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Multicultural Literacy, Multicultural Efficacy, and Multicultural Education in ELT Teacher Preparation: An Integrative Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study of the literature aims to gather how the three conceptions have been defined and assessed in ELT research and particularly on pre-service teachers.

Methods and Materials: This study integrates the findings of 25 peer-reviewed publications published between 2015 and 2025, obtained via systematic searches in Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar, utilizing the technique provided by Torraco (2016) for integrative reviews. A flowchart based on PRISMA was developed to demonstrate the article selection process, intending to improve the understanding of the methodological requirements of an integrative review.

Findings: The synthesis revealed three trends. First, the research has been articulated in three friendly but largely separate academic traditions: socialcognitive theory-based research for multicultural efficacy, intercultural communication theory-based research for multicultural literacy, and multicultural education theory-based research for curriculum and educational strategies. Second, there have been few studies that have looked at the links between these concepts at the same time, leading to a limited knowledge of how they interact together in multicultural teacher education in ELT. Third, the review provides an integrated conceptual framework where multicultural literacy is the knowledge and awareness component, multicultural efficacy is the teachers' confidence in implementing culturally responsive practices, and multicultural education is the curricular and institutional context that supports the development of the two components.

Conclusion: Multicultural teacher preparation in ELT requires an integrated approach combining knowledge, efficacy, and institutional support. Future research should empirically test the proposed framework using longitudinal, mixed-method, and classroom-based designs.

Keywords: Multicultural Literacy, Multicultural Efficacy, Multicultural Education, Pre-Service Teachers, Teacher Education.

Introduction

English is a world language and classrooms of ELT are becoming more diverse in terms of culture, language and social background. So, pre-service English teachers need to acquire not just language teaching methods but also the knowledge, attitudes and skills to educate students from varied cultural backgrounds. Research shows that exposure to other cultures enhances language development and is a positive addition to students' welfare, stressing the necessity for intercultural competence in ELT environments (Tsang et al., 2024).

However, there is a developing demand and many ELT teacher preparation programs have not trained pre-service teachers to work in multi-cultural classrooms. Research has also found that the extent to which ethnic perspectives are incorporated into teacher training programs varies widely, leading to different levels of preparedness and self-assurance among pre-service teachers (Cherng & Davis, 2019; Ji et al., 2025). The findings show that intercultural training is often patchy. Teacher education programs tend to focus on certain elements of intercultural competence, but often do not provide a complete framework to link these elements together.

Multicultural competence is often discussed in the literature from three connected approaches: The first one is the multicultural efficacy which is the teachers' confidence to educate the culturally and linguistically diverse learners (Bakir, 2020; Cruz et al., 2020; Malo-Juvera et al., 2018; Yada et al., 2021). The second perspective is related to multicultural literacy and is based on the intercultural communication theory, which underlines the significance of teachers' competence to understand, interpret, and respond to cultural differences properly (Altan, 2018; Phongsirikul & Thongrin, 2019; Ruales et al., 2020). The third perspective is on multicultural education, which encompasses teachers' views, instructional practices, and their enactment of culturally responsive curriculum (Akcaoglu & Arsal, 2022; Yilmaz, 2016).

While these viewpoints cover different aspects of multicultural competence, they have mostly been studied separately. Beside, many of the existing tools and discussions were derived from general teacher education rather than specifically from ELT settings (Cesur, 2024; Erdem, 2020; Matsumura & Tatsuyama, 2024;

Ruales et al., 2020). Thus, while the current research contributes useful insights into each of the several categories, insufficient emphasis has been devoted to integrate these perspectives to better understand the multicultural preparation of pre-service ELT teachers. The review is not intended to imply that no earlier research have examined these links. Rather it is aimed to fill this vacuum, synthesizing material from various study disciplines to achieve a more comprehensive conceptual understanding.

Thus, this literature review aims to synthesize research on multicultural literacy, multicultural effectiveness and multicultural education in ELT to find out their essential principles and assess how data from different studies may be utilized to enrich teacher training. The research questions that drive the review will include: How have multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education been defined in studies related to ELT classrooms? Based on the combined evidence from prior research, what theoretical and practical connections can be identified among these three concepts, and how might they together enhance multicultural approaches in ELT settings? How can a unified conceptual framework incorporating multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education guide future research and teacher training practices?

The current study synthesizes the results of numerous relevant studies to give a unified viewpoint to provide a more integrated approach to multicultural training in English Language Teaching (ELT) teacher preparation.

Conceptual Framework

In this research, multicultural education, multicultural efficacy and multicultural literacy are conceptualized as linked but analytically separate categories that have developed from several theoretical frameworks and address different elements of teacher education in English Language Teaching (ELT).

