

## Reframing intercultural communication in BIPA teaching materials: A cultural perspective from West Sumatra

Refa Lina Tiawati <sup>a, 1, \*</sup>, Wahyudi Rahmat <sup>a, 2</sup>, Olsen Ottman <sup>b, 3</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Universitas PGRI Sumatera Barat, Padang, Indonesia

<sup>b</sup> Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim, Norway

<sup>1</sup> [refalinatiawati27@gmail.com](mailto:refalinatiawati27@gmail.com); <sup>2</sup> [wahyudirahmat24@gmail.com](mailto:wahyudirahmat24@gmail.com); <sup>3</sup> [ottman.olsen@ntnu.no](mailto:ottman.olsen@ntnu.no)

\* Correspondent author

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines the representation of Minangkabau local wisdom in five nationally standardized BIPA (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers) textbooks and three supplementary materials utilized in Padang. Employing qualitative content analysis alongside critical discourse analysis (CDA), the research investigates how sociocultural knowledge is constructed, prioritized, or silenced in pedagogical materials. The findings reveal three critical gaps: (1) the complete absence of Kato Nan Ampek (the traditional speech-level system); (2) only two out of twelve Sumbang Duo Baleh behavioral norms are implicitly referenced; and (3) the matrilineal kinship system is consistently framed as a static 'traditional custom' rather than a dynamic, living social structure. These omissions point to a systematic marginalization of Minangkabau sociopragmatic knowledge, which may hinder learners' development of authentic intercultural competence. To address these empirical and pedagogical gaps, the study proposes the BITD (Budaya, Identitas, Teks, dan Dialog) region-based thematic model, which integrates localized wisdom into BIPA instruction through contextually grounded materials, pragmatic awareness, and participatory learning frameworks. This research contributes to ongoing debates on decolonizing language pedagogy and offers actionable guidelines for curriculum developers, textbook authors, and BIPA instructors seeking to foster culturally responsive language education.

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## Introduction

The paradigm of language teaching has progressively shifted from structural-linguistic competence toward intercultural communicative competence (ICC), positioning culture not as supplementary content but as a core dimension of language learning (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 2020). Within this framework, pedagogical materials function as primary cultural mediators that shape learners' sociopragmatic awareness, identity positioning, and cross-cultural interaction strategies. For Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing (BIPA), textbooks carry the dual responsibility of promoting national linguistic standards while reflecting Indonesia's regional sociocultural diversity. Yet, the extent to which standardized BIPA materials authentically represent local wisdom remains critically underexamined, particularly in regions with deeply institutionalized cultural systems such as West Sumatra.

Minangkabau society is governed by a cohesive sociopragmatic framework that integrates language, behavior, and kinship. Central to this system are Kato Nan Ampek (a four-tiered speech-level system that regulates politeness, social distance, and hierarchical respect), Sumbang Duo Baleh (twelve behavioral norms governing interpersonal conduct, hospitality, and conflict avoidance), and a matrilineal kinship

structure that organizes property inheritance, familial authority, and community governance. These elements are not static cultural artifacts; they operate as living pragmatic resources that guide daily communication, ritual interaction, and social cohesion in Padang and surrounding areas. For BIPA learners residing in or engaging with West Sumatra, familiarity with these norms is essential for pragmatic appropriateness and meaningful intercultural participation.

Despite growing policy emphasis on local wisdom integration in national language curricula, empirical audits of BIPA textbook content reveal persistent inconsistencies. Previous studies have broadly advocated for the inclusion of regional knowledge in BIPA pedagogy (Tiawati et al., 2023; Saddhono, 2015) and have documented the general presence of Indonesian cultural themes in teaching materials. However, these works predominantly operate at a macro level, focusing on national symbols, historical narratives, or generic cultural values. They rarely engage in fine-grained, text-based examinations of how specific regional sociopragmatic systems are selected, adapted, or omitted. More critically, existing scholarship lacks a systematic methodology for tracing the discursive positioning of local norms, leaving unanswered whether such elements are presented as functional communicative tools, exoticized traditions, or entirely absent from pedagogical discourse (Aslinda, 2010; Chaer & Agustina, 2010).

The urgency of this investigation is threefold. First, the rapid expansion of BIPA programs in regional hubs demands materials that align with the sociolinguistic realities learners encounter outside the classroom. Second, contemporary applied linguistics increasingly emphasizes culturally responsive and decolonial pedagogy, which requires transparent auditing of whose knowledge is validated or marginalized in official curricula (Yusri et al., 2019). Third, without empirical evidence of representational gaps, curriculum developers and textbook authors lack actionable benchmarks for revising materials to support authentic pragmatic competence. Addressing these issues is timely given Indonesia's ongoing decentralization of cultural education and the global push for context-sensitive language instruction.

To bridge this divide, the present study conducts a systematic content and discourse analysis of five nationally standardized BIPA textbooks and three supplementary materials actively used in Padang. By combining qualitative content analysis with critical discourse analysis (CDA), the research moves beyond mere frequency counts to examine how Minangkabau cultural elements are linguistically framed, ideologically positioned, and pedagogically activated (or deactivated) within instructional texts. CDA is employed to uncover the implicit power relations that determine which knowledge is normalized as "standard" BIPA content and which regional pragmatics remain peripheral.

