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ENGLISH AND LOCAL LANGUAGE PRESERVATION IN EAST NUSA TENGGARA: A STUDY OF PRE-SERVICE ENGLISH TEACHERS' ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES

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A B S T R A C T S

The widespread adoption of English in Indonesia has raised concerns about its impact on local language sustainability, especially in multilingual, postcolonial regions such as East Nusa Tenggara. This study investigates how English learning can coexist with local language preservation by addressing three key issues: (1) students' attitudes toward English and local languages, (2) the use of these languages across different domains, and (3) strategies proposed for promoting linguistic coexistence. Nineteen sixth-semester English Education students from Citra Bangsa University were selected as participants, given their future roles as language educators and policy influencers. Using a qualitative approach that included semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and surveys, the study found a dual but sometimes conflicting orientation. The results show that participants acknowledged the instrumental value of English for education and career advancement (89%) while affirming the cultural importance of local languages (95%). In terms of usage, local languages remained dominant in-home domains (65%) but were marginalized in academic settings (5%) and peer interactions (21%), revealing a domain-specific pattern shaped by perceived language utility. To bridge this gap, participants suggested strategies such as bilingual education models (74%), community-driven language initiatives (63%), and culturally inclusive curricula. However, 47% expressed skepticism toward government-led solutions, citing lack of relevance and implementation barriers. The findings indicate that sustainable multilingualism is possible through intentional, context-sensitive strategies. The study recommends reorienting teacher education to support multilingual pedagogies, integrating local knowledge, and fostering collaboration between grassroots efforts and institutional frameworks to ensure balanced language ecologies.

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INTRODUCTION

The global expansion of English as a lingua franca has triggered extensive debates regarding its impact on local and indigenous languages, particularly within multilingual societies (Crystal, 2003). In many contexts, the dominance of English in education, business,

and media raises concerns about linguistic imperialism, where English's prestige potentially threatens the survival of minority languages (Phillipson, 2009). While English proficiency is often associated with economic and academic mobility, this trend poses challenges for maintaining linguistic diversity.

In Indonesia, *Bahasa Indonesia* functions as the national language that unifies diverse ethnic groups. However, English is increasingly prioritized within education systems and labor markets as a tool for global competitiveness (Zein, 2020; Ate & Ndapa Lawa, 2022). This growing emphasis on English may marginalize both *Bahasa Indonesia* in certain formal domains and, more critically, regional languages that lack institutional support. This situation is especially urgent in linguistically diverse regions such as East Nusa Tenggara, where languages like *Uab Meto*, *Tetun*, and other indigenous tongues are facing declining intergenerational transmission and reduced functionality in daily life.

Globally, concerns over language shift are not only about preserving cultural identity but also about safeguarding cognitive, psychological, and social benefits associated with mother tongue use. According to UNESCO (2003), "languages are vehicles of intangible heritage," encompassing traditional knowledge systems, worldviews, and communal values. In East Nusa Tenggara, where oral traditions are embedded in native languages, the loss of these languages signifies not only the erosion of identity but also of local wisdom and heritage sustainability.

Nevertheless, English proficiency remains a non-negotiable asset for many Indonesian students, particularly those in teacher training programs. Graddol (2006) refers to English as the language of opportunity, reinforcing its instrumental value in a competitive global landscape. At institutions like Citra Bangsa University, students in the English Education Study Program are expected to master English to secure career prospects. However, this emphasis on English raises critical questions: Can English learning coexist with local language preservation? Or does it necessarily accelerate linguistic inequality?

One potential pathway is additive bilingualism, in which the acquisition of a second language supports rather than replaces the first (Baker, 2011). In education, this could take the form of integrating local languages into the curriculum or fostering bilingual literacy. However, implementing such models requires policy support, teacher training, and curriculum development, which are often lacking or inconsistently applied, especially in peripheral areas such as Kupang.

The Indonesian government has acknowledged the importance of regional languages through efforts like the 2009 Regional Language Vitalization Program, yet implementation often lags. This absence in formal education settings contributes to a perception among youth that indigenous languages are less valuable, leading to further disengagement and language attrition. Despite extensive literature on the effects of English on national and local languages in Indonesia, limited research has explored how pre-service English teachers perceive this dynamic particularly in less-researched contexts like East Nusa Tenggara. As future educators, these individuals play a crucial role in shaping classroom language practices and student attitudes toward multilingualism.

