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Fostering Intercultural Competence in BIPA Classrooms: A Qualitative Exploration of Transcultural Multimedia Integration

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Abstract. The globalization of the Indonesian language has precipitated a highly heterogeneous demographic of learners in Bahasa Indonesia for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA) programs. In multinational international school settings, learners often face significant socio-cultural barriers that hinder their functional communication. This qualitative exploratory study investigates the impact of transcultural multimedia integration on the development of learners' intercultural competence. In contrast to conventional monocultural approaches, transcultural pedagogy facilitates a dialogic comparison between the target culture and the learners' native cultures. Researchers conducted this three-month study at a Cooperative Education Unit (SPK) in Jakarta, involving 40 multinational expatriate learners (with no dual citizenship) and 10 BIPA educators. The researchers collected data through eight participatory classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and reflective logs. To ensure trustworthiness, the study validated the data through methodological triangulation and member checking. The findings reveal three dominant themes: (1) the emergence of cultural relativism and pragmatic adaptability among learners; (2) a significant reduction in communicative hesitation due to the creation of a psychologically safe, transculturally reflective environment; and (3) a fundamental shift in the pedagogical role of teachers from static information transmitters to dynamic learning experience designers. This study concludes that the integration of authentic, transculturally reflective multimedia serves as a vital catalyst in transforming linguistic beginners into culturally empathetic global communicators, offering a new paradigm for BIPA curriculum development.

Keywords: intercultural competence; transcultural pedagogy; BIPA; qualitative exploration; multimedia learning.

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1. Introduction

The formal recognition of Indonesian as an official working language of the UNESCO General Conference in 2023 represents a historic milestone that affirms its global existence. This international acknowledgment has catalyzed an unprecedented surge in interest in Bahasa Indonesia for Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA), with instruction now expanding to over 46 countries through 45+ international institutions and embassies (Ulumuddin & Agus W., 2014).

Consequently, BIPA programs have expanded beyond tertiary educational centers and are now deeply integrated into the formal curricula of international schools, recognized in Indonesia as Cooperative Education Units (SPK) (Kusmiatun et al. 2017; Ulumuddin & Agus W., 2014). This integration introduces profound pedagogical challenges in highly diverse environments, where instruction can no longer rely solely on structural linguistic transfer but must prioritize intercultural mediation and functional communication to accommodate the complex sociocultural identities of multinational learners.

The SPK environment is highly diverse, with 62 nationalities represented in this study's cohort. This diversity creates a significant pedagogical challenge: instruction can no longer rely solely on structural linguistic transfer. Preliminary needs analysis empirically supports this, revealing that 90% of multinational learners explicitly demand materials integrated with real-life contexts, while 60% specifically require visual transcultural comparisons. Consequently, educators must design BIPA materials to bridge the gap between Indonesian norms and the learners' complex sociocultural schemas, ensuring functional communication in everyday life.

Despite the urgency of cross-cultural adaptation, conventional BIPA classrooms face a critical, unresolved pedagogical problem: instructional materials primarily rely on a strict monocultural paradigm. These resources present Indonesian norms as absolute facts to memorize, forcing a one-directional assimilation. This approach fails to accommodate the complex sociocultural schemas of multinational learners, frequently triggering cultural alienation and paralyzing communicative hesitation (Ozerova, 2020). To resolve this problem immediately, educators must integrate transcultural multimedia to transform language acquisition into a dialogic interaction between the target culture and the learners' native identities (Kramsch, 2021).

A critical challenge in developing beginner BIPA materials is balancing linguistic simplicity with the learners' cognitive maturity. As older adolescent learners in a secondary school environment, multinational SPK students possess diverse life experiences and advanced cognitive capacities. Therefore, instructional materials must utilize an andragogical approach, presenting socio-cultural scenarios that respect their intellect while keeping the target language structurally accessible. While recent quantitative studies verified the statistical efficacy of transcultural multimedia in improving communication scores (Herawati et al., 2025), a significant theoretical gap remains. Existing literature largely overlooks the qualitative mechanisms, specifically how beginner learners perceive, negotiate,

and internalize these cross-cultural differences within a digital ecosystem. This study responds directly to this identifiable gap by investigating the deep psychological and sociocultural impacts of transcultural multimedia integration. By analyzing authentic learner reflections and classroom dynamics, this research uncovers how a digital "third space" fosters intercultural competence, mitigates interactional anxiety, and redefines the socio-pedagogical environment.

Unlike previous BIPA and multimedia studies that presented culture as static facts for passive assimilation, this study shifts to active dialogic comparison. The primary contribution of this research lies in its novel learning model—synthesizing the TPACK framework, ACTFL communication modes, and transcultural pedagogy into a digital 'third space'—and its profound impact on the learner experience, actively transforming communicative hesitation into interactional resilience. Ultimately, this study answers the core research question: *"How does transcultural multimedia integration impact the development of intercultural competence and communicative resilience among multinational beginner BIPA learners in an SPK environment?"*

2. Literature Review

2.1 Transcultural Pedagogy in Language Learning

The integration of culture in foreign language education has historically transitioned through several paradigms. Early models treated culture as supplementary, monolithic information (monoculturalism), often leading to stereotyping. In contrast, the transcultural approach argues that language learning is a reciprocal process.

