

Culture-Based Contextual Learning to Strengthen BIPA Learners' Communicative Competence at the Indonesian Embassy in Vienna

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Submitted: 2026-02-18

Revised: 2026-03-23

Published: 2026-07-24

Abstract. The community engagement program implemented culture-based Contextual Teaching and Learning to strengthen the communicative competence of Indonesian for Speakers of Other Languages learners at the Indonesian Embassy in Vienna. Approximately 8–12 learners with diverse proficiency levels participated in three interactive sessions: a Maumere dance workshop, an Indonesian horror-film discussion, and a marketplace simulation followed by Indonesian cooking activities. Program outcomes were evaluated through participant observation, documentation, oral reflection, and performance-based assessment. The activities encouraged learners to use Indonesian in meaningful cultural contexts, resulting in greater participation, confidence, speaking fluency, and mastery of contextual vocabulary and expressions. Learners also demonstrated development in grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. Despite limitations related to time, facilities, and heterogeneous proficiency levels, culture-based contextual learning created an engaging and authentic communicative environment. This facilitation model can support overseas BIPA programs while contributing to the internationalization of Indonesian and Indonesia's cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: BIPA; communicative competence; contextual learning; culture-based learning; cultural diplomacy

How to Cite: Latupapua, F.E., Sinaga, Y., Hiariej, C., Supriyono, A.Y., Tian, S., Yatmi, N. (2026). Culture-Based Contextual Learning to Strengthen BIPA Learners' Communicative Competence at the Indonesian Embassy in Vienna. *Journal of Community Empowerment*, 6 (1), 46-56.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization and the increasing mobility of people across national borders have made foreign language proficiency not only a means of communication but also a medium for fostering intercultural understanding and international relations. In this context, language learning can no longer focus solely on the mastery of grammatical structures and vocabulary; rather, it should provide learners with opportunities to use the language communicatively within its relevant social and cultural contexts. Language and culture are inherently interconnected, as language use always occurs within specific social settings and reflects the values, norms, and worldviews of its speech community (Kramsch, 1993; Liddicoat & Scarino, 2013). Therefore, language instruction for foreign learners should ideally integrate linguistic competence with cultural understanding, enabling learners not only to produce linguistically accurate utterances but also

to use the language appropriately in diverse communicative contexts.

In the Indonesian context, this need has become increasingly significant alongside the growing international status of the Indonesian language. Indonesian was officially recognized as one of the official languages of the UNESCO General Conference through Resolution 42 C/28 on 20 November 2023 (Recognition of Bahasa Indonesia as an Official Language of the General Conference of UNESCO, 2023). This milestone further reinforces the strategic role of the BIPA program as an instrument for the internationalization of the Indonesian language and the promotion of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy. Through BIPA, Indonesian is introduced not merely as a linguistic system to be mastered but also as a gateway for international learners to understand Indonesian society and its rich cultural diversity. In line with this perspective, Aronin and Singleton (2008) argue that language learning in the era of globalization

cannot be separated from the dimensions of cultural identity and intercultural communication. Similarly, Audrey et al. (2023) found that the implementation of BIPA programs abroad serves a diplomatic function, as language instruction provides an effective medium for introducing Indonesian culture while fostering relationships with communities in partner countries.

The international expansion of BIPA programs also highlights the growing need for more adaptive instructional models. BIPA learners outside Indonesia study in environments that differ substantially from the authentic contexts in which Indonesian is naturally used. Unlike learners residing in Indonesia, who have opportunities to use the target language in their daily lives, learners abroad have relatively limited access to authentic communicative interactions. This situation may create a gap between the language learned in the classroom and the language used in the sociocultural contexts of Indonesian society. Richards (2006) argues that language learning is more effective when learners are provided with opportunities to use the target language in authentic and meaningful communicative contexts. Likewise, Purbarani and Muliastuti (2023) emphasize that the integration of language and culture in instruction does not always provide communicative experiences that adequately reflect the sociocultural contexts of Indonesia, particularly for foreign learners with varying levels of language proficiency.

