

**Critical Ethnography and Dialogic Reflection in
Student-Led Language Research**

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ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the role of critical reflection in linguistic ethnography by analyzing the research papers and self-reflexive essays written by US college students enrolled in an introductory linguistics course who studied the attitudes towards and use of English of students taking an advanced English course at a Brazilian university. This study examines, in the form of case studies, the research output produced by two student groups. The results show student ethnographers engaging in multiple dialogic relationships in order to elicit and critically interpret language data. Furthermore, their reflective judgments may vary dramatically depending on the researcher's sociocultural and psychological frame of reference, resulting, for example, in a focus on the economic implications of language learning, or its emotive, motivational aspect. Linguistic ethnography is shown as capable of producing both critical discourse on social use of language and make it a transformative experience for the ethnographer. This transformation may lead to belief correction and/or a shift in the researcher's frame of reference such as stereotyped attitudes and linguistic concepts, habits of mind, or sociocultural and epistemic knowledge. Critically-guided, transformative learning can thus encourage the researcher, including a student researcher, to move from knowledge-telling to knowledge-transforming. The Internet provides a new, multilingual sociocultural space for co-construction of meaning, and also for critical reflection.