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The strengths and weaknesses of the BIPA curriculum as an Indonesian teaching guideline for foreign speakers: A review of the literature 2018-2023

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Abstract

A robust standard in the language teaching process is crucial since this is the primary guidance in the Indonesian language for non-native speakers (BIPA). A systematic literature review of 64 journal articles from 2018 to 2023 reveals comprehensive teaching resources, the flexibility for lecturers to innovate, and the incorporation of local wisdom in learning materials for students' cultural immersion, supporting language acquisition. However, weaknesses include overly broad content and insufficient guidance on promoting inclusivity, hindering students' diverse cultural backgrounds. I identified articles matching the selection criteria from titles, aims, and methods to findings. Based on these points, this article highlights more dynamic and adaptive curriculum development needs that respond to global demands. Future studies may focus on developing the curriculum, improving teacher training, and creating inclusive assessments aligned with language proficiency and character development goals to enrich and globalise the BIPA program, supporting the diverse needs of students in an interconnected world.

INTRODUCTION

A valid standard in language teaching and learning is crucial due to a primary core in improving students' skills in terms of language proficiency, including in BIPA (Bahasa Indonesian bagi Penutur Asing or the Indonesian for non-native speakers). Therefore, the Indonesian authority is concerned with the BIPA curriculum for international students in Indonesia's higher education (HE) institutions (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2017; Septiana *et al.*, 2023). As an Indonesian language learning program to be attended before taking courses at any HE institution, both undergraduate and postgraduate programs, BIPA aims to support the academic life and future of international students' plans in Indonesia (Kusmiatun, 2016).

Since 2016, the number of foreigners has grown in their interest in living, studying, or investing in Indonesia as the agreement of the ASEAN Economic Community allows everyone in this country to improve their standard of living (Ngelu, 2015). In addition, Indonesia has a quite promising National Income (NI); due to the country's strategic position, factors such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and mining can provide significant returns for investors (Lubis & Zulam, 2016). Unfortunately, in the 2023 English Proficiency Index (EPI) Report, Indonesia was ranked 79th out of 113 countries worldwide (First, 2023), thus urging international students to learn Indonesian and communicate well in the community.

BIPA has changed in the last few years, especially regarding language framework, learning materials, and available resources (Sudaryanto & Widodo, 2020). From 1999 to 2016, the Indonesian government adopted the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR),

an international standard to describe foreign language ability, without analysing student needs (Sudaryanto & Widodo, 2020). Despite having different classroom contexts, BIPA teachers had no other option but to apply this CEFR-based curriculum in their classes, forcing them to adapt it to various situations (Septiana *et al.*, 2023).

To address this problem, the Indonesian government issued a new curriculum through the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Permendikbud) Number 27 of 2017, containing several updates related to the competency levels, textbooks, and learning objectives in terms of both cognitive abilities and soft skills (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017). Such curriculum changes have strengths and weaknesses (Yulisan *et al.*, 2024). Concerning the BIPA program, this impact can be seen in the restructuring of BIPA teaching at all levels, especially in HE institutions, where lecturers have to adjust their learning materials, teaching approaches, or even teaching methodologies as the previous curriculum was inadequate to meet learning demands (Kurniawan *et al.*, 2022; Sudaryanto & Widodo, 2020). The CEFR-based curriculum requires expansion and updates in terms of improving language abilities, learning engagement, and interaction (North & Panthier, 2016), which have been done by BIPA teachers in their classes regardless of the difficulties they encountered in restructuring the curriculum.

Nevertheless, many studies about the updated BIPA curriculum in Indonesia's context of HE institutions argue the strengths and weaknesses. By reviewing the literature, this article is expected to find evidence-based practice to provide several recommendations for improving BIPA teaching and learning in Indonesian tertiary institutions and inspire policymakers and researchers in the field of education to pay more attention to this topic from various perspectives.

METHOD

A. A systematic review process

This research utilised the review of a systematic approach to synthesise evidence about the BIPA curriculum implementation, centring on the strengths and weaknesses viewpoints. This approach was informed by the PRISMA checklist (Page *et al.*, 2021), a guideline for organising systematic reviews in a structured and robust way, outlining clear steps for researchers.

