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# TRENDS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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# TRENDS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION

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## Introduction

In-country considerations of policy and practice affect issues of English language education (Hamied, 2012). This statement finds evidence in a wide array of research, which ranges from the interplay of the national language and English teaching (Dardjowidjojo, 2000), curriculum and its implementation (Madya, 2007), English and multilingual education (Zein, 2019), and English and language policy in Indonesia's superdiverse context (Zein, 2020). Those topics have called for in-depth explorations using the best methods that qualitative research can offer. However, literature pertinent to trends in qualitative research in English language education in Indonesia is barely available.

The rise of qualitative research in English language education worldwide can be traced back to 1992–1997 when only 10% of qualitative research was identified from four core journals in the field (Lazaraton, 2000). The number increased to 22% in 10 core journals during 1997–2006 (Benson et al., 2009), and almost 29% in three major journals during 2006–2015 (Tojo & Takagi, 2017). Recently, 47% of qualitative research was identified in journal articles published by three Thai Scopus-indexed journals between 2019 and 2021 (Phoocharoensil, 2022). In the Indonesian context, 52.8% was identified in journal articles published by four Indonesian journals in 2020 (Mali & Timotius, 2023), indicating a growing interest in employing qualitative research to obtain elaborative and deeper understanding of English language education in the nation.

Amid the rising worldwide trend of qualitative research, investigation into how the research is conducted in the Indonesian context is essential. Investigation into qualitative research methods in the Indonesian context is scarce, even though qualitative research appears to dominate the research landscape of English language education (see Mali & Timotius, 2023). The importance is further highlighted by the fact that there are ongoing concerns about the use of shaky rationales as a foundation for selecting research, and methodologies coupled with unclear steps of data collection approaches, which have been hinted at by Zein et al. (2020), after they consulted nearly five hundred academic papers during the period of 2011–2019 and reviewed 108 of them.

This chapter, therefore, aims to examine extensive literature to explore current trends in qualitative research into English language education in the Indonesian context, focusing on the common themes, research practices, and research ethics. These foci are chosen to recognize research topics that are perfect to be investigated using qualitative methods and how qualitative research' simultaneous, nonlinear, and iterative (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) characteristics can be put into practice by considering research ethics. Such an exploration can inform Indonesian scholars about qualitative research practices from which to learn.

Through a systematic literature review, this chapter includes academic articles published in reputable national and international journals, books, and book chapters so that the trends being looked at are highly relevant. The review resulted in 202 qualitative studies, of which 25 Sinta-indexed Indonesian journals published 130, 15 Scopus-indexed journals published 67, and five prominent publishers published five book chapters.

The chapter will present several relevant sections. Following the introduction is the theoretical framework section, which presents the theoretical underpinnings and approaches to qualitative research. Then, a section on current research on English language education in Indonesia is presented to investigate trends pertinent to the common themes, research practices, and research ethics issues in qualitative research drawn from the extensive literature. Finally, a conclusion section, which puts forward ideas for further improvements and future directions, will bring this chapter to a close.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### *On Qualitative Research*

Qualitative research is neither aimed at generalizing facts nor solely seeking or emphasizing objectivity as understood through positivism. Instead, it lays principles for the exploration and investigation of relevant issues in an in-depth manner. This distinction stems from dissimilar paradigms underlying the quantitative and qualitative research, which serves as the foundation for establishing the research goal, the nature of data needed, and the techniques for collecting and analyzing (see Croker, 2009; Phakiti et al., 2018). Qualitative research grounds constructivism, which believes that individuals construct unique views of the world, resulting in different conceptualizations and interpretations of reality that depend on time and particular situations. This fundamental conviction dissents from quantitative research, which stands on positivism, which believes that truths about reality are universally relevant to all groups and situations, irrespective of the context (Croker, 2009).

The primary emphasis of qualitative research is to examine the participants in their natural setting, namely how they perceive and engage with a phenomenon within a particular moment and context, counting the different interpretations it finds for them (Croker, 2009). Data that allow for exploring causes and changes throughout time that are directly related to particular phenomena (Schwandt & Gates, 2016) are fundamental. Hence, the qualitative researcher often conducts research in a particular setting (a case study) whose representativeness is uncertain and likely tricky to quantify, resulting in the generalizability of such findings becoming unknown (Bryman, 1988).

