

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN TEACHING BIPA FOR RUSSIAN-SPEAKING LEARNERS: AN INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE-BASED APPROACH

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Abstract: *This study examines the role of cultural integration in teaching Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) to Russian-speaking learners within an intercultural competence framework. While many BIPA programs still prioritize linguistic aspects such as grammar and vocabulary, cultural elements are often insufficiently integrated, which may hinder learners' ability to interpret language use in context. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach based on classroom observation, analysis of teaching materials, and pedagogical reflection. The study focuses on key elements of Indonesian culture relevant to everyday communication, including cuisine, politeness, indirect communication, address terms, and the concept of *oleh-oleh*. The findings indicate that integrating cultural content into BIPA instruction enhances learners' communicative and intercultural competence by enabling them to better understand social meanings and pragmatic aspects of language use. Furthermore, the use of contextual dialogues, culture-based activities, and thematic learning models proves effective in facilitating meaningful learning. This study proposes a practical model for integrating cultural elements into BIPA teaching, particularly for learners from culturally distant backgrounds such as Russian speakers.*

Keywords: *BIPA, Indonesian-culture, Russian-speaking-learners, intercultural-competence, language-teaching*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji peran integrasi budaya dalam pengajaran Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) untuk pembelajar penutur bahasa Rusia dalam kerangka kompetensi antarbudaya. Meskipun banyak program BIPA masih berfokus pada aspek linguistik seperti tata bahasa dan kosakata, unsur budaya sering kali belum terintegrasi secara sistematis sehingga menghambat pemahaman konteks penggunaan bahasa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif melalui observasi kelas, analisis bahan ajar, dan refleksi pedagogis. Fokus penelitian meliputi unsur-unsur budaya Indonesia yang relevan dengan komunikasi sehari-hari, seperti kuliner, kesantunan, komunikasi tidak langsung, sistem sapaan, dan konsep *oleh-oleh*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi budaya dalam pembelajaran BIPA dapat meningkatkan kompetensi komunikatif dan kompetensi antarbudaya pembelajar dengan membantu mereka memahami makna sosial dan aspek pragmatik bahasa. Selain itu, penggunaan dialog kontekstual, aktivitas berbasis budaya, dan model pembelajaran tematik terbukti efektif dalam mendukung proses pembelajaran yang bermakna. Penelitian ini menawarkan model praktis integrasi budaya dalam pengajaran BIPA, khususnya bagi pembelajar dengan latar belakang budaya yang berbeda seperti penutur bahasa Rusia.

Kata kunci: BIPA, budaya Indonesia, pembelajar penutur Rusia, kompetensi antarbudaya, pengajaran bahasa

Submission : February 23th, 2026

Revision : March 31th, 2026

Publication : April 30th, 2026

INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are two aspects that cannot be separated in foreign language learning. Language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a reflection of the values, norms, and patterns of social interaction within a society. Therefore, foreign language learning should involve an understanding of the culture of the language's speakers.

In the context of teaching Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA), the integration of cultural elements plays an important role in helping learners understand language use in context. Learners do not only study linguistic structures but also learn how the language is used in real social situations. However, various studies show that many BIPA programs still emphasize the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, while cultural aspects are often presented in a limited or unsystematic way. This condition can create difficulties for foreign learners in understanding the pragmatic meanings of the Indonesian language.

This issue becomes more complex for learners who come from cultural backgrounds that differ significantly from Indonesian culture. Russian speakers, for example, come from a communication culture that tends to be more direct and explicit compared to Indonesian communication culture, which is generally more indirect and emphasizes politeness and social harmony.

These differences often lead to communication misunderstandings between Russian learners and Indonesian society. Therefore, the integration of culture in BIPA teaching becomes very important in order to improve learners' communicative competence.

Previous studies have discussed the importance of intercultural competence in foreign language learning (Byram, 1997). However, research that specifically examines the integration of Indonesian culture in BIPA teaching for Russian-speaking learners is still relatively limited.

Thus, there is a research gap related to the development of culture-based learning models in BIPA teaching that specifically consider the characteristics of Russian learners. Based on the background of the study, this research aims to analyze the role of Indonesian cultural elements in BIPA learning for Russian-speaking learners, identify effective cultural learning strategies in BIPA teaching, and develop a culture-based learning model that can be applied in BIPA classrooms.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Relationship Between Language and Culture in Language Learning

Language and culture have a very close and mutually influential relationship. Language functions not only as a means of communication but also as a medium for expressing the values, norms, and ways of thinking of a particular society. Therefore, foreign language learning cannot be separated from an understanding of the culture of its speakers. The relationship between key cultural elements and their corresponding learning outcomes in BIPA instruction is summarized in Table 1.

