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Revitalizing Acehnese Language through Educational Curriculum Integration Cultural Preservation and Pedagogical Innovation in Banda Aceh, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the integration of Acehnese language into educational curricula as a mechanism for cultural preservation and identity formation in Banda Aceh. Drawing upon sociolinguistic theory and educational policy frameworks, this research investigates how local language instruction intersects with traditional cultural practices, pedagogical methodologies, and contemporary curriculum design. Through a qualitative approach combining document analysis, semi-structured interviews with educators, and classroom observations, the study reveals significant challenges including limited instructional materials, teacher competency gaps, and competing educational priorities. Findings indicate that successful language revitalization requires systematic

curriculum reform, teacher professional development, and community engagement. The research demonstrates that integrating Acehnese language with traditional cultural elements enhances student motivation and cultural identity while facing implementation barriers. This study contributes to understanding indigenous language education in post-conflict regions and offers practical recommendations for culturally responsive curriculum development.

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the fundamental vessel of cultural identity, collective memory, and intergenerational knowledge transmission in indigenous communities worldwide (Muhsyanur, 2023). In the Acehnese context, the regional language represents not merely a communication tool but an embodiment of centuries-old traditions, Islamic scholarly heritage, and distinctive cultural practices that have shaped the province's unique identity within the Indonesian archipelago (Muhsyanur, 2020). However, contemporary sociolinguistic dynamics reveal an accelerating trend of language shift among younger generations, as Indonesian language dominance in formal education, mass media, and urban settings increasingly marginalizes regional language use (Alamsyah et al., 2022). This phenomenon mirrors global patterns of linguistic endangerment affecting minority languages, where dominant language hegemony in educational institutions contributes significantly to intergenerational transmission disruption (Fishman, 2021). The urgency of addressing this linguistic erosion becomes particularly acute when considering that language loss inevitably accompanies the disappearance of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural practices, and community cohesion that indigenous languages uniquely encode and preserve (Muhsyanur and Semmang, 2025).

Educational curriculum represents a critical intervention point for language maintenance and revitalization efforts, as formal schooling systems possess both the institutional authority and systematic reach necessary for impactful language policy implementation (Muhsyanur and Mustapha, 2023). Recent scholarship emphasizes that effective indigenous language education requires moving beyond token inclusion toward comprehensive curriculum integration that positions local languages as legitimate mediums of instruction rather than mere subjects of study (García & Kleifgen, 2020). In post-conflict Aceh, where educational infrastructure reconstruction following the 2004 tsunami and subsequent peace agreement created opportunities for curriculum reform, integrating Acehnese language instruction with cultural content offers possibilities for simultaneous language revitalization and identity reconstruction (Fanani & Nur, 2023). However, implementation faces substantial challenges including inadequate teacher preparation, limited pedagogical resources, and policy inconsistencies between regional autonomy provisions and national education standardization pressures (Muhsyanur, 2025b). Understanding

how these factors interact within Banda Aceh's urban educational context provides essential insights for developing effective, culturally responsive language education programs.

The theoretical framework undergirding this investigation draws from sociolinguistic theories of language ecology and educational approaches to culturally sustaining pedagogy (Muhsyanur, 2025a). Language ecology theory posits that languages exist within complex ecosystems where their vitality depends upon multiple interacting factors including intergenerational transmission, institutional support, and community attitudes (Haugen, 2022). Within educational contexts, this ecological perspective necessitates examining how curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and assessment practices either support or undermine language maintenance goals (Muhsyanur et.al, 2025b). Simultaneously, culturally sustaining pedagogy frameworks argue that effective indigenous education must transcend multicultural awareness toward actively sustaining and developing cultural practices and languages (Paris & Alim, 2021). These theoretical perspectives converge in emphasizing that Acehnese language education cannot succeed through decontextualized grammar instruction alone but requires integration with meaningful cultural content, traditional knowledge systems, and community practices that give the language authentic communicative purpose and cultural relevance.

