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TRANSFORMING BIPA LEARNING: INTEGRATING CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION WITH TECHNOLOGY FOR CULTURAL DIPLOMACY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how integrating cross-cultural communication strategies with technology can revolutionize the teaching of Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) and enhance its role as a tool for cultural diplomacy. The research analyzes the experiences of BIPA teachers and learners at two universities in West Sumatra involved in the Darmasiswa program. Data were collected through semistructured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis to uncover strategies for addressing cross-cultural challenges and the role of technology in improving learning effectiveness. The findings reveal that combining cross-cultural communication with technology-based media, such as interactive videos, gamification applications, and online learning platforms, enhances cultural understanding and learning motivation. Practical simulations, such as role-playing and cultural discussions, enable learners to grasp Indonesia's socio-cultural context more deeply. However, limitations in technological literacy among teachers and learners, as well as cultural gaps, remain significant challenges. This study highlights the need for comprehensive training for teachers to maximize the potential of technology in education and the development of inclusive, culturally oriented teaching materials. These strategies improve learners' language competencies and strengthen cross-cultural relationships, positioning BIPA as an effective instrument for Indonesia's cultural diplomacy in the digital era.

Introduction

Cross-cultural communication is the process of interaction between individuals or groups with different cultural backgrounds, which involves understanding differences in values, norms, language, and behavior (Dharma, 2020). In language learning, cross-cultural communication becomes an essential element because language is not only a means of communication but also a reflection of the culture in which the language develops (Tannen, 1983). Cross-cultural communication is increasingly important in today's era of globalization, where individuals from different cultural backgrounds interact more frequently and more intensely (L. Warren, 2017). Cross-cultural communication includes understanding and navigating cultural differences in interactions between individuals (Kemal et al., 2020). Cultural awareness is the ability to recognize and understand other cultures' values, beliefs, and practices. Intercultural competence is communicating effectively and appropriately in different cultural contexts (Mulyaningsih et al., 2022). And Communication adaptation is the adjustment of ways of speaking, listening, and understanding to facilitate cross-cultural interactions (Dombrowski, 2020).

In the context of learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA), an understanding of cross-cultural communication strategies is essential to creating an effective (Zahra et al., 2023) and enjoyable learning experience (Khoirunnisa, 2023). Language is the main bridge to build cross-cultural understanding (Cesaria et al., 2022). BIPA learning, as one of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy instruments, requires an approach that considers cultural differences between teachers and students (Rahmat, Putra, et al., 2023). In this context, cross-cultural communication is not only a means of transferring information, but also a medium for

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understanding cultural values (Rahmat et al., 2019). Technology development provides opportunities to integrate Indonesian cultural elements in BIPA learning through various digital platforms (Rahmat, Tiawati, Rahardi, et al., 2024). In BIPA learning, cross-cultural communication is important in helping foreign speakers understand the cultural context behind the Indonesian language (Putra et al., 2021). This includes understanding customs, social norms, and distinctive local expressions. For example, greetings such as "Uni" and "Uda" have cultural meanings in West Sumatra. By understanding this context, learners not only master the language technically (Maryelliwati et al., 2018), but can also use it appropriately in social interactions. In language learning, cross-cultural communication provides an understanding of the social and cultural contexts surrounding language use. Language cannot be separated from cultural context (Rahmat, Lateh, et al., 2023) because the underlying cultural values often influence the meaning of words, phrases, and language structures (Carol Johnson, 2017). Key Dimensions in Cross-Cultural Communication for Language Learning include, language as a representation of culture, namely language carries symbols and meanings rooted in culture. Understanding idioms, metaphors, and local expressions is important in language learning. Cultural misunderstandings and cultural differences can lead to misinterpretations in grammar and social contexts. Interaction practices and communication patterns, such as how to greet, say hello, or ask permission, often differ between cultures and require explicit teaching in language learning.

