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Conditional Contributions: A Systematic Literature Review of Intercultural Communicative Competence Among Native English-Speaking Teachers in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This systematic literature review examines the challenges and strategies associated with developing intercultural communicative competence (ICC) among Native English-Speaking Teachers (NESTs) in Indonesia. It specifically distinguishes direct NEST evidence from comparative and contextual evidence to clarify the strength and scope of the available literature. Searches of Google Scholar and Garuda, supplemented by backward and forward snowballing, were conducted using a Population, Phenomenon of Interest, and Context framework, PRISMA 2020 reporting, and a Critical Appraisal Skills Programme-informed appraisal matrix. The evidence base was limited and predominantly contextual, with insufficient geographic and demographic reporting on NESTs. Four interrelated challenge dimensions emerged: linguistic comprehensibility, pedagogical preparation, sociocultural and ideological pressures, and institutional support. Reported or contextually supported practices included adaptive communication, reciprocal interaction, local-language and cultural mediation, contextualized materials, World Englishes awareness, and critical cultural literacy. Overall, NEST contributions to intercultural learning appear conditional on pedagogical competence, contextual knowledge, collaboration, and institutional support rather than native-speaker status alone.

1. Introduction

English occupies an ambivalent position in Indonesian education. On one hand, it is widely associated with access to higher education, international communication, and professional mobility. On the other hand, it is learned largely as a foreign language, and opportunities to use it outside the classroom remain uneven across regions and social groups. Within this context, the presence of Native English-Speaking Teachers (NESTs) has attracted considerable attention from schools, policy makers, and researchers. NESTs are commonly understood as teachers who

acquired English as a first language and who are recruited to teach it in settings where English is not the dominant language (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). In Indonesia, they may arrive through educational exchange programs or be recruited directly by private schools, international-oriented institutions, and language courses.

The perceived value of NESTs cannot be separated from the broader ideology of native-speakerism, which positions speakers from particular English-dominant countries as the most legitimate models of English (Holliday, 2006). This ideology may lead institutions, parents, or students to assume that native-speaker status is itself evidence of teaching quality. Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized Global Englishes, linguistic diversity, and communication across multilingual contexts instead (Munandar, 2025). From these perspectives, effective English teaching should not be measured solely by the extent to which teachers or students imitate British or American norms. It should also be evaluated through pedagogical competence, contextual understanding, and the ability to support meaningful communication among people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Kachru, 1985; Seidlhofer, 2011).

A central concern in this debate is intercultural communicative competence, hereafter ICC. Conceptualizes ICC through five interdependent *savoirs*: attitudes of openness (*savoir etre*), knowledge of cultural and social processes (*savoir*), the skill of interpreting and relating (*savoir comprendre*), the skill of discovery and interaction (*savoir faire*), and critical cultural awareness (*savoir s'engager*). NESTs are often expected to model these capacities because they bring lived experience of an English-speaking culture into the classroom. Yet native proficiency and professional teaching competence are not identical, and a NEST may provide fluent spoken interaction without automatically understanding the Indonesian curriculum, students' first-language influence, or local classroom expectations (Medgyes, 1994). Conversely, Non-Native English-Speaking Teachers (NNESTs) may share students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, anticipate common learning difficulties, and use Indonesian strategically to explain complex concepts.

The current literature also contains important gaps. Primary studies have examined student perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs (Shalihah, 2021; Rasyid et al., 2023), native-teacher feedback (Wardana, 2023), interculturality and authenticity (Munandar, 2025), the effect of native-speakerism on teacher identity (Ugahara & Suryani, 2023), and teacher views on World Englishes (Nurhayati et al., 2025). This evidence remains dispersed across designs, locations, and institutional types, and NEST-specific demographic reporting is rarely standardized. Iswandari and Ardi, synthesized nineteen empirical studies published from 2011 to 2021 on in-service and pre-service EFL teachers across EFL settings, identifying themes of teacher cognition, ICC assessment, teacher development, training, and ICC-related factors. Their review did not isolate NESTs in Indonesia or distinguish direct NEST findings from contextual evidence. The present review therefore narrows the population and national context, classifies every included study by evidentiary directness, and foregrounds native-speakerism, NEST and NNEST complementarity, and demographic reporting gaps. Its novelty lies not in producing

another general map of ICC, but in providing an evidence-bounded account of what can and cannot be concluded about NEST-related ICC in Indonesia.

The objective of this article is to systematically synthesize research on the challenges and strategies associated with the development and enactment of ICC among NESTs in Indonesia. Specifically, the review asks three questions. First, what research trends, geographic coverage, and demographic reporting characterize the literature on NESTs in Indonesia? Second, what linguistic, pedagogical, sociocultural, and institutional challenges affect NEST-related ICC? Third, what strategies do teachers and institutions report or support in response to those challenges? By addressing these questions, the article offers an evidence-informed basis for teacher preparation, institutional policy, and future research that treats intercultural teaching as a collaborative, context-dependent, and institutionally supported practice.

2. Methodology

Research Design

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) because the research questions required a transparent synthesis of dispersed evidence rather than the collection of new data from human participants. A systematic review is appropriate when a researcher needs to identify, appraise, compare, and synthesize studies through procedures explicit enough to be examined and, as far as possible, repeated by other researchers ; Xiao & Watson, 2019). The conduct of the review followed established SLR guidance for the social sciences, while the reporting was guided by the PRISMA 2020 statement (Page et al., 2021). PRISMA is a reporting guideline rather than a complete research method, so it was used to make the review process visible rather than to substitute for methodological reasoning. A statistical meta-analysis was not conducted because the included studies differed substantially in purpose, design, participants, and reported outcomes; narrative and thematic synthesis were therefore more defensible than statistical pooling (Popay et al., 2006).

