

Intercultural Learning Strategies to Enhance BIPA Students' Language Skills

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Abstract. Foreign language learning is related to the culture of the target language. Understanding Indonesian culture has an impact on the behavior of BIPA students when communicating with native Indonesian speakers and also strengthens linguistic knowledge. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. This study aims to describe implementing intercultural learning strategies for BIPA students. The study results show that integrating intercultural understanding in class results can enhance BIPA students' speaking and writing capacities. In this study, BIPA students from Japan provided a form of intercultural learning in class. Cultural topics introduced in class learning are the culture and habits of the Indonesian people. BIPA students who fully understand Indonesian culture can provide statements, responses, and comments about the learning context. Therefore, they will find it easier to adapt while staying in Indonesia.

Keywords: BIPA learning, Intercultural Learning Strategies, Foreign Language Skills

1 Introduction

Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) is an Indonesian language learning for foreign speakers in an effort to improve the function of Indonesian to become an international language as mandated in Government Regulation Number 57 of 2014 Article 31 concerning Development of Development and Protection of Language and Literature and Improvement of Indonesian Language Functions. The integrated curriculum on BIPA learning is listed in the *Standar Kompetensi Lulusan (SKL)* in Permendikbud No. 27 of 2017. In the *Standar Kompetensi Lulusan (SKL)*, each learning achievement is arranged based on language skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Other learning outcomes listed in this curriculum are the achievement of attitudes and values, abilities mastered in the realm of language, as well as the rights and responsibilities of learners.

BIPA occupies a position as a foreign language learning. Learning a foreign language is the same as learning a language in general, namely learning two components or linguistic competencies, namely active receptive language skills (listening and reading) and active productive language skills (writing and speaking) [1]. Furthermore, learning BIPA makes

foreigners able to master Indonesian [2]. Learning a foreign language has the same aspects as learning a language in general with reference to practical achievements according to language skills.

Every learning process will certainly not be separated from learning elements such as students or students. The word learner is used in BIPA terminology. The targets of BIPA students are foreign speakers who have a first-language background and learn Indonesian according to their personal goals. Furthermore, in Permendikbud Number 27 of 2017, it is stated that BIPA students learn Indonesian for various purposes, including being able to interact and communicate using Indonesian, not to gain expertise in the field of work. These BIPA students study Indonesian in accordance with the syllabus developed by each BIPA course institution adapting learning outcomes to SKL.

BIPA learning has often been echoed since around the 1990s. The BIPA learning context already existed at that time in several countries under the auspices of existing government institutions. One of the BIPA initiating programs was the Ministry of Education and Culture which has had a flagship program called Darmasiswa RI from 1974 until now [3]. This program facilitates BIPA learning for students who come from countries that have diplomatic relations with Indonesia. Reporting from Badan Bahasa Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan website (2006), the term BIPA arose when the Koferenasi Internasional Pengajar BIPA (KIPBIPA) in 1994 was held in Semarang [4]. Then in subsequent years, KIPBIPA will be held every two years until now the 12th KIPBIPA held in 2022. Every KIPBIPA congress is always attended by BIPA activists, teachers, and practitioners to update each other on the latest and most up-to-date context on BIPA teaching. That way, epistemologically, the origin of the concept of learning BIPA started with cooperative efforts between countries with the aim of learning Indonesian as a diplomatic tool.

The search for the benefits of learning BIPA can be seen in the context of teaching foreign languages. Language learning itself aims to develop the ability to think and communicate with each individual. This is in line with Sauri's opinion that the ability to think and communicate essentially originates from human nature and is developed through an educational process [5]. Foreign language learning has significant benefits for learners and speakers. The use of a foreign language can bridge the communication of two or more individuals with different language backgrounds. The results of the study by Hadjichristidis et al. (2015) showed that the use of a foreign language rather than the mother tongue is considered less risky and more beneficial. On the other hand, learning a foreign language is a cultural diplomatic tool for a country that can strengthen its state position [6].

The goal of BIPA learning in general is to produce graduates who have good and correct Indonesian language skills for various contexts. However, teaching BIPA is different from teaching Indonesian to native speakers. One of the differences is that BIPA students already have a first language and have different cultural backgrounds, ages, and goals [7]. Usually, BIPA learning is held in formal institutions. Thus, the benefits of learning BIPA can be divided into two according to SKL. A significant benefit for BIPA students is having good Indonesian language skills and being able to communicate in Indonesian fluently according to the context. The benefits of BIPA course organizing institutions are to produce standardized graduates.

