



Language Engagement Program in the Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers Course (Prinsip Keterlibatan Bahasa Pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing)

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Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan peran bahasa pada program Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA). Penelitian studi kasus ini berlokus di salah satu perguruan tinggi negeri di Jawa Timur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Universitas AKM menerapkan beberapa strategi pembelajaran BIPA yang sejalan dengan prinsip-prinsip peran bahasa. Dalam implementasinya, Universitas AKM mengintegrasikan program BIPA dengan skema pembelajaran berbasis asrama sehingga mahasiswa peserta program BIPA memiliki lebih banyak pengalaman terhadap bahasa sasaran yang dipelajari, yaitu Bahasa Indonesia.

Keywords:

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This study aims to describe the role of language in the Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) program. This case study research focuses on one of the state universities in East Java. The results of the study show that AKM University applies several BIPA learning strategies that are in line with the principles of the role of language. In its implementation, AKM University integrates the BIPA program with a dormitory-based learning scheme so that students participating in the BIPA program have more experience with the target language being studied, namely Indonesian.

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INTRODUCTION

In supporting the long-term roadmap of the Agency for Language Development and Cultivation (*Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa*) of the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to introduce Indonesian language and culture worldwide, many Indonesian higher education institutions take two policies: offering Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (*Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing*, commonly abbreviated as BIPA) course and calling for more international students to study in Indonesia. International students who are admitted in Indonesian universities are required to attend the course prior to enrolling at their respective study program.

This BIPA course is important not only to help them communicate with fellow international and local students but also to understand content subjects that mostly use Indonesian language as a medium of instruction. Some BIPA courses in Indonesian higher education are integrated into dormitory-based systems in which



all international students live under the same roof. This circumstance may provide students with maximum exposure to Indonesian language use outside classroom settings. In addition, this schema becomes one of the attractive reasons for prospective international students to study in Indonesian universities.

The aforementioned dormitory-based learning system, to some degree, applies the principles of the Language Engagement Program (LEP), which is commonly known as an immersion program. LEP has gained popularity around the world in the last decades. Hiver et al (2021) define engagement in language learning as students' dynamic participation in learning a language through continuous involvement in given tasks or activities. Language learning engagement covers at least three characteristics: students' goal-directed and purpose-driven actions, context-dependent, particularly on communities, relatives, educational institutions, friends, and classroom activities, and situated characteristics of the objects being learned (Shernoff, 2013).

LEP has been implemented in foreign language learning with students from diverse L2 lingua-cultural backgrounds. Among others are English (Suvongse & Chanyoo, 2022), Swedish (Björklund et al., 2014), Chinese (Lü, 2020; Xiong & Feng, 2020), French (Ryan, 2020), and Arabic (Abdalla, 2014). The learning of foreign languages, as these studies reported, tends to be more successful when language learners are assisted to participate in various activities that enable them to use the target language with their fellow international or local students. Instead of focusing on classroom teaching and learning activities, beyond-classroom activities like LEPs may help students gain richer language exposure necessary for the acquisition and interactional mastery of the language. Lindgren & Muñoz (2013) further argued that exposure, parents' L2 use, and linguistic distance do influence students' foreign language comprehension.

Although LEP has sprung in the Indonesian education institutions within the last decades (Chen et al., 2017), its grand model has never been thoroughly stipulated. LEP is a communicative approach that uses foreign language to teach content subjects. It has been one of the most effective methods employed in foreign language learning, such as English, German, Japan, or Mandarin. This communicative approach helps students acquire foreign language competence, raises their positive attitudes toward the target language that they study, and offers broad applicability in different education levels (Valdés, 2018). Some scholars have examined multi-layered aspects of LEP in terms of effectiveness (Marian et al., 2013; Watzinger-Tharp et al., 2018), challenges, (Lindholm-Leary, 2012), benefits (Brutt-Griffler & Jang, 2022; Salomé et al., 2022) and parents' motivation to send their children to the program (Chan, 2020).

