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The Cultural and Academic Background of BIPA Learners for Developing Indonesian Learning Materials

Imam Suyitno[1]*, Gatut Susanto[2], Musthofa Kamal[2] and Ary Fawzi[2]

[1]Department of Indonesian Language Education, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, East Java 65145, Indonesia
[2]Department of Indonesian Literature, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, East Java 65145, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Indonesian for foreign learners is one of the Indonesian language learning program that is devoted to foreign learners. This program is often called by the name of BIPA. Many foreign learners in Indonesia are studying Indonesian language in BIPA program. The study outlined in this article aimed to describe the cultural and academic background of BIPA learners. The description was used as a guide for selecting and developing teaching materials, specifically teaching materials for developing a communication literacy in learning BIPA. This research was conducted by a qualitative method. Participants of the research were foreign learners and instructors who were involved in BIPA program. The data research were the information about the origin country and the academic background of the learners, the levels of learners' competencies, and their needs in learning the Bahasa Indonesia. The data were collected by interviews, study documents, and observation. Based on the result of data analysis, the research found that BIPA learners who learnt Indonesian had the various cultural and academic background. They had different experiences and goals in learning Indonesian language. According to the differences, learning materials of language skills and Indonesian cultures are the main subjects that need to be taught and trained to them for the development of communication literacy.

Keywords: BIPA learners, communication literacy, learning BIPA, teaching materials

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E-mail addresses:
imam.suyitno.fs@um.ac.id (Imam Suyitno)
gatutus@yahoo.com (Gatut Susanto)
musthofa.kamal.fs@um.ac.id (Musthofa Kamal)
ary.fawzi.fs@um.ac.id (Ary Fawzi)
* Corresponding author

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INTRODUCTION

BIPA is the acronym of *Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing* (Indonesia language for foreign learners) that is one variant of the Indonesian language designed specifically for foreign learners. The characteristics of BIPA are in accordance with the characteristics of foreign learners who study it. The diversity of learners' motivation and culture needs to be deeply understood by BIPA teachers. The more thorough the teachers understand the differences, the better chance they have of meeting the diverse learning needs of all of their learners (Moo, 2016).

The variety and complexity of BIPA teaching materials need to be adapted to the competence and cultural background of the learners. Indonesia language for foreign learners is basically a second language or a foreign language because the language is learned after BIPA learners master their first language (Leung & Scarino, 2016). Therefore, the developing and structuring BIPA learning materials need to be adjusted to the level of learner ability. The materials need to be organized based on cultural theme units that are packed communicatively and integrated.

In learning BIPA, foreign learners are positioned as learning subjects who actively use and practice the Indonesian language in communication. Therefore, the selected learning materials must be the meaningful materials that potentially and functionally can be used in communication. Suyitno (2017) explained BIPA learning material needed to be selected based on (1) aspects of learning objectives, (2) practicality and visibility for communication, (3) flexibility, (4) meaningfulness, and (5) diversity. The results of the research conducted by Bardovi-Harlig (1999) and Kasper and Schmidt (1996) suggested that the mastery of grammatical material did not guarantee the ability of learners to communicate significantly.

Communication literacies are the main target that must be achieved by foreign learners in learning BIPA. Based on the opinion stated by LoCastro (2001), we can explain that learning BIPA can be said to be successful if BIPA learners can use the Indonesian language well in real communication. The paradigm changes the research focus of language learning from the linguistic studies to social and cultural studies in learning (Franson & Holliday, 2009). Based on the result of the study of language learning, we assumed that the criteria that need to be considered in the selection of BIPA learning materials are the suitability between the level of learner ability, the goals to be achieved, and the interests or preferences of the learners (Duff, 2008). Therefore, to plan instructional materials that ensure learners have language literacy skills, the development of teaching materials that match the characteristics of learners, learning objectives, and learning needs must be developed. This can be done if there is comprehensive empirical data about the characteristics of BIPA learners. The aims of the research are to describe and map the condition of BIPA learners and teaching materials used in BIPA learning.

