

## NAVIGATING ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA IN A CROSS-CULTURAL CLASSROOM: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF AN INDONESIAN SEA-TEACHER'S PEDAGOGICAL ADAPTATION

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### ABSTRAK

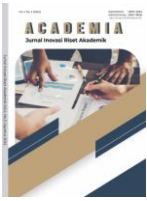
Pengalaman mengajar di negara lain dapat memperluas cara calon guru memahami kelas, tetapi perjumpaan dengan ragam bahasa Inggris dan kebiasaan interaksi yang berbeda sering menuntut penyesuaian komunikatif dan pedagogis yang tidak sepenuhnya tercakup dalam persiapan awal. Artikel ini mengkaji pengalaman seorang calon guru bahasa Inggris asal Indonesia selama penempatan *SEA-Teacher* satu bulan di sebuah sekolah menengah pertama negeri di Provinsi Iloilo, Filipina. Kajian menelusuri cara partisipan menghadapi ketidakpastian komunikatif dan pedagogis, menafsirkan respons siswa, mengubah keputusan pembelajaran, serta menata ulang pemahamannya tentang peran guru. Studi kasus tunggal interpretatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi hermeneutik digunakan untuk membaca pengalaman tersebut. Data mencakup tiga wawancara serial, dua puluh jurnal reflektif harian, delapan rencana pembelajaran revisi, dua belas dokumentasi papan tulis, dan empat catatan mentor. Melalui *Reflexive Thematic Analysis*, data dibaca berulang, dikodekan secara induktif, dibandingkan lintas sumber, lalu dirangkai menjadi tema-tema yang saling berhubungan. Ketidakakraban terhadap pelafalan, ekspresi kelas, dan keheningan siswa mendorong partisipan menyederhanakan instruksi, membuka respons multibahasa, serta menggunakan contoh yang dekat dengan kehidupan lokal. Studi ini mengajukan *Adaptive Navigation Cycle* sebagai sintesis konseptual berbasis satu kasus yang menghubungkan disonansi, pemaknaan konteks, improvisasi pedagogis, dan refleksi profesional. Temuan ini mengarah pada perlunya pembekalan *English as a Lingua Franca*, jurnal reflektif terstruktur, dan pendampingan mentor lintas negara selama mobilitas mengajar.

**Kata Kunci:** Bahasa Inggris Sebagai Lingua Franca, Adaptasi Pedagogis, SEA-Guru, Fenomenologi, Pembelajaran Transformatif

### ABSTRACT

Teaching in another country can broaden pre-service teachers' understanding of classroom practice; however, encounters with diverse varieties of English and different interactional conventions often require communicative and pedagogical adjustments that are not fully addressed in initial preparation. This article examines the experience of an Indonesian pre-service English teacher during a one-month *SEA-Teacher* placement at a public junior high school in Iloilo Province, Philippines. It explores how the participant navigated communicative and pedagogical uncertainty, interpreted student responses, modified instructional decisions, and reconsidered her understanding of the teacher's role. An interpretive single-case study informed by hermeneutic phenomenology was used to examine this experience. The data comprised three serial interviews, twenty daily reflective journal entries, eight revised lesson plans, twelve photographs of classroom whiteboards, and four mentor notes. Using *Reflexive Thematic Analysis*, the data were read repeatedly, coded inductively, compared across sources,





and developed into interconnected themes. Unfamiliar pronunciation, classroom expressions, and student silence prompted the participant to simplify instructions, allow multilingual responses, and use examples grounded in local life. The study proposes the *Adaptive Navigation Cycle* as a single-case conceptual synthesis linking dissonance, contextual meaning-making, pedagogical improvisation, and professional reflection. The findings point to the need for preparation in *English as a Lingua Franca*, structured reflective journaling, and cross-border mentor support throughout international teaching mobility.

**Keywords:** *English as a Lingua Franca, Pedagogical Adaptation, SEA-Teacher, Phenomenology, Transformative Learning*

## INTRODUCTION

Teaching across national borders can unsettle assumptions that pre-service teachers often bring from their university classrooms. A lesson plan may be carefully designed, yet its instructions can lose clarity when students respond through unfamiliar pronunciation, locally shaped expressions, or interactional conventions that the visiting teacher has not previously encountered. In such circumstances, teaching requires more than subject knowledge and linguistic accuracy; it requires the ability to interpret uncertainty while continuing to make pedagogical decisions. When this interpretive work is unsuccessful, classroom interaction may become constrained, learner participation may be misread, and instructional adjustments may fail to address the actual conditions shaping learning. International teaching mobility therefore offers a setting in which intercultural competence is enacted through situated judgment rather than acquired simply through physical exposure to another country.

