BRIDGING EXPECTATIONS AND EXPERIENCES: EXPLORING TEACHER–LEARNER DYNAMICS IN THE BIPA PROGRAM

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Article Info	Abstract
	This study explored the alignment between teacher expectations and learner experiences of the BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia for Foreign Speaker) program. Since the demand for BIPA is increasing, these dynamics have to be understood in order to improve language learning outcomes. The research employed a mixed methods approach in a university in Batam and involved eight teachers and nine learners of different cultural backgrounds. Interviews, questionnaires and observations were used to gather data. The partial alignment of teacher expectations and learner experiences were found. Both focus on speaking skills and give regular feedback, but they differ in how to teach, how fast they should pace the lesson, and how to engage learners. The challenges that were faced include grammar, pronunciation and understanding spoken instructions. The research concluded that these gaps are addressed through differentiated instruction, interactive activities and culturally responsive teaching. These changes might increase learner satisfaction and program effectiveness. Research findings made clear the need for more learner centered approaches and provide important guidance for stakeholders and future studies to improve BIPA programs.

INTRODUCTION

Bahasa Indonesia recently became one recognized international language (Siregar, 2021; Audrey et al., 2023). Due to that reason, many foreigners are eager to learn Bahasa Indonesia through direct or indirect learning. The government of Indonesia created a program for foreigners to easily learn Bahasa Indonesia known as Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing (BIPA). BIPA aims to improve learners' proficiency in writing, reading, listening, and speaking Bahasa Indonesia (Kurniawan et al., 2019; Quinones & Mayrena, 2020). According to Febria (2021), English proficiency skills is one of significant skills to possessed in the current era. BIPA not only focuses on developing language proficiency but also emphasizes cultural immersion, allowing learners to better understand Indonesian customs, traditions, and societal norms (Bagus et al., 2021; Bahtiar & Nasrullah, 2019). Because of the recognition of Bahasa Indonesia as an international language, the demand for BIPA programs has risen significantly (Suprastayasa & Ariasri, 2023; Anggaira, 2023). BIPA is without a doubt one of the most important learning programs for foreigners.

Teacher expectations have a great influence on learners' learning outcomes in language learning. Chen (2005) and Hao (2023) define it as the learners' abilities assumption and concern,

namely, it is an assumption and concern about the learners' abilities to convey a positive outlook to the learners, to ignite their learning motivation, and to accomplish the levels of progress that the teachers have envisioned. Teacher expectation is shaped by several factors like the teacher's previous experience, views regarding learners' motivation, as well as learners' characteristics such as age, nationality, and education background (Aydın & Ok, 2022; Barriga et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2018). In the language learning context, the learner's expectations might be about how quickly they will learn new vocabulary, how well they will converse, or how well they will adjust to cultural differences. These expectations can have a large impact on how teachers teach and how they design learning (Denessen et al., 2020). Research has shown that teacher ex room dynamics, instructional methods, and student outcomes (Aydın & Ok, 2022; Gentrup et al., 2020 Rubie et al., 2020). When teachers have high expectations, they tend to provide more challenging and engaging assignments, including feedback providing, which can improve learners' confidence and performance. While low teacher expectations may result in less challenging assignments that potentially hinder learners' progress.

Apart from teacher expectations, learner experience is also essential in the language learning process. It refers to the learners' perceptions, responses, and performances through interaction between themselves and external conditions in the environment (Moye, 2021 Silva et al., 2023). In language learning programs like BIPA, learners not only face challenges in linguistics but also cultural ones (Febria et al., 2023; Putri Mayori et al., 2023; Zahra et al., 2023). This is because they have to adapt to a new language and the cultural context used. The linguistic and cultural background has an influence in shaping their learning experience in the BIPA program (Habók et al., 2021; Hamad et al., 2018; Liu & Rao, 2023). Learners from different cultural environments bring varying expectations, motivations, and learning styles (Marambe et al., 2012; Hernesniemi et al., 2019). It then influences how they interact with the language and their peers. In addition, learners' perceptions on their learning progress are closely related to their level of motivation (Marsevani, 2021; Topu, 2023). When they feel they are making steady progress in their language skills, their desire to learn and confidence will increase. Meanwhile, when struggling in acquiring the language, learners will have lower motivation which results in disengagement in the learning.

