

## **A Conceptual Framework for Reflexive Autoethnography in CFL Teacher Research**

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### ***Abstract***

*The global expansion of Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) education has led to increasingly diverse and multicultural classrooms, particularly in regions like Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Within these contexts, CFL teachers navigate complex linguistic and cultural landscapes, yet the internal decision-making processes that shape their pedagogical approaches remain critically underexplored. This conceptual paper addresses this gap by proposing a robust theoretical and methodological framework for investigating CFL teacher cognition through the lens of critical autoethnography. Synthesizing literature from teacher cognition, intercultural communication, and transformative learning theory, the paper argues that autoethnography offers a uniquely powerful tool for accessing the nuanced, context-dependent knowledge of CFL practitioners. The proposed framework integrates three core pillars: transformative learning theory, the principles of reflective practice, and the model of intercultural communicative competence. It positions the teacher as a reflexive instrument of inquiry, capable of generating rich, situated knowledge about the challenges and affordances of teaching CFL in multicultural settings. The paper proposes a novel integration of ICC as a teacher competency (not merely student goal) and operationalizes transformative learning through classroom micro-events, concluding with methodological implications.*

**Keywords:** *Autoethnography, CFL Education, Teacher Cognition, Reflective Practice, Intercultural Competence, Conceptual Framework*

### **Introduction**

The teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language (CFL) has undergone a profound transformation in the 21st century, propelled by China's growing economic and geopolitical influence (Luo & Huang, 2020; Wang, F., 2023). Initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative have catalyzed a surge in Mandarin learning worldwide, creating classrooms that are more culturally and linguistically diverse than ever before.

In regions like Southeast Asia, particularly Malaysia with its multicultural fabric of Malay, Chinese, and Indian communities, CFL teachers encounter a complex tapestry of learner backgrounds, prior linguistic knowledge, and cultural expectations (Goh & Yunus, 2021; Tan &

Abdullah, 2022). Similarly, in contexts such as Saudi Arabia, CFL educators must navigate the intersection of Chinese language instruction with deeply rooted Islamic cultural norms and educational traditions (Ahmad & Mustafa, 2021; Al-Sudairi, 2020).

The paper is structured as follows: Section 1 introduction provides the context, Section 2 reviews the relevant literature on CFL in multicultural contexts, teacher cognition, and autoethnography. Section 3 presents the proposed conceptual framework, integrating transformative learning theory, reflective practice, and intercultural communicative competence, complete with a visual representation and illustrations from practice. Section 4 discusses the methodological implications of the framework, outlining how it can guide data collection, analysis, and the establishment of rigor in autoethnographic inquiry. Section 5 concludes with a summary and a discussion of the framework's implications for research and practice.

### **Role of the Teacher**

Within these dynamic environments, the CFL teacher is not merely a transmitter of linguistic knowledge but a cultural mediator, a curriculum negotiator, and a reflective practitioner constantly adapting to the needs of their learners (Li & Chen, 2021; Kaur & Chu, 2022). Despite the critical role of the teacher in shaping the learning experience, the internal cognitive and affective processes that underpin their pedagogical decisions in multicultural contexts remain significantly underexplored.

### **Research Gap**

Research on teacher cognition in language education has established that what teachers think, know, and believe profoundly influences their classroom practice (Borg, 2003; Borg, 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). However, much of this research has relied on third-person methodologies such as interviews and observations. While valuable, these methods may not fully capture the deeply personal, context-dependent, and often tacit nature of teacher knowledge (Mann & Walsh, 2017). What remains missing is an insider's perspective—a first-person account of how teachers actually experience, process, and learn from the moment-by-moment challenges of teaching in culturally complex settings.

### **Need for the Present Study**

This conceptual paper addresses this methodological and theoretical gap by proposing a novel framework for studying CFL teacher cognition. It argues that autoethnography, a qualitative research methodology that connects the personal to the cultural (Ellis, 2004; Ellis et al., 2011), offers a uniquely powerful lens through which to examine the lived experiences of CFL teachers in multicultural settings. By placing the researcher's own subjectivity at the center of inquiry, autoethnography enables a deep, nuanced exploration of how teachers make sense of critical incidents, negotiate cultural differences, and develop their professional identity over time (Chang, 2016; Denzin, 2014).

