

Empowering BIPA Educators in Australia through Indonesian Local Wisdom Training

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ABSTRACT: In Australia, Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) educators have diverse Educational backgrounds, including not only bachelor's or master's degrees in teaching Indonesian but also various disciplines such as linguistics and sociology. Interestingly, some of these educators are native Australians who have mastered Indonesian. This study aims to improve the capacity of BIPA educators by equipping them with local Indonesian wisdom so they can teach the Indonesian language and culture more effectively. This study uses a qualitative approach with direct training methods and field mentoring, carried out at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra for two days. On the first day, 20 educators were introduced to the concept of local Indonesian wisdom, and on the second day, they practiced teaching using local wisdom-based materials. Data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews with participants. The analysis showed that 85% of participants felt more confident integrating local cultural elements into their teaching after the training, as measured by a post-training survey. In conclusion, this training has successfully empowered BIPA educators by providing additional skills to teach Bahasa Indonesia more engagingly and contextually. This emphasizes incorporating local cultural elements into language learning to enhance student appeal and understanding. Thus, improving the competence of BIPA educators through this local wisdom training has contributed significantly to Bahasa Indonesia education in Australia.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In order to improve the quality of BIPA teaching in Australia, integrating local Indonesian wisdom in teacher training is an urgency that cannot be ignored (Ningsih et al., 2019; Salamah & Setiawati, 2024). This study offers a new approach expected to enrich the Indonesian language learning experience for foreign speakers (Rahmat et al., 2024; Solikhah, 2020) while maintaining the values of native Indonesian culture (Yew & Xiang, 2022). Through this innovation, it is hoped that BIPA teaching in Australia can continue to develop and positively promote the Indonesian language and culture internationally (Curtis, 2022; Saddhono, 2024). The demand for Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) educators in Australia has surged due to Indonesia's strategic geopolitical position and rich cultural heritage (Gibbs, 2020; Rahmat, 2024a). This growing interest in learning the Indonesian language is evident among students, tourists, and professionals.

However, BIPA educators face unique challenges (Sa'diyah, 2021) stemming from their diverse educational backgrounds, often including fields beyond language teaching, such as sociology or linguistics (Astoria, 2023; Sa'diyah, 2021). This diversity enriches the educational experience but necessitates a thorough understanding of local Indonesian wisdom to effectively contextualize language learning (Ramliyana, 2016; Hasanah et al., 2021).

Incorporating local wisdom into BIPA teaching presents several challenges (KetutYoda, 2024; Suud, 2022). Indonesian culture is diverse and multifaceted, with over 17,000 islands and hundreds of ethnic groups possessing unique traditions and cultural practices (Maulana, 2020; Syamsi, 2024). This diversity can overwhelm educators trying to embed cultural elements into their teaching. Traditional language teaching methods often focus on grammar and vocabulary (Jannah, 2021), neglecting the rich cultural context that gives language its whole meaning (Yulianeta et al., 2024). Consequently, students may only achieve a superficial understanding of the language, hindering their ability to communicate effectively in real-world scenarios where cultural sensitivity is crucial (Cucco, 2023; Husniah, 2021).

Furthermore, many BIPA educators, especially non-native Indonesians, may lack direct exposure to Indonesian cultural practices (Mokoginta, 2022; Yuriananta, 2023). This lack of firsthand experience can impede their ability to convey cultural subtleties accurately. For instance, explaining practices like "kerokan," a traditional healing method perceived as unfamiliar or alarming to outsiders, can be challenging. This disconnect can lead to misunderstandings both in the classroom and beyond. Moreover, the scarcity of comprehensive resources integrating cultural elements with language instruction further exacerbates these challenges (Syihabuddin, 2022; Albantani & Madkur, 2018).

Integrating local wisdom in language teaching is urgent (Suratno, 2020), especially in today's multicultural educational settings. As globalization accelerates, students worldwide encounter languages and cultures distant from their own, requiring educators to adopt a holistic approach that includes cultural competence. In BIPA programs, bridging cultural gaps is essential for meaningful learning experiences (Defina, 2024; Rahmat, 2024b). Studies have shown that cultural understanding enhances language acquisition, improving linguistic proficiency and fostering a deeper appreciation for cultural nuances (Buttjes, 1990).

This integration also promotes social cohesion and intercultural dialogue. Research indicates that students who appreciate cultural diversity through language studies are likelier to engage in positive intercultural interactions (Amandangi et al., 2020). Educators can mitigate stereotypes and reduce prejudice by integrating cultural elements, contributing to more harmonious societies. This study provides BIPA educators with tools and strategies to create culturally rich and inclusive learning environments (Perdani, 2022), equipping students with intercultural competence crucial in our globalized world.