According to Kramsch (2021), transculturality facilitates students not just to adopt the target culture, but to actively integrate and negotiate their understanding of the target language with their native cultural identities. Furthermore, implementing transcultural pedagogy requires a critical shift in how educators perceive their instructional roles. Arif and Hamdan (2021) highlighted that transcultural learning in BIPA presents unique pedagogical challenges, necessitating educators to actively bridge the diverse cultural backgrounds of multinational learners.

While earlier studies by (Setyaningsih et al., 2016 and Bursan & Fatimah, 2021) successfully integrated 'local culture' into BIPA materials, they predominantly employed a monocultural paradigm in which Indonesian norms were presented as static facts for one-way assimilation. This study fundamentally differs by shifting from passive cultural exposure to active dialogic comparison. Conceptually, this research extends Kramsch's (2021) theory of symbolic competence by demonstrating that multimedia, when engineered through the TPACK framework and ACTFL modes, functions as a digital 'third space.' In this space, absolute beginners from 62 nationalities actively negotiate meaning and transform 'cultural friction' into 'interactional resilience'. Consequently, this study offers a specific theoretical contribution beyond merely confirming existing intercultural learning theories.

2.2 Intercultural Competence in Language Acquisition

Intercultural competence (IC) refers to the ability to interact effectively and appropriately in diverse cultural contexts. In this study, IC is synthesized not as a static set of rules, but as a dynamic, continuous acquisition process involving cultural awareness, cognitive openness, empathy, and adaptability. While mastering linguistic structures is necessary, it is insufficient for BIPA learners who must navigate complex sociolinguistic nuances such as hierarchy, indirectness, and politeness markers to avoid the "culture shock" and communication breakdowns identified by Prayoga, 2018. Recent international studies emphasize the critical role of virtual and digital exchanges in fostering intercultural competence among secondary-level learners (Robinson & Manegre, 2025).

This research relates these conceptual components to the transcultural multimedia framework by arguing that IC is best fostered through a dialogic "Third Space". Within this digital ecosystem, multinational learners are not passive recipients of Indonesian norms; instead, they are encouraged to critically contrast sociocultural practices with their respective home countries. By operationalizing Mayer's (2022) cognitive principles, this study provides a psychologically safe arena where absolute beginners can build "interactional resilience". Thus, intercultural competence in this context is redefined as the learner's ability to symbolically position themselves between their native identity and the target Indonesian culture, ensuring that language acquisition is both functional and empathetically grounded (Achieng, 2023; Khaerunnisa et al., 2023; Zakharova & Lasagabaster, 2026)

2.3 Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning

Mayer's (2022) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning serves as the architectural blueprint for the "Speak-Connect-Explore" e-book, ensuring the digital design accounts for novice learners' cognitive limits. The research operationalizes Mayer's dual-channel assumption by synchronizing native audio narrations with culturally relevant visual cues. Paivio's (2007) Dual Coding Theory fundamentally supports this approach, suggesting that processing verbal and non-verbal information concurrently significantly enhances memory retention, thereby circumventing absolute beginners limited cognitive capacity.

To manage the limited capacity of learners, the multimedia interface employs signaling and modality principles, providing clear visual anchors that allow students to navigate complex transcultural information without overwhelming their new linguistic system. Furthermore, the active processing assumption is supported by comparative tasks in which learners select and integrate Indonesian concepts into their native cultural schemas.

This application design aligns with recent BIPA instructional developments where the integration of digital media has proven highly effective. Fatimah & Pramesti, (2023) demonstrated that teaching culture through digital media integration significantly heightens learners' sociocultural awareness. From the educators' perspective, Rohim and Fitriani (2022) concluded that utilizing culturally embedded multimedia not only accelerates language acquisition but

also empowers teachers to facilitate intercultural communicative competence more dynamically.

2.4 The ACTFL Communication Framework

Effective language instruction should aim to develop communicative ability in addition to grammatical knowledge. The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) guidelines divide communication into three primary modes (ACTFL, 2012). The interpretive mode focuses on the comprehension of spoken and written input without active negotiation. The interpersonal mode emphasizes active, spontaneous two-way meaning negotiation. The presentational mode trains students to produce and deliver structured ideas to an audience. Integrating these three modes into a digital ecosystem provides students with a holistic learning experience, ensuring that they transition from passive receivers of cultural information to active global communicators.

Specifically for a multinational BIPA context, the ACTFL framework is highly suitable because it shifts the instructional focus from rigid grammatical assimilation to functional meaning negotiation. Given that multinational learners in this study represent 62 different nationalities, ACTFL's interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational modes provide a dynamic 'third space'. It accommodates their diverse cultural backgrounds by allowing them to actively compare their native cultures with Indonesian norms without abandoning their cultural identities, which is essential for adult and older adolescent learners.

