

Transforming language education through culturally responsive teaching: A Reflective case study in Japanese language micro-teaching practice

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Abstract

While Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) is widely researched in Western monocultural or multilingual settings, its internalization by pre-service teachers in non-Western foreign-language contexts—such as Japanese-language education in Indonesia—remains underexplored. This study examines how 90 pre-service Japanese language teachers enact CRT principles through reflective micro-teaching, focusing on a purposively selected sample of 14 comprehensive teaching scripts analyzed via thematic reflective analysis. The findings reveal three dominant pedagogical features: inclusive instructional design (e.g., dialogic scaffolding and learner agency), cultural contextualization (e.g., localizing Japanese cultural concepts like *obento*), and empathetic teacher positioning (e.g., affective language use). These features demonstrate early-stage responsiveness to learner identity and socio-cultural contexts. This research contributes to teacher education by offering an integrative pedagogical framework that shows that CRT is an embodied, intuitive practice shaped by reflection, emotion, and situational awareness rather than a mere theoretical construct.

Kata Kunci:

empati kelas; identitas
guru; kesadaran
antarbudaya; pedagogi
tanggap budaya;
pembelajaran bahasa
Jepang; reflektif
pengajaran mikro

Abstrak

Transformasi pendidikan bahasa melalui pengajaran yang responsif terhadap budaya: Studi kasus reflektif dalam praktik pengajaran mikro bahasa Jepang

Meskipun *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (CRT) telah banyak diteliti dalam konteks Barat yang monokultural atau multilingual, internalisasinya oleh calon guru dalam konteks bahasa asing non-Barat—seperti pendidikan bahasa Jepang di Indonesia—masih jarang dieksplorasi. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana 90 calon guru bahasa Jepang menerapkan prinsip-prinsip CRT melalui praktik *micro-teaching* yang reflektif, dengan fokus pada 14 skrip pengajaran yang dipilih secara *purposive* dan dianalisis menggunakan analisis reflektif tematik. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan tiga fitur pedagogis utama: desain pembelajaran inklusif (seperti perancah dialogis dan agensi pembelajar), pengontekstualisasian budaya (seperti melokalisasi konsep budaya Jepang seperti *obento*), dan posisi guru yang empatik (seperti penggunaan bahasa afektif). Fitur-fitur tersebut menunjukkan tanggung jawab awal terhadap identitas peserta didik dan konteks sosial budaya. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pendidikan guru dengan menghadirkan kerangka pedagogis integratif yang menunjukkan bahwa CRT merupakan praktik nyata dan intuitif yang dibentuk melalui refleksi, afeksi, dan kesadaran kontekstual, bukan sekadar konstruksi teoretis.

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1 Introduction

While Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) has gained increasing attention as a transformative framework for addressing diversity, its empirical application in second-language teacher education remains heavily skewed toward Western ESL/EFL contexts. Within Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) education, prior scholarship has historically focused on grammatical mastery (*bunpou*), instructional techniques, or conventional pedagogical competence, leaving a profound gap in understanding how pre-service teachers internalize cultural responsiveness. In fact, cross-cultural comparative CRT studies in Japanese pedagogy have remained stagnant for two decades (e.g., comparisons between Japan and Western settings), with virtually no exploration of how JFL candidates negotiate CRT principles in non-Western, highly diverse developing nations such as Indonesia.

This pedagogical gap is further exacerbated by recent structural shifts in the Indonesian educational landscape. The implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum) mandates a transition toward student-centered, highly differentiated, and socio-culturally sensitive instructional environments. Consequently, teacher education programs (LPTKs) face the pressing task of integrating CRT not merely as an abstract concept in Lesson Planning (*Perencanaan Pembelajaran*) courses, but as an enacted practice during formative training phases, specifically through micro-teaching simulations. Fostering this culturally responsive disposition requires a robust intersection with reflective pedagogy, as pre-service teachers cannot transform their instructional choices without engaging in critical self-inquiry to unpack their cultural positioning and real-time dialogic decisions (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Sleeter, 2011).

