



Professional Development of BIPA Teachers: Competency Standards and Challenges In The Global Era

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Abstract. The growing internationalization of the Indonesian language has increased the demand for qualified Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) teachers, making their professional development a strategic priority in the global era. This study aims to analyze the competency standards required for BIPA teachers and identify the major challenges affecting their professional development. A qualitative approach employing document analysis was used to examine BIPA teacher competency standards, policy documents, and relevant scholarly literature. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that BIPA teacher professionalism encompasses not only pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies but also intercultural competence, digital competence, instructional material development, and continuous professional learning. Furthermore, the study identifies four major challenges: disparities in teacher qualifications, limited opportunities for continuous professional development, increasing demands for digital competence, and the need to strengthen intercultural competence in multicultural learning environments. These findings highlight the importance of collaboration among government agencies, higher education institutions, and BIPA providers in strengthening professional development programs, developing adaptive curricula, and fostering sustainable professional networks. The study provides strategic recommendations for enhancing BIPA teacher professionalism to support the quality and sustainability of the internationalization of the Indonesian language.

Keywords: BIPA, teacher professional development, competence.

1 Introduction

The internationalization of the Indonesian language has continued to expand over the last decade, leading to a growing demand for Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) programs in universities, language institutions, and Indonesian representative offices abroad. As BIPA programs become increasingly widespread, the role of

BIPA teachers extends beyond language instruction to include promoting Indonesian culture and strengthening Indonesia's linguistic diplomacy. Consequently, the professionalism of BIPA teachers has become a strategic factor in ensuring the quality and sustainability of BIPA programs worldwide [1].

Professionalism in BIPA teaching requires competencies that are more comprehensive than those expected of teachers in general. In addition to pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies, BIPA teachers are expected to possess intercultural competence, digital literacy, curriculum development skills, and the ability to design learning experiences that accommodate learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds [3]. These competencies are increasingly important in response to rapid technological development, globalization, and the changing characteristics of foreign language learners.

The Indonesian government has made various efforts to improve the quality of BIPA teachers through competency standards, professional training programs, and curriculum development initiatives. However, disparities in teachers' educational backgrounds, professional preparation, teaching experience, and access to continuous professional development remain major challenges in many BIPA institutions. These conditions often result in inconsistent instructional quality and differences in the implementation of BIPA learning across institutions [5].

Previous studies have discussed BIPA from various perspectives, including curriculum development, intercultural learning, teaching materials, digital learning, and cultural diplomacy. Nevertheless, these studies generally focus on specific aspects of BIPA implementation and have not comprehensively examined the relationship between competency standards and the contemporary challenges faced by BIPA teachers in the global era. However, few studies have synthesized competency standards and contemporary professional challenges of BIPA teachers through a systematic document analysis. This gap limits a comprehensive understanding of the competencies required to support the internationalization of Indonesian language education. Therefore, an integrated analysis is needed to understand how competency standards can respond to current professional demands while supporting the sustainable development of BIPA programs [6].

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the competency standards required for BIPA teachers and identify the major challenges affecting their professional development through qualitative document analysis. The findings are expected to contribute to strengthening policies, professional development programs, and institutional strategies for improving the quality of BIPA teachers in the global context.

2 Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using document analysis to examine the professional development of Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) teachers, particularly regarding competency standards and current professional challenges. Document analysis was selected because the study focused on examining policy documents, competency standards, scholarly publications, and previous research relevant to BIPA teacher professionalism.

The primary data sources consisted of official documents published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of Indonesia, the Roadmap for Continuous Training for BIPA Teachers, and other publications concerning BIPA teacher competency standards. Supporting data were obtained from books, scientific articles, conference proceedings, and previous studies related to language teacher professional development, intercultural competence, digital literacy, and technology integration in language learning. The selected documents were chosen based on their relevance, credibility, and direct contribution to the analysis of BIPA teacher competency standards and professionalism.

Data were analyzed using the interactive qualitative analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the condensation stage, relevant information was identified and classified according to research themes. The organized data were subsequently presented descriptively to identify relationships among competency standards, professional challenges, and professional development strategies for BIPA teachers. Finally, conclusions were drawn through an interpretative analysis of the synthesized findings.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Analysis of BIPA Teacher Competency Standards

Analysis of policy documents and relevant literature indicates that the professional competence of Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) teachers extends beyond the four basic competencies commonly required of teachers in Indonesia. While pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies remain the primary foundation, BIPA teachers are additionally expected to demonstrate intercultural competence, digital literacy, curriculum development skills, and the ability to adapt instruction to learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds [11]. The document analysis identified six key competency dimensions that characterize BIPA teacher professionalism and should be strengthened through professional development programs in the global era. These competency dimensions and their main indicators are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Synthesis of BIPA Teacher Competency Standards Derived from Document Analysis

