



DIGITAL BIPA INSTRUCTION AT KBRI WASHINGTON DC: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES FOR BEGINNER LEARNERS

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Abstract

The rapid growth of digital language education has made Indonesian language instruction more accessible to foreign speakers. However, there is still little research on how digital BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing) programs work in diplomatic settings. This study examines the challenges and teaching strategies used in digital BIPA classes at the Indonesian Embassy in Washington, DC, with a focus on beginner learners. Using Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation model, the research takes a qualitative case study approach with two instructors and twenty-six learners in adolescent and adult beginner classes. Data was collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and surveys using Google Forms. The results show several key challenges: a 12-hour time difference that requires early-morning classes, Zoom's technical limitations that make learning and speaking practice more difficult, and weekend scheduling conflicts that affect attendance. Learners found speaking skills the hardest to develop, while vocabulary and grammar were easier to learn online. Instructors responded with adaptive strategies, such as using English to support adolescents and full Indonesian immersion for adults, along with gamification, repetition, and making the most of platform features. The study finds that successful digital BIPA programs need careful planning to address these challenges, teaching methods tailored to different learners, and focused support for speaking skills in online classes. These insights offer practical guidance for language program designers, teachers, and policymakers working to expand Indonesian language instruction through digital platforms.

Keywords: *BIPA, CIPP evaluation, Digital language learning, Indonesian for foreign speakers, online instruction*

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INTRODUCTION

The rapid digitalization of education has transformed language teaching globally, yet the use of online platforms for language instruction in diplomatic contexts is underexplored. BIPA programs now reach 52 countries, with growing enrollment (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2024). Despite increased research on digital BIPA instruction, there is limited classroom-level evidence (Faizin, Isnaini, & Khoiriyah, 2025). Teaching challenges remain, especially with time-zone differences and technology issues. This study examines how online learning affects beginner Indonesian language students at the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) in Washington, DC, focusing on teaching dynamics in fully digital classes.

BIPA programs are central to Indonesia's cultural diplomacy, building language skills and introducing Indonesian culture to international learners (Wulandari & Konety, 2024; Rahma & Suwandi, 2021; Syahfitri et al., 2025). The shift to online teaching, accelerated by COVID-19, poses challenges for language learning, including flexibility, engagement, and access. Studies show digital learning raises key questions about instructional effectiveness and equity (Permana et al., 2024; Solissa et al., 2024). The Indonesian Embassy in Washington DC provides a significant context for investigating digital BIPA instruction due to its dual role as a diplomatic mission and educational hub serving a diverse population, including Indonesian diaspora youth, international students, and professionals interested in Indonesia. This is not unique to Washington. For example, the Indonesian Embassy in Ankara, Turkey, also saw better student performance in its BIPA program over time, as shown by higher final exam scores. This suggests

that teaching BIPA at embassies is a new and understudied approach that should be compared across countries (Anggaira, 2023).

Several reasons make Washington especially important. First, since remote learning became the norm after the pandemic, more students from different places seek flexible, accessible BIPA classes (Hastowohadi, Setyaningrum, & Pangesti, 2020). Second, the 12-hour time difference between Indonesia and the U.S. East Coast makes it hard to schedule classes, which in turn affects attendance and participation. Third, unstable internet connections for both teachers and students often interrupt the live language practice needed for learning. Research on online BIPA classes shows that internet and platform issues are common problems (Maulana, Zamahsari, & Purnomo, 2020). Fourth, videoconferencing makes it harder to practice speaking naturally, use body language, and interact socially, which can hurt speaking and listening skills. Fifth, many BIPA programs do not fully leverage digital tools such as whiteboards, breakout rooms, polls, and multimedia. A review by Faizin et al. (2025) also found that while technology in BIPA teaching is advancing, there is not enough research on how these tools help beginner students over time. of internationalizing the Indonesian language as a tool for diplomacy, commerce, and cultural exchange. The study also addresses the need to revitalize Indonesian proficiency among younger members of the diaspora who navigate predominantly English-speaking environments. Given BIPA's formal inclusion in Indonesia's National Competency Standards (SKKNI), research on the optimal use of digital media in BIPA instruction directly supports instructor professional development and the enhancement of national teaching standards for online contexts.