The role of teacher-learner relationships has a great impact on the teaching and learning process. One of which is the impact of improving learners' academic results. Teacher-learner interpersonal relationships significantly correlate with learners' academic achievement in English as a Foreign Language context, with positive emotional factors mediating this relationship (Zhang, 2022). While the teacher-learner relationship is undoubtedly a good impact, it came across some challenges. Some of the challenges are related to diverse linguistics and the cultural background of the learner. Challenges in BIPA intercultural learning include differences in perspective and cultural background, self-adaptation, heterogeneous class situations, cultural similarities seek, and learner needs (Khoirunnisa & Sunarya, 2023). Due to these challenges, teachers' expectations of the learning strategy should be in line with learners' experience with their cultural backgrounds. Aligning teacher expectations with learner experiences through diagnostic evaluations, self-evaluation, needs analysis surveys, and tailored pedagogical approaches can improve language learning outcomes (Kalashnyk et al., 2023).

Based on the observations of BIPA classes, several issues were identified across the four English proficiency skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. Signs of demotivation, lack of confidence and disengagement were present in some learners during the learning process. These problems were also found in Srikandi (2022) research where the cultural and language backgrounds of the students become the factor. More specifically, learners had difficulty pronouncing vocabulary correctly and some resorted to their mother tongue in class. As for writing, students face difficulties in word choices and sentence structures. In terms of listening,

some learners found it difficult to stay focused on what teachers were presenting, and many found language barriers that prevented them from understanding.

Some studies have focused on the research of teachers implementing proper strategies on BIPA teaching such as TPR, direct method and the use of ICT (Akmal et al., 2022; Herlina et al., 2019; Jesús Rincón-Ussa et al., 2020; Ashraf et al., 2022; Arvianto, 2020;Rahmawati et al., 2020). Studies show that the implemented methods significantly improve learners' understanding of the teaching material. EFL teachers in Indonesia use ICT tools and different strategies to enhance teaching efficacy and student engagement, leading to improved comprehension and learning outcomes (Kibar et al., 2023). Teaching strategies can have links to the expectation of the teacher and the students' own experience. Some researchers have studied that the expectations of language learning teachers are connected to learners' experience. The studies have been conducted in China, Poland, and Ghana, and other countries (Ding & Rubie-Davies, 2019; Szumski & Karwowski, 2019; Appiah et al., 2023). Studies show that teacher expectation influences and improves learners' academic results. It is implied that teachers' expectations and learners' experience could be connected to one another. These studies have provided valuable insights into the relationship between teacher expectations and learner experiences in language acquisition and shall therefore be taken as a baseline for further studies on these dynamics in the context of BIPA.

From the previous studies mentioned above, it can be highlighted that most research on teacher expectations and learner experiences has been conducted in various language learning contexts. However, no research has directly focused on the BIPA program. Previous studies on BIPA have only focused on teaching strategies which indicates a clear gap in the research in this area. Therefore, this research aims to explore how the alignment between teacher expectations and learner experiences in the BIPA program impacts learner outcomes, while also addressing the challenges that arise in bridging these expectations and experiences.

RESEARCH METHOD
Research Design
This research used a qualitative approach. Researchers used a mixed method to reinforce the study of teachers' expectations and learners' experience in BIPA. Mix methods research can enhance theoretical and practical research contributions, with benefits including increased specificity and complexity (Grant et al., 2023).

Research Participants
This research was conducted in one of the universities in Batam. Researchers selected this university as it was currently hosting a BIPA teaching program conducted by fifth-semester students, providing relevant context for the study. The participants were 8 teachers and 9 foreign learners: 8 learners from Thailand, and 1 learner from Ghana. Researchers chose the participants based on their knowledge and experience in the BIPA program. The 8 teachers were people that took prior BIPA teaching training at one of the universities in Batam, who taught BIPA classes on a rotating basis, each focusing on specific language skills.