Cross-border learning has been associated with the development of intercultural competence among student teachers who work with peers and educational communities from different national backgrounds (Öztürk & Ekşi, 2025). Sabet and Chapman (2023) similarly position intercultural competence as an educational outcome needed by graduates who will participate in globally connected academic and professional environments. Yet, the movement from international contact to professional growth is neither automatic nor uniform. Adaptation can involve changing phases of enthusiasm, challenge, struggle, and adjustment, each shaped by the social and cultural conditions of the host environment (Ye, 2025). For pre-service teachers, those shifts occur while they are expected to plan lessons, manage interaction, interpret learner responses, and respond to unexpected events in real time; intercultural competence becomes consequential only when it informs concrete classroom practice (Kumru-Yağmurkaya & Aşık, 2026).

The *SEA-Teacher Project* brings these dynamics into focus within the Southeast Asian region. Coordinated by the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, the programme provides pre-service teachers with short-term placements in partner schools where they observe, assist, and conduct teaching activities beyond their home institutions (Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization [SEAMEO], 2023). Its design combines professional preparation, regional engagement, and intercultural learning, but the one-month placement structure also creates a distinctive condition: participants must learn the host school's linguistic practices, institutional routines, and relational norms while already carrying responsibility for classroom work. They do not enter the classroom after completing a prolonged process of cultural adjustment; instead, they learn while teaching. This compressed arrangement makes the programme a productive context for examining how pedagogical adaptation is formed under limited time and unfamiliar cultural conditions.



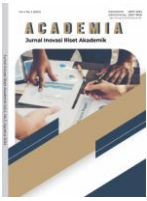
Studies involving Indonesian participants have identified both the developmental potential and the practical difficulty of *SEA-Teacher* participation. Afrian (2025) examined an Indonesian economics student teacher's placement in the Philippines through a SWOT perspective, identifying strengths, opportunities, weaknesses, and threats related to twenty-first-century teacher competence. In a more direct Indonesia–Philippines account, Hidayat et al. (2025) report that pre-service teachers in the *SEA-Teacher* programme encounter language-related difficulties, cultural adjustment demands, and the need to revise teaching strategies. These studies demonstrate that short-term mobility involves more than exposure to another education system. However, their emphasis on strategic mapping and general challenges leaves insufficiently explored how a teacher experiences a particular communicative disruption, decides what it may mean, alters instruction in response, and subsequently reconsiders earlier beliefs about teaching.

Indonesia–Philippines educational engagement also requires attention to the ways English is used in actual classroom interaction. Dukut and Diasti (2024) show that communication between Indonesian and Filipino educators depends on intentional intercultural strategies that support mutual understanding and collaboration. Although English occupies an established institutional role in Philippine education and public communication, its classroom use may be mediated by locally recognisable pronunciation, lexical choices, interactional rhythms, and multilingual resources. A visiting Indonesian teacher may therefore encounter difficulty not because English is unavailable, but because meanings are negotiated through repertoires that differ from those anticipated during prior preparation. This possibility calls for caution when interpreting silence, short answers, delayed participation, or indirect responses, since these behaviours may reflect local norms of respect, classroom hierarchy, uncertainty, or communicative comfort rather than low engagement or limited ability.

The present study approaches such encounters through *English as a Lingua Franca* (ELF), culturally responsive teaching, and transformative learning as interconnected *analytical lenses*. ELF directs attention to intelligibility, accommodation, and collaborative meaning-making among speakers with diverse first-language backgrounds, all of which are central to communication in ASEAN English-medium classrooms (Boonsuk, 2026). Culturally responsive teaching clarifies how a teacher may modify language, activities, examples, and participation structures after recognising that learner responses are shaped by social and cultural contexts; this reflective attentiveness is essential for inclusive practice in multicultural classrooms (Mulya, 2025). Transformative learning, in turn, provides a way to examine whether dissonance and reflection lead the participant to question earlier assumptions about teaching, authority, and professional self-understanding. Rather than functioning as separate explanatory frameworks, these perspectives are used together to trace how communication, instructional response, and professional reflection become connected during the placement.

