ORIGINAL ARTICLES

Autoethnography in English Language Education and Applied Linguistics: An Integrative Literature Review

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ABSTRACT
Literature reviews play a pivotal role to identify the best existing evidence for studies in different fields of knowledge. Employing an integrative literature review design, this qualitative study aims to review articles and book chapters which use autoethnography as a research method and have been published in the domain of English language education and applied linguistics over the past two decades. The reviewed documents were, with coding schemes of exclusion and inclusion criteria, collected with the extensive and intensive search on prestigious citation-tracking electronic databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. The searches yielded a pool of 151 autoethnographies, including 78 peer-reviewed articles published in high-ranking journals and 73 book chapters published by well-established publishers. These data sources were collected, analyzed, and reported in reflections on authors of such autoethnographies concerning a number of aspects, including (1) research context, (2) autoethnographers' positionality and challenges, (3) justifications of methodological choices, (4) procedure for data generation and analysis, (5) strategies for ethical considerations, and (6) impacts of autoethnographies on educational practices. Built on these findings, the present study recommends that novice autoethnographers familiarize themselves with the types, foundations, justifications, methodologies, and practical implications of autoethnography so as to seek the most appropriate autoethnographic research design to tell their lived stories in their own ways. The limitations of this research are discussed, along with directions to guide researchers in their future studies.

1. INTRODUCTION

The increasing recognition of English language education and applied linguistics (ELE-AL) (Keleş, 2022a, 2022b; Yazan, 2019) has led to greater emphasis on the relationships between lived experiences, cultural contexts, and teaching practices rather than personalization (Adams et al., 2017; Canagarajah, 2012; Jones et al., 2016). Within this paradigm shift, autoethnography has emerged as a valuable methodological approach, offering nuanced insights into various research topics, including challenges, constraints, or reluctance (Le & Pham, 2024); (in)equality (Ulla & Paiz, 2024); glocalisation, transnationalism, and transculturalism (Saiphet, 2024); TESOL researchers' identities (Kamali, 2024), and policies or curricula in higher education institutions (Lowe, 2024).

Autoethnography is distinct from traditional ethnographic research, which primarily investigates people and cultures through external observation and community immersion (Adams et al., 2017). Instead, autoethnography integrates researchers' self-experiences with ethnographic analysis, allowing an insider's perspective to be compared with outsiders' within a societal framework (Anderson, 2006; Spry, 2001). This approach contextualizes individuals'

experiences within broader social phenomena and serves as a methodological bridge between personal narratives and systematic inquiry (Ellis et al., 2011). Consequently, autoethnography has the potential to transform personal reflections - such as navigating life choices and understanding professional struggles - into rigorous scholarly contributions (Stanley, 2019).

Despite its methodological contributions, autoethnography presents challenges, including subjectivity, ethical concerns, and the need for self-reflexivity (Chang, 2008; Ellis et al., 2011). A key limitation in the current literature is the absence of a comprehensive synthesis of the tenets of autoethnography within ELE-AL, which hinders assessments of its methodological effectiveness. To address this gap, this review adopts a methodological synthesis approach (Cooper, 1988), examining various aspects such as research contexts, autoethnographers' positionality and challenges, justifications for methodological choices, data generation and analysis procedures, ethical considerations, and the impact of autoethnographies on educational practices. This synthesis draws on high-ranking peer-reviewed journal articles and well-established edited book chapters published between 2000 and 2024. Specifically, this review is guided by the following research question: How has autoethnography been employed as a method of qualitative inquiry in English language education and applied linguistics studies?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

As a research method, autoethnography is characterized by integrating autobiographical narratives with ethnographic inquiry. It is often categorized into two primary forms: evocative and analytic autoethnography (Ellis et al., 2011). Evocative autoethnography focuses on personal lived experiences, conveyed aesthetically and emotionally to engage readers on an affective level. In contrast, analytic autoethnography systematically connects personal narratives with broader theoretical frameworks and empirical findings (Anderson, 2006). Both forms contribute to the richness of qualitative inquiry by merging individual subjectivities with academic rigor.

Chang (2008) identifies three core benefits of autoethnography: (1) Accessibility to readers; (2) Enhanced cultural understanding of the self and others; (3) Fostering cross-cultural dialogues. However, he also highlights challenges such as reader engagement, issues of generalizability due to subjective biases, and ethical concerns in representing self and others. To mitigate these challenges, Ellis et al. (2011) emphasized the role of self-reflexivity, requiring autoethnographers to examine their biases, assumptions, and emotional investments critically. Additionally, strategies such as incorporating external data sources, ensuring transparency in methodological choices, and adhering to ethical considerations can strengthen the credibility of autoethnographic research (Chang, 2008).

