



Elements of German culture: An analysis of German language textbooks in Indonesian universities

Aspek budaya Jerman: Analisis buku ajar bahasa Jerman di perguruan tinggi Indonesia

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KEYWORDS

cultural aspects; eight dimensions of culture; German textbooks

ABSTRACT

German textbooks encompass various facets of German culture. However, teachers in Indonesia often overlook the significance of German culture. The primary objective of this study is to provide a comprehensive account of the German cultural components found within German language textbooks used in Indonesian universities. To achieve this goal, a descriptive qualitative methodology was employed, where the textbooks were analyzed according to Byram's (1989) theory of eight cultural dimensions. The utilised textbooks include Netzwerk A1, Netzwerk A2, and Netzwerk B1, which align with language skill levels A1, A2, and B1 according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Each textbook set consists of a coursebook and a workbook. The findings of the analysis revealed that the most prevalent cultural elements encompassed social interaction, stereotypes and national identity, and socialization and life cycle. The implications of these findings indicate that social interaction, as the most prominent cultural aspect, reinforces the educational objectives of German language courses, specifically in terms of fostering the development of communicative competence.

KATA KUNCI

aspek budaya; delapan dimensi budaya; buku ajar bahasa Jerman

ABSTRAK

Buku ajar bahasa Jerman mengandung berbagai aspek budaya Jerman. Namun demikian, keberadaan budaya Jerman tersebut sering kali diabaikan oleh para pengajar di Indonesia. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memberikan gambaran yang komprehensif mengenai komponen-komponen budaya Jerman yang terdapat dalam buku-buku ajar bahasa Jerman yang digunakan di perguruan tinggi di Indonesia. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif. Data penelitian ini bersumber dari buku ajar bahasa Jerman yang mencakup tiga level penguasaan bahasa berdasarkan acuan kerangka kerja pembelajaran bahasa di Eropa (CEFR), yaitu Netzwerk A1, Netzwerk A2, dan Netzwerk B1. Ketiga buku tersebut dianalisis menggunakan teori Byram (1989) tentang delapan dimensi budaya. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa elemen budaya yang paling banyak ditemukan adalah interaksi sosial, stereotip dan identitas nasional, serta sosialisasi dan siklus hidup. Implikasi dari temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa interaksi sosial, sebagai aspek budaya yang paling menonjol, memperkuat tujuan pendidikan mata kuliah bahasa Jerman, khususnya dalam hal mendorong pengembangan kompetensi komunikatif.

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Introduction

Textbooks play a crucial role in the process of acquiring German as a foreign language. They serve as a means to introduce linguistic and cultural phenomena of the target language and guide the learning process within a defined timeframe (Rösler & Würfel, 2014), adhering to specific didactic principles (Rösler & Schart, 2016). Within the context of German language learning, textbooks constitute an integral component in achieving the goals of acquiring communicative and intercultural competence among learners. This is substantiated by Risager (2020) opinion that textbooks provide learning inputs regarding intercultural aspects, simultaneously fostering the development of communicative skills and language awareness in learners. Kramersch (1995) underscores the inseparability of culture and language, emphasizing the need for integrating the culture of the target language into the language learning process. Culture serves as a communication bridge, enabling learners to gain a deeper understanding of the people who speak the language being learned (Chapelle, 2016). Hence, it can be inferred that (inter)cultural aspects within textbooks are indispensable (Sudarmaji et al., 2012). Qodriani & Kardiansyah (2018) emphasized the importance of cultural aspects in fostering heightened awareness among teachers and students regarding the interdependent relationship between language and culture. They support the acquisition of learners' communicative competence (Espinar, 2019).

Foreign language textbooks, including those for German, serve as a medium through which learners engage with and learn about the culture associated with the language being studied. The process of interaction in this context is a dialogical one that requires careful consideration, as not all aspects of foreign culture align with the learners' own cultural background. These textbooks act as a vehicle for transmitting ideas and values that shape learners' identities (Widodo, 2018) and instill both universal and specific values of particular communities (Gebregeorgis, 2017). In essence, teaching materials, including textbooks, serve as a medium for imparting language skills as well as hidden agendas and diverse cultural perspectives (Setyono & Widodo, 2019). In line with this, Santoso et al. (2012) discovered various postcolonial aspects within German and French language textbooks used in universities, often hidden and overlooked by both teachers and learners. Concerns arise that such hidden aspects may reinforce Western hegemony over the East (Santoso, 2014). Consequently, it becomes imperative for teachers of German as a foreign language to possess knowledge and understanding of the cultural aspects embedded within the used textbooks. With a proper grasp of these cultural elements, German teachers can effectively and proportionally explain them to learners.

Textbooks hold significant importance as a medium in the realm of teaching and learning. According to Azimov and Shchukin (in Torresin, 2023) a textbook is the main means of teaching which serves as a guide in the work of the trainer and the trainees and which implements the concept of teaching method in the field of foreign language. These books are considered standard references, compiled by experts in their respective fields, with the intention of facilitating comprehension among users in educational institutions, thereby supporting teaching programs. This aligns with the viewpoint expressed by Grit (2019), who describes textbooks as instructional materials tailored to specific educational levels, functioning as tools to convey subject matter content, teaching methodologies, and desired competencies. Textbooks serve the dual purpose of

providing students with a knowledge source and guiding them through the learning process to ensure the successful attainment of learning outcomes.