2.5 The ASSURE Instructional Design Model

To effectively engineer these theoretical frameworks into a functional multimedia product, a robust instructional design is required. The ASSURE model (Smaldino et al., 2012) provides a systematic framework specifically designed to integrate media and technology into learning environments. The model comprises six sequential stages: Analyze learners, State standards and objectives, select strategies and resources, utilize media and materials, require learner participation, and evaluate and revise. This structured approach ensures that the development of BIPA multimedia materials is not merely a digitization of texts, but a pedagogically sound process that systematically accommodates learners' specific transcultural needs.

2.6. Synthesizing Andragogical Principles and TPACK for Intercultural Digital Pedagogy

BIPA learners, particularly older adolescents in international schools, possess fully developed native linguistic systems and extensive sociocultural schemas. Treating these learners as 'cognitive beginners' actively diminishes their motivation. Consequently, instructional designs must apply andragogical principles that leverage learners' prior experiences and promote self-directed learning. Recent adult learning scholarship demonstrates that technology-mediated environments significantly enhance learner autonomy and self-regulated learning, effectively mitigating foreign language anxiety (Tabuk & Cetin, 2026; Zakharova & Lasagabaster, 2026).

To achieve this, this study synthesizes transcultural pedagogy, Mayer's cognitive principles, and the ACTFL communication modes through the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework. Recent international research highlights the critical need for intercultural digital pedagogy that fosters multilingual classroom interaction rather than passive assimilation (Robinson & Manegre, 2025; Silva et al., 2026). By operationalizing TPACK, this study transforms multimedia from mere visual decoration into an interactive 'third space.' The transcultural 'Content' challenges learners' cultural assumptions, the andragogical 'Pedagogy' drives authentic problem-based learning via ACTFL modes, and the interactive 'Technology' provides a psychologically safe environment. This theoretical synergy ensures that digital tools actively scaffold the learners' transcultural journey, bridging the gap between linguistic simplicity and cognitive maturity.

2.7 The TPACK Framework

To effectively operationalize this andragogical transcultural approach within a digital medium, the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework is essential. The TPACK framework mandates that technology must not be treated merely as a static presentation tool, but as an active pedagogical instrument that guides learners to explore transcultural content (Koehler & Mishra, 2009; Smaldino et al., 2012).

In the context of this study, the 'Content' is the transcultural comparative material; the 'Pedagogy' is driven by the andragogical active-learning principles and the ACTFL communication modes; and the 'Technology' involves the use of interactive digital platforms. The seamless integration of these three domains ensures that multimedia elements function as essential cognitive scaffolds. This ecosystem directly facilitates self-paced learning, allowing novice learners to process language inputs repeatedly, which minimizes cognitive overload and maximizes learner confidence. A key technological feature within this TPACK ecosystem is gamification—the integration of game-based mechanics such as interactive quizzes—which serves to lower learners' affective filter and stimulate active engagement.

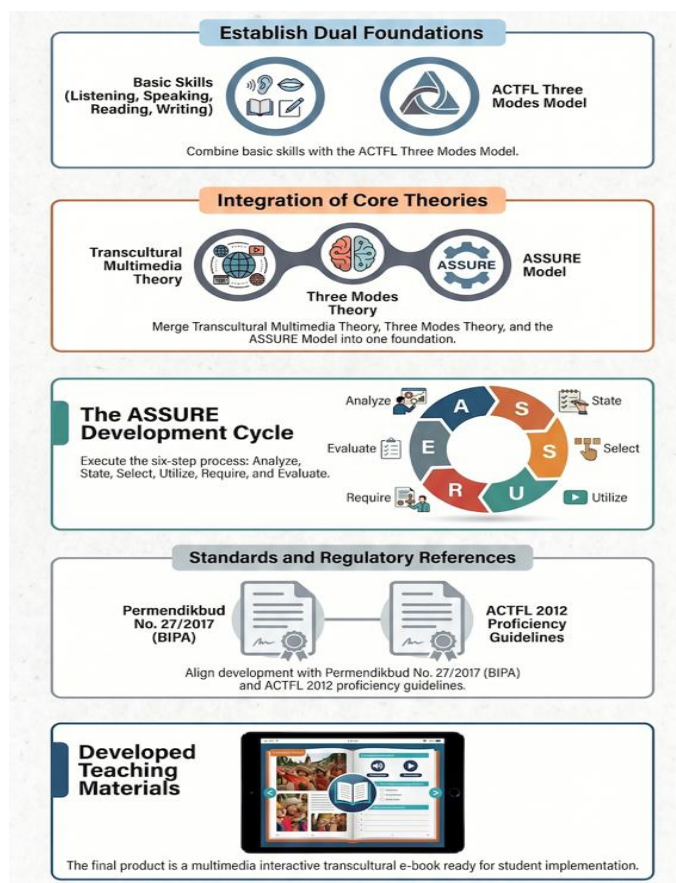


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Developing Interactive Language Materials

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design, Context, and Researcher Positionality

This study employed a qualitative descriptive methodology to explore intercultural interactions in a naturalistic educational setting. The research took place over a three-month intervention period at a Cooperative Education Unit (SPK) in Jakarta, representing 62 nationalities. Because the primary researcher also served as an active educational practitioner at this institution, the study acknowledges this insider positionality. To prevent observer bias and ensure objectivity, the researchers utilized strict data triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing throughout the data collection and analysis phases (Emzir, 2014; Creswell, 2012).

