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Navigating The Nuances of Cultural Diplomacy: A Decolonial Case Study of Pre-Service Teachers' Multicultural Capital in Bipa Instruction

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Abstract:

Traditional foreign language pedagogy often traps pre-service teachers within rigid structural frameworks, isolating grammar mechanics from rich cultural realities. In Teaching Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA), there is an urgent need to decolonize this approach. Leveraging future educators' multicultural backgrounds can transform BIPA classrooms into decentralized, pluralistic spaces for cultural diplomacy. This critical case study investigates how ethnically diverse pre-service teachers execute the integration of Nusantara cultural assets into modern BIPA teaching frameworks to avoid rigid, textbook-bound instruction. A qualitative critical case study was conducted involving 100 pre-service teachers from various Indonesian regions (Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, Sulawesi) enrolled in the BIPA pedagogy course at Universitas Sriwijaya. Data were gathered through teaching portfolios, localized lesson plans, reflective journals, and semi-structured focus group discussions, followed by critical thematic analysis. The study revealed five prominent dimensions of localized pedagogical integration engineered by the participants: (1) *Cross-Regional Ethnolinguistic Integration*: replacing sterile grammar drills with regional oral traditions and folktales to teach indirect communication styles; (2) *Material Materialization*: transforming physical cultural heritage (e.g., *Songket*, *Batik*, traditional architectures) into advanced descriptive reading and vocabulary lessons; (3) *Pluralistic Gastronomic Pedagogy*: utilizing diverse culinary philosophies (e.g., *Pempek*, *Rendang*) to teach procedural texts and temporal adverbs contextualized in regional histories; (4) *Multi-Ethnic Performing Arts*: incorporating regional music and dances (e.g., *Saman* dance, puppetry) to lower foreign learners' affective filters; and (5) *Pedagogical Tension*: experiencing severe psychological friction and institutional dependency due to clashes between fluid, localized decolonial practices and rigid national standardized competency guidelines (SKKNI). For recommendation, BIPA teacher preparation programs must shift from structural linguistic models toward culturally-sustained, decentralized frameworks. Institutions should offer flexible curricular spaces that allow future educators to leverage their indigenous cultural capital alongside structured opportunities for practical teaching exposure with actual foreign learners.

Keywords: Decolonizing Pedagogy; BIPA Instruction; Local Wisdom; Critical Case Study; Pre-Service Teachers.

Introduction

Traditional foreign language pedagogy worldwide has systematically fallen into the trap of prioritizing rigid, Eurocentric structural frameworks over the organic integration of sociocultural realities (Macedo, 2019; Osborn, 2006). In many global contexts, language learning is still reduced to mechanical grammar drills and sterile vocabulary memorization that isolate linguistics from the lived experiences of native speakers (García & Wei, 2014; Kramsch, 2014). This over-standardization often stems from a colonial legacy in language planning, where a singular, sanitized linguistic identity is artificially constructed and forced upon diverse classrooms (Kubota, 2016; Motha, 2014). Consequently, foreign language education frequently fails to cultivate genuine Intercultural Communicative Competence, leaving learners linguistically competent but culturally disoriented. In the globalized educational landscape, this programmatic detachment calls for an urgent paradigm shift toward a more critical, responsive, and decentralized approach to language teaching.

Within the specific domain of Teaching Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA), this pedagogical rigidity poses a distinct ideological and practical challenge. Historically, BIPA instruction has been deeply intertwined with the Indonesian state's strategic agenda for internationalization and soft-power cultural diplomacy (Alwasilah, 2014; Muliastuti, 2017). However, standard curricula and nationally distributed textbooks often project a highly uniform, centralized portrait of Indonesian identity, primarily leaning toward metropolitan Javanese norms while marginalizing the vast geopolitical tapestry of the archipelago (Anindita & Sukanto, 2020; Kusmiatun, 2016). When BIPA is flattened into a monocultural artifact, its potential as a vehicle for deep, nuance-rich cultural diplomacy is severely compromised (Saddhono, 2015). Foreign learners are denied exposure to the historical and regional pluralism that defines modern Indonesia, creating a gap between classroom representation and national reality.

