



***TEACHING DIFFICULTIES IN THE INDONESIAN LANGUAGE TO EGYPTIAN STUDENTS WITH ARABIC AS AN INTERMEDIARY LANGUAGE***

**KESULITAN MENGAJAR BAHASA INDONESIA KEPADA SISWA MESIR DENGAN BAHASA ARAB SEBAGAI BAHASA PERANTARA**

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***Abstract***

*The Indonesian Cultural Center in Cairo or “Pusat Kebudayaan Indonesia (Puskin) KBRI Kairo” offers a free Indonesian course consisting of 6 levels, each level taking almost three months. The teachers of the course are those who study at Al-Azhar University and speak the Arabic language well. Hundreds of Egyptian students join the course (level one), but only a few students finish up to the six levels. This study aims to identify problems and difficulties that are often encountered by Indonesian teachers in teaching the Indonesian language and the learning process in the classroom, from two points of view the Indonesian teachers and the Egyptian students. In addition, this study aims to know the reasons why many students don’t finish all levels of the courses and how to solve the problem. This descriptive qualitative study is subject to primary data, which are collected by questionnaires from Egyptian students and Indonesian teachers. The result of this study shows that the difficulties in teaching and learning the Indonesian language are categoriaed into linguistic difficulties, and non-linguistic difficulties.*

**Keywords:** *Indonesia language; اللغة العربية- Arab; socio-cultural; BIPA; linguistic problems; nonlinguistic problems*

**Abstrak**

Pusat Kebudayaan Indonesia di Kairo atau (Puskin) KBRI Kairo” mengajarkan kursus bahasa Indonesia secara gratis yang terdiri dari 6 tingkat, setiap tingkat menghabiskan waktu hampir tiga bulan. Kursus-kursus ini diajarkan oleh guru-guru bahasa Indonesia yang sedang belajar di Universitas Al-Azhar dan mengerti bahasa Arab dengan baik. Setiap tahun ratusan siswa Mesir mengikuti kursus ini (tingkat satu), tetapi hanya sedikit siswa yang menyelesaikan enam tingkat. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi masalah dan kesulitan yang sering terjadi khususnya bagi guru bahasa Indonesia dalam pengajaran bahasa Indonesia dan proses pembelajaran di kelas, dari dua sudut pandang guru bahasa Indonesia dan siswa Mesir. Selian itu, penelitian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengetahui alasan mengapa banyak siswa tidak selesai semua tingkat kursus, dan bagaimana menyelesaikannya. Penelitian kualitatif deskriptif ini bergantung pada data

primer, yang akan dikumpulkan dengan kuesioner dari siswa Mesir dan guru Indonesia. Hasil penelitian ini, kesulitan mengajar belajar bahasa Indonesia dapat dibagi menjadi kesulitan mengajar, kesulitan linguistik, dan kesulitan non-linguistik.

**Kata kunci:** bahasa Indonesia; اللغة العربية -Arab; sosio-kultural; BIPA; masalah linguistik; masalah nonlinguistik

## 1. Introduction

(Yulianto, 2014) stated that the usage prevalence of the Indonesian language is increasing due to the increase in the international relationship between Indonesia and other nations. Studying the Indonesian language is requested by many nations because many of their people come directly to learn at Indonesian universities. (Wiedarti, 2013) mentioned that *BIPA* or *Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing* is a famous organized course in 19 Indonesian Embassies and 176 universities/courses in 45 countries around the world for teaching the Indonesian language. The Indonesian Cultural Center in Cairo - Egypt or “Pusat Kebudayaan Indonesia (Puskin) KBRI Kairo” offers a free Indonesian course BIPA consisting of 6 levels, each level taking almost three months. These courses are administered by Indonesian teachers who are studying at Al-Azhar University and speak the Arabic language very well. Each year, hundreds of Egyptian students join this course (level one), but only a few students complete the six levels. (Ragab, 2022) mentioned in his research that in 2012, another Indonesian

center opened at the Suez Canal University, where the same curriculum of BIPA was taught. Also, in 2016, BIPA Center was opened at Al-Azhar University (P: 68). (Inayatillah, 2019) mentioned in his article on the news Website of the Cabinet Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, that in 2019 the Indonesian embassy in Cairo officially opened a new class for teaching the Indonesian language as a second language, at the faculty of language and translation, Al-Azhar University. In all the Indonesian centers to teach BIPA, a lot of Egyptian students join the course to learn the Indonesian language, and also many students didn't finish the course till the end.

