

Analysis of the Difficulties in Learning Indonesian for Foreign Students in Batam

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Abstract. Learning Indonesian language is one of subjects that has to be understood by foreign students in Batam. However, the learning process sometimes could not run well because of foreign students' ability in learning Indonesian language was still low. Hence, this research aims at analyzing the learning difficulties of foreign students in learning Indonesian language. This research employs mixed methods. Furthermore, this research conducted in one of private schools in Batam with a total of 25 foreign students. The authors distributed questionnaires and conducted interviews to obtain the data. The results shows that there were several difficulties faced by the foreign students in learning Indonesian language such as difficulties in learning speaking, reading, writing, and listening skills and pronouncing Indonesian words. It can be concluded that these difficulties arose due to differences in cultural and language background, lack of time to learn and practice, as well as BIPA materials which they found very challenging. The authors hope that the teachers can improve their motivation in learning Indonesian language by providing interesting learning materials.

Keywords: Indonesian Language, Foreign speakers, Learning Program, Learning Difficulties

INTERFERENCE

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesian language is not only studied as a subject in schools in Indonesia, but it is also studied by foreigners in Indonesia and other countries. Indonesian language learned by foreigners is known as BIPA. BIPA in Indonesian is an abbreviation of “Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing, which means “Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers” in English. As the name implies, the focus of BIPA is to teach Indonesian to foreign students who want to learn Indonesian.

According to [Lina Tiawati \(2019\)](#), the teaching of BIPA has different characteristics than the teaching of Indonesian language to native speakers. One of the differences can be seen from the perspective of BIPA students themselves. BIPA students who already have a first language have different cultural backgrounds. In the process of learning Indonesian, every student experiences difficulties. These difficulties can be one of the causes of students’ outcomes in learning being less than optimal.

This situation was supported by [Shofia & Suyitno \(2020\)](#). The difficulties faced by BIPA students include (1) problems related to understanding teaching materials; (2) problems of understanding vocabulary, in which the lack of knowledge and understanding of grammar; and (3) problems related to different cultural backgrounds. The other research also found difficulties in learning Indonesian language for foreign students. [Widianto \(2021\)](#) concluded that the difficulties faced by BIPA students in Vietnam include the difficulty in pronouncing some sounds in Indonesian as well as the difficulties in morphology and syntax.

Another research was found by [Lasa et al. \(2019\)](#). They carried out research focused on the BIPA students in Thailand. The research found that several students categorized that they have weaknesses in speaking, listening, spelling sounds, understanding grammar, and arranging parts, also limiting the number of words in their memories. In the acquisition of pronunciation, classrooms are not sufficient to achieve pronunciation. Students also have limited knowledge of grammar and vocabulary that is dependent on the teacher provided.

The research mentioned above is consistent with the research of [Nasution \(2020\)](#), who found that the order of language skills that are most difficult for BIPA students to understand in Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages are (1) listening, (2) speaking, (3) writing, and (4) reading. This conclusion was obtained from the results of the monthly exams in the first semester period in September – December 2018.

In addition to the difficulties in learning Indonesian that arise from learning ability, there are also psychological barriers. The psychological barriers include language anxiety. According to Gürsoy, language anxiety is one of the major affective factors that affect language learning (as cited in [Sampelolo et al., 2021](#)). Students learning a second language often develop anxiety as they begin to learn a second language. It can be said that this problem is inevitable in learning foreign languages. This anxiety arises because of feelings of inconceivability in foreign language skills.

The statement was supported by the research by [Pratama et al. \(2022\)](#). The research aimed to investigate the foreign language anxiety of BIPA students. The

results of the data analysis showed that this insecurity appeared in Thai students. They think that their Indonesian ability is still not good. This raises doubts about whether every speech they make will be understood by the interlocutor. This feeling eventually makes their desire to communicate using Indonesian low.

The authors conducted semi-structured interview with an Indonesian language studies teacher before conducted research. She claimed that some of the students somehow could not understand the materials because of pronunciation difference. It is because they rarely spoke Indonesian language in their daily lives. Hence, it makes them unfamiliar with Indonesian vocabularies.

