



Revitalization of the Palembang Language in Elementary Schools: Transformative Learning Models from a Multicultural Perspective

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Abstract

Local language learning in elementary schools plays a strategic role in preserving cultural identity and fostering inclusive attitudes. However, a gap still exists between government policy and classroom practice, particularly in multicultural contexts. This study aims to examine the implementation of Palembang language learning and its contribution to the development of students' local identity and inclusive attitudes. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data collected through interviews (with the principal and two classroom teachers) and classroom observations. The findings reveal that the Palembang language has been implemented as a compulsory local content subject using contextual strategies, such as traditional games, oral presentations, and group activities. Students from diverse ethnic backgrounds actively participated and responded positively. Major challenges, such as limited learning resources and the presence of non-native teachers, were addressed through adaptive strategies like digital media utilization and teacher collaboration. Based on field data, this study proposes two theoretical contributions of Multicultural Transformative Local Language Learning and Participatory Cultural Inclusion. These concepts highlight that local language learning not only develops linguistic competence but also serves as a medium for cultural revitalization and multicultural character education from an early age. The implications of this can be applied in primary school learning.

Keywords:

Cultural Identity, Multicultural Transformative Model, Palembang Language

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Abstrak

Pembelajaran bahasa daerah di sekolah dasar berperan strategis dalam melestarikan identitas budaya sekaligus menumbuhkan sikap inklusif. Namun, masih terdapat kesenjangan antara kebijakan pemerintah dan praktik di kelas, khususnya dalam konteks multikultural. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji implementasi pembelajaran Bahasa Palembang serta kontribusinya terhadap pembentukan identitas lokal dan sikap inklusif siswa. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif dengan pengumpulan data melalui wawancara (kepala sekolah dan dua guru kelas) serta observasi pembelajaran. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Bahasa Palembang diterapkan sebagai muatan lokal wajib dengan strategi kontekstual, seperti permainan tradisional, presentasi lisan, dan kerja kelompok. Siswa dari berbagai latar belakang etnis berpartisipasi aktif dan menunjukkan respons positif. Tantangan utama berupa keterbatasan sumber belajar dan guru yang bukan penutur asli diatasi melalui strategi adaptif, seperti pemanfaatan media digital dan kolaborasi antar guru. Berdasarkan temuan lapangan, penelitian ini menghasilkan kontribusi teoretis berupa konsep Multicultural Transformative Local Language Learning dan Participatory Cultural Inclusion. Kedua konsep ini menegaskan bahwa pembelajaran bahasa daerah tidak hanya membangun kompetensi linguistik, tetapi juga menjadi sarana revitalisasi budaya dan pendidikan karakter multikultural sejak dini. Implikasi penelitian ini dapat diterapkan pada pembelajaran sekolah dasar.

Kata Kunci:

Identitas Budaya, Model Transformatif Multikultural, Bahasa Palembang

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with extraordinary cultural richness, including various regional languages that are integral to the local people's cultural identity (Savira et al., 2024). One of these regional languages is the Palembang language, which is spoken and developed among the people of South Sumatra, especially in Palembang City. However, the current globalization and the dominance of the Indonesian language in various formal realms have led to the marginalization of regional languages in daily life (Inriani & Fiddienika, 2024).

This phenomenon poses a serious challenge to efforts to preserve local identity, particularly among the younger generation who are becoming increasingly unfamiliar with their regional language and culture. In this context, the urgency of revitalizing regional languages is becoming increasingly real. Revitalization is interpreted as an effort to revive the function of regional languages in educational, social, and cultural spaces in a planned and systematic manner (Nasrullah et al., 2024).

Schools as formal educational institutions have a strategic role in supporting efforts to revitalize local culture (Juliani et al., 2024). The application of Palembang language subjects as local content in elementary schools is a concrete step in integrating local wisdom into the education system. In addition to being a means of preserving language and culture, this local content also supports the formation of a strong cultural identity of students and is rooted in their regional values.

Furthermore, learning the Palembang language can be used as a medium to develop multicultural education. Multiculturalism in the context of basic education emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting the diversity of identities, as well as the formation of an inclusive attitude that is open to cultural differences (Wardani et al., 2024).

