



EMERGING SPONTANEOUS AUDIOVISUAL AUTOETHNOGRAPHY IN TIKTOK

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes and proposes the concept of "spontaneous audiovisual autoethnography" on TikTok, revealing a diversity of cultural narratives. Autoethnographers like @jairdesdeelcampo0 and @indigenac4mp0 defy conventions, authentically connecting with a global audience. The research is based on content analysis, web observation, and film analysis theory. It highlights the communicative evolution from simple self-narratives to complex and aesthetic representations. The study theoretically defines spontaneous autoethnography on TikTok. This typology transcends borders, projecting rural, ethnic, and peasant life. The present study contributes to understanding new forms of sociocultural expression on digital platforms, emphasizing TikTok's significant impact on preserving audiovisual memory and disseminating diverse voices globally. The research underscores the relevance of the phenomenon in contemporary cultural dynamics and how it amplifies diverse voices globally.

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1. Introduction

According to Statista (2024), the digital media ecosystem has witnessed a remarkable growth in the popularity of TikTok. By January 2024, the platform had reached 1.562 million users worldwide, establishing itself as a phenomenon that has become one of the most popular and influential platforms for content creation and consumption, as evidenced by the findings of Alfonso-López et al., (2023). The history of TikTok is based on the creation and sharing of short videos in a vertical format (Caffrey, 2023). This history has seen the emergence of content typologies that have evolved in both their target audience and the range of content available on the platform. Initially, the platform was used by teenagers belonging to Generation Z Pérez-Ordóñez et al., (2022), However, the platform has since expanded to appeal to a wider audience.

The rapid growth and conceptual transformation of TikTok can be attributed to the circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic, which provided a period of time and opportunity for a greater number of people to engage with the social network (Anderson, 2020). Conversely, TikTok's own algorithm is an efficient tool that learns and predicts the interests of the audience, thus enabling users to remain connected to content that may be of interest to them for extended periods of time. This is due to the predictive ability and the use of artificial intelligence (Wang, et al., 2019).

At the outset, TikTok users primarily created videos focused on music, incorporating choreography and lip-syncing. However, the audiovisual content on the platform has evolved to reach a broader and more diverse audience. According to Suarez-Álvarez and García-Jiménez (2021), 29% of videos on TikTok are choreographed. The remaining 71% of content on TikTok is comprised of videos that are not music videos. These videos include fun videos, daily activities, and selfie videos. The latter are directly related to self-expression and representation, according to the interests and affinities of the creators (Angulo 2019, cited in Suarez-Álvarez and García-Jiménez, 2021).

The subject of this research is self-representation videos. This typology finds epistemological support in Goffman's theory of social action (2009), which has been applied to prosumers' representations in digital platforms (Suarez-Álvarez and García-Jiménez, 2021). Social action focuses on how people manage their impressions in face-to-face situations. Goffman (2009) employs the metaphor of theatre to describe social life, wherein individuals are actors and social situations are stages. According to Goffman (2009), individuals perform 'acts' in order to present a desired image of themselves to others. This process involves managing the impressions that others have of the individual in question, controlling the information that is revealed, and adapting one's behaviour to the social context. Applied to audio-visual performance, this is what each performer does when designing their character and their respective performance in front of the camera. Social action theory has been studied by McRoberts et al. (2017) and Djafarova and y Rushworth (2017) in videos on other social networks such as YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and Vine.

The objective of this research is to identify the presence of self-expression and representation videos on the TikTok platform that meet the characteristics of spontaneous autoethnography. Subsequently, the aforementioned videos will be subjected to audiovisual characterisation. Consequently, not all audiovisual typologies present on the platform that are framed in self-expression, such as video selfies or "get ready with me", will be susceptible to characterisation. Rather, the videos that can be described in accordance with the definition of spontaneous autoethnography and that contribute elements of typological specificity will be identified.

1.1. Autoethnography

Autoethnography is a social research method that focuses on self-reflection. It is defined as a form of autobiographical ethnographic research that extends beyond the personal description of the subject (Avery et al., 2024) and enables researchers to examine the relationship between their own experiences and broader cultural, political and social meanings and understandings (Szwabowski, 2023). In this manner, autoethnography entails selective reflection on the insights gained from being part of a culture or having a particular cultural identity (Ellis et al., 2015; Avery et al., 2024).

In contrast to other self-referential formats, such as self-narrative or autobiography, autoethnography prioritises cultural analysis and interpretation of the researcher's experiences, thoughts and behaviours in relation to others and the society under study. The focus of autoethnography is on the interaction between the personal self and the social, with the aim of understanding how

individual experiences are intertwined with cultural phenomena. According to Guerrero-Muñoz (2014), autoethnography is divided into three broad varieties: The following categories have been identified: indigenous anthropology, ethnic autobiography and autobiographical ethnography. These categorisations permit an understanding of the manner in which the object of study of this paper is delimited.

Authors such as Ellis et al., (2015); Adams and Holman (2008); Frank (1995) have highlighted the role of how autoethnography is presented, indicating that it must meet aesthetic and evocative criteria that engage the recipient. These authors speak of "bringing the reader into the scene – especially into the thoughts, feelings and actions" (Ellis, 2004, p.142) of the autoethnographic narrators.

1.1.1. Self-Representation and Moving Image

As pGT previously stated, self-reflection and self-representation utilise creative forms of expression. One such form is the documentary, which Nichols (2001) defines as a product of non-fiction, insofar as it represents the historical world through rhetorical devices. Nicholls posits that documentaries serve to render the material of social reality visible and audible in a particular form, according to the acts of selection and organisation carried out by the filmmaker (2001, p.81). This author, who is regarded as one of the first theorists to establish categories for the documentary genre, which he terms modes, divides them into the following categories: expository, observational, participatory or interactive, reflexive, poetic and performative documentary.

