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Pluricultural Competence and Translanguaging Practices: Insights from Thai BIPA Classes

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the interplay of communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging in Indonesian and Thai BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing) classrooms. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations with 14 participants, including four experienced instructors and ten Thai learners of Indonesian. Thematic analysis revealed three interrelated themes: translanguaging as pedagogical practice, translanguaging and communication culture, and translanguaging and identity construction. Teachers used translanguaging to scaffold comprehension of complex grammatical structures and to highlight cultural norms such as "basa-basi" in Indonesia and "phuut taam marayaat" in Thailand, while learners reported increased confidence when allowed to mobilize Indonesian, Thai, and English flexibly. These findings demonstrate that pluricultural competence is enacted through communication culture and operationalized by translanguaging, which functions as a bridge connecting linguistic and cultural repertoires in multilingual, high-context societies. Theoretically, the study extends existing models of pluricultural competence by integrating communication culture as a critical dimension of language use and by providing evidence from Southeast Asia, where such research remains limited. Practically, the results highlight the need for teacher education and curriculum design to incorporate

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ARTICLE INFO
Received: 8 August 2025 | Revised: 19 August 2025 | Accepted: 17 September 2025 | Published Online: 24 October 2025
DOI: https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i11.11559

CITATION
Vidya Asteria, P., Yulianto, B., Sodiq, S., et al., 2026. Pluricultural Competence and Translanguaging Practices: Insights from Thai BIPA Classes. Forum for Linguistic Studies. 7(11): 1077–1095. DOI: https://doi.org/10.30564/fls.v7i11.11559

translanguaging and intercultural communication strategies, and for policymakers to move beyond monolingual assumptions toward inclusive, culturally responsive frameworks. By legitimizing translanguaging as both a pedagogical and cultural practice, this study demonstrates its potential to foster pluricultural competence, validate learners' linguistic identities, and strengthen intercultural understanding in BIPA education.

Keywords: Pluricultural Competence; Communication Culture; Translanguaging Pedagogy; Thai BIPA Classes.

1. Introduction

The rapid expansion of globalization and international mobility in the twenty-first century has significantly transformed the ways in which languages are taught and learned. The globalization of education demands pedagogies that go beyond national frameworks to address intercultural encounters [1]. In contemporary education, learners are no longer expected to acquire languages in isolation but rather to integrate multiple linguistic and cultural resources in order to participate in diverse social, academic, and professional contexts. This recognition has been institutionalized most prominently in the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which since its first edition [2] and the more recent CEFR Companion Volume [3], has emphasized the notion of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC). The PPC framework defines communicative competence as the ability of individuals to draw flexibly from their full linguistic and cultural repertoires, rather than compartmentalizing languages into separate systems. Coste, Moore, and Zarate [4] describe PPC as a "plural competence" that enables learners to mobilize languages and cultural knowledge as resources for communication and mediation. Galante [5] further operationalized PPC in the form of an empirical scale, showing how language and culture are inseparably bound in authentic communicative practice. Beyond Europe, scholars have expanded this discussion by demonstrating how PPC can be fostered in diverse educational contexts, including through innovative practices such as audiovisual translation [6], telecollaboration [7], and pluricultural mediation in language classrooms [8,9]. These studies affirm that pluricultural competence is not simply an abstract ideal but a practical necessity for navigating multilingual societies.

Within the Southeast Asian context, pluricultural competence takes on specific cultural forms that are deeply rooted in local communicative traditions. The concept of communication culture is particularly relevant here. Communication culture refers to the system of norms, values, and pragmatic conventions that shape how individuals interact and interpret meaning in specific cultural settings [10–12]. For example, "basa-basi" functions as a social lubricant that maintains harmony and signals respect in Indonesia. Similarly, the cultural norm of "phuut taam marayaat" reflects sensitivity to others' feelings and the avoidance of confrontation, thereby preserving group harmony in Thailand. This cultural dimension has been documented in research on English learning in North-Eastern Thailand [13]. Both of these norms exemplify what Hall [14] terms "high-context communication," where much of the meaning is embedded in shared understandings and implicit cues, rather than explicit verbalization. Hofstede's [15] cultural dimensions theory likewise situates Indonesia and Thailand within collectivist, high power-distance cultures, where politeness and respect for hierarchy strongly shape communicative choices. Later studies confirm that such norms are more than superficial routines: they are cultural rituals that construct relational alignment, trust, and social identity [16,17]. In this sense, communication culture is a vital dimension of pluricultural competence, as learners must not only master linguistic forms but also appropriate the pragmatic and cultural values embedded within them.

The role of communication culture in language learning becomes particularly salient in contexts where learners navigate between their own cultural repertoires and those of the target language. In BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing) classrooms, learners from Thailand often bring with them cultural frameworks such as "phuut taam marayaat" while simultaneously being socialized into Indonesian "basa-basi". The parallels and contrasts between these norms highlight the dynamic nature of pluricultural learning: students must learn not only vocabulary and grammar but also how to position themselves appropriately in culturally situated interactions. As Kirkpatrick [18] emphasizes, Southeast Asia provides a unique linguistic ecology where multiple local languages, national languag-

es, and global lingua francas coexist, making the negotiation of communication culture an essential skill. The Indonesian language itself has a long history of functioning as a unifying medium of communication across diverse ethnic groups, shaping patterns of interaction and identity [19]. From this perspective, language learning is inseparable from intercultural communication, since students are expected to shift between modes of politeness, indirectness, and relational strategies across contexts.

At the same time, translanguaging has gained increasing prominence as a theoretical and pedagogical lens for understanding how multilingual speakers mobilize their repertoires. García and Wei [20] define translanguaging as the process by which speakers draw on their entire linguistic repertoire to make meaning, without being constrained by arbitrary boundaries between "languages." This perspective challenges traditional monolingual paradigms of education, instead recognizing that bilingual and multilingual practices are natural, dynamic, and pedagogically valuable. Otheguy, García, and Reid [21] emphasize that translanguaging does not imply "mixing languages" in a deficit sense, but rather reflects the holistic linguistic competence of plurilingual individuals. More recent work underscores its role in identity construction, learner agency, and cultural mediation [22–24].