Some previous research results have shown that learning based on local culture can increase students' emotional engagement, build pride in their own cultural identity, and foster tolerance for diversity (Cahyani & Wahana, 2025; Hayati et al., 2024; Irpan et al., 2024; Juliani et al., 2024). The findings of SD

Cikarang revealed an increase in cultural understanding from 20% to 90% after the application of local materials (Irpan et al., 2024). Other primary studies reported increased motivation and non-academic achievement, along with pride in local identity (Hayati et al., 2024). In addition, the integration of cultural wisdom in learning Pancasila has succeeded in forming a more realistic attitude of tolerance among students (Cahyani & Wahana, 2025).

The revitalization of local culture in education is not only a response to the threat of regional languages' extinction but also part of a strategy to form a national identity rooted in diversity (Holidin & Muadin, 2025). Language as a cultural symbol contains collective values that can shape students' character and perspective towards the world around them (Pajarianto et al., 2023). Therefore, learning the Palembang language in basic education should be seen as more than just mastering vocabulary or language structure; it is a process of internalizing local values that can strengthen students' identities while building their multicultural awareness.

Multicultural education demands the recognition of the existence of local culture as part of the national wealth that must be appreciated. In practice, multicultural-based learning encourages learners to understand, accept, and appreciate cultural diversity in daily life (Riyanti & Novitasari, 2021).

Furthermore, learning the Palembang language has the potential to be an effective vehicle for realizing these values, as the regional language preserves the historical narrative, traditions, and social values that form the collective identity of a community. When students are invited to understand and appreciate their local language and culture, they are trained to recognize their identity and open themselves to diversity (Saputri et al., 2024).

The urgency of this research lies in the need to transform basic education to emphasize not only academic achievement but also the formation of identity and character rooted in local culture. In a multicultural social reality, education that ignores elements of local culture tends to result in students losing attachment to their community values (Siriat & Surbayani, 2018). Therefore, integrating the

local content of the Palembang language not only complements the curriculum but also serves as a strategic medium to foster cultural awareness and universal human values in the Indonesian context.

Theoretically, this approach aligns with the constructivist paradigm in education, which views the learning process as a meaning-building activity from social and cultural experiences (Suhendi et al., 2021). Students learn to recognize language not only as a means of communication but also as a cultural product that reflects the way of viewing, values, and norms of the society in which they live. When learning is structured around a local context, students can connect new knowledge with their everyday experiences, resulting in more meaningful learning outcomes and long-term impact (Andriyani et al., 2025).

The correlation between Palembang language subjects, school identity, and multicultural education demonstrates a mutually reinforcing relationship in shaping the character of students who are rooted in local culture but open to diversity. The use of the Palembang language as local content reflects the identity of a school committed to cultural preservation and upholding the values of inclusivity.

Additionally, school identity is no longer just an administrative symbol, but a representation of values carried out in daily educational practices (Tsalitsa et al., 2024). When the values of local wisdom become part of the institutional identity and are integrated into the curriculum, multicultural education not only becomes a normative concept but also manifests in real life in the learning process (Maesaro et al., 2025). This strengthens the school's role as a strategic space for local cultural revitalization as well as a social laboratory for the formation of students' multicultural character.

There is an absence of in-depth studies on applying Palembang Language subjects from a multicultural perspective. A number of previous studies have confirmed the importance of learning based on local wisdom in elementary schools. Research has found that a culture-based approach can build positive character in students while fostering a sense of pride in local identity (Hayati et al., 2024;

Juliani et al., 2024). The values of tolerance and inclusive attitudes have also been proven to be instilled through the integration of local culture in Pancasila subjects (Cahyani & Wahana, 2025). From a policy perspective, the study of the revitalization of local content confirms its role as an important strategy in strengthening cultural identity in schools (Holidin & Muadin, 2025).

On the other hand, studies on the threat of regional language shifts in the era of globalization show that local languages are vulnerable due to the dominance of national languages and modernization trends (Inriani & Fiddienika, 2024). More broadly, international literature also emphasizes that the revitalization of regional languages serves not only to protect languages from extinction but also to form an awareness of multicultural identity and solidarity (Guerrettaz, 2020; Turner & Lin, 2024). However, these studies tend to focus on the general case of local culture-based learning or on other regional languages, without providing an in-depth analysis of how Palembang language subjects are applied in a multicultural context. Hence, there are academic gaps that need to be filled through this research.

Based on studies that discuss other regional languages or general aspects of culture-based learning, there has been no in-depth study on the implementation of Palembang language subjects from a multicultural perspective in elementary schools. This emptiness is the basis for the urgency of this research. This research aims to address this gap by presenting empirical data from education units that are the first implementers of this policy in Palembang City. Departing from this background, this research not only has new value but also contains significant academic and practical urgency.

