



T.C.

İNÖNÜ UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES EDUCATION

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM

PRAGMATIC AWARENESS AND INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY OF PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS

MASTERS' THESIS

İLAYDA ERDEM

Malatya-2026

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ADVISOR: ASSOC. PROF. DR. Ayse DEREĞÖZÜ

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PRAGMATIC AWARENESS AND INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY OF PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

DANIŞMAN

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HAZIRLAYAN

İLAYDA ERDEM

Jürimiz tarafından 20/04/2026 tarihinde yapılan tez savunma sınavı sonucunda bu tez **oybirliği** ile başarılı bulunarak Yabancı Diller Eğitimi Anabilim Dalı DoktoraTezi olarak kabul etmiştir.

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O N A Y

Bu tez, İnönü Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim-Öğretim Yönetmeliği'nin ilgili maddeleri uyarınca yukarıdaki jüri üyeleri tarafından kabul edilmiş ve Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu'nun .../.../20... tarih ve 20..../..... sayılı Kararıyla da uygun görülmüştür.

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EĞİTİM BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜNE

ETİK ve YAPAY ZEKÂ KULLANIM BEYANI

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İnönü Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Tez Yazım Kurallarına uygun olarak, “Doç. Dr. Aysel DEREGÖZÜ” danışmanlığında hazırlayıp sunduğum “Pragmatic Awareness and Intercultural Sensitivity of Pre-Service EFL Teachers” başlıklı Yüksek Lisans / Doktora tezimde:

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İmza

Yapay Zekâ Kullanım Tablosu

Bu tablo, tez çalışmanızda kullanılan üretken yapay zekâ araçlarının şeffaf biçimde beyan edilmesi amacıyla hazırlanmıştır. Her satırda kullanılan aracın adı, kullanım amacı, hangi bölümde kullanıldığı ve kullanım şekli belirtilmelidir. Tablo, danışman öğretim üyesinin bilgisi dâhilinde doldurulmalı ve gerektiğinde ek belgelerle desteklenmelidir.

No	Üretken Yapay Zekâ Aracı	Kullanım Amacı	Kullanıldığı Bölüm	Kullanım Şekli
1	ChatGPT	Yazım Denetimi	Giriş, Literatür Taraması, Tartışma, Sonuç	Cümle akıcılığı ve akademik metin organizasyonu için kullanılmıştır.
2	Grammarly	Dil Kontrolü	Giriş, Literatür Taraması, Araştırma Yöntemi, Bulgular, Tartışma, Sonuç	Dil ve imla kontrolü için kullanılmıştır.
3				
4				
5				

Üretken Yapay Zekâ Aracı: Kullanılan aracın adı (ör. ChatGPT, Grammarly, Zotero AI, Copilot vb.).

Kullanım Amacı: Aracın hangi amaçla kullanıldığı (ör. literatür özeti, dil kontrolü, kaynak önerisi, yazım denetimi vb.).

Kullanıldığı Bölüm: Tezin hangi bölümünde kullanıldığı (ör. Giriş, Literatür Taraması, Bulgular, Sonuç vb.).

Kullanım Şekli: Kullanım biçiminin niteliği (ör. öneri alma, metin taslağı oluşturma, dil ve imla kontrolü, kaynak listesi düzenleme, doğrudan alıntı vb.).

Bu tablo, tezde üretken yapay zekâ kullanımının şeffaf, izlenebilir ve etik kurallara uygun olmasını sağlamak için hazırlanmıştır. Araçların katkısı, tez metninin özgünlüğünü ve bilimsel sorumluluğu ortadan kaldıracak düzeyde olmamalıdır.

Örnek:

No	Yapay Zekâ Aracı	Kullanım Amacı	Kullanıldığı Bölüm	Kullanım Şekli
1	ChatGPT	Kavramsal çerçevede ön okuma ve öneri alma	Giriş, Literatür taraması, Tartışma	Literatürdeki görüşleri özetlemek için yönlendirici sorular sorulmuştur. Otomatik üretilen metin aynen kullanılmamıştır.

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ABBREVIATIONS LIST

AJT	: Appropriateness Judgment Tasks
DMIS	: Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity
FTA	: Face-Threatening Actions
IA	: Interaction Attentiveness
IC	: Interaction Confidence
IE	: Interaction Engagement
IENJ	: Interaction Enjoyment
ILP	: Interlanguage Pragmatics
IS	: Intercultural Sensitivity
PA	: Pragmatic Awareness
RCD	: Respect for Cultural Differences

ABSTARCT

PRAGMATIC AWARENESS AND INTERCULTURAL SENSITIVITY OF PRE-SERVICE EFL TEACHERS

As English functions as a global lingua franca, foreign language education increasingly emphasizes the development of learners' intercultural communication competence, which relies heavily on pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity. Teachers play a critical role in fostering these abilities; however, teacher education programs often give insufficient attention to these areas, leaving the competence levels of pre-service teachers underexplored. This mixed-method study investigates the pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity of pre-service English language teachers enrolled at Inonu University and Firat University, examines differences based on demographic variables (gender, grade level, and overseas experience), and explores the relationship between the two constructs. Quantitative data were collected using Appropriateness Judgment Tasks (AJT) and the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), while qualitative insights were obtained through semi-structured interviews. The findings indicate that participants generally display high intercultural sensitivity and relatively strong pragmatic awareness. Participants were more successful in identifying pragmatically appropriate expressions than inappropriate ones and showed greater sensitivity to rudeness than to over-politeness, suggesting difficulty with subtle pragmatic infelicities. Interview data revealed challenges related to cultural differences, politeness and formality nuances, affective factors, limited practice, lexical constraints, and overall proficiency. Demographic analyses showed no significant gender differences overall, except that males reported higher interaction confidence and enjoyment. Pragmatic awareness differed significantly by grade level, favoring third-year students. Overseas experience enhanced intercultural sensitivity but not pragmatic awareness. Finally, a weak yet significant positive correlation was found between pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity, indicating partial but independent development of these constructs.

Key Words: Pragmatic awareness, Intercultural sensitivity, Intercultural communication, Pre-service EFL teachers

ÖZET

İNGİLİZCE ÖĞRETMEN ADAYLARININ EDİMBİLİMSEL FARKINDALIĞI VE KÜLTÜRLERARASI DUYARLILIĞI

İngilizcenin küresel bir lingua franca olarak işlev görmesiyle birlikte, yabancı dil eğitimi öğrenenlerin kültürlerarası iletişim yeterliğini geliştirmeye giderek daha fazla önem vermektedir. Bu yeterlik, büyük ölçüde edimbilimsel farkındalık ve kültürlerarası duyarlılığa dayanmaktadır. Öğretmenler bu becerilerin kazandırılmasında kilit bir role sahip olsa da öğretmen yetiştirme programlarında bu alanlar çoğu zaman yeterince ele alınmamaktadır. Bu nedenle, hizmet öncesi öğretmenlerin söz konusu yeterlik düzeyleri yeterince net değildir. Bu karma yöntemli çalışma, İnönü Üniversitesi ve Fırat Üniversitesinde öğrenim gören İngilizce öğretmen adaylarının edimbilimsel farkındalık ve kültürlerarası duyarlılık düzeylerini incelemeyi; cinsiyet, sınıf düzeyi ve yurt dışı deneyimi gibi demografik değişkenlere göre olası farklılıkları belirlemeyi ve bu iki yapı arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Nicel veriler Uygunluk Değerlendirme Görevleri (AJT) ve Kültürlerarası Duyarlılık Ölçeği (ISS) aracılığıyla, nitel veriler ise yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Bulgular, katılımcıların genel olarak yüksek düzeyde kültürlerarası duyarlılık ve nispeten güçlü bir edimbilimsel farkındalık sergilediklerini ortaya koymuştur. Katılımcılar, edimbilimsel olarak uygun ifadeleri uygunsuz olanlara kıyasla daha kolay belirlemiş; kabalığı aşırı nezakete göre daha iyi fark etmişlerdir. Görüşmeler, zorlukların kültürel farklılıklar, nezaket ve resmiyet incelikleri, duyuşsal etmenler, sınırlı pratik yapma fırsatları ve dil yeterliğiyle ilişkili olduğunu göstermiştir. Demografik değişkenler açısından cinsiyet genel olarak anlamlı bir fark yaratmazken, edimbilimsel farkındalık üçüncü sınıf öğrencileri lehine anlamlı biçimde farklılaşmıştır. Yurt dışı deneyimi kültürlerarası duyarlılığı artırmış; ancak edimbilimsel farkındalık üzerinde anlamlı bir etki göstermemiştir. Son olarak, edimbilimsel farkındalık ile kültürlerarası duyarlılık arasında zayıf fakat anlamlı bir pozitif ilişki bulunmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Edimbilimsel farkındalık, Kültürlerarası duyarlılık, Kültürlerarası iletişim, İngilizce öğretmen adayları

1. INTORODUCTION

In this chapter, the problem statement, the aim and significance of the research, the research questions, the limitations of the study, and the definitions are provided.

1.1. Problem Statement

The fundamental objective of foreign language instruction is to provide learners with the skills to communicate proficiently in a foreign language. This objective is regularly underlined across various syllabuses or textbooks, with the purpose of improving students' communicative competence (Zhu, 2017). Effective communication, however, depends not just on linguistic accuracy but also on the appropriateness of language use in different social contexts (Li et al., 2015a). This aspect of language, known as pragmatics, is defined by Bardovi-Harlig and Mahan-Taylor (2003) as encompassing “speech acts, conversational structure, conversational implicature, conversational management, discourse organization, and sociolinguistic aspects of language use, such as the choice of address forms” (p. 1). While grammar focuses on the accurate structure of language, including morphology and syntax, pragmatics deals with the appropriateness of statements in particular contexts, taking into account the speakers and the content involved (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998).

Pragmatic awareness, defined as “L2 learners’ conscious and explicit knowledge about the appropriateness of language use constrained by communication contexts” (Li et al., 2015b, p. 103), plays an indispensable role in second and/or foreign language communication. An understanding of speech acts, such as how people apologize, make requests, or inquire about manners, is a crucial element of pragmatic awareness (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998). While native speakers intuitively grasp the appropriateness of speech acts in various situations, language learners and non-native speakers often lack this intuitive understanding. For learners to effectively use and understand these speech acts in a second language, they require exposure, either through interaction with the target language community or in language classes (Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2012). Language teachers, therefore, hold the responsibility to convey the pragmatic features of language use to students, whose exposure to the foreign language mainly occurs within classroom settings (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005). To effectively fulfil this responsibility and to ensure that students are aware of the existence of pragmatic functions in language, especially in discourse (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991), language teachers must acquire the pragmatic awareness that is essential for successful intercultural communication in today’s globalized world (Khabcheche & Hamitouche, 2022).

A crucial element of pragmatic awareness is the ability to understand the sociocultural expectations of the target culture and to choose appropriate speech acts for intercultural

communication based on this understanding (Félix-Brasdefer, 2021). This understanding is vital, as culture constitutes a fundamental aspect of language. As Brown (2007, p. 171) states, “a language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language: the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture.” Such a deep-rooted connection between language and culture makes an intercultural perspective essential in language use and instruction (Mighani & Moghadam, 2019). Accordingly, prospective language teachers are expected to develop increasing awareness of intercultural prejudices and conflicts in their own perspectives so as to form a broader and more impartial understanding (Linares, 2023). This need is particularly obvious for prospective teachers, who are figures responsible for transmitting cultural values, communication norms, and discourse patterns of the target language into classroom practices. Therefore, their ability to question their own cultural perspectives and model appropriate language use across diverse cultural contexts plays a significant role in fostering learners’ pragmatic and intercultural competence.

As Sercu (2005) emphasizes, language is inherently intercultural, and effective communication requires sensitivity toward cultural differences. Intercultural sensitivity, defined as the readiness to recognize, respect, and appreciate cultural diversity, constitutes a crucial affective aspect of intercultural competence (Chen & Starosta, 1998). Scholars increasingly agree that such sensitivity is indispensable for successful interaction among individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Moradi & Ghabanchi, 2019). Consequently, foreign language education has shown a growing interest in integrating cultural dimensions into instruction (Atay et al., 2009). However, despite this recognition, cultural and pragmatic dimensions are often addressed only implicitly in teacher education programs. This makes it difficult for teacher candidates to consciously teach appropriate language use in both classroom and real-life communication contexts. As Höl and Aygün (2023) argue, it is unlikely for teachers to foster pragmatic awareness in learners without first being aware of it themselves. Moreover, EFL teachers are expected to demonstrate intercultural sensitivity by exhibiting cultural awareness, openness to discovering other cultures, and positive attitudes toward learners from diverse backgrounds (Boudouaia et al., 2022). Teachers’ professional skills should therefore focus on fostering inclusive perspectives in educational settings where different cultures combine (Demir & Üstün, 2017). Nonetheless, relatively few teacher education programs offer systematic instruction in pragmatics, leaving many teachers to develop pragmatic and pedagogical competence through individual efforts (Bardovi-Harlig, 2019). This challenge is further intensified in foreign language contexts, where learners have limited exposure to authentic and contextualized interactions (Cohen, 2016). In light of these considerations, it is apparent that it is necessary to investigate how teacher candidates develop intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness during their professional training, as these competencies are fundamental to effective language teaching in culturally diverse contexts.

1.2. The Aim and Significance of the Research

In an EFL context, it's important to develop a sense of awareness of how speech acts are carried out both in the target language and how the native culture and language of the speakers affect their performance of specific acts. Pre-service EFL teachers in particular EFL environments, such as Turkey, frequently have little exposure to English outside of the classroom, relying rather on rare abroad travels and media exposure. However, despite its importance, the pragmatic aspect of language receives less attention in teacher education programs compared to grammar and vocabulary (Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003), and the pragmatic awareness of pre-service EFL teachers is often overlooked (Sciberras, 2016). Though frequently neglected, it is crucial to examine the pragmatic awareness of pre-service teachers to draw conclusions about their level of pragmatic understanding. If aspects of their current situation that need improvement are identified, it also allows for the discovery of factors potentially affecting awareness and the development of strategies to create the necessary conditions for enhancement (Bella, 2012).

The intercultural aspect of foreign language teaching has emerged as a highly specialized topic for educators and researchers (Atay et al., 2009). Intercultural sensitivity, with its importance strongly felt in disciplines ranging from communication studies to psychology (Moradi & Ghabanchi, 2019), has become a necessity for teachers in today's education (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). Given that EFL teachers are expected to foster their students' perspectives and sensitivities towards diverse cultures, intercultural sensitivity emerges as one of the key attributes of the modern EFL teacher profile (Kazazoğlu & Ece, 2021). Because in order to develop their students' intercultural sensitivity, they themselves must also be interculturally sensitive (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018). Therefore, investigating the intercultural sensitivity levels of pre-service EFL teachers will enable us to determine whether future English language teachers, who will be teaching their own classrooms soon, have the capacity to instill the necessary awareness and sensitivity in their students.

Existing research has demonstrated a growing interest in both pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity in EFL contexts, with studies examining these constructs among in-service and pre-service teachers across a wide range of educational and cultural settings. While this body of research has contributed valuable insights into how EFL teachers and pre-service teachers perceive and develop pragmatic and intercultural competencies, these two constructs have largely been investigated separately. That is, studies have typically focused either on pragmatic awareness or on intercultural sensitivity, without sufficiently addressing how these dimensions may interact and mutually inform one another in teacher education contexts. This separation is particularly noteworthy given the inherently interrelated nature of pragmatics and intercultural communication. For this reason, despite the recognized importance of both constructs in effective language teaching, there continues to be a lack

of empirical research that simultaneously examines pre-service EFL teachers' pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity and investigates the relationship between them. Addressing this gap, the present study aims to investigate pre-service EFL teachers' pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity, with a particular focus on the relationship between these two constructs.

1.3. Research Questions

The research questions addressed in this study are as follows:

RQ1. What is the level of intercultural sensitivity of pre-service EFL teachers?

RQ2. To what extent are pre-service EFL teachers able to judge the appropriateness of pragmatic (in)felicities in a range of speech act situations?

RQ3. Is there a statistically significant difference in participants' intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness in terms of:

- a. Gender
- b. Grade
- c. Overseas experience

RQ4. Are there any correlations between pre-service EFL teachers' intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness?

1.4. Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to students enrolled in English Language Teaching departments at Inonu University and Firat University in Turkey, as well as to the data collection instruments specifically selected for the research.

In the original study conducted by Yang and Ren (2019), participants listened to and rated the appropriateness of the provided scenarios using audio recordings made by native English speakers. However, due to the logistical and technical constraints of administering audio-recorded stimuli to a large sample of participants within a university setting, where the current study was conducted, the scenarios were presented in written form. Participants were asked to read the scenarios in the Appropriateness Judgement Tasks and rate their appropriateness accordingly.

Second, the qualitative component involved nine participants, a sample size that, although appropriate for in-depth qualitative inquiry (Dörnyei, 2007), may restrict the transferability of findings. It should be noted that recruitment proved more difficult than anticipated; thirteen prospective participants initially agreed to take part but withdrew prior to data collection. The final sample size therefore reflects the practical constraints of the data collection process rather than a deliberate methodological choice. As a result, the final qualitative sample was shaped by practical constraints rather than deliberate design decisions. Nevertheless, the depth of engagement with participants

allowed for meaningful thematic analysis within the aims of this study. Future research should consider employing purposive or maximum variation sampling to enhance the representativeness of qualitative data.

1.5. Definitions

Pragmatic Awareness: Pragmatic awareness is the mindful, thoughtful comprehension of pragmatics. It entails understanding the rules and practices that regulate appropriate language usage in certain communicative circumstances for speakers of particular social communities (Alcón & Safont-Jordà, 2008).

Intercultural Sensitivity: Intercultural sensitivity is characterized as a purposeful willingness to encourage oneself to perceive, value, and embrace cultural differences (Chen & Starosta, 1998).

Intercultural Communication: Intercultural communication is exchanging information and meaning with people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. This can occur in several contexts: when one participant is a native speaker of the language used, when a common language (lingua franca) is employed, or when individuals from the same country speak different languages, with one being the native speaker of the language used (Byram, 1997).

Communicative Competence: Communicative competence refers to the adept and efficient management of interactions among individuals that possess diverse or opposing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral viewpoints (Spitzberg & Chagnon, 2009).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RELATED RESEARCH

2.1. Pragmatics

Successful communication is not limited to the acquisition of vocabulary and grammar (Li et al., 2015b). To communicate effectively, individuals must understand what to say and how to say it in relation to the context (Suleymanovna, 2023). Accurately combining words and verbs, similar to stringing beads on a necklace, is not sufficient by itself for meaningful communication. In order to ensure meaningful and functional communication, certain language norms must be followed, and contextually appropriate language must be used (Bonvillain, 2020). In this context, the study of the appropriate use of language is called “pragmatics”.

The term "pragmatics" first emerged in the 1930s when Charles Morris (1938) introduced the three research areas of semiotics, i.e., the examination of signs as aspects of interaction (Taguchi & Roever, 2017): syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Morris (1938) defined syntax as "the formal relation of signs to one another", semantics as "the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable", and pragmatics as "the relation of signs to interpreters" (p. 6).

Since then, Morris's pragmatics definition has evolved to reflect a more inclusive perspective that takes into account broader terms such as context, subject, and social behavior, and efforts have been made to develop various alternative definitions (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). However, attempts to define pragmatics in a holistic way are quite difficult due to the inherently dynamic nature of this discipline. This is because pragmatics is not only limited to the surface content of the words used, but also includes layers of implicit or implied meaning that emerge under the influence of context (Grabowski, 2013).

According to LoCastro (2003), pragmatics is the study of the meaning-making process of linguistic and non-linguistic cues "in the context of socio-culturally structured activities" in interactions between speaker and listener (p.15). It focuses on analyzing what individuals mean by their utterances within their context, rather than the dictionary meaning of words or sentences. As Silva and Mey (2021) state, context helps the listener to understand and interpret the speaker's intention. For instance, when encountering a phrase such as “Baby sale! Lots of bargains!” in a baby products store, one understands that the expression refers not to babies being sold but to discounted baby products (Campsall, 2001, as cited in Tunçel, 2022). This realization occurs through pragmatic knowledge, which enables individuals to construct and interpret meaning by taking into account speaker intention, contextual features, and the meanings of specific expressions. In this sense, pragmatics stands out as a discipline that examines how meaning extends beyond literal expression and how such meaning is interpreted in context (Tunçel, 2022).

In defining pragmatics, Crystal (2008) adopts a perspective that encompasses both speakers and listeners, referring to them collectively as interlocutors, and characterizes pragmatics as follows:

The study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication (p. 379).

Since it involves both the speaker and the listener, researchers frequently adopt Crystal's definition of pragmatics. Supporting Crystal's views, Schauer (2009) also succinctly describes pragmatics as the encoding and decoding of utterances by speakers and listeners.

In addition to contextual elements, including the setting, the relationships and roles of the speakers, and the topics being discussed, language use is also impacted by factors such as agency and consequentiality (Taguchi, 2019). These directly influence how listeners interpret the message, the impression they develop of the speaker, and the actions they take afterward (Taguchi & Roever, 2017).

Pragmatics is usually subdivided into sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics (Figure 1) (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Pragmalinguistics is concerned with how available linguistic resources are used to fulfil language functions. It refers to how speech acts such as apologizing, making a request, or making a complaint take place in the spoken language (Alzeebaree & Yavuz, 2017). For example, in the context of greetings, which represent one of the simplest and most frequently encountered language functions, pragmalinguistics examines which lexical choices and syntactic forms are considered appropriate, such as *"I'm fine, thanks"* or *"I'm good, how are you?"* (Pirogova, 2022). Kasper (1997) defines pragmalinguistics as incorporating "strategies like directness and indirectness, routines, and a large range of linguistic forms which can intensify or soften communicative acts" (p. 1). For example, according to her, in the context of apologizing, one might simply say, *"I'm sorry,"* or use a more elaborate form, such as *"I'm absolutely devastated. Can you possibly forgive me?"* Both expressions offer an apology, yet each reflects a distinctly different attitude and social dynamic (Kasper, 1997).

Sociopragmatics moves into the sociological field of pragmatics, focusing on the social context surrounding communication (Thomas, 1983; Leech, 1983). According to Tello Rueda (2006), sociopragmatics deals with "the social perception of communicative action" (p. 173). In other words, sociopragmatics can be defined as "the sociological interface of pragmatics" (Leech, 1983, p. 10)

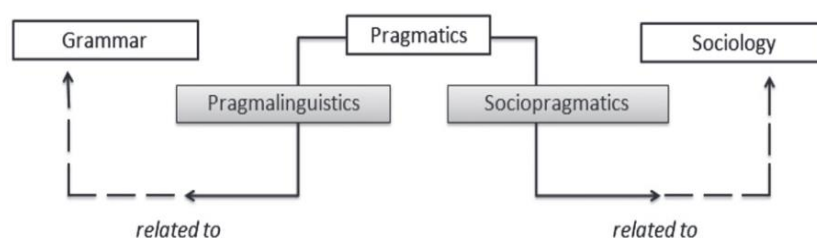


Figure 1. Leech’s distinction between pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics (Timpe-Laughlin et al., 2015)

Sociopragmatic knowledge allows one to comprehend the characteristics of the social context and select the best appropriate linguistic resource in a particular situation (Culpeper et al., 2018). For instance, through sociopragmatic knowledge, one can decide if complimenting someone is culturally appropriate in context (Wyner & Cohen, 2015) or if answering “*How are you?*” with complete honesty is suitable in a given context (Pirogova, 2022).

The subfields of pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics have influenced the evolution of methodological approaches in second language acquisition research (Bublitz & Norrick, 2011). This distinction holds particular importance for studies conducted in the context of intercultural pragmatics and second language pragmatics (Culpeper et al., 2018).

2.1.1. Second Language Pragmatics

In the last fifty years, pragmatics has emerged as an independent discipline, and the necessity of including it in the curriculum within the context of language pedagogy has come to the forefront (Khabcheche & Hamitouche, 2022). It has gained momentum, especially with Hymes' introduction of the Communicative Competence theory in 1972. Prior to the 1970s, the ability of students to produce grammatically correct words and structures was the main focus of the common perception of language competency (Li et al., 2015b). However, Hymes (1972) argued that, while the importance of grammatical knowledge is undeniable, in order to communicate effectively, it is not enough for speakers to know only grammatical correctness or incorrectness. Speakers also need to grasp what is and is not communicatively appropriate in a given context. With the acceptance of Hymes' perspective and the development of Communicative Competence theory, language teaching began to emphasize that instruction should no longer be limited to elements such as grammar and vocabulary. It was highlighted that the appropriate use of language in social contexts, the expression of linguistic intentions, and how the interlocutors perceive these intentions are also fundamental aspects that need to be considered (Khabcheche & Hamitouche, 2022).

With these developments in second language education, the combination of second language acquisition and pragmatics has given rise to the interdisciplinary field of second language pragmatics (Culpeper et al., 2018), which has become a research area of intense interest in academic circles (e.g., Bardovi-Harlig, 2010, 2013, 2019; Kasper & Schmidt, 1996; Kasper, 1997; Kasper & Rose, 1999; Taguchi & Roever, 2017; Taguchi, 2019). While pragmatics functions as an objective in second language acquisition, second language acquisition itself offers theoretical frameworks and empirical methodologies to evaluate the learning process and its influencing factors (Taguchi, 2019). According to Kasper and Rose (1999), pragmatics plays two main roles in second language acquisition: “It acts as a constraint on linguistic forms and their acquisition, and it represents a type of communicative knowledge and object of L2 learning in its own right” (p. 81). Thus, second language acquisition and pragmatics are mutually interconnected and interact with second language pragmatics emerging at the intersection of these two fields.