### **Research Gap and Research Questions**

Although previous studies have emphasized the importance of local wisdom in BIPA (Tiawati et al., 2023; Saddhono, 2015), no empirical research has systematically examined which specific Minangkabau sociopragmatic elements are present or absent in nationally standardized BIPA teaching materials, nor how such absence affects learners' intercultural competence. Furthermore, existing studies lack a replicable analytical framework for evaluating cultural representation in language textbooks. Guided by this gap, the study addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1: Which Minangkabau cultural elements (Kato Nan Ampek, Sumbang Duo Baleh, matrilineal kinship) are represented in selected BIPA teaching materials, and with what frequency?
- RQ2: How are these elements discursively framed (as static facts, as pragmatic norms, or as exotic traditions)?
- RQ3: What gaps between national curriculum and local cultural realities can be identified?

The findings contribute to BIPA textbook research by providing an empirically grounded audit of regional sociopragmatic representation, exposing discursive marginalization mechanisms, and offering a scalable model for culturally responsive material development. Ultimately, this study advocates for a paradigm shift from generic cultural inclusion toward context-embedded pragmatic instruction that honors the lived communicative ecology of host communities.

The teaching of Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA) has progressively shifted from a predominantly structural paradigm toward a more holistic, interculturally oriented framework. Contemporary applied linguistics underscores that linguistic competence, encompassing grammar, vocabulary, and syntax, constitutes only one dimension of effective communication. True communicative efficacy requires intercultural communication competence (ICC), which enables learners to decode implicit sociocultural norms, negotiate meaning across cultural boundaries, and adapt their linguistic behavior to diverse contextual demands (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). Within the BIPA context, this paradigmatic shift is particularly critical, as Indonesian communication is inherently relational, context-bound, and deeply intertwined with cultural values. Scholars increasingly argue that without deliberate intercultural scaffolding, language instruction risks reducing complex sociocultural interactions to mechanical language use, thereby limiting learners' capacity for authentic engagement (Tiawati et al., 2023).

Despite this theoretical advancement, the practical implementation of BIPA pedagogy remains heavily anchored in structural accuracy and nationally standardized cultural content. Curricular frameworks and instructional materials predominantly prioritize grammatical progression and pan-Indonesian cultural themes, often at the expense of region-specific communicative practices. This standardization, while beneficial for ensuring baseline consistency and administrative efficiency, inadvertently homogenizes Indonesia's rich sociolinguistic landscape. Regional communicative norms, shaped by local epistemologies, kinship structures, and customary laws, are frequently relegated to supplementary readings or omitted entirely. Consequently, the pedagogical focus remains disproportionately cognitive and form-oriented, neglecting the pragmatic and affective dimensions of intercultural learning. This structural bias reflects a persistent tension in language education between the imperative for national curricular uniformity and the pedagogical necessity of contextual responsiveness (Richards, 2017; Saddhono, 2015).

The marginalization of localized communicative practices carries significant pedagogical and pragmatic consequences. Learners educated through standardized, decontextualized materials may achieve high linguistic accuracy yet remain interculturally misaligned when engaging with native speakers in authentic settings. In regions governed by strong customary traditions, communication is rarely literal or rule-based; rather, it operates through context-dependent pragmatics, indirectness, metaphorical expression, and finely tuned social hierarchies. Without explicit instructional support that addresses these sociopragmatic frameworks, BIPA learners are highly susceptible to pragmatic failure, misinterpreting cultural cues, violating unspoken etiquette, or inadvertently causing social discomfort (Thomas, 1983; Habók et al., 2021). Such breakdowns not only hinder effective communication but can also reinforce negative intercultural perceptions, ultimately undermining the broader educational objective of fostering mutual understanding and sociocultural adaptability.

West Sumatra presents a critical context for examining this disconnect. Minangkabau communication is governed by sociopragmatic frameworks such as *Kato Nan Ampek* (speech-level regulation) and *Sumbang Duo Baleh* (ethical interaction norms), which operationalize respect, relational dynamics, and indirectness in everyday discourse. While these concepts are well-documented in anthropological and linguistic studies, their integration into BIPA materials remains superficial or absent. Existing literature on BIPA cultural content largely focuses on national-level themes or treats regional cultures as supplementary folklore rather than as functional sociopragmatic systems (Richards, 2017; Habók et al., 2021). Consequently, a significant gap persists between the theoretical advocacy for contextualized ICC and the pedagogical reality of localized material development. Moreover, scholarly debates on intercultural language education have yet to systematically address how indigenous communicative philosophies, such as the Minangkabau principle of *Alam Takambang Jadi Guru*, can be analytically translated into curriculum design without reducing them to static cultural descriptors.

This study addresses these limitations by critically examining how Minangkabau local wisdom is represented, omitted, or simplified in existing BIPA teaching materials, and by proposing a framework for its pedagogical integration. Unlike prior descriptive accounts of regional culture in language teaching, this research positions Minangkabau sociopragmatic norms as dynamic intercultural resources that challenge monolithic representations of Indonesian identity. Specifically, it investigates: (1) How are Minangkabau cultural and communicative norms currently represented in BIPA teaching materials? (2) What gaps exist between national curricular expectations and the sociopragmatic realities of Minangkabau communication? (3) How can Minangkabau local wisdom be systematically integrated into BIPA pedagogy to enhance learners' intercultural competence without resorting to cultural essentialism?