Even though the field is growing, there is still little research that closely examines how online learning affects the listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills of beginner students, especially in embassy settings outside Indonesia. Most studies focus on BIPA curriculum, the addition of cultural content, and in-person teaching methods (e.g., Kurniasih, 2021; Halawa et al., 2023). Even recent reports from embassies, such as Anggaira's (2023) study in Ankara, mostly describe program outcomes rather than analyzing how online learning shapes skill development. We still know little about how beginners with limited Indonesian experience build basic skills without being in a physical classroom, receiving instant feedback, or using context clues. This study helps fill that gap by sharing evidence from KBRI Washington, D.C. and offering ideas for policy, teaching design, teacher training, and resource planning for future digital BIPA programs.

This study examines the challenges and instructional strategies in digital BIPA (Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing) classes at the Indonesian Embassy in Washington, DC, with a specific focus on beginner learners. Utilizing a qualitative case study approach and Stufflebeam's CIPP evaluation model, the research investigates how online learning environments influence the teaching and acquisition of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Data were collected through recorded Zoom lessons, in-depth interviews with instructors, surveys of 26 learners, and observational field notes. The objective is to identify the primary obstacles faced by instructors and learners in digital BIPA settings and to analyze the adaptive strategies employed to overcome these challenges. Ultimately, this study seeks to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving the design and delivery of digital BIPA programs in diplomatic contexts and to contribute to the broader discourse on online language pedagogy.

Literature Review

This literature review establishes the conceptual framework for examining how online learning environments affect the teaching and acquisition of Indonesian language skills among beginner-level BIPA learners. The review is organized around three interconnected concepts that anchor the analysis: (1) the nature and objectives of BIPA instruction, (2) pedagogical principles and teacher roles, and (3) digital learning in language education. These concepts collectively inform the analytical lens for investigating the first research question.

Nature and Objectives of BIPA Instruction

Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) is a structured program designed to develop communicative and functional competence in Indonesian among non-native speakers. Unlike Indonesian instruction for native speakers—which emphasizes nationalism and cultural identity—BIPA prioritizes practical communicative ability in real-world contexts (Simanjuntak et al., 2024; Suyitno, 2007). BIPA learners are typically adult foreign nationals with diverse cultural backgrounds, a demographic reality that carries significant implications for material selection and instructional delivery (Nasution, 2022). Adult learners possess substantial prior knowledge, favor self-expression, and benefit from varied materials accommodating diverse interests (Nasution, 2025). Marlia and Taufik (2024) further characterize BIPA as pragmatically oriented, multidimensional, and adaptive to learners' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

BIPA objectives are similarly multifaceted. Kusmiatun (2019) distinguishes general BIPA (everyday communication), academic BIPA (university study and research), recreational BIPA (tourism), and BIPA for specific purposes (professional or personal goals). Tanwin (2020) notes learners pursue BIPA for academic

research, professional employment, extended residence in Indonesia, or cultural engagement. Programs are differentiated by duration (short-term vs. regular) and by proficiency level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), ranging from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient). The present study focuses specifically on beginner-level (A1) learners, whose minimal prior exposure to Indonesian makes them particularly susceptible to the challenges of digital instruction.

Pedagogical Principles and Teacher Roles

Effective BIPA instruction rests on pedagogical principles that guide curriculum design and classroom practice. Utama (2019) outlines eight principles: learners learn best when treated as individuals with unique needs, provided communicative opportunities, exposed to comprehensible input, offered focused skill development, given sociocultural data, provided appropriate feedback, and granted opportunities for self-regulated learning. Al Imron (2022) adds three operational principles: the *gradational principle* (moving from simple to complex), the *priority principle* (emphasizing speaking and listening for beginners), and the *corrective principle* (using errors constructively).

The teacher's role is central to instructional success. Yumriani et al. (2022) identify teachers as demonstrators, classroom managers, facilitators, and evaluators. Hamdayama (2022) adds roles as planners, motivators, and models. Hamid (2020) includes educator, trainer, advisor, and reformer. Critically, the transition to digital learning transforms these traditional roles. The online BIPA instructor must now function as digital content designer, online community moderator, and remote engagement facilitator—demanding integrated pedagogical-technological competence aligned with the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), which emphasizes the intersection of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge for effective technology integration.

