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Intercultural Communication Education

ISSN 2209-1041

<https://www.castledown.com/journals/ice/>

Intercultural Communication Education, 9(2), 103975 (2026)

<https://doi.org/10.29140/ice.v9n2.103975>

Intercultural Dynamics in Materials Development: An Exploration of Inspiring Experiences of BIPA Teachers in Thai Schools



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Abstract

The expansion of BIPA (Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers) programs in Thailand necessitates the development of teaching materials that are not only linguistically sound but also culturally responsive and contextually relevant. This study examines the intercultural dynamics in the development of culture-based BIPA teaching materials by six practicum teachers in Thai secondary schools, focusing on how they integrate Indonesian cultural elements, the constraints they encounter, and how reflective experiences shape their material innovation practices. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis of teaching materials, then analyzed thematically using NVivo. The findings reveal three key dynamics. First, cultural integration operates through culture as content and culture as activity structure, enabling a shift from static cultural information toward interactive, comparative, and experiential learning. Second, constraints such as technological limitations, pedagogical-cultural competence gaps, mismatches with student characteristics, and systemic workload function not merely as barriers but as catalysts for pedagogical awareness and creative adaptation. Third, teacher inspiration forms an integrative reflective cycle, from classroom experience to empathic awareness, creativity, and systematic structuring, transforming challenges into sustained pedagogical growth. The study contributes theoretically by repositioning cultural integration as a dynamic pedagogical process rather than static content, and practically by offering empirical insights for strengthening practicum teacher training, institutional support systems, and the development of context-sensitive, digitally supported BIPA materials in intercultural educational settings.

Keywords: BIPA, teaching materials, intercultural dynamics, practicum teachers, Thai schools

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

Introduction

The growth of Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing (BIPA) programs in Thailand reflects a convergence of institutional agendas and sociocultural dynamics that increasingly position Indonesian as a strategic regional language for study and work (Witayarat, 2023; Wagner et al., 2025). As diplomatic and economic relations between Thailand and Indonesia intensify, Indonesian language competence becomes more relevant for academic mobility, professional engagement, and cross-border communication in Southeast Asia (Amor et al., 2023; Wagner et al., 2025). Universities respond to these shifts by expanding language offerings and embedding intercultural competence as an employability-oriented outcome in line with broader globalization pressures (Witayarat, 2023; Amor et al., 2023). In parallel, institutional partnerships and exchange programs between Thai and Indonesian universities often prioritize language training and cultural exchange as part of regional collaboration (Witayarat, 2023). These developments contribute to a growing demand for BIPA instruction that is not only linguistically accurate but also socially and culturally meaningful for Thai learners (Hu et al., 2023; Weninger & Kiss, 2013).

Government-backed cultural diplomacy further accelerates BIPA's expansion in Thailand by increasing public visibility and learner exposure to Indonesian language and culture (Amor et al., 2023). Cultural festivals, competitions, and workshops motivate participation by presenting Indonesian as a living communicative resource rather than a purely academic subject (Amor et al., 2023). Within many language programs, culture is increasingly framed as integral to language use, aligning with approaches that integrate content and language to enhance learning relevance and intercultural outcomes (Hu et al., 2023; Weninger & Kiss, 2013). At the learner level, the perceived economic value of Indonesian has also risen as Indonesia's regional economic position strengthens, which encourages Thai students to view Indonesian proficiency as an asset for business, trade, and future study pathways (Wagner et al., 2025). Experiential opportunities such as study-abroad programs and community engagement are likewise associated with stronger sociolinguistic competence and smoother adaptation to target-language norms, reinforcing the appeal of BIPA as a pathway to real-world participation (Orsini-Jones, 2023).

Despite its expansion, BIPA classes abroad often face challenges when cultural content is imported without adequate adaptation to the local learners' context (Sokolova et al., 2022; Suharni et al., 2024). When teaching materials and examples do not align with learners' sociocultural experiences, students may struggle to understand the content and become less engaged in classroom activities (Sokolova et al., 2022; Beregovaya & Kudashov, 2019). This misalignment can reduce perceived relevance and lead to apathy toward language learning, especially when culture is presented as static "facts" rather than as an interactive process of meaning-making within familiar contexts (Beregovaya & Kudashov, 2019; Weninger & Kiss, 2013).

This challenge was also experienced by six practicum teachers in this study. They are students from the Department of Indonesian Language and Literature Education at University of Islam Malang, Indonesia who participated in a teaching practicum program in Thai schools. This program is a collaboration between University of Islam Malang, Indonesia and the Association of Educational Cultural International (AECI) Thailand within the framework of the KKN-PPL (student teaching/community service) program. AECI's mission in this program is to support the introduction of Indonesian culture and the teaching of moderate Islamic education in partner schools in Thailand, allowing the practicum teachers to provide BIPA instruction while introducing Indonesian culture to students. These six seventh-semester students were placed in various junior/senior high schools. The learners in this study were junior high school students, consisting of both male and female students. They were beginners

who were learning Indonesian for the first time. The medium of instruction used by the teachers was a combination of Indonesian and Thai.

All practicum placement schools are private Islamic schools located in Southern Thailand. Their first language is Indonesian, and they also master regional languages (Javanese, Madurese, Bugis, among others), making them multilingual. Prior to their placement, they had completed courses in the BIPA Curriculum, BIPA Grammar, BIPA Learning Programs, and BIPA Learning Innovation, which equipped them to develop lesson plans, materials, and learning media according to the characteristics and needs of students in Thai schools. They had also received Thai language training.

In practice, these practicum teachers strive to design culturally adaptive materials that align with the local realities of Thai students. This adjustment effort is crucial because the available reference BIPA material, the *Sahabatku Indonesia* book, was developed by the Indonesian Language and Book Development Agency for beginner level (BIPA 1) with university learners in mind, making it less sui for direct application with junior and senior high school students in Thailand. Therefore, the practicum teachers need to adjust or independently develop materials so that the cultural context presented can be understood and perceived as relevant by local students and aligned with AECI's mission to support the introduction of Indonesian culture in Thai schools. This effort aligns with findings that culturally adaptive materials can support the learning of language forms within socially understandable situations (Aski et al., 2023; Garrett-Rucks, 2013). By independently developing teaching materials relevant to the intercultural learning environment faced by these practicum teachers in Southern Thailand, the quality of cultural content becomes a central pedagogical issue, not merely an additional consideration (Guerra et al., 2020; Suharni et al., 2024).

The literature identifies persistent gaps in BIPA and comparable foreign-language materials, particularly in Southeast Asian contexts, involving content authenticity, pedagogical alignment, and digital interactivity (Guerra et al., 2020; Sadijah et al., 2024). Content gaps include limited representation of locally relevant culture, idioms, and communication styles, which can hinder learners' capacity to interpret meaning in socially appropriate ways (Weninger & Kiss, 2013; Suharni et al., 2024). Pedagogical gaps emerge when materials do not operationalize contemporary teaching strategies that support active learning, critical thinking, and intercultural competence development in real interactional scenarios (Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Beregovaya & Kudashov, 2019). Digital interactivity gaps are increasingly salient as learners expect collaborative and multimodal learning environments; insufficiently interactive materials may limit engagement and reduce opportunities for meaningful practice beyond textbook routines (Zúñiga et al., 2025; Amor et al., 2023). These gaps matter because intercultural communication challenges can depress motivation and weaken learning outcomes when learners feel disconnected, unsupported, or unsure how language functions in their lived contexts (Sadijah et al., 2024; Liaw, 2007).

Previous research explains why materials that are culturally sensitive and context-aware are beneficial but also reveals an unresolved gap regarding how such materials are practically developed under real-world constraints in BIPA classrooms abroad, especially when innovation is driven by teacher practicants (Aski et al., 2023; Suharni et al., 2024). Addressing this gap is important for BIPA in Thailand because sustained program growth will depend not only on institutional expansion but also on the quality and contextual fit of materials used in classrooms (Amor et al., 2023; Wagner et al., 2025).