Audiovisual autoethnography is categorised as belonging to the participatory mode. Lloga Sanz (2020) analyses the categories of Nichols (2001) and asserts that this mode is based on the "encounter of the filmmaker with the subject-object of the film" (p.81), which implies that the filmmaker-protagonist is involved with the represented reality.

In accordance with the aforementioned principles, Barbash and Taylor (2023) posit that certain reflexive films accentuate the interactive attributes of verité and situate them within the first person. This entails the possibility of the filmmaker's presence on screen or voice-over narration directed towards the audience. Furthermore, they posit that they represent a kind of audiovisual analogy of a diary, which fully describes the practices present in the object of study of this article.

1.2. The Spontaneous

In general, spontaneity is defined as actions or expressions that occur naturally, that is to say, that are not planned. These manifestations are linked to the concepts of authenticity, creativity and the relationship between the individual and his or her environment. In the work of Boria (2001), the concept of spontaneity is defined as "the intimate perception of feeling alive and ready to mobilise one's intellectual, affective and physical energies" (p.98). This concept, in relation to the notion of event, refers to an unexpected and transformative intrusion into everyday life that has the power to affect the subject and produce significant changes in their perception and experience. The event functions as an opening, facilitating the emergence of the novel. This is the transition from one field of knowledge to another (Bravo Jiménez, 2023, p. 115).

Thus, the spontaneity of academic rigour has driven many researchers to autoethnography, from triggering events to systematising their own experiences, as in the case of Lucherini (2017), who discovered himself doing autoethnography because of his diabetic condition and, in the middle of a traditional research: "instead of choosing to integrate my personal experience into the research, I realised that, whether I wanted to or not, I was involved in an inevitable autoethnography" (p.430). Similarly, Clare Holdsworth (2024) describes how autoethnography emerged spontaneously. "Like other autoethnographers, I did not initially set out to engage in autoethnography; however, I found myself employing this approach to interpret a specific set of personal experiences." (p. 126).

Similarly, autoethnography manifests itself in the narrative exercises of the TikTokers, who decide to present their experiences and relationships with their environment, their identity and their culture. In many cases, this involves the transposition of traditional knowledge with the empirical knowledge of digital narratives.

2. Research Design

2.1. Objective

The objective of this article is to provide a theoretical definition of the emerging spontaneous autoethnographic videos on the digital platform TikTok.

2.2. Justification

This work is pertinent in that the emergence of new narrative forms on social platforms necessitates their characterisation in order to facilitate understanding and cataloguing. As Eliseo Verón (2001, p. 10) notes, those engaged in research on the media have a clear and significant task ahead of them: to begin to write their history in the most noble sense of the word. This article presents a typology of spontaneous autoethnography, a format that has emerged on the social network TikTok but is applicable to any digital platform that allows the creation and distribution of audiovisual content. In this way, it contributes to the task set by Verón to be carried out in the context of media evolution.

A review of the theoretical literature revealed no evidence of studies that address the relationship between self-presentation and Tiktok from the perspective of autoethnography. This research contributes to the characterisation of the audiovisual typology of the Tiktok platform by offering an original perspective on this topic.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach, with a descriptive scope, to elucidate a specific and concrete phenomenon or situation (Abela, 2000). The objective was to document the medium's or mediation's transition through the aforementioned phenomenon or situation (Verón, 2001). The study was conducted in accordance with the methodological framework of qualitative content analysis, as delineated by Abela (2000). The data were obtained through non-participant web observation of the TikTok videos, selected according to the criterion of belonging to a channel recommended by the TikTok algorithm, which develops themes such as: territorial identity, culture, ethnic groups, rural life. It should be noted that the term "autoethnography" is understood to encompass a wide variety of contexts and human groups from an autobiographical perspective. However, for the purposes of this research, a focus has been placed on those contexts and groups that can offer insights into deeply rooted or ancestral traditions.

The analysis of the videos was conducted in accordance with the theoretical framework of film analysis proposed by Casetti and Di Chio (1991). This approach entails an investigation of the videos' structural and categorical aspects, "in order to study its composition, its architecture and its dynamics, as a complete object" (p.122). To this end, the codebook proposed by Urrea-Giraldo (2022) has been applied to the analysis of videopolitical pieces and the inclusion of categories derived from the present object of study, as will be explained below.

Subsequently, the videos were analysed in terms of their audiovisual structure, with the results used to characterise and classify them. This approach enabled the research objective to be achieved.

3.1. TikTok Metrics

The efficacy of videos on TikTok is gauged by employing a range of metrics to ascertain their reach and popularity on the platform. Table 1 illustrates that the most popular channel in terms of "likes" is @Saida.zc, with a total of 53,900,000.

According to Hootsuite (2023), the range of views is a key indicator of whether a video is viral. A video is considered viral if it reaches between 250,000 and 1,000,000 views in a moderate period of time. These figures demonstrate the capacity of the content to capture the attention and engagement of the audience.

TikTok's "For You" section plays a pivotal role in the promotion of videos. The page draws content from videos posted within the last 90 days, thereby indicating that the platform places a premium on the freshness and timeliness of the material. It is typical for videos to experience a surge in engagement in the initial days following their publication. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that TikTok continues to recommend videos for as long as viewers engage with them (TikTok, S.F.).

3.2. Corpus

3.2.1. Analysis Units

3.2.1.1. Sampling units

TikTok channels in Spanish present content of self-expression and self-reflection, which, on initial observation, appear to encompass cultural, identity, folkloric, raizal, ethnic, indigenous, rural, and autobiographical themes.

3.2.1.2. Context Units

The following five TikTok channels were identified as appearing in the "For You" section of the researcher's account between 23 February 2023 and 23 January 2024. These channels were selected following the training of the algorithm, and they have at least 500,000 likes on the channel. The channels were chosen because they most closely match the characteristics of the autoethnography.

3.2.1.3. Registration units

The videos included in contextual units are accompanied by a range of interactivity tools, including commenting interfaces, like, save and share buttons.

