



CULTURAL APPROACH THROUGH TRADITIONAL DANCE IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE LEARNING FOR FOREIGN SPEAKERS: PEDAGOGICAL INNOVATION IN THE GLOBAL BIPA PROGRAM

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of cultural approaches through the integration of traditional dance in the teaching of Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA) at Hebei Foreign Studies University (HISU), China. The primary focus is on the use of Jathilan (a traditional Javanese dance) and Betawi dance as instructional media to foster cultural awareness and enhance language skills among international learners. This qualitative case study involved data collection through direct observation of both online and offline learning sessions, as well as in-depth interviews with BIPA instructors and participants actively involved in the dance-based learning process. The findings indicate that the incorporation of traditional dance significantly boosts learners' motivation, deepens their understanding of Indonesian culture, and creates an inclusive and participatory classroom environment. Active involvement in dance practice also strengthens students' emotional and cognitive engagement in language learning. A key element in the success of this program is the collaboration between Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) and HISU through an international community service initiative. The study concludes that performing arts-based cultural approaches offer an innovative pedagogical strategy for BIPA instruction and serve as an effective tool for Indonesia's cultural diplomacy on the global stage.

Keywords: *BIPA, traditional dance, culture-based learning, learning motivation, cultural diplomacy*

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the teaching of Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA) has witnessed a significant shift from traditional grammar-focused methods toward more culturally enriched approaches. This transformation is driven by the realization that effective communication requires more than linguistic proficiency—it also demands intercultural competence (Kramsch, 1993). Cultural understanding allows language learners not only to communicate correctly but also appropriately within diverse sociocultural contexts. This is especially vital in BIPA programs, where students often come from multilingual and multicultural backgrounds.

Traditional arts, such as dance, play a vital role in conveying the essence of Indonesian cultural identity. Dance embodies values, narratives, symbols, and social customs that are deeply rooted in local wisdom. Integrating traditional dance into BIPA instruction offers a tangible and immersive entry point into Indonesian culture. As Sulistyowati (2018) emphasizes, traditional dance can serve not only as an educational medium but also as a diplomatic tool that fosters intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

The global resurgence of interest in Southeast Asian cultures, including Indonesia, has further underscored the need to leverage cultural heritage as a core component in language teaching (UNESCO, 2003). Programs that integrate performing arts in language education are not only more engaging but also more memorable and transformative. Dewey (1938) asserts that learning through experience results in deeper cognitive and emotional engagement. This notion supports the experiential learning model that underpins the approach of using dance in BIPA.

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Despite this potential, the implementation of traditional arts in BIPA remains underexplored. Previous studies have primarily focused on the use of songs, culinary experiences, or folklore to convey cultural content (Lestari & Wahyuni, 2019; Nugroho, 2020). However, dance—particularly as a performative, physical, and symbolic practice—has received limited scholarly attention in this context. Mulyani and Widodo (2021) suggest that the inclusion of performing arts in BIPA holds promise for creating holistic, multimodal learning environments that integrate speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills.

In practice, BIPA materials are still dominated by static, text-based resources. These conventional tools, while valuable, often lack the interactive and emotional appeal necessary to captivate learners from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds. This is particularly true for kinesthetic and visual learners, who benefit greatly from embodied learning experiences such as dance. Therefore, innovation in BIPA pedagogy must consider multisensory engagement as a key design principle.

This study explores the integration of two traditional Indonesian dances—Jathilan from Java and Betawi dance from Jakarta—into the BIPA program at Hebei Foreign Studies University (HISU), China. Conducted in collaboration with Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), the program leverages a blended learning model comprising online cultural lectures and offline dance practice. The initiative exemplifies the synergy between educational goals and cultural diplomacy, aligning with Indonesia's broader agenda of promoting national identity abroad (Permendikbud, 2017).

The research addresses the following core question: How can a cultural approach using traditional dance be effectively implemented in BIPA learning as a pedagogical innovation and a tool for cultural diplomacy? To answer this, the study draws upon a qualitative case study design (Stake, 1995), involving classroom observations and interviews with participants.

