The Need Analysis of Online Placement Test for Teaching Indonesian to Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA)
(Analisis Kebutuhan Tes Penempatan Daring untuk Pengajaran Bahasa Indonesia untuk Penutur Asing (BIPA))

Septyara Lingce[1], Syahrial[2], Wisma Yunita[3]

[1,2,3]Universitas Bengkulu, Bengkulu, Indonesia
[1]septyaralingce@gmail.com, [2]syahrial@unib.ac.id, [3]wismayunita@unib.ac.id

Abstract: *This research aimed to investigate the need for online placement tests for Teaching Indonesian to Speakers of Other Languages (BIPA) at Bengkulu University. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach and the method was a semi-structured interview. Three international students from Cambodia were interviewed in different Zoom video call sessions during this research. The data collected were then analyzed by using the content analysis technique. There are some findings in this research. First, there was no placement test for BIPA students at Bengkulu University. Second, according to the existing condition of the students, they had different reasons, exposures, experiences, and frequencies in learning or using Indonesian language. Third, the students could not do written tests or paper-based tests (PBT) that required them to come to the test venue in Bengkulu University during the pandemic situation, so an online placement test was used as an alternative. Moreover, the students had some topic preferences to be learned and discussed in Indonesian language. These findings revealed that an online placement test is needed to find out the students' abilities and to place the students into appropriate levels before conducting BIPA course at Bengkulu University. In the end, the result of this research can later be used to compile placement test materials in accordance with the needs of BIPA students.*

Keywords : *need analysis, BIPA, language teaching, assessment, placement test*
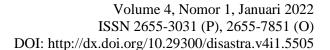
Abstrak : Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meneliti kebutuhan dari tes penempatan daring untuk pengajaran Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) di Universitas Bengkulu. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan metode yang digunakan adalah wawancara semi terstruktur. Pada penelitian ini, tiga mahasiswa internasional dari Kamboja diwawancara dalam sesi panggilan video Zoom yang berbeda. Kemudian, data yang dikumpulkan, dianalisis dengan menggunakan teknik analisis isi. Terdapat beberapa temuan pada penelitian ini. Pertama, tidak ada tes penempatan untuk pemelajar BIPA di Universitas Bengkulu. Kedua, berdasarkan kondisi yang ada, para pemelajar mempunyai alasan, paparan, pengalaman, dan frekuensi yang berbeda dalam belajar atau menggunakan bahasa Indonesia. Ketiga, para pemelajar tidak dapat melaksanakan tes tertulis yang mengharuskan mereka untuk datang ke tempat pelaksanaan tes di Universitas Bengkulu pada situasi pandemic, sehingga tes penempatan daring dapat menjadi solusi. Selain itu, para pemelajar mempunyai pilihan-pilihan topik untuk dipelajari dan didiskusikan dalam bahasa Indonesia. Temuan-temuan ini mengungkapkan bahwa tes penempatan daring dibutuhkan untuk mengetahui tingkat kemampuan siswa serta menempatkan siswa ke tingkat yang tepat sebelum melaksanakan pelatihan BIPA di Universitas Bengkulu..

Kata Kunci: analisis kebutuhan, BIPA, pengajaran bahasa, penilaian, tes penempatan

Introduction

Indonesian language has recently attracted the world attention. The number of the speakers and its area of use is growing continuously. Perhaps, the number will be increased by the time since many foreigners are interested in learning Indonesian language. According to a national magazine entitled *Diplomasi* (2017), there are 52 countries that provide Indonesian Language Studies. Moreover, to support Indonesian language studies, the government of Indonesia has created a program named Teaching Indonesian to Speakers of Other Languages or *Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA).*
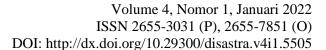
Bahasa Indonesia bagi Penutur Asing (BIPA) is a government program to help foreigners to learn Indonesian language. BIPA also refers to Indonesian language course program for non-native Indonesian speakers that aims to prepare them to actively and appropriately communicate in Indonesian language. Furthermore, it is aimed to internationalize Indonesian Language and to promote Indonesian cultures to other countries. According to the website of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud, 2019), there are 430 BIPA institutes in 46 countries. In Indonesia, there are more than 60 BIPA institutes to help non-native speakers to learn Indonesian language. Moreover, at some universities, BIPA course is provided for International students at the beginning of their studies due to their different languages and cultural backgrounds (Suyitno, 2007).

