



Indonesian Local Wisdom as Material for Strengthening the Competence of BIPA Teachers in Australia

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ABSTRACT

Australia is home to numerous institutions offering BIPA (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers or Indonesian as a foreign languages) programs, where Indonesian is taught as an elective foreign language in schools. Cultural understanding plays an integral role in language learning, making the introduction of local wisdom essential for BIPA learners at all proficiency levels. This literature review examines the diverse forms of Indonesian local wisdom that can be integrated into teaching materials and training modules for BIPA teachers in Australia. The article serves as a valuable resource for developing instructional materials and organizing training sessions. Through an extensive review of relevant literature, this study reveals that local wisdom encompasses culinary, artistic, and environmental aspects. These materials can be presented not only through written resources but also through practical applications and activities. By incorporating local wisdom into their teaching practices, BIPA teachers can enhance their cultural competence and teaching skills, thereby benefiting Indonesian language learners in Australia.

Keywords: *Australia, BIPA, Indonesian language teaching, local wisdom.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a strategic position in the eyes of the international community, whether it is from a geographical, economic, demographic, and political perspective. A very strategic position makes the Indonesian language more and more popular and learned by foreigners with various purposes. Every year the demand for learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is increasing. Domestically, there are many foreign students enrolling at Indonesian universities and the number of requests for BIPA services to teach Indonesian in institutions abroad has also increased (Lestari & Jazeri, 2021).

The demand for BIPA learning is increasing day by day. Therefore, the demand for BIPA learning is also increasing in Indonesia and abroad (Jazeri, 2013). This increase was influenced by several things, one of which was the wealth of human resources, natural resources, and culture in Indonesia (Jazeri, 2016). One of the steps in learning BIPA so that it can be applied to foreign Indonesian students based on local wisdom is not in a short time. Learning Indonesian cannot be separated from the social and cultural context of Indonesia. Through various Indonesian cultures, foreign students are invited to use Indonesian according to their exact needs.

The very prominent objectives of teaching BIPA are to communicate daily with Indonesian speakers (general objectives) and to explore Indonesian culture in all its aspects (special objectives) (Suyitno, 2008). The first goal is the emphasis on mastery of everyday language that can be used for practical purposes, such as greeting, bargaining, refusing, inviting, thanking, inviting, refusing, praising, introducing, saying goodbye, and so on.

The second goal is to provide an understanding or just an introduction to foreign students about culture and all forms of local wisdom inherent in the lives of Indonesian citizens. One example is that there are still many foreign speakers

who misinterpret the habits of Indonesian citizens, one of which is "kerokan" which they consider inhumane. They think that the habit of "kerokan" can hurt the person, they see that the skin that is treated will turn red and cause pain. In fact, Indonesians consider kerokan as a frugal and highly efficacious traditional treatment. This treatment is believed to be useful for conditions that many people call "colds" which are characterized by runny nose, aching rheumatic pain, headaches, and others (Hasanah et al., 2018).

Local wisdom in BIPA learning is an integral part of language learning content. In essence, teaching BIPA is an effort to introduce and strengthen national identity. One example of an Indonesian local wisdom in BIPA learning was studied by Purnamasari (2021) who introduced Sekaten to BIPA students through descriptive texts. By introducing the cultural elements contained in Sekaten, it is hoped that BIPA students will become more familiar with Indonesian culture, especially Javanese culture. Through descriptive texts based on local wisdom, students are also expected to be able to find new vocabulary which can be used as additional references in learning Indonesian (Purnamasari, 2021). BIPA learning by inserting elements of local Indonesian culture is a very important thing to do. Apart from being an effort to introduce Indonesian to the outside world, this cultural insertion will also help students understand the culture of Indonesian society. This understanding that students have can later be used as provision in interacting with local communities. This cultural insertion also helps students adapt to the Indonesian environment.

