an instrument... Not a contaminant I’m onymous... Not anonymous.

My research should be read... Not scanned Its meaning... In the reading... My attention... Turns to writing... Not boring Never become precisely... Completely... Yet, I keep it up... In writing.

Writing is viable ... Not for reliable Writing is fun... Not grief-stricken.

Writing is my life... As I write about my life Writing presents my voice... As I write my experience.

Who you are?... Do you know? When you write... You may know!!

Writing about myself... To find out myself Writing my stories... To see myself.

I write unknown to be known... I write to know what was unknown I write to know... what I didn’t know.

I learned to write what I know... But didn’t know how to write I learned to write after I know... I learned to know before I write... I learned to write... But not to know... because writing is about what I know

What if I write to know... Write what I don’t know to know... Write what is unknown to be known.

My writing has different ways... because my life has different stories. Writing in different ways... means considering new aspects of my life.

I write about myself... From myself... To understand myself I wanna make a difference... About my experience

Should it be academically... scientifically??... But why??!! Why not narratively!!... Why not poetically!!... Why not evocatively!!... Emotionally!!... Impressively!! Why not??!!!... So,... Let’s do it.
CONCLUSION

The power of this approach seems to be most obvious in its ability to enable us to become culturally inclusive. From the Islamic view, we are encouraged not to be isolated but to have an inclusive culture (Islam and other cultures). The Prophet said: “Wherever you happen to find wisdom, take it”. At the same time, we are discouraged from being uncritically dependent. What this means is that whatever or wherever we find an advantage we are very much encouraged to take it, provided that it does not conflict with Islamic principles. Accordingly, Islamic principles and values should be present in any prosperity or development.

Therefore, transformative educational research is needed to enhance Islamic values in the education system of Saudi Arabia. Critical auto/ethnography could be used as a tool for Saudi mathematics education researchers that engages them in critical reflexivity to transform their professionalism. The approach is unconventional in that it is based on the researchers themselves, their personal lived experiences and their own culture. Critical auto/ethnography enables educational researchers – especially novices - to be involved firsthand in a process of transformative learning which lies at the heart of transformative education.

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