The first approach started by developing guiding keywords for searching supportive literature. The table 1 below shows the keywords which opted to search related studies.

Table 1 Related keywords

Keywords	Strength	Weakness	BIPA curriculum
Related words	Implementation, opportunity, inclusion, kelebihan (advantageous/benefits)	Challenge, implementation, kelemahan (drawbacks/disadvantageous)	Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing, BIPA teaching, Bahasa Indonesia to speakers of other languages, BIPA policy, language policy, TISOL.

All searches started or ended with "higher education", "perguruan tinggi", "university", or "Universitas", which are the key contexts for this review. Besides, since the study focuses on the result of the BIPA curriculum implementation from the strong and weak points, I also included keywords related to outcome, impact, language acquisition, and influence. These keywords were based on prior systematic reviews of the BIPA curriculum (Hamied and Musthafa, 2019; Kusuma & Ismail, 2017; Kusuma, 2019; Solikhah & Budiharso, 2020; Sutjipto *et al.*, 2023). Apart from that, I applied the Boolean operators, such as "AND" and "OR", to search the keywords effectively (Chalmers et al., 2024).

In the following stage, all searches with related words were applied to five academic research indexes: Google Scholar, Scopus, British Education Index, and ERIC (Institute of Educati-

on Sciences). Since the implementation of the BIPA curriculum in higher education is commonly mentioned, this study is merely limited searches to titles, keywords, and abstracts.

B. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The initial research found 137 journal articles. This research utilised management software (EndNote) to extract the database results. Furthermore, linking to the review's aims, this research created inclusion and exclusion criteria for evaluating and filtering the database based on several objectives (Tricco *et al.*, 2018), summarised in Table 2.

Table 2 Frequency, mean and standard deviation on sources of cultural beliefs held by students

Inclusion criteria
Focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of the BIPA curriculum implementation in higher education topically
Covers some empirical or practical data (e.g., not only theory)
Shows a measurable impact on the BIPA teaching and learning of international students
Published between January 2018 and December 2023
The context within higher education (private or public)
Published in open-access or in peer-reviewed journal articles

Exclusion criteria
Just include fully theoretical or conceptual data
Does not have a connection to the BIPA curriculum implementation in higher education
Does not show a measurable impact on the BIPA teaching and learning of international students
Published before January 2018 or after December 2023
The context is not in higher education (private or public)
Published in formats other than open-access or peer-reviewed journal articles

This research included articles related to implementing the BIPA curriculum in higher education in the broadest possible definition. Nevertheless, the implementation of the BIPA curriculum must have been narrowed to the explicit focus, as indicated by the article title, keywords, abstract, research question, or methodology (Mittelmeier *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, the articles that were included must have focused on the BIPA curriculum or the ways the BIPA curriculum impacts the teaching and learning of BIPA either from lecturers, students, or the process. I also included articles from empirical data to conceptual explorations (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods), meaning conceptual explanations were excluded. For the place criteria of the articles, this study did not use it to develop broad contexts and provide evidence-based approaches to the BIPA curriculum implementation. Due to access matters, this research merely included open-access and peer-reviewed journal articles.

The specific dates for the articles' standard and search were between January 2018 and December 2023. I fully acknowledge that the BIPA curriculum research topic in the higher education context has not been established well over time. Thus, a limited number of articles were linked to the inclusion criteria and supported the research aims in synthesising the literature. To filter it, the title and abstracts were necessary. Nevertheless, the full texts will be reviewed in the first step to screen and remove unrelated articles that match the exclusion criteria. As a result, this research removed entirely conceptual articles (n=13) and was not focused on lecturers, students, or the learning process in higher education (n=60). Therefore, 64 articles remained after this selection step.