To move beyond a simple descriptive exploration—and to address the high conceptual standards of contemporary scholarship—this study aims to establish a comprehensive pedagogical model for JFL teacher training. By critically analyzing how Indonesian pre-service Japanese language teachers at Universitas Negeri Semarang integrate CRT principles into their micro-teaching narratives, this research does not merely "explore" or "summarize" experiences. Instead, it synthesizes empirical data from teaching scripts to construct an integrative pedagogical framework. In doing so, this study offers a significant theoretical and practical contribution: a localized, replicable analytical framework that illustrates how early-stage cultural sensitivity can be systematically modeled, reflected upon, and institutionalized within foreign language education under modern curricular mandates.

2 Methods

This section outlines the methodological framework applied to investigate pre-service teachers' engagement with culturally responsive teaching through micro-teaching practices. The study adopts a qualitative approach guided by reflective pedagogy and CRT principles, aiming to capture how instructional design and teacher disposition manifest in scripted classroom interactions.

To ensure clarity and transparency, the methods are presented in six structured subsections: (1) Research Design, detailing the overall approach and rationale; (2) Participants and Learning Context, describing the study's educational setting and student demographics; (3) Instructional Input and Scaffolding, elaborating on course materials and preparatory supports; (4) Data Collection Procedure, explaining how student artifacts were compiled and curated; (5) Data Analysis, outlining the interpretive framework used to examine reflective scripts; and (6) Trustworthiness and Ethical Consideration, describing safeguards to uphold validity and research ethics.

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach framed by culturally responsive teaching (CRT) and reflective pedagogy (Gay, 2015; 2010). Reflective practices are crucial in understanding



how educators internalize CRT values through situated teaching contexts (Gay, 2010; Sleeter, 2011). The design aligns with the belief that effective CRT emerges not only from knowledge, but from the teacher's ability to critically reflect upon their role and cultural positioning (Freeman, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1995).

The study was conducted over one semester in a Japanese language education course at Universitas Negeri Semarang, emphasizing student-centered learning (SCL) and the 4C framework: Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking, and Creativity (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

2.2 Participants and Learning Context

The study involved 90 pre-service Japanese language teachers distributed across three intact classes: Class 1 (n = 33), Class 2 (n = 27), and Class 3 (n = 30). Within each class, students formed collaborative groups of three (triads) to facilitate peer-scaffolding, resulting in a total of 30 teaching groups across the entire cohort (11 groups from Class 1, 9 groups from Class 2, and 10 groups from Class 3). Each group was tasked with developing an instructional design and writing comprehensive teacher–student dialogue scripts covering six sequential micro-teaching stages.

From the total corpus of 30 submitted scripts, a purposive sampling technique was employed to select 14 specific scripts for in-depth analysis. The rationale for this data corpus reduction was governed by two strict selection criteria: (1) Structural Completeness, requiring the scripts to fully document all six instructional stages from introduction to conclusion, and (2) Data Richness, selecting scripts that exhibited explicit manifest indicators of culturally responsive dialogue (e.g., localized cultural analogies or explicit ritual inclusiveness) rather than purely mechanical grammar delivery. This reduction ensured a highly dense and relevant data set for qualitative synthesis.

2.3 Instructional Input and Scaffolding

In the initial weeks of the semester, students were guided through self-paced learning using the Kirameki online course, developed by the Japan Foundation (<https://minato-jf.jp>). The course covered all six instructional stages and included video modules, quizzes, and an official certificate of completion for those achieving a minimum score of 60%. PowerPoint slides were provided by the instructor to support micro-teaching practice for each stage. The visual prompts and explanations ensured students understood lesson structure and teacher roles.

2.4 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted as an integral part of a semester-long instructional sequence designed to promote reflective teaching and culturally responsive pedagogy. Student-generated teaching scripts were compiled through structured tasks embedded in a Japanese language education course. These artifacts captured early pedagogical engagement and intercultural disposition among pre-service teachers.