Second language pragmatics examines the understanding and execution of communicative behaviors of non-native learners across various contexts, such as second language communication (Félix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021). According to Bardovi-Harlig (2010), second language pragmatics unites the technical aspects of the language (the system side) with its practical application (the use side), closing the gap between them. It is concerned with how L2 learners develop pragmatic competencies over time, focusing on how they use discourse markers, speech acts including apologizing, complaining, or adulation, etc., and how they detect implications made during communication (Félix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021).

One of the early definitions of second language pragmatics was made by Kasper and Schmidt (1996) as the “study of the development and use of strategies for linguistic action by nonnative speakers” (p. 150). This definition places particular emphasis on non-native speakers as the subject in L2 pragmatics. This is because native speakers have a natural and intuitive grasp of the appropriateness of speech acts in different situations and events. However, this intuitive understanding is frequently absent from language learners and non-native speakers (Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2012). The lack of an intuitive sense of appropriateness in a non-native speaker becomes evident when they interact with a native speaker. The misunderstandings that can arise in such interactions often result from “*pragmatic failure*” (Thomas, 1983).

Thomas (1983) coined the term pragmatic failure and explained it as “the inability to understand ‘what is meant by what is said’” (p. 91). Particularly common among non-native speakers (Nouichi, 2014), pragmatic failure occurs when the hearer interprets the speaker’s utterance with a force different from that intended by the speaker (Jaworski, 1994).

The term pragmatic failure is preferred to *pragmatic error*, as Thomas (1983) argues, errors can be explained with reference to established rules. For instance, a grammatical error can be

identified because grammaticality is evaluated according to prescriptive norms. In contrast, due to the nature of pragmatic fluctuation, it is not feasible to label the pragmatic force of an utterance as “wrong.” Rather, pragmatic failure refers to a situation in which the speaker does not succeed in achieving the intended communicative goal. Such failures often result in more serious communication problems than grammatical errors (Li et al., 2015b). While grammatical errors made by non-native speakers are typically interpreted as indicators of poor language skills, pragmatic failure can cause interlocutors to perceive the speaker as rude, impolite, or even hostile (Thomas, 1983).

Pragmatic failure is not limited to interactions between native and non-native speakers; it can occur in any communicative exchange between individuals who, in a given context, lack a shared linguistic or cultural framework. It is a major factor hindering intercultural communication (Fernández Amaya, 2008), and may manifest in two types, namely pragmalinguistic failure and sociopragmatic failure. Pragmalinguistic failure is a linguistic concern arising from differences in how pragmatic force is encoded in language (Thomas, 1983). Wei (2019) defines pragmalinguistic failure as the inappropriate use of the target language as a result of failing to comprehend the linguistic context of the language being spoken. Pragmalinguistic failure happens when there are inaccuracies in carrying over speech act strategies from one language (L1) to another (L2), or when the intended pragmatic meaning of an utterance, as understood by the speaker, differs from the interpretation that native speakers of the target language usually have (Al-Furaiji, 2017).

Sociopragmatic failure, however, occurs because of “cross-culturally different perceptions of what constitutes appropriate linguistic behaviour” (Thomas, 1983, p. 99). It might stem from individuals’ different cultural understanding of the world, as well as the way they communicate it in language. Second or foreign language learners, for instance, face sociopragmatic failure when communicating with native speakers if they do not know the cultural rules of the target language (Stukan, 2018).

In conclusion, what is worth mentioning is that the two sub-fields are not in dichotomy, separate types of pragmatic failure; instead, they indicate two ends of a continuum (LoCastro, 2003). Although no sharp boundaries exist between the two subfields, it can be stated that pragmalinguistic failure occurs when an inappropriate form or strategy is chosen in a speech act while sociopragmatic failure manifests itself when one fails to understand the cultural impact of a speech act, be unaware of taboos, or makes inappropriate judgements of relative power or social distance between speakers (Marmaridou, 2023).

Handling pragmatics in two main sub-areas, pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics, allows this discipline to holistically cover the functional and social aspects of language. This distinction, especially in the field of second language pragmatics, clarifies the nature of the field by providing an

understanding of the ways in which language is used in functional and social contexts and contributes to the construction of pragmatic competence in the second language (Culpeper et al., 2018).

A key focus in the field of second language pragmatics is the study of interlanguage pragmatics. Interlanguage, a second language acquisition term first introduced by Selinker (1972), is referred to as the system one develops for the target language they are learning. Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), as Kasper and Dahl (1991) define, is a subfield of second language acquisition that examines “nonnative speakers’ (NNSs’) comprehension and production of speech acts, and how their L2-related speech act knowledge is acquired” (p. 216). Interlanguage pragmatics has emerged as a subfield that examines second language learners’ capacity to understand and execute pragmatic actions in the target language, along with the progress of this capacity with time (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Bardovi-Harlig (2010) views interlanguage pragmatics as contributing to a synthesis of structure and usage in the examination of language acquisition. In the field of second language acquisition, interlanguage pragmatics holds an important position, examining how non-native speakers produce and use linguistic action methods. In contrast to other fields of second language study that address patterns of acquisition of interlanguage knowledge over time, interlanguage pragmatics focuses on the differences in pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic knowledge between nonnative speakers and native speakers, as well as the variations among learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In this respect, it can be concluded that interlanguage pragmatics is a field that focuses predominantly on second language use instead of second language learning (Kasper & Schmidt, 1996).

ILP is closely related to cross-cultural pragmatics and sometimes used interchangeably, however these terms do not represent the same subfields (Kecskés, 2017). Interlanguage pragmatics, as mentioned before, is the study of how non-native speakers develop and employ strategies for linguistic communication, whereas according to Kecskés (2017), “cross-cultural pragmatics compares different cultures, based on the investigation of certain aspects of language use, such as speech acts, behaviour patterns, and language behaviour” (p. 1). This comparison is not a typical examination of cultures; instead, it focuses on the conventional use of language and associated evaluations within different language communities (House & Kádár, 2024). In this sense, cross-cultural pragmatics explores the speech behaviors and norms of various cultures; it focuses on contextualizing meaning, on the appropriate use of language in different cultural contexts, and in a sense, examines the “meaning negotiation between different cultures” (Stadler, 2018).

Similarly, Wierzbicka (1991) summarized the basic principle of cross-cultural pragmatics as follows:

In different societies and different communities, people speak differently; these differences in ways of speaking are profound and systematic. These differences reflect different cultural values, or at least different hierarchies of values; different ways of speaking, different communicative

styles, can be explained and made sense of, in terms of independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities. (p. 69).

The main aim of the discipline has therefore been to investigate aspects of language behavior in which speakers from various cultures exhibit both differences and similarities (Kecskés, 2017).

2.1.2 Foundational Theories in Pragmatics

Speech Act Theory (Austin and Searle)

Speech act theory, developed by one of the leading philosophers in the field of linguistic philosophy, J. L. Austin, examines the functional dimension of language (Finch, 2000). He elaborated on the theory he developed in the 1930s in his lectures at Harvard in the 1950s and encapsulated in his most significant book, *How to Do Things with Words* (Austin, 1962). The theory was later expanded and refined by Searle (1969), a philosopher and Austin's student. Going beyond the conventional view of language of the time, which regards language as a solely descriptive tool, the theory examines the performative side of language and how words not only communicate information but also perform actions (Hussain & Khan, 2024). In contrast to the restricting and reductive perspectives of the period, speech act theory offers a more comprehensive view of language by emphasizing its diverse functions and uses.

At that time, the dominant focus in linguistics and philosophy was on truth conditions, the notion that language simply serves to determine whether something is true or false (Loke & Golding, 2016; Culpeper et al., 2018). However, Austin (1962) challenged this view by arguing that utterances involve more than the expression of truth values and that they “do something.” Austin argued that language is more than just a way of delivering facts that can be evaluated as true or false; it is also a way of performing actions. So, according to him, when we use language, we don't simply describe the environment around us; we perform a variety of social tasks, including making requests, issuing commands, or expressing opinions (Dey, 2023).

Austin (1962) argued that there are three types of acts: *Locutionary*, *Illocutionary* and *Perlocutionary*. The locutionary act, defined by Austin (1975) as “the act of saying something” (p. 94), is the act of expression that uses a literal or surface-level interpretation of a statement with a particular vocabulary and grammatical structure (Félix-Brasdefer, 2019; Hussain & Khan, 2024). Secondly, an illocutionary act, described by Austin (1975) as “the performance of an act in saying something” (p. 99), involves the expression of an utterance that carries the force of an action (Çelebi, 2014). These acts have a conventional force known as the “illocutionary force” which includes actions such as ordering, asking, etc., and are intended to produce particular effects (Senft, 2014).

According to Austin (1962), an illocutionary act must fulfill three conditions for its successful execution: securing an uptake, taking effects, and inviting response. He illustrated this point as follows:

I cannot be said to have warned an audience unless it hears what I say and takes what I say in a certain sense. An effect must be achieved on the audience if the illocutionary act is to be carried out. How should we best put it here? And how can we limit it? Generally, the effect amounts to bringing about the understanding of the meaning and of the force of the locution. So, the performance of an illocutionary act involves the securing of uptake (pp. 115-116).

To be able to secure uptake, the speaker must ensure that the listener comprehends the pragmatic meaning and intent behind their words. By including both the speaker's utterances and the listener's response to the expression, this concept facilitates the analysis of speech acts (Félix-Brasdefer, 2021).

Second, illocutionary acts "take effect" by bringing about a change in the usual course of events (Senft, 2014). An illustrative example is provided by Félix-Brasdefer (2019), who notes that once President Obama took the Oath of Office in 2009, he was no longer referred to as Senator Obama. In addition, illocutionary acts typically invite a response or follow-up. Such responses may be verbal, as in the case of promises, which entail an expectation of fulfillment (Senft, 2014), or non-verbal, including nodding, intonation, or gestures (Félix-Brasdefer, 2021).

Searle (1976) developed and systematized Austin's work, including the classification of illocutionary acts. According to Searle (1976), speech acts in a language are divided into five categories: *Assertives/Representatives*, *Directives*, *Commissives*, *Expressives*, and *Declaratives*. Each category represents a different type of illocutionary force or intention that is conveyed through speech (Dey, 2023). As summarized by Mukhroji et al. (2019), assertives or representatives are statements that describe a state of affairs and are presented as true. Directives are utterances through which speakers attempt to get listeners to perform an action. For example, when a speaker asks, "*Can you open the window?*" the intention is to prompt the listener to open the window, making the utterance a directive because it functions as a request for action.

Commissives express a speaker's intention and are understood as a commitment to carry out a future action. An example of this is the statement "*I promise I will be there,*" which commits the speaker to a specific future act. Expressives convey the speaker's emotional, cognitive, or psychological states, such as in the case of apologies. Finally, declaratives are utterances that bring about changes in institutional reality, such as declaring someone guilty or declaring war.

The study of speech acts holds significance within linguistics and extends to other fields such as communication studies, psychology, and philosophy (Mackenzie & Stoljar, 2000). By examining the

various aspects of speech acts, researchers can gain a deeper insight into how language is employed to express meaning, manage social interactions, and influence our perceptions of the world (Dey, 2023).

Grice's Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims

Like Austin and Searle's Speech Act theory, Paul Grice's work on conversations attracted the initial interest in pragmatics and contributed to the development of pragmatics into what it is today (Davies, 2007). His most important work in the field is the Cooperative Principle and Conversational Implicature, which he first presented in 1967 and later discussed in his article titled *Logic and Conversation* published in 1975. (Ephratt, 2012).

Much of the meaning lies beyond words, and speakers often intend more than the surface meaning of their utterances. Recognizing that listeners can infer this meaning, Grice formulated the Cooperative Principle in order to explain how effective communication can be established despite the inherent ambiguities of language (Culpeper et al., 2018). According to Thomas (1995), Grice tried to methodically demonstrate how one grasps the implied meaning from what is stated. Grice's Cooperation Principle is based on the assumption that communication is by its very nature a cooperative act and that, therefore, in every communicative event, the speaker and the listener (or the writer and the reader) tend to cooperate in order to produce a common meaning (Hadi, 2013; Hossain, 2021). Within this framework, speakers can create implicit meanings, and listeners can decode these meanings through contextual clues and available background knowledge (Joyce, 2021). Grice (1989) expressed this principle as follows: "Make your conversation contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged" (p. 26).

Grice's Cooperative Principle consists of four maxims, three of which pertain to the content of utterances, while one addresses their form (Figure 2) (Grice, 1989). These four maxims are called *quantity*, *quality*, *relevance*, and *manner*, and they provide a framework for identifying implicatures (Joyce, 2021).

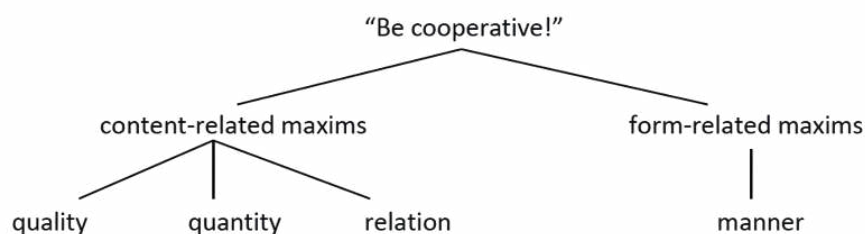


Figure 2. Grice's Cooperative Principle (Kortmann, 2020)

Maxim of quantity identifies with the amount of information a speaker must supply. Grice (1989) added two sub-principles under this maxim: "Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange)" and "Do not make your contribution more informative than is required" (p. 26). In this regard, the main focus of the maxim in question can be expressed as the need for the speaker to be informative just as required (Hadi, 2013). Maxim of quality refers to providing truthful information. Under the maxim fall two following sub-principles: "Do not say what you believe to be false" and "Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence" (Grice, 1989, p. 27). Under the maxim of relevance, Grice only put "Be relevant" (Grice, 1989, p. 27). And lastly, the maxim of manner relates not to the content of what is said, but to the manner of what is said. Grice (1989), under this maxim, added sub-principles such as "Be perspicuous" and outlining principles such as avoiding obscurity and ambiguity, being brief, and being orderly (p. 27).

Grice (1989) also points out that people do not always follow these maxims when communicating and identifies several ways in which the maxims are not fulfilled. During a conversation, one may deliberately fail to follow a conversational maxim, not to deceive or mislead, but to encourage the listener to infer a meaning beyond or different from the literal expression. He referred to this implied additional meaning as "conversational implicature" and described the deliberate violation of a maxim to create it as "*flouting a maxim*." (Thomas, 1995). This is often done indirectly, through contradictory statements, verbiage, and exaggeration (Hossain, 2021). Changing the subject quickly or steering the conversation in a different direction to prevent a topic from being discussed is an example of flouting. Joyce (2021, p. 13) illustrates this with an exchange in which a mother asks her son, "*Any news about the college applications?*" and the son responds, "*More salad?*" The son's response reflects his reluctance to discuss college application matters. By redirecting the conversation to a neutral and safe topic, he delays engagement with the original question. This interaction, therefore, exemplifies flouting of the maxim of relevance.

Another way in which maxims are not fulfilled is by *violating* them. In contrast to flouting a maxim, violating a maxim means that the speaker does not want the listener to infer an implication from what is being said and, in a way, misleads the listener (Grice, 1989). A maxim can be violated in various ways. For instance, a speaker might withhold sufficient information (violating the maxim of quantity), provide false or inaccurate information (violating the maxim of quality), overwhelm the listener with excessive information (violating the maxim of manner), or subtly mislead the listener (violating the maxim of relation) (Hossain, 2021).

The speaker may also *opt out* of both the maxims and the Cooperative Principle by indicating their unwillingness to comply with the maxim's requirements. Grice (1989) illustrates this situation with the "*I cannot say more; my lips are sealed*" (p. 30). Lastly, the speaker may encounter a *clash*, such

as being unable to "fulfil the first maxim of quantity without violating the second maxim of quality" (Grice, 1989, p. 30).

Grice (1989) claims that there is a widely accepted form of communication that serves as a standard foundation for conversational behavior. He conceptualizes conversational maxims as guiding concepts rather than hard rules. Similarly, Bach (2006) argues that Grice established these maxims as guidelines for effective communication. According to Bach, these maxims operate as presumptive norms that speakers employ, and listeners rely upon in the interpretation of utterances. This theoretical framework provides a systematic approach to understanding the underlying structures of everyday conversation, making it particularly applicable to second language acquisition. She (2022) further emphasizes that this clarity is particularly advantageous for learners with lower proficiency, enabling them to better understand and engage with conversations, thus improving their second language.

Politeness Theory (Brown and Levinson)

The most influential theory of politeness to date was proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987). Their work focused on the connection between language features and social contexts, seeking to explain why consistent patterns in language use and structure emerge across diverse cultures. Politeness theory has become an important theoretical framework in various academic disciplines such as Linguistics, Economics, and Psychology (Sapitri et al., 2019). By studying three languages in depth—English (as spoken in Britain and the United States), Tzeltal (spoken in Chiapas, Mexico), and Tamil (spoken in Tamil Nadu, India)—Brown and Levinson observed cross-cultural similarities in the basic principles of polite communication. For instance, they observed that in all three cultures, when people asked for something, they often made indirect requests, such as "*Can you tell me the time?*" rather than imperative commands such as "*Tell me the time.*" Based on such observations, they argued that there must be some basic principles that explain why people in different cultures develop parallel linguistic features. They aimed to systematize this phenomenon in everyday interactions and proposed that shared mechanisms regulate polite behavior universally, beyond cultural and linguistic boundaries (Fathi, 2024).

In order to broadly define the notion of politeness, Brown and Levinson proposed the concept of *face* (Sapitri et al., 2019). Their notion of face is derived from Goffman's (1967) foundational framework, which defines face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he is taking during a particular contact" (p. 5). Building on this idea, Brown and Levinson (1987) define face as "the public self image that every member wants to claim for himself" (p. 61). Put simply, face pertains to our sense of self-esteem (Bousfield, 2023) and is an emotionally significant aspect that can be at risk of loss (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Losing one's face frequently

leads to shame or embarrassment, suggesting an emotionally sensitive state of face (Culpeper et al., 2018).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), face consists of two aspects: positive face and negative face. They defined positive face as "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" and negative face as "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others" (p. 62). Positive face is related to the need to be liked by others, while negative face is primarily related to the desire to maintain one's independence. This implies that although positive face involves wanting to be viewed as likeable or desirable, negative face requires one's actions to be free from interference (Al-Hindawi & Alkhazaali, 2016).

Brown and Levinson suggest that people are inclined to try to save the face of others as well as their own. When one of the participants feels their face is threatened, it is quite possible for them to retaliate in a similar manner. Recognizing this, people often mutually cooperate to protect each other's face during interactions. Therefore, according to Brown and Levinson (1987), it can be stated that the central notion of Politeness theory is that "it is in general in every participant's best interest to maintain each other's face" (p. 61).

Anytime we communicate, our public self-image is something we constantly manage because our face is always at stake. Most of our daily behaviors, mainly many actions we perform with words such as giving orders, offering advice, making promises, and criticizing can potentially threaten our faces (Goldsmith, 2008). Brown and Levinson (1987) define actions that can harm or threaten an individual's face as face-threatening actions (FTA). FTA impacts both the positive and negative faces of the listener and the speaker. Brown and Levinson (1987) propose that we employ several communication strategies to reduce or avoid those threats. These strategies are referred to as "strategies of politeness", and the suitability of a particular strategy is influenced by three key aspects of social situations: "*power*", "*distance*", and "*rank*." Power is referred to as the extent to which one individual can assert their plans or judgments over another. For instance, the dynamics of a conversation between two equals differ from those of a conversation between two people, where one holds more power or authority over the other. Distance includes both relational closeness and social similarity. This could range from two people being strangers from very different backgrounds to being close friends of similar age, race, and gender. Rank refers to culturally shaped perceptions of how sensitive certain face-threatening situations are. Power, distance, and rank collectively affect the weight of the face threat (Goldsmith, 2008). As this weight increases, the 'Model Person,' conceptualized as a rational actor (Brown & Levinson, 1987), tends to choose a higher-numbered strategy accordingly (Culpeper et al., 2018) (Figure 3).

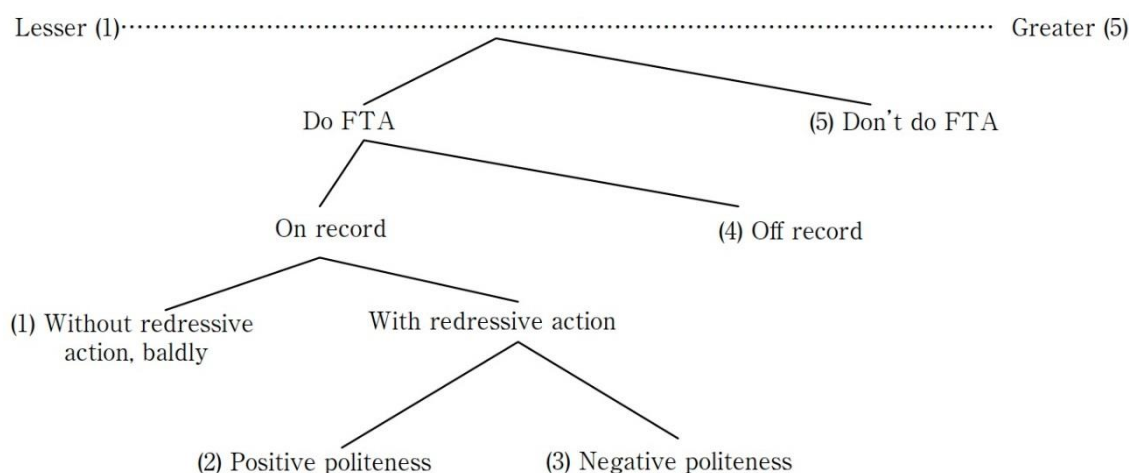


Figure 3. Selection of politeness strategies (Brown, 2007)

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the first of the politeness strategies, *bald on record*, is a way of expressing a statement clearly, unambiguously, and simply without minimizing or exaggerating it. This type of FTA only happens when the speaker is free from concern of retribution coming from the listener. For instance, in the case of an emergency, both parties implicitly agree that face concerns can be overlooked (e.g., shouting '*Help!*' or '*Watch out!*').

The second strategy, *positive politeness*, is based on the positive face of the listener and aims to maximize the implication of politeness by seeking to build solidarity and sympathy between communicators (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Positive politeness strategies involve "showing exaggeration, interest, approval, and sympathy as well as using in-group identity markers" (Song, 2017, p. 70). Watts (2003) also presented some examples of positive politeness strategies, such as using identity signs in the group, avoiding incompatibility, trying to reach agreement on safe issues, finding common ground, and bringing it to the agenda.

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), *negative politeness* "is essentially avoidance-based, and realizations of negative-politeness strategies consist in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee's freedom of action" (p. 70). By using the traditional indirectness approach, negative politeness strategies are employed to prevent imposition. To minimize the imposition, techniques such as hedging or apologizing may be employed (Astia, 2020).

And lastly, the realization of the *off-record strategy* is such that "there is more than one unambiguously attributable intention so that the actor cannot be held to have committed himself to one particular intent" (Brown & Levinson, 1987, p. 69). An example of this is provided by Brown and Levinson (1987): "*I ran out of cash; I forgot to go to the bank today.*" The speaker in this example may be trying to get the listener to lend him or her cash, but may feel embarrassed to express this directly. Similarly, saying "*I'm thirsty*" with the intention of encouraging someone nearby to offer a drink technically flouts Grice's (1989) maxim of relation. However, in the appropriate context, the listener

may infer that the speaker wants something to drink; if questioned, the speaker can always reject this interpretation (Culpeper et al., 2018). The off-record strategy is realized by using irony, metaphors, or asking rhetorical questions, in short, by giving clues to the listener about what is meant without stating it directly (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Brown and Levinson argued that Politeness Theory is valid for all languages. However, questions have been raised about how universal and inclusive the theory actually is, and claims have been made that Brown and Levinson's theory only takes into account certain cultures (Brown, 2007). Some scholars have criticized the idea that various cultures employ politeness strategies in ways that differ from the framework proposed by Brown and Levinson (Armaşu, 2012). For example, politeness theory has been criticized for being largely influenced by Western cultures, which emphasize individualism, while in many non Western cultures, group identity tends to be prioritized over the individual (Mao, 1994). In certain cultures and language groups, such as Japanese and English, negative politeness tends to be the standard. In these cultures, formality is emphasized more highly than in others. In contrast, cultures such as those in Australia and America favor positive politeness, where intimacy is prioritized, and formality or deference is often viewed as a barrier to effective communication (Armaşu, 2012). Even though it has faced criticism, Brown and Levinson's politeness theory continues to be highly influential in communication research and related disciplines. The theory holds particular significance in the study of interpersonal communication, as it offers insights into key areas like identity management, message creation, and personal relationships (Feng, 2016).

2.1.3. Pragmatic Competence

The ability to understand and appropriately navigate the rules of conversation is essential for achieving effective communication and mutual understanding (Yule, 1996). This ability, often referred to as pragmatic competence, is essentially the capacity to understand and use language appropriately within context. It is the ability to use language to meet communicative goals and to interpret speakers' intentions, particularly when those intentions are not conveyed directly, which is the case in most actual communication (Ziafar, 2018).

One of the earliest definitions of pragmatic competence was made by Chomsky (1980) as the "knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use, in conformity with various purposes" (p. 224). The notion was often compared to grammatical competence, which, in Chomsky's terms, refers to the ability to understand the structure and meaning (Tello-Rueda, 2006). It has also been defined as: "the competence in conveying and understanding communicative intent, that is, matching actional intent with linguistic form based on the knowledge of an inventory of verbal schemata that carry illocutionary force" (Celce-Murcia et al. 1995, p. 17).