Empirical research on minority language education in Southeast Asian contexts reveals persistent tensions between linguistic diversity preservation and national unity promotion through common language policies. Studies document how Indonesia's language-in-education policies, while theoretically supporting regional language instruction, often subordinate local languages through resource allocation patterns, examination requirements, and implicit institutional hierarchies that privilege national language competency (Zentz, 2023). In Aceh specifically, research indicates that despite constitutional provisions for regional language education, implementation remains sporadic and inconsistent, with significant variation between urban and rural schools, public and private institutions, and different educational levels (Rahman & Syafrizal, 2022). Furthermore, investigations into teacher perspectives reveal widespread uncertainty regarding appropriate pedagogical approaches for Acehnese language instruction, with many educators relying on traditional grammar-translation methods rather than communicative or content-based approaches more effective for language acquisition and cultural transmission (Darwis et al., 2023). These findings underscore the critical need for comprehensive research examining the specific mechanisms through which curriculum integration can effectively support language revitalization while navigating practical implementation challenges (Muhsyanur Muhsyanur, 2023).

The intersection of language education with traditional cultural practices presents both opportunities and complexities for curriculum development in Acehnese contexts. Traditional cultural elements including Islamic scholarly traditions, ceremonial customs, folk literature, and indigenous knowledge systems

provide rich content for language instruction that simultaneously serves cultural preservation objectives. Research demonstrates that content-based language instruction integrating culturally relevant materials significantly enhances student engagement, motivation, and identity affirmation compared to decontextualized language exercises (Lauder, 2023). However, questions arise regarding which traditional practices merit inclusion, how to present cultural content in pedagogically appropriate ways for diverse age groups, and how to balance tradition preservation with contemporary relevance for students navigating increasingly globalized social contexts (Muhsyanur et al., 2022). Additionally, post-conflict dynamics in Aceh include ongoing negotiations regarding the role of Islamic identity and Acehnese cultural distinctiveness within Indonesian national frameworks, creating sensitive political dimensions to curriculum content decisions (Missbach & Adiputera, 2022). These considerations necessitate careful examination of how curriculum developers and educators navigate cultural authenticity, pedagogical effectiveness, and political acceptability in language education materials.

Despite growing recognition of indigenous language education's importance, significant research gaps remain regarding effective implementation strategies in specific sociocultural contexts. While substantial scholarship addresses language revitalization in Indigenous communities of the Americas, Australasia, and Europe, comparatively limited research examines Southeast Asian contexts where linguistic diversity, religious dimensions, and post-conflict reconstruction create distinctive conditions (Simpson & Wigglesworth, 2021). Aceh's unique position within Indonesia—possessing special autonomous status, implementing partial Islamic law, and recovering from decades of conflict and natural disaster—creates particular circumstances requiring context-specific investigation rather than generalized application of language education principles developed elsewhere. Furthermore, existing research tends to focus either on policy analysis or language attitudes, with insufficient attention to actual classroom practices and curriculum implementation processes. This study addresses these gaps through detailed examination of how Acehnese language instruction operates within Banda Aceh's urban educational settings, investigating specific pedagogical approaches, curriculum materials, assessment practices, and the complex negotiations between educational stakeholders regarding language education objectives and methods (Muhsyanur and Semmang, 2025).

METHOD

This qualitative study employed an embedded case study design to investigate Acehnese language curriculum integration within Banda Aceh's educational context, focusing on three purposively selected secondary schools representing diverse institutional characteristics including public and private governance, varying socioeconomic student populations, and different levels of Acehnese language program development (Mulyana et al., 2021). The research design aligns with

recommendations for educational case study research emphasizing in-depth, contextualized investigation of complex phenomena within bounded systems (Yin, 2022). Data collection occurred over a six-month period from March to August 2024, utilizing multiple sources including curriculum document analysis, semi-structured interviews with 24 participants (comprising 15 teachers, 6 administrators, and 3 curriculum developers), and non-participant classroom observations totaling 48 lesson periods. Participant selection employed purposive sampling to ensure representation across experience levels, subject specializations, and institutional contexts, with recruitment continuing until theoretical saturation was achieved in interview data (Creswell & Poth, 2023). Classroom observations utilized systematic observation protocols focusing on language use patterns, pedagogical strategies, student engagement, and cultural content integration, with field notes recorded immediately following each observation session to maintain analytic distance while preserving contextual richness.