To document this process in detail, the section is divided into two parts: (1) Task and Script Development, describing how instructional artifacts were generated through guided teaching simulations; and (2) Submission and Storage, explaining how student work was organized and collected via digital learning platforms under ethical and curricular protocols.

2.4.1 Task and Script Development

Students were required to create teacher–student dialogue scripts for each instructional stage. In the *Topic Introduction* stage, learners used Indonesian in Q-A format to simulate pre-vocabulary classroom discourse. To stimulate imagination and engagement, images were shown prior to scripting.

Original excerpts from classroom scripts were authored in bahasa Indonesia and have been translated into English for clarity while maintaining their pedagogical tone.

2.4.2 Submission and Storage

Student-created micro-teaching scripts were collected progressively throughout the semester via *Elena*, the official e-learning platform of Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES). This platform facilitates educational activities through electronic media and internet-based access, enabling students to retrieve instructional materials and submit assignments online via dedicated institutional links. The collection process adhered to the ethical standards outlined in the course syllabus, ensuring structured documentation of instructional outputs and learner progress.

2.5 Data Analysis

To ensure analytical rigor and mitigate subjectivity, the 14 selected scripts were analyzed using a hybrid qualitative framework that combined Braun & Clarke's (2012) thematic reflective analysis with (Miles et al., 2014) interactive model. This interpretive process followed a systematic, multi-cycle coding procedure across five iterative stages:

1. Familiarization: The researchers engaged in prolonged immersion by reading and re-reading the 14 micro-teaching scripts multiple times to understand the pedagogical flow and dialogue tones.
2. Initial Coding (First-Cycle Coding): Descriptive and In Vivo coding were applied to mark specific textual units or dialogue lines. For instance, classroom dialogue segments containing spiritual or communal greetings (e.g., "*Minasan, silakan berdoa sesuai agama masing-masing*") were assigned the initial code "*Spiritual Inclusivity*".
3. Category Construction (Second-Cycle Coding): Initial codes were clustered into broader categories based on shared conceptual patterns. For example, codes such as "*Spiritual Inclusivity*", "*Voluntary Participation*", and "*Egalitarian Grouping*" were collapsed into the category of "*Dialogic Scaffolding and Learner Agency*".
4. Thematic Development: Categories were map-matched against the core theoretical tenets of Culturally Responsive Teaching (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995) to construct the final three dominant themes: *Inclusive Instructional Design*, *Cultural Contextualization*, and *Empathetic Teacher Positioning*.

Trustworthiness and Inter-Rater Reliability: To eliminate individual bias, a peer-debriefing and cross-coder discussion (*inter-rater alignment*) were conducted among the research team. Discrepancies in code assignments were resolved through iterative consensus meetings and an explicit audit trail, ensuring that the final categories remained interpretatively consistent with the raw empirical data.

2.6 Trustworthiness and Ethical Consideration

To ensure analytical credibility, triangulation was employed using task prompts, Kirameki course input, and student reflections. Lincoln & Guba (1985) emphasize that trustworthiness in qualitative research requires prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and audit trails. Anonymization of student data was enforced, and procedures followed institutional syllabi and ethical guidelines.

3 Findings

This study examined 14 reflective micro-teaching scripts authored by pre-service Japanese language teachers at Universitas Negeri Semarang. Through a qualitative approach grounded in reflective pedagogy and CRT principles, the analysis focused on three core indicators of Culturally Responsive Teaching:

- (1) inclusive instructional design,
- (2) cultural contextualization, and
- (3) empathetic teacher positioning.

Each script was analyzed to identify how these indicators were demonstrated during classroom interactions—particularly in moments of topic introduction, dialogic scaffolding, and learner engagement. Findings are presented in descriptive thematic categories supported by representative excerpts from student scripts and summarized in tables to illustrate recurring pedagogical patterns.

To protect participant privacy, names of pre-service teachers have been anonymized throughout the analysis. References to individual scripts are made without personal identifiers, and emphasis is placed on pedagogical features and thematic patterns observed across the data.