Based on preliminary research above, it can be seen that there were various types of difficulties faced by BIPA students in learning Indonesian language. From the previous studies above, most of the research participants were university students and came from outside Batam; this encouraged the authors to find out the difficulties in learning Indonesian language faced by high school students in Batam. By finding out the difficulties faced, it can provide information about the situation of Indonesian language students in that school and also reflect on the learning process that has been carried out. Hence, this research aims to analyze difficulties in learning Indonesian language encountered by foreign students.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is undertaken through mixed-methods to address research questions with more complete picture than a standalone quantitative or qualitative study. According to Creswell & Plano Clark, mixed methods research is a research methodology that incorporates multiple methods to address research questions in an appropriate and principled manner, which involves collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting both qualitative and quantitative data (as cited in [Dawadi et al., 2021](#)).

Research Participant

The research was conducted in one of the private schools in Batam. The school provides BIPA programs according to the standards of the Minister of Education and Culture. In addition, the school is trusted and chosen by students from many countries to study, which was why the authors chose this school as the case study for this research.

The participants in this research were foreign students from India, Malaysia, Singapore, England, USA, and Tunisia from grades 8-12. The junior high school students were from grades 8 – 9 with a total of 15 students. While senior high school students were from grades 10-12 with a total of 10 students. The reason behind choosing the students from grades 8-12 was that they were studying a BIPA course and also faced difficulties on learning BIPA. The BIPA teacher, Miss A, was also one of the research participants. The reason why the authors chose Miss A was because she has long experience of teaching BIPA to international students and she is still teaching BIPA students from grades 8-12 in that private school.

The questionnaires consisted of closed-ended items. A closed-ended question is one in which the respondent is provided with predefined answer categories. An open-ended question refers to providing a space for the respondent

to provide an answer (Chen, 2017). Closed-ended questions are easier to conduct, analyze, and interpret (Aithal et al., 2020).

The authors designed the questions based on the difficulties BIPA students face by using previous studies. The use of the Likert scale was made to assess the preference for learning difficulties of BIPA students. Face-to-face interviews were used in this method. The authors conducted the interview in order to strengthen the students' answer through questionnaires. It means it validated their answers. In this section, the authors did a face-to-face interview with the BIPA teacher.

After the authors had the results from the questionnaires, the authors interpreted the information obtained from the participants' answers to the questionnaires. Then, the authors analyzed the results using the quantitative method. The students' responses to the survey questions were compiled and statistically examined using SPSS. It first showed the frequency and percentage of student responses. The mean and standard deviation for every item were then highlighted. The rank and level of each item were also denoted by it. According to the questionnaire replies, the students' attitudes to the challenges they face learning BIPA are shown to have the highest and lowest frequencies in the information above (Mohammad et al., 2020).

After the authors interviewed the teacher, the results of the interview were interpreted. The information was analyzed as a way of describing the answers to the interview. Elisa (2019) stated that in analyzing the data of this interview, the authors use a step process that is described as follows: (1) Organization: the authors organize the narrative data as interview transcripts. After the data is organized, the authors make a code to categorize the data to provide similar types and information. (2) Description: the authors describe the characteristics of the categories resulting from the coding. The authors make a connection between the data collected to the research question. (3) Interpretation: the authors examine the events-related results of interviews that have been categorized. The authors look for the aspects of the data that answer the research questions and know the current practice results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

a. Questionnaire

This research used a paper-based questionnaire containing 10 questions to gather the data. Total respondents (N=25) had a representation of five grade groups, grade 8-12.

