


# The Use of Short Stories as a Media of Cultural Diplomacy in BIPA Learning at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand

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\*Amilatul Farichah, R. Yusuf Sidiq Budiawan, Siti Ulfiyani<sup>abc</sup>

<sup>123</sup>Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra Indonesia, Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas PGRI Semarang, Indonesia.

Corresponding Author: [Farichahamilatul@gmail.com](mailto:Farichahamilatul@gmail.com)

## ABSTRAK

This study examines the use of Indonesian short stories as a medium of cultural diplomacy in learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand. Although literary texts have long been used in BIPA learning, studies that specifically examine their role as an instrument of cultural diplomacy in the context of multicultural education are still limited. The purpose of this study is to describe the use of short stories as a means of cultural diplomacy in the BIPA learning process at Phatnawitya School. This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study showed that short stories were effective in improving the language skills of foreign learners, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. In addition, the use of short stories also encourages understanding and appreciation of Indonesian culture. The learners showed high enthusiasm and were able to express their ideas through the presentation of their work. Thus, short stories have proven to contribute positively to the development of language competence and become a means of conveying Indonesian cultural values subtly (soft diplomacy) in the realm of international education.

**Keywords:** BIPA, Short Stories, Cultural Diplomacy, Language Learning, Indonesian Culture

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) is an Indonesian language teaching program aimed at foreigners who want to learn Indonesian in a structured manner. This program also plays a role in improving the function of Indonesian as an international language (Inderasari & Agustina, 2018). Furthermore, BIPA Learning is a form of implementation of Asta Cita's fourth point, namely "Realizing an Indonesia with personality in culture", which is in line with cultural diplomacy efforts through language education. The juridical basis for this effort is reflected in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 of 2009 Article 44 Paragraph 1 which regulates the flag, language, state emblem, and national anthem which are the basis for improving the function of language as an international language (Ristyandani et al., 2023). This strengthens the fact that Indonesian has the opportunity to become an international language as a means of communication between nations (Zubaidah in Suyitno, 2021:11). Support for language internationalization can be seen from the latest data from the Language Development and Development Agency, the BIPA program has been implemented in 74 countries with 597 organizing institutions, 1,857 teacher assignments, and 183,000 learners by 2024 (Language Agency, 2024).

As a tangible manifestation of cultural diplomacy, the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI) plays an active role in providing Indonesian classes for foreign nationals, including learners at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand (Septriani & Rustandi, 2023). Phatnawitya School is an Islamic educational institution that aims to provide high-quality education, based on Islamic values. The school focuses on spiritual, moral, and academic development, by offering a balanced curriculum between academic and non-academic

learning (Senowarsito et al., 2023). The school implements BIPA learning, which not only teaches linguistic aspects, but also strengthens cultural diplomacy, which is an important part of the Indonesian internationalization strategy (Septriani & Rustandi, 2023). There are five classes that have implemented BIPA learning at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand, namely Primary 5/2, Primary 6/1, Primary 6/2, Secondary 2, and Secondary 3.

BIPA learning is taught in several classes mentioned above, through the observation of the author in each class, in the Secondary 2 class there are ten learners who have an interest in learning Indonesian language and culture. BIPA students are very interested in the cultural values of the archipelago. Therefore, the provision of cultural values is very important for BIPA learners to enhance their language skills (Adnyana et al., 2021). One of the main challenges in the learning process is how to convey elements of Indonesian culture in an interesting, communicative, and contextual way so that it can be accepted by learners with very different cultural backgrounds, as is the case in Thailand. To answer these challenges, short stories (short stories) were chosen as learning media that were considered able to integrate linguistic and cultural content in a narrative, contextual, and interesting form. Short stories are part of literary works that contain a wealth of cultural, moral, and social values that can be adapted in the context of language learning. In its implementation, short stories are a means of implementing interesting, creative, and innovative teaching in which aspects of the local Indonesian language and culture are packaged so that learners at Phatnawitya School not only get learning materials but at the same time get cultural insights from outside Thailand.