3.1 Inclusive Instructional Design

In terms of Inclusive Instructional Design, pre-service teachers demonstrated an early-stage ability to cultivate an egalitarian and identity-affirming classroom climate. For instance, Respondent 55-APS utilized an active ice-breaking strategy ("*Tebak Sifat Lewat Pose*") as a low-stakes pedagogical tool to establish psychological safety, aligning with Ladson-Billings' (1995) concept of inclusive pedagogy. Similarly, collective practices were observed in Respondent 74-RNZ's script, where choral reading ("*Nihongo wa kayoubi desu*") was employed to foster collective participation and promote academic success through shared responsibility.

Furthermore, inclusive design was expanded into scaffolding learner agency. Respondent 10-AAO initiated the instructional sequence by introducing open-ended visual inquiries to invite diverse peer interpretations. To solidify student autonomy, both Respondent 74-RNZ and Respondent 33-RSP integrated contextual tasks—such as designing mini-schedule posters and constructing real-life situational dialogues—which provided concrete avenues for student-controlled learning and identity affirmation (Gay, 2010).

3.2 Cultural Contextualization

Cultural Contextualization manifested prominently through the pre-service teachers' efforts to construct ideological and cultural bridges between Japanese traditions and Indonesian local contexts. Rather than exoticizing the target language, the participants activated students' sociocultural consciousness (Villegas & Lucas, 2016). Respondent 55-APS and Respondent 74-RNZ systematically guided learners to compare target cultural phenomena with local practices, such as juxtaposing school uniforms (*batik* versus plain clothing) and artistic expressions (*shodou* versus *membatik*).

Moreover, critical reflection was stimulated through dialogic exploration of everyday habits. Respondent 33-RSP and Respondent 10-AAO cross-examined cultural concepts of greetings and dining habits by prompting personal reflection ("*Have you ever asked your friend about the taste of their food?*"). This cross-cultural resonance serves as a functional pedagogical conduit, fulfilling (Byram & Wagner, 2018), Gay's (2010) assertion that culturally responsive curriculum must rely on the lived experiences and cultural funds of knowledge possessed by the learners.

3.3 Empathetic Teacher Positioning

The third theme highlights how pre-service teachers positioned themselves as empathetic mediators who prioritize affective caring over rigid linguistic correction. This caring pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1995) was visible when teachers consciously normalized student limitations and anxiety. For example, Respondent 10-AAO responded to a student's cognitive lapse by stating, "*Yang lupa barengan saja ya dengan temannya*" (Those who forgot, just work together with your friends), effectively mitigating foreign language anxiety through communal support.

In parallel, Respondent 55-APS used empathetic affirmation to normalize varying levels of mastery by celebrating different achievements ("*Yang 2 bintang angkat tangan... keren!*"). Relational empathy was further maintained by Respondent 74-RNZ and Respondent 33-RSP, who infused humor and explicit psychological validation ("*Jangan ragu untuk bertanya...*") to reassure learners. These verbal affirmations demonstrate that the participants did not view their role merely as knowledge transmitters, but as emotionally responsive educators (Barnes & McCallops, 2019).

3.4 Pedagogical Tensions and Superficial CRT Enactments

To avoid an overly idealized portrayal of these pre-service teachers, a critical cross-examination of the corpus revealed significant pedagogical tensions and superficial (tokenistic) enactments of CRT (Deardorff, 2006). While the instructional designs appeared outwardly inclusive, they frequently fell short of fostering deeper critical reflection. For example, Respondent 55-APS reduced final reflections to a brief procedural checklist and missed a critical opportunity to unpack cultural stereotypes during the "*Teacher Killer*" ice-breaking activity, leaving potential cultural biases unaddressed.