Multicultural Education

Multicultural education forms the comprehensive institutional and instructional framework where teacher training programs encourage teaching that responds to diverse cultures. It mainly relies on Banks' theory of multicultural education, which focuses on integrating curricula, constructing knowledge, reducing biases, promoting equitable teaching practices, and creating an

empowering school environment. [Yılmaz \(2016\)](#) showed that teacher candidates generally had favorable views towards multiculturalism, while [Akcaoglu & Aarsal \(2022\)](#) and [Banks \(2012\)](#) indicated that well-structured multicultural classes enhanced both attitudes and teaching effectiveness. In this review, multicultural education refers to intentional curricular and programmatic initiatives aimed at building skills essential for classrooms that are culturally and linguistically diverse.

Multicultural Efficacy

Multicultural efficacy, based on Bandura's social cognitive theory, is often understood as culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy (CRTSE). It describes teachers' beliefs in their ability to design, execute, and modify lessons for learners from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Research shows that efficacy differs depending on specific teaching tasks and can influence teacher resilience ([Malo-Juvera et al., 2018](#); [Cruz et al., 2020](#); [Yada et al., 2021](#)). Thus, multicultural efficacy is characterized as teachers' assurance in utilizing multicultural knowledge and teaching methods in diverse ELT environments.

Multicultural Literacy

In this analysis, multicultural literacy is regarded as a unique concept instead of a broad term that includes intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, or multicultural competence. It specifically denotes the capacity to comprehend, interpret, and appropriately

interact with cultural and linguistic diversity within educational settings. This definition is based on theories of intercultural communication, particularly [Byram \(2020\)](#) and [Phongsirikul & Thongrin \(2019\)](#) concept of intercultural communicative competence alongside Chen and Starosta's model of intercultural sensitivity, which offer the theoretical basis for multicultural literacy but are not the same as these constructs. Therefore, multicultural literacy is seen as a dimension focused on knowledge and awareness that facilitates effective interactions with cultural diversity in English Language Teaching environments.

An Integrative Model

The literature reviewed indicates that multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education are conceptually linked, although their interactions have seldom been studied together in one empirical investigation. Various studies suggest that multicultural literacy may contribute to the growth of multicultural efficacy, while multicultural education offers the institutional framework that can enhance both concepts. However, existing evidence is mostly indirect, as most research looks at these concepts in isolation. Consequently, the integrative model put forward in this review should be seen as a conceptual amalgamation drawn from existing literature rather than as a scientifically validated causal chain. A summary of this framework is illustrated in [Table 1](#).

Table 1

Core Constructs, Theoretical Roots, and Representative ELT Studies

Construct	Working Definition	Theoretical Roots	Representative Studies
Multicultural Literacy	Cognitive, affective, and behavioral capacity to read, interpret, and respond to cultural/linguistic difference	Byram's ICC model; Chen & Starosta's intercultural sensitivity;	(Altan, 2018 ; Phongsirikul & Thongrin, 2019 ; Ruales et al., 2020)
Multicultural Efficacy	Belief in one's own capability to plan, deliver, and adapt instruction for diverse learners	Bandura's self-efficacy theory; culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy (CRTSE)	(Cruz et al., 2020 ; Malo-Juvera et al., 2018 ; Yada et al., 2021)
Multicultural Education	Curricular and programmatic mechanism that deliberately cultivates literacy and efficacy	Banks' multicultural education dimensions	(Akcaoglu & Aarsal, 2022 ; Ji et al., 2025 ; Yılmaz, 2016)

Methods and Materials

Research Design

This research utilized [Torraco \(2016\)](#) methodology for integrative literature reviews to amalgamate and analyze existing insights regarding multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education in

English Language Teaching (ELT). In alignment with Torraco's methods, the review focused on integrating concepts and advancing theory, rather than merely aggregating statistical results. For better transparency regarding the article selection process, a PRISMA flow diagram was employed solely as a reporting method;

nonetheless, the review did not adhere to the PRISMA guidelines as a structured systematic review protocol.

Literature searches were executed across four online databases: Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Searches involved combinations of keywords relevant to multicultural education, multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, self-efficacy, preservice

teachers, teacher education, and ELT. Boolean operators (AND, OR) facilitated the merging of search terms. The searches were applied to titles, abstracts, and keywords whenever the capabilities of the databases allowed. The records that were collected underwent screening based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in [Table 2](#).