During data collection, unlike quantitative research where the researcher takes the role of an observer who is detached from the social environment (Bryman, 1988), qualitative researchers need to put themselves in close relationships with their studies (Rossman & Rallis, 2003) to perceive the environment from the participants' perspective. This condition

naturally entails subjectivity as researchers engage with social spheres, carrying multiple presumptions about human perceptions and realities (Croker, 2009; Lew et al., 2018). The validity of qualitative research is not guaranteed by mitigating or regulating personal biases as in the quantitative research (Bryman, 1988). Instead, qualitative researchers should reverse four aspects: how the “inquiry practice” is carried out, whether appropriate data collection and analysis are selected and implemented, how conclusions are drawn and data are interpreted, and how these aspects enable researchers to gain meaningful insight and knowledge.

Data analysis in qualitative research is done through the simultaneous, nonlinear, and iterative process of interpretation (Rossmann & Rallis, 2003). Researchers continuously transition between data collection, analysis, and interpretation until the data are saturated and new data no longer contribute to their understanding of a topic (Croker, 2009). The interpretation process relies on studying the data and leveraging multiple viewpoints (Richards, 2009b), which provides a comprehensive description that explicates and characterizes the participants and the research setting – comprising the meticulous observations of the researchers, who subsequently incorporate their thoughts and views. Researchers must critically evaluate their data and classify the corresponding idea to identify patterns of practices and perception (Lew et al., 2018). Thus, the level of detail provided in the research report should enable the readers to visualize the research environment and evaluate its applicability to their situations.

### *Qualitative Methods in English Language Education*

Although qualitative research does not adhere to a rigid formula, it is systematic and rigorous (Croker, 2009) as a continuous exchange between theoretical concepts, data collected, and the researcher’s analysis is pivotal. The following paragraphs elaborate on some prominent data collection techniques in qualitative research in English language education to provide a clearer picture of the methods used and possible variations.

#### *Observation*

Observation directly examines actual occurrences within a real-life setting, which requires researchers to adopt the practice of making the familiar strange because familiarity with the research setting before making the observation will facilitate a thick description (Cowie, 2009). While observing, field notes help accommodate the researcher’s written notes and recordings describing the actions of the participants and offer the freedom to record details without being bound by specific inquiries (Copland, 2018). As a guide, researchers may divide pages in a notebook into three columns to record time and location, field notes that document individuals present and the interactions taking place (Cowie, 2009), and analytical memos and comments on the field notes that are often made once the observation has concluded.

After observation, Cowie (2009) proposes three steps of the interpretative process to analyze data: “description”, “making sense” of the observations, and “argument”, where the entire experience is elucidated in the final report for the reader. This way, researchers provide a clear distinction between the description of the research process and the interpretation of said process. Detailed explanations should also be provided for poignant situations to incorporate relevant participant quotations to support researchers’ interpretations. Finally, theoretical ideas must be efficiently incorporated into researchers’ argumentation when presenting the findings.

### *Interview*

An interview is considered the epitome of qualitative research since soliciting individuals to discuss their personal experiences and perspectives (Prior, 2018) has the potential to delve deeply into individuals' beliefs, perceptions, and motives (Richards, 2009a). Based on the interviewee, an interview is classified into survey and (auto)biographical interviewing (Prior, 2018), while based on the category, Richards (2009a) classified interviews as structured, semi-structured, and open interviews. In survey interviewing, the interviewee serves as a representative sample of a target group. They are asked the same questions in the same order and manner. On the other hand, semi-structured and open interviews require researchers to carefully and flexibly design practical questions that correspond to the research objectives (Prior, 2018). These types of interviews are applicable in (auto)biographical and narrative interviews which are smaller in scale compared to extended life-story interviews.

An interview guide outlining significant subjects to be addressed is essential in conducting the interviews (Richards, 2009a). Researchers should establish the interview objectives to categorize the questions under relevant subjects and organize issues to allow for a natural progression before the interview trial is done. After recruiting, confirming, and arranging the participation of the interviewee, researchers must actively listen, document information, and make written records during the interview while ensuring that they keep control and facilitate a natural flow of conversation (Prior, 2018). Afterward, a concise overview of the critical points and an outline of any additional questions that will be pursued in future interviews should be made.