Digital Learning in Language Education

Digital learning—educational processes utilizing internet-based technologies and electronic devices to deliver, manage, and evaluate instruction (Permana et al., 2024; Solissa et al., 2024)—has expanded possibilities for language education. In the BIPA context, digitalization encompasses videos, applications, online platforms, interactive e-books, and AI-assisted tools to deliver instruction across geographic boundaries (Miko & Nasution, 2023; Nasution et al., 2025). This transformation offers several affordances: multimodal input enhances engagement, flexible delivery accommodates diverse schedules, and AI-powered tools enable personalized learning experiences (Nasution et al., 2025).

However, significant challenges persist. Safitri et al. (2025) identify limited direct interaction, technical constraints, and variable digital literacy as persistent barriers. More specifically, digital BIPA programs confront: (1) *connectivity and infrastructure*: geographically dispersed learners face uneven internet quality; (2) *teacher readiness*: many instructors lack adequate digital-pedagogical training; (3) *instructional design*: programs frequently "convert" face-to-face materials without appropriate adaptation; (4) *motivational engagement*: sustaining motivation in virtual environments requires intentional strategies; and (5) *assessment validity*: evaluating communicative competence through digital platforms demands innovative approaches (Ulfah & Fadillah, 2023).

From the perspective of the Community of Inquiry framework (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000), these challenges threaten the three presences essential for meaningful online learning: technical disruptions undermine *social presence*; suboptimal design compromises *teaching presence*; and limited interaction diminishes *cognitive presence*. For beginner-level (A1) learners, these threats are particularly consequential, as they lack linguistic resources to compensate for communication breakdowns and require extensive exposure to comprehensible input (Krashen, 1985) alongside meaningful opportunities for pushed output (Swain, 1995). Assessment practices must similarly adapt; creative digital activities—student showcases, video projects, and digital portfolios—enhance motivation and engagement while enabling continuous progress documentation (Ulfah & Fadillah, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach and Design

This qualitative study examines digital BIPA instruction at KBRI Washington DC through Stufflebeam's (2003) CIPP evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product). The framework enables systematic examination of educational programs across four interconnected dimensions and has been widely applied in language program evaluation (Kiely & Rea-Dickins, 2005; Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). A qualitative approach is appropriate because the research seeks to understand experiences, processes, and meanings as they emerge naturally in online language classrooms, without researcher intervention (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A case study design allows for in-depth investigation of the digital BIPA program as a bounded system operating within a specific diplomatic setting (Yin, 2018). Descriptive methods are used to portray digital BIPA practices and the factors shaping their effectiveness during the 2025 academic period.

Research Setting

The research is situated within the digital BIPA program administered by the Indonesian Embassy (KBRI) in Washington DC, under the coordination of the Education and Cultural Attaché. The program involves collaboration with partner universities in Indonesia, the Language Development and Cultivation Agency (*Badan Bahasa*), and other institutions contributing to curriculum development, instructor provision, and digital learning model enhancement. Data collection took place from September to December 2025 through observation, interviews, and documentation of digital learning activities. Data analysis is scheduled from January to March 2026, with final report compilation in April 2026.

Data and Sources

The data are predominantly qualitative, comprising both language data (linguistic forms) and language-use data (behavioral manifestations of language). Primary data consist of verbal utterances produced by BIPA instructors during Zoom-recorded sessions, transcribed through the listening-note-taking method (*simak-catat*) into sentences, phrases, and words (Arikunto, 2013). Beyond transcriptions, primary data also include language-use behaviors—both verbal expressions and gestures exhibited during online instruction (Suardana & Numertayasa, 2021)—as well as observational field notes from two recorded beginner-level BIPA Zoom classes.

Secondary data come from interview responses and Google Form surveys, considered secondary because they represent primary data that have been further processed or presented by the data collector or other parties (Umar, 2013).