Textbooks come in various formats, including printed materials, textbooks accompanied by audio resources, listening materials, and interactive teaching materials (Majid, 2007). In the context of language learning, Zhang, (2019) highlights that textbooks serve as a medium for imparting linguistic and cultural knowledge relevant to the target language. In the case of learning German, one of the key functions of textbooks is to present vocabulary and cultural information within specific thematic contexts. Additionally, textbooks play a crucial role in guiding learners to master linguistic aspects necessary for effective communication in the target language (Rösler & Würfel, 2014). Consequently, cultural elements are inherently embedded within textbooks for German language learning.

Culture can be defined as a comprehensive framework encompassing the accumulated knowledge, shared experiences, beliefs, values, attitudes, interpretations, social structures, religious customs, notions of time, societal roles, spatial perceptions, cosmological understandings, material artifacts, and belongings acquired by a community through collective and individual efforts, transmitted across generations (Porter & Samovar, 2003). Within the context of foreign language learning, cultural elements can be categorized into three distinct levels.

Table 1. Levels of cultural knowledge according to Zeuner (1997)

Level	Form
First	Facts and data about a country
Second	Concrete situations, ways of behaving, outlook on life, individual/group structures
Third	Societal structure, ideological structure, ideological pattern (System and ideology)

In addition to Zeuner, Byram (in Ariawan, 2020; and Byram, 1989) has put forth a framework consisting of eight cultural dimensions that are commonly utilized for the analysis of cultural elements present in textbooks. These dimensions are provided in Table 2.

Table 2. Dimensions of culture according to Byram

Dimensions	Dimension Name	Description
1	Social identity and social group (D1)	This aspect covers a wide range of factors including socioeconomic status, ethnic groups in the minority and majority, regional affiliations, professional roles, and personal social identities.
2	Social interaction (D2)	This dimension involves the mannerisms or practices observed within a specific community, encompassing both spoken and unspoken actions during social exchanges, varying degrees of formality, and individual traits such as emotions, beliefs, values, and perceived challenges.
3	Belief and behavior (D3)	This dimension revolves around the everyday societal activities intertwined with religious and moral principles.
4	Social and political (D4) institution	This dimension addresses the institutions within the country, such as department's handling specific business matters, and seeks to understand the significance and principles upheld by these institutions.
5	Socialization and the life cycle (D5)	This dimension encompasses smaller-scale institutions like family, school, and workplace, along with rituals that signify transitions through various stages of social life.
6	National history (D6)	This dimension encompasses both historical events and current occurrences, which are crucial to facilitate teaching and learning in the classroom.
7	National geography (D7)	This dimension relates to geographical characteristics linked with a specific community and its surroundings.
8	Stereotypes and national identity (D8)	This dimension showcases notable landmarks of a country, such as artifacts, renowned locations, or individuals.

In the context of Indonesia, a diverse range of German language textbooks is currently available for both secondary schools and universities. Within the university setting, the predominant textbooks utilized are authored by German writers who possess a strong cultural background in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. These textbooks fall into the category of international textbooks, which are designed to be utilized worldwide and employ a single language (Maijala & Tammenga-Helmantel, 2016). Nonetheless, when employing such textbooks, teachers need to make necessary adaptations, particularly when imparting aspects of German culture. Conversely, there are textbooks specifically tailored to meet the requirements of individual countries or regions. This is evident in certain German textbooks intended for secondary school students, which are compiled in accordance with the national curriculum and customized to cater to local needs. However, it should be noted that these textbooks primarily emphasize linguistic aspects, providing minimal cultural information.

The significance of cultural content in textbooks has been widely acknowledged, leading numerous researchers to delve into the examination of cultural content in foreign language textbooks. For instance, Karakuş, (2021) conducted a comprehensive review of 22 scientific articles that explored cultural content in English as a foreign language textbooks. The findings revealed an imbalance in the representation of various world cultures within these textbooks. Research by Faris (2014), Syahri & Susanti (2016), and Ayu (2020) shows that English textbooks from Indonesian's publisher tend to prioritize target culture over local culture. Putra et al. (2020) study concludes that English textbooks for twelfth-grade students in Indonesia inadequately represent cultural diversity in an international context, with a dominance of Indonesian and English-speaking cultures. However, the current English textbook is making progress towards representing cultural dimensions proportionally, as noted by Ariawan (2020) and Mandarani et al. (2021).

Research exploring cultural content in German language textbooks as a foreign language has been conducted by several scholars. Maijala (2008) analyzed intercultural aspects in German textbooks, while Hoch (2016) proposed the concept of *kulturreflexives Lernen* as an alternative to *interkulturelles Lernen* and explored its implementation in German, Dutch, and French textbooks. Głowińska, (2020) investigated the presence of high culture and mass culture in German language textbooks used in Poland.