3.2.2. Selection Criteria for the Analysis Units

In qualitative content analysis, the criterion for selecting units of analysis is purposive sampling. Abela posits that this can be either opinionated or theoretical. In the former case, "the analyst selects the sampling units not at random, nor according to calculations or laws of probability, but by other methods" (2000, p.25).

In this study, the selection of recording units was conducted through purposive opinion sampling, with the criterion of selecting videos from the "For You" feed of the researcher's TikTok account. These videos were selected to align with the characteristics previously described in the contextual units. It should be noted that the independent videos addressing the aforementioned topics were not the subject of the study. Rather, they were selected to correspond to a channel that maintained thematic coherence and periodicity of publication. This was done in order to demonstrate a coherent and consistent narrative with the object of study.

Table 1 presents a list of the channels analysed and their impact, as measured by the number of followers, the number of views of the anchored video, and the total number of "likes." This provides a comprehensive overview of the level of engagement achieved by creators of autoethnographic content. The table is ordered in descending order according to the aforementioned criterion.

Table 1. Scope of channels of the units of analysis

Channel	Total "Likes" of the channel	Channel followers	Anchored video views
@Saida.zc	53.900.000	2.900.000	3.700.000
@Leidy20025	27.100.000	1.800.000	13.000.000
@joselovein	17.800.000	1.400.000	4.500.000
@jairdesdeelcampo0	14.200.000	867.100	8.800.000
@la_nativa1296	11.700.000	1.500.000	5.700.000
@indigenac4mp0	10.000.000	740.300	1.800.000
@Somosdelranchooficial	7.700.000	736.100	7.800.000
@tuagricultordeconfianzaa	4.900.000	387.100	6.200.000
@elabuelo.oficial	3.900.000	462.900	6.400.000
@JaieKyremu	3.100.000	413.200	496.800
@elgomezcl	2.700.000	251.600	5.100.000
@munuzdeiver7	1.800.000	171.800	41.600.000
@Cristianpoema	691.800	84.900.	1.500.000

Source: Own elaboration, 2024.

3.3. Codebook

The codebook is based on the theoretical framework proposed by Guerrero-Muñoz (2014) for the variables related to autoethnography, and on the systematisation carried out by Urrea-Giraldo for the variables related to audiovisual language and narrative. The following section presents a selection of the most pertinent variables.

Table 2. Codebook variables

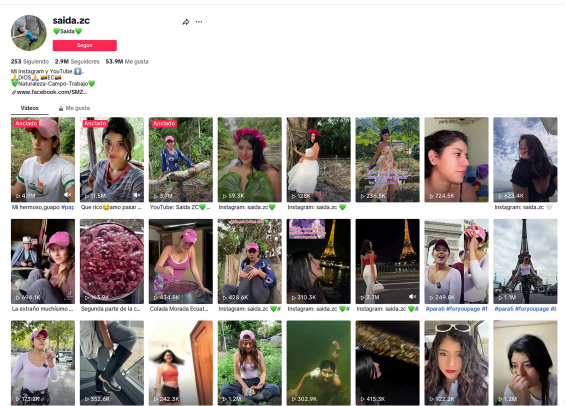
Variable	Description
Autoethnography codes	
Ease of use (display, readability)	The autoethnography should be easy to consume, understandable to the common reader.
Narrative methodological orientation	The experience of reality is mediated and constructed through narratives
Autorrepresentación	An understanding of oneself and one's social and territorial environment is evident.
Self-representation	A transformation on a personal level and also a possible impact on others is evident in the course of the videos.
Abandoning methodological conventions	The diaries or contents are natural, spontaneous and spontaneous.
Focus on the "self"	Does it place too much emphasis on the "self", isolating itself from others?
Memory and recall resources	Is there recourse to memory and recall of data? Or is there evidence of the use of other resources as knowledge holders or other sources?
Emancipatory value	Autoethnography has an emancipatory value by giving voice to the often voiceless in social research and by breaking with the constraints of positivist methodology
Singular script	He has a singular "writing", a unique way of capturing events and experiences.
Balance between description, cultural analysis and self-narrative	It combines description, cultural analysis and self-narrative in a balanced way.
Awareness of the process as a narrator of the socio-cultural world it belongs to	He is aware, and expresses it in his videos, of his role as a narrator of the socio-cultural world to which he belongs.
Construction of meaning through audiovisual language	The autoethnographer has audiovisual narrative resources to communicate meaning to platform users.

Source: Own elaboration based on the theory of Guerrero-Muñoz, 2014.

4. Findings

The presentation of the findings derived from the analysis of the emerging spontaneous autoethnography videos on the TikTok platform will focus on the five channels that have the greatest impact in terms of the number of total 'likes' of the channel and the greatest affinity with the concept of autoethnography. This means that those with the highest metric impact will not necessarily appear in the analysis of this text. The channels will be described as a whole, based on a general review of the videos published, validating that they maintain thematic coherence and periodicity of publication. Subsequently, the recording units will be compared with the codes in order to determine the videos' compliance with the theory describing autoethnography.

Figure 1. Canal @Saida.ZC



Source: Screenshot Tiktok channel @saida.zc, 2024..

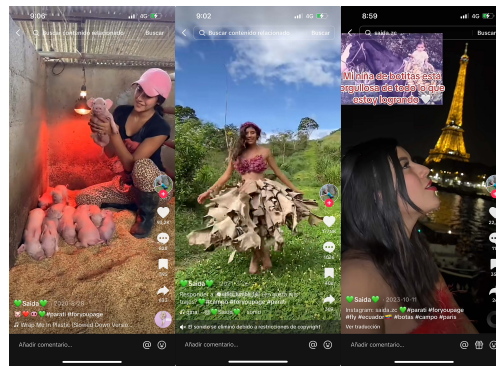
The channel of Saida Zúñiga, of Ecuadorian origin, is consistent with the concept of self-representation, as can be observed in Figure 1. This has been the case since the inaugural video was published in 2020, which coincided with the advent of the platform due to the global health crisis caused by the novel coronavirus.