Cross-Cultural Communication Relationship in BIPA

Learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) not only focuses on mastering linguistic aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, but also includes understanding Indonesian culture (Tiawati et al., 2023). Language and culture are two inseparable elements; language reflects a society's values, norms, and ways of thinking (Tiawati et al., 2024). In this context, cross-cultural communication becomes essential in BIPA learning because it allows learners to understand and use Indonesian appropriately in various social and cultural contexts. Cross-cultural communication in BIPA facilitates the process of learners' adaptation to Indonesian culture (Qubais et al., 2024). Through cross-cultural interaction, learners learn to understand the meaning of words and sentence structures and to read the meaning behind language expressions used in a particular cultural context. For example, expressions such as "makan dulu" or "silakan mampir" have a broader cultural meaning than their literal meaning, which often describes the friendliness and customs of Indonesian people. Without cross-cultural understanding, learners may misinterpret these meanings or feel confused in using them.

In addition, cross-cultural communication helps BIPA learners develop pragmatic competence, namely the ability to use language effectively according to situations and social norms (Sumarti et al., 2018). This competency includes choosing words, intonation, and appropriate way of speaking in certain situations, such as speaking to elders, communicating in formal contexts, or using everyday language. Through a cross-cultural approach, BIPA learning becomes more contextual and relevant, thus helping learners achieve a higher level of proficiency. The role of cross-cultural communication in BIPA also includes an introduction to cultural diversity in Indonesia. As a country with various ethnicities, customs, and regional languages, Indonesia offers a richness of diverse cultures. BIPA teachers can use this uniqueness to teach cross-cultural aspects, such as differences in greeting, eating habits, or ceremonial traditions from various regions. By understanding this diversity, learners can use Indonesian better and understand the socio-cultural dynamics that exist in Indonesia. By integrating cross-cultural communication into the BIPA program, Indonesian language learning functions as a linguistic instrument and a bridge to strengthen intercultural relations and enhance its role as a tool for cultural diplomacy.

Transforming of Indonesian Culture-Based Technology in BIPA Learning

Based on research data, BIPA learning in West Sumatra has not fully implemented technology in its learning, namely BIPA applications and media. Teachers have a big challenge when teaching BIPA in their respective university programs in teaching BIPA at the basic level of Indonesian from various countries, most of whom are not good at English and Indonesian at all. However, teachers always have good strategies that can be used, one of which is cross-cultural communication. Technological advances provide great opportunities for teachers to increase the effectiveness and attractiveness of BIPA learning (Rahmat, Tiawati, Saddhono, et

al., 2024). By utilizing culture-based technology, the BIPA program focuses on linguistic aspects and introduces Indonesian cultural values and richness. Implementing this technology allows learners to gain a more interactive, contextual, and in-depth learning experience, thus supporting the goals of cultural diplomacy through Language(Bruhn Jensen, 2016).

One of the main ways to implement culture-based technology is by developing a digital platform that combines elements of Indonesian culture. An example is a language learning application that uses Augmented Reality (AR), namely teachers using Google Lens to learn Indonesian Culture. Learners can scan images to display cultural artifacts, such as batik, keris, and traditional houses, so that learners can understand the historical and social value of each element. This technology allows learners to experience culture virtually, overcoming the limitations of space and time (Jia et al., 2024). In addition, gamification-based learning can also be used to make language learning more interesting by adding game elements that teach Indonesian traditions and customs (Khosrow-pour et al., 2015). Gamification in language learning is a method that utilizes game elements to increase motivation, engagement and learning outcomes (Hamari, 2023). In the context of BIPA (Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers), gamification can be used to introduce Indonesian culture, including traditional games, while learning Indonesian in a fun and interactive way.

Video and multimedia technology is also important in integrating Indonesian culture into BIPA learning. BIPA teachers use interactive videos recorded by BIPA teachers that show dialogues in everyday situations in various regions of Indonesia. Through these videos, learners can learn about local dialects, intonations, and cultural contexts in various regions, such as Javanese traditions in politeness or Minang culture in everyday communication. This approach not only introduces the language but also provides insight into the diversity of Indonesian culture. Technology can be used to support the development of teaching materials that reflect Indonesian cultural values (Zairawati et al., 2024). Online learning platforms, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), can provide learning modules that are rich in cultural content, such as folklore, traditional music, and performing arts. These BIPA modules can be enriched with interactive quizzes and discussion forums to increase learner participation. Thus, learning does not only focus on formal language but also on the cultural aspects inherent in the use of language in everyday life (Taftiawati, 2014).