While the importance of cultural elements in language education is widely acknowledged, practical implementation remains a challenge (Asteria, 2023; Jannah, 2021). Research emphasizes Indonesia's cultural heritage in attracting language learners but lacks actionable methodologies for educators. The decline in interest in Indonesian language courses in Australia is due to political and social factors (Smith, 2020), suggesting a need for innovative teaching approaches that integrate culture.

Stressed the multicultural nature of BIPA classrooms, emphasizing cultural sensitivity without developing comprehensive training programs for educators (Pratiwi, 2022; Sa'diyah, 2021). Integrated local wisdom into BIPA textbooks but did not explore dynamic classroom interactions (Jannah, 2021; Yulianeta et al., 2024a). Underscored cultural understanding in language acquisition but lacked specific guidance for educators. These studies highlight theoretical insights but often fail to provide practical tools for educators to apply effectively (Febrianti, 2021; Yuriananta, 2023).

This study addresses these gaps by developing a hands-on training program for BIPA educators, focusing on the practical challenges they face in multicultural settings like Australia (Nursaid et al., 2023; Smith, 2020). Unlike prior research, this study offers educators actionable insights and tools for incorporating local wisdom into their practices. By enhancing educators' cultural competence and pedagogical skills, this comprehensive approach ensures that educators can integrate cultural dimensions into their curricula effectively ((Arvianto, 2020; Mulyanah et al., 2024).

The novelty of this study lies in its dual focus on capacity building and cultural integration. Using direct

training and field mentoring, the research provides a framework for empowering BIPA educators (Pratama, 2023; Yuriananta, 2023). The training at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra serves as a model, with empirical findings showing 85% of participants reporting increased confidence in integrating cultural elements into their teaching.

This study presents a novel approach to empowering BIPA educators by integrating local Indonesian wisdom into their teaching practices (Kusuma, 2022; Nugraha, 2020). By addressing the challenges and gaps identified in previous research, The findings underscore the importance of cultural integration in language education (Sa'diyah, 2021), paving the way for more effective and engaging student learning experiences. This study contributes to language education and reinforces the value of cultural understanding in an interconnected world (Mas'odi & Arma, 2024).

2. METHOD

The research design of this study is structured to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the process of empowering BIPA educators through local Indonesian wisdom training (Yulianeta et al., 2024a). The research follows a qualitative approach characterized by direct training methods and field mentoring. The design consists of three main phases: Preparation, Implementation, and Evaluation. The stages in this research can be seen in Figure 1.