C. Impact criteria

The ultimate stage filtered the articles based on the level of the impact categorisations in language education, meaning the prior research was published in high-impact journals or often used by other scholars (Arsyad, 2024). The categorisations were divided into two points: designed for impact, reflected impact, and limited impact (Mittelmeier *et al.*, 2022). I am aware that these standards cannot facilitate the entire part but only focus on impacts on lecturers, international students, or the learning process experiences.

There are three divided impacts: designed for impact, reflected impact, and limited impact. Designed for impact means that the articles evaluated practical impacts on lecturers, international students, or the learning process experiences. This can be achieved through assessments in the local institutions, evidence-based on other types of research methodologies (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, etc), or direct impact on the BIPA teaching and learning process (positive, negative, or neutral). Afterwards, the reflected impact was needed to connect with the authors through discussions or conclusions, but the findings did not provide significant impacts. Finally, limited impact utilised the primary data. However, it provided descriptive case studies, broader discussions connected to the BIPA learning process or the curriculum implementation, and reflections on the teaching and learning process in a broad way. This can be categorised as potential future research or interest. These categorisations were helpful in the analysis and findings sections because each theme is arranged according to the level of impact in this research design.

D. Study limitation

This research has limitations in the approach and the number of prior literatures. First, during the search process, this may have missed supporting articles not covered to be analysed based on the provided keywords or titles and abstracts. Nevertheless, I have implemented precautions to minimise it by searching systematically. Second, the search engines of this study are dominated by Western-centric, such as Scopus, British Education Index, and ERIC (Institute of Education Sciences), because these provide free access. To balance it, I have attempted to include JBIPA and Google Scholar, which also links to Academia.edu or ResearchGate and enriches the variety of sources. However, some articles are not open-source and limit the inclusion of knowledge fields from specific sources, particularly those from Google Scholar, regarding algorithmic bias and its functionality.

Afterwards, the bias of this study is highly probable because a single author did the writing process. However, I have attempted to set explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria to reduce selection bias and consult with colleagues or experts to seek feedback and search strategy. Then, the number of previous studies is few due to a specific topic related to Bahasa Indonesia as a foreign language, even though I have broadened the search in different journals or websites to enrich the sources. Finally, the prior studies included in this research provided various contexts due to broad resources, which may be different characteristics to be implemented in other institutions. Nonetheless, this study aims to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the BIPA curriculum implementation with diverse interventions. Therefore, it can offer the following suggestions for future research.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Themes and Evidence Overview

In total, 64 articles were evaluated and observed through the systematic literature review, which focused on the strengths and weaknesses of the BIPA curriculum in higher education. These were categorised into five themes based on several key areas.

- Academic process: articles focusing on students' academic achievement and the knowledge transfer among them and their lecturers. Moreover, the concern for supporting BIPA students from institutions is discussed here.
- Teaching implementation or practices: articles focusing on the BIPA curriculum implementation from lecturers' perspectives in higher education institutions.
- Assessment: articles focusing on assessment design and process for students' progress.
- Learning support: articles focusing on learning media or language support for BIPA students while learning Indonesian in higher education.

The table 3 below explains the number of studies on each theme and the impact categorisation.

Table 3 Overview articles based on impact categorisation for each theme

Theme	Total number of articles	The number of designed-for-impact articles	The number of reflected-impact articles	The number of limited-impact articles
Academic process	18	10	6	2
Teaching implementation/practice	15	7	6	2
Assessment	4	3	1	-
Learning support	27	23	3	1
Total	64	43	16	5

Table 3 identified five different key themes. The most dominant one is the design for impact articles, particularly in academic process and learning support. Areas with the most limited research are in assessment.

This research has analysed the articles and found a few articles related to curriculum use that explicitly contradict each other (Hamied and Musthafa, 2019; Pinariya & Sutjipto, 2021) due to the angles they spotted. Regarding curriculum implementation, such as intercultural decolonisation or inclusiveness, the study could not find those topics to be discussed in the articles. Furthermore, the dominating articles did not mention questions about students' language proficiency assessment or curriculum targets. Meanwhile, these gaps are pivotal for evaluating students' abilities after learning (Purpura, 2016). This indicates that they must be researched more, although it may affect the BIPA teaching and learning settings.