In addition, based on the forms of local wisdom mentioned above, several studies have been conducted previously to find local wisdom content in BIPA teaching materials. This is what the researchers are trying to reveal, that BIPA teaching materials and enrichment materials have included local wisdom as the main content in providing Indonesian language learning. One of the studies was conducted by Hasanah et al. (2018). Based on the results of the research, it was found that the content of local wisdom contained in the BIPA textbook "*Sahabatku Indonesia*" is at levels B1, B2, C1, and C2. Then, the content of local wisdom is grouped into three areas, namely culture, food and drink, and sports. Finally, it is known that not all foreign speakers can easily accept Indonesian culture that has existed for a long time.

Issues in Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) are rather important for Indonesian language planning (Nugraheni, 2015). At the VI Indonesian Language Congress (1993), it was stated that the teaching of BIPA abroad was developing quite rapidly (especially in Australia, the United States, Germany, Russia, and Korea). Furthermore, Indonesian as a foreign language in Australia is the language learned at school level. The Indonesian subject is an elective subject for the Language field. Usually, several foreign language subjects are offered, such as Indonesian, French, and Italian. Students are required to choose a foreign language lesson to learn. According to Thamrin (2016), Indonesian is one of the most popular subjects. Several years ago, the interest in the subject was quite good, but the interest in choosing the subject tended to decrease due to several things, namely political, security, and bilateral relations between the two countries.

In Australia the BIPA learning strategy is also applied. This is to attract students' interest in learning Indonesian considering the language competition in Australia which is a multicultural country. BIPA classes in Australia can be called a multicultural class because students come from various ethnic communities of immigrants, namely Vietnam, Australia, India, Pakistan, etc. who have different cultural backgrounds. The term multicultural is used for foreign students who are in the same place, but do not have the same language background, habits, religion, etc. (Saddono, 2017). In Australia, language programs that are usually carried out by schools to attract BIPA students include language and cultural tours, immersion, and excursions. One of the approaches used to improve Indonesian language proficiency for foreign speakers is immersion. The term immersion can mean 'assimilation' of the target language. Students are continuously exposed to the target language, in this case Indonesian, so they can improve their proficiency in it. In immersion, the rules of the Indonesian language are not taught explicitly, but in the communication, they must do (Riana, 2020).

Based on initial observations of the implementation of BIPA learning in Australia, it is known that BIPA teachers or instructors have very diverse backgrounds. Most BIPA teachers have a scientific background in the field of Indonesian Language Education or Indonesian linguistics, but not all BIPA teachers in Australia come from Indonesia. Some teachers even have inappropriate scientific backgrounds. For example, coming from fields other than Indonesian (Siagian, n.d.). Several BIPA teachers at universities in Australia have educational backgrounds in the social field. In addition, BIPA teachers also come from various countries, such as Indonesia, Australia, Malaysia, and other countries.

Meanwhile, there are special competencies that must be fulfilled to become a BIPA teacher who has good performance. BIPA teachers must be able to 1) master their field of knowledge, or in other words, being skilled in 4 language skills and having sufficient abilities in linguistic aspects; 2) have pedagogical competence, especially related to teaching Language as a Foreign Language, including the ability to plan, implement and evaluate programs, apply models, use appropriate media in accordance with the characteristics of the learner; 3) have extensive knowledge; 4) be responsive to the development of science; 5) have responsibility and is open to criticism, 6) have a code of ethics as a

BIPA teacher; and 7) have cross-cultural knowledge (cross-cultural understanding) (Kusuma, 2019; Syihabuddin, 2022).

This is in accordance with the research by Albantani and Madkur (2018) which stated that local wisdom is very essential, and it could be executed by including the local wisdom values into the materials, allocating time for discussions on local wisdom, classroom activities and the process of teaching linguistic skills. Buttjes (1990) emphasized that language teaching is culture teaching. Furthermore, Douglas H. Brown, as cited by Richards and Renandya (2002) declared that teaching a language means teaching a complex system of cultural customs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling and acting. Therefore, it is considered a crucial matter that all teachers and stakeholders involved in the practice of teaching foreign languages must have awareness and sensitivity regarding the issues of diversity between foreign language and the local language as well as the national language, in this case, Indonesian.