Accordingly, this study aims to examine intercultural dynamics in the development of BIPA learning materials in Thai schools by focusing on practicum teachers' roles in designing, adapting, and imple-

menting culture-based resources under classroom realities (Egorova, 2022; Banegas, 2021). Specifically, it investigates (1) how practicum teachers integrate Indonesian cultural elements in ways that resonate with Thai learners; (2) what constraints they encounter (content, pedagogy? resources, and digital interactivity); and (3) how reflective feedback shapes their materials innovation practices.

The novelty of this work lies in linking intercultural communication challenges and motivation-related risks to the situated work of materials development, thereby moving beyond general claims that “culture matters” toward an evidence-informed account of how cultural adaptation is operationalized by novice educators in an expanding BIPA context (Garrett-Rucks, 2013; Suharni et al., 2024). By foregrounding practicum teachers as cultural mediators and design agents, the study contributes practical insights for program improvement, teacher preparation, and the development of context-sensitive, digitally supported BIPA materials that can sustain engagement and learning outcomes in Thailand (Glimång & Sauro, 2024; Zúñiga et al., 2025).

Literature Review

This review adopts intercultural communicative competence (ICC) as its conceptual lens, framing language learning as the ability to mediate between cultures (Porto & Byram, 2022; Baker, 2021). ICC is relevant here as practicum teachers integrate Indonesian culture with Thai learners’ backgrounds, creating intercultural dialogue. The review is organized into four sections: teachers as active materials developers, cultural integration in BIPA materials, recurring constraints in design practices, and the gaps this study addresses.

Teachers as Materials Developers

Teachers as materials developers must apply these design principles in practice. Effective materials are commonly characterized by three interlocking design principles: communicativeness, contextualization, and competency orientation. Communicativeness requires that tasks create conditions for meaningful interaction, mirroring how language is used beyond the classroom; role-plays, dialogues, and discussion prompts are frequently cited as mechanisms for eliciting authentic language use and building communicative competence (Egorova, 2022). Contextualization refers to embedding language input and tasks within recognizable social situations and cultural references so learners can infer meaning and apply forms appropriately; materials that connect language structures to learners’ lived realities are argued to strengthen retention and perceived relevance (Guerra et al., 2020). Competency orientation aligns materials with explicit learning outcomes, including not only grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to operate in diverse interactional contexts; this approach frames language learning as performance and adaptability rather than accumulation of discrete knowledge (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). Beyond materials, Andriyanto et al. (2025) highlight that evaluation instruments themselves often lack contextual adaptation, particularly for Thai learners, underscoring the need for assessment designs that integrate local wisdom and learner characteristics.

These principles are not merely abstract ideals; they are also linked to how materials are assessed and validated in educational settings. Communicativeness is often evaluated through performance evidence and learner feedback whether students can participate comfortably in practical communicative situations and whether classroom activities stimulate sustained interaction (Egorova, 2022). Contextualization can be assessed by examining how well tasks represent culturally plausible scenarios and whether learners can connect target language use with culturally relevant situations, including local community practices (Guerra et al., 2020). Competency orientation is commonly assessed through

performance tasks, projects, and standardized measures that approximate real-world communicative demands and require cultural interpretation as part of language use (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). Competency orientation aligns materials with explicit learning outcomes, including not only grammar and vocabulary but also the ability to operate in diverse interactional contexts. In a similar vein, Sabrina et al. (2026) found that even well-intentioned international English textbooks for young learners in Indonesia often present intercultural communicative competence in a superficial manner, underscoring the need for more critically designed materials that embed authentic cultural negotiation tasks. In BIPA contexts, where learners typically engage with Indonesian to interact with Indonesian people, media, and institutions, these design principles become especially salient because materials must support both linguistic accuracy and sociocultural appropriateness (Weninger & Kiss, 2013).

Cultural Integration in BIPA Learning

A central premise in intercultural language education is that language and culture are inseparable: meanings are carried not only by lexical items and grammatical structures but also by culturally patterned ways of speaking, valuing, and relating (Hossain, 2024). Consequently, integrating culture into textbooks and classroom tasks is not an optional enrichment but a prerequisite for meaningful communication in the target language. Cultural integration is typically discussed in terms of material culture (e.g., artifacts, food, clothing, arts) and non-material culture (e.g., values, norms, beliefs, interactional expectations) that shape what counts as polite, persuasive, humorous, or appropriate (Garrett-Rucks, 2013). For BIPA, cultural integration helps learners understand why particular expressions are used, how turn-taking works, and what social meanings are implied in everyday interaction (Garrett-Rucks, 2013). Batitusta et al. (2025) extend this perspective by demonstrating how local communicative practices, such as *boso walikan* and community interaction patterns in Malang, can serve as pedagogical resources for developing pluricultural competence in BIPA learners, emphasizing that such integration must go beyond superficial representation.

In this study, intercultural dynamics are conceptualized as the processes of interaction, meaning negotiation, and transformation that occur when Indonesian culture (as the target culture) and Thai culture (as learners' experiential background) are brought together in the development and implementation of BIPA teaching materials. These dynamics operate through three interconnected dimensions (1) a shift from culture as static information toward culture as interactive experience through a comparative approach, (2) a model of cultural integration culture as content and culture as activity structure, and (3) a reflective cycle through which teachers develop as intercultural mediators. In this study, intercultural dynamics are conceptualized as the processes of interaction, meaning negotiation, and transformation that occur when Indonesian culture (as the target culture) and Thai culture (as learners' experiential background) are brought together. This conceptualization resonates with Zou's (2025) empirical work, which demonstrated that among Chinese college students, sustained intercultural contact (especially when structured around comparative reflection) leads to measurable growth in ICC, particularly in the dimensions of knowledge, attitude, and critical cultural awareness.

Embedding cultural values and norms into language materials supports intercultural understanding by making learners aware that language choices are linked to worldview and social relations (Aski et al., 2023). When classroom tasks require learners to engage with cultural narratives or to reflect on norms during language practice, they tend to develop a more nuanced understanding of meaning and context, moving beyond surface-level memorization (Schat et al., 2021). Such tasks also create opportunities for critical reflection: learners can compare their own cultural assumptions with those embedded in Indonesian communicative practices, which can cultivate empathy and reduce the risk of ethnocentric interpretation (Witayarat, 2023). From a competence-based perspective, this integration contributes to

intercultural communicative competence by linking linguistic performance to cultural interpretation and interactional awareness (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017).

Cultural integration also carries design risks. If culture is presented as static “facts” or stereotypical images, materials may inadvertently reinforce simplified representations and inhibit authentic intercultural dialogue (Guerra et al., 2020). This principle extends to assessment design, as Andriyanto et al. (2025) argue that evaluation instruments must equally reflect local wisdom and learner contexts to accurately capture intercultural competence development, especially for learners with distinct cultural backgrounds such as Thai students. Therefore, culturally responsive design emphasizes contextual fit: tasks should be locally intelligible to learners while still opening a pathway to Indonesian cultural meanings (Guerra et al., 2020). In cross-cultural BIPA settings such as Thailand, this implies that Indonesian cultural elements must be selected and framed in ways that resonate with Thai learners’ social experiences, allowing them to interpret culture as negotiated meaning rather than distant information (Witayarat, 2023). This aligns with findings by Trisnawati et al. (2025), who showed that teachers’ and students’ lived experiences in intercultural programmes (e.g., IB MYP) significantly contribute to the gradual development of intercultural sensitivity through structured reflection and cultural dialogue.

