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Trapped in a Domestic Posture? Exploring the International Posture of Pre-service Primary School Teachers in Türkiye



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Abstract

This study investigates the International Posture (IP) of pre-service primary school teachers in Türkiye who are preparing to teach English in schools lacking specialized English teachers. IP, originally defined by Yashima (2002) as interest in international affairs, willingness to work or study abroad, readiness to interact with people from other cultures, and openness toward different cultures, is a motivational construct linked to communicative confidence and global outlook. In this mixed-methods study, 200 participants completed a Turkish version of Yashima's (2009) IP scale (20 items across sub-dimensions such as international vocation interest, news interest, and intercultural approach/avoidance), and a subset volunteered for semi-structured interviews. Survey results showed generally low IP scores, indicating limited interest in global engagement (e.g. low desire to live abroad or follow international news). Interview themes included a focus on exam-oriented learning and local contexts, limited exposure to English media, and anxiety about intercultural communication patterns consistent with what Yashima terms a "domestic posture." These findings echo recent Turkish research where even English-major undergraduates exhibited "relatively limited" global orientation and align with evidence from other EFL contexts. In the context of intercultural communication education, we discuss how the predominantly monolingual environment and pedagogical practices may constrain IP, and we suggest curriculum reforms and experiential learning (e.g. content-based instruction on global issues, study abroad or virtual exchange) to foster pre-service teachers' global awareness. Implications for teacher training and education policy are considered, and future research directions are proposed.

Keywords: International posture, intercultural competence, pre-service teachers, primary education, English language teaching

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Data Availability Statement: All relevant data are within this paper.

Introduction

In today's globalized world, language education is expected not only to build linguistic skills but also to develop intercultural awareness, a global outlook and L2 vision in both teachers and learners. In Türkiye, English became a compulsory subject in primary education in 1997 (introduced from Grade 4 onward). However, the rapid curriculum change outpaced the supply of specialist language teachers: the country was not equipped with enough qualified English teachers to implement the new English curriculum (Şevik, 2011). As a result, generalist primary school teachers (GPSTs) are typically assigned to teach English, often in "unified-classroom" primary schools (small multigrade schools in rural areas where one teacher instructs multiple grades) due to the lack of specialist English teachers. As pre-service teachers they received only a modest introduction to English teaching methodology in their teacher education programs, yet they will be expected to lead English lessons in mostly monolingual environments. In this context, the degree to which they hold an international posture, an attitude of openness to the world beyond their immediate community, may be crucial for how they perceive the value of English and model intercultural competence for their future pupils.

International Posture (IP) is a concept introduced by Yashima (2002) to capture learners' attitudinal orientation towards using English as a global lingua franca. It encompasses both integrative and instrumental aspects of motivation. Yashima (2002, 2009) notes that for many EFL learners, English functions as "a window open to the world" rather than a means to join a specific overseas group. Thus, IP includes willingness to make friends with or work alongside people from other countries, interest in international news and activities, and openness to cultural diversity. Crucially, high IP implies a readiness to use English to "meet people and explore possibilities of working overseas." Conversely, learners with low IP exhibit what Yashima terms a domestic posture, an inward-looking stance, sometimes described as "uchimuki" or risk-averse, preferring the safety of familiar settings over global engagement (Willey, 2023).

IP has been linked to other motivational constructs in L2 learning. Studies show that high-IP learners tend to have stronger Ideal L2 Selves and willingness to communicate (WTC) in English. For example, Kormos and Csizer (2008) found IP to be the most robust predictor of learners' Ideal L2 self across age groups, and Lamb (2012) similarly observed that IP significantly boosts motivation and varies with learners' exposure to international contexts. In Türkiye, recent research by Zaimoğlu and Dağtaş (2024) and Demir (2025) using Yashima's framework reported that even English-major undergraduates showed "relatively limited" global orientation, often preferring to remain in local contexts rather than seek international engagement. That study also identified exposure to English as a key factor that strengthens IP via greater motivation. Such findings suggest that in Türkiye's predominantly monolingual educational environment, pre-service teachers may similarly hold modest international outlooks.