The objectives of this study are fourfold: (1) to analyze the strategies and forms of integrating traditional dance in BIPA instruction; (2) to explore the perceptions and experiences of BIPA instructors and learners toward this approach; (3) to identify the impact of dance-based learning on learner engagement, motivation, and cultural awareness; and (4) to propose a replicable model for culture-based BIPA pedagogy in international contexts.

By addressing these aims, the study contributes to filling several gaps in the literature. First, there is a scarcity of empirical research focusing specifically on traditional dance as a pedagogical tool in BIPA. Second, existing documentation on BIPA practices abroad often overlooks performative and embodied learning modalities. Third, there is no established pedagogical framework that holistically integrates dance into intercultural language teaching.

The novelty of this research lies in its interdisciplinary approach—bridging applied linguistics, performing arts, and cultural diplomacy. It offers practical and conceptual contributions: the former through empirical insights that may inform BIPA curriculum development, and the latter through advancing theoretical discourse on multimodal and experiential language learning. As Anderson (2006) noted in his discussion on imagined communities, national identity is constructed and expressed through shared cultural practices. Thus, embedding dance into language education is not merely pedagogical, but also a strategic act of nation branding.

In conclusion, this introduction outlines the rationale, objectives, and significance of integrating traditional dance into BIPA instruction. It frames the study within broader educational and cultural trends and provides a foundation for the subsequent methodological and analytical discussions. The next section details the research design, participants, data collection instruments, and procedures



2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study design, which enables an in-depth exploration of the integration of traditional dance as a cultural approach in the teaching of Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA) at Hebei Foreign Studies University (HISU), China. The case study method is particularly suited for examining complex educational phenomena within their real-life contexts (Stake, 1995). The research design is descriptive and exploratory, focusing on actual teaching practices, participant perceptions, and the sociocultural dynamics that influence language learning experiences.

2.1 Research Setting and Context

The study was conducted in the context of an international collaborative initiative between Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) and HISU, formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Memorandum of Agreement (MoA). This collaboration facilitated the deployment of UNJ dance instructors to HISU for a two-month program involving both online and offline instructional activities. The setting was chosen due to its established BIPA program and openness to cultural-based pedagogical innovation.

2.2 Participants and Sampling

Participants were selected using purposive sampling. This technique allowed the researcher to identify individuals who were directly involved and experienced in the instructional context being studied (Stake, 1995). Two groups of participants were included:

- a. Instructor: One Indonesian BIPA lecturer at HISU who designed and implemented the dance-based curriculum. The instructor has prior experience with performance-based language teaching methods and collaborated closely with UNJ facilitators.
- b. Students: Several international students enrolled in the HISU BIPA program who participated in both the online and offline sessions. These students were chosen based on their active engagement in the dance-based learning activities and their willingness to share their experiences through interviews.

2.3 Materials and Learning Resources

The learning materials were developed through collaboration with UNJ. The instructional content focused on two traditional Indonesian dances: Jathilan (originating from Java) and Betawi dance (associated with Jakarta). These dances were selected due to their contrasting styles—Jathilan being mystical and symbolically rich, while Betawi dance is vibrant and socially expressive. Supporting learning resources included:

- a. Video recordings of traditional dance performances with Indonesian narration or subtitles.
- b. Dance learning modules that covered vocabulary, background information, choreography descriptions, and cultural contexts.
- c. Scripts and reading texts explaining the sociocultural significance of the dances.

These resources were used in both online cultural lectures and offline dance practice sessions, supporting a multimodal, contextualized learning experience (Mulyani & Widodo, 2021).