An essential aspect of autoethnography in ELE-AL is its ability to capture researchers' experiences within their educational and sociocultural contexts. Acknowledging researcher positionality is crucial, as it shapes their investment in the research topic and influences knowledge production (Adams et al., 2021; Keleş, 2022b). Rather than excluding subjectivity in pursuit of objectivity, autoethnography advocates for embracing researchers' lived experiences as legitimate sites of knowledge. However, scholars have proposed various methodological approaches to prevent solipsism - a critique often directed at autoethnographic work. These include employing multiple analytical frameworks (Anand, 2022), layering self-experiences within diverse theoretical perspectives (Ngo et al., 2024), and integrating protective measures for individuals referenced in the research (Wang et al., 2024). Additionally, Panta and Luitel (2022) stress the importance of engaging with multiple logics and genres while Cinaglia et al. (2024) advocate for sustained self-reflexivity in autoethnographic practice.

Overall, existing literature underscores the methodological richness of autoethnography in ELE-AL, particularly in exploring the complexities of self-experience, pedagogical transformation, and inclusive knowledge dissemination. However, methodological rigor, ethical transparency, and engagement with broader theoretical perspectives remain critical to its validity. The subsequent sections of this review will delve deeper into the methodological synthesis of autoethnographic research within ELE-AL, evaluating its impact, challenges, and best practices in contemporary scholarly discourse.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Research design

Before developing this integrative literature review, the reviewers had first sought whether any methodological review of autoethnography in ELE-AL was conducted. They then found Keleş's (2022a) article in Applied

Linguistics that reviewed a limited number (40 articles) of autoethnographic studies. Keleş's study presents critical findings in the scholarship, including the conceptualization of autoethnography without further explanations, the employment of first-person voice in the majority of the reviewed autoethnographies, the lacuna of (auto)biographical information, and the dearth of justification of methodological choices. To provide readers with a holistic review, this study reviewed 151 autoethnographies in the field of ELE-AL that were published in peer-reviewed journals and edited books during the past 25 years.

To address the posed research question, the present study employs the integrative qualitative literature review method (Torraco, 2016) to synthesize publications since it allows a systematic application of exclusive and inclusive criteria as well as the employment of diverse methodologies in database searches (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). As stated in the predetermined criteria, the selected publications must be (1) conducted in ELE-AL, (2) peer-reviewed journal papers or edited book chapters published by well-established publishers or journals (for academic purposes), (3) written in the English language, and (4) published from 2000 to 2024. The sources which failed to comply with the criteria were excluded. These academic texts were not reviewed since they were small in sample, not yet published in the searched e-databases and hard to be accessed due to restriction policies of the educational institutions holding them. The included publications then were manually coded following the pre-determined framework in Table 1 below.

Table 1. A Predetermined Data Extract Framework

Research context	Author
	Year of Publication
	Types of Publication
Key themes	Research Context
	Autoethnographers' Positionality and Challenges
	Justification of Methodological Choices
	Data Generation and Analysis
	Ethical Considerations
	Impact of Autoethnographies on Educational Practices

3.2. Sampling

A systematic process (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005) was employed to identify potential publications based on the determined criteria. First, the first author conducted an electronic database (e-database) search in Google Scholar, due to its popularity, with the researched subject (*autoethnography* or *autoethnographic study* or *autoethnographic research*) as the keywords in the titles, abstracts, keywords, or methodology sections. Subsequently, to avoid missing potential results, he manually searched the reference lists of the initially retrieved articles as an additional strategy recommended by Whittemore and Knafl (2005). After discussing the plan with the second author for an agreement, the first author began to collect data. Continuing discussions were maintained to tackle challenges during the execution.

3.3. Data collection

First, the e-database search in Google Scholar with the predetermined keywords was conducted. Several problems unexpectedly arose during this initial search. Some publications did not explicitly mention the keywords in the methodology section. In addition, some works employed autoethnography as the research method but did not contain the keywords. The works were featured with new keywords *co-operative* or *collaborative* or *co-constructed* in the titles, abstracts, keywords, or the methodology section; and used the plural personal pronoun *we* to represent co-researchers. Importantly, several works retrieved from the search results employed the autoethnographic method but claimed the keyword *ethnographic* instead of *autoethnographic*. These incidents caused a time-consuming searching process for the reviewers, and even worse, could undermine its accessibility to potential readers.

The manual search on the reference lists of the initially retrieved publications proceeded. As a result, an extensive e-database search in ScienceDirect, Sage Journals, Wiley Online Library, Taylor and Francis, Springer, De Gruyter, John Benjamins, IGI Global, and The Qualitative Report for the same keywords with the filters of Education, Language, Language Education, or similar variations was performed. The searching process included screening the

titles, abstracts, keywords, and the methodology section of the relevant sources which was then followed by a full-text reading to confirm that articles and book chapters met the data inclusion criteria. All included publications were manually screened to remove the duplicates and irrelevant works. In total, with the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 151 publications including 78 articles and 73 book chapters were detected from the strictly controlled data searching procedure. To ensure coding consistency and quality, the first author coded all reviewed studies. The codes were then reviewed and verified by the second author. The authors resolved these differences through ongoing discussions.