Constraints in BIPA Materials Development

Even when educators agree on the importance of communicative and culture-sensitive materials, practical constraints often shape what can be developed and implemented. The literature identifies several recurring constraint domains: resources and infrastructure, teacher expertise and training, workload and time, and the availability of culturally appropriate references. Resource limitations such as inadequate technology, limited access to multimedia tools, or insufficient instructional materials restrict teachers’ ability to produce interactive and culturally rich content (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). School-level support is also a critical predictor: administrative encouragement, professional development structures, and shared material repositories can enable teachers to experiment with culturally responsive designs, whereas weak support can discourage sustained innovation (Schat et al., 2021).

Teacher training is repeatedly highlighted as a decisive factor in intercultural materials development. Without professional development on intercultural competence and culturally responsive pedagogy, teachers may struggle to transform cultural topics into tasks that promote interaction and reflection, leading to materials that are either culturally superficial or pedagogically misaligned (Kamal, 2025). Saddhono et al. (2024) reinforce this finding in the BIPA context, emphasizing that structured training in culture-based material design is essential for equipping teachers with the competencies needed to develop contextual and engaging learning resources. Similarly, the “digital interactivity gap” is increasingly prominent as language education shifts toward multimodal and technology-mediated learning; interactive platforms and multimedia can represent cultural practices more vividly, but they require both technical skills and infrastructure (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017). Workload constitutes a further systemic constraint: overburdened teachers have less time to design, trial, and revise materials, making innovation difficult to sustain even when motivation is high (Murray, 2022). Incentives recognition, career credit, or financial support—are therefore discussed as mechanisms that can motivate teachers to invest effort in culturally responsive curriculum work (Witayarat, 2023).

Empirical studies also show that particular cultural anchoring strategies games, arts, narratives, and role play can be effective but are highly sensitive to context and support conditions. Games can boost engagement and facilitate communicative competence when they are culturally relevant and clearly linked to language objectives; yet games that do not align with learners’ experiences can produce disengagement and disconnect (Egorova, 2022; Beregovaya & Kudashov, 2019). Arts-based integration

(music, visual arts) may foster respectful dialogue around cultural meanings, including sensitive topics, but requires resources and structured facilitation to avoid superficial consumption of cultural products (Spathopoulou & Pitychoutis, 2025). Narratives can promote empathy and deeper cultural inquiry, but their success depends on teachers' ability to guide interpretation and connect stories to communicative practice (Garrett-Rucks, 2013). Role play can simulate real-life interactions and clarify cultural norms, yet learners may struggle to adopt unfamiliar perspectives unless scaffolded carefully through preparatory reflection and supportive classroom climate (Aski et al., 2023). Collectively, this evidence suggests that constraints are not merely logistical; they shape whether cultural anchoring becomes meaningful intercultural learning or remains a decorative activity.

Research Positioning and Identified Gap

Across these strands, the literature provides strong conceptual and empirical support for communicative, contextualized, competency-oriented materials that integrate both material and non-material cultural elements to promote intercultural competence (Egorova, 2022; Guerra et al., 2020; Chapelle & Sauro, 2017; Aski et al., 2023). Yet a key gap remains in explaining how culture-sensitive BIPA materials are actually produced in expanding BIPA contexts under everyday constraints particularly when innovation is driven by practicum teachers who must negotiate limited resources, varying school support, uneven training, and time pressure (Banegas, 2021; Murray, 2022). In addition, while studies document the potential of cultural anchoring strategies (games, arts, narratives, role play), fewer accounts connect the success or failure of these strategies to concrete design decisions and to the institutional conditions that enable iterative refinement (Spathopoulou & Pitychoutis, 2025; Schat et al., 2021). This study is therefore positioned to contribute by examining the intercultural dynamics of practicum teachers' materials development in Thai schools linking design principles, cultural integration choices, and constraint patterns to the practical work of creating BIPA learning resources that remain meaningful and usable in a local educational environment.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, as its primary objective is to explore in depth the intercultural dynamics involved in the development of BIPA teaching materials by practicum teachers in Thai schools. A qualitative case study is particularly appropriate when research is exploratory in nature and seeks a detailed understanding of the interaction between pedagogical practices, cultural contexts, and teachers' material-design decisions in real educational settings (Guerra et al., 2020).

Intercultural contexts are inherently complex, variable, and shaped by multiple factors, including institutional conditions (school support), cultural dimensions (local values), and resource-related aspects (access to technology). A case study design enables the researcher to capture the interrelationships among these factors holistically (Borzova & Shemanaeva, 2022). In addition, this study focuses on practicum teachers' meaning-making processes as they navigate intercultural teaching experiences, which aligns closely with research questions best addressed through qualitative inquiry (Suharni et al., 2024).

The main case of this study is defined as "practicum teachers' innovation in developing culture-based BIPA teaching materials in Thai schools." Within this case, three embedded sub-cases were analyzed in an integrated manner: (1) the use of Indonesian cultural elements in teaching materials, (2) constraints in materials development,

and (3) practicum teachers' inspirations and reflections on materials development. The identification of these sub-cases allows for focused analysis while preserving a comprehensive view of the underlying intercultural dynamics.

Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in six partner schools in Thailand which served as practicum sites for six BIPA practicum teachers participating in the KKN-PPL (community service/student teaching practicum) program of the Indonesian Language and Literature Education Department, as part of the collaboration program between Universitas Islam Malang and AECI Thailand. The participants consisted of six practicum teachers who taught BIPA and were actively involved in developing teaching materials during their teaching practicum.

Participants were selected from all practicum teachers after identifying that all six teachers met the criteria relevant to the research focus, such as having teaching experience in intercultural contexts and direct involvement in designing or adapting teaching materials (Borzova & Shemanaeva, 2022). Data adequacy was determined based on the principle of data saturation, whereby additional interviews and discussions no longer yielded meaningful new themes (Garrett-Rucks, 2013). This strategy is appropriate for small-N qualitative studies that emphasize narrative depth and process traceability (thick description), rather than statistical generalization. To maintain anonymity, participants were assigned codes (e.g., SPC, MOTH, NRA, TOWW, LNS, AUN), and schools were also anonymized using institutional codes (e.g., AMKS, BS, AJS, EIS, DMS).

Data Sources and Data Collection Procedures

This study employed data sources to capture (a) teachers' reasoning and lived experiences and (b) concrete evidence in the form of teaching materials produced. The combination of interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis is recommended to integrate "what teachers say" with "what they design and implement" in materials innovation (Aski et al., 2023; Egorova, 2022).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore personal narratives, pedagogical considerations, and rationales for selecting cultural elements in teaching materials. This format ensured consistency across participants through core questions while allowing flexibility to probe issues emerging from authentic classroom experiences (Aski et al., 2023). Interview questions focused on three areas: forms of cultural integration, design and implementation constraints, and reflections on innovation. Interview data were also used to understand teachers' emotional experiences and adaptive strategies in intercultural contexts, as personal narratives are a key source for revealing the rationales behind curricular decision-making (Witayarat, 2023).

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

FGDs were conducted to elicit collective dialogue regarding best practices, shared challenges, and variations in instructional strategies among teachers. FGDs enabled the researcher to capture dynamics of "meaning negotiation" among educators for example, how teachers reached consensus on which cultural elements were considered safe, relevant, and effective for Thai learners—and to strengthen findings through cross-participant validation (Aski et al., 2023). Discussions addressed types of instructional media, lesson planning, assessment practices, and cultural adaptation strategies.

Teaching Materials Document Analysis

Documentation included teaching materials developed by the teachers (worksheets, presentation media, narratives, audio resources, and/or interactive materials), as well as supporting notes indicating learning objectives, instructional steps, and cultural content. Document analysis served as artifactual evidence to examine the alignment between teachers' intentions and the actual materials used, while also enabling the identification of material and non-material cultural elements embedded in learning tasks (Egorova, 2022).