Review Framework

The review questions and search logic were structured through the Population, Phenomenon of Interest, and Context framework, which is commonly used for qualitative and context-sensitive review questions because it clarifies who or what is being examined, which phenomenon is central, and where it occurs (Lockwood et al., 2015). The Population comprised teachers represented as NESTs and, where directly relevant, NNESTs in comparative studies. The Phenomenon of Interest comprised research coverage, ICC-related challenges, and strategies. The Context comprised English language education in Indonesia, including schools, pesantren, universities, language courses, exchange programs, and other Indonesian EFL institutions. This framework prevented the search from becoming a general review

of English teaching in Indonesia and kept the corpus focused on NEST-related evidence.

Search Strategy and Eligibility Criteria

Searches were conducted in Google Scholar and Garuda and were closed on 30 July 2026. Google Scholar was queried with three Boolean strings: (1) ("native English-speaking teacher" OR NEST OR "native English teacher") AND (Indonesia OR Indonesian) AND ("intercultural communicative competence" OR ICC OR intercultural); (2) ("native-speakerism" OR "native speakerism" OR "World Englishes") AND ("English teacher" OR ELT OR EFL) AND Indonesia; and (3) (NEST OR "native English-speaking teacher") AND (NNEST OR "non-native English-speaking teacher") AND Indonesia. Because Garuda does not consistently process nested Boolean syntax, the same concepts were entered as paired combinations: "native English teacher Indonesia", "NEST NNEST Indonesia", "intercultural communicative competence English teacher Indonesia", "native-speakerism Indonesia", and "World Englishes Indonesia". Backward and forward snowballing from eligible reports supplemented the database searches (Wohlin, 2014). The retained search file records an aggregate identification total of 73 records after the routes were merged, but it does not preserve reliable pre-merge subtotals for Google Scholar, Garuda, backward snowballing, and forward snowballing. Source-specific counts were therefore not reconstructed post hoc. This limitation is reported explicitly because invented precision would be less reproducible than an acknowledged gap in the search log.

Studies were eligible when they were published from 2019 through the search cut-off, available in English or Indonesian full text, situated in Indonesian English-language education, and provided empirical evidence that was directly NEST-specific, directly comparative between NESTs and NNESTs, or contextually relevant to NEST-related ICC challenges and strategies. Contextual studies were eligible only when their findings addressed a mechanism specified in the review questions, such as native-speakerism, multilingual mediation, World Englishes, gendered representation, or institutional support. Records were excluded when they were duplicates or alternate versions, were conducted outside Indonesia, did not concern English-language education, lacked analyzable empirical or documentary data, were unavailable in full text, or did not contribute to any review question. The databases, search strings, and search dates are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Search Databases, Search Strings, and Search Dates

Database	Search String(s)	Search Date
Google Scholar	(1) ("native English-speaking teacher" OR NEST OR "native English teacher") AND (Indonesia OR Indonesian) AND ("intercultural communicative competence" OR ICC OR intercultural); (2) ("native-speakerism" OR "native	30 July 2026

	speakerism" OR "World Englishes") AND ("English teacher" OR ELT OR EFL) AND Indonesia; (3) (NEST OR "native English-speaking teacher") AND (NNEST OR "non-native English-speaking teacher") AND Indonesia	
Garuda	"native English teacher Indonesia"; "NEST NNEST Indonesia"; "intercultural communicative competence English teacher Indonesia"; "native-speakerism Indonesia"; "World Englishes Indonesia"	30 July 2026
Snowballing	Backward and forward snowballing from eligible reports	Concurrent with database searches

Source-specific identification counts for Google Scholar, Garuda, backward snowballing, and forward snowballing were not retained in the merged search log and could not be reliably reconstructed post hoc. Only the aggregate total of 73 records is therefore reported. This is stated as a methodological limitation rather than omitted, since fabricated subtotals would compromise rather than enhance replicability.

Study Selection and Data Analysis

Screening proceeded in four stages. First, fifteen duplicate or alternate-version records were removed from the 73 identified records. Second, the titles and abstracts of 58 unique records were screened against the eligibility criteria, and 24 records were excluded as off-topic or outside the Indonesian NEST-related context. Third, 34 full-text reports were assessed for topical relevance, documentary adequacy, and methodological quality. Twenty-three full texts were excluded because they lacked sufficient NEST or ICC relevance, lacked analyzable empirical or documentary evidence, or did not meet the appraisal threshold. The original screening file grouped these full-text reasons rather than retaining reliable reason-specific subtotals, so no post hoc allocation was created. Eleven studies remained for primary synthesis. Figure 1, Table 3, and the Results section report the same sequence: 73 identified, 15 duplicates removed, 58 screened, 24 excluded at title and abstract screening, 34 full texts assessed, 23 full texts excluded, and 11 studies synthesized.

Methodological quality was assessed with a ten-indicator matrix informed clarity of aims, fit between the research question and design, transparency of participant or document selection, adequacy of data collection, attention to researcher-participant or researcher-document relationships, ethical reporting where applicable, rigor of analysis, clarity of findings, traceability between evidence and conclusions, and relevance to the review questions. Each indicator was scored 0 when absent, 1 when partly reported, and 2 when clearly satisfied, for a maximum

of 20. Inclusion required a score of at least 14 and no score of 0 for design appropriateness, analytic rigor, or evidence-to-conclusion traceability. Borderline cases were re-examined during peer debriefing. Eligibility and quality were treated separately: a contextually relevant study could be retained if it passed the threshold, but its contribution remained limited to contextual interpretation rather than direct claims about NESTs. The methodological quality appraisal indicators and scoring criteria are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Methodological Quality Appraisal Indicators and Scoring Criteria

No.	Indicator	Score 0	Score 1	Score 2
1	Clarity of aims	Absent	Partly reported	Clearly stated
2	Fit between research question and design	Absent	Partly reported	Clearly appropriate
3	Transparency of participant/document selection	Absent	Partly reported	Fully transparent
4	Adequacy of data collection	Absent	Partly reported	Adequate
5	Attention to researcher–participant/document relationship	Absent	Partly reported	Addressed
6	Ethical reporting (where applicable)	Absent	Partly reported	Addressed
7	Rigor of analysis	Absent	Partly reported	Rigorous
8	Clarity of findings	Absent	Partly reported	Clear
9	Traceability between evidence and conclusions	Absent	Partly reported	Traceable
10	Relevance to review questions	Absent	Partly reported	Clearly relevant