(Madkhali, 2018) found that non-native speakers are introduced to a language through formal instruction regardless of the context or pragmatic guide, neither of them can distinguish if the structure seems similar (p. 755). Therefore, learning a second language has a lot of difficulties, as (Oybekovna, 2020) stated that “Learning a foreign language as a second language is not easy. Especially, learning a language outside of the country

in which learning language is spoken, certainly teachers and students encounter certain kinds of problems.” (p. 71). These problems could be divided in learning the Indonesian language into linguistic or non-linguistic problems as already mentioned in the research (Al-Rawafi & Syihabuddin, 2018; Effendi & Mu’in, 2018).

(Rolf, 1988) defines the intermediate language as: Ideally, the intermediate language will have to be an unambiguous representation of the meaning of (each of) the source language(s) (p. 544). The intermediate language has a great influence on learning a second language. (Rady, 2021) states the impact of using the intermediate language on teaching Arabic to Indonesian students. There is no effect of the intermediate language on teaching reading and writing skills for the first and second levels, while there is an effect of the intermediate language on the skills of listening and speaking for the second level (pp. 99 – 100). (Alkhafeel & Elkholy, 2022) stated in their research the influence of the first Language (Arabic) on learning English as a Second Language. They mentioned about 12 linguistic issues or problems that affected learning English by using the mother tongue language (Arabic) in teaching, such as definite articles,

prepositions, tenses usage, .ect (pp. 34 – 38). On the other hand, (Dmour, 2015) conducted that using Arabic as an instruction language in English classes in Jordanian schools has negative and positive effects on the learning procedure (p. 95).

This study aims to identify problems and difficulties often happened especially for Indonesian teachers in teaching the Indonesian language and learning process in the classroom, from two points of view the Indonesian teachers and the Egyptian students. To know the reasons behind lifting the course from many students, and how to solve it.

## 2. Theoretical Basis

(Gochitashvili, 2016) states that in his research the challenges of teaching a foreign language as a second language are: diversity of the audience in the class, dealing with sensitive issues regarding culture and communication, real knowledge of the usage of language in real communicative situations, and teaching (instruction) language. (p. 42 – 44). While (Patekar, 2017) states other challenges such as teachers using their voice professionally to deliver the right pronunciation, learning motivation, giving instructions and organizing students, and

using additional materials and activities. (p. 103 – 110).

(Singhal, 2020) explores the linguistic and Non-Linguistic challenges or obstacles in learning English as a second language. Linguistic obstacles are lack of exposure to comprehensible input, mother tongue influence, choice of exposure to content, grammatical errors, word formation, absence of motivational teaching, goal orientation, written versus spoken English confusion, dyslexia where the person has trouble understanding written word, and dysgraphia where the person has trouble with forming letters when writing. While Non-Linguistic obstacles are ego complex with others, hesitation, fear, lack of interest, slow grasping power, inability to express oneself, state margins or accent problems, lack of communication environment with the language, psychological root or cultural and educational influence, and learning inferiority or discussions.

In addition to that, (Kormos, 2020) mentioned the impact of individual differences on the processes and outcomes of second language learning. In the case of learning Indonesia as a second language, may not all those obstacles would be found, or many other obstacles.