Competency Dimension	Key Indicators	References
Pedagogical Competence	Designing learner-centered instruction, planning learning, and assessment	[3], [5]
Professional Competence	Mastery of the Indonesian language, BIPA methodology, and material development	[3], [5], [6]
Personal Competence	Integrity, ethics, responsibility, adaptability	[5]
Social Competence	Communication, collaboration, multicultural interaction	[2], [5]
Intercultural Competence	Cultural mediation, intercultural communication	[4], [10]
Digital Competence	Technology integration, digital teaching materials, and online learning	[6], [10], [18]

The analysis further shows that pedagogical competence involves not only planning and implementing instruction but also designing learning activities that accommodate the characteristics, learning objectives, and cultural backgrounds of international students. This competence requires teachers to apply learner-centered approaches that encourage active participation, critical thinking, and authentic language use in intercultural contexts [12].

Professional competence encompasses mastery of Indonesian linguistic knowledge, language teaching methodologies, assessment strategies, and the ability to continuously update professional knowledge in response to educational developments. In the context of BIPA, professional competence also includes the capacity to develop culturally relevant teaching materials and integrate local wisdom into language instruction, enabling learners to understand Indonesian language and culture simultaneously [6].

Personal competence remains essential because BIPA teachers represent Indonesia when interacting with international learners. Professional ethics, responsibility, adaptability, and integrity contribute significantly to creating positive learning environments and strengthening Indonesia's cultural image. Meanwhile, social competence enables teachers to communicate effectively with learners from different linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds while establishing productive collaboration with educational institutions and professional communities [13].

Beyond these four competencies, the document analysis highlights two emerging competencies that increasingly characterize BIPA teacher professionalism in the global era. The first is *intercultural competence*, which enables teachers to mediate cultural differences, facilitate intercultural communication, and foster mutual understanding between Indonesian culture and learners' native cultures. The second is *digital competence*, referring to teachers' ability to utilize digital technologies for instructional design, online learning, digital assessment, and the development of technology-enhanced

learning resources. These competencies reflect the transformation of language education toward more flexible, technology-supported, and globally connected learning environments [10].

3.2 Major Challenges in BIPA Teacher Professional Development

The document analysis identified four major challenges influencing the professional development of BIPA teachers in the global era. These challenges include disparities in teacher qualifications and professional preparation, limited opportunities for continuous professional development, increasing demands for digital competence, and the necessity of strengthening intercultural competence in multicultural classrooms. These challenges are interconnected and require systematic efforts from educational institutions, government agencies, and professional organizations [5]. The four major challenges identified through the document analysis, together with their implications for BIPA teacher professional development, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Major Professional Challenges Faced by BIPA Teachers

Challenge	Findings from Document Analysis	Potential Implications
Teacher qualification disparities	Teachers come from different educational backgrounds	Uneven instructional quality
Limited professional development	Training opportunities remain limited	Slow competency improvement
Digital competence	Different levels of digital literacy	Difficulties integrating technology
Intercultural competence	Multicultural classrooms require cross-cultural skills	Need for intercultural training
Institutional collaboration	Collaboration among stakeholders remains limited	Limited sustainability of professional development initiatives

Disparities in Teacher Qualifications. The analysis indicates that BIPA teachers come from diverse educational and professional backgrounds. While many possess strong linguistic knowledge, not all have received formal preparation in teaching Indonesian as a foreign language. This diversity contributes to variations in instructional quality, curriculum implementation, and classroom management across BIPA institutions. Consequently, standardized competency development and continuous professional training remain necessary to ensure consistent instructional quality [3].

Digital Competence. Rapid technological advancement has transformed language learning environments, requiring teachers to integrate digital technologies into instructional practice. The analysis reveals that digital competence is no longer considered an additional skill but rather an essential component of teacher professionalism. BIPA

teachers are expected to utilize digital learning platforms, develop interactive teaching materials, conduct online assessment, and facilitate collaborative learning through digital technologies. However, differences in teachers' digital literacy and access to technology continue to hinder effective implementation [11].

Intercultural Competence. Since BIPA classrooms consist of learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, intercultural competence becomes a fundamental professional requirement. Teachers are expected to facilitate intercultural communication, minimize cultural misunderstandings, and promote respect for cultural diversity while introducing Indonesian language and culture. This competence strengthens meaningful learning experiences and contributes to Indonesia's cultural diplomacy through language education [4].

Institutional Collaboration. Sustainable professional development cannot rely solely on individual teachers. The analysis demonstrates that collaboration among universities, government agencies, Indonesian representative institutions abroad, and professional associations plays a significant role in strengthening teacher competence through training, mentoring, curriculum development, and resource sharing. Such collaboration supports the long-term sustainability and quality improvement of BIPA programs at both national and international levels [2].