Knowing a language goes beyond linguistic knowledge and includes the ability to apply that linguistic knowledge in different contexts. In the Speech Act theory that he put forward, as mentioned before, Austin (1962) deals with how the utterances we use function beyond their dictionary meaning. He emphasizes the need to develop the ability to perform effective communication. His arguments were echoed by Hymes (1972) in his Communicative Competence theory. According to him, for effective and meaningful communication, every language learner must consider the social and cultural aspects of the target language alongside grammatical knowledge. To be able to develop communicative competence, it is crucial to focus on its components, one of which is pragmatic competence (Najafi et al., 2017).

Pragmatic competence is a fundamental component of communicative competence and a key factor in communication (Kentmen et al., 2023), and it has been incorporated into many models of communicative competence (e.g., Bachman, 1990; Canale & Swain, 1980). For instance, in Canale and Swain's (1980) communicative competence model, there are four key aspects for effective communication, namely grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence, and strategic competence (Figure 4). Grammatical competence refers to the "knowledge of sounds, letters, syntax, morphology, and so on" (Taş & Khan, 2020, p. 89), resembling Chomsky's concept of language competence (Takkaç-Tulgar, 2016). On the other hand, strategic competence refers to communication strategies, whether verbal or non-verbal, that can be used to avoid conversational breakdowns (Canale & Swain, 1980). Discourse competence is the capacity to use cohesion and coherence in communication, ensuring smooth flow and consistency (Canale, 1983). Lastly, sociolinguistic competence refers to the skill of adapting language appropriately based on the context, along with grammatical knowledge, essentially combining linguistic rules and contextual guidelines (Canale & Swain, 1980). In Canale and Swain's (1980) communicative model, sociolinguistic competence corresponds to pragmatic competence (Tello-Rueda, 2006).

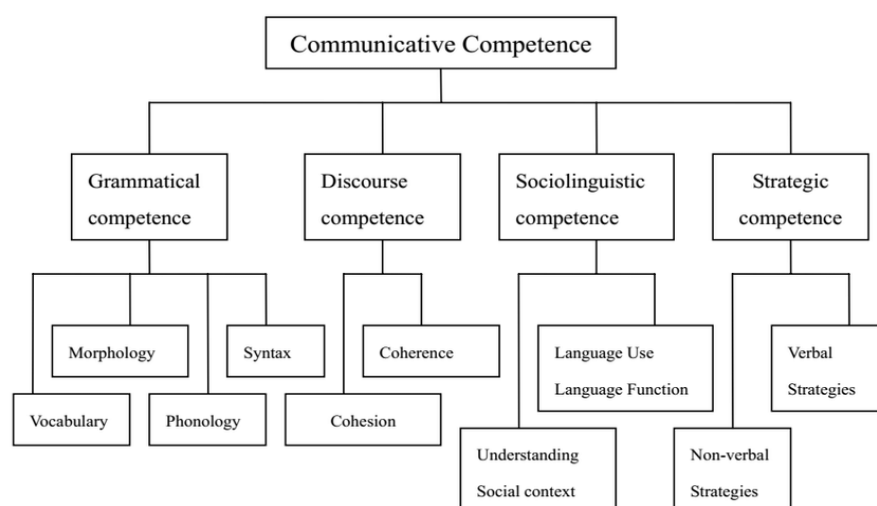


Figure 4. Canale and Swain's (1980) Communicative Competence Model (Alzeebaree, 2017)

The conceptualization of pragmatic competence as a stand-alone branch was included in the model of language competence proposed by Bachman (1990) (Figure 5). In Bachman's model, language competence encompasses two main competencies, each consisting of two other sub-competencies. Organizational competence primarily focuses on form, whereas pragmatic competence is mainly concerned with function (Taş & Khan, 2020). Organizational competence encompasses grammatical competence, which refers to linguistic knowledge, including vocabulary, morphology, and syntax. Resembling Chomsky's concept of language competence and Canale and Swain's grammatical competence, Bachman's (1990) grammatical competence describes "the choice of words to express specific significations, their forms, their arrangement in utterances to express propositions, and their physical realizations, either as sounds or as written symbols" (p. 87). The second branch of organizational competence, textual competence, on the other hand, covers cohesion and rhetorical organization.

When it comes to pragmatic competence, it includes illocutionary competence and sociolinguistic competence. Illocutionary competence consists of four functions namely, ideational function, which enables expression of knowledge or feelings; manipulative function, which enables the usage of language to get things done; heuristic function, which is about taking advantage of the language to learn, teach or solve problems; and lastly imaginative function, which enables creating and shaping the environment for humorous and/or esthetic reasons (Bachman, 1990). The second branch of pragmatic competence, sociolinguistic competence, mainly concerns awareness of and sensitivity to the rules governing language usage based on the characteristics of a given context. According to Bachman (1990), it is sociolinguistic competence that allows us to employ language properly and effectively in diverse social contexts. Considering the significant role of pragmatic competence in various key communication competence models, it can be concluded that pragmatic competence is considered a fundamental aspect of language ability (Xiao, 2015).

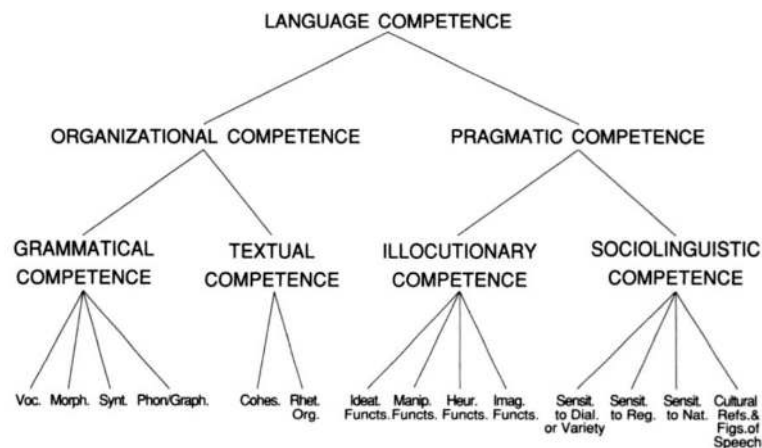


Figure 5. Bachman's Language Competence Model (Bachman, 1990)

Taguchi (2019) states that pragmatic competence can be most effectively described as a complex concept that encompasses three areas of knowledge and skill: understanding how language choices align with social and cultural contexts, the capacity to adapt language use dynamically during interaction, and the autonomy to decide when and whether such pragmatic knowledge should be applied within a given community. A similar perspective is offered by Bialystok (1993, as cited in Kentmen et al., 2023), who emphasizes the ability to use language across contexts, infer meaning beyond literal expressions (e.g., indirect speech acts and irony), and to integrate these skills in discourse construction.

Pragmatic competence is a crucial part of language competence, enabling language learners (second and/or foreign) to effectively communicate with both native and non-native speakers of the target language (Gomez-Laich, 2016; Lv et al., 2021). However, developing pragmatic competence can be challenging, and it is one of the linguistic aspects with which many language learners struggle the most (Prasatyo et al., 2023). The development of pragmatic competence in a foreign language setting, especially where there is minimal interaction with native speakers, has certain features that distinguish it from acquiring pragmatic competence in the society where the language is spoken. For example, the learner might feel strongly connected to their native language and culture. In such cases, it could be difficult to adapt to the sociocultural norms of the target language and its culture. Additionally, pragmatic competence provided by native speakers is often presented via instructional materials in an unnatural and inauthentic way. For languages with multiple varieties, such as English, it can be challenging to pinpoint a single reference model. Also, the opportunity to interact with native speakers in real-life situations can be extremely limited, and in some instances, there could be no interaction whatsoever. This results in a lack of feedback for the learner and no communication (Cenoz, 2008).

Considering all these limitations, the conventional understanding of competence in second language acquisition, defined as mimicking native speakers of a particular variety, has been challenged. Traditional language competence views monolingual native competence as a goal that multilingual learners should strive to achieve. Some scholars even defined it as a "monolingual view of bilingualism" (Cook, 1992, 1995; Grosjean, 1992). However, a truly balanced bilingual or multilingual person is rare. Native-level competence in a second or additional language is most often not reached, and it is therefore considered a failure by learners and even by teachers. The reason behind this is the focus on native speakers' standards, rather than considering learners' needs and how they intend to use the language (Edwards, 1994). As an alternative to the traditional understanding, Cook (1992) put forward the concept of 'multicompetence' to describe a distinctive form of language competence. The notion promotes the idea that second language speakers should not be considered mere imitations of native speakers; instead, they should be recognized for having their own distinct forms of competence. The goal is not to imitate the speech of native speakers from a particular dialect, but rather to develop the ability to comprehend and manage various elements of communication. This includes understanding speech acts in conversations, using appropriate address forms in both formal and informal settings, and interpreting direct and indirect meanings. These skills are grounded in an awareness of the sociocultural norms of the target culture, as well as the contextual factors and the participants' social dynamics, such as power relations, social distance, and the level of imposition involved in the communicative exchange (Félix-Brasdefer & Shively, 2021).

2.1.4. Pragmatic Awareness

Pragmatic awareness is considered essential for the development of pragmatic competence and is suggested as a marker of an early stage of pragmatic competence in second-language learners (Ifantidou, 2013). Most scholars agree that pragmatic competence presupposes pragmatic awareness (Alcón & Safont-Jordà, 2008; García, 2004; Schmidt, 1993) and has been part of second language acquisition for several decades since its inception in the field of interlanguage pragmatics (McConachy, 2022).

Pragmatic awareness is considered crucial for generating and negotiating meaning (Verschuere, 2000). The most commonly used definition of pragmatic awareness is "the conscious, reflective, explicit knowledge about pragmatics" (Alcón & Safont-Jordà, 2008, p. 193). Bardovi-Harlig and Griffin (2005), on the other hand, refer to pragmatic awareness as a language learner's capacity to recognize how pragmatic features are expressed in the target language and to identify "pragmatically infelicitous utterances." Nikula (2002) prefers to define pragmatic awareness as "a reference to features of language and interaction with which language users orient to aspects of language use that pertain to its social and interpersonal functioning" (p. 451).

According to Alcón and Safont-Jordà (2008), pragmatic awareness includes understanding the norms and guidelines that regulate appropriate language use in particular speech communities and communicational circumstances. In more detail, Ishihara (2007) explained what pragmatic awareness entails as follows:

Pragmatic awareness includes having a repertoire of linguistic strategies (i.e., prosodic, lexical, syntactic and semantic strategies) for a speech act set (pragmalinguistic awareness), knowing the impact of contextual factors on L2 form and when to apply certain L2 use to the appropriate occasion or understanding the cultural reasoning behind L2 pragmatic norms (sociopragmatic awareness) (p. 22).

Pragmatic awareness is seen as a first step in the development of L2 pragmatic competence as well as a learning outcome in its own right. Developing pragmatic awareness can help learners develop their learning skills autonomously in the foreign language learning process (Bardovi-Harlig, 2018). This is because, in the process of developing pragmatic awareness, learners are exposed to language in use in such a way that they are directed to spend energy and attention to making discoveries for themselves (Tomlinson, 1994).

The concept of pragmatic awareness began to garner attention when Schmidt's (1993) *noticing hypothesis* was applied to the interlanguage pragmatics field (McConachy, 2022). Even today, discussions on awareness in second language pragmatics are often grounded in Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (Bardovi-Harlig, 2018). Unlike other theorists who argue that language acquisition occurs unconsciously (e.g., Chomsky, 1965, 1986; Krashen, 1982, 1985), Schmidt asserts that learning involves conscious awareness through noticing. He suggests that the elements learners pay attention to in the input are what ultimately transform into intake for learning (Usó-Juan & Martínez-Flor, 2021). When applying his noticing hypothesis to the field of pragmatics, he states that language functions as a system bridging forms, functions, and contextual factors. Within this framework, we can conclude that pragmatic awareness depends on "the ability to allocate sufficient attentional resources to detect patterns in input (noticing) and derive from this input an understanding of underlying principles governing the cooccurrence of pragmatic forms, functions, and contextual variables (understanding)" (p. 767). To illustrate, Schmidt (1995, p. 30) provides the following example:

In pragmatics, awareness that on a particular occasion someone says to their interlocutor something like, "I'm terribly sorry to bother you, but if you have time could you look at this problem?" is a matter of noticing. Relating the various forms used to their strategic deployment in the service of politeness and recognizing the co-occurrence with elements of context such as social distance, power, level of imposition and so on, are all matters of understanding.

2.2. Intercultural Sensitivity

2.2.1. Language and Culture

Culture, originating from the Latin verb *cultura*, which means "to cultivate," refers to the customs and social practices found in human communities (Asfaw & Bulbula, 2022). Culture is a complex and dynamic construct shaped by various historical, social, political, and personal factors. It reaches every facet of human life, whether it is societal norms or the subtle details of daily interactions (Gurney & Demuro, 2025). Trying to define culture within a single framework is an injustice to its inherently complex nature. However, some scholars and researchers in the field provide their own definitions of culture. According to Irímia (2012), in general terms, culture can be defined as the beliefs, customs, artistic endeavors, and organizations that belong to a community united by their nationality, race, religion, or language. In the field of intercultural studies, it can be defined as the understanding, drive, and abilities required for efficient communication with individuals from different cultures (Byram 1997). In linguistics, on the other hand, it describes the socially acquired comprehension of the world, and the associated mindset, with the number of words a language uses to describe particular phenomena varying based on the speaker's cultural upbringing (Asfaw & Bulbula, 2022). Ting-Toomey and Chung (2022) defined culture in their way as a "complex frame of reference" of customs, values, opinions, symbols, and meaning shared through interactions among individuals in the community. Nevertheless, perhaps one of the most frequently used and cited definitions is provided by Kramsch (1998):

Culture can be defined as membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history, and common imaginings. Even when they have left that community, its members may retain, wherever they are, a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating and acting. These standards are what is generally called their 'culture' (p. 10).

Language, on the other hand, is one of humanity's most sophisticated means of social contact, demonstrating remarkable and convoluted human capacity (Omenukwa, 2024). Language is deeply ingrained in culture, serving as a social instrument for communication within society. Values, customs, and beliefs are passed down through generations via language. In a way, language contributes to the formation and reinforcement of social identities in cultural groups (Saleem et al., 2022), as it is through the usage of language that culture thrives and exists in society (Omenukwa, 2024). Language is a product of cultural, historical, and social constructs, but it also reciprocally affects and shapes culture (Jiang, 2000).

The relationship between language and culture has long been an area of focus for scholars across various disciplines, including sociologists, linguists, psychologists, and more. Many have acknowledged that language and culture are intricately linked and influence each other in numerous

ways (Ergashevna, 2020; Saghar, 2023). When the state of language and culture is mentioned, the phrase "language is culture; culture is language" is often heard. This is due to their intricate yet analogous relationship (Saleem et al., 2022). For this reason, it is impossible to examine language meaningfully without reference to its cultural context (Brenneis, 2002; Prins & Ulijn, 1998). The inseparability between language and culture is perhaps best explained by Brown (2007):

A language is a part of a culture and a culture is a part of a language; the two are intricately interwoven so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture (p. 171).

The American anthropologist Sapir (1921) suggests that culture heavily relies on language simply because it transmits the implicit meaning and patterns of existence. Within the cultural framework, these patterns reflect one's identity with one's thoughts, beliefs, and actions, while also shaping their personalities and guiding their behavior in conformity with societal norms (Ali et al., 2015).

Opinions and attitudes of culture were not always static. As the attitude towards language has changed, the view of culture has also changed. In the early 21st century, the prevailing focus on "language in itself and for itself", which disregarded extralinguistic factors, shifted with the necessity for a comprehensive analysis of the sociocultural, communicative, psychological, and context-dependent circumstances of language interaction (Ergashevna, 2020). Risager (2007) introduced the notion of *languaculture* to emphasize the "close connection, an interdependence, a complex relationship between language and culture" (p. 163). Similarly, Duranti (2009) highlighted the frequent use of the term "ethnolinguistics" in examining the interplay between language and culture. Regardless of the terminology, such studies have played a role in shaping a cohesive sub-discipline dedicated to exploring the relationship between language and culture (Sharifian, 2015).

2.2.2. Intercultural Dimension in Second Language Acquisition

Culture is widely acknowledged as a complex, diverse, and pervasive aspect of language education (Gurney & Demuro, 2025), in which language shapes the focus of study (Kasper & Omori, 2010). The exploration of culture, including both learners' native culture and the culture of the target language, has been a longstanding area of interest (Kramsch, 2006). Today, there is broad agreement that teaching a second language extends beyond explaining grammar rules or acquiring vocabulary; it must also incorporate cultural elements (Kuo & Lai, 2006).

The significance of integrating intercultural perspectives in language instruction has been highlighted by recent social, political, and technological developments, as well as the increased mobility of people made possible by electronic media and international organizations, especially through modern communication. Given this, being able to comprehend intercultural concepts has

become essential, and English, being the main language of communication worldwide, plays a key role in bridging multicultural ideas (Prodromou, 1992). As a result, foreign language instruction has changed from being primarily linguistic to promoting intercultural understanding and communication skills. This shift aims to equip language learners with the skills needed to navigate cultural differences effectively (Chan et al., 2015). Consequently, the goal of foreign or second language teaching has expanded beyond teaching an academic subject to fostering the ability to engage in intercultural communication (Robinson, 1985; Zheng, 2014).

In line with this shift, scholars and instructors worldwide have emphasized the significance of an intercultural dimension in foreign language education, as it enables learners to have direct experience and engagement with other cultures (Atay et al., 2009; Byram, 2021; Cheng, 2012; Álvarez, 2020; Megawati et al., 2020; Sevimeş-Şahin, 2020). The intercultural focus in foreign language education does not simply provide individuals with the linguistic skills that are essential for efficient interaction, whether spoken or written. It also involves creating mutual comprehension among people with different cultural backgrounds, as well as facilitating meaningful interactions with individuals viewed as multifaceted, each with unique identities (Irimia, 2012). Foreign language learners with strong intercultural communicative competence can effectively communicate in the target language with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This is because they possess a deeper understanding of both their own cultural perspective and that of others, allowing them to integrate linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse skills in their language use (Iswandari & Ardi, 2022).

Within this context, intercultural communication can be understood as the ability of speakers from different cultural backgrounds to come together and create interactions that are shaped by their specific communicative contexts together, which often include different expectations of politeness and social norms (Culpeper et al., 2018). Hence, the development of intercultural communicative competence has become one of the main goals in foreign and second language education, as it aims to enhance learners' intercultural awareness and enable them to better understand both the target culture and their own (Tirnaz & Narafshan, 2018).

Intercultural communicative competence can be defined as the capacity "to interact with people from another social group in another language" (Byram, 2021, p. 97). In other words, having intercultural communicative competence means communicating effectively with people from different cultures (Sun, 2013). Once intercultural communicative competence is integrated into foreign or second language education, learners can develop into intercultural speakers capable of reflecting on what they believe and do from a new perspective, dealing with different viewpoints, while acquiring a better understanding of another culture (Moeller & Nugent, 2014). However, it is important to note that this process is neither about fully assimilating into the target culture nor about strictly preserving

the learner's own culture. Instead, it is about seeking a connection between the two, creating a "third place" (Kovács, 2017).

2.2.3. Intercultural Competence

Without a doubt, globalization and the multiculturalism it inevitably brings about have changed the political and social landscape (Hong & Cheon, 2017), as individuals increasingly identify as “citizens of the world” for reasons such as employment, higher education, and trading, necessitating the navigation of linguistic, ethnic, and national boundaries (Turner, 2006). As people from different cultural backgrounds coexist, societies all over the world have grown more cosmopolitan (Zhang & Zhou, 2019). Simultaneously, migration and swift developments in transport and communication technologies have resulted in increased intercultural interactions on a global scale, necessitating the development of bilingual and intercultural competencies (Jackson, 2019). The aforementioned intercultural competence framework covers essential understanding and abilities that enable individuals to navigate appropriately in intercultural circumstances (Tirnaz & Narafshan, 2018).

The concept of intercultural competence has been developed and analyzed across many academic disciplines, including language and communication studies or intercultural education (Kramsch & Hua, 2016). In its broadest sense, intercultural competency can be defined as “the ability to communicate effectively in cross-cultural situations and to relate appropriately in a variety of cultural contexts” (Bennett & Bennett, 2004, p. 149). Deardorff (2004) defines intercultural competence as “the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one’s intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (p. 184). She identifies three key components of intercultural competence: knowledge, attitude, and skill (Deardorff, 2006). As interpreted by Blair (2017) later, Deardorff’s definition is the process of acquiring specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes that result in clear, effective, and appropriate conduct and communication in intercultural situations. According to Thomas (2003; as cited in Rathje, 2007), intercultural competence is having the ability to facilitate intercultural communication that mitigates or contextualizes misconceptions, while fostering chances for collaborative problem-solving that is effective for all participants. Thomas emphasized the significance of intercultural competence in preventing misunderstandings, as its absence can result in prejudice, bias, and hostile interactions, all of which contribute to miscommunication between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (Barrett, 2012).

Intercultural competence can be cultivated through intercultural training and instruction (Bultseva & Lebedeva, 2021; Klak & Martin, 2003; Pascarella et al., 1996), as well as through meaningful interactions with people from diverse cultural contexts (Zhai & Scheer, 2004). To improve intercultural competence, learners must become more familiar with different cultures and relate them to their own (Sercu, 2002). It is important to recognize that developing intercultural competence is not a swift

process nor something that can be achieved through a singular course. Instead, it requires continuous engagement, guided learning beyond the classroom, and ongoing practice. Building intercultural competence involves enhancing awareness and knowledge of various cultures, known as an intercultural mindset, as well as developing the ability to understand, appreciate, and adapt to cultural differences, known as an intercultural skillset (Bennett & Bennett, 2004). According to Deardorff (2006), the intercultural competence process is continuous, as individuals consistently learn, gain understanding, and become more adaptable over time.

Byram's Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence

Scholars and researchers from a variety of academic disciplines have proposed over thirty different intercultural competence models. However, especially Byram's (1997) Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence, which is influenced by other significant communicative competence models such as those proposed by Hymes (1972) and Canale and Swain (1980), has gained an important place in the literature by influencing both the intercultural pedagogy and second and foreign language education across Europe (Jackson, 2019). So much so that the model has contributed to the development of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (2001), a manual provided by the Council of Europe for instruction and assessment of intercultural competence in European nations (Guilherme, 2015).

Realizing that cultural aspects were not sufficiently included in the second language education, he broadened the concept of communicative competence by incorporating a clearer focus on cultural aspects. In his model, rather than considering the native speaker as the ideal and target model for language learners, he urges foreign language teachers to perceive their learners as intercultural communicators who actively create meaning in cross-cultural exchanges, using diverse linguistic and cultural systems along with their personal identities (Jackson, 2019).

The foundation of Byram's (1997) model is based on the notion of "savoir", a fundamental aspect of intercultural competence consisting of four interrelated parts: attitudes, knowledge, skills (such as interpreting, relating, discovery, and interaction), and critical cultural awareness. Representing attitudes, *Savoir être* refers to "curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own" (Byram, 2021, p. 62). Cultural knowledge, referred to as *Savoirs*, involves understanding social groups, practices, and patterns of interaction in both one's own culture and that of interlocutors. The model further includes two sets of skills. *Savoir comprendre* focuses on the capacity to analyze and connect cultural documents or occurrences across cultures, while *Savoir apprendre/faire* highlights the capacity to acquire new cultural knowledge and apply it effectively in real-time interaction (Byram, 2021). Finally, critical cultural awareness, also known as *Savoir s'engager*, is "an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of an explicit, systematic process of reasoning, values present in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 2021, p. 66).

With the emphasis on the connection of the four aspects, the model draws attention to the necessity of exhaustive and holistic language instruction. It provides guidance to language teachers about creating a classroom atmosphere that inspires learners to explore, engage with, and understand the opportunities and challenges associated with intercultural communication (Khan et al., 2023). Apart from emphasizing the significance of identity and cultural awareness, the model postulates that foreign language education should foster an "intercultural speaker" rather than a native speaker (Huang, 2021). It still contributes significantly to the foreign language education research (Hoff, 2020) and is also often utilized by teachers as a thorough manual for assisting their learners in developing intercultural communicative competence (Khan et al., 2023).

Deardorff's Intercultural Competence Model

Amidst the numerous definitions available in the literature, Deardorff's (2004, 2006) study provides an essential overview of the intercultural competence notion (Dalib et al., 2014). Deardorff (2004, 2006) carried out a study on intercultural competence aimed at identifying the consensus among prominent specialists and academics regarding the fundamental components necessary for compatible human interaction. The study she conducted showed that certain attitudes, knowledge, and skills are the fundamental components of intercultural competence and that their usage results in both internal and external consequences (Deardorff, 2004). Therefore, Deardorff (2015) emphasizes that intercultural competence extends beyond language and cultural awareness, highlighting the significance of skills and attitudes in its development.

In light of the results of her study, Deardorff (2006) proposes a Model of Intercultural Competence, incorporating components of "attitudes, knowledge, and skills." The model's three main attitudes are "*respect, openness, curiosity/discovery*." According to Deardorff (2015), being respectful toward other people means expressing your sympathy for them and paying close attention to what they have to say. It is particularly essential to show respect to individuals whose opinions and conduct are different from one's own. Curiosity and openness suggest an eagerness to take chances and step out of one's comfort zone. The development of knowledge and skills that are necessary for intercultural competence is based on these attitudes. Making people reevaluate their presumptions about how they see the world and other people is one technique to help them develop these necessary attitudes. One way to achieve this is by creating environments for learners to actively interact with members of the local population (Deardorff, 2015).

According to Deardorff (2004, 2006, 2015), knowledge consists of several key categories, including "cultural self-awareness," which refers to understanding how an individual's own culture shapes their personality and perspectives. It also includes "culture-specific knowledge," "deep cultural knowledge," which refers to recognizing diverse perspectives, and "sociolinguistic awareness."