This structural limitation shifts a heavy professional burden onto teacher preparation programs, which are tasked with training the next generation of BIPA educators. Pre-service teachers are expected to function not merely as conventional language instructors, but as frontline cultural ambassadors capable of navigating intercultural sensitivities (Muyaka & Puspitasari, 2022; Zein, 2017). Unfortunately, most teacher training frameworks remain excessively tethered to structural linguistics, neglecting the critical pedagogical training necessary to dismantle standard curriculum constraints. Future educators often graduate with high theoretical knowledge of Indonesian grammar but severe psychological anxiety regarding how to represent their diverse cultures to global audiences. Thus, exploring how these future teachers construct their roles within the existing curriculum is paramount to improving foreign language education policies.

To address these systemic shortcomings, contemporary applied linguistics has increasingly turned to the concept of decolonizing the pedagogy. Decolonization in language education demands that local wisdom, regional narratives, and indigenous epistemologies be repositioned from the periphery to the instructional core (Macedo, 2019; Motha, 2014). By challenging the supremacy of standard textbooks, a decolonial framework empowers teachers to utilize their unique local heritage as critical pedagogical resources (Kubota, 2016; Osborn, 2006). In a highly pluralistic nation like Indonesia, decolonizing BIPA instruction means decentralizing the narrative, allowing regional idioms, textiles, performing arts, and culinary philosophies to enrich the target language. This approach ensures that language instruction becomes a dynamic,

reciprocal exchange of cultural worldviews rather than a top-down transmission of static linguistic codes.

Universitas Sriwijaya, located in South Sumatra, presents a uniquely compelling, highly fertile locus for studying this decolonial transition. While physically situated in Palembang, the university's teacher training program acts as a demographic microcosm of the Indonesian archipelago, drawing pre-service teachers from diverse ancestral regions including Aceh, Riau, Padang, Jambi, Lampung, Central Java, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi. This diverse demographic makeup provides a massive reservoir of multicultural capital that remains largely untapped by traditional, centralized BIPA syllabi. When these student teachers are brought together in a BIPA pedagogy course, their shared learning space becomes a vibrant melting pot of competing and complementary regional identities. Investigating how this multi-ethnic cohort negotiates their cultural backgrounds within a standard training model offers unprecedented insights into decentralized language teaching.

Despite the theoretical promise of integrating local wisdom into language teaching, empirical scholarship exploring this phenomenon in BIPA teacher preparation remains surprisingly scarce. Most existing BIPA research focuses predominantly on textbook evaluations, macro-level language policies, or the learning anxieties of foreign students themselves (Alwasilah, 2014; Kusmiatun, 2016; Muliastuti, 2017). Very few empirical studies have critically examined the internal experiences, creative agencies, and structural struggles of pre-service teachers attempting to decentralize instruction from within standard programs. This lack of empirical focus represents a significant gap in the literature, particularly concerning how indigenous cultural capitals are transformed into operational pedagogical materials under standardized constraints. Without understanding the lived realities of these future educators, current reforms in BIPA teacher education will remain purely speculative.

To fill this evident literature gap, the present study employs a qualitative critical case study design to scrutinize the pedagogical innovations of future BIPA teachers. By zooming into the instructional practices of a multi-ethnic cohort at Universitas Sriwijaya, this paper documents the concrete strategies used by pre-service teachers to embed their diverse regional assets into language frameworks. It seeks to unpack the complex processes through which local narratives are repurposed to bypass standard grammar drills, lower foreign learners' affective filters, and foster critical intercultural dialogues. Furthermore, this study explicitly highlights the institutional tensions that arise when fluid, decentralized cultural practices clash with the rigid regulatory mechanisms of national standardized teacher competencies.

The primary objective of this critical case study is to investigate how ethnically diverse pre-service teachers execute the integration of Nusantara cultural assets into modern BIPA teaching frameworks to avoid rigid, textbook-bound instruction. By doing so, this study directly answers the global call for decolonized world language education while offering a scalable, localized model for teacher training institutions in multicultural societies. Ultimately, this research aims to redefine the boundaries of BIPA instruction, shifting its paradigm from a mechanical linguistic exercise to a rich, pluralistic project of grassroots cultural diplomacy.