This study aims to fill that gap by examining how pre-service English teachers in Kupang understand and navigate the balance between English acquisition and local language maintenance. Their perspectives offer insights not only into current sociolinguistic realities but also into potential directions for more inclusive and sustainable language education. While English is increasingly viewed as a necessity in education and employment, its prominence may inadvertently undermine the vitality of local languages in multilingual regions. In East Nusa Tenggara, there is a need to understand how future English educators perceive and respond to this tension within their educational contexts.

This study is designed to: 1) investigate students' attitudes toward both English and local languages; 2) examine domain-specific patterns of language use in their daily interactions; 3)

identify the strategies they propose to promote the coexistence of English learning and local language preservation. By focusing on these objectives, the research aligns with broader concerns in language policy and sustainable multilingualism, contributing to efforts to achieve UNESCO's SDG 4.7, which emphasizes the integration of linguistic and cultural diversity in education.

This study is grounded in several key concepts such as: 1) Linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 2009): the dominance of English at the expense of local languages; 2) Language vitality and shift (UNESCO, 2003): indicators of a language's sustainability; 3) Additive bilingualism (Baker, 2011): a model of language acquisition that enriches rather than replaces the mother tongue; and 4) Multilingual education: the strategic use of multiple languages within formal learning settings to support both global competencies and local identity.

By applying these concepts to the context of East Nusa Tenggara, this research seeks to inform language policy, curriculum design, and teacher training initiatives that prioritize equity and cultural rootedness in language education. Ultimately, the question is not whether English should be taught, but how it can be taught alongside local languages in a way that values both. As Fishman (1991) emphasizes, language maintenance is not about resisting change but about managing it wisely. This study seeks to contribute to that wisdom by listening to those who will be at the frontlines of language education: the future teachers of East Nusa Tenggara.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative case study design to explore the perceptions of English Education students regarding the coexistence of English learning and local language preservation. A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate because it enables a deep exploration of complex, context-dependent issues such as language attitudes, identity, and educational practices areas that are difficult to quantify but rich in meaning (Creswell, 2014). The case study method allowed for a focused investigation of a bounded group of participants within a specific institutional and sociolinguistic context.

The research was conducted at Citra Bangsa University in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara, a linguistically diverse region experiencing rapid shifts in language use due to national and global pressures. The university's English Education Study Program was chosen as the research site because its students are being prepared to become English teachers and thus play a pivotal role in shaping future language practices in their communities.

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of participants' views and behaviors, the study employed methodological triangulation, combining three data collection instruments: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and written surveys. These tools were selected to capture both individual reflections and collective discourse, as well as to enhance the credibility and richness of the data.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative intrinsic case study design providing an in-depth and context-sensitive exploration of a bounded system specifically, a group of 19 sixth-semester English Education students at Citra Bangsa University in Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara. This group was selected because of its dual role as language learners and future language educators, placing them at the intersection of English acquisition and local language preservation. Unlike ethnography, which seeks a holistic cultural portrait, or narrative inquiry, which centers on individual life stories, the case study approach was chosen to explore shared perceptions and language use patterns within a clearly defined educational and sociocultural context. In addressing *how* and *why* questions in real-life contexts, the case study enabled a multi-layered analysis of language attitudes, usage across social domains, and strategies for linguistic coexistence. Data were collected over a two-month period through three sequential methods:

(1) a preliminary survey to map general language behaviors, (2) semi-structured interviews for deeper individual insights, and (3) focus group discussions to capture collective views and tensions.

The researcher's role was that of an insider-outsider, serving as both a lecturer in the institution and a neutral investigator. Reflexive journaling was employed throughout the study to acknowledge and minimize potential biases, and data triangulation was used to enhance analytical rigor. Ethical considerations were rigorously upheld: participants were informed of their rights to withdraw at any time, signed informed consent forms were obtained, and the study was approved by the university's Research Ethics Committee. All names and identifying details were anonymized to ensure confidentiality and to protect the participants' academic and personal integrity. Through this design, the study aims to generate rich, contextually grounded insights that inform both language policy and teacher education practices in multilingual, postcolonial regions such as East Nusa Tenggara.