According to Kramsch (2014), language is a symbol of culture because through language individuals can understand how a particular society perceives the world, organizes social relationships, and expresses cultural identity. In the context of foreign language learning, cultural understanding helps learners grasp the deeper meanings embedded in language use.

In second language teaching, the integration of cultural elements can help learners understand how language is used in different social situations. Thus, language learning should not only focus on linguistic structures but also on the appropriate use of language in accordance with the cultural norms of the speech community.

Communicative Competence in Language Learning

The concept of communicative competence is one of the fundamental principles of modern language teaching. Communicative competence refers to a person's ability to use language effectively and appropriately in various communicative situations.

According to Batitusta, F. O., Asteria, P. V., Sodik, S., & Maiklad, (2025); Daud et al., (2024), communicative competence does not only include knowledge of grammar but also the ability to understand when, where, and how language should be used in a particular social context. In other words, language learning should consider the social and cultural aspects of language use.

In the context of BIPA learning, communicative competence is particularly important because learners need to understand how Indonesian is used in everyday interactions in Indonesian society. This includes the use of polite expressions, indirect communication strategies, and appropriate word choices depending on the social situation.

Intercultural Competence in Language Learning

In addition to communicative competence, foreign language learning also emphasizes the importance of intercultural competence. Intercultural competence refers to a person's ability to understand, appreciate, and interact effectively with people from different cultural backgrounds.

According to Byram (1997; Diani & Halimi, (2024), intercultural competence encompasses several key components, including knowledge of other cultures, openness toward cultural differences, skills in interpreting and understanding cultural practices, as well as the ability to interact effectively in intercultural contexts. In foreign language learning, intercultural competence helps learners avoid communication misunderstandings that often arise due to differences in cultural norms.

Cultural Integration in BIPA Teaching

In the teaching of Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA), the integration of culture is an essential component of the learning process. Indonesian is used in various social contexts influenced by cultural values such as politeness, social harmony, and respect for others.

Cultural integration in BIPA learning can be implemented through several pedagogical strategies, such as the use of contextual dialogues that reflect real-life communication situations, the introduction of everyday cultural practices, the use of culture-based teaching materials, and classroom activities that encourage intercultural discussion among learners. This approach helps learners understand the relationship between language and culture and improves their ability to communicate effectively within Indonesian society.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the integration of cultural elements in BIPA learning for Russian-speaking learners. The participants of this study consisted of 10 Russian-speaking learners enrolled in a BIPA program at an intermediate level (A2–B1). The learning process was conducted in a classroom setting within an online language course program, where Indonesian was taught as a foreign language. The data were collected over a period of eight weeks during regular instructional sessions.

The data sources in this study include classroom observations of BIPA learning activities involving Russian-speaking learners, analysis of teaching materials used during the instructional process, and pedagogical reflections based on the instructor's teaching experience. All data were documented systematically to capture the interaction between language learning and cultural elements in the classroom context. The analysis was conducted through three stages: data reduction by selecting relevant information, data categorization based on identified cultural elements, and data interpretation to examine how cultural integration contributes to learners' communicative and intercultural competence. The instructor also acted as the researcher.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that the integration of cultural elements in BIPA learning helps learners understand the context of Indonesian language use more accurately. These findings suggest that BIPA curricula should systematically integrate cultural instruction as a core component rather than as supplementary content.

Several cultural elements were found to be particularly effective in BIPA learning, including the following:

Indonesian Cuisine as a Medium for Language and Cultural Learning

Cuisine is one of the cultural elements that can be most easily introduced to foreign language learners because it is directly related to everyday life. In the context of teaching Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA), the topic of cuisine functions not only as a means of introducing vocabulary but also as a medium for understanding the social and cultural practices of Indonesian society.

According to Diani & Halimi, (2024); Kramsch (2014), foreign language learning becomes more effective when language is taught within an authentic cultural context. Cuisine, as part of everyday culture, allows learners to understand the relationship between language, social habits, and cultural values. This is consistent with the view of Byram (1997), who states that communicative competence in a foreign language includes the ability to understand the cultural practices of the language community.