## **Purpose and Significance**

The purpose of this paper is to synthesize key theoretical perspectives from the literature to build a coherent conceptual framework for conducting reflexive autoethnographic research in CFL education. By integrating three core theoretical pillars, the framework provides a structured yet flexible guide for inquiry. It is significant because it offers CFL teacher-researchers a way to systematically investigate their own practice, generating knowledge that is both personally transformative and professionally relevant.

## **Literature Review**

The global spread of Mandarin has created diverse learning environments that challenge traditional, monolithic approaches to language teaching. In Malaysia, for example, CFL classrooms are inherently multicultural, bringing together learners from Malay, Chinese, and Indian backgrounds, each with distinct linguistic repertoires and cultural orientations towards learning (Goh & Yunus, 2021; Tan & Abdullah, 2022). This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges. Research by Rahim and Ooi (2020) highlights how Malaysian CFL teachers actively integrate local cultural content into their materials to make the language more relevant and accessible to their students. Similarly, studies on differentiated instruction in this context demonstrate the need for teachers to adapt their pedagogical strategies to accommodate the varying proficiency levels and learning styles of heritage and non-heritage learners (Lim, 2022; Tan & Abdullah, 2022).

In other parts of the world, CFL teachers face equally complex dynamics. In Muslim-majority contexts such as Saudi Arabia and Malaysia, educators must be attuned to cultural and religious sensitivities, ensuring that their teaching materials and classroom interactions are respectful and culturally responsive (Ahmad & Mustaffa, 2021; Al-Sudairi, 2020). The challenge is not merely about avoiding offense but about proactively building bridges between Chinese culture and local cultural frameworks. This requires teachers to possess a high degree of intercultural awareness and the ability to act as cultural mediators (Byram, 1997; Yuan & Xie, 2020).

Furthermore, the linguistic diversity of learners presents specific pedagogical challenges. Research by Wang and Nor (2019) on multilingual transfer in Malaysian Mandarin learning reveals how learners' prior knowledge of Malay, English, and other Chinese dialects can positively and negatively influence their acquisition of Mandarin. This finding underscores the need for CFL teachers to have a sophisticated understanding of comparative linguistics and to develop strategies that leverage learners' existing linguistic resources. The teaching of tones (Li & Lee, 2020) and Chinese characters (Zhang & Hu, 2022) remain perennial challenges, particularly for learners from alphabetic language backgrounds. This complex landscape demands that CFL teachers are not only linguistically proficient but also highly adaptive, reflective, and culturally attuned.

## **Teacher Cognition in Language Education**

The field of language teacher cognition has made significant strides in understanding the complex mental lives of teachers. Borg's (2003) seminal review defined teacher cognition as "the unobservable cognitive dimension of teaching – what teachers know, believe, and think" (p. 81). Subsequent research has demonstrated that these cognitions are shaped by a variety of factors, including teachers' own experiences as language learners, their teacher education programs, their classroom practice, and the broader institutional and societal context (Borg, 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015).

In the context of CFL education, emerging research has begun to explore teacher cognition. Kaur and Chu (2022) conducted a qualitative study on reflective practice and teacher cognition in multicultural CFL classrooms in Malaysia, finding that teachers' beliefs about language learning and cultural difference were deeply intertwined with their instructional choices. Similarly, Zhao and Lin (2022) examined teacher cognition in international education, highlighting the dynamic interplay between teachers' personal and professional identities.

However, much of this research has been conducted using traditional qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. These methods capture teachers' stated beliefs and observed behaviors but may not fully access the nuanced, moment-by-moment reflective processes that underpin their practice (Mann & Walsh, 2017). There is a growing recognition of the need for methodologies that can capture the "inner dialogue" of teachers as they navigate the complexities of the classroom (Farrell, 2022).

## **Autoethnography as a Methodology for Teacher Research**

Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience (Ellis et al., 2011). It treats research as a political, socially just, and socially conscious act (Adams & Jones, 2022). A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product.

The methodology has gained increasing traction in applied linguistics and teacher education as a means of exploring the lived experiences of practitioners (Keles, 2022; Hamilton et al., 2021). For language teachers, autoethnography offers a powerful tool for critically reflecting on their own practice, examining their identity formation, and making sense of the cultural and political dimensions of their work (Barkhuizen, 2021). By documenting their personal experiences, teachers can generate rich, contextualized knowledge that is often absent from more traditional research paradigms.