Professional identity is likely to be implicated when pre-service teachers confront a mismatch between what they expect classrooms to be and what they encounter in practice. Malmir and Arefian (2025) associate intercultural communicative competence with identity-processing styles and teaching professionalism among English teachers. Köylü and Borràs (2024) further show that sojourn experiences in ELF environments can influence how participants position themselves in relation to language, belonging, and intercultural communication. In a short-term placement, however, such repositioning may not emerge as a gradual or fully resolved transformation. It may appear through small but consequential revisions in how teachers understand learner silence, determine the value of a planned method, or redefine their role in relation to students. Examining these moments makes it possible to





move beyond broad claims that mobility enhances competence and instead consider how professional learning is negotiated through classroom events.

Research on international teaching mobility has frequently assessed intercultural competence as an outcome after participation or described challenges and strategies at a general level. Less attention has been directed toward the phenomenological process through which Indonesian pre-service teachers experience communicative and pedagogical dissonance in specific classroom episodes, interpret culturally situated learner responses, formulate adaptive instructional actions, and reconstruct professional understanding during short-term teaching in Philippine schools. This study aims to examine how an Indonesian pre-service English teacher navigates communicative and pedagogical dissonance, develops context-responsive instructional practices, and reconstructs professional understanding during a one-month *SEA-Teacher* placement in the Philippines. It develops an empirically grounded conceptual account, termed the *Adaptive Navigation Cycle*, which describes adaptation as a non-linear movement across four interconnected processes: encountering dissonance, interpreting contextual meanings, improvising responsive pedagogical strategies, and reconstructing professional understanding through reflection. Accordingly, this study investigates: (1) How does the participant experience communicative and pedagogical dissonance in a Philippine lingua franca classroom? (2) How does the participant develop and enact adaptive strategies in response to these challenges? and (3) How does the placement experience influence the participant's pedagogical beliefs and professional identity?

## RESEARCH METHOD

The inquiry followed one Indonesian pre-service English teacher during her one-month *SEA-Teacher* placement at a public junior high school in Iloilo Province, Philippines, from August to September 2023. The study was situated within an interpretivist qualitative orientation and treated the placement as an intrinsic single case, allowing attention to remain on how one participant understood and responded to events in her own teaching setting. Hermeneutic phenomenology guided the interpretation of her accounts because the analysis focused on the meanings she attached to uncertainty, communication, classroom participation, and instructional change. The participant was recruited purposively after meeting four conditions: she was an Indonesian pre-service English teacher, participated in the *SEA-Teacher* programme, completed the Philippine placement, and agreed to share her experiences and reflective materials. To protect confidentiality, she is referred to as DM, a seventh-semester student in an English Education Study Program at Universitas Jambi who was twenty-one years old during the placement.

Evidence was assembled across the placement and the period immediately following its completion. While teaching, DM produced twenty daily reflective journal entries in response to prompts concerning classroom events, learner responses, emotions, decisions, and lessons learned. Her reflections were read alongside eight revised lesson plans, twelve photographs of classroom whiteboards, and four written mentor notes, which were examined for visible changes in instructions, examples, learning activities, language use, and participation arrangements. After the placement, three semi-structured phenomenological interviews were conducted, with a combined duration of approximately 230 minutes. The conversations moved from pre-departure expectations to detailed classroom episodes, perceived communication difficulties, pedagogical responses, and subsequent changes in teaching beliefs. All interviews were audio-recorded with permission, transcribed verbatim, and checked against the recordings.

The interview guide and journal prompts are included in Appendix A to make the data-generation process traceable.

Interpretation developed through repeated movement between interview transcripts, journals, and pedagogical materials rather than through a fixed linear sequence. Initial codes were generated inductively from accounts of significant classroom episodes, then compared across sources to identify convergences, tensions, and changes in instructional response. Candidate themes were revisited and refined through reflexive memoing, which recorded analytical decisions, researcher assumptions, and revisions to the coding structure. The *Adaptive Navigation Cycle* was not used to pre-code the material; it was developed after the thematic patterns had been established and was used to integrate the relationships among dissonance, contextual interpretation, pedagogical improvisation, and professional reflection. Credibility was strengthened through source triangulation, an audit trail containing transcripts, coding records, memos, and theme-development notes, and participant validation in which DM reviewed a written summary of the preliminary interpretations and confirmed their accuracy. Written informed consent was obtained before data collection, pseudonyms were assigned to the participant and mentor teacher, relevant permissions were secured from the university, programme, and host school, and digital files were stored in password-protected folders.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Result