In Southeast Asia, translanguaging practices often involve strategic alternation between local languages, national languages (Indonesian or Thai), and English as a lingua franca. For instance, Indonesian teachers may explain complex grammatical rules using English before returning to Indonesian for practice, while Thai instructors may draw on Thai and English to scaffold comprehension for BIPA learners. In both contexts, translanguaging serves pedagogical, cultural, and affective functions: it reduces learner anxiety, clarifies meaning, validates linguistic repertoires, and facilitates the internalization of communicative norms [25,26]. Beyond the classroom, translanguaging also reflects how pluricultural competence is enacted in daily life, as individuals switch between communicative frameworks depending on the social context.

Despite the growing recognition of pluricultural competence and translanguaging, there remains a notable gap in research that explicitly connects these concepts with communication culture in Southeast Asia. Existing studies on plurilingual and pluricultural competence are largely situated in European contexts [9,27–29], while research on translanguaging has focused heavily on Western bilingual education or global North settings. Fewer studies have investigated how Southeast Asian communicative norms such as "basa-basi" and "phuut taam marayaat" intersect with pluricultural and translanguaging practices. Recent scientometric reviews show that while translanguaging has been extensively studied in Europe and North America, Asian perspectives remain underrepresented [30]. As Kirkpatrick [18] argues, Southeast Asia offers fertile ground for expanding theories of multilingualism, given its complex interplay of high-context communication, collectivist values, and multilingual repertoires. Moreover, in the specific domain of BIPA education, there has been limited attention to how translanguaging mediates the acquisition of not just linguistic forms but also cultural practices. This research gap suggests the need for studies that highlight the interconnection of communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging in Indonesian and Thai contexts.

The present study responds to this gap by investigating how communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging intersect in BIPA classrooms across Indonesia and Thailand. By situating translanguaging within culturally specific communicative norms, the study advances theoretical discussions of pluricultural competence while also providing practical implications for language pedagogy, intercultural communication, and policy development. The research is guided by three key questions: How do norms such as "basa-basi" and "phuut taam marayaat" shape translanguaging practices in multilingual interactions? In what ways does translanguaging reflect and reinforce pluricultural competence? And what are the implications of these practices for language pedagogy and intercultural communication in Southeast Asia?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Communication Culture

Communication culture refers to the system of norms, values, and pragmatic routines that shape how individuals construct meaning and relationships in interaction. Practices such as "basa-basi" in Indonesia and "phuut taam

marayaat" in Thailand exemplify high-context communication [14,15], where implicit cues, politeness, and harmony are prioritized [11,16,31]. Recent studies confirm that such routines function as cultural strategies for maintaining social alignment and identity [17].

Communication culture can thus be seen as culturally grounded speech acts that embody values of politeness, respect, intimacy, or local wisdom, upheld by specific communities and comparable across cultures [12,32]. This view is consistent with prior research that links communicative behavior to cultural systems rather than isolated linguistic choices [10,14,15]. In the context of BIPA education, this definition underscores that learning Indonesian involves internalizing communication culture as a core element of pluricultural competence and as a foundation for translanguaging practices that mediate understanding between Indonesian, Thai, and English. Indonesian linguistic structures and pragmatic features also play a crucial role in mediating communication. Classic and modern references provide detailed accounts of Indonesian grammar and usage in educational [33,34].

2.2. Pluricultural Competence

Pluricultural competence has been conceptualized in the CEFR [2,3] as the ability to draw upon multiple cultural repertoires for communication. Coste, Moore, and Zarate [4] define it as cultural mediation, while Galante [5] empirically validates its inseparability from plurilingual competence. Byram [27] highlights critical cultural awareness, and Kramsch and Zhang [28] emphasize intercultural positioning, whereas Kirkpatrick [18,35] demonstrates its centrality in multilingual Asia. In addition to intercultural citizenship and mediation models, interculturality has also been theorized as a flexible educational and methodological toolbox that can guide both pedagogy and research [36]. These perspectives highlight pluricultural competence as a multidimensional skill that goes beyond knowledge to practice.

Pluricultural competence can be defined as the ability to master and understand communication cultures from different backgrounds and apply them appropriately in interaction while maintaining one's cultural identity [12,37,38]. This perspective aligns with Byram's [27] and Galante's [5] emphasis on negotiation and enactment of cultural values, showing that competence is expressed in practice rather than abstract knowledge. In BIPA classrooms, pluricultural competence becomes visible when learners mobilize their home cultural norms alongside Indonesian communication culture through translanguaging, enabling them to negotiate meaning, build confidence, and perform intercultural identities. Recent work also highlights the need to operationalize PPC into curricula and teacher training [9,39].

2.3. Translanguaging

Translanguaging is understood as the dynamic use of one's full linguistic repertoire without rigid separation between languages [20,21]. It has been shown to support comprehension, scaffold learning, and reduce anxiety [22,23,25,40]. Beyond pedagogical benefits, translanguaging validates learners' repertoires and empowers them to express authentic identities [25,26]. In Southeast Asia, translanguaging often involves Indonesian or Thai in combination with English as a lingua franca and local vernaculars, reflecting complex multilingual ecologies [41]. Other perspectives have also introduced alternative models for analyzing how interaction mediates learning in multilingual classrooms [42], which further support the view that translanguaging enables learners to mobilize multiple repertoires for meaning-making.

Recent scholarship situates translanguaging as both pedagogy and identity practice, highlighting its role in intercultural communication [24]. In BIPA contexts, translanguaging occurs when teachers alternate between Indonesian and English to scaffold abstract grammar, or between Indonesian and Thai to connect cultural routines such as "basa-basi" and "phuut taam marayaat". This underscores translanguaging as a bridge that connects pluricultural competence with communication culture, making it central to language learning in Southeast Asian multilingual classrooms. Early studies in bilingual classrooms highlighted its role as a pedagogy for learning and teaching [43,44], while more recent scholarship frames it as a practical language theory and cultural mediation [23,40,45]. A scientometric mapping of translanguaging research also highlights emerging trends and the need for studies that integrate cultural dimensions, especially in underexplored Asian contexts [30].

2.4. Integrative Perspectives and Research Gap

Although communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging have often been examined separately, integrative perspectives highlight their interconnectedness. Araújo e Sá and Melo-Pfeifer [46] argue that pluricultural competence is enacted through communicative practices, while Preece and Marshall [29] emphasize cultural translation as real-time mediation between languages and cultures. Beacco [9] insists that PPC should be operationalized in classroom practices rather than remaining abstract. These perspectives resonate with Byram's [27] intercultural communicative competence framework, which links linguistic, sociolinguistic, and cultural skills.