2.4 Teaching Procedure and Program Design

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The instructional program was structured over eight sessions within a two-month period using a blended learning model:

a. Phase 1: Online Sessions (4 meetings)

- 1) Conducted via Zoom and other virtual platforms.
- 2) Focused on theoretical understanding of Indonesian culture, introduction to dance, and discussion of cultural values.
- 3) Learners watched dance videos, discussed symbolism, and learned related Indonesian vocabulary.

b. Phase 2: Offline Sessions (4 meetings)

- 1) Conducted on-site at HISU with dance instructors from UNJ.
- 2) Focused on practical dance training.
- 3) Emphasis was placed on movement, rhythm, group coordination, and embodied cultural expression.

This phased model follows Dewey's (1938) principles of experiential learning, enabling students to first gain conceptual grounding before engaging in hands-on cultural experience.

2.5 Data Collection Methods

a. Data were collected through two primary methods:

Participant Observation: The researcher conducted non-intrusive observations during both online and offline sessions, recording notes on student engagement, interaction patterns, emotional responses, and classroom dynamics (Yuliana, 2022).

b. In-depth Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with both the instructor and selected students. Questions explored their perceptions of the dance-based instruction, cultural understanding, and perceived impact on language learning. Interviews were transcribed and translated into English where necessary.

2.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a method suitable for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The process involved the following steps:

- a. Familiarization with data: Reading and re-reading observation notes and interview transcripts.
- b. Coding: Assigning codes to meaningful data segments related to cultural learning, engagement, motivation, and embodiment.
- c. Theme generation: Grouping codes into overarching themes such as cultural awareness, emotional connection, pedagogical innovation, and interactivity.
- d. Interpretation: Analyzing how these themes illustrated the role of dance in enriching the BIPA learning experience.

2.7 Validity and Trustworthiness

To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the findings, several strategies were employed:

- a. Triangulation: Data were triangulated by comparing observations with interview responses and instructional materials (Stake, 1995).



- b. Member Checking: Participants were invited to review their interview transcripts and preliminary findings for accuracy.
- c. Thick Description: Detailed contextual and narrative descriptions were provided to convey the depth of the research setting and participant experiences (Creswell, 2013).

2.8 Ethical Considerations

This research adhered to ethical standards in educational research. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their voluntary participation. Informed consent was obtained, and anonymity was assured in reporting findings. No sensitive personal data were collected or disclosed.

2.9 Research Flow

The overall research process followed these stages:

- a. Preparation: Proposal writing, MoU signing between UNJ and HISU, and development of instructional materials.
- b. Implementation: Delivery of blended learning sessions (online cultural theory and offline dance practice).
- c. Data Collection: Observation during sessions and interviews at the end of the program.
- d. Data Analysis: Thematic analysis of qualitative data.
- e. Reporting: Compilation of findings into an academic report and manuscript for publication.

This structured methodology ensures a robust foundation for understanding how traditional dance-based instruction can function as both a pedagogical and diplomatic tool in the global expansion of BIPA programs.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Participant Engagement and Response in Online Learning

The initial learning phase of the dance-based BIPA program at Hebei Foreign Studies University (HISU) began with online sessions spanning four sessions. These online sessions were designed to provide a conceptual foundation in Indonesian traditional dance, specifically the Jathilan dance from Java and the Betawi dance from Jakarta. These activities aimed to build participants' initial knowledge of the cultural context of both dances before they directly engaged in body movement practices in the offline sessions. In the online sessions, material was delivered through interactive lectures, open discussions, and documentary video screenings and dance performances narrated in simple Indonesian.

The online materials began with an introduction to Indonesian cultural background, followed by specific explanations of the meaning, social function, and symbolism of the Jathilan and Betawi dances. Jathilan dance was introduced as a traditional dance form with spiritual and mystical elements, with movements symbolizing strength, dexterity, and transcendence. Meanwhile, Betawi dance was presented as a dynamic, cheerful, and inclusive form of urban cultural expression. These two dances were strategically chosen to showcase the diversity of cultural expression in Indonesia.