Beyond IP, the broader notion of intercultural competence underscores the skills and attitudes necessary for effective cross-cultural interaction. Intercultural competence involves knowledge, attitudes, and skills that support communication in diverse cultural settings. Attitudinally, it is characterized by respect, curiosity, and openness toward other cultures, which foster adaptability, flexibility, and empathy. In language teacher education, cultivating these attributes is seen as essential for preparing teachers to guide students in a globalized world. European frameworks (e.g. Council of Europe, 2021) advocate developing learners' plurilingual and pluricultural competences, encouraging teachers to value students' full linguistic repertoires rather than enforcing monolingual norms. Indeed, recent work in the Turkish context notes that educators are beginning to challenge the country's official policy stipulating Turkish as the sole language of instruction, arguing for educational approaches that

leverage all teachers' and learners' language resources (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, 1973). This shift aligns with the perspective that even learners in monolingual settings should be exposed to global content and intercultural perspectives.

Given this background, our study asks: What is the level of IP among pre-service primary school teachers in a Turkish university, and what factors underlie that posture? To examine their global orientation and L2 vision, we employ a mixed-methods design: a quantitative survey using Yashima's (2009) International Posture Scale (IPS), followed by qualitative interviews to explore attitudes and beliefs in depth. This approach allows us to quantify IP levels and contextualize them with personal narratives.

Literature Review

International Posture: Since its introduction, IP has been widely studied as a motivational variable in L2 learning. Yashima (2002) designed a multi-dimensional scale to operationalize IP. The scale's subscales capture an intercultural approach/avoidance tendency, interest in international professional/vocational opportunities, interest in international news, and the desire to have "things to communicate with the world." These items reflect both social (friendship) and pragmatic (career) motivations, integrating Gardner's integrativeness with instrumentality in an internationalized context. Notably, IP does not presume a specific target L2 community; rather, it measures openness to the global use of English (or any L2) as a lingua franca. As such, high-IP learners imagine joining "an international community" via English, with the goal of communicating meaningfully across cultures. By contrast, low-IP individuals may regard English study as purely academic or exam-focused, without linking it to wider intercultural engagement.

Empirical research shows that IP is positively associated with various motivational factors. For instance, Kormos and Csizér (2008) and later Csizér and Kormos (2009) demonstrated that IP significantly predicted learners' Ideal L2 self (the vision of oneself as a competent speaker) and general motivation. In these models, learners with higher IP were more likely to envision an internationalized future self and to actively invest effort in learning. Taylan (2017) similarly found a strong link between IP and Turkish learners' ideal L2 identities. Additionally, research in informal learning contexts suggests that learners with higher IP are more inclined to seek out English media and communities. Alnajashi's (2024) study of female Saudi university students found that those with higher IP engaged more often in online informal English learning activities, viewing them as a means to connect with the global English-speaking community. In that study, overall IP was described as "relatively restricted," paralleling our setting.

Conversely, several investigations report generally low to moderate IP in EFL learner populations from monolingual or conservative cultures. For example, Alrashidi and Phan (2015) observed low IP levels among Saudi female students, noting that cultural norms and limited international experiences contributed to an inward-looking stance. This pattern resonates with what Yashima calls a "domestic posture," an orientation observed in her Japanese EFL participants—though Japanese students did value English, many were risk-averse about intercultural communication. It appears that when education emphasizes grammar and exam scores rather than global content, learners' IP may remain underdeveloped.

Intercultural Competence in Teacher Education: Preparing teachers for intercultural communication involves more than language skills; it requires fostering attitudes and competencies that enable teachers to integrate global perspectives into their teaching. Deardorff (2006) and others define intercultural competence as encompassing respect, openness, and curiosity, attitudes that lead to skills such as flexibility and empathy. For language teachers, this means not only understanding cultural differences

but also modelling intercultural awareness for students. In the European context, the Council of Europe's framework (2021) emphasizes plurilingual and pluricultural competence, expecting teachers to draw on all languages and cultures that learners bring to the classroom. While Türkiye has historically promoted a monolingual policy (Turkish) in schools, recent scholarship highlights the benefits of recognizing students' home languages and cultural backgrounds. Lytra and Gelir (2023) report that even in a Turkish-Kurdish context, educators actively negotiated the official "Turkish only" policy, arguing for curriculum reform to "leverage teachers and children's entire linguistic repertoires." This perspective implies that teacher education should not only tolerate but embrace multilingualism and global content.