The skills in the model pertain to handling knowledge through "observing, listening, evaluating, analyzing, interpreting, and relating" (Deardorff, 2015, p. 142). These components contribute to achieving both internal and external outcomes (Pinto, 2018). According to Deardorff (2015), internal outcomes include "flexibility, adaptability, an ethno-relative perspective, and empathy" (p. 142). However, as Celis (2024) points out, various other factors also come into play, such as context, age, and the relationship between the individuals involved. It is important to take these factors into account. These outcomes take place when an individual develops the attitudes, knowledge, and skills essential for intercultural competence. When these internal outcomes are met, one is able to understand the viewpoints of others and engage in interactions that reflect how those individuals would like to be treated. The extent to which someone attains this outcome depends on the level of intercultural knowledge and skills they have achieved (Deardorff, 2015). External outcomes, on the other hand, refer to the combination of attitudes, knowledge, and skills, along with internal outcomes, and an individual's observable behavior and communication in an intercultural setting (Deardorff, 2015).

2.2.4. Intercultural Sensitivity

As interaction among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds reaches unheard-of levels, interculturality emerges as a factor facilitating the development of a new perspective on living and communicating in a multifaceted world (Erdoğan & Okumuşlar, 2020). In intercultural communication, individuals may encounter challenges that result from interactional barriers, including cultural preconceptions, bias, and lack of language and communication skills (Dai & Chen, 2014). In this regard, intercultural sensitivity plays a crucial role as it minimizes these interactional barriers among individuals from different cultural contexts (Moradi & Ghabanchi, 2019).

Intercultural sensitivity is often regarded as crucial both in theoretical examinations of individuals' adaptation process to diverse cultures and in practical programs designed to equip individuals for effective living and working in cultures different from their own (Bhawuk & Brislin, 1992). As a result, it has attracted considerable attention from scholars across various fields, including education, psychology, and communication science. Many researchers have concluded that effective communication among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds depends largely on intercultural sensitivity (Moradi & Ghabanchi, 2019). Reflecting its importance, a number of influential models and studies have been proposed over the years, including those by Bennett (1986), Chen and Starosta (1996), and Hammer et al. (2003).

Hammer et al. (2003) define intercultural sensitivity as "the ability to discriminate and experience relevant cultural differences" (p. 422) and further claim that increased intercultural sensitivity enhances the chances of demonstrating intercultural competence. Another important

definition of intercultural sensitivity is made by Bennett (2017) as the "ability to have more complex personal experience of otherness" (p. 2). Bennett's significance in the intercultural communication discipline stems from his proposal of the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) (Bennett, 1986, 2004, 2017), recognized as a theoretical framework for understanding the process of intercultural communication competence development in humans.

The DMIS consists of six stages, categorized into two broad phases called Ethnocentric and Ethnorelative (Figure 6). However, these stages are not fixed states that one simply enters or exits. Instead, they represent distinct points along a spectrum ranging from the most ethnocentric to the most ethnorelative. Each stage reflects the degree of sensitivity present in the perception process of otherness (Bennett, 2025). The ethnocentric stages, denial, defense, and minimization, are characterized by viewing one's own culture as more central or superior. The ethnorelative stages, acceptance, adaptation, and integration, on the other hand, are related to perceiving other cultures as different ways of structuring reality (Bennett, 2017).

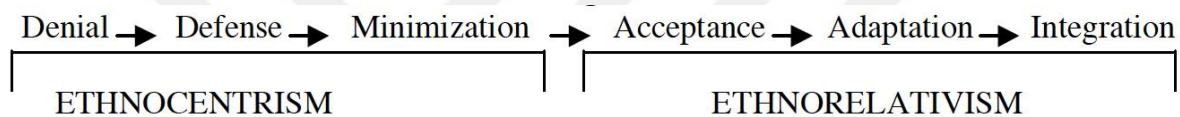


Figure 6. The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 2004)

The first, or "default" stage of DMIS is *denial*; in this stage, individuals fail to recognize the presence of people from various cultural backgrounds. Once the denial phase is over, individuals may move on to the second stage, *defense*. In this stage, others are viewed with more awareness compared to the denial stage; however, the perception is mostly divided into the "us versus them" mindset, where others are heavily stereotyped. The last ethnocentric stage is *minimization*. In this stage, differences that were previously denied and defended against are "minimized," with consideration given to the commonalities between one's own culture and other cultures. In the first ethnorelative stage, *acceptance*, individuals become more aware of both themselves and others in cultural situations. They show interest in different cultures; however, due to a lack of understanding, they may struggle to adjust their behavior to fit the cultural context. In the *adaptation* stage, individuals start to develop "feelings of appropriateness" and empathy that lead to changes in behaviors regarding the other culture. Bennett (2004) emphasizes that adaptation should not be confused with assimilation. He states that "adaptation involves the extension of your repertoire of beliefs and behavior, not a substitution of one set for another" (p. 71). Thus, unlike assimilation, individuals in the adaptation stage maintain their own cultural identity. In the final stage, *integration*, individuals are able to incorporate ethnorelativism into their identity and embrace difference as a crucial aspect of life.

By outlining how perceptions of cultural difference evolve across stages, the DMIS offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of

intercultural development. For this reason, the model has been widely applied in both research and educational contexts, and Bennett (2025) continues to regard the DMIS as one of the most modern intercultural theories available in the literature.

Two prominent researchers in the intercultural communication discipline, Chen and Starosta (1997), define intercultural sensitivity as "an individual's ability to develop a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes an appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication" (p. 5). Chen and Starosta (1997) state that intercultural competence includes three components, with intercultural sensitivity being just one of them, alongside intercultural awareness and intercultural adroitness. Intercultural awareness represents the cognitive side of intercultural communication and is referred to as "the understanding of cultural conventions that affect how we think and behave" (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 28). Intercultural sensitivity, on the other hand, represents the affective facet of intercultural communication and is defined as "the development of a readiness to understand and appreciate cultural differences in intercultural communication" (Chen & Starosta, 1998, p. 28). Finally, Intercultural adroitness represents the behavioral facet of intercultural communication and is defined as "the ability to get the job done and attain communication goals in intercultural interactions" (Chen & Starosta, 1996, p. 367).

Effective intercultural communication requires being aware of both the similarities and differences between cultures, known as intercultural awareness. However, this awareness must be supported by intercultural sensitivity. Without a genuine interest and willingness to learn, recognize, and respect not only the similarities but also the differences, achieving true intercultural awareness cannot be possible. As intercultural sensitivity increases, individuals are able to adapt to intercultural circumstances and grow respect toward different cultures. (Chen & Starosta, 1997). Thus, it is crucial to recognize the significance of intercultural sensitivity for fostering a united and inclusive environment for different cultural groups (Choi, 2023).

2.2.5. Related Research

Research on Pragmatic Awareness

As interest in the role of pragmatics and pragmatic instruction in second language education grows, there has been a corresponding increase in studies on pragmatic awareness. Under this heading, studies on EFL pragmatic awareness conducted in the last ten years are summarized.

Several studies in the past decade have explored different aspects of pragmatic awareness in EFL learners across various contexts. Timpe-Laughlin et al. (2021) conducted a study in the USA, investigating the effects of a computer-assisted learning environment on adult EFL learners. Similarly, Almegren (2022) examined the pragmatic awareness of university-level EFL learners in Saudi Arabia. In Iran, Khadangi Barani and Mousapour Negari (2023) explored the impact of video-based pragmatic

tests on the pragmatic awareness of high school EFL learners, while Torabi (2024) analyzed how flipped and blended teaching methods influence EFL learners' pragmatic awareness. In Spain, Portolés-Falomir and Gayete-Domínguez (2024) focused on the role of pedagogical translanguaging in enhancing the pragmatic awareness of multilingual young learners. In China, Yang and Ren (2019) investigated the effect of university EFL learners' motivation levels on their degree of pragmatic awareness of English, while Hui and Chen (2025) investigated the relationship between university EFL learners' socioeconomic status and their pragmatic awareness, with learning motivation as a mediating factor.

Several studies have also been conducted in the Turkish context. Han and Burgucu-Tazegül (2016) examined how EFL learners perform refusals in English, while Gazioğlu and Çiftçi (2017) investigated the impact of pragmatics-based instruction on the request strategies of high school EFL learners. Similarly, Demirkol (2019) explored the refusal performances of Turkish EFL learners, and Kaplan (2019) conducted a thesis study analyzing both the pragmatic and grammatical awareness of prep-class students. More recently, Kıyanççek (2023) examined the relationship between pragmatic awareness and motivation levels among university EFL learners. These studies contribute to the growing body of research on pragmatic awareness within the Turkish EFL context.

There have also been several studies on pragmatic awareness among in-service EFL teachers worldwide. In the Turkish context, Aydın (2020) explored the pragmatic awareness of foreign language teachers who were also pursuing their master's degrees. Ngai and Janusch (2018) examined how a cross-cultural pragmatic professional development course influenced the pragmatic awareness of Korean foreign language teachers. Similarly, Bagherkazemi and Arefkal (2021) investigated the impact of an awareness-raising workshop on the pragmatic awareness of foreign language teachers in Iran. In Germany, Glaser (2023) studied the effects of a workshop on L2 pragmatic awareness for EFL teachers, while more recently, Ton-Nu (2024) examined the impact of a professional development activity focused on L2 pragmatics teaching for EFL teachers in Vietnam.

There have also been studies on pragmatic awareness among pre-service EFL teachers, who also constitute the study group of the present research. Ekin and Damar (2013) conducted a study with 30 fourth-year pre-service EFL teachers to examine their pragmatic awareness as well as their reflections regarding pragmatic instruction using a discourse completion task (DCT) to assess pragmatic awareness. The results indicated that pre-service EFL teachers generally possess pragmatic awareness; however, this awareness is primarily based on theoretical pragmatic knowledge. Additionally, the findings revealed that pre-service EFL teachers struggle to apply their knowledge effectively in practice.

Hergüner and Çakır (2017) investigated how pre-service teachers selected refusal speech acts based on their level of directness. A total of 133 pre-service EFL teachers completed a discourse

completion task, and according to the results, refusal statements proved to be the most challenging for the pre-service teachers, and they used more reasoning statements than other strategies. They also demonstrated sensitivity to the requester's status while exhibiting less sensitivity to peers.

Çetinavcı (2018) investigated the pragmatic awareness of pre-service EFL teachers using a multiple-choice discourse completion test (MDCT) and compared their results with those of native English speakers. The results showed a notable difference between pre-service EFL teachers and native speakers of English favoring the latter when it comes to interpreting the inferred meanings.

Karagöz and İşisağ (2019) investigated the request strategies used by pre-service EFL teachers by adopting a discourse completion test and a Rating Scale for Appropriateness of Speech Act Patterns. The results of the study indicated that ELT pre-service teachers predominantly adopted indirect request strategies. However, they experienced difficulties when making requests to higher-status interlocutors, as opposed to those of equal status, suggesting challenges in employing appropriate and polite request strategies in such contexts. Overall, despite these challenges, the pre-service EFL teachers demonstrated pragmatically appropriate request performance.

Khabcheche and Hamitouche (2022) investigated the pragmatic awareness of 90 master's level pre-service EFL teachers in Algeria. The findings revealed that their pragmatic awareness was mostly based on theoretical knowledge. A detailed analysis of the participants' lesson plans further showed that they struggled to reflect this theoretical knowledge into practice. In the same year, Chiu et al. (2022) also conducted a study in Taiwan with 32 students in the Department of Applied English about the role of collaboration in both pragmatic and grammatical awareness. The results indicated that participants viewed pragmatic infelicities as more serious than grammatical errors; however, the collaborative group demonstrated stronger performance than those working individually.

Höl and Aygün (2023) examined the pragmatic and grammatical awareness of pre-service EFL teachers. A total of 22 participants, including both freshman and senior pre-service teachers, completed a discourse completion task. The results revealed that pre-service EFL teachers' pragmatic awareness levels were higher than their grammatical awareness levels, and they considered pragmatic infelicities as more serious than grammatical errors. However, the grade level of the pre-service teachers (freshman or senior) did not make a significant difference in their pragmatic and grammatical awareness. Lastly, a significant but weak correlation was found between pragmatic awareness and grammatical awareness.

Erdem Coşgun (2023) investigated pre-service EFL teachers' views about L2 pragmatics and their pragmatic awareness. The study involved 33 pre-service EFL teachers and revealed that, although they had a general understanding of pragmatics because they acquired limited knowledge of specific pragmatic notions, such as speech acts or pragmatic awareness, during their university

education, their familiarity with some other pragmatic notions was comparatively limited. The study highlighted the importance of placing greater emphasis on pragmatics within teacher education programs.

Research on Intercultural Sensitivity

Alaei and Nosrati (2018) conducted a study in Iran, investigating EFL teachers' intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence levels with 167 participants, and the potential relationship between these two constructs. Similarly, Boudouaia et al. (2022) investigated intercultural sensitivity levels of EFL teachers in accordance with different demographic variables in the Algerian context. In the Chilean context, Cancino and Nuñez (2023) examined the correlation of EFL teachers' attitudes towards multicultural English classrooms and their intercultural sensitivity levels, along with an evaluation of how their intercultural sensitivity impacts their intercultural communicative competence with 61 EFL teachers. Imsa-ard (2023) conducted a study in Thailand with 395 EFL teachers, examining their intercultural sensitivity and intercultural communicative competence levels, alongside the potential relationship between these two constructs. In the Turkish context, Gedik-Bal (2023) investigated intercultural sensitivity levels of in-service teachers, including EFL teachers, across different demographic variables.

Gedik-Bal (2020) also conducted a similar study on preparatory school students, examining the level of intercultural sensitivity among EFL learners and discovering the factors that may influence their intercultural sensitivity. Another study conducted with EFL learners was carried out by Koch and Takashima (2021) in Japan. They explored the development of intercultural sensitivity among Japanese EFL learners through a lesson focusing on a short story depicting cultural differences. In the Vietnamese context, Nguyen (2023) examined the intercultural competence of EFL learners, while Barrios and Napiórkowska (2024) investigated the relationships between affective factors, intercultural sensitivity, and willingness to communicate among 1,480 Polish and 1,128 Spanish students.

Previous studies have also examined intercultural sensitivity among pre-service EFL teachers, who also constitute the participant group in the present study. Çetin-Köroğlu (2016) conducted a study to investigate the intercultural sensitivity levels of 61 pre-service EFL teachers using the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) developed by Chen and Starosta (2000). The results indicated that pre-service EFL teachers generally held positive views about cultural diversity and were tolerant of different cultural interactions. However, the results also revealed that pre-service EFL teachers have insufficient possibilities to observe and experience other cultures.

Genç and Boynukara (2017) investigated the intercultural sensitivity levels of pre-service EFL teachers and their relationship with social intelligence and certain demographic characteristics, such as gender, age and online interaction with foreigners. The results of the study, which involved 99 pre-service EFL teachers, revealed a significant relationship between social intelligence and intercultural

sensitivity. Nevertheless, no significant correlation was found between intercultural sensitivity and the mentioned demographic factors.

Similarly, Altan (2018) investigated the intercultural sensitivity levels of Turkish pre-service EFL teachers. The study involved 70 pre-service EFL teachers, and the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) developed by Chen and Starosta (2000) was used to measure their levels of intercultural sensitivity. According to the results, it was revealed that pre-service EFL teachers demonstrated high intercultural sensitivity; however, their interest in learning about foreigners and engaging with them was rather low.

Susilo (2019) investigated the possible effect of the L2 learning environment on the intercultural sensitivity of pre-service EFL teachers, alongside their teaching abilities, language proficiency, and exposure to different cultures in Indonesia. 156 pre-service EFL teachers participated in the study, and the results revealed that while L2 environments influenced English proficiency, they did not significantly affect teaching skills or intercultural sensitivity among pre-service EFL teachers.

Mighani and Moghadam (2019) planned to improve the intercultural sensitivity levels of pre-service EFL teachers by implementing culture-based speaking activities. To this end, the researchers developed a task-based syllabus including intercultural motives and implemented it over the course of one academic semester with 32 pre-service EFL teachers. The results showed that the intercultural sensitivity levels of pre-service EFL teachers substantially improved as a result of the mediation exercises done during the course of the study.

Another intercultural sensitivity study involving pre-service EFL teachers was conducted in Turkey by Arcagok and Yilmaz (2020). Aiming to reveal the intercultural sensitivity levels of pre-service EFL teachers, the study used the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) developed by Chen and Starosta (2000) and involved 90 pre-service EFL teachers. The findings indicated that pre-service EFL teachers exhibited a high level of intercultural sensitivity and that gender and parental education status did not influence this sensitivity. However, the intercultural sensitivity levels of pre-service EFL teachers who volunteered with non-governmental organizations were found to be higher compared to those who had not engaged in such volunteer work.

Similarly, Gürkan (2021) explored the intercultural communication sensitivity levels of first and fourth-grade pre-service EFL teachers. The study also investigated the gender differences, the correlation between intercultural sensitivity and foreign television program consumption and gaming. The study involved 114 first-year and 96 fourth-year prospective teachers and found that fourth-year pre-service EFL teachers demonstrated higher levels of intercultural communication sensitivity than first-year students. Additionally, a positive correlation was found between pre-service EFL teachers' intercultural communication sensitivity and the amount of time spent watching foreign television programs. Although no statistically significant relationship was found between gaming

and intercultural communication sensitivity, the findings suggested that intercultural communication sensitivity increases with greater levels of interaction with others.

In the Moroccan context, Echcharfy (2022) investigated the intercultural awareness of Moroccan pre-service EFL teachers. The study involved 50 pre-service teachers and employed both a three-point Likert scale questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. According to the results, the majority of participants demonstrated a positive attitude toward diverse cultures; however, their level of intercultural awareness was found to be insufficient. The study emphasized the need to enhance the intercultural competence of pre-service EFL teachers.

Lineras (2023) examined the intercultural sensitivity of pre-service EFL teachers and the aspects that could possibly affect it in Colombia. 50 pre-service EFL teachers participated in the study, and the results revealed a predominantly low sensitivity among pre-service EFL teachers. Further analysis of qualitative data from interviews and observations showed that participating pre-service EFL teachers held biased views of U.S. culture with strong cultural pride and a tendency to undervalue the "other". Echoing previous studies, the study also emphasized the need to develop the intercultural sensitivity of pre-service EFL teachers.

Lastly, Purti and Widagsa (2025) aimed to reveal how teaching practicum affects pre-service EFL teachers' intercultural sensitivity and the effect of intercultural sensitivity on their teacher identity development. The study involved three pre-service EFL teachers, and data were collected through interviews with participants who had already completed their teaching practice in schools. The study's findings indicated that pre-service EFL teachers' teaching practice experiences significantly enhanced their cultural sensitivity, particularly regarding school culture. In addition, the results showed that cultural sensitivity played a significant role in the formation of teacher identity, helping pre-service EFL teachers better understand their professional responsibilities and align them with their vision as future educators.

Research on the Interrelation of Pragmatic Awareness and Intercultural Sensitivity

The close relationship between interculturality and pragmatics has led to a body of research that explores them simultaneously. For instance, Ghazanfari et al. (2019) investigated TESOL master students' pragmatic awareness, particularly the use of condolence expressions and intercultural sensitivity. Using a discourse completion task and the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000), the study involved 30 EFL learners. The study discovered a positive relationship between condolence strategies and intercultural sensitivity, indicating that students with higher levels of intercultural sensitivity were more proficient in using appropriate condolence expressions.

Boustani and Allami (2015) investigated the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness, specifically in request and apology expressions. 30 Iranian EFL learners took a proficiency exam, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000), and a discourse

completion task for the study. The results indicated a positive relationship between intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness in performing request and apology speech acts. Learners with higher scores on the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) tended to use semantic formulae more frequently. However, the strength of this relationship was relatively weak. Additionally, those with higher ISS scores were generally more confident in the appropriateness of their responses.

Hua and Hong (2022) explored cross-cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural pragmatic competence of English language department students in China. Using a discourse completion task and the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000), the study involved 163 first, second, and third-grade English majors. The results revealed that cross-cultural pragmatic competence among English majors was relatively low, while their cross-cultural sensitivity ranged from moderate to high. Third-grade students exhibited the strongest cross-cultural pragmatic competence, whereas first graders showed the highest level of cross-cultural sensitivity. The study also indicated no significant correlation between cross-cultural pragmatic competence and cross-cultural sensitivity.

Boustani (2016) explored the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness regarding refusal expressions. 30 Iranian English Literature majors took the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000), a discourse completion test, and a 5-point scale testing the level of confidence regarding the appropriateness of the answers. The results indicated a positive relationship between intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness of refusal speech acts. Additionally, a positive relationship between intercultural sensitivity and confidence test scores was found.

Similarly, Qi (2023) investigated the pragmatic competence and intercultural sensitivity levels of Chinese EFL learners and the possible relationship between these two constructs. 322 university-level EFL learners have undergone CSE (China's Standards of English Language Ability), which focused on the pragmatic aspect of language and the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) (Chen & Starosta, 2000). The results revealed that participants possessed a moderate level of intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic competence. The study also reported a significant correlation between intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic competence.

Krauter (2024) investigated the impact of pragmatic interventions on the development of intercultural communicative competency in three different learning settings: study-abroad, online, and at home. 49 students with similar backgrounds who were enrolled in a German language and culture class participated in the study. As part of the intervention, participants were asked to rewrite a scene from the movie *Die Kriegerin* (Combat Girls, 2011). The focus was on how students altered the scene to make it more suitable for a U.S. audience. The study aimed to explore the perceptions of pragmalinguistics and intercultural communicative skills, particularly their interpretations of the scene and the adaptations they thought were required for American viewers, revealing their assumptions

and perceptions about U.S. and German cultures. The results revealed that study-abroad and online participating students exhibited higher pragmalinguistic awareness and intercultural communicative competence compared to at-home students. Study-abroad students wrote longer and more subtle reflections on cultural interactions. The study suggests that study-abroad programs and online learning environments can significantly enhance cultural engagement and pragmalinguistic awareness.

Zhang and Li (2024) investigated whether teaching cross-cultural pragmatics explicitly affects intercultural sensitivity. A total of 150 intermediate level language learners participating in the study were divided into two groups: a control group (n=75) and an experimental group (n=75). The experimental group received specific pragmatics instruction, while the control group received regular grammar and vocabulary instruction. The results of a real-life scenarios test indicated that explicit instruction led to a substantial improvement in the experimental group's performance.



3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides information on the methodology used to conduct the current research. It provides detailed information on the study design, setting, and participants, data collection tools, procedures, and data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

This study employs an explanatory sequential design, one of the mixed-methods research designs. The explanatory sequential mixed methods design involves the initial collection of quantitative data, which is then followed by qualitative data to further explain or elaborate on the quantitative findings (Creswell, 2020). In the present study, qualitative data were used to get deeper insight into the results obtained from quantitative data analysis. Quantitative data were gathered using two data collection tools to evaluate participants' pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity, with analyses focusing on whether these constructs differed according to demographic variables. In addition, correlation analysis was conducted to explore the relationship between pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity. The qualitative aspect of the study was carried out using semi-structured interview questions.

3.2. Setting and Participants

The current study included participants from two state universities, Inonu University and Firat University, located in the Eastern Anatolian region of Turkey. The sample consisted of 337 pre-service EFL teachers enrolled in 4-year English language teaching programs at both universities. Students from the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th years of the English Language Teaching departments participated in the study on a voluntary basis. All participants were selected using a convenience sampling strategy.

Of the 337 participants, 208 pre-service teachers (61.7%) were from Inonu University, while 129 pre-service teachers (38.3%) were from Firat University. Overall, female students constituted the majority of the sample ($n = 242$, 71.8%), while male students accounted for 95 participants (28.2%). At Inonu University, 74.5% of the participants were female, whereas at Firat University, females accounted for 67.4% of the sample (Table 1).

Table 1. Gender Distribution of Participants

Variable		Inonu University		Firat University		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender	Male	53	25,5	42	32,6	95	28.2
	Female	155	74.5	87	67,4	242	71.8
Total		208	100	129	100	337	100

The participants were mostly young adults. Most pre-service teachers were between the ages of 20 and 29 ($n = 243$, 72.1%), followed by those under 20 years of age ($n = 88$, 26.1%). Only a small proportion of participants were aged 30 or above ($n = 6$, 1.8%). The age distribution was similar across Inonu and Firat Universities (Table 2).

Table 2. Age Distribution of Participants

Variable		Inonu University		Firat University		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Age	Under 20	54	26	34	26,4	88	26,1
	20-29	150	72,1	93	72.1	243	72,1
	30-39	3	1,4	2	1,6	5	1,5
	40-49	1	0.5	-	-	1	0.3
	Over 50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total		208	100	129	100	337	100

The participants were distributed across all four grade levels. First-year students constituted the largest group overall ($n = 110$, 32.6%), followed by fourth-year students ($n = 87$, 25.8%), third-year students ($n = 71$, 21.1%), and second-year students ($n = 69$, 20.5%). At Inonu University, first-year students made up the largest group ($n = 73$, 35.1%), whereas second-year students constituted the largest proportion at Firat University ($n = 38$, 29.5%) (Table 3).

Table 3. Grade Distribution of Participants

Variable		Inonu University		Firat University		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Grade	1 st grade	73	35,1	37	28,7	110	32,6
	2 nd grade	31	14.9	38	29,5	69	20,5
	3 rd grade	46	22,1	25	19,4	71	21,1
	4 th grade	58	27,9	29	22,5	87	25,8
Total		208	100	129	100	337	100

With regard to overseas experience, only a small proportion of the participants reported having been abroad ($n = 56$, 16.6%), while the majority had no overseas experience ($n = 281$, 83.4%). Similar patterns were observed across both universities, with 15.9% of pre-service teachers at Inonu University and 17.8% of pre-service teachers at Firat University reporting overseas experience (Table 4).