Each of the 34 full-text reports was scored against this matrix (maximum score = 20). Inclusion required a total score of at least 14 and a non-zero score on indicators 2 (design appropriateness), 7 (analytic rigor), and 9 (evidence-to-conclusion traceability), since a zero on any of these three indicators was treated as disqualifying regardless of total score. Reports meeting the total-score threshold but failing one of these three indicators were excluded and recorded as such; borderline cases (total score 14–15, or a single indicator scored 1 on a disqualifying item) were re-examined independently by a second reviewer during peer debriefing before a final decision was made. This process yielded the 23 exclusions and 11 inclusions reported in Section 3.

Evidence Classification and Thematic Synthesis

Data extraction recorded publication details, design, participants or documentary source, institutional and geographic context, teacher status, demographic reporting, principal findings, stated limitations, and relevance to each research question. Every extracted finding was tagged as direct NEST evidence, direct comparative NEST and NNEST evidence, or contextual evidence. Meaning units were coded close to the language of the source, then grouped into descriptive categories and higher-

order themes. For example, units concerning unfamiliar speech rate, difficulty understanding feedback, reformulation, and clarification were coded under comprehensibility and grouped as linguistic challenges. Units concerning scaffolding, material selection, motivation, and classroom management formed the pedagogical category. Native-speaker hierarchy, authenticity, identity pressure, and gendered representation formed the sociocultural and ideological category, while limited orientation, mentoring, role clarity, curricular support, and professional learning formed the institutional category.

Strategy synthesis used the same source-linked matrix. Practices explicitly described in a primary study were labeled directly reported. Practices supported by studies of the surrounding Indonesian EFL context were labeled contextually supported. Proposals produced by convergence across themes, including NEST and NNEST collaboration, induction, mentoring, role clarification, and continuing professional development, were labeled evidence-informed recommendations requiring evaluation. This chain from meaning unit to code, category, theme, and evidence level prevented contextual findings from being rewritten as direct NEST experiences. Trustworthiness was supported through procedural transparency, source and analytical triangulation, peer debriefing, and reflexive documentation.

3. Results and Discussion

The systematic search produced a small but analytically usable body of evidence. Google Scholar, Garuda, and backward and forward snowballing yielded 73 records in the merged identification file. After fifteen duplicates or alternate versions were removed, 58 unique records were screened. Title and abstract screening excluded 24 records that were off-topic or outside the Indonesian NEST-related context, leaving 34 reports for full-text assessment. Twenty-three full texts were excluded because of insufficient topical relevance, insufficient analyzable evidence, or failure to meet the appraisal threshold. Eleven studies were retained for primary synthesis. The study selection process is illustrated in Figure 1, while the numerical distribution across the review stages is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 summarizes the numerical flow at each review stage. The table makes explicit that full-text assessment is an eligibility stage, not evidence of final inclusion. Treating all 34 full-text reports as included studies would have weakened the synthesis because studies excluded for relevance or methodological limitations would have contributed to the same conclusions as the retained studies. The findings that follow are consequently grounded in the eleven-study primary evidence set, while broader literature is used only to interpret or contextualize those findings. The eleven included studies were heterogeneous in design and evidentiary directness. This heterogeneity was not a defect in itself because the research questions required information about perceptions, classroom practices, ideology, institutional conditions, multilingual awareness, gendered context, and teaching materials. However, the studies could not all answer the same question with equal

authority. Direct NEST studies were strongest for describing learners' perceptions of NEST roles and feedback.

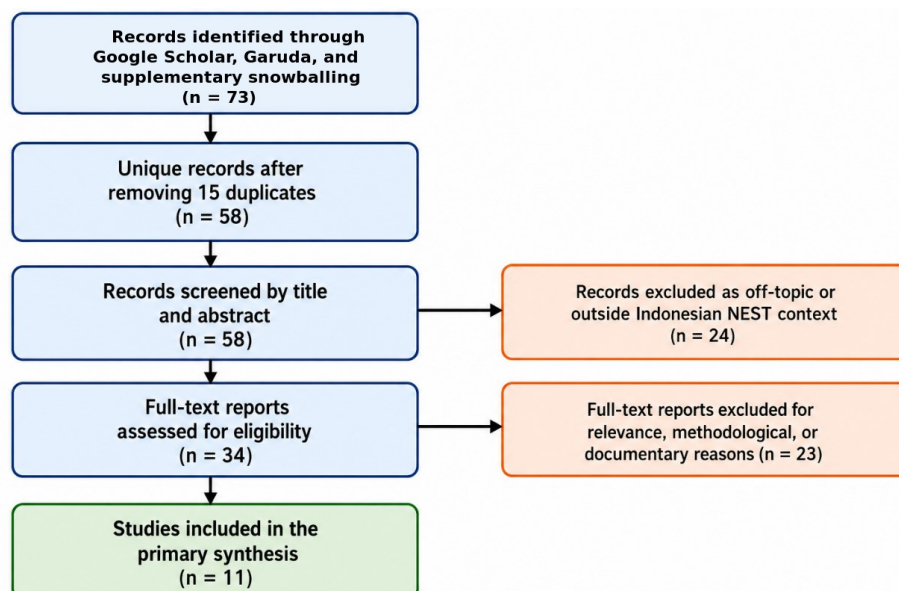


Figure 1. PRISMA-inspired flow diagram of the study selection process from identification through synthesis

Table 3. Summary of the Study Selection Process

Review Stage	Number	Interpretation
Records identified	73	Merged records from Google Scholar, Garuda, and supplementary backward and forward snowballing.
Duplicates removed	15	Duplicate or alternate-version records removed before screening.
Unique records screened	58	Titles and abstracts screened against the eligibility criteria.
Records excluded at title and abstract screening	24	Records excluded as off-topic or outside the Indonesian NEST-related context.
Full-text reports assessed	34	Reports assessed for topical relevance, documentary adequacy, and methodological quality.
Full-text reports excluded	23	Reports excluded for insufficient NEST or ICC relevance, insufficient analyzable evidence, or failure to meet the appraisal threshold.
Studies included in primary synthesis	11	Studies meeting eligibility and appraisal requirements that informed the principal findings.