3.4. Data analysis

To minimize the bias of the researcher in the process of identifying themes across the reviewed literature, this study employed six-step thematic analysis framework by Braun & Clarke (2006). First, the first author familiarized himself with the reviewed studies to understand contents and contexts. Second, he did a coding process by identifying aspects of the studies regarding the research question. Next, the codes were organized into themes and subthemes on commonalities and differences. Following that, the codes, subthemes, and themes (see Table 1 for the key themes) were refined for coherent and valid purposes. After that, he reviewed the working titles of subthemes and themes for hierarchical order and representations. Finally, the first author interwove the subthemes and themes with demonstrative data extracts into a descriptive narrative. This entire process was reviewed and verified by the second author of the study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

In response to the research question aforementioned, the following sections present the findings of our analysis on the reviewed studies in specified terms of (1) research context, (2) autoethnographers' positionality and challenges, (3) justifications of methodological choices, (4) procedures of data generation and analysis, (5) strategies for ethical considerations, and (6) impacts of autoethnographies on educational practices.

4.1.1. Research Contexts

This section discusses the features of 151 retrieved publications, including years of publication, publication forms, and the most prolific authors. Specifically, these publications included 78 journal articles (52%) and 73 book chapters (48%).

As depicted in Figure 1, the number of studies published over the past two decades has witnessed a proliferation, rising from 4 in the middle five-year period (2011-2015) to 93 over the past three years (2021-2024). It indicates a significant upward research trend which underscored the significance of autoethnography and its applicability in ELE-AL research. As the review's findings showed, the two most prolific researchers were Bedrettin Yazan (6 individual publications over 6 years) and Shizhou Yang (6 individual publications over 2 years).
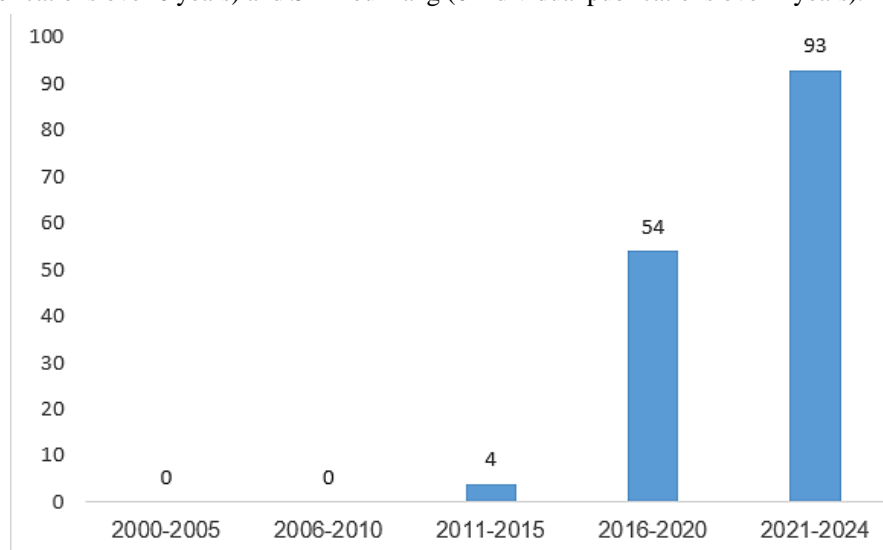

Figure 1. Number of Studies per Five-Year Period over the Past Two Decades

As regards autoethnographic categories, Figure 2 illustrates various categories of autoethnographies that were employed in the reviewed studies. Whilst the studies that did not specify their selected categories represented the largest publication volume (66), the group of duoethnographic, collaborative, and critical autoethnographies, among all the specified categories, showed a publication hierarchy with 23, 20, and 16, respectively. In addition, the combined and analytical autoethnographies shared the same publication volume (6). Similarly, four categories including evocative, digital, betweener, and visual autoethnographies were found with only one publication for each. Likewise, the trioethnographic category was reported with two publications, whilst eight publications were found in the poetic category of autoethnography.
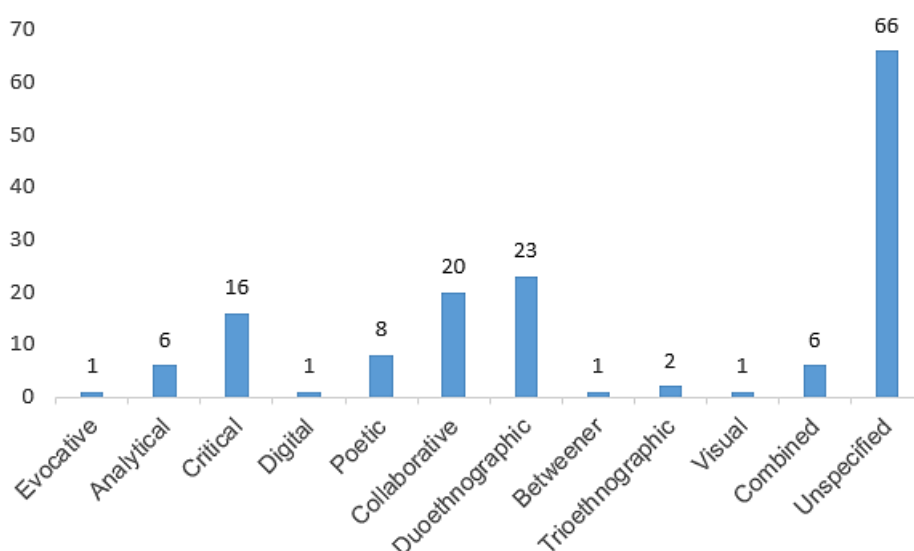