Participants' responses to the online sessions demonstrated high levels of cognitive and affective engagement. Based on observations and recordings of the online discussions, most participants demonstrated enthusiasm through questions posed in the chat room and verbally. They were interested not only in the movement aspects but also in the cultural meanings

inherent in the dance. Several participants, for example, inquired about the differences between Jathilan Dance and other Indonesian art forms, as well as the context of its performance within their communities. Participants from Europe and Central Asia appeared particularly intrigued by the spiritual and ritualistic aspects of Jathilan Dance, which they noted differed from popular culture in their home countries.

The use of visual media in the form of traditional dance videos played a crucial role in building participant engagement. By directly witnessing the dancers' performances, costumes, accompanying music, and the performance setting, participants were able to grasp the cultural meaning more fully. The videos used in the online sessions were equipped with Indonesian subtitles and verbal explanations by the facilitator. This enabled participants to simultaneously improve their linguistic competence (vocabulary, sentence structure) and cultural competence (symbolism, social values). In line with Kramsch's (1993) idea, effective language learning must bring language and culture together in authentic contexts. In this context, the dance video served as an authentic representation that enriched participants' cross-cultural understanding.

The discussions that emerged after the video screenings indicated that participants were beginning to develop a reflective cultural awareness. Some compared Indonesian dance movements with traditional dances in their home countries. For example, a participant from Uzbekistan compared Betawi dance movements with Uzbek folk dances, which are also energetic and communicative. Meanwhile, a participant from South Korea highlighted the similarities in the performance structure between the Jathilan dance and several traditional Korean rituals. Such reflections are important indicators of intercultural learning, where participants not only absorb a new culture but also reflect on their own culture (Lestari & Wahyuni, 2019).

Furthermore, the online discussion activities provided a space for participants to practice using Indonesian in real-life contexts. They attempted to convey their responses in simple Indonesian sentences, albeit with the help of vocabulary learned in the module. This practice strengthened speaking and writing skills, which are part of the BIPA learning objectives. As explained by Dewey (1938), learning experiences that involve emotion, reflection, and action will result in deeper intellectual and affective engagement.

From observations, facilitators noted that online sessions were an important starting point for building a connection between participants and Indonesian cultural content. The learning atmosphere became more open, dynamic, and relaxed, unlike conventional language learning, which focuses solely on grammar or vocabulary. The presence of videos, open discussions, and a culture-based communicative approach made the learning feel more lively and relevant for foreign participants who came from diverse educational backgrounds. Thus, online sessions served not only as an introduction to theory but also as a trigger for participants' emotional and cognitive engagement with Indonesian culture. Participants' responses during the online sessions served as an indicator of the beginning of the learning process.



3.2 Participant Responses and Participation in Offline Learning

The offline learning phase of the BIPA program at Hebei Foreign Studies University (HISU) was implemented after participants had attended four online sessions introducing the fundamentals of Indonesian culture through dance. The offline sessions were held face-to-face on the HISU campus over four sessions, with direct guidance from dance lecturers from Jakarta State University (UNJ). This learning prioritized an experiential learning approach through hands-on practice of Betawi and Jathilan dance movements. This approach was designed to provide a holistic learning experience, where participants not only conceptually understand the cultural meaning of dance but also internalize it through their bodies and personal expression.

Participants' responses to the offline learning demonstrated increased physical and emotional engagement. Observations revealed that almost all participants participated enthusiastically and actively. Even participants who had previously appeared passive in the online sessions began to show greater interest and confidence during the live dance practice. This aligns with the principles of kinesthetic learning, which emphasize the importance of physical involvement in the internalization of knowledge (Dewey, 1938). By directly experiencing the body movements, musical rhythms, and facial expressions of the dance, participants experience cross-sensory learning that strengthens their absorption of cultural meanings.

Betawi dance was introduced first in the offline session because it is characterized by being lighter, more cheerful, and easier for beginners to learn. The dynamic accompanying music and energetic movements created an inclusive and enjoyable learning atmosphere. Many participants laughed, supported each other, and applauded as their peers attempted the dance. This activity created a relaxed learning environment and encouraged spontaneous cross-cultural social interaction. Some participants even began inserting simple phrases in Indonesian during the practice, such as "ayo," "baik," and "ulang lagi."