For conceptual clarity, it is useful to distinguish intercultural competence (IC) from intercultural communicative competence (ICC). Byram (1997) defines IC as the ability to interact with people from another country and culture in one's own language, while ICC is the ability to do so in a foreign language context. In Byram's model of ICC, an individual with well-developed ICC can build relationships across cultures, communicate effectively while considering others' viewpoints, mediate between different cultural perspectives, and strive to continually develop intercultural understanding. Byram outlines five key savours of ICC: attitudes (curiosity and openness), knowledge (of others and of one-self), skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness. Other scholars have proposed compatible frameworks; for example, Chen and Starosta (1996) conceptualize ICC as comprising intercultural sensitivity (affective), intercultural awareness (cognitive), and intercultural effectiveness (behavioural skills). Despite variations in terminology, these models all highlight that beyond language proficiency, successful intercultural communication requires an open-minded attitude and adaptive skills.

From this perspective, Yashima's construct of IP can be viewed as aligning with the attitudinal dimension of intercultural competence. Yashima (2009) describes IP as an openness to the world through English, capturing a learner's willingness to engage internationally. Recent work has accordingly interpreted IP as a facet of intercultural competence. For instance, Willey (2023) notes that learners with low IP tend to exhibit a domestic posture, an inward-looking orientation antithetical to intercultural openness. Similarly, Yashima and Nishida (2024), in developing a short-form IP scale, underscore IP's utility as an indicator of learners' intercultural orientation. In our study, we interpret IP as a motivational construct that reflects, in part, a nascent intercultural competence, a readiness (or reluctance) to engage with people and ideas beyond one's immediate cultural context.

In practical terms, language teacher educators have suggested incorporating content- and task-based learning on international topics to build IP and intercultural skills. Yashima & Zenuk-Nishide (2008) showed that Japanese students exposed to CLIL-based 'global studies' content significantly increased their IP and willingness to communicate compared to peers in grammar-oriented classes. Modern textbooks often include global issues, and technology now allows intercultural communication opportunities through virtual exchange. Research into study-abroad and international programs consistently finds that direct cross-cultural experiences foster traits like openness and adaptability. However, in primary teacher training, especially in monolingual contexts, such opportunities are rare. Understanding current IP levels among pre-service teachers is a first step toward identifying curriculum needs.

Language Teacher Education in Monolingual Settings: In Türkiye, prospective primary teachers typically major in primary education and receive one or two semesters of English methodology. They generally have Turkish monolingual backgrounds, with little exposure to English outside the classroom. Research on primary EFL teaching in Türkiye confirms that most classroom English

teachers are generalists. Şevik (2011) notes that after MLPS (Modern Foreign Languages in Primary Schools) was mandated, the result was that generalist primary teachers ended up teaching English, often with minimal training. In unified-classroom schools, lack of specialized staff means that the question of who teaches MLPS remains a chronic issue. Şevik's case study in southern Türkiye found that primary school teachers can be effective if given adequate in-service support. However, preparatory IP or intercultural curriculum is not typically part of their training. Instead, the focus is on basics of language teaching and familiarity with the curriculum. In effect, these pre-service teachers may be completing their programs with limited motivation and orientation toward English as a global tool.

There is a gap in the literature regarding IP among primary pre-service teachers. Most IP studies have targeted university EFL majors or older learners. Given the policy context described above, it is important to investigate whether Türkiye's future PSTs hold an international posture that would enable them to inspire their students toward global engagement, or whether their outlook is primarily domestic. Our study addresses this gap by surveying and interviewing a cohort of Bozok University pre-service primary teachers, providing new data on IP in a largely monolingual educational setting.

Methodology

Participants

First, ethical approval for this research was obtained from the Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee of Yozgat Bozok University. All procedures were conducted in accordance with institutional guidelines, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. 200 pre-service primary school teachers who are studying in a state university in Türkiye participated in this study. These participants were either currently enrolled in or preparing to take the compulsory English Language Teaching in Primary Education course, which is included in the fourth-year curriculum of the undergraduate primary education program. The sample consisted of around 130 female and 70 male students, aged between 21 and 23, reflecting the typical demographic profile of Turkish primary teacher education cohorts. Participation was voluntary and anonymous with informed consent obtained from all individuals. All participants were first-language Turkish speakers with limited exposure to English beyond the classroom environment.

