Integrating *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* into the PGMI Curriculum for Prospective Elementary School Educators: A Step PGMI Curriculum Towards Decolonizing Music Education

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Abstract

This study examines the integration of Tembang Bocah Banyumasan into the PGMI curriculum at UIN Saizu Purwokerto as a decolonizing intervention in music education. In the PGMI context, the longstanding dominance of Western music has limited pre-service teachers' exposure to local musical knowledge, weakened cultural rootedness, and produced learning practices that are insufficiently aligned with Indonesia's cultural diversity. The paper aims to examine how this integration unfolds through three key phases: critical awareness, reappropriation, and emancipation and knowledge production, where students create and perform works that integrate local culture, Islamic values, and environmental awareness. The research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, analyzing curriculum structure, weekly learning stages, and empirical findings from student engagement. The results indicate that integrating *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* fosters cultural identity, critical thinking, and creativity among PGMI students, while also contributing to a more inclusive, contextually relevant curriculum for elementary schools. Challenges, such as limited access to traditional instruments, were addressed through digital tools and local artist collaborations, ensuring a meaningful and adaptable learning experience. The findings suggest that this integration not only decolonizes music education but also bridges the gap between university and elementary school curricula, offering a model for inclusive and culturally responsive teaching.

Keywords: **cultural knowledge; contextual learning; traditional tembang**

Introduction

Education plays a crucial role in shaping the future of societies, not only by enhancing intellectual development but also by transmitting cultural values and identities (Winkeljohn Black & Klinger, 2022). However, the current educational system, particularly in post-colonial contexts, often reflects the dominance of Western knowledge frameworks that overshadow local wisdom and cultural heritage (Daubney et al., 2018). In Indonesia, this issue is evident within the realm of music education, where traditional Indonesian music, such as Tembang Bocah Banyumasan, is often overlooked in favor of Western musical styles and national songs (Susanto, 2021). Tembang Bocah Banyumasan, a traditional children's music from Banyumas, offers a unique form of local musical expression, distinct in its lively kendang rhythms, direct language, and cultural humor. Despite its cultural significance, this genre has been marginalized in favor of more mainstream, nationalized content. This cultural imbalance in education calls for a critical re-examination and decolonization of curricula to integrate and validate indigenous knowledge systems, such as Tembang Bocah Banyumasan, and their benefits in educational practices (F. S. S. Sinaga & Sinaga, 2021). By reintroducing local music into educational curricula, it not only promotes cultural identity but also enhances students' understanding of their heritage, while bridging the gap between university-level education and elementary school teaching practices. The integration of such music can offer meaningful pedagogical tools for prospective educators to deliver culturally relevant lessons in elementary schools.

Decolonization of education refers to the process of challenging and dismantling the colonial structures embedded within the educational system, which frequently prioritize foreign knowledge while marginalizing indigenous knowledge (W. D. Mignolo, 2021; Tuhiwai Smith, 2012). This process involves reclaiming local languages, cultural expressions, and knowledge systems as legitimate and valuable sources of learning (Ding, 2024). Music, as an essential cultural expression, provides a powerful tool for decolonization, enabling students to engage with their local heritage while fostering a more inclusive and contextually relevant education (Aini et al., 2023; Sinaga F, 2021; Yang, 2022).

In Indonesia, the dominance of Western musical paradigms has marginalized local forms of music (Rosabal-Coto, 2022). This has led to a significant gap in students'

Emah Winangsit, Sunarto, Udi Utomo, Syahrul Syah Sinaga, Fajry Sub'haan Syah Sinaga, Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Bakri

connection with their cultural roots, particularly in educational institutions (Taznidaturrohmah et al., 2020). *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*, a collection of local children's songs composed by Fadjar Sopsan (Azis, 2018; Rahmawati, 2020), was integrated into the PGMI curriculum at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto as part of broader efforts to rethink the foundations of music education. This step is crucial because the existing curriculum has long privileged national and Western musical forms, resulting in the marginalization of local cultural knowledge within teacher education. Addressing this imbalance aligns directly with the goals of decolonization, which seek to challenge curricular structures that prioritize external cultural frameworks over indigenous traditions. By embedding *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* into formal coursework, the program begins to restore the visibility and legitimacy of local musical expressions, demonstrating how decolonization can create a more culturally grounded and contextually relevant model of music education.