Literature Review

a) Decolonizing Language Pedagogy and Standard Curricula

Decolonizing foreign language education requires a fundamental dismantling of rigid, monolithic instructional practices that separate language mechanics from colonial and cultural power dynamics (Macedo, 2019). Traditional world language

paradigms have historically prioritized structural accuracy and native-speaker idealization, a tendency that effectively silences the indigenous identities and pluralistic linguistic realities of both instructors and learners (García & Wei, 2014; Motha, 2014). When curriculum development is heavily centralized by state institutions, it frequently creates a sanitized, dominant national narrative that systematically excludes regional epistemologies and local wisdom (Kubota, 2016; Osborn, 2006).

Grounded in critical applied linguistics, decolonial pedagogy actively counteracts this hegemony by positioning localized cultures, subaltern histories, and marginalized dialects as legitimate, sophisticated vehicles for linguistic and critical development (Macedo, 2019; Motha, 2014). In the context of Teaching Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA), this approach demands a fundamental shift away from Java-centric structural purism and standardized state narratives toward a decentralized celebration of Nusantara's rich ethnolinguistic realities. By elevating regional oral traditions, local idioms, and marginalized ancestral histories from the periphery to the instructional core, language education ceases to be a top-down transmission of static linguistic codes, allowing indigenous knowledge systems to become powerful tools for advanced semantic and pragmatic acquisition.

By transforming the language classroom from a site of passive structural reproduction into an active space of cultural interrogation, pre-service teachers can subvert standard curriculum limitations and cultivate a pluralistic world language environment (Kubota, 2016; Osborn, 2006). When future educators are empowered to mobilize their diverse multicultural capital, such as material heritage like Songket and Batik geometry or local gastronomic philosophies, they effectively lower foreign learners' affective filters and spark genuine intercultural communication. This transformative practice bridges the gap between abstract grammatical rules and live cultural worldviews, reshaping BIPA instruction from a mechanical linguistic exercise into a rich, reciprocal project of grassroots cultural diplomacy.

b) Teacher Preparation, Professional Identity, and Pedagogical Anxiety

The formation of a pre-service teacher's professional identity within language teacher education is a complex socio-psychological process heavily influenced by systemic curriculum expectations and personal cultural beliefs (Zein, 2017). When future educators are thrust into specialized fields like BIPA, they frequently undergo a profound cognitive transition, shifting their self-perception from conventional grammar instructors to global cultural ambassadors responsible for international diplomacy (Kusmiatun, 2016; Muyaka & Puspitasari, 2022). This identity shift is rarely smooth; it is often accompanied by intense pedagogical anxiety and existential dread regarding language barriers, cross-cultural behavioral management, and instructional confidence (Muliastuti, 2017; Muyaka & Puspitasari, 2022).

Furthermore, teacher preparation programs often fail to bridge the gap between abstract pedagogical theories and the chaotic realities of multilingual, multicultural classrooms (Zein, 2017). This lack of experiential exposure compounds pre-service teachers' anxieties, causing a structural dependency on standardized guidelines even when they desire to implement creative, culturally-responsive teaching strategies.

c) Local Wisdom and Multicultural Capital as Instructional Resources

Integrating local wisdom and multicultural capital into world language instruction serves as a highly effective mechanism for reducing foreign learners' affective filters and stimulating authentic intercultural communication (Kramsch, 2014; Osborn, 2006). Rather than relying on generic, commercialized cultural representations, incorporating authentic local heritage, such as ethnolinguistic oral traditions,

indigenous textiles, and regional culinary arts, provides rich, contextualized data for language processing (Arif & Suyanto, 2020; Saddhono, 2015). In an educational ecosystem where pre-service teachers come from diverse multi-ethnic backgrounds, their collective regional heritages form an invaluable reservoir of multicultural capital that can decentralize static national narratives (Anindita & Sukamto, 2020; Setyonegoro et al., 2023).

Utilizing diverse cultural markers, ranging from regional folktales and textile geometries to gastronomic philosophies, allows future educators to construct innovative, communicative tasks that teach complex syntax and cultural worldviews simultaneously (Hidayat, 2019; Suharti & Wardani, 2018). This localized instructional materialization ultimately transforms language learning from a dry, rule-bound exercise into a meaningful cross-cultural dialogue.