Table 1 *Data Sources and Analytical Focus*

Data Source	Unit	Focus of Inquiry	Analytical Output
Interviews	6 teachers	Design rationales, intercultural experiences, constraints, reflections	Interview transcripts
FGDs	Teacher groups	Strategy negotiation, practice comparison, cross-validation	FGD transcripts
Documents	Teaching materials	Material structure, cultural content, media types, task samples	Document corpus

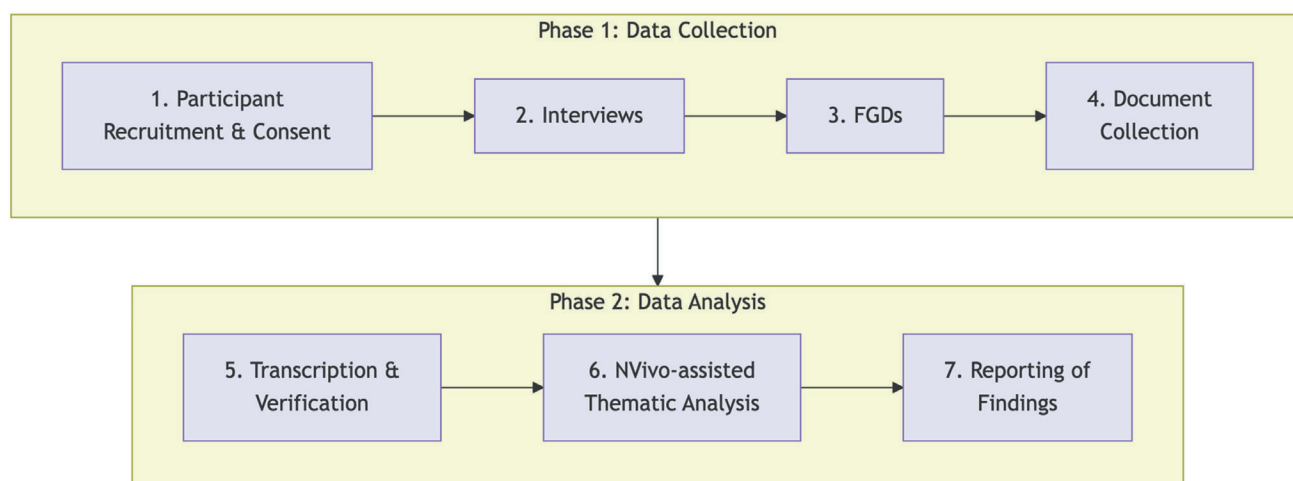


Figure 1 *Research Procedure Flow (Summary)*

Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis supported by NVivo software (version 15) to manage the data corpus and trace thematic relationships. The analysis proceeded through the following stages: (a) data familiarization (reading transcripts and documents), (b) initial coding (open coding) of relevant segments, (c) grouping codes into categories, (d) developing cross-data-source themes, and (e) mapping relationships among themes to clarify intercultural dynamics in materials innovation.

Coding followed an iterative constant comparison approach: codes were revised as new evidence emerged and stabilized once categories demonstrated consistency across data sources. NVivo outputs, including node maps, frequency queries, and relational visualizations, were used to support analytical traceability and coherence of interpretation.

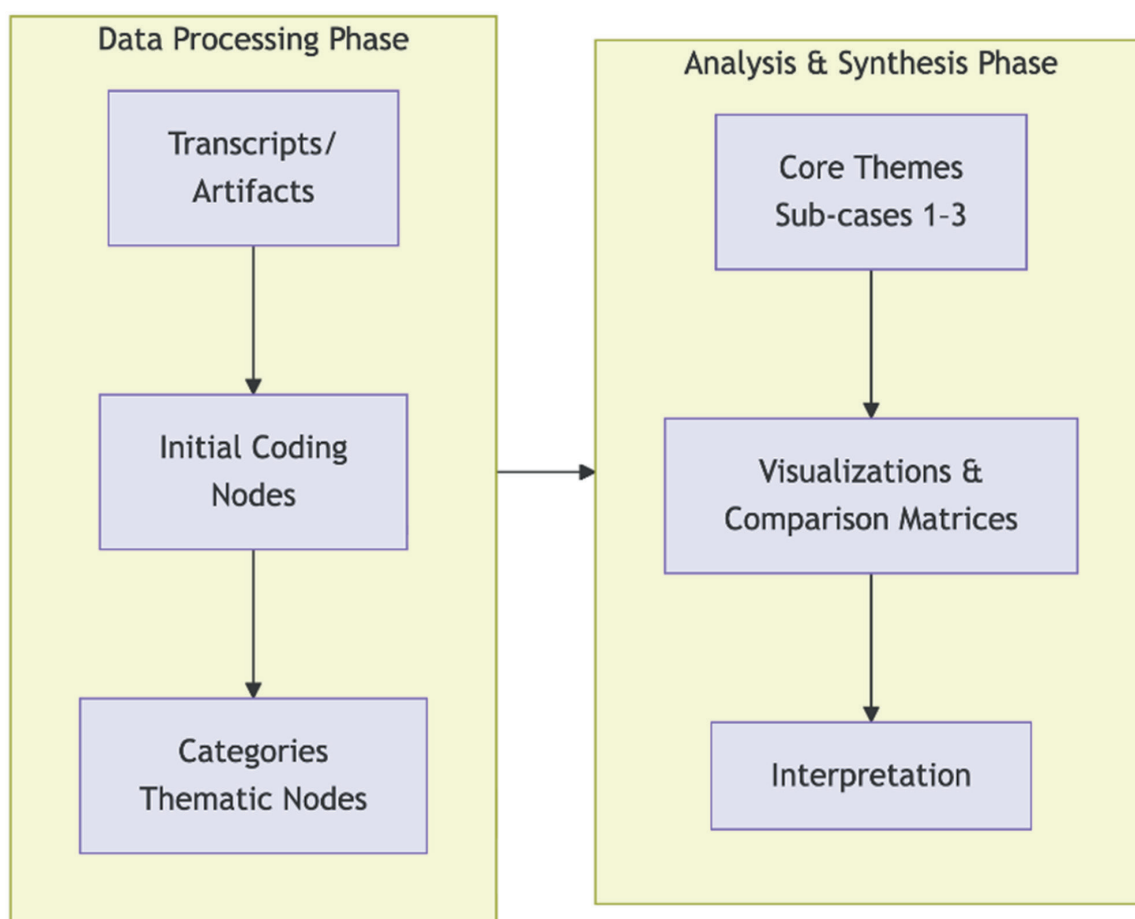


Figure 2 *NVivo-Assisted Thematic Analysis Scheme*

Trustworthiness and Research Ethics

Trustworthiness was ensured through three primary strategies: triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Triangulation involved comparing findings across interviews, FGDs, and document analysis to ensure thematic consistency and reduce single-source bias (Guerra et al., 2020). Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants to confirm interpretive accuracy and ensure that analyses reflected participants' intended meanings (Beregovaya & Kudashov, 2019). Peer debriefing involved critical discussions with academic peers or mentors to challenge assumptions, refine interpretations, and enhance analytical transparency (Vo, 2025).

Ethical considerations were addressed through: (1) informed consent; (2) protection of participant confidentiality through anonymized teacher and school codes; (3) secure data storage with restricted access; and (4) use of data solely for academic purposes. These procedures are essential given that the data include professional experiences, institutional evaluations, and personal narratives of practicum teachers in intercultural settings.

Additionally, the study applied caution in reporting practices: direct quotations (when used in the Results section) were selected to avoid revealing individual or institutional identities, and interpretations were framed to prevent cultural stereotyping. These practices align with the aims of intercultural research, which emphasize respect for diversity and accuracy in representing cross-cultural experiences (Suharni et al., 2024; Witayarat, 2023).

intonation, and cultural meaning. These patterns indicate that culture was not treated merely as informational content but transformed into participatory language-learning tasks.

