

## Research Article

# How international students can well understand adapted online collaboration project? The case of BIPA learners

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Exploring and adapting learning development has been fascinating in recent decades. One is project-based online intercultural collaborative learning for international BIPA students in Thailand. Two simultaneous project-based learning classes are used in the quasi-experimental investigation. Indonesian students collaborate online in experimental classes. Knowledge exams and project product evaluations provided quantitative data, while communication recordings and semi-structured interviews provided qualitative data. The study found that BIPA novices improved from PBL adaptation. Online cooperation improves target culture theory and micro-setting life experiences, which aids early BIPA learning. Based on identified challenges, project-based online intercultural collaborative learning is advised to balance group work and individual aid for BIPA beginner learners, give team dynamics more time, and better use technology resources.

Keywords: Parent attachment; Character strength of kindness; Perceived social support; Family; Friends; Teachers

Article History: Submitted 28 August 2023; Revised 16 December 2023; Published online 9 January 2024

## 1. Introduction

The increasing population of non-native Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing [BIPA] speakers worldwide pose a significant challenge for Indonesian language educators, both domestically and internationally (Nugraheni et al., 2022). The global development of BIPA education, APPBIPA Indonesia association Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing' teachers, has witnessed the proactive engagement of the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, particularly by the Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa (Agency for Language Development and Fostering) (Daring, 2023; Tokyo, 2023). With this agency, APPBIPA Indonesia assumes a pivotal role in advancing and promoting the pedagogy of Indonesian language instruction to foreign learners. APPBIPA offers an array of resources, support, and

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**How to cite:** Rahmat, W., Tiawati, R. L., Rahardi, R. K., & Saaduddin, S. J. (2024). How international students can well understand adapted online collaboration project? The case of BIPA learners. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 8(1), 143-158. <https://doi.org/10.33902/JPR.202423689>

educational programs to instructors, both within Indonesia and abroad, thereby contributing to the worldwide expansion of BIPA as a recognized discipline (Isnaniah & Islahuddin, 2020). Their initiatives encompass the development of innovative teaching materials, cultivating partnerships with international educational institutions, and providing guidance to educators on effective pedagogical methodologies (Hardini et al., 2008).

Moreover, it is noteworthy that the evolution of BIPA is not confined to Indonesia alone. Universities and institutions on a global scale have acknowledged the significance of delivering Bahasa Indonesia education to non-native speakers (Khaerunnisa & Mutiarani, 2018). Consequently, they have incorporated BIPA programs into their language education curricula, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps between learners and Indonesia's rich heritage (Laksono & Ismiatun, 2023). In light of these developments, it remains apparent that despite the challenges encountered by BIPA learners, a collective effort, led by organizations like APPBIPA in Indonesia and supported by government bodies and educational institutions worldwide, is underway to advance and enrich the teaching and acquisition of Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing. These collaborative endeavors address the intricate linguistic and pedagogical issues associated with BIPA, enabling learners to surmount obstacles on their language learning journey effectively.

Despite implementing learning models and modules by Indonesian teachers, Maharani and Astuti (2018) found that BIPA learners continue to encounter challenges in their oral proficiency in the Indonesian language. The variation in linguistic characteristics and instructional methodologies employed in language learning across the globe accounts for this phenomenon, as posited by Mulyaningsih et al. (2022). Moreover, the existing literature about Indonesian as a foreign language has primarily concentrated on language instruction pedagogy (Candler & Hildreth, 2015; Delpa & Afrinda, 2022; Rahmat, Fitriyah, et al., 2023). Nonetheless, providing an alternative approach to education is advisable to assist BIPA learners in cultivating their motivation and surmounting obstacles, particularly during the initial stages of their language acquisition journey, when their mother tongue is significantly distinct from Indonesian.

As a result, efforts have been made in recent years to incorporate a variety of innovative teaching and learning methods into BIPA classrooms, including culture-based classes (Busri et al., 2016; Rahmat et al., 2019; Rahmawati, 2019; Tiawati et al., 2022), environmentally-based learning (Brown & Park, 2020; Yusri et al., 2019), and game-based learning (Trihardini et al., 2019). The studies above clearly illustrate that creating an environment conducive to acquiring the Indonesian language and culture significantly enhances students' academic performance and engagement. This evidence underscores the increasing utilization of technology in foreign language education. Nevertheless, within this context, a notable opportunity arises for harnessing digital resources to cater to the specific needs of novice young learners, particularly those who are just beginning their journey in BIPA (Megawati, 2014) programs. Given the growing emphasis on integrating technology into BIPA education, there is a pressing need for comprehensive research that can substantiate the effectiveness of this approach and provide a stronger connection between the locus of language acquisition, digital resources, and the discussion on the importance of rigorous research in enhancing BIPA education.

