

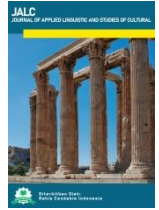


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KNOWING INDONESIAN LANGUAGE FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS: FOUNDATIONS FOR BEGINNERS

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A B S T R A C T

Indonesian as a Foreign Language (it is usually called as BIPA – Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing) plays an essential role in introducing the Indonesian language and culture to the international community. This article discusses the basics of BIPA learning, from introducing vocabulary and common expressions used in daily communication to understanding the cultural contexts associated with the Indonesian language. With an interactive and easy-to-understand approach, this material aims to help foreign speakers communicate effectively in various social situations, such as in the workplace, education, and everyday life. It is expected that BIPA learning will accelerate the adaptation process for foreign speakers and enhance their understanding of Indonesian cultural values.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian is a language rich in cultural nuances and serves as a key link in Indonesia, a country with more than 17,000 islands and diverse ethnicities. As the national language, Indonesian is used in everyday life by more than 270 million people, and more and more people outside Indonesia are interested in learning it (Nasution & Mulyadi, 2022). This has led to the importance of learning Indonesian for foreign speakers or non-native speakers. In Indonesian language called BIPA, the abbreviation from Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (later stated as BIPA). It is a program designed to help foreigners understand and use Indonesian well in various situations (Arumdyahsari et al., 2016).

Along with globalization and advances in information technology, international interactions are increasing. Many foreigners are interested in learning Indonesian,

whether for the purpose of education, work, tourism, or social relations. The Indonesian government and various educational institutions at home and abroad are also increasingly paying attention to the teaching of BIPA, given the importance of Indonesian as a means of international communication (Nasution, 2019). One of the main challenges in learning BIPA is the difference in culture and linguistic systems between Indonesian and the home language of foreign speakers.

In this context, BIPA learning includes not only mastery of linguistic aspects, such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, but also an understanding of Indonesian culture (Qoyyimah, 2020). Effective communication skills in Indonesian must be accompanied by an understanding of the Indonesian social and cultural context, such as customs, ways of interacting in society, and values that live in everyday life (Asteria & Nofitasari, 2023). Without a deep understanding of the culture, language learning will not be effective, and foreign speakers may have difficulty in adapting to the social environment in Indonesia (Siahaan et al., 2023).

One important aspect that needs to be considered in BIPA learning is the introduction of vocabulary and common expressions used in daily communication. This vocabulary is very diverse and contextual, depending on the situation and the relationship between speakers. For example, in communicating with elders, there are more polite and formal forms of language, while in daily conversations between peers, the language used is more casual (Azi & Dajan, 2022). Therefore, BIPA teaching needs to emphasize the importance of flexibility in using language according to the existing social context (Inderasari & Agustina, 2017).

In addition, the teaching aspect of oral and written communication is also an important part. In daily life, foreign speakers in Indonesia will be faced with various situations that require them to speak, listen, read, or write in Indonesian. Therefore, teaching that is based on real situations and regular communication practice is very much needed especially in vocabulary (Erowati & Nurjanah, 2020). Conversation practice with native speakers or the use of interactive learning media can help accelerate the learning process for foreign speakers.

BIPA teaching also requires methods that are suitable for the different characteristics of foreign speakers. Everyone has different cultural backgrounds, education levels, and goals in learning Indonesian. Therefore, the BIPA learning approach must be tailored to the needs and context of each individual. The use of technology in BIPA learning, such as language apps and online classes, also provides flexibility for foreign speakers who want to learn Indonesian remotely (Nasution, 2022).

Overall, BIPA learning aims to facilitate foreign speakers to communicate effectively and build a deeper understanding of Indonesian culture. Effective BIPA teaching depends not only on teaching the language itself, but also on introducing and applying Indonesian cultural values in the context of everyday life (Defina, 2021; Pamenang, 2021). Through proper teaching, it is expected that foreign speakers can feel more accepted and adapt to the social environment in Indonesia, as well as strengthen international relations between Indonesia and other countries (Erviana & Faisal, 2022).

