

Research Article

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Problems of Learners with L1 Background (Non-Latin Mother Tongue) Learning Indonesian as L2

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Abstract

Background/purpose. Indonesian uses Latin script, so students whose first language background (L1) is a non-Latin language will experience difficulties in understanding it. The purpose of this study is to explore the similarities and differences in the problems faced by Indonesian students (L2) with a non-Latin background (L1) and students with a Latin background (L1).

Materials / Methods. The research design used is qualitative and exploratory. Data were collected through observation and interviews to find initial data, which was then continued with a literature study to compare the findings of problems faced by non-Latin L1 (non-Latin mother tongue) students with Latin students in learning Indonesian (L2).

Results. The results of the study show that Indonesian as a second language (L2) students with a non-Latin first language (L1) background, especially Mandarin speakers, experience various difficulties both from linguistic and non-linguistic aspects. From the linguistic side, the main challenges include mispronunciation of certain letters, use of punctuation, writing Latin letters, and understanding the morphological structure of the Indonesian language. From the non-linguistic side, problems were found, such as low learning motivation, limited learning time, lack of social interaction in Indonesian, and difficulty in adjusting to Indonesian norms and culture.

Conclusion. Differences in first language background (Latin vs. non-Latin) significantly affect the type and level of difficulty in learning Indonesian. Therefore, strategies for teaching Indonesian as a foreign language need to be specifically adjusted to the characteristics and needs of each group of students to optimize learning outcomes.

1. Introduction

Indonesian language learning is currently widely known in various parts of the world. Based on the official Jaga BIPA website, there are 58 countries that have organized Indonesian language learning (Mahanani et al., 2022; Sudarmo et al., 2021; Sukmayadi & Yahya, 2020). This phenomenon shows that in the language learning process, some advantages and disadvantages are influenced by linguistic and non-linguistic factors (Krizman et al., 2017; Nygaard & Tzeng, 2021). Linguistic factors include differences in script type, pronunciation, sentence structure, and intonation (Burns & Seidlhofer, 2018; Calduch & Talaván, 2017), while non-linguistic factors include cultural background, learning motivation, self-confidence level, learning duration, and initial language ability (Ghasemi et al., 2020; Soruç et al., 2024; Tsvetkova, 2019). Nevertheless, Indonesia is one of the countries that greatly interests foreign learners in learning its language and culture (Mantra, 2022; Muharom Albantani & Madkur, 2018; Saddhono, 2018).

These foreign learners come from various countries such as China, Japan, Taiwan, Germany, France, the Philippines, Thailand, Australia, Turkey, and Arabic. Learners can be distinguished based on their mother tongue (L1) script system in this context. L1 refers to learners who use non-Latin scripts in their first language, such as learners from China, Japan, and Korea, while L2 refers to second languages that generally use the Latin script system, such as Indonesian, English, or French. These differences in script systems often pose significant initial challenges in learning because they affect the ability to recognize letters, pronounce, and grammatical structures. This study specifically focuses on learners from non-Latin mother tongue countries, such as China and Taiwan. Mandarin-speaking learners often face difficulties in the process of transitioning from non-Latin to Latin scripts, as well as from Mandarin to Indonesian grammatical structures. (Budianta, 2017; Budiman et al., 2018; Luli & Budiman, 2019; Sandyaningrum & Kusumaningtyas, 2023; Setijadi, 2016). Learners, in this case, do not only learn the language but also learn the existing culture. Thus, learners will be able to adapt to their environment (Hastuti & Sudrajat, 2023; Zein et al., 2020). L2 (Latin second language) learning emphasizes the importance of mastering language skills that not only support cognitive aspects but also social and professional development, thus enabling learners to communicate more effectively (Getie, 2020).

Based on an initial interview with one of the teachers (NS), it was revealed that the differences in the script systems between Latin (in L2) and non-Latin (in L1) were the main obstacles in the learning process. In addition, differences in morphology are also a challenge, especially in the use of prefixes, suffixes, and infixes that are not found in Mandarin but are essential in word formation in Indonesian (Jiang & Cohen, 2018; Liu & Reed, 2021; Nel & Krog, 2021). The second challenge is the difference in language morphology. L2 (Latin second language) has a structure with a different morphology from Mandarin, namely in the use of prefixes, suffixes, and infixes that are not found in Mandarin. This can affect the understanding and use of L2 (Latin second language) by Mandarin learners, especially in forming words that are in accordance with L2 (second language) rules (Hasel, 2022).

In addition, the problem that occurs is that students' understanding of Indonesian culture is still relatively low. Lack of knowledge about culture can affect the way students interact and understand the context of language use in various social situations (Tomalin, 2017). For example, without an adequate understanding of customs or social norms, students may not be able to apply language appropriately in various situations (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Ethics and behavioral norms are also problems faced by students. Students have not fully internalized the norms of language behavior that are in accordance with Indonesian culture, including the use of polite language and in accordance with the social context. This inability can result in errors in communication that can be considered impolite or not in accordance with social norms (Parvaresh, 2019).

Another problem faced during L2 (second language Latin) learning for Mandarin-speaking students is the lack of parental support in terms of implementing L2 (second language Latin) in everyday life. This greatly supports the development of children's language skills (Bosch et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2024; Tao & Xu, 2022). Students who do not have the opportunity to practice L2 (second language, Latin) consistently outside the classroom will have difficulty applying L2 (second language). Therefore, it is important to create an environment that supports the use of L2 (second language, Latin) in everyday activities and provides opportunities to practice communication in real-world contexts (Jackson, 2018; Liu et al., 2016). Without adequate support from the family environment, students feel less motivated or are not used to using the language actively in everyday life (Bosch et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2024; Tao & Xu, 2022). This has an impact on the development of language skills, which is quite slow (Christiansen & Chater, 2015). The next problem faced during L2 (Latin second language) learning is the discovery of differences in language ability levels in one class. The diversity of language abilities between students can be a new challenge for teachers, so teachers must be able to provide learning methods appropriate to students' learning styles and needs. These differences become challenges in achieving the expected learning objectives (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017).

The problem of learning L2 (Latin foreign languages) is not only experienced by Mandarin learners but also in several countries, including countries that use non-Latin scripts, such as China, Korea, Thailand, Arabic, and Turkey. Problems that often arise in non-Latin L1 students are generally related to differences in the script and phonology systems between their mother tongue and Indonesian as L2. For example, students from China have difficulty pronouncing certain phonemes such as /r/, /e/, and /t/ because there are no equivalents in Mandarin (Yulianeta, 2022). Likewise, students from South Korea do not have the phonemes /f/, /v/, or /ə/ in their phonological system, causing pronunciation and intonation errors when communicating in Indonesian (Youngsun, Sosrohadi et al., 2024). Students from Thailand also face difficulties in pronouncing the sound "e" and often confuse the consonants /r/ and /l/, in addition to differences in sentence structure and tone systems that make it difficult for them to understand Indonesian intonation (Wahyono et al., 2023; Cheuypoung, 2023).

