

## **Bridging Cultures, Reshaping Identities: How Pragmatic Awareness Transforms Teachers in Ethiopian International Schools**

Ünal Deniz

*Manisa Celal Bayar University, Türkiye*

---

### **ABSTRACT**

*This phenomenological study explores how teachers experience intercultural pragmatic dissonances and how these experiences shape their professional identity development. In-depth interviews were conducted with 12 teachers (six Ethiopian and six international) from three international schools in Addis Ababa. Findings reveal three themes of intercultural pragmatic dissonances, cultural mediation practices, and professional identity transformation through developing pragmatic awareness. Specifically, teachers navigated pragmatic dissonances in multiple contexts by developing cultural mediation strategies, including bridge-building and fostering intercultural competence. The results illuminate how teachers progressively develop the capacity to navigate communication challenges and reconstruct their professional identities. This study reveals pragmatic awareness as a catalyst for professional transformation, demonstrating how pragmatic dissonances offer opportunities for growth.*

**Keywords:** Cross-cultural communication; intercultural pragmatics; international schools; pragmatic awareness; teacher identity

© Author(s), 2026. Published by Star Scholars Press.

This article is distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the acceleration of globalization and increasing international mobility have fundamentally transformed educational institutions into multicultural and multilingual contexts (Chennamsetti, 2020; Deniz & Kayir, 2025; Ihuoma & Bista, 2025). This transformation is particularly evident in international schools, which serve as microcosms of global diversity where teachers, students, and administrators from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds converge to create unique educational environments (Bunnell, 2019; Hayden & Thompson, 2017; Tarc & Mishra Tarc, 2015). Within these culturally rich yet complex educational spaces, teachers frequently encounter intercultural pragmatic dissonances (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014). Such dissonances manifest as misunderstandings and communicative challenges stemming from differences in cultural norms, communication styles, and contextual interpretations of language use (McConachy, 2018). While often subtle, these pragmatic dissonances can significantly impact pedagogical relationships, classroom management, and ultimately, the construction of teachers' professional identities (Gkonou & Miller, 2021; Yuan, 2019).

The complex interplay between intercultural pragmatic dissonance and teacher identity development deserves closer examination, as it represents a critical dimension of teacher professionalism in increasingly diverse educational settings worldwide (Byram et al., 2017; Deardorff, 2006; Holliday, 2018). International school teachers serve not only as instructors of academic content but also as cultural mediators who must navigate, interpret, and bridge cultural differences (Bailey & Cooker, 2019; Poole, 2020). Simultaneously, they construct coherent professional identities that accommodate multiple cultural perspectives and expectations. This cultural mediation role requires sophisticated pragmatic awareness to anticipate communicative misunderstandings, adjust communication strategies, and help students develop intercultural competencies (Drajati et al., 2024; Liddicoat, 2015). Developing such awareness transforms teachers' communicative practices and their understanding of professional roles within multicultural educational environments (Ishihara, 2011; Yuan & Mak, 2018).

Despite growing recognition of the importance of intercultural competence in educational settings generally (e.g., Deniz, 2024, 2025a; McConachy, 2019; Nguyen & Ton-Nu, 2023), research on how teachers navigate pragmatic dissonance specifically in international schools remains notably scarce. This gap is significant as international schools continue to proliferate globally, with substantial growth in regions like Ethiopia, where intercultural educational spaces emerge at the intersection of local and global educational paradigms. Ethiopia presents a rich context for examining these phenomena. Its distinct educational heritage, emphasizing hierarchical teacher-student relationships and traditional pedagogies (Abebe & Woldehanna, 2013; Semela, 2014), contrasts with

the egalitarian approaches promoted in many international curricula, creating sites of pragmatic tension. Furthermore, the complex linguistic landscape—with Amharic as the official language alongside more than 80 other languages and English as the primary language of instruction in international schools—creates a multilingual environment where pragmatic norms from various linguistic traditions intersect and conflict, requiring sophisticated metalinguistic awareness (Heugh et al., 2012). These unique characteristics make Ethiopia an ideal setting for exploring how teachers navigate pragmatic dissonances and construct their professional identities.

The present study aims to examine the intercultural pragmatic dissonances experienced by teachers in international schools in Ethiopia, how they conceptualize their cultural mediation roles, and how their developing pragmatic awareness transforms their professional practices and identities. This study enhances understanding of teacher identity formation in intercultural contexts and the processes through which teachers develop pragmatic awareness. The findings hold significance for international school administrators, teacher educators, and policymakers seeking to support teachers in diverse educational settings. Additionally, this research informs theoretical discussions about the relationship between language, culture, and professional identity in globalized educational contexts. Drawing on an integrated theoretical framework that combines Beijaard et al.'s (2004) conceptualization of teacher identity, Byram's (1997, 2008) model of intercultural communicative competence, and Kramsch's (2013) third place theory, this study explores the following research questions:

1. What intercultural pragmatic dissonances do teachers experience in international schools?
2. How do teachers in international schools conceptualize their cultural mediation roles?
3. How does the development of teachers' intercultural pragmatic awareness transform their professional practices?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Theoretical Framework

This study employs an integrated theoretical framework combining three perspectives: teacher identity, intercultural communicative competence, and third space theory. Drawing on Beijaard et al.'s (2004) work, the framework conceptualizes teacher professional identity as an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences. Four essential characteristics define this conceptualization: identity as an ongoing process, the involvement of both person and context, harmonization of sub-identities, and agency in identity formation. This approach emphasizes dynamic construction through interactions between

personal, professional, and contextual factors, rather than viewing identity as fixed. In international school settings, this process becomes particularly fluid as teachers navigate multiple cultural expectations and educational paradigms.

This conceptualization of teacher identity intersects with Byram's (1997, 2008) model of intercultural communicative competence, which provides analytical tools for understanding the intercultural dimensions of teacher experiences. Byram's (1997, 2008) framework outlines five relevant components for teachers in culturally diverse educational environments: attitudes of curiosity and openness, knowledge of social groups and their interaction processes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. Unlike approaches focusing solely on linguistic competence, this model acknowledges the complex interplay between language, culture, and communication that characterizes international school environments. It conceptualizes how teachers develop the ability to "decentre" from their cultural perspectives and mediate between different cultural interpretations of communicative acts (Byram et al., 2002).

Complementing these approaches, Kramsch's (2013) concept of the "third place" provides insights into the unique cultural and linguistic spaces emerging in international schools. This concept describes a symbolic place that is by no means unitary, stable, permanent, or homogeneous but rather a space where meaning is constantly negotiated. The third place framework is particularly relevant to international schools in Ethiopia, which represent intersections of local educational traditions and global educational paradigms. It allows examination of how teachers navigate and construct meaning within these intercultural spaces, reconcile potentially conflicting educational values, and adopt cultural mediation roles that bridge different cultural understandings.