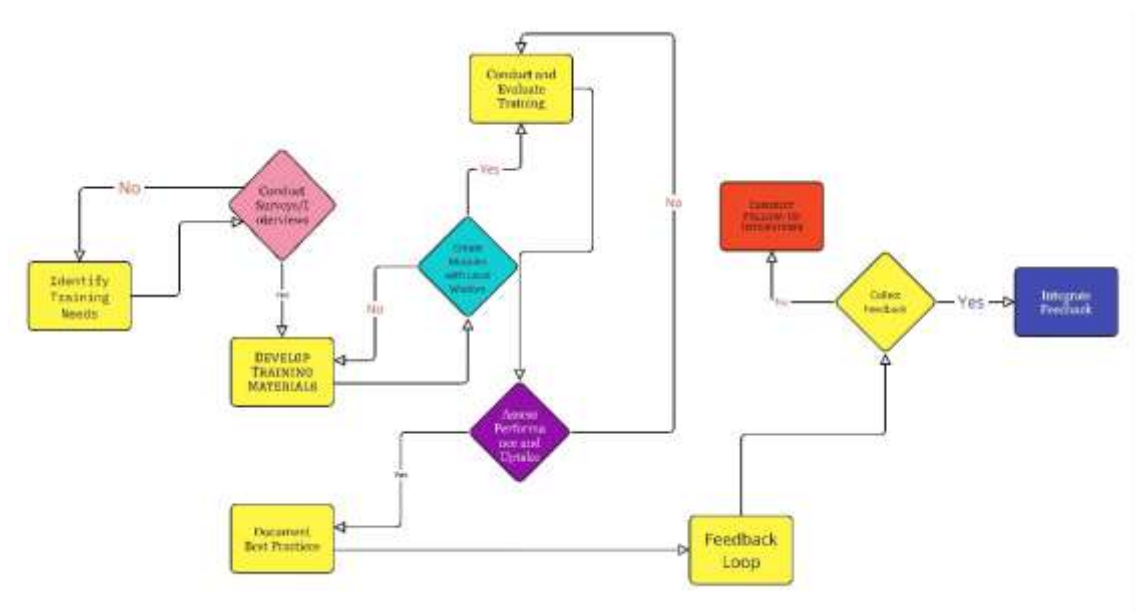


Figure 1. Research Design of this study is structured

This research design (Figure 1) is crafted to streamline the empowerment of BIPA (Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers) educators by embedding local Indonesian wisdom into their training process (Choi et al., 2023; Rahmawati & Sulistyono, 2021). The design is simplified into two main phases—Preparation (Lee & Blundell, 2009; Suyitno et al., 2019) and Implementation and Evaluation (Ahmadi et al., 2021; Febrianti et al., 2021)—each with distinct steps ensuring efficiency and effectiveness (Sujinah et al., 2019; Yulianeta et al., 2024b). In the Preparation phase (Choudhury & Flower, 2015), training needs are identified through surveys and interviews (Boeriswati et al., 2023; Roekhan et al., 2024), guiding the development of culturally relevant training materials (Pratiwi et al., 2022).

If these materials align with the identified needs, the process advances to the Implementation and Evaluation phase, where training sessions are conducted using direct methods and field mentoring. Educators' performance is evaluated simultaneously, with the flexibility to modify approaches if necessary. A feedback loop is established to incorporate participants' insights for future improvements, ensuring a dynamic and adaptable approach. This trial-and-error model allows for continuous refinement, fostering the empowerment of educators through culturally sensitive and relevant training methods.

The participants in this study include BIPA educators with diverse educational backgrounds: 1) **Bachelor's or Master's Degrees:** Many educators have formal qualifications in teaching Indonesian; 2) **Various**

Disciplines: Some educators come from fields such as linguistics and sociology; 3) **Native Australians:** A unique aspect of this group is the inclusion of native Australians who have mastered the Indonesian language.

Training Structure

The training was structured into two main phases:

- 1) **Day One: Introduction to Local Indonesian Wisdom:** a) **Objective:** To familiarize educators with local Indonesian wisdom; b) **Activities:** Lectures and discussions introducing the cultural elements relevant to teaching Bahasa Indonesia.
- 2) **Day Two: Practical Application:** a) **Objective:** To practice teaching using materials based on local wisdom; b) **Activities:** Educators engaged in hands-on teaching sessions, applying the knowledge gained from the first day.

Data Collection Methods

Data for this study were collected using: 1) **Observation:** Monitoring educators as they engaged with the training materials and sessions; 2) **In-depth Interviews:** Conducted with participants to gain insights into their experiences and perceptions of the training.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed to assess the impact of the training on educators' confidence and teaching abilities. A post-training survey revealed that **85% of Participants** Reported increased confidence in integrating local cultural elements into their teaching practices.

The study concludes that the training effectively empowered BIPA educators by enhancing their ability to teach Bahasa Indonesia more engagingly and contextually. Incorporating local cultural elements into language learning has significantly contributed to the success of Bahasa Indonesia education in Australia.

Table 1. Summary Table of Research Methodology

Research Component	Description
Educational Backgrounds	Various, including teaching, linguistics, sociology
Training Venue	Indonesian Embassy in Canberra
Training Duration	Two days
Day One Focus	Introduction to local Indonesian wisdom
Day Two Focus	Practical teaching application
Data Collection Methods	Observation, In-depth interviews
Participants' Confidence Increase	85% as per post-training survey
Training Outcome	Enhanced teaching skills through the integration of cultural elements

This study highlights the importance of integrating local cultural wisdom into the training of language educators, offering a template for similar initiatives globally.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings from the research conducted to empower BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing) educators by integrating local Indonesian wisdom into their teaching practices. The results are structured according to the three main phases of the research design: Preparation, Implementation, and Evaluation. Each phase's outcomes are discussed, including the study's objectives and the impact on educators and learners—development and distribution of promotional materials (flyers, posters).

a. Preparation Stage Outcome

The preparation stage was pivotal in laying a strong foundation for the BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing) educator training program. This phase involved strategic activities essential for the program's success, such as coordination meetings, the development of promotional materials, and participant recruitment. These efforts created a collaborative and inclusive environment, setting the stage for the program's seamless delivery. Coordination meetings with committee members from both

Australia and Indonesia were instrumental in aligning the program's objectives and vision. By blending offline and online interactions, these meetings facilitated diverse inputs from participants, fostering a shared commitment to the program's goals. Creating and distributing promotional materials further maximized outreach efforts, attracting many educators.

These materials, designed to be visually appealing and informative, ensured that potential



Figure 2. Flyer “Local Wisdom-Based Instruction”

participants were well-informed about the program's offerings. The streamlined online registration process also facilitated participant recruitment by removing barriers associated with traditional sign-up methods and assembling a diverse group of educators. This diversity enriched the training experience through exchanging ideas and experiences, ultimately laying the groundwork for successfully integrating local Indonesian wisdom into language instruction. The preparation stage is presented as follows.