Figure 2. Categories of Autoethnographies Employed in the Reviewed Studies

4.1.2. Autoethnographers' Positionality and Challenges

Autoethnographers' Positionality

Our dataset identified 21 studies explicitly presenting a separate description of their researchers' positionality. These studies utilized autoethnography to examine the social identities of learners, teachers, teacher candidates, teacher educators, teacher researchers, writers, and administrators.

Anand (2024) explored the writing center space through the lens of personal and professional experiences from India to the United States, highlighting how the background as a student of color influenced perceptions and interactions within the writing center and emphasizing the dual nature of the writing center as both a utopian and dystopian space. Additionally, Ulla and Paiz (2024) acknowledged how their own LGBTQ+ identities influenced their understanding and interpretation of queer inquiry in the teaching practice of a queer nonbinary Filipino teacher at a Thai university. Similarly, Ulla et al. (2024) described the various obstacles and instances of prejudice they encountered due to their non-native English use, which heightened their awareness of discriminatory biases imposed upon their linguistic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Besides, Rokita-Jaśkow and Werbińska (2023) used duoethnography from a position of collegiality to explore the subjective nature of emotions, highlighting the collaboration and how their professional relationship influenced their understanding of emotional experiences. In the same vein, Vinte et al. (2023) grounded their methodologies on their experiences as international doctoral students who encountered challenges due to the geographical distance from their homelands. These challenges influenced their research process and highlighted the complexities of conducting transnational research. Furthermore, Yazan et al. (2023) identified themselves as practitioners who navigated multiple countries, languages, and cultures and situated their Collaborative Autoethnography (CAE) at the intersection of teacher identity and transnational communities. Their positionality encompassed their roles as language teachers, teacher educators, researchers, and administrators, reflecting the dynamic and multifaceted nature of their professional identities.

In contrast, Kessler (2023) provided a more neutral description in steps to avoid influencing teacher candidates and unduly coercing them into participating in the study. Whilst this approach aimed to minimize bias, it lacked the depth of reflection seen in the aforementioned studies. Kessler briefly mentioned their role as a teacher educator but did not elaborate on how their background and perspectives might influence the research process. This comparison foregrounds the need for a more comprehensive discussion of positionality to enhance the credibility and depth of autoethnographic research.

Autoethnographers' Challenges

The present review exposed several challenges of conducting autoethnographic studies in ELE - AL. They include excessive focus on the self, lack of critical analysis, over-reliance on personal memories, unethical practices, and misuse of the term 'autoethnography,' as reported by Chang (2008). The dataset from the present review reveal additional challenges.

First, the self-nature of autoethnography led to subjectivity bias due to researchers' interpretations, openness, and familiarity with participants' backgrounds, experiences, stories, perceptions, and feelings. To mitigate this in the design by researchers' preferences, research questions should be derived from literature based on most recurrent themes (Rahmati & Nushi, 2023). Readers might object to the way researchers framed the research questions, giving precedence to collective experiences over individual accounts (Kessler, 2023). Although autoethnographic studies might reveal participants' failures, confrontations, and dilemmas (Yazan, 2019), they could resonate with readers' experiences, prompting them to reflect on their lives and contexts, thereby emphasizing the importance of their personal narratives (Spry, 2001).

Second, generalization was limited as the data represented an individual's perspective (Zhang & Yu, 2024). Researchers encountered ethical constraints in sharing raw data (visual or handwritten) to protect identities (Egitim & Watson, 2024). Developing key research questions could help manage the overwhelming bulk of data (Rahmati & Nushi, 2023).

Third, the lack of formal guidelines for writing autoethnography mattered when researchers were confronted with traumatic experiences. They must balance personal narratives with broader social contexts (Egitim & Watson, 2024). These challenges highlighted the need for clearer guidelines and support systems for researchers undertaking autoethnographic studies (Yazan & Keleş, 2024).

As aforementioned, collaborative autoethnographies, duoethnographies, and critical autoethnographies were most employed in the reviewed dataset. Each of them accommodated its specified challenges which are emphasized in our review. In collaborative autoethnography, challenges included varying degrees of participation and a need to develop counter-narratives (Adamson & Muller, 2024). Duoethnography, providing nuanced perspectives on emotions, might involve an inauthentic reconstruction of dialogues to enhance readability (Rokita-Jaśkow & Werbińska, 2023). For teacher educators (TEs), using critical autoethnographic narratives (CANs) in teacher education programs (TEPs) presented specific challenges. These included TEs' approaches, the integration of CANs in coursework, TEs' feedback, teacher candidates' (TCs) attitudes, TCs' critical approaches, TCs' comfort and selectivity in narrating their experiences, and the ongoing nature of CANs (Yazan, 2019).