Table 4. Overseas Experience of Participants

Variable		Inonu University		Firat University		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Having been abroad	Yes	33	15.9	23	17.8	56	16.6
	No	175	84.1	106	82.2	281	83.4
Total		208	100	129	100	337	100

Among the participants who reported overseas experience (n = 56), the majority had stayed abroad for less than six months (80.4%). Longer durations were relatively rare, with only 5.4% reporting stays of one to three years and even smaller proportions indicating longer periods. This pattern was consistent across both Inonu and Firat Universities (Table 5).

Table 5. Overseas Experience Duration of Participants

Variable	Inonu University		Firat University		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Less than 6 months	26	78.8	19	82.6	45	80.4
1-3 years	1	3	2	8.7	3	5.4
3-5 years	2	6.1	-	-	2	3.6
5-10 years	1	3	-	-	1	1.8
More than 10 years	3	9.1	2	8.7	5	8.9
Total	33	100	23	100	56	100

Among participants who reported overseas experience (n = 56), the most common reason for being abroad was vacation (41.1%), followed by education or personal development, which includes participation in Erasmus programs, EU-funded projects, and internships (32.1%). Smaller proportions reported long-term residence abroad (16.1%), compulsory reasons due to work obligations or conflict-related circumstances (7.1%), or family-related reasons such as visiting relatives or traveling for religious purposes (3.6%) (Table 6).

Table 6. Overseas Experience Reasons of Participants

Variable		Inonu University		Firat University		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Reason for Being Abroad	Vacation	10	30,3	13	56,5	23	41,1
	Living	6	18,2	3	13	9	16,1
	Education/Development	12	36.4	6	26,1	18	32.1
	Family/Personal	2	6,1	-	-	2	3,6
	Compulsory Reasons	3	9,1	1	4,3	4	7,1
Total		33	100	23	100	56	100

3.3. Data Collection Instruments

In the study, two separate quantitative data collection tools were employed. The first part of the data collection tools consisted of questions designed to obtain demographic information about the participants' grade level, gender, and overseas experience. Appropriateness Judgment Tasks (AJT), which were developed by Yang and Ren (2019), were used to measure the pragmatic awareness of pre-service EFL teachers. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS), which was developed by Chen and Starosta

(2000), was used to determine their level of intercultural sensitivity. For both data collection tools, permission for use was obtained from the corresponding authors via e-mail (Appendix A).

3.3.1. Quantitative Data Collection Tools:

Appropriateness Judgement Tasks (AJT)

The Appropriateness Judgment Tasks (AJT) (Yang & Ren, 2019) consist of 10 short dialogues between a non-English speaker named Peter and others around him, such as his classmates or teachers. The short dialogues were originally adapted from Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) and represent various speech acts, including requests, refusals, apologies, and suggestions. Of the ten dialogues, seven contain pragmatic infelicities, whereas three are pragmatically appropriate and serve as control items. Participants were asked to rate the appropriateness of each statement on a six-point scale, where 1 indicated "most inappropriate", and 6 indicated "most appropriate". Each item was scored accordingly. Higher scores on the three pragmatically appropriate items indicate greater pragmatic awareness, while lower scores on the seven experimental items reflect higher pragmatic awareness. To simplify data analysis, the scores for the seven pragmatically inappropriate statements were reverse-coded. Consequently, the maximum possible score a participant can receive turns out to be 60, with higher overall scores indicating higher levels of pragmatic awareness.

Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) chose the preferred native-speaker responses from the production task related to the scenarios for the pragmatically appropriate items. However, for the pragmatically problematic items, they chose typical but non-target-like learner replies from the same sources. In Yang and Ren's (2019) study, the researchers had the explanations and conversations recorded by native speakers and asked participants to rate the appropriateness of each scenario's final line on a six-point scale. However, due to the limitations of technological facilities such as sound systems in the classrooms, the participants were asked to read the dialogues themselves and rate the appropriateness of the utterances on a six-point scale. The internal consistency and reliability of the AJT were reported as $\alpha=.75$ (Yang & Ren, 2019). For this study, an independent measurement and evaluation expert was consulted to evaluate the appropriateness of the AJT with respect to content and language, and the instrument was found to be suitable.

Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS)

In the study, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) was used to determine the level of intercultural sensitivity of the pre-service EFL teachers. The Intercultural Sensitivity Scale was developed by Chen and Starosta (2000), and it consists of 24 items using a five-point Likert format to assess intercultural sensitivity. It includes five dimensions: *interaction engagement* (items 1, 11, 13, 21, 22, 23, and 24), *respect for cultural differences* (items 2, 7, 8, 16, 18, and 20), *interaction confidence* (items 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10), *interaction enjoyment* (items 9, 12, and 15), and *interaction attentiveness*

(items 14, 17, and 19). Items 2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 15, 18, 20, and 22 are reverse-coded. An overall score can be calculated from the scale, with higher ISS scores indicating a higher level of sensitivity in intercultural interactions. The scale has shown strong internal consistency with a reliability coefficient of .86 (Chen & Starosta, 2000). In the current study, this value was found to be 0.83.

3.3.2. Qualitative Data Collection Tool:

Semi-Structured Interview Questions:

Semi-structured interview questions were used to examine participants' pragmatic awareness, the factors influencing it, and their intercultural sensitivity in greater depth. They also aimed to explore participants' perceived pragmatic competence beyond the Appropriateness Judgment Tasks, providing insight into how they developed their ability to assess pragmatic appropriateness in English communication, as well as identifying areas of difficulty and eliciting examples from their experiences. The questions were designed based on a comprehensive literature review, and the predefined themes aligned with the research objectives. Follow-up questions were asked as needed based on participants' responses. To ensure content validity, the questions were reviewed by the thesis advisor, and necessary revisions were made before finalizing them.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure:

Data collection was carried out with 1st to 4th-year pre-service EFL teachers enrolled in the undergraduate English Language Teaching programs at Inonu University and Firat University during the fall semesters of the 2024-2025 academic year. Participants were selected using a convenience sampling method in order to reach as many participants as possible. The Appropriateness Judgment Tasks (AJT) and the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) were administered in a controlled environment to ensure consistency in data collection. Participants completed these tasks individually during scheduled class sessions. The AJT, used to measure participants' pragmatic awareness, and the ISS, used to measure their level of intercultural sensitivity, were distributed via Google Forms. Before starting the study, Ethical approval was secured from Inonu University's ethics committee, and research application permission was granted by Firat University. Participants were fully informed of their rights, and their consent to participate was obtained. The study was voluntary, and participant identities were kept confidential.

During the qualitative data collection process, pre-service teachers who completed the questionnaire were informed about the semi-structured interview. Those who volunteered to participate provided their contact information to the researcher. A total of nine pre-service EFL teachers participated in the interviews, including four from Inonu University and five from Firat University. The demographic information for the participants is shown in Table 7. The interviews were conducted

online via Zoom, recorded with participants' consent, and later transcribed by the researcher. Prior to each interview, the volunteers reviewed the completed scale and the appropriateness judgment task. All interviews were conducted in English, and participants' identities were kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms (PT1-PT9).

Table 7. Demographic information of the participants in the semi-structured interviews

	Inonu University	Firat University	Total
Female	2	2	4
Male	2	3	5
Total	4	5	9

3.5. Data Analysis

Quantitative analyses were performed using SPSS23 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). The reverse-coded items for the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale and the Appropriateness Judgment Tasks were reversed once all the data had been entered into the program. Kurtosis and Skewness values were then taken into account in the assessment of normality to determine the appropriate types of analyses to be performed. A kurtosis value of ± 1.0 is deemed desirable for most psychometric applications, though values up to ± 2.0 are often acceptable (George & Mallery, 2024). As shown in Table 8, the data in this study also exhibit a normal distribution. Additionally, descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, are calculated.

Table 8. Skewness-Kurtosis Values of Data

	Skewness	Kurtosis
Pragmatic Awareness	0,240	0,188
Intercultural Sensitivity	-0.143	-0.302
Interaction Engagement	-0.479	1.678
Respect for Cultural Differences	-0.790	1.816
Interaction Confidence	-0.113	-0.124
Interaction Enjoyment	-0.484	0.147
Interaction Attentiveness	-0.221	0.099

Upon normal distribution of the data, the Independent Sample t-test, one of the parametric tests that compares the means of two independent variables (Okoye & Hosseini, 2024), was employed to evaluate the differences between groups (gender and overseas experience) in terms of intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed for the other variable (grade), as this analysis is appropriate for comparing means across three or more independent groups (Okoye & Hosseini, 2024). In case of significant differences in their results, post-

hoc multiple comparison tests were conducted for further analysis. Lastly, the relationship between pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity was investigated using Pearson correlation.

For the qualitative aspect of this study, thematic analysis was used, which is a widely applied method for identifying and interpreting patterns or themes within a data set and is particularly useful for generating new perspectives (Naeem et al., 2023). Thematic analysis is a theoretically adaptable and easily understandable method that is ideal for investigating meaning without being limited by certain epistemological stances (Ahmed et al., 2025). In this study, Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework was specifically followed. These phases include: "familiarizing yourself with your data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, producing the report" (p.87). This structured framework was chosen because it continues to be a foundational guide for conducting rigorous and reliable thematic analysis (Ahmed et al., 2025). Data collection continued until no new codes or themes emerged from the data, indicating that data saturation had been achieved.

After all interview audio recordings were transcribed, the data were read repeatedly, and initial notes were taken. The data were then systematically examined, and meaningful sections related to the research questions were identified. Subsequently, the codes were divided into potential themes, and data collection began for these themes. Rechecks were performed to ensure the consistency of the data. Each theme was clarified, and its relationship to the research question was determined. Finally, the data were presented in the findings section under the relevant research questions and discussed in the discussion section.

The analyses were initially conducted manually, followed by the use of MAXQDA 24 to support and organize the coding process. The code map derived from the analysis is displayed in Figure 7. To ensure the internal reliability of the qualitative analysis, several strategies recommended by LeCompte and Goetz (1982) were employed. First, the data were presented as directly and transparently as possible, with interpretations and explanations provided subsequently. Additionally, the initial analyses were conducted by the researcher and then reviewed by an independent researcher with expertise in qualitative analysis in order to obtain expert feedback and minimize potential bias.

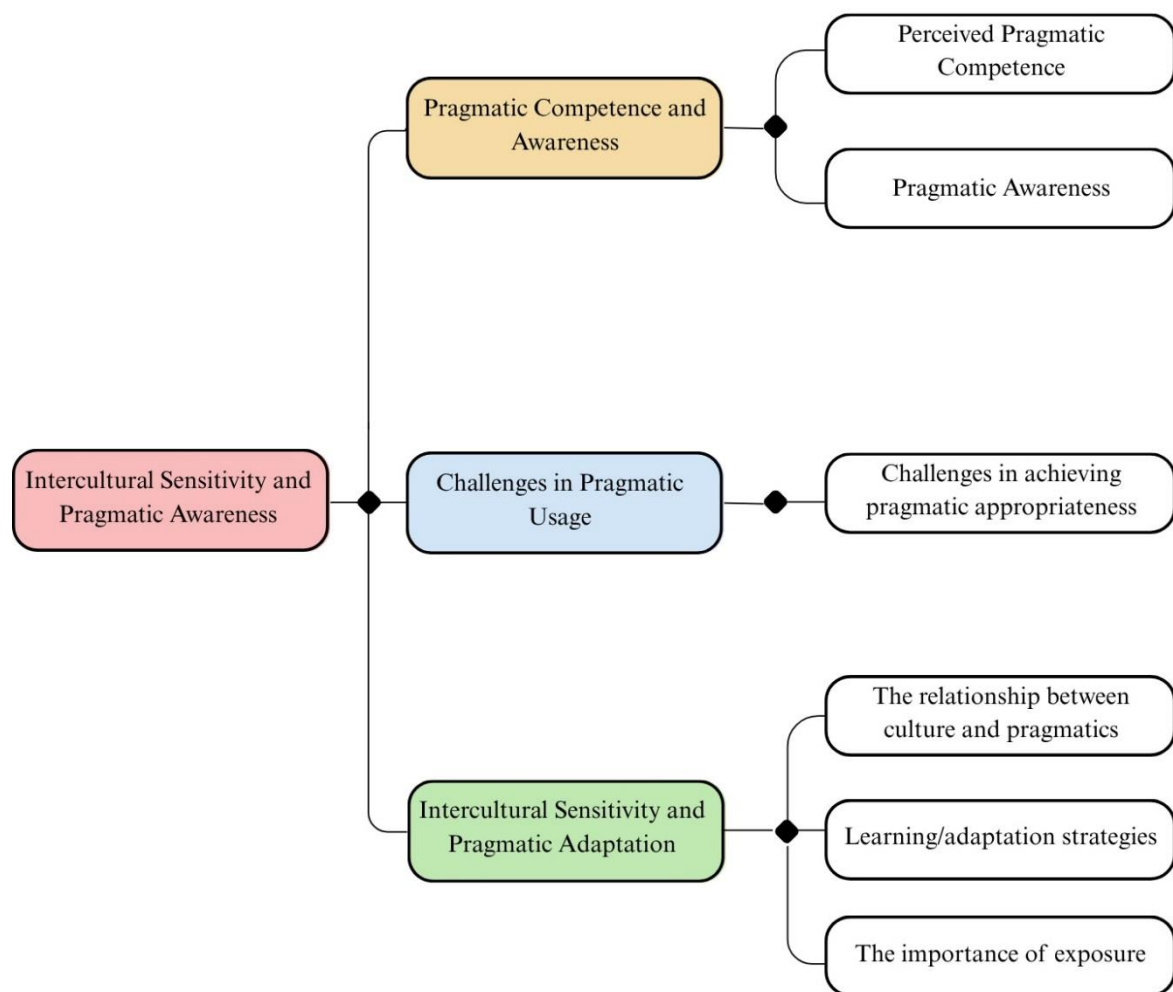


Figure 7. Themes and categories identified in the qualitative analysis

4. FINDINGS

In this chapter, the findings obtained from the analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data are systematically presented. The results are presented in an integrated manner, combining qualitative and quantitative findings under each research question, and supported with tables for clarity.

4.1. RQ1. What is the level of intercultural sensitivity of pre-service EFL teachers?

Table 9 provides a comprehensive overview of the overall mean score for intercultural sensitivity, along with the respective mean scores for each of its sub-scales.

Table 9. Means and standard deviations of Intercultural sensitivity and its sub-scales

Scales/Sub-scales	N	Mean	S.D.
Intercultural Sensitivity	337	3.77	0.42
Interaction Engagement	337	3.77	0.44
Respect for Cultural Differences	337	3.89	0.61
Interaction Confidence	337	3.54	0.71
Interaction Enjoyment	337	3.85	0.73
Interaction Attentiveness	337	3.83	0.59

When the table is analyzed, it is seen that the overall mean score of Intercultural Sensitivity was 3.77, indicating a high level of intercultural sensitivity among participants. When the subscales are examined, the highest mean score was recorded for the *Respect for Cultural Differences* subscale (M=3.89). This is followed by *Interaction Enjoyment* (M=3.85) and *Interaction Attentiveness* (M=3.83). While *Interaction Engagement* was among the subscales with relatively lower mean scores (M=3.77), *Interaction Confidence* exhibited the lowest mean score overall (M=3.54).

A further look into the individual item mean scores (Table 10) shows that item 8, "*I respect the values of people from different cultures*", had the highest mean score (M=4.37). A significant majority of participants (90.8%) agreed with this statement (combining responses of "strongly agree" and "agree"). Following this, item 1, "*I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures*", had the second highest mean score (M=4.29), with 87% of the participants expressing agreement. Additionally, 87.6% of the participants expressed agreement with item 13, "*I am open-minded to people from different cultures*", making it the item with the third highest mean score (M=4.25).

Table 10. Means and standard deviations of Intercultural sensitivity scale items

Factor	Items	Mean	S.D.
IE	1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.	4.29	0.86
	11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.	3.29	0.78
	13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.	4.25	0.76
	21. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.	3.94	0.74
	22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.	3.19	1.02
	23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal and nonverbal cues.	3.58	0.87
	24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.	3.91	0.81
RCD	2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.	3.85	0.91
	7. I don't like to be with people from different cultures.	4.13	0.92
	8. I respect the values of people from different cultures.	4.37	0.81
	16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.	4.12	0.86
	18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.	4.04	1.01
	20. I think my culture is better than other cultures.	2.84	1.17
IC	3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.	3.82	0.86
	4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.	3.33	1.16
	5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.34	0.88
	6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.55	1.02
	10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.71	0.96
IENJ	9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.	4.04	0.86
	12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.	3.61	1.02
	15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.92	0.97
IA	14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.	3.90	0.87
	17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.	4.13	0.77
	19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.	3.49	0.93

When the sub-items of the scale are examined in detail, the highest mean value within the Interaction Engagement factor belongs to item 1, *"I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures"* ($M = 4.29$, $SD = 0.86$). This situation may indicate that participants generally demonstrate a positive and open attitude toward different cultural interactions. However, item 22, *"I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons"* ($M = 3.19$, $SD = 1.02$), yielded a relatively lower mean score, along with a higher standard deviation, indicating considerable individual variation in attitudes toward engaging with culturally different individuals.

The highest mean score in the Respect for Cultural Differences factor belongs to item 8 for *"I respect the values of people from different cultures"* ($M = 4.37$). This result reflects a high level of respect for cultural values in general.

In the Interaction Confidence factor, the highest mean score is found in item 3, *"I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures"* ($M = 3.82$). In this dimension, where the means are generally moderate, it can be said that individuals have a certain level of confidence in cross-cultural interactions, but there are areas for improvement.

Regarding the Interaction Enjoyment factor, all items are reverse-coded, and the table presents the scores in their reverse-coded form. Accordingly, higher mean values reflect greater enjoyment in intercultural interactions, whereas lower values suggest less enjoyment. In this context, the relatively high reverse-coded mean for certain items, such as item 9, *"I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures"* ($M = 4.04$), indicates that participants rarely experience negative emotions in intercultural interactions and generally enjoy these interactions to a high degree.

Finally, in the Interaction Attentiveness factor, item 17 *"I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures"* ($M = 4.13$) and item 14, *"I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures"* ($M = 3.90$), reveal that pre-service EFL teachers tend to interact in a conscious and attentive manner.

The data generally show that participants have high levels of intercultural sensitivity and are open, respectful, and attentive when interacting with different cultural groups. However, relatively low means and high standard deviations on certain items indicate that some individuals may have lower levels of sensitivity or different attitudes.

4.2. RQ2. To What Extent are Pre-Service EFL Teachers Able to Judge the Appropriateness Of Pragmatic (in)Felicities in A Range of Speech Act Situations?

4.2.1. Quantitative Findings of Pragmatic Awareness

In order to determine the extent to which pre-service EFL teachers are able to judge the appropriateness of pragmatic (in)felicities across various speech act situations, descriptive statistical

analyses were conducted. The maximum possible score in the Appropriateness Judgement Task is 60; in the present study, the mean score was found to be 39.17, corresponding to 65.1% of the total possible score. This suggests that the majority of the participants were able to accurately judge the appropriateness and inappropriateness of speech acts. Therefore, it can be concluded that the pre-service EFL teachers exhibited a high degree of L2 pragmatic awareness generally. Figure 8 presents the average score for each of the 10 scenarios.

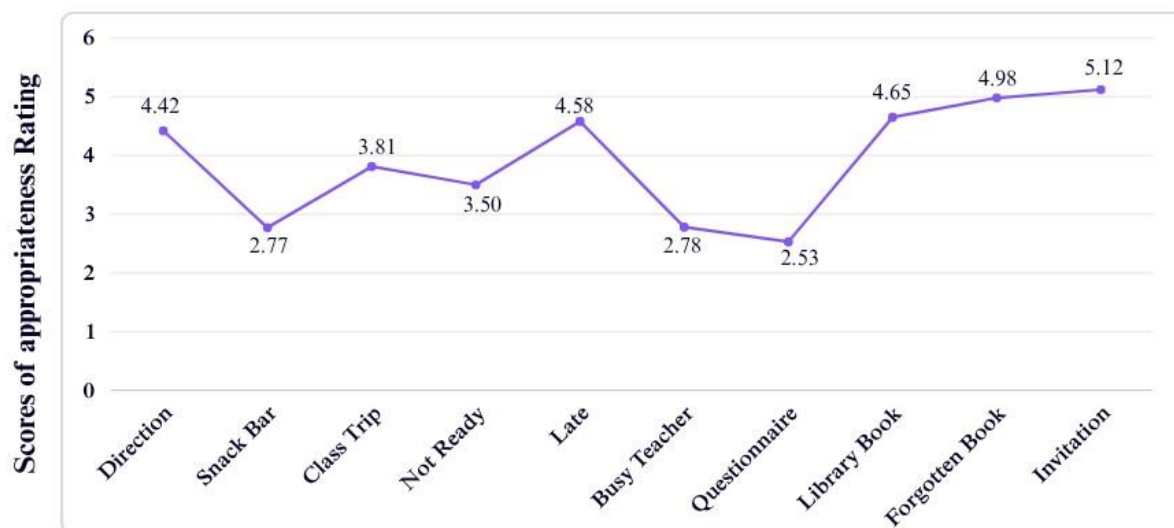


Figure 8. Appropriateness ratings given for each scenario

Once the pragmatically inappropriate statements were reversed during the analysis phase, higher overall scores indicated greater participant success in identifying both appropriate and inappropriate pragmatic forms. When the table is analyzed, it can be seen that the top three scenarios with the highest score are *Invitation*, *Forgotten Book*, and *Library Book*, respectively. These final three scenarios consisted of pragmatically appropriate statements included for control purposes. Therefore, it can be concluded that participants demonstrated the highest success in identifying appropriate pragmatic expressions. When it comes to identifying pragmatically inappropriate scenarios, the scenarios that received the highest scores from participants (originally the lowest before the items were reversed) were *Late*, *Direction*, *Class Trip*, *Not Ready*, *Busy Teacher*, and *Snack Bar*, respectively. However, the scenario with the lowest participant score was the *Questionnaire*.

Participants generally perceived scenarios in which Peter behaved rudely as pragmatically less appropriate. For example, in the scenario *Direction*, Peter's phrase "Tell me how to get to the library," directed at another student, is identified as inappropriate in both form and tone. The utterance is too direct, lacks politeness strategies, and does not fit the social dynamics of the situation. Participants could recognize the direct imperative form and pragmatically judged it to be inappropriate for the context. Similarly, in the *Class Trip* and *Not Ready* scenarios, most participants considered it pragmatically inappropriate for Peter to reject the speaker's request without offering any excuse or

justification. However, in scenarios where excessive politeness led to pragmatic inappropriateness, participants produced relatively worse results. For example, in the *Snack Bar* scenario, Peter's statement to the waiter, *"Would you be so kind as to give me a sandwich and a yogurt, please?"* comes across as overly polite and is pragmatically inappropriate in this type of service context. However, the low mean score found for this scenario (which was high before the items were reversed) suggests that participants generally had difficulty recognizing pragmatic inappropriateness when it was expressed through excessive politeness and courtesy.

4.2.2. Qualitative Findings of Pragmatic Awareness

In interviews with participants, each participant was asked how they would rate their current ability to judge the appropriateness of utterances. The analysis of the qualitative data obtained from the interviews with the participants also showed that the majority of the participants defined their pragmatic awareness as intermediate. Participant quotes reflecting their perceived pragmatic competence are presented in Table 11.

Table 11. Excerpts Related to Participants' Perceptions of Their Pragmatic Competence

Theme	Sub-theme	N	Excerpt
Pragmatic Competence and Awareness	Perceived pragmatic competence	9	“If I give a point to myself from one to five about judging appropriateness in sentences or utterances, I would say I can judge with the point four.” (PT1)
			“It’s avarage. Sometimes I can understand, sometimes I cannot, unfortunately (...) Because I’m not the best ever yet in language, in English language, unfortunately.” (PT2)
			“I believe on a scale of 1 to 10, I would say that my ability is somewhere near 6 or 7. I don't think I am fully capable of judging the appropriateness, but I believe I have some correct ideas on that topic.” (PT3)
			“I am between, somewhere between like a beginner and intermediate. I can understand there's something wrong, something unnatural but it would be like difficult to pinpoint.” (PT4)
			“I’m pretty satisfied with my judgment.” (PT5)
			“I used to consider myself inadequate in such matters because I didn't consider myself competent enough (...) But over time, as my knowledge and level have increased, I can now interpret and judge statements. For example, even if a statement is correct, I think about whether it is appropriate in some aspects and then express my opinion.” (PT6)
			“My ability to judge the appropriateness of specific utterances quite strong at the moment. However, I also recognize that this is something that continuously improves with experience and exposure to different social situations.” (PT7)
			“I think my ability is getting better day by day. I can usually understand whether something sounds natural or not in English. However, I still sometimes find it difficult to decide what is the appropriate informal or informal situations.” (PT8)
			“I believe I have a moderate ability to judge this appropriateness of uterance at question (PT9)”

Overall, the majority of participants reported perceiving themselves as being at an intermediate level in identifying pragmatic infelicities in English conversations (PT2, PT3, PT4, PT6, PT8,

PT9). While they generally acknowledged that their competency in this area was not extremely advanced, they expressed confidence in their ability to recognize expressions that sounded unnatural or inappropriate. For instance, PT3 commented on this point as follows:

I believe on a scale of 1 to 10, I would say that my ability is somewhere near 6 or 7. I don't think I am fully capable of judging the appropriateness, but I believe I have some correct ideas on that topic.
(PT3)

There was a recurring theme of a sense of improvement in participants' views (PT6, PT7, PT8). Some participants also demonstrated a more nuanced awareness of pragmatic competence as a dynamic and developmental construct. For instance, PT6 reported a transition from feeling "inadequate" to becoming more "competent" in assessing appropriateness as their proficiency in language improved. PT7 also acknowledged that their ability to judge utterances was "quite strong at the moment", but also emphasized that pragmatic competence "continuously improves with experience and exposure to different social situations."