Different from teaching Indonesian language to native Indonesian speakers, teaching BIPA is more complex and complicated. This can happen for several reasons (Muliastuti, 2019). The students are non-native Indonesian speakers. They have different nationalities, so they have different first languages. Thus, BIPA teachers are required to be able to speak in students' languages, or at least they can speak English fluently. Otherwise, it will be an obstacle to communicate with the students. Besides, the students also have different ages one each other. In some cases, one BIPA class can consist of young and old students.

In addition, each student has different purposes for learning Indonesian language. The purposes of non-native Indonesian speakers to learn Indonesian language are different to native Indonesian speakers in learning Indonesian language (Iskandarwassid & Sunendar, 2011). A study from Nofrahadi (2018) indicated that the purposes of BIPA learners to learn Indonesian language are mostly for working and knowing the culture of Indonesia. Moreover, according to Muliastuti (2019), there are some purposes to learn a foreign language, integrative and instrumental purpose.

It is classified to an integrative purpose if the students want to communicate to people around the world or live in a culture where the target language is the first language used. Besides, it will be instrumental purpose if the students aim to learn a language for travelling, studying or working in other countries that use the target language, learning a specific subject, and looking for work in their local society that requires them to use such language. So, globally, the purpose of non-native Indonesian speakers learning Indonesian language can be classified into the purpose for travelling, working, studying, and

learning language as an activity in their free time.

There are two different aspects that need to consider in teaching Indonesian to speakers of other languages (BIPA). They are instructional and conditional aspect. The instructional aspect encompasses the purposes of learning, materials, learning method, learning media, class management, evaluation, the students, and the teachers. Besides, the conditional aspect covers the setting of students' readiness and needs, the exposure and discourse in actual linguistics situations, the learning environment, and the student self-practice.
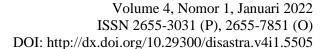
Before conducting BIPA course, the students are supposed to join a placement test. Placement test is a set of tests that aims to place the students into a particular level of a language curriculum or course program (Brown, 2010). Hughes (2010) also explains a placement test as a kind of test that is intended to give information in order to place the students at the most appropriate stages. According to the definitions from those experts, a placement test is designed to provide information that helps the teacher to consider the appropriate level of the students according to their capability to begin a course program.

There are many varieties and formats of placement test (Brown, 2010). It can be accessing comprehension and production, responding through written and oral performance, open-ended and limited responses, selection or multiple-choice, gap filling and other formats that can be used and constructed according to the purpose of the placement test. According to Brown (2010), placement test is an important aspect to support the success of teaching and learning, which has a role in placing the students at an appropriate level before starting a course. A placement test is also expected to give diagnostic information on a student's performance, which gives the teachers a start to assess the students' abilities, for example in English Placement Test at the University of Illinois (Chung, et al., 2015). Thus, the placement test for BIPA needs to be well designed.

To design a placement test, need analysis is the first step to do. There are various definitions of need analysis. It refers to the starting point of syllabus or curriculum design in which discovers what needs to be learned and what learners want to learn (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Hyland (2006) also explained that need analysis is like any other classroom practice in that it involves decisions based on teachers' interests, values, and beliefs about teaching, learning and language. In addition, according to Basturkmen (2010), need analysis focused largely on necessities or objective needs representing 'the destination of the learner's journey, and it should not be seen as an entirely objective procedure.

In short, need analysis is a systematic process to identify the specific needs of an individual or group of people. It is an important step in developmental research or research and development, such as curriculum syllabus, materials, and test design. A need analysis model by Nation & Macalister (2010) is called the learning-centred approach, which focuses on the learning process. The needs in this model are approached from two directions, learning needs and target needs.

110

Learning needs refer to numerous factors, such as learners, learning background, and age. The target needs refer to what the learner needs to do in the target situation. The target needs are categorized into three individual parts, which are necessities, lacks and wants. Necessities are the types of need determined by the demands of the target situation, that is, what the learner has to know in order to function effectively in the target situation (Kaewpet, 2009). Necessities fit into required knowledge. Lacks are the necessities that the learners do not possess that fit into present knowledge. Wants are the learners' wishes and views toward what they need to learn (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Thus, need analysis is an essential step in developmental research or research and development, such as curriculum syllabus, materials, and test design, including BIPA placement test design.