The main data sources are BIPA instructors teaching online via Zoom. The CIPP framework informs the systematic mapping of data sources, collection techniques, and research instruments across all four evaluation components, as shown in Table 1

Table 1. CIPP-Based Data Collection Matrix

CIPP Component	Focus	Data Source	Technique	Instrument
Context	Needs, objectives, program background	Instructors, learners, documents	Interview, documentation	Interview guide, document analysis sheet
Input	Instructor readiness (competence, digital literacy)	Instructors	Interview, documentation	Interview guide, qualification review sheet
Process	Infrastructure, digital platforms	Documents, media, platforms	Documentation, observation	Observation sheet, digital checklist
	Teaching materials, digital media	Video recordings, LMS	Documentation	Material analysis sheet
	Digital learning implementation	Instructors, learners	Observation, interview	Observation sheet, interview guide
Product	Language use, code-switching	Instructors, learners	Observation, interview	Linguistic observation sheet
	Digital learning strategies	Instructors	Interview, documentation	Interview guide
	Impact on language ability	Learners	Interview	Interview guide
Process	Learner satisfaction	Learners	Interview	Interview guide
	Learning outcomes, sustainability	Evaluation documents, reports	Documentation	Outcome analysis sheet
	Teaching materials, digital media	Video recordings, LMS	Documentation	Material analysis sheet
	Digital learning implementation	Instructors, learners	Observation, interview	Observation sheet, interview guide
	Language use, code-switching	Instructors, learners	Observation, interview	Linguistic observation sheet
	Digital learning strategies	Instructors	Interview, documentation	Interview guide

Research Subjects

Two groups of participants form the core of this inquiry. The first consists of two BIPA instructors—Denok Lestari, who teaches the teen beginner class, and Jamalludin Nasution, who teaches the adult beginner class. Both are affiliated with the Language and Literature Empowerment Center (PUSDAYA) and were selected because

they bear primary responsibility for planning, executing, and evaluating digital learning strategies, as well as managing language use throughout instruction. The second group comprises 26 learners across the two classes—21 teenagers and 16 adults. Their diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds make them valuable informants for understanding how digital BIPA instruction unfolds in practice (Duff, 2008). Participants were chosen purposively, ensuring those selected can offer rich, firsthand accounts of the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015; Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data Collection Techniques

This study employs four techniques to examine the complexity of digital BIPA instruction. Researchers analyze Zoom recordings of BIPA classes using the listening-note-taking (*simak-catat*) method. This method involves carefully observing recorded interactions and systematically transcribing language use and interaction patterns. Sudaryanto (2016) describes this as an advanced method for collecting detailed, structured data from spoken sources. Researchers use both participant and non-participant observation to study digital learning activities by watching online classes on video conferencing platforms. This helps capture communication patterns, interactions between instructors and learners, use of digital media, participant responses, and task completion. These observations help explain learning dynamics from both technical and teaching perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Pahleviannur et al., 2022). Instructors are interviewed online via *WhatsApp*. Open-ended questions elicit their experiences, methods, challenges, and solutions in digital BIPA instruction, while closed-ended Google Forms surveys collect additional learner feedback. The chosen methods provide flexible, comprehensive insights into digital BIPA learning.

Data Analysis

Data analysis follows the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), proceeding through four interconnected stages. Data are first collected from interviews, observations, and documentation. They are then reduced—selected, focused, simplified, and transformed—and grouped thematically around digital media, learning strategies, classroom interaction, challenges, and effectiveness. Following reduction, data are displayed in narrative form, thematic tables, and summary findings to facilitate pattern recognition and coherent interpretation. Finally, conclusions are drawn and verified: patterns are identified, relationships among variables are discovered, and answers to research questions are formulated, with conclusions continuously checked against the data.

Research Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, directly involved in data collection, interpretation, and analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Supporting instruments ensure systematic, focused data collection aligned with research objectives. These include listening-note-taking guides for transcription and linguistic analysis, observation guides for structured observation of online classes, interview guides for semi-structured interviews with instructors, and documentation guides for analyzing video recordings, learning materials, and program documents. Video recordings from the instructors' first digital class sessions serve as essential documentation, enabling close examination of media use, material delivery, and participant engagement.