These challenges are also evident in the implementation of BIPA programs in Vienna, Austria. The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) in Vienna is one of the institutions that offers Indonesian language instruction for international learners. In 2025, KBRI Vienna, in collaboration with the University of Vienna, organized the BIPA Winter Semester (WiSe) 2025 Program, which consisted of BIPA 1, BIPA 2, BIPA 3, BIPA 4, a Conversation Class, and a Children's Class. According to data provided by the Information, Social, and Cultural Affairs Section (*Penerangan, Sosial, dan Budaya*—Pensosbud) of KBRI Vienna for this program, the overall enrollment comprised 76 learners, including 38 in BIPA 1, 10 in BIPA 2, 6 in BIPA 3, 8 in BIPA 4, 5 in the Conversation Class, and 9 in the Children's Class. Most classes were conducted at the University of Vienna. In addition to these regular classes, a Cultural Class was organized at KBRI Vienna to provide learners with opportunities to engage more closely with the Indonesian language and culture.

The Cultural Class occupies a significant position within the BIPA program because it provides a relatively flexible learning environment that integrates language practice with cultural experiences. However, based on the partner institution's needs assessment, the implementation of this class faces several challenges, including the heterogeneous language proficiency levels of learners, limited opportunities to use Indonesian authentically in their daily environment, and the need for cultural learning activities that go beyond introducing knowledge about Indonesia by actively encouraging learners to use the language. Furthermore, the Cultural Class is not entirely bound by the regular BIPA curriculum, requiring instructors to design instructional materials and learning activities that accommodate learners' diverse characteristics. These conditions underscore the need for a learning environment that provides authentic communicative experiences. This perspective is consistent with Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which posits that learning occurs most effectively through social interaction and collaborative activities that enable learners to construct knowledge collectively.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of integrating cultural elements into BIPA instruction. Rachman et al. (2019) found that culture constitutes an essential component of BIPA learning because it enables learners to understand language use within the cultural contexts of Indonesian society. Their study also revealed that although learners demonstrate considerable interest in Indonesian culture, the presentation of cultural content in language instruction still requires more engaging instructional media and authentic learning experiences. These findings suggest that culture should not be treated merely as supplementary information in BIPA instruction but rather as a meaningful context that facilitates authentic language use.

From the perspective of contextual learning, Rumindah et al. (2025) demonstrated that a contextual approach to BIPA instruction enhances learners' language proficiency while simultaneously fostering a deeper understanding of Indonesian culture. By connecting learning materials with learners' everyday experiences and cultural values, this approach makes language learning more relevant and meaningful. Similarly, research on the integration of culinary activities into BIPA instruction has shown that cultural

activities can serve as engaging and meaningful language-learning media, helping learners understand the social, cultural, and historical dimensions of Indonesia (Saddhono et al., 2024). Collectively, these studies indicate a growing consensus that integrating contextual and cultural dimensions contributes positively to the effectiveness of BIPA instruction.

Nevertheless, previous studies have primarily focused on the implementation of culture-based instruction, the development of teaching materials, the effectiveness of contextual learning approaches, and the role of BIPA as an instrument of language and cultural diplomacy. There remains considerable scope for developing community engagement practices that directly implement culture-based contextual learning facilitation within overseas BIPA programs, particularly in classes characterized by heterogeneous levels of language proficiency. Moreover, the BIPA context in Vienna presents unique characteristics, as learners study Indonesian at a considerable distance from the social environment in which the language is naturally used. Consequently, there is a need to create a micro-context or learning environment that represents authentic communicative situations, enabling learners to connect their linguistic knowledge with real communicative practice. This perspective is consistent with Ellis (2003), who argues that second language acquisition is more effective when learners are provided with opportunities to use the target language in meaningful and contextualized interactions.

Based on this gap, the present community engagement program was designed as a culture-based contextual learning facilitation initiative implemented in the Cultural Class at KBRI Vienna. The facilitation approach positioned culture not merely as an object of instruction but as the very context in which communication takes place. This principle was realized through three major learning experiences: (1) practicing the Maumere dance while integrating language instructions and communicative interaction; (2) exploring Indonesian horror films as a medium for understanding narrative structures and engaging in cross-cultural comparison; and (3) participating in a market simulation and Indonesian cooking activities that provided learners with opportunities to use Indonesian in transactional communication and collaborative tasks. These learning experiences were designed to compensate for learners' limited exposure to authentic Indonesian

language environments while creating meaningful opportunities to practice vocabulary, contextual expressions, and communication strategies in realistic situations.