Once participants became comfortable with Betawi dance, the instructor began introducing Jathilan dance, which has more complex movements and cultural meanings. This dance is known for its strong spiritual and magical elements and demands intense concentration and body coordination. Initially, some participants showed confusion or difficulty in following the rhythm and symbolism of the movements. However, after the facilitator provided contextual explanations—including the folklore and philosophical values behind the dance—the participants began to show a deep respect and interest. They realized that movement was not merely aesthetic, but also a meaningful cultural expression.

One key moment recorded during the observations was when a European participant stated that she felt "entered" into Indonesian culture after trying the Jathilan dance. She said that her body was telling the story, rather than simply imitating the movements. This statement indicated that the learning had reached the complementary affective and cognitive dimensions—an indicator of the success of a culture-based learning approach (Kramsch, 1993).

Active participation in the dance practice also encouraged participants to collaborate, support each other, and form social bonds within the group. They learned not only from the instructor but also from their classmates. This collaborative process reinforced the principles of social learning and made the class a safe space for experimentation and expression. In some sessions, participants broke into small groups to repeat and re-enact the dance movements they had been taught. This activity encouraged participants to recall Indonesian vocabulary related to the body, direction, and action, thus integrating linguistic and performative aspects.

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Interviews conducted after the offline session revealed that most participants considered the dance practice experience to be the most enjoyable and memorable part of the entire learning process. They stated that through dancing, they not only learned about Indonesian culture but also felt a part of it. Some even expressed a desire to learn more traditional dances from other regions in Indonesia. This finding reinforces the notion that dance is not only a teaching medium but also a tool of cultural diplomacy capable of reaching students' emotions and identities (Sulistyowati, 2018).

This positive response demonstrates that dance-based learning methods provide ample scope for expression while strengthening participants' emotional connection to Indonesian culture. Dance is an effective medium for conveying values such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), togetherness, discipline, and respect towards tradition. With this approach, the Indonesian language learning process becomes more contextual, meaningful, and enjoyable. This aligns with the results of a study by Mulyani and Widodo (2021), which found that traditional performing arts can significantly increase the motivation and quality of learning experiences of BIPA participants.

Thus, offline learning in this program not only complements online sessions but also serves as the culmination of the participants' cultural internalization process. The combination of verbal, visual, and hands-on instruction results in multisensory learning that is difficult to achieve through conventional approaches. The implications of these findings are profound, both for the future development of the BIPA curriculum and for Indonesia's cultural diplomacy efforts through cross-border education.

3.3 Observation of Classroom Dynamics

During the learning sessions, both online and offline, researchers conducted participatory observations to directly observe the classroom dynamics occurring between the instructor, facilitator, and BIPA students. These observations covered the verbal, non-verbal, interactive, and affective dimensions of the teaching and learning process. The observations showed that the dance-based classes created a much more lively, fluid, and inclusive atmosphere compared to conventional language learning.

One of the most prominent dynamics was the increased two-way interaction between instructor and participants. In the context of BIPA learning, this interaction is crucial because it reflects the participants' openness and active participation in class activities. During the online sessions, participants engaged through discussions and chat boxes; while in the offline sessions, interaction took place through body movement, facial expressions, and collaboration in dance practice. This learning model breaks down the pattern of one-way communication and creates a dialogic classroom (Yuliana, 2022).

Multisensory engagement also appeared dominant throughout the learning process. Participants used not only their senses of sight and hearing, but also touch and physical movement to understand the material. While dancing, they experienced a simultaneous fusion of rhythm, space, body, and cultural meaning. This experience strengthened the participants' cognitive and emotional engagement in understanding Indonesian language and culture. This aligns with Dewey's (1938) theory, which emphasizes the importance of direct experience in meaningful learning.