Furthermore, among the participants, some expressed confidence in their strong pragmatic awareness (PT1, PT5, PT7). For instance, PT5 explicitly stated satisfaction with their judgment skills, indicating that they felt competent in assessing pragmatic appropriateness, whereas PT1 rated their ability as four out of five, reflecting a high level of confidence.

During the interviews, participants provided more in-depth reflections on the aspects of pragmatic awareness they found challenging, along with potential reasons underlying these difficulties. Table 12 presents the reasons participants attributed to their perceived lack of pragmatic awareness.

Table 12. Codes Illustrating Participants' Perceived Lack of Pragmatic Awareness and the Underlying Reasons with Frequencies

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes	N
Challenges in Pragmatic Usage	Challenges in achieving pragmatic appropriateness	Lack of practice	2
		Politeness/formality nuances	3
		Cultural differences	5
		Affective factors (anxiety/pressure)	3
		Lexical/semantic issues	2
		Proficiency limitations	1

The majority of challenges encountered by the participants were related to the subtle nature of pragmatic norms, emotional factors such as anxiety or fear (PT2, PT5, PT7), a lack of practice in real-life interactional contexts (PT1, PT3), and cultural differences (PT2, PT5, PT6, PT7, PT8). Some participants reported that although they were able to recognize simple infelicities, they frequently found it difficult to understand more complex facets of pragmatic appropriateness, especially those

related to formality and politeness (PT1, PT2, PT9). For example, PT1 shared the following experience from their time working as a hotel receptionist, particularly regarding interactions with guests from different cultural backgrounds:

I heard sentences that were grammatically and pragmatically correct, but something about the tone of voice changed the meaning, maybe just a single word, which made it sound like extreme kindness or extreme rudeness. I experienced this while working as a receptionist at a hotel, where I interacted a lot with foreign people and often encountered both extreme politeness and rudeness. (PT1)

Additionally, two participants reported difficulties with the adequate use of lexical and semantic items (PT2, PT7). PT2 described an instance where they “couldn't choose the right direction and language” in an intercultural conversation, while PT7 stated experiencing “uncertainty about phrasing” at times.

Overall, participants most frequently cited cultural differences as a barrier to pragmatic appropriateness. PT6, for instance, acknowledged that different cultural and educational backgrounds often lead to misunderstandings. Similarly, PT8 highlighted the challenge of “navigating cultural differences,” pointing to the “walls in our mind” that make it difficult to step outside one’s own cultural norms and perspectives.

In conclusion, while many participants perceived themselves as moderately competent in pragmatic appropriateness, they also addressed a number of challenges that are still getting in the way of their pragmatic efficacy, such as not being familiar with the culture, not having enough exposure, and having trouble with formality and politeness.

Along with their self-reported pragmatic efficacy, participants also showed a notable awareness of the importance of using language appropriately in different contexts. Table 13 presents excerpts that illustrate participants’ views on the role of pragmatics in communication.

Table 13. Excerpts Illustrating Participants' Views on the Role of Pragmatics in Communication

Theme	Sub-theme	N	Excerpt
Pragmatic Competence and Awareness	Pragmatic awareness	14	"It is [identifying pragmatic infelicities] important because it helps a lot to understand, to comprehend the counterpart of us when we are communicating" (PT1) "If we, for example, if I use the wrong one, my, the person that I talk to can understand me wrongly." (PT2) "I think it's it [making efforts to improve pragmatic awareness] important because no one wants like a person to think about them like rude or and that's not a good person and that's why we need to do like effort to be polite or not too polite and like try to be like not stupid but not too clever not stubborn like having a balance between every wise and virtue things and that's why making efforts is like a good thing." (PT4) "It's [identifying pragmatic infelicities] important because these pragmatic errors can lead misunderstanding or like unintended offense. Language is just like not about grammar and vocabulary. It involves like knowing how to use these expressions in different social and cultural contexts and different discourses and that's why it's important." (PT4) "Many language learners just focus on grammatic, and this is over-empathizing, so because, you know, you do not have to use all the correct grammatic to make yourself understandable by, you know, the native, because they're going to understand you no matter what, but in social part of the language, it can be some confusion, it can be misunderstanding, which just hurts the communication." (PT5) "Appropriate communication never just depends on grammatical correctness, but also it depends on cultural context, social context, and other things that the ability to use the language, like the sentence could be totally correct in grammatical issues, but, you know, when you're just using it in such context, even in formal context, informal context, this also depends. So, I think it's crucial to know, so I think being aware of this is important first." (PT5) "Even though a sentence may seem correct or appropriate in terms of structure, it can sometimes be wrong in terms of meaning or its usage." (PT6) "For example, sometimes tourists came to our country and when we contact with each other, there sometimes can be some misunderstandings. And that's why I think it's because of appropriateness sometimes." (PT6) "Knowing grammar and vocabulary is great, but if something sounds unnatural or inappropriate in a certain situation, it can really affect how well I communicate" (PT7) "Even if someone knows all the grammar rules perfectly and has a wide vocabulary, using phrases in the wrong context can lead to misunderstandings, awkwardness, or even unintentional rudeness (...) Even if my grammar is perfect, if I say something in an awkward or inappropriate way, it could make my speech seem unnatural, impolite." (PT7) "Understanding what is appropriate to say depends on several factors, including the context, the relationship between the people involved, the setting, and even cultural norms. One might be perfectly fine in one situation could be considered rude, awkward, or even offensive in another." (PT7) "If we say something in an appropriate way, it can cause misunderstandings or even offend someone (...) knowing that what is polite, rude or too direct in different situations, helps us communicate better also." (PT8) "It's [identifying pragmatic infelicities] very important because language is not just grammar or vocabulary." (PT8) "Pragmatic infelicities, can cause misunderstanding. Even if the structure of the sentence is grammatically correct, it can go different ways. If someone uses an appropriate expression in a formal setting, it can make communication offensive, maybe. I think it's really important." (PT9)

Among the participants, there was a strong consensus that pragmatic awareness is fundamental for successful communication. Several emphasized that knowing grammar and vocabulary alone is not sufficient, highlighting that effective communication requires more than mere grammatical accuracy (PT4, PT5, PT6, PT7, PT8, PT9). For example, PT4, PT5, and PT8 emphasized that appropriate communication also involves social and cultural appropriateness.

Another recurring theme was the risk of misunderstanding when pragmatic norms are violated (PT2, PT4, PT5, PT6, PT7, PT8, PT9). PT1 and PT2 explicitly stated that pragmatic infelicities can lead interlocutors to interpret messages incorrectly. PT7 and PT9 further elaborated that even with perfect grammar, inappropriate phrasing can result in awkwardness or unintentional rudeness.

Participants also highlighted the role of politeness strategies and the need for balance in communication (PT2, PT4, PT8). PT4 described efforts to avoid being viewed as “rude,” “stubborn,” or “too clever,” suggesting that pragmatic awareness requires adjustment of one’s language use to achieve social harmony. PT8 echoed this, pointing out that “knowing that what is polite, rude or too direct in different situations” promotes better interaction between interlocutors.

Overall, it can be seen that pre-service EFL teachers generally recognized pragmatic awareness as a critical aspect of language competence. They were aware of the potential risk of misunderstanding and the damage that pragmatic infelicities may cause. Furthermore, they viewed the development of pragmatic awareness as requiring conscious effort to balance politeness, appropriateness, and contextual sensitivity.

4.3. RQ3. Is There a Statistically Significant Difference in Participants' Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Awareness in Terms of Gender?

4.3.1. Quantitative Findings of Intercultural Sensitivity

The results of the independent samples t-test conducted on the Intercultural sensitivity scale and its sub-scales to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference in participants’ intercultural sensitivity based on gender are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Independent Samples t-test Results of the Intercultural Sensitivity and Its Subscales According to Gender Variable

Scales	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t	p	d
IS	Male	95	3.82	0.43	335	1.262	0.208	
	Female	242	3.76	0.42				
IE	Male	95	3.74	0.53	138.069	-0.826	0.410	
	Female	242	3.79	0.40				
RCD	Male	95	3.81	0.72	140.622	-1.398	0.164	
	Female	242	3.92	0.56				
IC	Male	95	3.77	0.65	335	3.749	0.000***	0.46
	Female	242	3.45	0.71				
IENJ	Male	95	4.05	0.69	335	3.116	0.002**	0.37
	Female	242	3.78	0.74				
IA	Male	95	3.78	0.62	335	-1.015	0.311	
	Female	242	3.85	0.58				

** < .01 *** < .001

Considering all items of intercultural sensitivity scale, there was no significant difference between the intercultural sensitivity scores of the groups according to gender $t(335) = 1.262$, $p = .208$ ($p > .05$). When intercultural sensitivity is analyzed in terms of sub-scales, it is understood that there is a significant difference according to gender in interaction confidence $t(335) = 3.749$, $p = .000$ ($p < .001$), $d = .46$, and interaction enjoyment $t(335) = 3.116$, $p = .002$ ($p < .01$), $d = .37$. Males were found to have higher interaction confidence ($M = 3.77$) compared to females ($M = 3.45$). Likewise, their interaction enjoyment was also higher ($M = 4.05$) than that of females ($M = 3.78$). Based on the effect size values, the magnitude of the significant difference between women and men in interaction confidence was moderate ($d = .45$), whereas the difference in the interaction enjoyment subscale was small to moderate ($d = .37$).

In contrast, interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, and interaction attentiveness did not show significant differences according to gender (interaction engagement: $t(138.069) = -0.826$, $p = .410$ ($p > .05$); respect for cultural differences: $t(140.622) = -1.398$, $p = .164$ ($p > .05$); interaction attentiveness: $t(335) = -1.015$, $p = .311$ ($p > .05$)).

4.3.2. Quantitative Findings of Pragmatic Awareness

The results of the independent samples t-test conducted with the Appropriateness Judgement Task to examine whether there was a statistically significant gender-based difference in participants' pragmatic awareness are shown in Table 15.

Table 15. Independent Samples t-test Results of the Appropriateness Judgement Task According to Gender Variable

Scale	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t	p
PA	Male	95	3.91	0.56	335	-0.036	0.971
	Female	242	3.91	0.53			

An examination of the table reveals no significant difference between the pragmatic awareness of the groups according to gender, $t(335) = -.036, p=.971 (p>.05)$.

4.4. RQ4. Is there a statistically significant difference in participants' intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness in terms of grade?

4.4.1. Quantitative Findings of Intercultural Sensitivity

The results of the ANOVA conducted with the Intercultural sensitivity scale, and its sub-scales to examine whether there were statistically significant differences in participants' intercultural sensitivity across grade levels are shown in Table 16.

Table 16. ANOVA Results of the Intercultural Sensitivity and Its Subscales According to Grade Variable

Scale	Grade	N	Mean	SD	S.V.	S.S.	df	M.S.	F	p
IS	1	110	3.79	0.40	Between Groups	0.572	3	0.191	1.035	0.377
	2	69	3.71	0.44	Within Groups	61.354	333	0.184		
	3	71	3.75	0.37	Groups Total	61.926	336			
	4	87	3.82	0.48						
IE	1	110	3.79	0.42	Between Groups	1.082	3	0.361	1.813	0.144
	2	69	3.67	0.39	Within Groups	66.255	333	0.199		
	3	71	3.83	0.42	Groups Total	67.337	336			
	4	87	3.79	0.52						
RCD	1	110	3.96	0.53	Between Groups	1.352	3	0.451	1.209	0.306
	2	69	3.79	0.65	Within Groups	124.135	333	0.373		
	3	71	3.91	0.58	Groups Total	125.488	336			
	4	87	3.85	0.67						
IC	1	110	3.47	0.75	Between Groups	4.113	3	1.371	2.742	0.043*
	2	69	3.58	0.74	Within Groups	166.529	333	0.500		
	3	71	3.42	0.68	Groups Total	170.642	336			
	4	87	3.71	0.62						
IENJ	1	110	3.94	0.70	Between Groups	3.149	3	1.050	1.940	0.123
	2	69	3.76	0.69	Within Groups	180.220	333	0.541		
	3	71	3.72	0.75	Groups Total	183.369	336			
	4	87	3.93	0.78						
IA	1	110	3.82	0.52	Between Groups	0.698	3	0.233	0.648	0.585
	2	69	3.77	0.60	Within Groups	119.542	333	0.359		
	3	71	3.84	0.56	Groups Total	120.240	336			
	4	87	3.90	0.69						

* < .05

Taking all items of the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale into account, there was no significant difference between the intercultural sensitivity scores of the groups according to grade ($F=1.035$, $p=.377$). Similarly, interaction engagement ($F=1.813$, $p=.144$), respect for cultural differences ($F=1.209$, $p=.306$), interaction enjoyment ($F=1.940$, $p=.123$), and interaction attentiveness ($F=.648$, $p=.585$) sub-scales did not show significant differences according to grade. However, in the interaction confidence sub-scale, a significant difference was found between groups in terms of grade ($F=2.742$, $P=.043$, $p>.05$). After this process, complementary post hoc analysis techniques were used to determine which groups accounted for the significant differences identified in the analysis. In order to determine the appropriate post hoc comparison technique, Levene's test was used to test the homogeneity of variances, and the results indicated that the group variances were equal ($Lf = 2.141$; $p = .095$). Accordingly, Tukey's HSD post hoc test was employed to identify the specific groups between which the significant differences occurred (Table 17).

Table 17. Post Hoc Test Results for Subgroup Differences in Interaction Confidence by Grade Levels

	Grade	Grade	Mean Difference	Std. Error	p
IC	1	2	-0.11	0.10	0.711
		3	0.04	0.10	0.976
		4	-0.23	0.10	0.086
	2	1	0.11	0.10	0.711
		3	0.16	0.11	0.538
		4	-0.12	0.11	0.696
	3	1	-0.04	0.10	0.976
		2	-0.16	0.11	0.538
		4	-0.28*	0.11	0.059
	4	1	0.23	0.10	0.086
		2	0.12	0.11	0.696
		3	0.28*	0.11	0.059

According to the results, Post hoc comparisons revealed no statistically significant differences in interaction confidence across grade levels (all $p > .05$). Although the comparison between Grades 3 and 4 approached significance ($p = .059$), it did not meet the threshold for statistical significance, indicating that interaction confidence is generally consistent across grades.

4.4.2. Quantitative Findings of Pragmatic Awareness

Table 18 presents the results of the ANOVA conducted using the Appropriateness Judgement Task to determine whether there were statistically significant differences in participants' pragmatic awareness based on grade level.

Table 18. ANOVA Results of the Appropriateness Judgement Task according to Grade Variable

Scale	Grade	N	Mean	S.D.	S.V.	S.S.	df	M.S.	F	p
PA	1	110	3.93	0.52	Between Groups	3.013	3	1.004	3.475	0.016*
	2	69	3.73	0.49	Within Groups	96.234	333	0.289		
	3	71	4.01	0.57	Total	99.247	336			
	4	87	3.95	0.55						

* < .05

Analysis of the table indicates that a statistically significant difference was found between the groups in terms of grade level ($F=3.475$, $p=.016$). In order to identify which groups this difference occurred between, additional analysis using post hoc testing was conducted. Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicated that the assumption of homogeneity was met ($Lf = 0.434$; $p = .729$). Accordingly, Tukey's HSD post hoc test was employed to identify the specific groups between which the significant differences occurred (Table 19).

Table 19. Post Hoc Test Results for Subgroup Differences in Pragmatic Awareness by Grade Levels

	Grade	Grade	Mean Difference	Std. Error	p
PA	1	2	0.19	0.08	0.079
		3	-0.07	0.08	0.793
		4	-0.01	0.07	0.995
	2	1	-0.19	0.08	0.079
		3	-0.27	0.09	0.015*
		4	-0.21	0.08	0.061
	3	1	0.07	0.08	0.793
		2	0.27	0.09	0.015*
		4	0.05	0.08	0.914
	4	1	0.01	0.07	0.995
		2	0.21	0.08	0.061
		3	-0.05	0.08	0.914

* < .05

According to the results, Post hoc analyses revealed a statistically significant difference in pragmatic awareness between Grade 2 and Grade 3 students ($p = .015$), favoring Grade 3. No other significant differences were found among grade levels ($p > .05$).

4.5. RQ5. is there a Statistically Significant Difference in Participants' Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Awareness in Terms of Overseas Experience?

4.5.1. Quantitative Findings of Intercultural Sensitivity

Table 20 shows the results of the independent samples t-test conducted on the Intercultural sensitivity scale and its sub-scales to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference in participants' intercultural sensitivity based on overseas experience.

Table 20. Independent Samples t-test Results of the Intercultural Sensitivity and Its Subscales According to Overseas Experience Variable

Scales	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t	p	d
IS	Yes	56	3.93	0.43	335	2.936	0.004**	0.45
	No	281	3.74	0.42				
IE	Yes	56	3.87	0.42	335	1.713	0.088	
	No	281	3.76	0.45				
RCD	Yes	56	3.97	0.54	335	1.154	0.249	
	No	281	3.87	0.62				
IC	Yes	56	3.88	0.64	335	3.956	0.000***	0.58
	No	281	3.48	0.70				
IENJ	Yes	56	3.91	0.81	335	0.644	0.520	
	No	281	3.84	0.72				
IA	Yes	56	3.97	0.60	335	1.807	0.072	
	No	281	3.81	0.59				

** < .01 *** < .001

Considering all items of intercultural sensitivity scale, there was a significant difference between the intercultural sensitivity scores of the groups according to overseas experience $t(335) = 2.936$, $p = .004$ ($p < .05$), $d = .45$. Participants who had overseas experience before showed higher levels of intercultural sensitivity ($M = 3.93$) compared to those who had not ($M = 3.74$). According to the effect size values, the magnitude of this significant difference between participants was moderate ($d = .45$). When intercultural sensitivity is analyzed in terms of sub-scales, interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction enjoyment and interaction attentiveness did not show significant differences according to overseas experience (interaction engagement: $t(335) = 1.713$, $p = .088$ ($p > .05$); respect for cultural differences: $t(335) = 1.154$, $p = .249$ ($p > .05$); interaction enjoyment: $t(335) = .644$, $p = .520$ ($p > .05$); interaction attentiveness: $t(335) = -1.807$, $p = .072$ ($p > .05$)). However, a statistically significant difference was found in interaction confidence based on overseas experience $t(335) = 3.956$, $p = .000$ ($p < .05$), $d = .58$. Participants who had overseas experience before showed higher interaction confidence ($M = 3.88$) compared to those who had not ($M = 3.48$). Based on the effect size

values, the magnitude of this significant difference between women and men was moderate to large ($d = .58$).

4.5.2. Quantitative Findings of Pragmatic Awareness

The results of the independent samples t-test conducted with the Appropriateness Judgement Task to examine whether there was a statistically significant difference in participants' pragmatic awareness based on overseas experience are shown in Table 21.

Table 21. Independent Samples t-test Results of the Appropriateness Judgement Task According to Overseas Experience

Scale	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	df	t	p
PA	Yes	56	3.88	0.49	335	-0.479	0.632
	No	281	3.92	0.55			

An examination of the table reveals no significant difference in pragmatic awareness between the groups based on overseas experience, $t(335) = -.479$, $p = .632$ ($p > .05$).

4.5.3. Qualitative Findings of Pragmatic Awareness

Although the t-test results revealed no statistically significant difference in pragmatic awareness based on overseas experience, qualitative findings offered deeper insight into participants' perceptions of the role of exposure in developing pragmatic awareness. Table 22 provides excerpts reflecting how participants view the influence of exposure on their pragmatic awareness.

Table 22. Excerpts Illustrating Participants' View on the Influence of Exposure on Pragmatic Awareness

Theme	Sub-theme	N	Excerpt
Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Adaptation	The importance of exposure	6	"(You can improve your pragmatic abilities) by exposing ourselves to language and the culture also (...) You should expose [yourself] to the culture, the people, maybe the certain economic or social or [any] other structure of the language and the culture that the language [users] are talking. Definitely." (PT2)
			"For example, the African people. And even if their English is not their native language, they are better than us because they make contact with the world." (PT2)
			"It is [giving a score of 5 -6 out of 10 for perceived pragmatic competence] because of me being exposed to the culture of the language I'm learning, English. So, I had some experiences with some foreigners, with some local English people. That is why I think I'm somewhere near 5, 6." (PT3)
			"We need real life situations. Okay, we watch native speakers in series, but they are all scripted like they have written things to read and act. But we need some real situations: what should we do when we are angry, when we are nervous, or when we run into someone and hurt them like how to say it, how to express our feelings. All these are like a lack of practice, a lack of environment. That's why we need real life situations. Watching series is not enough, or listening to music is not enough." (PT4)
			"It [developing pragmatic abilities] was at the high school afterward, but meeting with them [people from different cultures], to have that opportunity, gave most of the pragmatic effectiveness in the communication. Also, kind of cultural awareness." (PT8)
			"I think I need more exposure to natural conversations to improve this [pragmatic awareness]." (PT9)

Participants frequently mentioned the strong connection between pragmatic awareness and exposure to the target culture. Some of the participants highlighted that pragmatic competence develops not only through studying language but also through engaging with the cultural structures of English-speaking communities (PT2, PT3, PT8). For instance, PT2 stated, *"You should expose [yourself] to the culture, the people, maybe the certain economic or social or [any] other structure of the language*

and the culture that the language [users] are talking.” Similarly, PT3 attributed their perceived pragmatic competence (moderate level) to “being exposed to the culture of the language.”

Participants also considered interaction with diverse speakers to be essential for pragmatic development (PT2, PT8). PT2 gave examples of English speakers in Africa for their global interactions, stating that “even if their English is not their native language, they are better than us because they make contact with the world.” Similarly, PT8 highlighted the influence of intercultural contact on pragmatic competence, noting that interaction with people from diverse cultural backgrounds helped them develop their own pragmatic abilities.

The influence of real-life situations was another recurring point (PT4, PT9). PT4, for instance, noted that even though the media is useful to some extent, they lack authenticity: “they are all scripted like they have written things to read and act. But we need some real situations.” Similarly, PT9 also highlighted the need for “natural conversations” in developing pragmatic awareness.

In conclusion, although statistical analyses did not reveal a direct relationship between pragmatic awareness and overseas experience, the majority of participants believed that the impact of interacting with different cultures and societies on the development of pragmatic awareness cannot be ignored.

4.6. RQ6. Are there any correlations between pre-service EFL teachers' intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness?

4.6.1. Quantitative Findings of Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Awareness

Table 23 presents the results of the Pearson correlation analysis conducted to examine the relationship between pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity.

Table 23. Pearson Correlation Results of the Intercultural Sensitivity and Its Subscales and Pragmatic Awareness

	IS	IE	RCD	IC	IENJ	IA	PA
IS	1						
IE	0.747**	1					
RCD	0.747**	0.547**	1				
IC	0.656**	0.323**	0.143**	1			
IENJ	0.701**	0.362**	0.436**	0.452**	1		
IA	0.574**	0.504**	0.307**	0.246**	0.221**	1	
PA	0.173**	0.149**	0.181**	-0.003	0.206**	0.102	1

** < .01

According to the results, a statistically significant, positive but weak relationship was found between intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness at $p < .01$ level ($r = .173$). Intercultural Sensitivity and its sub-scales showed to be strongly interrelated, as expected (IE: $r = .747$; RCD: $r = .747$;

IC: $r=.656$; IENJ: $r=.701$; and IA: $r=.574$). On the other hand, pragmatic awareness showed a statistically significant, positive but weak relationship with interaction engagement ($p < .01$, $r=.149$), respect for cultural differences ($p < .01$, $r=.181$), and interaction enjoyment ($p < .01$, $r=.206$) sub-scales. The results indicated no correlation between pragmatic awareness and interaction confidence and interaction attentiveness sub-scales.

4.6.2. Qualitative Findings of Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Awareness

In line with the statistical findings, the qualitative data provided meaningful insight into how participants perceive the relationship between intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness. Many participants explicitly or implicitly acknowledged that understanding a culture is deeply intertwined with understanding how language functions within it. Table 24 presents excerpts illustrating participants' views on the relationship between culture and pragmatics.