In the Indonesian context, numerous researchers have conducted studies on cultural content. Permatawati, (2014) discovered 44 subject materials within *Studio D A2* textbooks that encompass elements of German culture. Khoirunnisa et al. (2021) found that *Netzwerk B1* textbooks encompass diverse *Landeskunde* material and emphasize information about German-speaking countries. Lendo et al. (2023) employed a semiotic-social approach in their study and determined that *Netzwerk A1* offers learners the opportunity to engage in critical learning, thinking, and reflection on German culture through pedagogical questions regarding image-text-pedagogy discussion. All of the examined books are internationally utilized textbooks. Conversely, Trianti, (2019) conducted research on a regional German textbook called *Gruss dich!* and ascertained that this textbook encompasses various aspects of knowledge about German-speaking countries.

Based on the aforementioned explanation, it is evident that there has been limited research conducted on the cultural content of German language textbooks used in Indonesian universities and high schools. Furthermore, the existing studies do not explicitly reference Byram's eight cultural dimensions. Therefore, undertaking this research is crucial in order to map out the cultural content within German language textbooks. Additionally, it is worth noting that the cultural elements associated with German-speaking communities are often overlooked by both teachers and learners. Teachers tend to prioritize the acquisition of linguistic knowledge and German language skills. Hence, the findings of this study will offer comprehensive insights into the aspects of German culture depicted in textbooks, thereby providing valuable information for German language teachers and learners.

The aim of this study is twofold: (1) to identify the cultural dimensions as proposed by Byram, and (2) to describe how these cultural dimensions are manifested within German language textbooks used in Indonesian universities.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research design, as the research findings are not derived through statistical procedures or quantitative counting methods. Nevertheless, the data collected can be analyzed and presented in numerical form (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The research methodology employed in this study is a literature review, utilizing scholarly sources in the form of reference books (Tahmidaten & Krismanto, 2020).

This study was carried out in 2022. The selected literature sources for this research consist of German language textbooks that are intended for adults and used in universities located in Yogyakarta, Malang, Bandung and Surabaya. Specifically, the textbooks used are *Netzwerk A1* (Dengler et al., 2013a), *Netzwerk A2* (Dengler et al., 2013b), and *Netzwerk B1* (Dengler et al., 2014), which correspond to language proficiency levels A1, A2, and B1 based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Each textbook comprises a *Kursbuch* (coursebook) and an *Arbeitsbuch* (workbook). These textbooks were chosen because this textbook has been used in universities throughout Indonesia for quite a long time. However, universities on the island of Java have entered a transition period using the new edition, namely *Netzwerk Neu*.

In this study, a textbook analysis paradigm (Kiss & Weninger, 2015) is employed to examine the chosen literature sources. The theoretical framework guiding the analysis is based on Byram's eight dimensions of culture. The data analyzed in this study encompass two main forms: (1) linguistic elements, including words, phrases, sentences, and texts, which also encompass transcriptions of conversations; and (2) visual elements such as images, photos, sketches, and videos. The researcher serves as the primary instrument responsible for data collection, data categorization, and data interpretation. The data collection technique employed in this research involves the use of a read and write approach, utilizing data cards to facilitate the classification and interpretation.

Results

The data analysis revealed a total of 166 cultural elements across the three German textbooks examined. The presentation of the research findings will be organized by discussing the data obtained from each textbook, namely *Netzwerk A1*, *A2*, and *B1*. The

identified cultural elements have been categorized into the eight dimensions proposed by Byram (1989). The quantitative data representing the distribution of cultural elements within each dimension are presented in the following tables.

Table 3. Cultural elements in the *Netzwerk A1* textbook

No.	Dimensions	Textbook		Total
		<i>Kursbuch</i>	<i>Arbeitsbuch</i>	
1	Social identity and social group (D1)	0	2	2
2	Social interaction (D2)	9	5	14
3	Belief and behavior (D3)	1	0	1
4	Social and political institution (D4)	1	0	1
5	Socialization and the life cycle (D5)	9	12	21
6	National history (D6)	1	0	1
7	National geography (D7)	5	8	13
8	Stereotypes and national identity (D8)	10	8	18
Total		36	35	71

Table 3 presents the results of the analysis of cultural elements within the eight dimensions in the *Netzwerk A1* textbooks, yielding a total of 71 occurrences. Socialization and the life cycle exhibited the highest frequency with 21 occurrences, followed by social identity and social group with 18, and social interaction with 14 occurrences. Conversely, the dimensions Belief and behavior, social and political institution; and national geography had the lowest occurrence, each comprising only 1 occurrence.

Table 4. Cultural elements in the *Netzwerk A2* textbook

No.	Dimensions	Textbook		Total
		<i>Kursbuch</i>	<i>Arbeitsbuch</i>	
1	Social identity and social group (D1)	2	3	5
2	Social interaction (D2)	12	9	21
3	Belief and behavior (D3)	7	1	8
4	Social and political institution (D4)	1	0	1
5	Socialization and the life cycle (D5)	5	6	11
6	National history (D6)	2	1	3
7	National geography (D7)	2	2	4
8	Stereotypes and national identity (D8)	3	10	13
Total		34	32	66

Based on the findings presented in Table 4, the analysis reveals that the cultural dimension of social interaction emerges as the most frequently represented, with a total of 21 instances. This is closely followed by stereotypes and national identity group, which appear 13 times, and socialization and the life cycle, which is present 11 times. Conversely, the cultural dimensions of national geography, national history, and social and political institution have the lowest occurrence, with 4, 3, and 1 instance, respectively.