Instruments

International Posture Scale: Yashima's (2009) International Posture Scale (IPS), a 20-item questionnaire capturing the dimensions of IP was used. The IP scale encompasses four subdimensions: Intergroup Approach–Avoidance Tendency (6 items), Interest in International Vocation or Activities (6 items), Interest in International News (4 items), and Having Things to Communicate to the World (4 items). Items assess attitudes such as willingness to use English for international communication, interest in international news, desire to live/study abroad, and comfort with multicultural interactions. Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Example items include "I would like to live abroad for a short period of time" and "I often read international news in English." In line with prior research, we translated the IPS into Turkish using a back-translation procedure to ensure conceptual equivalence. A bilingual committee (including the author) performed the translation and back-translation, following established guidelines. The final Turkish version was pilot tested with a small group of students for clarity.

The overall scale showed good reliability in this study (Cronbach's $\alpha = .812$) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Cronbach's α Reliability Coefficients for the International Posture (IP) Scale and Its Subscales

Subscale	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Intergroup Approach–Avoidance Tendency	6	.78
Interest in International Vocation or Activities	6	.81
Interest in International News	4	.74
Having Things to Communicate to the World	4	.76
Overall IP Scale	20	.812

Interviews: After the survey, a purposive sample of 15 volunteers (10 females, 5 males) was selected to ensure a range of high-, mid-, and low-IP individuals, and they agreed to semi-structured interviews. These interviews explored participants' experiences learning English, their attitudes toward international cultures, and their aspirations regarding English use. Interview prompts included: "What does learning English mean to you?"; "Have you had any experiences abroad or with foreigners?"; and "How do you feel about using English to communicate with people from other countries?" Each interview lasted 20–30 minutes, was audio-recorded, and later transcribed.

Procedures

The questionnaire was administered by the course instructor during the regular class time, without the researcher present in the room. This approach was intended to integrate the data collection process into students' ordinary classroom routine, thereby reducing the likelihood that participants would perceive themselves as being under special observation. Minimizing this perception helped reduce the potential influence of the Hawthorne effect, where individuals may alter their responses when they feel they are being closely observed by a researcher. Participants were assured that their responses would remain confidential and that their answers would not affect their course grades. First, participants completed the IP survey, which took about 15 minutes. Surveys were anonymous and coded to link with interview responses for those who participated. Then, interviews were scheduled on a voluntary basis within the same week. Interviewees represented a range of IP scores (selected randomly from volunteers to avoid bias toward high or low scorers). The interviews were conducted by the author, in Turkish, to facilitate natural discussion. No time pressure was imposed, allowing interviewees to elaborate on their views.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis: Survey data ($n = 200$) were analysed using SPSS. We computed descriptive statistics for the overall IP score and subscale means. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) was calculated for the scale and sub-dimensions. Although the primary purpose was descriptive (to gauge overall IP levels), we also performed one-sample t-tests against the neutral midpoint (3.0) to determine if IP scores were significantly below or above moderate levels. Additionally, we examined item-level means to identify particular strengths or weaknesses (e.g. items reflecting interest in international news vs. willingness to live abroad).

Qualitative Analysis: Interview transcripts were analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) procedure. We first conducted open coding of the data, identifying recurring ideas related to international experiences, language attitudes, and perceived barriers. These codes were then grouped into higher-order themes. Two researchers independently coded a subset of transcripts to ensure

reliability, then reconciled differences through discussion. Thematic analysis was conducted. Three major themes were identified: (1) academic requirement-oriented motivation, (2) limited intercultural exposure, and (3) communication anxiety.

