

# Learning the Indonesian Language: A Fact from International Students

*by I Made Suarta Et All*

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Article

## Learning the Indonesian Language: A Fact from International Students

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### Abstract

This study aims to understand the difficulties encountered by overseas students interacting with the Indonesian people and desiring to learn the Indonesian languages. It is commonly known that learning a foreign language is not simple for anyone, regardless of origin. This study is based on quantitative data acquired from the target demographic of international students in Indonesia via a Likert scale questionnaire. The sample size was 650, with a response rate of 50% predicted. The study suggests that learning methodologies, learner motivation, and learner traits play a vital role in international students' acquisition of the Indonesian language. This study has substantial consequences for all parties involved in acquiring the Indonesian language. The implications of this study will assist international students in comprehending the many dynamics and developing strategies for efficiently learning the Indonesian language.

### Keywords

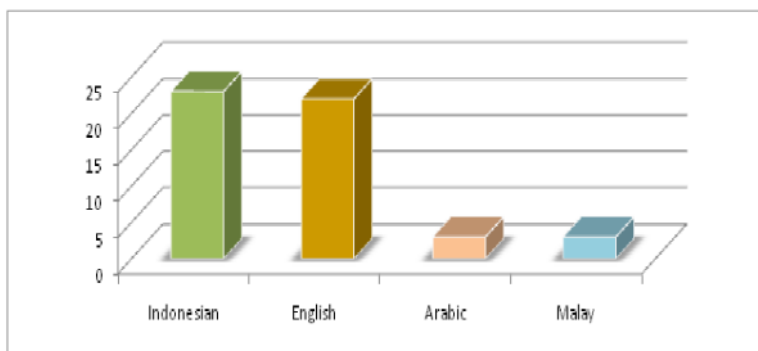
Learning language, Indonesian language, international students, language learning process, and language learning barriers

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People migrate from country to country for various reasons, owing to globalisation and other socioeconomic issues. Similarly, students fly to developed countries to further their education and study. However, when students interact with people from different cultures and languages, they encounter various obstacles (Booth-Kewley & Vickers Jr, 1994). In this light, language is regarded as one of the critical issues confronting pupils in the present era. There are several alternatives for each action, but when it comes to language, the concept of alternative is quite limited, as nothing can place a language. Similarly, international students moving to Indonesia face linguistic difficulties due to their foreign language anxieties (He & Chiang, 2016). As a result, they are having difficulty learning the Indonesian language, causing them long-term problems.

The term “learning strategies” refers to the goal and methods for learning a language established by an individual who wishes to acquire a new language (Saddhono, 2016). Without a doubt, people employ a variety of ways when they want to learn different languages in different nations. However, it is critical to remember that these tactics must be constructed successfully to address all the issues when learning a language. Learner characteristics are the traits of a language learner that they use to comprehend the dynamics of a new language (MHum et al., 2016). These traits may include the learner’s cognitive and mental capacity for comprehending a new language. It is a fact that individuals with outstanding skills are those who can successfully and fast learn a new language. Learner motivation refers to an individual’s cause when they are willing to learn a new language for a specific goal (Hashimoto, 2013). This motivation may be natural, or the learner may be motivated by someone else to succeed in his task of efficiently learning a language. Foreign language anxiety is a term that refers to the difficulties that a language learner encounters when interacting with the culture and social dynamics of another language. Additionally, it is recognized that individuals experiencing foreign language anxiety are more vulnerable and less capable of effectively learning a new language (Widanta et al., 2019). In this regard, individuals must be provided with the opportunity to acquire a language to meet their basic needs productively.



**Figure 1.** *The languages Spoken in Indonesia*  
**Source:** A Study on Open Access in Indonesia

This study aims to ascertain the difficulties encountered by international students when studying the Indonesian language in Indonesia. Indonesian and English are the two most widely spoken languages in the country (see Figure 1). The purpose of this study is to determine the dimensions and influencing factors that contribute to an understanding of the various types of difficulties encountered by learners while learning a language, particularly the Indonesian language (Mustakim et al., 2020; Nainggolan et al., 2022). This study aims to identify the independent variables that contribute to and influence the dependent variable of foreign language anxiety, specifically the Indonesian language. Thus, this study would address all the critical factors that must be considered when international students wish to learn the Indonesian language.