Similar problems are also found in students from Arab countries, who often replace the sound /p/ with /b/, such as "paid" becoming "Badi" due to the absence of the sound /p/ in Arabic (Yulianeta, 2022). Meanwhile, students from Turkey, even though they use the Latin alphabet, still experience phonetic obstacles such as the pronunciation of /e/ into /ə/ and the influence of the agglutinative morphology system, which makes it challenging to understand the affix structure in Indonesian (Anggaira, 2022; IŞIK & Artuner, 2020). Apart from the phonological aspect, other linguistic problems such as the use of pronouns, difficulty understanding affixation (prefixes, suffixes, infixes), and syntactic structures are also obstacles. Thai, Korean, and Arabic students are often confused when understanding and forming sentences according to the SPOK pattern of Indonesian because the structure in their mother tongue is very different. In addition, difficulty in understanding the meaning of vocabulary that does not have a direct equivalent in L1 is also a common challenge that slows down the learning process.

Another problem faced during L2 learning is the lack of support from the family environment, especially for Mandarin-speaking students. The absence of Indonesian language practice at home hinders students from building the habit of using L2 in real contexts. This is reinforced by research showing that language interactions outside the classroom, especially at home, greatly influence the development of children's language skills (Bosch et al., 2025; Chen et al., 2024; Tao & Xu, 2022). Without active and consistent environmental support, students tend to be less confident and not used to using Indonesian orally in everyday life (Jackson, 2018; Liu et al., 2016; Christiansen & Chater, 2015).

The next problem is the inequality of language skills in the classroom. In one class, students have diverse backgrounds and levels of language proficiency. This difference challenges teachers in designing learning methods that are appropriate to the learning styles and individual needs of students (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2017). Teachers are required to be able to apply an adaptive learning approach so that each student can still achieve optimal learning outcomes.

Thus, based on the background of the problem, the purpose of this study is to determine the similarities and differences in the problems faced by Indonesian language (L2) learners with non-Latin (L1) backgrounds and Latin (L1) learners. The results of this study are expected to contribute knowledge about the similarities and differences in Indonesian language learning problems for Latin and non-Latin L1 learners, as well as being the basis for developing more contextual and effective learning strategies.

2. Literature Review

In learning Indonesian as a foreign language (BIPA), the first language (L1) background plays an important role in the language acquisition process. Differences in writing systems between Latin L1 and non-Latin L1, such as letters and symbols in Mandarin, Korean, and Arabic, have been identified as variables that can create obstacles or even facilitate the teaching and learning process (KHOLIQ et al., 2024; Supriadi et al., 2022). These differences in graphic systems, accompanied by phonological differences such as the pronunciation of sounds that are less familiar to non-Latin L1 speakers, require adjustments to teaching methods so that the application of pronunciation training techniques through the BIPA approach can accommodate the phonetic difficulties that occur (Supriadi et al., 2022).

Phonologically, research shows that Mandarin speakers, for example, have difficulty pronouncing sounds that do not have a direct equivalent in their L1, so the use of technology and interactive media in pronunciation training is needed to improve phonological awareness (Supriadi et al., 2022). Likewise, the challenges faced by Korean speakers in adopting phonemes that are unfamiliar to them underscore the need to adapt teaching materials. This suggests that phonetic differences between L1 (mother tongue) and Indonesian must be addressed with conducive teaching strategies, especially through a structured and integrative approach (KHOLIQ et al., 2024; Supriadi et al., 2022).

In terms of morphology, Indonesian is known to be rich in affixes (prefixes, suffixes, infixes, and confixes), which are often a challenge for students from non-agglutinative language backgrounds such as Mandarin and Thai. A contrastive study of morphosyntactic analysis shows that the mismatch of morphological structures between Indonesian and non-agglutinative first languages can result in difficulties in understanding and using derived words appropriately in grammatical contexts (Sumarti et al., 2023). Therefore, the application of teaching strategies that emphasize structural analysis and intensive practice in the use of affixes is expected to help students internalize morphological patterns more effectively.

In addition to linguistic aspects, non-linguistic aspects such as culture and learning motivation also have a significant influence on the BIPA learning process. Differences in cultural values and social practices between individualistic cultures, such as in China and Korea, and collectivist cultures in Indonesia, show that social interaction and cultural adaptation are important components of successful learning. Integration of learning materials containing cultural elements, for example, through folklore and literature, has been shown to increase connectivity between the linguistic context and the underlying cultural values, thereby increasing students' understanding and learning motivation (Rachman et al., 2019; Tiawati et al., 2024).

To overcome these challenges, the BIPA teaching approach must be adjusted to the background and culture of each student's L1 (non-Latin mother tongue). Teaching strategies that combine pragmatic context and cultural content, for example, through the use of literary works, folklore, and the application of digital technology in interactive training, have been identified as effective methods to bridge L1 (non-Latin mother tongue) differences and increase learning motivation (Setyaningsih & Rahardi, 2020; Tiawati et al., 2024). Such an approach not only prioritizes linguistic aspects but also provides a pragmatic context that can help students understand the dynamics of communication in using Indonesian in authentic social environments (Rachman et al., 2019; Setyaningsih & Rahardi, 2020).

Thus, the synergy between a deep understanding of structural differences in phonology and morphology and the integration of cultural elements in teaching materials becomes an important foundation in designing effective BIPA teaching strategies. By accommodating L1 differences through a differentiation approach in teaching, it is hoped that linguistic and cultural barriers can be minimized so that the process of acquiring Indonesian runs optimally and inclusively.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study used an exploratory qualitative research design. The purpose of this study was to determine the similarities and differences in the problems faced by Indonesian language (L2) learners with non-Latin (L1) backgrounds and Latin language (L1) learners (Girelli & Bevilacqua, 2017; Hunter et al., 2019). This study focused on collecting information about L2 learning at the Teipi School Cooperative Education Unit in Jakarta in, Indonesia.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population in this study were all students and teachers involved in learning Indonesian at the Elementary School level in one of the Cooperative Education Unit Schools (SPK). The sample in this study consisted of students in grades 1A and 1B, as well as Indonesian language subject teachers who taught in the two classes. The number of students in class 1A was 28, consisting of 14 male and 14 female students. Meanwhile, class 1B had 29 people, consisting of 15 male students and 14 female students. Thus, the total sample of students was 57, consisting of 29 male and 28 female students. The sampling technique used was total sampling, where all members of the population who met the criteria were included as research subjects.

In addition to students, Indonesian language teachers were also included as participants because they have a direct role in the learning process and observe the development of students' language skills and the obstacles they experience in acquiring a second language. In terms of demographic characteristics, all students are native Mandarin speakers who come from families with a Chinese ethnolinguistic background. Mandarin is the main language used at home, and most students are not yet accustomed to actively using Indonesian outside of formal learning contexts.