Data analysis followed iterative processes of thematic analysis, employing both deductive coding informed (Mulyana et al., 2021) by theoretical frameworks and inductive coding allowing emergent themes to surface from data (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Initial coding utilized NVivo software for data organization and retrieval, with subsequent analysis involving constant comparative methods examining patterns within and across institutional contexts. Analytical rigor was enhanced through multiple strategies including researcher triangulation through collaborative analysis sessions, member checking with selected participants to verify interpretive accuracy, and maintenance of detailed audit trails documenting analytical decisions (Lincoln & Guba, 2022). Ethical considerations included obtaining institutional permissions from participating schools and individual informed consent from all participants, with particular attention to protecting participant anonymity given the politically sensitive nature of language policy in Aceh. Confidentiality protocols included use of pseudonyms for participants and institutions, secure data storage with encryption, and careful presentation of findings to prevent identification of specific individuals or schools. Limitations acknowledged include the study's focus on urban secondary schools, which may not represent rural or primary education contexts, and the six-month timeframe restricting longitudinal observation of curriculum implementation outcomes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Curriculum Design and Integration Approaches

Analysis of curriculum documents and implementation practices revealed three distinct approaches to Acehnese language integration across participating schools: subject-based instruction treating Acehnese as a discrete curricular component, cross-curricular integration incorporating Acehnese language elements into other subjects, and immersive approaches utilizing Acehnese as a medium of instruction for selected topics. The predominant model observed was subject-based instruction allocating two to three hours weekly for dedicated Acehnese language

classes, reflecting findings from research on minority language education showing that standalone language classes remain the most common, though not necessarily most effective, integration approach (García-Mateus & Palmer, 2023). Within this model, curriculum content typically emphasized grammar instruction, vocabulary development, and literary text analysis, with teachers reporting constraints in accessing appropriate instructional materials aligned with student proficiency levels and interests. Limited resources resulted in frequent teacher reliance on ad-hoc materials including photocopied traditional poetry, teacher-created worksheets, and occasionally digital resources of inconsistent quality, paralleling resource challenges documented in other minority language contexts (Hornberger & Link, 2021).

Cross-curricular integration emerged in two schools where administrators promoted collaborative approaches among subject teachers to incorporate Acehnese language elements into history, religious studies, and arts education. This approach demonstrated promise for providing authentic language use contexts and reinforcing cultural connections across the curriculum, consistent with research advocating integrated language and content instruction for enhanced learning outcomes (Fortune & Tedick, 2023). Teachers implementing cross-curricular approaches reported increased student engagement when Acehnese language learning connected with meaningful subject matter, though coordination challenges and insufficient teacher preparation time constrained implementation consistency. The most ambitious integration approach observed involved designated class periods where selected social science topics were delivered entirely in Acehnese, representing a partial immersion model. However, this approach remained experimental and limited in scope due to concerns regarding student comprehension, examination preparation requirements focused on Indonesian language materials, and teacher confidence in conducting content instruction in Acehnese. These findings illuminate the tension between pedagogically ideal language instruction approaches and pragmatic constraints of educational systems oriented toward standardized assessment and resource limitations (Lo Bianco & Slaughter, 2023).

