

## Learning BIPA through folktales: Needs analysis of foreign students in Indonesia

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### Abstract

The existence of the Indonesian language is currently increasing. This is evident in the number of foreigners who have shown interest in learning the Indonesian language for foreigners called BIPA. The purpose of this study is to know the need for foreign learners in learning the Indonesian language using folktales. This study used a qualitative approach. Data were obtained through observation and deep interviews conducted with international students. The results of the study showed that foreign students are interested in learning through folktales. They also hope that the BIPA learning will use the Indonesian language dominantly, variations of methods and resources, innovative media using various folktales, and meet many new classmates who come from different countries. Some students also assume that the Indonesian language is unique and easy to learn with folktales. This study implies that BIPA teachers could use folktales as material content for BIPA learners.

**Keywords:** BIPA; foreign students; folktales; need analysis.

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## 1. Introduction

Language has a very important role and function in the development of a country, especially as a unifying tool for various ethnic groups that have the social, cultural, regional language, and religious diversity that exists (Rosiak, 2023). Learning a foreign language however, comes with anxiety and uncertainties (Thapan, 2022; Toyama & Yamazaki, 2022; AL-Qadri et al., 2023). With the existence of the Indonesian language, communication between individuals who have different backgrounds can also be done effectively. In addition, besides bringing important benefits to the speakers, the existence of the Indonesian language is now starting to be learned in the international community. According to data from the Language Center in Jakarta, the BIPA teaching program has been organized in about 46 countries in the world (Azizah, et al, 2012: 1). Their interest in the Indonesian language is evident by the holding of Indonesian language learning program for foreign fighters (BIPA) both at Indonesia and abroad. They learn the Indonesian language with various interests such as doing business, education, or simply getting new insight into the Indonesian language and culture.

BIPA stands for Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing, which translates as Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers. BIPA program has a role in the internationalization of universities in Indonesia. The growing number of BIPA enthusiasts can be used as an internationalization effort for universities in Indonesia (Ningrum et al., 2017). BIPA learning in Indonesia is starting to develop well. Many government and private institutions begin to implement the program. For example, South Koreans actively conduct BIPA teaching. Three universities in South Korea have opened majors related to Malay-Indonesian. There are also private institutions that provide Indonesian language teaching to Koreans, especially in the capital Seoul because the three universities are unable to provide for people's needs to learn Indonesian.

Therefore, a capable and skilled BIPA instructor is certainly needed for the sustainability of the BIPA program that will be implemented. A BIPA instructor is also expected to be a competent person and has empirical knowledge or experience about BIPA learning so it will be easier to teach the Indonesian language to strangers. Besides the conceptual understanding of BIPA learning, creativity, breadth of knowledge and insight will certainly be very helpful for a BIPA instructor in carrying out learning activities.

### 1.1. Literature review

Saddahono (2012) stated that data from UNS international office in 2012 showed that 2012 there were 113 people from 28 countries in student exchange programs and 63 people from 26 countries studying at UNS. Understanding the characteristics of foreign students is necessary, especially in the effort to select and develop BIPA learning materials (Suyitno, 2007:64). Saddahono (2012) states that foreign students who study Indonesian at UNS have a peculiarity in the use of language in communicating. Daily conversation is still heavily influenced by English because language mediation tools are most possible for foreign students and lecturers.

Foreign students during their studies in Indonesia not only use oral communication, but they must also be able to communicate writing, especially to make college assignments, thesis, and thesis that they will compose later (Anjarsari et al., 2007). The existence of the Indonesian language on the international scene is well known. There are several universities in Asia and mainland Europe teaching the Indonesian language as one of the must-do courses. Many efforts to bring the Indonesian language to the international scene, one of them is through the teaching of BIPA. The use of the Indonesian language in education in Indonesia has been stipulated in Law No. 24 of 2009, especially article 29 paragraph (1). This applies to BIPA teaching programs in Indonesia. Therefore, foreign students who study and even work in Indonesia should be able to use the Indonesian language to communicate. One way that foreign students can use Indonesian in their daily lives is through the BIPA program (Ningrum et al., 2017).

Nowadays, the Indonesian language becomes one of the most popular languages in the world. So, efforts to conduct a good learning process for foreign speakers are the important thing to do (Saddhono, 2015). BIPA plays a prominent role in developing students' communication skills at Vietnam National University. It serves as the barometer in the Indonesian Studies major that required an effective learning model (Okimono et al., 2017).