Based on the development of Indonesian learning in Australia, it is necessary to have competent teachers to teach Indonesian. Not only in terms of language, but also in terms of cultural understanding, especially the local wisdom of the Indonesian people, which have various shapes and forms. These various forms of local wisdom need to be introduced more concretely to BIPA teachers. This research has the objective of describing forms of Indonesian local wisdom which can be used as content or materials (training modules) to be delivered to BIPA teachers in Australia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Local Wisdom in BIPA Learning

Local wisdom is the cultural identity or personality of a nation that causes the nation to be able to absorb, even process culture originating from outside/other nations into its own character and abilities. This was conveyed by Wibowo (2015). The identity and personality adjust to the view of life of the surrounding community so that there is no shift in values. In foreign languages, it is often conceptualized as local wisdom or local knowledge or local genius (Fajarini, 2014). Various strategies are carried out by the local community to maintain their culture. The same thing was also expressed by Alfian (2013) and Mungmachon (2012) defining local wisdom as a view of life and knowledge as well as a life strategy in the form of activities carried out by local communities in meeting their needs.

Local wisdom according to Ratna (2011) is a binding cement in the form of an existing culture so that it is based on existence. Local wisdom can be defined as a culture created by local actors through an iterative process, through the internalization and interpretation of religious and cultural teachings which are socialized in the form of norms and used as guidelines in the daily life of the community. The forms of local wisdom are religious harmony in the form of social practices that are based on the wisdom of culture (Haryanto, 2014; Meliono, 2011; Kadarisman, 2017). Local wisdom in society can be in the form of culture (values, norms, ethics, beliefs, customs, customary law, and special rules). Noble values related to local wisdom include love for God, the nature of the semester and its contents, responsibility, discipline and independence, honesty, respect and courtesy, compassion and care, confidence, creativity, hard work and never give up, justice and leadership, kind and humble, tolerance, peace-loving, and unity.

Local wisdom is an unwritten rule of law which is a reference for society that covers all aspects of life in the form of rules concerning relations between human beings. For example, in social interaction both between individuals and groups, which are related to the hierarchy in governance and customs, inter-clan marriage rules, and manners in everyday life. Local wisdom can also be expressed in the form of words of wisdom (philosophy) such as advice, proverbs, rhymes, poetry, folklore (oral stories) and so on; rules, principles, norms, as well as social and moral rules that make up the social system; rites, traditional ceremonies, and rituals; as well as habits seen in daily social interaction (Haryanto, 2013).

The role of local culture in learning BIPA material can show that Indonesian culture is very diverse; people who read, see, and listen to Indonesian culture will know the characteristics of each region that carries that culture; foreigners will be interested and can easily learn Indonesian and even their local language (Hermoyo & Suher, 2017). According to Rahyono (2009), learning local wisdom has a strategic position. This strategic position includes (1) local wisdom forming an identity, (2) local wisdom is not a foreign value to its owner, (3) the emotional involvement of the community in the appreciation of local wisdom is strong, (4) local wisdom is able to grow self, and (5) local wisdom can increase the dignity of the nation and state.

In BIPA learning, culture and language are two things that are interrelated and support each other as a form of teaching program. In general, the skills needed by foreign speakers in learning Indonesian include reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. However, there are differences between language learning for native speakers and foreign speakers. Learning Indonesian for native speakers places more emphasis on aspects of nationalism and patriotism. Meanwhile, language learning for foreign speakers places more emphasis on aspects of its functioning. Therefore, local

wisdom as Indonesian culture can be used as content in the language learning process. The local wisdom referred to here is various forms of activities, material, or intangible, which are owned, often carried out, become habits, and have become 'ordinary' things for Indonesian people. These forms of activities or objects have become part of Indonesian society as a nation that upholds local culture.

3. METHOD

The research conducted in this paper falls under the category of a literature study, where researchers rely on various literary sources to gather research data. A qualitative approach is employed as the data is in the form of words or descriptions. This study was carried out by leveraging studies that were similar or relevant to the research object, specifically focusing on Indonesian local wisdom which could be integrated into the training curriculum for BIPA teachers in Australia.

The research data was obtained through online searches, utilizing national and international articles, as well as digital books available on Google Scholar, using keywords such as "Indonesian local wisdom" and "Local wisdom as content for BIPA teaching."