Table 5. Cultural elements in the *Netzwerk B1* textbook

No.	Dimensions	Textbook		Total
		<i>Kursbuch</i>	<i>Arbeitsbuch</i>	
1	Social identity and social group (D1)	7	1	8
2	Social interaction (D2)	19	10	29
3	Belief and behavior (D3)	5	5	10
4	Social and political institution (D4)	3	1	4
5	Socialization and the life cycle (D5)	12	3	15
6	National history (D6)	8	1	9
7	National geography (D7)	3	1	4
8	Stereotypes and national identity (D8)	15	9	24
Total		72	31	103

Table 5 provides an overview of the content distribution within the *Netzwerk B1* textbook, revealing that the dimension of social interaction encompasses 29 occurrences, followed by stereotypes and national identity with 24 occurrences, and socialization and the life cycle with 15 occurrences.

Table 6. Comparison of cultural elements in 3 German textbooks

No.	Dimensions	Textbook			Total
		<i>Netzwerk A1</i>	<i>Netzwerk A2</i>	<i>Netzwerk B1</i>	
1	Social identity and social group (D1)	2	5	8	15
2	Social interaction (D2)	14	21	29	64
3	Belief and behavior (D3)	1	8	10	19
4	Social and political institution (D4)	1	1	4	6
5	Socialization and the life cycle (D5)	21	11	15	47
6	National history (D6)	1	3	9	13
7	National geography (D7)	13	4	4	21
8	Stereotypes and national identity (D8)	18	13	24	55
	Total	71	66	103	240

In Table 6, a comparative analysis of the eight cultural dimensions featured in three German textbooks used in Indonesian universities is presented. The data from the table demonstrates that the predominant cultural dimension among these textbooks is social interaction, accounting for a total of 64 units. Subsequently, stereotypes and national identity group claim the second highest position with 55 units, while socialization and the life cycle represent the subsequent cultural dimension in terms of content coverage.

Discussion

The comparative analysis of eight cultural dimensions in German textbooks

Based on the findings presented in Table 6, an examination of the content distribution within textbook *Netzwerk A1* reveals that dimension socialization and life cycle, occupies the highest position. It is followed by dimension of stereotypes and national identity, while social interaction, ranks third in prominence. Conversely, dimension of belief and behaviour, social and political institution, and national history are observed to appear only once throughout the textbook.

The dimension of socialization and life cycle assumes a fundamental role within community groups as it encompasses various aspects of daily life, such as greetings during encounters, mealtime customs, and parting rituals. Additionally, it encompasses habitual behaviors and the atmosphere prevalent within familial, professional, and educational settings. This dimension is typically introduced in the early stages of language acquisition, as it encompasses concrete situations and everyday behavioral norms.

Within foreign language textbooks, it is commonplace to encounter various forms of information such as photographs, illustrations, textual passages, as well as posters or leaflets, with explicit connections to tourism and national identity. These resources serve as direct introductions to the respective nation or country associated with the language being studied. Notably, a substantial occurrence of information related to national identity is evident, appearing a total of 18 times throughout the textbook. For instance, the inclusion of visual depictions or textual descriptions of iconic landmarks like *Hamburger Hafen* or *der Michel* church imparts insights into the identity and characteristics of the city of Hamburg to learners.

In order to reinforce the socialization and life cycle (D5), and stereotypes and national identity (D8) within the *Netzwerk A1* textbook, a complementary dimension of social interaction is incorporated. This particular dimension encompasses various situations and methods employed in German-speaking societies to establish verbal and non-verbal communication, with varying degrees of formality. It encompasses guidelines on how to interact with acquaintances, unfamiliar individuals, colleagues, and others. By serving as a cohesive element, the social interaction dimension functions as a binding force for linguistic components, ensuring that other dimensions, particularly social identity and social group, and socialization and the life cycle, remain intricately intertwined with the German language context, rather than being isolated from it.

In conjunction with the aforementioned patterns, a noteworthy aspect of textbook A1 pertains to the substantial frequency of occurrence of D7, denoting national geography, which manifests itself 13 times. This figure is remarkable, as it falls just one instance short of the prevalence observed in social interaction (D2). Upon closer examination of the data pertaining to the dimension of national geography, it becomes apparent that the majority of the information pertains to various cities, with Berlin, serving as the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany, being prominently featured. The dissemination of information regarding Berlin as the capital city assumes significant importance for German learners. Given the A1 level of proficiency, a considerable emphasis is placed on geographical knowledge, as it possesses a psychological motivating effect on novice learners. Moreover, according to Zeuner (1997) framework of cultural knowledge, geographic information aligns with the initial level, which encompasses data and facts that are relatively easier for beginners to comprehend.

