



Empowering Global Students: Indonesian Studies at Surabaya European School through the Commemoration of Indonesian Independence Day

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Abstract. BIPA learning at *Surabaya European School* is applied through the *Indonesian Studies Programme* by exploring the local wisdom of the archipelago as a source of learning, one of which is the commemoration of Indonesian Independence Day. It is used to improve the Indonesian perspective of students from different backgrounds and nations. The focus of this research is: 1) to know the Indonesian language skills at the *Upper Secondary* level, and 2) to *Indonesian Studies Programme* activities by commemorating Indonesian Independence Day. The research design used is qualitative. Primary data includes learning activities in the *Indonesian Studies Programme*, supplemented by secondary data from journals, books, and relevant research. Data collection was conducted through focus group discussions, classrooms, and observations. IS at SES is not an academic teaching of Indonesian history and language, but a hands-on experience that allows students to deeply immerse and appreciate Indonesian culture. To commemorate Independence Day, Indonesia's local wisdom can be explored through competitions or contests. The competitions include tug-of-war, eating crackers, etc. Through these activities, schools can effectively introduce Indonesian Studies (culture and local wisdom) to improve students' understanding of Indonesian history and culture. Through these activities, students learn about the origins and meanings behind each competition, which are usually related to the spirit of struggle and togetherness of the Indonesian people during the colonial period. This research is expected to be published at an international conference.

Keywords: Local Wisdom, Indonesian Studies, BIPA.

1 Introduction

Surabaya European School (SES) is a Cooperative Education Unit (CU) school located in the city of Surabaya. Collaborative Education Unit (SPK) (*Satuan Pendidikan Kerjasama*) is an international school currently under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. SPK is allowed to use foreign curricula such as IB, Cambridge, etc. However, it is required to organize three subjects based on the national curriculum including Indonesian Language, Civic Education, and Religion. These three subjects are mandatory for Indonesian students, while foreign students are required to take Bahasa Indonesia for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) (*Bahasa Indonesia*

bagi Penutur Asing) and Indonesian Studies. Surabaya European School currently uses the Cambridge curriculum for all subjects except the three compulsory national curriculum subjects.

The curriculum used at SPK follows Permendikbud No. 31 of 2014. Permendikbud No 31/2014 Article 11 regulates the curriculum for SPK. (1) The curriculum is prepared regarding the National Education Standards, the Basic Framework and Curriculum Structure, and implementation guidelines which can be enriched by the curriculum of other countries' education units that have excellence in the field of education or can use other countries' curricula after obtaining permission from the minister or other designated officials. (2) The curriculum at SPK for SMA, MA, SMK, and MAK, or other equivalent forms can be arranged in a semester credit system. (3) The curriculum applied to Indonesian citizen students must contain Religious Education, Pancasila and Citizenship Education, and Indonesian Language subjects by the provisions of laws and regulations. (4) Foreign students must be taught the Indonesian Language and Indonesian Culture (Indonesian Studies). In line with government regulations, BIPA teaching is not only the language that is the focus but cannot be separated from local wisdom and Indonesian culture. So one of the substantial things is to bring BIPA learners closer to local wisdom through aligned materials [11].

Some of the goals of learners in learning Indonesian, such as at the Love Language School, studies of Indonesian culture, gain insight/opportunities to work in Indonesian, and travel needs [16]. By using Indonesian as a means of culture, we can see how rich the culture in the region is. BIPA learners, as recipients of cultural material, can be said to be successful if the recipients of cultural material can understand that the culture in their area and the community can understand, understand, and the local culture is upheld by the people who use the language [17].

SES students range in age from 3-4 years old in nursery/Montessori class, 4-5 years old in Year 1 (kindergarten equivalent), Year 2-7 (primary school equivalent) at 6-12 years old. Year 8-10 (junior high school equivalent) at 12-14 years old, Year 11-13 or *upper secondary* (high school equivalent) age range 14-18 years old. BIPA and Indonesian language learning must be taught at all levels for both Indonesian citizens and foreigners. BIPA is an Indonesian language course for foreign speakers that introduces Indonesian from level 1 to level 5, while the Indonesian Studies program is a course that introduces Indonesian culture, especially local culture, which contains local culture and wisdom.

Language learning also involves cross-cultural elements. The crucial need in learning a foreign language is to provide cross-cultural understanding. This context is particularly relevant in second or foreign language learning. Foreign language learners are involved in acquiring language skills with related cultural contexts. To improve linguistic skills and broaden the horizons of cultural differences and similarities, there is a need for exposure to language-related cultural knowledge. Foreign language learners engage in social interaction through language that requires cross-cultural understanding. Communicating effectively can involve role plays, debates, or collaborative projects where students must understand social and cultural norms [15].