Comparative studies were strongest for identifying complementary NEST and NNEST resources. Contextual studies were strongest for explaining native-speakerism, local mediation, institutional constraints, and gendered representations.

To maintain this distinction throughout the remainder of this section, every citation to a contextual study is accompanied by an explicit marker (e.g., "contextual evidence indicates...") rather than presented in the same grammatical form as direct NEST findings.

Table 4 makes this hierarchy visible. The table does not claim that contextual studies measured NESTs. Instead, it identifies the precise contribution that each study can legitimately make. This classification is part of the warrant for the later synthesis: conclusions about NESTs are based primarily on direct and comparative evidence, while conclusions about the environment surrounding NEST practice are supported by contextual evidence. Figure 3, presented later in this section, visualizes the distribution of these evidence types.

Table 4. Evidence Classification and Contribution of the Included Studies

Study	Evidence Status	Legitimate Contribution
Darmanto (2020)	Direct	Documents pedagogical, psychological, linguistic, and cultural roles associated with student motivation in a Sumbawa Besar senior high school.
Shalihah (2021)	Direct comparative	Shows differentiated pesantren student preferences and complementary strengths rather than universal superiority of one teacher group.
Wardana (2023)	Direct	Supports claims about feedback and learner perception; does not establish NEST gender composition.
Rasyid et al. (2023)	Direct comparative	Provides cross-teacher evidence that pedagogical value is multidimensional and context dependent.
Munandar (2025)	Contextual	Explains ideological tensions and the pedagogical value of local linguistic and cultural mediation.
Ugahara & Suryani (2023)	Contextual	Shows how native-speakerism can affect professional legitimacy and collaboration.
Nurhayati et al. (2025)	Contextual	Identifies the gap between inclusive awareness and continued preference for British or American models, including institutional barriers.
Andriani et al. (2024)	Contextual	Identifies pedagogical challenges and directly reported coping strategies relevant to speaking instruction in Kampung Inggris.
Juanda et al. (2024)	Contextual	Supports multilingualism as an intercultural resource but does not measure NEST practice directly.
Khair (2024)	Contextual	Clarifies gendered expectations in language-teacher identity, not the sex distribution of NESTs.
Samawa & Jazadi (2025)	Contextual	Identifies gender bias in instructional materials and supports critical-cultural-literacy strategies.

The profile in Table 4 reveals a central limitation of the evidence base: only a minority of the included studies directly investigated NESTs. The remaining studies were retained because they explain conditions that shape NEST-related ICC work,

but their findings must not be rewritten as direct reports of NEST experience. For example, (Andriani et al., 2024) studied local tutors rather than NESTs, (Khair, 2024) studied female language student teachers rather than foreign teachers, and (Samawa & Jazadi, 2025) examined a textbook rather than classroom interaction. Their findings are relevant only when the article explicitly marks the inferential step from context to possible implication. To maintain this distinction throughout the remainder of this section, every citation to a contextual study is accompanied by an explicit marker (e.g., "contextual evidence indicates...") rather than presented in the same grammatical form as direct NEST findings.

The first research question is answered most defensibly as a description of the literature's coverage rather than as a census of NESTs in Indonesia. Nine of the eleven included studies were published between 2023 and 2025, indicating recent scholarly attention to native-speakerism, World Englishes, feedback, multilingualism, gender, and NEST–NNEST comparisons. Figure 2 presents the distribution of the eleven included studies by publication year. This concentration of publications indicates increased research activity within the selected corpus; however, it does not establish a corresponding increase in the number of NESTs in Indonesia.

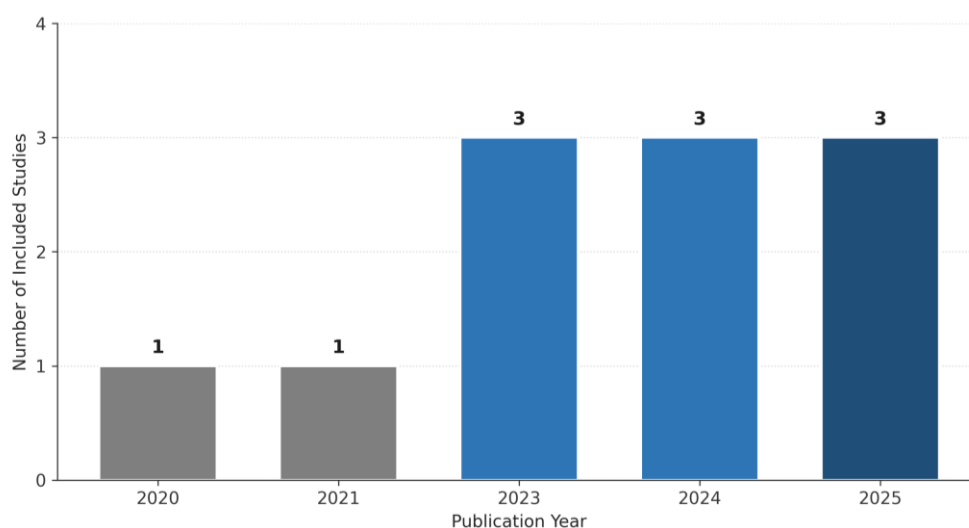


Figure 2. Distribution of the eleven included studies by publication year, showing recent intensification of NEST-related research

The geographic evidence is too sparse and conceptually mixed to support a claim that NESTs are nationally concentrated in a particular province. (Darmanto, 2020) provides direct evidence of a NEST placement in Sumbawa Besar, while (Shalihah, 2021) provides evidence from a pesantren setting. The comparative studies report Indonesian learner perceptions but do not specify NEST placements. By contrast, the locations in (Munandar, 2025; Nurhayati et al., 2025; Andriani et al., 2024; Khair, 2024; Samawa & Jazadi, 2025) describe contextual research sites or document origins, not observations of NEST placement. Counting all of those locations as NEST locations would conflate where research was conducted with where NESTs are distributed.