BIPA teachers will integrate various learning strategies in class according to learning outcomes. One learning strategy that can meet the language needs of learners is an intercultural learning strategy. Language is a key paradigm of intercultural dialogue. This social phenomenon is based

on territorial, ethnic, historical, and religious, and is used for communication, understanding, transmission, and assimilation of information [8]. On the other hand, learning that involves intercultural contexts plays an important role in the future lives of students. This is in line with leading learners to intercultural understanding is an important way of preparing young people to function in a national and global village as responsible and thoughtful adults [9]. Hofstede states that intercultural differences can be classified according to type, or rather according to different ranges of emphasis, for example, from individualism to collectivism; or in terms of power relations, from hierarchal to horizontal; or in terms of gender relations, from masculine to feminine [10]. With the aim of deepening intercultural understanding, BIPA teachers can introduce Indonesian culture so that students can become tolerant and confident individuals.

Several previous studies have also produced findings about the use of intercultural learning strategies in foreign language and BIPA classes. Sumarti et al. (2020) integrated intercultural learning strategies to improve students' speaking competence with the topic of shopping. The results of his research show that the significance of learning helps students in the bargaining process when shopping [11]. This makes it easier for students to get relatively cheaper prices. Other research conducted by Satria & Nurgiyantoro (2021) shows that language learning supports communication skills while cultural learning directs communication according to the cultural context of the language in society [12]. Therefore, language learning through an intercultural approach pairs two studies in one educational process for BIPA students.

Based on the background and results of previous studies, this study aims to identify and analyze intercultural learning strategies to improve the language skills of BIPA students. The Indonesian language skills that are the target of learning are writing and speaking. It is intended that students can provide responses, responses, and clarify their positions when writing and speaking in the context of Indonesian culture. Writing and speaking skills are needed by students to respond to various communication situations they will face when in direct contact with the culture being studied.

2 Research Methods

The research method used is descriptive qualitative. Bogman & Taylor stated that the qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior [13]. Researchers describe the lesson plan, the results of observations on the implementation of learning, and learning outcomes using intercultural strategies. Data interpretation is also carried out on learning outcomes with an authentic assessment of writing skills.

The subject of this research is 3 BIPA students from Japan that learning Bahasa Indonesia at Balai Bahasa Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia. They are Osaka University students majoring in Bahasa Indonesia. Based on the placement test results, they are currently studying in BIPA 4 or intermediate level. For the first time, they live in Bandung, Indonesia since June 2022. They never experienced living or communicating with native Bahasa Indonesia before.

To collect data for this research, the researcher observes the implementation of learning and learning outcomes using intercultural strategies in class. The teacher follows the lesson plan designed for teaching cultural aspects. The researcher also describes the discussion between teacher and students also the score of BIPA students' writing tasks.

3 Result and Discussion

The successful learning process is not measured only because the steps in the learning syntax are well executed. More than that, successful learning can have a positive impact on the sustainability of students' lives. Students are not considered as people who are ready to accept anything they learn, as blank paper that is ready to be written according to the wishes of the teacher (*transfer of knowledge*). However, students are seen as part of the language community with all the differences and similarities with other people [14]. That way, learning that is in line with the concept of intercultural strategies focuses on the achievement of students' understanding of cultural differences and similarities that are learned in class.

Implementing intercultural strategies is a challenge. This is because the strategy demands the task of the language teacher who must process at least some intercultural knowledge and continue to develop it side by side with the learner's life [15]. Thus, researchers develop a learning process that involves intercultural understanding using contexts that are common and often occur in Indonesia. The topic chosen is the custom of the tradition of *selamatan*. The following is a lesson plan that is structured using the syntax of *discovery learning* by involving elements of intercultural understanding.

Table 1. Lesson Plan Using Intercultural Learning Strategies

Topics	Forms of Learning	Description of Learning Activities
Indonesian Habits	Initial activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Teacher greets students. – Teacher provides an apperception of learning material. – Teacher conveys the learning objectives.
	Main activities	<p><i>Stimulation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students watch a video about the tradition of <i>selamatan</i> in Indonesia. – Students and teachers discuss information in the video. <p><i>Data Collections</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students collect information about the tradition of <i>selamatan</i>. – Students and teachers exchange information about the tradition of <i>selamatan</i>. – Students and teachers discuss new vocabulary about the tradition of <i>selamatan</i>.

		<p><i>Data Processing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students are given time to prepare responses and responses about the tradition of selamatan. – Students talk about their responses to the tradition of selamatan. <p><i>Generalizations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Students and teachers discuss the meaning of the tradition of selamatan. – Students talk about traditions that are similar to the tradition of selamatan. – Students are given the task of writing a text describing the tradition of selamatan in Indonesia.
	Closing Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Teacher invites students to ask questions. – Teacher and students conclude the material that has been presented. – Teacher tells students the material at the next meeting. – Teacher end class session.