- 1) **Coordination Meetings:** The meetings facilitated a collaborative environment among committee members from Australia and Indonesia. The blend of offline and online formats ensured inclusivity and allowed for diverse input from participants. Feedback from the meetings highlighted improved communication and a shared vision for the training initiative.
- 2) **Promotional Materials:** The creation and distribution of flyers and posters effectively maximized outreach. Participants reported that the materials were informative and visually appealing, which attracted a diverse group of educators. This is significant as a broader participant base enhances the exchange of ideas and experiences during the training.
- 3) **Participant Recruitment:** The online registration link streamlined the sign-up process, contributing to a diverse group of attendees. The ease of access encouraged participation from educators who may have faced barriers in traditional registration methods. This inclusivity is essential for fostering a rich learning environment.

The hands-on nature of the training and the lecturers' insights helped solidify the educators' understanding of effectively incorporating local wisdom into their training curricula, highlighting the significant demand for BIPA education in Australia. With over 72,746 students engaged in BIPA programs worldwide and a substantial portion in Australia, there is a clear need for educators who are well-versed in Indonesia's language and cultural aspects. This phase involved identifying the training needs of participants and tailoring the content to address these needs effectively.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Country	Number of Participants
Australia	25
Finland	4
Malaysia	3
United States	4
Indonesia	3

The diverse origins of the participants underscored the global interest in the Indonesian language and culture. The varied backgrounds of the teachers also suggested different levels of familiarity with Indonesian culture, necessitating a comprehensive approach to training. The workshop's implementation phase was designed to provide hands-on experience integrating local wisdom into BIPA teaching (Jannah, 2021; Nagauleng, 2024). The theme "Local Wisdom-Based Instruction in Indonesian for Foreign Learners" guided the activities. On the first day, participants engaged with material exploring Indonesian culture's rich tapestry. This included lectures on cultural practices, storytelling, and traditional arts. The second day focused on practical application. Participants were involved in teaching simulations, allowing them to practice integrating cultural elements into language lessons. This approach aligns with experiential learning theories, which advocate for learning through direct experience to enhance understanding and retention. Empirical evidence from previous studies supports the effectiveness of such methods. For example, a study by Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) found that teachers who integrate culture into language instruction often report higher student motivation and interest levels.

The evaluation of the workshop revealed positive feedback from participants. Many reported increased confidence in their ability to teach Indonesian with a focus on cultural authenticity. Traditional dances and clothing demonstrations, such as the "Mak Inang Pulau Kampai" dance and Kenyah Dayak Tribe attire, gave participants a deeper appreciation for Indonesia's cultural diversity.

Table 2: Participant Feedback

Feedback Aspect	Positive Responses (%)
Increased Cultural Awareness	92
Enhanced Teaching Skills	89
Overall Satisfaction	95

The overwhelmingly positive response suggests that integrating local wisdom into BIPA teaching is feasible and effective. Participants expressed enthusiasm for applying these new insights in their classrooms, indicating a potential for improved student outcomes, which is essential for minimizing culture shock and fostering a deeper appreciation of Indonesian culture among students. A study by Setyaningsih et al. (2022) highlights BIPA educators' challenges in incorporating cultural elements due to varying cultural understanding and integration skills. This underscores the need for specialized training that enhances educators' capacity to effectively teach language and culture (Budiarti et al., 2023).

The training was organized by the Faculty of Language and Literature Education (FPBS) of the Indonesian Education University (UPI) in collaboration with the Education and Culture Attaché Office at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra. The hybrid training allowed participation from 39 educators across different countries, enhancing the diversity of learning experiences.

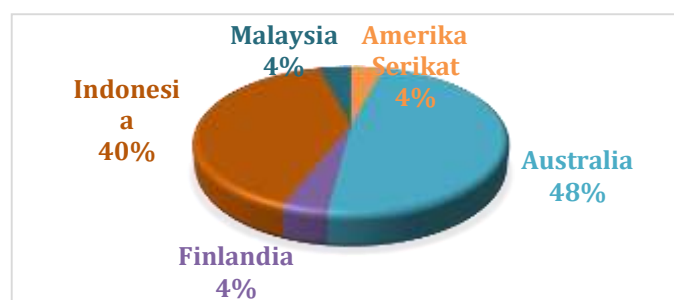


Diagram 1. Participant's country of origin

Training Structure

- **Day 1:** Introduction to Local Indonesian Wisdom Educators were introduced to the principles of local wisdom and their significance in cultural education. The session was designed to provide a foundational understanding of how local wisdom can be used as a pedagogical tool.
- **Day 2:** Practical Application Participants used materials infused with local wisdom in teaching simulations. This hands-on approach facilitated the practical application of theoretical knowledge gained

on the first day.