The purpose of this study is to explore how to explore cross-cultural communication strategies used by BIPA teachers that are integrated with technology in their learning media so that they can revolutionize BIPA teaching. This study began with the effectiveness of BIPA learning carried out in international programs at universities in West Sumatra. Especially in the Darmasiswa program, which teaches Indonesian for communication and understanding local culture. BIPA teaching that is given sometimes uses Indonesian as the language of instruction and also English, the learning provided focuses only on learning standard Indonesian, without any understanding of culture and technological media that can be used in learning (Nugroho et al., 2023). So researchers are interested in seeing how interesting teachers use communication strategies, and how to implement cross-cultural communication in technological media that can be used. This research is an interesting field that has never been explored in language learning.

Materials and Methods

This research is about integrating cross-cultural communication strategies in BIPA learning with technology using a comprehensive methodological approach (Croucher & Cronn-Mills, 2018).This research uses a methodological framework rooted in case study research (Creswell et al., 2007). By analyzing the data obtained descriptively and interpretively regarding the experiences of BIPA teachers and learners in utilizing technological media. Case study methodology is one of the qualitative approaches that aims to explore certain phenomena in depth in real-life contexts. Case studies are suitable for this study because the focus is on the specific experiences of BIPA teachers and learners in utilizing technological media, which involves complex variables such as cultural interaction, technology mastery, and application of communication strategies (Sharan B. Merriam, 2009). This case study is designed to explore descriptive and interpretive insights into how technology is used as a learning medium in BIPA. Descriptive analysis is conducted to identify patterns of technology use, while interpretive analysis is used to understand the meaning behind the experiences and perceptions of teachers and learners. With this combination, the

study not only describes the phenomenon, but also provides an in-depth interpretation of how technology influences the BIPA learning process.

This study involved two research subjects, namely two BIPA teachers at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang and Institut seni Indonesia (ISI) Padangpanjang who provided insight into strategies and challenges in using technology to teach Indonesian language and culture. And seven BIPA learners who provided perspectives on their learning experiences using technology media. Both of these research subject data were at two universities in West Sumatra that have Darmasiswa students. Learners come from various countries such as Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar and Japan. The collection of research data by looking at online and offline learning. The data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews. Interviews were conducted with BIPA teachers and learners to gain an in-depth understanding of their experiences. This interview was designed to explore their views on technology, its effectiveness in learning, and the challenges faced. Researchers directly observed the learning process using technology. This observation includes interactions in online classes or the use of certain technological tools, such as the learning media used. Meanwhile, for the documentation analysis, the researcher looked at technology-based teaching materials, such as learning videos, digital modules, Duolingo and Google Lens applications, to identify elements of Indonesian culture and their use in learning.

The researcher combined data from interviews, observations, and documentation to strengthen the validity of the findings using the triangulation technique. The results of the interviews and initial interpretations were confirmed with the research subjects to ensure that the researcher's interpretation was following their experiences. This was done to conduct member checking in this study. The researcher conducted member checking by following the observation checklist regarding the cultural and language communication elements used by teachers and learners. The teacher demonstrated the technology media used to support his BIPA learning strategy. Meanwhile, BIPA learners were able to distinguish between language and tradition in communication.

Results and Discussion

Research findings the integration of cross-cultural communication strategies and technology in BIPA learning explains to increase the effectiveness and attractiveness of learning. The findings of this study require an understanding approach that includes cultural understanding, technological mastery, and adaptation to changes in the digital era in language learning. Therefore, cross-cultural communication strategies play an important role in bridging the cultural gap that often arises in BIPA learning. Learners from cultures that are very different from Indonesian culture seem to have difficulty understanding communication norms such as the use of greetings *(Bapak/Ibu, Kakak/ Adek, Uni/ Uda)* and polite expressions. The application of practical simulations and introduction to cultural contexts help learners understand the language formally and its pragmatic aspects, such as relevant intonation and gestures. This approach is in line with the principle of intercultural competence, which emphasizes the importance of cultural awareness in language learning. From the results of interviews and observations of BIPA teachers and learners, it was found that the most effective cross-cultural communication strategies involve:

Table 1. The results of semi-structured interviews and field observations
a. BIPA Teacher

Introduction to Cultural Context	Teachers use examples of everyday situations such as interactions in markets, public transportation, and formal meetings to introduce language use that is appropriate to Indonesian social norms.
Cultural Empathy Approach	Teachers encourage learners to understand and appreciate cultural differences through open discussion and reflection on personal experiences.
Practical Simulation	Teachers use activities such as role-play and simulations of communication situations to practically understand cross-cultural contexts.

