

# Chapter 5

## Trustworthy Design of Analytic Autoethnography as a Research Method

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The author discusses using analytic autoethnography, a research design method that combines naturalistic inquiry for trustworthiness. This chapter details the purpose and methodology of analytic autoethnography, emphasizing methodological triangulation through data collection and analysis, including semi-structured interviews, reflexive journals, and member-checked critical incidents. By employing an inductive approach in data analysis, distinct themes and categories emerged. The quality and trustworthiness of the research depend on the methodology and design decisions made. The chapter underscores the significance of developing a reliable design for analytic autoethnography that aligns with critical theory, linguistics, and language education, and supports novice researchers.*

### **BACKGROUND**

My idea to conduct analytic auto-ethnographic research originated from critiquing two articles: “What Culture? Which Culture? Cross-Cultural Factors in Language Learning” by Prodromou (1992) and “Multiple Identities: The Turkish Perspective” by Atay and Ece (2009). The first article focused on Greek students, while the second focused on Turkish teachers’ identities. Curious about the experiences of EFL

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(English as a Foreign Language) students in Greece and Turkey due to their shared history and politics, I decided to co-construct knowledge by elucidating Turkish and International teachers' roles and their perception of teaching rationale at a private Pre-kindergarten–Grade 12 Laboratory School in Ankara, Turkey. I followed Kvale's (1996) study design to accomplish this. One of my original interview questions was "What is wrong with learning English primarily from a Turkish teacher?", after which I revised my questions to ensure an unbiased approach. To accurately portray the participants' perspectives, I conducted interviews to capture their views without any constraints. The initial findings from this small research project contributed to my overall understanding. Upon analyzing the interview data and conducting critical research, I revised my perception of the relationship between institutional practices. In a yearlong study, I sought answers to questions such as which theories support my understanding within a theoretical framework and how that framework would support valid research. Through analytic auto-ethnography, I could critically examine my role as a researcher, its origin, biases, and values, and how I relate to other educators/researchers in similar contexts.

My thinking shifted from the initial premise, influenced by Phillipson (1992, p. 54), who identified power imbalances as central in ELT (English language teaching). Phillipson (1992, p. 54) referred to it as "linguistic imperialism" and argued that English teachers play a predominant role in assimilating linguistically and culturally diverse students to Anglo norms. Pennycook emphasized the relationship of English with class, education, and culture, and how it serves as a gatekeeper to wealth and prestige. Zeichner and Liston (1987) highlighted the significance of context in educators' personal and professional development. Bourdieu's (1977) theory of reflexivity further shaped my perspective on the influence of family, education, language, and social perception in shaping one's sense of place.

According to Giroux (1988), critical theory identifies the inquirer's voice as that of the transformative intellectual. Specifically, from a postcolonialist perspective, I investigate unequal power relations created by ideological distortion in discourse. This discourse constructs topics in a particular way, presenting a biased view of the world and aiming to control reality and others. Foucault and Deleuze (1977, p. 206–207) argue that theory and practice form networks and relay actions. Burrell (1998) observes that, for Foucault, power lies in interconnected relationships rather than in things. In my dual role as a researcher and participant, I can rewrite how I am represented in academic research, aiming to challenge dominant forms of power through relational networks.

I questioned participants in two separate interviews to understand their perspectives on ELT. Their insights, along with mine, helped me achieve ontological authenticity. This implies growth in participants' understanding and my progressive subjectivity (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 248).

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