METHOD

The subjects of this research were BIPA teachers and learners in Universitas Negeri Malang (UM) Malang, Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY) Yogyakarta, Universitas Indonesia (UI) Jakarta, and Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) Bandung. The research data is in the form of information about (1) entry level of BIPA learner competence in the Indonesian language, and (2) need of relevant BIPA teaching materials and can improve language proficiency and cultured Indonesian BIPA learners. The data resources were field notes obtained through observation, notes of questionnaire results, interviews, and documents. The information is used for the development of prototype model of development of BIPA teaching materials. Analysing data was done through procedures: selecting data, organizing data, and presenting data in both table and description.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Country of Origin of BIPA Learners

The research findings showed that BIPA learners come from various countries. Of the 4 universities targeted for the study, it was noted that in the last 3 years, the number of foreign learners studying was as many as 267. Of the number of learners, it was known that most BIPA learners come from the United States, i.e. as many as 90 learners (33.71%). After the United States, most learners come from Thailand with 59 learners with a percentage of 22.10%. The complete data are shown in Table 1.

Tabel 1

The country of Origin of BIPA learners

No	The Country of Origin	Sum of Students	Percentage
1	Amerika Serikat	90	33.71%
2	Thailand	59	22.10%
3	China	15	5.62%
4	Madagaskar	15	5.62%
5	Usbekistan	11	4.12%
6	Libya	9	3.37%
7	Korsel South Korea	8	3.00%
8	Poland	8	3.00%
9	Jepan	7	2.62%
10	Papua New Guinea	7	2.62%
11	Palestin	6	2.25%
12	Netherland	2	0.75%
13	Australia	1	0.37%

Based on the data in the Table 1, it can be said that the Indonesian language and culture are in great demand by foreign learners from both Asia and America. BIPA learners who come from different countries bring their own culture so it is possible for cultural diffusion. Cultural diffusion can be a source of trouble for BIPA students if they do not have a cultural understanding and cannot accept the cultural differences. Therefore, in the BIPA learning program, the great attention to learning management in order to avoid cultural conflicts is needed. Sharma and Jung (1985) explained that cultural diffusion, especially in the field of international education, got a lot of attention. Increased interaction among nations in the world with increased means of transportation and communication has brought many communities preliterate and emerging into global contact. US higher education institutions through exchange programs allow international learners from all over the world to study at American universities.

Learners from different countries show different characters in learning BIPA. The difference is due to the cultural background that the learner has. Due to the diversity of BIPA learner characters, Lentz as cited by Sharma and Jung (1985) stated that learners with international insights had a different character from BIPA learners who had only national insight. International BIPA learners have the following characteristics: (a) not prejudiced against persons from other countries, (b) not very antagonistic towards ethnic and racial groups, (c) more enthusiastic about liberal and social views, and (d)) are more sympathetic to people in unfavourable circumstances. Meanwhile, Smith and Rosen as cited by Sharma and Jung (1985) revealed that individuals with only national insight were narrow-minded and tended to exhibit resistance to others.

In learning BIPA, the cultural background becomes an important factor to be considered by BIPA teachers. Cultural differences are closely related to learning styles and how they communicate. In terms of intercultural communication, there have been many studies that examine the patterns of communication between nations, between ethnic, and inter-racial (Chitty, 2010; Panggabean et al., 2013; Sharifian, 2010). In fact, Karomani (2017) had reviewed intercommunity communication in the same culture. All these studies show that culture is an important factor in communication activities. Therefore, the BIPA learning should seriously consider cultural factors, especially in the selection and determination of teaching materials.

The Academic Background of BIPA Learners

BIPA learners have different academic backgrounds. They generally are college learners and taking different courses of study in their home country. The data of the students' academic background can be seen in Table 2.