Based on Figure 4.1, it is evident that the utilization of cultural elements in the development of BIPA teaching materials in Thai schools is carried out with the following considerations. First, an indication of the learning focus, where words such as media, Indonesia, games, and culture appear with high frequency. This indicates that the main focus of BIPA teaching materials in Thai schools is the integration of Indonesian culture into learning media. The prominence of the word media highlights the importance of visual, audio, and interactive tools as a means of delivering both language and cultural material simultaneously. The words Indonesia and culture signify that the teaching materials not only introduce linguistic structures but also elevate Indonesia's national identity and local values. This aligns with the concept of culture-based learning, which emphasizes the importance of local content in foreign language instruction.

Second, an indication of the representation of traditional culture, as seen in words such as child, student, cublak suweng, injit semut, and silat (a traditional martial art). These terms suggest that folk games and traditional arts are utilized in the learning process. For example, the use of games like Dua Mata Saya and Topi Saya Bundar is not merely integrated as entertainment but serves as a tool for learning vocabulary, sentence structures, and understanding cultural values such as mutual cooperation (gotong royong) and sportsmanship. Additionally, pencak silat is presented through videos and demonstrations to introduce vocabulary related to movements, commands, and etiquette within Indonesian culture. This approach is considered effective in creating an engaging learning atmosphere while introducing non-verbal cultural values to foreign students.

Third, an indication of the application of contextual and interactive learning, as reflected in words such as applying, understanding, and implementing, which point to an active and applied learning approach. Students do not merely study Indonesian culture theoretically but engage in it through direct practice in the classroom. This approach supports the concept of experiential learning, wherein students acquire language skills through authentic cultural experiences. For instance, they are invited to participate in short dramas based on Indonesian folktales or practice regional songs as a means of reinforcing pronunciation and intonation.

Fourth, an indication of the integration of visual and kinesthetic elements. The learning media employed in BIPA teaching materials heavily rely on visual forms such as pictures, illustrations of wayang (shadow puppet) characters, traditional clothing, and video recordings of regional dances. Many also incorporate kinesthetic media, such as interactive games and role-play, enabling students to directly engage with the cultural contexts they are studying. This integration of culture-based media supports the findings of Rohmah & Wahyuni (2021), which revealed that BIPA teaching materials incorporating local cultural elements are more easily accepted and understood by foreign students compared to materials that are abstract or overly academic.

Fifth, an indication of high receptiveness and interest among students. Words such as child, accept, and need reflect students' positive attitudes toward culture-based learning media. Students feel that language learning accompanied by cultural understanding enables them to better grasp the social contexts of the vocabulary and expressions they study. This is further supported by observations in BIPA classrooms, where students demonstrate active participation, enthusiasm for cultural activities, and reflective discussions about cultural differences between Indonesia and Thailand.

Sixth, an indication of effectiveness and relevance within the cultural context. As shown by terms such as use, the integration of Indonesian cultural elements has proven effective in capturing students'

attention, reinforcing language comprehension, and instilling local values. By incorporating cultural aspects such as pencak silat, traditional games, and dance, students not only learn the language but also understand the social meanings behind its use. In an international context such as Thailand, this approach is relevant because it bridges cultural differences and introduces Indonesia as a nation rich in values, history, and traditions.

To provide a more systematic overview of how cultural elements are utilized in BIPA instructional materials, the findings are organized into several cultural domains, forms of Indonesia–Thailand integration, and their instructional functions. The detailed description is presented in Table 2.

Table 2 *Forms of Cultural Element Utilization in BIPA Instructional Materials*

Cultural Domain	Potential Indonesia–Thailand Integration	Instructional Function
Traditional games	Comparing the traditional game <i>cublak-cublak suweng</i> with the Thai traditional game <i>Mon Hide the Ring</i>	Vocabulary practice, instructions, social expressions, collaboration
Martial arts	Relating <i>pencak silat</i> (martial arts) to <i>Muay Thai</i> (a hard martial art originating from Thailand)	Command vocabulary, movement concepts, non-verbal culture
Performing arts	Comparing <i>wayang</i> (traditional puppet theatre) with the <i>khon</i> (Thai masked theatre)	Cultural context, descriptive tasks, cultural vocabulary
Music and songs	Connecting the Javanese folk song <i>cublak-cublak suweng</i> with Indonesian <i>gamelan</i> (traditional Indonesian musical ensemble) and Thai folk songs accompanied by <i>khim/ranaat</i> (Thai hammered dulcimer/Thai xylophone)	Pronunciation, intonation, listening skills
Traditional clothing	Comparing Indonesian traditional clothing with Thai traditional clothing	Cultural context, visual stimulus, descriptive vocabulary
Cultural rituals/traditions	Comparing <i>Petik Laut</i> (Sea Offering Ritual) with <i>Loy Krathong</i> (<i>Loy Loy</i>) as expressions of gratitude and safety prayers in coastal communities	Intercultural understanding, cultural values, reflective discussion, descriptive and interpretive skills

In summary, the findings in Section 4.1 reveal a dual-layered model of cultural utilization (1) culture as content, referring to the selection and representation of cultural elements, and (2) culture as an activity structure, where cultural elements are transformed into interactive and participatory language-learning tasks. This indicates a shift from viewing culture as static information toward positioning it as a dynamic pedagogical resource that actively supports language acquisition and intercultural competence development.

Constraints in Developing BIPA Instructional Materials in Thai Schools

The following table presents the distribution of constraints identified based on the analysis of interview data using NVivo. The percentages shown represent coding coverage in NVivo, which refers to the proportion of data segments coded within specific categories, thereby indicating the intensity of theme occurrence in the participants' narratives.

Infrastructure and Technology Constraints

This study analyzes various constraints faced by teachers in developing innovative instructional materials based on Media, Resources, and Creativity (MRC). The analysis involved six teachers, namely SPC, MOT, NRA, TOWW, LNS, and AUN, using percentage coverage of constraints as the main indicator. The graphical results show varying distributions of constraints across teachers, reflecting the complexity and differing challenges in developing their respective instructional materials. The constraints related to infrastructure and technology systems in Thai schools are described as follows.

