

RETHINKING LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION: A DIDACTIC MULTILINGUAL MODEL FOR
NON-NATIVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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Abstract

This research addresses the urgent need to strengthen the professional competence of non-native English and Arabic language teachers by developing a multilingual didactic teaching model. Despite curriculum advancements aimed at enhancing students' communicative skills, the success of language instruction ultimately hinges on teacher proficiency. This study was conducted at the Department of Language and Literature Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at a university in Jambi. The study proposes the reconstruction of a teaching model grounded in multilingual didactics to better prepare pre-service teachers for real-world classroom challenges. The research adopts the ADDIE framework (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) to ensure a systematic approach to model development. It focuses on equipping future teachers with cross-linguistic awareness, instructional adaptability, and enhanced communication skills in foreign languages. The model is validated through expert assessment, student feedback, and practical teaching applications. Expected outcomes include a validated multilingual didactic model, improved teaching performance among pre-service teachers, and enhanced pedagogical practices among university lecturers. The study supports the development of competitive, professional educators ready to work in diverse educational environments.

Keywords: Didactic Multilingual, Language Instruction, Non-Native Speaker, Pre-service Teacher, Foreign Language

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary global landscape has fundamentally transformed the requirements for language education, necessitating a paradigm shift in how we conceptualise competence in foreign language teaching. In an increasingly interconnected world, the traditional monolingual approach to language instruction has proven inadequate in preparing students for the complex linguistic realities they will encounter. The urgency of research on reconstructing models of foreign language teaching competence based on multilingual didactics has never been more apparent, particularly in contexts such as Indonesia, where multiple languages coexist and interact in educational settings.

Multilingual didactics represents an innovative pedagogical approach that harnesses the full linguistic repertoire of both teachers and learners to facilitate more effective language acquisition. Unlike traditional methods that rigidly separate languages, multilingual didactics recognises the dynamic interplay between languages and leverages this interplay as a resource rather than an obstacle (García, 2014). This approach is particularly relevant in teacher education programs, where prospective teachers must develop competence to navigate and facilitate multilingual learning environments effectively.

The research presented in this article addresses the critical need to reconstruct foreign language teaching competence models through the lens of multilingual didactics, with a specific focus on preparing prospective English and Arabic teachers at the Language and Literature Education Department (PBS) of Jambi University. This reconstruction is not merely an academic exercise but a response to the pressing demands of 21st-century education, where multilingual competence has become an essential professional qualification.

The urgency of this research stems from several interconnected factors. First, there is a growing recognition that foreign language teachers must possess multilingual didactic competence as part of their professional repertoire. Second, the implementation of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum emphasises the development of students' communication skills in foreign languages, which directly depends on teacher

competence. Third, achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) requires language-teaching approaches that effectively develop students' multilingual capabilities.

This article presents a comprehensive framework for reconstructing competence models for foreign-language teaching grounded in multilingual didactics, addressing both theoretical foundations and practical applications. Through this reconstruction, we aim to contribute to the development of more effective language teacher education programs that can meet the complex linguistic demands of contemporary education.

Theoretical Framework of Multilingual Didactics

Multilingual didactics emerge as a theoretical and pedagogical framework that challenges traditional monolingual approaches to language teaching. At its core, multilingual didactics is defined as “a pedagogical approach that utilises the entire linguistic repertoire (mother tongue/L1, target language, and other known languages) to facilitate foreign language learning” (García, 2011). This approach represents a significant departure from conventional language teaching methodologies, which maintain a strict separation between languages.

The theoretical foundation of multilingual didactics rests on several key principles. First, it recognises that multilingual individuals do not possess separate, autonomous language systems but rather an integrated linguistic repertoire that they draw upon strategically depending on context and purpose. Second, it views multilingualism not as a collection of individual languages, but as a complex, dynamic system where languages interact and influence one another. Third, it emphasises the importance of cross-linguistic awareness—the ability to recognise similarities and differences between languages—as a crucial component of language learning.