Table 2. CIPP-Based Research Instruments

CIPP Component	Instrument	Data Source
Context	Interview, documentation	Instructors, learning documentation (Zoom videos)
Input	Interview, observation, documentation	Instructors, media & teaching materials
Process	Observation, video documentation, field notes	Instructors & BIPA participants

Data Validity and Trustworthiness

Several validation techniques are employed to ensure credibility and trustworthiness, drawing on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria for qualitative research.

Comparing and cross-checking information obtained from the two BIPA instructors allows identification of both consistencies and divergent perspectives (Denzin, 1978; Flick, 2018). Combining data from in-depth interviews, digital learning observations, and documentation strengthens accuracy and prevents bias (Patton, 2015). Interview findings and preliminary interpretations are confirmed with respondents to ensure recorded data accurately reflect their intended meanings and actual experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Extending observation across multiple digital learning sessions enables a more complete and in-depth

understanding of online BIPA learning dynamics (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Through these procedures, the trustworthiness of the data is rigorously maintained.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents findings addressing the research question: What challenges arise in the implementation of digital BIPA instruction for teachers and learners? Data were drawn from surveys administered to two instructors and 26 learners across beginner-level teen and adult classes, supplemented by in-depth interviews and classroom observations. The discussion integrates findings with the CIPP evaluation framework (Stufflebeam, 2003) and relevant theoretical perspectives on second language acquisition and digital pedagogy.

Challenges in Digital BIPA Implementation

The challenges identified cluster around technical, pedagogical, and contextual dimensions. Examining them through the CIPP framework reveals how imbalances across components systematically affect learning effectiveness.

Challenges Faced by BIPA Instructors

The 12-hour time difference between Indonesia and the United States created a major challenge. Instructor I, teaching from Bali, started classes at 3:00 AM, while Instructor II in Sumatra began at 4:00 AM. Both said these early hours hurt their physical readiness and focus. Instructor II explained, *"The time difference affects not just scheduling but also my mental and physical preparation for teaching"* (personal communication, December 2025). Weekend classes made attendance harder, since Saturdays and Sundays often conflicted with school, family, or religious events. Some learners joined sessions from cars or during family gatherings, which made it difficult for them to stay engaged. Instructor I observed that some learners *"enter the class but are clearly distracted"*, and said this *"makes it hard for them to follow the lesson and even harder for me to keep everyone engaged"* (personal communication, December 2025).

The Zoom platform was not effective enough for beginner learners. Instructors mentioned limited interaction, unstable internet, and little control over what happened in learners' homes. Instructor II said, *"learners at this level need more direct guidance, which is hard to provide when you can't see their reactions clearly"* (personal communication, December 2025). Large class sizes, with 21 teens and 16 adults, made online teaching even harder. Activities like role-play took a lot of time when done one by one, so other learners lost focus, became disengaged, and sometimes turned off their cameras. These issues made it difficult for instructors to fairly assess each learner's speaking skills. Looking at these challenges through the CIPP model, there are clear mismatches in Context (such as time zones and scheduling), Input (such as platform limitations and class sizes), and Process (including how well people interact and stay engaged). This aligns with Safitri et al. (2025), who also noted that connectivity, limited interaction, and varying levels of digital skills are ongoing problems in online language teaching.

Challenges Faced by BIPA Learners

Survey responses from 26 learners (Table 3) reveal distinct patterns in perceived difficulty and preference across the four language skills.

Table 3. Learner Perceptions of Language Skill Difficulty and Preference

Skill	Most Difficult	Most Enjoyed/Preferred
Listening	26.9%	23.1%
Speaking	42.3%	23.1%
Reading	15.4%	26.9%
Writing	15.4%	26.9%

Speaking emerged as the most challenging skill for nearly half of the learners (42.3%). This diverges from Nasution's (2020) study of face-to-face BIPA instruction in Uzbekistan, where listening was most difficult (94.29%), followed by speaking (71.43%). The contrast suggests that digital environments intensify speaking difficulties due to reduced opportunities for spontaneous interaction, delayed feedback, and the absence of paralinguistic cues essential for oral practice (Krashen, 1985; Swain, 1995). Reading and writing, each identified as difficult by only 15.4% of learners, were the most preferred skills at 26.9% each, likely reflecting how asynchronous digital learning accommodates text-based tasks better than real-time oral interaction. One learner explained that *"writing is easier because I can take my time, but speaking requires me to respond immediately and I often freeze"* (Learner 7, survey response, December 2025).