The feasibility and uniqueness of this manuscript are evident in the research study, which delves into incentivizing BIPA students to engage in digital projects or online learning. The research was initiated in Thailand, aiming to address the acquisition of Bahasa Indonesia, a non-native language with potential use in Malaysian societies or curricula featuring Bahasa Melayu. However, given the relatively low number of Indonesian individuals in Thailand, BIPA students face the challenge of limited hands-on experience with the target language and culture, which is essential for maintaining their motivation to become proficient in Indonesian. In contrast, Thailand's substantial economic growth and technological advancements allow students to harness technology to enhance their language skills. As a result, there is a need for additional efforts to fully tap into technology's potential for innovative purposes, particularly within the realm of BIPA. The current study explores the impact of web-based instruction and its perspectives

on students. It introduces a collaborative online platform that connects BIPA students in Thailand with their counterparts in Indonesia, fostering cross-border initiatives to support BIPA students in Thailand. This approach showcases the feasibility and uniqueness of the research in addressing language acquisition challenges through technology and cross-cultural collaboration.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. BIPA Research**

Despite the increased global interest in learning Indonesian as a foreign language, the existing literature has identified the difficulties BIPA's beginner students encounter. First, many non-native speakers study Indonesian due to their interest in its culture, business, and tourism (Lina Tiawati, 2018; Suyitno, 2007). Recognizing the structural differences between Indonesian and many other languages may cause trust and efficacy issues (Jabbarov Ulugbek, 2020). Second, culture shock results from disparate approaches or models of instruction. Third, BIPA beginner learners, accustomed to constructivism and communicative approaches to teaching and learning from previous BIPA learning experiences, encounter the so-called 'Understanding of Indonesian Cognition.' Which emphasizes grammar-translation approaches, memorizing language structure and vocabulary patterns, and adhering to teacher dominance may cause culture shock in the learning mode and a loss of motivation (Rachman et al., 2019). Therefore, a BIPA teacher, in general, faces the challenge of how to rethink methods to fit the preferences and needs of effective BIPA learners (Hilton, 2011; Lina Tiawati, 2015; Oyserman, 2016; Richards, 2006;). Thirdly, the educator's role. Outside of Indonesia, the majority of BIPA teachers are native Indonesian speakers who have lived in the host country for an extended period but do not have a professional background as BIPA teachers, have not been professionally trained as BIPA teachers, or have studied in Indonesia but have limited knowledge of Indonesian cultural experiences (Goudousaki, 2006). Additionally, BIPA teachers outside of Indonesia face the challenge of developing BIPA teaching models and practices contextualized for BIPA learners (Khromchenko & Shutilo, 2021).

The latest review literature also reports on efforts to improve BIPA learning outside Indonesia, including culture-based classes (Wardani & Ulya, 2019; Zafar et al., 2013), environmentally-based learning (Fong et al., 2018), and game-based learning (Saddhono, 2015). From that, motivation is key to BIPA learning for entry-level students. One of the key factors driving BIPA students' motivation is their interest in Indonesian culture and cultural experience (Dirgantoro, 2016; Koeswanti, 2019). Therefore, creating opportunities for BIPA students with easy methods is a highly recommended target to increase the motivation of BIPA students. Integrating the use of online learning technologies and resources can also increase the attention of BIPA Teachers to improve their language skills and learning skills of BIPA teachers independently (Taftiawati, 2014; Susanto, 2007). These efforts enable the development of communicative approaches (Rahmat, Tiawati, et al., 2023), supported intercultural communication, and technologically enhanced methods in BIPA teaching and learning (Darmawansah et al., 2022).