This integrated theoretical framework enables multi-dimensional analysis of the research questions guiding this study. Beijaard et al.'s (2004) conceptualization of teacher identity provides tools to examine how intercultural pragmatic dissonances influence professional identity perceptions, while Byram's (1997, 2008) model offers a framework for understanding cultural mediation roles and pragmatic awareness development. Kramsch's (2013) third place theory contextualizes these processes within the unique cultural spaces of international schools in Ethiopia. Together, these perspectives acknowledge the complex, dynamic, and situated nature of teacher identity formation in international educational contexts.

## **Teacher Identity and Intercultural Pragmatic Dissonances**

Teacher identity in international school contexts represents a complex and dynamic process involving continuous negotiation across cultural, linguistic, and educational boundaries (Bailey & Cooker, 2019; Golis, 2025). International

schools function as unique spaces where teachers navigate multiple educational paradigms, cultural expectations, and communicative norms simultaneously (Deniz, 2025b, 2025c; Sahling & De Carvalho, 2021; Savva, 2017). These environments provide rich contexts for examining how professional identity is constructed, challenged, and transformed through intercultural interactions. Beijaard et al. (2004) conceptualize teacher professional identity as “an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences” (p. 122), a process that becomes particularly complex in multicultural settings (Lai et al., 2016a). Teachers regularly encounter intercultural pragmatic dissonances—misunderstandings stemming from differences in cultural norms, communication styles, and contextual interpretations of language use (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; McConachy, 2018; Nguyen & Ton-Nu, 2023).

Pragmatic dissonances manifest in various forms, including differences in expectations regarding formality, directness, classroom participation, feedback styles, and expressions of politeness (Dervin & Liddicoat, 2013; Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2011; Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2009). Such differences often lead to situations where teachers’ communicative intentions are misinterpreted by students or colleagues from different cultural backgrounds, or where teachers misinterpret others’ intentions due to different pragmatic norms (Gkonou & Miller, 2021; Nguyen & Ton-Nu, 2023). Research documents how these dissonances create moments of professional uncertainty as teachers question their communicative effectiveness and pedagogical authority (e.g., Deniz & Kayır, 2025; Lai et al., 2016a; Moloney & Saltmarsh, 2016), highlighting the intricate relationship between pragmatic competence and professional identity in multilingual contexts. Particularly challenging are pragmatic aspects that operate below conscious awareness, such as turn-taking conventions, silence interpretation, and non-verbal communication patterns that vary across cultures (Ishihara & Cohen, 2014; McConachy, 2018). These subtle differences profoundly impact classroom dynamics and teacher-student relationships in international schools (Kostogriz & Bonar, 2019; Lai et al., 2016a).

### **Cultural Mediation, Pragmatic Awareness, and Professional Transformation**

International school teachers serve not only as instructors of academic content but also as cultural mediators who must navigate, interpret, and bridge cultural differences (Bailey & Cooker, 2019; Sercu, 2006). This mediation function emerges as particularly significant in contexts where teachers must frequently interpret cultural expectations, explain implicit communicative norms, and facilitate intercultural dialogue among diverse school stakeholders (Lai et al., 2019; Liddicoat, 2015). Unlike language teachers, whose cultural mediation role has been extensively discussed (Kohler, 2015; Liddicoat, 2015; Sercu, 2006), content teachers in international schools often lack explicit preparation for this

aspect of their professional responsibilities. Consequently, cultural mediation practices develop organically through experience rather than through systematic professional development (Bailey, 2015; Lai et al., 2016b). Byram's (1997, 2008) model of intercultural communicative competence identifies five components essential for this role: openness and curiosity, knowledge of social groups, interpretive skills, discovery skills, and critical cultural awareness.

Developing pragmatic awareness represents a transformative journey that impacts teachers' communicative practices and professional understanding (Ishihara, 2011; Yuan & Mak, 2018). This development follows distinct phases, beginning with recognition of pragmatic differences, followed by analysis of underlying cultural values, and culminating in the integration of multiple pragmatic systems into professional practice (McConachy, 2019). However, studies examining pragmatic awareness have largely focused on language learners rather than teachers (Li, 2012; Taguchi, 2015). What remains underexplored is how this developmental trajectory intersects with teachers' evolving sense of professional identity, particularly in contexts where teachers' cultural and linguistic backgrounds differ substantially from those of their students and colleagues (Fichtner & Chapman, 2011; Menard-Warwick, 2011). Research suggests that as teachers become more aware of pragmatic differences and develop navigation strategies, they often experience significant shifts in their professional self-perception and pedagogical approaches (Lai et al., 2016b; Wernicke, 2018).

This transformation aligns with Kramsch's (2013) concept of the "third place"—a symbolic space where cultural and linguistic boundaries are constantly negotiated. The third place concept helps explain how international school teachers navigate between local and global educational values, developing integrated professional identities that incorporate multiple educational traditions (Bailey & Cooker, 2019; Sahling & De Carvalho, 2021). The negotiation of this third place involves complex processes of adaptation, innovation, and critical reflection on cultural assumptions and communicative practices, processes with significant implications for professional development initiatives (Lai et al., 2016b; Yuan & Mak, 2018). Despite growing recognition of these processes' importance, research specifically examining how teachers in international schools develop pragmatic awareness, conceptualize their cultural mediation roles, and transform their professional identities remains limited, particularly in African contexts such as Ethiopia. While pragmatic development has been extensively studied in language learners (Li, 2012; Taguchi, 2015), the intersection of pragmatic awareness and teacher identity development in international school contexts remains underexplored. The present study addresses this gap by examining intercultural pragmatic dissonances experienced by teachers in international schools in Ethiopia, their cultural mediation roles, and how pragmatic awareness transforms their professional identities.

## RESEARCH METHOD

### Research Design

This study employed a phenomenological approach to examine teachers' experiences of intercultural pragmatic dissonances in international schools in Ethiopia and their impact on professional identity development. Phenomenology was selected because it focuses on understanding the essence of lived experiences and how individuals make meaning of these experiences (van Manen, 2016). This methodological approach enabled a rich description of participants' lived experiences while identifying the essential structures underlying these experiences across different cultural backgrounds and teaching contexts.

### Research Context

The study was conducted in three international schools in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. These schools were purposefully selected to represent the diversity of international education in the Ethiopian context: a well-established American curriculum school, a European curriculum school, and an international baccalaureate school. All three schools featured multicultural teaching staff and student populations, creating naturally occurring contexts for intercultural pragmatic encounters. Ethiopia's unique historical, linguistic, and cultural characteristics made it a particularly rich setting for examining intercultural pragmatic dissonances, as it represents one of the few African nations that largely maintained its independence during the colonial era while still experiencing significant Western educational influences. The complex linguistic landscape of Ethiopia, with Amharic as the official national language alongside more than 80 other languages, and English serving as the primary language of instruction in international schools, created a rich environment for examining the intersection of local educational traditions and global educational paradigms.