In conclusion, a notable qualitative researcher, Dr. Stanley (2019) identified three pitfalls for would-be autoethnographers: (1) overemphasizing creative freedom, leading to a lack of structure and coherence; (2) neglecting to ground the study in relevant sociocultural literature, resulting in a weak conceptual and political context; and (3) focusing too heavily on addressing ethical wrongs, resulting in a compromise to the objectivity and scholarly value of the research.

4.1.3. Justification of Methodological Choices

The reviewed dataset show that 56 publications provided evident rationales for the employment of autoethnographies in their methodological choices. To synthesize these findings, the reviewers identified several recurring themes and significant rationales across the publications. Because of limited space in the review, three most noticeable findings were reported. The following findings highlight the tenets of autoethnographies in ELE-AL regarding deep personal insights, collaboration, transformation, and critical self-reflection, as reflected in several foregrounded works (Keleş, 2022a; Yazan, 2024).

Personal and Emotional Engagement

Autoethnography provided deep insights into individual journeys, such as the emotional experiences in teachers' identity construction (Li, 2024) and the impact of native-speakerist language policies on lecturers' professional development (Lowe, 2024). It served as a powerful self-reflective tool for exploring and integrating identity, emotion, and tension. This included examining identity tensions and transforming teaching practices through self-reflections (Yazan, 2021), selecting story elements in critical narrative writing (Yazan & Keleş, 2024), bridging research and practice for reader accessibility (Canagarajah, 2012), and offering rich descriptions of tensions, emotions, and agency in research contexts (Truong & Nguyen, 2024). Additionally, it connected lived experiences with cultural and political issues relevant to students (Saiphet, 2024).

Collaborative and Transformative Practices

Collaborative autoethnographies underscored shared experiences and collective reflections in understanding social identities, pedagogical practices, and professional development. This review delves into studies that showcased how collaboration enhanced the exploration of complex interactions and fostered a deeper comprehension of individual and collective experiences. For example, Cinaglia et al. (2024) generated emo-reflexivity among teachers and educators with reflections on and re-contextualisations of experiences and emotions through others' perspectives. Ngo et al. (2024) explored empowerment and resilience in interactions between identities and agency among four Asian international doctoral students with personal troubles and community issues. Yazan and Keleş (2024) employed critical autoethnographic narrative (CAN) for extended, scaffolded, and critical narrative writing. The freedom to choose what to include in the story and the right to tell the story in one's voice and style of preference underscored the collaboration. This approach fostered an engagement with the narratives and the exploration of professional identities. Yazan et al. (2023) explored the complications between identity, emotion, agency, and investment in professional lives as transnational TESOL practitioners. López-Gopar et al. (2022) strengthened collaboration in understanding and promoting social justice through analyses of critical or social justice-oriented identities as teacher educators.

Critical and Reflective Practices

Critical autoethnography (CA) served as a critical lens for examining social justice issues and fostering reflective practices. For example, Anand (2024) explored the vulnerable and liminal spaces between self, other, and context and challenges colonizing ethnographic practices, highlighting the efficacy of researchers in mediatory and collaborative spaces. Egitim and Watson (2024) also explored a teacher's experiences through dialogical narratives, focusing on overcoming the negative effects of long-term pedagogical habits through regular self-reflections and examining changes in teaching beliefs, philosophy, and practices. Besides, Egitim and Sandu (2023) reflected on personal experiences and the implementation of Leaderful Classroom Practices to promote intercultural learning. Moreover, Yazan et al. (2023) justified the use of autoethnography by its critical methodological affordances, such as breaking through dominant representations of professional practices and creating new knowledge, exploring the complex relationships between identity, emotion, agency, and investment in the professional lives of transnational TESOL practitioners (TTPs). Furthermore, López-Gopar et al. (2022) analyzed critical or social justice-oriented identities of teacher educators, particularly in relation to the curriculum of BA programs in teaching languages at universities. Yazan (2021) finally reflected on the decision to implement CA in a teacher education course, driven by identity tensions experienced in a multivocal self.

4.1.4. Data Generation and Analysis

Chang (2008) introduced three sources of data generation for autoethnographic research, including personal memories, self-observation, and external data. In the reviewed publications, the researchers mainly used personal memories followed by autobiographies, diaries, journals, and memoirs. The present review revealed a notable trend in the methodical reporting of data generation and analysis procedures in autoethnographic studies (Cinaglia et al., 2024; Ngo et al., 2024). However, most publications reviewed did not provide detailed descriptions of their procedures (Ulla et al., 2024). Instead, the researchers briefly described or mentioned the instruments used to generate data and the methods employed for data analysis (Ulla & Paiz, 2024; Yazan & Keleş, 2024). Furthermore, several studies did not mention their instruments or methods at all (Koné et al., 2024).