The purpose of this study is to examine how the integration of Banyumasan childrens songs into the PGMI curriculum can serve as a meaningful approach to decolonizing music education, particularly in a context where the curriculum does not yet provide clear guidance on regional music or its pedagogical role. In the current PGMI program, music is generally embedded within broader arts or thematic learning courses, and explicit references to local musical traditions are largely absent. This lack of curricular clarity has resulted in prospective teachers receiving limited exposure to regional cultural resources, which weakens their ability to design culturally grounded learning experiences for elementary students. By situating Banyumasan childrens songs within structured learning phases that include critical awareness, creative adaptation, and culturally rooted knowledge production, this study demonstrates how local music can become a pedagogical foundation that strengthens teacher education. The findings highlight how integrating local musical traditions not only enriches the curriculum but also equips future teachers with culturally relevant strategies that can be applied in elementary school settings, thereby promoting more inclusive and contextually responsive teaching practices.

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This research aims to fill a clear gap in existing literature, as previous studies on music education in Indonesia predominantly focus on Western repertoires and rarely address how local musical traditions can be systematically embedded within teacher education programs, particularly in PGMI. While decolonization has been widely discussed conceptually, there is limited empirical evidence on how decolonizing principles are operationalized in classroom practice. The novelty of this study lies in offering a concrete, three-phase model for integrating Integrating Tembang Bocah Banyumasan into the formal PGMI curriculum demonstrates a concrete application of decolonization theory within music education while also opening new prospects for research on the broader influence of regional arts in university courses. This study shows that incorporating local artistic traditions can strengthen students cultural understanding and provide a foundation for future curriculum models that integrate regional knowledge across subjects. The findings also highlight how pre-research comparisons between the prioritization of Western music and the limited use of regional musical traditions reveal a persistent imbalance that shapes the learning experiences of prospective teachers. By addressing this imbalance, the instructional design proposed in this study positions local cultural expressions as legitimate pedagogical resources and reinforces their importance within teacher education. This approach not only enriches culturally responsive curriculum development but also offers an innovative model that connects decolonization

Emah Winangsit, Sunarto, Udi Utomo, Syahrul Syah Sinaga, Fajry Sub'haan Syah Sinaga, Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Bakri

theory with practical strategies for preparing teachers to integrate regional cultural materials in elementary school settings.

In addition, this research highlights the explicit implications of decolonization for elementary school music education by identifying gaps in the current curriculum. The absence of clear guidance on regional music and the continued emphasis on Western repertoires indicate a curricular imbalance that limits students cultural literacy and reduces opportunities to engage with their own local heritage. By integrating Banyumasan childrens songs into the learning process, this study provides a critical response to that imbalance and demonstrates how local music can function as a concrete medium for restoring cultural identity and strengthening contextually relevant teaching practices. This integration therefore serves not only as an instructional innovation but also as a critique of the existing curriculum, showing the need for stronger representation of regional arts in teacher education. It also seeks to show how this integration enhances critical thinking and creativity among students, particularly in elementary education. The findings suggest that incorporating local music into music education not only enriches students' understanding of their cultural heritage but also provides them with the tools to engage critically with broader societal issues, fostering a sense of ownership over their cultural identity and enhancing their pedagogical practices as future educators.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative case study design to examine the integration of Tembang Bocah Banyumasan into the PGMI curriculum at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto. A case study was selected because the research focuses on an in-depth investigation of a bounded system, namely Pendidikan Seni Budaya dan Keterampilan course in the PGMI program where decolonizing music education is implemented through local cultural integration. The course consisted of twelve meetings structured around three decolonization stages, namely critical awareness, creative reappropriation, and culturally grounded knowledge production. Pre-research data were collected during the initial two meetings through diagnostic observations and short reflective questionnaires to identify students prior understanding of Western and regional musical traditions. This design allows for a detailed exploration of how the integration process unfolds, how students engage with it, and how it supports the development of cultural identity and pedagogical competence. Data were collected through participant

observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis (Cresswell, 2010), enabling a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum implementation and students' experiences. The use of multiple data sources strengthened the credibility of the findings and provided a holistic description of the decolonization practices embedded in the course.

Table 1. Stages of Decolonization, Course Meetings, Research Instruments, and Data Collected

Decolonization Stage	Course Meetings	Student Activities	Research Instruments	Data Collected
Pre-Research Phase	Meeting 1–2	(1) Initial reflection on Western vs regional music; (2) First listening session of Tembang Bocah Banyumasan	(1) Diagnostic observation sheet; (2) Short reflective questionnaire	(1) Baseline understanding of students; (2) Early responses to local songs; (3) Initial cultural awareness indicators
1. Critical Awareness	Meeting 3–4	(1) Identifying dominance of Western musical elements in previous schooling; (2) Group discussion on cultural imbalance; (3) Comparative analysis of Western and Banyumasan songs	(1) Observational guide Stage 1	(1) Awareness of knowledge imbalance; (2) Interpretation of local cultural value
2. Reappropriation and Creative Adaptation	Meeting 5–8	(1) Vocal practice of Banyumasan songs; (2) Lyric adaptation for elementary classes; (3) Scriptwriting for cultural storytelling; (4) Designing simple musical activities for children	(1) Observational guide Stage 2; (2) Document analysis sheet for student drafts	(1) Students' creative outputs; (2) Pedagogical decisions
3. Emancipation and Knowledge Production	Meeting 9–11	(1) Reconstructing songs into classroom-ready modules; (2) Performance-based demonstrations	(1) Observational guide Stage 3	(1) Culturally grounded teaching materials; (2) Performance evidence; (3) Students' cultural identity expressions