From stakeholders' perspective, Murphy (2022) reported that teachers of LEP face complexities in regard with language curricula and instructional activities. Students' participating in an English LEP in Taiwan elicited a confounding attitude as they are afraid that it may affect local/national language and culture attrition (Lee, 2020). What these studies have illuminated is that regardless its positive outputs, LEP is not rarely questioned for its potential harms. Besides, the studies of LEP often focus on established dominant language such as English, French, or Chinese, while the language from developing countries that seek for equal footing as those of dominant language is rarely explored. Bahasa Indonesia, the language



that is now studied by and offered in more than 32 countries, is also rarely examined.

As the most prominent method frequently employed in foreign language teaching, LEPs have drawn special attention from global practitioners, researchers, and scholars. However, there are not many studies that genuinely capture the implementation of Indonesian LEPs. Two limited studies that are mainly related to the practice of LEPs in Indonesian context were conducted by Wirawan (2018) and Riana (2020). Wirawan (2018) focused on the LEP that integrates the learning of Indonesian language and that of Indonesian culture. The study noted that the integrated engagement program plays a significant role since cultural aspects are inseparable from language learning and language use. Therefore, the learning of Indonesian language should be done together with the learning of Indonesian culture. The program implementation enables the students to learn Indonesian language based on its contextual use. Riana (2020) focused on the implementation of Indonesian LEP in Australia. The study described the characteristics of the teacher and those of the students participating at the LEP. The results of the study revealed that: (1) the teachers and the students of the Indonesian LEP are multicultural because they come from different countries with diverse cultural backgrounds; and (2) the program is designed with interesting activities like games, discussions, and cultural festivals that may support the students' learning of Indonesian language skills as well as deepen the students' understanding on Indonesian culture.

This study aims to describe and scrutinize the instructional practices of LEPs in Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (*Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing/BIPA*) at AKM University. It describes the implementation and strategies of the teaching of BIPA course and how they correspond to the principles of LEP. The findings are expected to capture the authentic application of the program that meets the LEP ideals.

METHOD

The research applies descriptive-qualitative design (Cohen et al., 2018) as it observes non-numerical information in the forms of instructional practices of language engagement programs at the Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers called BIPA course. The study was conducted at AKM University, one of higher education institutions in East Java. The University hosts no less than 400 international students from different parts of the world: Asia, Africa, Europe, Middle East, and Australia. All international students are required to take and pass the BIPA course with diverse duration, ranging from six to twelve months, depending on their basic Indonesian proficiencies.

The data collection involved a case study approach (Ebneyamini & Sadeghi-Moghadam, 2018) in which the researchers participated in an in-depth study on language engagement programs of the BIPA course at AKM University. This case study approach is visible due to the availability of convenient research settings and the teachers' willingness to participate in the study. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with two teachers and four students from two different levels. They were chosen on the basis of their language proficiency, experience, and eagerness to get involved in the after-course interviews. The interviews were carried out from



October 4 to 9 2021 and took around 45 to 60 minutes for each informant. It chose an online interview process via zoom to meet the pandemic health protocol. During the interview, the informants and the researchers agreed to use the Indonesian language as the medium of communication to avoid potential misunderstanding.

The objective of the semi-structured interviews was to gain detailed information about the informants' experiences in the teaching and learning activities of BIPA courses at AKM University. On the teachers' side, the interviews were directed to understand their roles and duties in the process of course planning, administration, and evaluation. In addition to the interviews, this study also looked at the instructional materials such as lesson plans, assessments, and students' work. The documents were useful to provide authentic evidence about the implementation of the BIPA course.