To strengthen the understanding and validity of the field data, sampling in this study was also strengthened through a literature study of 20 international scientific journals that discuss similar problems, namely the challenges of L2 acquisition by students with non-Latin L1 backgrounds. The literature review supports the context and formulation of the problem and serves as a reference for identifying linguistic and non-linguistic problem variables relevant to the study's object. This study has obtained official permission from the school and was carried out for nine months, aiming to observe the development of students' language skills longitudinally and explore the forms of problems that arise during the second language acquisition process.

3.3. Data collection technique

The data in this study were obtained through two main techniques, namely interviews and observations, and were strengthened by the results of a literature study of 20 national and international scientific journals. The observation method was used to directly identify various problems faced by native Mandarin-speaking students (L1 non-Latin mother tongue) when learning Indonesian (L2 Latin-script language). This observation was carried out in classroom learning situations, especially in speaking, writing, and reading comprehension activities. Meanwhile, the interview method was conducted with Indonesian teachers to obtain additional information related to the problems they observed during the learning process. The interviews also explored teachers' perceptions of the level of student difficulties and the strategies that had been implemented to overcome these obstacles. This study applies two main approaches, namely the exploratory method and the comparative study method.

The exploratory method is used to explore and understand in depth the various problems faced by non-Latin L1 students in learning L2. This approach is in line with the views of Creswell & Creswell (2018) and Chang (2009), who stated that the exploratory method is very suitable for uncovering problems that have not been systematically identified. Furthermore, the comparative study method is used to determine the similarities and differences in problems between native Mandarin speakers as L1 (non-Latin) and Indonesian language learners with a Latin L1 background. This approach is used to look at linguistic and non-linguistic factors that may be similar or different between the two groups. This is in line with the opinions of Akbas & Hardman, 2018; Ghalebi et al., 2020) who emphasize the importance of a comparative approach in analyzing cross-language and cross-cultural phenomena. As a reinforcement of the field findings, this field data is combined with the results of the analysis of 20 scientific journal articles that discuss similar issues in various educational contexts and countries. This literature study covers research results on L2 acquisition by non-Latin and Latin L1 speakers, thus helping to broaden theoretical perspectives and strengthen the validity of research findings. With the integration of empirical data and literature, the research results are expected to be more comprehensive and academically accountable.

4. Results

Based on the results of observations and interviews, data was found regarding several problems in learning Indonesian for Mandarin-speaking students. These problems are divided into two aspects, namely linguistic aspects and non-linguistic aspects. In linguistic problems, four factors were found, namely (1) pronunciation errors, (2) punctuation errors, (3) errors in the use of letters, (4) errors in writing letters.

4.1. Linguistic Aspects

1) Mispronunciation

Based on the observation results, data was found that many students still have difficulty pronouncing certain letters that are not Mandarin letters. The phonological differences between the two languages cause students to have difficulty pronouncing the correct sounds and intonations, so their pronunciation is less than perfect. These challenges slow down the process of mastering speaking skills, especially at levels that require fluency and confidence.

The most common letter pronunciation errors are "a, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, o, q, r, t, u, z" for example, a student named CR has difficulty pronouncing the letter "r" in the word "new", resulting in the word "widow". This difficulty indicates a phonetic difference between Indonesian and Mandarin, where the pronunciation of the letter "r" may not have the same equivalent or is difficult to articulate in Mandarin. This problem indicates a phonetic difference between Indonesian and Mandarin. Based on research (Brunelle & Kirby, 2016), the phonemes and pronunciation of certain letters in Mandarin

may differ significantly from those in Indonesia. In particular, the letter "r" in Indonesian has a distinctive pronunciation, where the sound "r" is usually driven by the vibration of the tongue in contact with the roof of the mouth. However, in Mandarin, the pronunciation of the letter "r" does not always have the same equivalent. In Mandarin, the letter "r" is pronounced differently from L2 (Latin second language) because, in Mandarin, there is no vocabulary for the letter "r" but tends to use "zh" or "l" (Muthmainna et al., 2023). Difficulty in pronouncing the letter "r" can also be influenced by the phonetic structure of Mandarin, so the pronunciation does not match the letter "r" in Indonesian (Brunelle & Kirby, 2016). In addition, differences in tongue position, airflow, and articulation habits in Mandarin can make it difficult for students in schools to adjust their pronunciation to Indonesian standards.

2) Punctuation Errors

Punctuation in learning Indonesian is an important thing in written language. Based on the results of observations conducted in classes 1A and 1B, data was obtained that when BR students read Indonesian texts, errors often occurred in sentences marked with periods, namely pausing for a moment, but these BR students continued reading without stopping. This resulted in the meaning of the sentences being read not being conveyed properly because the intonation and pauses needed to understand the sentence were lost. This error seems to be caused by students' lack of understanding of the function and meaning of punctuation.

The difference in punctuation systems between Indonesian and Mandarin is also one of the factors that causes students to misunderstand the text. In Mandarin, the period is in the form of a small circle (o), which is different from its shape in Indonesian (.). This difference makes students less familiar with or not fully understand how to use punctuation properly in Indonesian. This is reinforced by research conducted by (Chiang et al., 2019), that in Mandarin, the period is in the form of a small circle, which is different from Indonesian. This visual difference can cause Mandarin-speaking students to feel less familiar or not fully understand the use of proper punctuation in learning Indonesian (Rifai et al., 2022).

3) Character Abuse

Mistakes in the use of Latin characters are a challenge often experienced by students from countries with non-Latin script backgrounds. One of the mistakes experienced by Mandarin students at the Jakarta Taipei School was a student named KM who was reading the word "veri" as "weri". This error occurs because native Mandarin speakers often replace the sound /v/ with /w/ because the sound /w/ exists in Mandarin phonology, while the sound /v/ does not exist. Mandarin has a sound /w/ that occurs naturally in its phonetic system, for example, in words such as "我" (wǒ, which means "I"). Because this sound is familiar and easy to pronounce, Mandarin speakers tend to use /w/ as a substitute when they encounter sounds that do not exist in their language, such as /v/. In other words, Mandarin has a very different script system in terms of structure and function compared to Indonesian or other languages that use an alphabet (Lai & O'Brien, 2020; Sun et al., 2020). This is influenced because in Mandarin, Hanzi characters do not use phonetic letters, but rather characters that function to represent certain ideas or sounds, which are functionally different from the letters in Latin characters (Xiang et al., 2022).

4) Letter Writing Errors

Based on the results of observations conducted on several students, it was found that there were still errors in writing words containing the letter "n" or suffixed with the letter "n". For example, in the word "eating" students still made errors in writing it as "makaa", the word "mandi" became "mardi", the word "car" became "modil", and the word "seed" became "bigi". This type of error indicates an inability to distinguish the sounds and shapes of letters that should be used.