Planning, curriculum, teaching materials, teaching media, and the use of methods are the essence of BIPA learning that needs attention and handling. The preparation of

teaching materials is one of the important aspects when preparing for BIPA learning. Teaching materials must also be adapted to the conditions of the Indonesian nation so that foreign language learners can know the conditions of the Indonesian nation, culture or local wisdom, and the social conditions of the community to attract these BIPA learners to learn Indonesian. The preparation of appropriate teaching materials can be a benchmark in achieving goals in learning Indonesian in BIPA learning [4]. Along with the times, BIPA teachers need innovation and creativity in creating BIPA teaching materials that contain elements of local wisdom, which are expected that BIPA learners not only know Indonesian but with culture and local wisdom in Indonesian. [4]. Indonesian Studies Programme at the Upper Secondary level includes geographical conditions in Indonesia including islands and local tourist destinations, state identity (national anthem, state symbol, and national language), demographics of Indonesian society (ethnicity, regional language, religion), and national history. The many programs designed sometimes encounter obstacles in their implementation. The obstacle faced during the program is the language barrier because the majority of students are at level 1. The limited time is only 45 minutes a week so the depth of the material still needs to be added in the hours outside the lesson.

2 Research Methods

This research is a qualitative type through observation of learning activities in the Indonesian Studies Program class for Foreign Learners at the Upper Secondary level at Surabaya European School. Qualitative research emphasizes aspects of quality, process, and meaning, emphasizing the socially constructed nature of reality between researchers and research subjects and the problems or constraints of the situation faced [3].

The primary data in this research is the learning activities in the Indonesian Studies Programme for Foreign Learners at the Upper Secondary level at Surabaya European School. The things to be observed include curriculum documents, lesson planning documents, teaching materials, learning media, and documentation regarding the implementation of classes that are aligned with the process of exploring local wisdom. Secondary data refers to relevant previous research, books, and other references. The research data sources are foreign learners and teachers of Bahasa Indonesia for Foreign Speakers BIPA Upper Secondary Surabaya European School. The number of learners in the Upper Secondary Indonesian Studies Programme class in Year 10 is 16 learners, Year 11 is 9 learners, and Year 12 & 13 is 2 learners.

Data collection was carried out through the process of observation in the Upper Secondary Indonesian Studies Programme classes, extracted through clustered discussions with BIPA teachers. The observation process and initial interviews with BIPA teachers have been carried out in 2023. In the next stage, from March to July 2024, instruments will be developed and follow-up in-depth interviews & clustered discussions on learners' Indonesian language acquisition and the learning process regarding the exploration of local wisdom in the Indonesian Studies Programme. Classroom observation will be conducted at the Upper Secondary Indonesian Studies Programme level in Years 10-13.

Data analysis was carried out through involved observation analysis of Indonesian Studies Programme learning activities through in-depth observations of teachers and learners. Involved observation analysis, the researcher is directly involved in the social setting of the research by observing the various roles of the subjects in the research [3].

The data validity process is carried out through triangulation by cross-checking several data findings carried out through the process of interviews and focus group discussions, literature studies, and observations with teachers and learners of the Upper Secondary Indonesian Studies Programme at Secondary Surabaya European School. The process of cross-checking data validity is carried out so that data findings can be accounted for through several sources that are carried out.

3 Discussion

3.1 Indonesian Studies Learning at Surabaya European School

The learning process of Indonesian Studies at SES focuses on how learning strategies and models are implemented, and how innovative learning media are applied to achieve learning objectives. The young generation has an important role in facing globalization, especially the strong influence of science and technology. The young generation has a role in maintaining the Indonesian language as a national identity [8].

BIPA teachers experience great challenges in the learning process, especially in situations where learners have limited vocabulary. Limited vocabulary mastery makes teachers have to be more creative in solving problems in the classroom which can be done by providing stimulus in the form of games to improve vocabulary mastery. Using interactive media Kahoot, wordwall and Quizzes can help when learning is carried out online or offline [2].

The use of digital media can be optimised such as the use of Google Jamboard which can be used directly as an interaction between teachers and students through a collaborative process. The digital whiteboard provided is sufficient for students to practice writing, with twenty pages available. Jamboard learning outcomes are automatically stored in Google Drive and can be accessed by teachers and students at any time for self-study purposes. The use of smartphones and other digital media is certainly very helpful for BIPA learners [1].

BIPA learning prioritizes the multiliteracy aspect of integrating language and cultural learning. BIPA learners learn complex language and socio-cultural skills. Learning can be done by utilizing local literature and culture. BIPA learning urgently needs integration and a touch of local cultural content and multimedia [12]. Local wisdom contains substances including social norms for environmental management, collective social and natural norms, and local wisdom in the form of life skills in managing resources [7].

