

English Education Students' Lived Experiences in Teaching BIPA: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Teaching Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) contributes to the internationalization of the Indonesian language while presenting cross-disciplinary challenges for pre-service teachers from non-BIPA educational backgrounds. This study explores the lived experiences of pre-service English teachers when teaching BIPA and the coping strategies they adopted in multicultural classrooms. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the study involved five English Education student-teachers with BIPA teaching experience. Data were collected through reflective journals and semi-structured interviews and analysed to identify participants' experiences, challenges, and responses during the teaching process. The findings revealed that participants initially experienced professional identity dissonance and pedagogical friction when adapting their English Education background to BIPA instruction. They gradually managed these challenges through multimodal instruction, strategic code-switching, thorough preparation, and continuous video-based reflection. The experience also encouraged participants to develop more student-centered teaching practices and greater intercultural awareness. This study contributes to BIPA teacher preparation research by highlighting how cross-disciplinary teaching experiences can support the professional adaptation and pedagogical development of pre-service teachers in diverse and increasingly international educational contexts.

Keywords: BIPA Instruction, Lived Experiences, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, Pre-Service Teachers, Coping Strategies

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) has increasingly developed as an important language and cultural program in Indonesian higher education institutions. BIPA is designed not only to support foreign learners in acquiring Indonesian language proficiency but also to introduce Indonesian cultural values and social practices to international communities (Saddhono, 2024). As the demand for BIPA programs continues to expand through international collaborations, student exchange programs, and institutional partnerships, universities increasingly involve students from related educational backgrounds, particularly English Education students, in BIPA teaching activities. For English Education students, teaching BIPA represents a unique and unfamiliar teaching experience. Although they are academically prepared to teach English as a foreign language, they are required to teach Indonesian to international learners in multicultural classroom settings. This situation places them in a new pedagogical position where they must negotiate communication, instructional strategies, and classroom interaction beyond their primary disciplinary specialization. As a result, teaching BIPA becomes more than a technical teaching activity; it becomes a lived experience involving emotional responses, self-reflection, adaptation, and personal meaning-making.

Previous studies on BIPA have largely focused on instructional strategies, material development, language learning outcomes, and intercultural communication in BIPA classrooms (Islahuddin et al., 2025; Saddhono, 2024). Research on Indonesian for Foreign Speakers has grown significantly in recent years, with Saddhono (2024) explaining that BIPA

functions not only as a language learning program but also as a medium for introducing Indonesian culture to international learners. Similarly, [Islahuddin et al. \(2025\)](#) emphasize that BIPA instruction integrates language competence with intercultural understanding. Other studies have explored classroom interaction, digital learning media, and communicative teaching strategies in BIPA instruction ([Dhari, 2025](#); [Lantika & Cholsy, 2020](#); [Maharany et al., 2021](#)). However, these studies primarily focus on teaching methods and learner outcomes rather than the subjective experiences of teachers who deliver the instruction.

In teacher education research, lived teaching experiences are increasingly understood as important sites of personal and professional meaning construction. Studies show that pre-service teachers often experience uncertainty, nervousness, vulnerability, and self-reflection during teaching practice ([Aydin & Ustuk, 2020](#); [Novitasari & Murtafi, 2023](#); [Wijaya, 2022](#)). [Wijaya \(2022\)](#) found that pre-service English teachers frequently experience teaching anxiety during classroom practice, while [Novitasari & Murtafi \(2023\)](#) reported that student-teachers experience nervousness, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence during teaching activities. Similarly, ([Pravitasari et al., 2025](#)) and ([Anindya & Triyoga, 2025](#)) revealed that emotional experiences during teaching practicum contribute to the development of teacher identity and self-understanding. However, most existing studies examine teaching experiences within conventional English language teaching contexts rather than cross-disciplinary experiences such as teaching BIPA.

Teaching BIPA also involves interaction with learners from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. During classroom interaction, student-teachers may encounter communication barriers, cultural misunderstandings, differences in classroom participation styles, and difficulties in explaining linguistic meanings. [Pasaribu & Lestari \(2023\)](#) argue that teaching in multicultural classrooms requires teachers to adapt communication styles and negotiate cultural differences during classroom interaction. Furthermore, recent studies emphasize that language teaching experiences are inherently emotional and socially situated. According to [Yang & Sato \(2025\)](#), language teachers continuously experience a wide range of emotions shaped by classroom interaction, institutional expectations, and sociocultural contexts. ([Truong et al., 2025](#)) similarly argue that teacher identity, cognition, emotion, and agency interact dynamically throughout teaching experiences. In intercultural educational settings, teachers frequently adjust their instructional behavior and communication styles to accommodate learners' diverse cultural expectations ([Aulia, 2022](#); [Ganish et al., 2025](#)). These findings are highly relevant to BIPA contexts because English Education students teaching international learners are likely to encounter similar processes of cultural adaptation, communication adjustment, and identity negotiation.

In addition to emotional and intercultural dimensions, previous research has investigated how pre-service teachers cope with challenges encountered during teaching practice. [Novitasari & Murtafi \(2023\)](#) revealed that pre-service EFL teachers employ various coping strategies to manage teaching anxiety, including seeking peer support, engaging in thorough lesson preparation, practicing self-reflection, and increasing self-confidence through repeated teaching experiences. Similarly, [Liu & Wu \(2021\)](#) found that teachers cope with teaching-related anxiety by enhancing pedagogical preparation, sharing experiences with colleagues, and developing adaptive classroom management strategies. Recent studies further suggest that psychological coping resources, such as mindfulness, cognitive reappraisal, and self-efficacy, help language teachers regulate negative emotions and respond constructively to classroom challenges ([Fallah et al., 2023](#)). From a phenomenological perspective, coping strategies represent how individuals interpret, negotiate, and make sense of challenging experiences.

Despite the growing implementation of BIPA programs, limited research has explored how English Education students experience teaching BIPA as a lived and meaningful phenomenon. Existing studies predominantly focus on instructional strategies, learner achievement, and classroom effectiveness, while the subjective experiences of student-teachers remain underexplored. Furthermore, studies discussing teacher anxiety, intercultural interaction, and identity development often examine these aspects as separate psychological

or pedagogical variables rather than as interconnected lived experiences. As a result, little is known about how English Education students interpret emotional uncertainty, communication adjustment, intercultural encounters, and reflective self-understanding while teaching BIPA. The challenges encountered during BIPA teaching are understood in this study not merely as isolated teaching problems, but as interpreted lived experiences that shape participants' emotional, interpersonal, and professional meaning-making processes.

This study employs Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as its primary theoretical and methodological framework. IPA is a qualitative research approach concerned with exploring how individuals make sense of their lived experiences (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is rooted in three main philosophical foundations: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography. Phenomenology focuses on understanding how individuals experience a particular phenomenon in their everyday lives, exploring subjective meaning rather than measuring variables (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Hermeneutics emphasizes that experiences are always interpreted through reflection, recognizing a double hermeneutic process in which participants make sense of their experiences while the researcher interprets participants' interpretations (Smith et al., 2009). Idiography emphasizes detailed exploration of individual experiences within homogeneous participant groups (Alase, 2017; Pietkiewicz et al., 2014). IPA is appropriate for this study because the research aims to explore how participants interpret their experiences, emotions, challenges, and reflections while teaching BIPA in cross-cultural classroom contexts.

Within IPA, lived experience refers to how individuals consciously experience and interpret events, situations, and interactions in their daily lives. Teaching BIPA is understood as a lived experience involving emotional responses, classroom interaction, communication adjustment, and reflective self-understanding (Ma'rifat et al., 2024). For English Education students, teaching BIPA involves experiences of uncertainty, nervousness, adaptation, confidence development, and intercultural interaction. These experiences are treated as interconnected dimensions of lived experience that emerge naturally from participants' narratives, providing insights into how participants interpret these experiences and how such experiences influence their understanding of themselves as developing teachers.