Four interconnected themes emerged from DM’s accounts, reflections, and pedagogical records during the one-month placement. The first two themes address the first research question by describing the communicative and pedagogical dissonance DM encountered when English use and student participation did not unfold as she expected. The third theme addresses the second research question by tracing the adaptive strategies she developed within ongoing classroom interaction. The fourth theme responds to the third research question by showing how the placement informed her pedagogical beliefs and emerging professional identity. Although the themes are presented in the order in which they became most prominent in the data, they do not represent fixed stages because uncertainty, interpretation, adjustment, and reflection frequently overlapped across the placement. Table 1 maps each theme to its descriptive focus and the evidence sources that contributed to its development.

**Table 1. Themes, Descriptive Focus, and Supporting Evidence**

Theme	Descriptive Focus	Supporting Evidence
<i>Encountering unfamiliar English use</i>	Difficulty following pronunciation, classroom expressions, and interactional rhythm	INT-2; RJ-01–RJ-05; WB-01–WB-03
<i>Reassessing classroom participation</i>	Uncertainty in interpreting silence, brief responses, and participation during activities	INT-2; RJ-04–RJ-09; MN-01–MN-02
<i>Modifying instructional practices</i>	Changes in instructions, activities, examples, and interactional approaches	INT-2; RJ-08–RJ-16; LP-03–LP-08; WB-04–WB-10
<i>Reframing teaching</i>	Changes in views about lesson implementation, learner responses, and the teacher’s role	INT-3; RJ-15–RJ-20

As indicated in Table 1, no theme rested on a single retrospective interview account. The journals preserved reflections written during the placement, whereas lesson plans, whiteboard photographs, and mentor notes made it possible to examine whether shifts described by DM were also visible in classroom-related materials. Interview data added detailed recollections of particular episodes and later reflections on their significance. The four themes are presented below through selected accounts and records, with the emphasis placed on what DM reported and documented rather than on assumptions about all *SEA-Teacher* participants.

### Encountering Unfamiliar English Use

In the first days of teaching, DM discovered that a common instructional language did not ensure immediate mutual comprehension. She described needing extra time to follow some pronunciations, classroom expressions, and conversational rhythms used by students and the mentor teacher. A moment recalled in the second interview illustrates how an attempt to repair communication created further uncertainty rather than resolving it. The incident also carried an emotional dimension because DM felt exposed when students reacted to the exchange.

*"I asked him to repeat, and he looked confused. Then some of them giggled. I felt my face go hot. That was when I realised that we were both speaking English, but it was not the same English."* (DM, INT-2)

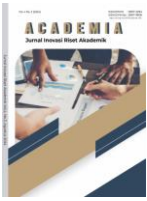
Entries from RJ-02 and RJ-03 recorded related difficulties close to the time they occurred. DM noted that she sometimes needed additional time to understand what students intended when they used expressions that had not appeared in her prepared materials, and she occasionally waited for clarification before continuing an explanation. The early whiteboard photographs (WB-01–WB-03) also contained vocabulary and prompts absent from her original teaching materials, indicating that the language of the lesson was shaped through classroom interaction as well as through prior planning. These records locate the initial difficulty in the situated use of English rather than in the simple presence or absence of English as a medium of instruction.

### Reassessing Classroom Participation

Uncertainty also arose when DM invited students to work in pairs or groups. At first, she associated limited verbal response with incomplete understanding or a lack of willingness to participate. She recalled one activity in which students moved into pairs but did not begin the discussion she had anticipated. Her repeated prompts produced brief acknowledgements rather than the extended exchange she had planned.

*"I divided them into pairs and said, 'Okay, start.' Then nothing happened. They sat together, but nobody spoke. I kept asking them to talk to their partners, and they only said, 'Yes, ma'am,' or 'Okay, po.'" (DM, INT-2)*

Her journal entries reveal that this was not a settled interpretation. In RJ-05, DM questioned whether the directions had been clear enough, while RJ-06 recorded her concern that public speaking might make some students uncomfortable. Mentor notes (MN-01–MN-02) likewise referred to students' tendency to pause before responding publicly and their greater willingness to contribute after additional prompting or peer support. The evidence did not establish one definitive reason for quietness; instead, it documents DM's movement away from treating silence as an immediate indicator of disengagement.