The preceding analysis presents the infrequent occurrence of three dimensions within the textbook, namely belief and behavior, social and political institutions, and national history. The limited representation of these dimensions can be attributed to their respective characteristics. Firstly, belief and behaviour encompass abstract concepts that prove challenging to comprehensively address at the A1 level of proficiency. Secondly, both dimensions namely social and political and national history revolve around weighty thematic domains that demand advanced linguistic skills to effectively engage with these dimensions. Given their complexity, a more comprehensive treatment of these dimensions necessitates higher linguistic competence to facilitate informed discussions and analyses.

In the *Netzwerk A2* which is a continuation of *Netzwerk A1*, dimension social interaction exhibits the highest frequency, followed by stereotypes and national identity, and socialization and the life cycle. These findings align with the competency requirements for level A2 as outlined by the Goethe-Institut, which emphasize the ability to engage in everyday communication and exchange information directly pertaining to daily encounters (www.goethe.de/ins/id/id/spr/stu.html). The prominence of the social interaction in *Netzwerk A2* is thus comprehensible, given its significance in facilitating interactions at this proficiency level. Furthermore, an intriguing observation in A2 textbooks lies in the relatively increased occurrence of belief and behavior compared to its presence in A1 textbooks.

At the B1 level of German language proficiency, learners are expected to possess a comprehensive linguistic competence in German, enabling them to comprehend main

topics and subjects across various themes using standard German. Additionally, they should be capable of effectively navigating linguistic challenges encountered in German-speaking countries (www.goethe.de/ins/id/id/spr/stu.html). Analysis of the research data pertaining to the B1 textbook reveals that dimension D2 (social interaction) maintains its highest intensity, mirroring its prominence at the A2 level. This finding corroborates the notion that interaction constitutes the core of language and culture. Indeed, culture emerges as a consequence of linguistic interaction, as posited by Levi Straus (in Prechel, 1980). Furthermore, language itself can be regarded as a manifestation of culture, extending beyond its classification as one of the constituent elements of culture, as suggested by Koentjaraningrat's framework (in Widiastuti, 2015).

The B1 textbook presents instances of interaction featuring themes categorized as advanced. Similar to the A1 and A2 textbooks, dimension stereotypes and national identity exhibit a high frequency of occurrence. However, a notable distinction arises in terms of the specific emphasis within this dimension. While A1 and A2 textbooks predominantly center around national identity, the B1 level places greater emphasis on stereotypes. These stereotypes encompass the cultural practices of Germans, Austrians, and Swiss individuals, as well as the perspectives held by outsiders regarding the habits of individuals hailing from these three German-speaking countries or even specific regions within them.

The domain of stereotypes within the German learning context necessitates a deeper level of proficiency, wherein learners are not only expected to comprehend but actively engage in communicating about this theme. Similarly, the dimension of socialization and the life cycle exhibits a significant presence in the B1 textbooks. However, akin to stereotypes and national identity, the dimension of socialization and the life cycle places higher demands on learners' competence due to its presentation at a level of difficulty surpassing that of A2 and A1. At the B1 level, the socialization and life cycle dimension is presented through texts featuring research findings or themes that deviate from the cultural context of Indonesia. For instance, the texts may explore topics such as making the choice to forgo starting a family, introducing learners to alternative perspectives and societal norms beyond their own cultural framework.

The research findings pertaining to the B1 textbook reveal notable occurrences of two dimensions, namely belief and behavior) and national history, appearing frequently with intensities of 10 times and 9 times, respectively. Drawing upon Zeuner's (1997) framework of cultural knowledge, both dimensions are classified within the third level due to their involvement with abstract elements such as values, ideologies, and ideological patterns.

Within the national history, a substantial amount of information is presented in the form of data and facts, aligning with the representation of the first level. However, it is important to note that the focus of this historical aspect extends beyond mere data and facts, emphasizing the ideological aspects associated with it. An illustration of this can be observed in the discussion surrounding the division of Germany after World War II, which encompasses an examination of ideological perspectives. This topic is far from simplistic, necessitating a considerable level of language proficiency in order to engage in meaningful discussions during the lecture process.

The overview provided in Table 9, serving as a recapitulation of the comprehensive research findings, elucidates the frequency of occurrence of various dimensions across the three textbooks. The dimension that emerges most frequently, in general, is dimension 2, denoting social interaction. Following closely in second place is dimension 8, encompassing stereotypes and national identity, while dimension 5, which encompasses socialization and the daily life cycle, takes the third position. As previously discussed, considering language's role as a tool for communication and interaction, the prevalence of dimension 2 as the most frequently appearing dimension in all three books is expected. Notably, in the A1 textbook, social interaction occupies the third place in terms of intensity of occurrence. At this initial learning stage (A1), the focus lies primarily on introductory and foundational aspects, prompting the prominence of dimensions that serve as motivators and introductions, such as dimension 8 (national identity), dimension 5 (daily life cycle), and dimension 7 (national geography), which pertain to data and factual knowledge.

Another dimension warranting attention is dimension 3 (belief and behavior), displaying an upward trend in its frequency of appearance that corresponds to increasing language levels. In the A1 textbook, this dimension appears only once, while in the A2 and B1 textbooks, it manifests 8 and 9 times, respectively. This trend suggests that dimension 3, situated at the third level in accordance with Zeuner's framework, tends to manifest more frequently at higher linguistic levels. In contrast, the dimension of national geography adheres closer to the first level of data and facts, hence exhibiting greater prevalence at lower language levels. National geography is more prominent in A1 textbooks than in A2 or B1 textbooks.