The overarching aim of this study is to explore how English Education students interpret and make sense of their lived experiences in teaching BIPA through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. Specifically, the study addresses two main research questions: first, how English Education students experience teaching BIPA; and second, what coping strategies are adopted by English Education students during their BIPA teaching experiences. By addressing these questions, the study seeks to explore the lived experiences of English Education students in teaching BIPA and to describe the coping strategies they adopt to navigate emotional and pedagogical challenges during cross-cultural language instruction.

METHOD

This study employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as the qualitative research design (Smith et al., 2009). IPA was selected because the study focuses on how pre-service English teachers experienced and made sense of their involvement in teaching Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA), particularly when they encountered professional, pedagogical, and intercultural challenges. Unlike qualitative approaches that primarily aim to describe cultural practices, develop theoretical explanations, or identify general patterns across large groups, IPA is concerned with understanding how individuals perceive, interpret, and give meaning to significant experiences. This approach was therefore appropriate for examining the participants' subjective experiences of teaching BIPA from their own perspectives.

IPA is grounded in three interconnected principles: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography. The phenomenological principle directs attention to participants' lived experiences and how they perceive those experiences. In this study, the analysis focused on participants' direct experiences of preparing and conducting BIPA lessons, interacting with

international students, responding to classroom challenges, and reflecting on their teaching practices. The hermeneutic principle emphasizes interpretation, meaning that the researcher seeks to understand how participants interpreted their experiences while also interpreting the meanings expressed in their accounts. This interpretative process recognizes the researcher's role in making sense of participants' reflections rather than treating their accounts as purely objective descriptions. The idiographic principle requires detailed and contextualized examination of individual cases before identifying patterns across participants. Accordingly, each participant's reflective journal and interview account was examined individually to preserve the particularity of their experience, after which recurring experiential patterns and shared meanings were identified across the five cases (Smith et al., 2009). These principles guided the analysis from individual accounts to the development of themes representing the participants' experiences and coping strategies.

Respondents

Five undergraduate students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari participated in the study. All participants were members of the 2022 cohort and were enrolled in the Micro Teaching course during the semester in which the study was conducted. As part of the course requirements, they were assigned to teach BIPA to international university students, providing them with authentic teaching experience in a cross-cultural classroom context. All participants had therefore experienced the phenomenon investigated in this study directly, including instructional preparation, classroom interaction, intercultural communication, and post-teaching reflection. Each participant conducted between two and four BIPA instructional meetings with international university students. Although the teaching experience was relatively short, it involved direct engagement with the phenomenon under investigation and provided participants with concrete experiences on which they could reflect.

Purposive sampling was used to select participants who met specific inclusion criteria: (1) being enrolled in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Kendari; (2) being a member of the 2022 cohort and enrolled in the Micro Teaching course; (3) having completed BIPA teaching as part of the course requirements; and (4) being willing and able to provide detailed reflections on their teaching experiences (Collins et al., 2021). Five participants were considered appropriate because IPA prioritizes depth and richness of individual accounts rather than a large sample size. The participants also formed a relatively homogeneous group because they shared the same academic program, cohort, course context, and BIPA teaching requirement. This homogeneity enabled the study to examine a specific shared phenomenon in sufficient depth while preserving individual differences in how participants experienced and interpreted their teaching practices (Smith et al., 2009).

Specifically, the participants were five female student-teachers aged 21–22 years, identified as Participants A–E. Participants A, C, and D conducted three instructional meetings, whereas Participants B and E conducted two sessions. Their teaching topics included asking for directions, traditional music, and personal introductions (Participant A); mall shopping and Indonesian Islamic culture (Participant B); public transportation, greetings, and Kendari tourism (Participant C); daily routines, mall pricing, and market bargaining (Participant D); and starter prompts and numerical expressions (Participant E).

Data Collection Analysis

Data were collected through reflective journals and semi-structured interviews. Reflective journals captured participants' immediate reflections on their preparation, classroom experiences, challenges, interactions with international students, and responses to teaching situations. Semi-structured interviews were subsequently used to explore participants' experiences in greater depth and clarify meanings emerging from their written reflections. The two sources allowed the researcher to examine both participants' reflections during the teaching experience and their retrospective interpretations of that experience.

The data were analyzed following the principles of IPA. First, each participant's journal and interview data were examined individually through repeated reading to develop an in-depth understanding of the account. Initial notes were then made to identify significant experiences, descriptive details, linguistic expressions, and interpretative meanings. These notes were developed into emergent themes within each individual case. The themes were subsequently examined for connections and relationships before being organized into broader experiential patterns. The same process was conducted for each participant to maintain the idiographic focus of IPA. Finally, patterns across cases were compared to identify convergent and divergent themes while preserving the distinctive experiences of individual participants. Through this process, the analysis focused not only on what participants experienced but also on how they interpreted and gave meaning to their experiences of teaching BIPA.

Instruments

In Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the researcher serves as the primary instrument in interpreting participants' lived experiences, actively engaging through double hermeneutics while maintaining reflexive awareness (Smith et al., 2009). To obtain rich experiential descriptions, this study employed two qualitative data sources: reflective journals as the primary data source and semi-structured phenomenological interviews as a complementary source. Reflective journals permitted participants to privately revisit their experiences and articulate emotional, cognitive, interpersonal, and professional dimensions in 300–500 words. Guided by phenomenological reflection principles (Moustakas, 1994; Schön, 1983), the journal prompts asked participants to describe emotionally significant moments, pedagogical challenges, and coping mechanisms (e.g., "What emotions did you experience during the lesson, and how did they affect your teaching?" and "How did you adapt your instructional strategies to support international students?").

Semi-structured phenomenological interviews lasting 30–60 minutes were conducted post-journal collection to clarify and deepen significant themes (Moustakas, 1994; Seidman, 2013). To operationalize Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) within the instrument, the interview protocol utilized open-ended, non-directive questions designed to elicit first-person accounts of lived experiences and hermeneutic self-reflection. Sample interview items included: "Can you describe a situation that you found particularly difficult or challenging in teaching BIPA?" (exploring lived pedagogical friction), "How did you deal with cross-cultural misunderstandings or adjustments in the classroom?" (capturing intercultural sense-making), and "Can you describe a moment that significantly influenced how you see yourself as a teacher?" (prompting double-hermeneutic reflection on professional identity transformation).

Procedures

Data collection was conducted through two sequential stages. The first stage involved the collection of retrospective reflective journals of 300–500 words. To facilitate asynchronous and organized data submission while ensuring data confidentiality, participants submitted their written reflective journals directly to a password-protected, private cloud storage repository hosted on Google Drive. This digital platform provided a secure and accessible space for participants to submit their entries privately, capturing emotionally significant classroom moments, intercultural encounters, professional uncertainty, teaching challenges, coping strategies, and participants' evolving perceptions of themselves as teachers. After the reflective journals were collected and initially reviewed, the second stage involved individual semi-structured, in-depth interviews lasting approximately 30–60 minutes, which were audio-recorded with participants' explicit consent. Combining reflective journals and semi-structured interviews supported data triangulation, providing primary written accounts of participants' lived experiences while facilitating clarification, elaboration, and deeper exploration of the meanings attached to those experiences (Denzin et al., 1994; Ravitch & Carl, 2021).