### 3. Research Method

This descriptive quantitative design study depends on primary data, which will be collected by questionnaires from Egyptian students and Indonesian teachers. The populations are in 2020, more than 600 Egyptian students and around 10 Indonesian teachers. The participants or samples are six Egyptian students, and 3 Indonesian teachers, who agreed to participate in the questionnaire. The characteristics of the informants are:

- 1) The Egyptian students: the gender (four females and two males), the age (between 30 – 50 years old), the education level (four have Bachelor degree, one has Master degree, one with Ph.D.), the occupation (tour guide, company owner, dentist, hospital manager, English teacher, governmental officer), the reason to learn Indonesian language (to be an Indonesian tour guide, to get Master degree from Indonesian university, to spend his retirement in Indonesia, to open a travel agency, to know a new culture, and to learn a new language), course level (between 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> level).
- 2) The Indonesian teachers: the gender (3 males), the age (between 31 – 37 Years old), the Education level (two have Master's degrees, one has a Bachelor's

degree), duration of learning Arabic (between 4 – 18 Years), and duration of teaching BIPA (3 years).

Data collection procedure, first a search permission letter from the faculty of culture - Airlangga University, no: 3500/UN3.1.11/PT/2021, which got accepted by a responsible from PUSKIN, then a questionnaire form was distributed to the Egyptian students and Indonesian teachers. This form was opened for one week, from 15 – 11 – 2021 to 22 – 11 – 2021. After getting the response from the informants who accepted to join the survey via a google form, The data analysis was processed accordingly by categorizing the data/answers into three categories of difficulties of learning a new language: teaching, linguistics, and non-linguistics difficulties.

#### 4. Discussion

The teaching difficulties of learning the Indonesian language can be divided into teaching difficulties, linguistic difficulties, and Non-Linguistic difficulties as explained by (Gochitashvili, 2016; Patekar, 2017; Kormos, 2020; Singhal, 2020).

#### 4.1 Teaching difficulties

A) Dealing with sensitive issues regarding culture and communication: According to the answers of the students, these sensitive issues happened not only between Indonesian teachers and Egyptian students but also between students themselves. One student stated *“Sometimes I lose the teacher, does he joking or talking seriously? Especially when the teacher tries to use Egyptian jokes.”* Another student says *“Different cultures make the learning process more difficult; the realization of new cultures and different details and expressions are not easy for someone who never traveled to another country.”* While other students mentioned, *“Some known expressions in one’s culture are not used or have no meaning in another culture, so literal translation for the expressions is meaningless, to fully learn the language, one has to learn the culture also to know daily life situation sentences and language.”*

While the Indonesian teachers have different opinions, as one of them state that *“he doesn’t find any problems because of the different culture, as the most learning language is depend on memorizing word and right pronunciation”*. While other two teacher has another opinion as they state that

*“There are difficulties in conveying Indonesian culture which is different from student culture” “Perbedaan budaya mengakibatkan guru dan murid kadang tidak sepaham dalam memandang budaya atau bahasa Indonesia. Keduanya pun harus saling menyesuaikan. Guru menjelaskan, dan sebaliknya murid juga dapat menjelaskan pandangan budaya dan bahasa Indonesia dari sudut pandang masing-masing, supaya tidak salah paham.”*

(Garcia & Pantao, 2021) stated in his research that there is a relationship between cultural sensitivity and classroom management exists as the cultural sensitivity of teachers affects their classroom management. For that teachers should take seminar-workshop to improve their culture-sensitive classroom management. Also, (Chouari, 2016) conducts that the teachers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students, needs special training and workshop.

B) Teaching (instruction) language: Also, the Indonesian teachers could speak and Explain in Arabic Language but as one student mentioned that *“as each level has different teachers, who have different Accent, I could not understand his Arabic or even his Indonesian language,”*

Other research on the impact of using the intermediate language on teaching Arabic to Indonesian students, (Rady, 2021) states that there is no effect of the intermediate language on teaching reading and writing skills for the first and second levels, while there is an effect of the intermediate language on the skills of listening and speaking for the second level (pp. 99 – 100).