So far, no research has been found on the use of short stories as a medium of cultural diplomacy in BIPA learning at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand. Based on the results of the literature search, several previous studies were found related to the research carried out. Research related to BIPA Learning in Thailand was conducted by Adnyana et al. (2021), Ambarwati et al (2023), Budiawan & Rukayati (2018), Budiawan (2023), Budiawan (2020), Inderasari & Agustina (2018), Insaniah (2020), Kusmiatun & Liliani (2019), Kusmiatun & Liliani (2020), Nisa et al (2024), Rofidah et al (2024), Ristyandani et al (2023), Septriani & Rustandi (2023), Tawandorloh et al (2021), Tiawati (2015), and Wijayanti et al. (2025). In addition, research related to Indonesian cultural diplomacy to Thailand has been conducted by Maulida et al. (2024), Sulianita & Qorib (2023), Yasmarani & Gaol (2022) and Zaman et al (2023). Furthermore, research related to short stories raised as a medium of cultural diplomacy has been conducted similar research related to vocabulary collections in folklore with cultural contexts, this research was conducted by Budiawan et al (2025). The results of the search show that there has been no research that raises the use of short stories as a medium of cultural diplomacy in BIPA learning at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand. Therefore, this study is interesting to identify the use of short stories as a medium of cultural diplomacy in BIPA learning at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand.

This study aims to describe the use of short stories as a medium of cultural diplomacy in BIPA learning at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand. This research specifically directs attention to the type of short stories used and the cultural content conveyed through the literary work. This study also seeks to reveal the perception of teachers at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand on the use of short stories in learning.

The results of this study are expected to provide benefits to BIPA learning by utilizing short stories as a medium of cultural diplomacy in BIPA learning at Phatnawitya School. Some of the other benefits are, increasing cultural parity and strengthening diplomatic instruments, including: preserving cultural heritage, introducing culture to the community, increasing education and awareness of culture, strengthening cultural identity, building social and diplomatic networks, and conveying messages (Yasmarani & Gaol, 2022). Therefore, this research is important to improve learners' skills and understanding in Indonesian as well as increase insight through various learning media.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach that aims to understand the meaning of learning activities and describe social problems in the school environment (Sugiyono, 2021). The location of the research was determined in the Secondary 2 class of Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand, with the consideration that the students in this class showed a high interest in Indonesian culture, so that it was considered representative in describing the phenomenon studied. Data collection is carried out systematically through direct observation of the learning process, interviews with teachers, and documentation of activities in the classroom. The data obtained was then analyzed by qualitative analysis steps, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Sugiyono, 2021). In addition, the analysis process also refers to the stages proposed by Creswell (2023), which include organizing and preparing data, coding, preparing themes and descriptions, to interpreting the meaning of the themes that have been prepared. The results of the study are presented descriptively through the interpretation of qualitative data with a triangulation approach to improve the validity and reliability of the findings.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Geographically, Phatnawitya School is located in Yala, Songkhla Province, Thailand. The school has been in operation for over 60 years since 1961. Phatnawitya School is an Islamic educational institution that aims to provide high-quality education to students based on Islamic values (Senowarsito et al, 2023). At the school, the students were very enthusiastic, one of which was seen when they studied the geographical location of Indonesia and Thailand, as seen in the following image.



Figure 1. Learners are enthusiastic about the explanation of the geographical location of Indonesia and Thailand

In Figure 1, it appears that the learners show enthusiasm when paying attention to the explanation of the geographical location of Indonesia and Thailand. This shows that the topic is able to arouse interest in learning while enriching their knowledge and experience about the geographical conditions of the two countries, especially Thailand, which has unique and relevant regional characteristics to compare with Indonesia.

Based on information obtained through the school's website, Phatnawitya School is a school that has a diverse culture and an international learning approach. With the number of learners reaching 2,195 people, ranging from kindergarten to high school levels. This school not only presents teachers from Thailand, but also from various countries including Indonesia, Malaysia, Africa, and the Philippines. With teachers from various countries who have diverse backgrounds and cultures, it is hoped that it can enrich the learning experience and knowledge of learners so that this can support cultural diplomacy. One example can be seen in the following image, it appears that teachers and learners are watching the performance of Indonesian teachers, namely the reading of Poetry and Tari Semarang from Indonesia.