Table 2

Torraco's 11 points for conducting an integrative literature review

Torraco's point	Our approach
Needs and Purpose of the review	It is conducted to expand understanding of the topics beyond the information provided in the initial literature sources, with the goal of review, update, and critiques those materials
Topic of the review	The topics of the review are limited in terms of self-efficacy, multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education in ELT classroom
Author's perspective	The authors' approach to crafting an integrative literature review focuses on delivering a thorough, organized, and analytical overview of the previous literature studies.
Organization and Structure	Conceptual structure is applied to organize this literature review. It is organized around the main concepts of the topics, research questions, research design, and the implications of these results
Discussion of research method	The discussion will encompass streams of related ideas in self-efficacy, multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education
Critical Analysis	it involves pinpointing research gaps, recognizing emerging trends, and enabling comparative studies to present a comprehensive understanding and evaluation of the subject area.
Synthesis	It builds toward a synthesis of ideas that offers new perspectives on self-efficacy, multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education, catalyzing further potential research.
Further Research	The result of its synthesis is intended to catalyze further potential research in the field of self-efficacy, multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education in ELT Classroom
Logic and conceptual reasoning	It examines the literature to discern patterns, trends, and gaps in the sources, which can offer a strong basis for comprehending and progressing the concepts of self-efficacy, multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education within the ELT classroom. This process includes deriving conclusions from the evidence provided in the literature and employing deductive and inductive reasoning to draw insights about the implications for further research and its practices.
Future of the topic	Based on the gaps identified in the review results, it will offer suggestions for future research, including new methodologies, research questions, or areas requiring further investigation.
Writing quality	the quality of the writing includes several essential components: a critical analysis of existing literature, the synthesis of new insights on the topic, a discussion of the conceptual reasoning employed to integrate the concepts and ideas from the literature, the implications of the review for additional research on the topic, and the review's suggestions for future directions in the field.

(Adapted from [Torraco, 2016](#))

Table 3

Key Search Terms

Type of search term	Terms used
Multicultural Terms	"Attitude and efficacy in multicultural classroom", "Intercultural communication in ELT classroom", "Multicultural education"
Literacy terms	"Multicultural literacy", "read", "write", "understanding"
Self-efficacy assessment	"self-efficacy", "multicultural efficacy", "multicultural efficacy assessment"
Population terms	"Preservice teachers", "prospective teachers", "teacher preparation", "teacher training", "English education", "teaching practicum"

Key search terms are presented in [Table 3](#). Records identified through these searches were then screened

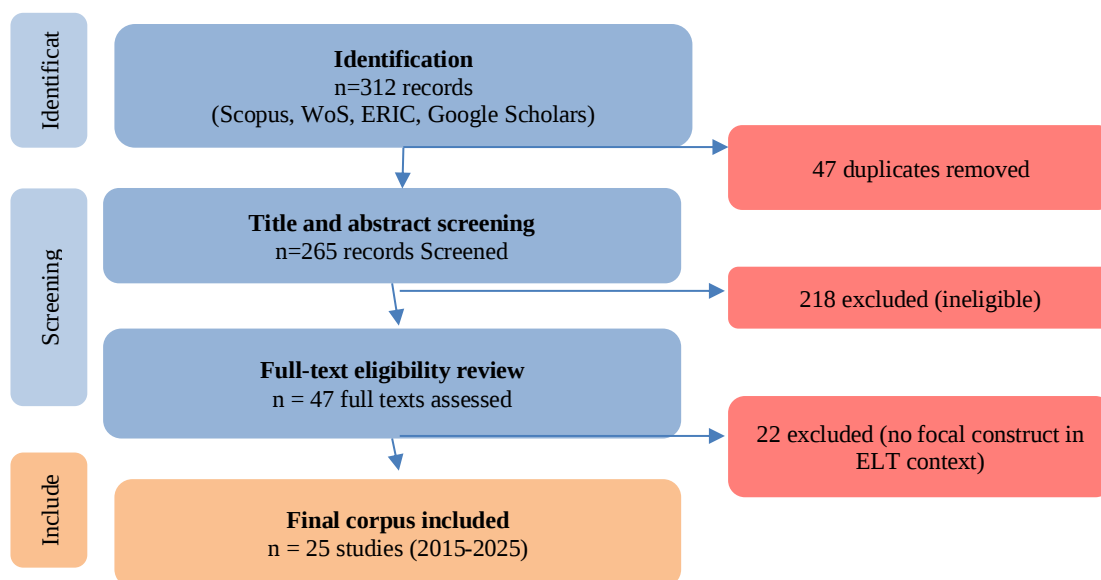
against the inclusion and exclusion criteria summarized in [Table 4](#).

Table 4*Specific Criteria*

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Time Period	2015-2025	Research studies outside the dates
Language	English	Non-English studies
Type of articles	peer-reviewed articles	not-peer reviewed articles
Study focus	Undergraduate students in teacher preparation programs; ELT classroom	Articles not discussing undergraduate teachers or ELT practices
Literature focus	Articles that defined and addressed on the multicultural efficacy and, and multicultural education within a multicultural literacy classroom	the articles that did not offer the definition of these themes; articles that were purely theoretical and did not provide a teaching practice; those that did not reference a multicultural literacy in ELT classroom context
Population and sample	Preservice teachers	in-service teachers

Studies eligible for review included peer-reviewed journal articles written in English and published between 2015 and 2025 that examined at least one of the three central concepts within ELT teacher education. While the main emphasis of this review was on preservice teachers, certain studies with mixed samples of preservice and in-service educators were included

when findings for preservice teachers were presented separately or when the information significantly contributed to the theoretical development of the targeted constructs. Research that did not relate to ELT, non-peer-reviewed sources, and articles not discussing any of the focal topics were excluded.