These findings are expected to strengthen the basis of education policy at both the regional and national levels, particularly in mainstreaming local values and designing learning strategies that adapt to the socio-cultural realities of the diverse Indonesian society (Mutamimah et al., 2022). In particular, this research was motivated by the implementation of a new policy in one of the public elementary schools

Schools in Palembang City have implemented Palembang Language subjects as official local content for the past year. This school is a pioneer in systematically integrating Palembang language learning into the curriculum, serving as an innovative approach to preserving local culture and strengthening multicultural education.

The policy reflects a strategic step to make educational institutions an agent of local cultural revitalization, while building an inclusive, contextual, and multicultural learning foundation (Sumartana et al., 2025). Thus, the purpose of this study is to describe the implementation of Palembang language learning as a local content and analyze its contribution in shaping students' local identity from a multicultural perspective. This research is expected to make an empirical contribution to the discourse on strengthening education based on local wisdom, aligning with the values of multiculturalism in basic education.

METHODS

This research used a qualitative descriptive approach of case studies to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of Palembang language learning as a local content, as well as its contribution in shaping students' local identities from a multicultural perspective. This approach was chosen because it is relevant to explore the meaning and subjective experiences of informants in complex educational social contexts. The research was conducted at SD Negeri 249 Palembang, a public elementary school in Palembang City, which became the first to implement the Palembang language subject policy as part of the local content. This location was chosen deliberately because it is relevant to the focus of the research.

This research aims to examine in depth the implementation of Palembang language learning and its contribution to shaping students' local identities through a multicultural approach. To address the problem and achieve these goals, data were collected through interviews with the principal and two homeroom teachers, as well as direct observation in the field.

The research informants included one principal, two classroom teachers (homeroom teachers of grades VI A and VI B) as sources

of interview data, and four students selected for observation data. The selection of students was based on active involvement in learning and diverse ethnic representation, thus providing a contextual picture of multicultural dynamics in the classroom. This observation data on students was used to complete the understanding of how the Palembang language learning was carried out in daily practice.

Table 1. Students' Background (Anonymous, Observation Data)

Code	Gender	Ethnic Group	Observation Notes
S-1	Girl	Palembang	Seen actively participating in local language-based activities.
S-2	Boy	Javanese	Frequent cross-ethnic interactions in study groups.
S-3	Girl	Betawi	Enthusiastic about games and activities in the Palembang language.
S-4	Boy	Sundanese	Trying to use Palembang vocabulary in communication.

Four students were selected to represent ethnic diversity in the classroom: Palembang, Javanese, Betawi, and Sundanese. These students displayed a variety of involvements, ranging from actively participating in local language-based activities and collaborating across ethnicities in groups to being enthusiastic about Palembang language games and trying to use local vocabulary in daily communication. This diversity confirms that learning the Palembang language occurred in a real multicultural context.

Structurally, the subject of the Palembang language is not taught by special teachers but is taught by the homeroom teachers. The selection of teachers for grades VI A and VI B was deliberate, as both were considered the most competent in teaching subjects and had participated in special training organized by the Palembang City Education Office (Nugraheni et al., 2023; Tihalmah & Falensiah, 2023). The selection

of students was made by considering their active involvement in the learning process and their ability to express the learning experience orally.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews, non-participatory observations, and documentation. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to explore the perceptions and experiences of informants about the implementation of Palembang language learning. Observations were made during the learning process to capture classroom dynamics, teaching methods, and social interactions. Meanwhile, documentation included learning tools, photos of activities, and other complementary documents.

The data were then analyzed using a thematic analysis approach that referred to the qualitative data model, specifically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Reductions were made to sort the data according to the research focus, and the presentation was carried out in narrative form, with conclusions drawn inductively to identify essential themes. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and techniques was carried out, along with examining the informants. In addition, the researchers also paid attention to the ethical principles of research, such as providing informed consent, disguising the informant's identity, and protecting data confidentiality (Rijali, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study found several important results that are relevant to the context and focus of the research.

Implementation of Palembang Language Learning in Elementary Schools

The main findings are summarized in the following table, which is based on five main focuses, namely the formulation of the problem in this study. The following are the five main focuses of the research results presented in the table, concisely, scientifically, and clearly according to the aspects studied.