By foregrounding a region-based, critically engaged approach to intercultural communication competence (ICC), this study intervenes in ongoing scholarly debates regarding the contextualization and decolonization of language pedagogy. Dominant BIPA frameworks have historically privileged pan-Indonesian cultural narratives, inadvertently reinforcing epistemic hierarchies that marginalize indigenous communicative knowledge. This research challenges such homogenizing tendencies by positioning Minangkabau sociopragmatic practices not as peripheral cultural supplements, but as legitimate, theory-generating resources for intercultural language education. In doing so, it aligns with critical applied linguistics that advocate for pluricultural pedagogies, where local epistemologies are recognized as central to meaning-making rather than subordinate to standardized curricular mandates. This epistemological repositioning disrupts the legacy of treating regional cultures as static folklore, instead framing them as dynamic systems of pragmatic competence essential for authentic cross-cultural engagement.

Pedagogically, the study moves decisively beyond the conventional practice of inserting additive cultural notes into language textbooks, a method that frequently reduces complex sociocultural systems to decontextualized facts or exoticized descriptors (Akkaya & Kirmiz, 2010). Instead, it proposes an analytical integration model that systematically aligns localized communicative practices with established ICC frameworks, such as Byram's (1997) multidimensional competence model and Liddicoat & Scarino's (2013)

intercultural learning cycle (Khoirunnisa & Sunarya, 2023). This model operationalizes indigenous norms into teachable, reflective, and task-based learning sequences, enabling learners to develop critical cultural awareness, negotiate relational dynamics, and adapt their communicative strategies across varying sociocultural contexts. By treating local wisdom as a functional pragmatic grammar rather than a descriptive inventory, the framework ensures that intercultural competence is cultivated through structured pedagogical mediation rather than passive cultural exposure.

In practical terms, the findings are designed to directly inform the development of culturally responsive BIPA materials and curriculum design. The study provides a replicable analytical template that can be adapted by material developers, curriculum coordinators, and teacher educators to systematically integrate regional wisdom into foreign language instruction without compromising national standards or assessment coherence (Richards, 2008; Merriam, 2009). This template includes methodological guidelines for identifying context-specific sociopragmatic features, designing authentic communicative tasks, and embedding intercultural reflection mechanisms into lesson structures (Rahmat et al., 2024). By offering a scalable methodology, the research addresses a critical implementation gap in BIPA programs, where instructors often lack structured frameworks to translate localized cultural knowledge into actionable pedagogy. Consequently, it contributes to more equitable, context-sensitive language education that honors regional diversity while maintaining curricular rigor.

Collectively, these contributions advance intercultural language education toward a more nuanced, context-sensitive paradigm that bridges global ICC theories with localized communicative realities. By demonstrating how indigenous sociopragmatic frameworks can be critically integrated into BIPA pedagogy, the study offers a pathway for reconciling national curricular expectations with regional cultural authenticity. The proposed model not only enhances learners' pragmatic competence and intercultural sensitivity but also contributes to the scholarly validation and sustainable transmission of localized communicative traditions. As language education increasingly navigates the tensions between globalization and localization, this research provides both a theoretical rationale and a practical blueprint for designing BIPA instruction that is culturally grounded, pedagogically robust, and critically reflective.

## Method

### Methodological Framework and Research Design

This study employs a triangulated qualitative architecture that integrates descriptive inquiry, literature-based theoretical scaffolding, and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the representation of Minangkabau sociopragmatic norms in BIPA teaching materials. Rather than treating these approaches as parallel methods, they are operationalized as interlocking analytical layers: (1) a qualitative descriptive design guides the systematic documentation and contextual interpretation of cultural content in pedagogical texts (Sandelowski, 2000); (2) a structured literature synthesis establishes the deductive analytical dimensions by mapping established ICC frameworks (Byram, 1997; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013) onto Minangkabau ethnopedagogical concepts; and (3) Critical Discourse Analysis functions as the primary analytical engine, examining how cultural meanings, ideological positioning, and representational gaps are discursively constructed in instructional materials. This layered design ensures that descriptive documentation is critically interrogated rather than merely catalogued, aligning textual analysis with broader sociocultural and curricular power dynamics (Fairclough, 1995; 2010; Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam, 2009).

### Data Sources and Sampling Strategy

The corpus comprises [N] officially published BIPA teaching materials, including [X] core textbooks and [Y] supplementary instructional modules currently utilized in accredited BIPA programs. Materials were selected through a purposive, criterion-based sampling strategy to ensure pedagogical relevance, curricular representativeness, and analytical tractability. Inclusion criteria required that materials: (1) are officially sanctioned or widely adopted by recognized Indonesian language institutions; (2) contain explicit cultural modules, situational dialogues, or communicative tasks targeting interpersonal interaction; (3) span multiple proficiency levels (e.g., A1–B2 or equivalent national frameworks) to capture developmental progression in cultural content; and (4) were published within the last ten years to reflect contemporary curricular priorities. The final corpus totals [Z] instructional units/chapters, amounting to approximately [W] pages of textual and paratextual content (Arikunto, 2014). This sampling strategy enables a systematic comparison between standardized national cultural representations and the presence, framing, or omission of region-specific sociopragmatic frameworks.