3.2. Participants and Selection Criteria

The researchers purposively selected 40 secondary-level multinational students (aged 12-18) and 10 BIPA educators. The inclusion criteria required participants to be expatriate absolute beginners (Novice level) with zero prior exposure to the Indonesian language. Conversely, the researchers excluded students with dual citizenship or previous Indonesian language study. This sample size of 40 students provided a robust qualitative dataset, allowing the researchers to achieve full thematic saturation by the end of the three-month intervention, as no new qualitative themes emerged from subsequent interviews and reflective logs (Sugiyono, 2017). To provide a clearer overview of the learners, the specific

descriptions of their age, nationalities, and language backgrounds are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic and language background profile of the BIPA learners

Demographic aspect	Description
Age	12–18 years old. The learners are categorized as older adolescents or secondary-level students.
Nationalities	Representing highly diverse cultural backgrounds, predominantly from European, East Asian, and American demographics.
Language backgrounds	Absolute beginners (Novice Low-Mid level) possessing zero to minimal prior exposure to the Indonesian language (typically mastering <100 basic words).

3.3. Data Collection and Instruments

During the three-month implementation phase, educators integrated the transcultural multimedia e-book into weekly BIPA sessions. Students actively utilized the platform's digital features—such as embedded authentic videos and asynchronous voice-recording tools—to practice interpretive, interpersonal, and presentational communication tasks. The researchers gathered data after implementing a specially designed interactive transcultural multimedia e-book. The UI/UX architecture of this digital platform explicitly incorporated gamification elements, utilizing QR codes and hyperlinks to engage students in low-stakes interactive vocabulary games. To guarantee the credibility and methodological rigor of the qualitative inquiry, a robust data triangulation strategy was executed (Creswell, 2012).

Triangulation was achieved using three primary qualitative instruments, each designed to capture a specific dimension of the transcultural learning experience:

- 1) **Participatory Classroom Observations:** Researchers acted as participant-observers during eight participatory classroom observation sessions, each lasting approximately 90 minutes, to document actual language use in its natural setting. The observation checklists meticulously recorded non-verbal interaction patterns, instances of linguistic hesitation, the application of pragmatic gestures (e.g., bowing or smiling), and emerging cultural misunderstandings during conventional speaking activities. This instrument was crucial for observing how learners negotiated meaning spontaneously during interpersonal tasks.
- 2) **In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews:** Conducted comprehensively with both the multinational learners and the BIPA educators. The interview protocols utilized semi-structured, open-ended guidelines focusing on the pedagogical gaps in current instructional materials, the psychological impact of the transcultural content on students' communication anxiety, and the specific sociolinguistic challenges frequently encountered in multinational classrooms. This allowed researchers to capture the affective and emotional dimensions of the learning process.
- 3) **Reflective Learner Logs:** To capture internal cognitive processes, students were required to complete post-activity written reflections. These logs prompted students to explicitly compare specific Indonesian communication etiquettes—

such as the use of honorifics or indirectness – with the normative behaviors of their home countries. These logs served as the primary data source for analyzing the emergence of cultural relativism and symbolic competence.

3.4 Data Analysis, Coding Reliability, and Theme Validation

The researchers analyzed the qualitative data, comprising interview transcripts, observation field notes, and written reflective logs, using the interactive thematic coding model (Emzir, 2014; Miles & Huberman, 1992). Instead of utilizing Qualitative Data Analysis Software (QDAS) such as NVivo, the researchers opted for a rigorous manual coding process to ensure deep immersion into the nuances of the learners' transcultural reflections. The analytical procedure was executed in four systematic phases.

First, the data familiarization phase involved transcribing all audio recordings from the semi-structured interviews and collating the field notes. Second, the open coding phase was conducted, wherein researchers systematically tagged recurring patterns related to cultural perception, interactional anxiety, and communicative behavior. Third, the axial coding phase categorized these initial codes into broader, interconnected overarching themes, such as 'pragmatic adaptability' and 'pedagogical transformation'. Finally, the selective coding phase synthesized these categories into a coherent narrative that directly addressed the research objectives. A sample of the thematic coding matrix, mapping the empirical data to identified themes, is presented in the Results section (see Table 2).

To ensure trustworthiness (credibility and dependability), methodological triangulation was applied by cross-referencing the interview transcripts, observational data, and learners' reflections. Additionally, an intercoder agreement approach was utilized where two independent researchers cross-coded a subset of the transcripts to ensure consistency. Furthermore, member checking and peer debriefing were conducted by allowing participating educators to review the synthesized themes, ensuring that the pedagogical interpretations were authentic and free from subjective bias (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

4. Results and Findings

The qualitative data analysis—derived from participatory observations, semi-structured interviews, and reflective learner logs—revealed profound pedagogical and psychological transformations among the learners. To systematically present these findings, the researchers categorized the raw qualitative data into three dominant themes: (1) the development of cultural relativism, (2) the reduction of communicative hesitation, and (3) the transformation of the pedagogical ecosystem. The thematic framework in Figure 2 visually maps the interrelationship between these themes and the overall qualitative outcomes.