Research by Wulandari and Surya (2021) suggests that experiential learning, such as teaching simulations, significantly enhances educators' confidence and competence in integrating cultural elements into their teaching practice. This aligns with the positive feedback received from participants in this study.

b. Implementing Stage Outcome

The implementation stage focused on delivering training that emphasized integrating local Indonesian wisdom into language instruction. This phase included training delivery, multimedia presentations, and hands-on teaching practice sessions.

1) Delivery of Training:

The training delivery was a cornerstone of the BIPA educator program, meticulously crafted to empower educators with the skills and confidence to integrate local Indonesian wisdom into their teaching practices. Conducted by seasoned lecturers from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI), the training sessions were highly effective in transferring practical knowledge and strategies to the participants. The educators, hailing from diverse backgrounds, reported feeling significantly empowered by the expertise and insights shared by the lecturers. This empowerment was not only a result of the lecturers' proficiency but also the engaging and interactive nature of the sessions. The lecturers recognized authorities in the language and cultural education field and brought a wealth of knowledge that resonated well with the participants, providing credibility and relevance to the training content.

One of the key strengths of the training was its emphasis on the applicability of local wisdom in everyday teaching contexts. The lecturers adeptly demonstrated how Indonesian cultural elements could be seamlessly woven into language lessons, enriching the educational experience for both teachers and students. This was achieved through a variety of teaching methodologies, including storytelling, the use of cultural artifacts, and traditional Indonesian games. These methods made the sessions lively and engaging and provided practical examples that educators could easily replicate in their classrooms. Participants expressed that these strategies helped them better understand the nuances of Indonesian culture, allowing them to teach the language more authentically and effectively.

Moreover, the training fostered an environment of mutual respect and collaboration among educators, creating a community of practice where ideas and experiences could be freely exchanged. This collaborative atmosphere was instrumental in reinforcing the program's objectives and fostering a shared commitment to cultural integration in language education. Educators appreciated the opportunity to engage in discussions and activities that challenged their preconceived notions about cultural teaching, encouraging them to adopt more innovative and culturally sensitive approaches: Implementation and Challenges. The workshop adopted the theme of "Local Wisdom-Based Instruction in Indonesian for Foreign Learners," emphasizing the importance of integrating cultural elements to enrich the learning experience.



Figure 2. Implementation of training at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra, Australia

2) Multimedia Presentation:

Integrating engaging PowerPoint presentations into the training program played a pivotal role in enhancing the participants' understanding and retention of the material. These presentations were not mere slideshows; they were carefully designed to be visually appealing, incorporating a mix of text, images, videos, and infographics to illustrate key concepts effectively. This approach aligns with contemporary educational research, which suggests that multimedia resources can significantly improve learning outcomes by catering to various learning styles and preferences. For instance, visual learners benefited from the rich imagery and diagrams, while auditory learners could gain insights from embedded audio explanations and video clips. This multifaceted approach ensured that complex concepts were broken down into digestible parts, making them easier to comprehend and remember.

Participants reported that these visual aids clarified intricate ideas and made the learning experience more enjoyable and engaging. The dynamic nature of the presentations kept the participants' attention focused, reducing cognitive overload and promoting active learning. The presentations created a narrative flow that seamlessly guided the learners through the material by incorporating elements such as animations and transitions. This method effectively explained the intricacies of integrating local Indonesian wisdom into language instruction. For example, animated sequences brought cultural stories and artifacts to life, allowing educators to visualize how these elements could be woven into their lessons.

Moreover, the presentations catalyzed discussions and interactions among participants. During the sessions, educators were encouraged to pause and reflect on the content, engage in group discussions, and share their interpretations. This interactive format fostered a collaborative learning environment where ideas could be freely exchanged, reinforcing the training's objectives. Participants expressed that the presentations inspired them to think creatively about how they could incorporate similar multimedia elements into their teaching practices, thus enhancing the learning experience for their students.

In summary, engaging PowerPoint presentations in the BIPA educator training program was instrumental in enhancing participants' comprehension and retention of the training material. By leveraging the power of multimedia, the presentations clarified complex concepts and invigorated the learning process, making it more interactive and enjoyable. This approach underscores the importance of integrating diverse educational tools in professional development programs to cater to various learning needs and preferences, ultimately leading to more effective teaching and learning outcomes.