Accordingly, this community engagement program aimed to facilitate the implementation of culture-based contextual learning in order to strengthen the communicative competence of BIPA learners in the Cultural Class at KBRI Vienna. Specifically, the program sought to create learning experiences that encouraged active participation and increased learners' confidence in using Indonesian, expanded their mastery of contextual vocabulary and expressions, and enhanced their understanding of language use within Indonesian cultural contexts. More broadly, this initiative is expected to generate a best practice model for culture-based BIPA learning facilitation that can be sustainably implemented by partner institutions while contributing to the internationalization of the Indonesian language and the promotion of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy through BIPA programs abroad.

METHODS

The community engagement program employed a participatory facilitation approach, actively involving BIPA learners in every stage of the culture-based contextual learning process. The program was conducted in the Cultural Class of the BIPA Winter Semester (WiSe) 2025 Program at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) in Vienna, Austria. Each session involved approximately 8–12 learners. Participants represented diverse levels of Indonesian language proficiency; therefore, the facilitation activities were designed to be flexible and adaptive to their varying communicative abilities. The Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach was implemented by linking the use of the Indonesian language with cultural experiences and authentic communicative situations. This approach enabled learners to actively use the target language in meaningful contexts while engaging in culturally grounded learning activities.

The implementation of the program consisted of three phases: planning, facilitation, and evaluation. The planning phase began with coordination between the community engagement team and the partner institution to identify learners' characteristics and needs and to determine learning activities aligned with the objectives of the Cultural Class. Based on the

outcomes of this coordination, the team developed contextual learning materials and activities that integrated language skills with the introduction of Indonesian culture. The instructional materials were designed to accommodate learners' diverse proficiency levels while creating learning situations that enabled participants to interact in Indonesian through direct cultural experiences.

The facilitation phase was conducted through three interactive sessions, each focusing on a different cultural theme. The first session integrated language learning with the practice of the Maumere dance, providing learners with opportunities to understand and use vocabulary and instructional expressions related to movement and performance. The second session employed Indonesian horror films as instructional media to introduce vocabulary, expressions, narrative structures, and the sociocultural contexts of Indonesia through listening, group discussions, and reflective responses. The third session consisted of a market simulation and Indonesian cooking activities, allowing learners to use Indonesian in authentic communicative situations, such as reading recipes, identifying food ingredients, conducting simple transactions, following instructions, collaborating in groups, and presenting the outcomes of their activities. Throughout each session, the community engagement team acted as facilitators by providing guidance, reinforcing vocabulary and contextual expressions, correcting language use, and offering feedback on learners' communicative performance.

The evaluation phase was conducted continuously throughout and after the implementation of the program to assess the achievement of its facilitation objectives. Data were collected through participant observation, activity documentation, oral reflection, and

performance-based assessment of learners' use of Indonesian during the learning activities. The evaluation focused on learners' active participation, confidence in using Indonesian, mastery of contextual vocabulary and expressions, interactional ability, and the use of communication strategies when encountering linguistic limitations. The evaluation data were subsequently reduced, categorized according to indicators of communicative competence, and interpreted descriptively based on the principles of contextual learning. The findings were used to describe the observed changes throughout the program while serving as a basis for reflecting on its effectiveness, identifying implementation challenges, and considering the sustainability of the culture-based contextual learning facilitation program in the Cultural Class at KBRI Vienna.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The community engagement program was implemented through three main phases: planning, implementation, and evaluation, as described below.

Planning

The planning phase was carried out through two online coordination meetings held on 12 October and 20 October 2025. During this stage, the community engagement team developed the technical plan for the program, including the preparation of instructional materials and the design of learning activities to be conducted in the Cultural Class. The proposed plan was subsequently coordinated with the partner institution to obtain approval for the program and to reach mutual agreement on the technical aspects of its implementation.



Figure 1. Activities on day one: the *maumere* dance from Indonesia



Figure 2. Activities on day two Indonesian horror films

Program Implementation

The first session was attended by eight BIPA learners representing different proficiency levels. The session began with an opening and a brief self-introduction activity. The instructors, Falantino Eryk Latupapua and Yunita Sinaga, warmly welcomed the participants and explained the objectives of the Cultural Class, namely to introduce Indonesian culture through interactive activities while enhancing the learners' communicative competence in Indonesian. Each participant was invited to introduce themselves, using Indonesian as much as possible. The introductions were delivered primarily in Indonesian, with English used only when necessary, allowing the instructors to identify the learners' initial speaking proficiency and vocabulary repertoire.