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed following the multi-stage IPA process outlined by [Smith et al. \(2009\)](#). The analysis began with reading and re-reading transcripts and journals alongside listening to audio recordings to establish deep immersion in participants' narratives. Initial noting was then performed across three distinct levels: descriptive comments focusing on content, linguistic comments examining word choices and emotional tone, and conceptual comments exploring broader interpretive meanings. Emergent themes were developed from these notes, capturing core experiential aspects such as nervousness, communication adjustment, and confidence development. The researcher then searched for connections across emergent themes by clustering related concepts into broader thematic categories. Following IPA's idiographic commitment, each case was analyzed individually before moving to cross-case pattern identification. Throughout analysis, reflexivity was maintained via analytical memo writing, and peer debriefing was conducted with supervisors to evaluate interpretive coherence ([Nowell et al., 2017](#)).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness was established using the framework by [Lincoln & Guba \(1985\)](#). Credibility was ensured through prolonged engagement with narratives, member checking of preliminary interpretations, and reflexive journaling. Transferability was enhanced by providing thick, detailed descriptions of participant contexts, emotional experiences, and classroom dynamics. Dependability was maintained through a detailed audit trail documenting all analytical decisions, while confirmability was preserved through continuous reflexive practice and peer debriefing to ensure findings remained firmly rooted in participants' authentic accounts ([Lincoln & Guba, 1985](#)).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) of the reflective journals and semi-structured interview transcripts revealed several key themes describing how English Education students experienced and made sense of teaching Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) to international learners. These themes emerged through the systematic six-stage IPA analytic process ([Smith et al., 2009](#)): initial reading and re-reading of participant narratives, exploratory noting (descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual), identification of individual emergent themes, clustering connected themes within each case, cross-case analysis to find shared patterns, and deep hermeneutic interpretation balancing the participants' lived voices with the researcher's analytical lens. The findings are structured according to the two primary research questions guiding this study.

English Education Students' Lived Experiences in Teaching BIPA

The first research question explored how English Education students experienced and made sense of teaching Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) to international learners. Three major superordinate themes emerged from the analysis: (1) emotional dynamics and initial vulnerability, (2) pedagogical challenges in cross-disciplinary instruction, and (3) navigating intercultural classroom interactions. These themes reflect the multifaceted emotional, pedagogical, and cross-cultural trajectories of the participants during their teaching practice.

Superordinate Theme 1: Emotional Dynamics and Initial Vulnerability

The first superordinate theme highlights the lived emotional journey of student-teachers as they transitioned into a novel cross-disciplinary teaching environment. All participants experienced intense psychological pressure prior to and at the onset of their BIPA teaching sessions. Phenomenologically, this initial vulnerability was deeply rooted in professional identity dissonance. Rather than experiencing generic pre-service anxiety, student-teachers faced a sharp conflict in their professional self-concept: while their formal academic preparation was strictly situated within English Language Teaching (ELT), they

were suddenly required to step into the role of Indonesian (BIPA) language instructors for international learners. This shift created a profound identity tension between their established identity as ELT practitioners and their emergent, unfamiliar role as BIPA educators. Lacking formal BIPA pedagogical training, participants struggled with the loss of their familiar academic scaffolding, generating intense uncertainty regarding instructional clarity, linguistic authority, and personal competence. This psychological strain was vividly articulated by Participant B, who recalled, *"I usually felt anxious and nervous because I worried about making mistakes or not explaining the lesson clearly... I was afraid of making mistakes while explaining the material and worried that I might look awkward in front of the students"*. Participant C similarly expressed how this identity rupture physically constrained her teaching delivery, noting, *"Prior to the initial meeting, I felt anxious and nervous out of fear that I wouldn't be able to deliver the material clearly... In truth, my initial anxiety made my teaching rather stiff"*. These empirical accounts demonstrate how the abrupt cross-disciplinary transition generated immediate vulnerability, self-consciousness, and instructional rigidity across participants.

Subordinate Theme 1.1: Pre-Teaching Anxiety, Fear of Making Mistakes, and Professional Identity Dissonance

Participant A made sense of her initial anxiety as cognitive overthinking driven by this pedagogical transition: *"Before teaching BIPA, I felt quite nervous and tended to overthink. I was worried about whether I would be able to teach well and explain the material clearly."* Participant A's account highlights how professional identity dissonance manifests as cognitive overthinking. Her explicit self-report of having "tended to overthink" reflects an internal, anticipatory struggle prior to teaching. Transitioning from her established background in English education to an unfamiliar BIPA teaching context disrupted her perceived instructional competence. Phenomenologically, she mentally internalized the responsibility for potential student confusion as an immediate threat to her personal authority and teaching ability.

Similarly, Participant B highlighted how anxiety and identity negotiation shaped her self-perception regarding instructional accuracy: *"Before teaching, I usually felt anxious and nervous because I worried about making mistakes or not explaining the lesson clearly... I was afraid of making mistakes while explaining the material and worried that I might look awkward in front of the students."* For Participant B, professional identity dissonance manifested as acute self-consciousness regarding her verbal delivery and physical presence. Having been trained to teach English through structured pedagogical rules, stepping into a BIPA classroom forced her to negotiate her role as a native speaker who lacked explicit BIPA instructional training. Her fear of making mistakes and looking "awkward" reflects an early crisis of professional authority, where concerns over instructional accuracy temporarily overshadowed her confidence in her native language fluency.

Participant C further reflected on how this internal identity tension physically constrained her pedagogical delivery: *"Prior to the initial meeting, I felt anxious and nervous out of fear that I wouldn't be able to deliver the material clearly or would face barriers with the language of instruction... In truth, my initial anxiety made my teaching rather stiff..."* Participant C's narrative illustrates a direct link between internal identity dissonance and external instructional stiffness. The tension of teaching outside her primary discipline (ELT) rigidified her physical classroom behavior. Experiencing an identity gap between an ELT student-teacher and an unprepared BIPA instructor momentarily prevented her from establishing fluid, warm, and natural interactions with international learners.

Across participants, initial pre-teaching anxiety was not merely general stress, but an analytical core of professional identity dissonance and negotiation. Stepping into an unfamiliar cross-disciplinary domain created a rupture in their sense of professional competence. The psychological manifestation of this dissonance varied across individuals: Participant A experienced cognitive overthinking regarding her explanatory clarity; Participant B internalized the tension as acute self-consciousness and fear of exposing pedagogical incompetence; while Participant C experienced physical and instructional stiffness in her delivery. Collectively, these accounts demonstrate that pre-service teachers

construct initial anxiety as a fundamental crisis of professional identity struggling to reconcile their formal training in English education with the immediate demands of teaching their native language to international students without prior pedagogical training.

These empirical observations align with established literature on novice language teacher vulnerability, which underscores that pre-service educators routinely experience acute anxiety, physical tension, and fear of instructional failure during early teaching practicums (Novitasari & Murtafi, 2023; Wijaya, 2022). However, the present findings significantly extend existing ELT-centric research by revealing that in cross-disciplinary language contexts, pre-service teacher anxiety is fundamentally rooted in professional identity dissonance. While conventional practicum literature attributes anxiety to unfamiliar classroom management or general public speaking apprehension within the student-teacher's primary discipline (Wijaya, 2022), this study demonstrates that teaching BIPA creates a sharp rupture in the participant's professional self-concept. Stripped of their familiar English Language Teaching (ELT) pedagogical scaffolding and formal lesson plans, student-teachers are forced to step into the role of native-language instructors for international students without formal BIPA pedagogical training. From a phenomenological standpoint, this transition generates an acute crisis of instructional authority. Participants perceive their intuitive, native-speaker fluency in Indonesian as insufficient for explicit classroom delivery, resulting in cognitive overthinking, heightened self-consciousness, and physical delivery stiffness. This dynamic reinforces the theoretical framework of (Truong et al., 2025), illustrating that teacher emotion and professional identity are not static traits, but are continuously and dynamically reshaped when teachers encounter novel institutional and cross-disciplinary expectations.