This study is notable because it is the first to examine the influence of learner motivation, learner

characteristics, and learning practices in international students learning the Indonesian language. This study will shed light on the relationship between the variables included in the study's theoretical framework and will detail the relationship for good comprehension. Similarly, the study consists of theoretical and practical implementation, which is crucial for students and other stakeholders involved in the Indonesian language learning process.

## Literature Review

### *Role of Learning Strategies in Foreign Language Learning*

It is a reality and critical to recognise that learning a new language is not an easy undertaking for anyone since there are numerous dynamics involved. Thus, according to Hashimoto (2013), individuals establish various strategies for learning a new language, which is then implemented in stages to provide a suitable answer to the individual's difficulty. However, when international students learn a new language to survive and interact socially in any community, these students must design and adhere to a systematic timeline for language learning (Widanta et al., 2019). It is crucial to emphasize that individuals who lack tactics and plans for learning a new language on a timeline are not provided with the necessary information about the target language as they lack a game plan for it (Mashudi et al., 2022). According to Nainggolan et al. (2022), advanced countries' governments and academies gradually ensure that international students and language learners are equipped with the necessary capabilities to study the language effectively. As a result, individuals derive the maximum value from strategies, as strategies are established following the objectives to be completed (Susilowati et al., 2020). On the other side, governments that do not provide adequate solutions for people to acquire a foreign language are less entertained by individuals, as it is believed that a country's worth is determined by how well its people understand its language and culture at their core values (He & Chiang, 2016; MHum et al., 2016). Notably, language learning techniques are not limited to governments and stakeholders; they may be developed by members of the public and international students studying in different countries. These students can benefit from various alternative methods for productively learning a language (Saddhono, 2016).

Additionally, it is recognised that in the age of digitalisation, it is vital for people to learn a new language effectively with the use of digital resources, as these technologies provide a suitable introduction to the foreign language and instructions for learning techniques (Rivanti & Sukmayadi, 2021; Zahran, 2022). Applications for new language learning are available on various types of smartphones and laptops, according to Mustakim et al. (2020). However, the dictionary and online academies are working to benefit from teaching a new language to the people to ensure their productivity. Additionally, Valentina et al. (2022)'s study demonstrate that learning a foreign language is not a difficult task in modern times; somewhat, with the aid of developed strategies and other parameters, it has become more accessible for people to learn the new language effectively and reap the benefits. It is also known that if people are unable to learn a language in the present day through the use of digital technologies and physical engagement with foreign language teachers, they are unable to build a plan for language acquisition and collectively fail (Hartono et al., 2022; Setiawan & Wardhani, 2022).

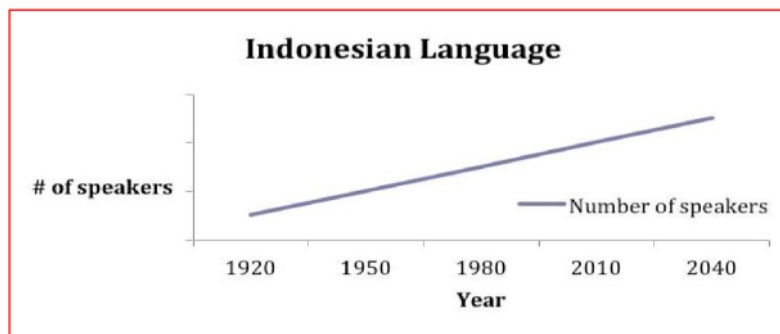
*H1. There is a relationship between learning strategies and foreign language anxiety.*

### *Role of Learner Characteristics in Foreign Language Learning*

There are indeed distinct types of foreign language learners since human personalities vary, and in this regard, we cannot categorise all persons and learners in a single box (Mashudi et al., 2022). However, according to Widanta et al. (2019), different qualities of learners influence how effectively they acquire the language for correct comprehension and development plan to learn for their prosperity. On the one hand, some students make a concerted effort to acquire a foreign language through meticulous planning and well-developed tactics (Zahran, 2022). As a result, these learners profit significantly since they follow a plan and establish a strategy for

completing tasks in the proper order to learn a language. Additionally, [Valentina et al. \(2022\)](#) do not view language learning as a difficult task since they believe that they would be able to learn a language effectively and profit from it with proper planning and development techniques.