Table 1. The results of semi-structured interviews and field observations indicate that there are difficulties in understanding the cultural context of learning Indonesian. Effective communication strategies by introducing cultural elements through practical methods such as simulations, role-plays, or group discussions to build cross-cultural awareness of learners. Teachers who use teaching methods based on everyday situations, such as shopping at the market, taking public transportation, or attending traditional ceremonies, tend to be more successful in helping learners understand the socio-cultural context of Indonesia.

Table 2. Culture shock Student
b.   BIPA Learners

use of greeting words	Ladies and gentlemen, Brother and Sister Uni-Uda
expression of politeness	Excuse me Excuse me
non-verbal expression	like a smile as a form of respect

Table 2. Several learners reported experiencing culture shock when faced with norms that were different from their home culture, such as the concept of leisure time (jam karet) or the habit of offering food to guests. The implications of the Communication Strategy that a BIPA teacher must carry out is an effective communication strategy, namely by introducing elements of Indonesian culture through practical methods such as simulations, role-plays, or group discussions to build cross-cultural awareness. Meanwhile, findings regarding teaching practices by BIPA teachers are seen in data findings on the contextual approach used by teachers, namely Teachers who use everyday situation-based teaching methods, such as shopping at the market, taking public transportation, or attending traditional ceremonies, tend to be more successful in helping learners understand the socio-cultural context of Indonesia. Meanwhile, from their teaching style, teachers often adjust their approach based on the learner's cultural background and language level. According to the data, learners from individualistic cultures tend to need more detailed explanations of collectivistic communication norms in Indonesia. This is related to the implications of cross-cultural communication strategies that teachers must use, namely teachers must use an approach that is sensitive to the learner's culture, and utilize stories, games, or visual media that reflect Indonesian culture. This is related to digital learning media. From the field research and interviews results, BIPA teachers are still few and only occasionally use applications and digital media in BIPA learning. Teachers have not used digital media such as interactive videos and learning applications Quizlet, Blooket and Tandem Language Exchange that can learn complex vocabulary and culture. New teachers try to use Duolingo and Google lenses to teach important phrases and specific communication situations in Indonesia and cultural context learning, such as the following.
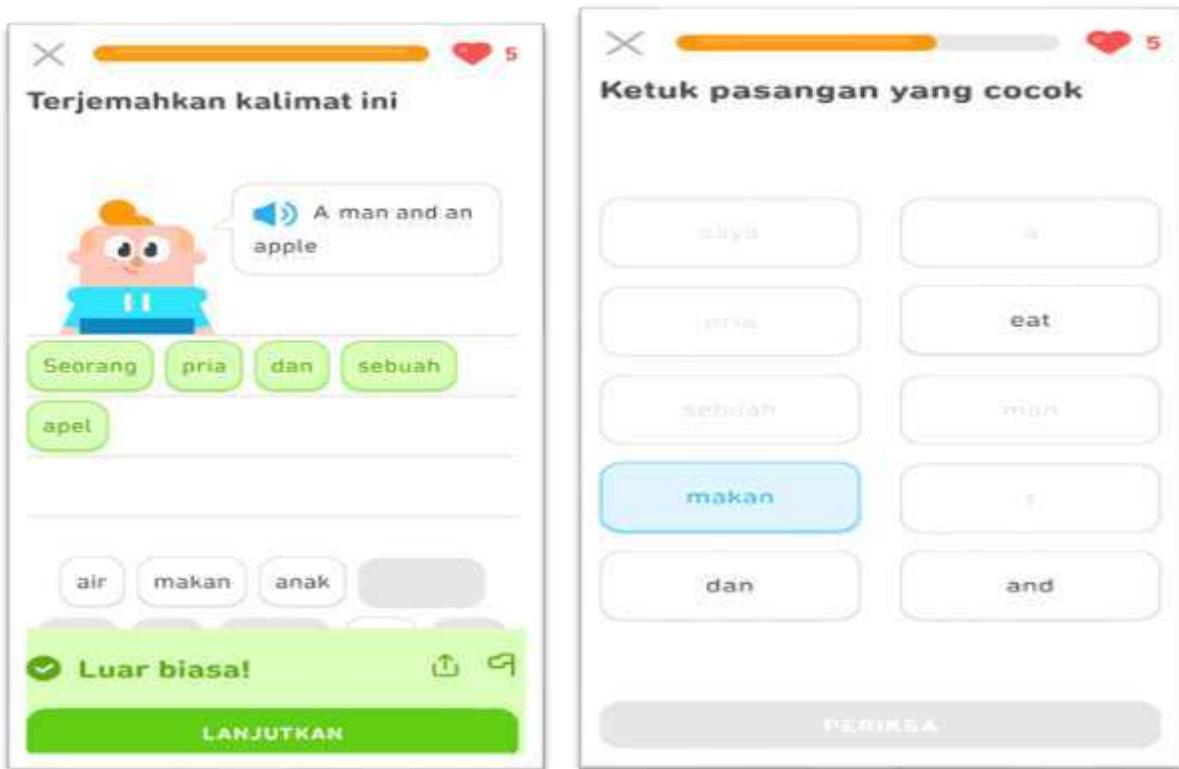
Figure1. The first Indonesian language learning using the Duolingo application