Kirkpatrick [18] highlights Southeast Asia as a unique site where multilingual repertoires intersect with high-context cultural traditions. Within this ecology, communication culture provides the cultural logics that frame pluricultural competence, while translanguaging serves as the mechanism for enacting them in practice. Integrating these perspectives allows for a holistic understanding of how BIPA learners negotiate meaning, internalize Indonesian communication culture, and develop pluricultural competence through translanguaging. Similar approaches highlight intercultural translation as classroom practice [8] and the role of innovative tasks such as audiovisual translation in fostering pluricultural mediation [6].

3. Methodology

The methodological framework of this study is rooted in a qualitative research paradigm, chosen to explore the complex interplay between pluricultural competence, communication culture, and translanguaging practices in Indonesia and Thailand. Qualitative methods were chosen because they allow for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences and the contextual meanings of communication practices [47]. Given the nature of the research questions, which seek to understand not just linguistic patterns but also the underlying cultural values and interactional norms, a qualitative approach allows for in-depth investigation of lived experiences, social practices, and cultural meanings. Rather than focusing on numerical measurements or quantifiable outcomes, the study emphasizes the interpretation of behaviors, attitudes, and narratives within their natural settings. This approach is consistent with sociolinguistic and ethnographic traditions that view language as embedded in social interaction and cultural practices [48,49].

A qualitative ethnographic design was selected because it offers tools to observe and interpret communication events in real-world contexts. Ethnography, by its nature, seeks to uncover the meaning systems that guide social interactions, making it particularly well-suited for examining high-context communication cultures like Indonesia and Thailand. Ethnographic approaches have been recommended for uncovering meaning systems that guide communicative behavior [46]. This approach aligns with calls for methodological pluralism in intercultural education, where researchers are encouraged to use interculturality as a toolbox to capture the dynamic and situated nature of communication [36]. This study follows an interpretivist framework, which acknowledges that meaning is co-constructed by the researcher and participants, and that cultural phenomena must be understood from the participants' perspectives. To achieve this, multiple data collection methods were employed, including semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and classroom observations.

The study was conducted in two primary settings: BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing) programs at Universitas Negeri Surabaya in Indonesia, and Thai BIPA programs at Chiang Mai University and Maejo University in Thailand. These sites were selected because they represent dynamic multilingual environments where both teachers and learners engage with multiple languages and cultural frameworks on a daily basis. The selection of these sites also aligns with the study's focus on Southeast Asian communication culture, providing rich data on how translanguaging and pluricultural competence manifest in educational and everyday contexts. The comparative element enabled the study to capture both similarities and differences in how pluricultural competence and translanguaging are enacted across cultural settings [50]. The following **Figure 1** is a flowchart of the research.

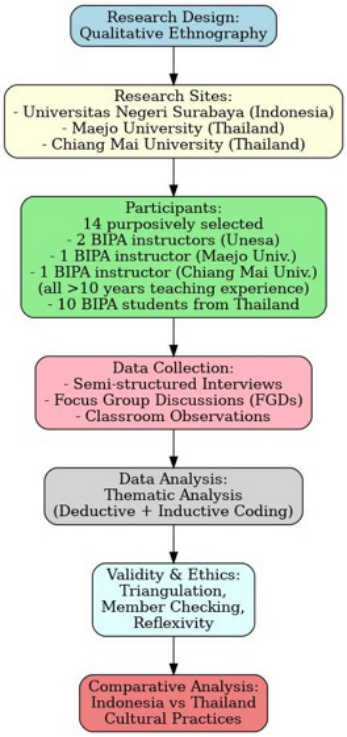

Figure 1. Research flowchart diagram.

3.1. Participants

Participants were recruited using purposive sampling to ensure that those involved had substantial experience with multilingual and intercultural communication [51]. The group consisted of BIPA instructors in Indonesia and Thailand, alongside BIPA learners from Thailand. In total, 14 participants were included: two BIPA instructors from Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), one BIPA instructor from Maejo University (Thailand), one BIPA instructor from Chiang Mai University (Thailand), and ten Thai students enrolled in BIPA programs. The selection aimed to capture perspectives from both teachers, who facilitate language and cultural learning, and students, who experience these practices directly. Participants varied in age (18–55 years), teaching experience (all instructors had more than 10 years), and linguistic repertoire, with most being proficient in at least two languages, including English as a lingua franca in academic contexts. **Table 1** below shows the background of research participants.

Table 1. Participants Background.

Category	Code	Number	Nationality	Experience	Language
BIPA Instructors (Universitas Negeri Surabaya)	TA, TB	2	Indonesia	≥10 years	Javanese, Indonesian, English.
BIPA Instructor (Maejo University)	TC	1	Thailand	≥10 years	Thai, English, Indonesian.
BIPA Instructor (Chiang Mai University)	TD	1	Thailand	≥10 years	Thai, English, Indonesian.
BIPA Learners	SA, SB, …, SJ	10	Thailand	Varied	Thai, English.

3.2. Data Collection

Data collection instruments were carefully developed based on the theoretical framework and research objectives. A semi-structured interview protocol was designed to elicit participants' views on communication culture,

their experiences with translanguaging in the classroom, and their perceptions of pluricultural competence. The interviews included open-ended questions such as: "How do cultural values like politeness or hierarchy influence your teaching or communication?" and "Can you describe moments when you combined multiple languages to facilitate understanding?" These questions were adapted from established intercultural communication studies [27,52] and adjusted to reflect the cultural contexts of Indonesia and Thailand.

In addition to interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted with groups of 4–5 participants, each lasting about 90 minutes. FGDs explored shared experiences of managing multilingual classrooms, negotiating cultural norms, and using translanguaging as a teaching and learning strategy. This format encouraged collaborative reflection and allowed peer-to-peer dialogue, generating insights that might not surface in individual interviews [53]. Classroom observations were carried out in BIPA classes at Universitas Negeri Surabaya and in Thai BIPA classes at Maejo University and Chiang Mai University. Ten sessions (60 minutes each) were observed, focusing on translanguaging in practice, teacher–student interactions, and the enactment of cultural values such as ethics and norms, implicature, "basa-basi" and "phuut taam marayaat". Ethnographic observation methods were informed by Zhu [54], who emphasizes the importance of contextualized accounts of communication. Detailed field notes documented both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, supported by audio recordings (with consent) for accurate transcription.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's [55] six-phase thematic analysis, combining deductive coding (based on pluricultural competence, communication culture, translanguaging) and inductive coding (emerging from participants' narratives). Codes such as politeness strategies, language alternation, cultural mediation, and identity negotiation were applied. A coding matrix was developed, and two researchers coded data independently before reconciling differences. Triangulation across interviews, FGDs, and observations ensured credibility.