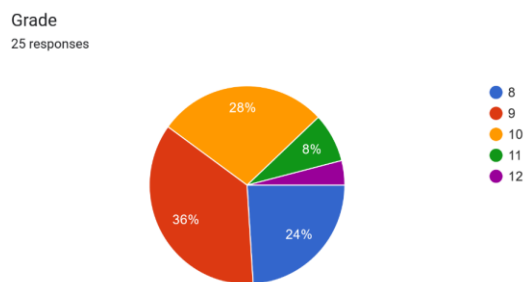


Figure 1. Distribution of the Respondents

Out of 25 respondents, 6 of them were from grade 8 or 24% of total respondents in this research. The largest number of respondents came from grade 9, which had 9 respondents or 36% of total respondents. The second largest number of respondents were from grade 10, which had 7 respondents or 28% of total respondents. 2 respondents were from grade 11 or 8% of total respondents. The least one was from grade 12, which had only 1 respondent or 4% of total respondents.

Further, the use of Likert’s scale was made to assess the difficulties faced by the respondents or students in learning Indonesian. 10 items were administered by 25 respondents on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree and 5=strongly agree.

Interpretation of data

10 items were assessed on Likert’s scale of 5. Each of the ten items was discussed as follows.

Item 1: I like Indonesian language

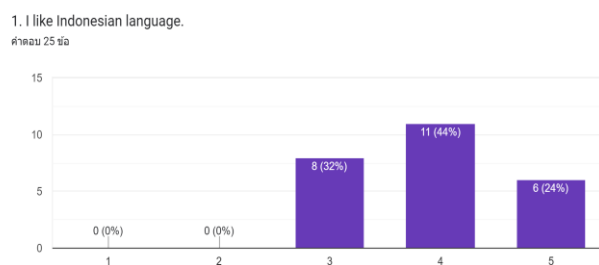


Figure 2. Responses to ‘I like Indonesian language’

Figure 2 shows a very high percentage of the respondents liking Indonesian language, with 68% in total in grades 4 and 5 (44% in grade 4 and 24% in grade 5). There were 32% of respondents chose grade 3 or neutral, while no respondents chose grade 1 and 2.

Item 2: I have difficulty in pronouncing Indonesian words

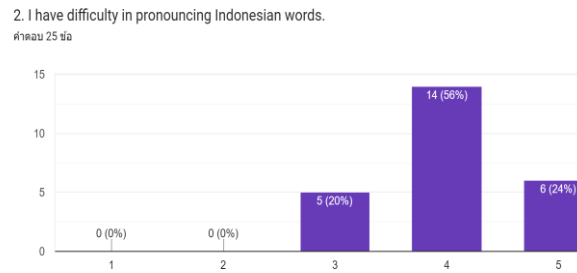


Figure 3. Responses to ‘I have difficulty in pronouncing Indonesian words’

It can be clearly seen that 56% of the respondents chose ‘agree’ (grade 4) and 24% of the respondents chose ‘strongly agree’ (grade 5). There were 20% of respondents graded 3 or neutral, while no respondents graded 1 and 2 for this item. Apparently, the majority of the respondents felt that they have difficulty in pronouncing Indonesian words.

Item 3: I have difficulty in listening Indonesian

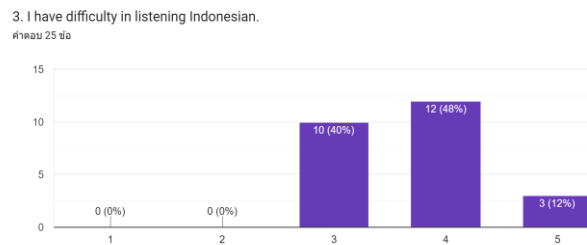


Figure 4. Responses to ‘I have difficulty in listening Indonesian’

The respondents were asked whether they had difficulty in listening Indonesian to further endorse the findings of item 3. The representation of the overall responses shows that 48% of the respondents graded 4 (agree), which was the highest percentage for this item. Meanwhile, 40% and 12% of the respondents graded 3 and 5, and no respondents graded 1 and 2.