From Table 2, The research findings showed that BIPA learners with a background of Academic Anthropology as many as 20 learners (7.49%), Linguistics as many as 10

Table 2

The academic background of BIPA learners

No	Study Program	Sum of Students	Percentage
1	Anthropology	20	7.49%
2	Linguistics	10	3.75%
3	Asean Studies	64	23.97%
4	Political Sciences	18	6.74%
5	Geology	6	2.25%
6	Religius Studies	15	5.62%
7	Musicology	11	4.12%
8	Psychology	12	4.49%
9	International Relations	33	12.36%
10	Sociology	10	3.75%
11	Study of Indonesian Language	20	7.49%
12	Photography	8	3.00%
13	Public Health	7	2.62%
14	Natural Science	15	5.62%
15	English Literature	18	6.74%

learners (3.75%), Asean Studies 64 learners (26.78%), Political Science as many as 18 learners (6.74%), Geology as many as 6 learners (2.25%), Religious Studies as many as 15 learners (5.62%), Musicology 11 learners (4.12%), Psychology of 12 learners (4.12%), International Relations 33 learners (12.36%), Sociology as many as 10 learners (3.75%), Study of Indonesian Language as many as 20 learners (7.49%), Photography of 8 learners (3.00%), Public Health of 7 learners (2.62%), Natural Science as many as 15 learners (5.62%), and English Literature as many as 18 learners (6.74%). Based on the data, the highest academic background is Asian Studies.

The different areas of their study have implications for the preparation of learning programs. Grabe (1986) stated that the problem of learning a foreign language arose as a result of the linguistic and socio-cultural differences of the first language and the target language. In such situations, the use of appropriate approaches and the selection of teaching materials that are functional have a very important role in determining the success of the BIPA lesson process.

Based on the differences of the academic background, in the learning BIPA, teachers must prepare proper materials in order to meet learners' needs. Suyitno (2017) revealed that to meet the needs of various

BIPA learners, an alternative learning program should be prepared. Learning in this alternative program is done individually and depends heavily on the interests and requests of its learners. This alternative program principally provides services to meet the needs of the learner. Therefore, the use of authentic materials will greatly assist the learner, especially for those who are not familiar with the target language at all (Heritaningsih, 2007).

The Learning Objectives of BIPA Learners

BIPA students have different goals in learning BIPA. The data of the different goals of the BiIPA learners can be seen in Table 3.

The research findings showed that of 267 BIPA students, 24 learners (8.99%) wanted to continue study in Indonesia and 43 learners (16.10%) aimed to work in Indonesia. Meanwhile, BIPA learners who wanted to be able to communicate daily in the Indonesian language were as many as 43 learners (16.11%). In addition, there were some students who were studying BIPA because they were interested in Indonesian culture, as many as 28 learners (10.49%). BIPA students who intended to study more deeply about the Indonesian language as much as 53 people (19.85%). Those who aimed to continue their study of Indonesian language from their country of origin were 27 learners (10.11%), while those aiming to take a vacation in Indonesia were 17 learners (6.37%). Meanwhile, 32 learners (11.99%) had a goal to be able to speak Indonesian.

The diversity of BIPA learner objectives has implications for decision making of BIPA organizers in determining their learning program, especially in preparing the learning materials according to the purpose. Thus, the subject matter of BIPA

Table 3

The learning objectives of BIPA learners

No	Learning Objectives	Sum of Students	Percentage
1	Continue study in Indonesia	24	8.99%
2	Work in Indonesia	43	16.10%
3	Daily Communication	43	16.11%
4	Interested Indonesian Culture	28	10.49%
5	Continue their study from their country of origin	27	10.11%
6	Learning Indonesian language	53	19.85%
7	Vacation in Indonesia	17	6.37%
8	Speak Indonesian	32	11.99%

has a close relationship with the problem of meeting the needs of foreign learners. The statement, in line with the explanation of Meyer and Benavot (2013) who implicitly stated that educational objectives, including language learning objectives, were often controlled by the needs of the field or the needs of its partner institutions.

Understanding the learning goals of BIPA learners is an important factor to be considered in the selection of BIPA teaching materials. In this case, the institutions of BIPA have the authority in determining the right materials to be taught to BIPA learners. A holistic and comprehensive consideration of the learners' needs is a major problem in learning BIPA. In such cases, practice for cooperation programs, vision, and mission of the first institution (whose sending learner) are an important factor for making a decision in determining the direction of BIPA learning policy (Byrnes, 2012). BIPA learning often faces challenges when there is a difference of perception among inexperienced BIPA practitioners (Ball et al., 2011).