In analyzing and interpreting the data, a quick read of the interview transcript and jotting down as many topics as possible facilitate the identification of emerging categories before resorting to meticulous and analytical coding practice to focus on essential themes. It is strongly advised to use a diagrammatic presentation of findings and illustrative vignettes in the elaboration to facilitate comprehension of the interrelationships between topics and their alignment with the research objective (Richards, 2009a).

### *Introspective Verbal Reports*

Introspective verbal reports extract information regarding cognitive processes (Bowles, 2018) since the method can investigate the participants' thought processes deeply (McKay, 2009). Qualitative research utilizes two types of verbal reports: concurrent reports, also known as think-aloud, which are made by participants while completing a task, and retrospective reports, also known as stimulated recall, which are made sometime after the task is completed (Bowles, 2018; McKay, 2009). In the think-aloud method, researchers prompt participants to articulate their cognitive processes while engaging in language processing during actual problem-solving activities or learning tasks. In contrast, stimulated recall involves presenting participants with a stimulus, usually an audio or video clip of themselves performing the task, to aid in their recollection of their thoughts during task completion (McKay, 2009).

Stimulated recall is commonly conducted through spoken activities, although it is also feasible to conduct it in writing. The primary concern regarding the validity of stimulated recall lies in its non-veridic susceptibility, whereby participants may not accurately recollect their thoughts during task completion (McKay, 2009). There are two ways to respond to

this concern. First, it is recommended that the delay between task completion and stimulated recall be kept short, preferably less than 48 hours (Bowles, 2018). Second, the influence of memory should be minimized by providing a strong stimulus, such as a video recording of the participant performing the task. This way, participants can accurately report their thoughts at the time of task completion rather than their current thoughts at the time of reporting (Bowles, 2018; McKay, 2009).

### *Discourse Completion Task (DCT)*

DCT offers valuable insights into speakers' pragmalinguistic understanding of the techniques and linguistic structures used to carry out communicative acts and their sociopragmatic awareness of the contextual factors that influence specific strategic and linguistic decisions (Woodfield, 2008). This method collects data in contexts and speech acts that are challenging to observe in a natural setting (Hashimoto & Nelson, 2020).

During DCT participants are given a situational scenario to respond to using pragmatic features in writing or speaking (Hashimoto & Nelson, 2020). When DCT is conducted in written form, participants get several concise situational descriptions, each followed by a brief discussion that contains a blank space for the speech act being analyzed. Participants are instructed to provide appropriate responses for the provided situation (Woodfield, 2008). These elicitation measures should prompt replies that are similar to what participants would supply in real-world conversation (Woodfield, 2008). This strategy involves participants responding to a hypothetical interlocutor that may impact the participants' choice of politeness techniques in the written speech acts (Woodfield, 2008). Consequently, DCT data demonstrated limited semantic formulas and less comprehensive negotiation (Hashimoto & Nelson, 2020).

### *Action Research*

Action research (AR) in English language education is often used to solve local problems within the classrooms, schools, or education organizations settings with the primary objective of improving the current practice (*Action*) based on a reflective strategy to close the divide between the ideal and the actual (*Research*) (Banegas & Consoli, 2020; Burns, 2015). "The AR process itself has been characterized as a spiral or cycle of movements between action and research" (Burns, 2015, p. 290) comprising four stages: planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Cohen et al., 2007). Researchers may initiate a new cycle of refinement based on continuous reflection and review throughout the stages (Banegas & Consoli, 2020) until the intended change is achieved.

AR begins with a question focusing on the local problem(s). Then, in the planning stage, the researchers project the direction of their research activities and provide an outline of their accomplishments, aims, and objectives. In the acting stage, researchers put the planning into action while undergoing the observation stage. Researchers can collect data in this stage using different research methods such as reflective journals, observation and field notes, learning and teaching artifacts, interviews, and survey questionnaires (Banegas & Consoli, 2020). Triangulation may be involved in analyzing data in the reflecting stage due to multiple data sources since deeper analysis may involve interactions with and elicitation of reflective comments from colleagues to support the interpretation of the data.