Table 2. Results Summary of Palembang Language Learning Research Focus

Focus of Research	Findings
1. Timing and Basis of Implementation	Starting from the 2024/2025 school year, based on the authority circular, this will be implemented in classes III–VI as mandatory local content.
2. Strategy and Approach	Teachers use contextual approaches such as games, lectures, memorization, and group discussions with textbook references.
3. Student Participation and Response	Students are active, enthusiastic, and participatory despite diverse cultural backgrounds.
4. Media and Facilities	Student and teacher books are available; printed dictionaries and special teacher training are unavailable.
5. Multicultural Values and Local Identity	Learning encourages local cultural pride, tolerance, and cross-tribal cooperation through the Pancasila P5 Student Profile and the Mother Language Bud Festival (FTBI).

The interpretation of Table 2 shows that the implementation of Palembang language learning is not only structurally successful but also positively impacts the formation of students' characters, fostering a local and inclusive identity. Interviews with the principal revealed that since the issuance of an official circular by the local government, the school has integrated the Palembang language as local content in grades III to VI. As conveyed by the principal, in his interview, he stated

"Since 2024, the issuance of a circular letter from the Palembang City Education Office, precisely at the time of the new 2024/2025 school year" (Principal, Onsite Interview).

The principal also emphasized that this activity received support through textbooks and cultural events such as the Mother Language Tunas Festival (FTBI) and P5, which encouraged students to perform using the Palembang language in the context of local

culture. Documentation of FTBI activities attended by SD Negeri 249 Palembang students can be accessed through the South Sumatra Provincial Language Center's official Instagram social media channels: <https://www.instagram.com/p/DCRaFBcP8so/?igsh=cHUyOHY1NmR0emdo>. This strengthens the position of lessons as an important part of the regional identity-based character development strategy.

Meanwhile, the two homeroom teachers interviewed indicated that the learning implementation was carried out adaptively, even though they were not from the Palembang ethnicity. They relied on creativity in using digital dictionaries and compiling methods, including traditional games, light lectures, and group presentations. As conveyed by the homeroom teacher of class VI A, he stated

"We compile the Palembang baso learning planning process based on the guidelines in the teacher's book and adjust it to the material in the student book (Teacher A, Onsite Interview)."

The strategies applied include vocabulary memorization, group discussions, presentations, and traditional games based on local culture. In his interview, the homeroom teacher of class VI B stated, "Learning starts with vocabulary, then combines it into sentences and presents it as a conversation." (Teacher B, Onsite Interview)." The statement was added again by the homeroom teacher of class VI B, who stated that

"The result of the conversation, we realize through games or games based on local wisdom, in other words, traditional games played together using the Palembang language (Teacher B, Onsite Interview)."

Observations in the classroom exhibited an interactive learning atmosphere. Teachers used digital media, such as online dictionaries, to overcome the limitations of facilities, ensuring that learning continued despite obstacles.

The Contribution of Palembang Language Learning to Local Identity and Students' Inclusive Attitudes

The study results revealed that learning the Palembang language contributes positively to the formation of students' local identity

while instilling multicultural values. The principal emphasized, as conveyed by the principal in his interview, that,

"This activity received support in the form of textbooks and cultural events such as the Festival Tunas Bahas Ibu [Mother Tongue Sprout Festival] (FTBI) and Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila [Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project] (P5), which encouraged students to perform using the Palembang language in the context of local culture" (Principal, Onsite Interview).

Based on the interview results, activities like the FTBI and the P5 have strengthened the position of the Palembang language as a means of character formation rooted in regional identity. Thus, the existence of FTBI and P5 is not only a forum for students' appreciation of the Palembang language but also a means of strengthening pride in local identity, aligning with the goals of multicultural education.

Student responses also showed a positive attitude: enthusiastic, participatory, and inclusive, even among students from outside Palembang (e.g., Javanese, Sundanese, or Betawi). The homeroom teacher of class VI B conveyed that,

"Even though there are students from Java, Sundanese, and Betawi, they teach each other the Palembang language in study groups" (Teacher B, Onsite Interview).

Based on the interviews, it was indicated that this learning not only strengthened language understanding but also instilled the value of mutual respect in cultural diversity. This suggests that Palembang language learning has a strong social transformation power in a multicultural elementary school environment.

Additionally, observations revealed that students not only learned vocabulary but also began to use the Palembang language in daily communication at school. They engage in traditional games of the teacher-designed spot, which simultaneously strengthens cross-cultural solidarity.