The Indonesian Learning Experiences and Competency Level of BIPA Learners

In learning Indonesian, BIPA learners had varied experiences. Based on the research findings, the learning experiences of BIPA learners could be seen that most BIPA learners knew and learnt Indonesian in their own colleges, which was 64 learners (24.34%). In addition to these experiences, BIPA learners had been familiar and able to speak Indonesian from ever living in Indonesia, as many as 15 learners (5.62%), had courses 2 of learners (0.75%), and self-learning as many as 5 learners (1.87%). Those who had never studied Indonesian at all were 180 learners (67.42%). The data can be visualized in Table 4.

From the level of competency, the learners could be classified at the beginning level as many as 159 learners (59.55%), intermediate level as many as 79 learners (29.59%), and advanced level as many as 29 learners (10.86%). Based on the condition of BIPA learners, BIPA materials should be distinguished in several categories,

Table 4

The learning experiences of BIPA learners

No	Learning Experiences	Sum of Students	Percentage
1	Have been staying in Indonesian	15	5.62%
2	Learn Indonesian in their own college	64	24.34%
3	Had courses	2	0.75%
4	Self-Learning	5	1.87%
5	Never study Bahasa Indonesia yet	180	67.42%

Table 5
Entry level competence of BIPA learners

No	Level of Competence	Sum of Students	Percentage
1	Beginning	159	59.55%
2	Intermediate	79	29.59%
3	Advanced	29	10.86%

namely (1) BIPA for beginners, (2) BIPA for intermediate learners, and (3) BIPA for BIPA for advanced learners. The data can be visualized in Table 5.

In line with the above facts, in BIPA learning, BIPA teachers need to make a selection of BIPA teaching materials that are more varied. The diversity of materials is intended to facilitate and expedite BIPA learners in mastering BIPA teaching materials. The material requirements of BIPA as stated in the above conditions invite the book authors to develop BIPA teaching materials. Sudiroatmadja (1993) noted there were several authors of books, both foreign authors and Indonesian writers who wrote Indonesian for foreigners. One goal they wanted to achieve was to make it easier for learners to master the Indonesian language. However, there are many variations found in both approaches, teaching techniques, teaching materials and sequences.

There are several inter-related conceptual issues related to goals as levels, standards, or outcomes. First, there is the conceptualization issue of construction, with various labels as the ability of communicative language, competence, language knowledge, abilities, and so on. The existence of a large number of terms itself signifies a variety of views. This always results in further conceptual and descriptive categories, which were then used to describe the nature and scope of language learning. An example of this phenomenon is the 'five Cs' National Standards for Foreign Language Education (American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages [ACTFL], 2006): communication, culture, connection, comparison, and society. These five concepts (five Cs) represent different areas of discrete purpose. The value of this formula is that the purpose of the language learning is seen as more than 'communication'. As with all such categorizations, however, there is a question of basic theory for each of these key concepts, how they may be interconnected or working together in a view of language and cultural use and learning, and how these terms are actually understood by different users at different times.[1]

1 (See Kramsch (2014), for a discussion of the sense changes from this concept from the modernist to the postmodern perspective, see Byrnes (2008), for a particular discussion on cultural standards, and see Magnan et al. (2014), for an in-depth study of understanding and the priorities of the five concepts in this section of language graduate learners in the United States).

Learning Materials for the Needs of BIPA Learners

Based on the description above, the development of BIPA learning materials is focused to develop the competence of BIPA learners, specifically communication literacy. BIPA learners need to be practiced in using the Indonesian language in the real communication. Therefore, the scope of BIPA learning materials includes Indonesian language skills and Indonesian cultures.