**Figure 1**

The selection process for this integrative review (Adapted from PRISMA flow diagram)

A modified PRISMA flow diagram of article selection is shown in Figure 1. Database searches yielded 312 hits, with 47 of them being duplicates. The remaining 265 submissions were reviewed by titles and abstracts and 218 studies were discarded. Then, 47 full-text articles were screened for eligibility. 22 papers were omitted

because they were not focused enough on the review goal or did not match the inclusion criteria. This yielded a final set of 25 papers for further investigation.

For each paper included in the review, we categorized the following: publication characteristics, theoretical framework, research approach, participants, main

findings, and implications. Coding was performed independently by two authors, with disagreements resolved via discussion until consensus was reached (inter-rater agreement > 85%).

The objective of this research was conceptual synthesis, rather than the evaluation of evidence quality, and hence no formal examination of the methodological quality of each study was conducted. The study, instead, made critical comparisons of theoretical viewpoints, methodological aspects and research outcomes across the studied publications. However, majority of the examined articles (76%) were published in Q1 or Q2

indexed journals, which gives greater confidence in the overall dependability of the synthesis data, although this is not a replacement for rigorous quality grading.

Findings and Results

A systematic integrative evaluation of 25 publications in Table 5 was performed. The synthesis is organized around the three constructs identified in the conceptual framework (research question 1), followed by a transversal study of the relationships between them (research question 2).

Table 5

Summary of Reviewed Studies (N = 25)

Study	Primary Focus	Method	Key Finding
(Medina et al., 2015)	Education	surveys, interviews, and reflections	Study abroad shifted PSTs' perceptions of ELLs
(Yilmaz, 2016)	Education	Qualitative case study	Candidates view multiculturalism positively but need explicit cultivation
(Soo & Goh, 2017)	Literacy	Survey + FGD	Eight dominant reticent beliefs identified in EAP participation
(He et al., 2017)	Education	Mixed methods	Intercultural growth not automatic; reflection essential
(Altan, 2018)	Literacy	Quantitative	Moderate, uneven intercultural sensitivity among ELT PSTs
(Senyshyn, 2018)	Literacy	Qualitative longitudinal	Perspective transformation through intercultural engagement
(Malo-Juvera et al., 2018)	Efficacy	Mixed (Q-factor)	Low efficacy for ELL communication and cultural infusion
(Cruz et al., 2020)	Efficacy	Survey	High relational efficacy; low linguistic-validation efficacy
(Cherng & Davis, 2019)	Education	Large-scale quantitative	Awareness varies by race and experience; linked to competence
(Smits & Janssenswillen, 2020)	Literacy	Qualitative case study	High awareness but divergent classroom practices
(Phongsirikul & Thongrin, 2019)	Literacy	Mixed methods	Significant gains in self-assessed intercultural awareness
(Bakir, 2020)	Efficacy	Survey	Above-average efficacy; differences by year level
(Cho et al., 2020)	Efficacy	Multi-method	Low EL-communication efficacy; field experience key
(Erdem, 2020)	Education	Instrument development	Validated 3-factor multicultural competence scale
(Ruales et al., 2020)	Literacy	Scale development	Validated 28-item, 5-factor sensitivity scale
(Yada et al., 2021)	Efficacy	Survey	Self-efficacy predicts resilience
(Kolano & Sancier, 2022)	Education	Qualitative: Thematic Narrative Analysis	Digital storytelling transformed attitudes toward immigrants
(Chahar Mahali & Sevigny, 2022)	Efficacy	Culturally Responsive Teaching Self-Efficacy Scale (CRTSE)	Cross-cultural experience raises culturally responsive teaching self-efficacy; burnout lowers it
(Akcaoglu & Arsal, 2022)	Education	Quasi-experimental	Intervention raised both attitude and efficacy
(Cancino & Nuñez, 2023)	Literacy	Mixed methods	High awareness; limited ICC pedagogy in practice
(Matsumura & Tatsuyama, 2024)	Efficacy	An explanatory sequential design	Practicum raised efficacy; belief conflict observed
(Cesur, 2024)	Efficacy	exploratory sequential mixed method	Validated 20-item, 5-factor CLD efficacy scale
(Pevce-Zimmer et al., 2024)	Efficacy	Quasi-experimental mixed	Identity-based intervention raised CRTSE confidence
(Tsang et al., 2024)	Literacy	Mixed methods (Survey and Interview)	Intercultural participation yields psychological and linguistic benefits
(Ji et al., 2025)	Education	Systematic review	Uneven integration; low preparedness and self-efficacy

The final collection included 25 research articles published between 2015 and 2025. The majority of the research was conducted in Asia, especially in Türkiye, Thailand, Japan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, and Malaysia, while a number of studies came from North America, Europe, and Australia. The literature mainly focused on preservice teachers, even though a few

studies featured a mix of preservice and in-service teachers, with findings relevant to preservice teachers presented separately. Quantitative and mixed-methods studies were the most frequent designs whereas qualitative, quasi-experimental and systematic review were the least common types. The most common subject of the evaluated literature was multicultural efficacy

(n=9), followed by multicultural literacy (n=8) and intercultural education (n=8). [Table 5](#) provides an overview of the methodological aspects and significant results of the examined studies.