Figure 1. Students play the traditional game of Plektokan to learn the Palembang language through a contextual and culture-based strategy.

Traditional game activities inserted in Palembang language learning provide an opportunity for students to internalize vocabulary and cultural values in a natural and fun way. This activity not only strengthens language skills but also serves as an effective medium for building solidarity among students and fostering a love for local culture.

Findings regarding the contribution of Palembang language learning to the formation of local identity and the cultivation of multicultural values can be seen from various aspects, ranging from cultural pride and tolerance to social cooperation. To clarify, a summary of contributions along with field evidence is presented in Table 3.

Table 2. The Contribution of Palembang Language Learning to Identity

Aspect	Key Findings	Field Evidence
Local Identity	Students show pride in using the Palembang language in school activities.	"This activity received support in the form of textbooks and cultural events such as FTBI and P5, which encouraged students to perform using the Palembang language in the context of local culture." (Principal)
Cultural Pride	The Mother Language Tunas Festival (FTBI) is a forum for	Observation: Students appear confident using the Palembang language in the FTBI performance.

		regional language appreciation.
Tolerance & Inclusivity	Students from various ethnic backgrounds (Javanese, Sundanese, Betawi) also use the Palembang language.	"Even though there are students from Java, Sundanese, and Betawi, they teach each other the Palembang language in study groups." (Teacher A)
Social Cooperation	Traditional games foster cross-ethnic solidarity.	Observation: Students work together in a game of plexiglass using Palembang vocabulary
Multicultural Transformation	The Palembang language becomes a multicultural educational medium based on elementary schools.	Documentation of classroom activities shows that students interact inclusively using the Palembang language in daily communication.

Thus, the contribution of learning the Palembang language is not only limited to language mastery but also includes strengthening local identity, developing tolerant attitudes, and forming cross-cultural solidarity. Through FTBI, P5, and culture-based learning practices in the classroom, the Palembang language serves as a means of social transformation, fostering multicultural character in the elementary school environment.

Discussion
Implementation of Palembang Language Learning in Elementary Schools

In terms of policy, this research emphasizes the role of local governments in supporting the revitalization of regional languages through a formal curriculum. This aligns with UNESCO, who recommend mother tongue as the key to inclusive education (Gobana, 2025). However, compared to studies by Holidin & Muadin (2025) that highlight structural policies more, this study provides empirical evidence at the classroom implementation level, showing how

these policies are translated into real practice in primary schools. These findings also show compatibility with Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1997), which emphasizes the importance of critical reflection in changing students' perspectives. However, this context is different because transformation occurs not only through individual reflection but also through the collective experiences of students across ethnicities.

From the perspective of contemporary pedagogy, this research highlights the importance of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) as an approach that allows students to learn regional languages through real-life experiences (Regandi et al., 2024). Research by Putantri et al. (2025) indicated that CTL effectively improves the understanding of cultural values. Nevertheless, this study goes a step further because CTL not only serves to enhance cultural knowledge but also fosters multicultural interaction among students from different backgrounds.

The findings of this research also led to the birth of a new concept called Multicultural Transformative Local Language Learning (MTLLL). In contrast to the Culturally Responsive Pedagogy concept in *Culturally Responsive Teaching* by Gay (in Jia & Nasri, 2019), which emphasizes the importance of curriculum suitability with students' cultural background, MTLLL is not only adaptive but also puts the revitalization of regional languages at the core of learning. This concept views local languages not just as a medium of communication, but as a transformative instrument that forms identity awareness and cross-cultural solidarity.

In addition, MTLLL aligns with Transformative Learning Theory (Mezirow, 1997 in Hoggan & Finnegan, 2023) and offers a unique aspect: the transformation process is not only individual but also emerges from shared social practices in multiethnic classrooms, such as FTBI, P5, and traditional games. This perspective is rarely touched on in the global literature, thus demonstrating a new conceptual contribution from the Indonesian context.

The main characteristics of MTLLL can be formulated in four elements: (1) a contextual approach based on local cultural experiences, (2) active involvement of cross-

ethnic students, (3) flexibility of teachers' methods to adapt to limitations, and (4) integration of Pancasila values and global insights in learning. These elements distinguish MTLLL from the CRP model or Transformative Learning theory because it places local language at the heart of the multicultural educational process.

Thus, this research contributes to the literature by presenting the concept of MTLLL as a new development in the study of multicultural education and regional language revitalization. The practical implication is the need to strengthen local content policies that are not only oriented towards language preservation but also directed as a transformative educational medium. Further, the theoretical implication is the expansion of the horizons of CRP and TL in a more contextual, participatory, and multicultural direction.