Table 24. Excerpts Illustrating Participants' View on the Relationship Between Culture and Pragmatics

Theme	Sub-theme	N	Excerpt
Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Adaptation	The relationship between culture and pragmatics	10	"The culture, you know, it is in relationship with pragmatics, culture and pragmatics are related, really related to each other." (PT1)
			"Maybe I felt that the guy or the girl I'm talking to is a bad person or a person with bad intentions, bad purposes, but the reason behind it, behind the communication style, it just maybe like sometimes it's just culture." (PT1)
			"It's [culture's role in conversations with people from different cultures] very important because you need to know about their social life and you understand their social behavior by learning about their cultures, maybe even some history of their culture." (PT3)
			"If you don't know how to approach them [people from different cultures], don't know about their culture, you sometimes may look like a weird person to them." (PT3)
			"Every language has some different cultures, and each culture has totally different structure, and, you know, even the slang, even the usage of words, even how people use some words in some situations, because, you know, all words have some meaning, but while we are using it in real actions, we can use the word out of its context, and this is a cultural thing." (PT5)
			"For example, something is normal for us, but they [people from different cultures] cannot understand that because it can be because of cultural differences or maybe education differences (...) or societal norms." (PT6)
			"One thing I've realized is that pragmatic infelicities often come from cultural differences. For example, in my native language, people might refuse and offer more indirectly, but in English it's totally fine just to say no thanks at first." (PT7)
			"Different cultures have different expectations when it comes to politeness, directness, and tone." (PT7)
			"Cultural differences play a significant role in how certain expressions are perceived. In some cultures, being very direct is seen as confident and honest, while in others, it may come across as rude or inappropriate. For instance, in some cultures, it's common to give direct feedback (...), but in other cultures, a more indirect approach is preferred." (PT7)
			"The knowledge of the cultural, like cultural knowledge plays a role in that context [chatting, communication]." (PT8)

Participants consistently highlighted the importance of cultural knowledge in shaping pragmatic awareness and communicative effectiveness (PT1, PT3, PT5, PT6, PT7, PT8). For instance, PT6 and PT8 pointed out that cultural understanding plays a key role in how individuals interpret and

engage in interactions. Similarly, PT7 emphasized that cultural variability can significantly influence norms related to politeness, directness, and tone. They further elaborated on how these differences impact the interpretation of speech acts across cultures:

Cultural differences play a significant role in how certain expressions are perceived. In some cultures, being very direct is seen as confident and honest, while in others, it may come across as rude or inappropriate. For instance, in some cultures, it's common to give direct feedback (...) but in other cultures, a more indirect approach is preferred. (PT7)

This perspective was also echoed by PT3, who emphasized the risk of misunderstandings in intercultural communication when cultural norms are unfamiliar. PT1 also supported this view, drawing from their real-life experiences as a hotel receptionist, where cultural differences occasionally led to misunderstandings:

Maybe I felt that the guy or the girl I'm talking to is a bad person or a person with bad intentions, bad purposes, but the reason behind it, behind the communication style, it's just maybe like sometimes it's just culture. (PT1)

In addition to the quantitative findings, participants' reflections also suggest that pragmatic awareness is closely tied to culture and interculturality. The qualitative insights complement the quantitative results by providing a more subtle understanding of how learners' intercultural sensitivity influences their pragmatic awareness. They further highlight that a lack of such sensitivity can often hinder effective communication, leading to misunderstandings in intercultural interactions.

Following the discussion on how cultural differences manifest in intercultural interactions and may occasionally hinder effective communication when awareness and sensitivity are lacking, participants were asked how they navigate such situations and what, if any, efforts they make to address these challenges. Table 25 provides participants' strategies for maintaining pragmatic appropriateness in communication.

Table 25. Codes Illustrating Participants' Strategies for Pragmatic Appropriateness with Frequencies

Theme	Sub-theme	Codes	N
Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Adaptation	Learning/adaptation strategies	Contact with foreigners	5
		Observation of language use	2
		Usage of media	4
		Adaptive/mindful mindset and empathy	4
		Simplification strategy	2

Participants employed a variety of strategies to improve their pragmatic abilities in English, emphasizing both conscious efforts and deliberate practice. A recurring pattern was the active pursuit of authentic exposure and observation (PT2, PT7). Many participants acknowledged that pragmatic knowledge is not acquired only through formal instruction but rather through real-life engagement

with language in use (PT1, PT2, PT3, PT5). They mentioned that direct exposure to authentic materials, such as movies, sitcoms, or real-life conversations, actually helped them acquire how language functions in different social contexts (PT3, PT7, PT9). For example, PT7 explained:

One of the biggest things I've done is immerse myself in English as much as possible. I watch, as I said, tons of movies, TV shows, and YouTube videos, vlogs, where native speakers interact naturally, like sitcoms like Friends or The Office have been super helpful because they show casual conversations or jokes, apologies, like basically how people talk in everyday life. This has helped me notice how different expressions are used depending on the situation. (PT7)

Additionally, PT7 also reported using language exchange apps and online platforms to observe pragmatic usage in authentic contexts:

I've used language exchange apps like HelloTalk, where I can chat with native speakers and see how they face things. I also check forums like Reddit to see how people respond in different situations. I believe it's been super helpful for understanding how people actually talk, not just what's in the textbooks we use, we see. (PT7)

Social interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds were also frequently cited as crucial (PT1, PT2, PT3, PT5). PT1 highlighted the importance of communication itself as a means of improvement, as PT2 stressed the value of connecting with non-Turkish friends, specifically foreign language learners, as a way of improving pragmatic competence. PT5 noted that communicating with “foreign friends” provided valuable opportunities for pragmatic practice, stating, *“I’m improving so much, I can feel it, like whenever I’m talking to them.”* PT3, on the other hand, reflected how formal instruction contributed less to their pragmatic development than interacting with people from other cultures:

I must say that the part of the learning that happened in school didn't help me that much to learn about the appropriateness. It was the part where I started to connect with people from other cultures (...) that is how I improved myself on that scale. (PT3)

Adaptive/mindful mindset and empathy also emerged as recurring strategies among participants striving for pragmatic appropriateness (PT1, PT5, PT6, PT7). PT1 highlighted the importance of adjusting one’s speech to align with different communities and individuals, suggesting that adaptation is not just a skill but a continuous, socially required process. Similarly, PT7 stated that contextual mindfulness and awareness of interlocutors are essential for pragmatic development: *“The key is to be mindful of the situation, I think, the people involved, and the cultural background.”* PT5 also highlighted the importance of conscious effort to align language use with the expectations and norms of diverse interlocutors: *“You should be adaptive (...) you should also think from their view, like, you should put yourself in their (people from different cultures) shoes.”*

The simplification strategy emerged as the final approach implemented by the participants (PT3, PT4). Participants reported a tendency to simplify their language and employ non-verbal cues as pragmatic strategies to improve mutual understanding and reduce the risk of miscommunication. For instance, PT3 highlighted the role of gestures and simplified expressions in managing communication breakdowns: *"I believe even with some gestures, not only words, and some communication by using some simple words, simpler words, I think I can manage those situations."* Similarly, PT4 also emphasized the choice of basic vocabulary to prevent misinterpretation in interactions with their foreign friends.

Overall, participants generally emphasized that pragmatic development is not solely the result of formal classroom instruction but is more effectively fostered through real-life experiences, cultural exposure, and intentional engagement. Authentic interactions were regarded as particularly valuable in enhancing participants' awareness of contextually appropriate language use and in developing their ability to adapt to diverse sociocultural norms. Throughout the interviews, the importance of social participation, intercultural contact, mindfulness, and adaptability was consistently highlighted as central to the development of pragmatic competence. Overall, the qualitative data suggest that pragmatic development is best supported through a combination of cultural exposure, reflective active participation, and real-life interaction, rather than through instruction alone.

5. DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the study's findings are interpreted and discussed in comparison with relevant literature, organized under each research question. This study sought to examine pre-service EFL teachers' pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity, with a particular focus on the relationship between these two constructs. Hence, this study was conducted with 337 pre-service EFL teachers studying at two state universities in the Eastern Anatolia region of Turkey. While quantitative measurement tools were used to determine the intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness levels of the teacher candidates, semi-structured interviews, a qualitative data collection method, provided a more in-depth perspective on the results obtained from quantitative data analysis.

5.1. RQ1. What is the Level of Intercultural Sensitivity of Pre-Service EFL Teachers?

The first research question sought to examine the overall levels of intercultural sensitivity among pre-service EFL teachers. Based on the analyses conducted in this regard, it was determined that the participants exhibited high intercultural sensitivity. The results regarding the first research question are consistent with findings from other research conducted with pre-service EFL teachers (e.g., Altan, 2018; Arcagok & Yilmaz, 2020; Salihoglu, 2024).

Among the sub-scales, the highest mean was recorded for *Respect for Cultural Differences*. Similar outcomes have been documented in previous studies conducted with pre-service EFL teachers. For instance, in the studies conducted by Genç and Boynukara (2017) as well as Altan (2018), participants achieved their highest scores on the Respect for Cultural Differences sub-scale. The findings suggest that participants are inclined to respect and tolerate the cultures and perspectives of others, while also recognizing the significance of culture. However, among the sub-scales, *Interaction Confidence* yielded the lowest mean score. Interaction confidence pertains to an individual's confidence in intercultural conversations, including their confidence in engaging with individuals from diverse cultures, their ability to articulate appropriately in such contexts, and their sociability, or conversely, their difficulty in interacting with culturally different individuals (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018). In a similar study with Iranian in-service EFL teachers, Alaei and Nosrati (2018) also reported that participants received the lowest mean score on the *Interaction Confidence* sub-scale. Alaei and Nosrati (2018) attributed their findings to anxiety and embarrassment of their participants on making mistakes, whereas Pourakbari and Chalak (2015), in a comparable study with Iranian in-service EFL teachers, linked the low self-confidence in intercultural communication reported by more than half of the participants to linguistic and cultural limitations. These findings lend support to theoretical frameworks such as Byram's (1997) Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence and Deardorff's (2006)

Intercultural Process Model. Both emphasize that attitudes alone are insufficient for successful intercultural communication; the development of specific skills and cultural knowledge is equally essential. In a similar vein, teachers' mere awareness of cultural diversity is not adequate. They are also expected to exhibit confidence and demonstrate effective communication abilities in intercultural contexts (Boudouaia et al., 2022).

Overall, participants demonstrated strong attitudinal openness and respect, along with enjoyment and attentiveness towards cultural differences. This suggests that participants were capable of developing positive feelings toward understanding and respecting cultural diversity, enabling them to behave more effectively in intercultural contexts (Chen & Starosta, 1997).

One possible explanation for the generally high intercultural sensitivity of pre-service EFL teachers may be the fact that most courses within the EFL teacher training curriculum incorporate authentic materials related to foreign cultures, even though courses explicitly focusing on intercultural sensitivity are not formally included in the curricula of all education faculties (Susilo, 2019). Such exposure likely fosters positive attitudes such as respect, openness, and enjoyment; however, it may not be sufficient to develop the practical skills and confidence needed for effective intercultural interaction. In this sense, intercultural competence may be developing primarily at the attitudinal level, while behavioral aspects, such as interaction confidence, may require more structured experiential learning opportunities.

5.2. RQ2. to What Extent are Pre-Service EFL Teachers Able to Judge the Appropriateness of Pragmatic (In)Felicities in a Range of Speech Act Situations?

The second research question sought to examine the pragmatic awareness levels of pre-service EFL teachers. The results of the AJT and the analysis of semi-structured interviews revealed that pre-service EFL teachers generally exhibited relatively high levels of awareness. One possible explanation for this finding is that pre-service EFL teachers study in English Language Teaching departments and are therefore consistently exposed to an EFL context, even if they live in a place where English is not predominantly spoken. As Ren (2018) pointed out, pragmatic awareness can be developed in a foreign language environment, and its development is heavily shaped by the learning contexts in which it occurs (Yang & Ren, 2019).

Based on the results, pre-service teachers were more successful at identifying pragmatically appropriate expressions than at identifying pragmatically inappropriate ones. When it comes to identifying pragmatically inappropriate situations, they were better at recognizing rudeness, while they were less adept at identifying pragmatic inappropriateness in scenarios where excessive politeness resulted in inappropriate usage. This may stem from their inadequate L2 sociopragmatic knowledge, making them less competent at considering L2 contextual cues when deciding on the appropriateness

of utterances (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). Additionally, they may not be clear on how to express politeness in English properly and may not recognize that excessive politeness can be pragmatically inappropriate. Consequently, when encountering expressions that include markers of politeness, they are likely to perceive them as naturally appropriate (Yang & Ren, 2019). This situation could be attributed to the fact that students' English lectures throughout their education have mostly concentrated on grammar and vocabulary, with insufficient attention paid to the pragmatic aspects of language (Ren & Han, 2016). Moreover, the majority of the materials they use do not properly reflect the pragmatic usage of the target language (Cohen & Ishihara, 2013), and the resources presented to students are frequently offered with limited contextual support (Harwood, 2014). Additionally, participants' language transfer when speaking English may also influence this result. Language transfer refers to the process of transferring rules and norms from one's native language to a second/foreign language (Ellis, 1994). When the influence of the native language leads to difficulties in the learning process, negative transfer may occur (Bardovi-Harlig & Sprouse, 2018). The politeness norms of Turkish, the participants' native language, may not be directly applicable to English, their second or foreign language (Kasper, 1992). This stems from the fact that, although certain elements of pragmatic knowledge may be universal, only specific components are transferable from one's native language (Kasper, 1997).

According to the qualitative findings, it appears that pre-service EFL teachers regarded pragmatic awareness as an essential element of language proficiency. They recognized the potential for misunderstandings that could arise from pragmatic infelicities. In addition, they believed that fostering pragmatic awareness demands conscious effort to balance politeness, appropriateness, and sensitivity to context. They also emphasized that knowing grammar and vocabulary alone is not sufficient, highlighting that effective communication requires more than mere grammatical accuracy, consistent with the findings reported by Ariani et al. (2021), Korkmaz and Karatepe (2023), and Takkaç-Tulgar (2017).

The qualitative analysis also highlighted the areas in which pre-service EFL teachers perceived themselves as lacking in pragmatic competence and the potential reasons they attributed to these difficulties. Based on the findings, the factors most frequently cited as contributing to participants' sense of inadequacy, in order of frequency, were cultural differences, politeness and formality nuances, affective factors such as anxiety and pressure, lack of practice, lexical and semantic issues, and proficiency limitations.

The majority of participants reported experiencing pragmatic challenges caused by cultural differences. These results align closely with previous research highlighting the close relationship between culture and language use. According to Kramsch (2014), culture shapes pragmatics, affecting cultural standards of communication and perceptions. Since language intertwines with culture and

influences social identity, it serves as a vital tool for understanding social life (Eragamreddy, 2024). This may help explain why cultural differences were the most frequently cited factor among the participants, as a lack of in-depth understanding of the target culture makes it difficult to interpret or create appropriate pragmatic responses (Wyner & Cohen, 2015). As Timpe (2012) states, pragmatic ability, including cultural elements and social conventions, cannot be fully understood without taking the target language and culture into account.

Furthermore, different cultural norms shape not only the content of what people say but also how others' words are interpreted (Berdikulova & Jamalova, 2023). For instance, some cultures may value not expressing emotions outwardly, while others may encourage direct expression of feelings (Hwang & Matsumoto, 2015). Awareness of these differences allows communicators to approach intercultural interactions with more empathy and avoid misinterpretation of emotional cues (Eragamreddy, 2024). Additionally, Turkish culture can be categorized as a high-context culture, which relies on indirectness and prioritizes the maintenance of face (Ahmed, 2022; Aydin & McIsaac, 2004). In cultures with a high-context orientation, meaning is shaped largely by context. By contrast, in low-context cultures, meaning is extracted mainly from the explicit wording of a message (Hall, 1976). Hall (1976) argues that a vague style of communication in high-context societies facilitates face-saving by allowing an interpretation of alternate meanings. The power dynamics among speakers also significantly influence the interpretation of exchanges in those societies. Thus, it is very likely that Turkish pre-service EFL teachers draw on their native language and cultural background, which emphasize indirectness and the maintenance of face-saving, when evaluating the appropriateness of utterances.

When it comes to the pragmatic transfer of cultural norms, Hofstede's power distance dimension of the Cultural Dimensions theory may also emerge as a factor influencing participants' perceptions of appropriateness. According to Hofstede (2011), in high power-distance cultures, people tend to place strong emphasis on tradition and community and often develop a reliance on those in positions of greater authority. Individuals holding positional power are, therefore, mostly dependent upon members lower in the hierarchy. Based on Hofstede's framework, participants in Turkey, which has a high power-distance culture, are expected to be more sensitive to social power in interactions and to evaluate the appropriateness of utterances through the lens of their own cultural norms. In his study on pragmatic failures among university-level EFL students in Morocco, which shares similarities with Turkey according to Hofstede's cultural framework, Ezzaoua (2023) also reached similar conclusions.

The participants' reported struggles with politeness and formality nuances also echo this point. Politeness strategies, levels of directness, and humor often vary significantly across cultures. As Mohebbi (2023) notes, even domains such as comedy and politeness reflect culturally specific

approaches, meaning that what is considered polite or humorous in one context may be perceived as impolite or inappropriate in another. Without sufficient exposure to these nuances, pre-service teachers may experience uncertainty and anxiety, which, as the findings suggest, further hinder their pragmatic performance (Korkmaz & Karatepe, 2023).

Another important point raised by the participants was their lack of opportunities to engage in sufficiently authentic speaking practice. As Taguchi (2019) points out, exposure to authentic language usage and practice through interaction is essential for developing pragmatic ability. According to Wyner and Cohen (2015), increased interaction with other speakers, either in person or online, is likely to enhance learners' pragmatic awareness. Being exposed to various social interaction styles is essential for pragmatic development, and such practices heavily depend on the social connections learners establish in their communities (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). However, limited practice opportunities may have further increased pre-service EFL teachers' difficulties related to interpreting cultural differences and managing politeness or formality nuances in communication, resulting in failure in various interaction contexts in the ability to use English (Noviyenty & Anwar, 2022).

5.3. RQ3. is there a Statistically Significant Difference in Participants' Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Awareness in Terms of Gender?

The third research question aimed to determine whether there was a statistically significant gender-based difference in the participants' intercultural sensitivity. Results from the Independent Samples t-test indicated that, overall, there were no statistically significant differences between male and female participants in their total intercultural sensitivity scores. However, analysis of the sub-scales revealed notable differences: males reported higher levels of interaction confidence, suggesting that they feel more self-assured in intercultural communication. Additionally, males demonstrated greater interaction enjoyment, indicating that they tend to derive more pleasure from intercultural exchanges. These findings suggest that while the overall construct of intercultural sensitivity appears consistent across genders, the way it is expressed, particularly in terms of confidence and emotional engagement, differs to some degree.

Consistent with these findings, previous research on intercultural sensitivity has also included studies reporting no significant difference between genders (e.g., Akin, 2016; Altan, 2018; Arcagok & Yilmaz, 2020; Çiloğlu & Bardakçı, 2019; Eren, 2023; Ghaemi & Soltani, 2023; Gürkan, 2021; Idris, 2021). However, when the sub-scales are examined individually, some differing patterns emerge. In Genç's (2018) study, while no gender difference was observed in pre-service EFL teachers' levels of open-mindedness and cultural empathy, male pre-service EFL teachers exhibited more ambiguity tolerance compared to their female counterparts. Similarly, Boudouaia et al. (2022) reported a gender difference in interaction enjoyment, consistent with the findings of the present study. However, unlike the current

results, their study showed that female participants experienced greater enjoyment in intercultural communication than males. There appear to be variations in the gender-related findings of studies on intercultural sensitivity. Hernández-López et al. (2024) reported that male participants scored higher on the dimensions of awareness, knowledge, and skills, as well as discovery and interpretation. In contrast, female participants achieved higher scores on the attitude dimension. Similarly, Gün (2023) found that female pre-service EFL teachers demonstrated higher levels of intercultural communicative competence than their male counterparts. However, Aslım-Yetiş and Kurt (2016) and Coffey et al. (2017) also identified significant gender differences, though their findings indicated that male participants scored higher. Variations of findings across studies may stem from differences in participants' cultural backgrounds, educational settings, and exposure to intercultural experiences. As Solhaug and Kristensen (2020) note, perceptions in intercultural interactions are shaped by personal life experiences; thus, individuals' intercultural sensitivity is influenced by their unique histories and prior encounters. This perspective suggests that the gender differences observed in interaction confidence and enjoyment might be context-dependent, reflecting variations in socialization and intercultural opportunities rather than fixed gender traits.

The second part of the third research question sought to determine whether there was a statistically significant gender-based difference in participants' pragmatic awareness. Results from the Independent Samples t-test indicated no significant difference between male and female participants. This finding implies that both groups demonstrated similar levels of awareness of pragmatic aspects of language use. Several previous studies also reported similar results. For instance, Almegren (2022), Çiftlikli-Hapci (2025), Maleki et al. (2023), Malmir & Derakhshan (2020), and Zughaibi (2023) reported that gender was not a significant factor in pragmatic awareness. These studies, along with the current research, suggest that pragmatic awareness may be influenced by other factors such as language experience or sociocultural interaction, rather than inherent gender differences (El Hammouchi, 2025). This supports the idea that pragmatic awareness does not develop as a function of biological or socialized gender traits. However, some studies have reported contradictory findings, highlighting subtle gender-related variations in pragmatic awareness. For example, in an Iranian context, Mohammad-Bagheri (2015) reported that gender played a significant role in pragmatic awareness, with female participants performing better than male participants. Similarly, Chen (2017) found significant gender-based differences, with female participants demonstrating higher levels of pragmatic competence than their male counterparts. Supporting these findings, Usuludin et al. (2021) also reported significant differences between males and females, highlighting the influence of contextual factors such as culture and social norms. In a similar study, Wang (2019) found that female participants employed indirect refusal strategies more frequently and effectively than male participants, suggesting greater pragmatic sensitivity in managing politeness and face-saving.

These contrasting findings suggest that gender may not universally determine pragmatic awareness, but its influence varies based on context, task type, cultural background, and the sociolinguistic norms of the target language. Therefore, the results of this study contribute to a more detailed understanding of the role of gender in second language pragmatics and show that gender-based differences are neither innate nor consistent, but emerge under specific sociocultural and interactional conditions.

5.4. RQ4. is there a Statistically Significant Difference in Participants' Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Awareness in Terms of Grade?

The first part of the fourth research question aimed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in participants' intercultural sensitivity according to grade level. Results from the one-way ANOVA indicated that, overall, there were no statistically significant differences in intercultural sensitivity scores across grades. When the subscales were analyzed individually, no significant differences were found in interaction engagement, respect for cultural differences, interaction enjoyment, or interaction attentiveness. Although an overall significant difference initially emerged in the interaction confidence sub-scale, the results of the post hoc analysis indicated that this difference was not statistically significant.

Similar to the findings of the current study, Erdoğan and Okumuşlar (2020) reported that intercultural sensitivity did not differ significantly across grade levels. In the Turkish context, Kuluşaklı (2022) also found comparable results, indicating no significant relationship between intercultural sensitivity and participants' grade levels. The lack of statistically significant differences in overall intercultural sensitivity across grade levels suggests that pre-service EFL teachers maintain relatively consistent levels of intercultural openness and awareness throughout their program. However, some contradictory findings have been reported in the literature. For instance, Aslım-Yetiş and Kurt (2016) found a statistically significant difference in intercultural sensitivity across grade levels among pre-service foreign language teachers. Similarly, Tuncel and Arıcıoğlu (2018) and Karasu et al. (2022) reported that participants' intercultural sensitivity levels tended to increase as their grade level advanced. In contrast, Genç and Boynukara (2017) and Ghamarnia et al. (2016), who examined similar participant groups by age rather than grade level, found that age did not have a significant effect on pre-service EFL teachers' intercultural sensitivity.

Differences between the current findings may be explained by contextual and methodological factors, such as differences in program structure or participants' levels of exposure to intercultural education. In programs where intercultural or global competence is explicitly embedded across multiple years, such as through culture-focused courses or study-abroad opportunities, students' intercultural sensitivity may progressively increase with grade level. In contrast, in contexts where

intercultural content is not systematically reinforced, students may reach a point where further growth is limited, resulting in relatively stable intercultural sensitivity scores across grade levels, as observed in the present study.

Additionally, context-specific factors, such as national education policies, sociopolitical climate, and cultural norms, may also shape how intercultural sensitivity develops. In educational settings where opportunities for intercultural interaction are limited or where social contexts are relatively homogeneous, simply advancing grade levels alone may not be sufficient to achieve significant gains in intercultural sensitivity. The lack of significant effects for both age and grade level reported in several studies further suggests that intercultural sensitivity is influenced less by age or academic progress and more by meaningful experiences, such as direct intercultural contact, international exposure, and reflective pedagogical practices. In this sense, advancing through a program does not automatically lead to higher intercultural sensitivity unless it is accompanied by continuous and purposeful intercultural interaction.

The second part of the fourth research question aimed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in participants' pragmatic awareness across grade levels. The results indicated a significant difference between the groups based on grade level. Tukey's HSD post hoc test revealed that third-year students scored significantly higher in pragmatic awareness than second-year students. This finding may suggest a developing pattern in pre-service EFL teachers' sensitivity in language use, potentially correlating with increased academic exposure and communicative experience. These results are partly consistent with previous studies emphasizing that pragmatic awareness tends to improve with linguistic and educational experience. For instance, Taguchi and Roever (2017) and Bardovi-Harlig and Dörnyei (1998) observed that learners' pragmatic awareness develops gradually with increased exposure to authentic input and explicit instruction. Similarly, Ishihara (2007) reported that teacher education programs emphasizing discourse-level and cultural aspects of communication fostered greater pragmatic sensitivity among more advanced learners.

However, the findings differ from those of studies reporting no significant difference across grade levels (e.g., Takkaç-Tulgar, 2016b; Höl & Aygün, 2023), which suggest that pragmatic awareness may be shaped more by individual learner variables or contextual factors than by grade level alone. One possible explanation for the discrepancy is that pragmatic competence does not develop linearly; instead, it may fluctuate depending on the extent of intercultural contact (Veettil, 2018), classroom focus on pragmatics (Siddiqa & Whyte, 2025), or opportunities for authentic communication (Wyner & Cohen, 2015). In this sense, pragmatic awareness is considered a multifaceted and context-sensitive construct shaped by emotional, cognitive, instructional, and experiential factors (Culpeper et al., 2018) rather than grade level in isolation.

5.5. RQ5. is there a Statistically Significant Difference in Participants' Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Awareness in Terms of Overseas Experience?

The first part of the fifth research question aimed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in participants' intercultural sensitivity in terms of overseas experience. The analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the intercultural sensitivity and overseas experience of the participants. Participants with overseas experience demonstrated higher levels of intercultural sensitivity compared to those without such experience. This finding aligns with a substantial body of research emphasizing the positive impact of international exposure on intercultural competence.