The channel's description is as follows: The categories of nature, landscape, and work are also reflected in the tags of the videos. The initial audiovisual pieces, although they exhibit a peasant aesthetic in terms of location and wardrobe, adhere to the prevailing trends on the social network. However, a discernible evolution can be observed in the subsequent pieces, which transition from single-shot choreography to videos assembled with supporting shots and on-camera narration. In these images, although the actions are related to the dances and songs of the current trend, the close relationship between the autoethnographer and the landscape, represented by the animals, customs and dynamics, can be observed. This creates a contrast between rhythm-movement and aesthetics-environment. Another element of contrast is the use of filters on the platform, which challenges the peasant aesthetic that has been identified as the hallmark of the channel. Additionally, the transposition of the aesthetics of designer fashion with materials from the countryside represents a departure from the typical aesthetic of the channel. The protagonist can be observed traversing a range of settings, from a video of her modelling on the riverbank to one of her carrying firewood or feeding animals.

In the evolution of the autoethnographer, we can observe the introduction of identity elements such as slogans. In this case, the phrase "hello my little peasant girls" ("hola mis campitas") suggests that the protagonist has a female audience in her reference. However, in the subsequent video, the slogan is used constantly and is generalised to all audiences.

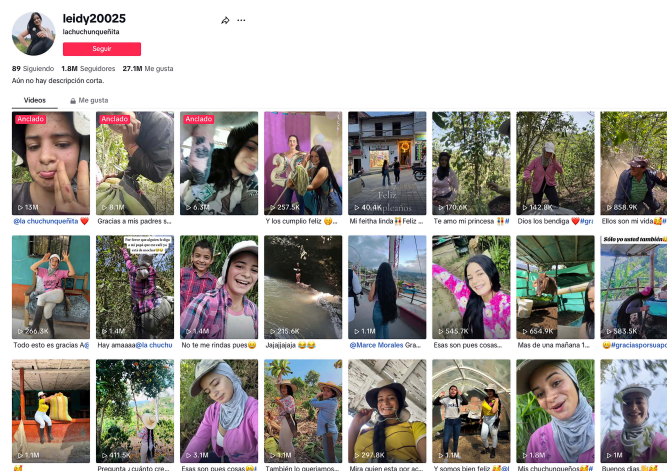
The character undergoes a significant transformation over the course of a relatively brief period, as illustrated in Figure 2. In less than three years, she transitions from a humble peasant girl who presents herself as a princess to a woman who appears in videos at a beauty salon. Despite this shift, she does not abandon her peasant identity; however, she is seen in various settings, including an airplane, on the beach, in cars, and in Paris. This suggests that she is moving away from the traditional country lifestyle.

Figure 2. Transformation arch of @Saida.ZC



Source: Stills from videos from Tiktok's channel @saida.zc, 2024

Figure 3. Canal @leidy20025

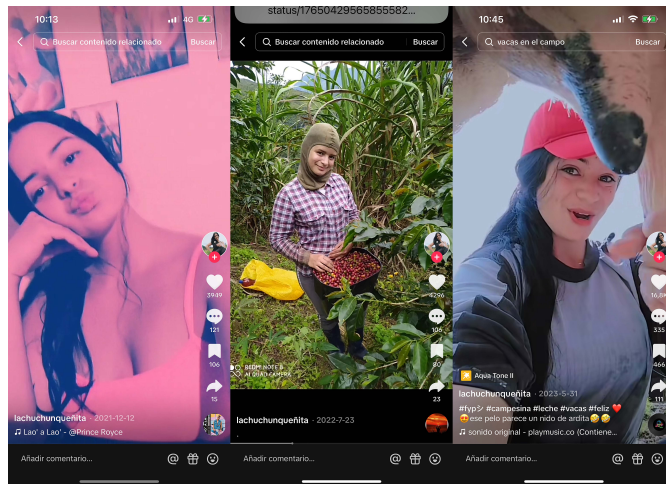


Source: Screenshot Tiktok channel @leidy20025, 2024.

The channel of Leidy "La lachuchunqueñita", a Colombian, published her inaugural video in December 2021. Initially, the content focused on the video selfie typology, featuring the user in a series of conventional social photography poses, accompanied by the trending songs of the platform. In the initial videos, the field theme is barely present, with no tags linking the content to this category. By mid-2022, even within the video selfie category, the videos included a greater number of elements that identified the countryside, such as farm animals. However, there was no greater cultural reference, and instead the videos focused on the efforts of rural labour in jobs that were usually associated with the male gender. The videos lacked the use of voice-in or voice-out, and were predominantly produced in a single take. A year later, videos began to emerge that elucidated rural tasks and a few that reflected on traditions. This is the point at which the character begins to take shape, with a strident and outspoken personality that now places greater emphasis on the elements that explain peasant culture. In May 2023, the slogan "hello my chuchunqueños" ("hola mis chuchunqueños") was incorporated into the identity of the channel.

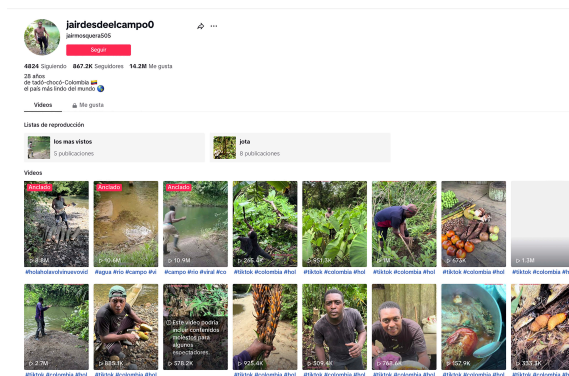
The concept of self-representation is a permanent one. This channel is comprised of video selfies and autoethnography videos. However, it can be maintained as part of the units of analysis because in the timeline, socio-cultural elements of the field activity are intermittently evident. The content and narrative style of this channel have remained consistent since its inception.