Gender reporting is even more restricted. (Wardana, 2023) compared the perceptions of male and female students, so the reported gender variable belongs to learners rather than to the native teacher population. (Khair, 2024) focused on female language student teachers, and (Samawa & Jazadi, 2025) examined male and female representation in a textbook. These studies reveal that gender matters within Indonesian language education, but none provides a national count of female and male NESTs. Country of origin was also underreported: (Darmanto, 2020) participant was connected to a United States exchange context, but the corpus did not provide a denominator from which national percentages for American, British, Australian, Filipino, or other teachers could be calculated. The authentic finding is therefore a reporting gap: the selected studies rarely provide standardized demographic information about the NESTs they discuss. Table 5 organizes this geographic and gender evidence by distinguishing what the literature supports from what it does not support, thereby making the inferential boundaries of the synthesis explicit.

Table 5. Interpretation of Geographic and Gender Evidence

Variable	What the Literature Supports	What the Literature Does Not Support
Geographic coverage	Identification of the locations and institutional contexts explicitly reported by individual studies.	A national ranking of provinces by NEST population or effectiveness.
Institutional coverage	Comparison of school, pesantren, course, university, teacher-education, and textbook contexts in the literature.	An assertion that NESTs were present in every institution represented by contextual studies.
Gender reporting	Analysis of student gender, female teacher identity, and gender representation where those variables were directly studied.	A percentage estimate of male and female NESTs in Indonesia.
Country of origin	Description of origin only when a study explicitly identifies it.	National percentages by country of origin based on isolated mentions.

Taken together, the first research question produces a substantive negative finding: demographic reporting is insufficient for national mapping. This absence is analytically important rather than merely inconvenient. Without standardized reporting of teacher status, country of origin, gender, placement, institution, qualifications, and length of service, later reviews cannot determine whether particular challenges vary by location or demographic background. Figure 3 visualizes the evidence classification of the eleven studies, highlighting why contextual evidence cannot substitute for direct NEST data.

The evidence classification highlights an important limitation of the reviewed literature: contextual evidence cannot substitute for direct evidence about NESTs. Studies directly examining NESTs provide the strongest basis for describing their reported experiences and practices, while comparative studies contribute evidence on differences and complementarities between NESTs and NNESTs. Contextual studies help explain the institutional, sociocultural, and pedagogical environment surrounding NEST-related intercultural communicative competence. Figure 3

visualizes the distribution of the eleven included studies across these three evidence categories.

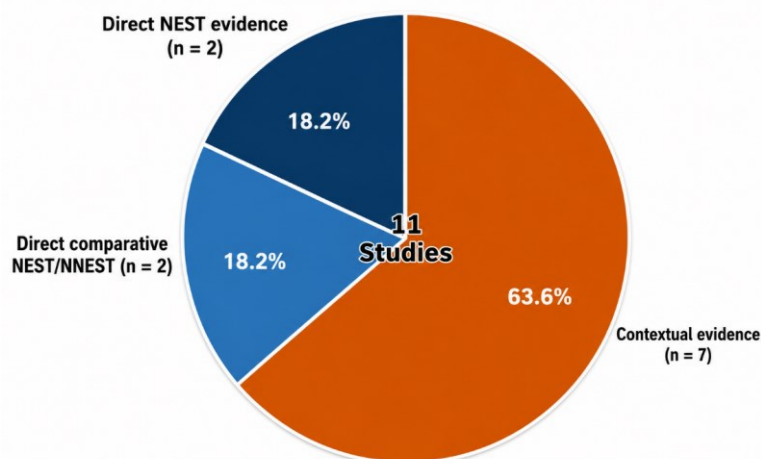


Figure 3. Evidence classification of the eleven included studies, showing the predominance of contextual evidence and the limited direct NEST base

The four challenge dimensions were generated through the coding chain described in the Methodology rather than assigned from article titles. Meaning units about unfamiliar speed, difficulty understanding feedback, reformulation, and clarification became comprehensibility codes and then the linguistic theme. Units concerning scaffolding, material selection, motivation, and classroom management formed the pedagogical theme. Native-speaker superiority, authenticity, identity pressure, and gendered representation formed the sociocultural and ideological theme. Units concerning limited orientation, mentoring, curricular support, and role clarity formed the institutional theme. Every unit retained its source and evidence-status tag, so contextual findings described the environment surrounding NEST practice but were not presented as direct testimony from NESTs.

The second research question concerns the linguistic, pedagogical, sociocultural, and institutional challenges that affect NEST-related ICC. Direct and direct-comparative evidence locates the principal linguistic challenge in comprehensibility rather than in a simple opposition between correct native English and deficient learner English. Students value NESTs as sources of fluent speech, pronunciation models, and spontaneous interaction, but those resources become pedagogically useful only when they are interactionally accessible (Shalihah, 2021; Rasyid et al., 2023; Wardana, 2023). A NEST who provides fluent input without checking comprehension may offer exposure without successful intercultural communication. Slowing speech, reformulating, illustrating meaning, inviting clarification, and checking understanding turn linguistic difference into an opportunity for discovery and interaction.