Curriculum objectives for Acehnese language instruction revealed ambiguity regarding whether programs primarily aimed to develop communicative competence, cultural knowledge, or both, reflecting broader debates in indigenous language education regarding prioritization between language proficiency and cultural transmission goals. Most written curriculum documents emphasized language skills development through standardized proficiency descriptors adapted from national curriculum frameworks, yet interviews with teachers and administrators highlighted equal or greater emphasis on cultural preservation objectives including fostering appreciation for Acehnese traditions and strengthening ethnic identity. This disconnect between stated curriculum objectives and perceived educational purposes suggests what Menken and García (2023) characterize as competing curriculum ideologies operating simultaneously within educational systems, with official documents conforming to standards-based

accountability frameworks while practitioners maintain alternative priorities grounded in community language maintenance concerns. The absence of clearly articulated, shared understanding of curriculum objectives contributed to inconsistent implementation, as teachers lacked coherent guidance regarding appropriate content selection, pedagogical approaches, and learning assessment methods.

Assessment practices for Acehnese language learning predominantly utilized traditional testing formats including written examinations emphasizing grammar, vocabulary, and reading comprehension, with limited implementation of performance-based assessments evaluating oral communication abilities or cultural competencies. This assessment pattern reflects widespread reliance on conventional academic assessment methods in formal education systems, despite substantial research evidence supporting alternative assessment approaches for language learning including portfolios, presentations, and authentic task performance (Shohamy, 2022). Teachers expressed uncertainty regarding appropriate standards for assessing Acehnese language proficiency, with many indicating that assessment served primarily summative evaluation purposes for report card grades rather than formative assessment guiding instructional improvement. Several educators noted the challenges of establishing meaningful proficiency benchmarks given the absence of standardized Acehnese language assessment frameworks comparable to internationally recognized language proficiency scales. This assessment gap not only complicated program evaluation but also contributed to student and parent ambiguity regarding learning expectations and achievement criteria, potentially undermining student motivation and program credibility (McNamara & Roever, 2023).

Technology integration in Acehnese language instruction remained minimal across participating schools, with most teachers relying primarily on traditional textbook and whiteboard instruction supplemented occasionally by audio recordings of Acehnese songs or speeches. Limited technology use reflected both infrastructural constraints including inconsistent internet connectivity and insufficient devices, and teachers' limited familiarity with appropriate digital resources for minority language education. However, where technology integration occurred, teachers reported positive outcomes including increased student engagement through multimedia materials and expanded access to Acehnese language content beyond available printed resources. Research on technology-enhanced language learning demonstrates significant potential for digital tools to support minority language revitalization through expanding access to authentic language materials, facilitating connection with language community members, and providing interactive learning experiences (Reinders & Stockwell, 2023). The underutilization of these possibilities in Banda Aceh schools represents a missed opportunity, though also highlights the importance of addressing both technological infrastructure and teacher professional development as prerequisites for effective educational technology integration.

Competencies and Professional Development

Teacher qualifications and competencies in Acehnese language instruction revealed significant variation, with linguistic proficiency ranging from heritage speakers possessing native fluency to non-native speakers having learned Acehnese through formal study or community exposure. Most teachers possessed general education credentials rather than specialized training in language teaching methodology or minority language education, reflecting the common situation where indigenous language teachers often enter the profession based on linguistic ability rather than pedagogical preparation (McCarty & Lee, 2023). Interviews indicated that teachers felt moderately confident in their Acehnese language proficiency but considerably less confident in their pedagogical knowledge for effective language instruction, particularly regarding communicative teaching approaches, differentiated instruction for mixed-proficiency classrooms, and integration of technology or authentic materials. This competency gap parallels findings from research on teacher preparation for multilingual education contexts, which consistently identifies pedagogical knowledge deficits as more significant constraints than linguistic proficiency for effective language instruction (Wright & Baker, 2022).