### Participants

Twelve teachers (six Ethiopian and six international) were chosen through purposive sampling to ensure they had direct experience with the phenomenon being studied. Participant selection aimed to achieve maximum variation across several dimensions: nationality (Ethiopian and various international backgrounds), gender (six male, six female), years of experience in international schools (ranging from 2-23 years), and subject areas (balanced representation across disciplines). This sampling strategy aligns with phenomenological research principles, which emphasize selecting participants who have direct experience with the phenomenon being studied while seeking variation in perspectives.

**Table 1: Participant Demographics**

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	Nationality	Subject	Experience	Languages
Kidist	Female	35	Ethiopian	Mathematics	12	Amharic, English
Selamawit	Female	42	Ethiopian	English	18	Amharic, English, French, Tigrinya
Meskerem	Female	29	Ethiopian	Chemistry	7	Amharic, English, Oromo
Dawit	Male	47	Ethiopian	Social Studies	23	Amharic, English, Arabic
Yonas	Male	33	Ethiopian	PE/Health	10	Amharic, English
Tesfaye	Male	38	Ethiopian	IT	14	Amharic, English, Basic German
Emma	Female	36	British	Art	13	English, French
Sarah	Female	51	American	English	25	English, Spanish, Basic Amharic
Priya	Female	29	Indian	Mathematics	8	English, Hindi, Tamil
Jean-Pierre	Male	44	French	Music	20	French, English, Spanish
Michael	Male	32	Canadian	Physics	9	English, French
Daniel	Male	39	Kenyan	Geography	15	English, Swahili, Kikuyu

Table 1 presents participants' demographic information, using pseudonyms to protect confidentiality. As shown in Table 1, participants represented diverse backgrounds in terms of nationality, language proficiency, educational qualifications, and teaching experience. This diversity enabled rich

comparative analysis of how cultural background influences experiences of pragmatic dissonances and processes of identity development in international school settings. The balanced inclusion of both local Ethiopian and international teachers provided complementary perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation.

## **Data Collection**

In alignment with phenomenological research principles, in-depth, semi-structured interviews served as the primary data collection method, as they allow researchers to gather detailed descriptions of lived experiences (van Manen, 2016). Interviews were conducted between December 2024 and January 2025. The interview protocol was developed based on the study's research questions and relevant literature on intercultural pragmatics, cultural mediation, and teacher identity. Following Seidman's (2019) recommendations for phenomenological interviewing, the protocol contained questions designed to elicit concrete descriptions of experiences, reflection on these experiences, and consideration of their meaning. The protocol was structured around three main sections: (1) experiences of intercultural pragmatic dissonances in professional contexts, (2) cultural mediation roles and strategies, and (3) perceptions of how these experiences influenced professional identity and practices. Sample questions included: *"Can you describe a specific situation where you experienced miscommunication or misunderstanding due to different cultural communication norms?"*, *"How did you respond to this situation?"*, and *"How have these experiences shaped your understanding of yourself as a teacher?"* Follow-up prompts encouraged participants to provide detailed descriptions of specific incidents and reflect on their significance. The protocol was piloted with two international school teachers (one Ethiopian, one expatriate) who were not part of the main study, and minor adjustments were made based on their feedback. All interviews were conducted in English, which was either the first or working language of all participants. Interviews were conducted online using video conferencing platforms (Zoom and Jitsi) to provide participants with familiar and comfortable environments where they could express themselves freely and reflect on their experiences without constraints. This approach also offered scheduling flexibility and accommodated participants' professional commitments. Interviews lasted between 50-80 minutes and were scheduled at times convenient for participants, outside their teaching hours. All interviews were recorded with participants' informed consent and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological analysis, adapted to accommodate multiple participants across diverse cultural backgrounds. The analysis proceeded through several systematic phases. First, through horizontalization, each transcript was read multiple times to identify all statements relevant to the experience of intercultural pragmatic dissonances and identity development. These significant statements were treated initially with equal value. Second, reduction and elimination processes were applied where statements that were irrelevant to the phenomenon, repetitive, or overlapping were eliminated, leaving only the "horizons" or essential constituents of the experience. Third, related horizons were clustered into thematic units through a process of clustering and thematizing. These emerging themes represented the core elements of participants' experiences with pragmatic dissonances, cultural mediation, and identity transformation. Fourth, themes were validated by checking against the original transcripts to ensure they accurately represented participants' accounts. This process involved returning to the data to verify that themes were explicitly expressed or compatible with participants' descriptions. Fifth, individual textural descriptions were developed for each participant, capturing their unique experience of the phenomenon using verbatim excerpts from their interview. Sixth, individual structural descriptions were created focusing on the underlying dynamics of the experience, identifying how participants made meaning of their experiences with pragmatic dissonances and cultural mediation. Finally, the individual descriptions were integrated into a composite textural-structural description that represented the essence of the phenomenon as experienced by the group as a whole, while acknowledging variations in individual experiences. Throughout this process, particular attention was paid to comparing and contrasting the experiences of Ethiopian and international teachers to identify similarities and differences in their experiences of pragmatic dissonances and identity development. Data management and analysis were facilitated using MAXQDA 2020 software, which enabled systematic organization of significant statements, themes, and analytical notes. The final thematic structure consisted of three major themes (intercultural pragmatic dissonances, cultural mediation roles, and teacher identity transformation), each with several subthemes as presented in the findings.

## **Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity**

Phenomenological research requires researchers to acknowledge their experiences and preconceptions related to the phenomenon under study. Following Dahlberg et al. (2008), this study adopted a stance of "bridling" rather than complete bracketing—maintaining awareness of how the researcher's perspectives

might influence interpretation while remaining open to participants' unique experiences. Given the researcher's familiarity with both Ethiopian and international educational contexts, reflexive awareness was maintained throughout the research process regarding how prior experiences might shape understanding of participants' accounts. Regular peer debriefing sessions were conducted with colleagues familiar with international education but not directly involved in the study to challenge interpretations and consider alternative perspectives. Reflective notes were maintained throughout data collection and analysis to document the researcher's evolving understanding and potential biases. This reflexive approach ensured that findings authentically represented participants' experiences while acknowledging the interpretive nature of phenomenological inquiry.