Conceptualizing Multicultural Literacy in ELT Research

Eight studies examined multicultural literacy, most often as intercultural awareness, intercultural sensitivity, or intercultural communication competence. The study revealed a strong trend that multicultural literacy was promoted via organized educational events rather than by exposure to cultural diversity alone. Improvements in cultural awareness and perspective taking were regularly related to intercultural efforts, reflection exercises and specifically designed ELT courses. However, in several investigations, a persistent discrepancy was identified between teachers' self-reported intercultural understanding and their actual classroom activities. Thus, multicultural literacy does not necessarily equate to successful teaching practices. In addition, most literacy research employed self-report measures and examined qualities such as intercultural sensitivity rather than directly measuring multicultural literacy, which shows ongoing conceptual overlap in this field of inquiry.

[Ruales et al. \(2020\)](#) validated a 28-item, five-factor multicultural sensitivity measure with 1,034 Filipino preservice teachers at the instrument level. Dimensions captured were ethnocentrism, intercultural endeavour, and monocultural orientation. Tho not primarily designed for ELT, but for general teacher preparation, this scale is one of the most psychometrically produced literacy-oriented instruments in the corpus. Two recent studies have taken multicultural literacy beyond the individual teacher to the institutional and linguistic ecology of language learning. [Cancino & Nuñez \(2023\)](#) found that although Chilean EFL instructors were highly interculturally aware, they did not use fundamental intercultural pedagogy in practice, believe that students that they view as a true language learning environment, rather than an add-on, provide mental and linguistic gains ([Tsang et al., 2024](#)).

Conceptualizing Multicultural Efficacy in ELT Research

Nine studies explored intercultural efficacy and all nine indicated instructor confidence varying between instructional activities rather than a single overall competence. Participants typically felt more confidence about their capacity to participate in personal

connections than in culturally and linguistically relevant instructional techniques. Field experiences, cross-cultural experiences and practicum activities were often associated with increased effectiveness while exhaustion and limited teaching experience decreased confidence. The methodological approaches were very comparable, however most studies used self-reported judgments of effectiveness, therefore providing no evidence that enhanced efficacy translated into actual classroom practices.

Several studies have investigated predictors or moderators of multicultural efficacy. [Bakir \(2020\)](#) found that Turkish preservice teachers reported above average efficacy levels that were year level dependent, revealing a developing pattern in the teacher preparation curriculum. [Chahar Mahali & Seigniny \(2022\)](#) found that Canadian preservice teachers were influenced by two competing forces on their CRTSE; cross-cultural exposure had a positive influence on CRTSE while burnout had a negative influence, indicating that teacher well-being is a neglected mediator of effectiveness. [Yada et al. \(2021\)](#) found self-efficacy to be correlated with resilience in a structural equation modeling analysis of Finnish preservice teachers, suggesting that efficacy may have a protective role against attrition. Some recent work has begun to adapt efficacy research to language-teaching contexts. [Matsumura & Tatsuyama \(2024\)](#) found that practicum enhanced Japanese preservice EFL teachers' self-efficacy thru engagement with English as a lingua franca, although belief conflicts remained. [Cesur \(2024\)](#) created and validated a 20-item, five-factor cultural and linguistic diversity efficacy scale for Turkish EFL preservice teachers. [Pevce-Zimmer et al. \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that an identity-based intervention with 606 preservice teachers increased confidence in diversity-related classroom dialog, directly linking ethnic-cultural identity work to CRTSE.

Conceptualizing Multicultural Education in ELT Research

Eight studies were related to multicultural education, from the perspectives of curriculum, teacher training programs and institutional activities. In general, the literature suggested that planned intercultural education had a good effect on teachers' multicultural attitudes and on their preparedness for teaching. However, the research showed that the implementation of multicultural education varied across teacher preparation programs, indicating that multicultural

education mostly depends on institutional commitment and curricular design. Intervention studies are promising but there is little proof that these effects will be permanent in the long-run since few study have employed longitudinal or follow-up methodologies.

Experiential and study-abroad programs are an uneven but recurring drive for intercultural education. Medina et al., (2015) found that a study abroad experience improved preservice teachers' attitudes of ELLs in a pre-post design. However, He et al. (2017) argued that such growth is not inevitable. Short-term study abroad did not consistently enhance the intercultural abilities and educational perspectives of in-service teachers without systematic reflection. A less resource-intensive method was suggested by Kolano & Sanczyk (2022) in which a digital-storytelling intervention modified preservice teachers' attitudes about immigrant communities and lowered deficit-oriented views, with no required visit. At the level of formal curricular intervention, some of the strongest causal evidence in the corpus came from Akcaoglu & Aarsal (2022) A quasi-experimental multicultural course based on Banks' content-integration dimension resulted in substantial increases in attitude and effectiveness for 52 preservice teachers.