This research has novelty in the form of elaboration of local wisdom content and internationalization of Indonesian in the academic context through the commemoration of the big day of Indonesian Independence. Various innovations in BIPA learning in SPK have not been explored to the fullest. This will contribute scientifically: 1) providing several alternative BIPA learning models according to

learning needs and objectives, 2) the utilization of local wisdom as a means of BIPA learning as well as an Indonesian language and cultural diplomacy.

Foreign national students at Surabaya European School (SES) show striking variations in their Indonesian language skills and cultural knowledge due to their unique backgrounds and circumstances. Many of these students move between schools frequently due to their parents' jobs that require them to live in different countries. As a result, each student has a different Indonesian language learning experience, both in terms of the duration of learning and the intensity of exposure to the Indonesian language and culture.

In a single class, this difference is reflected by the presence of students at various BIPA levels, ranging from beginner to advanced. Students who have just joined may only have basic knowledge and are still adapting to the new environment, while students who have been studying in Indonesian for longer can communicate fluently and have a deep understanding of the local culture. This creates a unique classroom dynamic, where students can learn from each other and share experiences, but also challenges teachers to provide flexible teaching methods that can accommodate diverse learning needs.

Cross-cultural education is crucial in the current era of globalization. One important aspect of cross-cultural education is the introduction and appreciation of a country's local wisdom. At Surabaya European School (SES), an international school offering education at the Upper Secondary level, Indonesian Studies (IS) is an important milestone in introducing the richness of Indonesian culture to foreign students. IS at SES is not just an academic teaching of Indonesian history and language, but also a hands-on experience that allows students to deeply immerse and appreciate Indonesian culture. The program is designed to open doors for students to explore various aspects of Indonesian culture such as art, music, dance, and distinctive social values.

There is a lot of diversity, both ethnicity, race, culture, regional language, religion, natural potential, and others are an advantage of the Indonesian state. This is a matter of pride for the people of Indonesia. Agricultural products, creative arts, cultural traditions, services, natural resources, human resources, and others are local wisdom that is an advantage in every region in Indonesia [14]. In line with the main objective of IS is to explore Indonesia's rich local wisdom and help students develop a deeper understanding of the country. Through various activities such as visits to historical places, traditional food cooking classes, and participation in local cultural festivals, students not only learn theoretically but also practically experience Indonesian cultural diversity.

The program also has a significant impact on shaping students' perspectives and attitudes toward cultural diversity. They learn to appreciate differences and increase their sense of empathy towards people from different cultural backgrounds. This experience not only helps students in their academic process but also in their personal development as global citizens who are aware of cultural differences. BIPA learners will get a meaningful learning value, which motivates BIPA students, the material is authentic, contains educational values, guides BIPA students to understand other cultures, stimulates language acquisition, develops ways of interpreting Indonesian contextually, provides fun, expands language awareness, and encourages BIPA students to express opinions and feelings [10].

In addition, IS at SES serves as a social bridge between international students and the local community in Surabaya. Through direct interaction with the local community, students can expand their social networks and gain deeper insights into the daily lives and values of Indonesians. The implementation of IS at SES also sets an example for other international schools to adopt a similar approach in introducing the local wisdom of their host country to international students. Thus, the program not only has a local but also a global impact, strengthening intercultural relations and supporting the vision of inclusive global education.

3.2 Indonesian Independence Day Competition

Indonesian Independence Day, which is commemorated every 17th of August, is an important moment that is celebrated throughout Indonesia with various competitions, known as Indonesian Independence Day competitions. These competitions are not only entertainment but also educational tools that contain values of togetherness, cooperation, and fighting spirit. For education, this celebration can be used as an opportunity to deepen students' understanding of history, culture, and national values through fun and educational activities. Organizing competitions with the theme of independence in the context of Indonesian Studies learning is one effective method to achieve this goal.

Observations have shown that introducing the seventh race in Indonesian Studies classes is effective in improving students' understanding of Indonesian history and culture. Through this activity, students learn about the origins and meaning behind each competition, which is usually related to the spirit of struggle and togetherness of the Indonesian people during the colonial period.

"I learned that the cracker-eating competition symbolizes the struggle and simplicity of the people in the past," said a student.

"Sack races apparently originated from the way farmers transport their crops, so now I appreciate their work more," added another student.

Seventh-day competitions have also proven effective in instilling national values such as togetherness, cooperation, and fighting spirit. This activity encourages students to work together in teams, play healthy competition, and feel a sense of togetherness in celebrating independence. The integration of the competition into Indonesian Studies learning also increases students' enthusiasm and participation. Students look more excited and active in following the learning activities.