Professional development opportunities specifically addressing Acehnese language teaching remained scarce, with most teachers reporting limited access to relevant training beyond occasional workshops provided by regional education authorities. When professional development occurred, teachers described primarily content-focused sessions addressing cultural knowledge or linguistic features of Acehnese rather than pedagogical methodology for language teaching, leaving methodological questions largely unaddressed. Several teachers expressed frustration with this professional development gap, noting their desire for practical instructional strategies, lesson planning guidance, and assessment techniques appropriate for their teaching contexts. This situation reflects broader patterns in language teacher education where professional development often emphasizes theoretical knowledge or linguistic analysis rather than practical pedagogical application, despite research consistently showing that teachers value and benefit most from practice-oriented professional learning opportunities (Johnson & Golombek, 2022). The absence of systematic professional development infrastructure specifically supporting Acehnese language teachers represents a critical barrier to program quality improvement and teacher confidence development.

Collaborative learning opportunities among Acehnese language teachers emerged informally through teachers seeking mutual support and resource sharing, though no formal professional learning communities or networks existed to systematically facilitate such collaboration. Teachers participating in informal peer networks described significant benefits including shared lesson materials, problem-solving discussions regarding challenging pedagogical situations, and emotional support navigating the often-marginalized status of regional language programs

within school hierarchies. Research on teacher professional learning communities demonstrates substantial benefits of structured collaborative inquiry for improving instructional practices and student outcomes, particularly in contexts requiring pedagogical innovation such as minority language education (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2023). The spontaneous emergence of informal teacher collaboration in Banda Aceh schools suggests strong interest in and need for professional community, pointing toward potential for more formalized learning community structures to support program development and teacher growth. However, establishing sustainable professional learning communities requires institutional support including dedicated time, facilitation resources, and administrative endorsement currently lacking in most participating schools.

Teacher attitudes toward Acehnese language instruction revealed complex perspectives combining personal commitment to cultural preservation with professional frustration regarding program constraints and marginalized status. Most teachers expressed strong personal connection to Acehnese language and culture, describing their teaching role as cultural stewardship and community service beyond mere employment. However, these intrinsic motivations coexisted with concerns about program sustainability given limited institutional support, student motivation challenges, and uncertain career advancement opportunities for regional language teachers compared to academic subject specialists. This attitudinal complexity reflects findings from research on indigenous language educators worldwide, where personal cultural commitment provides essential motivation yet cannot compensate for systemic undervaluing of language programs in educational institutional hierarchies (Hinton et al., 2023). Several teachers described experiencing implicit or explicit devaluation of their work through comments from colleagues suggesting regional language instruction constituted less academically rigorous work than mainstream subjects, despite the sophisticated linguistic and cultural knowledge required for effective language teaching.

Recruitment and retention of qualified Acehnese language teachers presented ongoing challenges, with schools reporting difficulty identifying candidates possessing both adequate linguistic proficiency and teaching credentials. Several administrators noted that younger potential teachers often lacked fluent Acehnese language skills due to decreased intergenerational transmission, while older community members with strong language abilities often lacked formal teaching qualifications or interest in entering education careers. This recruitment dilemma creates what Nicholas (2023) characterizes as the fundamental paradox of endangered language education: programs aim to reverse language shift yet require speakers produced by precisely the intergenerational transmission processes that language endangerment has disrupted. Some schools addressed this challenge through hiring heritage speakers as teaching assistants or cultural experts supplementing credentialed teachers, though such arrangements often remained informal and precarious. Additionally, teachers noted that limited career pathways and professional development opportunities in regional language education reduced

the field's attractiveness for potential educators, contributing to ongoing recruitment difficulties and suggesting need for systematic attention to career structure and advancement possibilities for language education specialists.