To support this process, a coding matrix was developed, drawing on the instruments used in the field. For example, codes such as politeness strategies, language alternation, cultural mediation, and identity negotiation were used to categorize data segments. The coding process was conducted collaboratively by researchers to enhance reliability, with discrepancies resolved through discussion and re-coding. Triangulation was achieved by comparing data from interviews, FGDs, and observations, ensuring that themes were supported by multiple data sources.

3.4. Ethics and Trustworthiness

Ethical considerations were an integral part of the research design. All participants were provided with an informed consent form that explained the purpose of the study, their rights as participants, and the voluntary nature of their involvement. Confidentiality was ensured by assigning pseudonyms and removing any identifying information from transcripts and reports. Audio recordings and transcripts were stored securely, and participants were given the opportunity to review and approve their interview transcripts. The study adhered to ethical standards for qualitative educational research, as outlined in Creswell and Poth [47].

The validity and trustworthiness of the study were strengthened through several strategies. First, triangulation of data sources (interviews, FGDs, and observations) allowed for cross-verification of findings. Second, member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary findings with participants to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Third, reflexivity was maintained throughout the research process, with the researchers keeping reflective journals to document their assumptions, biases, and evolving understandings of the data. Finally, the study adhered to the qualitative research criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability [56].

3.5. Comparative Dimension

A distinctive aspect of this study is its comparative design, which examines communication culture and translanguaging across two national contexts. This comparative approach not only highlights similarities and differences but also sheds light on how cultural norms interact with language practices. For example, while both Indonesia and Thailand value politeness and indirectness, the specific strategies used to achieve these goals differ. Ob-

serving how teachers and learners navigate these cultural frameworks provides insights into the broader concept of pluricultural competence as a dynamic and context-dependent skill.

The role of the researcher in this study was both as observer and interpreter. As an academic familiar with both Indonesian and Southeast Asian cultural contexts, the primary researcher leveraged insider knowledge while remaining attentive to the need for critical distance. Fieldwork in Thailand was conducted in collaboration with local researchers, which facilitated access to participants and enhanced cultural interpretation of the data. This collaborative ethnographic approach ensured that the analysis was informed by both local and comparative perspectives. This reflexive stance reflects the ethnographic principle that researchers are active participants in meaning-making, not neutral recorders [54].

3.6. Data Saturation

Data saturation was achieved after approximately 8 interviews and two FGDs, when no new themes or insights emerged. The additional interviews and observations served to confirm and refine the existing themes. The final dataset consisted of approximately 50 pages of interview transcripts, 20 pages of FGD notes, and 15 pages of classroom observation notes, along with supplementary materials such as lesson plans and teaching materials provided by participants.

The methodological framework was designed to align with the research objectives, which focus on understanding how pluricultural competence is enacted through translanguaging and communication practices. By combining interviews, FGDs, and observations, the study captures both the individual and collective dimensions of these practices. Thematic analysis allows for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between language and culture, while the comparative design situates these findings within the broader Southeast Asian context.

This methodological approach also responds to recent calls in linguistic research for greater attention to the sociocultural dimensions of multilingualism [40,45]. Rather than treating language as an abstract system, this study emphasizes how language use is shaped by cultural values, social relationships, and institutional contexts. By focusing on the lived experiences of teachers and learners, it provides insights into how translanguaging and pluricultural competence operate as practical, context-bound phenomena. The methodology employed in this study is both rigorous and flexible, combining ethnographic sensitivity with systematic analysis. The use of multiple data sources and triangulation enhances the credibility of the findings, while the comparative focus enriches the understanding of communication culture in Indonesia and Thailand. This methodological design lays a strong foundation for the results and discussion sections that follow, which will present and interpret the key themes that emerged from the data.

4. Results

The findings are organized into three themes that emerged from the thematic analysis [55]: (1) translanguaging as pedagogical practice, (2) translanguaging as communication culture, and (3) translanguaging as identity construction. These themes were consistently identified across interviews, FGDs, and classroom observations, which provided triangulated evidence [56]. Selected excerpts illustrate how teachers and students enacted pluricultural competence and communication culture through translanguaging in BIPA contexts.

4.1. Translanguaging as Pedagogical Practice

Teachers in both Indonesia and Thailand used translanguaging strategically to support comprehension and active participation. TB explained: “Ketika saya mengajarkan prefiks bahasa Indonesia, saya sering beralih ke bahasa Inggris untuk memastikan siswa internasional memahami fungsinya. Setelah itu, saya kembali ke bahasa Indonesia agar mereka dapat berlatih secara alami.” (When I introduce Indonesian affixes, I often switch to English briefly to make sure international students understand the function. After that, I return to Indonesian to let them practice naturally). Similarly in Thailand, TC stated: “Lebih mudah bagi siswa untuk memahami pelajaran jika saya mencampur bahasa Thailand dan Inggris, terutama ketika contohnya berupa nilai budaya yang lebih spesifik.” (It is easier for students to follow my explanation if I mix Thai and English, especially when the example is culturally specific).

Students confirmed these strategies in interviews and FGDs. SA said: “I feel less nervous when my teacher

explains in both Indonesian and English. It helps me understand the rule, then I can try to say it in Indonesian." SB added: "Translanguaging makes me confident, because when I cannot express in Indonesian, I can still use English, and the teacher supports me." **Table 2** below is an example of translanguaging practice in learning Indonesian grammar.

This pattern illustrates how thematic analysis captured the dual function of translanguaging: explaining abstract grammar and reinforcing learner confidence. Teachers in both Indonesia and Thailand reported that switching between local languages, Indonesian or Thai, and English enabled learners to access complex content more effectively. Classroom observations also showed that BIPA instructors in Indonesia used English (as lingua franca) explanations when introducing abstract grammatical concepts before returning to Indonesian for practice. Likewise, BIPA instructors in Thailand alternated between Thai and English (as lingua franca) to clarify meanings, ensuring that cultural nuances were not lost. These findings highlight that translanguaging is not a random mixing of codes but a deliberate pedagogical practice designed to scaffold comprehension and lower affective barriers.