3) Hands-on Teaching Practice Sessions:

The hands-on teaching practice sessions were a cornerstone of the BIPA educator training program, providing a dynamic platform for participants to apply local Indonesian wisdom directly within their teaching practices. These sessions were designed to create a supportive and collaborative environment where educators could experiment with new pedagogical methods and receive constructive feedback from peers and trainers. The focus on practical application allowed participants to move beyond theoretical understanding, fostering a deeper connection with the cultural elements they were learning to incorporate.

During these sessions, educators were encouraged to develop and present lesson plans that integrated various aspects of Indonesian culture, such as traditional stories, music, and art forms. This experiential learning approach was instrumental in building participants' confidence and competence in using cultural elements effectively. By engaging with real-world teaching scenarios, educators could test different strategies, such as using folklore to explain linguistic concepts or traditional music to enhance pronunciation. The interactive nature of these activities honed their teaching techniques and encouraged creativity and adaptability, essential skills for any language educator.

Moreover, the supportive environment of these sessions played a crucial role in empowering educators. Trainers provided personalized feedback, highlighting strengths and offering suggestions for improvement, which helped participants refine their approaches and better understand how to seamlessly. The hands-on teaching sessions underscored the importance of experiential learning in professional development by bridging the gap between theory and practice and integrating local wisdom into their curricula. Peer collaboration was equally valuable; educators shared insights and challenges,

learning from each other's experiences and fostering a sense of community and shared purpose. This camaraderie was vital in reinforcing the program's objectives and promoting a collective commitment to cultural integration in language teaching.

The success of these hands-on sessions was evident in the participants' reflections and subsequent teaching demonstrations. Many educators reported a newfound enthusiasm for incorporating cultural elements into their lessons, noting that these practices enriched their teaching methods and enhanced student engagement and learning outcomes. The hands-on teaching sessions underscored the importance of experiential learning in professional development by bridging the gap between theory and practice. They provided a blueprint for educators to follow, ensuring that the integration of local wisdom into language instruction is both meaningful and effective, ultimately leading to a more immersive and culturally rich educational experience for students.

c. Evaluation Stage Outcome

The implementation stage focused on delivering training that emphasized integrating local Indonesian wisdom into language instruction. This phase included training delivery, multimedia presentations, and hands-on teaching practice sessions.

1) Collection of Personal Testimonials:

The collection of personal testimonials from participants of the BIPA educator training program at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra has revealed profound insights into the personal and professional growth experienced by the educators (Elliot & Kobayashi, 2019; Tsuboi et al., 1995). These testimonials underscore the significant impact of integrating local Indonesian wisdom into their teaching methodologies and understanding of cultural nuances. Many educators expressed a newfound appreciation for the richness of Indonesian culture and its relevance in language instruction (Flannery et al., 2005; Leung, 2021). For instance, one participant shared how the training inspired them to incorporate traditional Indonesian folktales into their lesson plans (Rothbaum & Morelli, 2005; Zwart, 2017). They noted that these stories captivated their students' interest and provided a meaningful context for language learning (Brahm & Poblete, 2024a; Pillay & James, 2013), enabling students to explore cultural values and historical contexts through the language (Brahm & Poblete, 2024b; Lepore & Kaul, 2023).

Another educator highlighted the transformative effect of the hands-on activities, such as traditional dance and music workshops (Aisyah et al., 2024; Sutomo et al., 2024), which they planned to replicate in their classrooms—introducing these cultural elements aimed to create a more engaging and interactive learning environment that would appeal to diverse learning styles (Darmawati et al., 2024; Sefira et al., 2024). This approach was particularly effective in helping students connect the language and its cultural roots (Hendarto et al., 2024; Qomariyah et al., 2024), enhancing their comprehension and retention of the material. The educator noted that these practical applications of local wisdom not only enriched their teaching repertoire but also instilled a sense of pride and enthusiasm among students as they learned about the cultural heritage of Bahasa Indonesia.

Moreover, participants reflected on the collaborative nature of the training sessions, which fostered a sense of community and mutual support among educators (Haanurat et al., 2024; Nurhakim et al., 2024; Saputra et al., 2024). Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to exchange ideas and strategies with peers, which broadened their perspectives and inspired innovative teaching practices. The testimonials emphasized that this collective learning experience was instrumental in building confidence and competence in integrating cultural elements into language instruction. Educators left the training with a strong commitment to continue exploring and incorporating Indonesian cultural wisdom into their curricula, recognizing its potential to enhance the educational experience for both themselves and their students. These personal accounts demonstrate the training program's effectiveness and highlight the enduring impact of cultural integration on language education, serving as a testament to the power of cultural exchange in fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse cultural perspectives.

Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive (Bahoze, 2021; Jessen, 2022), with 85%

reporting increased confidence in integrating local cultural elements into their teaching practices (Michalak et al., 2024; Wildman et al., 2014). Testimonials from educators, such as Naomi from Burgmann Anglican School and Richard from Trinity Christian School (Cwenar, 2024; Winfield & Blackmore, 2022), highlighted the practical applicability and interest generated by the local wisdom approach (Makhmud et al., 2024; Nuryami et al., 2024; Wicaksana et al., 2024).



Figure 3. Testimonials from training participants

Participant Testimonials

Naomi: "The training opened my eyes to new and interesting approaches to teaching that I can apply in my classroom."

Richard: "Integrating local wisdom into the BIPA curriculum is both innovative and engaging for students."

2) Survey Analysis:

The analysis of survey responses from the BIPA educator training program provides valuable insights into the initiative's effectiveness and areas for improvement. A striking 85% of participants reported a heightened confidence in incorporating cultural elements into their teaching practices, underscoring the program's success in achieving its primary objective. This increase in confidence is not merely an abstract metric; it reflects the educators' readiness to enrich their lessons with local Indonesian wisdom, enhancing their students' learning experience. The training's immersive approach, which combined theoretical knowledge with practical application, played a crucial role in this positive outcome. By engaging directly with cultural artifacts, traditional stories, and interactive workshops, participants could internalize the cultural nuances vital for effective language instruction.

However, the survey responses also illuminated areas that require further attention to sustain and enhance the program's impact. Many educators expressed a desire for more advanced training sessions that delve deeper into the intricacies of cultural integration. They indicated that while the foundational knowledge gained was invaluable, there remains a need for more specialized content that addresses specific challenges and opportunities in their unique teaching contexts. This feedback points to the necessity of developing a tiered training program that offers progressive learning paths for educators at different stages of their professional development.

Additionally, participants highlighted a demand for additional resources on local wisdom that can be readily incorporated into their curricula. Providing such resources in digital libraries, instructional videos, or collaborative platforms would facilitate ongoing learning and innovation in teaching practices. Educators also suggested the establishment of a community of practice where they could share experiences, exchange teaching materials, and receive peer support. This collaborative network would reinforce the training's objectives and foster a culture of continuous professional growth and cultural exchange.

The survey analysis, therefore, emphasizes the importance of addressing these areas for improvement to ensure the program's long-term success. By expanding the training content and

providing comprehensive resources, the initiative can continue to empower educators, ultimately leading to a more engaging and culturally enriched educational experience for students. This feedback-driven approach demonstrates a commitment to excellence and adaptability, ensuring that integrating cultural elements into language teaching remains practical and dynamic.

d. Improved Cultural Competence:

The two-day training program for BIPA educators at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra proved to be a transformative experience for many participants, particularly in enhancing their cultural competence. A significant 85% of the educators reported an increased confidence in integrating local cultural elements into their teaching practices. This improvement was primarily attributed to the immersive training, which provided educators with direct exposure to Indonesian cultural nuances. By engaging in hands-on activities such as storytelling sessions, traditional dance workshops, and discussions on cultural artifacts, participants could gain a deeper understanding of the subtleties that define Indonesian culture. This experiential learning approach enriched their knowledge and equipped them with practical strategies to bring these cultural insights into the classroom.

Moreover, the training emphasized the importance of cultural sensitivity and awareness in language teaching. Educators were encouraged to view language as a vehicle for artists primarily attributed expression rather than merely a tool for communication. This paradigm shift allowed them to see the value of cultural elements as integral components of language instruction. By incorporating local wisdom and traditions into their lessons, teachers could create a more dynamic and relatable learning environment for their students. This approach also helped break down cultural barriers and foster a classroom atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding. The ability to teach language through the lens of culture enhanced the educators' teaching methods and contributed to a more inclusive and culturally rich educational experience for their students.

The success of this program underscores the critical role of cultural competence in language education. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, appreciating and integrating diverse cultural perspectives into teaching is more important than ever. The feedback from the participants highlighted a newfound enthusiasm for cultural integration, with many educators expressing a desire to continue exploring and incorporating Indonesian cultural elements into their curriculum. This enthusiasm is essential for sustaining the momentum of the program's outcomes, ensuring that the benefits of cultural competence extend beyond the training sessions. By fostering a deeper understanding of Indonesian culture, the program empowered BIPA educators and set a precedent for integrating cultural elements into language education worldwide, promoting a more holistic and culturally aware approach to teaching.