According to observations, these errors can be caused by several factors. One of them is the lack of a deep understanding of word pronunciation, which is an important foundation in the writing process. When students do not fully understand how a word should be written into good and correct Indonesian, students tend to write words according to the pronunciation they hear or know with an inappropriate form, such as "makaa". This writing error occurs because of the difficulty in distinguishing letters that are similar in shape, such as "n" with "r", "n" with "a", "b" with "d", and "j" with "g".

4.2. Non-linguistic Aspects

1) Student Characteristics

Based on the observation results on October 26, 2024, students with a Chinese background tend to show individualistic characters in project-based learning activities. When working on group assignments, students are asked to collaborate with their group mates to draw types of animals according to the instruction sheet. However, in reality, students have not been able to collaborate collectively. For example, KN prefers to do his own assignments because he feels more active and smart, while his other friends are more engrossed in their own world. The teacher has emphasized that each student must contribute actively, but the involvement of other friends is only seen when time is almost up. This incident reflects the individualistic nature that is still strong in students with a Chinese background.

This phenomenon is in accordance with the results of research (Huang, Jie et al., 2018; Huang, Shiliang et al., 2018) which show that Chinese culture, in addition to prioritizing collectivity, also emphasizes personal achievement, so that Mandarin children often show individualistic attitudes in academic contexts. This is different from Indonesian culture which emphasizes the values of collectivity, cooperation, and family in education (Arli & Pekerti, 2017; Bedford & Yeh, 2019; Sudigdo et al., 2024).

2) Differences in Language Skills

Based on the results of observations in classes 1A and 1B totaling 57 students, there are significant differences in ability in learning Indonesian, especially in reading skills. Students in class 1A are more fluent in reading and have better fluency, while students in class 1B often experience difficulties, especially in the pronunciation and spelling of words. This difference shows that some students have not fully mastered the reading skills expected at this level. Especially when reading a text, the presence of punctuation in the text is less noticeable, for example, after a period, which is paused, but students continue to read it just like that in the next sentence. This, of course, makes students not understand the intent and purpose of the sentences in the text.

These differences in ability pose challenges in teaching, requiring teachers to adapt their methods (Pourhosein Gilakjani & Banou Sabouri, 2017). More advanced students need additional challenges to stay motivated while struggling students need more detailed explanations and additional time to understand the material (Kinshuk et al., 2016; Shavazipour et al., 2021).

3) Norms of Behavior

Based on the observation results, a JC student was found during the learning process putting both of his feet on the study table. Seeing this action, the teacher immediately reprimanded him, and then JC replied, "Why, ma'am?" This incident shows that some students with a Chinese background still do not fully understand the ethics and norms of behavior that apply in the Indonesian educational environment. Putting feet on the table is considered impolite and disrupts the learning atmosphere. However, this does not reflect the Chinese student population as a whole because many other students already have a good understanding of ethics and norms in learning.

In Chinese culture, respect for parents and elders is highly emphasized (Bedford & Yeh, 2019), and children are taught to speak politely and respect family rules (Mamirxonovna, 2025; Taufik & Pamungkas, 2025; Tyler & Trinkner, 2017). Therefore, students of Chinese descent are generally accustomed to following stricter norms of politeness in social interactions. However, adapting to educational norms and ethics in Indonesia takes time, especially in understanding the importance of maintaining cleanliness and order in the classroom, as well as communicating politely and respecting the teacher's time and effort (Aningsih et al., 2022; Suyatno et al., 2019).

4) *Motivation for Language Use*

Based on the results of interviews with Indonesian language teachers, NS stated that "learning Indonesian (B2) is considered only as a formality because students are in Indonesia". This is reinforced by the finding that students do not find the practice of speaking using Indonesian at home. Students only use Indonesian with household assistants or with drivers. This is supported by the results of research from (Ciampa, 2014; Lamb, 2017) that the lack of support from the family when practicing language in the home environment makes children feel too lazy to practice it; this certainly hinders the achievement of targeted language skills. Parental support and a home environment that supports active language use are very important for children's language development (Dörnyei et al., 2014; Kukulska-Hulme & Viberg, 2018). So far, children have only used Indonesian when communicating with household assistants or with drivers.

On another occasion, an interview was conducted with an Indonesian teacher, RC stated that, "Most of our students do not have the opportunity to speak Indonesian at home or in the surrounding environment. They communicate more often in Mandarin, which makes it difficult for them to improve their Indonesian language skills and feel less confident." On the other hand, students are oriented to continue higher education abroad, so they are more likely to use Mandarin and English in daily communication.

5) *Time Limit*

The duration of learning Indonesian is very limited. Where in one week, there are two meetings with a learning duration of only 35 minutes for each meeting. This is certainly one of the factors that hinders students' language progress. Students use Indonesian during class hours, if they change to another subject, then the language used is Mandarin or English. This time limitation can have a major impact on children's language learning progress; the more time is used to practice the language, the faster students will master the target language (Jónsdóttir et al., 2021).

6) *Lack of Social Interaction*

The lack of social interaction in this context means that students basically do not have the opportunity to communicate with neighbors in urban housing complexes. The majority of students in this school live in urban residential areas. Students in urban areas tend to spend more time at school. Students leave from 07.00 in the morning until 15.30. This means students have no time to interact with their neighbors. Problems that may arise in this social interaction include the lack of opportunities to interact directly, which can hinder children's ability to learn language (Endevelt-Shapira, Bosseler, Mizrahi et al., 2024; Endevelt-Shapira, Bosseler, Zhao et al., 2024).

7) *Lack of Self Confidence*

Lack of self-confidence in students stems from their inability to master the target language. Pronunciation that is still often wrong and back and forth makes students feel embarrassed when speaking. This triggers teachers to repeat the material over and over again so that students can understand and practice it. Frequently making mistakes in pronouncing a word makes students feel insecure. Mistakes in pronouncing a word make students feel stressed and anxious when they want to produce words or sentences (Tagarelli et al., 2016). Thus, students will tend to be passive or

unwilling to produce language using Indonesian. This is also reinforced by (Ciftci et al., 2024 and Zhang et al., 2024) that self-confidence has a significant effect on student communication and socialization, especially in honing interpersonal skills to interact.

5. Discussion

In the previous section, several problems faced by students with a Chinese (non-Latin) L1 (mother tongue) background have been described. To find out the similarities and differences in the problems faced by Indonesian (L2) learners with a non-Latin (L1) background and learners with a Latin (L1) background, a comparative study is needed. The comparison of the problems of students with a non-Latin language background here includes learners with Chinese, Korean, Thai, Arabic, and Turkish language backgrounds. The problems found are divided into two aspects, namely linguistic aspects and non-linguistic aspects.