In Indonesian society, food does not only serve a biological function as a source of energy but also plays an important social role. Eating activities often serve as a means of building social relationships, strengthening friendships, and demonstrating hospitality to guests. For example, in many social situations in Indonesia, guests are often welcomed with offers of food or drinks as a form of respect. For Russian-speaking learners, this concept can be an interesting cultural experience because eating habits in Russian culture have different characteristics. In Russian culture, meal times are usually more structured, whereas in Indonesian culture eating activities can be more flexible and are often associated with informal social interactions.

In addition, the diversity of Indonesian cuisine reflects the cultural diversity of Indonesia. Each region has its own traditional dishes that reflect the history, traditions, and geographical conditions of that region. Therefore, introducing Indonesian cuisine in BIPA learning can serve as an entry point for understanding the broader cultural diversity of Indonesia.

In BIPA learning, the topic of cuisine can be used to introduce various basic vocabulary items related to food and beverages, such as *rice, noodles, chicken, fish, vegetables, spicy, sweet, and salty*. In addition, learners can also learn expressions that are commonly used in communication situations in restaurants or food stalls.

An example of a dialogue that can be used in BIPA learning is as follows.

A: *Selamat siang. Bapak/Ibu mau pesan apa?*

B: *Saya mau nasi goreng satu.*

A: *Mau pedas atau tidak pedas?*

B: *Tidak terlalu pedas.*

Example 1 (see Figure 1) presents an activity adapted from a beginner-level BIPA textbook (*Bahasa Indonesia bagi pemula A1*) authored by Safira Dinara Salsabila, which focuses on learning adjectives related to food and beverages, aimed at developing reading and listening skills while introducing Indonesian cuisine. The structure of this model is illustrated in Figure 1.



Latihan 19. Слушайте Аудио 50.1, повторяйте и читайте



Аудио 50.1

Rasa makanan dan minuman - Вкус еды и напитков			
manis 🍬	сладкий	segar 🍏	свежий
pahit 😞	горький	enak 😊	вкусный
asin 🍷	солёный	gurih 🍲	пикантный
asam 🍋	кислый	lezat 😋	очень вкусный
pedas 🌶️	острый	basi 🤢	тухлый

ayam bakar курица гриль	nasi goreng жареный рис	sayur asam / asem кислые овощи	jus jeruk / апельсин. сок	es teh / чай со льдом
nasi goreng bebek жареный рис с уткой	teh hangat тёплый чай	soto ayam куриный суп с лапшой	air putih питьевая вода	kopi hitam чёрный кофе
nasi tempung рис с "пощёчиной" (tempung - пощёчина по-явански), т.к. подаётся с острым самбалом	sambal самбал (соус с перцем чили разной остроты)	kue putri salju пирожное Снежная принцесса	kue lapis слоёное пирожное	kue Klepon пирожное Клепон

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Figure 1.

The Concept of Politeness in Indonesian Culture as Part of Communicative Competence

The concept of politeness is one of the important elements in the communication culture of Indonesian society. In everyday social interactions, the use of polite language is not only viewed as a matter of etiquette but also as a way to maintain harmonious social relationships. Therefore, understanding the concept of politeness becomes an essential aspect in learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA).

According to Brown, P., & Levinson (1987), politeness in communication is closely related to the concept of *face*, or a person's self-image in social interaction. In many Asian cultures, including Indonesia, politeness strategies are often used to protect the feelings of the interlocutor and to avoid social conflict. This differs from some Western or Eastern European cultures, which tend to be more direct in expressing opinions.

In Indonesian culture, politeness is often realized through the use of certain expressions such as *tolong* (please), *maaf* (sorry), *permisi* (excuse me), and *terima kasih* (thank you). These expressions are used to show respect toward the interlocutor and to soften the intention of the message being conveyed. For example, when someone wants to ask for help, Indonesian often uses more polite expressions such as:

- *Maaf/permisi, boleh minta tolong?*
- *Tolong bantu saya sebentar.*

The use of the word *maaf* (sorry) in this context does not always literally mean apologizing; rather, it functions as a politeness strategy to open a conversation in a gentle and respectful way. For Russian-speaking learners, this concept of politeness can sometimes be challenging because Russian communication culture tends to be more direct and explicit. In certain communication situations, Russian speakers may express requests more directly without using introductory expressions that are considered important in Indonesian culture.

These differences may lead to misunderstandings in communication. For example, expressions that are too direct may be perceived as less polite by native speakers of Indonesian. Therefore, teaching the concept of politeness in BIPA learning becomes very important in order to help learners understand the communication norms of Indonesian society.