The purpose of this study is to develop an in-depth understanding of the process of introducing Indonesian to foreign speakers with a focus on the basics of learning for beginners. This research aims to identify effective teaching methods, relevant learning materials, and interactive approaches that can help foreign speakers understand the basic structures, vocabulary, and culture associated with Indonesian. Thus, the results of this study are expected to contribute to improving the quality of learning Indonesian as a foreign language as well as facilitating linguistic and cultural adaptation for beginner learners.

METHOD

The methodology of learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) in this study uses a communicative and contextual approach, which emphasizes the development of language skills in real situations. Learning focuses on four main aspects, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, which are taught in an integrated manner through direct interaction and simulation of daily life. Each learning session is designed to encourage learners' active participation, using materials relevant to the Indonesian socio-cultural context. In addition, teaching methods also include the use of technology, such as language learning apps and interactive media, to enhance the engagement of learners who learn independently or remotely.

In practice, learning is conducted through a combination of face-to-face classes and digital platforms that enable distance learning. Each topic is covered with an approach based on practical situations, such as conversations in the market, in the office, or in social events. To measure the effectiveness of learning, assessments are conducted periodically through language skills tests and direct observation of participants' ability to communicate in Bahasa Indonesia. In addition, feedback from learners is used as evaluation material to improve the teaching methods and materials used.

The data of this study are the results of observations, interviews, and analysis of Indonesian learning materials for beginner foreign speakers, which include language structure, vocabulary, and teaching methods used. In addition, the data also includes the responses and experiences of novice learners in understanding and using Indonesian.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesian Language Learning for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is becoming increasingly important in the current context of globalization, where inter-country and intercultural interactions are increasingly intense. Indonesian, as the official language in Indonesia, has a central role in facilitating communication in various sectors of life, such as education, business, tourism, and diplomacy. Therefore, the BIPA program is designed to not only teach linguistic aspects, but also to introduce Indonesian culture that is inherent in daily language use. This discussion will

review various aspects related to BIPA learning, including the challenges faced by foreign speakers, teaching methods, as well as the importance of teaching culture in the language learning process.

One of the main challenges foreign speakers face in learning Indonesian is the difference in linguistic systems between Indonesian and their home language. For example, in Indonesian there are various forms of pronouns that indicate a level of politeness, which may not be found in the language of foreign speakers. In addition, the sentence structure in Indonesian, which is often more flexible and not bound to a strict word order as in English, requires adjustment for speakers who are used to a more rigid sentence structure. Therefore, BIPA teaching must pay attention to these linguistic differences so that foreign speakers can master the use of Indonesian appropriately and effectively.

In addition to linguistic challenges, foreign speakers are also faced with profound cultural differences between their home countries and Indonesia. Indonesian culture, which is heavily influenced by values such as *gotong royong*, respect for elders, and the importance of social relationships, is reflected in the language used. For example, in everyday conversation, Indonesian has more formal forms when speaking to older or more respected people. BIPA teaching needs to incorporate these cultural elements so that foreign speakers not only understand the language technically, but can also adapt to social interactions in Indonesia.

Effective BIPA learning methods need to combine various approaches, ranging from task-based learning, context-based learning, to the use of digital media. Task-based learning invites learners to work on tasks that simulate real situations, such as buying goods in a market or ordering food in a restaurant. This provides hands-on experience that is useful for developing practical communication skills. In addition, the use of technology such as language learning apps, interactive videos and online platforms can increase flexibility and learner engagement, especially for those learning remotely.

In the context of oral communication, foreign speakers need to be trained to understand and produce intonations and accents that are in line with Indonesian social norms. In Indonesian, intonation can have different meanings depending on the context and situation. For example, the way of speaking to peers is certainly different from speaking to superiors or elders. Therefore, BIPA learning does not only focus on mastering words and phrases, but also on mastering aspects of prosody (intonation, word stress, and rhythm) to ensure that foreign speakers can communicate naturally and appropriately.

The importance of teaching culture in BIPA cannot be ignored either. Indonesian not only reflects the way of speaking, but also reflects the way of thinking and interacting in society. For example, in daily communication, manners are highly valued, and many expressions contain the value of politeness. Understanding this will help foreign speakers to avoid misunderstandings in social interactions. Cultural learning in BIPA includes teaching about social norms, customs, and expected attitudes and behaviors in various social situations.