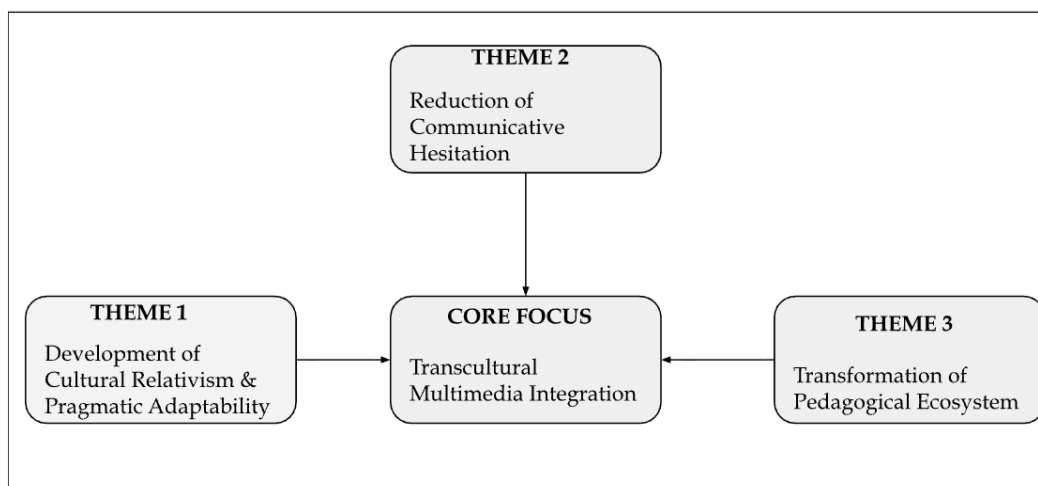


Figure 2: Thematic map and visual framework of the qualitative findings

To systematically navigate the qualitative evidence and integrate empirical findings with theoretical interpretations, Table 2 presents the comprehensive thematic coding matrix across all participant demographics.

Table 2: Comprehensive Thematic Coding and Analytical Matrix

Dominant	Empirical Evidence (Participant Syntheses)	Theoretical Integration & Analytical Significance
1. Cultural Relativism & Pragmatic Adaptability	Learners actively compared Indonesian social norms (e.g., indirectness, <i>rukun</i>) with their home cultures, shifting from ethnocentric judgment to cultural empathy.	Extends Kramsch's Symbolic Competence: Learners successfully negotiate complex identities within a digital 'third space' without abandoning native roots.
2. Reduction of Communicative Hesitation	Absolute beginners intuitively employed appropriate non-verbal gestures and honorifics during unscripted role-plays, mitigating interactional anxiety.	Corroborates Mayer's Cognitive Theory: Multimodal scaffolding drastically lowers the affective filter, transforming cultural friction into situational fluency.
3. Transformation of the Pedagogical Ecosystem	Instructors reported reduced burnout and observed learners engaging in autonomous, peer-to-peer meaning negotiation using digital asynchronous tools.	Operationalizes the TPACK Framework: Digital architecture shifts the teacher's role from static information transmitter to dynamic learning experience designer.

4.1 Development of Cultural Relativism and Pragmatic

Adaptability integrating transcultural elements, specifically addressing indirect communication, respect for hierarchy, and social norms, significantly influenced learners' attitudes. Unlike traditional materials that dictate cultural rules, the multimedia platform encouraged learners to critically reflect upon differences. For instance, in the 'Family' module, the materials prompted learners to compare the concept of the Indonesian 'extended family' (*keluarga besar*) with the 'nuclear family' structures prevalent in many Western countries.

Thematic coding of the reflective logs revealed a growing awareness of intercultural pragmatics. Learners demonstrated an emergent cultural relativism; they not only memorized facts about Indonesian culture but began to critically analyze and contrast them without bias. Table 3 summarizes these qualitative themes and their supporting empirical data (learner excerpts).

Table 3: Thematic matrix of learner transcultural reflections

Identified Theme	Empirical Data (Excerpts from Learner Logs and Interviews)
Awareness of Indirectness	"In my country, directness is common, but here I learned that being indirect can be a sign of respect." (Participant from Germany)
Social Etiquette and Public Behavior	"I understood that raising your voice is not acceptable in many public situations in Indonesia." (Participant from Australia)
Pragmatic Body Language	"The idea of showing deference to elders through body language and specific intonations was new to me, but the videos made it clear why it is important." (Participant from South Korea)

Note. Data extracted from post-activity qualitative reflection logs representing diverse cultural backgrounds

The empirical data in Table 1 indicates that the transcultural integration actively prevented cultural dissonance. Learners successfully internalize specific Indonesian politeness markers without feeling alienated from their own cultural identities. Supporting this qualitative finding, a follow-up questionnaire revealed that 35 out of 40 participants agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more aware of cultural subtleties after using the module. Furthermore, 30 participants stated they would confidently apply these insights in real interactions with Indonesian speakers.