### *Ethnography*

Initially employed in history and anthropology to investigate communities and their social practices that were relatively unknown or difficult to access, ethnography has now been adopted in various fields to comprehend unique aspects of the social lives of individuals and social groups (Wei, 2020). In applied linguistics and language education, Roberts (2006) warned that ethnography may be reduced to a mere collection of techniques without a clear disciplinary framework since many qualitative studies are frequently mislabelled as ethnography without proper attention to the fundamental paradigm or methods involved. Thus, researchers must be mindful of whether they are “doing ethnography”, having an “ethnographic perspective”, or “using ethnographic tools” (Green & Bloome, 2004).

In ethnography, researchers must possess a distinct interest in a particular cultural practice of a social group or social phenomenon before conducting a long-term study by fully engaging in daily social interaction to closely study the practice or phenomenon informed by theories from anthropology or sociology. During the immersion, researchers gather information on how community members interpret their own practices or social phenomena. This evidence is later used to inform others about the significance of specific practices or phenomena within the community under investigation. Yet, when the same theoretical and methodological principles as a full ethnography were employed but less comprehensively, the research is said to have an ethnographic perspective. Further, when researchers only use ethnographic techniques, with or without guidance from social and cultural theories, it is said that the research uses ethnographic tools (Green & Bloome, 2004).

In ethnography, data collection is an active process where ethnographers assume the role of the social group that they study rather than simply observing and documenting passively. It makes ethnography a specific and subjective interpretation of the accounts made by the ethnographer (Wei, 2020). As ethnography encompasses many data collection methods and its analysis emphasizes the interconnections between diverse elements (Wei, 2020), it is expected to encounter elaborate depictions and extensive deliberations on individual, emotional, and spontaneous conduct and activities during specific events that are considered captivating.

### *Narrative Inquiry*

Narrative inquiry is the study of people’s experiences through the lens of stories (Caine et al., 2013). Researchers construct narratives of individual experiences, gather and narrate stories about people’s lives, and describe the lives of individuals through seven steps: defining a phenomenon, selecting a participant or participants, gathering participant narratives by listening to their accounts, gathering additional field texts, recounting the story, working closely with the participant(s) throughout the entire process, composing the story, and verifying the story’s credibility (Creswell, 2012). At each stage of a narrative inquiry, Clandinin et al. (2007) emphasized researchers should ask eight inquiries: why the study is essential, what the researchers inquire about, what specific methods are being used to study the phenomenon, how the analysis and interpretation are processed, how the narrative inquirer is positioned, what information is known about the phenomenon, and ethical considerations.

Narrative inquiry is much more than just narrating stories; it involves paying close attention to how narrative conceptualizations are understood as phenomena and methods and how the three commonplaces in the inquiry process: temporality, sociality, and place

(Clandinin et al., 2007) interact with one another. It means that narrative inquirers must be attentive to the fact that people always have a past, present, and future; people’s perceptions of the events under study may be influenced by their personal and social circumstances, and each place affects people’s experiences.

### **Current Research Issues**

A systematic review called “Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis” (PRISMA) was employed to present the results of this study. An initial database search was conducted by identifying English language education journals in Indonesia that Sinta indexes resulted in 25 journals that are not indexed by Scopus. Then, a Scopus database search was conducted using the Boolean operation of “Indonesia” AND “qualitative” AND “English education” and “Indonesia” AND “qualitative” AND “English teaching” using document type limitation to journal, book, and book chapter. This search generated 70 articles from 15 Scopus-indexed international journals and seven book chapters from six publishers. A careful search of qualitative research in Indonesia was performed by examining the articles’ titles, authors, abstracts, and paper accessibility. This step resulted in 133 articles from the Indonesian journals, 67 from the international journals, and five book chapters. Further meticulous readings and examinations were done following the inclusion and exclusion criteria (Table 38.1). They resulted in 202 research papers (130 articles from Indonesian journals, 67 from Scopus-indexed journals, and five book chapters).

Content analysis was employed to analyze the data, enabling categorization and comparison (Fraenkel et al., 2012). The articles were initially categorized using Microsoft Excel into Indonesian and international journals. Then, coding was done to identify the articles’ topics, data collection techniques, and data analysis. Single-spreadsheet data extraction was prepared to evaluate the studies’ relevance to this review. A comment space was opened to note down reviews from both reviewers. The following subsections present the trends in qualitative research in Indonesia, focusing on common themes, data collection and analysis, and research ethics.