### **2.2. Intercultural Collaborative Learning through Computer-Mediated Communication**

When Covid-19 spreads worldwide, computer-mediated communication [CMC] can be a technology platform for learning in learning systems (Pavlova et al., 2022). Several intercultural collaborative learning programs have reported positive results promoting this online collaborative learning model. The use of such methods to increase students' motivation and interest (Chen & Du, 2022; Yendra et al., 2018) in improving their teaching (Yusri et al., 2019) skills during the restriction period of activities outside the home during Covid-19, known as PSBB (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar or Large Scale Social Restriction) (Putria et al., 2020; Rahmat, Putra, et al., 2023; Wincana et al., 2022). While some study programs in Indonesia organize this learning, the goal is to promote effective online learning as a special face-to-face replacement media in Indonesia (Ningsih, 2020; Putra et al., 2021) and not outside Indonesia. Research on this is still rarely done, such as in Indonesian, such as how online intercultural programs can support less

commonly taught language learning (Haryadi & Selviani, 2021). Numerous studies have documented technology enhancement programs for online learning (Gumono, 2022; Yusri et al., 2019), and this study examines the potential use of online intercultural learning modes to assist BIPA beginner learners. The findings are provisional due to the small sample size and ambiguous learning and research methods design. Nonetheless, additional effort is required to investigate this potential further, methodologically and through research in diverse sociocultural contexts.

### **2.3. Project-Based Learning**

PBL is a learner-centered curriculum approach that empowers students to conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and apply knowledge and skills to develop viable solutions to problems (Inderasari & Agustina, 2017). Project-based learning is aimed at students and provides an opportunity for in-depth investigation of the studied topics and issues. Learners have increased autonomy because they can generate personally meaningful knowledge and provide representations of their learning. While PBL has been successfully implemented in various subjects (Pujo Leksono & Tiawati, 2020), it has also been successfully implemented in foreign language classes to help students improve their language proficiency and develop their problem-solving and critical thinking skills (Maharany, 2018).

The present research is constrained to individuals with a specific proficiency in the target language. There is a shortage of information regarding the advantages of PBL for novice BIPA learners. This research focuses on creating online problem-based learning models that incorporate intercultural learning strategies to aid in acquiring Bahasa Indonesia for non-native speakers in Thailand. The proposed approach involves the integration of various dimensions into a cohesive framework. This study examines the efficacy of student learning outcomes from initial trial efforts. The investigation will be guided by two key factors: (a) the influence of online collaborative intercultural projects on the acquisition of BIPA students in Thailand who are non-native speakers, and (b) the experiences of learners with intercultural online collaborative projects.

## **3. Method**

### **3.1. Research Context and Design**

The Indonesian language and culture have been established in universities and schools worldwide (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Fossey et al., 2002). Additionally, Indonesian culture has developed into a second language in many countries worldwide (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). This initiative piques the interest of BIPA teachers, Indonesian citizens who have lived abroad, and residents who have studied in Indonesia. However, it is a concern, as it is well known that quality, learning, and innovative models have not been positively associated with BIPA beginner learners. One of the primary challenges for BIPA beginner learners is a lack of opportunities to practice the target language with native Indonesian speakers and immerse themselves in Indonesia's culture (Riazi & Candlin, 2014).

Elective courses on the Indonesian language and culture have been made available at Fatoni University in Thailand, specifically focusing on the Malay Language Study program. Every academic term, a pair of introductory-level and advanced-level courses are provided for instruction in the Indonesian language. The applicants for these courses are sourced from the Malay study programs at Fatoni University, specifically at the entry-level. The course spans over two months and comprises a daily instruction time of two hours. In addition, the educational institution known as Fatoni University has incorporated problem and project-based learning methodologies, commonly referred to as PBL. The proficiency of students in utilizing computers and their familiarity with Problem-Based Learning have facilitated our investigation of online intercultural PBL methodologies.

The research provided two simultaneous introductory courses, comprising a cohort of 20 pupils in the first and 19 in the second grades. The selection process for instructors in two classes involved screening candidates from a cohort of students who had previously undergone BIPA

teaching training at universities in West Indonesia. The chosen candidates exhibited exceptional teaching skills, as evidenced by their successful completion of microteaching courses and teaching experiences at schools or during their internships in BIPA. The present study aimed to investigate the impact of a novel model that evaluates the benefits and drawbacks of intercultural collaboration facilitated by online projects. The research employed rigorous methodologies and experimental design to achieve its objectives (Hart et al., 2009). In addition, we collect data from various sources, including quantitative data comparing students' learning outcomes from knowledge tests and project products and qualitative data from advanced communication and interview records (Cunnings, 2012).

### 3.2. Participants

The research utilized a purposive sampling technique, inviting all students from the two classes above to participate. To ensure a balanced student population between groups 1 and 2 and to incorporate Indonesian students into experimental classes, we opted to designate classes with fewer students as experimental groups (grade 1) and classes with more students as control groups (grade 2).