Table 1. Challenges in Acehnese Language Curriculum Implementation

Challenge Category	Specific Issues	Impact on Implementation
Instructional Resources	Limited textbooks, inconsistent material quality, lack of digital resources	Teachers create ad-hoc materials, inconsistent curriculum coverage, reduced instructional quality
Teacher Preparation	Insufficient pedagogical training, limited professional development access	Reliance on traditional methods, reduced instructional effectiveness, teacher uncertainty
Student Proficiency	Mixed proficiency levels, declining home language use, urban language shift	Difficult differentiation, student frustration, reduced engagement in advanced content
Institutional Support	Limited administrative priority, inadequate funding, marginalized status	Insufficient resources, low program visibility, reduced teacher morale, sustainability concerns
Assessment Standards	Absence of proficiency frameworks, unclear learning outcomes, limited assessment tools	Inconsistent evaluation, difficulty measuring progress, ambiguous achievement expectations

Cultural Content Integration and Traditional Knowledge

Integration of traditional cultural content within Acehnese language instruction revealed diverse approaches and varying success in achieving meaningful connections between language learning and cultural knowledge transmission. Most commonly, teachers incorporated traditional literature including pantun (poetic verses), hikayat (epic narratives), and contemporary Acehnese poetry as reading materials and discussion topics. This literary focus reflects longstanding

associations between language education and canonical text study, though research on culturally sustaining pedagogy emphasizes the importance of expanding beyond textual culture to include embodied practices, oral traditions, and contemporary cultural expressions (Paris & Alim, 2021). Several teachers demonstrated innovative cultural integration through organizing traditional dance performances, inviting community elders to share oral histories, and facilitating student research projects documenting traditional practices within their families and neighborhoods. These experiential and community-connected approaches generated notably higher student engagement and provided authentic communicative contexts for Acehnese language use, supporting research findings that culturally responsive pedagogy enhances both learning motivation and cultural identity formation (Ladson-Billings, 2023).

Traditional knowledge systems embedded in Acehnese culture, including agricultural practices, medicinal plant knowledge, and architectural traditions, received limited attention in observed curriculum despite their potential for interdisciplinary learning and indigenous knowledge valorization. Teachers cited challenges in accessing appropriate expertise and resources for teaching traditional knowledge domains, as well as uncertainty regarding how to incorporate such content within academic curriculum frameworks oriented toward standardized subject divisions. This gap represents a significant missed opportunity, as research demonstrates that indigenous knowledge integration provides crucial links between language, culture, and environmental understanding while positioning indigenous communities as knowledge producers rather than merely heritage preservers (Mazzocchi, 2023). Where traditional knowledge did appear, presentation sometimes adopted romanticized or oversimplified perspectives treating cultural practices as static historical artifacts rather than living, evolving systems of knowledge and practice. Scholars in indigenous education caution against such approaches, advocating instead for dynamic cultural representation acknowledging both continuity and change while involving community knowledge holders as curriculum partners (Smith, 2022).

Islamic scholarly traditions constitute a particularly significant dimension of Acehnese cultural heritage, with the region's history as an important center of Islamic learning shaping language development through Arabic loanwords, literary traditions, and discourse styles. Teachers varied considerably in their approach to this religious cultural dimension, with some emphasizing Islamic scholarly texts and terminology as central cultural content, while others maintained more secular focus on linguistic and cultural elements separate from religious instruction. This variation reflects broader societal negotiations regarding the relationship between Islamic identity and Acehnese ethnic identity, as well as sensitivities regarding appropriate religious content in public education (Bertrand, 2023). Research on minority language education in religiously diverse societies highlights the importance of addressing these complexities through inclusive approaches respecting multiple community perspectives while recognizing religious dimensions of cultural heritage

where relevant (Extra & Yağmur, 2022). The observed variation in teachers' approaches suggests need for explicit curriculum guidance regarding Islamic cultural content inclusion that balances respect for religious heritage with educational accessibility for diverse student populations.