In the context of BIPA learning, the concept of politeness can be introduced through various pedagogical strategies. One effective approach is the use of contextual dialogues that reflect everyday communication situations.

The following is an example of a dialogue that can be used in BIPA learning.

Dialogue: Asking for Help

A: *Permisi, Pak.*

B: *Ya, ada yang bisa saya dibantu?*

A: *Maaf, saya ingin bertanya. Apakah ini kantor pos?*

B: *Ya, benar. Kantor pos ada di sebelah kanan jalan.*

Through such dialogues, learners can study the use of expressions such as *permisi* (excuse me) and *maaf* (sorry) as politeness strategies for initiating conversations with people they do not know. In addition to dialogues, teachers can also use role-play activities to practice the use of polite language in specific communication situations. In this activity, learners are asked to act out various social situations, such as asking for help, asking for directions, or speaking with someone older.

One example of a classroom activity is a simulation of conversations in public places. In this activity, learners work in pairs and play the roles of a person asking for information and a person providing information. The teacher then provides feedback on the use of polite language in the conversation.

Furthermore, cultural discussions can also become an important component in teaching the concept of politeness. Teachers can ask learners to compare how people ask for help in Indonesian culture and in their own cultures. This discussion helps learners understand differences in intercultural communication norms and increases their cultural awareness.

According to Hieu (2025); Liddicoat & Scarino (2013), language learning that involves reflection on cultural differences can help learners develop intercultural competence. By understanding these differences, learners can adapt their communication behavior in different cultural contexts.

Thus, teaching the concept of politeness in BIPA learning does not only aim to teach polite expressions but also to help learners understand the social values underlying the use of such language. This understanding is particularly important for Russian-speaking learners so that they

can communicate effectively and appropriately according to the cultural norms of Indonesian society.

The integration of the concept of politeness in BIPA learning also helps learners develop **pragmatic competence**, which is the ability to use language appropriately according to social and cultural contexts. This competence is an important part of communicative competence in foreign language learning.

Therefore, the teaching of politeness should become an integral part of BIPA learning materials, especially for learners who come from cultural backgrounds that differ significantly from Indonesian culture.

Example 2 (see Figure 2) presents an exercise adapted from a beginner-level BIPA textbook (*Bahasa Indonesia bagi pemula A1*) authored by Salsabila (2025), which focuses on the use of time expressions in Indonesian while integrating cultural contexts.



Latihan 15
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Tempat: Jl. Kubu Anyar No.31,
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Undangan Hari Batik Nasional.

Kemarin temanku Lina yang berasal dari Australia, mendapat undangan untuk menghadiri acara Hari Batik Nasional. Acara ini akan diadakan pada hari Rabu, 2 Oktober di hotel Swiss Belhotel Tuban di Kuta. Dia sangat senang karena ini pertama kalinya dia menghadiri acara seperti ini. Acara akan dimulai **pada pukul 9 pagi** dan selesai **pada pukul 3 sore**. Di sana, Lina akan mengikuti workshop membuat batik dan melihat pameran batik tradisional. Dia juga ingin mencoba lomba memakai batik dengan gaya unik. **Pagi ini pukul 08.30**, Lina menelepon saya. Dia bertanya pakaian batik seperti apa yang cocok untuk acara tersebut. Saya memberi tahu Lina bahwa semua pakaian batik itu bagus, yang penting rapi dan nyaman.

Saya berharap Lina menikmati acara Hari Batik Nasional dan belajar banyak tentang budaya Indonesia.

Приглашение на Национальный день батика.

Вчера моя подруга Лина из Австралии получила приглашение посетить мероприятие, посвященное Национальному дню батика. Мероприятие состоится в среду, 2 октября, в отеле Swiss Belhotel Tuban в Куте. Она очень взволнована, поскольку впервые присутствует на подобном мероприятии. Мероприятие начнётся в **9:00** и закончится в **15:00**. Там Лина примет участие в мастер-классе по изготовлению батика и посетит традиционную выставку батика. Она также хочет принять участие в соревновании по ношению батика в уникальном стиле.

Сегодня утром в **8:30** мне позвонила Лина. Она спросила, какая одежда батик подойдет для этого мероприятия. Я сказала Лине, что вся одежда батик хороша, если она аккуратная и удобная.

Надеюсь, Лине понравится мероприятие, посвященное Национальному дню батика, и она узнает много об индонезийской культуре.