Furthermore, there are some ways of conducting BIPA placement test. They are offline and online placement test. An offline placement test is a kind of test that requires the students to do the test on-site, for instance, paper-based test. On the other hand, an online placement test has flexibility in test location and even test schedule, such as web-based and mobile application-based tests. This test can be an alternative for offline placement test in the conditions that do not let the students come to the placement test venue, for example, in a pandemic era.

This research was conducted to investigate the needs of online placement test for teaching Indonesian to speakers of other languages (BIPA) at Bengk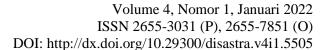ulu University as an institute that provides a BIPA course. Different with the previous research by Nofrahadi (2018) that examining the general needs of the students in learning Indonesian language, this research was focus in investigating the needs of placement test only. Finally, the result of this research is expected to contribute to teaching Indonesian to speakers of other languages (BIPA), especially to be the reference for designing the placement test.

Method

This research was descriptive qualitative research. Three participants were involved in this research. They were BIPA students at Bengkulu University who are international students from Cambodia. The participants were chosen by using purposive sampling technique to get eligible participants to represent the population of this research.

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is a kind of interview to examine specific information to some participants by using a list of specific questions or a list of topics to be discussed and some open-ended questions (Dawson, 2002). The instrument used in this research was needs analysis interview guideline to BIPA students that consisted of 18 questions. Those questions were adapted from the theory of need analysis by Nation & Macalister (2010). There are nine questions about the existing condition of the students, and the other nine questions are the questions to find out the needs of BIPA placement test.

There are two main indicators of the interview questions. The first is related with existing condition of the students, so the questions are about the reasons to study

111

Indonesian language, the exposure of the students, the experiences of the students in BIPA placement test, and the frequency of using Indonesian language. The second indicator is related with expected BIPA placement test. Hence, the question is about the interesting topic of BIPA, their opinion about placement test, and their needs of placement test.

This research was conducted in some steps. The first was the preparation. This step included identifying the participants, preparing the instruments used, and scheduling the interviews. The second step was collecting the data. In this step, the researcher did need analysis interview with each participant in different sessions by video call. All interview sessions were recorded and transcribed. Finally, the data were analyzed using a descriptive content analysis technique. The content analysis technique is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text (or other meaningful matter) to the context of their use (Krippendorff, 2004). Thus, in this research, the data from the interview were interpreted, summarized, and described to identify the needs of online placement test for BIPA.
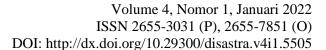
Result and Discussion

There were some findings from the result of the need analysis interview with students. These findings were about the experience of the participants in learning Indonesian language, reasons to study Indonesian language, period of learning the language, frequency of listening Indonesian language, frequency of speaking in Indonesian language, frequency of reading in Indonesian language, frequency of writing in Indonesian language, interesting topics to talk/discuss in Indonesian language, experience in taking the placement test, frequency of using mobile phone and internet, and the needs of online placement test.

First, the result of need analysis showed that all students had experiences in learning Indonesian language. In different interview sessions, the researcher asked each of them about their experiences in learning Indonesian language. Student 1 said, *"Since the first semester I used to study one time, through WhatsApp"*, student 2 said, *"Yeah, I did. I was in student exchange program for one semester in Bengkulu some years ago."*, and student 3 said, *"Yeah, I had learned Indonesian. It's actually during I take the online class"*. All the answers indicated that they had learned Indonesian language. Two of them started to learn Indonesian language when they just take their postgraduate study in Bengkulu University. On the other hand, student 2 had earlier starting point of learning Indonesian language which was some years ago.

Second, although the students had experiences in learning Indonesian language, their learning duration was different. Student 1 learned Indonesian language for one week. Student 1 said, *"It was only for few days. Maybe, only one week"*. Student 2 had the longest duration of learning Indonesian language. It was in some weeks. Student 2 said, *"Only some weeks to learn the understanding of communication…"* and *"Wait, I forgot. During this online course, we also have an Indonesian discussion as well about two weeks"*. These utterances indicate that student 2 learned Indonesian language for