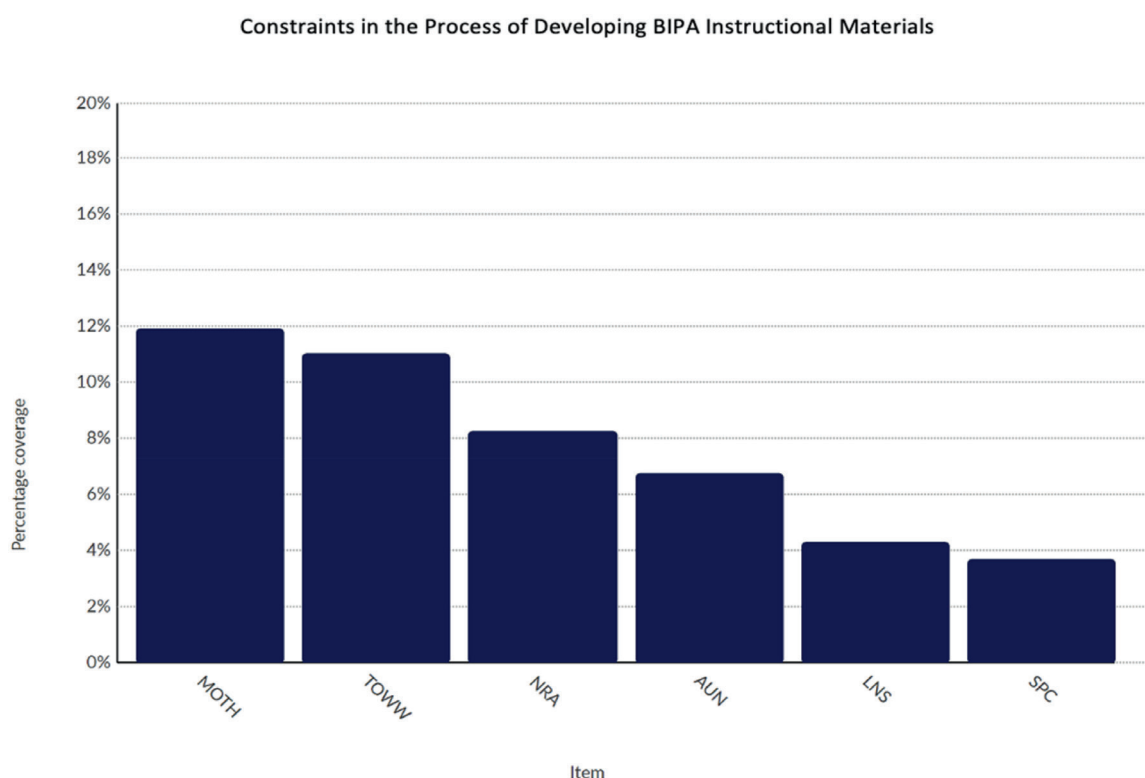


Figure 4 Constraints in the Process of Developing BIPA Instructional Materials in Thai Schools
Source: NVivo12, 2025

First, SPC shows the highest percentage of constraint coverage, exceeding 6%. This indicates that the development of technology-based innovative instructional materials faces significant challenges. These constraints may stem from technical complexities, such as the need for specific hardware and software, advanced multimedia design skills, and difficulties in aligning content with interactive features. Second, MOT has a constraint percentage of approximately 4%, ranking as the second highest. The constraints mainly relate to unstable internet connectivity, limited mastery of digital platforms, and insufficient ability to design effective hybrid learning content that integrates synchronous and asynchronous modes. Third, NRA and TOWW show a moderate level of constraints, with coverage around 3%. For NRA, the challenges are associated with limitations in developing digital-based instructional content. Meanwhile, TOWW faces difficulties related to text authenticity and the alignment of cultural or geographical contexts with students' needs in their specific teaching environment. Fourth, LNS and AUN demonstrate the lowest level of constraints (<2%), indicating that the development of instructional materials is relatively easier. These teachers tend to adopt flexible approaches that do not rely heavily on advanced technology. Materials can be developed manually or digitally with minimal resources.

School-Based Constraints

The school-based constraints in this study aim to identify and analyze the obstacles faced by teachers in developing innovative teaching materials in Thai schools, with a specific focus on differences based on school location. Data were obtained through qualitative analysis using NVivo software to categorize and calculate the percentage coverage of constraints from each respondent. The following are the results of the analysis related to school-based constraints.

Table 3 *Constraint Coverage by School*

School	Constraint Coverage
AMKS	>40%
BS	20–30%
AJS	20–30%
EIS	<10%
DMS	<10%

Based on Table 3, the findings are as follows. First, AMKS school recorded the highest constraint coverage, exceeding 40% of the total information analyzed, indicating significant challenges in the process of developing innovative teaching materials at this school. The identified contributing factors include (1) limited access to media and teaching resources, (2) lack of training in culture-based teaching material development, and (3) the complexity of local curriculum standards that must be aligned with BIPA materials. Second, BS and AJS schools showed moderate constraint coverage, ranging from 20% to 30%. In these two schools, common constraints included (1) limited development time due to administrative workload, (2) difficulties in integrating local cultural elements into teaching materials, and (3) a lack of contextual teaching material references suitable for the Thai learning environment. Third, EIS and DMS schools exhibited the lowest constraint coverage, below 10%. Teachers in these two schools appeared to face fewer difficulties in developing teaching materials. The likely reasons for the low constraints include better support from school management, the availability of ready-to-implement culture-based teaching materials, and the availability of digital learning resources that are already relevant to student characteristics.

Constraints in the Teaching Material Development Process

This study reveals various constraints faced by teachers in developing BIPA teaching materials in Thai schools. The results of NVivo coding of interview and documentation data indicate four main categories of constraints, namely (1) facility limitations, (2) pedagogical-cultural competence constraints, (3) mismatch with student characteristics, and (4) the absence of a structured material development process by teachers. Based on the analysis of the four constraints faced by teachers in the process of developing BIPA teaching materials, derived from interview and documentation data coded using NVivo, the findings are presented as follows.

First, facility limitations. It was found that teachers complained about the lack of supporting infrastructure, such as digital media, language laboratories, or stable internet access. Not all classrooms are equipped with projectors or audio-visual devices, and consequently not all teachers have access to the prepared teaching material software applications. Moreover, the schools do not have adequate collections of instructional media on Indonesian culture. These facility limitations directly hinder the

development of technology-based and culture-based teaching materials and reduce the quality of interaction in the learning process.

Second, pedagogical-cultural content constraints. It was found that teachers expressed difficulties in designing innovative, engaging, and contextual materials for BIPA instruction. In practice, the materials created remain text-based and lack visual elements, as teachers also struggle to creatively adapt Indonesian culture into teaching materials, and the materials still rely on outdated references that are less appropriate for the Thai student context. This situation indicates that teachers require specialized training in culture-based teaching material design, particularly in developing content that integrates educational value, interactivity, and contextual relevance according to the needs of students in Thai schools.

Third, alignment with student characteristics. It was found that several teachers reported that the teaching materials they had developed were not sufficiently aligned with the students' characteristics, needs, and abilities. In practice, students' Indonesian language proficiency levels vary considerably, they have diverse cultural backgrounds and learning preferences, and the materials are sometimes too complex or not sufficiently contextual for beginner learners. This issue underscores the importance of conducting a more specific student needs analysis prior to material development, so that the content can be effectively received.

Fourth, constraints in the development process itself. It was found that some teachers do not actively develop their own teaching materials, instead relying heavily on materials already available from other sources. The main reasons are the heavy administrative workload and teaching responsibilities, as well as the limited mentoring system for instructional innovation provided by senior teachers serving as supervisors at the school. This reveals systemic challenges that lead to limited teacher involvement in the material development process, thereby restricting innovation and personalization of materials.

Based on the NVivo analysis mapping the various types of constraints experienced by teachers in developing innovative teaching materials, a diagram was obtained that illustrates the direct relationships between the constraint categories and the specific learning materials used in BIPA instruction in Thai schools. These direct relationships between the categories of constraints faced by teachers in developing innovative BIPA teaching materials are presented in Figure 4.5.

Inspiration Gained by Practicum Teachers

To deepen the understanding of how practicum experiences shape teachers' perceptions of the importance of teaching materials, an analysis was conducted on the pedagogical reflections of teachers during their teaching practice. The results of this analysis identified four main dimensions that serve as sources of teacher inspiration, namely *teaching practice*, *supporting learners*, *creativity*, and *structure*. The details of these dimensions are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 5 *Dimensions of Practicum Teacher Inspiration*

Dimension	Description
Teaching practice	Classroom experience prompts strategy adaptation
Supporting learners	Motivation to clarify materials for beginners
Creativity	Drive to design more engaging and interactive materials
Structure	Awareness of systematic sequencing in instruction

Based on qualitative data analysis through interviews and NVivo coding, four main dimensions were found to have a significant influence.

First, inspiration to develop adaptive teaching materials. Direct teaching experience had a major impact on teachers' understanding of the effectiveness of teaching materials. The findings of this study are as follows: (1) teachers realized that relevant and contextual teaching approaches are more easily achieved through structured, experience-based teaching materials; (2) the experience of dealing with diverse student characteristics encouraged teachers to adapt their teaching strategies. Teaching materials were considered important because they provide practical, adaptable guidance and serve as a bridge between theory and classroom practice.