Figure 2.

Indirect Communication Culture in Indonesian Society

One important characteristic of communication culture in Indonesian society is the tendency to use **indirect communication**. In many social situations, Indonesian speakers often use softer and more indirect expressions to convey opinions, requests, or refusals. This communication pattern is

closely related to cultural values that emphasize social harmony, respect, and the avoidance of conflict in interpersonal interactions.

According to Hall (1976); Kramsch (2014), communication cultures can be categorized into **high-context** and **low-context** cultures. In high-context cultures, the meaning of communication is conveyed not only through words but also through social context, interpersonal relationships, and nonverbal cues. Indonesia is often classified as a high-context culture, where messages are frequently conveyed implicitly and require an understanding of the social context.

In contrast, several Western and Eastern European cultures, including Russia, tend to be closer to **low-context cultures**. In such cultures, messages are usually delivered more explicitly and directly through verbal language. Therefore, this difference in communication style can become a challenge for Russian-speaking learners in understanding communication practices in Indonesian society.

In everyday communication in Indonesia, refusals or criticism are rarely expressed directly. For example, when someone cannot fulfill a request, Indonesian speakers may use expressions such as:

- *Besok.*
- *Mungkin nanti saja.*
- *Nanti kita lihat dulu.*
- *Sepertinya agak sulit.*

These expressions are often used to convey refusal in a subtle way without creating a confrontational impression. For native speakers of Indonesian, the meaning of such expressions can usually be understood through the situational context and the social relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor.

However, for foreign learners—especially those who come from communication cultures that are more direct—such expressions may cause confusion. Learners may interpret these expressions literally without understanding the implicit meaning contained within them. Therefore, teaching the culture of indirect communication becomes an important aspect of learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA).

In BIPA learning, teachers can introduce the concept of indirect communication through various examples of authentic communication situations. The use of contextual dialogues can help learners understand how indirect expressions are used in everyday life.

The following is an example of a dialogue that illustrates indirect communication in Indonesian. Dialogue: Refusing an Invitation

- A: *Besok kita makan bersama, ya?*
 B: *Wah, sepertinya besok saya agak sibuk.*
 A: *Oh begitu, tidak apa-apa.*

In the dialogue above, Speaker B does not directly say “no,” but instead uses a softer expression to indicate that they cannot accept the invitation. Communication strategies like this are commonly used in Indonesian culture to maintain harmonious social relationships.

In addition to dialogues, teachers can also use cultural discussion activities to help learners understand differences in intercultural communication styles. In this activity, learners can be asked to compare how refusals are expressed in Indonesian culture and in the cultures of their home countries. For example, teachers may ask questions such as:

- *Bagaimana cara menolak ajakan dalam budaya Rusia?*
- *Apakah penolakan biasanya disampaikan secara langsung atau tidak langsung?*
- *Apa perbedaan utama dengan cara penolakan dalam budaya Indonesia?*

Such discussions not only help learners understand differences in communication culture but also increase their awareness of the diversity of communication practices across cultures.

According to Herawati et al. (2025); Liddicoat & Scarino (2013), reflection on cultural differences is an important component in developing intercultural competence in foreign language learning.

Through such reflection, learners can develop the ability to interpret communicative meanings within different cultural contexts.

In BIPA teaching, understanding indirect communication can also be practiced through role-play activities. Learners can be asked to perform various communication situations involving indirect refusals, requests, or criticism. This activity allows learners to practice communication strategies that align with Indonesian cultural norms.

In addition, teachers can provide exercises focused on interpreting implicit meanings in conversations. In these exercises, learners are asked to read or listen to short dialogues and then explain the actual meaning of the expressions used. For example:

Interpretation Exercise

Sentence:

"Nanti kita pikirkan lagi."

Question:

Apakah kalimat ini berarti persetujuan atau penolakan?

Through exercises such as these, learners can develop the ability to understand pragmatic meanings that frequently appear in Indonesian communication.

Thus, teaching the culture of indirect communication in BIPA learning plays an important role in helping learners understand how Indonesian speakers convey messages in a subtle and context-sensitive manner. This understanding not only improves learners' language proficiency but also helps them interact more effectively in social environments where Indonesian is used.

Therefore, integrating the concept of indirect communication into BIPA learning materials and classroom activities is very important, especially for learners who come from different communication cultures, such as Russian speakers. Through this approach, learners can develop both communicative competence and intercultural competence that are essential for successful cross-cultural communication.