Additionally, an observed trend is the relatively infrequent occurrence of dimension 4 (social and political institutions) across all textbook levels. This dimension deemed "too" specific and specialized for early learners (A1, A2, and B1), receives dedicated attention in the German Language Study Program curriculum within the distinct *Kulturkunde* course. Moreover, Koentjaraningrat's conception of cultural elements (in Widiastuti, 2015) does not consider this aspect/dimension as an independent element, further underscoring its limited presence within the textbooks.

Embodiment of the Eight Cultural Dimensions Portrayed in German Language Textbooks

Drawing upon the previously discussed research findings, a qualitative representation of the cultural dimensions within German language textbooks used in German language courses in Indonesia, as outlined by Byram, is presented in the following discussion.

Cultural elements of identity and social groups

The incorporation of cultural elements within German language textbooks, specifically *Netzwerk* series, is not extensive. However, a notable realization can be found on page 15 of *Netzwerk B1*. In this instance, a visual depiction portrays a man engaging in the professional identity of cheese-making. This portrayal reflects the significance of various types of cheese in the daily lives of individuals residing in Germany, Switzerland, and Austria - countries renowned for their cheese production. The image is tied to the theme "*Urlaub oder Arbeit*" (Vacation or work), exploring the alternative of working on a cheese-producing farm during a vacation. This representation exemplifies the

value placed upon diverse professions within German-speaking countries. The cheese-making profession serves as an intriguing cultural facet of German, Austrian, and Swiss life, which may be relatively unfamiliar to Indonesian learners.

Moreover, *Netzwerk B1* also introduces a range of professions prevalent in Germany. These professions encompass chemist, waiter, mechanic, mountain farmer, postman, and firefighter, shedding light on the varied occupational landscape within the country.

Cultural elements of social interaction

The inclusion of cultural elements in the form of social interaction within German language textbooks plays a vital role in the process of German language acquisition. Given the inherent nature of language as a medium of communication, the prevalence of social interaction forms using German serves as a foundational aspect, thus justifying its dominance in German textbooks.

One particular manifestation of social interaction, commonly encountered in everyday life, is exemplified on page 16 of the *Netzwerk A1* textbook through a short film segment. The character Bea demonstrates the appropriate use of utterances to display linguistic politeness when initiating a conversation to seek information, employing the utterance "*Entschuldigung*" (Sorry). The introduction to proper German language interaction commences from the early stages of language learning. On pages 10 and 11 of *Netzwerk A1*, the differentiation between the use of "*Sie*" (formal "you") and "*du*" (informal "you") is illustrated, accompanied by images of individuals engaging in greetings such as handshakes and hugs. The visual aids emphasize the use of "*Sie*" in formal contexts, when addressing individuals deserving respect, while "*du*" denotes familiarity and is employed in informal situations. Mastering these distinctions is crucial for German learners, as even though Indonesian language acknowledges "*Anda*" and "*kamu*," or Javanese language employs "*kowe*" and "*panjenengan*," the principles governing the usage of these personal pronouns may not align in specific circumstances.

The German textbooks consistently highlight the appropriate utilization of German utterances in various situations. *Netzwerk A2*, for instance, presents utterances categorized as directive speech, encompassing polite requests for assistance or ordering others. Additionally, expressions offering something to others are also provided.

In *Netzwerk A2*, a scenario unfolds involving the Berg family, Bea, and Felix, gathered for a communal dinner. Pragmatically important utterances, essential for learners to acquire, are featured. Martin Berg's expression "*noch was zu trinken?*" (Would you like another drink?) exemplifies the art of offering, to which a polite response of "*Ja, bitte. Sehr gern.*" (Yes, with pleasure) is provided. Furthermore, the textbook illustrates a polite request for additional bread through Ella's utterance of "*Kann ich noch ein mal Brot essen?*" (Can I have some more breads)

Cultural elements of belief and behavior

Within German society, despite its social modernity, there exists a continued belief in various phenomena, as depicted in the images found on pages 62 and 63 of the *Netzwerk B1* textbook. The practice of divination, aimed at predicting the future, remains prevalent among Germans. This belief is demonstrated through methods such as palmistry, reading coffee grounds, interpreting fortune cookies, and consulting the

zodiac. Additionally, German individuals, particularly those engaged in farming, possess knowledge of predictions regarding the onset of specific seasons based on natural signs, known as *Bauernregeln*.

Based on the teaching materials, it becomes evident that belief in myths or predictions is not exclusive to German society but is present in societies worldwide, both in the Western and Eastern contexts. Alongside religious attitudes, individuals in these societies harbor beliefs in various myths and predictions. However, it is important to note that the belief in these predictions has evolved and may not be embraced as absolute truths. The German people's adherence to certain myths or predictions highlights that even Western societies, which prioritize logical reasoning, possess an additional facet beyond the realm of logic they hold in high regard.

Moreover, moral values cherished by the German populace are effectively conveyed through the utilization of proverbs. These proverbs serve as vehicles for instilling moral values and promoting desirable behavioral attitudes within German society. For instance, the proverb "*Morgen Stund halt Gold im Mund*" (The early bird catches the worm) imparts the importance of diligence and early initiation of activities to attain success and prosperity.