Rather than a single intervention, two studies were linked to multicultural education at the level of assessment and program-wide synthesis. Erdem (2020) developed and validated a 14-item three-factor (awareness, knowledge, skill) multicultural competence scale with 628 Turkish preservice teachers and demonstrated measurement invariance across gender, providing a psychometrically sound diagnostic tool, but designed for general rather than ELT-specific teacher education. Most recently, Ji et al. (2025) conducted a systematic review of 33 Australian ITE studies and found that multicultural education continues to be inconsistently embedded across programs and preservice teachers report low levels of preparedness

and self-efficacy. Significantly, this finding sits at the intersection of the education and efficacy strands and prefigures the integrative analysis below.

Relationships among Multicultural Literacy, Efficacy, and Education

Relationships Among Multicultural Literacy, Efficacy and Education Few research studies have examined more than one of the three main concepts together. Therefore, the relationships among multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education discussed in this review are a combination of findings from different studies rather than direct empirical support. Overall, the literature reviewed suggests that organized multicultural education may improve both multicultural literacy and multicultural efficacy. Nevertheless, gains in one area were not always matched by gains in the others, suggesting that these concepts should be seen as supportive yet separate aspects of ELT teacher training rather than as stages that follow each other in development.

Other studies illuminate the efficacy-to-practice link specifically. Cruz et al. (2020) and Malo-Juvera et al. (2018) both show that efficacy is domain-specific rather than global: a teacher can possess relational confidence without linguistic-validation confidence, implying that literacy gained in one cultural domain (e.g., general intercultural sensitivity) does not automatically generalize into efficacy for a different, more linguistically demanding domain. Pevec-Zimmer et al. (2024) identity-based intervention is the corpus's clearest bridge between literacy and efficacy, using ethnic-cultural identity work—a literacy-adjacent construct—as the mechanism for raising CRTSE. Chahar Mahali and Seigny Chahar Mahali & Seigny (2022) add a moderator largely absent from the other two strands: emotional well-being and burnout, which can suppress efficacy independently of how much literacy or education a teacher has received.

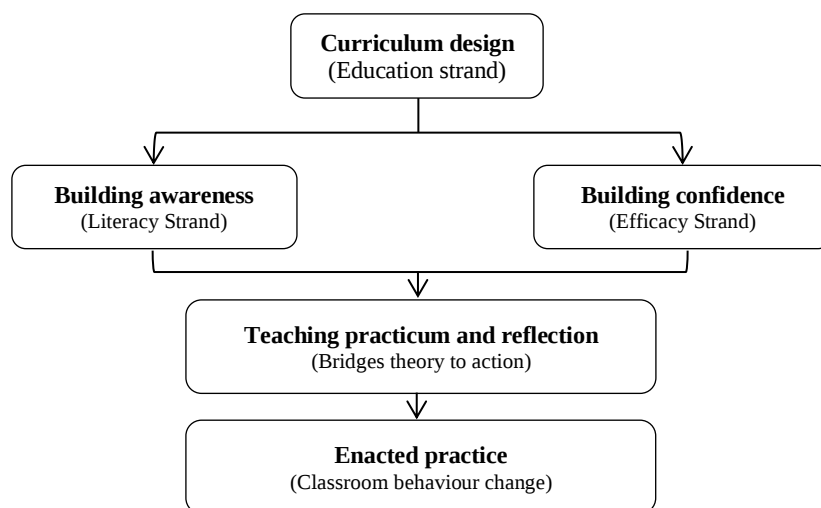


Figure 2

A proposed integrative framework of multicultural education, literacy, and efficacy in ELT teacher education

As we can see in [Figure 2](#), curriculum design represents program-level decisions — course sequencing, content-integration models, practicum requirements — the level at which [Akcaoglu & Aarsal \(2022\)](#) quasi-experimental course (built on [Banks, 2012](#) content-integration dimension), operated, producing measurable gains in both attitude and efficacy simultaneously. It is placed at the top of the flow because it's the only construct that's fully under institutional control before a preservice teacher ever enters a classroom. Everything downstream is shaped by choices made here. The reason curriculum design branches into two paths rather than one is that it has to do two different jobs at once, build knowledge and build confidence. The literature shows these don't automatically travel together.

'Building awareness' branch corresponds to what ([Altan, 2018](#); [Ruales et al., 2020](#); [Senyshyn, 2018](#)) investigated in terms of intercultural sensitivity, awareness, and knowledge as a cognitive/attitudinal profile. This is where Altan's finding that sensitivity is 'not a cohesive trait but a profile of unevenly developed sub-skills' comes in. This branch is not one input, but a bundle of sub-competencies (ethnocentrism, perspective-taking, cultural knowledge). A curriculum must address them individually, not as one monolithic construct. Moreover, [Phongsirikul & Thongrin \(2019\)](#) demonstrated that awareness can be developed with direct instruction. However, their finding that students resist 'theoretical density' is cautionary: this branch can

be built in such a way that knowledge is generated without buy-in, which undermines what feeds into 'building confidence'. This branch relates to the CRTSE-type measurements of [Malo-Juvera et al. \(2018\)](#), [Cruz et al. \(2020\)](#), and [Cho et al. \(2020\)](#). Because the research plainly reveals that effectiveness does not only grow with awareness, it is shown as an independent, parallel track, rather than a downstream result of awareness. The best evidence came from [Cruz et al. \(2020\)](#) indicating relationship efficacy was high but effective in linguistic validation was substantially lower. Confidence is not a general property that comes from learning more, but is tailored to the activity.