Several forms of autoethnography exist. Evocative autoethnography, championed by Ellis and Bochner (Bochner & Ellis, 2016), emphasizes the emotional and aesthetic power of storytelling to connect with readers and evoke empathy. Analytic autoethnography, proposed by Anderson (2006), aims to use personal experience as a basis for developing theoretical insights and contributing to existing knowledge. Critical autoethnography, as articulated by Boylorn and Orbe (2021), explicitly foregrounds issues of power, identity, and social justice, examining how broader cultural structures shape personal experience. For a CFL teacher researcher navigating

multicultural classrooms, a critical and reflexive approach to autoethnography is particularly apt, as it allows for an examination of how one's own cultural positionality intersects with that of their students within a broader socio-political context.

However, autoethnography is not without its critics. Concerns have been raised about its potential for self-indulgence, lack of rigor, and ethical challenges related to representing others (Tolich, 2010). These critiques have led to the development of robust criteria for ensuring quality and trustworthiness in autoethnographic work, including the need for explicit reflexivity, transparency about the research process, and a commitment to relational ethics (Ellis, 2007; Lapadat, 2017). This paper's proposed framework directly addresses these concerns by embedding strategies for rigor within its very structure.

### **Conceptual Framework: Three Pillars of Reflexive Autoethnographic Inquiry**

Building on the literature reviewed above, this section presents an integrated conceptual framework for conducting reflexive autoethnographic research on CFL teacher cognition in multicultural contexts. The framework is not intended as a rigid prescription but as a flexible guide—a set of interconnected theoretical lenses and methodological commitments that can inform and enrich the inquiry process. It rests on three pillars: Transformative Learning Theory, Reflective Practice, and Intercultural Communicative Competence.

#### **Pillar 1: Transformative Learning Theory**

Mezirow's (1991) transformative learning theory provides a powerful lens for understanding how adults revise their meaning perspectives through critical reflection on experience. A "disorienting dilemma"—an experience that does not fit one's existing framework of understanding—can trigger a process of self-examination, critical assessment of assumptions, exploration of new roles, and ultimately, a transformation in perspective that leads to more inclusive and discriminating action.

For a CFL teacher in a multicultural classroom, disorienting dilemmas abound. Consider the experience of a teacher moving from Malaysia to Saudi Arabia:

*"When I played a video of families gathering for the New Year's Eve dinner, and the screen showed wine glasses, the entire classroom fell into silence. Not the kind of amazed silence—but the heavy, uncomfortable silence of something gone wrong. A student asked: 'Teacher, is wine haram? Why do Chinese people drink wine?'"* (Journal Entry, Week 1)

This moment represents a classic disorienting dilemma. The teacher's assumption—that materials effective in multicultural Malaysia would transfer seamlessly to conservative Saudi Arabia—was fundamentally challenged. The student's question forced a confrontation with unexamined assumptions about cultural neutrality in teaching materials.

By using autoethnography to systematically document and analyze such dilemmas, the teacher-researcher can trace their own process of perspective transformation. The reflective journal becomes a space for not only recording events but for excavating the assumptions underlying their reactions and for charting the evolution of their understanding over time. This pillar provides a theoretical rationale for focusing on critical incidents as key sites of learning and growth (Teh & Ching, 2023).

### **Pillar 2: Reflective Practice**

The second pillar, reflective practice, provides the methodological mechanism for the transformative process described above. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Farrell (2022) and Mann and Walsh (2017), this framework conceptualizes reflection not as a casual afterthought but as a systematic, disciplined practice. Reflective practice involves deliberately and critically examining one's actions, beliefs, and the contexts in which they occur, with the goal of improving practice and deepening understanding.

In this framework, reflection operates at multiple levels. It encompasses reflection-in-action, the spontaneous, intuitive adjustments a teacher makes in the midst of teaching (Schön, 1983). It also includes reflection-on-action, the retrospective analysis of past events. Crucially, for autoethnography, it involves reflection-on-reflection, or reflexivity: a critical awareness of how the researcher's own subjectivity, values, and positionality shape the entire research process, from the questions asked to the interpretations made (Pillow, 2019). This meta-cognitive layer is what distinguishes a rigorous autoethnography from a simple memoir.