Emah Winangsit, Sunarto, Udi Utomo, Syahrul Syah Sinaga, Fajry Sub'haan Syah Sinaga, Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Bakri

Decolonization Stage	Course Meetings	Student Activities	Research Instruments	Data Collected
Post-Observation Phase	Meeting 12	(1) Presentation of final outputs; (2) Discussion on future application in PGMI and elementary schools	(1) Reflection of project	(1) Students' readiness to apply locally grounded pedagogy

Source: Personal Documents

Observations were conducted during the 2025 academic year, focusing on PGMI classes A, B, C, and D, who were tasked with incorporating *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* into their musical pe-rformances. The researcher attended all rehearsals and performances, noting how local music was integrated, how students engaged with the material, and their responses to the learning environment. These observations, conducted in the rehearsal halls and performance spaces, provided a deeper understanding of the students' creative processes and interactions with local music. In addition to observations, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants, including 12 PGMI students and 4 faculty members, as well as local cultural practitioners. These interviews, which lasted approximately 25-40 minutes, aimed to gain insights into students' views on integrating *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* into the curriculum, the challenges they encountered, and the perceived benefits. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis.

Document analysis was also employed, focusing on curriculum-related materials such as the *Rencana Pembelajaran Semester* (RPS), and musical scripts created by students. This analysis provided a deeper understanding of how *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* was incorporated into the formal curriculum and whether it aligned with the broader goals of decolonizing music education. The data collected from these methods were then analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-step process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2019). Thematic analysis allowed for the identification of key patterns related to cultural identity, decolonization, and the development of pedagogical skills, providing insights into how integrating local music could reshape music education for both university students and elementary school teachers.
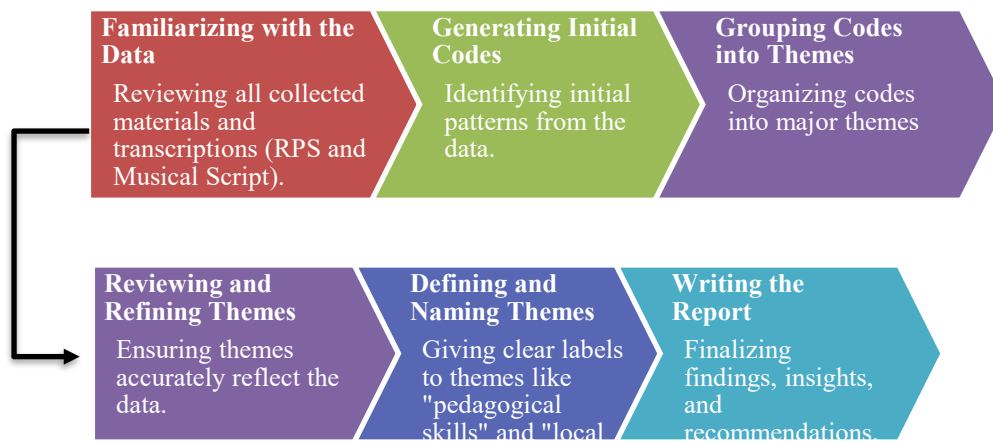
Figure 1. Thematic Analysis Process
Source: Braun & Clarke, 2019

Throughout the study, ethical considerations were carefully maintained. All participants were informed about the research purpose and procedures, and informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Anonymity and confidentiality of participants were ensured, and all audio recordings were securely stored. The researcher utilized audio recorders for interviews, transcription software for transcribing interviews, and video equipment for capturing live rehearsals and performances. Additionally, *Sibelius* software was used to transcribe and arrange *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* for the performances, as access to traditional instruments was limited. These tools allowed the researcher to accurately represent the music used in the study and support the overall data collection process.