The experimental class has collaborated with Indonesian native speakers who received their education in Indonesia. The initial step involved initiating communication with a faculty member at Fatoni University who specializes in teaching optional modules on the Indonesian language. The instructor extended a voluntary invitation to the students enrolled in the course to participate in cross-cultural collaboration. A group of ten students from Indonesia indicated their desire to participate in the project. The participants were allocated to two distinct classes, resulting in the formation of five collaborative groups. These groups comprised an experimental and control class and shared common lecturers, learning content, and project tasks. It is required that every student accomplish two collaborative assignments within two months. The experimental classes involve intercultural projects that necessitate online collaboration with Indonesian counterparts, whereas the control classes require students to undertake comparable projects in groups with their peers.

### 3.3. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection and analysis methods design utilizing a mixed method incorporates various data sources, detailed below.

#### 3.3.1. Test of knowledge

Knowledge assessments are utilized to evaluate the efficacy of web-based cooperative project-based education. The examination has the potential to facilitate the acquisition and comprehension of the fundamental Indonesian language and culture among students. The examination papers for the two theme-based projects are subject to editing by researchers following the BIPA Learning Module requirements. The examination is being evaluated by an academic who holds the positions of both a lecturer and a researcher in linguistics, with a specific focus on studying objects within the Indonesian language. The dataset comprises 12 items, with an aggregate score of 60. The text encompasses single and double questions, exemplified by the phrase, "When Indonesians meet, they will say (a)." Salutations. 'Hai' (c). Greetings (various options). What is the writing convention for Indonesian names? (a). The surname solely identifies the individual in contrast to the first name. The individual's given name and family name. The statistical analysis of scores for comparative purposes uses the SPSS 22.0 software.

#### 3.3.2. The products of the project

The evaluation method employed for the initial project's outcomes is a quantitative assessment designed to gauge their cultural sensitivity, authenticity, and innovation. In this approach, the course instructor utilizes a predefined assessment rubric to evaluate the project outcomes' quality meticulously. Using a rubric ensures a systematic and objective evaluation process, making it a pedagogical method that aligns with a collaborative approach. For the second project, the

evaluation primarily encompasses a quantitative analysis. This analysis compares the number and percentage of concepts within each group about the first project. The examination identifies and measures significant variations or improvements in the student's performance. While this approach leans more towards quantitative evaluation, it can also be considered cooperative elements, particularly when students work together to generate concepts and contribute to group achievements.

### 3.3.3. *Communication notes for an experiment*

The study on Classroom Interaction entailed a meticulous examination of a substantial dataset, comprising 323 chat notes sourced from WhatsApp and four emails associated with the learning process. A methodical and structured approach was meticulously implemented to evaluate these diverse forms of electronic communication. This method involved the introduction of specific intervals or interventions within the dataset, strategically placed between the chat notes and email exchanges. These intervals were deliberately incorporated to uphold methodological consistency and ensure the precise and comprehensive analysis of the communicative interactions.

The incorporation of intervals between these electronic communications aimed to serve a twofold purpose. Firstly, they enabled a detailed assessment of the evolving dynamics of the discussions, allowing for a closer examination of the sequential progression of the interactions. Secondly, these strategically positioned intervals facilitated the examination of the nature of questions posed to the students through the WhatsApp platform, affording a nuanced insight into the pedagogical strategies and inquiries utilized within the context of Classroom Interaction.

The data acquired through these extensive discussions is the basis for an in-depth analysis. This analysis extends beyond the mere content of the conversations to encompass the broader communication process and, more crucially, its impact on the learning outcomes. The rigorous measures taken to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants have been integral to the ethical conduct of this study. It is essential to highlight that all data, whether originating from WhatsApp chat notes or email exchanges, has been meticulously anonymized or pseudonymized.

Consequently, this meticulous approach ensures the systematic examination of WhatsApp chat notes and email interactions. It is imperative to emphasize that the study's primary focus revolves around the intricate and dynamic nature of the discussions that transpire within Classroom Interaction. This systematic approach enables a comprehensive analysis of the questions posed, the trajectory of the discussions, and, most significantly, the educational outcomes that emerge from these interactions.

### 3.3.4. *Interviews with a semi-structured format*

Structured and semi-structured interviews are two types used in research (Gibson, 1998; Pollock, 2019). The main difference between them is the level of structure and flexibility, and structured interviews have a strict structure with predetermined questions asked consistently to all participants (Kallio et al., 2016; Mueller & Segal, 2015). On the other hand, semi-structured interviews give researchers more flexibility to explore issues that arise during the interview and gain a richer understanding of the participants (Kallio et al., 2016; Mueller & Segal, 2015).