Figure 2. Poetry Reading Performances by Indonesian Teachers

As seen in figure 2, teachers from Indonesia are allowed to perform Poetry and Semarang Dance readings in *Sport Day activities*. This activity is an opportunity given by the Principal of Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand to provide a forum for teachers from abroad. Thus, this greatly helps enthusiasm as well as tolerance and appreciation for different countries.

### **The Utilization of Short Stories in BIPA Learning**

In BIPA learning at Phatnawitya School Yala, Thailand, it is a form of cultural diplomacy that is applied contextually. BIPA learning is one of the effective strategies to introduce Indonesia to the world community (Solikhah & Nurlina, 2024). As a data reinforcement from the Language Development and Development Agency (2020), namely in BIPA learning at the B1 level, learners are expected to be able to use Indonesian orally and in writing for formal purposes, such as discussions, presentations, or report writing. This can be done with various learning strategies, one of which is by utilizing short stories as a BIPA learning medium. In the implementation, learners are given basic short story material then make pictures and write short stories, then present their work. Thus, BIPA learning is focused on reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

This was also stated by one of the speakers who emphasized that short stories have potential not only as a BIPA learning medium but also as a tool to introduce Indonesian culture. In an interview conducted on May 4, 2025, with BIPA teachers at the school, it was stated that the short stories chosen had a connection with the learner's life. This information can be seen in the following interview excerpt.

Researchers : "How do teachers choose the right short stories for students?"

Sources : "Choose an easy language and a short story."

Researchers : "What kind of tools have you ever used?"

Sources : "Short stories about friendship, family, and the environment."

Source: Fateene, interview 1, May 4, 2025

Based on the interview, the resource person emphasized that the right selection of short stories can affect the continuity of BIPA learning in the classroom. As proof of the success of the use of this short story, it is also seen in the observation data. Learners show high enthusiasm during learning. They actively ask questions, showing interest in stories, characters, and even the geography of Indonesia. As noted in the observation: "The learner is very enthusiastic and interested; many actively ask questions about Indonesian stories, characters, and culture. Especially the geographical location of the Indonesian country." From the results of these observations, short stories are proven to be a learner-friendly medium, short stories encourage listening skills and increase learners' motivation in active BIPA learning.





Figure 3. Presentation of Short Stories of Fairy Tales by Learners

In figure 3, it can be seen that the learners are presenting their work in the form of pictures. In addition to telling the story of the pictures, they also explain the elements contained in the short story. Based on observations, learning activities are carried out ranging from reading together, group discussions, making illustrations, to presentations explaining the elements contained in the story directly in Indonesian. To find out how effective short stories are in BIPA learning, interviews were conducted with BIPA teachers at Phatnawitya School.

*Researchers* : "How do teachers assess the effectiveness of the use of short stories in Indonesian learning?"

*Sources* : "Very effective for increasing learners' interest and understanding."

source: Fateene, interview 2, May 4, 2025

This makes it easier to use literary works (short stories) in BIPA learning because short stories have proven to be very effective in expanding learners' vocabulary, and can improve reading, writing, listening and speaking skills.

### Language Understanding Through Short Stories in BIPA Learning

Short stories are a form of literary text that has an important role in developing Indonesian language skills for foreign speakers. As part of efforts to strengthen learners' understanding of BIPA learning materials, short story writing activities are one of the expression media used. Although the learning process is focused on the use of Indonesian, some learners also try to write short stories in Thai as a more personal form of expression. This shows that learners have been able to capture the core story, narrative structure, and themes raised in learning, even though they are expressed in their native language. Below is a picture of the documentation of the short stories written by Thai learners that reflect their active involvement in learning and their ability to process ideas creatively.