The journal entries demonstrate this reflective process in action. After the wine glass incident, the teacher reflects:

*"Later, in reflection, I realized I had been self-righteous. I had transplanted what worked in multicultural Malaysia—where many students are familiar with Chinese festivals—without sufficient cultural mediation. I hadn't previewed the materials through a Saudi lens. Those wine glasses weren't just props; they were symbols conflicting with deeply held values."* (Journal Entry, Week 1)

This is not mere description but critical analysis—an interrogation of assumptions and a recognition of the teacher's own role in the pedagogical failure. It is the "critical" in "critical reflexivity," ensuring that the researcher is constantly interrogating their own role in constructing the knowledge they present.

### **Pillar 3: Intercultural Communicative Competence**

The third pillar, Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence (ICC), provides the substantive focus for the inquiry. Byram's model moves beyond linguistic proficiency to encompass the attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary for effective and appropriate communication across cultural boundaries. It includes five key components:

Component	Description
<b>Attitudes</b>	Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own
<b>Knowledge</b>	Of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction
<b>Skills of interpreting and relating</b>	The ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own
<b>Skills of discovery and interaction</b>	The ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction
<b>Critical cultural awareness</b>	An ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries

For the CFL teacher, ICC is not just a goal for students but a professional imperative. The teacher's own ICC directly shapes their ability to create an inclusive classroom environment, select culturally appropriate materials, mediate cultural misunderstandings, and model intercultural sensitivity for their learners (Ahmad & Mustafa, 2021; Yuan & Xie, 2020). By framing the autoethnographic inquiry within Byram's model, the teacher-researcher can systematically examine their own intercultural development.

The journal entry about teaching the character "十" (ten) illustrates this development:

*"A student raised his hand: 'Teacher, this looks like a cross. The cross is haram.' I paused and decided not to be defensive. 'Thank you for telling me, Y. You're right, this shape does resemble a cross. But this is the Chinese character for the number 'ten', as ordinary as our 1, 2, 3. It has no religious meaning whatsoever in Chinese culture; it simply represents the number 10.' Then I turned to the whiteboard and wrote the Arabic numeral '10' and the Roman numeral 'X' next to it. 'See, the Roman numeral for 10 is also X, like crossed lines. Different writing systems sometimes have similar shapes, but completely different meanings.'"* (Journal Entry, Week 3)