The introductory activity also provided learners with opportunities to practice basic vocabulary while fostering a supportive and interactive classroom atmosphere. At this stage, the instructors emphasized the importance of active participation and the confidence to communicate in Indonesian, encouraging learners to express their ideas and share their experiences during the subsequent learning activities.

Following the introductory session, the instructors provided a brief overview of the Maumere dance to ensure that learners who had not previously attended the Conversation Class acquired a structured understanding of its cultural background. Visual presentations and video demonstrations were used as supporting instructional media, enabling learners to gain a clearer understanding of the dance movements and rhythm. The instructors also introduced key

vocabulary related to the dance, including terms for movements, musical accompaniment, and emotional expressions, which were subsequently applied during the practical activities.

After developing an understanding of the cultural background of the dance, learners were invited to share their personal perspectives or experiences related to Indonesian dance and culture. This activity encouraged them to begin using Indonesian more actively while connecting the cultural content with their own experiences. Learners then practiced the Maumere dance under the guidance of the instructors. The movements were demonstrated step by step, and the learners imitated them in sequence. Throughout the practice session, the instructors provided immediate feedback on learners' pronunciation, reinforced the instructional vocabulary and expressions used during the activity, and corrected the accuracy of the dance movements. This integrated approach enabled learners to internalize both linguistic and cultural knowledge simultaneously. Moreover, the collaborative nature of the activity fostered social interaction among learners, strengthening interpersonal relationships and enhancing their confidence in using Indonesian.

The session concluded with a reflective discussion. Each learner was invited to share brief reflections on their experiences during the dance practice, either in Indonesian or, when necessary, in English. The instructors reinforced the vocabulary and expressions used by the learners while providing corrective feedback to promote accurate and communicative language use. This reflection served as an informal evaluation of the learners' language development and further strengthened their understanding of the cultural



Figure 3. Activities on day three Indonesian cooking workshop

significance of the Maumere dance. Overall, the first session successfully integrated language learning with cultural experience, fostering learners' communicative competence, intercultural awareness, and active participation.

The second session began with an opening activity followed by an interactive ice-breaking session. The instructors, Falantino Eryk Latupapua and Yunita Sinaga, welcomed the learners and introduced the learning objectives for the day, which focused on understanding narrative structures and cultural contexts through film. This instructional theme was selected to promote intercultural learning in relation to the Halloween celebration, which takes place during the final week of October. Halloween is widely celebrated in Austria, as well as in the United States and many other European countries. Several learners attended the session wearing Halloween costumes, demonstrating their enthusiasm for engaging in intercultural learning experiences through the activity.

As a warm-up activity, learners were invited to talk about their favorite horror films from their respective countries and explain the reasons for their choices. This activity not only introduced learners to basic vocabulary related to films and emotions but also created a friendly classroom atmosphere and encouraged active participation from the outset.

Following the introductory activities, the instructors screened an Indonesian horror film with English subtitles to facilitate learners' comprehension of the storyline. Before and during the screening, the instructors provided contextual explanations of the film's cultural background, characters, plot, and the traditions and social values represented in the narrative. They also highlighted key vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and commonly used phrases appearing in the dialogue, thereby equipping learners with the linguistic resources necessary to

comprehend the film more effectively. This session was designed to enable learners to connect language use with its cultural context and to understand how meaning is constructed through language in cinematic discourse.

At the end of the screening, the instructors and the partner team announced the winners of the Best Halloween Costume competition. Subsequently, several learners were invited to share their reflections and opinions about their viewing experience. The instructors reinforced the vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and communicative phrases used by the learners while providing corrective feedback to promote accurate and effective language use. This reflective discussion served not only as an informal assessment of the learners' language development but also as an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the cultural contexts and social values represented in Indonesian horror films. Based on the smooth implementation of the session and the learners' active responses, the second meeting of the community engagement program successfully integrated language learning with cultural exploration, thereby enhancing both learners' communicative competence and their intercultural awareness.