On the other hand, some people believe that learning a language is a difficult task since they lack methods and game plans for doing so ([Hartono et al., 2022](#); [Hashimoto, 2013](#)). These individuals approach language learning differently because their techniques are not well-developed concerning the dynamics of the foreign language ([Setiawan & Wardhani, 2022](#)). Additionally, various factors are eroding the capacities of individual foreign language learners ([Rivanti & Sukmayadi, 2021](#); [Saddhono, 2016](#)). Simultaneously, the number of Indonesian persons is expanding (see [Figure 2](#)).



**Figure 2.** Increase in the number of People Speaking Indonesian  
**Source:** Local Languages in Indonesia

According to [Septiana et al. \(2021\)](#)'s study, these reasons include people's mental and cognitive deficiencies when it comes to learning a new language, and in this regard, people are less prepared and efficient when it comes to learning a new language than intelligent and robust people who have a game plan in place. Thus, these individuals are considered less favourably by society when it comes to learning a new language, as it is assumed that they are incapable of learning and would jeopardise the entire class of language learners ([Nainggolan et al., 2022](#)). Thus, it is the government's and other stakeholders' responsibility to consider and categorise people according to their characteristics and mental capabilities ([Mustakim et al., 2020](#)) to ensure that each type of person is treated differently to ensure language productivity and performance. This is because if people with varying qualities are treated equally when learning a new language, it will be impossible for cognitively and mentally weak individuals to attain the level of mental solid, capable individuals ([Septiana et al., 2021](#)). The advanced countries are developing alternate game plans to ensure that different individuals are handled differently in language classes based on their mental ability and good comprehension skills in a new language ([He & Chiang, 2016](#)).

*H2. There is a relationship between learner characteristics and foreign language anxiety.*

**Role of Learner Motivation in Foreign Language Learning**

Motivation is a critical factor in achieving any objective or success ([Fathiyah et al., 2020](#); [Hartono et al., 2022](#)). In this sense, it is critical to recognise that motivation enables individuals to devise various techniques for achieving their objectives in their respective endeavours. However, the drive is vital when learning a language, particularly a foreign language, as learning without desire is complex. Two types of motivation assist individuals in learning a foreign language ([Valentina et al., 2022](#)). On the one hand, internal motivation encourages people to build strategies because they believe that they will receive a higher benefit if they learn a language properly ([Putri et al., 2020](#); [Widanta et al., 2019](#)). This is because individuals who are internally motivated to learn are

more capable and efficient in their educational endeavours.

On the other hand, it is considered that external motivation plays a vital part in people's language acquisition process (Mashudi et al., 2022). It is believed that individuals who are externally motivated to do their tasks productively develop a better plan with the assistance of external variables to accomplish their goals productively (Hashimoto, 2013). According to Setiawan and Wardhani (2022)'s study, it aids people in learning the language and achieving the desired outcome. There are countries where mentors provide external encouragement for people's ways of effectively learning a foreign language (Nainggolan et al., 2022). Thus, international students in these nations benefit from external motivation and assistance from various instructors (He & Chiang, 2016). Notably, motivation is not restricted to establishing tactics; it also aids in rapidly learning a language and utilising it for the individual's broader goal (Zahran, 2022). According to Widanta et al. (2020), motivation helps people learn a foreign language because when people believe that their strategies are based on actual functions and that their strategies are separated, they can achieve the appropriate level of success when it comes to learning a foreign language. Different private organisations in America and the United Kingdom are assisting international students in understanding the world language by providing facilities and assistance (Ntoumanis et al., 2021; Saddhono, 2016). Thus, the external motive supplied to students by these non-governmental groups is to ensure that they receive all necessary materials for a better grasp of the language and to achieve the most significant outcomes for a successful career (Chuang et al., 2022; Ritonga et al., 2021). Indeed, it is the individual's responsibility to seize opportunities arising from internal and external motivations and develop strategies for learning a foreign language in the most effective manner possible, thereby assisting the individual in eliminating barriers to foreign language learning and increase productivity and job satisfaction (Mustakim et al., 2020; Ritonga et al., 2021).

H3. There is a relationship between learner motivation and foreign language anxiety.