Instruments
Researchers used semi-structured interviews to conduct data collected from the teacher. This approach was selected since its ability to be modified in response to participant replies. Should a participant bring up an unexpected yet relevant topic, the interviewer can ask follow-up questions to explore further, which would not be feasible in a fully structured interview. The interviews were adapted from Annisa & Sumaludin (2022), Khoirunnisa & Sunarya (2023), Laksono & Ismiatun (2023), Solikhah & Budiharso (2020), Tsiplakides & Keramida (2010) which focused on the teachers' expectations, teachers' challenges, and teachers' support to the learning process. Additionally, researchers used close-end questionnaires in the form of Likert

scale to gather the necessary data from the learners. This instrument was chosen by researchers because it gives them control over responses, guaranteeing that the data matches the goals of the study. It helps in focusing on specific aspects that the researchers need to measure, avoiding irrelevant or off-topic responses. The questionnaires were adapted from Kalashnyk et al (2023) Alamri (2022), Delplancq et al (2023) which focuses on the learners' challenges, learners' expectations, and learners' experiences with 5 questionnaires in each main point. Lastly, researchers used field notes observations to gather the data. Observations were chosen since it would guarantee the validity of the gathered data without any bias as well as offer narratives that help identify patterns, themes, and meanings for a deeper understanding of the subject.

Data Analysis

The data was collected through three main methods which include interview, questionnaire, and observation. The first step was to conduct field note observations. The observation was conducted twice. Researchers observed direct interactions between teachers and learners during BIPA classes. The second step was to distribute questionnaires to learners that were participating in the BIPA program and to collect quantitative data on learners' experiences, challenges, and expectations. Finally, 8 teachers were interviewed face to face to obtain more in-depth data on the participant's perspective. These methods were collected to gain a better understanding of teacher expectations and learner experiences in the BIPA program. After the data was collected, the data was analyzed using a mixed method of qualitative data and quantitative data. For qualitative data, the results of interviews were transcribed, and observations notes were read through to analyze and categorize the data per theme to find relationships between teacher expectations, learner experiences, and challenges in the BIPA program. For quantitative data, responses from questionnaires were analyzed statistically to find out learners' perceptions regarding challenges, expectations and progress in their learning. The results of the questionnaire were then summarized descriptively. Finally, conclusions would be drawn by analyzing the results of the data from the three instruments to discover the alignment and mismatch between teacher expectations and learner experiences in the BIPA program.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Research Findings

Several key recurring themes in teachers' and learners' expectations were identified from the teachers' interviews and learners' survey data. The following chart shows the primary goal of the learner for joining the program.
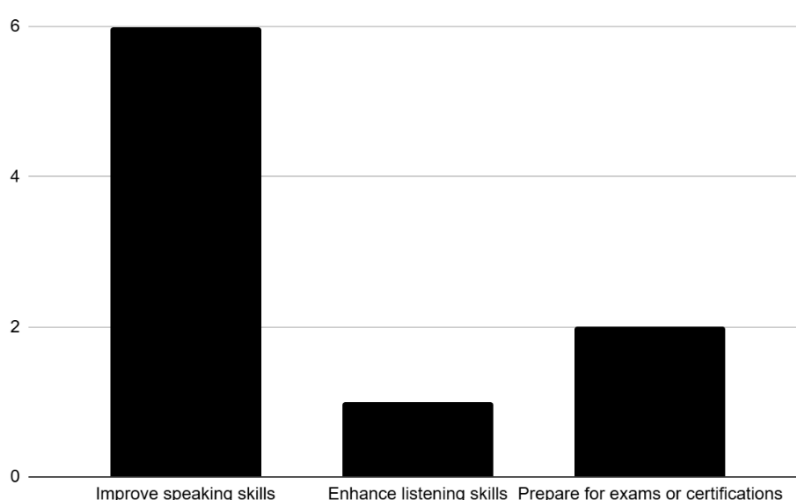