Table 2. Examples of learning Indonesian grammar using translanguaging.

Speaker	z	Function
TB (Instructor, in Indonesia)	*"Prefiks meN- itu artinya 'to …'. Jadi kalau meN + tulis → menulis, it means 'to write'."*	Explaining grammar rule with short Indonesian sentences, then English reinforcement
SA (Student, in Indonesia)	*"Oh, jadi kalau mengajar itu from meN + belajar → menbelajar, men… belajar?"*	Testing understanding with a common overgeneralization
TB (Instructor, in Indonesia)	*"Ya, hampir betul. Almost correct. Namun, seharusnya kata dasarnya adalah **ajar**, bukan **belajar**. But, the root word should be **ajar**, not **belajar**. Jadi meN + ajar → mengajar. If meN meets a root word that begins with a vowel (a, i, u, e, o), then meN changes to meNG."*	Correcting misconception with sequential translanguaging (Indonesian → English) for emphasis

4.2. Translanguaging and Communication Culture

In Thailand BIPA classes, instructors used translanguaging to highlight cultural similarities between Indonesian "basa-basi" and Thai "phuut taam marayaat". This theme emerged strongly in FGDs, where students expressed that comparative cultural explanation helped them feel familiar with Indonesian norms. This comparative approach helped students recognize shared communicative routines and apply them in practice. **Table 3** shows an example of learning communication as culture using translanguaging.

Table 3. Example of learning communication as culture using translanguaging.

Speaker	Utterance	Function
TC (Instructor, in Thailand)	*"Kalau di Indonesia, ketika kita duduk dengan orang baru, biasanya kita tanya: Mau ke mana? Dari mana? Ada tujuan apa?"* → *"In Indonesia, when you sit with someone new, you often ask: Where are you going? Where are you from? What's your purpose?"*	Introducing Indonesian small talk formula (Indonesian → English)
SF (Student, in Thailand)	*"In Thai juga sama.* เราพูดว่า ไปไหนมา *(pai nai ma = Mau ke mana?),* มาจากไหน *(ma jak nai = Dari mana?). So it's the same pattern."*	Comparing Thai expressions to Indonesian, with English as main scaffold
TC (Instructor, in Thailand)	*"Bagus, jadi polanya sama. Setelah itu, biasanya kita lanjut: Saya dari Surabaya. Nama saya …."* → *"Good, the pattern is the same. After that, we continue: I am from Surabaya. My name is …."*	Linking small talk to introduction (Indonesian → English)
SG (Student, in Thailand)	*"Oh, so I can say in Indonesian: Dari Bangkok. Nama saya Somchai. Right?"*	Practicing Indonesian introduction (short Indonesian + English)
TC (Instructor, in Thailand)	*"Sangat bagus. Jadi ketika kita memulai pembicaraan dengan orang asing sewaktu dalam perjalanan, kita bisa mulai dari basa-basi, baru perkenalan nama."* → "เวลาเราเริ่มต้นสนทนากับคนแปลกหน้า เราจะเริ่มด้วยการทักทายเล็กน้อยก่อน แล้วจึงแนะนำตัวเอง"	Reinforcing cultural sequence (Indonesian → Thai)

Both teachers and students commented that comparing Indonesian and Thai small talk patterns accelerated comprehension. TC reflected: "Ketika saya membandingkan pola basa-basi Indonesia dengan pola basa-basi Thailand, mahasiswa lebih cepat menangkap maksudnya karena mereka merasa familiar." (When I compare Indonesian small talk with Thai small talk, students immediately see the similarity and can apply it in practice).

Student reflections confirmed this theme. SF said: "When the teacher compared Indonesian and Thai small talk, I understood faster because it felt familiar." SG added: "It feels natural, because the pattern is the same. I can immediately try it in Indonesian after realizing it is similar to Thai." Thematic analysis clustered these comments under the theme cultural scaffolding through translanguaging, highlighting how communication culture was made explicit in multilingual pedagogy. These findings confirm that translanguaging is embedded in communication culture and adapts to cultural expectations of interaction. This indicates that comparative translanguaging not only clarified meaning but also accelerated learners' ability to internalize Indonesian communicative norms.

4.3. Translanguaging and Identity Construction

A third theme identified was the role of translanguaging in identity construction. Teachers were coded as cultural mediators, while students expressed pluricultural identities that combined Indonesian, English, and Thai repertoires. Translanguaging emerged as a resource for constructing pluricultural identities among teachers and students. In Indonesian BIPA classrooms, translanguaging was central to building learner confidence and pluricultural identity. TB described herself as a cultural mediator: "Saya tidak hanya mengajar bahasa Indonesia, tetapi juga mengajarkan bagaimana orang Indonesia berkomunikasi, bagaimana menggunakan basa-basi dengan sopan. Ketika saya menggunakan translanguaging, saya menunjukkan bagaimana kedua bahasa dan kedua budaya." (I am not only teaching Indonesian, I am teaching how Indonesians communicate, how to use small talk politely. When I translanguage, I show both languages and both cultures). In Thailand BIPA classrooms, TC expressed a similar perspective: "Menggunakan bahasa Thailand dan Indonesia bukan hanya untuk mengajar, tetapi menunjukkan kepada siswa bahwa saya adalah bagian dari kedua budaya." (Using Thai and Indonesia is not just for teaching, it shows students that I am part of both cultural worlds). **Table 4** below shows how teachers and learners use code switching and code mixing as natural speech for pluricultural speakers in learning activities.

Table 4. Pluricultural Identity Construction in learning activities.

Speaker	Utterance	Function
SA (Student, in Indonesia)	*"Saya nervous, tapi kalau pakai English sedikit, I can talk more."*	Expressing self as pluricultural learner
TB (Instructor, in Indonesia)	*"It's okay. Kamu belajar pelan-pelan, yours confidence will grow."*	Positioning as supportive cultural mediator
SD (Student, in Indonesia)	*"Now I can use Indonesian ethics like 'permisi' or 'boleh saya bertanya' plus English when I need. It feels natural."*	Demonstrating identity as pluricultural speaker

Students also articulated their identity negotiation. SA reflected: "I feel I am both English and Indonesian when I study here. Sometimes I speak half-half, but it shows I belong to two cultures now." SB shared: "Translanguaging helps me to be accepted, because I can use Indonesian expressions like 'basa-basi', ethics, and still rely on English when needed."