### Modifying Instructional Practices

The classroom responses that initially confused DM gradually influenced the way she structured instruction. She began to reduce the formality of her classroom language, gave shorter directions, and allowed students to draw on more than one language when responding. She also used a small number of Filipino expressions to reduce interactional distance, while still maintaining English as the central instructional medium. In the second interview, DM connected these changes with a more active classroom atmosphere.

*“I stopped trying to sound like a textbook. I learned a few Filipino words, such as *salamat* and *opo*. I told them they could answer in English or Filipino. It was messy at first, but we started talking more.”* (DM, INT-2)

The changes were also visible in her written planning. RJ-10 recorded her decision to shorten directions after noticing that students responded more readily when an instruction was followed by a concrete example. In LP-03, a longer discussion activity was revised into a sequence of teacher modelling, pair preparation, and short group sharing; subsequent plans (LP-04–LP-08) incorporated examples connected to students’ daily surroundings. DM recalled one lesson in which she set aside the original activity and used the Iloilo River as a vocabulary prompt because it offered a familiar reference point for the class.

*“I left the lesson plan for that morning and drew the Iloilo River on the board. I asked them what they saw on the way to school. They began calling out words, mixed together, and one student asked me how to write ‘market’ in English.”* (DM, INT-2)

This account corresponded with WB-04–WB-10, which included shorter written prompts, locally recognisable examples, and student-generated vocabulary that differed from the more formal wording evident in the earlier records. The artefacts therefore support the reported shift from a pre-planned activity sequence toward more responsive task design. Rather than representing a single replacement method, the adjustments involved changes in language choice, pacing, task order, and opportunities for participation.

### Reframing Teaching

The placement also affected how DM later described the purpose of pedagogical preparation. She did not reject the methods learned at university, but she no longer treated them as sufficient guides for every classroom situation. Her final interview placed greater emphasis on observing students and revising a plan when the classroom called for a different response. This change is evident in the contrast she drew between her earlier expectations and her later understanding of teaching.

*“Before I went there, I thought following what I learned at university was enough. After being in that classroom, I do not think that way anymore. The method is not the main thing; the students are.”* (DM, INT-3)

The later journal entries provided a contemporaneous record of this developing orientation. RJ-17–RJ-20 repeatedly linked changes in lesson implementation with attention to learner responses and classroom conditions. In RJ-18, DM reflected that quietness should not be immediately treated as a lack of interest because students might require time, examples, or a less public route into participation. Her final interview expressed a similar position, as she described asking what silence might mean before deciding how to invite students into the lesson.

*“Now, when students are quiet, I do not immediately think they are not engaged. I ask what their silence might mean and what different way I can use to invite them into the lesson.”* (DM, INT-3)

Table 2 condenses the recurring patterns across the four themes by linking classroom conditions with DM’s documented responses. Whereas Table 1 identifies the evidence base for each theme, Table 2 shows how the reported experiences appeared across the placement without presenting them as a rigid developmental sequence. Several patterns overlapped, and communication-related uncertainty continued even after instructional changes had begun. The table therefore provides a descriptive bridge to the conceptual interpretation developed in the *Discussion* section.

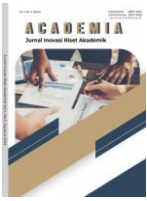
**Table 2. Recurring Patterns of Adaptation Across the Placement**

Reported Pattern	Classroom Condition or Event	Participant Response	Supporting Evidence
Initial communication-related difficulty	Unfamiliar pronunciation, expressions, and interactional rhythm	Reported confusion, embarrassment, and uncertainty during early lessons	INT-2; RJ-01–RJ-05; WB-01–WB-03
Reconsideration of classroom responses	Silence, brief replies, and delayed participation during activities	Questioned initial assumptions, observed student responses, and sought contextual information	INT-2; RJ-04–RJ-09; MN-01–MN-02
Instructional adjustment	Need to revise instructions, activity pacing, and lesson examples	Simplified language, permitted multilingual responses, and incorporated local contexts	INT-2; RJ-08–RJ-16; LP-03–LP-08; WB-04–WB-10
Later reflection on teaching	Repeated changes in lesson implementation and learner participation	Described teaching as responsive to learners and classroom conditions	INT-3; RJ-15–RJ-20

As shown in Table 2, the evidence does not depict adaptation as a one-directional movement from difficulty to resolution. Communication concerns continued to shape later decisions, while reflections on student participation informed changes in task design and instructional language. The reported responses were formed through repeated encounters with classroom conditions, not through a single successful adjustment. These findings provide the empirical basis for examining the relationship among dissonance, contextual interpretation, pedagogical improvisation, and professional reflection in the subsequent *Discussion* section.