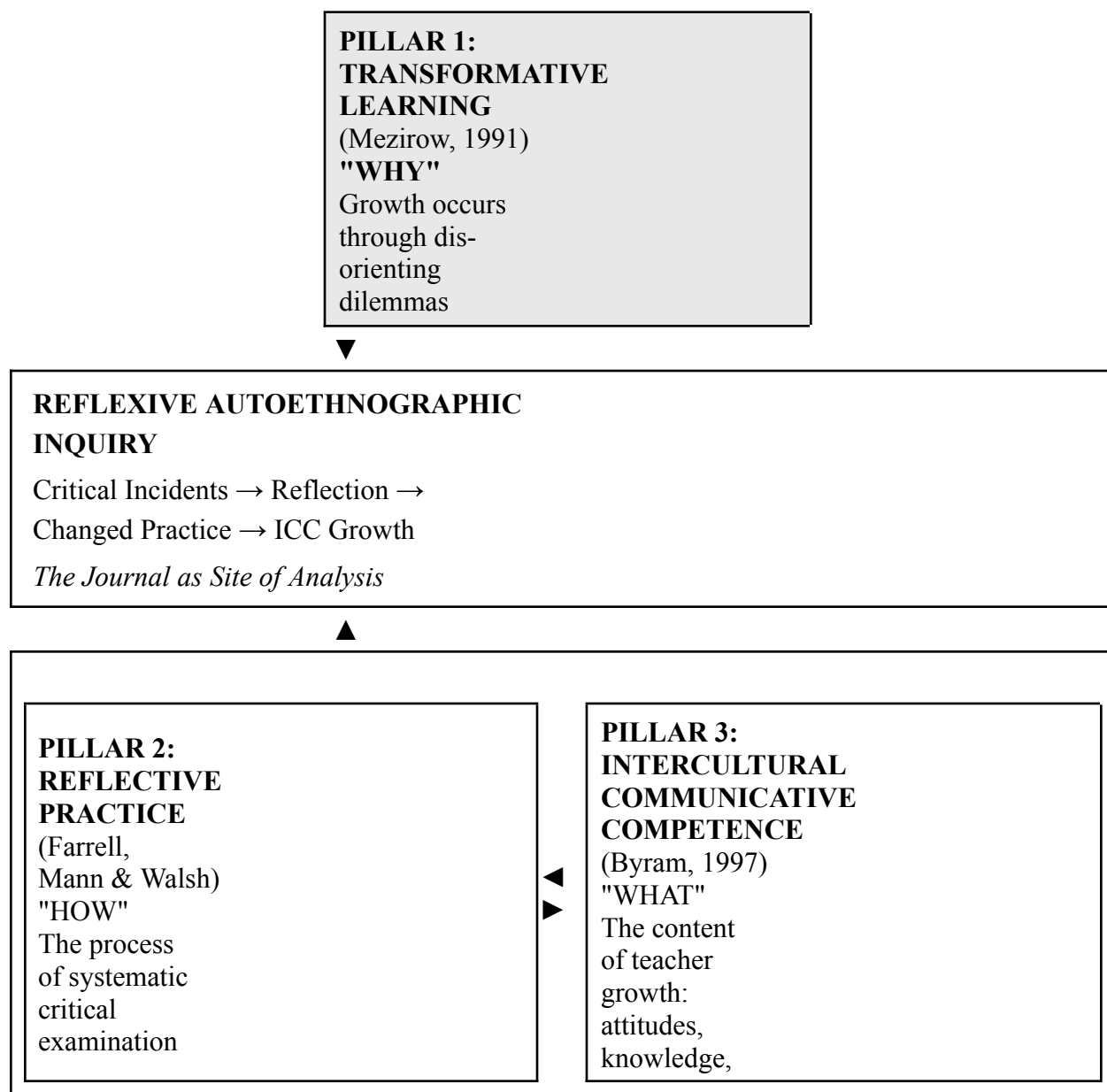
Yet I must confess: three weeks later, I made a similar mistake with the character '田', not recognizing its visual parallel to a religious symbol until a student pointed it out. Reflection does not guarantee immediate transformation; some lessons require repeated disorientation before new perspectives stabilize.

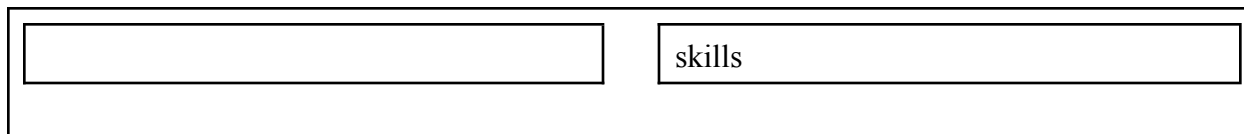
This response demonstrates several ICC components: attitudes of openness rather than defensiveness, skills of interpreting and relating (connecting the character to familiar Roman numerals), and critical cultural awareness (understanding why the shape might be sensitive). The reflective journal becomes a record of the ongoing development of one's own intercultural competence as it is enacted and refined in the crucible of classroom practice.

## Integrating the Pillars: A Visual Framework

The relationship between the three pillars is not linear but cyclical and mutually reinforcing. Figure 1 illustrates this dynamic interplay. Critically, these three pillars operate not as static categories but as a dynamic system. An ICC challenge (e.g., cultural misreading) surfaces as a disorienting dilemma when reflected upon, triggering perspective transformation; this transformed perspective then reshapes subsequent reflective capacity and ICC. Autoethnography's strength lies in capturing this non-linear, diachronic development through sustained journaling.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Reflexive Autoethnographic Inquiry in CFL Teacher Research**





As shown in Figure 1, the framework is anchored by **Transformative Learning Theory** (Pillar 1), which provides the theoretical rationale for *why* critical incidents matter and *why* growth occurs. A "disorienting dilemma" triggers a process of critical reflection. This reflection is not casual but disciplined and systematic, drawing on the principles of **Reflective Practice** (Pillar 2), which provides the *how*—the methodological mechanism for transformation.