The findings indicate that translanguaging does more than facilitate learning; it also enables both teachers and learners to position themselves as pluricultural actors. As thematic analysis revealed, identity construction was a recurring code across interviews and FGDs, showing that learners perceived themselves as pluricultural speakers navigating multiple cultural repertoires. Classroom data confirmed that students used multiple languages to express humor, solidarity, and closeness, showing that identity work was a central outcome of translanguaging practices.

4.4. Thematic Synthesis

The findings from interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations were analyzed thematically [55] to capture recurring patterns across the dataset. Three major themes emerged: translanguaging as pedagogical practice, translanguaging and communication culture, and translanguaging and identity construction. Each of these themes reflects how teachers and learners engaged with communication culture, enacted pluricultural competence, and strategically used translanguaging in BIPA classrooms in Indonesia and Thailand.

To better illustrate the interrelationship between the study's core constructs and emergent themes, a thematic diagram was developed (**Figure 2**). The diagram visualizes the reciprocal connections between communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging, while also showing how these interconnections give rise to the three themes identified in the analysis. This visual representation helps clarify the role of translanguaging as a bridge that links cultural norms and pluricultural competence in multilingual education.

The diagram illustrates the interconnectedness of the three core constructs: communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging. Dashed arrows indicate their reciprocal influence: communication culture provides the cultural logics of interaction, pluricultural competence enables learners to navigate and apply these logics across contexts, and translanguaging operationalizes them in classroom practice.

Thematic analysis identified three main outcomes emerging from these interconnections. Translanguaging was employed as a pedagogical practice to scaffold comprehension and reduce anxiety, as a means of explicitly highlighting communication culture such as "basa-basi" and "phuut taam marayaat", and as a resource for identity construction, where learners negotiated pluricultural identities through flexible use of Indonesian, English, and Thai. This visual representation underscores that translanguaging is not isolated from culture but functions as a bridge linking communication norms and pluricultural competence in multilingual classrooms.

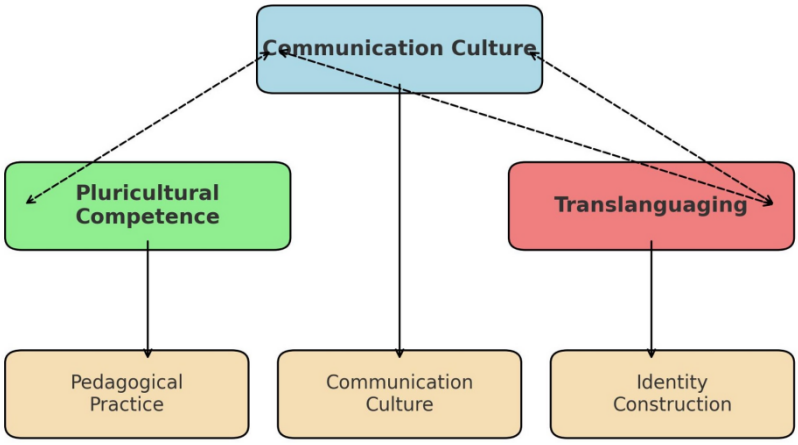

Figure 2. Thematic relationships between communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging in Thai BIPA contexts.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the interwoven nature of communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging in the multilingual contexts of Indonesia and Thailand. This section discusses these findings in relation to existing theoretical frameworks and previous research, emphasizing the implications for language education, intercultural communication, and linguistic theory. By interpreting the results through the lenses of Hall's [14] high-context and low-context communication, Hofstede's [15] cultural dimensions, and the translanguaging framework of García and Wei [20], the discussion provides a deeper understanding of how language and culture operate in tandem to shape communicative practices. These findings reaffirm earlier work in bilingual classrooms, where

translanguaging was shown to be a productive pedagogy for scaffolding content and fostering learner agency [43], but cultural dimensions should be understood as dynamic and context-sensitive [57]. The observed practices in both Indonesia and Thailand reflect how interaction mediates not only linguistic comprehension but also cultural negotiation, consistent with recent interaction-based models of multilingual learning [42].

One salient finding is the extent to which cultural values, such as "basa-basi" and "phuut taam marayaat", shape communicative strategies pattern. These practices are not merely conversational conventions but cultural resources that sustain politeness, social harmony, and respect [11,16,31]. Their presence in classrooms affirms Hall's [14] notion of high-context communication, where implicit understandings carry meaning, and Hofstede's [15] dimensions of collectivism and power distance. It illustrates the multiplicities of multilingual interaction, where learners and teachers constantly shift between repertoires in ways that negotiate meaning and relationality [44]. In this respect, Indonesian "basa-basi" emphasizes warmth and inclusivity, while Thai "phuut taam marayaat" reflects conflict avoidance and deference. These findings echo Moussa et al. [17], who showed that Southeast Asian politeness strategies function as cultural rituals, and support Asteria's [32] argument that communication culture is best understood as a cultural rather than linguistic phenomenon. It's also consistent with studies in other multilingual high-context societies. For example, family language policies in Kazakhstan also reveal how translanguaging practices are used to negotiate cultural values and maintain multilingual repertoires [58].

The integration of cultural norms into classroom practices illustrates that pluricultural competence is a critical component of effective communication. As Byram [27] and Galante [5] argue, intercultural mediation is as essential as linguistic proficiency. Instructors demonstrated pluricultural competence when teaching polite expressions such as "permisi" or "boleh saya bertanya" in Indonesia and polite particles such as "khrap" and "kha" in Thailand. These pedagogical practices show that pluricultural competence is enacted through communication culture, aligning with Kramsch and Zhang's [28] observation that intercultural positioning is inseparable from communicative performance. In BIPA contexts, this suggests that learners must not only acquire Indonesian forms but also navigate cultural norms through comparative reflection with their own communicative traditions. Similar observations have been made in studies of English education in Thailand, where cultural values such as "phuut taam marayaat" mediate teacher–student relationships and classroom participation [13]. This echoes Kramsch's [1] argument that globalization poses new challenges for language educators, who must address both the linguistic and cultural dimensions of learning in increasingly diverse classrooms.