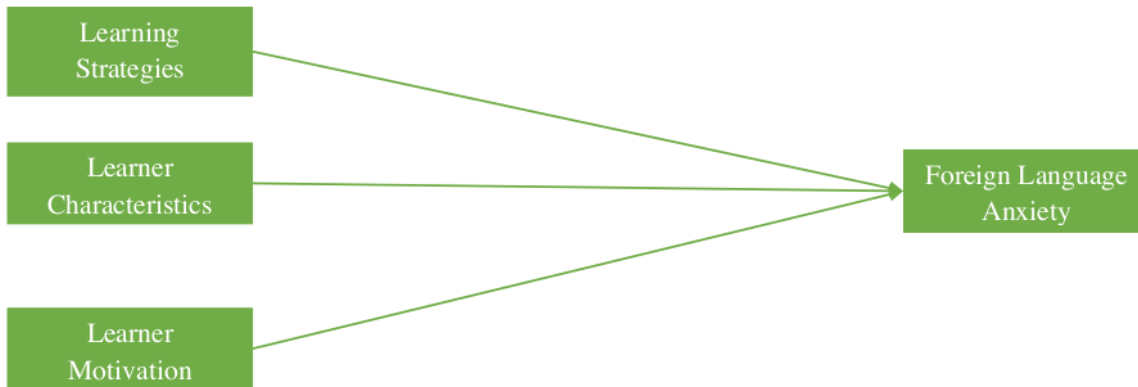


Figure 3. Theoretical Framework of the Study

### Methodology

#### Prepare Questionnaire

The research approach used in this study was quantitative, and a questionnaire based on the Likert scale was created to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire, however, was divided into two distinct portions. The first component was used to collect demographic data on the respondents, such as their social class, ethnic origin, and age. Additionally, the second half of the questionnaire was based on the scale questions used in prior studies to obtain responses from respondents for each variable. The scale item measuring the learning

strategy was used to elicit responses regarding the learning strategies for foreign language acquisition. Similarly, the learner characteristics scale items were designed to assess how learners acquire the foreign language based on their speciality. Additionally, the scale questions used to assess student motivation were chosen to demonstrate the crucial role motivation plays in foreign language learning.

**Data Collection**

The questionnaire was sent to international students studying in Indonesia who were required to acquire the Indonesian language to continue their studies. The predicted response rate was 50%, and 650 questionnaires were delivered to responders. Additionally, all respondents' questions were handled appropriately, and their difficulties were resolved due to responding to the questionnaire. After collecting the questionnaires from the respondents, it was discovered that 11 of them were incomplete or incorrectly completed. These questionnaires were not included in the final data analysis, and the remaining questionnaires were used as a sample for the study. The respondents expressed gratitude for their time spent responding to the questionnaire.

**Findings**

**Convergent Validity**

The convergent validity of the scale items was determined in this section of the study using the Smart PLS 3 programme, which Ramayah et al. (2018) recommended as the best for modern studies. PLS Algorithms computations were identified in this regard. According to the values, the factor loadings for each scale item were more significant than 0.60, as Wong (2013) recommends for recent investigations. Similarly, the composite dependability (CR) score for each variable was more than 0.70, which Wong (2013) recommends for advanced investigations. Additionally, the average variance extracted values (AVE) for each scale item were determined, and each AVE was found to be greater than 0.50, which is also suggested for recent investigations. Thus, based on the results in Table 1, it is evident that the scale items have convergent validity.

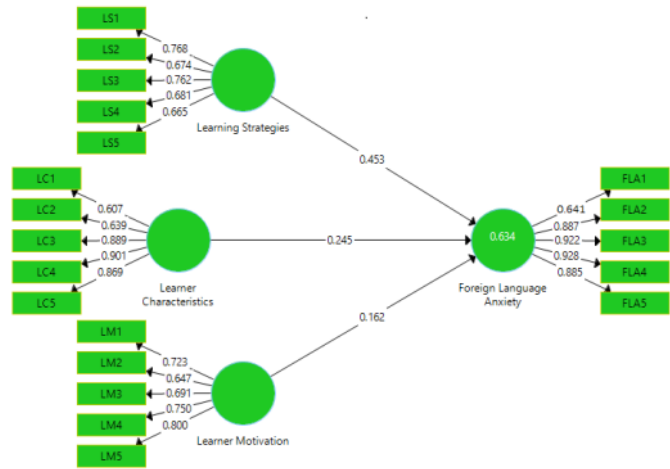


Figure 4. Measure Model of the Study

Table 1. Factor Loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extraction