Figure 1. Learners' Goals

Figure 1 indicates that most learners prioritize improving their speaking skills. As teachers expected, teachers' interview result revealing most teachers expect learners to have basic communicative proficiency in all skills, including speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Based on the interviews, many teachers concentrate on practical language use enabling students to carry on simple conversations. It shows that teachers and learners have a shared goal. The following chart shows learners' type of learning approach that they expect from the program.
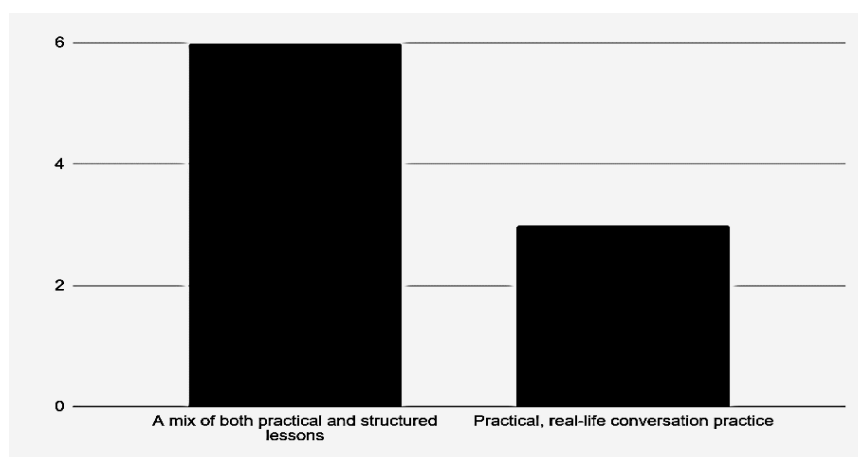

Figure 2. Learners' Learning Approach Expectations

Chart 2 shows that most of the learner's expectation on the program is to have a mix of both practical and structured lessons while the rest expected more practical conversation practice. However, classroom observation revealed limited differentiation methods, with teachers utilizing mainly lecture based instruction and assignment tasks. While teachers recognize the importance of meeting individual learning needs, the actual use of interactive and differentiated activities remains limited. This discrepancy shows that the practical, conversationally based learning approach expected by learners (as presented in Chart 2) does not match the way the learning is delivered. The following chart shows the learner's expectations on how often they receive feedback on their progress.
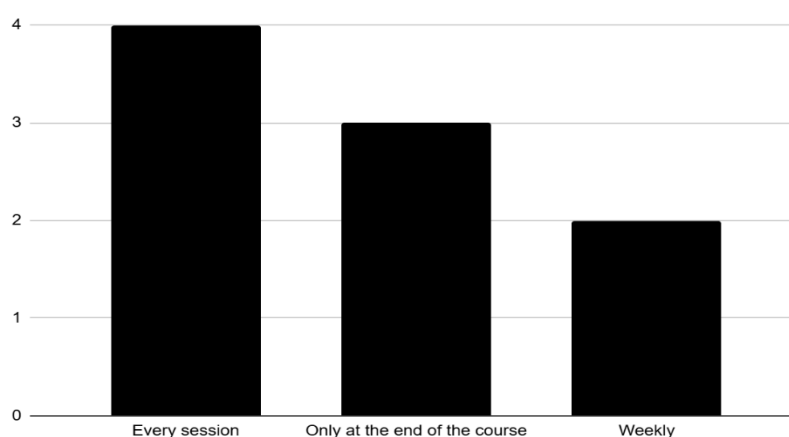

Figure 3. Learners' Feedback Expectation

Based on Chart 3, 4 learners expected to receive feedback in every session, 3 students expected to receive feedback only at the end of the course and 2 students expected to receive feedback weekly. It demonstrates that although feedback preferences differ, almost half of the learners anticipate feedback in every session. It is in line with teacher practices as they were

interviewed as engaging in one-on-one evaluation and give feedback to help students advance, listening to students speak and observe how much students were comfortable with Indonesian beyond structured tasks. Class observations confirmed that teachers frequently correct errors and provide guidance, suggesting that teachers fulfil learners' expectations about regular feedback.

While some learners have gone above and beyond teachers' expectations, in speaking and comprehension in particular, others are still falling short, especially those who are less engaged or who rely too heavily on translation tools. Some learners took their basic greetings, and progressed to delivering short presentations in Indonesian, a sign of great growth and dedication to language learning. In general, these findings indicate that establishing expectations and being flexible to student needs are important to supporting student success in BIPA programs.