Besides, during the process, this study found several articles stating that implementing the BIPA curriculum as a guideline for teaching and learning is less than to be discussed in class. Instead, they tended to develop the learning support, namely IT media, methodologies, or approaches, that do not thoroughly pay attention to the curriculum's targets. This means some are ignorant of the provided curriculum, whereas the curriculum is briefly integrated into the assessment of the BIPA process in the class (Graves, 2008).

In addition, this study found that most research on these themes did not assess students' perspectives regarding their experiences with the impact of BIPA curriculum transformation. Specifically, only 67% (n = 43) of studies focused on innovations in the general learning process without considering students' responses. In other words, there is limited access to understanding BIPA students' experiences following the curriculum decolonisation. Consequently, future research should explore this area to gather evidence-based data, recognise students' roles, and promote inclusion in intercultural learning contexts (Tavares, 2024; Wang & Guan, 2020).

In the following part, I have synthesised the evidence based on five themes and the impact category regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the BIPA curriculum implementation.

B. Academic process

The academic process is the primary focus, as it is the most prominent aspect of the BIPA program. Moreover, many studies (n=18) have examined this topic from various perspectives to provide clear background information for both the theme and the readers.

1. Evidence of designed research for impact

This study has examined seven articles that influence the academic process. Given its crucial role in BIPA, a systematic literature review identified one key strength: the innovation of knowledge transfer, which enhances students' language proficiency (Hadianto *et al.*, 2021; Susilowati *et al.*, 2020; Widia, 2023). However, Susilowati *et al.* (2020) analysed the academic process by focusing on linguistic characteristics specific to BIPA's academic purposes, thereby excluding other factors such as beliefs, gender, and cultural backgrounds (Smucker, 2024). These three aspects are essential to the international academic process. Additionally, Hadianto *et al.* (2021) argued that multimodal texts could enhance literacy and influence the social behaviour of international students. These findings highlight a drawback of the current BIPA curriculum: its interpretation can vary widely depending on students' cultural backgrounds.

The concept of inclusion in BIPA teaching and learning has been highlighted by Solikhah and Budiharso (2020). They invited international students, lecturers, and staff from 11 universities to participate in their study to evaluate the BIPA academic process more holistically. Their findings indicated that the language content aligned well with the curriculum. However, cultural knowledge was not effectively taught due to language teaching methodology and content deficiencies. Although the government has provided various learning materials on https://bipa.kemdikbud.go.id/ following the curriculum update, these resources remain insufficient for effective BIPA teaching and learning.

2. Evidence of reflected research for impact

Six studies reflecting on the academic process were not necessarily measured. However, they provide insight into BIPA teaching and learning in higher education classrooms during curriculum implementation (Asteria *et al.*, 2023; Erowati *et al.*, 2023; Maharany *et al.*, 2021; Mulyani & Kurniawan, 2023; Widiasih & Hermayanti, 2020). For instance, Asteria *et al.* (2023) found that many teachers had not mastered pluricultural competence but possessed only Indonesian cultural knowledge. This occurs to prevent cultural conflicts or align with BIPA student adaptation requirements.

Erowati *et al.* (2023) also reflected on their approaches to teaching BIPA and implementing the curriculum. They tend to incorporate Islamic values into knowledge transfer for BIPA students through extracurricular activities. Rather than fostering intercultural or pluricultural skills, religious values are introduced as knowledge, prioritising cultural adaptation. These two studies suggest that the BIPA curriculum has not explicitly promoted inclusivity, as BIPA students cannot represent themselves, and authorities do not accommodate their cultural backgrounds (Smucker, 2024). However, to improve language proficiency, students must understand local cultures and values (Sukmadinata & Alexon, 2012). Thus, there is potential to develop a framework that addresses these gaps and adapts the curriculum in the classroom. Such a framework could provide a more vigorous justification for implementation and better support inclusivity (Scott, 2016).