Variables	Items	Loadings	Alpha	CR	AVE
Foreign Language Anxiety	FLA1	0.641	0.890	0.924	0.715
	FLA2	0.887			

	FLA3	0.922			
	FLA4	0.928			
	FLA5	0.885			
Learner Characteristics	LC1	0.607	0.847	0.891	0.627
	LC2	0.639			
	LC3	0.889			
	LC4	0.901			
	LC5	0.869			
Learner Motivation	LM1	0.723	0.777	0.846	0.524
	LM2	0.647			
	LM3	0.691			
	LM4	0.750			
	LM5	0.800			
Learning Strategies	LS1	0.768	0.757	0.836	0.506
	LS2	0.674			
	LS3	0.762			
	LS4	0.681			
	LS5	0.665			

**Discriminant Validity**

The discriminant validity of the variables and scale items was determined in this study using PLS Algorithms computations. The HTMT approach was utilised to assess discriminant validity in this instance because it is the most frequently recommended method for current studies by Sander and Teh (2014). Additionally, the results of this study indicate that all discriminant validity values were less than 0.90, which Ringle et al. (2015) recommend for recent investigations (see Table 2). This resulted in a high degree of discriminant validity between the scale items.

**Table 2. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)<sub>0.9</sub>**

	Foreign Language Anxiety	Learner Characteristics	Learner Motivation	Learning Strategies
<b>Foreign Language Anxiety</b>				
Learner Characteristics	0.814			
Learner Motivation	0.795	0.815		
Learning Strategies	0.816	0.838	0.837	

**The PLS-SEMs Results**

In this section of the study, the direct effects of the relationship were tested, available in Figure 3. PLS Bootstrapping calculations were used in this regard, and the results are available in Table 3. To begin with, H1 was tested to check its significance, and according to the results, Learning Strategies have a significant effect on Foreign Language Anxiety ( $\beta= 0.453$ ,  $t= 6.795$ ,  $p= 0.000$ ), and H1 is accepted. Similarly, H2 was tested to check its significance, and according to the results, Learner Characteristics have a significant effect on Foreign Language Anxiety ( $\beta= 0.245$ ,  $t= 3.212$ ,  $p= 0.001$ ), and H2 is accepted. Lastly, H3 was tested to check its significance, and according to the results, Learner Motivation has a significant effect on Foreign Language Anxiety ( $\beta= 0.162$ ,  $t= 2.272$ ,  $p= 0.024$ ), and H3 is accepted.



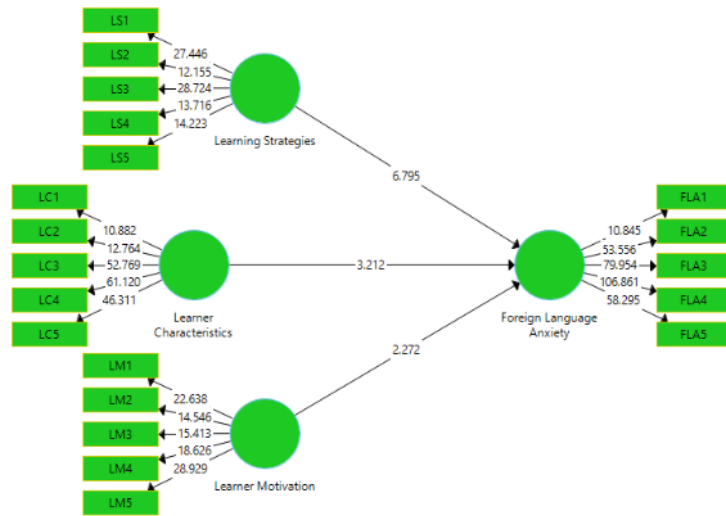


Figure 5. Structural Model of the Study

Table 3. Direct Effects of Hypotheses

Direct Effects	Beta	STDEV	T Value	P-Value	Decisions
H1. Learning Strategies -> Foreign Language Anxiety	0.453	0.067	6.795	0.000	Accepted
H2. Learner Characteristics -> Foreign Language Anxiety	0.245	0.076	3.212	0.001	Accepted
H3. Learner Motivation -> Foreign Language Anxiety	0.162	0.071	2.272	0.024	Accepted