Similarly, cultural contextualization often remained stagnant at a surface level. Respondent 74-RNZ offered generic praise ("*jouzu desu ne*") without addressing minor linguistic errors and failed to expand the cross-cultural dialogue (Liu, 2021) between *shodou* and *batik* into why structural differences matter. Furthermore, instructional constraints restricted learner agency; Respondent 33-RSP over-emphasized rote memorization of normative moral codes rather than exploring complex sociolinguistic hierarchies (e.g., formal versus informal *keigo* contexts). This formalistic limitation was mirrored by Respondent 10-AAO, whose roleplay activity was highly rigid and restricted to fixed prompt cards (e.g., *udon*, *sushi*, *kimuchi*) without integrating Indonesian local food. These contradictions demonstrate that while pre-service teachers can structurally plan for CRT, shifting from mechanical, "add-on" cultural tokens to organic, critical student-centered pedagogy remains a developmental hurdle (Kramsch, 2014).

3.5 Summary of CRT Indicator Distribution

To clarify the extent to which each Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) indicator was represented in the 14 micro-teaching scripts, a summary table is presented below. The table shows how frequently each indicator emerged during classroom interactions and highlights the prevalence of inclusive design, cultural contextualization, and empathetic teacher positioning across scripts.

As illustrated in Table 1, the quantification of CRT indicators was conducted using a binary content configuration process, in which each of the 14 micro-teaching scripts was evaluated for the presence (1) or absence (0) of manifest dialogic indicators representing the three core themes. Coding consistency was strictly maintained by cross-referencing each textual unit against the operational definitions extracted from Gay (2010) and Ladson-Billings (1995), as detailed in the coding exemplars. The frequency (f) represents the number of distinct scripts that successfully operationalized the respective indicator, which was then converted into a cumulative percentage to demonstrate the prevalence of each CRT dimension across the entire data corpus.

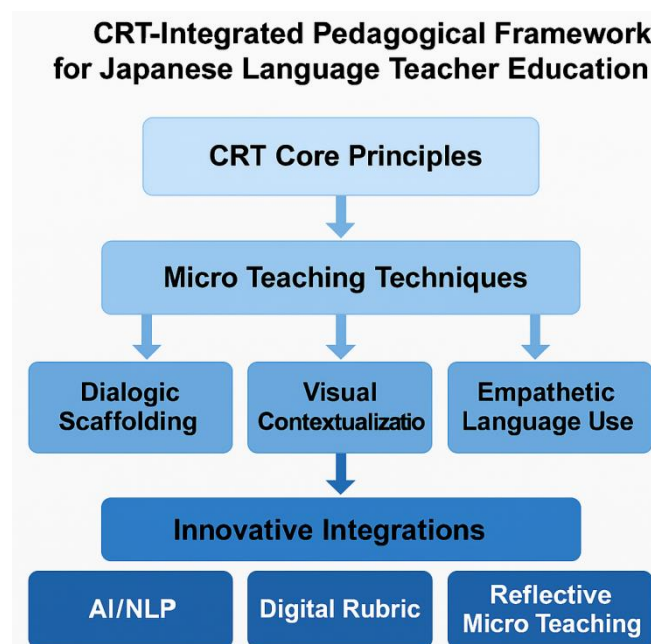
Table 1. Operationalization, Coding Exemplars, and Frequency Distribution of CRT Indicators (N = 14)

Theme / CRT Indicator	Operational Dimension (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995)	Textual Coding Exemplar (Data Corpus)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Inclusive Instructional Design	Identity affirmation; Inclusive & responsive pedagogy; Learner agency.	“Nah, sebelum masuk ke materi yang lebih berat, kita pemanasan dulu yok... 'Tebak Sifat Lewat Pose'.” (Respondent 55-APS)	14	100%
Cultural Contextualization	Sociocultural consciousness; Cultural relevance; Cultural bridging.	“Sekarang kita lihat gambar sebelah kanan. Kira-kira mereka lagi praktik apa? ... Lagi membatik kain, Sensei!” (Respondent 74-RNZ)	14	100%
Empathetic Teacher Positioning	Caring pedagogy; Empathetic teacher orientation & affirmation.	“Yang lupa barengan saja ya dengan temannya.” (Respondent 10-AAO)	13	92.8%

3.6 CRT Integrative Framework for Reflective Japanese Language Pedagogy

The following framework illustrates the pedagogical integration observed across the 14 scripts, showing how pre-service Japanese language teachers implement Culturally Responsive Teaching through inclusive instruction, cultural contextualization, and empathetic engagement. It also visualizes potential extensions through innovative methodologies and reflective identity development (Kabilan, 2007).