However, learners initially resisted this cultural relativism. Preliminary data revealed that learners from Western individualistic cultures initially experienced cultural dissonance; they perceived common Indonesian phatic communication, such as 'Mau ke mana?' (Where are you going?), as an intrusive invasion of privacy rather than a gesture of social harmony. This conflicting perspective highlighted the deep-seated cultural schemas that learners had to negotiate before internalizing the 'rukun' (harmony) value presented in the multimedia modules.

4.2. Decoding Socio-cultural Nuances through Intonation and Authentic Texts

Qualitative observations revealed that the multimedia's interpretive mode significantly enhanced learners' ability to decode abstract socio-cultural nuances, particularly vocal intonation. While conventional BIPA instruction often teaches intonation mechanically, the transcultural multimedia embedded authentic audio demonstrating how Indonesian intonation deeply connects to emotional expression and social hierarchy.

A European learner illustrated this shift in their reflective log: "I realized that raising the pitch at the end of a sentence isn't just about asking a question; depending on the context, it can express politeness, surprise, or even subtle disagreement." By analyzing authentic visual texts—such as traditional food menus and school schedules—alongside these audio cues, learners developed a sophisticated interpretive capacity. This multimodal exposure allowed them to grasp the communicative intent of native speakers beyond literal translation. Finally, this ability to move from literal translation to situational decoding effectively bridged the gap between structural language knowledge and social intent, marking a clear success in their intercultural communication.

4.3 Reduction of Communicative Hesitation

Classroom observations and interviews revealed that creating a psychologically safe learning environment visibly reduced learners' communicative hesitation. Novice learners often face paralyzing foreign language anxiety when interacting in culturally unfamiliar settings. However, the embedded dual-channel multimedia features mitigated this affective filter. During a simulated role-playing activity set in a traditional restaurant, educators observed almost all learners (36 out of 40) successfully employing culturally appropriate body language—such as offering smiles, using a gentle tone, and saying "permisi" or "maaf" which they had acquired directly from watching the authentic multimedia videos.

In-depth interview data further corroborated this reduction in anxiety. A Japanese participant noted: "I liked how the modules allowed me to hear the exact tone and intonation that Indonesians use when they are being polite. It helped me feel less afraid to speak during the role-play." This evidence proves that visualizing cultural nuances bridges the gap between structural language knowledge and pragmatic application, transforming hesitation into situational fluency. Despite this eventual success, learners initially experienced significant linguistic hesitation. For instance, learners from Japan and South Korea reported feeling 'awkward' and 'fearful' of speaking because they found the subtle variations in Indonesian honorific intonations difficult to replicate correctly. Crucially, learners successfully transferred these transcultural behaviors into authentic, unscripted environments.

During a field trip to a local traditional market in Jakarta, educators observed that learners voluntarily applied the specific pragmatics—such as slightly bowing and using correct informal honorifics when bargaining—learned exclusively from the digital ecosystem. An American learner reflected: "I used to be terrified of buying things outside the supermarket because I didn't know how to act. But remembering the video of how locals gently bargain in the market made me feel like I knew the 'secret rules'. The vendors actually smiled and appreciated my gestures." This confirms that the multimedia ecosystem equipped learners with the functional cultural fluency required to navigate Indonesian society seamlessly.

Beyond the acquisition of practical communication skills, the qualitative data revealed that multinational learners profoundly internalized core Indonesian philosophical values. Throughout the thematic modules, the instructional design systematically exposed learners to scenarios reflecting foundational values such as

harmony (*rukun*), politeness (*sopan santun*), and mutual respect (*tenggang rasa*). Instead of presenting these values as abstract concepts, the multimedia materials contextualized them within everyday transcultural interactions.

Qualitative content analysis of the post-activity reflections and focus group discussions indicated that learners developed a nuanced appreciation for these values. For example, when discussing the concept of '*tenggang rasa*', a participant from the United States reflected: "The idea of constantly anticipating how your words might affect someone else's feelings (*tenggang rasa*) was challenging, but watching the video examples made me realize that indirectness is actually a profound form of empathy." This excerpt demonstrates that the transcultural multimedia successfully transformed abstract local wisdom into comprehensible, actionable intercultural competencies, enabling learners to decode the hidden sociolinguistic rules of Indonesian society. Interactive gamification also significantly enhanced learner engagement. The digital platform's UI/UX architecture incorporated gamification elements, using quick-response (QR) codes and embedded hyperlinks that connect learners in real-time to interactive vocabulary quizzes and transcultural dialogue simulations.

Observational data indicated that these gamified features acted as a crucial psychological scaffold. Absolute beginners frequently exhibit high anxiety when transitioning from receptive tasks (listening/reading) to productive tasks (speaking). However, the gamified quizzes provided a low-stakes, highly engaging transitional phase. By transforming vocabulary recall into a collaborative game, the platform drastically lowered the learners' affective filter. Instructors noted in their observation logs that students became highly animated, frequently engaging in spontaneous peer-to-peer meaning negotiation to solve the digital challenges. This phenomenon confirmed that the gamification elements effectively shifted the learners' behavior from passive screen-reading to active, enthusiastic interpersonal communication.