One of the growing strategies in BIPA teaching is the use of authentic media, such as news, movies, and Indonesian songs. These authentic media provide a more vivid and real context of how language is used in everyday life. For example, through watching movies or listening to songs, foreign speakers not only learn vocabulary and sentence structures, but can also understand the expressions and the underlying culture. The use of authentic media also increases learners' motivation to learn, as they can see how Indonesian is used in a wider range of social contexts.

One method that is quite effective in learning BIPA is the situation or communication-based approach. In this approach, learning is more focused on direct practice of speaking and listening in situations related to daily life. For example, teaching foreign speakers how to interact with sellers in the market, talk to friends, or have business conversations. By focusing on real situations, foreign speakers can directly experience how Indonesian is used in daily communication and enrich their social skills.

However, BIPA learning should also pay attention to the different learning goals of each individual. Some foreign speakers may learn Indonesian for academic purposes, while others may be interested in learning the language for social or professional purposes. Therefore, it is important to tailor teaching materials and methods to the specific needs of learners. For example, for those learning Bahasa Indonesia for business purposes, the materials taught could focus more on formal language and vocabulary used in the professional world, while for tourists, the lessons would focus more on everyday conversations useful in tourist attractions.

Assessment in BIPA learning also plays an important role to evaluate the extent to which learners have mastered language skills. Assessment is not only done through written exams, but also through the assessment of speaking and listening skills in situations similar to real life. The use of clear and objective assessment rubrics is essential to provide constructive feedback to learners, so that they can continue to improve their language skills. In addition, assessments that focus on mastering the cultural context are also very important, to ensure that foreign speakers not only understand the language technically, but can also use it appropriately in social interactions.

The importance of support from teachers or instructors who are competent in BIPA is also undeniable. Teachers who understand the cultural and linguistic differences between Indonesia and learners' home countries can provide more precise directions and help overcome barriers to learning. BIPA teachers need to have in-depth knowledge of both languages and cultures involved, and be able to adapt teaching methods to the various backgrounds of learners. Qualified teachers can create a conducive and fun learning environment, which can increase learners' motivation in learning Indonesian language and culture.

Overall, learning BIPA is a complex process and requires an integrated approach between language and culture. By using the right method and adjusting the material to the needs of the learners, it is expected that learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers can run effectively. Holistic teaching, which not only prioritizes language aspects, but also an introduction to culture, will provide a richer and

deeper learning experience for foreign speakers, as well as strengthen international relations between Indonesia and other countries.

CONCLUSION

Indonesian Language Learning for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is an important effort to introduce Indonesian language as well as Indonesian culture to the international community. BIPA learning not only aims to teach linguistic aspects, such as grammar and vocabulary, but also to provide a deep understanding of the social and cultural norms inherent in everyday language use. In the context of growing globalization, Indonesian language skills are becoming increasingly important for those who interact with Indonesia in various sectors, such as education, business, and tourism. Therefore, comprehensive and effective BIPA learning will facilitate foreign speakers in communicating more fluently and adaptively.

In its implementation, BIPA teaching should be tailored to the needs and goals of each learner, using approaches based on real situations and the use of authentic media to support the learning process. Appropriate methods, which combine language and cultural theories, are essential to achieve maximum learning goals. Support from competent teachers as well as regular evaluation will accelerate the learning process and ensure that foreign speakers not only master the language, but can also interact well within the Indonesian socio-cultural context. Thus, effective BIPA learning not only enriches language skills, but also strengthens more harmonious intercultural relations at the global level.

A suggestion that can be given to readers, especially BIPA (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers) teachers, is to continue to develop innovative and interactive teaching methods to increase the learning interest of beginner students. Teachers are advised to utilize digital media, cultural simulations, and contextual materials to facilitate understanding of language structures and vocabulary. Future researchers are expected to continue this research by exploring new aspects, such as the influence of local culture in language learning or the effectiveness of technology in supporting the teaching-learning process. In addition, general readers are expected to understand the important role of Indonesian in global communication and support efforts to promote the language internationally.

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