Figure 2 explains the first Indonesian language learning using the Duolingo application, all learners must have the duolingo application on their smartphones and complete the Indonesian language learning in the application. The data used is to translate existing sentences into correct Indonesian and match language pairs. Although the use of this application is a translation learning but it can help mastery of Indonesian vocabulary that has been learned. Learning apps such as Duolingo or Quizlet often teach important phrases and specific communication situations in Indonesia.
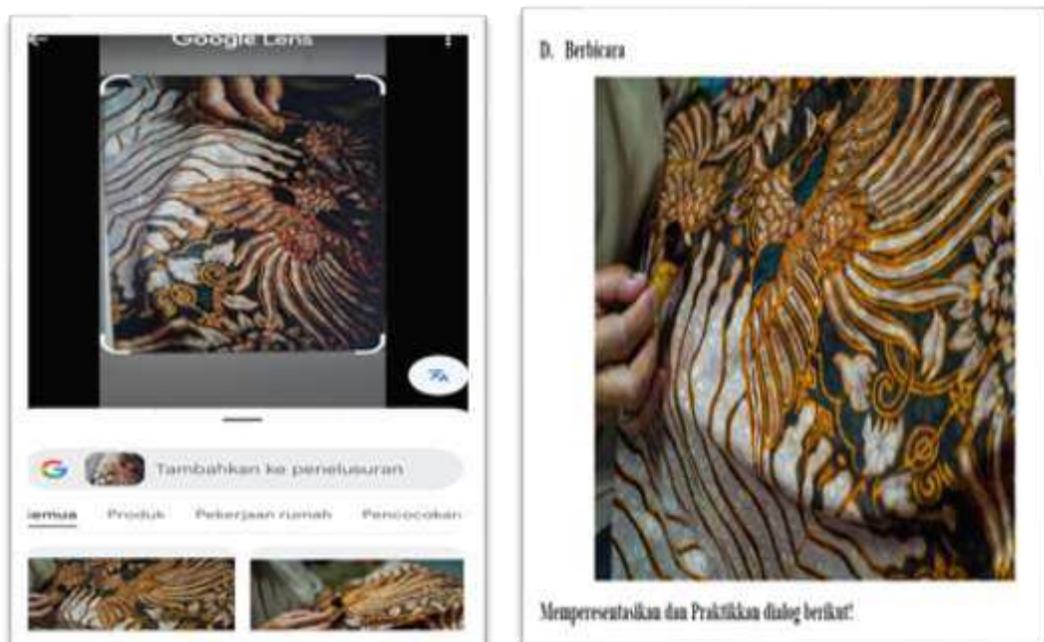

Figure 2. Using of google lens for practical simulation in learning Indonesian culture.

Figure 2. google lens is used for practical simulation in learning Indonesian culture. Learning data about batik using Google Lens to learn speaking skills. Batik images are displayed to see various models and names of batik in Indonesia. The batik images will be used to learn speaking skills. Therefore, Culture-based technology must be designed by BIPA teachers to be inclusive and accessible. Teachers also need to utilize technology to provide a more interactive and relevant learning experience to the Indonesian cultural context.