### **Trustworthiness**

Several strategies were employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, following Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative research rigor. Credibility was established through member checking, where interview transcripts and preliminary interpretations were shared with participants to verify accuracy and resonance with their experiences. Regular peer debriefing sessions with colleagues not involved in the study helped challenge interpretations and identify potential biases. Rich, thick description using participants' own words was provided to substantiate interpretations. Transferability was addressed through a detailed description of participant characteristics and research context, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings to other settings. Dependability was maintained through systematic documentation of the research process, including detailed descriptions of data collection and analysis procedures. Confirmability was supported through the reflexive practices described above and transparent reporting of how conclusions were derived from the data. These measures helped ensure that the findings authentically represented participants' experiences while acknowledging the interpretive nature of phenomenological research.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The study adhered to rigorous ethical standards for research with human participants. Informed consent was secured from all participants prior to data collection. Confidentiality was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and the removal of identifying details from all reported findings. Participants were provided opportunities to review their interview transcripts and request the omission of any content they felt uncomfortable sharing. Additionally, given the potentially sensitive nature of discussions about cultural differences and institutional challenges, particular attention was paid to respecting participants'

boundaries during interviews and ensuring their accounts were represented respectfully in the findings.

## FINDINGS

Analysis of interviews with 12 teachers in international schools in Ethiopia revealed three main themes: intercultural pragmatic dissonances, cultural mediation roles, and teacher identity transformation.

### Theme 1: Intercultural Pragmatic Dissonances

#### *Classroom Communication Norms*

Participants reported significant differences in classroom communication expectations across cultures. Forms of address and formality created initial tensions, with Ethiopian teachers expecting formal address while international teachers were accustomed to more casual interactions. Dawit mentioned feeling initially uncomfortable when students addressed him by his first name, a practice that contrasted sharply with Ethiopian educational norms. Direct/indirect speech preferences affected feedback delivery, with international teachers typically using more explicit communication than their Ethiopian counterparts. Sarah noted that she had to learn to soften criticism and use more indirect language when providing feedback to Ethiopian students who were accustomed to more implicit communication styles.

Silence interpretation emerged as a subtle but significant pragmatic challenge. Jean-Pierre noted that silences in class carried different meanings across cultures, often leading to misinterpretation of student engagement. He explained, “*What I read as disinterest was often a sign of respectful attention in Ethiopian culture.*” Student participation expectations revealed contrasting educational traditions. Emma shared:

*The international students would volunteer ideas and even challenge my suggestions, while Ethiopian students, though equally capable, would wait for explicit invitations to speak. I had to develop different questioning techniques for different students until we established a shared classroom culture that accommodated everyone.*

This experience highlights how teachers navigated conflicting communication norms while trying to create inclusive learning environments. Local-international curriculum tensions required ongoing negotiation as teachers balanced different educational values. Kidist described this challenge as “*Finding the middle ground between the Ethiopian focus on foundational knowledge and the international curriculum’s emphasis on critical thinking.*”

## ***Institutional Communication Challenges***

Formal structures revealed underlying pragmatic dissonances in professional contexts. Meeting protocols and decision-making participation reflected different cultural expectations regarding directness and authority. Tesfaye observed that *“Expatriate colleagues would often debate points directly in meetings, while Ethiopian staff preferred to discuss concerns privately with supervisors afterward.”* Hierarchical relationship impacts manifested in communication patterns, with Ethiopian teachers typically following more formal channels than their international colleagues. Meskerem explained that she initially found it shocking when international teachers would casually disagree with the principal, reflecting different cultural approaches to authority.

Status differences impact was evident in institutional interactions. Michael observed that opinions from international staff sometimes received more immediate attention in meetings, creating subtle power imbalances. He reflected, *“I noticed my suggestions gained more traction than identical ideas from Ethiopian colleagues,”* showing awareness of these dynamics. Professional norm conflicts often remained unaddressed despite causing tension. Daniel reflected:

*We never explicitly discussed our different expectations about professional communication. Western colleagues would send direct emails about problems to the whole team, which felt inappropriate to local staff who preferred addressing issues privately. These different professional norms created barriers that affected our effectiveness.*

This observation underscores how unexamined pragmatic differences impacted collaboration and professional relationships across cultural groups. Such miscommunications often persisted until explicitly addressed through intentional conversations about differing expectations.

## ***Local-international Teacher Dynamics***

Interactions between colleagues from different backgrounds revealed additional pragmatic challenges. Professional knowledge sharing was sometimes hindered by communication barriers, with several participants noting how specialized terminology created exclusion. Priya admitted that she initially used jargon without realizing it created barriers for colleagues with different educational backgrounds. Culture-based misunderstandings frequently occurred in informal settings, where pragmatic norms varied most significantly. Yonas described how social invitations were often misinterpreted: *“When international colleagues said ‘we should get coffee sometime,’ I would wait for a specific invitation that never came, not understanding it was just a friendly expression.”*

Language barriers affected collaboration, though many participants developed strategies to overcome these challenges. Social interaction differences extended beyond the workplace, with varying expectations about colleague relationships outside school. Professional solidarity networks were typically formed along cultural lines initially, gradually becoming more integrated as pragmatic awareness developed. The patterns of intercultural pragmatic dissonance revealed in this theme highlight how linguistic and cultural differences are manifested in everyday professional interactions, creating challenges that require conscious navigation and adaptation from both local and international teachers.

## **Theme 2: Cultural Mediation Roles**

### ***Intercultural Bridge-building***

Teachers developed various strategies to navigate intercultural challenges in their professional environment. Cultural translation roles emerged organically, with both local and international teachers mediating between different expectations. Selamawit described how she often found herself explaining to international colleagues why certain approaches wouldn't work with Ethiopian parents, serving as a cultural interpreter. Norm explanation strategies were employed to clarify implicit cultural assumptions. Priya shared that she regularly created explicit guides for navigating parent meetings to help new international teachers understand local expectations. Making implicit expectations explicit became a valuable approach. Yonas described:

*I found myself explaining why students stood when teachers entered the room, why they were reluctant to ask questions, and why they preferred group rather than individual recognition. These explanations helped my international colleagues adapt their approaches rather than misinterpreting these behaviors as lack of engagement or independence.*

This mediation work facilitated greater mutual understanding between cultural groups. Facilitating cross-cultural dialogue extended beyond explanation to creating opportunities for meaningful exchange. Daniel mentioned organizing informal “lunches” where teachers could discuss differences in educational philosophies in a low-pressure environment. Conflict management strategies evolved as teachers gained experience navigating intercultural tensions. Jean-Pierre noted developing an awareness of addressing cross-cultural misunderstandings, demonstrating how teachers systematized their mediation practices over time. These structured approaches helped transform potential conflicts into opportunities for deeper cultural understanding and institutional growth.

## ***Bridging Educational Practices and Environments***

Participants described the development of integrated educational environments that incorporated elements from multiple cultural traditions. Blended cultural practices emerged through experimentation and adaptation. Michael described creating a classroom greeting ritual that combined Ethiopian respectful acknowledgment with international casual warmth. Cultural code-integration became evident in teachers' communication styles, which incorporated elements from both Ethiopian and international approaches. New pragmatic norm development resulted from this cultural integration. Several teachers described how their classrooms had developed unique communication norms that differed from both pure Ethiopian and Western models.