Eighteen articles explored the BIPA academic process using various approaches. While these studies did not provide measurable assessments of students' language proficiency or cultural comprehension, they offer valuable insights for academic process development, including greater student involvement in learning (Arianto *et al.*, 2021; Suyitno *et al.*, 2019; Widiasih & Hermayanti, 2020). This argument aligns with Wang and Guan's (2020) findings on learning Chinese as a fo-

reign language from students' psychological perspectives. This aspect should also be considered in the BIPA academic process. However, further research is needed to deepen this critical reflection.

C. Teaching implementation/practice

This theme focuses on the curriculum used in teaching implementation or practice, emphasising the BIPA teaching process and highlighting the intercultural approaches lecturers may use in the classroom. In total, this study identified 15 articles.

1. Evidence of designed research for impact

Seven previous studies have researched the BIPA curriculum, focusing on its implementation from a teaching perspective. Some authors argue that teaching can be interpreted in various ways, mainly by contextualising the curriculum with local cultures or other supporting materials (Khoirunnisa *et al.*, 2023; Mayasari & Irwansyah, 2020; Milati, 2023). For example, Mayasari and Irwansyah (2020) reported that in BIPA teaching in Yogyakarta, teachers incorporate sociolinguistics to develop lesson plans, syllabi, and teaching materials, thereby contextualising the learning process. Similarly, Khoirunnisa *et al.* (2023) found that in Bandung, BIPA teaching is connected to a sociocultural approach in the classroom, allowing BIPA 4 students to develop critical thinking skills. In Bali, Milati (2023) observed that ethno-pedagogy benefits BIPA practice, as it integrates local values and cultures to enhance language proficiency and students' communication skills.

Previous research has shown that the BIPA curriculum shares similarities across different implementations and helps prepare students for the experience of living in Indonesia. However, fully implementing a sociolinguistic approach without considering theoretical language foundations, students' cultural inclusion in the classroom, and the contextual use of Indonesian outside the classroom may hinder students' success (Hardini *et al.*, 2019; Sumariadhi *et al.*, 2022). Therefore, further research on the benefits and drawbacks of the sociolinguistic approach in achieving the goals of the BIPA curriculum remains an important area for future study.

The explanation for this finding suggests that the evidence indirectly supports implementing a meaningful curriculum tailored to local contexts, students' needs, or disciplinary situations in teaching and learning practices. For instance, Hardini *et al.* (2019) argue that preparing BIPA teachers based on a needs analysis can help them optimise their teaching performance, enabling them to identify the most important aspects for students. Similarly, Oktora and Khairina (2021) found in North Sumatra that BIPA lecturers should focus on teaching the language and emphasising its role as a communication tool. This approach can facilitate students' acquisition of Indonesian more effectively. Thus, the findings suggest that the BIPA curriculum requires further development to help lecturers integrate learning objectives between the written curriculum and practical classroom situations. However, this process necessitates intentionally designing and incorporating teaching materials based on students' prior knowledge, experiences, and needs.

2. Evidence of reflected research for impact

Six studies (n=6) examined the implementation of the BIPA curriculum in teaching but did not measure its impact. For example, Mintowati *et al.* (2022) found that BIPA teachers in Surabaya faced challenges related to teaching materials and media due to the broad scope of the BIPA curriculum. Similarly, Isnaniah and Islahuddin (2020) highlighted the need for curriculum development, teacher training, and government support for BIPA management in Islamic higher education institutions in Surakarta to strengthen BIPA instruction.

Kusuma (2019) conducted a document analysis at Atma Jaya to provide an overview of BIPA curriculum development, focusing on institution teacher preparation. These studies indicate that

the BIPA curriculum does not fully support teachers due to a lack of comprehensive resources to enhance their teaching skills. As a result, professional training programs and support from relevant authorities are necessary to address skill gaps. However, even with training, there is no guarantee that teachers will implement the acquired knowledge effectively (Baskan & Ayda, 2018; Hardini *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, regular evaluation and supervision are essential to ensure effective curriculum implementation.