## Discussion

DM’s early encounters with pronunciation, classroom expressions, and interactional rhythm indicate that a shared instructional language did not automatically create shared understanding. English operated as a common resource, yet its use was shaped by local speech patterns, classroom routines, and participants’ prior communicative experiences. From an *English as a Lingua Franca* perspective, the difficulty should not be read as a deficit in either DM’s or the students’ English; mutual intelligibility had to be built through accommodation, clarification, and sensitivity to context. Her embarrassment and uncertainty therefore marked the collapse of an unexamined assumption that English would function in the same way across classrooms. This interpretation extends preparation-oriented discussions of the *SEA-Teacher* programme, which often emphasise communication readiness and adaptation before departure,



by showing that readiness is continually tested and reconstructed during classroom interaction (Febriyanti et al., 2025; Rifki & Ramalia, 2025).

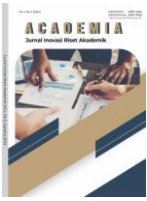
International teaching practicum may offer professional growth, but the present findings suggest that growth does not begin with confidence or proceed through a smooth trajectory. Barlaman and Umamah (2025) portray international practicum as a meaningful setting for cross-cultural learning and professional development among Indonesian pre-service teachers. DM's experience supports that potential while drawing attention to the uncomfortable interpretive labour that precedes it. Rather than immediately viewing unfamiliar English use as a problem located in students' speech, she gradually recognised that her own expectations about pronunciation, fluency, and classroom interaction also required adjustment. Short-term mobility can therefore be understood as a compressed professional encounter in which teachers must continue teaching while revising the assumptions that organise their instructional decisions.

The accounts of student quietness introduce a second layer of interpretation. DM initially associated silence and brief replies with incomplete understanding or limited willingness to participate, but later began to consider whether her instructions, the public nature of the activity, or the interactional conditions of the classroom influenced students' responses. This shift reflects the movement from a narrow behavioural reading of participation toward a more culturally responsive interpretation of classroom interaction. Hur et al. (2024) similarly show that short-term overseas experiences can foster intercultural competence and cultural responsiveness among teachers. Their study, however, involved in-service teachers, whereas DM was still developing basic professional confidence as a pre-service teacher; she had to negotiate cultural uncertainty while learning to manage a classroom for the first time. Because this study draws on one participant's account, student silence cannot be fixed as a cultural characteristic of Philippine learners; it is better understood as a classroom signal whose meaning required contextual interpretation.

This reconsideration of silence became pedagogically consequential because DM began changing the conditions under which participation was invited. She shortened directions, offered examples before expecting responses, and created less demanding routes into pair or group work. Such adjustments resonate with multicultural foreign-language teaching, which encourages teachers to attend to learner diversity and revise interactional practices accordingly (Failasofah & Habibi, 2024). Yet the present case differs from training-oriented initiatives in which inclusive strategies are introduced as planned techniques before classroom use. DM's responses emerged from immediate uncertainty, where silence could not be assigned one stable meaning and where teaching decisions had to be made before she possessed complete contextual knowledge. The finding suggests that cultural responsiveness involves not only knowing strategies but also sustaining interpretive openness when classroom behaviour remains ambiguous.

The revisions visible in DM's lesson plans and whiteboard records further illuminate the pedagogical significance of multilingual resources. Allowing students to respond in English or Filipino, simplifying instructions, and drawing on familiar references did not displace English from the lesson. Instead, these changes widened access to English learning by allowing students to use available linguistic resources while constructing meaning. Zhou et al. (2025) describe how a translanguaging orientation can connect learning, research, and practice in the preparation of pre-service language teachers. DM's experience parallels that orientation but emerged under markedly different conditions: rather than participating in a sustained learning–research–practice ecology, she developed tentative multilingual practices during a one-month





placement with limited time for systematic inquiry. This contrast suggests that short-term international mobility may trigger awareness of multilingual pedagogy, whereas longer institutional support is needed to consolidate that awareness into an enduring professional repertoire.