Indonesian Language Skills Materials for BIPA Learners

In accordance with the level of BIPA learner competence, learning the Indonesian language skills for beginner level students are directed to achieve ability to use Indonesian for daily communication. Through listening skills, learners are expected to be able to seek important information, know the family tree, understand the principles of mutual assistance, and understand the words in the sale and purchase transactions. By learning speaking skills, learners are able to communicate the genealogies of their respective families, social activity interviews, know the phrases with the derivation word, tell the game seen, and tell the daily activities. By learning reading skills, learners are able to know the proposition, recognize the sentence structure, understand the social life in Indonesia, recognize personal letters, know the simple grammar, know the vocabulary in the activity, know various comparisons, know word connections, know various words, know Indonesian names, know how bargaining, and identify adjectives in buying and selling. Competencies achieved through writing skills are to make sentences, write simple texts, change sentences structures, sort words and phrases randomly, complete sentences, write personal letters, play games by using affixes, write sentences with comparative words in buying and selling, and create sentences about Indonesian food. The four language skills, developed in units with the theme of my family, daily activities, shopping, the beauty of Indonesian culture, and Indonesian politics.

Language skills for intermediate level are intended to reach the student's ability for formal communication. Competencies achieved through listening skills are to be familiar with and acknowledge adverbs, employed verbs, names of foods, names of transport, names of vegetables, names of fruits, animal names, bargaining activities in markets, and conversations. Competencies achieved through speaking skills are to use the Indonesian language for formal and no formal conversation, introduce others, ask for help, greet, accept and reject offers, invite others, offer something to others, present papers, conduct role-playing, interviews, bargain in the market, conduct deliberations in the classroom, and express opinions. Competencies achieved through reading skills are to understand a language in text and the content of text they read. They are able to know the word raw correctly incorrectly, the word question (for sale and purchase transactions and offer something), the word command, adjective words in the sentences, comparative words, the

places of the public, the types of texts, the essential subjects of various texts, the time markers, the Indonesian currency, traditional foods, the ways of traditional and modern shopping, community organizations, the traditions of Indonesian ceremonies, the tradition of marriage in various regions in Indonesia, the topic of the text, the symbol of the Indonesian state, the Indonesian government system, the process of deliberation, the deliberative activities, and to summarize texts. Competencies achieved through writing skills are to write biodata, a conversation, daily activities in the form of paragraphs, opinions, experiences, narrative text, descriptive text, sentences with adding the sentence according to the structure of S + P + O, the description of Indonesian food, text from pictures. The substance of the material taught in the four aspects of the above skills includes manners, daily activities, buying and selling (economy), Indonesian diversity, and Indonesian democracy.

Language skills for advanced level are intended to reach the student's ability in advanced communication. Competencies achieved through listening are answering questions, finding key points of text they listen to, and understand puppet show art through description text. Competence achieved through speaking skills is to have a conversation on a predetermined topic and to conduct an interview. Competence achieved through reading is to know the tourist attraction in Indonesia, understand how to bargain, know and understand the offer letter, know and understand the greetings in Indonesia, know and understand the job application letter, and know and understand how to write a resume. Competencies achieved through writing skills are to create sentences with predetermined vocabulary, write sentences with newly discovered vocabulary, and write conversations text about Indonesian culture on a given topic. The substance of the taught material includes vacations, bargaining, popular articles, scientific texts, job applications, and grammar.

In learning language, BIPA students are expected to master the oral and written language skills. For that, they learn four aspects of language skills. Students of BIPA are said to have mastered the Indonesian language ideally if they have mastered the four aspects of language skills well. Implicitly, Cook (2008) revealed that in communicating, language learners must have multicompetence in using the language. However, in reality learning activities, teachers face many problems related to student mastery of the language they learn. There are many learners who are able to speak Indonesian fluently, but are weak in reading or writing. Conversely, there are learners who are able to read the text and rewrite the contents of the text correctly, but they have difficulty in giving their opinions verbally. To overcome these problems, BIPA learning needs to tackle the four aspects of language proficiency proportionally in accordance with the needs of its learners.

Based on the material diversity presented above, it can be argued that the development

and arrangement of the material need to be tailored to the needs and levels of the learner's abilities. Basically, BIPA learning should be able to meet the learner's need to communicate naturally, both for now and for the future and communication (Slattery, 2003). The direction and orientation of the material and the range of learning materials of BIPA which is expressed in line with Suyitno's explanation (2017), which was about the factors that needed to be considered in the management of BIPA learning materials.