Participants

The participants in this study consisted of 19 sixth-semester students from the English Education Study Program at Citra Bangsa University, Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants who could provide relevant insights into the multilingual dynamics in the region. The criteria for inclusion required students to self-report fluency in at least two of the following languages: a local regional language such as *Uab Meto* or *Dawan*, *Bahasa Indonesia* as the national language, and English as the target foreign language. This linguistic diversity allowed the study to capture a range of experiences and perceptions regarding language coexistence in both personal and educational domains. Further demographic details collected included participants' ethnic backgrounds and prior exposure to language learning environments, which varied from predominantly rural to semi-urban settings. These factors contributed to the richness and contextual specificity of the data.

Prior to data collection, all participants provided written informed consent, acknowledging voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any time without penalty. To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned, and all identifying information was anonymized. The researchers, also affiliated with the same university, maintained a reflexive stance throughout the study to address potential bias arising from insider positionality. Strategies such as member checking, transparent documentation of decision-making processes, and triangulation of data sources were implemented to enhance trustworthiness and validity of the findings.

Instruments

This study employed three complementary research instruments to ensure comprehensive data collection and methodological triangulation: semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and a written survey. The semi-structured interview guide consisted of 12 open-ended questions designed to explore participants' language attitudes, perceived challenges in balancing English learning with local language preservation, and suggestions for fostering linguistic coexistence. Sample questions included how participants perceive the role of English compared to their local language in daily life, the challenges they face in maintaining their local language while learning English, and suggestions for strategies that might help balance these two languages in their communities. These interviews allowed flexibility to probe deeper while maintaining a thematic focus aligned with the research objectives.

The FGD protocol included five thematic prompts to stimulate group discussions around language policy, cultural identity, and community responses to language shift. For example, participants were asked to reflect on the impact of language policy on local language use and

how English learning influences their cultural identity. Encouraging peer interaction helped surface shared experiences and occasionally contested views, providing insight into collective attitudes. The written survey combined Likert-scale items, rated from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and open-ended questions. The Likert items measured attitudes toward English and local languages in terms of perceived value, cultural relevance, and anticipated future use, such as agreement with statements. Other survey items assessed perceived language vitality and domain-specific use frequency, for example in the home, school, and social media contexts. Open-ended questions invited participants to elaborate on their responses.

To ensure instrument validity and reliability, all three tools were piloted with four students from the same program, who provided feedback on clarity, cultural relevance, and length. Adjustments were made to address ambiguous phrasing and inconsistent local terminology. Although this pilot improved face validity, formal reliability testing of the survey, such as Cronbach's alpha, was not conducted due to sample size limitations, which is acknowledged as a limitation. Future research should incorporate broader piloting and psychometric analysis to enhance instrument validation. The constructs of language attitudes and language use patterns were operationalized through thematic coding of qualitative data and quantitative scaling in the survey, allowing cross-validation of findings across instruments. Overall, the triangulated use of interviews, FGDs, and surveys strengthened the credibility and depth of the data, providing both nuanced narratives and measurable trends related to language coexistence in the study context.

Data Analysis

Data were collected using a triangulation approach to enhance validity by combining qualitative and quantitative methods over a four-week period to accommodate academic schedules and encourage thoughtful responses. Qualitative data included individual semi-structured interviews (30–45 minutes each) conducted in participants' preferred language (*Bahasa Indonesia* or English), and two focus group discussions (FGDs) (60 minutes each) held in a neutral campus setting to foster open interaction while minimizing power dynamics. All interviews and FGDs were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Additionally, a written survey was distributed electronically via Google Forms to capture broader trends, achieving a 100% response rate. Field notes were also taken during all interactions to document non-verbal cues and contextual details.

The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis through a six-phase iterative process directly linked to the research questions. The first phase involved transcription and careful translation of local-language excerpts into English to ensure accessibility. The second phase was open coding using NVivo 12, where initial codes such as economic pressure, cultural pride, and language anxiety were identified from data relating to language attitudes and usage. In the third phase, axial coding clustered these codes into broader themes like instrumental vs. integrative motivation, which addressed questions regarding reasons for learning English and preserving local languages. The fourth phase involved pattern refinement through constant comparative analysis to strengthen thematic coherence. In the fifth phase, triangulation integrated qualitative themes with quantitative survey data for example, survey results showing strong support for bilingual education were complemented with qualitative insights on coexistence strategies to enrich the statistical findings. The final phase involved member checking with five participants who validated preliminary interpretations to ensure credibility.