Item 4: I have difficulty in speaking Indonesian

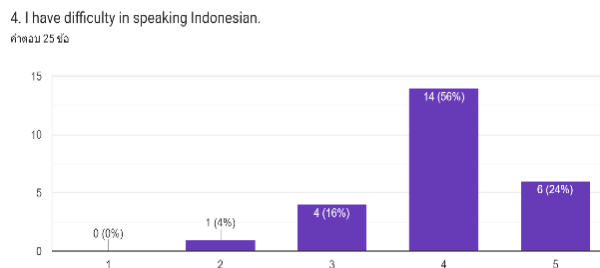


Figure 5. Responses to ‘I have difficulty in speaking Indonesian’

Figure 5 shows that the majority of the respondents graded 4 (agree) in the item ‘I have difficulty in speaking Indonesian’, while 24% of the respondents graded 5 (mostly agree). Besides, 16% of the respondents were having a ‘neutral’ attitude. 4% of the respondents graded 2 (disagree) and no respondents graded 1 (strongly disagree).

Item 5: I have difficulty in reading Indonesian

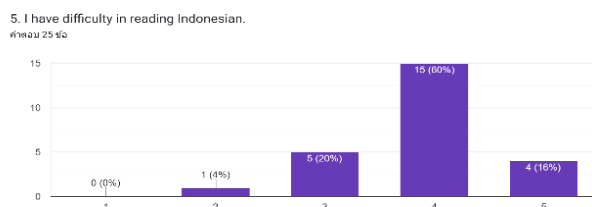


Figure 6. Responses to ‘I have difficulty in reading Indonesian’

The highest percentage of this item was found in grade 4; the figure shows that 60% of the respondents agree that they have difficulty in reading Indonesian. Meanwhile, 16%, 20%, and 4% of the respondents graded 5, 3, and 2. In addition, no respondents graded 1.

Item 6: I have difficulty in writing Indonesian

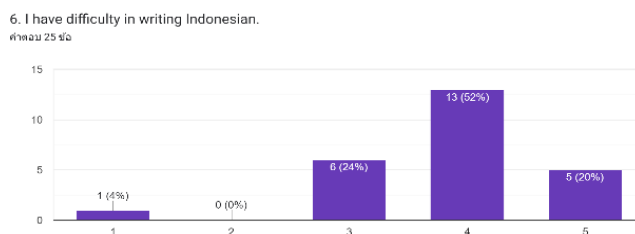


Figure 7. Responses to ‘I have difficulty in writing Indonesian’

Taking this further, the respondents were asked to express their level of agreement on the ‘I have difficulty in writing Indonesian’. The majority of the respondents agree on this item with a 52% percentage, while 24% and 20% of the respondents graded 3 and 5. Additionally, 4% of the respondents graded 1 and no respondents graded 2.

Item 7: I lack time both in learning and practicing Indonesian

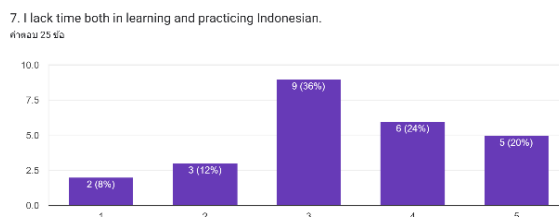


Figure 8. Responses to ‘I lack time both in learning and practicing Indonesian’

This figure shows that the responses to the item were varied. 20%, 24%, 12%, and 8% of the respondents graded 5, 4, 2, and 1. Most of the respondents were ‘neutral’, which 36% of the respondents choosing grade 3.

Item 8: I think BIPA teaching materials are challenging

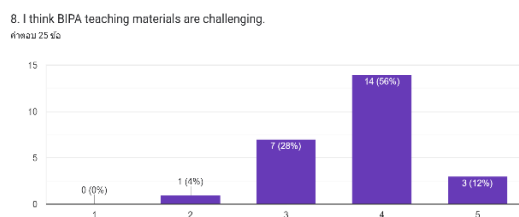


Figure 9. Responses to ‘I think BIPA teaching materials are challenging’

It was clear from the Figure 8 shows that the majority of the respondents (56%) agree that the BIPA teaching materials are challenging. The second highest of the respondents were ‘neutral’ (28%). Grade 5 had 12%; grade 2 had 4%; and grade 1 had 0% of the responses.