C) Teachers using their voice professionally to deliver the right pronunciation: According to one student states that *“as each level has different teachers, who have different Accents, I could not understand his Arabic or even his Indonesian language,”* Also another student mentioned, *“The speed of the speaker, sometimes the speaker is very fast and I need time to understand what he is trying to say.”*

(Jones & Evans, 1995) explain in his research the importance of the quality of the teacher’s voice to teach pronunciation to the students and give a teaching technique using communicative practice to deliver pronunciation to students. Also, (Hikmawati & Handayani, 2018) explain the teacher’s role in pronunciation improvement for students, the teachers should speak loudly in a clear voice, care about students’ pronunciation

mistakes and correct to them, and motivate students to practice pronunciation freely (p. 113).

D) Giving instructions and organizing students: This could influence or cause other difficulties like fear of speaking or shyness. as one student mentioned” *she is shy, especially if there were a guy who comments on his classmate speaking or corrects them before the teacher. When he is absent, I feel free to speak and express myself even if I do mistakes, I accept the correction only from the teacher.*”

(Marzano & Marzano, 2003) shows in their research that the actions of the teachers during the class have a great effect on the educational achievement of the students, as the relationship between the teacher and the student effect classroom management, which affects the student’s achievement (p. 12). This is could be proved in the research of (Ranjit, 2022) about the classroom challenges of Secondary governmental school in Nepal, which mainly related to the classroom management, therefor the researchers’ advice was teachers should learn and apply classroom management techniques.

E) Using additional material activities: From the student’s answer, using recording is very useful, but not all

teachers use it in all course levels. One student stated that *“the recording equipment helps me learn the pronunciation and different expressions of daily life by listening to dialogs and recorded texts.”* Another one says *“It helps me to pronounce the words properly”*

On other hand, the Indonesian teachers state that they used the recording to evaluate the teaching proses.

(Ajoke, 2017) evaluated in his research the importance of using instructional materials in teaching a second language (English), the result shows that there is a significant relationship between using instructional material and the performance of the students (p. 42).

#### 4.2 Linguistic difficulties

A) Mother Tongue influence: According to the answer of one student, she states *“as each level has different teachers, who have different Accents, I could not understand his Arabic or even his Indonesian language,”* Not only the influence of the Mother tongue influence of the Indonesian teacher can be linguistics difficulties, but also the influence of other tongue or English language specifically, as three students state that *“Different*

*pronunciation in letters or words although they are written in English letters: ex: C & CH, G & J, E & I .....”* As they mix English pronunciation with Indonesian pronunciation.

Another point is the influence of the mother tongue (Arabic language) as according to the answer of most students there are so many Indonesian words similar to Arabic words either in meaning or in word formation. As three students agree that “*Many words are the same in meaning but some are different. For example, the word salah means righteous in Arabic but means wrong in Indonesian. Also, the word susu which means milk usually used by Egyptians as a nickname. Also, the word myarakat means sharing in Arabic but in society in Indonesia. kalimat means words in Arabic ( but it means sentence in Bahasa) Al Kitab means book in Arabic (but means Bible).*”

On the other hand, the teacher also found that the Arabic language influences the Indonesian pronunciation, as one teachers state that “*Masalah membaca bahasa Indonesia untuk orang Arab atau penutur Arab umumnya disebabkan mereka belum mampu membedakan antara B dengan P. Kemudian juga dalam membaca a, e, dan i, sebab sebagian mereka telanjur belajar bahasa Inggris*

*sebelumnya, dan menuliskan namanya sesuai ejaan Inggris, semisal Ahmad ditulis Ahmed, Muhammad ditulis Mohammed, iya kadang dibaca Eya, dsb.”*

B) Grammatical errors: One of the students mentioned that “*The main comment from my teachers regarding writing is don’t translate from Arabic word by word, try to search for the right Indonesian expression for that meaning. On other hand, sometimes I had to write a long sentence to express my thoughts, and I cannot find the right Indonesian word.*” While other students mentioned that “*Different structure of sentences in the Indonesian language than any other language. Also, Grammar is different (future, past, ..)*”

C) Word Formation Or Dysgraphia (where the person has trouble with forming letters when writing): One of the students mentioned that “*The biggest problem in reading Indonesian is the long words which have many parts*”. Another student mentioned that “*Comparing the word to the English language because they use the same letters sometimes makes it difficult to write*”. One other student states that “*The most problem that faces me in writing is the spelling mistakes that can change the meaning.*”