Subordinate Theme 1.2: Emotional Transition Toward Confidence and Fulfilment

Despite initial apprehension, participants experienced an emotional shift as classroom interactions unfolded. This shift was motivated by observable learner engagement such as student responsiveness, active participation, and positive feedback which served as external validation. Reassured by these positive feedback loops, student-teachers were able to re-interpret their teaching presence, fostering relief, self-efficacy, and professional fulfillment.

Participant A described how learner engagement served as an emotional catalyst for building confidence: *"However, as the lesson progressed and students began to respond, I felt more confident and encouraged by their efforts... As I interacted with the students, I became more comfortable and focused on helping them understand the material rather than thinking about my own nervousness."* Participant A's shift demonstrates a vital psychological transition from self-focused anxiety to student-focused empathy. Phenomenologically, her experience illustrates how active engagement with learners serves as a grounding mechanism. By redirecting her attention away from her internal apprehension ("thinking about my own nervousness") and focusing on the students' immediate responses ("focused on helping them understand the material"), she gradually gained personal comfort and built confidence in real time. This shift highlights that her developing confidence was not achieved through internal self-talk alone, but was dynamically facilitated by observing and responding to her students' engagement during the lesson.

Participant E similarly reflected on the sense of personal accomplishment following the completion of her session: *"During the lesson, I gradually became more confident as I saw the students paying attention and trying to participate... After the class ended, I felt relieved and proud because I had completed my first teaching experience."* For Participant E, the emotional transition from initial anxiety to confidence was directly facilitated by real-time student engagement. Seeing international learners actively paying attention and making an effort to participate served as immediate positive feedback, which gradually reduced her internal fear of instructional failure. This external engagement allowed her to reframe her perception of the classroom environment from an intimidating space into an interactive one. Consequently, completing the session successfully generated feelings of relief and pride, reinforcing her belief in her ability to manage an unfamiliar teaching context and serving as an important milestone in her developing sense of teaching efficacy.

Across participants, the emotional trajectory from anxiety to confidence was universally mediated by real-time learner responsiveness rather than internal self-talk alone. While Participant A achieved emotional stabilization by intentionally pivoting her focus away from her internal apprehension toward active student empathy, Participant E derived her sense of efficacy post-hoc through the emotional validation of completing a successful session and receiving visible student attention. Together, these findings indicate that initial pre-service teacher vulnerability is highly malleable and can be rapidly reconstructed into professional pride when learners actively respond to instructional cues.

The observed emotional trajectory from vulnerability to self-efficacy provides strong empirical support for [Yang & Sato \(2025\)](#) conceptualization of language teacher emotions as inherently socially situated and dynamically negotiated through real-time classroom interactions. Rather than relying solely on internal cognitive reappraisal or self-reassurance, the participants reconstructed their teaching confidence through the immediate, visible responsiveness of their international students. This finding extends previous research by [\(Pravitasari et al., 2025\)](#), which highlights that positive affective encounters during teaching practicums serve as crucial emotional validation for pre-service teachers. Phenomenologically, the transformation from self-focused anxiety (worrying about personal awkwardness or speech accuracy) to student-centered empathy (focusing on whether foreign learners comprehend the lesson) represents a pivotal shift in teacher intentionality. When international learners actively participated, answered questions, and demonstrated understanding, student-teachers reinterpreted the classroom from a site of evaluation into a collaborative communicative space. Consequently, initial pre-teaching vulnerability was rapidly reconstructed into professional pride and pedagogical fulfillment, demonstrating the high malleability of pre-service teacher affect during cross-cultural encounters.

Superordinate Theme 2: Pedagogical Challenges in Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

The second superordinate theme captures the lived pedagogical difficulties encountered by student-teachers when delivering language instruction outside their primary discipline. Specifically, cross-disciplinary instruction in this context refers to the experience of student-teachers with formal training in English Language Teaching (ELT) who were required to instruct international learners in Indonesian (BIPA). This transition generated cognitive friction in concept explanation, where student-teachers struggled to transform their implicit, intuitive native knowledge of Indonesian such as complex morphological affixes (e.g., *me-N-* and *ber-*) or culturally bound time boundaries into explicit pedagogical scaffolding suitable for foreign beginners. Additionally, participants experienced temporal pressure in pacing management, facing difficulties in balancing ambitious lesson objectives against rigid time constraints and unexpected classroom disruptions, such as accommodating late-arriving international students. Together, these challenges highlight that native-speaker fluency alone does not grant immediate pedagogical content knowledge when operating outside one's primary academic discipline.

Subordinate Theme 2.1: Navigating Language Barriers and Explaining Complex Concepts

Participants experienced cognitive and instructional friction when trying to explain abstract concepts, formal grammatical structures, or nuanced vocabulary to beginner international learners. The primary reason for this friction was their specific background in English Education: while they were academically trained to analyze English syntax and grammar rules explicitly, their mastery of Indonesian was largely implicit and intuitive as native speakers. Consequently, they struggled to break down complex Indonesian affixation or sociolinguistic rules into accessible, explicit pedagogical steps.

Participant D articulated the difficulty of scaffolding complex structural rules without confusing learners: *"A particularly challenging moment was explaining abstract cultural concepts and nuanced grammar rules – such as prefix variations like 'me-N-' and 'ber-' – to beginner students who had minimal Indonesian proficiency. Finding the balance between kept explanations simple and accurate without causing confusion was quite difficult."* Participant D's account illustrates a cross-disciplinary cognitive conflict stemming from the transition between her formal academic background and her actual teaching task. As an English Education student, she was

academically trained to deliver explicit, structured explanations of foreign language grammar. However, when teaching Indonesian a language in which her proficiency was largely intuitive as a native speaker, she encountered a cognitive challenge in breaking down complex morphological structures such as prefix variations "me-N-" and "ber-" into simple, accessible steps for beginner international learners. The conflict arose from the tension between her implicit native knowledge and the need for explicit pedagogical scaffolding, as she struggled to maintain instructional accuracy while simultaneously simplifying concepts to avoid overwhelming her students.

Participant C encountered a similar challenge when attempting to explain culturally bound time concepts: *"In interacting with international students, I faced several challenges when they asked about the distinction between morning and afternoon, specifically regarding the exact time boundaries... The explanation I provided was not fully understood by the students, so they still appeared confused."* Participant C's struggle highlights the difficulty of pedagogical translation in cross-cultural settings. Explaining sociolinguistic constructs that are taken for granted by native speakers requires fine-grained pedagogical clarity; failing to convey these subtle boundaries left her feeling pedagogically vulnerable in front of a confused international audience.

Across participants, pedagogical friction arose from the paradox of native speaker intuition versus explicit instructional delivery. Participant D experienced cognitive conflict when trying to deconstruct abstract morphological rules (e.g., prefix affixes) into simple scaffolding for beginners, whereas Participant C encountered barriers when explaining implicit sociolinguistic constructs (e.g., time boundaries in Indonesian culture). Keypoints across cases confirm that native fluency does not automatically translate into pedagogical content knowledge, particularly when student-teachers are operating outside their formal ELT training.