Observations also showed that the classroom became a space for active intercultural interaction. Participants shared stories about dance cultures from their home countries and compared them with traditional Indonesian dances. Some participants even demonstrated their own dance movements when asked to compare the cultural meanings of certain movements. This activity fostered a spirit of mutual respect, fostered curiosity, and broadened cultural perspectives among



participants. Learning was no longer a one-way process from teacher to student, but rather a reciprocal process that enriched all parties.

Effectively, the classroom atmosphere was very positive and supportive. Participants appeared to enjoy the learning process, laughed together, and were unafraid to make mistakes. When one participant performed a movement incorrectly, their peers encouraged them, rather than criticized them. This attitude demonstrated the development of group solidarity that supports collective and collaborative learning.

Overall, the resulting classroom dynamics demonstrate that a dance-based learning approach not only enhances cultural understanding but also fosters a healthy and productive learning community. This approach successfully creates a safe space where participants can learn, experiment, and interact without pressure, a crucial foundation for cross-cultural learning.

3.4 Interview Results with Participants

As part of the data collection process, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with several BIPA program participants who participated in the entire series of dance-based learning sessions, both online and offline. These interviews aimed to further explore the participants' perceptions, personal experiences, and the emotional and cognitive impacts they experienced after participating in the activities. Interestingly, all interviews were conducted in simple Indonesian, appropriate for the participants' proficiency level, which was still in the learning phase. This also served as part of their language practice process.

In general, participants responded very positively to their learning experience. Many felt that learning through dance provided a different and enjoyable atmosphere. One participant stated, "*Saya suka belajar dengan tari, karena saya bisa bergerak, tidak hanya duduk dan membaca buku. Badan saya juga belajar, bukan hanya otak.*" This statement indicates that participants experienced a broader dimension of learning—not only cognitively, but also physically and emotionally.

A participant added, "*Saya merasa gembira waktu belajar Tari Betawi. Musiknya lucu dan gerakannya seperti bermain. Saya jadi tidak takut bicara bahasa Indonesia karena suasananya santai.*" This statement highlights the importance of a supportive and relaxed classroom atmosphere, especially for foreign language learners. In this context, dance serves as a bridge to reduce psychological barriers such as fear or shyness in speaking.

Interviews also demonstrated that participants were able to grasp the cultural meanings inherent in dance. A student said, "*Tari Jathilan itu agak menyeramkan, tapi saya pikir itu budaya yang sangat kuat. Ada kekuatan dan semangat dari gerakannya.*" The student then explained that through the instructor's explanations, she began to understand that each movement has a specific meaning related to courage and the spiritual realm in Javanese culture. This demonstrates the active internalization of cultural values through dance practice.

Several participants also reflected on the process of cultural comparison that enriched their perspectives. For example, a participant stated, "*Di China ada juga tarian tradisional, tapi tidak seperti ini. Tari Indonesia lebih bebas dan ekspresif. Saya jadi ingin belajar lebih banyak.*" This comment indicates that the experience of learning Indonesian dance has fostered cross-cultural curiosity, an important indicator of developing intercultural awareness (Kramsch, 1993).

In terms of learning motivation, participants explicitly expressed that this method made them more enthusiastic about coming to class and learning Indonesian. A participant said, "*Biasanya saya malas belajar kalau hanya buku. Tapi kalau ada tari, saya senang sekali. Saya tunggu hari Jumat*

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karena ada tari. " Dance-based learning activities have created positive anticipation for learning, which directly impacts the frequency and quality of participants' engagement in the learning process.

Some participants even indicated a deeper emotional impact. One said, " *Ketika saya menari, saya merasa seperti orang Indonesia.*" This statement reflects a high level of empathy and identity connection between the participants and the culture being studied. Dance, in this context, becomes a transformative medium that allows participants to go beyond simply 'learning the language' to 'experiencing the culture.'