In this final stage of the course, semi-structured interviews are conducted to corroborate quantitative data and delve deeper into the reasons and factors revealed by emerging patterns and provide researchers with more flexibility to explore issues that arise during the interview and gain a richer understanding of the participants (Cunnings, 2012; Ottman et al., 2023). Following the course, ten individual interviews were conducted with representatives from the experimental and control classes, consisting of five students each. The term "collaborative projects" in experimental classes pertains to intercultural collaboration with Indonesian students, while in control classes, it pertains to group collaboration within the classroom. The interview method involves utilizing Zoom video conferencing technology, with a typical duration ranging from 10 to 15 minutes. Following his graduation, one of the Thai students was interviewed and reported to have relocated

to Indonesia to pursue further academic endeavors. Subsequently, WhatsApp-based follow-up interviews are carried out to determine the enduring effects of intercultural exposure on academic pursuits and knowledge acquisition. The thematic analysis involves the reduction of interviewee expressions into meaningful and structured categories through the process of coding and categorization. In addition, inductive content analysis techniques uncover individual responses by identifying communication patterns and generating meaning from linguistic features within a specific context ( Mulyaningsih et al., 2022; Riazi & Candlin, 2014). Finally, the interview findings were compared to other data analysis sources to confirm the initial conclusions and delve deeper into the reasons and explanations.

## 4. Results

This section will expose the results of a systematic investigation of the research inquiry. Quantitative data in knowledge tests, project evaluations, and qualitative data in communication records and interview data were utilized to investigate the initial research inquiry. The second inquiry involves the collection of information obtained from the interview.

### 4.1. Effect of Project-Based Intercultural with Online Learning for BIPA Learners

#### 4.1.1. Analyses of knowledge testing

Owing to the unpredictable pattern of student attendance in elective courses, it is not uncommon for some individuals to miss the pre-and post-test. Thus, the experimental group consisted of nine matching samples, while the control group consisted of twelve. Using independent *t*-test samples is common in comparing learning achievement discrepancies between two classes. In contrast, paired *t*-test samples are frequently employed to assess the improvement of each class.

Based on the pre-test values, it can be observed that the control class has a mean of 34.13 and a standard deviation of 6.12, while the experimental class has a mean of 27.23 and a standard deviation of 5.69. The *t*-test results ( $t = -.80, p >.05$ ) indicated no significant difference between the two classes, indicating they had equivalent prior knowledge. Post-test values were 45.28 and 10.68 for the control class and 42.79 and 12.74 for the experimental class, respectively. The results of the *t*-test ( $t = -3.24, p >.05$ ) indicated no significant difference in the post-test value between the two classes.

#### 4.1.2. Project work and records of communication

The initial undertaking pertains to the development of a travel guidebook. The grading of each group project was based on a rubric aligned with the intended learning outcomes and ranged from 1 to 5. The scale encompassed a range of performance levels, from 'below expectations' to 'beyond expectations.' Overall, the students in both classes exhibit proficiency in synthesizing their classroom-based understanding of the Indonesian language and culture with their aptitude for conducting online research and analyzing intricate designs. As depicted in Figure 1, the products of experimental class projects function as a proactive tool in a travel guide by conveying information relevant to intercultural groups.

The disparity in performance between experimental class groups and their Indonesian counterparts can be attributed to the findings derived from online communication records. These records indicate that experimental class groups often communicate with Indonesian students through the messaging application WhatsApp to seek their aid in generating ideas, offering suggestions, and assisting with revisions. However, it was observed that although the Indonesian student pairs reviewed the products of the experimental class group, there were grammatical errors in Indonesian expressions when they referred to Figure 2. Moreover, during the interview, students from Indonesia and those from the experimental class conveyed their disinclination to explore further opportunities from the opposing side owing to their lack of familiarity and preference to restrict their WhatsApp-based communication as a gesture of politeness. Moreover,

several Indonesian participants expressed their lack of confidence in their pedagogical skills concerning effectively instructing their partners.