Item 9: I think cultural and language background make it difficult for me to learn Indonesian

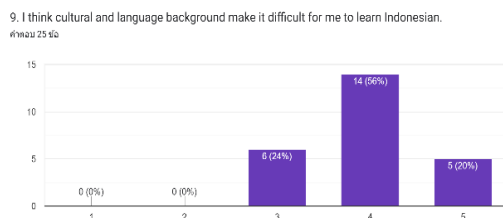


Figure 10. Responses to ‘I think cultural and language background make it difficult for me to learn Indonesian’

This figure shows that 56% of the respondents agree that cultural and language background make it difficult for them to learn Indonesian and 20% of the respondents said strongly agree. Meanwhile, 24% of the respondents were ‘neutral’, and no respondents chose grade 1 and 2 (strongly disagree and disagree). On the whole, one can realise that the majority of the respondents believe that their cultural and language background make learning Indonesian difficult for them.

Item 10: I lack confidence to speak Indonesian

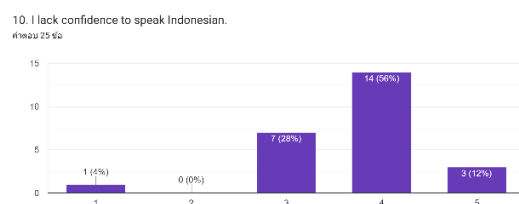


Figure 11. Responses to ‘I lack confidence to speak Indonesian’

Figure 11 shows that a very high percentage of the respondents (56%) agree that they lack confidence to speak Indonesian. Meanwhile, the second highest of the respondents chose 'neutral' in this item (28%). 12% and 4% of the respondents graded 5 and 1, while no respondents graded 2.

Table 1. Students' Questionnaire Feedback

No.	Score					Mean	S.D.
	1	2	3	4	5		
Q1	0	0	8	11	6	3,92	.759
Q2	0	0	5	14	6	4,04	.676
Q3	0	0	10	12	3	3,72	.678
Q4	0	1	4	14	6	4,00	.764
Q5	0	1	5	15	4	3,88	.726
Q6	1	0	6	13	5	3,84	.898
Q7	2	3	9	6	5	3,36	1.186
Q8	0	1	7	14	3	3,76	.723
Q9	0	0	6	14	5	3,96	.676
Q10	1	0	7	14	3	3,72	.843
	Mean					3,82	

From the table above, it can be seen that there were two questions at the "agree" level: I have difficulty in pronouncing Indonesian words (mean = 4,04 ± = 0.676) and I have difficulty in speaking Indonesian (mean = 4,00 ± = 0.764). Besides, there were eight questions at the "neutral" level: I think cultural and language background make it difficult for me to learn Indonesian (mean = 3,96 ± = 0.676), I like Indonesian language (mean = 3,92 ± = 0.759), I have difficulty in reading Indonesian (mean = 3,88 ± = 0.726), I have difficulty in writing Indonesian (mean = 3,84 ± = 0.898), I think BIPA teaching materials are challenging (mean = 3,76 ± = 0.723), I have difficulty in listening Indonesian (mean = 3,72 ± = 0.678), I lack confidence to speak Indonesian (mean = 3,72 ± = 0.843), and I lack time both in learning and practicing Indonesian (mean = 3,36 ± = 1.186). The overall average of the ten questions was at a "neutral" level (3.82/5.00).

b. Face-to-face interview

The face-to-face interview was used to collect data. The finding shows the interviewee has long experience teaching BIPA specifically to schoolchildren for 5 years. The statement is as follows.

“Since 2018, but I left for a few months, just count almost 5 years.”

“All of them are schoolchildren. I ever taught an adult, but only for one month. He was just a casual learner, not the student in the classroom.”