The BIPA program is growing because the interest of foreigners in learning Indonesian is so high. They learn Indonesian for various purposes such as for business, school, and work in Indonesia (Putra et al., 2017). Listening skills are language skill that has a very important role as the beginning of other skills (Loren, 2017). Verbal and non-verbal communication strategy has benefits for BIPA students to understand the ongoing event. Moreover, it could bridge the gap between the students and the teachers, as well as among the students (Purwiyanti et al., 2017).

The extension of The Indonesian language on the international scene is beyond doubt. There are several universities in Asia and mainland Europe teaching Bahasa Indonesia as one of the must-do courses. Efforts to bring Indonesian to the international scene are one of them through the teaching of BIPA (Ningrum et al., 2017). Junaidi et al. (2017) stated that the existence of BIPA learning at home and abroad is strengthening. This is evidenced by the rise of foreign learners coming to Indonesia. Bipa courses are growing. Not only that, even in some famous universities in Indonesia, many foreign learners continue to study in Indonesian. Some of them learned Indonesian to the level of S-2. This proves how seriously foreigners want to master the Indonesian language with various interests.

### **1.2. Purpose of study**

In reality, BIPA learners are expected to master all Indonesian language skills. This can be achieved by doing a need analysis so instructors can develop ideal learning as well as the needs of learners. For example, various supporting facilities such as adequate availability of learning media, great teaching materials, and syllabus, and as a reference that can be used as a learning resource. Thus, this research will focus on "Need Analysis of International Students in Studying BIPA in Surakarta". This paper is expected to provide clearer and more comprehensive information about the needs of BIPA learners to learn.

## **2. Materials and Method**

This research used a qualitative method. Qualitative research is a type of scientific research. In general terms, scientific research consists of an investigation that: seeks answers to a question, systematically uses a predefined set of procedures to answer the question, collects evidence, produces findings that were not determined in advance, and produces findings that are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study (Mack, 2005).

### **2.1. Data collection instrument**

The research was conducted in Surakarta, Central Java. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews to find out the needs of BIPA student learners in Surakarta, especially at Universitas Sebelas Maret. To get valid results, researchers conducted several interviews to find out the needs of international students in learning the Indonesian language. Researchers used qualitative methods.

### **2.2. Participants**

The informants in this study were international students from various countries; Tajikistan, Egypt, Timor Leste, Turkmenistan, Nigeria, Uzbekistan, Vietnam, and Singapore. Most of them are not good at speaking the Indonesian Language because they do not have much experience learning Indonesian.

### **2.3. Ethics**

This research sought oral consent from the participants before they proceeded with the study. No participants' information was revealed. All ethical requirements were strictly adhered to.

### 3. Result

The interest of foreign learners learn the Indonesian language is poorly supported by the availability of teaching materials on the market. Therefore, the need for teaching materials BIPA as balancing the amount of interest a foreign nation has to learn Indonesian. In addition, teaching materials are very beneficial for the BIPA program for the teaching materials BIPA socio-cultural sphere we can put the wealth of identity, character, and culture as the nation of Indonesia. Until now interactive learning books for BIPA are not widely available in Indonesia. One of the obstacles to the development of interactive learning media is fewer interactive media development technology mastered by the teachers and managers of BIPA in Indonesia (Ulumuddin & Wismanto, 2014).

From the data obtained, here are the goals of foreign students to learn the Indonesian language:

- To study and do research in Indonesia: The informant who chooses this purpose is an international student who is getting the opportunity to learn Indonesian from the Indonesian government. They will study in Indonesia. The Indonesian language is certainly very important for them to attend lectures later. After completing their Indonesian language studies, they will live in Indonesia for studying in college.
- To learn different types of languages, including the Indonesian language: It can be said that some BIPA learners are interested in learning the Indonesian language because of their hobbies or love to learn foreign languages. They generally already could speak many other languages, besides Indonesian.
- Indonesian is easy to understand: Some informants think that Indonesian is easy to understand so they are interested in learning Indonesian. For this category, they will understand the Indonesian language for short time. They said learning the Indonesian language is easy because they have learned other languages that are considered more difficult.
- To work in Indonesia: Informants who choose the purpose of learning Indonesian because they want to work in Indonesia. They will stay for a long time in Indonesia. They will start their careers in Indonesia by working in foreign companies or others.
- Love Indonesian culture and people: Informants who stated this are certainly those who want to add insight about Indonesia. They also think that Indonesian culture is very interesting and Indonesian people are so friendly that they are happy to learn the Indonesian language and culture.
- To stay in Indonesia: This group will usually start a career in Indonesia. They are interested to live in Indonesia for a long time.
- To teach the Indonesian language in their own country: From many informants, some informants have a different purpose. They plan to return to their own country and teach the Indonesian language there. They came directly to Indonesia to gain knowledge and understanding of BIPA and Indonesian culture as a provision to teach later. As we know, nowadays, the Indonesian language is taught in many countries in the world so the potential for internationalization of the Indonesian language is greater in the future. Indonesian language may become an international language that is loved by the international community.