The *content* of this reflection—*what* the teacher is actually learning to do better—is captured by **Intercultural Communicative Competence** (Pillar 3). Each critical incident becomes an opportunity to develop Byram's five components. The three pillars are bidirectional: developing ICC deepens the quality of reflective practice; reflective practice surfaces new disorienting dilemmas; transformative learning reshapes the teacher's capacity for both reflection and intercultural mediation.

The autoethnographic method—structured journaling focused on critical incidents—makes this entire process visible and analyzable. The journal becomes both the site of reflection and the data for analysis, allowing the teacher-researcher to trace their own developmental trajectory across time.

### Illustrations from Practice

The calligraphy breakthrough entry provides a powerful example of the framework in action, demonstrating how the three pillars work together:

*"K raised his hand. 'Teacher,' he said, 'this is like when we learn to write beautifully. My grandfather does this with Arabic. He says the pen must be held with respect, just like you said about the brush.' Connection. He made the connection himself. I asked him to explain to the class. He stood up—this usually quiet boy—and demonstrated how his grandfather taught him to prepare the reed pen, how the ink must flow, how patience is everything. Other students leaned forward. For the next twenty minutes, we had a conversation—not me teaching them about Chinese culture, but us sharing what it means to treat writing as an art form, a spiritual practice, across our different traditions."* (Journal Entry, Week 12)

This moment can be analyzed through the framework as follows:

- **Transformative Learning:** The teacher's perspective shifted from "teaching Chinese culture" to "facilitating dialogue about a universal human practice." This represents a fundamental reorientation of professional identity.
- **Reflective Practice:** The teacher's conscious choice to frame calligraphy as "the art of writing" rather than "Chinese art" was a deliberate pedagogical decision informed by prior reflection on earlier incidents.
- **Intercultural Communicative Competence:** The moment demonstrates all five ICC components in action—attitudes of openness, knowledge of both cultures, skills of

interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction, and critical cultural awareness.

The pillars are not separate; they are mutually reinforcing. The framework makes visible what might otherwise remain invisible: the complex interplay of cognition, reflection, and cultural learning that constitutes teacher development in multicultural contexts.

### **Methodological Implications of the Framework**

This conceptual framework carries clear implications for the design and execution of an autoethnographic study. It suggests a methodology that is systematically reflective, focused on critical incidents, explicitly reflexive, rigorously analyzed, and ethically grounded.

#### **Systematically Reflective**

Data collection should be structured around regular, disciplined reflective journaling that goes beyond simple description to include critical analysis of assumptions, feelings, and evolving understandings. Prompts based on the three pillars can guide this process.

#### **Example Journal Prompts Aligned with the Framework:**

Pillar	Sample Prompt
Transformative Learning	"What assumptions about teaching and learning did I bring to this lesson? Was any assumption challenged?"
Reflective Practice	"How did I adapt my teaching in the moment when I sensed student confusion? What will I do differently?"
Intercultural Competence	"What does this interaction reveal about my own intercultural skills of discovery and interaction?"

#### **Focused on Critical Incidents**

The framework directs attention to specific, impactful moments in practice. These critical incidents become the primary units of analysis. The researcher documents the incident in rich detail, then systematically analyzes it through the lens of the three pillars.

A critical incident is defined by its impact, not its drama. A moment of silence, a student's question, a failed lesson, a breakthrough connection—each can serve as a focal point for deeper exploration of teacher cognition and development. A template for documenting critical incidents is provided in Appendix B.

#### **Explicitly Reflexive**

The framework demands that the researcher continuously interrogate their own positionality. This involves keeping a separate reflexive journal to document how their personal history, cultural background, and evolving understanding of the research are shaping the inquiry. This meta-layer of reflection is essential for establishing trustworthiness (Brinkmann, 2022).

Reflexivity involves asking questions such as:

- How does my cultural background shape what I notice and what I miss?
- How do my emotional responses to incidents influence my interpretation?
- How am I changing as a teacher through this process of inquiry?

The teacher's acknowledgment of being "self-righteous" and having "transplanted what worked in multicultural Malaysia without sufficient cultural mediation" exemplifies this reflexivity.