The evolution toward multilingual didactics can be traced through several phases of language teaching methodology. The grammar-translation method, dominant in the 19th and early 20th centuries, treated languages as discrete systems to be analysed and compared rather than as means of communication. The audio-lingual method that followed focused on habit formation through pattern drills, still maintaining strict separation between languages.

Communicative language teaching, which emerged in the 1970s, represented a significant shift by emphasising language use over language analysis, but it largely operated within a monolingual framework. It is only in recent decades, with the development of theories of multilingualism and translanguaging, that language teaching has begun to systematically incorporate multilingual perspectives.

Translanguaging theory, developed by García and Wei (2014), has been particularly influential in shaping multilingual didactics. Translanguaging refers to “the complex discursive practices that multilinguals use to construct their communicative repertoires” and involves the flexible deployment of linguistic resources regardless of language boundaries (García & Wei, 2014). This theoretical perspective provides the foundation for understanding how multilingual didactics can be implemented in classroom practice.

Key Components of Multilingual Didactic Competence

Multilingual didactic competence encompasses several interrelated components that foreign language teachers must develop. These components form the basis for reconstructing traditional models of language teaching competence:

1. **Metalinguistic Awareness:** The ability to reflect on and analyse linguistic features across multiple languages, recognising patterns, similarities, and differences.
2. **Cross-linguistic Mediation Skills:** The capacity to help learners make connections between languages and use their existing linguistic knowledge to acquire new languages.
3. **Flexible Language Use:** The ability to strategically deploy different languages for various pedagogical purposes, including explanation, clarification, and scaffolding.
4. **Multilingual Assessment Literacy:** Competence in evaluating learners' multilingual development using appropriate assessment tools and criteria.
5. **Critical Multilingual Awareness:** Understanding the social, political, and ideological dimensions of multilingualism in educational contexts.

These components represent a significant expansion of traditional language-teaching competence models, which typically focus on target-language proficiency and general pedagogical skills without specifically addressing multilingual dimensions.

Research Evidence Supporting Multilingual Didactics

A growing body of research supports the effectiveness of multilingual didactic approaches. Studies have shown that leveraging students' entire linguistic repertoire can lead to deeper understanding of linguistic concepts, increased metalinguistic awareness, and more positive attitudes toward language learning (García, 2022).

Research in Arabic heritage language education has demonstrated that translanguaging approaches can facilitate language development by allowing learners to draw on their full linguistic resources (Al Musawi, 2025). Similarly, studies on translanguaging oral corrective feedback have shown that multilingual approaches can provide more effective support for language learners than monolingual methods (Ben Said, 2024). These findings challenge the monolingual principle that has dominated language education for decades, providing empirical support for reconstructing language teaching competence models along multilingual lines.

Current Challenges in Foreign Language Teaching

The traditional monolingual approach to foreign language teaching, which has dominated educational practice for decades, faces significant limitations in addressing the linguistic realities of contemporary classrooms. This approach, characterised by the strict separation of languages and the exclusive use of the target language in instruction, is based on the questionable assumption that languages function as autonomous systems in the minds of multilingual individuals.

Monolingual approaches typically enforce what has been termed the "target language only" policy, where teachers are expected to use the language being taught exclusively, and students are discouraged from using their other linguistic resources. This approach creates artificial learning environments that do not reflect how languages are used in real-world multilingual contexts. Research has shown that such artificial constraints can create unnecessary cognitive burdens for learners and limit opportunities for meaningful language use (García, 2014; Failasofah et. al., 2023).

The limitations of monolingual approaches become particularly evident in contexts like Indonesia, where students typically have knowledge of multiple languages (Indonesian, local languages, and potentially English or other foreign languages). In such contexts, the rigid separation of languages fails to capitalise on learners' rich linguistic resources and may even devalue them, leading to negative attitudes toward multilingualism.

A significant challenge in implementing effective multilingual education is the lack of preparedness among foreign language teachers. Most teacher education programs have traditionally operated within monolingual frameworks, providing prospective teachers with limited exposure to multilingual pedagogical approaches. As a result, many teachers lack the knowledge, skills, and confidence to implement multilingual didactic strategies in their classrooms.