Due to the limited capacity of the kitchen facilities at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) in Vienna, which served as the venue for the cooking workshop, participation in the third session was limited to 12 learners. Prior to the cooking activity, the instructors prepared a simulated marketplace within the classroom by arranging a variety of ingredients required for preparing three Indonesian dishes and beverages: *Kolak Campur*, *Bakwan Sayur*, and *Air Guraka*. To facilitate the implementation of the activity, the learners were divided into three groups, with each group assigned to prepare one of the featured dishes or beverages.

The session began with an opening activity followed by an interactive ice-breaking exercise. The instructors, Falantino Eryk Latupapua and Yunita Sinaga, welcomed the learners and introduced the objectives of the session, namely to familiarize participants with Indonesian cooking-related vocabulary, phrases, and instructional expressions while introducing them to Indonesia's culinary culture. As an initial activity, learners were invited to mention traditional Indonesian foods that they had previously known or tasted. This discussion served as a warm-up activity that fostered a friendly classroom atmosphere and encouraged learners to participate actively in Indonesian from the beginning of the session.

Each learner received a recipe written in Indonesian and was asked to prepare notes outlining the cooking procedures. This activity was designed to develop learners' ability to read authentic recipes carefully, recognize vocabulary related to cooking ingredients and kitchen utensils, and practice communicative interaction in Indonesian through a simulated shopping activity. During this simulation, the instructors assumed the role of market vendors, while the learners negotiated prices, requested ingredients, and engaged in simple transactional conversations using relevant Indonesian vocabulary and expressions. This authentic communicative setting made both the linguistic and cultural contexts more meaningful and engaging.

After completing the marketplace activity, each group proceeded to the cooking workshop. Learners collaboratively followed the recipe instructions while using Indonesian vocabulary and expressions to communicate, coordinate tasks, and ensure that each stage of the cooking process was completed correctly. Throughout the activity, the instructors provided continuous facilitation and guidance to all three groups, ensuring both the accuracy of the cooking procedures and the appropriate use of Indonesian during group interactions.

Upon completing the cooking activities, each group presented its dishes and explained the cooking process and learning experiences in Indonesian. The instructors provided constructive feedback on learners' vocabulary use, sentence structure, and communicative expressions, enabling them to strengthen their language proficiency through an enjoyable and collaborative learning experience. The session concluded with a communal tasting, during which both learners and instructors sampled the prepared dishes and beverages together.

The program concluded with a reflective discussion. Learners shared their experiences and impressions of both the marketplace simulation and the cooking workshop. The instructors reviewed the new vocabulary, phrases, and expressions that had emerged during the activities and provided corrective feedback whenever necessary. This reflective session served as an informal assessment of learners' language development while reinforcing their understanding of Indonesian culinary culture. Overall, the third session successfully integrated language learning with cultural experience, simultaneously enhancing learners' communicative competence, collaborative skills, and intercultural awareness.

Analysis of the Achievement of Program Objectives

The implementation of the culture-based contextual learning facilitation program in the Cultural Class at KBRI Vienna successfully achieved its primary objective of strengthening the communicative competence of BIPA learners through learning experiences that integrated the Indonesian language and culture. The achievement of this objective was reflected in learners' increased active participation throughout the program, greater confidence in using Indonesian during classroom interactions, expanded mastery of contextual vocabulary and expressions, and enhanced understanding of Indonesian culture as the context in which the language is used. These findings indicate that the learning process extended beyond the acquisition of linguistic knowledge to the development of learners' ability to use the language appropriately in authentic communicative situations.

This achievement can be attributed to the implementation of the Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) approach, which places authentic learning experiences at the center of the instructional process. According to Johnson (2002), contextual learning enables learners to construct knowledge by connecting instructional content with real-life experiences, thereby making learning more meaningful. This finding is consistent with the study of Rumindah et al. (2025b), which demonstrated that applying a contextual approach in BIPA instruction enhances language proficiency while simultaneously strengthening learners' cultural understanding by linking instructional materials to their everyday experiences.