Figure 1  
A portion of the Group Experimental class's project product



Figure 2  
The Indonesian module expression



The second project entails utilizing the concept map to gauge the extent of students' higher-order cognitive comprehension of concepts, including their ability to apply, analyze, and synthesize information, as evidenced by the number of conceptual nodes and valid connections. The comparison between the control and experimental classes showed that the experimental class comprises 123 conceptual nodes, while the control class comprises 82. Moreover, the experimental group exhibits 38 instances, whereas the control group exhibits 17. In contrast to experimental classes, students enrolled in control classes exhibit a stronger inclination towards prioritizing conceptual connections, such as the correlation between education and politics. This trend is consistent with Indonesia's prevalent news and social media coverage. In addition, experimental classes afford students greater opportunities to engage in cross-cultural communication with Indonesian students regarding the nuances of daily life, familial dynamics, and educational practices. Conversely, control classes prioritize macro-regulatory culture over micro-regulatory culture.

The results suggest that the experimental group exhibited a greater level of comprehension regarding Indonesian culture in comparison to the control group. Within the framework of the International Curriculum for BIPA education, the project work produced by students manifests their comprehension of the interdependent connection between language and culture in the context of BIPA studies. It also reflects their enthusiasm for Indonesian culture and proficiency in the Indonesian language. Given the significance of diversity and intercultural interaction, it is imperative to emphasize cultural values. As a result, the experimental class students report an enhanced and elaborate exposition of the cultural micro-environment of Indonesia facilitated by their Indonesian counterparts.

The qualitative analysis of these findings highlights that the experimental group has shown a more profound understanding of Indonesian culture than the control group. The projects created by the students, as part of the International Curriculum for BIPA education, provide tangible evidence of their grasp of the interconnected relationship between language and culture within the BIPA studies framework. These projects also serve as a reflection of the students' strong enthusiasm for Indonesian culture and their proficiency in the Indonesian language. Recognizing the importance of diversity and intercultural interactions, it becomes crucial to accentuate the

value of cultural appreciation. Consequently, students in the experimental class can provide more detailed and enriched insights into the cultural micro-environment of Indonesia, which is facilitated by their interactions with Indonesian counterparts.

## 4.2. Learners Perceptions of Intercultural Online Collaborative Project-Based Learning

### 4.2.1. Perceived benefits

The interview transcript's thematic analysis reveals several agreed-upon benefits. To begin, most students have a favorable attitude toward intercultural collaborative learning and express their interest and motivation to learn BIPA; as one student put it "All we know about the Indonesian language and culture is from textbooks and class. One of the benefits of communicating with Indonesian students is that they understand things more realistically in various aspects. Because everyone's experience is unique. (ES)"

Furthermore, the participants reported a heightened cultural affinity due to direct communication with native Indonesians. This motivated them to understand the Indonesian language and culture better. As an illustration, a pupil of age seventeen encountered initial difficulties acquiring proficiency in Indonesian during classroom instruction. Nevertheless, she actively participates in the intercultural initiative and has cultivated a profound fascination for linguistic research. The individual expressed the following statement:

Since taking the course, I have a much higher regard for Indonesia. Indonesia, in my opinion, is a fantastic country. Nature, food, the beach, and people are all part of its legacy. As a result of becoming more familiar with Indonesian culture, I now hold higher regard for the country and its people. (ES)

Among the 'strong people' she mentioned were women from low-status families, discussed during the second project. We get the impression that some students developed emotional attachments and resonances with Indonesian culture through the project. To ascertain the project's long-term impact, we interviewed a student who relocated to Indonesia following graduation. She stated as "Learning about Indonesian culture while taking an Indonesian language class was extremely beneficial. WhatsApp came in handy a lot. I want to practice and learn from my Indonesian language partners in the project if there is another opportunity (ES)."

According to student interviews, the Project is widely regarded as a suitable approach to promote learning by harmonizing and linking theories and practices, as reported by most students in the control class." Three interviewees expressed a desire for increased direct interaction with individuals from Indonesia. According to the Indonesian students interviewed, they expressed gratitude for their participation in cross-cultural learning initiatives. A minimum of five individuals were eager to "acquire knowledge regarding Thai culture through this collaborative effort."

### 4.2.2. The challenges that students face

The interviews revealed that certain issues had an impact on the learning experiences of students. At the outset, students engaged in group discussions to express their perspectives on BIPA. Due to their accustomed teamwork, Fatoni University in Thailand students expressed apprehension regarding the challenging nature of acquiring proficiency in the Indonesian language. As one of my students put it:

I'm a beginner, and learning Indonesian is still challenging. As a result, having a "private" assistant would have allowed me to learn far more. In addition, I think they wrote a little too much in Indonesian, which made it difficult to keep up with the class in the group chat. (ES)

Indonesian students agreed it was difficult to support a large group of beginners simultaneously, particularly when their motivation levels differed. Moreover, it was difficult to see "how to support them equally when their motivation levels differed."