The interview data were transcribed verbatim. In displaying the data, each class was represented by abbreviation C1 and C2, teacher by T1 and T2, and student by S1, S2, S3, and S4. The data were reduced and classified into three groups: the stages of the teaching of BIPA course, the implementation of BIPA course, and the adaptation of language engagement program principles in the teaching of BIPA. The first category relied on the interview data from the teachers, the second category was based on students' interviews and documents, and the third category examined the application of BIPA course at AKM university in accordance with the principles of language engagement program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

BIPA course aims at facilitating non-native Indonesian speakers to improve their language proficiency and promoting Indonesian local cultures to global communities. BIPA course is administered under the Regulation of the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture number 27 of 2017, particularly on the Design of Standard of Graduate Competence for BIPA Course and Training. The Agency for Language Development and Cultivation of the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology estimated that there were no less than 45 domestic institutions serving BIPA course; in addition, BIPA course has also been taught in 36 countries around the world in no less than 130 institutions ranging from universities, cultural centers, to embassies (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2018).

Along with the so-called internationalization of Indonesian Higher Education (Sutrisno, 2019), universities in Indonesia are now competing to "attract" more overseas students and providing bridging activities to help them adapt with Indonesian (academic) cultures. BIPA has been one of such intermediary activities. International students usually undertake the course right before being officially enrolled in a desired university. This program is widely implemented to support the introduction of Indonesian language and culture.

Like other Indonesian higher education institutions, AKM University requires the international students to take BIPA course prior to their official attendance in the designated study program. They have to pass the course before they start their regular classes. The course equips international students with basic skills to communicate in Indonesian language and, in turn, understand further courses taught in Indonesian language. At AKM University, BIPA course is taught for one to two



semester(s), or between six to twelve months, depending on the students' basic competence in Indonesian language.

Table 1. Teacher`s and International`s Students of BIPA Course at AKM University, Academic Year 2021/2022

	Total Number	Native Language	Foreign Language Skill		Indonesian Language Proficiency Level
Foreign Students	22	Thai, Malay, Arabic, Russian, Chinese	Arabic	English	Basic Intermediate Upper Intermediate
Teachers	10	Indonesian	Arabic	English	Advanced

In the academic year 2021/2022, there were twenty-two students enrolled in the BIPA course at AKM university. They came from different continents: Asia, Europe, and Africa. The countries included Thailand, Malaysia, Libya, Afghanistan, and Dagestan. As the International students were diverse in their origins, they spoke different mother tongues, such as Thai, Chinese, Arabic, and Russian. Very few of them were able to communicate in Indonesian language. Some of them had neither listened any Indonesian words nor written Latin scripts, which constitute Indonesian orthography. Students from Middle Eastern countries, for example, spoke Arabic as their mother tongue and were accustomed to writing with *al-Abjadiyah* alphabets, which organize the Arabic writing system. The students' first language has indeed been the most determining factor that influences their Indonesian as a second or foreign language learning in the BIPA course (Müller & Schroeder, 2022; Thyab, 2016). The disparity in their Indonesian language skill was quite obvious, extending from basic (e.g., students from Arabic-spoken countries) to upper intermediate (e.g., students from Malay-spoken countries).

Furthermore, there were ten teachers in charge of the BIPA course at AKM University. Three of them were civil servants, while the others had either a semi-permanent or a part-time contract. The languages of instruction were Arabic and English. However, as most of the international students came from Arabic-speaking countries, the use of Arabic language was more dominant during the course, making the BIPA course at the AKM University among the few BIPA programs that used Arabic as their medium of communication (Famdale et al., 2020; Idris, 2022). Only under certain circumstances was English used, particularly when the students were not able to understand Arabic or when the use of the Arabic language may lead to misunderstanding.

Stages of Implementing BIPA Course at AKM University

The BIPA course (used interchangeably with BIPA Program) at AKM University was introduced in 2016. There were desperate struggles put up by the University stakeholders to establish the program and make it sustainable until today. Some stages were taken to succeed in the implementation of the program. The first stage was policy design. The University made BIPA a mandatory course for all incoming international students. The students had to pass the course before they started attending the regular class at the study programs they wished to enroll.



This policy aimed at ensuring that the non-Indonesian students did not encounter any language barriers in their future academic interaction so that they could successfully follow the classes, which were mostly delivered in Indonesian language.