In learning BIPA, the grammatical materials become an integral part of language learning. The introduction of grammatical material is important in order to develop the BIPA learner's ability to use correct and acceptable language. Ghabool et al. (2012) explained that the difficulties of foreign learners in language learning, especially in writing, related to the correct use of grammar, which included grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and some other basic aspects of writing. The results of research conducted by Khojasteh et al. (2017) revealed that in communicating there were some discrepancies in the frequency of models used by native speakers and the ones used by advanced EFL learners. Therefore, the introduction of Indonesian grammar to BIPA learners provides significant benefits for improving the language of learners as well as providing supplies and convenience to learners in understanding the text in Indonesian scientific books.

BIPA learning depends on the learning objectives of BIPA learners. To meet these objectives, BIPA learning needs to involve formal learning activities in the classroom and in real communication in the community. Through diverse learning activities, BIPA learners can gain a more complex language experience. BIPA learners not only master the knowledge of Indonesian language but also able to transfer their language knowledge in real communication in the community. The multilingual development is manifested as trans language (García & Wei, 2014) or by 'translingual practice' (Canagarajah, 2013).

Teaching Material of Indonesian Cultures

The learning materials of Indonesian culture required in BIPA learning include (a) cultural behavioural, (b) visiting ways (hours of visiting, greetings), (d) acknowledgment of accepting and rejecting solicitation, (e) traditional means of transportation, (f) traditional games, (f) crafts (batik, shadow puppets, traditional house of tongkonan, *angklung* musical instrument) (j) traditional dance, (i) traditional ceremony , and (k) typical Indonesian food.

In BIPA learning, the development of cultural material is directed to the introduction and enrichment of Indonesian cultural insight to foreign learners so that they can use it in their daily life in Indonesian society. The subjects of cultural materials that need to be introduced to BIPA learners are cultural objects. The principle in providing this cultural material is to equip BIPA learners to be able to speak Indonesian in accordance with the

situation and conditions. In addition, it also introduces Indonesian culture to BIPA learners so that it can foster a positive attitude of BIPA learners to Indonesian culture (Lantolf, 2015).

Cultural behaviour that should be introduced to foreign learners, among others, is a way of living in family, friendship, community, and politeness in the association. Learning and recognition of cultural behaviour can be done through the placement of foreign learners individually on Indonesian families. In the life of the Indonesian family, learners often discuss with family members and communities in the neighbourhood, at least they will recognize the Indonesian family's way of life. Other activities that can be done in learning cultural behaviour is the activities of family visits, visits to a friend's house, or a visit to the homes of village or community leaders. Through this activities, learners can gain a meaningful experience in establishing friendly relations and the application of politeness in the association.

In learning BIPA, culture can be taught through literary works because the literary work is the result of the author's thought based on the author's self-contact, whether consciously or not, with social reality and cultural patterns. Through literary works can be taught a local culture that plays a role in shaping a universal culture. BIPA learners should not only learn the universal culture but also learn the local culture (Seelye, 1994). Included in the cultural teaching materials in the form of literary works is folklore. Folklore is a material that inherits a tradition, both through words and customs and habits that can be people's songs, folklore, proverbs, or other material presented in words. Folklore can also be traditional tools and physical objects such as traditional ornaments, traditional symbols, and so on.

CONCLUSIONS

The diversity of competence, culture, goals, and needs of learners in learning Indonesian has implications for the selection and determination of Indonesian language teaching materials. BIPA teaching materials are more oriented to meet the needs of learners than the interests of the BIPA organizer program. Efforts to make the learners able and to smoothly communicate in the target language is a top priority. Therefore, learning materials of language skills and the introduction of Indonesian culture are the main subjects that need to be taught and trained to them. In essence, the development of communication literacy teaching materials will be able to meet the needs of BIPA learners if the teaching materials are developed based on cultural characteristics, initial abilities, and learner objectives.

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