For instance, in her Turkish context study, Gedik-Bal (2023) reported that teachers with overseas experience showed greater intercultural sensitivity, and that the length of time spent abroad was positively correlated with this sensitivity. Similarly, Wang (2016), in a study of English teachers in China, reported that overseas experiences had a substantial influence on their intercultural sensitivity. Yurur et al. (2018) also observed that having overseas experiences and spending time abroad significantly increases individuals' intercultural sensitivity. Supporting this perspective, Vu (2022) reported that Vietnamese students who spent one to two years of their four-year undergraduate education overseas achieved the highest mean scores on the respect for cultural differences sub-scale, suggesting a strong appreciation for cultural norms. Likewise, Alonso-Marks and Sánchez-Hernández (2020) found that university students made notable progress in their intercultural sensitivity and, in particular, in their cultural behavior integration after their eight-week learning mobility period in Spain.

Individuals with overseas experience develop intercultural interaction skills that provide exposure to different cultures and opportunities for cultural immersion. Such experiences are perceived as chances to gain new cultural understanding while also reflecting on and recognizing their own cultural values (Tran & Pham, 2015). As mentioned in Bennett's (1986) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), individuals progress from ethnocentric to ethnorelative stages as they gain direct experience with cultural diversity. Overseas experience provides authentic opportunities for such transformation by challenging preconceived cultural assumptions and developing empathy. Exposure to diverse cultural contexts can improve individuals' understanding of cultural differences and also foster the development of empathy, open-mindedness, and adaptive communication skills.

The second part of the fifth research question aimed to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference in terms of overseas experience in pragmatic awareness. The quantitative findings indicated no significant difference between the pragmatic awareness of the groups according to overseas experience. This suggests that studying or living abroad may not, in itself, guarantee enhanced pragmatic understanding. While this finding contrasts with a substantial body of

research reporting the positive impact of overseas experiences on pragmatic development (e.g., Hu, 2014; Magliacane & Sánchez-Hernández, 2025; Sánchez-Hernández & Alcón-Soler, 2019; Schauer, 2009), it aligns with more recent discussions emphasizing the complicated and often fluctuating nature of L2 pragmatic learning (Taguchi, 2012).

The qualitative findings, on the other hand, revealed that the majority of participants acknowledged the influence of exposure to different cultures and societies on their development of pragmatic awareness. They clearly expressed their belief that there is a strong link between pragmatic awareness and exposure to the target culture. This apparent inconsistency between quantitative and qualitative results may reflect the subjective sense of growth that accompanies intercultural exposure, even if such experiences do not always result in measurable improvements. In other words, participants may feel more pragmatically aware through intercultural interactions, but this awareness may not yet manifest as significant behavioral competence.

The general consensus in the literature holds that overseas experience tends to facilitate pragmatic growth (Magliacane & Sánchez-Hernández, 2025) by increasing exposure to authentic input and opportunities for interaction with native speakers (Ren, 2018). However, as Taguchi (2012) and Taguchi et al. (2016) highlight, pragmatic development is not solely determined by environmental factors such as length of stay or exposure, but also by individual differences, including learners' processing capacity, personality, motivation, and linguistic proficiency. From a Sociocultural Theory perspective (Lantolf, 2006), meaningful participation in social interaction and access to the target language community are crucial for pragmatic development. Yet, many individuals face limited integration and restricted interactional opportunities, resulting in smaller pragmatic gains despite being immersed in the target environment (Sánchez-Hernández & Alcón-Soler, 2019).

Another point to consider when interpreting the current findings concerns the duration and quality of participants' overseas experience. As described in the methodology chapter, the vast majority of participants who reported overseas experience had stayed abroad for less than six months. Such short-term exposure may not provide sufficient time for meaningful interaction with native speakers or deep engagement with the target culture. Moreover, as noted by Magliacane and Sánchez-Hernández (2025), the intensity and quality of L2 interaction play a decisive role in the development of pragmatic awareness. Without consistent and meaningful opportunities for communication, even extended residence in the target culture may yield limited pragmatic gains. However, due to the unfeasibility of quantitatively measuring the quality of those experiences for individuals with overseas experience, Taguchi (2018) asserts that the relationship between pragmatic awareness and overseas experience is indirect, mediated by learners' access to interactional opportunities, willingness to participate in the target-language community, and ability to notice and internalize pragmatic features.

Thus, the absence of significant differences in the present study may reflect not a lack of potential influence, but rather variability in learners' engagement during their time overseas.

5.6. RQ6. are there Any Correlations Between Pre-Service EFL Teachers' Intercultural Sensitivity and Pragmatic Awareness?

The final research question examined whether there was a correlation between pre-service EFL teachers' intercultural sensitivity and their pragmatic awareness. The quantitative results revealed a statistically significant, positive, but weak correlation between the two constructs. This suggests that while the two constructs are related, they may develop independently and be influenced by different sets of factors. The positive association indicates that individuals who demonstrate greater openness, respect, and enjoyment in intercultural encounters also tend to be more sensitive to pragmatic nuances in language use.

From a broader theoretical perspective, Taguchi and Roever (2017) argue that one component of intercultural competence is to function successfully within a different culture. As intercultural competence increases, individuals are more likely to expand their social networks and engage in richer communicative experiences. Since successful communication requires sensitivity to cultural variation and awareness of the discursive nature of interactional contexts (Ghazanfari et al., 2019), pragmatic awareness may naturally emerge as part of the socialization process when individuals interact across cultural boundaries.

Both pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity are essential components of communicative competence and may influence the efficacy of intercultural communication (Huang, 2014). As Qi (2023) notes, pragmatic awareness relates to how individuals behave in intercultural communicative situations, whereas intercultural sensitivity concerns the emotional and attitudinal dimensions of these encounters. Because awareness typically precedes action, intercultural sensitivity may serve as a foundational precursor to the development of effective pragmatic behavior in intercultural contexts.

Empirical findings in the literature also offer support for this relationship. Boustani and Allami (2015) found that learners with higher intercultural sensitivity tended to employ more varied semantic formulas in their responses, although the correlation remained weak, which is consistent with the present study. Similarly, Ghazanfari et al. (2019) reported a significant relationship between intercultural sensitivity and participants' pragmatic performance on discourse completion tasks, suggesting that affective readiness and attitudinal openness may facilitate learners' ability to interpret and produce contextually appropriate language.

When these findings are evaluated together, they indicate that while intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness are theoretically and empirically related, the relatively weak correlation suggests that they develop through different but complementary ways.

The qualitative findings highlighted that participants viewed pragmatic development as a process acquired mainly through experience and social interaction, rather than one that results only from formal instruction. They stated that direct exposure to authentic materials or real-life conversations actually helped them learn how language functions in different social settings. Research in interlanguage pragmatics in the literature also supports this perspective, emphasizing that pragmatic competence emerges through exposure to authentic input and opportunities for meaningful interaction (Kasper & Rose, 2002; Taguchi, 2019).

The repeated references to intercultural contact, empathy, and adaptability indicated that learners perceive pragmatic competence as intertwined with intercultural competence, consistent with Byram's (1997) model, where attitudes such as curiosity, openness, and mindfulness facilitate effective communication across cultures. Participants' recognition that authentic social interactions help them understand culturally variable norms supports findings by Cohen and Ishihara (2013) and Barron (2003), who argue that pragmatic learning is enhanced when learners engage with diverse interlocutors and reflect on the sociocultural implications of language usage.

Furthermore, throughout the interviews, social participation, intercultural contact, mindfulness, and adaptability were often emphasized as critical to the development of pragmatic competence, reflecting learners' attempts to manage the affective and relational dimensions of discourse, and pointing to the interdependence of pragmatic awareness and emotional-social factors. Many participants also acknowledged that pragmatic knowledge is not acquired only through formal instruction but rather through real-life engagement with language in use. This reflects an ongoing argument in L2 pragmatics literature, which discusses that classroom environments often lack the contextual richness and variability needed for robust pragmatic development unless they intentionally integrate authentic tasks and reflective activities (Taguchi & Roever, 2017; Taguchi, 2019).

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

In this chapter, conclusions based on the findings of the present study are discussed, and corresponding suggestions are provided. This study aimed to investigate pre-service EFL teachers' pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity, with a particular focus on the relationship between these two constructs. Additionally, the relationships between these constructs and gender, grade, and overseas experience were also examined. Quantitative measurement tools were used to determine teacher candidates' levels of intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness, while semi-structured interviews, a qualitative data collection method, helped to gain deeper insight into the results obtained from quantitative data analysis.

6.1. Conclusion

The overall findings of the study reveal that pre-service EFL teachers demonstrate high levels of intercultural sensitivity and relatively strong pragmatic awareness, but with notable areas requiring further development. Quantitative analyses, combined with data from the AJT and semi-structured interviews, indicate that participants are generally aware of the pragmatic and intercultural demands of communication; however, their competence is uneven across different dimensions.

In terms of pragmatic awareness, participants were more successful at identifying pragmatically appropriate expressions than inappropriate ones. When they did recognize inappropriateness, they were particularly better at detecting rudeness, but had more difficulty with recognizing situations where over-politeness led to pragmatic infelicity. This suggests that while learners may be sensitive to obvious violations of pragmatic norms, they may still struggle with more subtle infelicities.

Interviews revealed that participants' challenges in achieving pragmatic appropriateness stem from several recurring factors: cultural differences, politeness/formality nuances, affective constraints (e.g., anxiety/pressure), insufficient practice, lexical/semantic limitations, and overall proficiency issues. These perceived challenges align with the areas in which students showed weaker performance.

Findings related to demographic variables were mostly consistent. Gender did not significantly influence intercultural sensitivity or pragmatic awareness, with the exception that male participants reported higher levels of interaction confidence and interaction enjoyment. However, a significant difference was observed in pragmatic awareness across grade levels, with third-year students scoring significantly higher than second-year students.

Regarding overseas experience, participants who had lived or studied abroad exhibited higher intercultural sensitivity, yet overseas experience did not significantly enhance pragmatic awareness.

This suggests that exposure alone may foster openness and sensitivity but does not automatically translate into a deeper understanding of pragmatic norms unless supported by explicit instruction or reflective learning experiences.

Finally, the study revealed a statistically significant but weak positive correlation between intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness, indicating that while the constructs are related, they develop somewhat independently.

6.2. Implications

With the ongoing rise in international students and refugees, language classrooms are becoming more culturally diverse. This growing multiculturalism poses particular challenges for teachers who lack sufficient intercultural sensitivity. Under these circumstances, being able to engage in effective intercultural communication and to exhibit strong intercultural sensitivity is not just beneficial but crucial, particularly for teachers (Altan, 2018). These realities place significant responsibility on pre-service EFL teachers, who will be expected to work in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms upon entering the profession. Beyond their traditional instructional roles, foreign language teachers are increasingly required to act as cultural mediators, supporting the development of their students' intercultural communication abilities. Therefore, pre-service EFL teachers must develop their own intercultural sensitivity and competence during teacher education programs, while also acquiring the pedagogical knowledge and abilities required to guide their prospective students in becoming interculturally sensitive and competent (Altan, 2018).

This expectation has important implications for pre-service teacher education, as culture plays a central role in the language classroom and is widely viewed as an essential element of second language acquisition. (Mozaffarzadeh & Ajideh, 2019). Accordingly, pre-service EFL teachers need to be prepared to promote communicative competence by integrating cultural and pragmatic dimensions into language instruction (Sarıçoban & Öz, 2014). In this regard, intercultural sensitivity emerges as a particularly critical construct for pre-service EFL teachers, as it is closely associated with individuals' emotional and attitudinal orientations toward cultural differences, including tolerance, empathy, and respect for others (Boudouaia et al., 2022). Developing these qualities during the pre-service stage is essential, as they form the foundation for teachers' future ability to foster inclusive, culturally responsive, and globally oriented language classrooms.

The current study, despite its limitations, indicates that Turkish pre-service EFL teachers possess high levels of intercultural sensitivity, which aligns with key professional expectations in language education. This finding suggests that, in the future, these prospective teachers may be well positioned to prepare their own students to embrace diverse worldviews and to develop more open and inclusive attitudes toward cultural diversity (Pinho, 2015). Moreover, they may play a crucial role

in guiding learners toward the acquisition of intercultural sensitivity and intercultural competence, which are widely regarded as essential requirements for global citizenship in contemporary societies (Altan, 2018).

The finding that participants with overseas experience demonstrated higher levels of intercultural sensitivity suggests that direct and ongoing exposure to other cultures plays a significant role in fostering openness, tolerance, and positive attitudes toward cultural diversity. Living or studying abroad appears to provide individuals with authentic intercultural encounters that promote empathy, reduce ethnocentric perspectives, and enhance awareness of cultural differences. These experiences may contribute to the development of emotional and attitudinal aspects of intercultural sensitivity, such as respect for cultural differences and willingness to engage with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. This result highlights the value of experiential learning opportunities in pre-service EFL teacher education. Overseas experiences can serve as powerful contexts for developing intercultural sensitivity, which is a core professional competence for future language teachers. Importantly, this finding also suggests that intercultural sensitivity can be developed through experience, even if pragmatic gains are not automatically guaranteed.

Another key expectation of foreign language teachers in today's intercultural context is to enable learners to communicate effectively in a foreign language (Zhu, 2017; Yang & Maarof, 2024). This competence extends beyond grammatical accuracy to include the appropriate use of language across varying social contexts (Li et al., 2015a). For learners to successfully comprehend and perform speech acts in a second language, they must be exposed to them through interaction with members of the target language community or within instructional settings (Bektaş-Çetinkaya, 2012). Consequently, language teachers carry the responsibility of introducing learners, who are often primarily exposed to the foreign language in classroom environments, to the pragmatic dimensions of language use (Eslami-Rasekh, 2005). To meet this responsibility effectively and to raise learners' awareness of pragmatic functions, particularly at the discourse level (Bardovi-Harlig et al., 1991), teachers themselves need to develop strong pragmatic awareness to support successful intercultural communication in an increasingly globalized world (Khabcheche & Hamitouche, 2022).

According to the current study's findings, Turkish pre-service EFL teachers demonstrate a relatively strong level of pragmatic awareness, this competence remains partial, particularly in recognizing pragmatically inappropriate language use. Their greater success in identifying pragmatically appropriate expressions and their difficulty in identifying pragmatically inappropriate expressions may stem from the subjective nature of second language acquisition when learning occurs primarily within the cultural context of the learners' native language. In such contexts, learners tend to negotiate linguistic and pragmatic forms between their first language and target language cultures, resulting in a hybridized interpretive framework (Yang & Maarof, 2024). More specifically, participants' sensitivity to

overt pragmatic violations, such as rude behavior, and their difficulty in identifying pragmatic inappropriateness caused by excessive politeness may stem from integrating their native language cultural identities by adding cultural nuances when speaking a foreign language. As learners attempt to transfer or adapt familiar cultural nuances to the target language, certain pragmatic mismatches, particularly those involving excessive politeness, may become less noticeable or even perceived as appropriate.

The qualitative findings further highlight that pragmatic challenges stem from multiple sources, including cultural differences, politeness norms, affective factors, limited practice opportunities, and linguistic limitations. These results suggest that pragmatic awareness cannot be developed through linguistic proficiency alone and requires systematic exposure, practice, and guided reflection (Ren, 2022). Therefore, it is highly important to reinforce pre-service EFL teachers' pragmatic knowledge theoretically and to increase their awareness of how to integrate pragmatics into everyday teaching practices and to provide them with extensive exposure to pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 2020).

Furthermore, the finding that overseas experience did not significantly enhance pragmatic awareness has important implications. While intercultural exposure may increase sensitivity and openness, it does not necessarily lead to a deeper understanding of pragmatic norms (Lang, 2019). This suggests that pragmatic awareness requires explicit pedagogical mediation, even in immersive contexts (Taguchi et al., 2016). Although pragmatic ability is recognized as crucial for effective interaction, the majority of language instruction lacks sufficient methodologies to systematically include pragmatic education. To this day, the majority of the curricula fail to address pragmatics in a systematic manner, instead confining it to limited and often stereotypical cultural and linguistic content (González-Lloret, 2019). This inadequacy is particularly evident in teacher training curricula (Bardovi-Harlig, 2019). However, if pragmatic awareness is not adequately addressed during the pre-service stage, future teachers may start the profession with limited ability to recognize, explain, and practice contextually appropriate language use. As a result, pragmatic competence risks being regarded as an implicit and underdeveloped aspect of language teaching, reinforcing the tendency for pragmatics to remain secondary rather than foundational in EFL instruction.

Finally, the study revealed a meaningful, positive, but weak correlation between pre-service EFL teachers' intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness. This result suggests that although intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness are related, they do not develop in tandem to a strong degree. In other words, higher intercultural sensitivity does not automatically guarantee a correspondingly high degree of pragmatic awareness. Consequently, this finding highlights the need to define intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness as complementary but independent competencies in pre-service EFL teacher development. The result also helps explain why overseas experience enhanced intercultural sensitivity but did not significantly affect pragmatic awareness,

further supporting the idea that pragmatic awareness requires more than exposure and positive attitudes alone. Such awareness is essential for prospective EFL teachers to support their students in developing intercultural sensitivity and acceptance, enabling them to remain mindful of pragmatic values that differ from their own and to make informed pragmatic decisions (Martínez-Flor et al., 2023).

6.3. Suggestions

In light of the findings and limitations of the study, several suggestions for future research can be proposed to further enhance understanding of intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness in EFL teacher education. First, future studies may adopt longitudinal research designs to examine how intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness develop over time throughout pre-service teacher education programs. Following the same participants over multiple academic years may provide deeper insights, particularly in the debate over whether targeted educational interventions are necessary for the development of pragmatic awareness. In addition to research design considerations, future studies may also benefit from employing a wider range of measurement instruments to examine intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness. Although the scales and tools used in the present study provided valuable insights, relying on a limited number of instruments may not fully reflect the multidimensional nature of these constructs. Future research could incorporate self-report scales with performance-based assessments, such as discourse completion tasks, as well as classroom-based observations to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of pragmatic awareness.

Future research should also explore strategies that enhance pre-service EFL teachers' intercultural sensitivity and pragmatic awareness. In this regard, international exchange programs, such as Erasmus, require further research. Having such experiences may provide pre-service teachers with meaningful and authentic intercultural communication. Moreover, given that most research on pragmatic awareness has been carried out in face-to-face settings, there is a need for future studies to explore how pragmatic awareness can be developed in technology-mediated environments. Investigating alternative modes of interaction, such as digital platforms, virtual exchanges, and computer-mediated communication, may provide valuable insights into how pragmatic awareness and intercultural sensitivity can be fostered across both traditional and remote learning environments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A - Approvals for Data Collection Tools

← [Icons] 6 ileti dizisinden 1. < >

Approval Request: Integrating Your Adapted Research Tool in My Thesis

Harici Gelen Kutusu x

8 Ağu Per 18:21 ☆

Dear Professor, I hope this email finds you well. My name is İlayda Erdem, and I am a research assistant at Fırat University in Turkey. Currently, I am pursuing

önce) ☆ ↩ ⋮

Türkçe diline çevir x

Dear İlayda, thanks for the request. Yes, you have our permission to use the IS Scale for non-profit research purposes.

Best.

guo-ming

← [Icons] 345 ileti dizisinden 124. < >

Dear Professor,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is İlayda Erdem, and I am a research assistant at Fırat University in Turkey. Currently, I am pursuing my Master's degree in the Department of Foreign Language Teaching.

I am reaching out to you regarding my thesis research. I would like to use the Appropriateness judgement tasks that you developed in your study titled "Pragmatic Awareness and Second Language Learning Motivation." I am interested in utilizing this tool for my own research. However, before proceeding, I need to get approval from one of the researchers.

Therefore, I am kindly requesting your permission to use the Appropriateness judgement tasks in my thesis project.

I would be grateful for your consideration of my request.

I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

İlayda Erdem

22 May Çar 13:27 ☆ ↩ ⋮

Dear İlayda,

I am happy to approve your request to use the questionnaire in our study.

Best

Wei

23 May Per 01:12 ☆ ↩ ⋮

Appendix B – Intercultural Sensitivity Scale

Intercultural Sensitivity Scale

Below is a series of statements concerning intercultural communication. There are no right or wrong answers. Please work quickly and record your first impression by indicating the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. Thank you for your cooperation.

5 = strongly agree

4 = agree

3 = uncertain

2 = disagree

1 = strongly disagree

Please put the number corresponding to your answer in the blank before the statement

	1. I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures.
	2. I think people from other cultures are narrow-minded.
	3. I am pretty sure of myself in interacting with people from different cultures.
	4. I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures.
	5. I always know what to say when interacting with people from different cultures.
	6. I can be as sociable as I want to be when interacting with people from different cultures.
	7. I don't like to be with people from different cultures.
	8. I respect the values of people from different cultures.
	9. I get upset easily when interacting with people from different cultures.
	10. I feel confident when interacting with people from different cultures.
	11. I tend to wait before forming an impression of culturally-distinct counterparts.
	12. I often get discouraged when I am with people from different cultures.
	13. I am open-minded to people from different cultures.
	14. I am very observant when interacting with people from different cultures.
	15. I often feel useless when interacting with people from different cultures.
	16. I respect the ways people from different cultures behave.
	17. I try to obtain as much information as I can when interacting with people from different cultures.
	18. I would not accept the opinions of people from different cultures.
	19. I am sensitive to my culturally-distinct counterpart's subtle meanings during our interaction.
	20. I think my culture is better than other cultures.
	21. I often give positive responses to my culturally different counterpart during our interaction.
	22. I avoid those situations where I will have to deal with culturally-distinct persons.
	23. I often show my culturally-distinct counterpart my understanding through verbal and nonverbal cues.
	24. I have a feeling of enjoyment towards differences between my culturally-distinct counterpart and me.

Appendix C – Appropriateness Judgement Tasks

Appropriateness Judgement Tasks

Directions: In this part, there are ten short conversations between Peter and his classmates or teachers. His English is sometimes proper but sometimes there will be a problem. Your job is to decide how appropriately Peter used English in different conversations on the rating-scales.

[“!” indicates the sentence to be judged, while pragmatic infelicities are indicated by “#”.]

1. Directions

Peter needs directions to the library. He asks another student.

A: Hi.

P: Hi.

! **P:** #Tell me how to get to the library.

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate

2. Snack bar

Peter goes to the snack bar to get something to eat before class.

W: May I help you?

! **P:** #Would you be so kind as to give me a sandwich and a yogurt please?

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate

3. Class trip

The teacher asks Peter to help with the plans for the class trip.

T: OK, so we'll go by bus. Who lives near the bus station? Peter, could you check the bus times for us on the way home tonight.

! **P:** #No, I can't tonight. Sorry.

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate

4. Not ready

It is Peter's day to give his talk in class, but he is not ready.

T: Thank you Steven, that was very interesting. Peter, it's your turn to give your talk.

! **P:** #I can't do it today but I will do it next week.

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate

5. Late

Peter is going to George's house. He is quite late.

P: Hi George.

G: Hi Peter. I've been waiting for over half an hour for you. Weren't we supposed to meet at 4?

P: #I couldn't come earlier. And anyway, we don't have to hurry anywhere.

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate

6. Busy teacher

Peter goes to see his teacher at his office. When he arrives, his teacher is busy.

P: (knocks on the door)

T: Yes, come in.

P: Hello, Professor Millar. Are you busy?

T: Erm ... I'm afraid so. Could you come back later?

P: #OK, I'll be here tomorrow morning at 10.

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate

7. Questionnaire

Peter goes to ask his teacher to fill in a questionnaire. He knocks on the office door.

P: (knocks on the door)

T: Yes, come in.

P: # Hello. My name is Peter. If you don't mind, I would like you to fill this in for me.

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate

8. Library book

George is going to the library. Peter asks him to return a library book.

G: Well, I'll see you later. I've got to go to the library to return my books.

P: Oh, if you are going to the library, can you please return my book too?

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate

9. Forgotten book

Peter has borrowed a book from his teacher. His teacher needs it back, but Peter has forgotten to return it.

T: Peter, have you brought back the book I gave you yesterday?

P: Oh, I'm very sorry, I completely forgot. Can I give it to you tomorrow?

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate

10. Invitation

George invites Peter to his house but Peter cannot come.

G: Peter, would you like to come over this afternoon?

P: I'm sorry, I'd really like to come but I have a difficult history test tomorrow.

Most inappropriate **1 2 3 4 5 6** Most appropriate



Appendix D – Interview Questions

English Version:

1. How do you evaluate your current ability to judge the appropriateness of the specified utterances?

2. Do you think the ability to identify pragmatic infelicities is important? Why?

3. What efforts have you made or would you like to make to improve your ability to judge the appropriateness of L2 pragmatic infelicities while learning English? Why have you made or would like to make these efforts?

Turkish Version:

1. Belirtilen ifadelerin uygunluğunu değerlendirme konusundaki mevcut becerinizi nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

2. Pragmatik uygunsuzlukları tespit edebilme yeteneğinin önemli olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? Neden?

3. İngilizce öğrenirken pratik hatalarının uygunluğunu değerlendirme yeteneğinizi geliştirmek için hangi çabaları gösterdiniz ya da göstermek istersiniz? Bu çabaları neden gösterdiniz ya da göstermek istiyorsunuz?

Appendix E – Ethics Committee Approval Report

Etik Kurul Otomasyonu

13.12.2024 10:27

T.C. İNÖNÜ ÜNİVERSİTESİ BİLİMSEL ARAŞTIRMA VE YAYIN ETİĞİ KURULU Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Bilimsel Araştırma ve Yayın Etik Kurulu					
Oturum Tarihi : 03-12-2024		Oturum Sayısı : 20		Karar Sayısı : 16	
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Appendix F – Data Collection Permission Report



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EĞİTİM FAKÜLTESİ DEKANLIĞINA

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Prof. Dr. Mahmut DOĞRU
Rektör Yardımcısı

Ek: Yazı (24 Sayfa)