"During the competition activities, the student participation rate reached almost 100%, with all students actively participating. Students who are usually passive in class showed a significant increase in engagement and interest during the race activities". (BIPA teacher)

This shows that introducing Independence Day competitions into Indonesian Studies learning has many benefits. It not only makes learning more fun and interesting but also enriches students' understanding of Indonesian history and culture

and instills important national values. In addition, the increased enthusiasm and participation of students shows that this method is effective in attracting students' interest and making them more involved in the learning process.

Introducing the Indonesian Independent Day competition during Indonesian Independence Day in Indonesian Studies classes is an effective approach to improving students' understanding of Indonesian history and culture, as well as strengthening national values. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that similar activities be routinely integrated into the learning curriculum. Thus, the Independence Day celebration is not only a celebration event, but also a meaningful and inspiring learning moment for students, strengthening their love for the country, and fostering a strong national spirit.

In addition to outdoor competitions, during the commemoration of the Republic of Indonesia's birthday, students were also asked to collaborate to create a Cultural Corner. For BIPA learners, knowing the local wisdom of the Indonesian people is very closely related. When coming and learning directly in Indonesian, it makes the learners not experience culture shock. BIPA learners in learning Indonesian with the introduction of culture and local wisdom, make it has its charm. The learners in understanding Indonesian local wisdom will have a very unique experience because they have never experienced it before. BIPA learners need Indonesian cultural materials that are certainly diverse. For BIPA learners, it is not only about Javanese culture. The material raised certainly includes material that is already known by the wider Indonesian community itself so that it can also be easily taught to learners [9].

By connecting language lessons with cultural contexts, students can understand the use of language in real and everyday situations. This helps them to more easily remember and apply the vocabulary and language structures they learn. Knowing Indonesian culture helps students to appreciate cultural diversity, both in Indonesia and globally. This is important in building an attitude of tolerance and respect for cultural differences. Thus, language learning becomes more interesting, fun, and rewarding for students.

The majority of BIPA learning methods that exist today can be implemented in offline learning. Offline learning has teaching materials that are much different from online learning and cannot be implemented by equating, because the two sides of the learning method are indeed different. Learning media used in BIPA learning such as the Ministry of Education's BIPA online portal, zoom, WhatsApp groups, wordwall.net, and quizzes. It is very easy to access and can meet learning needs, as well as students' backgrounds [5]. One way to overcome the lack of online BIPA teaching materials is to further develop online-based BIPA teaching topics [6]. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, children can still learn about culture in a fun way. For example, by cooking traditional Indonesian food. This fried banana cooking activity is done online. Meanwhile, the activity of cooking fried rice is carried out offline because there is already a concession and students are allowed to do face-to-face learning.

BIPA teaching materials can be integrated with Indonesian cultural treasures. Cultural integration through various language skills can make it easier to master Indonesian. The BIPA material includes what is to be achieved in the learning objectives, so the use of materials related to Indonesian culture is a solution for BIPA learners to get to know Indonesians better. Culture that discusses culinary is an

interesting thing to raise in BIPA learning materials because culinary has its characteristics in each region which is very popular with the Indonesian people themselves and even foreign tourists. By learning about culinary in Indonesian, BIPA learners not only learn Indonesian but can find out about culture, cuisine, and something deeper from the people of Indonesian [13].

The Indonesian Studies Programme at Surabaya European School is not just an additional curriculum, but a vehicle to bridge cross-cultural understanding and enrich students' educational experience. Through an in-depth exploration of Indonesian local wisdom, the program makes a valuable contribution to preparing students to become knowledgeable global citizens who appreciate global cultural diversity. As such, the Indonesian Studies Programme at SES is not only an integral part of the school's curriculum but also a reflection of SES' commitment to promoting intercultural understanding and tolerance in an international educational environment.

4 Conclusion

The Indonesian Studies Programme at Surabaya European School is not just an additional curriculum, but a vehicle to bridge cross-cultural understanding and enrich students' educational experience. Through an in-depth exploration of Indonesian local wisdom, the program makes a valuable contribution to preparing students to become knowledgeable global citizens who appreciate global cultural diversity. As such, the Indonesian Studies Programme at SES is not only an integral part of the school's curriculum but also a reflection of SES' commitment to promoting intercultural understanding and tolerance in an international educational environment.

Surabaya European School's Indonesian Studies program successfully empowered global learners through various activities commemorating Indonesian Independence Day. With an interactive and immersive approach, students not only learn about Indonesian history and culture but also develop a broader understanding of the importance of independence and national heroes. Through this experience, the students are expected to become individuals who better appreciate cultural diversity, have a global perspective, and are ready to contribute positively to the international community. This program is an important step in shaping a generation that values cultural heritage while remaining open-minded and broad-minded.

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