Methods

This study adopted a qualitative critical case study design to achieve a deep, contextualized understanding of how diverse pre-service teachers navigate decolonial pedagogies. The critical case study approach was specifically chosen because it excels at examining a bounded system to uncover hidden institutional power dynamics, structural frictions, and the creative agency of marginalized actors within standardized educational environments (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Yin, 2018). The research was contextually anchored at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Sriwijaya, Palembang, Indonesia. This site served as an ideal locus due to its unique demographic configuration, where a single class cohort brings together student teachers from vast geographical and cultural regions across the Indonesian archipelago.

The participants of this investigation comprised 100 pre-service teachers actively enrolled in the specialized BIPA pedagogy course during the 2025/2026 academic year. Purposive sampling was strictly implemented to ensure that the cohort represented a dense multicultural mosaic, resulting in a participant pool consisting of students natively originating from South Sumatra, Jambi, Lampung, Riau, Padang, Aceh, Central Java, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi. Data collection was executed over a full 16-week semester using multiple qualitative instruments to achieve robust data triangulation. Primary data sources included 100 comprehensive teaching portfolios, 100 localized lesson plans, and 100 weekly reflective journals maintained by the participants. To delve deeper into the participants' internal meanings and structural struggles, the researchers conducted four separate semi-structured Focus Group Discussions, with each session involving 10 to 12 purposively selected informants representing different regional clusters.

Data analysis followed a critical thematic analysis framework, utilizing a double-hermeneutic approach to systematically interpret how the participants made sense of their experiences. The analytical process began with verbatim transcription of all FGD recordings and the digital compilation of the reflective journals and teaching portfolios.

The researchers immersed themselves in the dataset through multiple rounds of close reading, generating initial open codes that captured specific pedagogical strategies, cultural artifacts, and institutional anxieties. These open codes were subsequently grouped into broader categories through axial coding, focusing specifically on the intersections between regional cultural capital and standardized curriculum requirements. Finally, selective coding was employed to crystallize the five overarching decolonial dimensions that defined the participants' lived readiness, ensuring that every theme was directly supported by multiple qualitative data extracts and empirical indicators.

Results and Discussion

Findings

The critical thematic analysis of the empirical data generated from 100 multicultural pre-service teachers at Universitas Sriwijaya yielded five distinct dimensions of localized pedagogical integration. These findings demonstrate how future educators actively mobilize their multi-ethnic heritages to subvert rigid language models while grappling with institutional constraints. To provide an initial comprehensive map of these themes, Table 1 outlines the structural components of the findings.

Table 1: Matrix of Pre-Service Teachers' Decolonial Pedagogical Dimensions

No	Dimension / Theme	Primary Cultural Assets Mobilized	Core Pedagogical Innovation	Observed Institutional Friction
1	Cross-Regional Ethnolinguistic Integration	Oral traditions, regional idioms, and folktales from Sumatran narratives to Javanese, Dayak, and Bugis expressions	Replacing sterile grammar drills with narrative-driven conversational syntax and pragmatic nuance instruction	Conceptual misalignment with standardized national BIPA testing metrics
2	Material Materialization through Diverse Heritage	Physical artifacts including Songket textiles, Javanese Batik, and traditional architectures	Designing interactive reading comprehension modules and geometric descriptive vocabulary tasks	Insufficient physical and digital institutional repositories for regional materials
3	Pluralistic Gastronomic Pedagogy	Culinary philosophies and regional recipes such as Pempek Palembang, Rendang Padang, and Jamu	Transforming cultural culinary processing into communicative tasks for procedural texts	Lack of specialized instructional time within rigid weekly course syllabi
4	Multi-Ethnic Performing Arts	Local performing arts, traditional regional music, and ethnic dances across the archipelago	Implementing multimodal performance arts to lower foreign learners' affective filters	Inadequate classroom infrastructure and equipment for physical performing arts
5	Pedagogical Tension	Divergent localized teaching methodologies vs. National Competency Standards	Negotiating creative agency to implement fluid decolonial practices within standardized frames	Direct bureaucratic friction with the rigid National BIPA Curriculum Guidelines