The System of Address Terms in Indonesian as a Reflection of Social Relationships

The system of address terms is an important element of communication culture in Indonesian society. In everyday interactions, the use of address terms does not only function as a way of calling or referring to the interlocutor but also reflects social relationships, age, status, and the level of familiarity between the speaker and the listener. Therefore, understanding the system of address terms is an important aspect of learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA).

According to Brown, R., & Gilman (1960), the use of address terms in a language is often related to the concepts of power and solidarity within a society. In many languages, including Indonesian, the choice of address terms may indicate the level of respect or closeness between individuals engaged in communication.

In Indonesian society, the use of address terms is strongly influenced by norms of politeness and social hierarchy. Some commonly used address terms include *Bapak*, *Ibu*, *Pak*, *Bu*, *Mas*, *Mbak*, *Kak*, as well as the use of personal names. Each address term has a different context of use and reflects a particular type of social relationship.

For example, the address terms *Bapak* and *Ibu* are usually used to address someone older or someone who holds a formal position in society. In more informal situations, the shorter forms *Pak* and *Bu* are often used in everyday conversations.

Meanwhile, the address terms *Mas* and *Mbak* are widely used in several regions of Indonesia, especially in Java, to address someone slightly older or as a polite form of address in public services, such as in shops or restaurants. The term *Kak* is also frequently used to address someone slightly older without emphasizing a formal difference in social status.

For Russian-speaking learners, the system of address terms in Indonesian can be quite complex. In the Russian language, forms of address are usually related to the use of first names, patronymics, or formal and informal forms of the second-person pronoun. However, the Indonesian system of address terms is more flexible and highly dependent on social context and interpersonal relationships.

These differences often cause confusion for foreign learners. For example, learners may not understand when to use address terms such as *Pak*, *Bu*, or *Mas*. In certain situations, addressing someone directly by name without an address term may be considered impolite by native speakers of Indonesian.

Therefore, teaching the system of address terms in BIPA learning needs to be done explicitly. Teachers should explain the social functions of each address term as well as the contexts in which they are used in different communication situations (Purbarani et al., 2021).

One effective method for teaching the system of address terms is through the use of contextual dialogues. Dialogues can help learners understand how address terms are used in everyday conversations. The following is an example of a dialogue that can be used in BIPA learning. Dialogue: Greeting Someone at the Office,

A: *Selamat pagi, Pak.*

B: *Selamat pagi. Ada yang bisa saya dibantu?*

A: *Saya ingin bertanya tentang jadwal layanan di kantor ini.*

In the dialogue above, the use of the address term *Pak* indicates respect toward the interlocutor, who is likely older or holds a particular position.

In addition to dialogues, teachers can also use simulation activities to practice the use of address terms in various social contexts. In this activity, learners are asked to act out different communication situations, such as speaking with a lecturer, talking with peers, or asking questions to a public service officer.

One example of a classroom activity is a role-play exercise involving communication situations in public places. In this activity, learners work in pairs and practice conversations using appropriate address terms.

Furthermore, cultural discussions can help learners understand the social function of address terms. Teachers may ask learners to compare the system of address terms in Indonesian with the system used in Russian. Through this discussion, learners can understand that each language has its own way of expressing social relationships through language.

According to Liddicoat & Scarino (2013), language learning that involves reflection on cultural practices can help learners develop intercultural competence. Understanding the system of address terms not only helps learners use the language more appropriately but also helps them understand the social values underlying language use.

Thus, the system of address terms in Indonesian is an important part of communicative competence that should be taught in BIPA learning. Through an understanding of this system, learners can use Indonesian more appropriately in various social situations and build more effective interactions with native speakers of Indonesian.

Therefore, integrating the teaching of address terms into BIPA learning materials is essential, especially for learners who come from cultural backgrounds that differ from Indonesian culture, such as Russian speakers. This approach helps learners develop both pragmatic competence and intercultural competence required for cross-cultural communication.

The Concept of *Oleh-Oleh* as a Cultural Practice in Social Interaction

The concept of *oleh-oleh* is one of the distinctive cultural practices in Indonesian society. In everyday life, *oleh-oleh* refers to the habit of bringing gifts or local specialties from a place after traveling. This tradition is not only related to giving items but also reflects social values such as care, togetherness, and appreciation of social relationships.