These principles were operationalized throughout the facilitation program by integrating cultural practices directly into the use of Indonesian. The Maumere dance workshop provided learners with opportunities to acquire vocabulary, instructional expressions, and communicative phrases associated with movement and performance. Through a combination of demonstrations, guided practice, and direct interaction, learners connected linguistic forms with meaningful actions, allowing language acquisition to occur in a more natural manner. During the Indonesian horror film discussion, learners developed their listening skills, expanded their vocabulary, expressed personal opinions, and compared Indonesian beliefs regarding the supernatural with the Halloween traditions familiar in their own cultural backgrounds. Likewise, the marketplace simulation and cooking workshop created communicative situations that closely resembled everyday interactions, enabling learners to use Indonesian while reading recipes, identifying ingredients, conducting simple transactions, following instructions, and collaborating within their groups. These learning experiences demonstrate that language is acquired most effectively through meaningful social interaction rather than through isolated linguistic exercises.

From the perspective of communicative competence, the facilitation program contributed to improvements across several dimensions of learners' language abilities. Canale and Swain (1980) conceptualize communicative competence as comprising grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competencies, all of which interact to support effective language use. Throughout the program, learners demonstrated increased mastery of vocabulary and simple sentence structures (grammatical competence), improved ability to select expressions appropriate to different communicative situations (sociolinguistic competence), enhanced capacity to present experiences and opinions coherently (discourse competence), and greater ability to sustain communication through paraphrasing, gestures, and the strategic use of familiar vocabulary when confronted with linguistic limitations (strategic competence). These findings indicate that culture-based learning activities not only enriched learners' linguistic knowledge but also strengthened their ability to use Indonesian effectively in authentic communication.

The findings of this program further reinforce previous studies emphasizing the importance of

integrating culture into BIPA instruction. Rachman et al. (2019) argue that culture constitutes a fundamental component of BIPA learning because it enables learners to understand language use within the sociocultural contexts of Indonesian society. Their study also found that although learners exhibit strong interest in cultural content, they require more authentic learning experiences to develop communicative competence optimally. Similarly, Rumindah et al. (2025a) reported that contextual learning approaches improve language skills while simultaneously enhancing cultural understanding by connecting instructional materials with learners' real-life experiences.

Throughout the implementation of the program, learners demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm and engagement in all learning activities. They actively participated in cultural practices, group discussions, the marketplace simulation, and the cooking workshop. Although some learners initially relied on English when they encountered difficulties expressing their ideas, the frequency of English use gradually declined as their Indonesian vocabulary and communicative repertoire expanded during the facilitation process. This progression reflects growing confidence in using Indonesian as the primary medium of communication. Learners' positive feedback further supported this observation, indicating that culture-based learning activities provided more engaging, enjoyable, and comprehensible learning experiences than instruction relying primarily on textbooks. Several participants also reported that the marketplace simulation before the cooking workshop helped them understand the practical use of vocabulary in authentic communicative situations, while the dance workshop and film discussion deepened their appreciation of Indonesia's cultural diversity.

In addition to benefiting the learners, the facilitation program also generated valuable outcomes for both the instructors and the partner institution. Throughout the program, the instructors acted as facilitators by providing continuous guidance, corrective feedback, vocabulary reinforcement, and support for learners' communicative performance. This process also served as a reflective opportunity for instructors to develop instructional strategies that were more responsive to the needs of linguistically heterogeneous classrooms. For KBRI Vienna, the program produced a best practice model of culture-based contextual learning that can be further developed in future Cultural Class

programs as part of Indonesia's language and cultural diplomacy initiatives. This finding is consistent with Josephine Audrey et al. (2023), who argue that BIPA programs implemented abroad function not only as language-learning initiatives but also as instruments of cultural diplomacy that strengthen Indonesia's international image.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that integrating the CTL approach with cultural activities creates a communicative, participatory, and meaningful learning environment. Rather than focusing primarily on the transmission of knowledge, the instructional process emphasized the creation of authentic learning experiences that enabled learners to use Indonesian in diverse communicative situations. Therefore, the objective of this community engagement program to strengthen the communicative competence of BIPA learners through culture-based contextual learning facilitation in the Cultural Class at KBRI Vienna can be considered successfully achieved.