Result

The integration of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* into the PGMI curriculum at UIN Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto can be analyzed through a decolonization process even though the term "decolonization" is not explicitly stated in the RPS. The evidence emerges from the structured learning experiences that gradually guide students to recognize, appreciate, and utilize their own cultural heritage as a primary source for music learning. This process is reflected in the *Seni Budaya dan Keterampilan* RPS, which consists of sixteen meetings and contains materials on regional arts, children's songs, local cultural practices, and creative performance–all of which support the re-centering of local identity within music education. Analysis of the RPS and triangulation

with interview data show that the integration unfolds across three stages. In the stage of critical awareness, students examine contrasts between Western repertoires and local song traditions while discussing their cultural and Islamic values. In the stage of creative reappropriation, students adapt Banyumasan children's songs into vocal practices, lyric modification, and simple teaching materials that incorporate Islamic messages and environmental themes relevant to elementary students. In the final stage of knowledge production, students create performances and learning products that combine local cultural expression, Islamic ethical values, and ecological awareness. These stages collectively illustrate a grounded form of decolonization, in which local culture becomes a central pedagogical resource for future PGMI educators. Based on an analysis of the RPS content and triangulation with interviews, this process can be mapped into three main phases:

Critical Awareness Phase (Meetings 1-4): Unpacking Dominance and Recognizing Local Identity

In the initial phase (weeks 1-4), students were guided to analyze the issues of arts education in MI/SD (Islamic Elementary Schools) and then introduced to *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*, a local children's music collection by Fadjar Sopsan. This phase represents epistemic awakening, where students began to realize that elementary school arts education was predominantly influenced by Western-style national children's songs such as "Pelangi" (Rainbow), "Naik-naik ke Puncak Gunung" (Climbing Up the Mountain), or "Menanam Jagung" (Planting Corn). Local songs like *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* had little recognition.

Table 1.
RPS Meeting Rubric 1-4

Time	Sub-CPMK / Subject Matter	Student Learning Activities	Methods/Strategies	Evaluation (Techniques & Instruments)
1	Analysis of art problems in MI/SD	Discussion of real problems of learning art in elementary schools, identification of constraint factors and potential solutions	Group discussions, case studies	Participation observations, reflection sheets
2	Concept of art, culture and skills in MI/SD	Students present the results of identifying problems and alternative solutions for art learning	Presentations, Q&A	Presentation rubric
3	Introduction *to Banyumasan*	Lecturers listen to songs, students discuss the	Interactive talks, audio exploration	Content analysis sheet

	Children's Song by Fadjar Sopsan	cultural context and moral message		
4	Analysis of the Meaning and Structure *of Children's Songs*	Students analyze lyrics, melodies, and educational values	Text and music analysis	Work analysis rubric

Source: Personal Documents

In the second week, the focus shifted to analyzing the concept of art and skills in *MI/SD*, with students presenting their findings and discussing alternative approaches to localizing art education. This process of collaborative reflection not only enhanced their pedagogical awareness but also marked an early stage of *epistemic awakening* as a growing recognition of the importance of cultural identity in education.

The third and fourth meetings deepened this awareness through the introduction and analysis of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* by Fadjar Sopsan. The lecturer facilitated listening sessions and discussions on the cultural and moral messages contained within the songs. Students analyzed the lyrics, melody, and educational values embedded in the music, revealing the richness of Banyumasan local wisdom for example its humor, honesty, and moral grounding in everyday life. This stage allowed students to critically compare the dominant Westernized music education framework with the authenticity and pedagogical potential of local musical traditions.

Overall, the activities conducted during this first phase successfully initiated a shift in perspective among PGMI students, from passive consumers of mainstream curricular content to reflective learners who recognize the significance of local music as a pedagogical resource. The structured use of group discussions, audio exploration, and reflective observation enabled students to understand how *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* could function not merely as a cultural artifact but as an educational tool that embodies the identity and values of the Banyumas community.

Contextual learning focused on making the learning experience relevant to students' real-world and socio-cultural contexts. In the arts performance, PGMI classes A, B, C, and D applied this approach by linking their learning to the local culture they experience daily. By involving local culture in their performance, students were not only learning art in the classroom but also experiencing how art interacts with the real lives of the community.

The Critical Awareness Phase was identified through three stages of data collection: classroom observations, student interviews, and document analysis of learning

activities. Observational data showed that students began by examining the contrast between Western musical influences and local cultural materials, such as *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* and the Nawang Wulan legend, which allowed them to recognize the cultural imbalance present in their prior music education. Interview data further supported this awareness, as students articulated how they consciously connected local songs and stories to wider social issues, including environmental crises and the importance of nature preservation. As stated by Fiana Hani (PGMI C):

> *"We tried to connect what we learned to relevant social issues, such as environmental problems or tourism in Banyumas. We wanted the audience to feel connected to the message we conveyed."*

Document analysis confirmed that during this phase, students engaged in reflection tasks aimed at identifying cultural values, Islamic moral messages, and ecological themes embedded in local art forms. Together, these data show that the Critical Awareness Phase successfully guided students to analyze their cultural environment, question previous learning dominated by Western models, and acknowledge the relevance of local traditions as meaningful learning resources.