5.1. Linguistic Problems

In the linguistic aspect, there are ten problems, including, First, pronunciation errors. (1) Students with a Chinese L1 (non-Latin mother tongue) background experience letter pronunciation errors like students from Taiwan, namely /r, a, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, o, q, r, t, u, z/ (Yulianeta, 2022). (2) pronunciation errors; for example, Korean students often make mistakes when pronouncing the phoneme sounds /ə, f, z, ñ/. This often happens because these phonemes exist in Indonesian but not in Korean. The next problem is in the pronunciation of the letter /r/. In the pronunciation of the letter /r/, students pronounce it very differently or even not the same; this is because there is no equivalent in Korean. Therefore, this makes it difficult for students to articulate the sound correctly (Youngsun, Sosrohadi et al., 2024) . (3) Thai students also have difficulty pronouncing the sound of the letter "e" which can sound like [ɛ] (as in the word "red") or [e] (as in the word "big") (Wahyono et al., 2023). In addition to the letter /e/, Thai students also have problems pronouncing the letters /r/ and /l/ (Damaianti et al., 2020). (4) Turkish students often have difficulty pronouncing the consonant letter /r/, which tends to be softer or closer to /r/. In addition, the letter /e/ is pronounced /ə/ as in the Indonesian word "senang" becomes "sənanɡ" and the word "sahabat" becomes "təman" (Aria Septi Anggaira, 2022).

The results of the analysis show that countries with non-Latin mother tongues (L1) tend to face significant challenges in pronouncing consonants, especially double consonants. One striking example is Arabic learners, who often make mistakes in pronouncing the word "any" as "apan". This error not only produces a sound that deviates from the rules of the Indonesian language but can also eliminate the meaning of the word, resulting in misunderstandings in communication. (5) Errors in pronouncing letters or alphabets by Arabic speakers when learning Indonesian are often caused by phonological differences in the two languages, namely in the alphabet /p/ becomes /b/ for example, the word "padi" becomes "badi", /f/ becomes /v/, /r, g, l/ and in double consonants such as /pp/ in the word "any" becomes "apan" (Yulianeta, 2022) .

Thus, it can be concluded that students with a non-Latin L1 (mother tongue) background often experience difficulties and errors in pronouncing vowels and consonants. Vowels that are still often wrong are the letters / a, i, u, e, o /, while consonants are found in the letters / b, f, g, h, j, k, l, n, p, i, r, t, and v /. These pronunciation errors can affect the meaning of the word, so it is important for learners to pronounce each letter clearly so that the meaning of the word is maintained. This is what characterizes Indonesian pronunciation.

Table 1. Mispronunciation of letters in non-Latin Indonesian L1 (NON-LATIN MOTHER LANGUAGE)

Aspects of Pronunciation Errors in Indonesian with a Non-Latin Background L1 (NON-LATIN MOTHER LANGUAGE)				
China	Korea	Thailand	Arab	Türkiye
Difficulty with consonant sounds such as /r, a, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, o, q, r, t, u, z/ and long vowels.	Errors in the phonemes /ə, f, z, ñ/ because there are no equivalents in Korean.	Difficulty with the vowel "e" ([ɛ] or [e]) and the consonant /r/, often becoming /l/.	Mispronunciation of the letters /p, b, f, v, r, g, l/ and double consonants such as /pp/ in the word "any" becomes "when"	The sound /ğ/ is often pronounced incorrectly.

Second, in the aspect of pronouns, students in China experience confusion in using pronouns such as "we", "us", or "they". Students are confused about when to use the word. Third, in the aspect of the use of affixes, Korean students have problems with the use of affixes, such as suffixes and confixes in Indonesian. In line with the problem, students from Thailand also experience the same problem as Korean students in terms of affixes; students often experience confusion when using suffixes, infixes, and confixes. Fourth, vocabulary equivalents, in this aspect Arabic students.

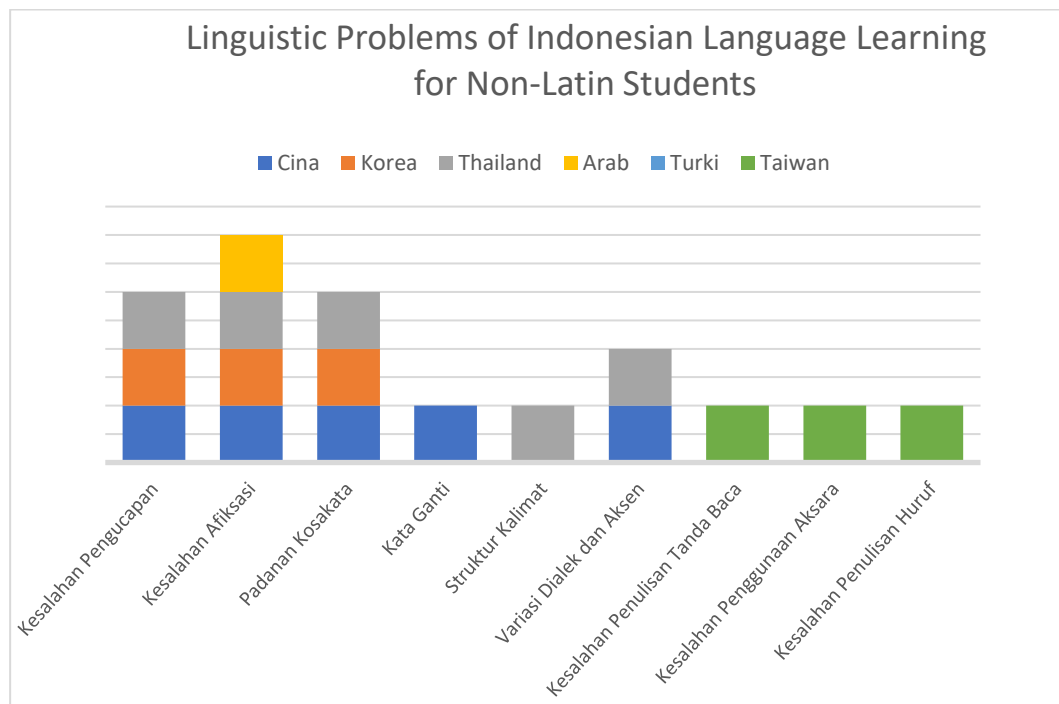
Koreans feel that many words do not have direct equivalents in Korean, so students must learn about the interaction between language and culture in order to understand the use of these words. Fifth, Thai students have difficulty in constructing sentences. This is because the sentence structure in Indonesian generally must meet the SPOK (Subject-Predicate-Object-Adverb) pattern, to ensure clarity and order in conveying meaning. In comparison, Thai sentence structure is more flexible than Indonesian.