These results corroborate existing BIPA literature asserting that foreign language instruction demands intricate linguistic simplification and cultural adaptation (Islahuddin et al., 2025; Saddhono, 2024). However, the hermeneutic analysis of participant narratives uncovers a critical pedagogical paradox that nuances traditional assumptions in teacher education: native-speaker fluency does not automatically translate into explicit Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK). Although the participants possessed formal, highly structured knowledge of English syntax and grammar rules, their mastery of Indonesian was largely implicit, intuitive, and uncoded as native speakers. When tasked with teaching beginner international learners, they experienced severe cognitive friction in transforming their implicit linguistic competence into explicit, step-by-step structural explanations, particularly regarding complex Indonesian prefix variations (e.g., *me-N-*, *ber-*) and culturally bound sociolinguistic constructs like local time boundaries. Contrary to the common assumption in ELT literature that native speakers naturally possess an innate advantage in language delivery, this study demonstrates that cross-disciplinary teaching requires explicit structural scaffolding that native intuition alone cannot provide. Operating outside their primary academic discipline exposed a clear gap between knowing a language intuitively and possessing the pedagogical tools to teach it systematically to foreign beginners.

Subordinate Theme 2.2: Time Constraints and Managing Varied Learner Paces

Managing instructional rhythm within strict time boundaries posed another significant challenge. Participants struggled because they had to reconcile ambitious lesson plans with the reality of accommodating diverse learning paces or managing unexpected real-time classroom disruptions.

Participant E identified time limitations as a primary constraint on deeper pedagogical exploration: *"The main difficulty I have is the time constraint. There are many things I would like to explore more deeply, but the time available is not enough."* Participant E's narrative exposes the tension between an ambitious desire to deliver thorough instruction and the rigid boundaries of lesson timing. For novice teachers, learning to balance content depth with temporal constraints represents an essential step in developing realistic instructional pacing.

Participant a experienced heightened instructional vulnerability due to an unexpected disruption: *"One of the biggest challenges I encountered while teaching BIPA involved an*

international student who arrived in the middle of the lesson. Because she missed the beginning of the class, she seemed to have difficulty understanding the topic... She repeatedly asked me to explain the material in English." This critical incident served as an intense test of Participant A's pedagogical adaptability and emotional control. The unexpected disruption forced her to negotiate classroom management, time management, and language policy simultaneously under real-time pressure, challenging her professional authority.

Across participants, temporal pressure served as a major source of pedagogical strain. Participant E conceptualized time constraints as an internal struggle between her ambitious instructional goals and rigid schedule limitations, while Participant a experienced time pressure externally through an unexpected learner disruption that disrupted the entire lesson flow and demanded immediate re-explanation. These findings highlight that time management in a foreign language context requires dynamic flexibility rather than rigid adherence to pre-planned timelines.

The temporal pressure and pacing difficulties articulated by participants closely align with findings by Liu & Wu (2021), who observed that novice educators frequently struggle to reconcile ambitious pre-planned lesson objectives with unpredictable classroom realities. In multicultural BIPA settings, these pacing challenges were significantly magnified by the need to manage contrasting learning speeds and real-time operational disruptions, such as accommodating late-arriving foreign students who required immediate language clarification in English. From a phenomenological perspective, temporal friction forces novice teachers to move beyond rigid syllabus adherence toward dynamic, real-time instructional decision-making. When unexpected disruptions occurred, student-teachers were compelled to re-evaluate their instructional priorities on the spot balancing target language immersion against the pragmatic need for rapid re-explanation. This finding underscores that effective cross-disciplinary instruction cannot rely on static time management, but requires adaptive pacing flexibility and emotional composure under pressure.

Superordinate Theme 3: Navigating Intercultural Classroom Interactions

The third superordinate theme explores participants' lived experiences of cross-cultural engagement and sense-making within multicultural classrooms, highlighting how student-teachers navigated communication styles and integrated local culture.

Subordinate Theme 3.1: Encountering Diverse Communication Styles and Participation Behaviors

Participants negotiated contrasting cultural norms and communication habits. They were challenged by the need to manage classrooms containing both highly direct/vocal learners and extremely passive/reserved students without misinterpreting these cultural behaviors as personal disrespect or lack of interest.

Participant C reflected on the challenge of managing culturally contrasting participation styles within a single group: *"The most challenging situation was teaching a class where the students came from various different countries at the same time (for example, from China and Thailand). Their learning styles were highly contrasting; some were very vocal and active, while others were very passive or shy..."* Participant C's reflection illustrates the complexity of managing a culturally heterogeneous classroom. She recognized that student silence or vocalness was not merely an individual trait, but a culturally conditioned behavior that required her to dismantle one-size-fits-all teaching assumptions.

Participant A underwent a process of interpretive adaptation when responding to direct communication styles: *"Another situation involved a student whose way of asking questions felt quite direct and demanding. At first, I was a little surprised... However, I later realized that it might simply have been her communication style rather than a personal attitude toward me."* Participant A's experience demonstrates an active cognitive reframing of intercultural friction. In this context, the intercultural friction stemmed from her initial surprise when encountering an international student's direct and assertive questioning style, which contrasted with her own communication expectations. Rather than interpreting this behavioral difference as personal disrespect or demanding attitude, Participant A consciously reframed the situation by depersonalizing the interaction. By recognizing that the student's directness was simply a culturally conditioned communication preference ("simply have been her communication

style"), she successfully de-escalated her own emotional surprise, maintained her professional composure, and demonstrated an emerging intercultural awareness in managing diverse classroom interactions.

Across participants, encountering diverse learner behaviors required a cognitive transition from culture-bound assumptions toward intercultural empathy. Initially, student-teachers interpreted foreign learners' classroom behaviors through the lens of their own familiar sociocultural norms such as expecting indirect communication or uniform participation patterns. However, as classroom interactions unfolded, participants developed intercultural empathy by recognizing that contrasting learner behaviors were culturally conditioned rather than reflections of personal attitude. For instance, Participant C had to navigate balancing contrasting participation habits (vocal, direct communication vs. passive, reserved tendencies) within a single multicultural cohort, while Participant A reframed a student's direct questioning style as a benign cultural trait rather than personal disrespect. Both cases demonstrate that effective intercultural teaching relies on a teacher's ability to move beyond local cultural expectations and depersonalize classroom friction.

These findings strongly support research by [Aulia \(2022\)](#) and [Pasaribu & Lestari \(2023\)](#), which asserts that teaching in multicultural environments requires educators to adapt their communication styles and dismantle culture-bound instructional assumptions. The present study extends this line of inquiry by illustrating how pre-service teachers actively developed intercultural empathy through deliberate cognitive reframing. When confronted with contrasting participation behaviors—such as navigating a classroom containing both highly assertive, direct foreign learners and extremely passive, silent students—participants initially interpreted these behaviors through their localized sociocultural norms. However, through active hermeneutic sense-making, student-teachers depersonalized these encounters, recognizing that direct questioning or classroom silence reflected culturally conditioned communication habits rather than personal disrespect or lack of interest. This cognitive transition from culture-bound surprise to intercultural open-mindedness demonstrates that cross-disciplinary teaching practice serves as an essential site for developing teacher intercultural competence.

Subordinate Theme 3.2: Experiencing Cross-Cultural Adjustments and Local Cultural Integration

Participants actively bridged cultural gaps by incorporating local cultural expressions and contextualized societal practices into their instructional design. Crucially, student-teachers intentionally embedded the specific sociocultural context of Kendari, South East Sulawesi, motivated by the desire to transform standard BIPA instruction into an authentic platform for local cultural acculturation and meaningful real-world application.

Participant B highlighted the meaningful integration of local Kendari dialect and cultural warmth: *"To begin each lesson, I greeted students warmly using light Kendari dialect expressions, such as 'Apa kabarmu hari ini? Sudah makan kah?'... These role-play scenarios included the use of Kendari dialect expressions, such as 'Sa mo beli sabun satu botol' or 'Bisa kurang kah?'... This allowed students not only to practice speaking but also to appreciate how culture shapes language use in daily life."* Participant B's pedagogical choice represents a highly sophisticated form of localized cultural mediation. Rather than limiting her teaching strictly to formal national standards, she introduced authentic Kendari dialect and local commerce norms. This strategic integration positioned her not only as a language instructor but also as an ambassador of South East Sulawesi local culture, enriching the international students' authentic lived experience in Kendari.