Your last times moderators are here to. But they're not separate boxes. This branch is addressed by both [Chahar Mahali & Sevigny \(2022\)](#) and [Yada et al. \(2021\)](#). The former finds that burnout depresses CRTSE, while the latter finds that effectiveness predicts resilience.

The 'practicum and reflection' branch is the bearing node of the whole framework. That is why the figure converges here, instead of travelling straight from the two upper branches to the conclusion. The same mechanism is studied from three distinct perspectives in three independent research. Senyshyn found that viewpoint change was seen in organized initiatives but not casual interaction. [He et al. \(2017\)](#) observed the reverse in that short-term study abroad without organized reflection did not consistently enhance competence or beliefs. [Cho et al. \(2020\)](#) discovered

effectiveness was improved by real-world field experience and not only classroom.

The final node, 'enacted practice' is the one variable that the literature doesn't really quantify. Upstream is virtually entirely self-reported. The biggest proof of the discrepancy between claimed knowledge and observed classroom practice that [Smits & Janssenswillen \(2020\)](#) uncovered is that self-reported literacy and efficacy are necessary but inadequate proxies of what really takes place in front of children.

The key methodological argument of the framework is to tease this out as a box instead of considering "high efficacy" the finish line: research agendas that centre around some single strand risk conflating an increase in self-reported awareness or confidence with a change in teaching behaviour, when the two are repeatedly shown to diverge.

The reason for drawing this as a flow rather than three side-by-side circles is because literacy and efficacy are parallel inputs, not sequential stages of each other, and both are gated by the same bridge mechanism before they can impact practice change. That's a more falsifiable model than "these three things are related". It predicts, for instance, that a program strong on curriculum and awareness but weak on structured practicum will still show a literacy-practice gap even with excellent instruction, which is exactly the pattern ([Cancino & Nuñez, 2023](#)) and ([Smits & Janssenswillen, 2020](#)) report.

Discussion and Conclusion

Firstly, the examined literature reveals significant theoretical disconnection, which speaks directly to RQ1. The analyzed studies utilize various theoretical frameworks, such as Bandura's self-efficacy theory, Banks' theory on multicultural education, Byram's framework for intercultural communicative competence, [Chen & Starosta \(1996\)](#) model of intercultural sensitivity, [Gorski & Parekh \(2020\)](#) transformative learning theory, and [Banks \(2012\)](#) multicultural education approach. However, these theories are often studied separately with little integration between them. This divide may explain why few studies explore multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education together, despite consistent patterns in the literature such as inconsistent

intercultural literacy and task-related efficacy ([Cesur, 2024](#); [Erdem, 2020](#); [Ruales et al., 2020](#)).

Furthermore, reviews of the evidence reveal methodological limitations that constrain the inferences that can be made about the relationships among the three constructs (RQ2). The majority of the research has relied on cross-sectional survey approaches or scale development approaches ([Cesur, 2024](#); [Erdem, 2020](#); [Ruales et al., 2020](#)), with only a few studies employing longitudinal designs capable of capturing change over time ([Senyshyn, 2018](#); [Yada et al., 2021](#)). The majority of studies relied heavily on self-report survey data without adequate inclusion of classroom observations or behavioral indicators to confirm that the reported literacy or effectiveness was reflective of actual teaching practices. Sample numbers were very different and a significant portion of the data was contributed by Asia and Türkiye. Hence the generalizability of findings to other ELT contexts should be treated with caution. Thus, the associations among multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy, and multicultural education should be viewed as suggestive rather than definitive.

Thirdly, there are relatively few measurement tools tailored for ELT and EFL, which is a concern directly linked to RQ3, as a comprehensive framework needs context-appropriate assessments. While there are a number of well-validated tools developed in the area of general teacher education studies ([Erdem, 2020](#); [Ruales et al., 2020](#)), are only now emerging in studies such as [Cesur \(2024\)](#) and [Matsumura & Tatsuyama \(2024\)](#). These studies are a major step forward, but the evidence from the field to date suggests that development and cross-cultural validation of ELT-specific tools is still in its infancy.

Finally, the reviewed intervention studies suggest that multicultural education can promote multicultural literacy and multicultural efficacy, especially when intercultural experiences are combined with structured reflection and authentic pedagogical practice. For example, [Medina et al. \(2015\)](#) reported positive effects after study-abroad experiences, while [He et al. \(2017\)](#) found that such experiences had limited benefits without reflective activities. Similarly, [Kolano & Sanczyk \(2022\)](#) showed that reflection-based digital storytelling facilitated positive multicultural perspectives without the need for international experiences. Overall, these results suggest that reflective learning processes may enhance multicultural literacy and multicultural efficacy.