T1 stated:

The policy introduced (to bridge the international students into regular classes at the desired study program) is by making BIPA course a compulsory subject in the first semester of their study at the AKM University. By system, all international students get the BIPA program when they first enroll to the University. During the first six months, they focus on studying Indonesian language and culture and they have to follow all activities provided by the teachers. If the score is not satisfying or they still cannot understand Indonesian language very well, they should (re)join the program in the following semester.

T1's statement indicates that all international students are required to attend the BIPA course; otherwise, they will lose their chance to enroll in a desired study program at AKM university. Students who fail to pass the course will not receive a certificate of the course participation and, as a result, not be able to join regular courses in the following semester. In addition, to facilitate the students with maximum exposure to the target language, the BIPA course is integrated into a dormitory-based program where they can engage with local students and use Indonesian language extensively as a medium of communication. By doing so, they are immersed not only to the target language but also to diversities of Indonesian (local) cultures which may sharpen their linguistic and (inter)cultural sensitivity, awareness, and respect (Dunstan et al., 2018). At the dormitory, they stay with local students who use Indonesian language in their mundane activities. Therefore, the international students are "pushed" to speak in Bahasa Indonesia, at least during their stay at the dormitory.

The second step of BIPA course implementation at AKM University is materials development. The process includes need analysis by identifying the students' level of competence, theme selection, material adaptation by taking into account several aspects such as students' interests, learning objective, teacher's personality and teaching style, and local values, and material production (Tomlinson, 2012).

T1 asserted:

The material taught at BIPA of the AKM University was initially only based on modules from the Language Centre of the Indonesian Ministry for Education and Culture Affairs. But over time, the Language Centre at AKM University compiled and developed special modules. The module is the incorporation of the central module of the Ministry with the addition of Islamic values.

Furthermore, T2 explained:

The compilers of the module material took examples for the material based on the environmental and community conditions around the AKM university like the culture and norms that exist in the city of Malang, the



habits in Mahad (AKM university's student dormitory), the procedures for worshipping campus residents, and many more.

The practice of BIPA material development at AKM University essentially reflects the need to incorporate local culture and values in foreign textbooks to facilitate learners with an awareness of cross-cultural understanding (Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018).

Materials of the BIPA course aim at improving the student's ability to read, write, listen, and speak the Indonesian language. Referring specifically to the teaching materials at BIPA, some scholars have also commented on international readability (Solikhah & Budiharso, 2020) and on the use of local content (Tanwin & Rosliani, 2020). BIPA learners' levels of language competence are classified into seven degrees, and six of which are based on CEFR. To further develop the materials, Kurniasih & Isnaniah (2019) proposed some fruitful recommendations to the stakeholders of BIPA. Some of the recommendations are manifested in the compilation of BIPA materials at AKM University. They also have an exam to assess the student's competence, evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching process, and get inputs on the learning materials (Wood-Wallace, 2016).

The third step is classifying the students. Before they attend the intensive Indonesian language learning program, a placement test is carried out to map their ability to speak, read, and write in the Indonesian language. The test aims at placing international students into the BIPA course that is appropriate to their language level, and this may help them better succeed in learning the language. The placement test can also provide diagnostic information about the students' performance, which in turn helps the teachers to design proper learning materials and activities (Chung et al., 2015).

According to T2:

The students are classified into three different levels: basic, intermediate, and advanced. The basic class is targeted for students who cannot or have not heard any Indonesian language at all. The intermediate class consists of students who have more knowledge of Indonesian than those in basic class. The advanced class are for students who already have sufficient ability or knowledge of Indonesian.

The fourth step is conducting instructional activities. T1 confirmed that the activities in the BIPA course run as follows.

The process of learning Bahasa Indonesia in BIPA is well-managed. The international students are exposed to Bahasa Indonesia activities during the class. The class starts at 08.00-11.00 a.m. and 13.00-15.00 p.m., from Monday to Friday. Referring to the previously-designed module, the teachers present the materials and "push" the students to use Bahasa Indonesia.