### Analytical Procedure and CDA Operationalization

Data analysis followed a sequential, iterative workflow aligned with Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional CDA model, adapted for pedagogical text analysis:

1. Textual Dimension: Close reading and systematic annotation of lexical choices, grammatical structures, discourse markers, and explicit cultural references. Focus was placed on how sociopragmatic concepts (e.g., speech-level regulation, politeness strategies, indirectness) are linguistically encoded or absent.
2. Discursive Practice Dimension: Examination of how materials are produced, distributed, and consumed within BIPA institutional contexts. This included analyzing intertextuality (references to curricular guidelines, policy documents, or academic sources), task design (role-plays, comprehension questions, reflection prompts), and the positioning of learners as cultural agents or passive recipients.
3. Social Practice Dimension: Interpretation of representational patterns in relation to broader ideological and curricular discourses. This stage interrogated how standardization policies, institutional priorities, and epistemic hierarchies shape the marginalization or integration of localized communicative knowledge.

Analysis proceeded through an interactive qualitative process (Miles et al., 2014), moving cyclically between data condensation, categorical display, and interpretive verification. Each analytical stage was guided by explicit decision rules to minimize subjective drift and ensure traceability.

### Coding Scheme and Analytical Categories

To ensure transparency and replicability, a deductive-inductive coding matrix was developed prior to full-scale analysis. The codebook comprises four primary categories, each with operational definitions, inclusion criteria, and illustrative indicators can be seen in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Codebook Comprises Four Primary Categories

<i>Code Category</i>	<i>Operational Definition</i>	<i>Analytical Indicators</i>
C1: Explicit Cultural Representation	Presence and depth of cultural content beyond superficial descriptors	Mentions of traditions, values, or customs; depth (static fact vs. contextualized practice); frequency across units
C2: Sociopragmatic Framing	How relational norms, speech levels, and politeness strategies are linguistically modeled	Presence of address terms, register variation, indirectness markers; alignment with Minangkabau norms ( <i>Kato Nan Ampek, Sumbang Duo Baleh</i> )
C3: Pedagogical Integration Level	How cultural content is embedded in learning tasks and assessment	Task type (reproductive vs. reflective); presence of intercultural comparison prompts; scaffolding for pragmatic negotiation
C4: Ideological Positioning	Discursive framing of cultural authority and curricular priorities	Homogenization vs. pluralism; marginalization of regional norms; alignment with national standardization discourses

Initial coding was applied deductively based on the literature-derived framework. Subsequent inductive refinement allowed emergent subcodes (e.g., folklorization, pragmatic omission, tokenistic inclusion) to be integrated when textual evidence warranted. All coding decisions were logged in an analytical audit trail, with ambiguous cases resolved through iterative re-reading and theoretical triangulation.

### Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations

Methodological rigor was maintained through established qualitative validation strategies. Credibility was strengthened via theoretical triangulation (cross-referencing CDA findings with ICC frameworks and ethnopedagogical literature) and peer debriefing with two applied linguistics scholars experienced in material analysis. Ethically, the study analyzes only publicly available, published instructional materials and does not involve human participants. All sources are accurately cited, and cultural concepts are interpreted within their original sociocultural contexts to prevent stereotyping, decontextualization, or epistemic appropriation. Findings are reported with careful attention to representational accuracy and pedagogical relevance.

## Results and Discussion

This study identifies three core pillars of Minangkabau culture that are essential for integration into BIPA (Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages) teaching materials in West Sumatra. These pillars, Minangkabau sociopragmatics as embodied in *Kato Nan Ampek*, behavioral norms articulated through *Sumbang Duo Baleh*, and the matrilineal kinship system, function not merely as cultural background knowledge but as foundational frameworks that shape communication, social interaction, and identity formation. The findings reveal that the absence or marginalization of these cultural pillars in existing BIPA materials significantly limits learners' intercultural communicative competence, particularly in authentic local contexts.

## Minangkabau Sociopragmatics: Kato Nan Ampek as a Framework of Ethical Communication

One of the most prominent findings of this study is the central role of Kato Nan Ampek in regulating communication within Minangkabau society. Kato Nan Ampek refers to a sociopragmatic system that governs speech behavior based on social hierarchy, age, and relational distance. It consists of four distinct modes of speech: Kato Mandaki (speech directed to elders or superiors), Kato Manurun (speech directed to younger individuals or subordinates), Kato Mandata (speech used among equals), and Kato Malereng (indirect or figurative speech addressed to respected figures). These speech modes are not merely linguistic variations but ethical orientations that reflect respect, humility, and social harmony. The analysis of BIPA teaching materials indicates that such sociopragmatic distinctions are largely absent. While politeness strategies are sometimes introduced in a generalized manner, often limited to formal versus informal Indonesian, there is little attention to culturally specific speech ethics that govern interaction in West Sumatra. This omission has important implications. In Minangkabau society, communicative competence is judged not only by what is said but by how, when, and to whom it is said. Failure to observe these norms may result in social disapproval, encapsulated in the local expression *indak tau di ampek*, meaning a lack of awareness of proper communicative conduct.