Reflective Evaluation of the Program Implementation

Overall, the implementation of the BIPA Cultural Class community engagement program within the Winter Semester (WiSe) 2025 Program at KBRI Vienna yielded positive outcomes in achieving its facilitation objectives, although several aspects require further improvement. From a reflective perspective, the program successfully integrated language learning with authentic cultural experiences in accordance with the principles of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL). Johnson (2002) argues that contextual learning enables learners to construct knowledge by connecting instructional content with real-life experiences, thereby making learning more meaningful. These principles were operationalized through a series of cultural activities, including the Maumere dance workshop, discussions of Indonesian horror films, a marketplace simulation, and an Indonesian cooking workshop. Collectively, these activities provided authentic learning experiences that enabled learners to use Indonesian in meaningful communicative contexts. The facilitation outcomes demonstrated increased learner participation, greater confidence in speaking Indonesian, and expanded mastery of thematic vocabulary and contextual expressions. Furthermore, the four dimensions of communicative competence: grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic

competence, developed in an integrated manner through these culture-based learning activities (Canale & Swain, 1980).

One of the program's principal strengths lies in its learner-centered instructional design, which was characterized by variety, innovation, and experiential learning. Each session incorporated different cultural media, including traditional dance, film, and Indonesian culinary practices, allowing learners to engage through physical participation, cognitive analysis, and social interaction. For example, the marketplace simulation preceding the cooking workshop proved particularly effective in encouraging the authentic use of Indonesian while simultaneously developing learners' communicative abilities in everyday situations. Throughout the program, the instructors consistently reinforced vocabulary and communicative expressions, provided pronunciation correction, and offered constructive feedback, enabling learners to improve their language use immediately. The integration of cultural content throughout each activity further clarified the contexts in which Indonesian is naturally used and contributed to the creation of meaningful learning experiences. These findings are consistent with those of Rachman et al. (2019), who argue that integrating culture into BIPA instruction helps learners understand language use within the sociocultural contexts of Indonesian society. Likewise, Rumindah et al. (2025) demonstrated that contextual approaches to BIPA instruction enhance language proficiency while strengthening cultural understanding through authentic learning experiences.

Despite these positive outcomes, several challenges emerged during the implementation of the program and should be considered in future initiatives. First, the time allocated for each session was relatively limited, preventing some learning activities from being implemented to their full potential. The dance workshop and cooking activities, for instance, required additional time to ensure that all learners could participate fully without reducing opportunities for discussion and reflection. Second, differences in learners' language proficiency resulted in uneven participation, with some learners engaging more actively while others remained relatively passive. This finding highlights the need for more adaptive facilitation strategies, including flexible grouping, differentiated learning tasks, and individualized support based on learners' proficiency levels. Third, the implementation of culture-based learning activities required

extensive logistical preparation, particularly with regard to instructional materials, cooking ingredients, and the organization of learning spaces. Finally, limitations in classroom space and facilities during practical sessions prevented all learners from participating simultaneously, indicating the need for more effective group management in future implementations.

Based on this reflective evaluation, it can be concluded that the culture-based CTL approach possesses considerable potential for strengthening the communicative competence of BIPA learners. The success of the program demonstrates that language learning becomes more effective when it is integrated with authentic cultural experiences and actively engages learners in meaningful participation. Nevertheless, maximizing the effectiveness of such facilitation programs requires more comprehensive planning, efficient time management, instructional strategies that accommodate learners' diverse proficiency levels, and adequate logistical support. This experience suggests that the success of culture-based BIPA instruction depends not only on the creativity involved in designing learning activities but also on instructors' capacity to engage in continuous reflection, respond adaptively to learners' needs, and refine their instructional strategies over time.

CONCLUSION

The culture-based contextual learning program successfully created participatory and meaningful opportunities for BIPA learners at the Indonesian Embassy in Vienna to use Indonesian in authentic communicative contexts. The Maumere dance workshop, Indonesian horror-film discussion, marketplace simulation, and cooking activities enabled learners to connect linguistic forms with Indonesian cultural practices. The observed outcomes included greater participation and confidence, broader mastery of contextual vocabulary and expressions, and integrated development of grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. The program nevertheless faced limitations related to its short implementation period, small number of participants, heterogeneous proficiency levels, limited facilities, and absence of long-term assessment. Future programs should provide differentiated tasks, longer practice sessions, structured pre- and post-assessments, and follow-up evaluation. Developing reusable culture-based CTL modules and strengthening collaboration

among BIPA providers would also support program sustainability. Overall, the model has the potential to be adapted for overseas BIPA programs and to contribute to the internationalization of Indonesian and the advancement of Indonesia's cultural diplomacy.

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