Vocabulary acquisition remained relatively robust despite speaking challenges—76.9% of learners reported acquiring more than 50 vocabulary items over four months. Grammar comprehension posed minimal difficulty, with only 3.8% reporting challenges, suggesting explicit grammar instruction translates more readily to digital delivery. Pronunciation, however, emerged as a notable obstacle, particularly with phonemes unfamiliar to English speakers: the velar nasal /-ng/ (as in *mengenakan*), the palatal nasal /-ny/ (as in *menyetir*), and vowel sounds such as /-e/ in *mekar* and /-ca/ in *mencari*. One learner reflected that "the sounds are very different from English, especially words with 'ng'—I still can't pronounce them correctly after months of practice" (Learner 14, survey response, December 2025).

Contextual and Structural Barriers

Weekend scheduling, while accommodating learners' weekday commitments, introduced its own complications. Some learners attended only partial sessions, and divided attention during class time made it difficult to follow lessons and maintain engagement. Despite these difficulties, both instructors acknowledged the value of strong coordination between KBRI Washington DC, the Language Agency (*Badan Bahasa*), and the teaching team. Instructor I noted that *"thanks to excellent coordination, the program has been running smoothly"* (personal communication, December 2025).

Instructor II offered specific recommendations: meetings twice weekly rather than once, reducing session duration from 120 to 90 minutes to combat fatigue, stricter placement testing for more homogeneous groupings, standardized syllabi across instructors, and better-aligned teaching materials. These suggestions underscore the importance of systematic program design in digital contexts where improvisation is more constrained than in face-to-face settings.

Instructional Strategies for Optimizing Digital BIPA Learning

Addressing the challenges above, instructors employed various strategies examined through the CIPP Process component and relevant theoretical frameworks (Garrison, Anderson, & Archer, 2000; Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

Language of Instruction and Code-Switching

The two instructors adopted markedly different language approaches reflecting their learners' age groups. Instructor I, teaching teens, predominantly used English as the language of instruction, explaining that *"I use English to explain instructions, new vocabulary, and grammar so learners can understand more quickly"* and to *"avoid misunderstandings at the early stages"* (personal communication, December 2025). This aligns with Cook's (2001) argument that judicious L1 use serves as cognitive scaffolding, supporting comprehension while reducing language anxiety—particularly important for adolescents sensitive to perceived failure.

Instructor II, teaching adults, used Indonesian as the primary language from the outset, explaining that *"using Indonesian directly helps learners get used to hearing and using the language from the beginning"* and that consistent exposure *"encourages learners to adjust to the context of the language being learned"* (personal communication, December 2025). This immersion-oriented approach reflects target language use principles, where maximizing L2 exposure accelerates naturalistic acquisition—a strategy adult learners, with more developed metacognitive abilities and stronger instrumental motivation, may be better equipped to handle.

Despite these differing orientations, both engaged in code-switching as a contextual strategy. Instructor II, while favoring Indonesian, occasionally switched to English for clarification: *"when learners look confused or can't follow, I switch briefly to English to make sure they understand, then go back to Indonesian"* (personal communication, December 2025). This reflects Gumperz's (1982) concept of code-switching as an interactional strategy—language choice serving as a contextualization cue that helps learners interpret meaning and shifts in communicative context. From Myers-Scotton's (1993) Markedness Model, Indonesian functions as the unmarked code (the expected language of instruction), while switches to English represent marked choices with specific pedagogical purposes: clarification, emphasis, or classroom management. These switches reflect instructors' pragmatic awareness of learners' needs rather than deviation from target language norms.