Reappropriation and Local Creation Phase (Meetings 5-10): Revitalizing Local Knowledge Through Practice

In the second phase (weeks 5-10), students began to internalize and reproduce local cultural values through vocal practice, song interpretation, and scriptwriting for the musical drama. This phase represents the reappropriation of knowledge, where local knowledge is reclaimed as part of the formal education system.

Figure 2. The claiming Tembang Bocah Banyumasan is part of the Drama Show
Source: Personal Documents

Group singing practice of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* and scriptwriting based on the song lyrics became the key turning point. Students practiced turning local lyrics into educational narratives suitable for the context of MI. As Mignolo (2012) explains, decolonizing knowledge requires epistemic translanguaging, the ability to transform local language and symbols into modern academic spaces. Mukodimah (PGMI A director) shared:

> "We learned that writing a script from Banyumasan lyrics wasn't easy. But when we internalized the moral messages, we found Islamic values, like patience and honesty. From there, we learned that local culture can align with religion."

This statement shows that during this phase, students began developing interpretive and creative skills by using *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* as a basis for expression and moral education. At this stage, Cultural Knowledge and Contextual Learning worked in parallel: music served as a tool for understanding oneself and the social environment.

Table 2.
RPS Meeting Rubric 5 - 10

Week	Main Topic / Sub-CPMK	Student Activities	Method / Strategy	Assessment (Techniques & Instruments)
5	Basic Vocal Techniques in Singing *Tembang*	Vocal technique training (breathing, intonation, articulation)	Demonstration and practice	Vocal performance rubric

Week	Main Topic / Sub-CPMK	Student Activities	Method / Strategy	Assessment (Techniques & Instruments)
6	Singing *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* in Groups	Students practice and perform the results of their initial training	Peer learning, coaching	Group performance assessment
7	Expression and Emotion in Singing *Tembang*	Simulating performance with expression and gesture	Practice, role play	Performance and expression rubric
8	Mid-term Exam (UTS) *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* Performance	Group performance assessed based on vocal techniques, harmony, expression, and collaboration	Direct practice (performance test)	Vocal & teamwork performance rubric
9	Introduction to Musical Drama Project	Discussing the concept of musical drama education, exploring ideas from *Tembang Bocah* lyrics	Project-based learning	Project proposal
10	Writing a Musical Drama Script	Students write scripts based on the themes of *Tembang Bocah*	Writing workshop	Script writing rubric

Source: Personal Documents

Cultural Knowledge, in the context of education, refers to understanding the students' cultural context, which allows teaching to be more meaningful and relevant to their background. In the performances of PGMI classes A, B, C, and D, this was evident in the integration of Banyumasan culture into the artistic displays, including drama, music, and traditional dance. The creative process involving local cultural elements showed that students were not just learning art in a theoretical context but also in the cultural context of the local community. Melanny (PGMI D) stated in the interview:

> "Yes, sir... integrating Banyumasan culture into our artwork taught us to understand and appreciate our cultural heritage more, and how it can be conveyed to the audience in a relevant and meaningful way."

According to Melanny, understanding students' culture is a fundamental foundation in creating an inclusive learning environment. The use of local culture in learning allowed students to emotionally connect with the material, making the learning process more effective and engaging.

Emancipation and Knowledge Production Phase (Meetings 11-16): Music as a Medium for Social Transformation

The final phase (weeks 11-16) is an emancipatory praxis phase, where students took concrete actions to present their art, reclaiming the dignity of local culture. Through rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and the performance of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*-based

musical dramas, students not only created art but also presented an alternative form of education, where traditional arts served as a medium for character education and ecoliteracy. The final performances, such as "Nawang Wulan: Sumur Harapan di Tengah Kekeringan" by PGMI C and "Jaka Tarub" by PGMI A, showed a synthesis of Islamic elements, Banyumasan culture, and ecological pedagogy.

Figure 3. PGMI Student Art Performance on Hall
Source: Personal Documents

To address this concern, the study employed clear benchmarks to assess students' ability to integrate Tembang Bocah Banyumasan as a form of decolonizing music education (Abozeid, 2021; Szmyt, 2024). These benchmarks were derived from three indicators aligned with the phases of the decolonization framework. First, critical awareness was evaluated through students' reflections demonstrating their understanding of Western musical dominance and the cultural significance of local traditions (Bardsley, 2020; Fikri & Kadir, 2025). Second, reappropriation and creative adaptation was assessed through students' ability to transform Banyumasan children's songs into teachable materials, including vocal arrangements, lyric adaptation, and scriptwriting suitable for elementary classrooms. Third, emancipatory knowledge production served as the final benchmark, measured through students' performances and learning products that integrated local values, Islamic perspectives, and contextual environmental themes.