The Contribution of Palembang Language Learning to Local Identity and Students' Inclusive Attitudes

The results of this study suggest that learning the Palembang language makes a real contribution to the formation of students' local identity while fostering an inclusive attitude across ethnicities. Students not only learn vocabulary but also internalize cultural values through traditional games, language festivals, and collaborative activities involving different ethnicities. This phenomenon aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) view that meaningful learning occurs through social interaction and highlights the role of local language as an instrument of social transformation (Dewi & Oktapiani, 2024).

In the multicultural educational literature, culture-based contributions are widely discussed through the concept of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP), which emphasizes a curriculum aligned with the students' background (Jia & Nasri, 2019). Nonetheless, CRP focuses more on teachers' responses in accommodating diversity, rather than on the role of local languages as a center for cultural identity revitalization. This study exhibited a fundamental difference: the Palembang language is not only a medium of communication, but the core of a multicultural educational process that fosters a sense of belonging to the local culture.

Relationships can also be drawn with Transformative Learning Theory (TLT) developed by Mezirow (1997), which emphasizes the critical reflection of the individual in changing perspectives. However, the findings of this study show that the transformation is collective, not individual. Students of diverse ethnicities experience changes in views and attitudes through shared experiences, such as language festivals and cross-cultural group work. This fills a gap in TLT that tends to emphasize more personal reflection in the context of adult education (Taylor, 2008).

Previous research in Indonesia has confirmed the role of local content in strengthening students' character and tolerance. For example, Juliani et al. (2024) asserted that culture-based learning increases discipline and identity pride. Hayati et al. (2024) uncovered increased motivation and non-academic achievement by integrating local wisdom. In addition, Cahyani & Wahana (2025) prove the inculcation of tolerance values through local culture-based learning in Pancasila Education. However, these studies do not highlight the role of regional languages as an instrument of cross-ethnic cultural participation, which is the academic gap this study fills.

To fill this gap, this study proposes the theory of Participatory Cultural Inclusion (PCI). It emphasizes that students are not just recipients of knowledge, but cultural actors who actively reproduce, interpret, and internalize local cultural values. This differs from the classical theory of Multicultural Education in *Multicultural Education: Issues and Perspectives* by Banks & Banks that emphasizes understanding and respect for diversity (King, 2020). PCI adds a new dimension through Student Agency, creating an inclusive space based on local culture.

Participatory Cultural Inclusion (PCI) also broadens the understanding of Inclusive Pedagogy. Florian & Black-Hawkins (2011) emphasize differentiation strategies so that all students have access to learning. However, inclusion in PCI not only provides formal access but also substantive involvement in cultural activities. In other words, students of different ethnicities are not only administratively accepted but also actively

involved in reproducing the local language and culture, thereby fostering social integration through cultural participation (Amin, 2024).

From here, the novelty of PCI's value can be seen. While CRP focuses on teachers' responses to diversity, PCI focuses on student involvement in bringing local culture to life. While TLT emphasizes individual reflection, PCI underscores collective transformation through cultural participation. If Inclusive Pedagogy emphasizes access to learning, PCI highlights active involvement in reproducing local identities. Thus, PCI fills a gap in the global literature by affirming the role of regional languages as a medium of collaborative cultural inclusion.

Therefore, this research contributes theoretically by introducing Participatory Cultural Inclusion (PCI) as a new development in the study of multicultural education. PCI was born from the empirical context of learning the Palembang language, but its implications can be extended to local content in other regions of Indonesia. This concept strengthens the global literature (King, 2020; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Hoggan & Finnegan, 2023; Jia & Nasri, 2019). At the same time, it presents a new perspective that places local languages at the heart of inclusion and social transformation in multicultural classrooms.

CONCLUSION

This research emphasizes that learning the Palembang language contributes to the preservation of regional languages, strengthening local identity, and fostering inclusive attitudes among students across ethnicities. From the analysis results, the concept of Participatory Cultural Inclusion emerged as a new theoretical contribution, placing local languages not only as means of communication but also as instruments of social transformation and cultural inclusion. Practically, these findings emphasize the importance of strengthening local content policies, teacher training, and participatory cultural activities in primary schools. For further research, comparative studies in various regions and long-term evaluations are required to assess the impact of local language learning on the formation of students' multicultural character.

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