To minimize translation bias and enhance accuracy, the translation process involved bilingual experts fluent in both *Bahasa Indonesia* and English. Translated excerpts were back-translated and cross-checked for semantic equivalence prior to coding, maintaining data integrity throughout analysis. Regarding coding reliability, two independent researchers initially coded a portion of the data separately and then compared and discussed discrepancies

until consensus was reached, thereby enhancing consistency and trustworthiness. The use of NVivo software alongside a mixed-method triangulation approach provided a comprehensive and credible understanding of the research problem, ensuring findings that are relevant and grounded in the real-world context.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

This study explored the perspectives of 19 sixth-semester English Education students regarding the coexistence of English learning and local language preservation. The findings are presented in three interrelated themes: (1) Language Attitudes and Perceptions, (2) Domain-Specific Language Use Patterns, and (3) Strategies for Coexistence.

1. Students' Attitudes Toward Both English and Local Languages

Participants demonstrated nuanced and often ambivalent attitudes toward both English and local languages. Table 1 summarizes their responses to key attitudinal statements, based on a survey where each participant could select agree, neutral, or disagree for each item.

Table 1
Perceived Value of English vs. Local Languages

Statement	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
English is essential for career success	89%	11%	0%
Local languages are important for cultural identity	95%	5%	0%
Learning English weakens local language proficiency	32%	42%	26%

These results reveal strong consensus on the instrumental value of English (89%) and the cultural importance of local languages (95%). However, opinions were divided regarding the potential conflict between them: only 26% disagreed with the idea that English weakens local language proficiency, while 42% were uncertain. This high rate of neutrality suggests an unresolved internal tension.

Interview data supported this ambivalence. As one participant noted, "we want to be fluent in English for our careers, but we also feel guilty when we stop using our mother tongue" (P06-F20). Another added, "speaking English makes me proud, but when I forget some *Uab Meto* words, I feel like I'm losing part of myself" (P13-F21). These comments reflect what Phillipson (1992) refers to as the paradox of linguistic imperialism where learners value English for its socioeconomic benefits but simultaneously feel concerned about its cultural implications. This ambivalence may also stem from participants' dual identities: as aspiring English educators, they are professionally committed to promoting English, which may make it difficult to critically acknowledge its impact on local languages. The cognitive dissonance between these roles may explain the high proportion of neutral responses.

2. Domain-Specific Patterns of Language Use

To explore how these attitudes translated into actual behavior, participants reported their language use across four everyday domains. Table 2 presents the percentage of participants who reported using each language most frequently in each domain. These percentages were derived by calculating the proportion of participants selecting each language as their primary choice for that context.

Table 2
Primary Language Use by Domain

Domain	Local Language	Indonesian	English
Family/Home	65%	30%	5%
Social media	5%	50%	45%
Academic work	5%	25%	70%
Peer Interaction	21%	59%	20%

These patterns reveal a clear case of domain-specific bilingualism or multilingualism. Local languages retain a strong role in the family domain (65%) but are nearly absent in academic and digital contexts. English dominates academic work (70%), while Indonesian serves as a bridging language, especially in peer interaction (59%).

Interview data contextualized these patterns. One participant explained, "I speak *Uab Meto* with my parents, but on campus and social media, I switch to Indonesian or English depending on who I'm talking to" (P10-F19). This pattern suggests a pragmatic adaptation rather than a full shift yet, as Fishman (1991) warns, reduced horizontal (peer-to-peer) use of local languages often precedes intergenerational loss. The low percentage of local language use in peer interactions (21%) signals potential vulnerability.

3. Strategies for Coexistence

Participants also proposed various strategies to ensure the continued presence of local languages alongside English. Table 3 presents these strategies, combining survey data on support levels (measured by the number of participants endorsing each solution) and illustrative quotes from interviews and FGDs.