Furthermore, their difficulty in learning Indonesian is a majority in the aspect of speaking and writing. While the easiest language skill for them is reading. Some of the informants also agreed that listening was the hardest. This makes them practice a lot such as listening to music and chatting with friends. This situation also makes them want BIPA teachers to speak using the Indonesian language fully to improve their understanding of listening and to remind them of their ability to communicate using Indonesian.

Generally, BIPA learners have an ideal need for the implementation of BIPA learning. They want contextual learning, namely learning that contains elements of Indonesian culture, such as the introduction of Indonesian traditional clothes, visiting tourist destinations, getting knowledge of Indonesian food, and prioritizing improving language competencies and knowledge and culture as well. The following table 1 illustrates the needs of BIPA learners in learning the Indonesian language.

**Table 1**  
*Needs of BIPA Learners*

Time	45 - 90 minutes
Sources	Books, newspapers, the internet, music
Media	Audio, audiovisual, field trip, traditional clothes
Classmate criteria	Different countries and different gender but the same level
Method	Individual, peer method, and group
Hope	Using various methods, using pictures, interacting with students, creating innovative media, and using the Indonesian language fully when teaching

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that BIPA learners request BIPA learning for 45 to 90 minutes for a single meeting. They also prefer learning resources from books and the internet with audio and audio-visual media. They need a field trip as well. Some of them also asked for traditional clothes as media of learning. Those will make them more excited to learn BIPA.

Furthermore, they also have their desires about class conditions. They prefer a heterogeneous class so they have many friends who come from different countries and genders. All informants dislike having classmates from the same country and the same gender. For learning methods, they prefer to learn in groups or pairs. The learning process is also expected not to be monotonous and use many variations of innovative methods in each meeting. Excessive use of English also makes them less interested in learning. They prefer teachers who speak Indonesian the most, interact actively with students, and assign assignments to students.

#### 4. Discussion

Many foreigners are interested to learn BIPA, not only for the benefit of a moment as a tourist but also for long time use such as research, study, consult, work, or to have a career in Asian countries (Ningsih et al., 2019). One of the biggest problems faced in BIPA learning is the motivation of learners. Many reasons that cause them to be less motivated in learning BIPA, one of which is the boring class atmosphere. One of the motivations that can increase learning motivation is providing something extraordinary in BIPA learning, especially among participants in their teens and early adulthood. Comics can be used efficiently to generate the learning motivation of BIPA participants. The use of comics in learning will have the same impact as the use of game methods in BIPA learning (Ramliyana, 2016).

Furthermore, the folktale is one of the learning materials that can be used to improve the Indonesian language skills of international students. The plot presented in the story certainly makes students to the spirit of reading and Indonesian folktale also contains the values of local wisdom and culture. Students will certainly get insight and also knowledge about the Indonesian language and culture. Some international students expressed interest in learning Indonesian using folklore.

By reading folktales, international students will be easier to know Indonesian culture. This applies to the study of other languages as well (Namaziandost et al., 2020). They will get a variety of new vocabulary, an understanding of culture, and also insight into various regions in Indonesia. They

also enjoy the stories they read. Indonesian folktale is very interesting to read. International students are very happy to learn Indonesian using folktales. There are also BIPA learners who are interested in participating in storytelling competitions. For her, the folktale is the right learning material to improve their ability to speak Indonesian.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the discussions that have been conducted, the Indonesian language now has been taught to the international community from various countries. This condition will certainly make the existence of Indonesia in the international world increase. The Indonesian language will become more recognizable to foreigners. This makes optimizing BIPA teaching important to do. This certainly departs from knowing their needs in learning Indonesian. From the results of this research, BIPA learners have a variety of objectives and reasons for learning Indonesian such as to study, work, be BIPA teachers in their country, and many others. They also generally want culture-based BIPA learning, innovative methods, varied learning resources, innovative media, and educational interaction during the learning process.

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