## 5. Discussion

The pedagogical approach employed in this study is project-based online intercultural collaborative learning. This approach is used within the context of teaching Indonesian as a Foreign Language in Thailand with the aim of enhancing student learning outcomes in the Indonesian language. The study follows an experimental design, which involves two comparable classes. Both classes adhere to the same curriculum and utilize a pedagogical method that emphasizes collaborative project-based learning. A comparative analysis of the results from these classes is conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of this pedagogical approach. To facilitate the experimental design, the study incorporates a cooperative virtual learning element that involves Indonesian students. This collaborative aspect aims to enhance the learning experience and the pedagogical approach's effectiveness. Researchers employ a sequential mixed-method approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The quantitative data is obtained through a knowledge test and assessment of project products, while the qualitative data is derived from communicative records and semi-structured interviews. This multifaceted approach allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the pedagogical method's impact on student learning outcomes.

The study investigated the effects of online collaborative intercultural projects on novice BIPA students by collecting both quantitative and qualitative data. The study's findings revealed that no significant differentiation was observed between the two cohorts in terms of their aptitude demonstrated on the knowledge evaluation. Hence, utilizing alternative pedagogical models such as PBL or communicative approaches may not be imperative to acquire factual knowledge and information about particular cultures within cultural education (Rahmat et al., 2022; Sariningsih, 2017). This finding is also consistent with what has been discovered in the PBL literature. Students do not necessarily learn more knowledge when they are in a PBL environment; rather, they improve related professional competencies in the process (Faisol et al., 2022; Lin Sihong, 2018; Maryelliwati et al., 2022). The class's short duration (two months) may also be a contributing factor, as it does not allow for sufficient time to observe a long-term effect, indicating that the effectiveness of the model design should be further investigated.

Both classes' project work assessment results were evaluated and were positive (higher than expected in grades). The interviews also revealed students' appreciation of BIPA learning in project work, indicating a generally positive impact of using project-based learning in BIPA, consistent with previous research on BIPA in language learning (Prasetiyo, 2018). Although both groups of students attained favorable project results, the experimental class exhibited superior overall performance compared to their counterparts. Specifically, with regards to intercultural sensitivity and innovation in their initial project undertaking, as well as a manifestation of cultural understanding at a more granular and nuanced level, ascribed to the assistance provided by Indonesian pupils via virtual collaborative education. The research concluded that including intercultural collaborative elements in online platforms did not significantly impact knowledge acquisition. Nonetheless, they facilitated students in acquiring a more profound comprehension of the intended culture, not solely in principle but also via experiential learning in micro-settings. This may potentially assist in bolstering the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills at the introductory level (Koeswanti, 2019).

During collaborative learning, students engaged in various activities. They worked on collaborative projects that involved interactions with Indonesian students, where they exchanged cultural insights and language proficiency. In the context of this intercultural collaboration, they participated in group discussions, collaborated on tasks, and communicated through online platforms, enhancing their intercultural skills and language proficiency. These activities aimed to immerse students in practical, real-life scenarios that bridged the gap between language learning and cultural understanding. The evaluation of data involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitatively, student perceptions and experiences were assessed through interviews and open-ended questions. These data sources provided insights into the positive effects of using Problem-Based Learning and online intercultural collaborative learning on BIPA beginners. The

qualitative analysis revealed that students from both classes confirmed the benefits of this approach, which included increased motivation, interest in Indonesian culture, and cultural knowledge acquisition through interactions with Indonesian peers. Furthermore, a further benefit of online intercultural collaborative learning, as demonstrated by students from the experimental class, was the development of their interests and motivation (Zafar et al., 2013) and the acquisition of cultural knowledge through interaction with people from the Indonesian culture. However, qualitative data also identified obstacles that may limit the effects of online intercultural collaborative learning on BIPA beginners, such as limited participation in group work due to low language proficiency and the time required to become acquainted with one another to support intercultural interaction better.

The study's findings yield insights into the potential model implications. It is imperative to recognize that although online communication offers a convenient means of engaging with native speakers, students' limited familiarity with their intercultural peers may constrain the scope of discussion topics. To mitigate this, learners should dedicate sufficient time and develop essential skills to cultivate strong relationships with their team members and intercultural collaborators. This includes engaging in thoughtful questioning and achieving a profound understanding and cultural reflection. As established in existing scholarly literature, the time zone disparity between Indonesia and Thailand can pose logistical obstacles that hinder student engagement. Another aspect to consider is the utilization of WhatsApp for intercultural online communication. While WhatsApp offers the convenience of asynchronous messaging, its effectiveness can be enhanced through synchronized video conferencing, a point emphasized by students in Zoom Meeting interviews. Employing online communication among students holds the potential to enhance cross-cultural and linguistic acquisition. However, the two projects examined in this study did not afford an opportunity to discern improvements in student learning. BIPA educators have the potential to design more sophisticated projects in the future, which may facilitate the monitoring of BIPA's progress in conjunction with the project's objectives, ultimately identifying enhancements in student learning.