### *Common Themes*

From 202 qualitative studies published during 2018–2022, the topic of teaching strategy is extensively investigated, with 66 studies identified. Other topics included changes in goals of English teaching and learning (45 studies), teachers’ quality (24 studies), native-speakerism, bilingualism, and multilingualism (22 studies), approaches to teaching and learning (16 studies), communicative competence (16 studies), and curriculum and assessments (13

*Table 38.1* Inclusion and exclusion criteria

<i>Inclusion</i>	<i>Exclusion</i>
Qualitative research articles on ELT in the Indonesian context published from 2018 to 2022	Conceptual article; Studies without collecting research data; Mixed-methods
Written in English by either Indonesian or non-Indonesian researchers	Written in languages other than English

studies). This finding suggests that investigating different teaching strategies to enhance student learning remains the primary emphasis of English language education in Indonesia. At the same time, concerns about the quality of English teachers in Indonesia are also highlighted, particularly the fact that teachers have differing levels of English language proficiency (Wulyani et al., 2019), with many of them possibly falling short of the proficiency threshold adequate for successful English teaching (Renandya et al., 2018). The superdiversity of Indonesia also adds up the complexity of English language education in Indonesia, which gives rise to various dynamics related to native speakerism, bilingualism, and multilingualism to explore possible signposts to navigate alternative goals (Zein, 2020).

Research about teaching strategy was detected in 2018 with five studies and gradually increased until reaching its peak in 2021 with 23 studies, 11 of which are about the use of technology. Overall, observation became the most used data collection technique, either as a single (8 studies) or a part of multiple data collection techniques (11 studies). The observation was mostly coupled with interviews (13 studies), while the interviews appeared to be used as a single method (9 studies) and as a part of multiple data collection techniques (10 studies). It makes interviews the second most used method in researching teaching strategies. On the opposite side, stimulated recall became the least used method as it only appeared in two studies.

Another least popular method was grounded theory, found in Nursanti (2021), who investigated translanguaging as a classroom strategy. Findings were generated by providing explanations grounded in the data collected through interviews to develop and relate categories to compose a visual model that portrays the general explanation. This idea sounds suitable for studying translanguaging, which is emerging in qualitative research and is pertinent to native speakerism, bilingualism, and multilingualism in Indonesia. The number of such studies fluctuated during 2018–2022. Six and three studies were detected in 2018 and 2019, respectively, and one study was identified in 2020. Yet, the topic re-emerged in 2021 and 2022 with six studies each year. The predominant research method is a case study, mainly employing observation and interviews. Distinct research was shown by Emilia and Hamied (2022), who employed ethnography, and Zein (2018), who demonstrated a multivocal ethnography – a variation of the ethnography study. As ethnography requires researchers to engage with community members fully to study the phenomenon closely (Green & Bloome, 2004), both studies incorporate technology as one of their ways of being immersed in their targeted society and collecting data. They utilized Zoom recordings and Google form questionnaires of their online classes (Emilia & Hamied, 2022) and video clips of classroom practices (Zein, 2018). The use of technology instead of direct physical interaction in ethnographic research deserves attention, considering that social lives in the digital era are changing social practices, which are the core of ethnographic research.

### *Research Practice*

While specific research design under the qualitative approach failed to be mentioned in the majority of the studies, some research designs are mentioned, such as grounded theory (1 study), stimulated recall (2 studies), ethnography (3 studies), action research (6 studies), and case study (18 studies). Nevertheless, no discourse completion task (DCT) was identified. It could indicate that the method might still be unfamiliar to Indonesian researchers.

As the most used design, case study was widely used in the investigation of topics, ranging from pedagogy (e.g., Astuti & Lammers, 2020), teachers' quality (e.g., Nuraeni & Heryatun,

2021), multilingualism (Martin-Anatias, 2018), to intercultural aspect (e.g., Munandar & Newton, 2021). On the other hand, all the action research that appears in the Indonesian context discussed teaching strategies to improve learning. For example, Ariyanto et al.'s (2018) study elaborated on how YouTube videos can be implemented to improve students' speaking proficiency. Following qualitative research's in-depth and explorative nature, the researchers employed multiple data collections through interviews, questionnaires, pre-tests, photographs, and post-tests to justify their findings.