Figure 4. Short stories in Thai

Figure 4 shows the enthusiasm and active participation of learners in developing creativity through short story writing. Although they are in Thai, the works reflect their understanding of the storyline, narrative structure, and themes that have been discussed in BIPA learning. This is an indicator that learning is not only understood cognitively, but also able to encourage learners' self-expression in an authentic and meaningful form.

In addition, learners also make short stories in Indonesian as a form of direct application of the language competencies they have learned. The use of Indonesian in this paper shows their ability to compose sentences, choose the right vocabulary, and convey ideas

in a concise and logical manner. The following is a picture of the documentation of the work of the learner making a short story in Indonesian.



Figure 5. Short stories in Indonesian

Through figure 5 in the Indonesian short story, it can be seen that this work is clear evidence that BIPA learning can form productive and creative language skills. This statement is supported by data from Rohmah (2020), in his research showing that the application of modern learning models in BIPA learning is effective in improving learners' writing skills. This approach helps learners understand the structure and characteristics of a particular text, so they can write more organized and creative.

As part of the data collection in this study, to reveal that to explore experiences, views, and learning practices related to Indonesian comprehension in BIPA classes at Phatnawitya School, an interview was conducted with the resource person, a BIPA teacher at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand. The following is a fragment of the results of the interview conducted on May 4, 2025.

*Researchers : "What is the biggest challenge that teachers face in teaching BIPA?"*

*Sources: "Learners lack vocabulary and rarely practice speaking."*

*Researchers : "Are there any difficulties that students face when reading or understanding short stories?"*

*Sources: "Yes, they have a hard time understanding difficult words or figuratives."*

*Researchers : "Do short stories help students enrich Indonesian vocabulary and sentence structure?"*

*Sources: "Yes, it was very helpful."*

source: Fateene, interview 3, May 4, 2025

From the results of interviews with the resource persons, it is known that the use of short stories can help learners in enriching vocabulary and understanding the structure of Indonesian sentences. This is in line with the findings in a study by Rumanti & Suandi (2021), which states that literary texts such as short stories provide an authentic and comprehensive context to learn linguistic elements naturally. With communicative and contextual language, short stories make it easier for students to understand the meaning of words, idioms, and the use of sentences in real situations.

This is also based on the results of direct observation in the Secondary 2 class of Phatnawitya School, short stories help learners recognize new vocabulary, narrative sentence structure, and improve reading and listening skills. Especially in writing skills, learners are still too rigid to write Latin like Indonesian or English, because they are used to writing Thai scripts. Therefore, to improve language understanding in BIPA learning, a good method of delivering material and learning media in the form of short stories is needed.

### **Short Stories as a Tool of Cultural Diplomacy**

Short stories open the learner's understanding of Indonesian culture authentically. In the class discussion, the learner compares Indonesian culture in short stories with local Thai legends. Based on observations, historical shows from both countries are shown on classroom TV as supporting material for cross-cultural discussions. As noted in the observation: "the learner compared Indonesian history with local Thai legends that discuss cultural values in stories. In learning activities, it is broadcast through TV as a learning medium that provides a spectacle of Thai history in the past by comparing the broadcast of Indonesian history to learners". After watching history, learners are asked to read short stories. Learners show a high interest in Indonesian culture. They are interested in history and cultural sites such as Prambanan Temple. One of the speakers emphasized that short stories make learners curious

and want to know more about Indonesia. This can be seen in interviews conducted with BIPA teachers in Thailand.

*Researchers* : "Does the use of short stories encourage students to be more interested in the culture of other countries (Indonesia)?"

*Sources* : "Yes, they are curious."

*Researchers* : "Are there any follow-up activities (e.g., cultural presentations, dramas, or discussions) after students read the short stories?"