3.3 Discussion

The findings demonstrate that effective professional development should be directed toward strengthening the multidimensional professionalism of BIPA teachers. In addition to pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies, BIPA teachers require intercultural competence, digital competence, and the capacity for continuous professional learning to effectively address the demands of international language education. These competencies reflect the transformation of language teaching from knowledge transmission toward learner-centered, culturally responsive, and technology-enhanced instruction [11].

This finding is consistent with Richards and Farrell [3], who argue that professional development is a continuous process through which teachers improve their pedagogical knowledge, instructional practices, and professional identity throughout their careers. Rather than relying solely on initial teacher education, language teachers need sustained professional learning opportunities that enable them to respond to changes in curriculum, technology, and learner characteristics. Within the context of BIPA, continuous professional development is essential because teachers work with learners from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds whose learning needs continually evolve. This finding is further supported by Retnowati et al. [17], who demonstrated that technology-based professional development programs significantly contribute to improving

the competencies of BIPA teachers. Their study emphasizes that continuous and structured professional development is essential for enabling teachers to adapt to evolving pedagogical and technological demands.

The present study also highlights the growing importance of intercultural competence as an integral component of BIPA teacher professionalism. This result supports Kramsch's perspective [4] that language and culture are inseparable dimensions of language education. For BIPA teachers, language instruction is simultaneously a process of introducing Indonesian cultural values while facilitating intercultural dialogue. Therefore, intercultural competence enables teachers to create inclusive learning environments, reduce cultural misunderstandings, and strengthen Indonesia's cultural diplomacy through language education. Similarly, Cahyaningsih [15] reported that the effective use of digital learning tools in BIPA instruction requires teachers to possess both intercultural awareness and technological competence. This finding reinforces the importance of integrating cultural understanding with digital pedagogy in BIPA teacher professional development.

Another important finding concerns the increasing demand for digital competence. The rapid development of educational technology requires BIPA teachers to integrate digital platforms, online learning environments, and interactive instructional media into language teaching. This finding is consistent with recent studies indicating that digital competence has become a core component of language teacher professionalism, particularly in technology-supported learning environments [18]. These findings are further supported by Rahmatika et al. [16], who found that BIPA teachers generally hold positive attitudes toward Digital Game-Based Language Learning (DGBLL) but continue to face challenges related to technological readiness and instructional implementation. These findings indicate that digital competence should become an integral component of continuous professional development programs for BIPA teachers.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes that sustainable professional development cannot be achieved solely through individual initiatives. Institutional collaboration among universities, government agencies, Indonesian representative institutions abroad, and professional organizations is required to provide systematic training, mentoring, curriculum development, and professional networking opportunities. Such collaborative efforts contribute to the development of competent BIPA teachers capable of supporting the internationalization of the Indonesian language [2]. The importance of institutional collaboration is also reflected in the work of Azis [23], who emphasizes that cooperation among Indonesian representative institutions, universities, and government agencies plays a strategic role in expanding and strengthening BIPA programs internationally.

Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening BIPA teacher professionalism requires an integrated approach combining competency standards, continuous professional development, intercultural competence, digital literacy, and institutional collaboration. These elements should be viewed as complementary rather than independent

dimensions in preparing BIPA teachers for the challenges of global language education. Taken together, these findings indicate that strengthening BIPA teacher professionalism requires not only competency standards but also evidence-based professional development programs that respond to technological innovation, intercultural communication, and the changing needs of global language education.

These findings have important implications for policymakers, universities, and BIPA institutions in designing competency-based professional development programs that are responsive to globalization and technological transformation.

4 Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of competency standards and professional challenges faced by BIPA teachers through qualitative document analysis. The findings indicate that effective professional development for BIPA teachers should encompass the enhancement of pedagogical, professional, personal, social, intercultural, and digital competencies. These competencies are increasingly important in response to globalization and the rapid advancement of educational technology.

The study further identified four major challenges affecting BIPA teacher professionalism, namely disparities in teacher qualifications, limited opportunities for continuous professional development, increasing demands for digital competence, and the need to strengthen intercultural competence in multicultural learning environments. Addressing these challenges requires collaboration among educational institutions, government agencies, and professional organizations to provide systematic training, competency development, and policy support.

These findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge on BIPA teacher professionalism and provide practical implications for competency development, institutional policy, and future professional development initiatives. Future studies are recommended to validate these findings through empirical research involving BIPA teachers from different countries and institutional contexts.

Acknowledgments. The authors express their thanks to all parties who have helped, both from the State University of Makassar and Toraja Christian State Institute, who have helped in realizing this article. We would also like to thank the ICLC-6 committee, Hasanuddin University, which also provided a discussion space for the development of these ideas in the future, and the positive comments from seminar participants have improved the quality of this article.

Disclosure of Interests. The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.

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