Together, these benchmarks provided a structured means of determining whether students were successfully engaging with decolonizing principles within the PGMI music education context.

These results highlight the phases of decolonization in the PGMI curriculum through the integration of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*. Despite challenges like limited access to traditional instruments, the students creatively adapted to these constraints, demonstrating the transformative potential of local cultural integration in education. The RPS served as a decolonial document, repositioning local culture from an object of study to an active subject of learning.

Discussion

The integration of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* into the PGMI curriculum not only impacts the students at the university level but also has significant benefits for elementary schools (Harrison et al., 2009). One of the main contributions is the bridging of the gap between higher education and elementary school curricula. By incorporating local music traditions into teacher education, future educators are equipped with tools to deliver culturally relevant and contextually appropriate music education to young learners (Sinaga F, 2021). Elementary schools, in particular, benefit from this integration as they gain access to innovative teaching methods that incorporate local culture, fostering students' cultural identity and promoting inclusive education (H. Park & Nam, 2024).

The correlation between campus-student and elementary school curricula lies in the application of the knowledge and skills developed at the university level (Whear et al., 2023). PGMI students are trained to understand the importance of local cultural heritage in education, which they can later apply when designing music lessons for elementary school students (Ediansyah et al., 2019). This alignment ensures that the educational strategies learned in the PGMI program are relevant to the needs of elementary schools, thus enhancing the overall educational experience for children. The integration of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* serves as an example of how local cultural content can be used to strengthen the connection between university curricula and elementary education.

Table 3.
Correlation Between PGMI Curriculum and Elementary School Education

PGMI Curriculum Activity	Relevance to Elementary School Education	Benefits for Elementary Schools
Learning Local Music (Tembang Bocah Banyumasan)	Future educators are trained to incorporate local music into the curriculum.	Elementary schools can introduce culturally relevant music, enhancing children's understanding of local heritage and promoting cultural pride.
Group Performances and Teaching Practices	PGMI students practice group collaboration and performance techniques.	Elementary students benefit from group-based learning and collaboration through music, improving social skills and cooperative learning.
Creative Expression in Singing and Performing	PGMI students learn to express emotions and convey messages through music.	Elementary students develop emotional expression and creativity through music, supporting their emotional and personal growth.
Music and Cultural Awareness	PGMI students learn to integrate local culture into music education.	Elementary schools can foster cultural awareness and inclusivity by teaching students about their own cultural heritage, creating a more diverse and inclusive learning environment.
Project-Based Learning for Musical Drama	PGMI students engage in project-based learning, designing music education projects.	Elementary schools can implement project-based learning, using music as a tool to teach problem-solving, teamwork, and creative thinking.
Writing and Script Development for Musical Performances	PGMI students create musical scripts based on local themes.	Elementary schools can use storytelling and scriptwriting as part of their creative arts curriculum, enhancing language skills and narrative abilities among young learners.

Source: Personal Documents

This study sought to explore how the integration of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* into the PGMI (Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) curriculum contributes to the decolonization of music education (Suharman & Rohman, 2022). Specifically, it aimed to understand how this integration facilitates the recognition of the dominance of Western music, fosters cultural identity, and impacts students' pedagogical practices (Vallejo, 2019). The findings reveal a significant shift in students' awareness and engagement with local music, which can be interpreted in light of decolonization theory, critical pedagogy, and contextual learning (Arbain et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2020).
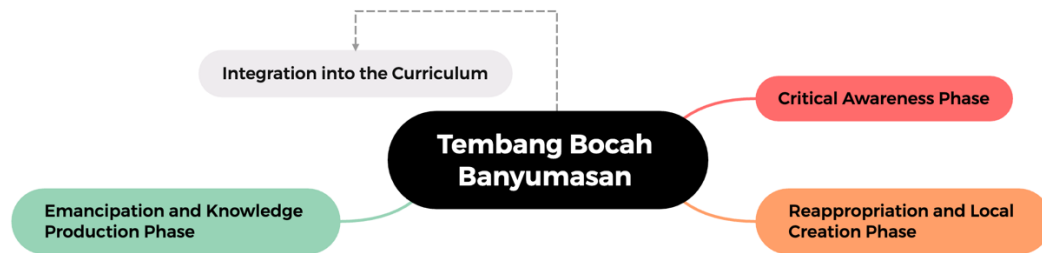
Figure 4. Concept of Integration
Source: Personal Documents

In the Critical Awareness Phase (Meetings 1-4), students critically examined the dominance of Western and nationalized music in the curriculum, recognizing the exclusion of local music forms like *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*. This phase reflects a process of epistemic awakening, where students, through discussions, case studies, and audio exploration, identified the cultural bias of the existing curriculum. According to Mignolo (2012), this process represents *epistemic disobedience*, a deliberate effort to challenge established colonial patterns of knowledge by validating local epistemologies as equally legitimate sources of learning (Karczewski et al., 2020; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2011).