In C1 and C2, the students were deeply immersed in Bahasa Indonesia. Sometimes, the teachers spoke Arabic or English to help the students who encountered difficulties in understanding the language. Very often, the teachers performed fascinating activities in the class like discussion and simple games.



The fifth step is undertaking an assessment. The assessment aims to identify at least two aspects: achievement and proficiency. The achievement measures how a specific material has been covered in a course and understood by the students; meanwhile, the proficiency measures the students' skill in general with or without being connected to the course materials (Hamp-Lyons, 2016).

T2 said:

There are at least two tests in this program, namely mid-term test and final exam. The mid-term test is usually conducted in the end of the first half of a semester when the students have reached a certain target. The final exam is carried out at the end of the semester. The mid-term test and final exam are held twice a year. If the students do not pass the minimum score, they must (re)take the program in the following semester.

Implementation of BIPA Course

Before the outbreak of covid-19 pandemic in early 2020, BIPA course at AKM University was administered on campus every day at 08.00-11.00 a.m. The time allotment was dedicated for the teachers to deliver the materials. The schedule changed day-to-day on the basis of language skills: reading, listening, writing, and speaking. Referring to the module, the teachers applied various strategies to deliver the materials. During observation in C1 and C2, we found that the most common strategy that the teachers used was drilling for learning new vocabularies. The teachers provided some vocabulary items to memorize. The students were expected to produce correct pronunciation as exemplified by the teachers. Students were at least introduced to 30 new vocabulary items in each meeting. With more and more vocabulary that they memorized and used in appropriate contexts, the students were supposed to be able to master the Indonesian language better. In doing so, the teacher sometimes used flashcards which, according to Nursyairofi et al., (2020), makes the learning activities more interesting.

Another method that the teachers used to accelerate the students' vocabulary mastery is encouraging students to read any Indonesian texts in books, articles, online news, and travel blogs. The teachers tried to ensure that the texts' level of difficulty is only one level above what they have learned. In addition, the teachers asked students to listen to songs, dialogues, news broadcasts, podcasts, or anything in Indonesian audios with transcripts. Listening and recording everything heard will help accelerate students' contextual understanding of using previously memorized vocabulary. Students, then, made independent corrections to match what has been heard and recorded with the existing transcripts. From this process, the teachers were likely to find out what vocabulary items the students have never heard and understood because it is likely that the words that are not written correctly are words they have never heard before (Maulana, Mulyaningsih, & Itaristanti, 2022).

The following method that BIPA teachers at AKM University often used is social media-based activities. The teachers made use of the students' liking of social media in the instructional process. The students browsed their preferred social media, such as Instagram or Facebook, and followed some accounts that are helpful to improve the students' Indonesian language proficiency. When the students surfed on social media and found unfamiliar words, the teachers asked them to find out the



meanings of the word from dictionaries. Usually, the teachers asked students to surf virtually for 30 minutes.

The teachers also allocated one day a week, usually on weekends, to invite students study excursions. This was conducted to facilitate the student's use any vocabulary items they had learned in actual acts of communication outside the campus. The students memorized and used the language as a communication tool, not something kept in the head. This on-campus learning was usually done by visiting traditional markets. In the market, the students tried to communicate directly with the sellers.

In addition to exposure to Indonesian language use, the students could also learn the politeness values in language and phatic communion which are easily found in conversational interactions in traditional markets. This cross-cultural language politeness learning was then discussed in the following meetings. From here, international students can learn and understand some differences regarding politeness, especially in a language that has a speech level like Indonesian.

International students also obtained cultural exposure by attending traditional ceremonies such as weddings and *Bersih Desa* rituals. The students were encouraged to write down any unfamiliar vocabulary items and discussed them in class. This cultural introduction activities for BIPA students support language exposure in accommodating cultural messages and, at the same time, reflecting the community's culture.