Another important finding is the central role of translanguaging as both pedagogy and cultural practice. Instructors frequently alternated between Indonesian, English, and Thai to scaffold comprehension of abstract concepts and to connect cultural norms across contexts. This supports García and Wei's [20] and Otheguy, García, and Reid's [21] conceptualization of translanguaging as a holistic practice that leverages the speaker's full repertoire. Pedagogical translanguaging facilitated comprehension and reduced anxiety, consistent with findings from Cenoz and Gorter [23] and Vogel and García [22]. At the same time, comparative translanguaging, such as highlighting similarities between Indonesian and Thai small talk, helped learners internalize communication norms more effectively. This aligns with Canagarajah [25,40] and Guo and Feng [26], who emphasize translanguaging's role in identity and cultural negotiation.

The observed instances of translanguaging in classrooms, such as the alternation between Indonesian, English, and local languages, illustrate the fluidity of language boundaries. For example, when explaining the use of affixes in Indonesian, teachers often resorted to English or students' native languages to ensure clarity. This aligns with the pedagogical benefits of translanguaging documented by Cenoz and Gorter [23], who emphasize that translanguaging allows learners to leverage their existing linguistic resources, thereby enhancing both comprehension and engagement. In the Thai context, the use of English alongside Thai served a similar purpose, bridging gaps in understanding while simultaneously exposing students to the cultural nuances of Thai politeness forms. Such practices underscore Wei's [45] notion of translanguaging as a "practical theory of language," which highlights

the creative and context-dependent ways speakers use language to navigate complex communicative landscapes.

Learners' reflections confirm that translanguaging validated their identities and gave them confidence to participate. This affirms Cummins's [59] linguistic interdependence hypothesis, which posits that knowledge of one language can support acquisition of another. In this study, translanguaging allowed learners to draw on Thai and English as scaffolds for acquiring Indonesian, fostering deeper cultural and linguistic awareness. Wei's [45] is reflected in how learners positioned themselves as pluricultural actors through the flexible use of repertoires. Such findings suggest that identity construction in multilingual classrooms is inseparable from translanguaging, reinforcing Asteria's [32] definition of pluricultural competence as the ability to enact communication cultures across contexts while maintaining one's own identity.

However, the findings also reveal tensions between translanguaging practices and institutional policies that favor monolingual approaches. Both Indonesian and Thai educators noted that their institutions sometimes prioritize a "target-language-only" policy, viewing translanguaging as a deviation from standard pedagogy. This tension reflects what García [60] describes as the "monolingual bias" in language education, which often fails to recognize the benefits of multilingual practices. Despite these constraints, teachers in this study found ways to incorporate translanguaging informally, demonstrating their agency and professional judgment. This aligns with Hornberger and Johnson's [61] argument that educators act as "policy interpreters," adapting official guidelines to meet the needs of their students.

The results also highlight the role of translanguaging in fostering intercultural understanding. By using multiple languages, teachers were able to introduce cultural concepts that might not be easily translatable. For example, the Thai concept of "sanuk", which emphasizes finding enjoyment in everyday activities, was explained using both Thai and English, with students encouraged to draw parallels with similar concepts in their own cultures. This not only deepened students' understanding of Thai culture but also facilitated cross-cultural dialogue. Similarly, in Indonesian classrooms, teachers used translanguaging to explain cultural practices such as "gotong royong" (mutual cooperation), helping students appreciate the social values embedded in the language. These examples illustrate how translanguaging can serve as a bridge between language learning and cultural learning, a connection that is central to pluricultural competence.

The comparative analysis of Indonesia and Thailand reveals both shared and distinct features of communication culture and translanguaging. Both countries are characterized by high-context communication, where indirectness and politeness are valued. In both contexts, teachers used translanguaging not only as a pedagogical tool but also as a means of aligning with cultural expectations. However, there are also notable differences. Indonesian "basa-basi" tends to emphasize social warmth and inclusivity, often using humor and informal expressions to build rapport. On the other hand, Thai "phuut taam marayaat" is more focused on avoiding conflict and preserving face, which can lead to more reserved or indirect communication styles. These cultural differences influence how translanguaging is employed. In Indonesia, teachers might use a mix of languages to create a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, while in Thailand, the focus is on maintaining harmony and respect. These findings confirm the argument that intercultural communication requires mediation between linguistic and cultural repertoires [9,27]. This comparative lens illustrates the importance of communication culture in shaping translanguaging and pluricultural competence, a finding that adds to recent calls for expanding PPC research into Asian contexts [9,18].

Another important discussion point is the role of teachers' own pluricultural competence in shaping their use of translanguaging. Teachers who were themselves plurilingual and accustomed to intercultural settings were more likely to embrace translanguaging as a legitimate practice. They viewed language as a flexible resource and encouraged students to draw on all their linguistic assets. Conversely, teachers with more traditional training tended to adhere to monolingual approaches, often due to concerns about curriculum standards or assessment practices. This finding underscores the need for teacher education programs to incorporate training on translanguaging and intercultural communication, preparing educators to navigate the realities of multilingual classrooms. Similar insights have been observed in multilingual education in Europe [23] and in translanguaging classrooms across Asia [62].

The study's findings contribute to ongoing debates about the nature of language competence in a globalized world. Traditional models of communicative competence [63] emphasize discrete language skills, but this study suggests that such models are insufficient for capturing the complexities of multilingual communication in high-context cultures. Pluricultural competence, as conceptualized CEFR [2,3] and further developed by Coste, Moore, and Zarate [4], Galante [5], Asteria [12,37,38] empirically validates its inseparability from plurilingual competence. Byram [27], offers a more holistic framework that integrates linguistic, cultural, and intercultural skills. Translanguaging, in turn, operationalizes this competence by providing a practical means of navigating diverse communicative contexts.

The findings also resonate with research which has emphasized the importance of integrating cultural translation and mediation into language education [64,65]. It highlights how translanguaging fosters intercultural dialogue, promotes learner agency, and challenges monolingual norms. For example, a study on adult ESL learners demonstrated that translanguaging reduced anxiety and increased participation by validating learners' linguistic identities [64]. These insights align closely with the experiences of learners in this study, who reported feeling more confident and engaged when allowed to use their native languages alongside the target language.

The role of translanguaging in identity construction is another important area of discussion. As Canagarajah [40] notes, multilingual speakers do not simply switch between languages; they construct hybrid identities that draw on multiple cultural references. In this study, students expressed that using a mix of languages allowed them to feel "more like themselves," as one Thai student put it. This suggests that translanguaging is not just a pedagogical tool but also a means of personal and cultural expression. By validating students' linguistic repertoires, teachers can create more inclusive and empowering learning environments.