Multiple perspective integration became a valued skill that strengthened teachers' practice. Kidist explained how she deliberately incorporated both local examples and global contexts in mathematics lessons, enriching students' understanding. Local-international pedagogical fusion represented the most sophisticated form of these integrated practices, with teachers thoughtfully combining pedagogical approaches. Sarah described developing assessment practices that balanced international standards with locally relevant evaluation approaches, creating more effective and culturally appropriate learning experiences. These integrated practices represented innovative educational approaches uniquely suited to the international school context in Ethiopia.

## ***Cultural Learning Processes***

Teachers described the ongoing development of cultural understanding through various experiences. Local culture/language acquisition was pursued by international teachers with varying levels of commitment. Emma shared that "*Learning basic Amharic transformed my relationships with students' families,*" highlighting the impact of language efforts. Cultural sensitivity development progressed through distinct phases, beginning with awareness of differences and gradually developing into a deeper understanding. Learning from pragmatic failures provided powerful development opportunities. Priya shared how misunderstandings in parent conferences led to significant insights about communication expectations, noting that "What seemed like a disaster actually became my most valuable learning experience."

Questioning cultural assumptions became increasingly important as teachers gained experience. Dawit explained how working with international colleagues led him to "*reconsider many teaching practices I had always taken for granted,*" showing reflexivity about his own cultural conditioning. Openness to intercultural encounters characterized teachers who successfully navigated pragmatic differences. Michael reflected:

*Initially, I was frustrated when things didn't work as expected. The turning point came when I stopped seeing cultural differences as obstacles and started approaching them with curiosity. This shift from judgment to inquiry completely transformed my experience and effectiveness in the school.*

This perspective transformation represented a crucial development in teachers' intercultural capabilities. Tolerance for ambiguity developed as teachers gained confidence navigating cultural complexity. Meskerem described becoming “comfortable with not always understanding everything immediately,” indicating growth in intercultural maturity. These developmental processes revealed how intercultural competence evolved through both structured learning and experiential challenges.

### ***Student Intercultural Development***

Many teachers recognized their role in fostering students' intercultural competencies. Cross-cultural communication support became an intentional focus in diverse classrooms. Tesfaye described how he created structured opportunities for students from different backgrounds to work together on projects, facilitating meaningful interaction. Cultural respect promotion was embedded in classroom management approaches. Intercultural awareness activities were integrated into various subject areas, with teachers using their subjects as vehicles for cultural learning. Daniel shared examples of how geography lessons became opportunities to explore different cultural perspectives on environmental issues.

Multilingual resource utilization helped create more inclusive learning environments. Several teachers described using multiple languages strategically to support learning and validate linguistic diversity. Yonas noted that “*Allowing students to process complex concepts in their strongest language before sharing in English*” enhanced both academic learning and intercultural understanding. This focus on developing students' intercultural capabilities revealed how teachers extended their cultural mediation role beyond colleague interactions to their pedagogical practices.

## **Theme 3: Teacher Identity Transformation**

### ***Pragmatic Awareness Development***

Participants described evolving awareness of pragmatic differences and their significance. Dissonance recognition stages typically begin with confusion or frustration before developing into conscious awareness. Jean-Pierre described his journey as moving “*From complete bewilderment to gradually identifying specific communication patterns that were culturally based.*” Reflective communication

awareness enabled teachers to analyze communication patterns more effectively. Sarah shared how she began to notice not just what was said, but how it was said and what that meant in different contexts, demonstrating increased pragmatic sensitivity. Communication strategy expansion resulted from increased pragmatic awareness. Teachers developed wider repertoires for different contexts, adjusting their communication based on audience and purpose. Intercultural sensitivity phases are aligned with theoretical models, showing progression from ethnocentric to more ethnorelative perspectives.

Pragmatic flexibility development was evident in experienced teachers' ability to switch between communication styles. Daniel described how he could now adjust his directness level depending on whether he was speaking with Ethiopian or international colleagues, showing sophisticated pragmatic adaptation. Coping with pragmatic failures became less threatening as teachers developed resilience and humor about intercultural challenges. Multidimensional communication competence was implicit in many teachers' approaches, with components of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness evident in their descriptions. This pragmatic awareness development represented a foundation for broader professional transformation.

### ***Professional Identity Reconstruction***

Teachers reported significant changes to their professional self-concept through intercultural experiences. Cross-cultural experience impacts were profound and often unexpected. Teaching role perception shifts included a broadened understanding of their function beyond academic instruction. Priya noted that she now saw herself as a cultural bridge-builder as much as a mathematics teacher, indicating an expanded professional identity. Professional value reassessment occurred as teachers encountered different educational philosophies. Selamawit shared:

*Before working here, I saw my role primarily as delivering subject content and maintaining classroom discipline. Through working with international colleagues, I've come to value facilitating student thinking and building relationships differently. These aren't just new techniques—they represent a fundamental shift in who I am as a teacher.*

This reflection demonstrates how intercultural experiences catalyzed deeper identity transformation. Pedagogical belief transformation often followed pragmatic awareness development, with teachers reconsidering fundamental assumptions about teaching and learning. Emma described “*completely reimagining what student participation could look like*” after working in this intercultural context. Professional confidence rebuilding was necessary as teachers navigated unfamiliar contexts. Many participants described initial periods of doubt

followed by renewed confidence as they developed intercultural competence. Cultural positioning reevaluation involved teachers reconsidering their relationship to both local and global teaching communities.

Local-global identity integration emerged as teachers developed identities that transcended simple cultural categories. Yonas explained that he now saw himself as neither just an Ethiopian teacher nor an international school teacher, but something new that incorporates both perspectives, illustrating the professional identities that developed through intercultural experience. This identity reconstruction represented a profound outcome of navigating intercultural pragmatic challenges over time.

### ***Transformed Professional Practices***

Identity changes manifested in concrete modifications to teaching approaches. Teaching approach adaptations reflected new pragmatic awareness and cultural understanding. Kidist described how her questioning techniques evolved to accommodate both Ethiopian indirect and Western direct communication styles, showing practical application of intercultural learning. Assessment practice revisions incorporated insights from different educational traditions. Michael shared that he now used a blend of formative feedback approaches that combined elements from both educational systems, demonstrating pedagogical integration.

Classroom management expansion was evident as teachers developed more varied approaches to creating effective learning environments. Several participants described adopting more flexible and culturally responsive discipline systems. Curriculum modifications integrated local and international elements to create more relevant and engaging learning experiences. Collegial collaboration evolution showed how professional relationships matured as pragmatic awareness increased. Tesfaye noted that “*After three years, our team had developed ways of working together that respected both cultural traditions,*” illustrating the emergence of new collaborative practices. These transformed professional practices demonstrated how intercultural experiences ultimately enhanced teacher effectiveness through expanded repertoires and more culturally responsive approaches.