From the statements, it shows the interviewee is well versed in teaching BIPA to grade 8-12 international students. She knows and understands the difficulties international students are experiencing in learning BIPA very well.

1) Importance and attitude of foreign students towards learning BIPA

The interviewee said international students view learning Indonesian language as not important to them, as in the following statement.

“Some students think that learning Indonesian is not important because they are not required to learn Indonesian in their country except English. So when they get here they like to ask why they should learn Indonesian.”

The above statement shows that the students think learning Indonesian is not significant for them in their country. However, when they live in Indonesia, they must learn Indonesian unavoidably to live in Indonesia smoothly and easily. This is supported by the questionnaire Item 1: I like Indonesian language. There were 32% of respondents chose grade 3 or neutral.

2) The difficulty caused by different cultural backgrounds

The interviewee believed that having a different cultural background influences BIPA learning because it helped shape the way of thinking and learning that enabled them to understand the thought and use of Indonesian more. As she stated the following.

“About the cultural differences, we don't only teach Indonesian grammar, we also include cultural elements, for example, how to show gratitude and how to say greetings, like our hands have to be folded above the chest. Then if you give something, you should use your right hand. They are difficult to relate why they can't use their left hand. So, cultural differences are very influential because they help shape the way they think and learn when they study BIPA.”

The statement can be interpreted that the different cultural background affects BIPA learning a lot for foreign students, and it might cause them difficulty in learning BIPA. The statement is supported by the questionnaire Item 9: I think cultural and language background make it **difficult** for me to learn Indonesian. It showed that 56% of the respondents agree that cultural and language background make it difficult for them to learn Indonesian and 20% of the respondents said strongly agree.

3) The difficulty caused by choosing to use words in Indonesian

In Indonesian, one word can be translated into many words in English. That causes difficulty for foreign students to use **Indonesian**. As the interviewee stated:

“In my class, there are many students that don't really like learning Indonesian because they think it's difficult and one Indonesian word can be translated into many words in English.”

The statement can be interpreted that foreign students always faced difficulty in choosing to use words in Indonesian. This also might affect their confidence and attitude toward practicing speaking skills because they may suddenly hesitate to use Indonesian words while **conversing**. It makes them difficult to practice speaking as well. This point can be supported by the questionnaire Item 4: I have difficulty in speaking Indonesian. It reflected that the majority of the respondents graded 4 (agree) in the item ‘I have difficulty in speaking Indonesian’, while 24% of the respondents graded 5 (strongly agree).

4) The lack of confidence in speaking Indonesian among foreign students

The interviewee also stated the problem of the lack of confidence that causes her student difficulty in speaking Indonesian. The evidence shows as follows.

“My grade 12 student, he is already good at Indonesian, only one student in one class. He's good at Indonesian but he's always not confident when communicating.”

The statement shows that even though the student is good at Indonesian, he is still obstructed to speak Indonesian because of lacking confidence. This point can be supported by the questionnaire Item 10: I lack confidence to speak Indonesian. It showed that a very high percentage of the respondents agree that they lack confidence to speak Indonesian (56%).

Discussion

This research made an analysis of the difficulties in learning Indonesian for foreign students from grades 8-12. Understanding such difficulties may provide suggestions and solutions for the students to master Indonesian. This research revealed some facts that need to be discussed.

1) Interest in Indonesian Language

The result of the questionnaire shows the majority of the respondents agree that they like Indonesian language. In spite of that, the interviewee stated that some students still think learning Indonesian is not important because they are not required to learn Indonesian in their country except English. The study by [Nasution \(2020\)](#) revealed that BIPA students like Indonesian language in a high percentage (85.71%). Another study by [Handoko et al. \(2019\)](#) also found that most BIPA students have an interest in learning Indonesian songs, dances, and other cultures in their studies. Indonesian language, which is considered quite easy to understand and its structural characteristics that do not recognize tenses, is also a special attraction for those who want to learn it. However, this does not indicate that their Indonesian language skills will be high, along with a preference for Indonesian language.