Six dialect and accent variations, the main difference between dialects or accents in Thailand and Indonesia lies in the role of tone in their languages. While tone is very important for meaning in Thailand, while in Indonesia tone only serves an expressive function and does not affect the meaning of words linguistically. This is supported by (Cheuypoung, 2023) that the tone system in Northeast Thailand (Thailand) in five language communities in Sisaket province is similar, namely using a five-tone system. However, there are differences in tone characteristics, especially in tone 2 (high-low) and tone 5 (low-low). This reflects the fundamental difference between tonal languages such as Thai and non-tonal languages such as Indonesian.

The next comparison is that of Turkey; the differences between Turkish and Indonesian dialects or accents lie in various linguistic aspects, including phonology, intonation, morphology, and socio-cultural context. In terms of intonation, Turkish dialects tend to be firm with rising and falling patterns governed by grammatical structures, while in Indonesia, intonation is often flat at the end of a sentence except for the Batak or Bugis dialects, which have a tone similar to certain Turkish accents. In terms of morphology, Turkish is highly agglutinative with layered suffixes to indicate case, number, and time, while Indonesian is heavily influenced by prefixes, suffixes, and infixes to form words. In social conventions, dialects are used as markers of regional identity and are often associated with social class or place of origin, while in Indonesia, dialects are often used to mark ethnic groups or regions. An example of dialectal differences in Turkish dialects, is the word "ben" (I) in the Cypriot dialect can be pronounced with different intonations, such as (ben) or (ban), while in the Indonesian dialect the word "aku" is pronounced standard as "kau" in Minang or "aku" in Indonesian. This is

supported by research (Işık & Artuner, 2020), which shows that differences in pronunciation and sentence structure in different Turkish dialects contribute to difficulties in speech recognition.

For more details, you can see the following graph 1.

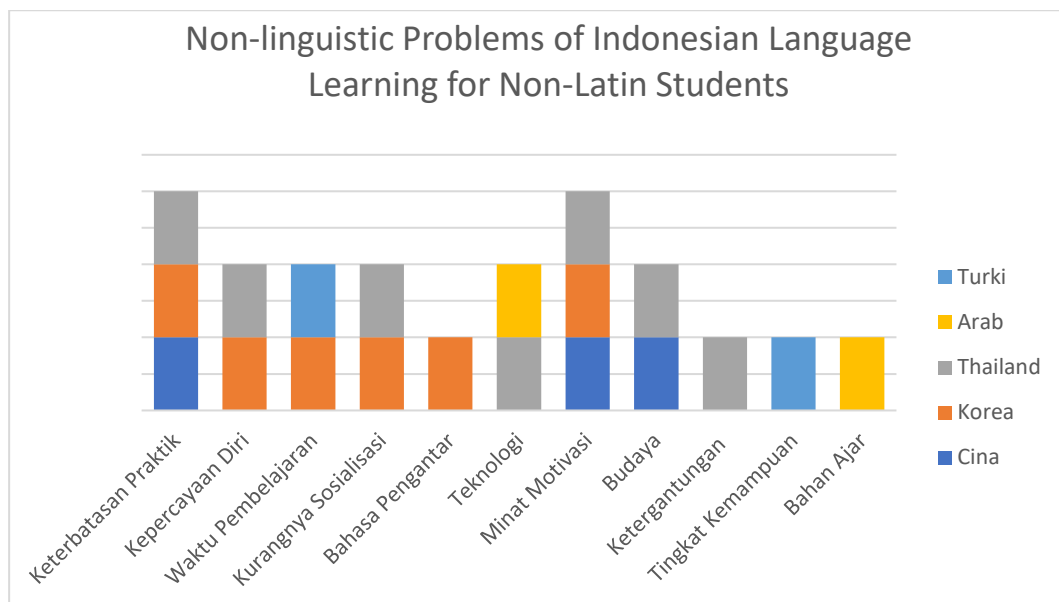


Graph 1. Linguistic Problems in Students with Non-Latin Language Backgrounds

Based on the analysis results in Graph 1, students from various countries with non-Latin language backgrounds have difficulty learning Indonesian. This difficulty is mainly caused by the inconsistency of direct vocabulary equivalents between their mother tongue and Indonesian. In the learning process, students from these countries must go through a more complex stage of understanding because many words in Indonesian do not have equivalent meanings that can be directly translated into their language. However, different conditions are found in students from Arabic-speaking countries. Arabic has many similarities in vocabulary with Indonesian, mainly due to the influence of the absorption of Arabic vocabulary into Indonesian vocabulary, especially in the religious, academic, and cultural domains. This makes it easier for students from Arab countries to understand and master Indonesian compared to students from other countries that use non-Latin languages.

5.2. Non-Linguistic Problems

In addition to language constraints, there are also various non-language factors that influence the success of students in learning Indonesian. Based on the results of the comparison, eight main factors were found to be challenges in the learning process, namely (1) lack of practice, (2) lack of self-confidence, (3) limited learning time, (4) lack of socialization, (5) language of instruction, (6) limited technology, (7) interest and motivation, (8) culture, (9) dependency, (10) level of ability, and (11) teaching materials. Lack of practice in communicating using Indonesian makes it difficult for students to develop speaking skills and understand language structures more naturally. In addition, lack of self-confidence is also an obstacle because many students are afraid of making mistakes when speaking, so they are reluctant to try. Other factors, such as limited learning time, lack of access to supporting learning technology, and low learning motivation, also slow down the process of language acquisition.



Graph 2. Non-linguistic Problems in Learning Indonesian for Non-Latin Students

Based on the comparison results in Graph 2 above, eight main factors were found to be obstacles to learning Indonesian for non-Latin students. These factors include limited practice, lack of self-confidence, limited study time, lack of socialization, difficulty understanding the language of instruction, limited access to technology, low motivation to learn, and cultural differences that affect the language acquisition process. One of the main challenges faced by non-Latin students is the lack of opportunities to practice Indonesian in everyday life. Chinese students, for example, are more likely to use their mother tongue when communicating with their peers outside the classroom (Ying et al., 2020). The same applies to students from Korea and Thailand, whose surrounding environment does not support natural Indonesian language practice (Pratama et al., 2024; Youngsun, Lukman et al., 2024). Based on research by Pratama et al. (2024), it was stated that Thai students, for example, face obstacles because the Indonesian-speaking community in their country is very limited, making it difficult to interact using the language outside the classroom.

In addition, a lack of self-confidence is also an obstacle for most students, according to research by Pratama et al. (2024) and Youngsun, Lukman, et al. (2024). Korean and Thai students feel this obstacle. They are often afraid of making mistakes in pronunciation or grammar, preferring to remain silent rather than trying to speak. Quoted from research by Youngsun et al. (2024), "I'm afraid of being laughed at if I pronounce the wrong words," said a Korean student. This is in line with research by Alam et al. (2021), which emphasized that this lack of self-confidence impacts low participation in conversations, ultimately slowing down the development of a person's speaking skills. Limited study time is also an influential factor, especially for students from Turkey and Korea (Hayrettin, 2015; Youngsun, Hasjim, et al., 2024). The heavy academic burden makes the time available to learn Indonesian very limited. Quoted from research by Tambunan et al. (2022) states that "We only have a few hours a week to learn Indonesian, while other languages such as English get a larger portion," said a student from Turkey. As a result, the learning process is less than optimal, and their understanding of Indonesian is slower to develop.