Findings

Survey Results: Low International Posture

Overall, Table 2 shows that the survey revealed low levels of IP among these pre-service primary school teachers. The mean overall IP score (averaging all items) was 2.25 (on the 1–5 scale), significantly below the neutral midpoint of 3.0 ($t(199) = -13.45$, $p < .001$). All four subscales of IP showed low means:

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for IP Subscales*

Subscale	Mean	SD
Intergroup Approach–Avoidance Tendency	2.10	0.60
Interest in International News	2.40	0.70
Interest in International Vocation or Activities	2.20	0.65
Things to Communicate with the World	2.30	0.68

Table 3. *One-Sample t-Test for Overall IP*

Scale	Mean	t-value	df	p-value
Overall IP	2.25	-13.45	199	<.001

Intercultural Approach–Avoidance: Mean $\approx$ 2.1. Items like “I am not really interested in becoming friends with people from other countries” (reverse-coded) had high agreement, indicating a tendency to avoid intercultural interactions.

International Vocations/Activities: Mean $\approx$ 2.2. Few participants strongly agreed with statements such as “I would like to work in an international environment.”

Interest in International News: Mean $\approx$ 2.4. Most respondents rarely followed global news; many skipped such items or marked “Neutral.”

Having “things to communicate” globally: Mean $\approx$ 2.3. Agreement with items about feeling motivated to have topics to share with foreigners was modest at best.

In short, participants generally did not express enthusiasm for international engagement through English. For example, only about 20% “agreed” or “strongly agreed” that they would like to live abroad even short-term, whereas roughly 60% “disagreed” or “strongly disagreed.” Similarly, most reported little familiarity with global issues beyond what was covered in class. Items measuring anxiety about speaking English (e.g. “I get nervous if I have to speak English with a foreigner”) were not part of the original IPS, but some participants volunteered comments during interviews (see below) reflecting such anxiety.

These quantitative findings are consistent with the notion of a domestic posture. On average, our sample's IP scores were comparable to or lower than those reported in similarly constrained contexts. For instance, Alrashidi and Phan (2015) found Saudi students' mean IP slightly below the midpoint. Similarly, Demir (2025) reported that Turkish pre-service EFL teachers exhibited limited international posture, often shaped by exam-oriented motivations and a lack of intercultural experiences. Zaimoğlu and Dağtaş (2024) also observed that Turkish EFL students demonstrated low engagement with global topics and international aspirations. In our study, the lower scores on international posture items particularly highlight an inward focus (agreeing with Yashima's description of IP as how "open to the world" one is). Moreover, the uniformly low response pattern suggests there was limited variability: the vast majority felt no compelling draw to foreign cultures or international careers.

Interview Themes

Table 4 and Figure 1 shed light on why IP was low in this group. To support the thematic analysis, we also examined the relative frequency with which each theme was mentioned across the 15 interview transcripts. 'Academic requirement-oriented motivation' was the most frequently observed theme, noted in 13 interviews. 'Limited intercultural exposure' was mentioned by 11 participants, while 'communication anxiety' emerged in 10 interviews. These frequencies suggest that the first theme is a predominant concern, reinforcing the quantitative findings of low international posture. Including frequency counts enhances the transparency of the qualitative analysis and supports the salience of these emergent patterns. As shown in Figure 1, academic requirement-oriented motivation was the most frequently mentioned theme.