(Delbio et al., 2018) mentioned in their research that sometimes the mother tongue/first language influences the thinking process of a person, because of that many students think in their mother tongue first and then express themselves in the second language, also the researchers put some psychological approaches to overcome this problem, like communication, recapitulation, stability in learning, trial and error, and translation method approaches (p. 498). On the other hand, another researcher (Phindane, 2020) investigates the positive and negative impact of using the first language in teaching the second language at a primary school in South Africa and proves that there is a great impact of the first language in the learning process of the second language (p. 382). Grammatical errors, word misinformation, or wrong translation are the normal results of the influence of the mother tongue in learning a second language, as discussed in those both research (Delbio et al., 2018; Phindane, 2020).

### 4.3 Non-Linguistic difficulties

A) Ego complex with others, Hesitation, Fear, and Lack of interest: All these features related to each other among most of the students, three of them mentioned

the most speaking skills problem is fear of doing mistakes, while two of them mentioned shy, and the last student mentioned less motivation. Also, the teachers have the same opinion the students are shy, fearful of mistakes, or less motivated.

B) state margins/accent problems: according to the answer of the students almost all of them face the same accent problem with special Indonesian Alphabets such as ng, ny, and sy..... Also, the Indonesian teachers have the same answer, as one teacher states that “ *almost all the Egyptian students face difficulties in pronouncing the Indonesian Alphabet which not exists in the Arabic Alphabet such as ng, ny* “

C) lack of communication environment with the language: almost all the student mentioned that they need to have more time to speak and practice the language with native persons, not only 4.5 hours per week.

(Zuhri et al., 2022) states in their research that the most important reasons for speaking problems in a second language speaking could be concluded as lack of opportunity to speak in front of people, lack of vocabulary, lack of pronunciation and knowledge of grammar, low motivation, and nervousness.

In addition to teaching difficulties, linguistic difficulties, and non-linguistic difficulties, also teachers mentioned other reasons for students who didn't complete the course, such as working, university students especially during exams, and family problems.

#### 4.4 Practical implications for teaching

##### **BIPA:**

To overcome those difficulties, the researcher suggests that;

1) For the teaching difficulties, the teacher should explain when he is joking that he is joking, and ask for feedback from the students about what they truly understand, and what is common in the Egyptian culture. Also, it's important to introduce each student to him/herself at the beginning of the course so the teacher and other students know the cultural background of each other to avoid conflict in the future. Also, the teachers should take care of their speaking speed, especially for the beginning levels, so students could follow up till they could completely understand the faster speaker. On the hand, the teacher should be a good organizer for the class, and control the ego of some

students in order to give space to the shy students to participate.

2) For linguistic difficulties, the teachers should repeat the Indonesian Pronunciation of the Alphabet in each class, so it is easy to be memorized by students. Also, teachers should not use Arabic as an intermediate language in explaining or delivering the Indonesian meaning of Arabic loanwords in the Indonesian language. Teachers can use game or movie scenes to explain the meaning of those words without using the Arabic translation. On other words, teachers should minimize using the Arabic language during the classroom. To avoid grammar and word formation errors, teachers could use games and puzzles to help students deliver the right structure.

3) For non-linguistics, the teachers should recognize the shy students, and encourage them to answer and participate in the class. Also, teachers could make a group of Indonesian students and Egyptian students to share culture and practice the language

- 4) with native persons, for Indonesians learn Arabic and Egyptians learn Indonesian.

## 5. Closing

To conclude, the difficulties of Learning the Indonesian Language using Arabic as an intermediate language for Egyptian Students at PUSKIN are Teaching, Linguistics, and Non-linguistics. The teaching difficulties are cultural and communication diversity, teaching instruction language, teacher 's pronunciation, using additional material, and the teacher's ability to organize the class and the students. The linguistic difficulties are mother tongue influence, grammatical errors, and word formation. The Non-Linguistics difficulties are ego complex with others, accent problems, and lack of communication.

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