Cultural elements of social and political institutions

The awareness and comprehension of cultural aspects embedded within social and political institutions hold significant relevance for individuals learning the German language. Acquiring cultural knowledge pertaining to the realm of social and political institutions serves as the foundational groundwork (*Vorkenntnisse*) for learners, enabling them to progress in their learning journey and fostering an enriched experience should they visit Germany.

One manifestation of the cultural dimension within social and political institutions can be observed in the *Netzwerk A1* textbook on page 128, as well as through a corresponding video. The theme "*Gesund und munter*" showcases the efforts of the humanitarian organization known as *Das Johannitern*, which provided assistance to Felix after his fall. *Das Johannitern* represents one among several social and political institutions that necessitate introduction in order to gain deeper insights into German society and German-speaking countries. These institutions play a vital role in supporting the functioning and well-being of German society as a whole.

Cultural elements of socialization and life cycle

The cultural dimension encompassing socialization and the life cycle encompasses various institutions at smaller levels, such as the family, school, and workplace, along with ceremonies that signify transitions through different stages of social life. Of particular interest is the contrasting educational systems between Germany and Indonesia. *Netzwerk B1*, on page 93, provides insight into the German education system, highlighting a specific type of school called *Gesamtschule*. One notable example is *die Lüneberg-Gesamtschule* located in Göttingen. In this educational setting, students receive qualitative feedback instead of quantitative grades, thereby alleviating the pressure associated with grade-centric objectives prevalent in other schools. The absence of traditional grading represents just one facet of the distinctive features exhibited by this institution. This system stands in stark contrast to the existing educational system in Indonesia.

Page 115 of the *Netzwerk A1 Arbeitsbuch* presents an exercise that prompts the composition of an essay focusing on specific aspects, elucidating the life journey of Eva from her school years to securing employment. From the text, it becomes apparent that the typical career trajectory of Germans commences with attending public school, followed by pursuing further education as an *Erzieherin* (an educator in early childhood schools). Subsequently, individuals may opt to travel abroad and reside there temporarily, aiming to accrue valuable experience before eventually settling down through marriage.

Based on the preceding discourse, a conclusive observation can be made that the cultural aspects of socialization and life cycles receive adequate attention in German language textbooks used in Indonesian universities, including from the introductory level such as *Netzwerk A1*. Consequently, learners not only acquire proficiency in the German language but also gain insights into an integral facet of German culture, namely the life cycle experienced by the German population. This integrated approach enables learners to develop a comprehensive understanding of both linguistic and cultural dimensions, fostering a more holistic learning experience.

Cultural elements of national history

One noteworthy cultural element pertaining to national history is found in Chapter 12 of the book *Netzwerk A1*, centered around the theme "Ab in den Urlaub!" Within this chapter, there exists a text detailing Laura's tour of Berlin, which specifically highlights the presence of the *Brandenburger Tor*. As one of Berlin's primary symbols, the *Brandenburger Tor* holds cultural significance as a manifestation of Germany's national history, encompassing both periods of "dunkle Zeit" (dark history) and "Freiheit" (freedom). It represents a somber witness to the division between the East and West, both in the narrow sense of the partition between West Berlin and East Berlin, and in the broader sense of the division between West Germany and East Germany, exemplified by the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, the *Brandenburger Tor* has emerged as a powerful symbol of Germany's unwavering commitment to freedom. The significance of the *Brandenburger Tor* is intricately intertwined with the events surrounding the Berlin Wall. In November 1989, the atmosphere around the *Brandenburger Tor* was charged with euphoria, particularly among the people of East Germany. This was a result of the historic opening of the Berlin Wall, following a momentous speech by Mikhail Gorbachev, the 8th President of the Soviet Union, which effectively released East Germany from the grip of the Eastern Bloc. The *Brandenburger Tor* became a focal point for the celebration and collective jubilation of the German people, signifying a transformative period in their history and the triumph of freedom.

In addition to the *Brandenburger Tor*, Berlin encompasses other notable landmarks that possess historical significance within the context of Germany. Among these landmarks are the *Gedächtniskirche* (Memorial Church) and the *Reichstag*. These architectural structures stand as enduring testaments to the historical narratives of both the German Empire and World War II.

Cultural elements of national geography

The process of language acquisition entails an inherent integration of cultural elements, including the geographical aspects of the country in which the language is spoken. Textbooks, serving as educational resources, frequently incorporate references to

cities within the respective country to provide learners with a deeper understanding of the cultural context. This holds true for German language textbooks, such as the *Netzwerk* series. The *Netzwerk* textbooks specifically incorporate geographical elements on multiple occasions. In *Netzwerk A1*, geography is addressed 13 times, while *Netzwerk A2* discusses it four times. Moving forward to *Netzwerk B1*, the geography element reoccurs four times.

