

Cultural Learning through Literary Texts for German Language Teachers in Indonesia: Implementation and Challenges toward SDG 4

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ABSTRACT

Keywords:

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Teaching German language in Indonesia emphasizes not only language proficiency but also the integration of German cultural with local Indonesian culture. Literary texts provide an effective medium for cultural learning, allowing teachers to present social, historical, and cultural contexts in a meaningful way. This study addresses two main issues: which literary texts are suitable for teaching German at the A1 level, and how can they support language and cultural learning? and what are the challenges for the teacher in Indonesia when implementing cultural learning through literary texts. Findings indicate that teachers need to prepare of materials, appropriate teaching strategies, and making all integration of cultural aspects to support quality education in line with SDG 4 (Quality Education). However, limitations in resources of relevant literary texts, and insufficient teacher training remain major obstacles. Therefore, targeted training programs are essential to enhance teachers' capacity to develop effective cultural learning strategies through literary texts.

INTRODUCTION

Foreign language education, including German as a Foreign Language (GFL) in Indonesia, emphasizes not only linguistic proficiency in grammar and vocabulary but also the understanding of cultural contexts embedded in the language. Cultural understanding is essential for developing the competence of intercultural students. It means that student have to the ability to understand, appreciate, and respond effectively to cultural differences (Byram, 1997), (R. dan T. R. I., 2022). In the Indonesian context, teaching German requires the integration of German culture with local cultural values, enabling learners not only to master the language but also to comprehend the social, historical, and cultural meanings conveyed in German texts. This is important things, because, in this context, language functions. The both are as communication and a carrying of culture (Salim, 2017).

A good means to include the learning culture in language teaching is however literature. Many narratives include numerous descriptions, these represent the cultural orientations, daily customs, social rules and worldview in German society many more. This kind of construction enables teachers to promote learning that is not limited to linguistic correctness but also involves cultural analysis and intercultural competence. Literature is, however, a good way to implement this learning culture into language teaching. Habit Many accounts are filled with all sorts of descriptions, that is the cultural customs, habits as well as social constraints and outlooks In German society many. This type of construction makes it possible for teachers to encourage learning beyond

linguistic correctness, and includes cultural understanding as well as intercultural competence.

Based on this context and situation, this study focuses on two main issues relevant to German language education in Indonesia: (1) Which literary texts are suitable for teaching German at the A1 level, and how can they support language and cultural learning? (2) what are the challenges for the teacher in Indonesia when implementing cultural learning through literary texts. The study aims to provide practical insights for teachers and education stakeholders while contributing to the achievement of SDG 4 (Quality Education) by enhancing the quality of foreign language teaching integrated with cultural learning.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article draws on literature methods to analyse and synthesize relevant research, theories and best practices in intercultural competence, language pedagogy, and sustainable education. The focus of this work is to compare how German language teachers in Indonesia selected literary texts suitable for teaching German at the A1 level and what kind of problems faced by the teacher in generation cultural learning through literary texts, by connecting with the practices and goals of SDG 4 (Quality Education). Using published data from journals, books and reports, we reviewed the literature to discover helpful classroom strategies in incorporating culture at the novice level of German.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

German Language Learning and SDG 4

Sustainable Development Goal 4 is about providing quality education that nurtures critical thought and transforms individuals of a society, with empathy and awareness about the responsibilities of a world citizen in active participation in social movements, intercultural understanding, and engagement in global issues. In the case of teaching the German language in Indonesia, SDG 4 can be put into practice using teaching materials in the form of literature that conveys German cultural values. While teaching with literature, language teachers can go beyond structural language teaching and social histories fostering a cross-cultural social norm understanding and the historical context in a way that scaffolds the student's cultural reflective abilities and critical reasoning, thus supporting the achievement of seamless active social, cultural, and global challenges. The cultural literature approach in the German language classroom, teaches the language and contributes to transformative education, SDG 4, and a strengthening inclusive and sustainable world.

LITERARY TEXTS FOR GERMAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Which literary texts are appropriate for teaching German at A1 and in what ways do they facilitate teaching the culture along with the language?

GFL is more than just teaching the structure of the language and vocabulary. It also encompasses culture and literature. Teaching German in Indonesia context involves teaching the ability to communicate in the language as well as the culture (norms, social

practices, historical context, and literature). This focus is consistent to modern views on foreign language teaching where the focus is on intercultural communication (Byram, 1997; Kramsch, 1993). To accomplish this, the teachers will need to use multiple ways to introduce culture as part of literary texts. Different genres of poetry, short stories, fairy tales, prose, and literature offer numerous ways to integrate language and culture. For example,

- Poetry provides rhythmic and repetitive language that facilitates vocabulary acquisition and introduces students to aesthetic and cultural expressions.
- Short stories and mini-stories offer contextualized narratives that help students understand social norms, moral values, and everyday life in German-speaking contexts.
- Fairy tales and adapted classics (e.g., Grimm’s tales or simplified versions of children’s novels) expose students to traditional cultural narratives while remaining accessible at the A1 level.
- Prose and dialogues enable learners to practice functional language in authentic scenarios, fostering both communication skills and cultural awareness.