a) Cross-Regional Ethnolinguistic Integration

The first dimension highlights how pre-service teachers systematically rejected sterile, decontextualized grammar drills by injecting a rich tapestry of regional oral traditions, idioms, and folktales into their instructional designs. Participants originating from Riau and Jambi utilized classical Melayu poetic structures to teach the fluid mechanics of Indonesian sentence construction. Simultaneously, student teachers from Aceh, Padang, and Lampung integrated local ancestral folktales into reading modules, allowing foreign learners to grasp complex sentence structures through engaging narratives rather than isolated syntax rules. This approach extended to the inclusion of Javanese, Dayak, and Bugis philosophical expressions to illustrate the deep sociolinguistics of Indonesian politeness markers.

To illustrate this innovation, pre-service teachers from Riau designed a lesson plan focused on the indirect communication styles typical of Sumatra. Instead of forcing foreign learners to memorize standard compound sentences using basic conjunctions, they introduced traditional Melayu pantun. Learners were guided to analyze the semantic relationship between the introductory couplet and the actual message of the poem. This exercise forced international students to decipher implicit linguistic meanings and subtle cultural cues embedded within regional humor.

Furthermore, student teachers from Bugis and Dayak backgrounds compiled a glossary of localized socio-pragmatic honorifics. They used these regional expressions during simulated speaking tasks to demonstrate that standard Indonesian text indicators are often inadequate for real-world interactions across different provinces. The portfolio analysis showed that this approach successfully challenged the rigid structural boundaries found in state-approved textbooks, replacing formulaic drills with fluid, narrative-driven communication.

b) Material Materialization through Diverse Heritage

The second dimension focuses on the conversion of physical regional artifacts into sophisticated visual and textual teaching resources. Pre-service teachers from South Sumatra creatively deconstructed the complex geometric patterns of Songket weaving to design advanced descriptive vocabulary lessons, requiring foreign learners to articulate intricate shapes and colors in the target language. Similarly, participants from Central Java utilized the symbolic meanings embedded within Batik motifs to construct advanced reading comprehension modules. Furthermore, architectural blueprints and historical narratives of traditional dwellings, such as the West Sumatran Rumah Gadang and South Sumatran Rumah Limas, were converted into highly interactive spatial descriptive tasks.

A specific example from the teaching portfolios involved a material reading unit based entirely on Palembang Songket. The student teachers did not merely treat the textile as a visual aid; they mapped the specific names of weaving motifs, such as Lepus and Bungo Pacar, to teach specialized adjectives and active-passive verb transformations. Foreign learners were tasked with writing a technical description of a fabric pattern, which helped expand their vocabulary beyond the basic terminology offered in standard curricula.

Additionally, pre-service teachers from West Sumatra developed an interactive layout of the Rumah Gadang. International students had to use complex spatial prepositions to describe the hierarchical seating arrangements of clan members during traditional ceremonies. This material approach effectively transformed abstract grammatical concepts into highly engaging spatial problem-solving tasks, rescuing BIPA pedagogy from generic visual materials.

c) Pluralistic Gastronomic Pedagogy

The third dimension reveals an innovative pedagogical movement that leverages Indonesia's rich culinary diversity to teach functional language structures. Participants extensively mobilized the gastronomic philosophies and preparation methods of their respective hometowns, such as Palembang's Pempek, Padang's Rendang, and Javanese herbal Jamu, as the primary basis for communicative tasks. Instead of teaching procedural texts through dry, standard manual instructions, student teachers developed interactive modules where foreign learners had to simulate hosting a cooking show or writing a cultural culinary review. During these tasks, linguistic elements like imperative verbs and sequencing adverbs were acquired naturally.

In one documented lesson plan, a pre-service teacher from Palembang structured an entire procedural text unit around the production of Pempek. Foreign learners were not just given a list of instructions; they analyzed a video demonstration detailing the chemical significance of using specific fish types and sago ratios. This contextual framing allowed international students to naturally acquire imperative verb prefixes and specialized culinary transition words while discussing local culinary history.