Participant D similarly described connecting transactional language practice with Indonesian cultural heritage: *"Cultural integration was achieved through several methods. I introduced the concept of bargaining in traditional Indonesian markets versus fixed prices in modern malls... The dialogue examples featured batik shirts, connecting fashion with Indonesian cultural heritage."* Participant D's narrative illustrates how functional transactional language specifically the practical expressions used for buying, selling, and inquiring about prices was intentionally contextualized through Indonesian sociocultural practices. Rather than teaching commercial vocabulary as isolated linguistic structures, she embedded transactional language

within authentic shopping scenarios, such as contrasting the cultural practice of market bargaining (*tawar-menawar*) with fixed-price shopping in modern malls. Furthermore, by incorporating culturally significant items like batik shirts into shopping dialogues, Participant D grounded routine transactional language in tangible Indonesian cultural heritage, allowing foreign learners to understand both the linguistic forms and the social customs governing commercial interactions in Indonesia.

Across participants, cultural integration was consciously utilized as a pedagogical bridge to make abstract language learning contextually meaningful. Participant B chose to integrate localized Kendari dialect expressions (e.g., "Sudah makan kah?", "Sa mo beli...") to foster immediate rapport and prepare learners for authentic social interactions in their local environment, while Participant D utilized national cultural artifacts (batik clothing) and traditional market bargaining dynamics to contrast formal and informal commercial transactions. Across these cases, language instruction functioned as an immersive form of cultural mediation where teaching went beyond linguistic rules to actively engage foreign learners in the lived cultural norms, social etiquette, and regional customs of Indonesia. By embedding these authentic cultural elements, student-teachers helped international learners navigate both language use and daily sociocultural integration.

In agreement with [Ganish et al. \(2025\)](#), these results confirm that authentic cross-cultural teaching encounters act as powerful catalysts for fostering cultural sensitivity in pre-service educators. Crucially, while mainstream BIPA literature primarily emphasizes the integration of standardized national culture ([Saddhono, 2024](#)), the participants in this study extended standard BIPA pedagogical frameworks by purposefully embedding localized cultural elements from Kendari, South East Sulawesi. By incorporating regional dialect greetings (e.g., "*Sudah makan kah?*") and localized daily commerce expressions into market role-plays, student-teachers transformed routine language drills into an authentic medium for regional cultural mediation. Phenomenologically, this practice positioned pre-service teachers not merely as passive instructors of formal grammar, but as active cultural ambassadors. Grounding abstract transactional language in tangible regional customs and national heritage (such as batik and market bargaining) allowed student-teachers to bridge the gap between classroom instruction and real-world sociocultural acculturation for international learners.

Coping Strategies Adopted by English Education Students

The second research question explored the coping strategies adopted by English Education students during their BIPA teaching experiences. Three major superordinate coping strategies emerged from the analysis: (1) pedagogical adaptation and multimodal instruction, (2) psychological self-regulation and thorough preparation, and (3) reflective practice and professional identity transformation. These strategies enabled participants to navigate emotional uncertainty, pedagogical friction, and intercultural challenges effectively.

Superordinate Theme 1: Pedagogical Adaptation And Multimodal Instruction

To overcome instructional barriers and maintain learner engagement, participants actively adapted their teaching methods through multimodal approaches, combining visual media, realia, role-plays, and strategic code-switching.

Subordinate Theme 1.1: Utilizing Visual Media, Realia, and Interactive Role-Plays

Participants consciously adopted visual aids, physical realia (e.g., household items, clothing), and communicative role-play simulations. The primary motivation for integrating realia and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities was to bypass abstract verbal explanations and direct grammar translation. By grounding vocabulary in tactile objects and interactive shopping scenarios, participants aimed to reduce cognitive overload, a state of mental strain experienced by beginner international learners when forced to process complex, abstract linguistic structures beyond their current proficiency level. Utilizing physical objects and visual media allowed student-teachers to anchor new vocabulary directly in sensory experiences, thereby simplifying language processing and making abstract concepts immediately tangible.

Participant D described integrating realia and Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) activities: *"During the presentation phase, I introduced vocabulary through visual aids and realia, bringing actual items like clothing and household objects to make learning tangible... Role-playing activities where students acted as shopkeepers and customers proved particularly effective..."* Participant D's reliance on physical realia serves as a compensatory pedagogical bridge. By bypassing abstract verbal translation and grounding vocabulary directly in tactile objects, she successfully mitigated language barriers and reduced cognitive overload for beginner learners.

Participant B similarly utilized gamified visual media to sustain learner focus: *"Student participation was maintained through engaging activities like card-matching games (matching goods with their correct units), guided sentence construction, and the 'Guess the Unit' game based on images."* Participant B's gamified multimodal design reveals a proactive strategy to lower learner anxiety while maximizing active practice. Transforming drills into visual games allowed her to maintain an energetic and supportive classroom climate.

Across participants, multimodal instruction which represents the strategic integration of multiple sensory channels including visual media, tactile realia, and kinesthetic role plays was deliberately selected to solve the problem of limited target language comprehension. Participant D brought physical realia such as clothing and household objects and designed market role plays specifically to anchor abstract transactional phrases in authentic sensory experiences, whereas Participant B employed gamified visual media through card matching and image guessing to maintain high engagement while scaffolding vocabulary units. Across cases, student teachers realized that abstract linguistic input must be anchored by concrete, visual, and experiential learning tools to facilitate comprehension for beginner international learners.

The strategic deployment of visual aids, tactile realia, and communicative role-play simulations aligns directly with research by [Dhari \(2025\)](#) and [Maharany et al. \(2021\)](#) regarding effective BIPA instructional practices. Within the framework of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, multimodal instruction functioned as a compensatory pedagogical bridge designed to circumvent the limitations of direct grammar translation. Because beginner international learners faced significant linguistic barriers, relying solely on verbal explanations created cognitive overload – a state of severe mental strain resulting from processing abstract target-language structures beyond their current proficiency. By anchoring abstract vocabulary in physical objects (e.g., household items, clothing) and kinesthetic shopping simulations, student-teachers successfully simplified language processing and rendered abstract concepts immediately tangible. This adaptive strategy demonstrates that pre-service teachers spontaneously utilize Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) principles to mitigate instructional friction and sustain active learner engagement in cross-cultural settings.

Subordinate Theme 1.2: Strategic Code-Switching and Simplified Language Delivery

Participants intentionally modulated their speech rate and strategically utilized English as an instructional bridge. The rationale behind this code switching was pragmatic as participants leveraged their background in English Education not to replace the target language, but to create an intentional linguistic scaffold. This scaffold functioned as a calculated temporary support mechanism using a familiar shared language to clarify complex instructions and vocabulary. Rather than relying on English as a primary medium, student teachers used it purposefully to de-escalate anxiety and bridge comprehension gaps. This prevented severe learner frustration and maintained emotional safety when complex instructions or grammar rules threatened to overwhelm beginner international students.

Participant A detailed her purposeful use of code-switching during challenging explanations: *"I explained that this was a BIPA class, where Indonesian is the target language, while English could be used as a supporting language when necessary. Therefore, I continued explaining the material by combining both English and Indonesian to help her understand."* Participant A's strategic code-switching demonstrates her ability to turn her English major background into a

pedagogical asset. English was not used as a default replacement, but as a scaffold to support comprehension while preserving Indonesian as the principal target language.