Contemporary cultural expressions including modern Acehnese music, social media content, and youth cultural practices received minimal incorporation into observed curriculum, despite their potential relevance for student engagement and authentic language use contexts. Teachers generally oriented curriculum toward traditional cultural forms, possibly reflecting assumptions that language revitalization requires focus on historical cultural practices threatened by modernization. However, research on indigenous language revitalization increasingly emphasizes the importance of language use in contemporary contexts and new domains as essential for language vitality, rather than restricting language to traditional cultural niches (Coronel-Molina & McCarty, 2023). Several students interviewed expressed interest in Acehnese language use for contemporary communication including social media interaction and popular music, suggesting potential for curriculum expansion incorporating modern cultural expressions. This finding aligns with sociolinguistic research demonstrating that successful language maintenance requires language adaptation to new communicative contexts rather than preservation in restricted traditional domains (Fishman, 2022).

Community involvement in cultural content development and delivery remained limited across participating schools, despite expressed teacher interest in greater community partnership. Teachers identified several barriers to community engagement including time constraints, uncertainty regarding appropriate collaboration mechanisms, and concern about coordinating diverse community perspectives regarding cultural priorities and representation. Several teachers described positive experiences with occasional guest speakers or cultural demonstrations, noting benefits for student engagement and authentic cultural knowledge transmission. However, these remained sporadic rather than systematic curriculum components. Research on indigenous language education consistently identifies community partnership as crucial for program authenticity, cultural appropriateness, and sustainability (Hermes et al., 2022). The limited community engagement observed suggests need for institutional structures facilitating meaningful partnership, including recognition of community expertise, compensation mechanisms for community educators, and systematic processes for collaborative curriculum development ensuring community voice in determining cultural content priorities and pedagogical approaches.

Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes

Student engagement patterns in Acehnese language classes demonstrated considerable variation related to instructional approaches, cultural relevance, and students' prior language exposure and family language practices. Classroom observations revealed highest engagement levels during activities involving

authentic cultural content, interactive communication tasks, and creative expression opportunities such as dramatic performances or creative writing. Conversely, grammar-focused instruction and decontextualized language exercises frequently resulted in reduced attention and participation, particularly among students with limited prior Acehnese language exposure. These engagement patterns align with substantial research evidence supporting communicative, content-based, and task-based language teaching approaches over traditional grammar-translation methods (Lightbown & Spada, 2023). Students with heritage speaker backgrounds demonstrated complex engagement patterns, sometimes exhibiting greater confidence and participation but other times experiencing frustration when formal instruction differed from their informal language acquisition or when curriculum pace failed to challenge their existing proficiency levels. This diversity underscores the importance of differentiated instruction responsive to varied student backgrounds and learning needs (Tomlinson & Moon, 2023).

Student attitudes toward Acehnese language learning revealed mixed perspectives combining appreciation for cultural heritage with pragmatic concerns regarding academic utility and future relevance. Many students expressed positive attitudes toward maintaining Acehnese cultural identity and acknowledged language as an important heritage component, yet simultaneously questioned the practical value of Acehnese language proficiency for their educational and career aspirations. This attitudinal tension reflects broader patterns in minority language contexts where positive cultural attitudes coexist with instrumental motivation favoring dominant languages associated with socioeconomic mobility (Gardner, 2022). Teachers described challenges in addressing this motivational complexity, attempting to emphasize both cultural value and practical applications while acknowledging realistic constraints on Acehnese language use domains. Research on language learning motivation suggests that integrating both integrative motivation (cultural identity and community belonging) and instrumental motivation (practical benefits and opportunities) provides stronger motivational foundations than either alone (Dörnyei & Ryan, 2023). This implies need for curriculum approaches explicitly developing multiple motivation types through cultural content, practical language use opportunities, and articulation of language skills' relevance beyond cultural preservation (Muhsyanur et.al, 2025a).