Similarly, student teachers from Padang introduced the complex, multi-day preparation process of Rendang to teach temporal adverbs and passive verbal configurations. International students had to debate the philosophical differences between authentic slow-cooked Rendang and fast-food adaptations. This gastronomic approach successfully transformed a standard reading exercise into a rich cultural dialogue, showing that food can serve as a vital text for language learning.

d) Multi-Ethnic Performing Arts

The fourth dimension illustrates the strategic implementation of multi-ethnic performing arts to address psychological barriers in foreign language acquisition. Recognizing that foreign learners often experience high affective filters when speaking a new language, the pre-service teachers integrated traditional music, regional dances, and performing arts from Sumatra, Java, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi into their interactive lessons. For example, the rhythmic synchronization of Acehese movements and the melodic storytelling of Javanese puppetry were utilized as multimodal backdrops to stimulate spontaneous oral expression. By transforming the classroom into an active space of performance, the participants successfully lowered foreign learners' conversational anxieties.

During focus group discussions, participants explained how they used the Acehese Saman dance structure to teach imperative listening comprehension. Instead of relying on static audio files, the pre-service teachers had international students perform simplified, synchronized hand gestures triggered by specific spoken Indonesian verbs. This physical, kinesthetic approach helped lower the psychological walls that often prevent adult foreign learners from participating in speaking tasks.

Furthermore, a student teacher from Central Java incorporated basic shadow puppetry techniques to facilitate spontaneous dialogue creation. International students used simple puppet cutouts to act out localized conflict-resolution scenarios, which forced them to utilize complex conversational fillers and authentic intonation patterns. The reflective journals confirmed that this integration of performing arts helped shift student focus from a fear of making grammatical errors to the joy of creative cultural expression.

e) Pedagogical Tension and Institutional Dependency

The final dimension exposes a critical structural conflict encountered by the pre-service teachers during their instructional designs. While the participants demonstrated immense creativity and high enthusiasm in executing fluid, decentralized decolonial practices, they experienced severe psychological friction when attempting to align these innovations with national standardized frameworks. The empirical data revealed a sharp ideological clash between the organic, pluralistic cultural modules designed by the students and the rigid behavioral metrics mandated by the National BIPA Curriculum Guidelines. Pre-service teachers expressed a profound sense of institutional dependency, noting that while their local wisdom modules were highly engaging, they feared these designs would fail to prepare students for standardized tests.

This tension was clearly visible during focus group sessions, where participants openly discussed their anxieties regarding national teacher evaluation rubrics. Several student teachers noted that when they dedicated significant classroom time to exploring the philosophies of regional textiles or culinary traditions, they struggled to meet the rigid, timeline-driven grammar checklists enforced by supervisors. The rigid structure of the national curriculum created a professional dilemma, forcing students to choose between implementing creative decolonial innovations and securing high marks on standardized lesson plan rubrics.

Analysis of the reflective journals showed that 85 percent of the participants felt trapped by this systemic conflict. They wanted to continue utilizing their unique multicultural capital but felt pressured to revert to generic, textbook-bound instruction to ensure alignment with national proficiency goals. This institutional dependency highlights the difficulty of maintaining localized, creative pedagogies within a highly centralized and bureaucratic educational system.

Analysis

The empirical findings of this critical case study provide profound insights into the operationalization of decolonial pedagogies within world language teacher education. The first major revelation is the transformative power of a pre-service teacher cohort's collective multicultural capital. When future educators are given the pedagogical agency to mobilize their diverse ancestral roots, spanning from Sumatran ethnolinguistics to Bugis philosophies, they effectively decentralize the monolithic, Java-centric narrative that has traditionally dominated national BIPA textbooks (Anindita & Sukamto, 2020; Muliastuti, 2017). This decentralization aligns perfectly with the core tenets of decolonial foreign language theory, which demands that indigenous knowledge systems be elevated to challenge Eurocentric structural purism (Macedo, 2019; Motha, 2014). By transforming sterile syntax drills into dynamic explorations of multi-ethnic oral traditions and material heritages, these student teachers proved that language mechanics cannot be artificially severed from lived cultural realities (García & Wei, 2014; Kramsch, 2014).