Figure 4. Typological coherence of the videos of @leidy20025



Source: Stills from videos from Tiktok's channel @leidy20025, 2024

Figure 5. Canal @jairdesdeelcampo0



Source: Screenshot Tiktok channel @jairdesdeelcampo0, 2024.

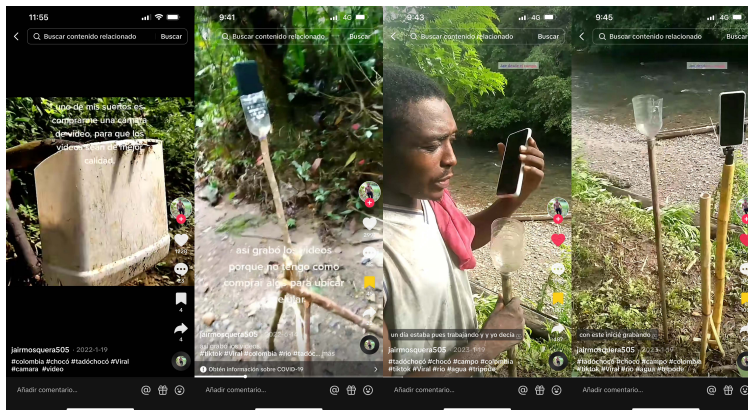
This channel is owned by a Colombian named Jair Cossio, a native of the municipality of Tadó, in the department of Chocó, Colombia. The focus is on the demographic location, as this is a defining characteristic of the channel. Unlike the other channels analysed, since its inception in mid-2021, the channel has concentrated on celebrating, describing and reflecting on the territory, the beauty of the landscape and, most importantly, the river. Indeed, the inaugural video of the channel depicts a canoe trip along the river, accompanied by a reference to the catch of the day and a collection of bananas.

The channel's narrative proposal celebrates peasant culture in all its elements, including the images, on- screen text and background music. These elements are in keeping with the message, which does not initially make use of audio narration.

The content of the channel is focused on the representation of the territory, the fruits that are produced there, and personal experiences of fishing, farming, and the secrets of rural life, even in the jungle. Topics such as where to find water, what to eat, and the explanation of fruits that, according to the comments left on the videos, seem exotic to the followers are also addressed.

What is noteworthy about this channel is that the autoethnographer has documented his narrative and audiovisual evolution, not only in the final product, which is of high visual quality, but also in the description of the processes that led to the results. "I record myself, here I place the mobile phone and I must return to retrieve the canoe and ascend the hill in order to obtain a suitable shot" (Mosquera, 2022, t.00:04). In this manner, the filmmaker elucidates the transition from recording himself in selfie mode with his own hand to the invention of an improvised camera support with a gallon container. In subsequent videos, he demonstrates the development of a tripod-like device constructed of wooden sticks, and subsequently, the creation of a hybrid between a commercial selfie stick with tripods and monopods crafted from bamboo.

Figure 6. Evolution of camera mounts used by @jairdesdeelcampo0

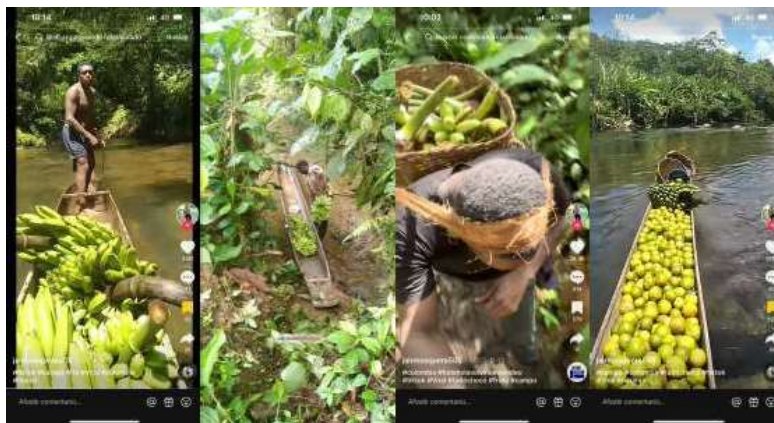


Source: Stills from videos from Tiktok's channel @jairdesdeelcampo0, 2024.

The videos on this channel can be defined as being of high audiovisual quality, with a clear narrative proposal, aesthetic appeal and sophisticated composition. The production exhibits a distinctive visual identity, employing a range of techniques to create a sense of depth and perspective. These include the use of elements of reference in the foreground, frame within a frame, separation of figure and background, multiple points of view through changes in camera placement, angle and dimension of the shot. Furthermore, the videos employ a transparent montage. The analysis of the channel indicates that the director is self-taught and autonomous in the production process, with no evidence of external human or technical teams being involved.

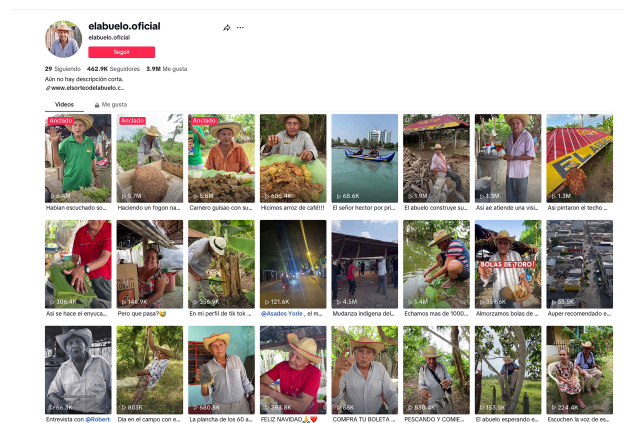
The videos on the channel demonstrate a clear self-representation and self-expression. The individual in question not only testifies to his belonging to his territory but also displays his admiration for the river and his personal taste for certain foods that he prepares himself. The phrase "I'm back, I'm back new video" ("Volví, volví nuevo video") has become a slogan that identifies Jair in the TikTok community.