The majority (60.5%) of the research reviewed in this study employed multiple data collection techniques using multiple research instruments. With 32 different data collection techniques and 12 different research instruments identified, only 39.5% of the 202 studies employed a single data collection technique. Such research was related to linguistics analysis, such as discourse analysis, rhetoric in writing, language ideology, semiotic analysis, or studies focusing on literature review. The increasing number of researchers who employed multiple data collection techniques indicates that researchers' understanding of the basic principles of qualitative research as exploratory and in-depth research is improving.

Interviews and observations have become the most-used techniques in collecting data, among other techniques such as textual analysis (e.g., Sulistiyo et al., 2021), portfolio analysis (e.g., Utami & Prestridge, 2018) and literature review (e.g., Iswandari & Ardi, 2022). 116 out of the 202 reviewed research employed interviews to collect data. Interviews were widely used to investigate the teaching strategies (Amalia & Rodliyah, 2019), linguistics in the English language education (Kusmanto & Widodo, 2022), teachers' quality (e.g., Nue & Manara, 2022), multilingualism (e.g., Irham et al., 2022), and the learner factors (e.g., Lestari & Hardiyanti, 2020). Variations in the employment of the interviews included structured interviews (see Susanto et al., 2020), semi-structured interviews (e.g., Astuti & Barratt, 2018), and open or in-depth interviews (see Lee & Yin, 2021).

While interview guides, field notes, and questionnaires are the most-used data collection tools, it is interesting to notice that reflective practice employing reflective checklists (e.g., Ashadi et al., 2022), reflective journals (e.g., Hajar et al., 2020), and reflective notes (Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018), are also emerging as data collection tools. Reflections like this may entail personal biases. Therefore, researchers must be careful with the validity of the data by ensuring that multiple data collection techniques and tools are strategically employed as fundamental validity evidence of the research.

The diversified data collection techniques and tools can counter concerns about subjectivity and personal bias, as Zacharias (2019) has shown. In her study, Zacharias (2019) employed student reflection journals as external data in her autoethnography study about native speakers among teachers because she realized that data from self-narrative writing alone was insufficient. The purpose of the students' reflection journals was to examine experiences and broaden comprehension beyond the spontaneous responses of her students during classroom interactions as one of her sources of reflection. Data from the students' reflection journals completed data collected from her teaching journal, self-narrative reflections on PowerPoint slides she made, and field texts that encompass her personal memory. In this way, her autoethnography study considers both the internal and external data to balance the point of view of the study.

Another way of ensuring the validity of qualitative research is through data analysis, as portrayed in Zein's (2022b) study. While doing the iterative data analysis, data collected from the interview transcripts and reflective journals were coded, involving a second coder to

ensure code comparability. It was then assessed for inter-rater reliability. Then, the data was triangulated by redefining the codes in a continuous comparative manner to determine the characteristics of the themes, sequencing and arranging the codes to identify interconnected categories, and giving frequency to the codes to indicate the recurring occurrence. After completing the triangulation, the data were classified and organized before reaching the next stage – the verification and validation process. Finally, the data and findings were presented to the participants for clarification.

The way data analysis was done in Munandar and Newton's (2021) case study is also noteworthy due to their compelling elucidation of the thematic analysis procedure. All necessary justifications and arguments pertinent to the theoretical framework and research procedure were comprehensively presented concisely. Likewise, substantial considerations employed throughout the data analysis process were mentioned, along with their relevance in addressing the research objectives. The emergence of data triangulation in their study indicates the researchers' awareness of validity issues in qualitative research that partly depends on researchers' critical reflection on their personal and theoretical biases (Phakiti et al., 2018). Such an explanation provided by Munandar and Newton (2021) can be a model for many Indonesian researchers as it reflects characteristics of data analysis in qualitative research, which are interpretive, explorative, and simultaneous.

Regardless of the pivotal role of researchers' rationales in analyzing data to achieve the explorative and in-depth nature of qualitative research, this study found that a great deal of articles published in Indonesian journals do not provide researchers' arguments for using the qualitative approach, let alone the rationales for analyzing the data. This situation may lead to the absence of in-depth exploration of the findings and their implications. Such data presentations and discussions, coupled with a weak argument underlying the selection of research methods, support Zein et al.'s (2020) concerns about the thin arguments underlying Indonesian researchers in selecting their research approach.