Second, inspiration to support learners. Teacher's experiences in assisting students, especially those experiencing learning difficulties, fostered an awareness that teaching materials play a crucial supporting role. The findings are as follows: (1) teachers felt that well-designed teaching materials with intercultural content could reduce student confusion, enhance understanding, and provide direction in the learning process; (2) reflective and humanistic teaching materials were considered more capable of addressing students' emotional needs. This experience encouraged teachers to view teaching materials not merely as cognitive tools, but also as a means of empathetic support and as engaging intercultural content for students.

Third, inspiration to enhanced creativity. This dimension highlights how dynamic teaching experiences encourage teachers to be creative and innovative in developing meaningful, engaging, and enjoyable interactive teaching materials. The inspiring experiences in this study include: (1) teachers who had faced passive or disengaged classes were motivated to create culture-based teaching materials that align with students' cultural backgrounds, making them more interactive and creative; (2) teachers used their experiences to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of existing teaching materials, then developed more attractive versions. Teaching materials with cultural content became important because they allow teachers to explore their personal creativity and increase their motivation to continuously refine relevant teaching methods.

Fourth, inspiration to design well-structured teaching materials. Teachers' experiences in developing, using, and evaluating teaching materials provided insights into the importance of structure and direction in the stages of the learning process, in accordance with relevant teaching methods. The findings related to this aspect are: (1) teachers realized that systematically organized teaching materials help keep the learning flow focused on effectiveness, efficiency, and engagement; (2) teachers also assessed that culture-based teaching materials can serve as a foundation for creating a learning atmosphere that integrates values, cognition, and reflection. This dimension reinforces the importance of teaching materials as a learning framework, not merely a collection of content, but also as a medium for integrating cultural values and wisdom in education.

Discussion

Intercultural Dynamics in BIPA Materials Development in Thai Schools

The findings of this study demonstrate that cultural elements in BIPA instructional materials function as a core component of language learning within an Indonesia–Thailand intercultural context, rather than as supplementary content (Baker, 2021; Porto & Byram, 2022). Cultural domains such as traditional games, martial arts, performing arts, music, clothing, and rituals are systematically integrated through a comparative approach, enabling learners to understand the target culture by relating it to their exist-

ing cultural knowledge (Zhang & Zhou, 2023). Furthermore, the findings reveal a dual-layered model of cultural utilization: culture as content and culture as an activity structure. At the content level, culture is represented as a source of cultural knowledge, while at the activity level, it is transformed into participatory tasks such as games, role-play, and experiential activities. This transformation reflects an experiential learning orientation that has been shown to effectively support both language acquisition and intercultural competence development (Baker, 2021; Andriyanto, et al., 2025).

The integration of Indonesian and Thai cultural elements also highlights the role of cultural equivalence as a pedagogical bridge. Comparisons such as *Cublak-Cublak Suweng* (The Hidden Earring Game) and *Mon Hide the Ring*, *Pencak Silat* (traditional Indonesian martial art) and *Muay Thai* (a hard martial art originating from Thailand), and *Petik Laut* (Sea Offering Ritual) and *Loy Krathong* (Loy Krathong Festival) facilitate conceptual connections that enhance comprehension and contextual relevance. (Porto & Byram, 2022). This supports the argument that foreign language learning becomes more effective when linked to learners' prior cultural experiences. In addition, the strong use of visual, audio, and kinesthetic media indicates a multimodal approach in BIPA materials. Such an approach enhances learner engagement, clarifies meaning, and supports language acquisition, particularly at the beginner level (Zhang & Zhou, 2023). Students' positive responses further suggest that culture-based instruction not only increases motivation but also deepens understanding of the social contexts of language use (Baker, 2021). Overall, these findings affirm that intercultural-based cultural integration in BIPA materials serves as an effective pedagogical strategy to promote contextual, participatory, and meaningful language learning, while simultaneously fostering the development of intercultural communicative competence (Porto & Byram, 2022; Zhang & Zhou, 2023; Batitusta, et al., 2025).

Intercultural dynamics in this study are reflected in the interaction between Indonesian culture as the target culture and Thai culture as learners' experiential background, manifested through processes of representation, interpretation, and meaning negotiation in learning activities. This positions BIPA instruction as a space for cultural dialogue, enabling learners to reflectively compare cultural practices. Such an approach contributes to the development of both communicative and intercultural competence, as learners relate new cultural knowledge to their existing cultural experiences through contextualized and meaningful activities (Baker, 2021; Porto & Byram, 2022; Zhang & Zhou, 2023). Such an approach contributes to the development of both communicative and intercultural competence, as learners relate new cultural knowledge to their existing cultural experiences through contextualized and meaningful activities (Baker, 2021; Porto & Byram, 2022; Zhang & Zhou, 2023). Extending this, Zou (2025) found that the dynamics of intercultural contact (including frequency, depth, and guided reflection) directly predict ICC gains, reinforcing the importance of deliberate design of intercultural tasks in BIPA classrooms. Therefore, cultural integration in BIPA learning plays a strategic role in fostering the development of intercultural communicative competence in a more applied manner.

Constraints in BIPA Instructional Material Development

The study identifies four major constraints in the development of BIPA instructional materials: technological limitations, resource availability, pedagogical competence, and systemic workload. Technological constraints particularly limited access to devices and stable internet emerged as a primary barrier to integrating digital and multimodal resources. This pattern is consistent with Chapelle and Sauro's (2017) assertion that while technology is central to contemporary language learning, it is often undermined by insufficient infrastructural support.

Limited access to culturally contextualized and authentic instructional resources is also widely reported in other intercultural language programs. Batitusta et al. (2025), for instance, emphasize that

integrating local communicative culture into BIPA materials is essential for developing pluricultural competence, yet such integration remains underdeveloped due to the scarcity of ready-to-use resources. Garrett-Rucks (2013) and Guerra et al. (2020) note that the scarcity of culturally relevant materials constrains the development of learners' intercultural competence. Furthermore, the pedagogical constraints identified in this study, especially the lack of formal training in culturally responsive pedagogy, align with Aski et al.'s (2023) findings on the necessity of explicit intercultural competence training for teachers. This gap is further highlighted by Batitusta et al. (2025), who argue that without systematic integration of local cultural practices into both materials and teacher preparation, the development of learners' pluricultural competence remains limited.

Systemic workload constitutes another significant constraint. Practicum teachers face administrative demands and time pressures that reduce opportunities for sustained instructional material design and revision. This issue is not unique to BIPA but reflects broader structural challenges in foreign language education contexts (Beregovaya & Kudashov, 2019; Spathopoulou & Pitychoutis, 2025). Accordingly, the constraints encountered by BIPA teachers in Thailand mirror wider systemic issues within intercultural language education.

The Dynamics of Awareness within the Four Dimensions of Inspiration

The four dimensions of teacher inspiration reflect a dynamic process of awareness and understanding that develops gradually through the practice of teaching material development in the intercultural context of Thailand. This dynamic demonstrates that direct experience in designing and implementing teaching materials not only produces learning resources but also transforms teachers' perspectives on their roles as language and culture educators.

First, inspiration from teaching practice reflects the dynamic awareness that classroom experience serves as an authentic source of learning. Teachers realize that relevant and contextual teaching approaches are more easily achieved through structured, experience-based teaching materials. This dynamic aligns with the findings of Han & Senyshyn (2024) that engagement in facilitated intercultural learning enhances teachers' perspectives and practices regarding cultural complexity in the language classroom. The process of reflection on teaching experience encourages teachers to bridge theory and practice, a process which Roxburgh (2025) identifies as key to the transformation of teacher perceptions.