Whilst some reviewed studies lacked specific rationales for conceptual or theoretical frameworks (Ulla & Paiz, 2024), others (Anand, 2024; Ngo et al., 2024) employed some, including Activity Theory (Truong & Nguyen, 2024), Critical Theory (Egitim & Watson, 2024), Cultural Historical Activity Theory (Sánchez-Martín, 2020), Decolonial

Theory (Anand, 2024), Ecological Theory (Kamali, 2024), Postcolonial Theory (T. Le & Pham, 2024), Post-Structuralist Theory (Yüzlü & Mumford, 2024), Sociocultural Theory (Ngo et al., 2024), Translanguaging Theory (Yang, 2024), and Community of Inquiry Framework (Muhalim, 2023).

In the following sections, the reviewers described types of data generated from the reviewed studies, and how the generated data were analyzed.

Diaries and Journals

In the reviewed studies, diaries and journals were extensively used as instruments for capturing personal memories and reflections in autoethnographic research. For example, Ngo et al. (2024) employed individual reflections and online discussions to co-generate data, supplemented by meeting memos and e-mail correspondence. Egitim and Watson (2024) utilized journals featuring teaching artifacts and notes, although they expressed concerns about sharing raw data due to identity protection. Li (2024) maintained weekly reflective journals to record work experiences, focusing on emotional labor and identity negotiation. Lowe (2024) collected reflective journals from 2021 which were shared with colleagues to verify memories from over a decade ago. Le and Pham (2024) combined reflective journals, personal essays, and narrative accounts to capture the depth of their autoethnographic experiences.

Regarding data analysis, the reviewed studies employed various methods to interpret the rich data collected through diaries and journals. For instance, Ngo et al. (2024) engaged in a co-analysis and discussions to achieve a deeper understanding of the data. Egitim and Watson (2024) employed in-vivo coding and introspective analysis to examine changes in beliefs and practices, despite not detailing their analysis procedures. Li (2024) re-read and reflected on journal entries to understand the impact of events on teacher identity, using external data for better interpretation. Lowe (2024) contextualized reflective journal data within a larger narrative of his professional life, verifying memories with colleagues. T. Le and Pham (2024) analyzed reflective writings and self-recording videos to capture the nuances of their experiences, providing a detailed and nuanced autoethnographic account. These varied approaches highlighted the flexibility and depth that diaries and journals offered in autoethnographic research, enabling the researchers to document and analyze their personal and professional journeys comprehensively.

Memoirs and Autobiographies

In the reviewed studies, memoirs and autobiographies were utilized as key instruments for generating and analyzing data in autoethnographic research. For example, Cinaglia et al. (2024) followed an eight-step procedure, starting with short narratives and elaborating them into condensed autoethnographies to explore similarities and differences. Kamali (2024) wrote three critical autoethnographic narratives (CANs) before, during, and after a course, using introspective questions and sharing thematic maps with colleagues for coherence. Truong and Nguyen (2024) reflected on overseas learning and EFL writing instruction using guided questions and self-recorded Zoom meetings. Saiphet (2024) reflected on memorable events using PowerPoint slides and supplementary materials.

For data analysis, these studies employed diverse methods to interpret the rich autobiographical data. For instance, Cinaglia et al. (2024) distilled narratives into condensed forms to identify common themes. Kamali (2024) enhanced the rigor of thematic analysis by sharing preliminary maps with colleagues. Truong and Nguyen (2024) used content analysis with pre-determined codes to analyze their reflections. These diverse approaches underlined the flexibility and depth presented by memoirs and autobiographies in autoethnographic research, helping the researchers record and analyze their personal and professional stories substantially.

4.1.5. Ethical Considerations

To develop the scholarship of ethics within ELE-AL, a great number of strategies have been proposed in the reviewed publications. First, Egitim and Watson (2024) highlighted the importance of ethical considerations in autoethnographies, emphasizing privacy, confidentiality, informed consent, and the fair treatment of individuals involved. Regarding relational ethics of vulnerable self-experiences, Song and Wu (2024) focused on the careful inclusion of their experiences and outsiders'. Li (2024) employed continuous self-reflections to regulate the influences of negative emotions. Next, Lowe (2024) omitted specifically identical details and used pseudonymous approaches for protecting identities of relevant individuals in narratives, as also practiced by Ngo et al. (2024) to reduce researcher vulnerability. To enhance the trustworthiness, Li (2024) practiced critical dialogues to refine the coding system at a high agreement rate to minimize biases. T. Le and Pham (2024) immersed themselves into the dualistic role of participant-researchers to balance subjectivity of self-experiences with critical analysis and underscore the multidimensional complexities of autoethnographic research. Anderson (2024) provided readers with

an audit trail as a means to verify findings and retain ethics, as counselled by some qualitative scholars (Braun & Clarke, 2024; Yazan, 2024). As a requirement of educational institutions, some reviewed studies (Koné et al., 2024; Li, 2024) were under a critical examination of the local ethics committee.