Figure 1. CRT Integrative Framework for Japanese Language Pedagogy



(designed by the author in collaboration with Microsoft Copilot)

4 Discussion

The discussion section aims to interpret the pedagogical patterns observed across the 14 micro-teaching scripts in light of Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) theory and relevant literature. Moving beyond descriptive findings, this section examines how inclusive design, cultural

contextualization (Phipps & Guilherme, 2004), and empathetic teacher positioning contribute to the development of professional identity among pre-service Japanese language teachers. Each thematic insight is elaborated through four interpretive subsections, supported by relevant citations and framed within the broader discourse on CRT, teacher education, and pedagogical innovation.

4.1 Objective of the Study

This study aims to examine how Japanese language student teachers at Semarang State University integrate Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) principles into their microteaching practices. The primary objective is to identify pedagogical patterns—particularly in terms of inclusive instructional design, cultural contextualization, and empathetic teacher positioning—and to understand how these patterns reflect teacher identity formation. Building on CRT literature (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2002), this study seeks to demonstrate that early teaching experiences already contain cultural and emotional sensitivities relevant to multilingual classrooms in Indonesia.

4.2 Linking Finding to Existing Literature

Gay (2010) emphasizes that culturally responsive teaching draws on learners' cultural knowledge and experiences to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of instruction (p. 31). In this study, cultural contextualization (Kim, 2007) was evident as pre-service teachers localized Japanese content—such as comparing *obentō* to Indonesian lunch traditions—showing early sensitivity toward cultural resonance.

According to Villegas and Lucas (2016), empowering students requires teachers to develop "sociocultural consciousness" and integrate it into instructional design (p. 21). This was reflected across the scripts through inclusive group work, voluntary participation, and spiritual inclusivity. Naz et al. (2024) affirm that CRT-oriented curriculum encourages future educators to design culturally embedded curricula across disciplines, including emerging fields like transportation and engineering education.

Lawson et al. (2024) emphasize the need for more robust CRT assessment tools, noting that educators often struggle to measure cultural responsiveness beyond intention. This relates to the verbal empathy and relational positioning seen in the scripts—phrases like “It's okay if you don't know yet” signal affective support, but also suggest a need for deeper emotional scaffolding. Similarly, Pevec-Zimmer et al. (2024) underscore that CRT efficacy depends not only on teacher disposition but also on structured identity reflection.

Chu et al. (2023), in the context of inclusive early childhood education in Taiwan, argue that culturally responsive practices foster both engagement and self-confidence when implemented through visual and dialogic supports. The findings here echo this by showing how cultural analogies and affirmations help learners relate content to familiar life experiences (Lash et al., 2022).

4.3 Insights and New Understandings

The consistent integration of CRT principles across the micro-teaching scripts revealed that cultural responsiveness can emerge not only through planned curriculum but also through spontaneous verbal acts and relational gestures. This suggests that CRT is not merely a theoretical stance, but an embodied practice shaped by emotion (Benita et al., 2017), context, and pedagogical intent. (Walker, 2023) highlights that collaboration centered around marginalized learners—such as refugee youth—can stimulate deep teacher reflection and transformative dispositions. Similarly, (Meihami, 2023) observed that EFL teachers in Iran implemented CRT through affective interaction and personal storytelling, often without formal training, demonstrating that CRT awareness may be intuitive when educators reflect on learner identities (Kabilan, 2007).