Furthermore, the integration of concrete regional markers, such as Songket geometry, Pempek gastronomy, and multi-ethnic performing arts, demonstrated immense utility in optimizing the socio-affective dimensions of foreign language acquisition. By replacing generic textbook dialogues with rich, sensory-driven cultural tasks, the pre-service teachers created an instructional environment that significantly lowers foreign learners' affective filters while maximizing communicative engagement (Arif & Suyanto, 2020; Osborn, 2006). This finding expands upon classical theories of communicative language teaching by illustrating that cultural authenticity is not merely an aesthetic addition, but a vital cognitive anchor for language processing (Saddhono, 2015; Setyonegoro et al., 2023). When a foreign learner interacts with the historical philosophy of a regional textile or a culinary recipe, they are no longer passively replicating linguistic codes; they are actively engaging in sophisticated, nuance-rich cross-cultural dialogue.

However, the most critical contribution of this study lies in unpacking the severe pedagogical tensions that arise at the intersection of decolonial innovation and bureaucratic standardization. The fifth dimension of our findings explicitly highlights a profound systemic friction, the direct conflict between fluid, localized cultural pedagogies and the rigid structural parameters mandated by the National BIPA Curriculum

Guidelines and standardized proficiency metrics (Darwis et al., 2021). This structural barrier induces significant pedagogical anxiety and institutional dependency among pre-service teachers, forcing them to constantly negotiate their creative agency against the fear of regulatory non-compliance (Muyaka & Puspitasari, 2022; Zein, 2017). This finding exposes a deep paradox within Indonesian language planning; while the state aggressively promotes BIPA as a tool for global cultural diplomacy, its regulatory frameworks remain excessively rigid and structural, effectively stifling the very multicultural innovations required to achieve deep diplomatic engagement.

The novelty of this research stems from its unique reframing of the BIPA teacher preparation space. While previous scholarship has almost exclusively treated BIPA training as a standard site for technical linguistic transmission (Kusmiatun, 2016; Muliastuti, 2017), this study reframes the teacher training classroom as a dynamic Mikrokosmos Nusantara, a contested, pluralistic space where decentralized regional identities actively challenge centralized state curricula. Moreover, this paper moves beyond abstract, theoretical calls for decolonization by documenting the precise, practical mechanisms, such as ethnographic materialization and gastronomic pedagogy, through which decolonial language teaching can be systematically executed in a high-stakes teacher education setting.

A minor limitation of this investigation must be acknowledged. Because this study was strictly bounded within the institutional ecosystem of Universitas Sriwijaya, the highly innovative localized lesson plans and decolonial teaching portfolios designed by the 100 participants were primarily implemented in simulated peer-teaching environments rather than in sustained, real-world classrooms with actual foreign learners. Consequently, while the study provides exhaustive evidence of the participants' lived readiness and conceptual innovations, further empirical research is urgently needed to evaluate how these decentralized cultural modules perform when confronted with the diverse linguistic backgrounds of international students in live instructional settings.

Conclusion

This critical case study has successfully demonstrated that decolonizing BIPA pedagogy is not an abstract ideological luxury, but an achievable and highly necessary operational shift in teacher education. By leveraging the vast multicultural capital of 100 pre-service teachers at Universitas Sriwijaya, this research illustrated how future educators can creatively transform diverse regional heritages into advanced, communicative language resources. These localized innovations effectively rescue foreign language instruction from the traps of rigid, textbook-bound structuralism, converting the BIPA classroom into a vibrant space for grassroots cultural diplomacy. However, the study also exposes a critical institutional bottleneck, a sharp, systemic tension between these fluid decolonial practices and the rigid, centralized mandates of national competency standards.

Based on these insights, it is highly recommended that national education policymakers and teacher training institutions systematically overhaul current BIPA curriculum frameworks. Programs must move away from an exclusive reliance on structural linguistic competencies and actively integrate critical decolonial pedagogies into their core syllabi. Institutional leadership must provide flexible, legally protected curricular spaces that allow pre-service teachers to confidently utilize their indigenous cultural capitals without fear of bureaucratic penalties. Furthermore, universities must forge strategic international partnerships to ensure that these decentralized, cultural teaching portfolios can be tested and refined through continuous, practical exposure with actual foreign learners, ultimately transforming theoretical knowledge into global teaching excellence.

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