*Sources* : "Yes, usually do a play or group discussion."

source: Fateene, interview 4, May 4, 2025

In the interview, the interviewee emphasized that the learners were interested in Indonesian culture. The form of learners' interest is evidenced by BIPA learning activities in the form of short stories in Indonesian. Short stories have proven to have the benefit of forming a positive image of Indonesia through the storyline and its characters. This is supported by the statement that modern Indonesian short stories that raise the values of family, tolerance, and diversity are very effective in building Indonesia's image as a friendly and open nation (Nugroho, 2021:55). In addition, short stories can also create space for cross-cultural discussion and cultural diplomacy gently through education. This is supported by previous research that emphasizes that the use of short stories in BIPA learning is an effective solution in advancing the quality and quantity of education (Senowarsito, et.al., 2023). Short stories are a medium that strengthens tolerance, cross-cultural understanding, and respect for differences. Like a statement from one of the speakers that short stories help learners understand and appreciate differences. As the following interview data reinforces this statement.

*Researchers* : "What is the role of short stories in shaping attitudes of tolerance or appreciation for other cultures?"

*Sources* : "Short stories help them understand and appreciate differences."

source: Fateene, interview 5, May 4, 2025

In addition to interview data and observation results that support that short stories can be used as a medium of cultural diplomacy in short story writing activities. The short stories written by the learners are related to the culture and history in Indonesia.

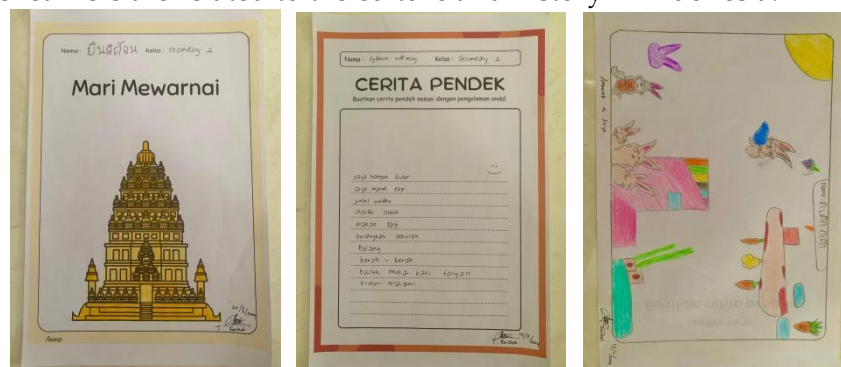


Figure 6. Short Stories by Learners

The work of the learner is shown in figure 6, in the form of an illustration of Prambanan Temple, one of Indonesia's historical monuments. The work is a combination of drawing skills and writing short stories that contain a summary of the history of Prambanan Temple. This reflects the understanding and appreciation of foreign learners for Indonesian culture.

In the context of BIPA learning, short stories are not only used to improve Indonesian language skills for foreign speakers, but also as a means of introducing the richness of Indonesian culture to foreign learners. Thus, this research continues and develops the previous study by focusing specifically on the implementation of short stories as a tool of cultural diplomacy in the context of education abroad, especially in the Southeast Asian region.

### Cultural Values in Short Stories as a Media of Cultural Diplomacy

Short stories as literary works that have great potential in conveying Indonesian cultural values in a concise, concise, and touching manner. In the context of learning Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand, short stories



are used not only as language teaching materials, but also as a means of introducing and instilling Indonesian cultural values implicitly and explicitly.

This finding is in line with the results of research by Nugraheni & Salaebing (2023) in their research titled *The Use of Folk Stories in Learning BIPA as An Effort of Indonesian Language Diplomacy*, showing that short stories have good usefulness in conveying cultural values in the context of BIPA learning and cultural diplomacy. Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA). In connection with this study, the use of short stories in BIPA classes is able to build a deeper cultural understanding of foreign learners through stories that contain local elements and social values of Indonesian society, such as mutual cooperation, politeness, and respect for parents. Another study by Dhaci (2019) also found that short stories can be a strategic tool for cultural diplomacy because of their ability to frame culture in a narrative that is easily accepted by foreign learners, especially if conveyed contextually in language learning activities. These findings are in line with the results of the implementation in this study that the use of short stories in BIPA learning at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand, not only functions as a language medium, but also as a bridge of cultural diplomacy that introduces the identity, character, and local wisdom of the Indonesian nation to foreign learners.