3. Other potential evidence for research interest

This literature analysed 15 studies on BIPA teaching implementation and practice in higher education. However, these studies did not explicitly address teachers' perspectives on aspects such as psychology, professional skill development, and other related factors (Isnaniah, 2020; Kusuma, 2019; Mintowati *et al.*, 2021; Oktora & Khairina, 2021).

One notable example is Jenkins (2020), who applied the Triadic Reciprocity Framework Core Agency Concepts (TRFCAC) model to examine teachers' responses to curriculum changes. The study found that teachers' willingness to achieve BIPA curriculum outcomes influenced their adaptation, as observed through a longitudinal qualitative case study. Expanding research into teachers' experiences after curriculum changes, Putwain and von der Embse (2018) found that such changes can lead to increased stress and reduced self-efficacy among teachers. This suggests that the BIPA curriculum may pressure lecturers as they adapt their teaching strategies.

However, this challenge can be mitigated through collaborative curriculum design (Moore *et al.*, 2023). Collaborative teams can support BIPA lecturers in professional development by enhancing their knowledge, refining teaching practices, and improving their ability to navigate curriculum changes. Therefore, incorporating teachers' experiences into curriculum development should be considered to ensure a more effective BIPA teaching process.

D. Assessment

This theme focused on a few studies (n=4) regarding the BIPA assessment in higher education. Assessment is usually understood as a test for specific knowledge or abilities for any given situation (Bachman & Adrian, 2022), which can be divided into two parts: formative and summative assessment. Even though the number of studies in this part is not huge, this research captured how BIPA teachers or other stakeholders designed assessments after the BIPA curriculum update.

1. Evidence of designed research for impact

Three designed studies on this theme primarily focused on various methods for testing language proficiency across the four language skills—writing, reading, speaking, and listening (Husniyah & Widyartono, 2022; Rahmawati & Sulistyono, 2021; Widia *et al.*, 2022). A key issue identified in these studies was the development of assessments, which are not yet standardised at the national or international level. Additionally, existing assessments focus on a single language skill while lacking cultural understanding and character-building evaluation components.

For instance, Widia *et al.* (2022) highlighted the need for improved BIPA listening evaluations, as BIPA students often struggle with listening comprehension in Indonesian. In response, they developed a detailed framework for assessing Indonesian listening competence. This framework emphasises speakers' preparation as presenter stimuli, ensuring proper pronunciation, intonation, and accurate pausing. Although this innovation is promising, it may not be ideal for international students due to concerns about the test's reliability and validity across different research development stages (Wen *et al.*, 2024). Further refinements and validation processes are necessary to enhance its effectiveness for diverse learner populations.

Husniyah and Widyartono (2022) conducted a study in Malang, developing a reading ability test based on Sahabatku Indonesia untuk Umum by Pusat Pengembangan Strategi dan Diplomasi Kebahasaan PPSDK (2019). The authors applied the LIX readability formula to validate the test and administered it via Google Forms (https://s.id/TPBIPAmembacaA). While this tool is accessible to everyone and provides instant scores, it raises concerns about data privacy (Vasantha Raju & Harinarayana, 2016). Therefore, authorities should carefully evaluate this platform before implementing it for BIPA students, as it may compromise their data security during the test. Furthermore, developing new assessments aligned with the updated BIPA curriculum is essential. The existing Indonesian language proficiency test (UKBI), designed for native speakers, is not suitable for assessing BIPA students at the beginner level (Husniyah & Widyartono, 2022).

2. Other potential evidence for research interest

This study identified four previous research studies but did not provide specific information on developing all four language skills, character-building assessments, or formative and summative assessments (n=4). For instance, Rahmawati and Sulistyono (2021) focused solely on evaluating the text readability of the BIPA test instrument from BIPA 1 to BIPA 3 in three Muhammadiyah universities in Java, Indonesia.

The findings from these studies highlight the need for further efforts to develop BIPA assessment and evaluation methods aligned with curriculum targets. Initially, researchers can collect information through questionnaires, interviews, and observations involving lecturers and students (Ariamaharani & Subyantoro, 2020). This data can then inform the inclusion of key characteristics in BIPA assessments based on the findings from the data collection process. Finally, enhancing lecturers' language assessment literacy under the updated BIPA curriculum is essential.