## **DISCUSSION**

Teachers in international schools in Ethiopia experienced various forms of pragmatic dissonances that challenged their professional communication and relationships. These dissonances manifested in classroom interactions, where differences in addressing styles, directness preferences, silence interpretation, and student participation expectations created frequent misunderstandings. Spencer-

Oatey and Franklin's (2009) research on culturally-contingent communicative norms provides a theoretical framework for understanding these challenges, particularly how seemingly minor pragmatic differences can lead to significant misalignments in educational contexts. The distinction between visible pragmatic differences (e.g., forms of address) and invisible ones (e.g., interpretations of silence) required different recognition and adaptation processes, extending McConachy's (2018) work on pragmatic awareness development. Within institutional settings, divergent expectations regarding meeting protocols, decision-making processes, and hierarchical communication created tensions that affected professional collaboration. The dynamics between local Ethiopian and international teachers revealed additional pragmatic challenges, including differing expectations in professional knowledge sharing, social interactions, and communication styles. Power dynamics influenced which communicative norms were privileged in different contexts, with Ethiopian teachers often bearing greater adaptation burdens despite their contextual expertise. These pragmatic dissonances were particularly significant because they often operated below the level of conscious awareness, leading to misinterpretations of intentions and creating barriers to effective professional relationships until explicitly recognized and addressed.

In response to pragmatic challenges, teachers developed cultural mediation strategies embodying Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence. Through intercultural bridge-building, they functioned as cultural interpreters, explaining implicit norms and facilitating understanding between cultural groups (Kramsch & Hua, 2016). Rather than merely facilitating communication, teachers engaged in "pragmatic pedagogy"—deliberately making implicit cultural norms explicit to foster intercultural understanding. Many contributed to creating Kramsch's (2013) "third spaces" that blended multiple cultural traditions, developing integrated practices incorporating both Ethiopian and international educational approaches. These teachers engaged in systematic integration of pedagogical approaches based on contextual appropriateness, learning objectives, and student needs rather than haphazard blending. Their cultural learning involved acquiring local knowledge, developing pragmatic sensitivity, and learning from communicative failures, reflecting developmental trajectories documented by Harsch and Poehner (2016). Many teachers extended their mediation role to fostering students' intercultural development through structured activities, approaches Byram et al. (2017) recommend for developing intercultural citizenship. This integration challenges conventional boundaries between content and culture, suggesting that in international contexts, cultural mediation becomes intrinsic to subject teaching. This work represented significant expansion of professional responsibilities beyond content instruction, requiring sophisticated intercultural awareness that transformed their identities and practices.

The experience of navigating intercultural pragmatic differences and engaging in cultural mediation led to significant professional identity transformation among teachers. Beijaard et al.'s (2004) conceptualization of teacher identity as “an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences” provides a theoretical framework for understanding how intercultural experiences reshape professional self-understanding. Teachers’ development of pragmatic awareness progressed through various stages, from initial confusion to sophisticated understanding of cultural communication patterns and the ability to adapt their communication strategies across contexts. The progression from pragmatic confusion to reflective awareness to strategic adaptation represents a developmental sequence not previously mapped in research on international teachers. This growing awareness catalyzed deeper professional identity reconstruction, as teachers reassessed their teaching roles, professional values, and pedagogical beliefs in light of intercultural experiences. The study reveals important distinctions between Ethiopian and international teachers’ identity transformation processes—while international teachers often experienced dramatic initial dissonance followed by gradual adaptation, Ethiopian teachers frequently described ongoing negotiation between local and global educational values, suggesting different identity transformation trajectories based on positioning relative to dominant educational paradigms (Tarc & Mishra Tarc, 2015; Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018). These identity changes manifested in transformed professional practices, including adapted teaching approaches, revised assessment methods, expanded classroom management strategies, and modified curriculum content that integrated elements from different educational traditions. The resulting professional capabilities – particularly the ability to navigate multiple cultural frameworks simultaneously and create contextually-responsive pedagogy – represent valuable forms of teacher expertise that deserve greater recognition in professional standards and development pathways (Richards, 2023; Yuan, 2019). This transformation trajectory revealed how intercultural experiences in international schools not only challenged teachers but ultimately enriched their professional capabilities, leading to more flexible, culturally responsive, and sophisticated approaches to education that transcended singular cultural frameworks.

Navigating intercultural pragmatic differences and engaging in cultural mediation led to significant professional identity transformation. Beijaard et al.'s (2004) conceptualization of teacher identity as “an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation of experiences” provides a framework for understanding how intercultural experiences reshape professional self-understanding. Pragmatic awareness progressed from initial confusion to sophisticated understanding of cultural communication patterns and strategic adaptation, reflecting developmental trajectories documented in research (Ishihara, 2011; Nguyen & Ton-Nu, 2023; Yuan & Mak, 2018). This awareness catalyzed

deeper reconstruction as teachers reassessed their roles, values, and pedagogical beliefs. The study reveals distinctions between Ethiopian and international teachers' transformation processes. International teachers experienced dramatic initial dissonance followed by gradual adaptation, while Ethiopian teachers described ongoing negotiation between local and global values, suggesting different trajectories based on positioning relative to dominant paradigms. These changes manifested in transformed practices: adapted teaching approaches, revised assessments, expanded classroom management, and modified curriculum integrating multiple traditions. The resulting capabilities—particularly navigating multiple cultural frameworks and creating contextually-responsive pedagogy—represent valuable expertise deserving greater recognition in professional standards. This trajectory, aligning with Kramsch's (2013) third place theory, revealed how intercultural experiences enriched capabilities, leading to more flexible, culturally responsive approaches transcending singular cultural frameworks.

## IMPLICATIONS

This study offers significant implications for multiple educational stakeholders involved in international school contexts. Teacher education programs should incorporate explicit pragmatic awareness development as a core component of intercultural competence training, preparing teachers for international contexts through attention to communication conventions, hierarchical patterns, and culturally-contingent interpretations of nonverbal cues. Both pre-service preparation and in-service professional development should move beyond general cultural awareness to address specific pragmatic challenges through structured exposure to cases of misunderstanding, guided reflection, and collaborative analysis of critical incidents. The finding that cultural mediation skills develop gradually suggests implementing mentoring relationships between experienced and new teachers—particularly those pairing educators with different cultural backgrounds—to accelerate intercultural competence development. For international school leaders, this study underscores the importance of creating institutional structures that acknowledge pragmatic dissonances rather than assuming they will resolve naturally. Administrators should establish flexible communication protocols, explicitly discuss cultural expectations, and create spaces for addressing misunderstandings. The power dynamics revealed between local and international teachers suggest leaders should implement strategies ensuring equitable participation and recognition across cultural groups, while acknowledging cultural mediation as significant professional work by incorporating it into job descriptions, evaluation criteria, and resource allocation decisions.