### *Research Ethics*

The implementation of research ethics seems to be lacking within Indonesia's research milieu. The data reveal that only two out of 202 studies (Hajar et al., 2020; Rasman, 2018) explicitly provided the research ethics section. These two studies were published in Scopus-indexed journals. While some other Scopus-indexed studies indicated adherence to research ethics (e.g., Emilia & Hamied, 2022; Muslim, 2020; Zein, 2022a) none of the research published in non-Scopus-indexed journals addressed the research ethics. It may indicate that the inclusion of research ethics in a study is based on the researchers' awareness.

However, some recent studies have given attention to the importance of research ethics in the Indonesian research environment (see Drajadi et al., 2023; Himawan, 2021; Rachmawaty, 2017). While Rachmawaty (2017) called for government bodies to attend research ethics in the nursing field, which is prone to research subjects' exploitation, Himawan (2021) emphasized the importance of research ethics in psychological research to protect the research subject. Concerns about the importance of research ethics in social studies are finally expressed by Drajadi et al. (2023), highlighting the social researchers' lacking knowledge, support, and access to gain ethical clearance.

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined a growing number of qualitative research articles and chapters published by Indonesian scholars. The use of shaky rationales as a foundation for selecting research methodologies and the unclear steps of data collection done by many Indonesian researchers has become evident in the discussion of this chapter, reiterating Zein et al. (2020). Trends examined in this chapter show that qualitative studies cover various topics, with teaching strategy being the most extensively studied (66 studies), while curriculum and assessment received the least attention (13 studies). The superdiversity of Indonesia has also led to the emergence of research topics such as native-speakerism, bilingualism, and multilingualism (22 studies), which explore the potential of modifications in the goals of English teaching and learning in Indonesia (Zein, 2020).

The world's trend of qualitative studies showed case studies and ethnography as the most frequently employed designs, and interviews, observations, discourse analysis, and conversation analysis were relatively well utilized to analyze the data (Richards, 2009b; Tojo & Takagi, 2017). While it is also true that case study is the most frequently used method in qualitative research in the Indonesian context, ethnography and its variations, such as autoethnography and multivocal ethnography, are among the least employed methods, along with grounded theory and stimulated verbal report. The researchers' unfamiliarity with the least used methods – and also the methods that are not used, such as the discourse completion task – might be the cause.

In addressing the trends in qualitative research, this chapter shows that a heavy emphasis remains on research dedicated to investigating teaching strategies. Meanwhile, explorations on emerging topics such as multilingualism and its implications on language policy could receive more attention (see Chapters 3 and 4, this volume, respectively). The use of observations and interviews to probe a wide range of research topics on English language education in Indonesia is also noticeable. Although observations and interviews are undoubtedly valuable, other data collection methods, such as reflective journals and introspective verbal reports, could be explored for gathering more rigorous data to satisfy qualitative research's exploratory and in-depth principles. Employing multiple data collection techniques is also beneficial to counter concerns about researchers' subjectivity and bias. Further, to maintain the research currency, qualitative researchers must pay more careful attention to research ethics issues.

Further, according to Tojo and Takagi (2017), there has been a noticeable increase in the use of 150 different methods for collecting and analyzing data in qualitative research. In the field of English language education in Indonesia, researchers identified 32 data collection techniques and 12 research instruments predominantly used in studies that employ multiple data collection techniques (60.5%). Interviews and observations were recognized as the dominant techniques utilized. The substantial number of researchers who utilized multiple data collection strategies suggests that researchers' comprehension of the fundamental tenets of qualitative research to conduct exploratory and comprehensive investigations is improving. In addition, employing a range of data collection methods and instruments can effectively address concerns regarding subjectivity and personal bias in qualitative studies. Although the tendency for improvement in the quality of qualitative research in the Indonesian context is seen from the research practice, notions related to research ethics remain. Government regulations pertinent to research clearance, its provision, procedures, and access seem unclear, leading to the barely available research that addresses ethics in their research.

Learning from the trends found in this study, continuous improvement is necessary to enhance the quality and credibility of qualitative analysis. It can be achieved by employing rigorous procedures, assuring validity and triangulation, and maintaining the researcher's credibility. Workshops and exercises should be encouraged to maximize the use of data gathered through spoken and written forms, acknowledgment of potentially conflicting assumptions, and guidance in the recursive analysis. Nevertheless, the awareness of research ethics and how to obtain ethical clearance is also the next crucial issue that needs to be addressed in qualitative research in the Indonesian context of English language education.

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