In Indonesian culture, bringing *oleh-oleh* is often considered a form of attentiveness toward family members, friends, or colleagues. When someone travels, whether for tourism or work, bringing *oleh-oleh* becomes a way of sharing the experience of the journey with others. Therefore, this practice carries a broader social meaning beyond simply giving a gift.

According to Batitusta, F. O., Asteria, P. V., Sodiq, S., & Maiklad (2025), in the context of cultural values in social communication, actions such as giving gifts can function as a means of strengthening interpersonal relationships within a society. In many Asian cultures, including Indonesia, the practice of sharing food or gifts often reflects collectivist values and the importance of

maintaining harmonious social relationships. For learners of Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA), the concept of *oleh-oleh* can be an interesting learning topic because this cultural practice does not always have an equivalent in other cultures. In some Western or European cultures, giving gifts after a trip is not always considered a common habit (Ahmed, T., & Aman, 2024).

Russian-speaking learners may be familiar with the tradition of bringing gifts in certain contexts, such as when visiting someone's home. However, the habit of bringing *oleh-oleh* after traveling does not always have the same social function as it does in Indonesian culture. Therefore, introducing this concept in BIPA learning can help learners understand the social values underlying this cultural practice.

In BIPA learning, the concept of *oleh-oleh* can be used to introduce vocabulary related to travel, regional specialty foods, and expressions commonly used in social situations. In addition, this topic can also be used to introduce the diversity of Indonesian culture and cuisine (Isro'iyah, L., & Herminingsih, 2024).

For example, learners can be introduced to various types of regional *oleh-oleh* in Indonesia, such as *bakpia* from Yogyakarta, *pie susu* from Bali, or *apple chips* from Malang. Through this introduction, learners not only learn new vocabulary but also gain knowledge about the diversity of Indonesian culture and cuisine.

The following is an example of a dialogue that can be used in BIPA learning to introduce the concept of *oleh-oleh*. Dialogue: Bringing Souvenirs (*Oleh-Oleh*),

A: *Kamu baru pulang dari Bali?*

B: *Ya, saya baru pulang kemarin.*

A: *Wah, bagaimana perjalananmu?*

B: *Sangat menyenangkan.*

A: *Kamu membawa oleh-oleh?*

B: *Ya, saya membawa pie susu untuk teman-teman di kantor.*

Through this dialogue, learners can understand that bringing *oleh-oleh* is a common part of social interaction in Indonesian society.

In addition to dialogues, teachers can also use cultural discussion activities to help learners understand the social meaning of the *oleh-oleh* practice. Teachers may ask learners questions such as:

- *Apakah di negara Anda ada tradisi membawa hadiah setelah perjalanan?*
- *Dalam situasi apa orang biasanya membawa hadiah?*
- *Apa perbedaan antara tradisi tersebut dengan konsep oleh-oleh di Indonesia?*

Such discussions can help learners compare Indonesian cultural practices with those of their home countries. According to Liddicoat & Scarino (2013), reflection on cultural differences is an important component in developing intercultural competence in language learning. In addition to discussions, another classroom activity that can be conducted is a conversation simulation about travel. In this activity, learners are asked to talk about their travel experiences and mention the *oleh-oleh* they brought for friends or family. This activity helps learners develop speaking skills while also understanding the social context of language use.

Teachers can also provide simple writing exercises related to the concept of *oleh-oleh*. For example, learners may be asked to write a short paragraph about their trip to a city in Indonesia and the *oleh-oleh* they bought there. Through these activities, learners not only learn vocabulary related to travel and food but also understand the social values embedded in the cultural practice of *oleh-oleh*.

Thus, the concept of *oleh-oleh* can serve as an effective learning medium in BIPA teaching because it integrates language and cultural aspects in a contextual way. Through this topic, learners can understand how everyday cultural practices reflect the social values of Indonesian society.

Therefore, integrating the concept of *oleh-oleh* into BIPA learning is very important, especially for learners who come from different cultural backgrounds, such as Russian speakers. Understanding this cultural practice helps learners develop communicative competence and intercultural competence needed to interact effectively in Indonesian-speaking environments.

A Culture-Based Learning Model for BIPA Instruction

Based on the findings of this study, a culture-based learning model for BIPA instruction can be proposed to systematically integrate linguistic and cultural elements in the learning process. This model consists of four interconnected stages that facilitate the development of both communicative competence and intercultural competence among learners.