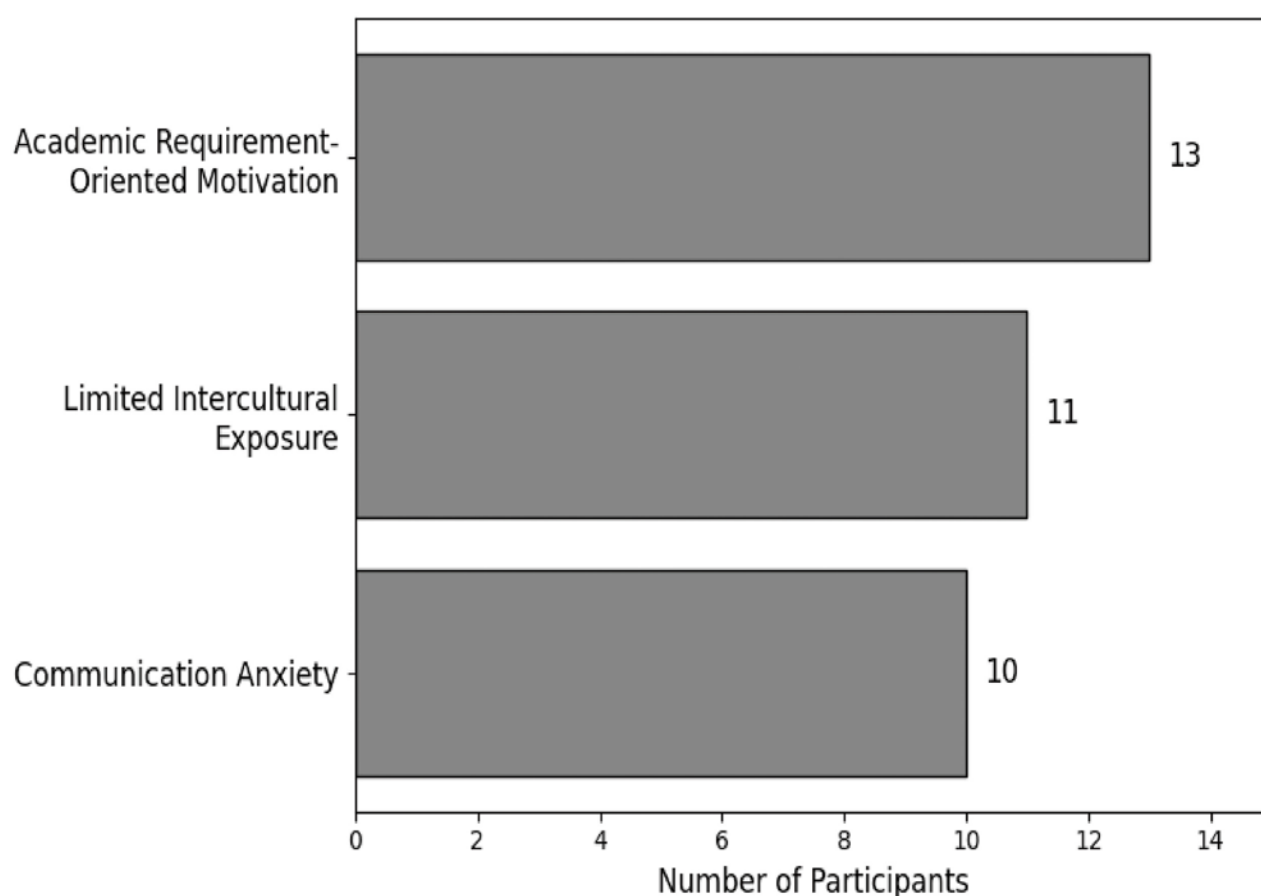


Figure 1 Frequency of Emergent Themes (Across 15 Interviews)

Table 4. *Thematic Analysis of Pre-service Primary Teachers' Interviews*

Theme	Definition (summary)	Sub-Themes (examples)
Academic Requirement-Oriented Motivation	Students perceive English primarily as a course they must pass in their final year, not as a skill needed professionally.	• Course completion motivation • Minimal long-term goals • English seen as irrelevant to career
Limited Intercultural Exposure	Little to no real-life interaction with foreign cultures; knowledge of other countries comes mostly from media.	• No study-abroad or exchange experience • Exposure only via media/textbooks • Abstract interest in other cultures
Communication Anxiety	High anxiety and fear about speaking English, leading to avoidance of communication in English.	• Nervousness in speaking English, even in class • Fear of mistakes and judgment • Low confidence in spontaneous use

Theme 1. Academic Requirement-Oriented Motivation: Rather than being driven by personal interest or future use of English, many participants reported studying English solely to pass their fourth-year methodology course. As English is not part of university entrance exams for primary education majors in Türkiye, students saw it as a temporary academic necessity. One student stated, “We have to take this course to graduate, so I try to pass it, but I don’t think I’ll use English much after that.” (P6) Another remarked, “English is not something I need for exams. I just need to complete this class and move on.” (P3) These responses suggest that English learning was viewed as short-term and non-essential to their broader professional goals.