In addition to internal factors, the lack of socialization with native Indonesian speakers is also an obstacle for students from Korea and Thailand. According to research by Flora & Raja (2019) and Youngsun, Hasjim, et al. (2024), students tend to socialize more with friends from their own country, so the opportunity to practice speaking Indonesian is very limited. This is evidenced by the research quote from Youngsun, Hasjim, et al. (2024), which states, "I am more comfortable talking to my Korean friends than trying to speak Indonesian with other people," said one Korean student. This is

in line with the findings of Ortaçtepe (2015), which stated that this lack of interaction hinders the development of their communication skills, especially in understanding the use of language in real social contexts. Differences in language systems are also a challenge for students from Korea, who have difficulty understanding Indonesian as the language of instruction (Youngsun, Hasjim, et al., 2024). Quoted from research by Youngsun, Lukman, et al. (2024), it was stated that the grammatical structure of Korean is different from Indonesian, which often causes them to have difficulty understanding instructions or explanations given in Indonesian. Quoted from research by Hun (2020), "Sometimes I don't understand the instructions in Indonesian, so I have to translate them into Korean first," said a Korean student. This difference requires them to spend more time understanding the material and adapting to the new language system.

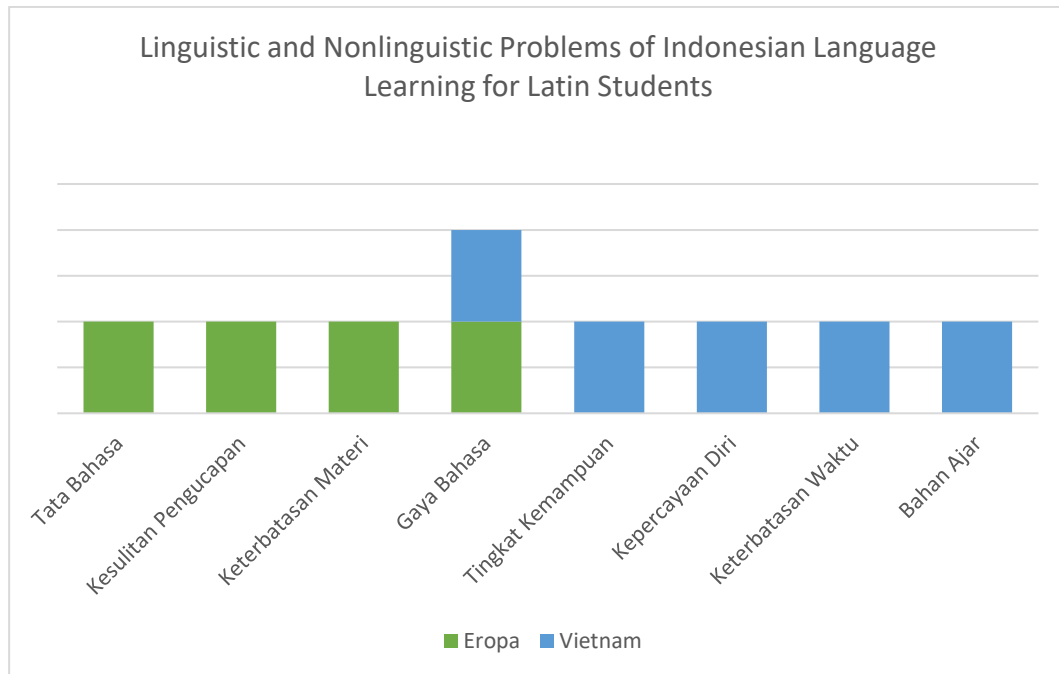
Another significant obstacle is limited access to learning technology, especially for students from Arab and Thai origins. Fitrianto (2024) stated that in Arab countries, access to Indonesian language learning applications or quality digital materials is still very limited. Meanwhile, according to the research results of Septiana et al. (2022), students in Thailand face obstacles in terms of limited technological devices that support online learning, which then hinders the development of their language skills. In addition to technical aspects, low learning motivation is also a factor that affects learning outcomes, especially for students from Korea, Thailand, and Turkey. Flora and Raja (2019) stated that in their research, some Thai students learn Indonesian not because of their own desires but because of academic demands. Azzahrah et al. (2025) emphasized that without strong motivation, students tend to be less proactive in practicing or looking for additional materials to deepen their understanding of Indonesian. In addition, cultural differences are also a challenge faced by students from Turkey and Thailand in adapting to social norms in Indonesia (Flora & Raja, 2019; Hayrettin, 2015). For example, some students from Turkey find it difficult to understand the communication style of Indonesians, who are more relaxed than their culture. These cultural differences can cause misunderstandings in communication and make students feel less confident when interacting using Indonesian (Hayrettin, 2015).

Another significant factor is the high dependence on teachers or teaching materials, especially for students from Thailand. Based on the results of research by Flora and Raja (2019), it was stated that Thai students tend to wait for teachers to teach their language rather than taking the initiative to learn on their own. This dependence causes them to be less independent in developing language skills outside the classroom, which ultimately slows down their learning process. In addition, in the research by Hayrettin (2015), it was stated that the variability in ability levels between students is also a challenge in learning Indonesian, especially for students from Turkey. Some students are able to understand and speak Indonesian well, while others still have difficulty understanding simple sentences. These differences require teaching methods to be more flexible to meet each individual's needs more effectively.

Finally, the limited availability of teaching materials is also an obstacle for students from several countries, especially from Arabia. Based on Fitrianto's research (2024), The limited availability of teaching materials that are appropriate to students' level of understanding and needs makes it difficult for them to deepen their understanding of the Indonesian language. In addition, the lack of teaching materials available in their mother tongue also makes the learning process more challenging. By considering these various factors, a more adaptive and comprehensive learning strategy is needed to overcome the obstacles faced by non-Latin students in learning Indonesian. More conducive environmental support, more optimal use of technology, and a more flexible teaching approach can help improve learning effectiveness for students from different language and cultural backgrounds.