112

more than two weeks. Different from student 1 and student 2, student 3 learned Indonesian language for two weeks. Student 3 said, *"It was only about two weeks"*. According to the interview, the students were facilitated to learn Indonesian language by their study program at the beginning of their study, but the it was only lasted for two weeks since the unavailability of BIPA teacher at that time.
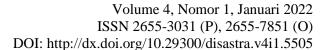
Third, the data also showed that the students have different reasons to study Indonesian language. The purposes of their Indonesian language study were to be able to communicate as well as to study for their postgraduate in Indonesia. Besides, student 1 and student 3 also had another reason. Student 1 learn Indonesian language to travel to Indonesia. After the researcher asked about reason for travelling to Indonesia, the students then said, "Yeah, I hope one day. I really enjoy studying there in Indonesia". Different to Student 1, student 3 learned Indonesian language since it is used for working. Student 3 said, *"Yes, of course. Because you know, in my work place, you know, have you ever seen this one",* and *"It is the collaboration with my faculty and MOU with University of Bengkulu. We hope that in that program, Indonesian student can come here and we can speak Indonesian for communication.*

Fourth, the students had different exposure to Indonesian language. It could be seen by the frequency of student in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in Indonesian language. According to the interview, they listened to Indonesian language occasionally, such as when having group discussion and lecturing session. Student 1 said, *"Sometimes, my friends or professors say some words in Indonesian"*, student 2 said, *"Yeah, most of the time",* and student 3 said, *"But for listening, the same. It's only occasionally. After knowing teacher, since we have no background of the language, we don't spend much time in listening".*

Fifth, different with listening, the students were rarely exposed to speaking skill. Student 1 said, *"When I have group discussion with my friends, I just know some words. Like "Terima kasih" and say "sama-sama".* This means that student 1 only knew and used some words in Indonesian language while speaking. Similar to student 1, student 2 used some words to communicate as well. Student 2 said, *"But sometimes I also use Indonesian language, like terima kasih, apa"* and *"Like asking for name and something like that"*. Moreover, student 3 was the same with student 1 and student 2. Student 3 said, *"I can only speak in some basic words"*. All utterances of the students indicated that they knew some words, which means the tendency to speak in Indonesian language was very small.

Sixth, the students had different frequencies in reading Indonesian language as well. Student 1 and student 2 sometimes read Indonesian text, and student 3 occasionally read Indonesian text. These could be seen through their answer in the interview. While the researcher asked about their frequency in reading Indonesian text, student 1 said, *"Yeah, sometimes I try to read group in WhatsApp and they write in Indonesian. I cannot read so well ..."*, student 2 said, *"I read the message from friends. They talk each other in group discussion sometimes in Indonesian. I can*

read that but I cannot understand the meaning", and student 3 said, *"I can say it's just sometimes, not usually, or occasionally maybe"*. Their answers also indicate that they read Indonesian text in group discussions on social media.

Seventh, the students' frequencies in writing Indonesian language were not similar too. Student 1 and student 2 rarely wrote in Indonesian language, and student 3 occasionally wrote in Indonesian language. In the interview session, student 1 said, *"Not all the time. Sometimes when I learn with Indonesian friends or professors, I know some words, the words that I told you, but if I know the words then I can write in in my book"*, student 2 said, *"I used to write some words but not now"*, and student 3 said, *"Yes, of course. When we learn, we need to learn how to write"* and *"Listening and writing are the same. Occasionally. Not very often"*.
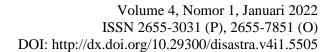
Eighth, all students interested in talking or discussing about education and some different topics. Student 1 was interested in talking about daily life, education, culture, and music. Student 1 said, *"I think that should be about daily life"*, and confirmed, *"Yes"* after the researcher asked about education, culture, and music. Student 2 answered, *"Education and culture"*. This indicated that student 2 was interested to talk or discuss about those two topics. Similar to student 1 and student 2, student 3 was also interested to talk about education. Besides, student 3 also thought that talking about family as an interesting topic within an utterance that said, *"The most interesting topics should be about family and education"*. This indicated that they have different topic preferences such as education, daily life, culture, music, and family. These topics an be the references of materials in designing the placement test for them.

Ninth, the students had been experienced in doing placement test. It was not Indonesian language placement test but was an English placement test. In the interview session, student 1 said, "Yeah, I have joined placement test", student 2 said, "Yeah, but not so detail" and student 3 said, "But I have joined an English placement test". Although the students never joined Indonesian language placement test, at least they knew the concept of placement test itself, which is the test that is conducted to see the level of test taker before joining certain course.