## Limitations and Future Research

This study has several important limitations. The sample of 12 teachers, though balanced between local and international educators, limits generalizability to broader contexts. Data collection relied primarily on self-reported experiences through interviews, introducing potential challenges of recall accuracy and social desirability bias. The cross-sectional design cannot fully capture the longitudinal processes through which pragmatic awareness and identity transformation evolve over time. The exclusive focus on teachers excludes perspectives of students, parents, and administrators who might offer alternative viewpoints on the pragmatic dissonances identified. The specific cultural, linguistic, and historical factors of the Ethiopian context may not translate directly to international schools in other regions. Language limitations should also be noted, as interviews conducted in English may have constrained the expressive capacity of some local participants, potentially affecting the depth of their reported experiences. Finally, despite reflexive practices employed throughout the research process, the researchers' own cultural positioning may have influenced interpretations of intercultural dynamics, particularly given the complex power relations that exist in postcolonial educational contexts such as those found in international schools.

These limitations open several promising avenues for future research, particularly longitudinal studies tracking how intercultural pragmatic competence evolves over time in international educational settings. The blended educational practices that emerged warrant deeper exploration regarding their effectiveness for student learning and development across different cultural groups. While this study focused on teachers, future research should examine how students navigate pragmatic dissonances in international schools and how various stakeholders—including parents and administrators—are affected by and contribute to intercultural pragmatic dynamics. Comparative studies across international schools in different cultural contexts would help distinguish context-specific elements from universal patterns in international education, contributing to more nuanced theoretical frameworks for understanding intercultural pragmatic development in increasingly globalized educational environments.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined pragmatic dissonances experienced by teachers in international schools in Ethiopia, their cultural mediation roles, and how pragmatic awareness transformed their professional identities and practices. Findings reveal complex interplay between language, culture, and professional identity in international educational settings. Teachers encountered pragmatic challenges in classroom communication, institutional interactions, and colleague relationships, leading them to develop cultural mediation strategies and create integrated “third

space” educational practices. Such experiences catalyzed professional identity transformation, with teachers reconstructing their self-understanding and adapting pedagogical approaches to integrate multiple cultural perspectives. These findings contribute to theoretical understanding of teacher identity development by demonstrating the central role of pragmatic awareness in facilitating identity reconstruction. The research also extends intercultural pragmatics by illustrating how pragmatic dissonances function not merely as communicative challenges but as catalysts for professional growth. Additionally, the study highlights the need for explicit attention to pragmatic dimensions in teacher education and professional development programs as institutions worldwide become increasingly diverse. The Ethiopian context offers valuable insights into how these processes unfold at the intersection of local and global educational paradigms, enhancing our understanding of teacher development in globalized educational environments. Despite limitations, this research advances knowledge about the relationship between pragmatic competence and professional transformation. Navigating pragmatic dissonances, while challenging, ultimately enriches teachers’ capabilities and fosters more culturally responsive educational practices.

## REFERENCES

- Abebe, D. S., & Woldehanna, T. (2013). *Teacher training and development in Ethiopia: Improving education quality by developing teacher skills, attitudes and work conditions*. Young Lives.
- Bailey, L. (2015). Reskilled and ‘running ahead’: Teachers in an international school talk about their work. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 14(1), 3–15. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240915572949>
- Bailey, L., & Cooker, L. (2019). Exploring teacher identity in international schools: Key concepts for research. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 18(2), 125-141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240919865035>
- Beijaard, D., Meijer, P. C., & Verloop, N. (2004). Reconsidering research on teachers’ professional identity. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 20(2), 107-128. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2003.07.001>
- Bunnell, T. (2019). *International schooling and education in the ‘new era’: Emerging issues*. Emerald Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1108/9781787695412>
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M. (2008). *From foreign language education to education for intercultural citizenship: Essays and reflections*. Multilingual Matters.
- Byram, M., Golubeva, I., Hui, H., & Wagner, M. (Eds.). (2017). *From principles to practice in education for intercultural citizenship*. Multilingual Matters.

- Byram, M., Gribkova, B., & Starkey, H. (2002). *Developing the intercultural dimension in language teaching: A practical introduction for teachers*. Council of Europe.
- Chennamsetti, P. (2020). Challenges faced by Indian international students in the US: Challenges of Indian international students. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education*, 9(2), 249-263. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jise.v9i2.2345>
- Dahlberg, K., Dahlberg, H., & Nyström, M. (2008). *Reflective lifeworld research*. Studentlitteratur.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2006). Identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10(3), 241–266. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315306287002>
- Deniz, Ü. (2024). The odyssey of Turkish school leaders in Africa: An expedition into professional identity, challenges, and cultural adaptations. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 103, 102090. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2024.102090>
- Deniz, Ü. (2025a). Teachers' pragmatic awareness in multilingual educational settings: A phenomenological study across six Sub-Saharan African countries. *System*, 134, 103830. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2025.103830>
- Deniz, Ü. (2025b). Local teachers' career experiences in international schools: A currere study from Côte d'Ivoire. *Currere and Praxis*, 2(2), 81-106. <https://doi.org/10.70116/30654572111>
- Deniz, Ü. (2025c). Mapping local teacher and expatriate leader professional ecologies in Sub-Saharan African International Schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 1-19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17411432251397569>
- Deniz, Ü., & Kayır, G. (2025). Multilingualism in practice: a phenomenological study of international school teachers' experiences in Sub-Saharan Africa. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 1-22. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2025.2590548>
- Dervin, F., & Liddicoat, A. J. (2013). Linguistics for intercultural education. In F. Dervin, & A. J. Liddicoat (Eds.), *Linguistics for intercultural education* (pp. 1-25). John Benjamins.
- Drajati, N. A., Tan, L., Wijaya, S. A., & Tyarakanita, A. (2024). Developing pre-service teachers' intercultural communication competence: Learning through extracurricular informal digital learning of English. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 11(2), 855–872. <https://doi.org/10.15294/selle.v11i2.73025>

- Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2011). "Please answer me as soon as possible": Pragmatic failure in non-native speakers' e-mail requests to faculty. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(13), 3193–3215. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2011.06.006>
- Fichtner, F., & Chapman, K. (2011). The cultural identities of foreign language teachers. *L2 Journal*, 3(1), 116-140. <https://doi.org/10.5070/12319072>
- Gkonou, C., & Miller, E. R. (2021). An exploration of language teacher reflection, emotion labor, and emotional capital. *TESOL Quarterly*, 55(1), 134-155. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.580>
- Golis, A. (2025). The work adjustment of expatriate teachers employed in Chinese internationalised schools: A pedagogical perspective. *Educational Review*, 77(1), 192–213. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2024.2341042>
- Harsch, C., & Poehner, M. E. (2016). Enhancing student learning experiences abroad: The potential of dynamic assessment to develop student interculturality. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 16(3), 470-490. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14708477.2016.1168043>
- Hayden, M., & Thompson, J. (2017). *International schools: Current issues and future prospects*. Symposium Books.
- Heugh, K., Benson, C., Gebre Yohannes, M., & Bogale, B. (2012). Implications for multilingual education: Student achievement in different models of education in Ethiopia. In T. Skutnabb-Hiver, P., & Whitehead, G. E. (2018). Sites of struggle: Classroom practice and the complex dynamic entanglement of language teacher agency and identity. *System*, 79, 70-80.
- Holliday, A. (2018). *Understanding intercultural communication: Negotiating a grammar of culture*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351139526>
- Ihuoma, C., & Bista, K. (2025). Navigating academic transitions: Support and challenges of African international students in community colleges. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Education*, 14(3), 173-192. <https://doi.org/10.32674/jfh27k92>
- Ishihara, N. (2011). Co-constructing pragmatic awareness: Instructional pragmatics in EFL teacher development in Japan. *TESL-EJ*, 15(2), 1-16.
- Ishihara, N., & Cohen, A. D. (2014). *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315833842>
- Kohler, M. (2015). *Teachers as mediators in the foreign language classroom*. Multilingual Matters.
- Kostogriz, A., & Bonar, G. (2019). The relational work of international teachers: A case study of a Sino-foreign school. *Transitions: Journal of Transient Migration*, 3(2), 127–144. [https://doi.org/10.1386/tjtm\\_00003\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/tjtm_00003_1)
- Kramsch, C. (2013). Culture in foreign language teaching. *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research*, 1(1), 57-78.

- Kramersch, C., & Hua, Z. (2016). Language, culture and language teaching. In G. Hall (Ed.), *Routledge handbook of English language teaching* (pp. 38-50). Routledge.
- Lai, C., Li, Z., & Gong, Y. (2016a). Teacher agency and professional learning in cross-cultural teaching contexts: Accounts of Chinese teachers from international schools in Hong Kong. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 54*, 12-21. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2015.11.007>
- Lai, C., Shum, M. S. K., & Zhang, B. (2016b). International mindedness in an Asian context: The case of the International Baccalaureate in Hong Kong. *Educational Research, 58*(2), 187-203. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2013.874159>
- Lai, C., Li, Z., & Gong, Y. (2019). Boundary brokering for cross-cultural professional learning in international school contexts. *British Educational Research Journal, 45*(6), 1105–1123. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3553>
- Li, S. (2012). The effects of input-based practice on pragmatic development of requests in L2 Chinese. *Language Learning, 62*(2), 403-438. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2011.00629.x>
- Liddicoat, A. J. (2015). Intercultural mediation, intercultural communication and translation. *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology, 24*(3), 354-364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676x.2014.980279>
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage.
- McConachy, T. (2018). *Developing intercultural perspectives on language use: Exploring pragmatics and culture in foreign language learning*. Multilingual Matters.
- McConachy, T. (2019). L2 pragmatics as ‘intercultural pragmatics’: Probing sociopragmatic aspects of pragmatic awareness. *Journal of Pragmatics, 151*, 167-176. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2019.02.014>
- Menard-Warwick, J. (2011). A methodological reflection on the process of narrative analysis: Alienation and identity in the life histories of English language teachers. *TESOL Quarterly, 45*(3), 564-574. <https://doi.org/10.5054/tq.2010.256798>
- Moloney, R., & Saltmarsh, D. (2016). ‘Knowing your students’ in the culturally and linguistically diverse classroom. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 41*(4), 79-93. <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2016v41n4.5>
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Sage.
- Nguyen, C. D., & Ton-Nu, A. T. (2023). Teacher’s awareness of intercultural pragmatics in adult EALD classrooms: an exploratory study in the multicultural context of Australia. *Language Awareness, 33*(1), 163–181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09658416.2023.2236015>

- Poole, A. (2020). Constructing international school teacher identity from lived experience: A fresh conceptual framework. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 19(2), 155-171.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1475240920954044>
- Richards, J. C. (2023). Teacher, learner and student-teacher identity in TESOL. *RELC Journal*, 54(1), 252-266.  
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688221991308>
- Sahling, J., & De Carvalho, R. (2021). Understanding teacher identity as an international teacher: An autoethnographic approach to (developing) reflective practice. *Journal of Research in International Education*, 20(1), 33–49. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14752409211005380>
- Savva, M. (2017). The personal struggles of ‘national’ educators working in ‘international’ schools: An intercultural perspective. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 15(5), 576-589.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14767724.2016.1195728>
- Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press.
- Semela, T. (2014). Teacher preparation in Ethiopia: A critical analysis of reforms. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 44(1), 113-145.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/0305764x.2013.860080>
- Sercu, L. (2006). The foreign language and intercultural competence teacher: The acquisition of a new professional identity. *Intercultural Education*, 17(1), 55-72. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14675980500502321>
- Spencer-Oatey, H., & Franklin, P. (2009). *Intercultural interaction: A multidisciplinary approach to intercultural communication*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Taguchi, N. (2015). Instructed pragmatics at a glance: Where instructional studies were, are, and should be going. *Language Teaching*, 48(1), 1-50.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444814000263>
- Tarc, P., & Mishra Tarc, A. (2015). Elite international schools in the Global South: Transnational space, class relationalities and the ‘middling’ international schoolteacher. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 36(1), 34-52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2014.971945>
- van Manen, M. (2016). *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning-giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Routledge.  
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315422657>
- Wernicke, M. (2018). Plurilingualism as agentive resource in L2 teacher identity. *System*, 79, 91-102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2018.07.005>
- Yuan, R. (2019). A critical review on nonnative English teacher identity research: From 2008 to 2017. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 40(6), 518-537.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2018.1533018>

- Yuan, R., & Mak, P. (2018). Reflective learning and identity construction in practice, discourse and activity: Experiences of pre-service language teachers in Hong Kong. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 74, 205-214. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2018.05.009>
- Zembylas, M., & Chubbuck, S. (2018). Conceptualizing 'teacher identity': A political approach. In P. A. Schutz, J. Hong, & D. Cross Francis (Eds.), *Research on teacher identity* (pp. 183-192). Springer. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93836-3\\_16](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-93836-3_16)

---

**ÜNAL DENİZ**, is an associate professor at Manisa Celal Bayar University. In the past, he worked as a teacher, administrator, and inspector in public, private, and international schools. He received a PhD degree in Educational Administration from Hacettepe University in 2021. His research interests include educational administration, comparative education, and international education. More recently, he has focused on the intersection of identity, culture, and professional practice in diverse educational contexts, employing the *currere* methodology. Email: [unaldeniz23@gmail.com](mailto:unaldeniz23@gmail.com); [unal.deniz@cbu.edu.tr](mailto:unal.deniz@cbu.edu.tr)

---