The textbook *Netzwerk A1 Kursbuch*, specifically on page 24, presents a theme titled "*Freunde, Kollegen und ich*" (Friends, Colleagues, and I), featuring visual depictions of the diverse seasons in Germany. Notably, the seasonal variations in Germany differ significantly from those experienced in Indonesia, where only two seasons prevail. This distinction holds relevance for German learners in Indonesia, as it correlates with the activities and pursuits undertaken by Germans during each season. For instance, during winter, Germans commonly engage in skiing or partake in other winter sports as a favored recreational pastime.

The theme "*In der Stadt*" (In the City) on page 30 in the *Netzwerk A1 Arbeitsbuch* includes a discussion on geography. Within this section, a short text is dedicated to describing the Weser River (*die Weser*). Germany boasts a network of numerous rivers, both large and small, which are dispersed throughout the country. Among these waterways, the Rhein River holds notable prominence as it stretches across western Germany. Not only is the Rhein River the longest river in Germany, but it also possesses several tributaries. Moreover, the Rhein River serves as a significant tourist attraction, offering travelers the opportunity to explore and appreciate the picturesque scenery along its banks via boat excursions. In addition to the Rhein, the Weser River is another substantial watercourse that traverses multiple states, namely Hessen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Niedersachsen, and Bremen. Ultimately, the Weser River merges with the North Sea (*Nordsee*), marking its final destination.

Cultural elements of stereotypes and national identity

The cultural dimensions of stereotypes and national identity serve to unveil the prominent landmarks of a country, encompassing artifacts, popular destinations, and renowned figures. Within the analyzed textbooks, these cultural elements are explored and analyzed in depth, with a cumulative total of 55 instances of discussion and examination.

In the *Netzwerk A1 Kursbuch*, specifically on pages 28 and 29, as well as the *Arbeitsbuch* on page 30, the theme "*In der Stadt*" (In the City) is explored in the context of stereotypical cultural elements and national identity. The material presented in the form of short texts showcases images of renowned landmarks in Germany. On page 28 of the *Kursbuch*, the text describes the mayor's office in Hamburg, which annually attracts over 100,000 visitors from around the globe. With a history of more than 110 years, the building spans a width of 111 meters, while its central tower stands tall at 112 meters. Moving on to page 29, the *Kursbuch* mentions Michel, a church that symbolizes the city of Hamburg. This church boasts a seating capacity of 2,500 individuals, and its tower soars to a height of 132 meters. Notably, at an elevation of 82 meters, a platform offers panoramic views of the harbor, providing visitors with an awe-inspiring view.

What is presented possesses a symbolic representation that encapsulates the national identity attached to a city in Germany. These iconic symbols are deeply intertwined with the city's historical development and the collective journey undertaken by its inhabitants. As a result, they serve as meaningful markers of both history and the lives of the local population. Given their historical significance, city icons receive meticulous care and attention from the respective governments of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria. Consequently, these iconic landmarks also serve as major attractions for tourists, who are drawn to explore and delve into the rich historical narratives they embody. The act of embarking on city tours, known as "*Städtereise*" in German, has become an integral part of German culture. Traveling to renowned urban centers such as Hamburg, Berlin, Dresden, Vienna, and Munich has become synonymous with immersing oneself in the essence of German history and culture.

Apart from tangible city icons that symbolize a city's identity, German textbooks also delve into abstract concepts pertaining to societal perceptions of German, Swiss, and Austrian cultures. These concepts are commonly referred to as stereotypes or prejudices, which may not necessarily align with the actual reality. An illustration depicting stereotypes of German and Swiss society can be found on page 136 of the *Netzwerk A2 Kursbuch*. Furthermore, the *Netzwerk A2 Arbeitsbuch* further explores the topic of stereotypes surrounding German and Swiss society on page 158.

The depicted picture presents common views or stereotypes associated with German society, including the perception that Germans are consistently punctual. Similarly, the Swiss are often associated with iconic elements such as cheese, the Alps, and chocolate. It is worth acknowledging that the existence of such views or stereotypes about a nation is an inherent aspect of intercultural perceptions. These views are not limited to specific individuals or communities, as German learners in Indonesia frequently tend to associate certain characteristics or attributes with particular nations.

Conclusions

The process of learning German as a foreign language intertwines closely with the cultural aspects associated with the language. Consequently, German textbooks used in universities in Indonesia integrate cultural elements to provide learners with a comprehensive understanding of the language's cultural context. This cultural understanding plays a crucial role in supporting learners' acquisition of communicative competence.

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that German textbooks, specifically *Netzwerk A1*, *A2*, and *B1*, encompass eight cultural dimensions as per Byram's approach. Among these dimensions, the second dimension, comprising social interaction, stereotypes, and national identity, along with socialization and the life cycle, are the most prominently featured. These dimensions align with the primary objective of German language textbooks, which is to develop communication skills among foreign learners of the language. Proficiency in these communicative skills is greatly enhanced when learners also master or comprehend the eight cultural dimensions, particularly those closely related to communication activities, such as social interaction, the life cycle, and socialization. From a pedagogical standpoint, introducing the cultural dimension of national identity becomes essential in increasing learners' motivation to study

German. By exploring and introducing the national identities of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, learners develop a stronger connection and motivation towards learning the language. The inclusion of these cultural dimensions enriches the learning experience and helps learners develop a deeper appreciation and understanding of the cultural context in which the German language is embedded.

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