Participatory observations highlighted another critical behavioral shift: the emergence of strategic compensation skills. Absolute beginners (who initially possessed fewer than 100 words) frequently encounter lexical 'dead ends', resulting in silence and frustration. To address this, the transcultural multimedia explicitly modeled how native speakers utilize nonverbal cues, paraphrasing, and clarification requests to sustain interaction. Learners successfully replicated these compensation strategies during unscripted peer-to-peer role-plays. For instance, when forgetting a specific word, learners intuitively employed culturally appropriate gestures and gently asked, "Maaf, bisa diulangi?" (Excuse me, could you repeat that?) with a gentle tone, mirroring the videos they had watched. A European learner confirmed this behavioral shift in their reflective log: "I forgot the exact vocabulary during the role-play, but remembering the video, I just smiled and asked 'bisa diulangi?' instead of panicking. It saved the conversation." This active negotiation of meaning proved that the digital ecosystem fostered interactional resilience, enabling students to navigate linguistic deficits gracefully without abandoning the conversation.

Finally, the intervention systematically dismantled learners' cognitive biases and cultural stereotypes. Foreign language learners often enter the classroom with preconceived stereotypes that trigger severe culture shock if left unaddressed (Prayoga, 2018). The transcultural multimedia directly confronted these biases by presenting authentic, multidimensional representations of Indonesian society, rather than simplified or exoticized caricatures. For example, after completing a module on urban daily life and public transportation, a European student expressed a significant paradigm shift: "I always imagined Indonesia strictly through the lens of traditional villages and tourism like Bali. Seeing the fast-paced, modern, yet highly polite interactions in the Jakarta MRT video completely changed my perspective." This cognitive restructuring indicates that the multimedia ecosystem effectively serves as a mitigating tool against culture shock, allowing learners to construct a more accurate, modern, and realistic mental model of the target culture.

5. Discussion

The findings demonstrate that transcultural multimedia functions far beyond mere technological novelty. The emergence of cultural relativism and pragmatic adaptability among the participants aligns closely with Kramsch's (2021) theory of symbolic competence. By deliberately presenting authentic socio-cultural contexts—rather than enforcing a monocultural assimilation—the instructional media allowed students to negotiate meaning equilibratively. As learners enthusiastically negotiated these cultural differences during peer discussions, they concurrently developed a high intercultural sensitivity. This indicates that utilizing the target language as a vehicle for authentic cross-cultural reflection profoundly accelerates language acquisition for multinational learners.

This research theoretically extends Kramsch's (2021) concept of symbolic competence by demonstrating that even absolute beginners can engage in complex identity negotiation when supported by a digital 'third space.' Learners clearly demonstrated this competence by using the digital interface to explore profound philosophies, such as Pancasila, while safely maintaining their native identities. By comparing these values asynchronously, absolute beginners engaged in a transformative dialogue, proving that even with a limited vocabulary, they successfully positioned themselves between their home culture and the target Indonesian culture.

Unlike traditional applications that focus on intermediate learners, this study reveals that multimedia integration serves as a sociocultural scaffold, transforming 'cultural friction' into 'interactional resilience.' Consequently, this finding refines Mayer's (2022) Cognitive Theory by establishing that dual-channel processing in a transcultural context serves two purposes: reducing cognitive load while simultaneously stabilizing the learner's emotional and cultural identity during the acquisition process. However, a critical discussion of the implementation reveals that this transcultural journey was not universally seamless. While multimedia reduced anxiety for most, some learners exhibited over-reliance on the gamified features, occasionally prioritizing task completion (e.g., winning vocabulary quizzes) over profound cultural reflection. Additionally, although the

asynchronous digital ecosystem fostered autonomy, it occasionally deprived absolute beginners of the immediate, nuanced emotional feedback inherent in live human interaction. Therefore, while multimedia functions as an effective psychological scaffold (Handoyo et al., 2025), it must supplement, rather than replace, real-time educator mediation.

Furthermore, the significant reduction in communicative hesitation corroborates the core assumptions of Mayer's (2022) Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning. Absolute beginners typically experience cognitive overload when navigating a new linguistic system and an alien cultural paradigm simultaneously. The synchronized audio-visual cues embedded within the digital ecosystem effectively circumvented this limitation. By observing native speakers' intonations and body language in real-world contexts via video, learners intuitively absorbed the sociocultural pragmatics. This multimodal scaffolding provided a low-stakes, psychologically safe rehearsal space, supporting previous findings that were culturally grounded, multimodal tools drastically enhance learner confidence and situational fluency (Zhao & Li, 2022).

Paivio's (2007) Dual Coding Theory supports this cognitive facilitation, explaining that processing verbal and non-verbal information concurrently enhances memory retention. By visually depicting sociolinguistic behaviors alongside native audio narrations, the transcultural multimedia provided a holistic multisensory input that text-based materials inherently lack. Moreover, significantly lowering the learners' affective filter drove the success of the presentational and interpersonal tasks within this digital ecosystem. In conventional BIPA instruction, absolute beginners frequently experience paralyzing foreign language anxiety, particularly when prompted to execute live oral presentations in a culturally unfamiliar language.