The BIPA educator training program significantly improved the teaching techniques of its participants by equipping them with the skills to create more engaging and culturally enriched lesson plans. Post-training demonstrations revealed that educators were adept at integrating local wisdom-based materials into their curriculum, a testament to the program's effectiveness. For instance, storytelling was a powerful pedagogical tool, allowing educators to weave traditional Indonesian folktales into language lessons. This approach captivated students and provided a rich context for understanding linguistic structures and vocabulary. Educators skillfully incorporated traditional games and cultural artifacts into their teaching, making lessons more interactive and relatable. These methods were particularly effective in breaking the monotony of conventional teaching techniques, fostering a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment. By using cultural elements as teaching aids, educators could present language as a living aspect of Indonesian culture rather than an abstract set of rules. This shift in teaching strategy empowered educators to create lessons that resonated with students on a deeper level, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the language.

The integration of local cultural content into the BIPA curriculum had a profound impact on student engagement. Educators reported that students responded enthusiastically to the newly introduced cultural elements, significantly enriching their learning experience. This increased engagement is pivotal for successful language acquisition, as it helps students form a deeper connection with the material. By encountering the language in culturally relevant contexts, students were more motivated to participate actively in lessons, enhancing their retention and comprehension of the language. Furthermore, the training facilitated a broadened perspective among educators, especially those from

non-Indonesian backgrounds. By gaining a deeper understanding of Indonesian culture, these educators could foster a more inclusive classroom environment that celebrates diversity and encourages open dialogue. This cultural awareness enriched teaching practices and promoted mutual respect and understanding among students from different backgrounds. As a result, classrooms became spaces of cultural exchange where students could appreciate the interconnectedness of language and culture. This holistic approach to language education underscores the importance of cultural integration in fostering a more engaging and meaningful learning experience, ultimately bridging cultural gaps and fostering global understanding.

Discussion

The successful implementation of this training highlights the importance of cultural context in language education. The program has enhanced their professional skills and contributed to a more holistic approach to language education by equipping educators with the knowledge and tools to integrate local wisdom into their teaching.

Importance of Cultural Integration: The integration of local wisdom into language teaching can significantly enhance the learning experience. It allows students to see the language as a living element of the culture rather than just a set of grammatical rules and vocabulary. This approach aligns with contemporary educational theories that emphasize the importance of cultural relevance in teaching.

Sustainability and Future Directions: For the long-term success of this initiative, continuous professional development and support for BIPA educators are essential. Future programs could explore more extensive collaborations with cultural experts and incorporate digital resources to reach a wider audience. Additionally, regular feedback and adaptation of training materials will ensure that they remain relevant and practical.

In conclusion, the training program has successfully empowered BIPA educators by integrating local Indonesian wisdom into their teaching practices. This enhances the educators' skills and enriches the overall learning experience for students, making Bahasa Indonesia education in Australia more engaging and culturally contextual. This initiative serves as a model for incorporating cultural elements into language education globally, highlighting the pivotal role of educators in bridging cultural gaps and fostering understanding.

4. CONCLUSION

The study "Bridging Cultures: Empowering BIPA Educators in Australia through Local Indonesian Wisdom Training" has illustrated the importance of integrating local Indonesian cultural elements into teaching the Indonesian language. By equipping BIPA educators with knowledge and understanding of local wisdom, the training has significantly enhanced their ability to teach Bahasa Indonesia in a more engaging and contextually relevant manner. The qualitative approach, involving direct training methods and field mentoring at the Indonesian Embassy in Canberra, effectively boosted educators' confidence. The post-training survey results, which showed that 85% of participants felt more adept at incorporating local cultural elements into their teaching, underscores the success of this initiative.

This training empowered the educators and highlighted the vital role of cultural integration in language learning, emphasizing how it can enrich the educational experience and increase student interest. The initiative also contributes to the broader goal of promoting the Indonesian language and culture internationally, supporting Indonesia's efforts in soft power diplomacy.

Recommendations

- Continued Professional Development:** It is recommended that regular workshops and training sessions similar to this study be organized to enhance the skills of BIPA educators continually. These sessions should focus on Indonesian culture and innovative teaching methodologies.
- Collaborative Networks:** Establishing a network among BIPA educators to share resources, experiences, and best practices can further strengthen their teaching capabilities. This network could also facilitate collaborations between educational institutions in Indonesia and Australia.
- Curriculum Development:** Encourage the development of a curriculum that systematically includes local Indonesian wisdom as part of the language learning process. This would ensure a

structured approach to integrating cultural elements in education.

4. **Utilization of Technology:** Leveraging online platforms for training and resource sharing can expand the reach of such initiatives, allowing educators from various countries to participate and benefit.
5. **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implementing feedback mechanisms post-training can provide valuable insights into the program's effectiveness and highlight improvement areas. This can guide future training sessions to be even more targeted and effective.

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