Figure 7. Visual richness of the @jairdesdeelcampo0 channel.



Source: Stills from videos from Tiktok's channel @jairdesdeelcampo0, 2024.

Figura 8. Canal @elabuelo.official



Source: Screenshot Tiktok channel @elabuelo.official, 2024.

The Grandfather channel represents a kind of spin-off of the channel @elgomezc1, which is not an autoethnographic channel but rather a channel about rural life. Initially, El Gómez was dedicated to the presentation of rural life and the portrayal of characters from the Colombian Caribbean. One such character was the Abuelo (Grandfather), who immediately captured the interest of the channel's followers. The character, imbued with theatricality and personality, transcended the initial anecdotal sense and the historical and cultural elements of the region, from the perspective and narrative style of Gómez, which were characterised by shrillness and crudeness. The success of the channel led to an increase in commercial interest, which, according to videos from other channels, led to the dissolution of the duo.

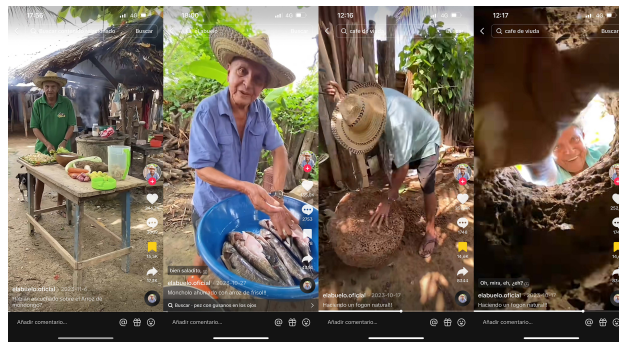
The Grandfather channel has been included in the recording units because, although he was initially a character from another channel, upon separation and the decision to continue documenting his stories, he met the criteria of the spontaneous autoethnography category. This is characterised by the subject starting from their relationship with the land and culture of the Caribbean coast to show customs, traditions, products and ways of being and doing from their self-awareness and narrative. For instance, the channel presents traditional and exotic recipes, as well as explanations of the dialect of their region, and the making of tools typical of the region, such as a cooker made from ants' nests, called *binde*.

In this instance, the production is facilitated by the involvement of third parties, as evidenced by the footage. These individuals have been engaged for the specific purpose of assisting with the production. In this regard, the cultural burden is borne by the grandfather's on-camera narration, which is consistently objective and is supported by a diegetic off-camera narrator.

The channel employs a high-quality audiovisual narrative yet lacks a distinctive identity. Consequently, the audiovisual language is adapted to align with the conventions of the platforms, incorporating supporting images and employing a variety of editing techniques, including jumps in the axis. The channel employs a multitude of shots and angles and incorporates incidental music and reinforcing sound effects. Additionally, the channel employs on-screen graphics, which have contributed to the channel's diverse aesthetic presentation over time. The involvement of several directors has been identified as a potential drawback for the audiovisual narrative, as it may affect the aesthetic and visual style. However, this does not appear to have an impact on the cinematic performance of the grandfather's character. It should be noted that, in this instance, as in the case of the photographic self-portrait, it is considered that spontaneous autoethnography may utilise third parties for the technical execution of the recording, provided that the autoethnographer's gaze is evident in the final product.

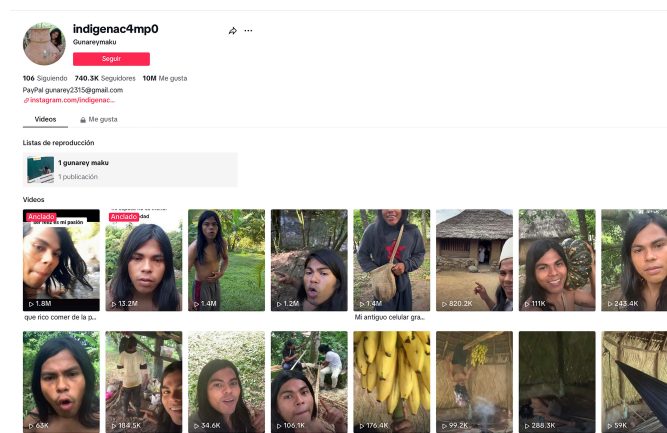
The grandfather provides several instructions, one of which is "light here," indicating that the camera should focus on the desired area. Despite the recent split with Gómez, Grandpa's channel has surpassed him in terms of followers and interactivity. This demonstrates the success of the character as a motivator for the audience. Nevertheless, the quality of the content has been diminished by the commercialisation of narratives that, while appropriate for the channel, are transparent.

Figure 9. Videos from the channel @elabuelo.official



Source: Screenshot Tiktok channel @elabuelo.official, 2024.