The multimedia platform's architecture design mitigated this psychological barrier by offering a private, low-stakes rehearsal space through its asynchronous voice-recording features. These features empowered learners to draft their cultural comparisons, record their voices, listen to their own pronunciation, and engage in an iterative process of autonomous self-correction before formal submission. This continuous cycle of trial, error, and private instant correction drastically accelerated their pragmatic competence while simultaneously dismantling their performance anxiety.

Strategic engineering of the TPACK framework fundamentally drives the successful digital operationalization of this transcultural framework. By simultaneously orchestrating text, visual design, and audio, the architecture creates a multisensory learning experience. This directly fulfills Mayer's third assumption: active processing. Meaningful learning only occurs when individuals actively select relevant information, organize it mentally, and integrate it with their existing schemas. The transcultural interface compelled this active mental organization by prompting learners to compare Indonesian cultural practices with their native cultures using digital recording tools.

Additionally, integrating asynchronous digital features drastically altered the classroom's feedback mechanism. In conventional settings, BIPA educators often experience burnout from repeatedly correcting basic pronunciation and cultural misunderstandings during live sessions. The multimedia platform alleviated this constraint by empowering students to practice language production autonomously. Because learners could record, self-evaluate, and re-record their spoken transcultural comparisons independently before receiving formal feedback, their final presentational output became structurally and phonologically vastly superior. This intricate alignment between the TPACK framework, Mayer's cognitive principles, and the ACTFL communication modes proves that digital architecture, when precisely engineered, transforms foreign language acquisition from a mechanical exercise into a profoundly engaging, autonomous, and culturally reflective process.

Qualitative data also highlighted the immense value of peer-to-peer collaborative feedback in refining presentational communication. While the built-in voice recording feature provided a private rehearsal space, it simultaneously facilitated asynchronous peer review. Before submitting their final oral presentations to the instructor, learners frequently shared their digital audio drafts with classmates to check for cross-cultural clarity and pronunciation accuracy. This collaborative dimension resonates with Lam (2024), who asserts that peer interaction significantly enhances speaking confidence and reduces communication apprehension. By actively negotiating the structural and cultural accuracy of their presentations together, learners transformed a traditionally solitary presentational task into a collaborative meaning-making process. This dynamic effectively shifted the locus of control from the teacher to the learners, fostering autonomy and building a strong network of mutual intercultural support within the multinational classroom.

Finally, successfully implementing this transcultural ecosystem generates concrete educational implications far beyond the SPK context. Educational policymakers should formally mandate integrating dialogic transcultural frameworks into broader standardized curricula, including higher education BIPA programs and adult migrant language education. Moreover, institutional policies must systematically prioritize targeted professional development—training educators specifically in intercultural mediation rather than just basic digital literacy. By adapting this multimedia architecture, educators and developers can establish a replicable, inclusive pedagogical blueprint for multilingual digital learning environments across the Global South and other highly diverse globalized settings.

6. Conclusion

Integrating transcultural multimedia into BIPA instruction yields profound pedagogical and psychological benefits for multinational beginner learners. By facilitating a dialogic interaction between Indonesian norms and the learners' native cultures, this approach effectively transcends the limitations of conventional monocultural materials. Authentic, multimedia-driven cultural contexts foster intercultural sensitivity, promotes pragmatic adaptability, and

dismantles cultural stereotypes. Crucially, the visualization of sociolinguistic behaviors significantly reduces foreign language anxiety, transforming communicative hesitation into situational fluency. Moreover, this multimedia integration empowers teachers to evolve into dynamic facilitators of cross-cultural negotiation. Ultimately, this study validates transcultural multimedia not merely as an alternative instructional tool, but as a fundamental necessity for equipping modern learners with the intercultural competence required to thrive in a globalized society.

7. Limitations

While yielding rich qualitative insights, this study has certain limitations. First, the participant-observer role inherently introduces potential research bias and the observer effect, as the researchers' presence may have altered learners' communicative behavior. To resolve this, the researchers carefully mitigated this bias through strict data triangulation. Second, focusing exclusively on beginner learners at a single Cooperative Education Unit (SPK) in Jakarta may limit the transferability of these qualitative themes to older adult learners in university settings or rural environments. Finally, the instructional materials primarily highlighted mainstream Indonesian cultural representations, potentially overlooking the full complexity of Indonesia's diverse regional identities.

8. Recommendations

Future BIPA curriculum developers should actively integrate transcultural reflective tasks and authentic multimedia into their instructional designs to mitigate learner anxiety. Future qualitative research should explore the longitudinal impact of such media on learners' intercultural identity formation. Additionally, developers should broaden multimedia content to encompass Indonesia's extensive regional and dialectal diversity, including specific customs and situational dialogues from Bali, Sumatra, Kalimantan, and Eastern Indonesia, to ensure a more pluralistic representation of the target culture.

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