Current research indicates that foreign language teachers' competence in utilising multiple languages for instructional purposes remains low (Al Musawi, 2025). Teachers often focus exclusively on the target language without actively developing connections, similarities, and differences between it and other languages students know. This limited approach constrains students' ability to develop flexible multilingual competence and restricts their expressive capabilities in the target language. The professional development needs of language teachers in this area are substantial. Teachers require not only theoretical knowledge about multilingualism but also practical strategies for implementing multilingual approaches in their classrooms. They need opportunities to develop their own multilingual awareness and to practice multilingual teaching techniques in supportive environments.

Curriculum and Assessment Constraints

Educational systems often create structural barriers to implementing multilingual approaches through curriculum design and assessment practices that reflect monolingual ideologies. Curricula typically treat languages as separate subjects with little or no connection between them, reinforcing the artificial separation of languages rather than their integration.

Assessment practices pose another significant challenge. Standardised language tests rarely evaluate learners' ability to use multiple languages strategically or to mediate between languages. Instead, they focus on monolingual proficiency in each language separately, sending a clear message that multilingual competence is not valued. This misalignment between multilingual pedagogical goals and monolingual assessment practices creates tensions that can undermine efforts to implement multilingual didactics.

In the Indonesian context, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum presents both opportunities and challenges for multilingual education. While the curriculum emphasises the development of communication skills in foreign languages, as stated in the Minister of Religion Decree No. 347 of 2022, it does not explicitly provide guidance on how to leverage students' multilingual resources in achieving these goals. This gap in the curriculum framework leaves teachers without clear direction on implementing multilingual approaches.

Sociocultural and Ideological Factors

Beyond the practical challenges of implementation, multilingual education faces significant sociocultural and ideological barriers. Deep-seated monolingual ideologies pervade educational systems and society at large, shaping attitudes toward language use in classrooms. These ideologies often manifest in the belief that “good” language teaching means the exclusive use of the target language and that using other languages represents a failure or deficiency.

Such ideologies can be particularly strong in contexts where colonial language policies have historically suppressed local languages in favour of dominant or foreign languages. In these settings, multilingual approaches may be viewed with suspicion or resistance, seen as a threat to the purity of the target language or to the development of “proper” language proficiency. Power dynamics between languages also play a crucial role in shaping the feasibility of multilingual approaches. In contexts where certain languages carry greater social prestige or economic value than others, there may be resistance to integrating less prestigious languages into foreign-language instruction. This resistance can come from various stakeholders, including parents, administrators, and even teachers.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a developmental research methodology, utilising the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation), to reconstruct foreign-language-teaching competence models grounded in multilingual didactics. The ADDIE model provides a systematic framework for educational development, ensuring comprehensive coverage of all necessary phases in the creation and validation of the multilingual didactic competence model.

The selection of the ADDIE model is based on its suitability for educational development projects and its flexibility in accommodating both theoretical and practical considerations. Unlike purely experimental or descriptive research designs, developmental research allows for the creation and validation of educational products—in this case, a competence model for multilingual foreign language teaching. The research design incorporates both qualitative and quantitative elements to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and to validate the developed model from multiple perspectives. This mixed-methods approach enhances the credibility and usefulness of the research outcomes.

The research was conducted at the Language and Literature Education Department (PBS) of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Jambi University, located in Muaro Jambi Regency. The participants in this study consisted of 50 preservice teachers from the English Language Education (PBI) and Arabic Language Education (PBA) programs. The researchers selected participants using a purposive sampling technique. The sample included both male and female participants, with a distribution that reflected the gender composition of the PBI and PBA programs. This diversity in participant profiles enhanced the representativeness of the findings and allowed consideration of potential gender-related differences in the development of multilingual didactic competence.

Data Analysis

The research employed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques to comprehensively address the research questions.

Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analysed using statistical methods to determine:

- The level of practicality of the multilingual didactic competence model as perceived by lecturers and preservice teachers
- Changes in preservice teachers' self-reported multilingual didactic competence over time
- Relationships between different components of the competence model
- Differences in implementation patterns between English and Arabic preservice teachers

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies) were used to summarise the quantitative data, while inferential statistics (t-tests, ANOVA, correlation analysis) were employed to test hypotheses and identify significant relationships.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from focus group discussions, observations, and open-ended questionnaire items were analysed using thematic analysis. This process involved:

- Transcribing audio recordings and field notes
- Coding data to identify emerging themes and patterns
- Categorising codes into broader thematic areas
- Interpreting themes in relation to the research questions
- Illustrating findings with representative quotes and examples

The qualitative analysis provided rich insights into the implementation process and the perceived effectiveness of the multilingual didactic competence model from the participants' perspectives.

Validation Procedures

The research incorporated multiple validation procedures to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings:

1. Expert Validation: The multilingual didactic competence model underwent validation by two panels of experts with complementary expertise. Subject matter experts evaluated the theoretical foundations and comprehensiveness of the model, while educational development experts assessed its methodological soundness and feasibility.
2. Triangulation: The use of multiple data collection methods and sources allowed for triangulation, enhancing the credibility of the findings through the convergence of evidence from different perspectives.
3. Member Checking: Participants were given opportunities to review and provide feedback on preliminary findings, ensuring that the interpretations accurately reflected their experiences and perspectives.
4. Peer Review: The research process and findings were reviewed by colleagues not directly involved in the study to provide critical feedback and identify potential biases or limitations.
5. Pilot Testing: Data collection instruments were pilot tested with a small group of participants, like the research sample, to identify and address any issues before full implementation.

These validation procedures strengthened the methodological rigour of the research and enhanced confidence in the validity of the findings and the usefulness of the developed multilingual didactic competence model.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Multilingual Didactic Competence Model

The implementation of the multilingual didactic competence model is expected to yield significant improvements in preservice teachers' professional competence, particularly in their ability to teach effectively in multilingual contexts. These improvements span several dimensions of teacher competence.

Preservice teachers who complete the restructured program are expected to develop sophisticated multilingual pedagogical skills that go beyond traditional monolingual teaching methods. These educators will be equipped to strategically use multiple languages for a range of instructional purposes, such as explanation, clarification, scaffolding, and assessment. Rather than treating translanguaging as an ad hoc

or remedial practice, they will learn to design and implement intentional translinguaging strategies that actively support language learning objectives. This includes adapting and creating multilingual teaching materials that reflect the real linguistic diversity of their classrooms, fostering integrated language development. Furthermore, they will guide students in building cross-linguistic awareness, helping them recognise both connections and differences across languages—an essential skill in multilingual contexts.

A key transformation involves improved multilingual assessment literacy. Preservice teachers will move beyond evaluating languages in isolation and instead develop the ability to design assessment tasks that evaluate students' strategic use of their full linguistic repertoire. They will apply assessment criteria that acknowledge multilingual communication as distinct from monolingual native-speaker norms. Through formative assessment practices, they will use multiple languages to provide meaningful feedback, supporting ongoing language growth. They will also learn to interpret assessment results from a multilingual perspective, identifying developmental patterns that transcend individual languages, ensuring that evaluation aligns with and reinforces multilingual pedagogical goals.

The program also aims to strengthen preservice teachers' multilingual identity and professional agency. Educators will come to recognise and value their own multilingual backgrounds and understand how these identities shape their teaching. This self-awareness will be paired with critical consciousness of the sociopolitical dynamics of language in education. As a result, they will gain the confidence to make principled decisions about language use, even when challenging institutional norms that favour monolingualism. They will also be empowered to become advocates for multilingual education within their schools and communities, a vital capacity for sustaining innovation amid systemic pressures.

Another core outcome is the cultivation of increased reflective practice. Preservice teachers will be trained to systematically reflect on their multilingual teaching methods and assess their impact on student learning. They will use evidence from their classrooms to inform instructional improvements and engage in collaborative reflection with peers, contributing to a shared knowledge base. Moreover, they will document their practices and conduct classroom-based research, actively expanding the field's understanding of effective multilingual education. This reflective orientation ensures continuous growth in multilingual didactic competence throughout their careers.