Tenth, in the term of frequency in using mobile phone, these three students had similar frequency. All of them usually used their mobile phone. Student 1 said, *"In one day? Most of the time"*, student 2 said, *"I think, it's almost 24 hours"*, and student 3 said, "Every day". According to the interview, the students used their mobile phone for studying, communicating, and working. They also used some applications regularly such as WhatsApp, Telegram, Zoom, Google Meet, Messenger, and some other application.

The last, in the term of the needs of online placement test, the student said that online placement test is very needed. Student 1 said, *"It's very useful for the student that far away for example like us"*. In addition, student 2 said, *"Yes, sure. It is really helpful, especially in this pandemic era, for people, for student. It helps us to keep distance between people"*, and student 3 said, "Yeah, very useful in the term of this situation." Those utterances implied that

online placement test can be so helpful for them who live in other countries and also for pandemic situation. As the students whom started their study in 2020 or in pandemic era, they studied online. The students were at Cambodia at that time, and they took their study in University of Bengkulu, which was far away from their country. The situation that did not allowed everyone to assemble together, including to do written test in specific venue. Moreover, the student also said that they are interested in joining online placement test since it is more flexible in the term of place and time.

Based on the interview to students, the researcher found that there is no placement test for BIPA students at Bengkulu University. As the most appropriate stages in placing the students into appropriate levels (Huges, 2010), a placement test can be considered as the necessity in teaching BIPA (Nation & Macalister, 2010). Besides, the students had different experiences in learning Indonesian language, as well as the exposure of each skill in the language. On the other side, during their experience in learning Indonesian language, they are not facilitated with placement test. This might be happened since there was no specific BIPA program for international students in Bengkulu University. This is in line with the data from the website of Ministry of Education and Culture (2021) which shows that BIPA program is not formally facilitated in Bengkulu University.

Online placement test is considered as the suitable testing media for the students due to the distance of the students, as well the system of the teaching and learning which is online learning too.

As the fourth instructional aspect in BIPA, learning media, including online testing media is also an important aspect to be considered (Muliasuti, 2017).

Conclusion

According to the findings above, it can be concluded that the student had different experiences in learning Indonesian language and the exposure and experiences of each skill in Indonesian language. The students' locations that were far from Bengkulu University was also the consideration to do paper-based placement test. Thus, an online placement test is needed to test the students' level before joining the Indonesian language course at Bengkulu University. In addition, the low exposures of the students to Indonesian language can be the consideration to design the level of the placement test. Moreover, the result about some topics preferences of the students can be the references in designing BIPA placement test later on.

.

References

Basturkmen, H. (2010). *Developing Courses in English for Specific Purposes*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Brown, H. D. (2010). *Language assessment: Principles and classroom practices* (2nd ed.). Pearson Longman.

Chung, S., Haider, I., & Boyd, R. (2015). The English Placement Test at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. *Language Teaching, 48*(2), 284-287.

Dawson, C. (2002). *Practical research method: A user-friendly guide to mastering research*. How To Books.

115

Hughes, A. (2010). *Testing for language teachers* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Hyland, K. (2006). *English for academic purposes: An advanced resource book.* Routledge.

Iskandarwassid., & Sunendar, D. (2011). *Strategi pembelajaran bahasa.* Rosdakarya.

Kaewpet, C. (2009). A framework for investigating learner needs: Needs analysis extended to curriculum development. *Electronic Journal of foreign language teaching, 6*(2), 209-220.

Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia. (2019). *Jaga BIPA: jaringan Lembaga penyelenggara BIPA.* Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. https://bipa.kemdikbud.go.id/jaga

Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia. (2017, June). Bahasa Indonesia: developing in different parts of the world. *Diplomacy, 6*(1), 4-5. Available online at https://www.slideshare.net/KhaririMakmun/tabloid-diplomasi-edisi-juni-2017-english

Krippendorff, K. (2004). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2nd ed.). Sage Publication.

Muliastuti, L. (2017). *Bahasa Indonesia bagi penutur asing: acuan teori dan pendekatan pengajaran.* Yayasan Pustaka Obor.

Nation, I. S. P., & Macalister, J. (2010). *Language curriculum design.* Rouledge.

Nofrahadi. (2018). The need analysis of Indonesian language teaching for speakers of other languages (BIPA). *Contemporary Social Sciences, 27*(2), 1-7.

Suyitno, I. (2007). Pengembangan bahan ajar bahasa Indonesia untuk penutur asing (BIPA) berdasarkan hasil analisis kebutuhan belajar. *Jurnal Wacana, 9*(1), 62-78.