Teachers can foster language skills and enhance cross-cultural appreciation by embedding these kinds of literature into instructional practice. This complements the aim of inclusive and transformative education aligned with SDG 4 (Quality Education). Diverse literary materials prompt reflective and comparative thinking, cultural critique, and preparation for cross-cultural engagements that students will encounter outside the classroom.

Table 1. Diverse Literary Materials Prompt Reflective

Genre	Example Titles	Linguistic Features	Cultural & Pedagogical Functions
Poetry / Puisi	<i>Alle meine Entchen, Himpelchen und Pimpelchen, Der Apfel</i>	Simple vocabulary, repetitive structures, rhymes	Introduces basic vocabulary, rhythmic language, and cultural expressions; supports memorization. These poems emphasize friendship, cooperation, routines, and familiar objects, allowing learners to compare German cultural values with their own.
Short Stories / Minigeschichten	<i>Der Regenbogenfisch, Die kleine Maus sucht ein Zuhause, Mein kleiner Tag</i>	Short sentences, simple grammar, everyday vocabulary	Introduces daily life, social interactions, and cultural values and daily life; enhances reading comprehension.
Fairy Tales / Märchen	<i>Hans im Glück, Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten, Rotkäppchen</i>	Simplified narrative, repetitive structures, moral messages	Exposes learners to traditional stories, moral lessons, and German cultural heritage; suitable for beginners
Prose & Dialogues / Prosa & Dialoge	<i>Rico und Oskar (simplified),</i>	Everyday language, dialogues,	Encourages speaking practice, situational communication,

Genre	Example Titles	Linguistic Features	Cultural & Pedagogical Functions
	<i>Conni geht einkaufen, Dialoge im Supermarkt / Im Klassenzimmer</i>	functional vocabulary	and understanding of social norms and culture
Children's Literature / Picture Books (Kinderliteratur / Bilderbücher)	<i>Conni geht einkaufen, Conni in der Schule</i>	Simple sentences, repetitive structures, illustrations	Introduces everyday life vocabulary, routines, and family/social norms; enhances motivation

What Challenges Do Indonesian Teachers of German Face when Teaching Culture Through Literature?

The challenges German as a Foreign Language (GFL) teachers face in Indonesia when implementing cultural learning through literary texts involves integrating cultural texts while upholding the communicative approach in the lesson. Literature often involves a lot of cultural values which makes it problematic for teachers. This was demonstrated in some of the interviews conducted with teachers of German classes as GFL wherein three predominant issues emerged.

1. Limited Access to Appropriate Materials.
 For A1-level learners, many teachers struggle to locate suitable literary texts. There is a lot of authentic German literature available, but A1 learners usually have problems with the intricate vocabulary, sentence structures, and cultural nuances. Consequently, teachers must spend considerable time adapting or simplifying texts, which can limit the scope and variety of materials available in the classroom (Kramsch, 1993; Nation, 2007).
2. The lack of Teacher Competence in Selecting and Adapting Materials.
 Inadequate teacher training hinders the selection of culture-sensitive materials and the effective modification of these resources for beginner learners. This encompasses adjusting the linguistic difficulty, creating pre- and post-reading activities, and incorporating and adapting relevant culture talks. Without targeted professional development, some teachers find it challenging to align materials with both linguistic goals and cultural learning objectives (Byram, 1997; Shaules, 2007).
3. Difficulties in Classroom Implementation.
 Effective didactic and methodological strategies are required in delivering cultural learning. Teachers shared their difficulties in lessons structuring between language and culture, student engagement management, and making cultural talks meaningful to students at different age levels. The requirement for the integration of reading and listening competencies with speaking competency added to that of cultural reflection makes a fourfold lesson, particularly tedious in big classes and where time allotment is limited.

Such issues strongly underscore the urgent need for well-organized teacher training, readily available materials, and realistic pedagogical models that can assist cultural learning via literary works toward resourceful intervention adaptations to problems highlighted here. Meeting this challenge will go a long way not only towards better linguistic results but also in the development of intercultural competence as well as transformative goals of SDG 4: Quality Education in GFL classrooms within Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The study has demonstrated that German literature as short stories, fairy tales, and prose or dialogues is an effective medium for teaching German at the A1 level in Indonesia where it is taught as a foreign language. It integrates language acquisition with cultural awareness and encourages the development of intercultural competence among beginner learners. The implementation for teachers in Indonesia poses great difficulties when it comes to the implementation of cultural learning due to several challenges such as inadequate materials, lack of expertise in the selection and adaptation of texts, and problems associated with applying suitable didactic strategies within the classroom situation. Specific training for these gaps, access to resources, and practical pedagogical frameworks are prerequisites that would be imperative toward driving inclusive yet transformative culturally aware language education per SDG 4 (Quality Education).

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