Second, inspiration to support learners demonstrates a dynamic of empathic awareness that develops through direct interaction with students' learning needs. Teachers understand that teaching materials are not merely cognitive tools but also a means of emotional support. This dynamic is relevant to the findings that cross-cultural learning experiences enhance awareness of students' emotional needs and intercultural adaptability (Roxburgh, 2025). Similarly, Trisnawati et al. (2025) documented that both teachers and students in Indonesian IB schools perceived intercultural sensitivity as emerging from authentic encounters and guided reflection, not merely from exposure to cultural facts. The process of assisting students experiencing learning difficulties shapes the awareness that reflective and humanistic teaching materials can address the affective dimensions of learning (Roxburgh, 2025).

Third, enhanced creativity illustrates the dynamic that exposure to cultural diversity encourages pedagogical innovation. Teachers who face passive classrooms are motivated to create culture-based teaching materials that are interactive and creative. Nguyen et al. (2025), in their study published in *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, found that multicultural experience is positively associated with

creative teaching, with cultural intelligence serving as a mediator. Wei et al. (2022), in a cross-national study across four Asia-Pacific countries, also confirmed that teachers' multicultural experience correlates with creative teaching practices, which are increasingly relevant in the era of globalization. This dynamic shows that intercultural experience not only broadens knowledge but also transforms teachers' pedagogical capacity.

Fourth, inspiration to design well-structured teaching materials reflects the dynamic awareness of the importance of systematic frameworks in learning. Teachers realize that structured teaching materials help maintain learning flow focused on effectiveness, efficiency, and student engagement. Samu & Nowak (2024) emphasize that the design of structured teaching materials adapted to local contexts is crucial for optimizing intercultural learning experiences. Mishan & Kiss (2024), in their book *Developing Intercultural Language Materials*, further assert that integrating intercultural competence into the curriculum requires a systematic and reflective design framework.

The four dimensions of inspiration demonstrate a cyclical and integrative dynamic of awareness development. Research by Liu et al. (2025) reveals that teachers undergo a journey from initial awareness (*Know*), emotional engagement (*Care*), to behavioral intention (*Act*) in implementing culturally responsive teaching. This dynamic confirms that the practice of teaching material development in Thai schools not only yields products but also transforms teachers' understanding of their roles as intercultural learning agents.

In the context of BIPA in Thailand, research by Saddhono et al. (2024) identified that the main problems in BIPA instruction are the limited availability of teaching materials and supporting resources. This challenge, however, becomes a catalyst for teachers to develop awareness and creativity in designing contextual materials. Andriyanto et al. (2025) also affirm that integrating local wisdom into BIPA assessment is a strategic step to enhance language competence and cultural awareness among Thai students. Thus, the dynamics at play demonstrate that challenges in teaching material development actually become a learning space that enriches teachers' pedagogical awareness.

Theoretically, this study challenges the dominant tendency in BIPA scholarship that positions culture as a static content component in instructional materials by demonstrating that cultural integration is a dynamic and constructive pedagogical process. From the perspective of intercultural communicative competence, the study argues that instructional material development should not be viewed merely as a medium for cultural transmission, but as a site of praxis in which teachers actively construct, select, and contextualize cultural representations within intercultural interactions. In this way, the study extends the theoretical framework by establishing a closer linkage between material development, pedagogical practices, and the formation of intercultural competence in the context of teaching Indonesian to speakers of other languages, while also addressing the gap between theoretical discourse and classroom practice. Practically, the study provides empirical insights into forms of culture-based instructional materials, multimodal pedagogical mechanisms, and the concrete constraints faced by teachers in the Thai context.

However, the findings should be interpreted with caution due to the limited number of participants and the relatively narrow school contexts, as well as the focus on teachers' perspectives, which does not fully capture learners' experiences or learning outcomes. Therefore, future research is recommended to adopt more learner-centered approaches and to expand the scope through cross-contextual comparative studies. Overall, these interpretations, implications, contributions, and limitations provide a coherent foundation for the conclusion, which synthesizes the significance of the findings within the broader field of BIPA development and intercultural language education.

Implications for Practicum Teacher Training and Curriculum Development

The findings of this study highlight the need to reposition BIPA instructional materials from presenting culture as static content toward fostering interactive and comparative intercultural experiences. A comparative cultural approach has proven effective in helping learners construct contextualized meaning; therefore, teacher training programs should equip teachers with the competence to design dialogic, multimodal, and learner-responsive activities within the framework of intercultural communicative competence (Aski et al., 2023; Murray, 2022). In addition, the reflective dynamics observed—from classroom experience to creative material design—underscore the importance of strengthening teachers' adaptive and reflective capacities in training programs (Chapelle & Sauro, 2017; Mishan & Kiss, 2024).

At the institutional level, constraints should not be viewed solely as barriers but also as catalysts for creative adaptation. Accordingly, curriculum development and policy need to be more flexible and context-sensitive, supported by opportunities for pedagogical innovation, reduced administrative workload, and sustained professional mentoring to ensure the continuity of culture-based instructional innovation (Guerra et al., 2020; Hossain, 2024; Han & Senyshyn, 2024). Andriyanto et al. (2025) further emphasize that evaluation instruments themselves must be designed with local wisdom and learner characteristics in mind, particularly in contexts such as Thailand, where student needs differ significantly from those in Indonesia.

Contributions and Limitations of the Study

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Conclusion

The utilization of cultural elements as an intercultural bridge represents a dynamic, namely the shift from culture as static information toward culture as interactive experience. Practicum teachers do not merely present facts about Indonesian culture; rather, they dynamically transform them through

a comparative approach with Thai culture, such as comparing *Cublak Suweng* (The Hidden Earring Game) with *Mon Hide the Ring* or *Pencak Silat* (traditional Indonesian martial art) with *Muay Thai* (martial art originating from Thailand). This dynamic creates a space for intercultural dialogue that enables Thai students to construct meaning based on their existing cultural knowledge, making Indonesian language learning feel familiar rather than foreign, and thus contextual and meaningful.

The constraints experienced by practicum teachers serve as a catalyst for pedagogical awareness, reflecting a dynamic, namely the transformation of obstacles into a reflective learning space for teachers. Although technological constraints, competence issues, alignment with student characteristics, and systemic workload appear to limit innovation, the dynamics at play actually show that teachers in schools with high constraint levels (such as AMKS) develop a sharper awareness of the importance of adaptive teaching materials. Constraints do not simply paralyze; rather, they trigger a process of creative adaptation, especially when teachers leverage limitations as an impetus to discover alternative resources and more contextual teaching strategies.

The dynamics of teacher inspiration form an integrative reflective cycle, namely from classroom experience, empathic awareness, creativity, to systematic structure. Teachers are not inspired in a linear manner but undergo a recursive process in which direct teaching experience triggers awareness of student needs, which then drives creativity in designing teaching materials, and ultimately builds awareness of the importance of systematic structure to ensure effective, efficient, and engaging learning. This dynamic demonstrates that inspiration is not merely a momentary affective response but a transformative process that continuously enriches teachers' pedagogical competence, positioning them as increasingly reflective and adaptive agents of intercultural learning.

Suggestions

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are proposed. For teacher education institutions, it is necessary to strengthen the curriculum with training in culture-based teaching material design and the use of simple digital media to address pedagogical-cultural and technological constraints. For partner schools in Thailand, systemic support is needed in the form of providing access to media, reducing administrative burdens, and sharing best practices among schools to create an environment conducive to teaching material innovation. For practicum program coordinators, a sustainable reflective mentoring system should be established through structured discussions and reflective journals so that teaching experiences can be transformed into sustained improvements in teacher creativity and pedagogical awareness. Fourth, for future researchers, longitudinal studies or design-based research are recommended to examine the effectiveness of training programs and to develop prototype BIPA teaching materials specifically tailored to the context of secondary schools in Thailand.

Acknowledgments

This study was funded by the Directorate of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia through Penelitian Fundamental Reguler Scheme (contract number: 109/E5.02.00.PL/2024; 018/SP2H/PT/LL7/2024).

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