In the Critical Awareness Phase, which took place during Meetings 1 to 4, students began by examining how Western and nationalized music had dominated their previous educational experiences and the PGMI curriculum. Through guided discussions, case analysis, and listening sessions, they recognized that local musical traditions such as *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* had been largely absent from formal instruction (Battiste, 2023). This stage marked the emergence of a conscious awareness in which students questioned the cultural imbalance in the curriculum and acknowledged the marginalization of regional arts. The learning activities encouraged them to reflect on how their preferences, assumptions, and teaching expectations had been shaped by Western musical exposure (E. B. Park & Yang, 2023). As they compared musical examples and shared personal reflections, students demonstrated a growing realization that local music carries cultural, moral, and pedagogical value that had not been fully recognized (Xing, 2023). This collective awareness reflects an intentional effort to rethink dominant knowledge structures and to validate local cultural expressions as meaningful sources for learning and future teaching practice (Smith, 2022).

The activities, such as group discussions and reflective listening, enabled students to confront the absence of local music in schools and understand how *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*, as a regional cultural asset, had been marginalized. This realization Jones & Bannerman (2024) concept of *decolonizing the mind*, which encourages students to recognize and challenge the hegemonic cultural narratives embedded in education. Moreover, this aligns with Fean (2012) critical pedagogy, which emphasizes reflection and dialogue to uncover the imbalances in education (Fatonah et al., 2023).

Through class discussions and audio explorations, students began to recognize the distinctive features of Banyumasan music, such as lively kendang rhythms, the straightforward language, and the humor typical of Banyumas society (Souza, 2022). This phase reflects what Smith (Tuhiwai Smith, 2012) calls "decolonizing the mind," an initial awareness that the existing curriculum often neglects local sources of knowledge. As stated by Fiana Hani (PGMI A class representative):

> "At first, we realized that the children's songs sung in schools were all in standard Indonesian. There were no songs from Banyumas. But children would prefer songs in a language that is close to them."

This quote illustrates the critical awareness of students towards the national curriculum bias and opens the space to recognize local culture as a valid source of learning.

The findings indicate that during this phase, students were not only able to identify the dominance of Western music but also begin to critically reflect on the cultural implications of this imbalance (Fatra et al., 2020). This phase also encouraged students to question the legitimacy of excluding local knowledge from formal education (Nasution et al., 2023), supporting Mignolo's (2021) notion of *epistemic disobedience*, where local knowledge and cultural expressions are reclaimed and validated within academic frameworks (Chaloemtiarana, 2014).

In the Reappropriation and Local Creation Phase (Meetings 5-10), students began to internalize local cultural knowledge through the practice of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* songs and scriptwriting activities (Sinaga F, 2021). This phase marks the shift from critical awareness to action, where students not only analyzed the cultural significance of the songs but also creatively adapted them into educational narratives. The process of scriptwriting based on *Tembang Bocah* lyrics, as highlighted in Mukodimah's (2025) interview, allowed students to engage with the moral lessons of the songs, such as patience and honesty, and adapt them to fit the context of teaching in MI/SD. This aligns

with Mignolo's (2021) concept of reappropriating knowledge, where local culture is transformed into educational content that fits the modern pedagogical context (Bae, 2021).

Students became autonomous subjects of learning, not just implementers of instructions. This reflects Freire's concept of critical pedagogy, where education is liberated through reflective and creative practices. Akmal shared:

> "At the final stage, we felt like real artists. All decisions were made by us, from the stage concept to the props and rhythm. But the most valuable part was the awareness that we were fighting for our culture in an academic space."

This phase marked the concrete realization of educational decolonization praxis: students created new knowledge rooted in local experiences and disseminated it within the academic context.

Moreover, this phase exemplifies *Cultural Knowledge* in educational theory, where local cultural contexts are incorporated into learning, enhancing the relevance and engagement of students with their education (Williams et al., 2021). Through this approach, students not only connected with their heritage but also began to see the potential for local music to serve as a meaningful pedagogical tool (F. S. S. Sinaga et al., 2021). The activities in this phase demonstrate the active integration of local knowledge into formal education, moving beyond passive consumption to creative expression and interpretation.