Furthermore, participants expressed hope that this dance-based learning method can be continued and developed in the future. " *Saya harap tahun depan ada lagi kelas seperti ini. Mungkin bisa tambah dengan alat musik tradisional juga,*" said a participant. This indicates that participants are not only accepting this approach but are also beginning to think creatively about the possibility of developing similar methods. The dance-based learning approach was not only well-received by participants but also had a significant positive impact on their learning experience. Dance opened up space for expression, cultural understanding, and social interaction, as well as creating a positive and meaningful learning environment. In the context of BIPA, this approach has proven effective in overcoming common challenges in foreign language teaching, such as boredom, fear of speaking, and cultural distance. The cultural approach in the BIPA program has great potential as a means of cultural diplomacy that touches the hearts and minds of participants from diverse backgrounds.

3.5 Thematic Discussion: Dance Integration in Language and Culture Learning

The results of this study indicate that the integration of traditional dance into Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) learning not only improves participants' linguistic abilities but also strengthens cultural understanding, emotional engagement, and learning motivation. Dance, in this context, is not merely supplementary material but also serves as the primary medium that bridges language and culture in a contextual and multisensory way.

This finding supports Kramsch's (1993) theory that language and culture are inseparable in the context of foreign language learning. Through dance, participants not only understand the literal meaning of words but also directly experience the cultural nuances they contain. For example, the body movements in the Jathilan Dance symbolize courage, spiritual strength, and closeness to nature; while the Betawi Dance reflects the openness, friendliness, and dynamism of urban Jakartan life.

The integration of dance into BIPA learning also aligns with the experiential learning approach developed by Dewey (1938). Learning through real-life experiences—in this case, dance practice—encourages participants to be physically active, mentally reflective, and emotionally engaged. This is evident in how participants stated that they "felt Indonesian culture in their bodies," or that "their bodies were learning, not just their brains."

From a pedagogical perspective, this approach also addresses common challenges in teaching Indonesian Language and Culture (BIPA), namely low learning motivation, limited teaching media, and the cultural alienation experienced by foreign participants. Through dance, learning becomes more lively, meaningful, and enjoyable. Dance also allows for cross-skill learning—participants not only listen and speak but also read dance synopses, write reflections, and engage in interactive discussions. This demonstrates that dance can be an integrative teaching material that combines language skills with cultural understanding.

Furthermore, the results of this study also contribute to the discourse on cultural diplomacy. As emphasized by Sulistyowati (2018), traditional Indonesian arts can be an effective tool for cultural diplomacy because they tap into the emotional aspects and identities of foreign participants. When



participants said, "I feel like an Indonesian when I dance," it was there that the symbolic power of performing arts plays a role in strengthening international relations.

Thus, this thematic discussion confirmed that the integration of traditional dance into BIPA teaching is not only a pedagogical innovation, but also a strategic strategy for building cultural affinity, strengthening national identity, and expanding Indonesia's influence globally. These findings support the importance of developing a culture-based learning model that can be widely replicated in international contexts.

3.6 Academic and Practical Implications

The findings of this study provide several important implications, both academically and practically, particularly for the development of the Indonesian Language and Arts (BIPA) curriculum and Indonesia's cultural diplomacy strategy at the global level. The integration of traditional dance into language learning has proven to be an effective, relevant, and transformative approach, and therefore deserves broader consideration by educators, program developers, and policymakers.

Academically, the results of this study enrich the literature in applied linguistics and foreign language education by adding a new perspective on arts- and culture-based learning. This research demonstrates that language teaching can be conducted through a multimodal and interdisciplinary approach that combines cognitive, affective, and kinesthetic aspects. This opens up space for further interdisciplinary studies involving linguistics, performing arts, anthropology, and critical pedagogy. Researchers and academics can use these findings as a foundation for developing new theoretical frameworks for culturally experiential language learning.