Figure 10. Channel @indigenac4mp0

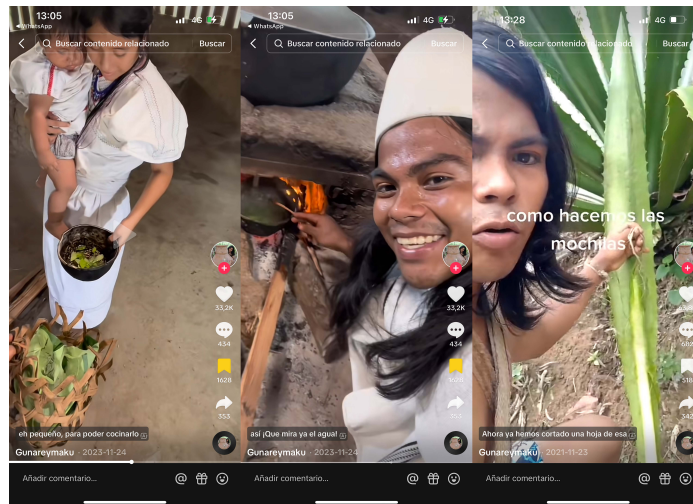


Source: Screenshot Tiktok channel @indigenac4mp0

In October 2021, Gunarey Maku, a member of the Arhuaca community of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia, published the inaugural video on his channel. In it, he critiques the limitations of contemporary technology, citing examples such as stone mills, stone carving, and terraced architecture as evidence of the superiority of indigenous techniques. This channel aligns with the emerging concept of autoethnography, as it explicitly delineates the function of the content it develops from the outset. In this context, the autoethnographer states: "This is the only way I have managed to inform you about the things of my culture so that you can learn about how we live" (Maku, 2011, t.00:36). Consequently, each publication adheres to a consistent cultural, ethnic and identity vision that incorporates personal elements, but primarily presents the community and cosmogony of the "older brothers" (Maku, 2011).

The channel's focus is on elucidating the customs, identity and rules of the Arhuaca indigenous culture, although it also features sporadic encounters with other communities such as the Koguis. Gunarey employs an interpellative perspective, akin to a selfie, to narrate his customs. Most of the footage is comprised of a single shot, with the director acting as the diegetic narrator, both within and outside of the frame. In terms of audiovisual elements, there are no particularly outstanding aspects, nor any significant errors in the camerawork. The videos are relatively brief and predominantly individual in nature, although in some instances, he presents footage of his family and community members. In each audiovisual piece, he develops a theme related to the world of life, including marriage, his dialect, the relationship with nature, and the payments. In essence, the autoethnographer's objective is to disseminate the tribe's message to the global community, thereby safeguarding their customs and the intrinsic character of their homeland.

The entirety of the channel represents a comprehensive display of self-expression and self-representation. In some of the videos, the same phenomenon is observed as in the other recording units. Fame generates arcs of transformation and conflicts with their peers, as it becomes a source of income.

Figure 11. Videos from channel @indigenac4mp0

Source: Screenshot Tiktok channel @indigenac4mp0

4.1 Respecting the codes of autoethnography.

1. Ease of consumption and narrative methodological orientation:

- The videos, as a whole, demonstrated an accessible and comprehensible narrative style, adapted to the narrative format of the TikTok platform.
- A predominant narrative methodological orientation was observed, whereby personal experiences were presented through stories structured according to the characteristics of each channel.
- In terms of narrative, the channels @jairdesdeelcampo0 and @elabubelo.official stand out for their use of a more sophisticated audiovisual language and a more structured narrative.

2. Self-representation and personal and social transformation:

- Autoethnographers demonstrated a capacity to reflect upon themselves and their social and territorial environment. In this context, the channels @jairdesdeelcampo0 and @indigenac4mp0 were the most prolific in terms of the quality and quantity of self-representation content. Moreover, they were the most assiduous in disseminating the cultural characteristics and values of their territory and environment.
- A narrative of personal transformation was observed throughout the videos; however, it was particularly prominent in the @saida.zc and @elabubelo.official channels, where significant changes in the lives of the creators and their possible impact on the audience can be discerned. In all the channels, there is evidence of a change in the production and treatment of content, from superficial products to more audiovisually elaborated and content-rich products. However, there is also evidence of wear and tear in the most recent videos, where there are repetitions and themes that may differ from the initial concept.
- In general, the channels under study have been affected by their own success in terms of narrative. This is due to the pressure to produce content that will connect with their users, which has a significant impact on narrative spontaneity or the truth of the protagonists' lives. Furthermore, the commercial elements that accompany popularity can influence the content in a way that is not entirely aligned with its natural form.

3. Abandoning methodological conventions and focusing on the 'self':

- The videos, as a whole, presented a natural and spontaneous style, moving away from methodological conventions. This is explained by the fact that none of the filmmakers showed evidence of traditional research experience.

- An appropriate balance was found in the focus on the 'self', without excessively isolating the creator from the social and cultural context. Although, as will be shown in the discussion, it is noticeable that the 'self' takes precedence in some accounts.
4. Memory and evocation resources and their emancipatory value:
 - Frequent recourse to memory and evocation is the common denominator of the videos contained in the channels analysed, particularly in the case of holders of ancestral or cumulative knowledge such as @elabubelo.official, @jairdesdeelcampo0 and @indigenac4mp0.
 - The videos demonstrated an emancipatory value, giving a voice to often marginalised communities, to territories and cultures with little media presence, and to issues that are rarely addressed.
 5. Unique writing and a balance between description, cultural analysis and self-narrative:
 - Singularity of writing was evident in the unique presentation of events and experiences in each channel corresponding to the sampling units, which demonstrated a unique style. However, this was not the case for the sampling units; in some channels that were not analysed in depth, narrative elements, themes and staging were identified, similar to other more successful channels.
 - In terms of the balance between description, cultural analysis and self-narrative, the channels that best meet these criteria are @elabubelo.official, @jairdesdeelcampo0 and @indigenac4mp0. On the other hand, the channels @saida.zc and @leidy20025 have a greater emphasis on self-narrative, even going as far as the video selfie in the case of @leidy20025.
 6. Awareness of the process as a narrator of the socio-cultural world to which they belong.
 - @indigenac4mp0 is the autoethnographer who is most aware of his role as a narrator of the socio-cultural world to which he belongs, followed by @jairdesdeelcampo0.
 - The ability to construct meaning through audiovisual narrative resources was highlighted, enriching communication on @jairdesdeelcampo0's TikTok platform.
 - In general, the channels studied underwent a transformation in their narrative content as a result of the pressure to produce content that connects with their users. This pressure significantly affected the narrative spontaneity or truth of the protagonists' lifeworld.

5. Discussion

The aim of this article is to characterise the emerging spontaneous audiovisual autoethnography on the digital platform TikTok, in order to define it theoretically. According to the results, it can be affirmed that there are videos on the TikTok platform that meet the theoretical criteria to be considered spontaneous autoethnography.