Pedagogical challenges arise because language proficiency and pedagogical content knowledge are related but distinct resources. The reviewed studies describe learner appreciation for interaction, feedback, and exposure to different cultural

experiences, but they also show the continuing value of teachers who can explain language structures, anticipate learning difficulties, and connect new material to learners' first language and educational background (Moussu & Llorca, 2008; Rasyid et al., 2023). Contextual evidence from Indonesian tutoring further shows that speaking instruction requires differentiated support, motivation, material selection, and classroom management rather than fluency alone (Andriani et al., 2024). These findings warrant rejecting the assumption that a NEST is automatically prepared to teach every proficiency level or skill area.

Sociocultural and ideological challenges are supported primarily by contextual evidence and are not presented as direct reports of NEST experience. Native-speakerism positions the imagined native speaker as the natural authority in English teaching and may exaggerate the professional value of linguistic origin while obscuring pedagogical qualifications (Holliday, 2006; Phillipson, 1992). In Indonesia, teachers negotiate native-oriented expectations while using local languages, cultural knowledge, and community values to make instruction meaningful (Munandar, 2025). This evidence indicates that authenticity is constructed through interpretation, comparison, and negotiation rather than delivered as a fixed cultural product by a foreign teacher. Gender is also contextual in this corpus. (Khair, 2024) examined female language student teachers, and (Samawa & Jazadi, 2025) examined gender representation in a textbook. These studies justify attention to representation, voice, and authority in NEST preparation and ICC materials, but they do not establish the gender composition or direct practices of NESTs.

Institutional challenges are also derived mainly from contextual evidence and reporting gaps. (Nurhayati et al., 2025) identified limited exposure and insufficient institutional support as barriers to implementing World Englishes perspectives despite positive teacher attitudes. This finding suggests that awareness alone cannot transform practice when materials and assessment continue to privilege a narrow native model. Direct NEST studies reported little about orientation, mentoring, role descriptions, co-planning, duration, or evaluation. That absence does not prove that support was unavailable; it shows that the current evidence cannot identify which institutional conditions produced particular outcomes. Table 6 therefore separates the observed barriers from the institutional recommendations inferred from them.

The four challenge dimensions in Table 6 were derived through a staged coding process rather than assigned directly from study titles or research questions. Meaning units were first extracted verbatim or near-verbatim from each of the eleven included studies (e.g., "students found the NEST's speech difficult to follow," "the tutor adjusted materials to sustain motivation"). Units addressing a shared concern were grouped into descriptive codes (e.g., unfamiliar speech rate, reformulation, clarification requests), and codes with a common conceptual thread were then grouped into categories (e.g., comprehensibility). Categories were finally consolidated into the four higher-order themes reported in Table 6: linguistic, pedagogical, sociocultural/ideological, and institutional. Each meaning unit retained its source study and evidence-status tag (direct, comparative, or contextual)

throughout this process, so the thematic labels in Table 6 reflect an auditable chain from raw data to theme rather than a top-down classification

Table 6. Synthesis of Challenges and Their Evidentiary Basis

Challenge Dimension	Specific Challenge	Evidence	Interpretive Warrant
Linguistic	Comprehensibility, unfamiliar speech, and the need to negotiate meaning.	Darmanto (2020); Shalihah (2021); Wardana (2023); Rasyid et al. (2023).	Fluent input contributes to ICC only when it is adapted and made interactionally accessible.
Pedagogical	Different learner needs, explicit explanation, material, motivation, time, and feedback demands.	Shalihah (2021); Wardana (2023); Rasyid et al. (2023); Andriani et al. (2024).	Native status does not replace pedagogical knowledge, scaffolding, and contextual planning.
Sociocultural and ideological	Native-speaker hierarchy, authenticity paradox, identity pressure, and gendered representation.	Munandar (2025); Ugahara & Suryani (2023); Nurhayati et al. (2025); Khair (2024); Samawa & Jazadi (2025).	ICC requires critical engagement with power and representation, not imitation of an idealized native model.
Institutional	Limited support for linguistic diversity and insufficient reporting of induction, mentoring, and role structures.	Nurhayati et al. (2025) and reporting gaps in direct NEST studies.	Individual teacher agency cannot substitute for coherent curricular and professional support.

The third research question concerns strategies reported or supported by the literature. Strategy formation followed three evidence levels. Direct NEST studies generated codes for motivating reciprocal interaction and adaptive feedback. Direct comparative studies generated codes for differentiated NEST and NNEST strengths. Contextual studies generated codes for local-language and local-culture mediation, rapport, contextualized materials, multilingual and World Englishes awareness, and gender-sensitive critical literacy. Repeated gaps across these themes generated recommendations for collaboration, induction, mentoring, role clarification, and continuing professional development. Practices explicitly described in a primary study are labeled directly reported, practices supported by the surrounding Indonesian EFL context are labeled contextually supported, and cross-theme proposals are labeled evidence-informed recommendations requiring evaluation. This distinction prevents an untested recommendation from being presented as an established intervention.

(Darmanto, 2020) found that a NEST's pedagogical, psychological, linguistic, and cultural roles were associated with positive student motivation. (Wardana, 2023) showed that learner responses to native-teacher feedback were shaped by perception and perspective, supporting feedback that is paced, explicit, dialogic, and sensitive to learner confidence. (Shalihah, 2021; Rasyid et al., 2023), showed that learners recognized different strengths in NESTs and NNESTs. This convergence provides a reasoned basis for testing collaborative planning in which NESTs contribute fluent interaction and personal cultural experience while NNESTs contribute curriculum knowledge, first-language mediation, and

familiarity with local learning histories. However, neither study directly evaluated co-planning as an intervention, so collaboration remains an evidence-informed recommendation rather than a proven strategy. (Munandar, 2025) documented local-language and local-culture mediation in Indonesian EFL pedagogy, but this contextual finding supports an implication for NEST preparation rather than a direct claim about NEST behavior.