In teaching practice, the results of this study provide direct recommendations for Indonesian Language and Arts (BIPA) teachers, both domestically and internationally. Using dance as part of learning doesn't require complex infrastructure, but it can have a significant impact in creating an inclusive, interactive, and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. Teachers can start by utilizing videos, dance synopses, and basic movement modules developed collaboratively with artists or arts institutions. In this regard, inter-institutional collaborations such as the one between Jakarta State University (UNJ) and Hebei Foreign Studies University (HISU) serve as a model partnership that can be replicated by other institutions.

Another equally important implication is the immense potential of dance as a tool for cultural diplomacy. This approach can be used as a soft power strategy for Indonesia in building a positive image in the eyes of the international community. When language learning is paired with cultural introductions through vibrant and emotionally engaging art, Indonesian cultural values are more deeply internalized. This is a tangible contribution to the Indonesian language internationalization program being promoted by the government through the Indonesian Language and Culture (BIPA).

From a policy perspective, the results of this study demonstrate the urgency of developing a BIPA curriculum guide that is more flexible and open to non-conventional approaches such as performing arts. BIPA institutions, both domestically and internationally, need to be provided with adequate training and resources to effectively implement this approach. This includes involving artists, providing culturally-based teaching materials, and facilitating ongoing cultural exchange.

Overall, this research contributes not only to enriching academic discourse on language learning but also to shaping educational policies and practices that are more rooted in local culture and more relevant to global needs. With a dance-based approach, BIPA learning not only teaches language but also builds strong and meaningful intercultural bridges.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore the effectiveness of a cultural approach through the integration of traditional dance in Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) learning, specifically at Hebei Foreign Studies University (HISU), China. Through a qualitative approach with a case study design, we found that dance-based learning not only enriches participants' linguistic aspects but also creates a more holistic and meaningful learning experience.

The main conclusion of this study is that traditional Indonesian dances—such as Jathilan and Betawi—can function effectively as teaching media in the context of BIPA learning. Dance not only provides aesthetic and entertainment elements but also contains deep cultural values, which can introduce foreign learners to the complexities of Indonesian culture directly. Through dancing, participants experience culture through their bodies and emotions, which in turn strengthens their understanding of the meaning of language and the context in which it is used.

During the online sessions, participants demonstrated enthusiasm for learning about Indonesian culture through videos, interactive lectures, and discussions. These sessions served as an important stage in building participants' conceptual knowledge and initial awareness of dance symbolism. This stage also helps reduce linguistic barriers because the use of Indonesian is tailored to the participants' level of understanding, while also increasing their confidence in using the language actively.

In offline sessions, learning becomes more immersive and interactive. Participants not only watch and listen but also directly participate in dance practices. Through these experiences, participants develop a deep emotional and cognitive engagement. They begin to understand that each dance movement carries a specific cultural message, and thus, learning Indonesian becomes more than just memorizing vocabulary but also an understanding of the social, spiritual, and aesthetic values inherent in Indonesian culture.

Interviews with participants demonstrate the positive impact of this approach on their learning motivation and connection to Indonesian culture. Many participants stated that they felt closer to Indonesian culture, with some even stating they felt "like Indonesians" while dancing. This demonstrates the transformative potential of dance in language learning, as well as the ability to foster empathy and cross-cultural engagement.

This research also emphasizes the importance of an interdisciplinary approach in teaching Indonesian Language and Language (BIPA). Collaborations between language teachers and dance practitioners, such as those between UNJ and HISU, provide examples of successful implementation models. Furthermore, this approach supports Indonesia's vision of cultural diplomacy, as arts-based learning has been proven to strengthen Indonesia's positive image internationally.

Thus, a cultural approach through dance can be considered a relevant and adaptive pedagogical innovation in the context of Indonesian language learning for non-native speakers. This approach deserves wider adoption and development, both within the BIPA curriculum and in Indonesian cultural education programs abroad. The findings of this study are expected to inspire BIPA teachers, policymakers, and institutions implementing the program to be more open to the use of arts- and local culture-based approaches in language learning. The conclusion explains what is expected in the Introduction section, as well as conclusions from the Results and Discussion *section*. Conclusions can also be added to the development plan for the implementation of future service.



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