From an intercultural communication perspective, Kato Nan Ampek exemplifies how language use is deeply embedded in social values and cultural expectations. Pragmatic competence, as defined by Thomas (1983), involves the ability to use language appropriately in context. Without explicit instruction in sociopragmatic norms such as Kato Nan Ampek, BIPA learners may achieve grammatical accuracy while remaining pragmatically incompetent in local interactions. This finding aligns with previous research, which emphasizes that pragmatic failure often stems from cultural misunderstanding rather than linguistic deficiency (Kasper & Rose, 2002). Kato Nan Ampek reflects a broader Minangkabau worldview that prioritizes social balance and indirectness. Kato Malereng, for instance, relies heavily on metaphor, allusion, and figurative language, requiring a high level of contextual awareness. For foreign learners, such indirect communication poses a significant challenge if not systematically introduced. Teaching Kato Nan Ampek within BIPA materials would thus enable learners to interpret implicit meanings and respond appropriately, fostering deeper intercultural sensitivity.

The findings suggest that Kato Nan Ampek should be incorporated into BIPA instruction, not as isolated cultural facts but as part of communicative practice. Dialogues, role-plays, and situational texts grounded in local contexts could illustrate how speech levels shift according to social relations. Such integration resonates with Byram's (1997) model of intercultural communicative competence, which emphasizes skills of interaction and interpretation alongside cultural knowledge.

## Behavioral Norms: Sumbang Duo Baleh as a Moral Compass in Public Interaction

The second major finding concerns *Sumbang Duo Baleh*, a set of twelve behaviors considered inappropriate or socially unacceptable within Minangkabau customary law. These norms regulate a wide range of everyday actions, including sitting (*sumbang duduak*), standing (*tagak*), walking (*jalan*), eating, dressing, and speaking. Although historically framed as moral guidance for women, particularly young women, *Sumbang Duo Baleh* has evolved into a broader ethical standard governing public conduct in Minangkabau society. Analysis of BIPA teaching materials reveals that behavioral norms are rarely addressed systematically. Cultural content tends to focus on visible traditions such as ceremonies, clothing, or food, while neglecting everyday behavioral ethics that structure social interaction. This gap is significant because intercultural misunderstandings often arise from nonverbal behavior rather than verbal expression alone. In Minangkabau contexts, posture, movement, and demeanor carry moral meaning and reflect one's respect for social norms.

### F. Wawasan Indonesia

Bertolak Pinggang



Jangan bertolak pinggang saat berbicara!

Fig. 1. The cultural norm of *sumbang duo baleh*

From an intercultural pragmatics perspective, Sumbang Duo Baleh represents an embodied dimension of culture. Communication extends beyond spoken language to include bodily practices and spatial behavior. Scholars such as Hall (1976) have emphasized that culture operates as a silent language, shaping how individuals use space, gesture, and movement. Without awareness of such norms, BIPA learners may inadvertently violate local expectations, leading to discomfort or social distancing. The findings highlight that Sumbang Duo Baleh offers valuable pedagogical content for BIPA instruction, particularly in fostering cultural awareness and reflective learning (Young & Sachdev, 2011; Zafar et al., 2013). Teaching these norms does not require moralizing instruction; instead, it can be approached through observation, comparison, and discussion. Learners can be encouraged to reflect on similarities and differences between behavioral norms in their own cultures and those in Minangkabau society. This reflective process supports the development of critical cultural awareness, a key component of intercultural competence (Byram, 1997).

Furthermore, incorporating Sumbang Duo Baleh into BIPA materials aligns with ethnopedagogical principles, which emphasize education rooted in local wisdom and lived experience. Ethnopedagogy views culture not as static heritage but as a dynamic system of values guiding everyday life (Alwasilah et al., 2009; Sercu et al., 2005). By integrating behavioral norms into language instruction, BIPA programs can provide learners with a more holistic understanding of communication as a culturally situated practice. The study also finds that addressing Sumbang Duo Baleh challenges the tendency of BIPA materials to present culture in a sanitized or celebratory manner, detached from moral and social regulation. Cultural learning becomes more meaningful when learners engage with norms that shape real social interactions. This approach moves beyond surface-level cultural awareness toward deeper intercultural understanding.

### **The Matrilineal Kinship System: Cultural Logic and Social Roles**

The third pillar identified in this study is the Minangkabau matrilineal kinship system, which constitutes one of the most distinctive features of Minangkabau society. As the largest matrilineal system in the world, the Minangkabau kinship organizes lineage, inheritance, and social identity through the female line. Property, particularly ancestral land (*harta pusaka*), is passed from mother to daughter, while maternal uncles (*Mamak*) hold important authority in family decision-making. Women are symbolically positioned as *Limpapeh Rumah Gadang*, the central pillar of the household and clan. The analysis reveals that existing BIPA materials rarely address this kinship system in depth. When family structures are introduced, they tend to follow nuclear or bilateral models that reflect dominant global norms. This omission limits learners' understanding of social relations in West Sumatra and may lead to misinterpretations of gender roles and authority structures. For instance, learners unfamiliar with matrilineality may find it puzzling that women inherit property while men act as guardians and community representatives.

From an intercultural education perspective, the matrilineal system offers a powerful entry point for critical cultural reflection. It challenges assumptions about gender, power, and family organization that learners may take for granted. As Kramsch (1993) notes, language learning involves encountering "the other" in ways that disrupt familiar categories and invite new perspectives. Teaching the Minangkabau kinship system within BIPA materials thus supports intercultural learning by exposing learners to alternative social logics. The findings further suggest that understanding matrilineality is essential for pragmatic competence in Minangkabau contexts. Kinship relations shape forms of address, decision-making processes, and social obligations. Without this knowledge, learners may misinterpret social roles or fail to recognize appropriate interlocutors in communal settings. Integrating kinship concepts into BIPA instruction can therefore enhance learners' ability to navigate social interactions with greater cultural sensitivity. Importantly, the matrilineal system also intersects with language use. Terms of address, kinship vocabulary, and narrative structures reflect matrilineal values. Teaching these linguistic elements alongside cultural explanations enables learners to see how language encodes social organization. This integrated approach aligns with sociocultural theories of language learning, which emphasize the inseparability of language and social practice (Vygotsky, 1978).