Introducing Indonesian culture to BIPA students aims to foster positive attitudes of BIPA students toward Indonesian culture as well as the Indonesian language. By always being in the life of the Indonesian people and discussing with the community around the campus, international students can recognize the Indonesians' way of life. Through this excursion study activity, international students can achieve Indonesian language proficiency that is appropriate to the culture and proper application of politeness strategies.

The next phase of BIPA course was administered at 01.00-03.00 p.m. The time was allotted for practical activities, i.e., that the students practice the materials they had learned. In this phase, most teachers adapted with different strategies, depending on the skills being taught. The teachers asserted that they commonly applied group discussion to teach speaking skills. In C1 and C2, for example, the students were divided into some groups. The teacher provided a particular topic that the students had to discuss. The students were not allowed to speak in L1. They were obliged to speak in L2 (Indonesian Language) when discussing with friends. They were strongly immersed in L2 communication during the class. However, the teachers once in a while explained the materials in L1 (English or Arabic) when the materials were too difficult to understand, e.g., related to abstract concepts or complicated issues.

When teaching Indonesian language skills, the teachers often inserted materials from the converted courses. Additional materials were adapted to students' abilities and were taken from daily lives around the University. Such a material selection aimed at providing students with basic understanding of the converted subject matter, together with some grammatical and socio-cultural materials (Budiana et al., 2018).



S1, S2, S3, S4 witnessed:

During offline classes, we have a certain amount of time to practice our Indonesian language skills. We and the teachers visit certain places such as markets, museums, malls, and others. We see, hear, and speak directly with the community using Indonesian language. It is to familiarize ourselves and measure our Indonesian language skills.

At first, it was hard for me to understand the Indonesian language, but I am forced to see, hear, and speak directly with local students using Indonesian.

It is fun when I meet Indonesian people directly. However, I gradually understand what they are saying. And, they are welcome and friendly.

The most memorable moment is when I visit a place and my friends and I enjoy communicating with the people.

Unfortunately, this schedule has been re-adjusted due to the pandemic, and all activities are conducted online. In the pandemic, the class schedule is only 14.00-17.00 a.m. That time includes the delivery of material and practice.

The Model of LEPs

Learning activities in the BIPA program apply one of the foreign language learning methods, namely immersion (Cammarata & Haley, 2018; Valdés, 2018). This method requires students to learn the culture of the target language and communicate directly with the community. This method is effective for honing foreign language skills. It is probably due to such an advantage that the administration of BIPA course at AKM University adapts this method. AKM university's BIPA program adapts the immersion method where all new international students are required to learn the Indonesian language. This method applies the cultural values of the target language. The duration of this program is one semester (six months). However, students can join the program for two semesters (one year) if they still don't acquire sufficient Indonesian language skills that are needed to support their learning in subsequent regular course.

The BIPA program has four skill subjects: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. The program integrates Islamic and Indonesian values. The course scores are converted into courses in the majors of, for example, Philosophy of Science, Indonesian Language, Pancasila (Civic), and others. AKM University has developed its own BIPA module so that the course is administered without too much dependence on the module suggested by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The self-developed module has accommodated some traditions, such as praying in congregation, living in dormitories, and others.

On the basis of data collected via the interview, it is evident that the typical immersion program implemented in BIPA program at AKM University is partial immersion (García-Mateus, 2020) with medium of instruction in Indonesian, the target language that students should acquire. Such a use of Indonesian language as the sole medium of instruction resonates foreign language immersion as discussed by some scholars, for example Supriyono et al., (2020). One of the informants



affirms that the choice to use Indonesian language is to provide a great exposure to the target language considered necessary for students' language improvement.

This approach to the LEP at AKM University is close to the so-called Indonesian-only approach. In this way, the teaching and learning activities are provided in Indonesian language and the use of students' first language or another language can be considered an obstacle or hindrance. Aligned to the above objective, greater exposure to Indonesian language as the target language is expected to help students better acquire the language. In addition, it is also noticeable that the model of language engagement program here does hold strong believe in, in terms of language acquisition, habituation with one-way language engagement model.