The framework synthesized in this study provides a conceptual tool for teacher educators to identify, support, and deepen CRT enactments among pre-service teachers. (Tanase & Kayaalp, 2023) note that moving CRT from theory to practice requires structuring opportunities for modeling, feedback, and self-inquiry—elements that emerge naturally in the participants' micro-teaching. These findings offer new insights into how reflective identity formation, empathetic engagement, and cultural contextualization can be cultivated through short teaching episodes and dialogic feedback loops.

4.4 Implications for Practice and Research

The findings of this study provide practical implications for Japanese language teacher education in Indonesia, particularly in multilingual and multicultural classrooms. The CRT approach can be integrated as a foundation in teacher training programs through guided reflection, structured microteaching, and rubric-based assessments for cultural and affective aspects. (González-Carriedo et al., 2024) demonstrated that international teacher exchange programs can foster critical awareness and enhance understanding of CRT through immersive cross-cultural experiences. Similarly, the integration of AI-based technologies—such as NLP for dialogue analysis or adaptive lesson planning—has the potential to support teacher pedagogical autonomy and responsiveness (Hasyim et al., 2026), as proposed by Nguyen & Huynh (2023) in ethnic minority education in Vietnam.

Future research could explore how CRT dispositions develop over time and how cultural sensitivity can be maintained across diverse learning contexts. Longitudinal studies could examine the impact of reflective pedagogy on teacher identity formation and student learning outcomes, while interdisciplinary projects might examine how CRT intersects with digital literacy, linguistic justice, and global citizenship in 21st-century classrooms.

Furthermore, the emergence of superficial CRT enactments and pedagogical tensions within the corpus underscores the non-linear nature of developing cultural responsiveness. The tendency of pre-service teachers to overlook minor linguistic errors, utilize tokenistic cultural images without critical dialogue, or retreat into rigid, card-based roleplays highlights a developmental friction between theoretical lesson planning and active instructional delivery. This finding aligns with contemporary teacher education literature, which argues that early-stage candidates often conceptualize diversity as a structural checklist rather than an adaptive pedagogical disposition. Therefore, fostering an organic CRT orientation requires prolonged, reflective coaching that moves beyond basic cultural inclusion toward critical, student-centered dialogues.

5 Conclusion

This study elucidates the complex pedagogical pathways through which pre-service Japanese language teachers internalize and enact Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) principles within digital micro-teaching environments. The textual analysis of teaching scripts validates that early-stage candidates possess the fundamental capacity to engineer egalitarian learning climates, activate local-target cultural analogies, and deploy empathetic validation to mitigate foreign language anxiety. However, the study simultaneously uncovers a critical developmental paradox: while structural and visual inclusion of cultural tokens is readily planned, transitioning into organic, deeply reflective, and critical student-centered dialogues remains a persistent pedagogical hurdle.

This research offers significant theoretical contributions by expanding the frontiers of CRT—which has historically been monopolized by Western ESL/EFL frameworks—into the unique sociolinguistic and non-Western context of Japanese as a Foreign Language (JFL) education in developing nations. It establishes an integrative pedagogical model demonstrating how target foreign values (e.g., *obento* or *shodou*) can be dialogically cross-examined with students' local identity and

cultural funds of knowledge. This statement explicitly indicates the importance of integrating local wisdom into the learning process (Mellom et al., 2018). Methodologically, the study underscores the potency of combining thematic reflective analysis with (Braun & Clarke, 2012), interactive coding matrices, proving that scripted teaching narratives serve as transparent visual windows to track early-stage teacher identities and emotional awareness before clinical field placement.

Ultimately, these findings bear profound relevance to educational policy, particularly under Indonesia's current national mandate of *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum), which strictly demands highly differentiated, inclusive, and culturally sensitive instructional environments. For Teacher Education Institutions (LPTKs), this study implies an urgent policy shift: CRT must be institutionalized not merely as a peripheral topic within lesson planning (*Perencanaan Pembelajaran*) courses, but as a core, systematically scaffolded reflective criterion throughout formative micro-teaching simulations to ensure future educators can effectively translate structural diversity policies into authentic classroom realities.

Disclosure Statement

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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