2) Difficulty in Indonesian language skills

The majority of the respondents felt that they have difficulty in pronouncing Indonesian words. A previous study by [Widianto \(2021\)](#) concluded that the difficulties faced by BIPA students in Vietnam including the difficulty in pronouncing some sounds in Indonesian, as well as the difficulties in morphology and syntax. They have difficulty in pronouncing some sounds in Indonesian, such as [r] in front becomes the sound [z], [c] turns into [k], [l] at the end becomes [n]. In addition, they also have difficulties at other linguistic levels such as morphology and syntax. Another study result by [Wiratsih \(2019\)](#) also indicated that there are several pronunciation difficulties faced by BIPA students from China including five consonant groups, namely the consonants { /b/ /d/ /g/ }, { /-p/ /-t/ /-k/ }, { /-ŋ- /-l/ }, { /r/ }, and { /h/ }.

The result of the overall responses shows the highest percentage of the respondents agree that they have difficulty in listening to Indonesian words. The results of [Pratiwi's \(2019\)](#) study found that the students have difficulty when practicing listening to Indonesian materials. This can be seen from the interviews and questionnaires results, which the students said that they already did the listening exercise but it was very fast and difficult for them. Another study by [Nasution \(2020\)](#) concluded that the ability of the students in listening skills can be categorized as "bad". The results of questionnaires and interviews revealed that 94.29% of students stated the most disliked skill in learning Indonesian is listening and 88.57% considered that listening is the most difficult skill in learning Indonesian.

For speaking skills, most of the respondents agree that they have difficulty in speaking Indonesian (56%). The interviewee also added that there are many students always face difficulty in choosing to use words in Indonesian because one word in Indonesian can be translated into many words in English. This might also affect their attitude toward practicing speaking skills because they may suddenly hesitate to use Indonesian words while conversing. The study conducted by [Nasution \(2020\)](#) revealed that the reason why the students felt they have difficulty in speaking Indonesian is that they are not yet familiar with Indonesian sentences and the grammar of their mother tongue is much different from Indonesian. The way of arranging words in sentences is very different so that errors often appear in expressing a good and correct Indonesian sentence. [Budiawan & Rukayati \(2018\)](#) concluded that BIPA students have difficulty in aspects of speaking caused by several factors, namely psychological factors (nervousness), mastery of the topic, lack of vocabulary, word selection, understanding grammar, and interference in mother tongue.

The highest percentage (60%) was found in grade 4, which says the respondents agree they have difficulty in reading Indonesian. This result contradicted the study by [Nasution \(2020\)](#). The study found that the most preferred skill in learning Indonesian is reading (57.14%) and the easiest skill in learning Indonesian is reading (71.43%). This can be categorized into internal factors because of the interest in the BIPA students; they like reading because it is easy. [Shehata \(2022\)](#) also revealed that reading skills are the skills most mastered by Egyptian

BIPA students (63.3%) because most reading materials are used in textbooks while they learn Indonesian.

The majority of the respondents (52%) agree that they have difficulty in writing Indonesian. A previous study by [Andayani & Saddhono \(2017\)](#) concluded that one of the obstacles experienced by BIPA students in writing Indonesian is vocabulary. When students are asked to write, they still find it difficult to put the ideas that exist in their minds in the form of good and correct sentences. In terms of grammar, they actually understand what they want to express, but sometimes they are confused about how to take the first step to composing a sentence when writing. Furthermore, a study by [Septiana et al. \(2022\)](#) found that there are some errors the BIPA students made when writing in Indonesian including diction errors, sentence structure errors, affix errors, and word missing errors.

3) Lack of time both in learning and practicing Indonesian

Most of the respondents were 'neutral', which 36% of the respondents choosing grade 3. However, it is a bit different from the previous study by [Pratiwi \(2019\)](#). The study revealed that one of the difficulties faced by BIPA learners at the University of Nottingham is the lack of time both in learning and practicing Indonesian. The lack of study time given by the campus to teach Indonesian is a difficulty faced by both students and teachers. The limited time is due to the absence of study rooms that can be used and the density of courses that must be followed by the students. Due to the lack of time to learn Indonesian, which is once a week, many students feel they do not have enough time to learn and practice. Another study by [Nastiti et al. \(2019\)](#) indicated that there are several obstacles faced by BIPA students, including book materials are not in accordance with the characteristics and needs of students and the allocation of time for BIPA students is not in accordance with the Graduate Competency Standards.