Given the profile attending the program, BIPA language engagement at AKM University belongs to late engagement program in the sense that participating students attend the program at the university level. From the same point of view, the language engagement program is classified into three types: early, late, and late language engagement. The first type usually takes place at an early age. The second type, moreover, is designed usually for students enrolled in high school level.

This study also reveals that materials, activities, and instruction are all in Indonesian language. It is arguable, therefore, that the language engagement program at AKM University embraces total language engagement. In other words, the curriculum along with instructional activities are in L2 and the use of students' L1 or another language which both students and teachers comprehend is not desirable.

It is consistent with the earlier data where exposure for full Indonesian language as the target language of the study is highly desired. However, later our data also revealed that what happened in the classroom did not always correspond to the designed curriculum. Our informants told us that they also used another language to facilitate and help students understand the materials. And instead of positioning Indonesian language as the only target language, they view this program as an additive bilingualism.

With regard to the type of activities of the immersion program in the under-research university, BIPA managed to offer some extracurricular activities such as city tour and excursions. The informants reported that during the mentioned activities, students were required to use Indonesian language to communicate with other participants involved in the agenda and with stakeholders involved. These activities were considered important and enabled them to experience social interactions with either international students or Indonesian citizens. As such, all mentioned activities could help students' literate in oral skills as well as in intercultural understanding. These activities correspond to the typical language engagement programs, or immersion programs, that are implemented elsewhere in other languages such as in English or French (García-Mateus, 2020; Supriyono et al., 2020).

There are several elements that have been applied by the BIPA program at AKM University based on the model of immersion program by García-Mateus (2020). First, the BIPA program presents L2 as a medium of instruction. In this program, the international students perform immersion in their classroom at least sixteen hours in a week. In the classroom, they focus more on the skills as well as



thematically understanding the local culture. Second, the program facilitates overt support for the L1. The teachers sometimes use students' L1, like Arabic, as a medium of instruction in learning activities.

Third, additive bilingualism is the goal. It is important to highlight this part as it seems to confronts the existing designed curriculum as to offer the program in Indonesian-only model. The complexities of the classroom and added the very context of the study in which majority of the students are from Arabic-speaking countries, BIPA program at AKM University set the minimum requirement for the lectures as to have a linguistic competence in Arabic language. In the current program, the L1 implemented a primacy in the curriculum and development of the L2 is an added cultural capital.

Fourth, the international students enter with limited levels of L2 proficiency. The students enroll in the program with a very basic level of L2, which means they have average and limited command of L2 proficiency at the first time. This situation seems to be another concern for the program to modify and readjust the policy of Indonesian-only in some extent. Without ignoring the importance of exposure to Indonesian language, BIPA program at AKM University tends to be aware of the need for providing avenues for students to use their first language to understand the materials. In other words, translation model in which the teachers translate some words into students' first language is considered important at this stage. And to materialize this adjustment, lectures should also be proficient in Arabic.

Fifth, the program facilitates bilingual lectures, meaning that they have expertise in teaching BIPA and hold proficiency in Arabic language. All the teachers are native speakers of Indonesian, but they are experts at the L2 as well, which means they use bilingual language to teach the students in the classroom.

CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that BIPA program at AKM University has implemented a partial immersion program model. This includes target language (L2) as a medium of instruction, overt support exists for the L1. The program is projected to additive bilingualism in which students enter with similar (and limited) levels of proficiency and the teachers are bilingual. However, the new features found in this program are, first, the partial immersion program is supported by full immersion during living in a dormitory. Second, there is a marvelous emphasis on the professional development of local immersion teachers such as attending workshops and seminars related to teaching BIPA in universities. Third, a primacy orientation to language teaching purpose reinforced by content-based and task-based pedagogies. Fourth, there is a great attention to the development of intercultural understanding.

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