

THE PROBLEMS OF INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR FOREIGN SPEAKERS (BIPA) ON ONLINE LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (CASE STUDY AT ALAM BAHASA INSTITUTE YOGYAKARTA)

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Abstract. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced face-to-face learning to be replaced by online learning. This rule also applies to Indonesian language learning for foreign speakers. This study aimed to explain online BIPA learning at Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta and the obstacles and solutions that was faced by Indonesian language teachers and students for foreign speakers (BIPA) in carrying out online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. This research was a qualitative with a case study method at Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta. The research data were collected by using observation, interview, and documentation techniques. Data was validated by using the source and method triangulation method. The data were presented using an interactive method. This research indicated that the obstacles faced can be divided into technical condition and non-technical condition. Technical conditions were most often encountered during online BIPA learning.

Keywords: BIPA learning, online learning, the Covid-19 pandemic

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic that broke out in Indonesia starting in March 2020 made significant changes, especially in the education field. Schools that initially implemented face-to-face learning was forced to switch to online teaching. All learning at all levels of elementary until higher education must organize learning in the network. Teachers and students must adapt to the prevailing conditions and policies.

Teachers and students who are accustomed to using gadgets or electronic equipment are easier adjust to this condition. However, teachers and students who do not have devices supporting tools are pretty difficult to adapt. Teachers and students encounter several difficulties in implementing online learning that is new for them. Atmojo & Nugroho (2020:62-71) revealed some challenges experienced by students in conducting online learning. The challenges faced by students include 1) the absence of mobile phones, 2) the instability of the internet connection, 3) the unavailability of student internet quotas, 4) the low digital literacy of some students, 5) the inaccuracy of students in participating in learning, 6) the non-compliance of several students in collecting assignments after the deadline, 7) the difference in the level of students' abilities, 8) student protests about the many homework assignments given by the teacher.

Meanwhile, teachers also experience challenges, namely the difficulty of building emotional attachments with students. Egbert (2020:318) explains that distance learning makes it difficult for teachers to measure student involvement in completing assignments. In addition to the expected obstacles found in online learning, some subjects also encounter specific challenges to online learning. Indonesian Language Learning for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is one of the types of education that has problems with online learning.

BIPA learning is a second language learning in which Indonesian taught to foreign speakers or foreigners (Kusmiatun, 2015:1). Mitchell et al. (2013:1) explain a second language as a language that a person learns long after early childhood. Mitchell asserts that the second term not only a second language after the first language, but also third, fourth, etc. Meanwhile, Brisk (2005:7) defines a second language as a language that learned at an advanced stage. The language is often different from the language spoken at home, at school, or with peers.

Learning BIPA a second language is certainly different from learning Indonesian for native speakers. BIPA learning has special characteristics and principles as a second language learning. Brown, (2007:55) suggests seven principles of second language learning based on first language acquisition, namely 1) emphasis on practice and exercise; 2) imitation; 3) imitation begin with separate sounds, then words, then sentences; 4) adapted to language development, starting with listening and then speaking; 5) adapted to the natural structure of language, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing; 6) avoid translation; and 7) begins by using simple language.

It does not stop there, BIPA learning is not only about linguistic or lexical aspects. BIPA learning also introduces Indonesian culture to foreign speakers. Haryati et al. (2019:1984) said that one of the reasons foreign students learn Indonesian is because of the cultural diversity in Indonesia. Therefore, BIPA learning also includes Indonesian culture. Several BIPA textbooks already contain Indonesian culture. Haryati et al. (2019:1984) said the cultural complexities found in BIPA "Indonesian Friends" teaching materials were daily life, equipment and technology, art, knowledge systems, religion, and language. Meanwhile, the cultural complexities found in the textbook "My Friends are Indonesia" are everyday life and art.

Although BIPA learning has some differences with Indonesian language learning for native speakers, Andayani (2015:60) asserts that the main goal of teaching Indonesian is to direct students' abilities to communicate in Indonesian according to their function. These points are the main points for learning Indonesian, including for foreign speakers. Teachers must be able to teach their students to speak Indonesian well.

With such learning objectives and special characteristics, online BIPA learning is bound to find new problems. For this reason, researchers are interested in researching online BIPA learning at the Alam Bahasa institute of Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This research has two objectives. The first goal is that researchers want to explain online BIPA learning at Alam Bahasa institute of Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic. The second goal is that the researcher wants to explain the problems faced and the solutions taken from both the teacher and student sides in online BIPA learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applied qualitative approach with a case study method. Yin (2011:2) says that qualitative research frees researchers to conduct in-depth studies on a topic under certain conditions or in everyday life. Meanwhile, Creswell (2009:13) explains the case study as one of the inquiry strategies in which the researcher explores a program, activity, or thing that is more individual in-depth.

The research was conducted at Alam Bahasa institute of Yogyakarta in May—October 2021. Alam Bahasa institute of Yogyakarta was chosen because this institution is an institution that is still operating in teaching Indonesian to foreign speakers during the pandemic. In addition, this institution has also been established in 1995 and has proven to be good at teaching the Indonesian language to foreign speakers. Based on observations made by researchers, in April 2021 there were 168 active classes of which 84 classes were students with intermediate levels. Researchers researched two intermediate-level classes with different students and teachers.