The collected data was then processed using descriptive techniques for presentation. The technique employed was traditional review. The research process encompassed stages of data collection, data reduction or categorization, the data analysis process, and ultimately, drawing conclusions. The outcomes derived from the traditional review method will be utilized to construct the literature review in the subsequent stages of the research.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Local Wisdom Based on Indonesian Culinary

Indonesia with its various forms of local wisdom is a gift that must be maintained and not be taken for granted. Not only carried out by Indonesians, but this local wisdom also needs to be introduced to foreigners as a form of introduction as well as strengthening the identity of the Indonesian nation. Through the myriad of cultures present in Indonesia, Indonesian language learners are encouraged to use the language according to their individual needs and purposes. They are also introduced to gain a deeper understanding of the various cultures that Indonesia possesses. One of the Indonesian cultures that can be introduced to Indonesian language learners is the local Indonesian cuisine. Culinary arts represent one of the most flexible aspects of culture. Food is easier to find, transport, and enjoy compared to other cultural elements. It also plays a significant role when we engage in communication with others. We seldom refuse to engage in lengthy conversations when presented with food. Additionally, when someone embarks on a vacation or journey, typically upon arriving at their destination, they inquire about the local specialty cuisine. Therefore, food is a fluid culture, as consciously or not, a civilization can be built around a dining table and the presentation of food (Farinda & Khaerunnisa, 2023).

First, in the culinary field of Indonesia. A local wisdom that is very attached to the people of Indonesia is the habit of eating without using utensils such as spoons, forks, or knives. Indonesian people are used to eating with their hands, namely the right hand (Figure 1). Eating with the right hand is an important custom in Indonesian culture. This way of eating is also quite reasonable, namely because the food prepared (rice and side dishes) is basically eaten by mouthfuls and does not require a knife to cut like in Europe (Rahman, 2016).



Figure 1 Eating using the right hand.

Sundanese people in West Java also have a distinctive social tradition, namely eating together, which is called *botram* or *ngabotram* (Figure 2). Food will be spread out on banana leaves which are placed in a row and eaten together. The food served is even more delicious because it is eaten without using a spoon. Botram is usually held with a dish of traditional Sundanese food, including liwet rice, bakakak chicken rice or tutug oncom rice. The dish is even more complete with the presence of a side dish of salted fish, various types of fresh vegetables, chili paste and delicious fried tofu and tempeh. The *botram* tradition is still being preserved by the people of West Java, especially at certain moments with extended family. Even today, *ngabotram* is also often carried out by the community when gathering with their colleagues by holding *botram* in various places, such as in gardens, rice fields, yards, riverbanks, and other places when gathering. This makes this tradition a place to increase a sense of togetherness while at the same time establishing friendship between people in the social environment.



Figure 2 *Botram* tradition.

4.2. Local Wisdom Based on Regional Arts

Each region must have distinctive arts that depict customs, a reflection of the environment, people's lives, legends, and myths that develop. Therefore, regional arts can be interpreted as a type of culture that is owned by an area. The division of regional art forms was stated by an art expert, namely Koentjaraningrat (2002). The types of regional arts and their examples are as follows.

1. Building arts. It is a field of art that is most suitable for use as a hallmark or identity of a region's pride. For example, the stupa building of Borobudur temple, Prambanan temple, and others.
2. Sculpture. Includes the art of sculpture itself, reliefs, paintings, or drawings which are the most flexible and easy-to-use forms of art to develop the personality traits of an area. For example, the statue of Garuda Wisnu Kencana in Bali, and the statue of Martha Tiahahu in Ambon.
3. Fashion. Fashion includes the art of clothing, which is a matter of pride, because it really emphasizes the uniqueness of a region through the motifs used. For example, batik, weaving, ikat, and other textiles.
4. Sports arts. Sports arts are closely related to Indonesian dance. This is reflected in the movements inspired by regional dances. Pencak silat is one example of sports arts.
5. Music. Music cannot be separated from regional arts. Examples of musical arts include keroncong from Betawi, angklung from West Java, and sasando from Rote.
6. Literature. Literature in Indonesia has differences in each region. Examples are Balinese, Javanese, Bugis, Malay, and other literary works.
7. Drama Arts. Drama is an extension of literature. Since ancient times, many regional drama arts have been adapted to the television screen or the big screen. Examples of drama arts are wayang, ludruk, lenong, folk plays, and others.