Regarding learner experience, questionnaire results show varied levels of engagement. The following chart shows how often learners feel engaged during the lessons. Two learners are always engaged, five sometimes, and two often. However, classroom observations recorded low engagement, with learners participating mainly when called upon. This suggests that teacher teaching methods may not be engaging enough to stimulate voluntary participation, especially given learners' preference for interactive approaches. The following chart shows whether learners have enough opportunities to practice writing, speaking, listening and reading the language during class.
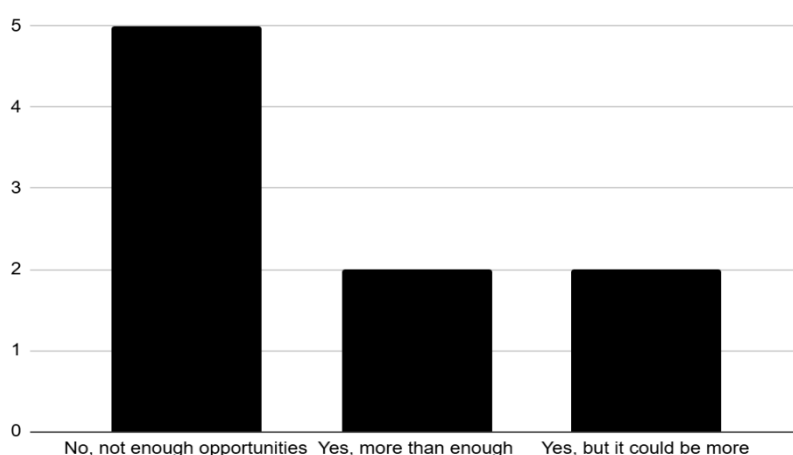

Figure 4. Learners' Opportunities

The following chart shows learner satisfaction level with the teaching methods used in the program. The findings reveal that most learners feel they lack sufficient opportunities to practice speaking, writing, reading, and listening and are neutral about the teaching methods. This indicates that teachers' approaches do not fully meet learners' preferences. The findings show also the learners' rating of their overall experience in the BIPA program. The overall experience rating of the questionnaire indicates a general satisfaction level but with room for improvement. This partly corresponds with what teachers have said about wanting more flexible materials and a more communicative approach. According to the interview, teachers proposed more interactive possibilities such as practicing with native speakers, cultural activities and personalized materials for different learning styles. Other ways to align expectations with outcomes were highlighted in the form of enhanced teacher learner communication and feedback mechanisms to create a learning environment that is both supportive and adaptive.

The interview results and learner questionnaire responses also align in several areas, particularly regarding challenges with spoken instructions, grammar, and pronunciation. The following chart shows the aspect of the language program learners find the most challenging.
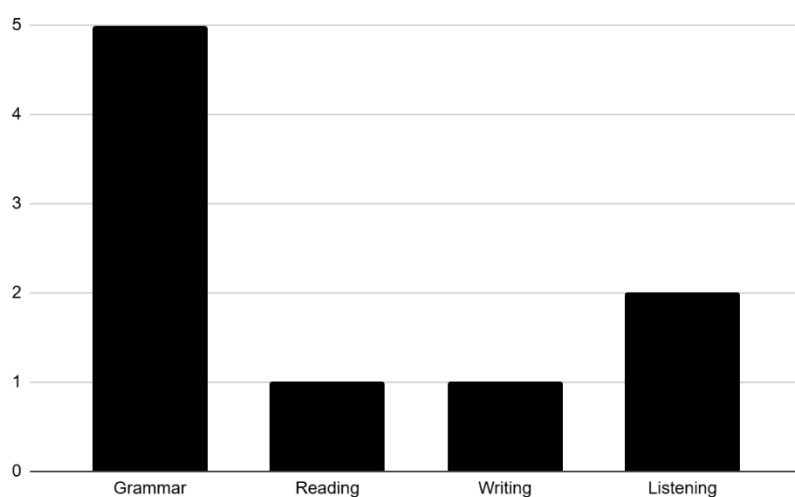
Figure 5. Learners' Most Challenging Aspects

Figure 5 shows that most learners find that grammar is the most challenging aspect in BIPA program. The other data show how frequently learners experience difficulties with language pronunciation. Most students sometimes experience difficulties with language pronunciation. Teachers noted that learners often struggle with Indonesian grammar and pronunciation, a challenge corroborated by Chart 8, where learners identified grammar as the most challenging aspect of the program. Additionally, both the interview responses and Chart 9 indicate that pronunciation difficulties are common among learners. However, there are mismatches regarding the pace and clarity of instruction. The following chart shows how often learners find it difficult to understand spoken instructions in the language class.