The data in this research were in the form of online BIPA learning notes obtained from observations, online BIPA learning information obtained from the results of student and teacher interviews, and documents regarding the online BIPA learning components carried out during the pandemic obtained through document analysis. The research data were collected by using observation, interview, and documentation techniques. Data were validated by using source and method triangulation method. The data was presented by using an interactive method. Miles,

Huberman, and Saldana (2004:8) based the interactive method on three components, namely data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification.

RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Researchers have researched teachers and students in two intermediate-level classes in Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta. Based on the research that has been conducted, the researchers found several obstacles and also solutions that teachers and students took while conducting online BIPA learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, before that, the researcher will explain the online BIPA learning carried out by Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta

Online BIPA Learning at the Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta During the Pandemic

BIPA learning at the Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta was included in the learning that was affected by the policy of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology regarding online learning. The Circular Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Educational Policies in the Emergency Period for the Spread of Coronavirus Disease (Covid-19) emphasized that all learning was carried out in a network or distance learning to stop the transmission of the Covid-19 virus.

Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta had opened online classes via Skype long before the pandemic. However, at that time only 1 to 20 students were participating in online learning. This number was very different from the Covid-19 pandemic, which reached 100 percent of students studying online.

In addition to change all learning to be online, the class format at Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta has also been changed. Classes that were usually held classically with several people were now converted into private classes containing one student and one teacher. This change also referred to the demand for students who want private learning to be more focused and effective. The student's request can be understood by the background of the students who come from working adults. Some of the students of Alam Bahasa Yogyakarta have various work backgrounds, from embassy employees to lecturers abroad who want to learn Indonesian. Student learning objectives also vary. Many students were required to learn Indonesian from their office and the final assessment was reported to the office. Some students willingly learn Indonesian because they were interested in things that exist in Indonesia.

Based on the different backgrounds and goals of students, teachers at Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta provided materials that were tailored to the conditions and demands of students. The compiled material was uploaded to the Natural Language Teaching Information System (SIM) which can be accessed by both teachers and students. In the SIM, students can also see the score obtained from each session that has been followed and get notes from the teacher who teaches related to student performance in each session. This transparent assessment was expected to increase students' motivation in learning Indonesian.

During this pandemic, Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta always conducts video conference-based learning. The video conferencing application used was more varied compared to online learning before the Covid-19 pandemic which was only done via Skype. The applications used include Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, and Webex. The determination of the application used in online learning was carried out by students before entering the learning period with the teacher.

Problems and Solutions to Online BIPA Learning at Alam Bahasa Institute Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Several problems were encountered in implementing online BIPA learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. These problems were encountered by both teachers and students. The discovery of these constraints is explained below

Problems and Solutions to Online BIPA Learning from the Teacher's Side

Teachers have an important role in the continuity of learning. The teacher acted as a facilitator and also delivered material to students. Like face-to-face learning, online BIPA learning also has its obstacles. This was experienced by two Alam Bahasa' teachers who taught BIPA online during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Before the pandemic, Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta had opened online classes. However, the online BIPA learning experience during the pandemic and before the pandemic was different. The obstacles experienced by teachers were also different.

The first problem experienced by the teacher was that the material and media files shared in WhatsApp groups did not last long. Material and media files that were shared in the group if it exceeds a certain time cannot be downloaded by both teachers and students, so teachers and administrators must resubmit materials and media that cannot be downloaded. Widodo and Nursaptini (2020:100) also found the same obstacles in online learning at the University of Mataram. The study found that the learning media used often experienced errors.

The solution taken by the teacher in dealing with this problem was to integrate all learning materials and media in one folder uploaded on Google Drive. The folder containing the learning materials and media can be accessed by all teachers so that if a similar problem occurs, the teacher can immediately re-downloaded the materials and media and shared them with students.

In addition, another problem was that students were less motivated in participating in online learning. The teacher said that students' motivation was very influential on the results and the learning process. Less motivated students had difficulty understanding the material presented by the teacher. This was in line with what was conveyed by Andayani (2015b:1106) who found a positive correlation between learning motivation and scientific writing ability in BIPA students at Sebelas Maret University. Alemayehu, L., & Chen (2021:1) also revealed there is positive relationship between learning motivation and self-efficacy, self-monitoring, and involvement in online learning. Cole, Lennon, and Weber (2019:1) also say that student involvement in online courses was more complex and ambiguous to understand than face-to-face learning. Online learning allowed teachers to feel inaccurate in measuring and responding to student engagement.

The solution taken by the teacher in dealing with the lack of student motivation was to provide games or ice-breaking. The game was held in Indonesian so that the teacher were able at the same time assessed the students' language skills. Suputra (2021:67) says that games can create a fun atmosphere in learning. Ma (2019:47) also says that games can increase students' curiosity.