5.3. Problems in Learning Indonesian for Latin Students

In addition to non-Latin students who have difficulty learning Indonesian, Latin students also often have difficulty learning Indonesian. Based on previous research in Europe and Vietnam, there are several obstacles faced by Latin students in learning Indonesian. These obstacles are presented in graph three below:



Graph 3. Linguistic and Non-linguistic Problems in Learning Indonesian for Latino Students

Based on the graph above, there are various linguistic and non-linguistic problems faced by Latino students in learning Indonesian, which are grouped into two regions, namely Europe and Vietnam. European students face difficulties, especially in terms of grammar and pronunciation, and they have limited materials. The structure of the Indonesian language, which is different from languages in Europe, is a major challenge for them. For example, according to Rahayu (2015), students from Spain and Italy have difficulty understanding Indonesian grammar and do not know verb conjugation. They often try to apply their mother tongue patterns to Indonesian, which leads to errors in sentence structure. For example, as quoted by Sri (2020), "I had breakfast yesterday" should be "I ate this morning." European students often make mistakes in the use of adverbs because in their languages, such as Spanish or Italian, the concept of past tense is more complex and uses changes in verb tense.

In addition, difficulty in pronunciation is also an obstacle, especially in pronouncing letters such as "ng", "ny", or long and short vowels that are different from their language (Adara et al., 2023). Quoted from research by Mahriyuni et al. (2024), A student from France said, "I often mispronounce the words 'sleepy' and 'challenging.' They sound almost the same to me, but the meaning is very different." The letter "ng" at the beginning of the word is difficult for French students to pronounce because there is no similar sound in their language. On the other hand, the limited Indonesian language learning materials in European countries are also an obstacle. Many students complain about the difficulty of finding books or learning resources that are tailored to their level of understanding. Quoted from research by Dewa & Laksman-Huntley (2022), a student from France said, "The books available are too academic or too basic, I have difficulty finding suitable material to gradually improve my understanding."

Unlike European students, Vietnamese students face more challenges in non-linguistic aspects, such as ability level, self-confidence, time constraints, and availability of teaching materials. One of them, in Anggaira's research (2022), stated that the level of Indonesian language proficiency among Vietnamese students varies greatly. Some students have better language learning experience, while others are completely new to Indonesian. This difference poses challenges in teaching methods because not all students can follow the material at the same speed.

According to Cheng's research (2023), self-confidence is also an obstacle for Vietnamese students when speaking Indonesian. They are often afraid of making mistakes and prefer to remain silent rather than trying to speak. In addition, limited study time is an obstacle for them. Vietnamese students often have busy academic schedules, making it difficult to practice Indonesian. Finally, limited teaching materials are also an obstacle. In the research of Oktriono et al. (2017), some Vietnamese students stated that the Indonesian language teaching materials available in their country were still very limited, making it difficult for them to find additional learning resources. "I have to look for teaching materials myself on the internet, but they often don't suit my needs," said one student.

Compared to the previous graph showing the challenges of non-Latino students from different countries, this graph highlights that the challenges faced by Latino students are more diverse. European students are more likely to experience linguistic difficulties, such as grammar and pronunciation, while Vietnamese students are more affected by non-linguistic factors, such as motivation and limited learning resources. This suggests that Indonesian language learning strategies for these two groups need to be adjusted. European students need learning methods that emphasize grammar, phonetics, and more systematic materials. Meanwhile, Vietnamese students need an approach that supports their confidence in speaking as well as access to broader and more in-depth teaching materials.

The pronunciation difficulty experienced by Korean language (L2) students is in the pronunciation of the letter "r". The phonetic differences between Indonesian and Korean are very obvious here. This is the same as the phonetics in Mandarin. The pronunciation of the letter "r" is very different or even has no equivalent in Korean, so this causes students to have difficulty in articulating the sound correctly. This shows that there are quite significant differences in the phonological systems of the two languages.

A similar phenomenon was also seen in the study "Exclamatory Responses: Foreign Students Difficulties in Learning Indonesian (A Case Study at JIKS Jakarta)" conducted by Youngsun, Lukman et al. (2024). The study found that students, especially students from Korea, often have difficulty pronouncing certain letters when learning Indonesian. Many students have difficulty with Indonesian sounds that are not found in Korean. The phonological differences between the two languages make it difficult for students to produce the correct sounds and intonation, resulting in incorrect pronunciation. Based on data analysis, the first group of participants, which included three Japanese female students, had the same characteristics. There were 15 speech sounds that were mispronounced. Five vowels and seven consonants formed speech sounds. The vowels, which can be found in various initial, medial, and final positions, are /i/, /u/, /e/, /ə/, and /a/. After that, there are the consonants /p/, /b/, /m/, /d/, /n/, /r/, /l/, /t/, /h/, and /k/ which are also mispronounced.

6. Conclusion

This study confirms that L1 background (non-Latin mother tongue) plays an important role in the success of mastering Indonesian as a second language (L2). Students with non-Latin L1 language backgrounds, such as Mandarin, Korean, Arabic, and Thai, face more complex obstacles than students with Latin L1 backgrounds. These obstacles include significant phonological problems, limitations in recognizing the Latin script system, and difficulties in understanding Indonesian's morphological

structure, which is rich in affixation. Also, non-linguistic obstacles such as low self-confidence, lack of social interaction in the target language, and alienation from Indonesian cultural norms also slow down the learning process. In contrast, students with a Latin background tend to adapt more quickly socially and culturally, although they still face grammar and sentence structure challenges. This shows that the types of obstacles faced are not universal but are greatly influenced by the structure and system of the mother tongue and the cultural values that surround it. Thus, it is not enough to rely on conventional teaching approaches. Adapted, responsive pedagogical strategies are needed and based on mapping students' linguistic and socio-cultural characteristics. This learning approach that is sensitive to L1 (non-Latin mother tongue) background is the key to increasing the effectiveness of Indonesian language learning globally.

The implication of this study is the need to develop a differentiated BIPA curriculum, with adjustments to teaching materials and teaching approaches based on the language profile of students. BIPA teachers also need to be equipped with professional training that strengthens pedagogical competence and sensitivity to phonological and cultural differences. An intercultural approach must be an integral part of Indonesian language teaching to ensure that students are able to use the language appropriately in social interactions. In addition, digital-based learning technology needs to be optimized to provide media that supports better pronunciation and understanding of context. No less importantly, the social and family environment involvement is essential to create an active Indonesian language learning atmosphere outside the classroom.

7. Suggestions

Based on this study's findings and limitations, further research is recommended to involve students from various levels of education and more diverse geographical backgrounds to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the challenges of learning Indonesian as a second language. Longitudinal research is also needed to observe the continuous and in-depth development of language skills. In addition, a mixed approach between qualitative and quantitative methods is recommended to enrich the data and increase the validity of the results. The development of phonetic-based digital learning media, as well as teacher training that focuses on cross-cultural understanding, are also important to support the effectiveness of BIPA teaching in the future. Integrative efforts between schools, families, and social environments also need to be improved so that students have more space to practice Indonesian in real contexts.

Declarations

Author Contributions. Ida Yeni Rahmawati: Conceptualization, Methodology, Software, Field Study; Data Curation, Writing-Original Draft, Validation; Imam Suyitno & Kusubakti Andajani: Visualization, Investigation, Writing-Review, and Editing

Conflict of Interest. There is no conflict of interest in this article.

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