4.1.6. Impacts of Autoethnographies on Educational Practices

Autoethnographies significantly impact educational practices by providing deep insights into personal and collective experiences, fostering self-reflections, and enhancing pedagogical approaches. For example, Cinaglia et al. (2024) demonstrated the methods of reinterpreting and reframing emotional labor among teacher educators for a better understanding of institutional contexts and pedagogical practices. Regarding language teacher education practices, some scholars (Uştuk & Özer, 2024; Yazan, 2024) advocated for integrating autoethnographic studies as a pedagogical and participatory design to educate teachers with critical professional identities and social justice to grow teacher agency. Yazan and Keleş (2024) discussed the potential of critical autoethnographic narratives to help teachers understand the uncertain nature of identity construction. Yazan (2019) foregrounded the role of autoethnography in excavating identities and promoting equitable educational experiences. Hillman et al. (2024) highlighted the transformative potential of addressing emotion labor through collaborative autoethnography, fostering a more equitable classroom space. Le and Pham (2024) employed autoethnography to raise educators' and researchers' awareness of cultural elements for effective teaching practices. Ulla and Paiz (2024), through an amalgamation of auto-ethnomethodology and queer theory, developed a video-based queer-informed language teaching framework for a safe community of learning foreign language for all gender identities. Collectively, these studies underscored the transformative power of autoethnography in enhancing educational practices and fostering a deeper understanding of teacher identity and pedagogy.

4.2. Discussion

Autoethnographers face challenges like subjectivity biases and ethical constraints, but the inclusion of researchers' positionality enhances credibility. Methodological choices reveal that autoethnography provides deep insights into identity and fosters collaboration. Data generation often involves diaries, journals, and memoirs, with analyses requiring detailed descriptions. Ethical considerations are crucial to maintaining trust. Autoethnographies impact educational practices by providing transformative insights into personal and professional experiences, promoting reflection, and enhancing pedagogical approaches.

Inspired by Keleş's (2022a) article, the reviewers took a more detailed stance to explore how autoethnography as a research method contributed to the area of ELE-AL. More specifically, the reviewers sought to answer how 151 studies that were published in peer-reviewed ELE-AL journals and edited book chapters from 2000 to August 2024 have employed autoethnography as a method of qualitative inquiry. To that end, the reviewers particularly focused on how such pre-determined aspects as autoethnographers' positionality and challenges, justifications of methodological choices, procedures of data generation and analysis, strategies for ethical considerations, and impacts of autoethnographies on educational practices were explored in those studies. The present review aimed to identify these five promising aspects of using autoethnographies to contribute to the ongoing discussions of avant-garde qualitative research methodologies. The following section discusses each of these newfound aspects.

First, addressing the autoethnographers' positionality and challenges for methodological rigor aforementioned, the researchers enhanced the credibility and impact of their works (Johnson & Rose, 2024). In agreement with Yazan (2024), and his mentee, Keleş (2022a), this review underscores that would-be autoethnographers should provide methodical guidelines and necessary supplements to mitigate ethical considerations. Additionally, integrating autoethnographic insights with broader sociocultural literature strengthened the conceptual framework of these studies, providing a more robust understanding of the educational phenomena being examined. Moreover, the use of autoethnography in exploring sensitive and vulnerable experiences offered valuable opportunities for transformative learning and social change (Saiphet, 2024). By sharing personal narratives, researchers might foster empathy and intercultural awareness among readers, contributing to a more inclusive and reflective educational environment.

Second, the review offers a laudatory statement about the flexibility and depth of self-experiences and reflections on identity, emotion, and tension (Buckley, 2015; Hager, 2022; Yazan, 2024). Given that, autoethnography fostered a more nuanced understanding of complex social phenomena (Edwards, 2021). This approach enriches the research process and enhanced the relevance and impact of the findings. Moreover, its collaborative and transformative potential underscores social justice and inclusive educational environments. By critically examining experiences of

prejudice and injustice, autoethnographies contribute to more equitable and empathetic teaching practices. In an interview conducted by Doctor Hager in 2022, Professor Grenier, a qualitative methodologist with expertise in autoethnography, provided her rationales for methodological choices in her autoethnographic study. In the literature, she found the gaps of scant personal accounts. Despite reviewing several quantitative studies with big samples and ethnographic studies of smaller groups of people, she could not obtain the same depth of self-experiences. Given the metaphor of a study as various dots, her autoethnographic research was one dot along with others (quantitative, ethnographic, or case study) for a holistic picture of research. On top of beneficial propositions in reviewed publication, as indicated in the findings, the lack of methodical elaborations in the reviewed methodology section could be due to the requirement of limited words in publications by international journals or publishers (Yazan, 2024). Therefore, future studies should investigate the identities of novice qualitative researchers who used autoethnography as a research method in their research projects.