The first stage, cultural input, involves the introduction of authentic cultural content through texts, dialogues, images, or videos that reflect real-life communication in Indonesian society. At this stage, learners are exposed to key cultural concepts such as politeness strategies, indirect communication, and social practices, which are embedded in language use.

The second stage, guided practice, focuses on structured learning activities that help learners understand and apply both linguistic forms and cultural meanings. These activities may include comprehension tasks, vocabulary exercises, and controlled dialogues that highlight the relationship between language and cultural context.

The third stage, communicative practice, emphasizes interactive and contextualized use of language through role-play, simulations, and problem-solving tasks. In this stage, learners practice using Indonesian in culturally appropriate ways in various social situations, such as asking for help, making requests, or responding to invitations.

The final stage, intercultural reflection, encourages learners to critically compare Indonesian cultural practices with those of their own culture. Through guided discussion and reflection activities, learners develop awareness of cultural differences and similarities, which supports the development of intercultural competence and adaptive communication strategies.

This model provides a structured yet flexible framework that can be applied in BIPA classrooms, particularly for learners from culturally different backgrounds such as Russian speakers. By integrating cultural elements at each stage of learning, the model enhances not only linguistic proficiency but also learners' ability to interpret meaning and interact effectively in real social contexts.

Table 1. Cultural Elements and Learning Outcomes in BIPA Instruction

Cultural Element	Description in Learning Context	Targeted Learning Outcomes
Indonesian cuisine	Vocabulary and dialogues related to food and eating practices	Vocabulary development; contextual understanding of daily life
Politeness strategies	Use of expressions such as <i>tolong</i> , <i>maaf</i> , <i>permisi</i>	Pragmatic competence; appropriate language use
Indirect communication	Interpretation of implicit meanings in everyday interactions	Discourse competence; interpretation of implied meanings
Address terms	Use of <i>Bapak</i> , <i>Ibu</i> , <i>Mas</i> , <i>Mbak</i> , etc.	Sociolinguistic competence; awareness of social relationships
Concept of <i>oleh-oleh</i>	Cultural practice of giving souvenirs after travel	Intercultural awareness; understanding of social values

As shown in Table 1, each cultural element contributes to the development of specific aspects of communicative and intercultural competence. These findings provide the basis for formulating a structured culture-based learning model in BIPA instruction (Tiawati et al., 2024).

Figure 1. Culture-Based Learning Model in BIPA Instruction

Based on these findings, a culture-based learning model is proposed to systematically integrate cultural elements into the BIPA learning process. Figure 1 illustrates a four-stage culture-based learning model consisting of (1) cultural input, (2) guided practice, (3) communicative practice, and (4) intercultural reflection. The model is cyclical in nature, allowing continuous development of learners' communicative and intercultural competence. Cultural input provides authentic exposure to language in context, guided practice supports structured understanding, communicative practice enables real-life language use, and intercultural reflection fosters critical

awareness of cultural differences and similarities. The structure of this model is illustrated in Figure 1. As illustrated in Figure 1, the model follows a cyclical structure that supports continuous development of learners' communicative and intercultural competence through iterative exposure, practice, and reflection.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the integration of cultural elements plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of BIPA instruction for Russian-speaking learners. The findings clearly address the research objectives by showing that (1) Indonesian cultural elements—such as cuisine, politeness strategies, indirect communication, address terms, and the concept of *oleh-oleh*—function as essential components in contextualizing language use; (2) culture-based pedagogical strategies, including contextual dialogues, role-play, and intercultural discussions, are effective in facilitating learners' communicative competence; and (3) a culture-integrated learning model can be systematically applied in BIPA classrooms to bridge linguistic and cultural understanding. Through this integration, learners are better equipped to interpret pragmatic meanings and engage appropriately in real-life communication within Indonesian society.

The contribution of this study lies in providing a practical and pedagogically grounded model for integrating cultural elements into BIPA teaching, specifically tailored to learners from culturally distant backgrounds such as Russian speakers. This model not only strengthens communicative competence but also promotes the development of intercultural competence as a core objective of foreign language learning. However, this study is limited to a qualitative scope and a specific learner group; therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample, as well as to employ mixed-method or experimental designs to measure the effectiveness of culture-based instruction more systematically. Further studies may also explore the integration of digital tools and intercultural simulations to support BIPA learning in diverse educational contexts.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

The author solely contributed to all aspects of this study, including the conceptualization of the research, formulation of research problems, development of the theoretical framework, research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and the writing and revision of the manuscript. The author has read and approved the final version of the article.

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