(Nurhayati et al., 2025) found support for linguistic diversity alongside persistent British and American preferences, while (Juanda et al., 2024) linked multilingual learning with cultural awareness. These contextual findings support exposing learners to multiple English varieties and validating Indonesian and regional languages as resources. (Samawa & Jazadi, 2025; Khair, 2024), support critical reading of voice, agency, absence, and role representation. Because these studies did not directly evaluate NEST practice, they support context-sensitive recommendations rather than claims of demonstrated NEST effectiveness. Table 7 preserves that distinction by naming the evidence level, source, and intended function of every proposed strategy.

Strategy codes followed the same evidentiary chain used for challenges. Direct NEST studies (Darmanto, 2020; Wardana, 2023) generated codes describing observed teacher behaviors, labeled directly reported. Contextual studies (e.g., Munandar, 2025; Andriani et al., 2024) generated codes describing practices documented in the surrounding Indonesian EFL context but not observed in NESTs directly, labeled contextually supported. Where codes recurred across multiple themes without any single study directly testing the resulting practice for example, the repeated but separate appearance of complementary NEST/NNEST strengths (Shalihah, 2021; Rasyid et al., 2023) and local mediation (Munandar, 2025) these were combined into cross-theme proposals such as NEST–NNEST collaborative planning, labeled evidence-informed recommendations requiring evaluation. This labeling was assigned at the point of synthesis, not retrofitted after Table 7 was drafted, so that the evidence-level column in Table 7 traces back to a specific coding decision for each strategy.

Table 7. Strategies, Evidence Level, and Intended Function

Strategy	Evidence Level	Primary Sources	Intended Function
Motivating, reciprocal interaction	Directly reported	Darmanto (2020)	Turns NEST contact into participatory linguistic and cultural learning.
Adaptive communication and feedback	Directly reported and strongly supported	Wardana (2023); Shalihah (2021); Rasyid et al. (2023)	Improves comprehensibility and protects learner participation.
NEST and NNEST collaborative planning	Evidence-informed recommendation requiring evaluation	Shalihah (2021); Rasyid et al. (2023); Munandar (2025)	Combines linguistic, pedagogical, curricular, and local-cultural expertise.
Local-language and local-culture mediation	Directly reported in	Munandar (2025)	Supports comparison, interpretation, and negotiated meaning.

Strategy	Evidence Level	Primary Sources	Intended Function
Rapport, updated materials, teacher learning, and learner motivation	contextual evidence Directly reported in contextual evidence	Andriani et al. (2024)	Addresses classroom management, material, confidence, and participation demands.
World Englishes and multilingual awareness	Contextually supported	Nurhayati et al. (2025); Juanda et al. (2024)	Reduces native-speaker hierarchy and prepares learners for diverse English users.
Gender-sensitive critical literacy	Contextually supported	Khair (2024); Samawa & Jazadi (2025)	Develops critical cultural awareness of voice, agency, and representation.
Induction, mentoring, role clarification, and continuing professional development	Evidence-informed recommendation requiring evaluation	Cross-theme synthesis	Creates institutional conditions for sustained adaptation and collaboration.

The principal interpretive finding is that the literature supports teacher complementarity more strongly than native-speaker superiority. Students evaluate teachers across multiple dimensions rather than through linguistic origin alone. (Darmanto, 2020) demonstrates the motivational and experiential value a NEST can provide, while (Shalihah, 2021; Rasyid et al., 2023) show that students also value NNESTs for comprehensibility, explanation, and shared linguistic or cultural experience. This interpretation is consistent with the theoretical critique of native-speakerism (Holliday, 2006) and with the long-standing argument that native and non-native teachers can possess different but complementary resources (Medgyes, 1994; Moussu & Llurda, 2008).

This contribution differs from the earlier review by (Iswandari & Ardi, 2022), which synthesized nineteen studies of in-service and pre-service EFL teachers across EFL settings and organized them around cognition, assessment, development, training, and ICC-related factors. The present review uses a narrower Indonesian NEST focus and adds three analytical elements not central to that review: an explicit hierarchy separating direct, comparative, and contextual evidence; analysis of native-speakerism and NEST and NNEST complementarity; and an audit of geographic and demographic reporting. The current synthesis therefore refines rather than duplicates the earlier map by showing both the conditional value attributed to NESTs and the limits of the evidence used to make that claim. Critically, Iswandari and Ardi (2022) did not audit demographic or geographic reporting within their included studies, so the reporting gap identified in the present review the near-total absence of standardized data on NEST gender, nationality, qualifications, and placement has not previously been documented for the Indonesian context. This gap is itself a substantive finding, not merely a methodological caveat, because it constrains what any future review, including the present one, can claim about who NESTs in Indonesia are.

(Byram, 1997) framework clarifies how the challenges and strategies relate to ICC rather than to general classroom effectiveness alone. The five *savoirs* are not

separate outcomes that can be assigned mechanically to particular teachers. They are interdependent capacities through which language users approach difference, acquire knowledge, interpret meanings, interact, and evaluate cultural perspectives. Figure 4 maps each *savoir* to the challenge identified in the literature and the strategy supported by the evidence. The figure makes visible the bilateral character of ICC: a NEST contributes one perspective among many, and effective intercultural teaching requires the deliberate cultivation of attitudes, knowledge, interpretation, interaction, and critical awareness rather than the display of a national culture.