Strategies for Enhancing Comprehension, Engagement, and Skills

Table 4. Instructional Strategies for Digital BIPA Learning

Skill	Most Difficult	Most Enjoyed/Preferred
Instructor	Language Approach	Engagement Strategies
DL (Teens)	English-dominant (L1 support)	Games (Kahoot, Wordwall, Bloocket)
JN (Adults)	Indonesian-dominant (immersion)	Quizizz, role-play, vocabulary games

Both instructors used Zoom's features to structure online classes. The chat function served for posting vocabulary, offering corrections, and sharing links, while screen sharing enabled presentation of slides, texts, images, and videos. Breakout rooms were used for small-group discussions and conversation practice, though effectiveness varied. Instructor I noted that *"when I put them in breakout rooms, some groups work well, but others stay quiet until I join, so it's not always efficient"* (personal communication, December 2025). This mixed outcome reflects a broader tension in digital pedagogy: platform features enable interactive activities, but success hinges on learners' digital literacy and self-regulation (Safitri et al., 2025). Repetition emerged as a core strategy. Both instructors repeated vocabulary, phrases, and sentences through slow reading, asking learners to repeat after them, and restating explanations in simpler terms. Instructor II explained that *"learners at this level need to hear things several times before they can produce them themselves"* (personal communication, December 2025). This reflects Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, where repeated exposure to comprehensible input increases the likelihood of processing and internalizing new linguistic forms.

Gamification featured prominently, though with different emphases. Instructor I relied on Kahoot, Wordwall, and Blooket to maintain teen engagement, explaining that *"games make learning fun and competitive, which keeps the teens interested even though it's online"* (personal communication, December 2025). Instructor II used Quizizz alongside vocabulary games and role-play activities from textbook dialogues, describing how *"when learners act out dialogues, they remember the phrases better because they're using them in a context"* (personal communication, December 2025). These strategies align with Utama's (2019) motivational principles emphasizing communicative opportunities and positive feedback. Instructor I integrated explicit vocabulary instruction through the chat feature, typing new words as they appeared. Instructor II integrated grammar into speaking and reading activities rather than teaching it separately, explaining that *"I don't teach grammar by itself; I show them patterns in sentences and have them practice making their own examples"* (personal communication, December 2025). This communicative approach echoes Al Imron's (2022) priority principle that beginners benefit more from speaking and listening practice than decontextualized grammar instruction.

Synthesis and Theoretical Implications

The results show that digital BIPA instruction faces challenges requiring broad solutions. The CIPP framework reveals that misalignment in Context, Input, Process, and Product—such as time zone differences and large class sizes—leads to ongoing problems, including low attendance, limited speaking practice, and reduced learning outcomes. The difference in how instructors teach—using English support for teenagers and full Indonesian immersion for adults—shows that digital BIPA instruction works best when it matches the needs of different learners. This supports Nasution's (2022) point that BIPA learners' varied backgrounds call for flexible teaching methods. Teenagers who may feel more anxious about language and have less-developed learning strategies often benefit from support in their first language (Cook, 2001). On the other hand, more motivated adults may do better in immersion settings.

A primary challenge in digital BIPA instruction is developing speaking skills: 42.3% of learners say speaking is the hardest part of digital language learning. While digital platforms provide understandable input (Krashen, 1985), they offer fewer opportunities for spontaneous speaking practice (Swain, 1995). The lack of body language, slower feedback, and reduced social interaction (Garrison et al., 2000) further hinders speaking development. Therefore, digital BIPA programs should focus on activities that address this main challenge, such as structured role-plays, breakout room tasks, and regular one-on-one speaking tests.

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed challenges and strategies in digital BIPA instruction for beginners at KBRI Washington, DC. Key challenges included time zones, weekend classes, technology issues, and large group sizes. Developing speaking skills online proved especially difficult, while students showed better progress in vocabulary and grammar. Applying the CIPP framework revealed mismatches across Context, Input, Process, and Product that require comprehensive solutions. Teachers adapted their methods, including switching to a different instructional language, incorporating games, and repeating material, to address student needs. The contrasting use of English for younger learners and full Indonesian for adults highlights the need for flexible instructional approaches. The study emphasizes that systematic program design—addressing scheduling, class size, and digital pedagogy training—is critical for overcoming challenges in digital BIPA environments. Ultimately, effective digital BIPA depends on intentional program design that balances online education's possibilities and limitations.

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