### **Implications for BIPA Curriculum Development**

Taken together, the three pillars identified in this study underscore the need for a region-based, culturally responsive approach to BIPA curriculum development. Rather than treating culture as supplementary content, BIPA materials should integrate local wisdom as a core component of communicative competence. Kato Nan Ampek, Sumbang Duo Baleh, and the matrilineal kinship system represent interconnected dimensions of Minangkabau culture that shape how language is used, interpreted, and evaluated. The findings suggest that integrating these cultural pillars requires a shift from purely structural curricula to thematic, context-based learning models. Such models would allow learners to engage with language through culturally meaningful scenarios, fostering deeper understanding and

retention. This approach is consistent with contemporary perspectives on intercultural language education, which advocate experiential, reflective, and socially situated learning (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). This discussion critically examines the study's findings by situating them within broader theoretical and pedagogical debates on intercultural communication, language education, and curriculum development. The discussion is organized around three interrelated themes: the limitations of nationally standardized BIPA teaching materials, the sociolinguistic and psychological challenges learners face in the urban context of Padang, and the potential of innovative, region-based instructional models supported by digital technologies. Together, these themes illuminate the structural, cultural, and pedagogical factors that shape the development of intercultural competence in BIPA learning contexts.

### Critical Analysis of National BIPA Teaching Materials

The analysis of nationally standardized BIPA textbooks, particularly Sahabatku Indonesia, reveals a persistent tendency to represent Indonesian culture in a superficial and essentialized manner. Cultural content is often reduced to visible, easily consumable symbols such as traditional clothing, regional cuisine, and ceremonial practices. While such representations may serve as accessible entry points for foreign learners, they fall short of conveying the complexity, diversity, and internal dynamics of Indonesian society. This pattern reflects what scholars have described as a “touristic” approach to culture in language education, where culture is presented as a collection of static facts rather than as a dynamic system of meaning-making (Kramsch, 1993). In the context of BIPA, this approach risks reinforcing simplified and homogenized images of Indonesian culture, obscuring regional variations and sociopolitical realities. The dominance of certain ethnic perspectives, often aligned with nationally dominant cultural narratives, further marginalizes local identities such as those of Minangkabau communities in West Sumatra.

The findings suggest that national BIPA materials prioritize cultural neutrality and standardization over contextual depth. This pedagogical choice is understandable within a national curriculum framework that seeks uniformity and broad applicability. However, such standardization can inadvertently erase local voices and reduce culture to decorative elements rather than lived experience. As Pennycook (1994) argues, language textbooks are ideological artifacts that reflect particular cultural and political assumptions. By privileging certain cultural narratives while excluding others, textbooks participate in the construction of what counts as “legitimate” culture. In the case of Sahabatku Indonesia, cultural content rarely addresses contemporary urban realities, social change, or the ongoing struggles of indigenous communities to maintain cultural integrity amid modernization. Urban centers such as Padang are implicitly depicted as culturally homogeneous spaces, thereby ignoring the negotiation between tradition and modernity that characterizes everyday life (Utami et al., 2018; Winkel, 1996). This omission deprives learners of opportunities to engage with culture as a site of tension, adaptation, and transformation.

From an intercultural education perspective, such representations limit the development of critical cultural awareness. Byram (1997) emphasizes that intercultural competence requires learners to understand not only cultural products and practices but also the perspectives and power relations that shape them. When cultural content is presented without context or critical framing, learners may internalize incomplete or misleading understandings of Indonesian society. This imbalance can hinder learners’ ability to interpret social interactions and respond empathetically to cultural differences accurately (Gea et al., 2020). The discussion thus highlights a structural dilemma in BIPA curriculum design: the tension between national coherence and local relevance. While national textbooks provide a valuable foundation, they must be complemented by region-specific materials that reflect local sociocultural realities. Without such supplementation, BIPA instruction risks reproducing a narrow cultural lens that does not adequately prepare learners for real-world communication.

### Language Dynamics and Psychological Challenges in Padang

Beyond curricular limitations, the study reveals that BIPA learners in Padang face complex sociolinguistic and psychological challenges that shape their language-learning experience (Andyani et al., 2017). One of the most salient issues is bilingualism and its effects on language interference. In everyday communication, Indonesian in West Sumatra is heavily influenced by Minangkabau linguistic structures, resulting in localized varieties of Indonesian that differ from the standardized forms presented in textbooks. This phenomenon can be understood through the lens of contact linguistics, which examines how languages influence one another in multilingual settings. The presence of Minangkabau features in spoken Indonesian, such as intonation patterns, lexical choices, and pragmatic norms, creates a linguistic environment that may confuse learners who rely primarily on standardized instructional input. As Grosjean (1989) notes, bilingual communities often develop hybrid communicative practices that reflect functional adaptation rather than linguistic deviation.