Of the various forms of regional arts above, there are several arts that can be used as training material for BIPA instructors. The requirements for these arts are easy access to tools and materials and easy to imitate. Some of these conveniences can be an advantage so that local arts can be introduced to foreigners more easily. For example, the art of regional music in the form of angklung (Figure 3) and batik making as the art of fashion.



Figure 3 Angklung arts.

4.3. Local Wisdom Based on Indonesian Environment

The multicultural environment in Indonesia has led to the existence of several distinctive traditions that can only be found in Indonesia. An example of environmental-based local wisdom inherent in Indonesia is *gotong royong*. *Gotong royong* activities (Figure 4) are social activities that are attended by a group of community members in carrying out an activity together. This habit also occurs because humans are social creatures that cannot live alone without the help of others. One characteristic of the life of the Indonesian people, especially the people in villages, is the high spirit of *gotong royong*, such as when building houses, repairing village roads, making water canals, building village offices, building schools and various activities for the common good. This kind of activity is better known as community service, especially dealing with matters of public interest. There is also *gotong royong* for personal gain, such as building houses, weddings, births, and opening a new garden (Derung, 2019).



Figure 4 *Gotong royong* cleaning the streets and sewers.

Aside from *gotong royong*, local wisdom based on the environment that is often found in regions throughout Indonesia is *slametan* (Figure 5). *Slametan* can be interpreted as a hope to ask for salvation so that one's life is happy and prosperous in this world and in the hereafter (Awalin, 2018). Hadisutrisna (2009) explained that *slametan* is a ceremony of alms food and joint prayer that aims to ask for safety and peace for the family members who organize it.



Figure 5 *Slametan* for moving to a new house.

Koentjaraningrat (1999) categorizes the types of *slametans*, which are as follows: 1) related to the cycle of life, such as birth, marriage, and death; 2) *slametan* related to Islamic celebrations, for example the Prophet's birthday; 3) village cleaning *slametan*, related to village social integration such as *merti dhusun*; 5) important events throughout one's life cycle, such as moving house, changing name, healing from illness, and so on.

5. CONCLUSION

Teaching Indonesian for foreign speakers has a strategic position in terms of introducing Indonesian language and culture to the international community. This is because BIPA also has a role in providing information about Indonesia which includes the life of its people and culture apart from being an Indonesian language teaching institution. The impact is to create a sense of mutual understanding and respect that can enhance cooperative relations between nations. Therefore, the BIPA program deserves to be seen as a medium and strategy for cultural diplomacy. In practice, before teaching the structure of the Indonesian language, BIPA teachers must of course be introduced and required to deepen their knowledge of local cultures in Indonesia. At the practical level, organizing this authentic learning material requires an emphasis on material that helps in capturing vocabulary, constructing sentences, understanding the interlocutor, understanding one's own emotions, and how to express a language concept in a communication context. For example, discussing the news in newspapers, recorded cultural news, advertisements, or conversations in dramas are interesting media for culture-based learning methods. Local culture and wisdom also include systems of values and norms, social, cultural products, and their application in language actions (Safitri et al., 2020). This can create educational activities that are synergistic and meaningful because they are not only processed in the classroom but also practiced outside the classroom. Therefore, the educational goals and objectives of learning Indonesian for foreign speakers can run optimally and produce something good.

Several forms of culinary-based Indonesian local wisdom, regional arts-based local wisdom, and environment-based local wisdom are several choices of Indonesian local wisdoms that can be selected as material provision for BIPA teachers wherever they are. This material provision can be delivered with the aim of being a form of introduction as well as deepening the material for BIPA teachers so that the material presented in class becomes more real and meaningful. The provision of this material can be done in the form of workshops as well as practice. It is hoped that BIPA teachers with different backgrounds can have sufficient knowledge and skills as provisions for teaching in BIPA classes at various levels.

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