Most learners find the spoken instructions in BIPA program to be difficult, even 1 learner finds that the spoken instruction always difficult for the learner. While teachers strive to simplify and thoroughly explain material for struggling learners, most learners still find spoken instructions difficult to understand. The following chart shows learners' thoughts regarding the pace of the lessons and whether it is suitable for their learning needs. Most learners find the pace of the lessons is too fast while the rest find that the pace is suitable for them. This suggests a potential gap between the teachers' intentions and the learners' experiences in pacing and instructional clarity.

Discussion

Most learners' goals enrolling in BIPA program are to improve their speaking skills. Improving speaking skills is important, and meta-cognitive and cognitive strategies are the most frequently used strategies for language learners (Kehing & Yunus, 2021). Learners' goals are in line with what the teacher has expected. Most teachers expect that by improving their speaking skills, it could raise the confidence of learners in public speaking. This is in line with Amelia et al. (2022) by stating that improving speaking skills is important for gaining better understanding of information and enhancing confidence. Most learners are expecting a combination of both practical and structured lessons in their learning process. A structured approach, preparation, and planning are key elements in ensuring systematic and effective small group teaching sessions (Van Diggele et al., 2020). By using both lessons, teachers are expected to have a plethora of learning materials that assess learners' proficiency skills, especially speaking. The rest of the learners expected that the teachers would use only practical lessons in the learning process.

Feedback is an important aspect of teaching and learning processes. It allows teachers to point out the mistakes and give solutions to learners. Feedback interventions that promote

students' perceptions of relatedness, competence, and autonomy lead to increased motivation and improved performance, but its effectiveness varies across different forms of feedback (Wisniewski et al., 2020; Ajjawi et al., 2022). Most students expected that in every meeting, there would be some feedback from the teachers. Based on the learners' experience, it shows that most learners sometimes feel engaged to the learning program. Learners' engagement is crucial for creating and maintaining an effective learning process (Bellamkonda et al., 2023; Farizka et al., 2020). The lack of feeling engaged could be caused by the lack of opportunities in the classroom such as practicing writing, reading, speaking, or listening. Limited access to engaging tasks or platforms for student expression may hinder their willingness to participate, highlighting the need for inclusive and opportunity-rich learning environments (Werang & Leba, 2022).

Most learners are neutral, and some are quite satisfied with the teaching method that teachers use during the learning process. Techniques such as group discussions, hands-on activities, and multimedia presentations were particularly effective in maintaining learner engagement and facilitating deeper understanding. This is in line with (Shukla et al., 2023; Yu, 2023), The combined lecture and action method in teaching provides better performance than the face-to-face method in terms of student satisfaction. Overall experience is one of the final indications of the success of a study program, besides final test scores. Most learners are in the middle in terms of their overall experience, while some learners are satisfied with the overall experience. Some studies by (Huang et al., 2023; Davis & Knight, 2021) imply that cultural distance and foreign language presence significantly influence students' study abroad experiences and learning outcomes.

Learners identify grammar as the most challenging aspects of learning Indonesian. Septiana et al. (2021) and Pangesti et al. (2023) show that BIPA learners find grammar, particularly affixes, the most challenging. Teachers also noted that learners, especially those from language backgrounds very different from Indonesian, struggle with the nuances of grammar and pronunciation. Aligned with Lutfiana (2021), learners' problem in learning Indonesian includes the pronouncing Indonesian vocabulary, which is difficult due to strong linguistic influences from their mother tongue (Muljono et al., 2016). However, Marsevani et al. (2024) adds that difficulties that are faced by foreign students are not only limited to grammar and pronunciation, but also include speaking, reading, and writing which is caused by cultural and language background differences and lack of practice time. Despite teacher efforts to simplify explanations and adjust instruction, there is a gap between learners' perceptions of clarity and lessons pace. Spoken instruction is difficult for many learners to understand, and the learning pace is too fast. Learners who find learning unclear and too fast do not meet their learning targets (Ediger, 2012). Moreover, the struggle with lesson clarity and pace could indicate that teachers are not consistently providing comprehensible input (Bolkan et al., 2016). Without adequately simplified input, learners may find it challenging to engage with and internalize the material, leading to a perceived mismatch in instructional delivery.