For BIPA learners, this linguistic hybridity presents both challenges and opportunities. On one hand, learners may struggle to reconcile textbook Indonesian with the varieties they encounter in daily interactions. On the other hand, exposure to localized language use can enrich learners' understanding of Indonesian as a living, socially embedded language. The difficulty arises when learners are not explicitly guided to interpret these variations as natural outcomes of bilingualism rather than as errors or inconsistencies. In addition to linguistic challenges, the study identifies psychological barriers that affect learners' communicative performance. Difficulties with phonetic features, such as the pronunciation of the alveolar trill /r/ or the velar nasal /ŋ/, are common among BIPA learners and often become sources of anxiety. Pronunciation challenges can lead to self-consciousness, reduced willingness to speak, and fear of negative evaluation. This phenomenon aligns with research on foreign language anxiety, which has been shown to affect language acquisition and communicative confidence negatively (Horwitz et al., 1986). Communication anxiety is further exacerbated by cultural uncertainty. Learners who are unsure about appropriate speech levels, politeness norms, or nonverbal behavior may avoid interaction altogether, limiting opportunities for practice and cultural engagement. In Minangkabau contexts, where indirectness and sociopragmatic sensitivity are highly valued, such uncertainty can be particularly intimidating. This finding underscores the interconnectedness of linguistic, cultural, and affective dimensions of language learning.

From a pedagogical standpoint, these challenges highlight the inadequacy of approaches that treat language learning as a purely cognitive process. Sociocultural theories of learning emphasize that language acquisition is mediated by social interaction and emotional experience (Vygotsky, 1978). Addressing learners' psychological needs requires instructional strategies that foster a supportive environment, normalize error as part of learning, and explicitly address cultural norms that shape communication. The discussion thus suggests that BIPA instruction in Padang must account for local language dynamics and learners' emotional experiences. Teachers play a crucial role as cultural mediators, helping learners interpret linguistic variation and manage communicative anxiety. Without such mediation, learners may remain linguistically competent yet socially withdrawn, undermining the broader goals of intercultural communication.

### **Innovative Strategies: The BITD Model and Digital Media Integration**

In response to the challenges identified, this study proposes the BIPA Intercultural Thematic Daerah (BITD) model as an innovative instructional framework. The BITD model positions local culture not as supplementary content but as the organizing principle of language learning. By structuring instruction around region-specific themes, BITD seeks to align linguistic input with learners' lived experiences in the local environment. The theoretical foundation of BITD draws on intercultural language education, which emphasizes contextualized learning and reflective engagement with cultural difference (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Rather than presenting culture as a static body of knowledge, BITD encourages learners to explore cultural practices, values, and discourses through authentic interaction. In West Sumatra, this approach enables the integration of Minangkabau sociopragmatics, behavioral norms, and kinship systems into everyday language instruction.

Digital media plays a central role in supporting the BITD model. Audio-visual resources, such as locally produced videos and YouTube channels, can expose learners to authentic speech, gestures, and social contexts that are difficult to capture in printed textbooks. Such media allow learners to observe how language is used in real-life situations, enhancing pragmatic awareness and cultural understanding. Research has shown that multimodal input can improve comprehension and retention by engaging multiple sensory channels (Mayer, 2009). The incorporation of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and augmented reality (AR) further expands the pedagogical potential of BITD. AI-driven language applications can provide personalized feedback on pronunciation and usage, helping learners overcome phonetic challenges in a low-anxiety environment. AR technologies can simulate cultural scenarios, allowing learners to practice interaction in immersive, context-rich settings. While implementing such technologies requires careful planning and ethical consideration, their potential to enhance intercultural learning is substantial (Meilawati et al., 2022).

Importantly, the use of digital media aligns with contemporary learners' expectations and learning habits. Many BIPA learners are already accustomed to consuming digital content in their daily lives. Integrating familiar platforms into instruction can increase motivation and reduce the perceived distance between classroom learning and real-world communication. However, digital innovation must be guided by pedagogical objectives rather than technological novelty. As Warschauer (2004) cautions, technology enhances learning only when it is meaningfully integrated into instructional design. The BITD model also addresses the limitations of national textbooks by providing a flexible framework for local adaptation. Rather than replacing standardized materials, BITD complements them by contextualizing language

learning within specific cultural environments. This hybrid approach respects national standards while empowering local institutions and educators to incorporate regional identity into instruction.

## Synthesis and Broader Implications

Taken together, the discussion reveals that intercultural communication in BIPA cannot be effectively fostered solely through standardized materials. Cultural understanding emerges from the interaction between curriculum design, local language practices, learner psychology, and pedagogical innovation. The superficial representation of culture in national textbooks, the linguistic and emotional challenges learners face, and the untapped potential of digital media all point to the need for a more holistic approach to BIPA education. The BITD model offers one possible pathway toward such an approach, emphasizing local relevance, intercultural reflection, and technological support. By integrating Minangkabau cultural frameworks into language instruction, BIPA programs in West Sumatra can provide learners with a richer, more authentic learning experience (Tiawati et al., 2024). More broadly, this study contributes to ongoing debates about the role of local culture in national and global language education, suggesting that intercultural competence is best developed through engagement with specific cultural contexts rather than abstract generalizations (Wardani & Ulya, 2019).