The lesson plan above was carried out in the BIPA 4 class which consisted of 3 students from Japan. The main focus of the text is descriptive text. The intercultural element that we want to highlight is an understanding of the custom or tradition of celebrating an important thing in the life process of Indonesian people. Students are given stimulation in the form of video shows about the tradition of selamatan. The students seek further information about the tradition and convey their responses orally. Students are also given the opportunity to talk about similar customs or traditions in Japan. At the end of the lesson, students and teachers reflect on the findings of information about the tradition of selamatan. Students are also given reinforcement of intercultural understanding in responding to the selamatan tradition.

In the learning process, active students provide responses about the tradition of selamatan. Those with an average age of 20-23 years shared their experiences when attending several celebrations in Japan with almost the same context of money as congratulations in Indonesia. For example, the *omiyamairi* tradition is a celebration of 100 days of childbirth similar to the *siten* tradition for Javanese people. The students also spontaneously told about the *Obon* celebration, which is the tradition of praying for the spirits of ancestors by coming back to Japanese people's hometowns, similar to the tradition of *mudik* in Indonesia. The students understand that there are almost the same cultural concepts between Japanese and Indonesian traditions. These concepts of culture is the joy of the people between the two countries in welcoming some important things in life.

At the end of the activity, students are given the task of writing texts with the aim of strengthening their knowledge and understanding of Indonesian culture. The intended text is a descriptive text about the tradition of selamatan. All of these 3 students described their findings in written form on different topics. The topics they write about are moving house traditions, marriages, and the birth of children. The topics they write about are often found in the lives of Indonesians. The purpose of writing these different texts is to increase student's knowledge about the concept of the selamatan tradition. Assessment of students' writing skills refers to authentic assessment. The following is an authentic assessment rubric for writing descriptive text.

Table 2. Authentic Assessment Rubric Writing Description Text

Student Name	Topic Description	Text	Rated aspect	Max Score
			Idea	20
			Content Organization	20
			Grammar	20
			Word Choices	20
			Spelling & Sentence Structure	20
			Total	100

The average student's writing results score 87 with the accuracy of ideas, organization, grammar, choice of diction, and spelling. There were several spelling errors in the Bahasa Indonesia vocabulary and sentence structure in the descriptive text they wrote. The difficulty for BIPA students from Japan is usually in sentence structure. This happens because the Bahasa Indonesia sentence structure always begins with a subject, a predicate, then an object. However, sentence structure in Japanese begins with a subject, object, and predicate. This sentence structure error does not deviate too much from the intended meaning of the sentence. The placement of predicates and objects that are confused can cause misinformation if the text they write is read by Bahasa Indonesia language speakers, both native speakers and other foreign speakers (BIPA students). The teacher corrects these mistakes by rearranging sentences with the same meaning, but with a sentence structure that conforms to grammatical rules.

Learning this topic is expected to be a provision for students when facing situations where they attend the traditional concept of selamatan in Indonesia. That way, they will not experience difficulties when communicating directly with Indonesians in that situation. Language learning cannot be separated from communication interactions. In the context of language learning, interaction is an important technique for improving language competence [17]. Good interaction between students and other Bahasa Indonesia language speakers is one of the achievements of BIPA learning. Learning with this intercultural strategy can be developed according to teaching needs. The cultural context that is presented in class can present topics that students might face directly. An understanding of Indonesian culture as a whole concept can form individual students who are ready for various new cultural situations for them.

4 Conclusion

Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) is language learning as an effort to internationalize Bahasa Indonesia. Based on its track record, the BIPA learning context has existed since the 1990s and is still developing today. The goal of BIPA learning is to produce graduates who are proficient in Bahasa Indonesia language skills to encourage teacher creativity to choose effective learning strategies.

One of the learning strategies with the aim of understanding the cultural context is the intercultural learning strategy. Implementation of learning using this strategy resulted in the finding that the context of the Indonesian tradition of *selamatan* can be introduced in class to BIPA students from Japan. BIPA students are able to speak clearly using their perspectives on the topic being studied. They can provide responses, responses, and comments about the tradition of *selamatan* verbally. These students can also write descriptive texts on various celebration traditions in Indonesia, for example, the tradition of celebrating moving house, marriage, and childbirth. Based on the assessment carried out, their writing results obtained an average score of 87. This score is considered good because it meets the predetermined assessment criteria. BIPA learning with this intercultural strategy can be the starting point for students to understand the Indonesian cultural context. Thus, BIPA students can face situations that intersect with a new culture for them.

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