The final Emancipation and Knowledge Production Phase (Meetings 11-16) marked the culmination of this process. Students were given the opportunity to create and perform their own musical dramas based on *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*, demonstrating their ability to synthesize their cultural knowledge with creative expression(Kim & Bae, 2019) . As Freire (1970) emphasizes in his concept of *emancipatory praxis*, education becomes truly liberating when students are empowered to produce knowledge and engage in critical reflection through action. The performances, such as *Nawang Wulan: Sumur Harapan di Tengah Kekeringan* by PGMI C and *Jaka Tarub* by PGMI A, showed how local culture, Islamic values, and social awareness could be integrated into a powerful pedagogical tool (S. S. Sinaga et al., 2025). This aligns with the concept of *Equitable Pedagogy*, which stresses the importance of creating inclusive learning environments that respect and celebrate students' cultural backgrounds (F. S. S. Sinaga et al., 2025).

In summary, the integration of *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* into the PGMI curriculum provides a concrete example of how local knowledge can be reclaimed, adapted, and integrated into education to foster cultural awareness and pedagogical innovation. The study's findings underscore the importance of decolonizing music education by promoting the inclusion of local cultural expressions, as these forms of knowledge are integral to building a more inclusive and relevant curriculum for future generations of educators. The following table summarizes the key activities, methods, and findings associated with each phase of the decolonization process in the study:

Table 4
Key Activities, Methods, and Findings in the Critical Awareness, Reappropriation, and Emancipation Phases of the Tembang Bocah Banyumasan Integration into the PGMI Curriculum.

Phase	Key Activity	Method/Strategy	Findings and Results
Critical Awareness Phase	Analyzing the dominance of Western music in the curriculum	Group Discussions, Case Studies, Audio Exploration	Students recognized the dominance of Western children's songs and the exclusion of local songs like *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*.
Cultural Reflection	Introducing *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*	Audio Listening Sessions, Class Discussions	Students identified cultural features (e.g., Banyumasan language, rhythm, humor) and compared them with national songs.
Epistemic Awakening	Exploring the relevance of local music	Reflection, Group Presentations	Students questioned the national curriculum's bias and acknowledged the importance of integrating local knowledge and cultural expression.
Pedagogical Impact	Understanding local music's role in education	Interactive Learning, Group Activities	Students felt empowered to include local music in their future teaching practices, recognizing its potential for moral and cultural education.
Cultural Identity and Pride	Recognizing the importance of local identity	Class Discussions, Reflection	Students experienced a sense of pride in their cultural heritage, understanding the value of promoting local traditions within the educational system.

Source: Personal Documents

Emah Winangsit, Sunarto, Udi Utomo, Syahrul Syah Sinaga, Fajry Sub'haan Syah Sinaga, Muhammad Asyraf Mohd Bakri

These findings not only demonstrate the practical outcomes of integrating local culture into the curriculum but also contribute to the broader theory of decolonizing education. By reflecting on their experiences and engaging with *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan*, students developed a deeper understanding of how education can be used as a tool for cultural preservation, critical thinking, and social transformation.

Conclusion

This study provides a concrete theoretical contribution by showing how decolonization becomes visible through the actual implementation of the 16-meeting learning process. Across the three stages of critical awareness, creative reappropriation, and knowledge production, students demonstrated clear shifts in understanding, practice, and cultural engagement. In the early meetings, they recognized the dominance of Western music and identified the absence of regional content in the PGMI curriculum. During the middle meetings, they reconstructed Banyumasan childrens songs into teachable materials, integrating Islamic values and environmental themes. In the final meetings, students produced performances and learning products that centered regional identity rather than Western models. These outcomes show that the structured process had a measurable impact on students' cultural confidence, pedagogical creativity, and ability to design locally grounded lessons. At the curriculum level, the findings reveal that integrating regional arts enriches the existing course structure and provides a model for how local cultural content can be systematically embedded into PGMI learning. This demonstrates that decolonization is not abstract theory but a process that generates tangible instructional change and directly strengthens teacher preparation.

Moreover, the research highlights the beneficial correlation between the PGMI curriculum and elementary school education. By equipping future educators with the tools to teach local music, this integration ensures that cultural heritage is preserved and passed on to younger generations, creating a more inclusive and culturally relevant educational environment. The findings suggest that incorporating *Tembang Bocah Banyumasan* in the curriculum can bridge the gap between university-level training and elementary school teaching, fostering a deeper connection between students' cultural backgrounds and their educational experiences.

The study also addressed challenges, such as the limited access to traditional instruments, through digital adaptations and collaborations with local artists, ensuring that

the learning process remained meaningful and adaptable. Ultimately, this research offers a model for integrating local knowledge into the formal education system, contributing to a more inclusive, relevant, and decolonized curriculum for both university students and elementary school educators.

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