Participant E noted using English strategically to clarify complex instructions: "*In giving instructions during the lesson, I use a mixture of English and Indonesian. I realize that some students still need help with the language of instruction so that they do not feel confused.*" Participant E's judicious blend of English and Indonesian reflects pragmatic instructional awareness. This awareness represents a practical understanding that instructional clarity must take precedence over rigid adherence to target language immersion. She recognized that maintaining absolute target language immersion at the cost of learner comprehension created anxiety. Therefore, by using English selectively as a supporting language to explain complex instructions, she maintained clear classroom communication and provided emotional safety for foreign learners while gradually building their familiarity with Indonesian.

Across participants, code switching was executed not as a sign of linguistic weakness, but as a calculated scaffolding coping mechanism. Participant A explicitly framed English as a supporting language to de-escalate tension during complex explanations while keeping Indonesian as the target language, while Participant E utilized bilingual instruction specifically for classroom management cues to prevent confusion. Both cases illustrate how student teachers successfully repurposed their English language teaching background to navigate cross lingual instructional hurdles, which represent the communication barriers that arise when delivering new target language concepts to international students who possess different linguistic backgrounds. By utilizing English as a strategic bridge, participants effectively resolved these language barriers without compromising the primary instructional focus on Indonesian.

These findings offer a fresh, nuanced perspective on the role of code-switching in pre-service language teacher education. Contrary to traditional monolingual purism, which often views code-switching as a sign of pedagogical weakness or target-language deficiency, the participants in this study repurposed their English Education background as a calculated scaffolding tool. Code-switching was executed pragmatically to clarify complex classroom management cues, de-escalate learner anxiety, and maintain emotional safety without compromising the primary instructional focus on Indonesian acquisition. By framing English explicitly as a temporary supporting bridge rather than a dominant medium, student-teachers demonstrated sophisticated pedagogical awareness, prioritizing instructional clarity and learner psychological comfort over rigid language policy. This adaptive mechanism supports (Novitasari & Murtafi, 2023) emphasis on the importance of flexible coping strategies during early teaching practicums. While target-language immersion remains a primary goal in BIPA pedagogy, the intentional use of English by pre-service ELT teachers functioned not as a permanent instructional dependency, but as a temporary, pragmatic scaffolding mechanism. This strategy successfully reduced cognitive overload for beginner international learners while preserving Indonesian as the principal medium of instruction.

Superordinate Theme 2: Psychological Self-Regulation and Thorough Preparation

Participants adopted internal psychological strategies and meticulous preparation to regulate anxiety and maintain pedagogical control, focusing on intensive independent practice and emotional composure.

Subordinate Theme 2.1: Intensive Independent Practice and Structured Lesson Planning

Pre class preparation served as the primary psychological buffer against vulnerability, functioning as a protective emotional mechanism that reduced self-doubt and anticipatory anxiety before stepping into an unfamiliar teaching context. To construct this protective buffer, student teachers engaged in rigorous self-study through disciplined, independent review of instructional materials to master target concepts. Furthermore, they conducted repeated mental rehearsals by practicing their explanations independently to anticipate potential classroom queries and establish pedagogical predictability. By over preparing teaching

materials, student teachers successfully restored an internal sense of control and confidence before entering the international classroom environment.

Participant A described her rigorous mental and practical rehearsal routine: *"To prepare myself, I studied independently at home and practiced explaining the lesson repeatedly. I also improved my English because it was the main language I used to communicate with the students... Besides preparing the teaching materials, I also focused on preparing myself mentally..."* For Participant A, intensive rehearsal functioned as a psychological buffer against fear of the unknown. Over-preparing material and mentally rehearsing explanations provided her with an internal sense of predictability and control before stepping into an unfamiliar classroom environment.

Participant B echoed the anxiety-reducing function of thorough lesson preparation: *"Before class, I prepared the lesson carefully and reviewed the material several times so I could feel more confident when teaching."* Participant B's reflection reinforces that pre-service teacher confidence is directly linked to structured preparation. Thorough review served as a stabilizing strategy that reduced fear of instructional failure.

Across participants, over preparation served as an essential psychological coping mechanism to manage pre teaching apprehension. Participant A engaged in multi layered preparation, which represents a comprehensive pre class strategy that systematically combines independent study, verbal rehearsal, and mental readiness. By integrating independent material review, repeated spoken practice, and emotional self-regulation, this multi layered approach allowed her to create a sense of control over potential instructional failure. Meanwhile, Participant B relied on repeated material reviews to build instructional confidence. Across cases, student teachers mitigated anxiety by converting unknown classroom variables into structured and rehearsed routines.

The heavy reliance on rigorous independent study, material over-preparation, and mental rehearsal strongly corroborates findings by [Liu & Wu \(2021\)](#) and [Novitasari & Murtafi \(2023\)](#), who identified meticulous lesson planning as a primary psychological buffer against teacher anxiety. Phenomenologically, stepping into an unfamiliar cross-disciplinary classroom generates intense feelings of unpredictability and loss of control. To construct a protective psychological buffer, student-teachers engaged in multi-layered preparation—systematically combining independent content review, verbal rehearsal of explanations, and mental anticipation of potential student questions. By converting unknown classroom variables into structured, rehearsed routines, participants successfully restored an internal sense of pedagogical predictability, instructional authority, and personal control before entering the international classroom.

Subordinate Theme 2.2: Maintaining Composure and Fostering a Supportive Learning Environment

When faced with real-time classroom friction or unexpected student hesitation, participants actively regulated their emotional states. They consciously chose to remain calm, slow down their pacing, and offer positive verbal reinforcement (e.g., "Very good", "Thank you"). The reason for this approach was twofold: it managed the teacher's own internal panic while simultaneously lowering the students' affective filter, ensuring that mistake-making was normalized in the learning process.

Participant E emphasized emotional self-control and constructive feedback: *"Whenever I faced difficulties, I tried to stay calm instead of rushing through the lesson... I give praise such as 'Very good' or 'Thank you' every time they follow the instructions correctly, as a form of appreciation and positive encouragement."* Participant E's deliberate choice to stay calm under pressure illustrates active emotional self-regulation, which represents a teacher's conscious ability to manage internal anxiety and maintain composure during classroom difficulties. Rather than reacting passively to instructional friction, she actively channeled her self-control into constructive teaching behaviors. By slowing down her instructional pace and responding to difficulties with patience and positive reinforcement, she transformed potential classroom tension into a supportive and encouraging environment for foreign learners.

Participant D described cultivating a low-pressure environment to alleviate student hesitation: *"Pair work was central to the lesson, allowing students to practice dialogues in a low-*

pressure environment... *Managing my initial anxiety made me more empathetic and patient, which helped create a welcoming atmosphere where students felt comfortable making mistakes.*" Participant D's account shows how personal experiences of vulnerability cultivated pedagogical empathy, which represents a teacher's ability to understand learner anxiety and transform personal teaching vulnerability into compassionate instructional design. Having experienced teaching anxiety herself, she developed deep empathy toward her students' fear of making mistakes. Consequently, she consciously designed low pressure peer activities like pair work that protected foreign learners from the fear of public evaluation, creating a safe psychological space where making errors was normalized as part of the language learning process.

Across participants, emotional regulation directly informed classroom climate management. Participant E utilized conscious self-calming and verbal praise to de-escalate personal anxiety and encourage participation, whereas Participant D transformed her own vulnerability into instructional empathy, explicitly structuring pair work so students could practice in low-stakes settings. Together, these accounts demonstrate that effective coping involves projecting calmness to create a safe psychological space for language acquisition.