Table 3
Proposed Strategies for Language Coexistence

Strategy	Support (%)	Implementation Level	Representative Quote
Bilingual Education Programs	74%	Institutional	"Schools should teach English through local languages." (P05-F22)
Community Language Events	63%	Grassroots	"Cultural festivals can make young people proud to speak their heritage language." (P12-F21)
Policy Reforms	47%	Governmental	"The government should fund local language materials for schools." (P08-M23)
Family-Based Language Practice	38%	Domestic	"Parents must consciously speak our language at home." (P03-F20)

The most popular strategy (74%) was implementing bilingual education, aligning with Baker's (2011) framework of weak bilingual models where local languages are used as mediums of instruction alongside English. This suggests participants are not rejecting English but rather advocating for additive multilingualism.

Community-based strategies also received strong support (63%), indicating that cultural pride and language use are tightly connected in participants' minds. As one student put it, "We need to celebrate our language, not just study it" (P07-F22), reflecting Fishman's (1996) emphasis on the social enjoyment of language as key to maintenance. While 47% supported

policy reform, several participants expressed skepticism about government involvement. One commented, "Laws alone won't make us speak our local languages if we don't want to" (P15-F22), underscoring the importance of bottom-up initiatives. Next to that, family practices, though receiving the least support (38%), were still recognized as crucial. This may reflect participants' own experiences of language shift beginning at home. One participant stated, "My younger cousins barely speak *Uab Meto* anymore. We speak Indonesian at home now" (P17-M21).

Moreover, based on the analysis, it can be also taken into account the importance of integrating culture, in this case, local culture, which can build up the students' pride, into language education, especially in multilingual and multicultural settings. As globalization continues to shape local communities, education that incorporates local culture can play a vital role in helping students preserve their cultural identity while acquiring the skills needed to succeed in a globalized world (Muliani, et al, 2024).

Discussion

1. Learners' Perceptions of English and Indigenous Languages

This study reveals a complex attitudinal landscape among English education students in East Nusa Tenggara regarding the roles of English and indigenous languages. On one hand, English is widely viewed as a tool for economic and educational advancement; on the other, local languages are deeply tied to cultural identity and emotional belonging. This duality exemplifies what Bozkurt and Topkaya (2023) describe as the double consciousness of multilingual individuals torn between global capital and local heritage.A striking 42% of participants expressed neutrality on the statement "Learning English weakens local language proficiency", suggesting not apathy but cognitive dissonance. Many students navigate conflicting loyalties: as future English educators, they are trained to prioritize English, yet their emotional identities remain rooted in their mother tongues. This mirrors findings by Lin and Kubota (2020), who argue that teacher identity construction in multilingual contexts often involves managing emotional contradictions.

Interviews reinforced this conflict. Some participants described English as a passport, yet also expressed fear of losing a piece of themselves. This ambivalence is not rejection of English but reflects a broader concern about subtractive bilingualism, where acquiring a dominant language risk marginalizing native ones (Baker & Hüttner, 2021; Tamelan, et al, 2021). Emotional attachments to language as highlighted by Nambiar & Hashim (2022) play a central role in this tension, yet are often overlooked by education systems that treat language as merely instrumental.

While 74% of participants support bilingual education, only 47% favor policy reforms to support local languages. This discrepancy reveals a distrust of institutional solutions. Students may support bilingualism in principle but lack confidence in government or educational institutions to implement effective and culturally responsive policies. This gap underscores the need for more participatory policy design, where local voices are central.

To address this tension, teacher education must go beyond promoting English as a skill and instead embrace critical multilingual pedagogy. As Bozkurt and Topkaya (2023) advocate, future educators should be equipped not only with linguistic tools but also with ideological clarity to promote additive multilingualism where English complements rather than replaces local languages.

2. Domain-Based Language Shift and Generational Transmission

Language use data from this study highlights a domain-based imbalance: 65% of participants use local languages at home, but only 5% do so in academic and digital spaces.

This pattern aligns with Fishman's (1991) GIDS model, signaling an early phase of functional erosion where intergenerational transmission may persist, but public relevance is diminishing.

This private-public divide often masks what UNESCO (2021) terms **i**nvisible endangerment when surface bilingualism conceals the slow retreat of local languages from crucial social functions. Participants may not fully realize the implications of this shift, as English and Indonesian are increasingly normalized in schools, social media, and professional spaces. Over time, the narrowing of use domains leads to reduced literacy, passive competence, and weakened cultural attachment (Zhou & Wang, 2021).