### Discussion and Conclusions

The findings of H1 indicate a significant association between learning methodologies and anxiety about foreign languages. In this sense, students who are in Indonesia and wish to learn the Indonesian language are confronted with a unique set of difficulties. Therefore, to minimise and eliminate any barriers to international students learning the Indonesian language, the best and most workable techniques must be devised by stakeholders and students alike to ensure that they receive all necessary information. However, students who are intelligently pursuing various tactics for enhancing their performance and effectively studying an international language are more concerned with their performance in the foreign language. The usefulness of developing strategies is not limited to international students for language acquisition; these strategies also assist international students in ensuring that they are working on the optimal agenda and timeline for language learning (He & Chiang, 2016). In this approach, facilities must be supplied for these students since countries that prioritise providing facilities for international students to study their language are becoming wealthy in research and development. Not only is it the students' obligation, but they should also build constructive methods of language acquisition that will quickly assist them in performing at their best.

H2 demonstrates a substantial correlation between learner attributes and foreign language anxiety. It is crucial to recognise that the learners do not share the same cognitive effectiveness due to their diverse origins and social backgrounds. This is not the time for learners to assess if their traits and talents are adequate for foreign language learning; instead, they must expand their capacities to an advanced level in foreign language learning (Widanta et al., 2019). This is because language acquisition is not an easy activity; it requires specific requirements and techniques that ultimately assist the learner in developing ways for acquiring information

accurately to acquire the language (Kekäläinen et al., 2022). Indeed, according to Asteria and Utami (2021)'s study, learners' primary goal should be to assist other learners who suffer from mental disabilities in the best way possible while learning the languages. This would provide the ideal chance for collectively developing appropriate tactics and then teaching the Indonesian language to international students effectively.

H3 demonstrates a substantial correlation between learner motivation and foreign language fear. Specific individuals are intrinsically driven to learn a foreign language; these individuals are diligent workers who efficiently create their plans and capacities to face all of the language's social and cultural challenges. On the other hand, some are not internally motivated but seek external motivation from others because when they are provided with the external motivation and receive confidence in return (Valentina et al., 2022), these individuals develop the most effective strategies for foreign language learning (Asteria & Utami, 2021). In this approach, stakeholders must ensure that internally and externally motivated people learn a foreign language (Rachmawati et al., 2022). If they are not, initiatives to encourage international students to study the Indonesian language must be devised. It would be an acceptable method for international students in Indonesia to study a foreign language.

### <sup>3</sup> The Study's Implications

<sup>5</sup> The findings of this study give crucial theoretical and practical consequences for international students studying the Indonesian language. First, the study emphasises the importance of stakeholders and policymakers focusing on learning methodologies that facilitate an individual's effective acquisition of the Indonesian language. In this regard, if stakeholders recognised the critical relationship between these variables while developing strategies and game plans for teaching international students the Indonesian language, the method of preparing the global speech for international students would be altered. It is vital to remember that the government organisations' job is not limited to enrolling current students in educational institutions but also exposing them to local and home culture. Thus, effective tactics may be designed, and learners motivated both internally and externally to study the foreign language for their benefit.

Additionally, the government and non-governmental organisations are responsible for enhancing the characteristics of individual foreign language learners to make them intellectually and emotionally capable of learning a foreign language, particularly the Indonesian language. Additionally, the study fills a theoretical gap by examining the function of learner motivation, learner characteristics, and learning strategies in the Indonesian context's foreign language anxiety. Notably, the study reveals practical consequences that must be considered when international individuals are offered chances in Indonesia. Thus, educational institutions are responsible for developing practical ways to assist Indonesian language learners in effectively achieving this potential for the communal and larger good (Mashudi et al., 2022). It should be mentioned that countries that do not take concrete steps to increase pupils' learning standards are doomed to failure due to a lack of methods. In this regard, the study's conclusion is critical to consider by a variety of stakeholders to assure productivity and performance in the most effective approach to learning a language in Indonesia. In a nutshell, it is critical to analyse the theoretical and practical ramifications of the study when it comes to international students learning the Indonesian language in Indonesia.

### Limitations

To create the theoretical framework, this study used learning strategies, learner motivation, and learner characteristics as independent variables and foreign language anxiety as a dependent variable. Notably, it is also shown that various other independent variables significantly contribute to foreign language learning. Future research should address language learning courses, cultural factors, and teaching methods better to understand the influence of variables on foreign language learning. Thus, future studies would significantly contribute to the

field and have implications for designing a strategy for foreign language learning.

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