4) BIPA teaching materials are challenging

The result of the questionnaire shows that the majority of the respondents agree that the BIPA teaching materials are challenging. This has similarities with the study conducted by [Pratiwi \(2019\)](#). The study found that the variety of characters and conditions of the students in the classroom makes some of them still feel difficulty with the materials provided. The students felt that the material was quite tough and there was a lot of new vocabulary every week. However, a study by [Khoiriah \(2022\)](#) found different results. The findings of the interview showed that the respondents gave a positive perception of the teaching materials used during the learning process. Many of them felt that the teaching materials suited their needs and the information provided made them understand more about Indonesia.

5) Cultural and language background make it difficult for the students to learn Indonesian

The result of the questionnaire shows the highest percentage of the respondents (56%) agree that cultural and language backgrounds make it difficult for them to learn Indonesian. The interviewee also stated the different cultural background affects BIPA learning a lot for foreign students, and it might cause

them difficulty in learning BIPA. This result was in line with the previous study by [Shofia & Suyitno \(2020\)](#) This cultural attitude problem refers to the emergence of student problems with cultural attitudes that are different from the student's country of origin. When students come to Indonesia, they will learn Indonesian culture; one of which is to learn about cultural attitudes that will be used when interacting with Indonesian society. In the process of learning culture, students will experience problems, and this is one of the triggers for students' difficulties in learning Indonesian.

Another previous study by [Pratiwi \(2019\)](#) also mentioned that the cultural and language background is also one of the factors of students' difficulties in learning Indonesian. Some students from Europe, China, Korea, France, and Taiwan have language patterns that are very different from Indonesian, as well as intonation and pronunciation. Sometimes, students still follow the sentence patterns of their first language.

6) Lack of confidence to speak Indonesian

A very high percentage of the respondents agree that they lack confidence in speaking Indonesian (56%). The result from the interviewee stated that even though she has a student that is good at Indonesian, he is still obstructed to speak Indonesian because of lacking confidence. This result can be compared with the previous study by [Faiza & Erowati \(2021\)](#). The study revealed that the BIPA learners have difficulty expressing verbally using Indonesian, even if only a few sentences. Problems that often occur are lack of confidence in constructing sentence structures, pronouncing words and language sounds because the first language has a sound difference with Indonesian. Another study by [Pratiwi \(2019\)](#) also observed that most BIPA students are afraid to speak or practice making sentences; this is because the students are always focused on making or saying the correct sentence. They quickly feel frustrated when the sentences they make are wrong and this has become the character of the students to always want to be perfect at making sentences or speaking.

CONCLUSION

This research highlighted several main findings of the difficulties faced by BIPA students, such as lack of interest in learning Indonesian language, difficulty in learning Indonesian language skills, lack of motivation and time, difficulties in understanding learning materials, cultural and language background difference, and lack of confidence in speaking Indonesian language. In order to encounter their obstacles, the variation of teaching materials is needed. The teachers have to be more creative to implement the learning strategies to improve students skills.

The teachers should know and do the needs analysis to see the ability situation of the learners so that the teacher can design the syllabus and lesson plan to meet the needs and problems of the students right to the point. In terms of differences in cultural background problems, the teacher can elaborate on Indonesian culture early or at the orientation time of teaching, so that it will make it easier for students and teachers to compare the Indonesian culture and students'

cultural background. Students can adapt to new situation when learning BIPA in a real situation.

Because of time limitation, it is highly recommended for further researchers to conduct the research in large number of students to gain deeper understanding of this field. It can be done either through qualitative or quantitative approach.

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