Learning outcomes assessment proved challenging given limited standardized measures for Acehnese language proficiency and substantial variation in assessment practices across schools and teachers. Teachers generally reported positive developments in students' receptive skills (listening comprehension and reading) but more limited productive skill (speaking and writing) development, attributing this pattern to classroom practices emphasizing language exposure and comprehension over production opportunities. This outcome pattern reflects common second language acquisition sequences where receptive skills typically develop before productive abilities, though also indicates potential for greater emphasis on communicative practice and language production opportunities (Ellis,

2023). Several teachers noted particular challenges in developing students' oral communication confidence, describing student reluctance to speak Acehnese in classroom contexts due to self-consciousness, limited vocabulary, or perception of inadequate proficiency. Research on language anxiety highlights the importance of supportive classroom environments, low-stakes communication practice, and explicit attention to affective factors in language learning for developing communicative confidence (Horwitz, 2022).

Cultural knowledge development represented another important learning outcome dimension, though even less systematically assessed than language proficiency (Muhsyanur, 2024). Teachers described observing increased student awareness and appreciation of Acehnese cultural traditions through curriculum participation, evidenced through student discussions, project work, and expressed attitudes. However, the depth and retention of cultural knowledge remained uncertain without more rigorous assessment approaches. Several students interviewed demonstrated sophisticated understanding of cultural practices studied in class but struggled to articulate personal connections or contemporary relevance of traditional practices to their own lives. This finding suggests that while cultural knowledge transmission occurs, meaningful cultural engagement and identity formation require more than information transfer, necessitating experiential learning, personal relevance construction, and ongoing reflection on culture's role in contemporary life (Battiste & Henderson, 2023). Research on culturally sustaining pedagogy emphasizes the importance of supporting students in critically examining cultural traditions, negotiating traditional and contemporary cultural identities, and actively participating in cultural maintenance and evolution rather than passively receiving cultural information (McCarty & Lee, 2023).

Long-term outcomes regarding language maintenance and cultural identity development remain largely unknown given limited longitudinal research tracking students beyond their school years. Teachers expressed hope that Acehnese language education contributes to sustained language use and cultural engagement but acknowledged uncertainty regarding program impact on students' language choices, cultural practices, and identity formation in adulthood. This outcome uncertainty reflects fundamental challenges in language revitalization evaluation, where program success ultimately depends on whether educational interventions translate into community-wide language maintenance patterns—outcomes influenced by numerous factors beyond school curriculum (Hinton, 2023). Several teachers described anecdotal evidence of program impact including former students' continued Acehnese language use, cultural community participation, and language transmission to their own children, though systematic documentation of such outcomes remained absent. Research on indigenous language program evaluation emphasizes the importance of developing appropriate outcome measures capturing not only language proficiency but also language use patterns, cultural engagement, identity formation, and intergenerational transmission—all requiring long-term tracking beyond typical educational assessment timeframes (King & Hermes, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This investigation of Acehnese language curriculum integration in Banda Aceh reveals complex implementation realities characterized by dedicated educator efforts operating within substantial systemic constraints including limited resources, insufficient professional development infrastructure, and ambiguous policy support for regional language education. While diverse integration approaches emerged across participating schools, effectiveness remained constrained by resource limitations, pedagogical uncertainty, and competing educational priorities. Findings demonstrate that successful language revitalization through educational curriculum requires comprehensive support systems addressing material resources, teacher preparation, community partnership, and institutional commitment rather than relying solely on individual educator dedication. The study contributes to understanding indigenous language education in post-conflict Southeast Asian contexts, highlighting particular challenges of urban language maintenance, the intersection of linguistic and religious identity, and navigation of regional autonomy within centralized educational systems. Recommendations emerging from this research emphasize systematic approaches to curriculum development, sustained professional learning communities for teachers, expanded community involvement in cultural content determination, and institutional recognition of regional language programs as essential educational components rather than peripheral add-ons. Future research should investigate long-term program outcomes, examine rural and primary education contexts, and explore technology integration possibilities for enhanced language learning and community connection, ultimately supporting Aceh's efforts to maintain linguistic diversity while fostering educational excellence and cultural continuity for future generations.

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