Another problem faced by teachers in online BIPA learning at Alam Bahasa Yogyakarta was the inconsistency of students' abilities. The teacher said that there were students who excelled in one skill, but were very poor in another. This was also found by Jamadi (2021: 86) in online learning conducted at SMKN 4 Yogyakarta, namely the lack of competence and the uneven intensity of competence in learning.

The teacher responds to this by conducting an objective assessment of each student's language skills. In addition, the teacher also provided special notes on the assessment SIM so that students can improved their performance in the next meeting.

The next problem was a bad internet connection. These constraints were also found in several previous studies. Researches that also revealed unstable internet connection barriers in online learning included Batdi, V., Doğan, Y., & Talan (2021:21); Zain, Sayekti, and Eryani (2021:1840); Jamadi (2021:82); Wahyuningsih (2021: 108); Asmuni (2020:281); Yuzulia (2021:11); Basar (2021:208); Adedoyin, O.A., & Soykan (2020:4); Barrot, J.S., Llenares, I.I., & Rosario (2021:7331).

A bad internet connection was circumvented by the teacher by looking for a place to teach with a stable internet connection. The teacher also installed wifi and ensured that the data quota was met so that the internet connection was not interrupted.

The last problem experienced by teachers was the student's state policy that did not allow access to certain applications. The application was needed in learning, especially assessment. This was a serious obstacle faced by teachers.

In this case, the teachers at Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta responded by changing the technical assessment. The initial assessment technique was that students accessed the assessment sheet in a particular application, then the teacher conducted a video conference to monitor student work. With this obstacle, the teacher took a solution, namely distributing screens containing assessment questions so that students could read the questions and immediately wrote down their answers.

Problems and Solutions to Online BIPA Learning from the Student's Side

In addition to teachers, students also experienced problems in conducting BIPA learning online. The obstacles faced by students include electrical stability. The case that researchers found in Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta was that the teacher's electricity went out so that students had to wait a few minutes to get learning. The solution taken was to wait for the electricity to turn on for a few minutes.

The next problem was the time zone difference. BIPA learning online at Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta was carried out across countries, namely between Indonesia (the teacher) and the country where the student lived. The difference in the country also had an impact on the time difference. In the case that the researchers met, students and teachers had experienced a miscommunication about time zone differences. Students assumed that learning was carried out according to their time zone, while the teacher thought that learning was adjusted to the Indonesian time zone. This was also found in another study conducted by Espinosa and Carmel (2004:253) which said that even small-time zone differences can create substantial problems if they were not synchronized. Liu and Shirley (2021: 192) and Tang, Zhao, Cao, and Inkpen (2011: 244) also said that time zone differences greatly impacted global work and communication.

The solution taken by the students was to communicate the new time zone difference to the teacher. With this communication, students expected that there will be no more time zone differences that hinder online learning.

In addition, the problem faced by students were places where learning was not conducive. The case that the researcher studied on students at Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta was that students were disturbed by pets during learning. This made students did not focus on understanding the material presented by the teacher. Adedoyin, O.A., & Soykan (2020:5) said that humans and pets can also interrupt bold learning. This was an unpredictable obstacle.

The solution taken by students in avoiding human and animal interruptions was that before learning begins, students locked themselves in their rooms so that no one can enter. In addition, students also secured their pets so they did not interfere with learning.

The problems found in online BIPA learning at Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta can be categorized into two main categories, namely technical constraints, and non-technical problems. Problems that fell into the technical category included missing material and media files in the short message group; poor internet connection; applications that were not accessible in certain countries; and power outages. Meanwhile, non-technical problems included low student motivation, inconsistent student abilities, time zone differences, and human and animal interruptions.

CONCLUSION

BIPA learning at Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta during the Covid-19 pandemic was carried out online. The learning strategy used was to make private classes containing one student and one teacher to be more effective. The material taught is adjusted to the background and demands of students. All materials and assessment results can be accessed by students at SIM Alam Bahasa. During online learning, teachers and students at Alam Bahasa institute Yogyakarta take advantage

of various video conferencing applications. Some problems were faced by teachers and students during online BIPA learning during the Covid-19 pandemic. These problems are categorized into two types, namely technical constraints, and non-technical constraints. Problems that fall into the technical category include missing material and media files in the short message group; poor internet connection; applications that are not accessible in certain countries; and power outages. Meanwhile, non-technical constraints include low student motivation, inconsistent student abilities, time zone differences, and human and animal interruptions. The solutions taken in the face of these problems are various. The technical constraints of missing material and media files were addressed by creating a material and media bank on Google Drive; the problem of poor internet connection is faced by choosing a teaching place with a stable internet connection; application constraints that cannot be accessed in certain countries are faced by changing the assessment technique using applications that are accessible in the student's country; the problem of power outages was solved by communicating with students to delay learning for a few minutes. Meanwhile, non-technical problems such as the low motivation of students to learn are addressed by providing games in learning to arouse students' interest; students' inconsistent ability constraints are resolved by giving special notes on the student's assessment driver's license concerned; the new time zone difference was addressed with intense communication and an agreement from both parties regarding the time the Teaching and Learning Activities (KBM) took place; as well as interrupting students and animals were solved by removing all things that could potentially interfere with learning including pets for a while.

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