These steps offer a potential solution to improving BIPA assessments by actively involving lecturers and students. This approach not only enhances the quality of assessment but also empowers lecturers by providing them with the necessary training and support (Razavipour & Rezagah, 2018).

In addition, BIPA students at IPB found that assessing agriculture-themed content in listening and reading was particularly challenging (Defina *et al.*, 2019). This indicates that the BIPA curriculum does not yet provide practical assessments tailored to this field, requiring lecturers to develop innovative strategies to support BIPA teaching and learning. To address this issue, Thong-iam (2017) recommended providing training for language lecturers to assist them in developing practical assessments. Such training is beneficial, as it allows lecturers to align assessment practices with curriculum goals, enhance collaboration in teaching, and engage with the broader learning community. Therefore, stakeholders should consider incorporating similar training programs into the BIPA environment to bridge assessment gaps and improve overall curriculum implementation.

E. Learning support

Prior research highlights numerous studies on learning support for BIPA students (n=27), making it the most frequently explored topic. In general, these studies discuss the facilities provided by various stakeholders to support the implementation of the BIPA curriculum.

1. Evidence of designed research for impact

A set of 23 articles were identified in this research, which showed a demonstrable result regarding learning support for BIPA students (Dwi Saputra *et al.*, 2022; Junaidi *et al.*, 2022; Rahmawati *et al.*, 2020; Setyaningsih *et al.*, 2020; Yaacob & Lubis, 2022). Yacoob and Lubis (2022), for

example, stated that some BIPA lecturers do not access learning support from the government's website (https://bipa.kemdikbud.go.id/), so it is essential to develop learning materials integrated with students' needs and Indonesian cultures such as Indonesian folklore. Similar research in Surakarta by Dwi Saputra *et al.* (2022) also found that involving local wisdom can be a learning support for students while studying the Indonesian language and culture in Indonesia.

Most previous studies have considered local wisdom as a means to support students' learning processes in Indonesian higher education institutions (n=23). Introducing local values to students is an intriguing approach to learning a new language. However, this can exclude students' cultural backgrounds if the curriculum design does not balance local and universal cultural content (Safitri *et al.*, 2020). Meanwhile, the BIPA curriculum design remains broad and exclusive, explicitly aiming to build character traits such as God-fearing attitudes and patriotism (Kusuma & Ismail, 2017; Pinariya & Sutjipto, 2021). Since the curriculum plays a pivotal role in shaping the learning process, either inclusively or not, it requires careful consideration in content development (e.g., learning materials, media, methodologies, etc.) to avoid becoming mere 'buzzwords' (Rahman & Alwi, 2018; Stentiford & Koutsouris, 2022).

2. Evidence of reflected research for impact

This research successfully reviewed three articles on learning support for BIPA students but without measuring the learning outcomes (Darwin *et al.*, 2022; Mulyani & Kurniawan, 2023; Widiasih & Hermayanti, 2020). Darwin *et al.* (2022) and Mulyani and Kurniawan (2023), for example, discovered that exploring and developing learning media can support BIPA students in learning the Indonesian language and culture in Indonesian higher education institutions. Both studies argued that this approach can enhance students' motivation to learn.

However, Widiasih and Hermayanti (2020) explained that international students need support in both academic and non-academic sectors because they must adapt to the culture and language in Indonesia. Learning support outside the classroom, such as access to health systems and extracurricular activities, is also necessary. On the other hand, as a developing country, Indonesia has been improving in these areas. This may be particularly challenging for students from developed countries, which can affect their focus while learning. As a result, the BIPA curriculum aims to focus on language proficiency, which cannot always be achieved (Widiasih & Hermayanti, 2020).