While teachers strive to support struggling students, their strategies may not fully address the diverse needs of learners. Teachers work hard to help struggling students, but many of their strategies do not meet the needs of all learners. Such a disconnect suggests a need for more differentiated instruction, that is more varied teaching strategies are used to fit the various linguistic backgrounds and proficiency of learners (Gheyssens et al., 2020). Sarama et al (2021) notes that instruction should be tailored to learner's current developmental level for them to progress. Research on adaptive teaching methodologies Shahzadi et al. (2024) seems to indicate that there is not one size fits all approach that may be limiting some learners from achieving their full potential. For this reason, teachers could introduce strategies such as differentiated pacing, multimodal resources and formative feedback based on individual needs to align the intentions of teachers with the experiences of learners.

CONCLUSION

This research explored the matching between teacher expectations and learner experience in BIPA programs, offering an understanding of program strengths and weaknesses. The results show that a common goal between teachers and learners is to enhance speaking skills. Teachers want to foster all round communicative competence across a variety of language skills, but learners are interested in a mixture of practical and structured learning approaches. Finally, teachers also successfully meet learner expectations for regular feedback, even at the individualized level. There are however tough challenges, notably grammar, pronunciation and engagement. It is found that learners struggle with spoken instructions, the speed of lesson pace, and note gaps between teachers' intentions and learners' experiences. Classroom practices, which continue to heavily rely on lecture methods, lead to learners feeling under engaged and do not receive the opportunity to practice the most important language skills, which negatively impacts their satisfaction with teaching methods and on average, the overall program experience.

For BIPA program stakeholders, these findings underline the need for more learner-centered approaches. First, differentiated instruction is essential to address the diverse linguistic backgrounds and proficiency levels of learners. Teachers should utilize varied teaching strategies, such as multimodal resources and adjusted lesson pacing, to better meet individual needs. Second, fostering learner engagement is critical. Stakeholders can achieve this by integrating interactive and collaborative activities, such as role-playing, group discussions, and practice sessions with native speakers, to promote active participation. Additionally, providing learners with dedicated opportunities to practice speaking, reading, writing, and listening would ensure balanced skill development. Regular, actionable feedback mechanisms are also crucial to motivate learners and track their progress effectively. Moreover, incorporating cultural components and personalized materials into the curriculum can enhance relevance and engagement.

For future researchers, this study highlights opportunities to expand upon its findings and address limitations. Conducting similar research across multiple universities or institutions could provide broader insights and enhance the generalizability of results. Differentiated instruction and feedback could be investigated long term effects on learner outcomes in longitudinal studies. Another area of research could also be of value in exploring how to complement classroom instruction with self-directed learning and how to foster learner autonomy. Secondly, a look at the ways in which cultural differences influence learner experiences and program effectiveness would yield important information about culturally responsive teaching practices. Finally, it is obvious that the teacher's expectations should be consistent with the learner's experiences in order to increase the quality of BIPA programs. Stakeholders can fill the instructional gaps and create more effective and engaging learning environments for foreign learners of Indonesian by adopting learner centered approaches. Future research and program development should continue to focus on personalized, interactive, and culturally responsive strategies to support successful language acquisition.

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. By agreeing to take part, the participants acknowledge that they have been informed about the purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits of the study. Participants understand that their identity are kept confidential and that all information they provide are used solely for research purposes.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data utilized in this study cannot be made publicly available due to strict adherence to privacy concerns and ethical obligations that safeguard participant confidentiality. This ensures compliance with ethical research standards and data protection regulations.

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