The subsequent section delineates the research's limitations and potential avenues for future inquiry. The research findings primarily emanated from the experimentation of a novel model blueprint with a specific cohort of participants. This scope was confined to the assessment of two project designs conducted over two months. Consequently, the study's findings can be considered preliminary and necessitate further examination and validation through longitudinal research. While the study's experimental design permitted data collection on the impact of online collaborative problem-based learning by comparing two classes, it did not unveil the specific disparities among student groups within each class. A proposition is made that group dynamics will continue to play a substantial role in the project team's performance. Therefore, future investigations should prioritize the analysis of project groups' characteristics and behaviors within the framework of virtual cross-cultural cooperative education, with particular attention to sustained engagement.

## **6. Conclusion**

The literature review underscores the challenges and opportunities in teaching and learning Indonesian as a non-native language. It emphasizes the significance of motivation, cultural relevance, and effective teaching methods. While there was no apparent discrepancy in the knowledge test scores between the two cohorts, the experimental group demonstrated better results in the project outcomes than the control group. By comparison, it can be observed that both cohorts exhibited praiseworthy advancement in their project endeavors. It provides a context for understanding the factors influencing BIPA learning, particularly among non-native learners. In the context of the research's objectives and findings, the literature review's insights align with the study's results.

The goal of the study was to find out how project-based online intercultural collaborative learning helped new non-native Thai language learners learn BIPA. The findings indicate that the experimental group, which used the problem-based learning methodology with intercultural collaborative elements, demonstrated better results in project outcomes compared to the control group. This suggests that incorporating intercultural collaborative elements into online learning platforms is advantageous for neophyte instructors and students in the early stages of their pedagogical journey. Furthermore, the study contributes to the advancement of BIPA education by highlighting the effectiveness of project-based online intercultural collaborative learning. It underscores the importance of achieving a balance between collaborative learning and individualized support for neophyte BIPA learners. This match between the literature review and the research results strengthens the case that new ways of teaching and working with people from different cultures can make learning and teaching BIPA better, addressing some of the problems that were pointed out in the literature review.

## 7. Limitations

The study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the research focused on a specific group of participants, namely non-native Thai learners of BIPA. This limitation makes it challenging to generalize the findings to a broader population of BIPA learners, who may have diverse characteristics and needs. Second, the study's duration was relatively short, spanning two months. Such a limited timeframe may not capture the long-term effects of project-based online intercultural collaborative learning on BIPA learners. Longitudinal research with extended observation periods could provide more comprehensive insights into the sustainability and persistence of the observed benefits. Third, the research employed a specific curriculum and pedagogical approach, which may not be universally applicable to all BIPA education contexts. The efficacy of project-based online intercultural collaborative learning could vary depending on the curriculum, resources, and student demographics.

Fourth, the study focused on the outcomes related to project work, while other aspects of BIPA learning, such as speaking and listening skills, were not comprehensively evaluated. A more holistic assessment of BIPA acquisition should consider a broader range of language skills and competencies. Fifth, the research mainly centered on the perspective of BIPA learners, with limited insights from BIPA instructors. A more comprehensive examination of the pedagogical approaches from the instructors' point of view would provide a more well-rounded understanding of the educational dynamics. Finally, the study predominantly relied on quantitative data for the assessment of project outcomes. Qualitative insights from students' perspectives and feedback could offer a deeper understanding of the factors contributing to the observed results and help refine the pedagogical model. While the study provides valuable insights into the potential of project-based online intercultural collaborative learning for BIPA education, these limitations should be considered when interpreting and applying the findings to broader educational contexts. Further research that addresses these limitations can contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of effective strategies in BIPA education.

**Author contributions:** All the authors contributed significantly to the conceptualization, analysis, and writing of this paper.

**Declaration of interest:** No conflict of interest is declared by authors.

**Ethics declaration:** The authors declared that this study does not require ethical approval.

**Funding:** No funding was received to assist with the preparation of this manuscript.

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