Third, the findings illustrate the flexibility of data generation and analysis in autoethnographic research. This nature allows autoethnographers to tailor their analytical approaches to the specific needs of their studies, enhancing the depth and relevance of their findings. In Hager's (2022) interview, Grenier reasoned that most of autoethnographers wrote autobiographies (simply story telling) rather than autoethnographies, depending on who the readers were, which might have induced the lack of methodical accounts of the reviewed publications. This shortage could hinder would-be autoethnographers in their references. Unlike autobiography, autoethnography was a critical, intentional, and systematic investigation that linked self-experiences back to theory and literature (Anderson, 2006).

Fourth, these findings highlighted the critical role of ethical considerations, such as protecting the privacy and confidentiality of individuals, to maintain trust and integrity in the research process. The emphasis on relational ethics, therefore, altering identifying details, further foregrounded the importance of safeguarding the identities of those involved. Moreover, the strategies employed to enhance the trustworthiness of interpretations, for example, refining coding systems and triangulating data sources, demonstrated the commitment to methodological rigor in autoethnographic research. Winkler (2017) argued that the relationship between the autoethnographer and others must be addressed from an ethical aspect. Winkler strengthened that autoethnographers should critically reflect on their responsibilities and consider not to harm others involved. In the similar vein, with a proposal of six thinking points for consideration, namely (im)possibility of anonymity and confidentiality, the ownership of stories, informed consent, member checking, no harms to others, and no harm to self, Sparkes (2024) indicated that autoethnographers required time to address those ethical challenges in a principled manner.

Finally, the current review presents many critical points, as indicated by Professor Yazan (2024), of doing autoethnography in ELE-AL, such as the transformation, empathetic self-reflections on identities, self-experiences, and social ideologies. Moreover, this method has been proven efficient in teacher professional development and pedagogical sense-making enhancement. Considering the findings aforementioned, the reviewers (certainly together with Yazan, Keleş, and other autoethnographers) believe that "this innovative and transformative methodology will gain more traction in research knowledge generation" (Yazan, 2024, p. 102). This review recommends that would-be autoethnographers should deeply and critically explore the types, the positionality, challenges, methodological justifications, instruments, and methods to generate and analyze their autoethnographies, strategies to protect ethical considerations, and impacts of their autoethnographies on educational practices so that they may find the most appropriate voice and affordances to tell their stories in their own way. As language learners, users, teachers, and teacher educators, these scholars may incorporate literary devices and artistic tools in their academic work to bring their emotions to the fore, voice their concerns, and narrate their unique stories which would otherwise remain unheard.

Contributions

This review addresses key aspects reinforcing autoethnographies' credibility and rigor. Autoethnographers' elucidated descriptions of positionality and the challenges they encountered enhances the trustworthiness of their work. The methodical guidelines and necessary supplements (e.g., audit trails of data generation and full accounts of data analysis) are crucial to navigate ethical considerations and maintain trustworthiness. This review provides novice autoethnographers with valuable insights and practical guidelines to seek their authentic voices and methodological approaches for narrating their self-experiences effectively.

Limitations and Recommendations

Given its limitations identified below, the current review highlights some needs for further research. First, the literature retrieval method excluded studies published in conference or workshop proceedings and (un)published theses or dissertations. The future reviews, therefore, can extend it with more inclusions.

Second, this integrative literature review reflected more on qualitative aspects. Hence, the future reviews can focus on other types of review (e.g., scoping or systematic review with meta-analysis) with quantitative lens to triangulate the findings.

Third, the current review focused on two areas of ELE and AL. Thus, a more comprehensive and systematic investigation could shed light on the specific conventions and expectations of multi-disciplines in social sciences, further informing pedagogical practices and helping novice researchers better prepare for doing further studies with this method in the respective fields.

Final, as echoed in previous studies (Keleş, 2022a; Yazan, 2024) and the current review, most of reviewed publications did not explicitly and sufficiently provide the rationales for their specific types selected in their works, the researcher positionality, procedures of data generation and analysis, and strategies for ethical considerations. Consequently, the reviewers call for more would-be autoethnographers to write a methodical account of those features so that their potential academic audiences could immerse themselves into self-experiences of the researcher and others in a social phenomenon.

5. CONCLUSION

Over the past two decades, the use of autoethnography as a research method in ELE-AL has garnered significant scholarly interest. This method has seen substantial growth and development, making it crucial to review and consolidate the knowledge generated thus far. To facilitate this, the reviewers adopted an integrative literature review method to collect, manually code, and analyze 151 publications based on predetermined criteria. The goal was to observe how published studies used autoethnography as a method of qualitative inquiry in ELE-AL for almost a quarter of a century.

As for the methodological trend in ELE-AL, the qualitative analysis in the current review shows that the substantial number of publications has been significantly increasing over the past 24 years. Apart from research without a specified type of autoethnography, the most investigated publications used duoethnography, collaborative autoethnography, and critical autoethnography. As for the implications for language education, this review suggests that it is necessary for learners, teachers, teacher educators, and relevant stakeholders to use autoethnography as a research method to extensively demonstrate the applicability of this method in ELE-AL.

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