### Analysis

Data analysis moves beyond simple thematic coding to a more theoretically informed interpretation. Drawing on reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Byrne, 2022), the researcher actively constructs themes that represent patterns of meaning related to transformative learning, reflective practice, and ICC.

The analysis should:

- Trace developmental trajectories across time
- Identify moments of disorientation and resolution
- Map evidence of ICC development
- Search for negative cases that complicate emerging themes
- Connect findings back to the theoretical framework

The goal is not just to describe what happened but to generate theoretical insights into the process of teacher development in multicultural contexts.

### Ethically Grounded

The framework is inherently committed to relational ethics (Ellis, 2007). The autoethnographer must be constantly mindful of their responsibilities to the students, colleagues, and others who appear in their narrative. Key ethical considerations include:

Consideration	Application
<b>Informed Consent</b>	Obtain consent from institution and, where possible, from students/parents
<b>Anonymity</b>	Use pseudonyms for all individuals and institutions
<b>Relational Ethics</b>	Consider the potential impact of writing on those represented; strive to portray them with fairness and respect
<b>Transparency</b>	Be clear with participants about the research purpose and how data will be used

<b>Ongoing Vigilance</b>	Ethics is not a one-time approval but a continuous process of reflection
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The journal entries in this paper demonstrate this ethical awareness, with students identified only by initials and portrayed with respect and fairness, even when describing challenging moments.

## Conclusion

### Summary of the Framework

This conceptual paper has proposed an integrated framework for conducting reflexive autoethnographic research on CFL teacher cognition in multicultural settings. By weaving together three core pillars—transformative learning theory, reflective practice, and intercultural communicative competence—the framework provides a coherent theoretical and methodological guide for exploring the rich, complex inner world of the CFL practitioner.

The framework positions autoethnography not as a soft or self-indulgent alternative to traditional research but as a rigorous and deeply illuminating methodology. It is capable of generating knowledge that is both personally meaningful and professionally significant. The three pillars work together cyclically: disorienting dilemmas trigger critical reflection; systematic reflective practice enables examination of assumptions and development of new perspectives; intercultural competence provides the content and goal of that development.

### Implications for Practice and Research

The implications of this framework are far-reaching across multiple domains.

**For CFL Teacher Education:** The framework suggests the value of incorporating autoethnographic approaches into training programs to foster critical reflection and intercultural awareness from the outset. Novice teachers could be guided to document and analyze their own critical incidents, learning to see disorienting dilemmas not as failures but as opportunities for growth. Teacher educators might use the three pillars as organizing principles for reflective assignments.

**For Curriculum Development:** The framework highlights the importance of creating materials and pedagogies that are responsive to the specific cultural contexts in which they are used. The teacher's experience in Saudi Arabia demonstrates that materials effective in one multicultural context cannot be assumed to transfer to another. Curriculum developers must build in space for local adaptation and teacher mediation, recognizing that the teacher's intercultural competence is as important as the materials themselves.

**For Future Research:** This framework offers a foundation for empirical autoethnographic studies that can provide rich, detailed accounts of teacher development in a variety of CFL settings. Future research directions include:

- Longitudinal autoethnographies tracking teacher development over multiple years
- Comparative autoethnographies examining teachers transitioning between different contexts
- Collaborative autoethnographies involving multiple teachers navigating similar transitions
- Studies incorporating student perspectives alongside teacher autoethnography
- Intervention studies examining whether structured autoethnographic reflection enhances teacher adaptation

### Concluding Thoughts

Ultimately, by illuminating the lived experience of the teacher, this framework contributes to a more nuanced, human-centered understanding of what it means to teach Chinese in an increasingly interconnected and culturally diverse world. As one journal entry concludes:

*"This is the reflective practice I wrote about—the cycle of experience, dissonance, critical reflection, and changed action. I'm living my own theoretical framework. It's hard. And it's necessary."* (Journal Entry, Week 16)

The framework proposed here offers a way to make that living, that difficulty, and that necessity visible. It provides a structured approach to transforming the inevitable struggles of cross-cultural teaching into opportunities for growth—for both teacher and students. In doing so, it affirms that the most valuable resource in multicultural CFL education is not a textbook or a curriculum, but a reflective, culturally-aware teacher willing to learn alongside their students.

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