Despite the positive outcomes associated with translanguaging, the study also highlights challenges that need to be addressed. One challenge is the lack of institutional support for translanguaging practices. In both Indonesia and Thailand, curricula and assessment systems are often designed around monolingual norms, which can discourage teachers from adopting more flexible approaches. To address this, educational policy makers need to recognize the value of translanguaging and develop frameworks that allow for its systematic integration into teaching and assessment. This could include designing bilingual or multilingual assessment tools, providing professional development for teachers, and revising curriculum guidelines to acknowledge the role of students' home languages in learning.

Another challenge is the potential for misunderstandings or confusion when multiple languages are used. While translanguaging can facilitate comprehension, it can also create difficulties if not managed effectively. For instance, some teachers reported that students became overly reliant on English, which hindered their immersion in Indonesian or Thai. This suggests the need for careful scaffolding, where translanguaging is used strategically to support learning rather than replacing the target language altogether. García, Johnson, & Seltzer [66] emphasize that translanguaging should be planned and purposeful, with clear goals and outcomes.

The implications of this study extend beyond the classroom. In professional and intercultural settings, pluricultural competence and translanguaging can enhance cross-cultural communication, diplomacy, and collaboration. For example, business professionals working in Southeast Asia could benefit from understanding cultural practices like "basa-basi" and "phuut taam marayaat", which can influence negotiations and relationship-building. Similarly, international students and expatriates could use translanguaging as a tool to navigate cultural differences and build connections with local communities.

The study also contributes to theoretical discussions on the relationship between language and culture. It supports the view that language is not a neutral medium but a cultural artifact that carries social values and ideologies. Translanguaging, in this context, can be seen as a form of cultural translation, where speakers negotiate meaning across linguistic and cultural boundaries. This aligns with the work of Kramsch [52] and Wei [45], who argue that language use is always embedded in cultural practices and social identities. The findings of this study demonstrate that communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. Teachers and learners in Indonesia and Thailand use

translanguaging not only to overcome linguistic barriers but also to navigate cultural expectations and build meaningful relationships. While challenges remain, particularly in terms of institutional policies and teacher training, the evidence suggests that embracing translanguaging can enhance both language learning and intercultural understanding.

In light of these findings, several policy and pedagogical implications can be drawn. Language education policies in Indonesia and Thailand need to move beyond rigid monolingual frameworks and acknowledge the pedagogical value of translanguaging. This entails rethinking curricular guidelines, assessment practices, and classroom norms so that they align more closely with the multilingual and pluricultural realities of learners. Teacher education and professional development programs should explicitly integrate training on translanguaging and intercultural competence, equipping educators with the skills to act as cultural mediators. At the institutional level, curriculum developers and policy makers could collaborate to design translanguaging-aware syllabi, particularly for subjects related to language and intercultural communication. Such initiatives would validate learners' full linguistic repertoires, empower teachers to adopt culturally responsive strategies without constraints, and foster more inclusive learning environments in Southeast Asian classrooms and beyond. Future research could build on these findings by exploring translanguaging in other Southeast Asian contexts or by examining its impact on specific language skills such as writing or pronunciation. Additionally, longitudinal studies could investigate how students' pluricultural competence develops over time and how translanguaging contributes to their overall communicative competence.

In summary, the study demonstrates that communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging are mutually reinforcing dimensions of multilingual education in Southeast Asia. Translanguaging emerged as both a pedagogical and cultural strategy, enabling teachers to scaffold comprehension while making communication norms explicit, and allowing learners to negotiate pluricultural identities. The comparative analysis between Indonesian "basa-basi" and Thai "phuut taam marayaat" illustrates how cultural logics frame classroom practice and how translanguaging serves as the bridge connecting these practices with pluricultural competence. While institutional monolingual policies remain a challenge, the findings suggest that embracing translanguaging and communication culture can enhance both language learning and intercultural understanding. These insights pave the way for the conclusion, which consolidates the implications for theory, pedagogy, and policy in BIPA education.

6. Conclusions

This study has examined the interplay of communication culture, pluricultural competence, and translanguaging in Indonesian and Thai BIPA classrooms through thematic analysis of interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. The findings show that translanguaging is not only a pedagogical strategy but also a cultural practice that enables learners to internalize communicative norms such as "basa-basi" and "phuut taam marayaat", negotiate their pluricultural identities, and access complex content more effectively. Teachers employed translanguaging to scaffold comprehension and highlight cultural parallels, while learners reported greater confidence when allowed to mobilize their full repertoires of Indonesian, Thai, and English. These insights affirm that pluricultural competence is enacted through communication culture and operationalized by translanguaging, aligning with global research yet extending it to Southeast Asian high-context settings. At the same time, tensions with monolingual policies underscore the need for institutional recognition of multilingual pedagogies. The comparative perspective reveals that while Indonesian classrooms often use translanguaging to foster inclusivity and rapport, Thai classrooms emphasize respect and harmony, reflecting distinct cultural logics. However, the study is limited by its relatively small sample size in Indonesia and Thailand. Future research could expand to other Southeast Asian contexts, employ longitudinal designs, or integrate corpus-based and mixed-method approaches to deepen insights into pluricultural competence. Despite these limitations, the evidence demonstrates that translanguaging embedded in communication culture provides a powerful resource for fostering pluricultural competence. Teacher education programs and curriculum design should therefore integrate translanguaging and intercultural communi-

cation training, while policy makers should move beyond monolingual assumptions to build inclusive frameworks that reflect the lived realities of multilingual learners.

Author Contributions

Conceptualization, P.V.A., S.M., and S.S. (Suhailee Sohnui); methodology, B.Y. and S.S. (Syamsul Sodiq); validation, S.M., S.S. (Suhailee Sohnui), and P.V.A.; formal analysis, S.S. (Syamsul Sodiq) and S.S. (Suhailee Sohnui); investigation, B.Y., P.V.A., and S.M.; data curation, P.V.A. and S.S. (Suhailee Sohnui); writing original draft preparation, P.V.A. and S.M.; writing review and editing, P.V.A. and S.S. (Suhailee Sohnui); supervision, B.Y. and S.S. (Syamsul Sodiq); project administration, P.V.A. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding

The research was funded by Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA).

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement

Informed consent was obtained from all subjects involved in the study.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy and ethical restrictions.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the participants of the BIPA program for their invaluable contributions, as well as colleagues at Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Maejo University, and Chiang Mai University for their support and collaboration.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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