Ultimately, the implementation of this multilingual didactic competence model is expected to enhance student learning outcomes in foreign language education. Students taught by these teachers will develop greater communicative competence, enabling them to use target languages appropriately across diverse contexts. They will also build stronger metalinguistic awareness and cross-linguistic transfer skills, allowing them to leverage knowledge from one language to accelerate learning in another. Increased confidence in using multiple languages will reduce language anxiety and encourage risk-taking, resulting in a more comprehensive and functional form of language proficiency than that fostered by traditional monolingual approaches.

In addition, students will develop more effective language-learning strategies. They will learn to strategically use their full linguistic repertoire to aid comprehension and expression, rather than viewing languages as isolated systems. Their ability to notice linguistic similarities and differences will be sharpened, enabling more efficient learning. With greater autonomy, they will be able to solve communication challenges by drawing on all their languages. These skills will not only improve their current language learning but also equip them to learn additional languages more effectively in the future.

Affective results for students are also expected to improve significantly. Motivation for language learning will increase as students recognise the relevance and practical benefits of multilingualism. They will develop stronger multilingual identities, seeing themselves as capable users of multiple languages rather than as incomplete speakers of separate ones. Attitudes toward linguistic diversity will become more positive, fostering inclusivity and respect. Language-related anxiety will decrease, as the rigid expectation to maintain strict language separation is replaced with a supportive, flexible approach. These emotional and identity-related benefits are essential for sustaining long-term engagement with language learning.

On an institutional level, the model calls for a transformation of teacher education. Curricula across programs will be innovated to move beyond monolingual paradigms and embed multilingual competence as a core expectation. Teacher education methods will themselves model multilingual practices, providing preservice teachers with authentic examples of effective pedagogy. Assessment systems will be redesigned to evaluate multilingual teaching skills in real-world contexts. Additionally, stronger partnerships between teacher education institutions and schools will be developed to support the implementation and refinement of multilingual education practices.

Policy development at institutional, national, and systemic levels will also be influenced. Institutional policies will begin to recognise and support multilingual teaching approaches. National standards for teacher education may incorporate multilingual competence as a key component of language teaching expertise. Language-in-education policies will shift toward valuing and leveraging multilingualism, rather than treating it as a barrier. Assessment policies will be realigned to reflect multilingual goals, ensuring that evaluations fairly and accurately capture multilingual competence.

Finally, the model contributes directly to Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by promoting inclusive and equitable education. By recognising students' diverse linguistic backgrounds as assets rather than deficits, the model supports educational equity. It enhances the effectiveness of teaching and learning by building on students' existing knowledge, leading to better educational outcomes. Moreover, it prepares future teachers and students to thrive in multilingual societies, contributing to global citizenship and lifelong learning—all key dimensions of quality education.

CONCLUSION

The restructured teacher education program represents a transformative shift toward embracing multilingualism as a pedagogical asset rather than a challenge to be overcome. By cultivating multilingual didactic competence in preservice teachers, the program redefines the role of language educators—not as enforcers of monolingual norms, but as strategic facilitators of dynamic, inclusive, and responsive multilingual learning environments. Through intentional translanguaging practices, these teachers are equipped to leverage students' full linguistic repertoires, fostering deeper understanding, enhanced metalinguistic awareness, and more effective language learning. Beyond individual classrooms, the impact extends to institutional and systemic levels. Teacher education curricula are reimaged to model and assess multilingual teaching practices, while stronger school-university partnerships ensure that innovation is grounded in real-world contexts. At the policy level, this approach challenges long-standing monolingual ideologies, advocating for changes in language-in-education policies and assessment frameworks that recognise and validate multilingual competence.

The didactic multilingual model empowers both teachers and students to develop strong multilingual identities, supported by reflective practice, professional agency, and critical consciousness. This contributes not only to improved linguistic outcomes but also to greater equity, inclusivity, and motivation in language learning—key drivers of student engagement and long-term success. This model aligns closely with Sustainable Development Goal 4 by promoting quality, inclusive, and equitable education. It affirms linguistic diversity as a foundation for effective teaching and learning, preparing future generations to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and multilingual world. As such, the implementation of multilingual didactic competence in teacher education is not merely an academic reform—it is a necessary evolution toward truly responsive and socially just education systems.

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