Firstly, as Suarez-Álvarez and García-Jiménez (2021) state, following Goffman (2009), the content producers studied by this researcher and classified as spontaneous autoethnographers use masks to represent different versions of the same character. Thus we can see a fashionista version of @saida.zc, adapted to the circumstances and availability of the countryside, and a fully indigenous peasant version. The same happens with @leidy20025 when she shows her urban side. The theory of social action is also evident in the self-representation of characters who face ancestral mandates to carry the message of their tribe, even going beyond their beliefs, as in the case of @Guanareymaku, who points out: "I have to pay a lot of money to use a mobile phone here in the Sierra, because the mobile phone is made of a material that harms the planet itself" (2021, t.00:20).

Self-expression and self-representation in TikTok are present in a category that the platform calls 'everyday life' and within which the creation and dissemination of what this study has called spontaneous audiovisual autoethnography has been facilitated.

Spontaneous audiovisual autoethnography is configured as a form of social expression characterised by its accessibility through digital media, particularly on platforms such as TikTok. This approach is

characterised by its narrative methodological orientation, where personal experiences are presented through consistent stories over time, through multiple short videos, fragmenting the narratives by related themes, which facilitates their consumption and understanding.

Autoethnographers spontaneously begin to reflect on their self-representation and personal and social transformation, demonstrating a continuous reflection on themselves and their cultural environment. This process moves away from methodological conventions as it is carried out by people at any academic, cultural or social level. They focus on the 'self', drawing on memory and evocation resources to construct meaning through narratives presented in audiovisual language.

Spontaneous audiovisual autoethnography, by not subscribing to the formal constraints of social research, represents a balance between description, cultural analysis and self-narrative. It is also characterised by its emancipatory value in giving voice to marginalised communities and experiences, and by a unique writing that allows for an authentic connection with the audience. Autoethnographers demonstrate an awareness of process as narrators of the socio-cultural world to which they belong, sharing authentic and transformative moments in an immediate and creative way.

This phenomenon manifests itself spontaneously in autoethnographers as a drive for audiovisual self-representation, as most come to record and share their stories without intending to do so. For example, @jairdesdeelcampo0 stated, "It turned out that I started recording, to create content, that it was overnight, because I hadn't planned it, I had other projects" (Mosquera, 2023). Similarly, @saida.zc explains in a YouTube video where her stories come from: "It's my daily life, my family and I live from it, and what I do is show the videos of what I do every day, if it is real" (Saida.zc, 2020, t.1:17).

Spontaneous audiovisual autoethnography could be considered as a category of TikTok content, but also as a document of socio-cultural memory, in which an evolution of content was observed, from simple narratives to complex representations that intertwine personal identity with the cultural environment. The most representative of the cases studied is the channel @jairdesdeelpo0, where all the characteristics of spontaneous autoethnography can be appreciated, adapted to an audiovisual narrative that stands out for its compositional, aesthetic and narrative quality, which goes beyond the average of similar channels. The content of this channel consists of a collection of customs, local names of fruits, fauna and flora, the glorification of the river, among others, which now leave a remote corner of Colombia to be exposed to the world through social platforms.

Autoethnography in TikTok has transcended geographical barriers, allowing global connectivity through ethnic, rural and peasant narratives. In this case, for example, the dignification of women's work in the countryside, the description of the work of the land; the projection of the indigenous message of care for the territories, from the heart of their sacred places, in their own words and with their own oral and audiovisual points of view; The recovery of culinary knowledge of the Caribbean coast or its traditions in general, the authentic representation of everyday experiences of identity, as well as the ability to share unique cultural perspectives, make autoethnography a powerful tool for preserving stories and disseminating messages on the web. The proof of the effectiveness of the dissemination of the audiovisual document is the interactivity motivated on the platform, where comments appear from different geographical points of the planet, asking for explanations or expanding the information, presenting the equivalence of the content exhibited in the video, but now with the denominations received in their respective territories.

Those who engage in autoethnographic TikTok are individuals who have discovered in social networks a means of expressing themselves and of portraying their environment with socio-cultural depth. They exhibit a capacity for transitioning spontaneously between disciplinary fields, developing their skills through a process of experimentation, demonstration, and documentation of their world.

6. Conclusions

1. A synthesis of the results is presented below. This study characterised spontaneous autoethnography on the TikTok platform, identifying recurring patterns in the representation of personal and cultural identity. These included self-identification in relation to the territory of the filmmakers, the narration of didactic experiences of daily work and the interpellation of the viewer.

The content of the channels has evolved over time, with changes in themes and approaches.

The results substantiate the existence of channels that align with the theoretical criteria of spontaneous autoethnography and corroborate the presence of this form of expression in the digital context.

2. Theoretical contribution: Spontaneous audiovisual autoethnography in TikTok represents a form of social expression that is characterised by its accessibility through digital media. It is characterised by a narrative orientation, reflecting the self-representation and personal and social transformation of the autoethnographers. This approach, which is not constrained by the limitations of conventional methodology, strikes a balance between description, cultural analysis and self-narrative. The aim is to provide emancipatory value by enabling marginalised communities to be heard, using the resources of memory and evocation through audiovisual language. Autoethnography on TikTok facilitates global connectivity and serves as an effective means of preserving authentic narratives. Those engaged in autoethnography who are utilising social media as a means of self-expression are undergoing a seamless transition between disciplines, developing their skills and spontaneously recording their world.
3. The challenges and future opportunities of this approach are as follows: While this study has illuminated the phenomenon of spontaneous audiovisual autoethnography on TikTok, it has also highlighted several questions that remain unanswered. One such question is the impact of commercial narrative conditioning as autoethnographers become more famous. This, in turn, allows for the possibility of investigating a derivative phenomenon that this researcher terms the peasant star system.

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