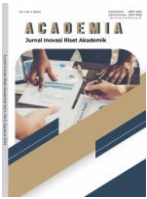
The use of the Iloilo River and other locally recognisable references also represented more than an effort to make activities more engaging. It altered the source of classroom knowledge by allowing students' surroundings and everyday experience to shape the language lesson. Mulyadi et al. (2025) demonstrate that culturally grounded materials can foster cross-cultural understanding through digital animated folklore, while DM's adaptation took the form of immediate classroom improvisation rather than a designed media intervention. The distinction highlights that culturally responsive practice may be produced in the moment, especially when teachers treat local knowledge as a legitimate instructional resource. Septian (2025) reports that student exchange can enhance multicultural values, but the present findings clarify how such values may enter pedagogy: they influence what is selected as an example, whose experiences are recognised, and how learners are invited to contribute.

The later reframing of teaching can be interpreted through transformative learning and professional identity development. DM did not reject the pedagogical methods introduced in her university courses; she repositioned them as resources that must be interpreted in relation to learners, interactional conditions, and the changing flow of a lesson. Huang and Wang (2024) describe professional identity transformation among pre-service teachers as a process of negotiating positions, capabilities, willingness, and contextual relations. The present case adds an international *lingua franca* dimension to this process because DM's professional self-understanding was shaped by her position as an Indonesian visitor in a Philippine classroom, not only by university expectations or mentor feedback. Novitasari et al. (2026) likewise situate the early development of teacher identity within a sociocultural landscape, and DM's experience reinforces the view that identity develops through participation in social relations around language, authority, and learner engagement.

Across the four themes, the proposed *Adaptive Navigation Cycle* offers a context-sensitive account of how short-term international teaching may be experienced. Dissonance did not end before contextual interpretation began, and instructional improvisation did not conclude reflection; these processes repeatedly informed one another as DM faced new classroom situations. The model is therefore proposed as a conceptual account derived from this single case, rather than as a universal sequence applicable to all international teaching placements. It complements programme-level efforts to broaden participation in *SEA-Teacher* (Rifki & Ramalia, 2025) and pre-departure initiatives focused on communication and adaptation (Febriyanti et al., 2025), while directing attention to support that continues during the placement itself. Teacher education programmes may strengthen such placements through structured reflective journals, regular cross-border mentor conversations, and guided opportunities to discuss multilingual scaffolding and ambiguous classroom responses while they are still unfolding.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined how an Indonesian pre-service English teacher experienced communicative and pedagogical dissonance, developed adaptive responses, and reconsidered her pedagogical beliefs during a one-month *SEA-Teacher* placement in a Philippine *lingua franca* classroom. The findings show that adaptation did not occur through a linear progression from difficulty to competence. Instead, unfamiliar English use, uncertainty surrounding student



silence, adjustments to instructional language and activities, and later reflection formed interconnected processes that repeatedly shaped one another. These processes informed the proposed *Adaptive Navigation Cycle*, which describes adaptation as the ongoing movement between encountering dissonance, interpreting contextual meanings, improvising responsive pedagogical action, and reconstructing professional understanding through reflection. Within this case, the placement became educationally meaningful not simply because the participant taught in another country, but because classroom uncertainty prompted her to reconsider how language, participation, local knowledge, and teacher authority should be understood in practice.

The study suggests that short-term international teaching placements may support early shifts in pedagogical perspective when participants receive opportunities to observe carefully, reflect systematically, and discuss classroom dilemmas with informed mentors. For the *SEA-Teacher* programme, preparation may be strengthened through practical orientation to *English as a Lingua Franca* communication, structured reflective-journal protocols, culturally responsive lesson-planning activities, and regular cross-border mentor debriefings during the placement rather than only before departure. The proposed *Adaptive Navigation Cycle* should be regarded as a context-sensitive conceptual account derived from one participant in one Philippine school, not as a universal model of teacher adaptation. Its further development requires comparative studies involving participants from different sending institutions and host countries, alongside longitudinal inquiry that follows changes in teaching practice and professional identity before departure, during placement, and after return. Such work could also evaluate whether reflective-journal protocols and mentor-supported dialogue help transform short-term mobility from temporary international exposure into sustained professional learning.

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