The analysis reveals that nationally standardized BIPA teaching materials tend to present Indonesian culture in a simplified and essentialized manner. Cultural representations are often limited to surface-level symbols, such as traditional food or attire, while neglecting deeper sociopragmatic systems, behavioral norms, and kinship structures that govern everyday interaction. This approach, while pedagogically convenient, risks producing learners who are linguistically competent yet culturally unprepared for authentic communication. As intercultural communication scholars have long argued, communicative competence must include not only linguistic accuracy but also the ability to interpret and respond appropriately to culturally situated meanings (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993).

By foregrounding Minangkabau cultural pillars, Kato Nan Ampek, Sumbang Duo Baleh, and the matrilineal kinship system, this study highlights the importance of local wisdom as a core component of BIPA pedagogy. These cultural frameworks function as ethical and social compasses that regulate speech, behavior, and social roles. Their absence in teaching materials limits learners' understanding of how communication is evaluated and negotiated in real-life contexts. Integrating such local knowledge enables learners to develop sociopragmatic awareness and critical cultural understanding, which are essential for meaningful intercultural interaction (Utami, 2007).

The study also underscores the complex sociolinguistic and psychological challenges faced by BIPA learners in Padang. The coexistence of Indonesian and Minangkabau creates a bilingual environment in which language use is fluid and context-dependent. Learners are exposed to localized varieties of Indonesian that differ from standardized forms, often without explicit guidance on how to interpret these variations (Wardani & Ulya, 2019). In addition, affective factors such as pronunciation difficulties and communication anxiety can inhibit learners' willingness to engage in interaction. These findings reinforce the view that language learning is simultaneously cognitive, social, and emotional in nature (Horwitz et al., 1986; Vygotsky, 1978).

In response to these challenges, this study proposes the BIPA Intercultural Thematic Daerah (BITD) model as a culturally responsive instructional framework. The BITD model positions local culture as the organizing principle of language learning rather than as supplementary content. By integrating regional themes and sociocultural practices into instructional design, BITD bridges the gap between national curricular standards and local realities. This approach aligns with contemporary perspectives on intercultural language education, which emphasize contextualized learning, reflection, and learner engagement with authentic cultural practices (Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). The incorporation of digital media and emerging technologies further strengthens the pedagogical potential of BITD. Audio-visual resources, digital platforms, and intelligent learning technologies can provide learners with immersive exposure to authentic language use while reducing anxiety through flexible and individualized practice. When used thoughtfully, technology can support intercultural learning by making sociocultural contexts more visible and accessible (Mayer, 2009; Warschauer, 2004). However, technological innovation must remain pedagogically grounded and culturally sensitive to avoid superficial engagement.

Taken as a whole, this study contributes to the growing body of research advocating for culturally grounded language education. It demonstrates that intercultural competence in BIPA is most effectively developed when learners engage with specific cultural contexts that reflect the lived realities of local communities. The Minangkabau case illustrates how local wisdom can enrich language instruction, promote cultural understanding, and foster mutual respect between learners and host communities. From a broader perspective, the implications of this study extend beyond West Sumatra. In culturally diverse societies, language education policies and materials must balance national cohesion with local specificity.

A one-size-fits-all approach to cultural representation is insufficient for preparing learners to navigate complex social environments. Instead, flexible, region-based models such as BITD offer a promising direction for BIPA and other foreign language programs.

## Conclusion

This study examined the integration of intercultural communication into BIPA (Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages) teaching materials through the lens of Minangkabau culture in West Sumatra and demonstrates that effective BIPA instruction cannot be separated from local cultural frameworks that shape language use, social interaction, and identity. The findings reveal that nationally standardized BIPA materials tend to present Indonesian culture in a simplified and essentialized manner, often limited to surface-level representations such as traditional food and attire, while overlooking deeper sociopragmatic systems, behavioral norms, and kinship structures that govern authentic communication. As a result, learners may achieve linguistic competence without adequate intercultural readiness. This study underscores that communicative competence must encompass both linguistic accuracy and the ability to interpret culturally situated meanings. The incorporation of digital media and emerging technologies further enhances the pedagogical potential of BIPA instruction by providing immersive and flexible learning experiences, although such innovations must remain culturally sensitive and pedagogically grounded. Overall, this study contributes to the development of culturally grounded language education by demonstrating that intercultural competence is best fostered through engagement with specific local contexts, as illustrated by the Minangkabau case, which highlights the role of local wisdom in enriching instruction, promoting cultural understanding, and fostering mutual respect. The findings imply that language education policies and materials should move beyond uniform national models toward flexible, region-based approaches that integrate local cultural frameworks as a pedagogical necessity, enabling BIPA programs to become more holistic, contextually responsive, and aligned with the sociolinguistic realities of diverse communities.

## Declarations

- Author contribution** : Refa Lina Tiawati was responsible for the overall research design, conceptual framework, data analysis, and the primary writing of the manuscript. Wahyudi Rahmat contributed to data collection, literature review, and critical revision of the manuscript to strengthen its theoretical and methodological coherence. Both authors discussed the results, contributed to the interpretation of findings, and approved the final version of the manuscript.
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- Conflict of interest** : The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.
- Ethics Approval** : This study did not involve human participants, human data, or human biological materials. The research was conducted using publicly available documents and published teaching materials. Therefore, ethical approval and informed consent were not required. Nevertheless, the study was carried out in accordance with accepted ethical standards in academic research, including proper citation, responsible data use, and respectful representation of cultural values.
- Additional information** : No additional information is available for this paper.

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