3. Other potential evidence for research interest

This theme analysed 27 articles, but none mentioned the learning support for BIPA students from a management viewpoint. Some research believed international students' learning support is from lecturers and the entire education environment collaboration (Arthur, 2017; Bartram, 2008; Martirosyan et al., 2019; Yılmaz & Temizkan, 2022). For example, Martirosyan et al. (2019) said social and cultural events, professional development workshops, or targeted writing support are potential initiatives outside the compulsory class that can aid students in improving their language acquisition and cultural comprehension. This notion can be adopted into the BIPA process because the focus in this area is also on international students. Future research can commence on these potential topics to enrich the information regarding BIPA learning support.

Staff perspectives, with multiple experiences in the BIPA learning process and intercultural understanding, are also essential in supporting international students' progress. For example, the research by Yilmaz and Temizkan (2022) in Turkey highlighted how staff assurance and empathy, reflected through service quality, positively impact students' satisfaction in a multicultural context with diverse beliefs. In other words, staff play a crucial role in the BIPA process. Management, lecturers, and staff should pay attention to further research and educational institutions (Mittelmeier *et al.*, 2022) to enhance learning support for international students and achieve the objectives of the BIPA curriculum. Additionally, engaging with international students by inte-

grating key support areas, such as academic faculty, counsellors, and local students, can enhance cross-cultural learning support (Arthur, 2017).

F. The strengths and weaknesses of the BIPA Curriculum (SKL)

Students experience emotions as they strive to improve and grow while learning a new language and culture, making the process easier once they master the target language (Zaki & Darmi, 2021). Through a systematic literature review, this research identifies the strengths and weaknesses of the BIPA curriculum in its implementation, focusing on the academic process, teaching practices, assessment, and learning support. Table 4 below explains the strengths and weaknesses of implementing the BIPA curriculum (SKL).

Table 4 identifies the four strengths and weaknesses of the BIPA curriculum (SKL) based on previous studies. The most notable aspects relate to supporting learning materials and lecturers' innovations in developing them from a language proficiency perspective. However, the curriculum requires further refinement to be more specific and practical in achieving its goals, particularly in language proficiency and character-building values. Strengthening the curriculum through training, gathering more valid data on collaboration in learning support across different BIPA components, and developing more reliable assessments will enhance its robustness and readiness for implementation in BIPA teaching and learning at higher education institutions.

Table 4 Overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the BIPA curriculum

Themes	Strengths	Weaknesses
Academic process	Provided supporting materials on the website	Not clear yet in terms of spreading inclusivity in the BIPA class. Do not have a practical framework.
Teaching implementation/practice	Broad contents in the provided teaching materials so that lecturers can innovate it in the class	Lack of training for BIPA lecturers to equip the skill gaps for narrowing the BIPA curriculum target in the class.
Assessment	Many innovations in language proficiency test	Lack of reliability, validity, and data privacy in the language proficiency test. Focus on language acquisition, not the entire curriculum aims (character-building).
Learning support	Local wisdom involvement in learning support from lecturers (e.g., materials or approaches)	Minor engagement programs or research with other parties, such as management, staff, and local students..

CONCLUSION

To conclude, a systematic literature review of various studies from 2018 to 2023 highlights the strengths and weaknesses of implementing the BIPA curriculum (SKL). On the one hand, the curriculum offers flexibility for lecturers to innovate their teaching methods and provides comprehensive online resources and materials. This adaptability enables lecturers to tailor learning experiences and support BIPA students in effectively developing their Indonesian language skills. Additionally, integrating local wisdom in learning support enhances cultural immersion for international students. On the other hand, the curriculum presents significant weaknesses, such as being too broad, lacking clear guidelines for inclusivity, and failing to address students' diverse cultural backgrounds. These shortcomings make it difficult to foster intercultural understanding in the classroom. Furthermore, lecturers receive insufficient training to bridge the gap between

the curriculum's broad objectives and practical classroom needs. Assessment methods also lack reliability, as they focus solely on language acquisition without incorporating character-building goals—an essential aspect of the BIPA curriculum. Therefore, further curriculum refinement, enhanced teacher training, and the development of inclusive, reliable assessments that align with both language proficiency and character-building objectives should be key areas for future research.

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