Research data also shows that BIPA teachers only use visual materials such as short films, photos, or infographics about Indonesian culture in learning strategies related to cross-cultural communication that can help learners understand the context of language use in their teaching materials. From the data analysis, researchers explore the meaning behind the experiences of teachers and learners, including how technology helps or hinders the process of cross-cultural communication in BIPA. Learners prefer strategies that provide direct experience, such as role-play, cultural discussions, or collaborative projects. The use of folklore, music, or traditional Indonesian art in learning increases learning motivation. And the technology media used in BIPA learning are new Duolingo and Google lens. Therefore, communication strategies must also prioritize an experiential learning approach that connects learners with Indonesian culture directly and meaningfully.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide important insights into the strategic approaches teachers use to promote the effective use of Indonesian in BIPA classes. The strategies found not only focus on linguistic mastery, but also pay attention to pragmatic and cultural aspects, which are key elements in cross-cultural communication. This suggests that the success of BIPA learning is determined not only by how well learners understand grammar and vocabulary but also by their ability to use the language following the Indonesian social and cultural context. One of the main strategies identified is the delivery of meaningful communication. Teachers consistently emphasize the importance of providing context in each learning material, so that learners not only understand the literal meaning of a word or phrase, but also its meaning in real communication situations. For example, the use of greetings such as *Bapak/Ibu* or polite expressions such as *permisi, maaf* are often accompanied by an explanation of the social norms behind them. This approach is in line with cross-cultural communication theory which emphasizes the importance of understanding high-context communication, where meaning is often implied in cultures such as Indonesia. In addition, effective communication strategies in BIPA learning include a comprehensive cross-cultural approach. These findings suggest that teaching pragmatics, namely the ability to use language appropriately in certain situations, is a key element in helping learners overcome cultural gaps. Simulations of everyday situations, such as conversations in the market or formal interactions, provide practical experiences that strengthen learners' cross-cultural communication skills. This approach not only improves language competence but also fosters a deeper understanding of social values and norms in Indonesia. The use of culture-based technology is also an integral part of the communication strategy in BIPA. Media such as interactive videos, gamification applications, and online platforms provide learners with access to materials rich in Indonesian cultural elements. For example, YouTube videos, Google Lens that depict traditional traditions or social interactions in local contexts help learners understand Indonesian use in various cultural situations and integrate communication into technology. This technology functions as a supporting tool and a medium to strengthen Indonesian cultural diplomacy.

This cross-communication strategy also faces challenges, such as the technological gap in some countries and differences in cultural literacy among learners. Therefore, educators need to adapt their strategies to learners' needs and cultural backgrounds, as well as ensure inclusivity in the use of technology. Overall, the findings of this study confirm that communication strategies in BIPA should include a language approach, combining pragmatic teaching, cross-cultural understanding, and culture-based technology by utilizing language learning applications. This approach improves learners' language skills and strengthens BIPA's role as a medium for Indonesian cultural diplomacy in the international arena. Thus, this study contributes to developing more effective and meaningful language learning strategies in the digital era.

Conclusions

This study reveals the integration of various strategies BIPA teachers use in teaching Indonesian language integrated with digital culture elements. These strategies include multimedia technology, such as interactive videos, namely Video call, gamification applications, Duolingo and Google lens, which are designed to provide a language learning experience rich in Indonesian cultural context. This approach helps learners understand the language structurally and apply it in real communication situations that reflect Indonesian cultural norms and values. Therefore, this study also highlights many challenges teachers face when integrating these strategies. One of the main difficulties is the limited technological literacy among learners and teachers, which hinders the full use of technology in learning. In addition, differences in cultural backgrounds among learners often create gaps in understanding communication norms that apply in Indonesia. Teachers also face challenges in adapting learning strategies to accommodate learners' very diverse individual needs. So, in conclusion, although digital culture-based strategies offer great potential to enhance the effectiveness of BIPA learning, their success depends largely on the ability of teachers to adapt their approaches to the needs and backgrounds of learners. This study emphasizes the importance of adequate training and support for teachers in using technology effectively and the need to develop inclusive and culturally oriented teaching materials. These findings provide valuable insights for developing BIPA programs that are more responsive to the challenges of the digital era and cross-cultural needs.

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