Nevertheless, the current evidence does not definitively prove that multicultural literacy always precedes or directly leads to multicultural efficacy, as only a small number of studies have investigated both concepts together.

To conclude, the body of research examined reveals that key contextual characteristics such as teacher identity, positionality, emotional labour, burnout, resilience and well-being are not sufficiently incorporated in the current conceptual frameworks. [Cherng & Davis \(2019\)](#) discovered that ethnicity and experience backgrounds impacted teachers' levels of intercultural awareness. Therefore, personal identity might affect the perception and comprehension of cultural variety. [Chahar Mahali & Sevigny \(2022\)](#) observed that burnout reduced self-efficacy for culturally responsive teaching regardless of intercultural experiences. [Yada et al. \(2021\)](#) recognized self-efficacy as a protective factor associated to teacher resilience. Identity-based interventions were also shown to improve intercultural efficacy by bolstering teachers' confidence in their competence to work with cultural diversity [Pevac-Zimmer et al. \(2024\)](#). The results indicate the necessity to consider the integration aspects of the body, the mind and the culture and show that the preparation of multicultural instructors relies on their identities, their mental health and their professional experiences, and not simply on their knowledge and teaching abilities. In future research, these issues should be investigated with different approaches such as longitudinal studies, mixed-methods research and classroom observations in an effort to gain a better understanding of the relationship between multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy and multicultural education and actual English Language Teaching practices.

Conclusion and Future Research Directions

This comprehensive literature review combines the outcomes of multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy and multicultural education in the setting of teacher training for English Language Teaching (ELT). The review suggests that these three concepts have mostly developed as different areas of study, yet they address similar challenges of preparing teachers for multicultural situations. The present research is fragmented and there is little empirical relationship between the three conceptions, which makes it rather

difficult to have a complete grasp of multicultural preparedness, in theory.

The paper also points out that there is a dearth of methodologies that are intended specifically for the evaluation of multicultural literacy and multicultural effectiveness in ELT settings, since most of the available evaluations were established for general teacher training situations. Moreover, the predominance of cross-sectional research leads to the demand for longitudinal and mixed-method studies to explore the evolution of such conceptions over time and their interaction in real ELT settings.

Propose a unified conceptual framework that integrates discoveries from previously distinct study domains. The suggested paradigm is more of a theoretical framework for studying probable relationships between multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy and multicultural education in the training of ELT teachers than an experimentally verified causal framework. In further research the method should be tested and improved in additional educational and cultural contexts.

Limitations

There are numerous constraints that have to be respected. First, our search was restricted to peer-reviewed journal articles published in English between 2015 and 2025, which may have excluded important data in other languages and unpublished resources. Second, the study was limited to four electronic databases, which may have limited the number of relevant studies found. Third, methodological quality was not explicitly appraised, since the main aim was to provide a conceptual synthesis rather than to judge the quality of the evidence. Fourth, the interpretative judgment of the classification and synthesis of researches may add to biases in the selection and classification. Finally, the reviewed studies were mostly conducted in specific geographical settings such as Türkiye, Asia, and some Western nations, which may affect the generalizability of the suggested conceptual framework to other educational contexts. This comprehensive literature review combines the outcomes of multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy and multicultural education in the setting of teacher training for English Language Teaching (ELT). The review suggests that these three concepts have mostly developed as different areas of study, yet they address

similar challenges of preparing teachers for multicultural situations. The present research is fragmented and there is little empirical relationship between the three conceptions, which makes it rather difficult to have a complete grasp of multicultural preparedness, in theory. The paper also points out that there is a dearth of methodologies that are intended specifically for the evaluation of multicultural literacy and multicultural effectiveness in ELT settings, since most of the available evaluations were established for general teacher training situations. Also, the preponderance of cross-sectional studies emphasizes the need for longitudinal and mixed-method research to explore the evolution of these conceptions over time and their interaction in real ELT environments. Propose a unified conceptual framework that integrates discoveries from previously disconnected domains of investigation. The suggested paradigm provides a theoretical framework to explore potential linkages between multicultural literacy, multicultural efficacy and multicultural education in the training of ELT teachers, instead of an empirically proven causal framework. The approach should be validated and improved in additional educational and cultural situations in future work.

Implications and Recommendations

The results indicate the need for a more unified approach to intercultural preparation in ELT teacher training programs by integrating multicultural literacy, effectiveness and instruction into a cohesive curriculum. A systematic sequence could begin with courses on developing multicultural literacy thru intercultural communication, culturally-sensitive teaching, and multilingual education, then proceed to students participating in organized practicum activities, supervised teaching opportunities, and reflective practice sessions to enhance intercultural competence in real classroom situations. Program assessment might include reflective journals, teaching portfolios, classroom observations, and validated instruments for measuring multicultural efficacy to track the professional growth of preservice teachers. Future studies should investigate the proposed framework in various educational environments and analyze its effectiveness through long-term and intervention-based research.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants. Ethical considerations in this study were that participation was entirely optional.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

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