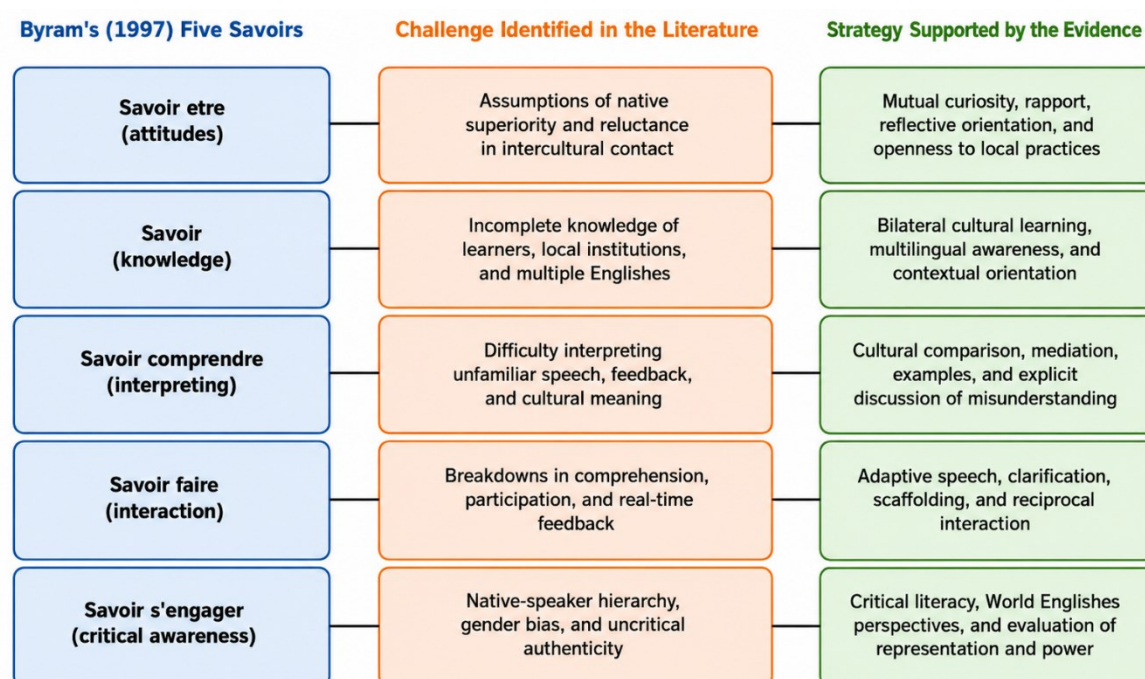


Figure 4. Conceptual framework mapping Byram's five *savoirs* to the challenges identified in the literature and the strategies supported by the evidence

The four challenge dimensions are analytically distinct but empirically connected. A linguistic difficulty may become pedagogical when a teacher lacks strategies for checking comprehension. It may become sociocultural when students interpret an accent as superior or inferior. It may become institutional when assessment and materials reward only one variety. Faster or unfamiliar speech cannot be solved solely by asking a NEST to slow down. The teacher also needs pedagogical techniques for reformulation, the class needs norms that permit clarification requests, and the institution needs learning objectives that value intelligibility over imitation. Similarly, native-speakerism cannot be solved by improving NNEST confidence alone. Recruitment language, role allocation, textbooks, assessment, and professional development also shape who is treated as authoritative. The synthesis therefore warrants multilevel strategies rather than individual blame.

The synthesis is most robust where several studies with different designs support a compatible interpretation. Complementary teacher roles, the influence of native-speakerism, and the importance of contextual mediation are supported through

converging direct and contextual evidence. The synthesis is less robust for national distribution, NEST gender composition, country of origin, the prevalence of particular challenges, and the effectiveness of institutional induction. Those areas are characterized by missing or indirect evidence rather than by stable cross-study patterns. Recognizing these boundaries strengthens rather than weakens the discussion because it links each conclusion to the method that produced it. The strategy findings also vary in strength: rapport building, motivating interaction, material adaptation, local mediation, and critical analysis are directly reported in one or more studies, whereas collaboration, induction, mentoring, and continuing professional development remain theoretically and empirically warranted but not yet evaluated as interventions.

The weakness of the intervention evidence has a direct policy consequence. None of the eleven included studies prospectively evaluated NEST and NNEST collaboration, induction, mentoring, or continuing professional development against a comparator with a defined ICC outcome. Direct NEST studies also reported little about program duration, implementation, facilitator roles, or adherence. Institutions may therefore pilot these measures because they respond coherently to the identified gaps, but they should pair implementation with process and outcome evaluation. The review does not warrant presenting them as proven packages or mandating them at scale solely on the basis of the current corpus.

This weakness is not incidental: none of the eleven included studies was designed to test collaboration, induction, mentoring, or CPD as an intervention, so no study could have generated direct evidence for or against them. Their presence in Table 7 reflects convergence across separate, non-interventional findings rather than a tested causal pathway. Presenting them alongside directly reported strategies such as rapport-building or adaptive feedback even with the evidence-level column distinguishing them carries a risk that readers skim past the label and treat all seven strategies in Table 7 as equally actionable. To guard against this, institutions considering NEST NNEST collaboration, induction, mentoring, or CPD should treat them as pilot-stage interventions requiring their own process and outcome evaluation, not as established best practices ready for policy mandate. Recommending them without this caveat would overstate what an evidence-classified narrative synthesis, as opposed to an intervention trial, can support.

4. Conclusion

NEST contributions to intercultural learning in Indonesia are conditional rather than automatic. The literature indicates that the value of NESTs depends not only on linguistic proficiency or native-speaker status but also on pedagogical competence, contextual understanding, intercultural awareness, and the capacity to work collaboratively within Indonesian educational settings. The review identifies four interconnected areas of challenge: linguistic comprehensibility, pedagogical preparation, sociocultural and ideological pressures, and institutional support.

These challenges demonstrate that effective intercultural teaching requires adaptation to learners, local cultural and linguistic contexts, and institutional expectations.

The synthesis also indicates that adaptive communication, reciprocal interaction, local-language and cultural mediation, contextualized materials, World Englishes awareness, and critical cultural literacy can support intercultural learning. However, collaboration between NESTs and NNESTs, induction, mentoring, co-planning, role clarification, and continuing professional development should be regarded as evidence-informed recommendations rather than established interventions because their effectiveness has not been directly evaluated. The review therefore supports a complementary rather than hierarchical understanding of NEST and NNEST roles. Future research should strengthen demographic and geographic reporting, examine diverse educational contexts, and directly evaluate institutional strategies for developing ICC.

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