Theme 2. Limited Intercultural Exposure: Students reported minimal real-life interaction with people from other cultures. Most gained information about other countries only through passive media consumption (TV, internet). “I’ve never been abroad or met foreigners. I only watch TV shows or use the internet to learn about other countries.” (P5) The lack of authentic intercultural experience appeared to limit students’ ability to develop a sense of international connectedness or global identity. This under-exposure contributes to the low level of IP observed (as described by Yashima, 2002).

Theme 3. Communication Anxiety: Participants commonly expressed anxiety and fear about speaking English, especially in spontaneous or real-life situations. One student admitted, “I feel so nervous that my mind goes blank when I have to speak English in class.” (P8) Others said they avoid using English for fear of making mistakes or being judged by peers. This communication apprehension reflects broader issues of low self-efficacy and lack of confidence, which can hinder the development of intercultural communication competence.

Overall, the interview themes indicate that these pre-service teachers’ engagement with English is shaped by short-term academic goals, insufficient intercultural exposure, and psychological barriers to communication. These findings align with previous literature linking low international posture to instrumental (exam-driven) motivation and foreign language anxiety (Yashima, 2002; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017).

Discussion

The findings provide important insights into the international posture and motivational orientations of pre-service primary school teachers in Türkiye. Quantitative results revealed that overall IP levels

were modest and skewed toward the lower end of the scale. Notably, the lowest means were in items reflecting intercultural willingness and global communication aspirations. These results mirror patterns found in prior studies conducted in similarly monolingual, exam-focused educational settings (Alrashidi & Phan, 2015; Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017; Demir, 2025). The data suggest that Turkish pre-service primary school teachers may possess what Yashima (2009) calls a domestic posture, a more inward-looking orientation shaped by limited global exposure and low communicative confidence.

The qualitative findings further contextualize this issue by uncovering three core themes: academic requirement-oriented motivation, limited intercultural exposure, and communication anxiety. Together, these themes suggest that the participants do not see English as an active tool for international communication but rather as a one-time requirement for academic progress. Despite some students expressing curiosity about other cultures, their opportunities to engage meaningfully with those cultures remain rare. Furthermore, their fear of speaking English—especially in public or unstructured settings that reinforces a reluctance to use the language in real or imagined intercultural interactions.

In the framework of intercultural communication education, these results highlight a gap in the efficacy of current language education policies in preparing generalist primary school teachers for English instruction. Willey (2023) emphasizes that IP reflects how prepared learners are “to use English to meet people, [to] explore possibilities of working overseas.” The students in our sample appear largely unprepared in this sense. Theoretical models of intercultural competence underscore that developing openness, and a global perspective requires exposure and reflective learning—conditions that seem scarce in our context. Consistent with research on the benefits of intercultural learning, some participants did indicate in interviews that they enjoy encountering foreign cultures (e.g. via media or travel) but have had few opportunities to do so. Yashima’s work suggests that even classroom curricula can foster IP if global content is integrated. For example, Japanese students who studied global issues through content-based classes showed significant increases in IP compared to peers in grammar-only classes (Yashima, 2009). By analogy, incorporating international themes into the primary teacher education curriculum (e.g. projects on global topics in the methodology course) could gradually increase Turkish pre-service teachers’ openness. If IP is considered an important aspect of a global-minded teacher identity (Yashima, 2009; Deardorff, 2006), then deliberate efforts must be made to build motivation, reduce anxiety, and expand intercultural engagement for this group.

Policy and Curriculum Implications: Based on our findings, we recommend that teacher education programs and educational authorities consider the following:

- **Integrate Global Content in Methodology Courses:** Rather than limiting English pedagogy courses to linguistic form and local teaching techniques, include modules on international culture, current events, and global issues. Teaching materials should not be culturally neutral; as Yashima (2009) advocates, content can give students “things to communicate” about. Even at the primary level, teacher candidates could engage in projects on simple global themes (e.g. environmental issues, cultural festivals) to start building IP.
- **Encourage Intercultural Interactions:** Wherever possible, create opportunities for pre-service teachers to use English with non-Turkish speakers. This could be through student exchange programs (even virtual exchanges), guest lectures by international educators, or online collaboration with peers abroad. Research on study abroad and international exchange programs shows such experiences promote greater openness and empathy (Richards & Doorenbos, 2016). For those unable to travel, participation in global online communities or virtual classroom projects can be a viable alternative (Alnajashi, 2024).