Interestingly, only 38% of participants emphasized the role of family in language maintenance, despite widespread home use. This contrasts with Fishman's emphasis on the family as the cornerstone of linguistic sustainability. This suggests either a lack of awareness of the family's potential influence or a pragmatic resignation to the dominance of formal education in shaping language ideologies. Romaine (2007) warns that when youth see their heritage language as irrelevant to peer and digital interaction, its symbolic and functional value erodes rapidly.

To counter this, revitalization must extend beyond the household. Schools, peer groups, and digital platforms must be mobilized to support local languages. Comparative cases such as New Zealand's Te Reo Māori immersion programs or Catalonia's school-based bilingualism demonstrate how state and community partnerships can revitalize minority languages by institutionalizing their presence in youth-centric domains (May, 2012).

3. Strategies for Coexistence: Navigating Structural and Sociocultural Challenges

Addressing the dual goals of English acquisition and local language preservation requires multi-level strategies that account for both structural barriers and sociocultural realities. Although most participants support bilingual education, their lukewarm endorsement of policy reforms suggests skepticism toward top-down approaches. This raises critical questions about institutional trust, implementation gaps, and cultural responsiveness in language policy.

Participants overwhelmingly use English and Indonesian in academic and digital spheres. Without intervention, this asymmetry risks accelerating subtractive bilingualism. The perception that indigenous languages lack academic or economic value is deeply embedded and often reinforced by curricula, teacher training, and media representation. As Zhou & Wang (2021) note, institutional neglect fosters internalized stigma, making students less likely to actively maintain their heritage languages.

There is a need to reframe local languages as assets rather than obstacles. Some interviewees described code-switching between English and their native languages in informal settings as "natural," but rarely considered this practice as pedagogically or professionally valuable. This disconnect reveals a missed opportunity: translanguaging when strategically employed in education can validate multilingual realities and foster cognitive flexibility (García & Wei, 2021).

Comparative examples offer practical insight. In Singapore, the "Mother Tongue Policy" ensures that ethnic languages are taught alongside English from early schooling. Though not without criticism, this model embeds local languages within formal structures and links them to national identity. Similarly, in Wales, Welsh-medium schools have played a key role in reversing language decline by normalizing its use across domains (Baker, 2011).

Ultimately, fostering coexistence requires an ecosystemic approach linking families, schools, media, and policymakers. Institutional reform alone is insufficient without grassroots engagement and youth buy-in. Empowering students to become stewards of both English and their local languages through training, curricular innovation, and community initiatives can shift attitudes from ambivalence to agency.

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the perceived tension between English learning and local language preservation stems not from inherent incompatibility, but from unequal sociolinguistic ecosystems that privilege global languages. The findings demonstrate that future English teachers in East Nusa Tenggara recognize both the instrumental value of English and the cultural significance of local languages, yet struggle to envision concrete pathways for their equitable coexistence. Their proposed solutions particularly bilingual education models and community-based initiatives offer promising directions for developing sustainable multilingual frameworks that resist the zero-sum logic of language competition.

Moving forward, the challenge lies in translating these grassroots perspectives into institutional practice. To this end, teacher education programs should be re-imagined to incorporate concrete bilingual pedagogy models, such as curricula that integrate local languages alongside English in content subjects, and teacher training modules that build skills in trans-language and culturally responsive teaching. Moreover, policy reforms must go beyond rhetoric by allocating dedicated funding and resources for local language documentation, teaching materials, and community language activities.

Successful language planning requires a synergistic approach combining governmental support with community ownership. For example, public-private partnerships could be established to sustain language revitalization projects that engage local schools, families, and cultural organizations. Creating platforms for community input in policy design will help bridge the gap between top-down initiatives and grassroots realities, fostering trust and collaborative stewardship.

This study acknowledges its limitations, notably the relatively small sample size and focus on a single university, which may affect the generalizability of findings. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to monitor language use and attitudes over time, and expand to include diverse regions and educational contexts within East Nusa Tenggara and beyond. Ultimately, this research underscores that linguistic diversity need not be sacrificed at the altar of English acquisition. Rather, through deliberate, context-sensitive strategies that combine pedagogical innovation, institutional commitment, and community engagement, multilingual societies can cultivate language ecologies where global and local languages mutually reinforce rather than undermine one another.

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