These empirical observations support [Fallah et al. \(2023\)](#), who established that psychological self-regulation and cognitive reappraisal enable language teachers to respond constructively to real-time classroom difficulties. Faced with unexpected student confusion or operational disruptions, participants actively suppressed their internal panic, slowed their speech rate, and offered positive verbal reinforcement (e.g., "Very good", "Thank you"). This dual-functioning strategy managed the teacher's personal affective state while simultaneously lowering the foreign learners' affective filter. Having personally experienced teaching anxiety, student-teachers developed deep pedagogical empathy, intentionally designing low-stakes pair activities and supportive feedback loops that normalized mistake-making. Consequently, emotional self-regulation directly enabled participants to transform potential classroom tension into a safe, encouraging psychological environment for foreign language acquisition.

Superordinate Theme 3: Reflective Practice and Professional Identity Transformation

The final superordinate theme addresses how student-teachers made sense of their experience over time, utilizing reflection to transform their professional identity and pedagogical orientation toward student-centered practices.

Subordinate Theme 3.1: Self-Observation Through Video Recordings and Continuous Reflection

Engaging with objective video documentation and continuous self-reflection played a pivotal role in participants' professional development. Student-teachers engaged in reflective self-observation because it provided an objective lens on their teaching performance. This reflective mechanism allowed them to detach emotionally from initial feelings of anxiety, critically evaluate their body language, speech pace, and instructional delivery, and identify blind spots that were invisible during live execution.

Participant A shared how video-based reflection transformed her self-understanding as a teacher: *"One moment that significantly changed the way I see myself as a teacher was when I watched the video recordings of my own teaching... By watching the recordings, I was able to evaluate not only what I taught but also how I taught it... I believe that continuous reflection is one of the most important ways to become a better educator."* Participant A's video reflection provided an objective "third-person" lens on her own performance. Watching herself teach allowed her to detach from initial emotional anxieties and evaluate her instructional effectiveness critically, accelerating her identity transformation from a hesitant novice into a reflective professional.

Participant B similarly highlighted how continuous post-lesson reflection enabled her to process teaching anxiety and systematically refine her instructional approach: *"After the class ended, I felt relieved and reflected on what went well and what I needed to improve for the next lesson... Looking back, I see my first teaching experience as an important learning process rather than something to fear. Although I still feel nervous sometimes, I am now better at managing those feelings. I prepare my lessons more carefully, use clearer explanations, and pay more attention to students' responses so I can adjust my teaching when necessary."* For Participant B, continuous reflection functioned as

an essential cognitive tool to process post-teaching emotions and identify concrete areas for pedagogical growth. By systematically evaluating what succeeded and what required adjustment after each session, she reframed her initial fear of making mistakes into a constructive driver for thorough lesson preparation and responsive classroom delivery.

Across participant accounts, reflective practice served as the primary engine for cognitive and identity transformation. While Participant A utilized objective video documentation as a "third-person" mirror to separate emotional anxiety from actual pedagogical delivery, Participant B engaged in continuous post-class reflection to reframe teaching apprehension into structured lesson refinement and learner-centered adjustments. Together, these accounts demonstrate that whether mediated by visual media recordings or continuous post-lesson evaluation, self-observation enables student-teachers to move beyond immediate emotional survival and engage in critical, self-directed learning. Through this analytical self-assessment, reflection appeared to become an important component of their developing professional identity.

Grounded in Schön (1983) reflective practitioner framework, these results demonstrate that objective, video-based self-observation plays a pivotal role in pre-service teacher development. Reviewing audio-visual recordings of their own teaching sessions provided participants with an objective, "third-person" mirror, allowing them to detach emotionally from immediate pre-teaching anxiety and critically evaluate their instructional delivery, speech pace, and body language. Phenomenologically, this reflective mechanism enabled student-teachers to bridge the gap between their intended teaching performance and actual classroom execution. By systematically identifying instructional blind spots and evaluating student responses post-hoc, participants reframed initial fears of failure into structured, self-directed learning opportunities, thereby accelerating their professional identity transformation from hesitant novices into reflective educators.

Subordinate Theme 3.2: Shifting Toward Student-Centered and Communicative Language Teaching

Reflective engagement prompted participants to re-evaluate their initial pedagogical assumptions. Initially, student-teachers relied on rigid, teacher-centered grammar lecturing and strict syllabus coverage as a protective mechanism against feeling unprepared. However, upon witnessing student confusion, they realized that formal grammar delivery was ineffective for beginner foreign learners. Consequently, they consciously shifted toward a flexible, student-centered Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) model that prioritized learner psychology, practical communication, and emotional support.

Participant C articulated a clear shift in her pedagogical identity: "At that time, my approach was highly textual and focused on formal grammar... However, I soon realized that a communicative approach is far more effective for beginners... The biggest shift in my approach has been moving toward focusing on the psychological and communicative needs of the students." Participant C's shift marks a major conceptual breakthrough. She abandoned her initial, protective reliance on rigid, textbook-driven grammar lecturing in favor of a flexible, humanistic approach that prioritized learner psychology and authentic communication.

Participant D similarly captured her evolution toward a holistic view of language instruction: "Initially, I focused heavily on covering the syllabus and explaining grammar rules strictly. Today, I view language teaching holistically integrating culture, emotional support, and practical communication. I now design lessons that are more flexible, student-driven, and culturally responsive." Participant D's narrative synthesizes the ultimate transformative impact of the BIPA teaching experience. By moving beyond rigid syllabus coverage to encompass cultural responsiveness and emotional support, she redefined her professional identity from a mere dispenser of linguistic rules to an adaptive, holistic language educator.

Across participants, the ultimate developmental milestone of teaching BIPA was abandoning protective, teacher-centered grammar lecturing in favor of adaptive, student-centered communication. Participant C abandoned rigid textual grammar delivery after recognizing its failure with beginners, pivoting toward addressing learner psychology; similarly, Participant D shifted from strict syllabus coverage to a holistic framework

integrating culture, emotional support, and practical language application. Keypoints confirm that teaching BIPA fundamentally broadened the student-teachers' professional identities, transforming them from rule-oriented instructors into adaptive, culturally responsive language educators.

The developmental evolution from rigid, teacher-centered grammar lecturing to flexible, student-centered Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) illustrates the dynamic interplay between teacher cognition, emotion, and agency described by (Anindya & Triyoga, 2025; Truong et al., 2025). Initially, student-teachers relied on strict syllabus coverage and formal grammar delivery as a protective mechanism to maintain classroom control. However, upon encountering real-time student confusion, participants exercised professional agency by abandoning rigid, textbook-driven approaches in favor of humanistic, student-centered strategies that prioritized learner psychology, practical communication, and cultural responsiveness. Ultimately, teaching BIPA served as a transformative professional catalyst. It broadened the participants' professional self-concept, successfully transforming them from rule-oriented English Education majors into adaptive, culturally sensitive, and holistic language educators.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of English Education students teaching Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Findings revealed initial professional identity dissonance, pedagogical difficulties in transforming implicit native-speaker knowledge into explicit scaffolding, and challenges in cross-cultural communication. Participants responded through multimodal instruction, strategic code-switching, mental rehearsal, emotional self-regulation, and video-based reflection. The experience ultimately transformed their teaching from rigid, teacher-centered grammar instruction toward flexible, student-centered Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) incorporating cultural nuances. Theoretically, the study demonstrates how cross-disciplinary teaching expands pre-service teachers' professional identities and highlights that language fluency does not guarantee pedagogical content knowledge. Practically, teacher education should provide BIPA pedagogy, cross-cultural mediation, morphological scaffolding, reflective video analysis, and microteaching. However, the study's small, context-specific sample in Kendari and reliance on self-reported data limit generalizability. Future studies should employ longitudinal designs, classroom observations, and international learners' perspectives.

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