- **Leverage Learners' Linguistic Repertoires:** Even in predominantly Turkish-speaking classrooms, educators should acknowledge any bilingual or multilingual resources students have. For example, if some teacher candidates have learned a second foreign language, those skills can be valued as gateways to understanding other cultures. Discussing students' own diverse language/cultural backgrounds during training may also increase their empathy for future multilingual pupils, aligning with calls to recognize and leverage all linguistic resources in education (Council of Europe, 2001; Lytra & Gelir, 2023).
- **Support Affective Readiness:** Given the prevalent anxiety about using English, teacher training should explicitly address confidence-building. Incorporating role-plays, informal conversation practice, and presentations in English can help reduce fear of speaking. As Yashima (2009) notes, even simple communication tasks (e.g. telling a story about one's hobby) can gradually build willingness to communicate. By guiding pre-service teachers to reflect on their attitudes and fears, teacher educators can help shift a "domestic posture" toward a more open stance.

At the policy level, our study suggests that compulsory English education in primary schools will be most effective if the teachers themselves develop an international posture. Ministries and universities might consider including intercultural competence training or experiences as part of pre-service teacher preparation for all teachers, not just English specialists. In the long term, fostering IP in primary teachers could produce a multiplier effect: teachers with a global outlook are more likely to inspire their pupils to see English as a tool for engaging with the world, rather than just another subject.

Limitations and Future Research: This study has limitations. Its scope was restricted to one university in central Türkiye, and although the sample size ($n \approx 200$) is robust for a single-site survey, the findings may not generalize to all regions or institutions. Also, the IP measure relied on self-report and might be subject to social desirability bias or misinterpretation of items. Future research could incorporate behavioural measures of international engagement (e.g. tracking participation in international projects) or include in-service teachers for comparison. Longitudinal studies would be valuable to see if IP changes after specific interventions (such as a cross-cultural curriculum module). Comparative studies across countries could also illuminate cultural factors influencing IP.

Additionally, while our interviews identified plausible reasons for low IP, more in-depth qualitative work (e.g. focus groups or narrative inquiries) could further explore how teachers' own schooling and life experiences shape their attitudes toward international engagement. Finally, it would be worthwhile to examine whether teachers' low IP translates into less globally oriented teaching practices in their future classrooms, and conversely whether higher IP teachers adopt more internationally minded pedagogies.

Conclusion

This study provided the first empirical look at international posture among Turkish pre-service primary school teachers. Using Yashima's IP scale and follow-up interviews, we found that teacher candidates generally exhibit a low level of international posture. They tend to view English as an academic subject rather than a means of engaging with the wider world, aligning with Yashima's notion of a domestic posture. Their motivations center on local concerns (passing exams, securing jobs in Türkiye) rather than on international experiences. These findings echo similar research with Turkish learners of English, reinforcing that simply increasing exposure to English in the curriculum does not automatically foster intercultural openness.

Within the framework of intercultural communication education, our results highlight a need to enrich teacher preparation with international and intercultural perspectives. Enhancing teachers' IP could have a multiplier effect: globally minded teachers are likely to raise globally minded students. We recommend incorporating global content and intercultural pedagogy into primary teacher education, as well as creating opportunities (even if virtual) for pre-service teachers to engage in cross-cultural exchanges. Educational policymakers should recognize that in a multilingual, interconnected world, preparing all teachers with at least a basic international outlook is as important as their subject-matter training.

Future research should build on this baseline by testing curriculum interventions aimed at increasing IP. For example, implementing a content-based 'global studies' module within the teacher training program and measuring its impact on IP over time would be informative. Additionally, exploring other affective or background factors (e.g. personality traits, prior travel experience, media consumption habits) that influence IP in this population would deepen our understanding of how to cultivate a more international posture in the next generation of primary teachers.

Ultimately, our mixed-methods study reveals that pre-service primary school teachers in this monolingual context currently hold a limited international posture. By identifying this gap, we can now work toward closing it through targeted educational reforms. Fostering a broader global outlook in these teachers will help better prepare their students for an interconnected world.

Declaration of Interest Statement

The author reports there are no competing interests to declare.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon request.

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