The cultural values contained in the short story summary of the history of Prambanan Temple reflect the views of life, habits, norms, and ways of thinking of the Indonesian people. Short stories are an effective bridge in the process of cultural diplomacy because they are able to convey cultural messages narratively and emotionally. Some of the cultural values that are reflected in the short stories and identified in the BIPA learning process include: the value of mutual cooperation, the value of family, the value of local wisdom, the value of tolerance, the value of education and morality.

The statement was also supported by interview data conducted with BIPA teachers, the resource person confirmed that short stories have an important contribution in forming cultural tolerance and appreciation attitudes in learners. This is evident in the following interview:

*Researchers : "What is the role of short stories in shaping attitudes of tolerance or appreciation for other cultures?"*

*Sources: "Short stories help them understand and appreciate differences."*

*Researchers : "According to Teacher, can short stories be a form of "cultural diplomacy"? Why?"*

*Sources : "Yes, because short stories convey cultural values in a subtle and interesting way."*

*Researchers : "How do teachers assess the effectiveness of the use of short stories in Indonesian learning?"*

*Sources: "Highly effective for increasing students' interest and understanding."*

source: Fateene, interview 6, May 4, 2025

Based on interviews with BIPA teachers in Thailand, short stories have proven to not only strengthen linguistic aspects, but also become a strategic means to convey cultural values diplomatically.

### **Learners' Response to Short Story Learning**

The response of learners to the use of short stories in BIPA learning is classified as very positive. This can be seen from a direct interview conducted with BIPA teachers at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand. One of the speakers added that learners become more active and enjoy learning when using short stories as a BIPA Learning medium.

*Researchers : "How do students react when learning using short stories?"*

*Sources: "They are happy and more active in asking questions."*





Figure 7. Interviews With BIPA Teachers in Thailand

In figure 7, you can see the interview activities carried out with the resource person. Based on the results of the interviews, the majority of BIPA learners showed a positive response to interactive teaching methods and the use of varied learning media. They feel more motivated and helped in understanding the vocabulary and linguistic structure of the Indonesian language. These findings are in line with the results of research by Leksono and Tiawati (2020) which showed that Thai learners in BIPA learning responded positively to the presence of native speakers, especially in improving cultural and pronunciation understanding. Their responses reflect the importance of communicative approaches and the role of native speakers in creating an authentic and supportive learning environment. Thus, both interview data and previous research confirm that learners' responses are strongly influenced by contextual and interactive teaching strategies, as well as direct engagement with native Indonesian speakers.

In addition to the interview data, there were observations made by BIPA teachers from Indonesia. It can be seen that learning activities take place in the Secondary 2 class of Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand.

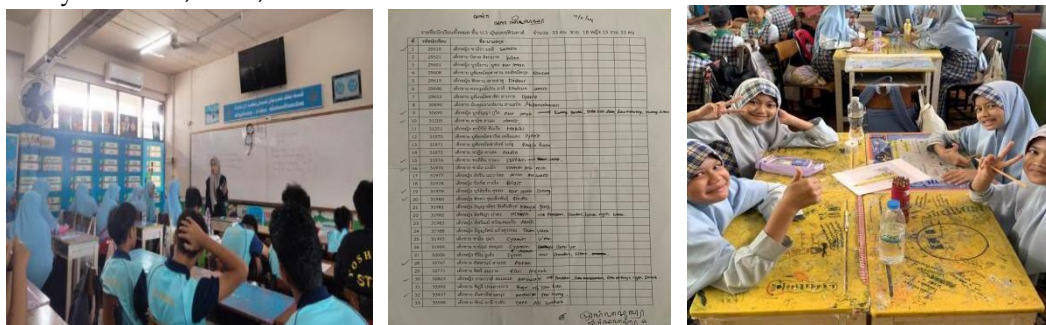


Figure 8. List of Learners and Learning Activities for BIPA class Secondary 2 Phatnawitya School

The continuity of BIPA learning in the Secondary 2 class carried out by the researcher can be seen in figure 8, the activity was observed by one of the BIPA teachers from Indonesia. The results of an observation made by one of the BIPA teachers from Indonesia show that short stories have an important role in BIPA learning at Phatnawitya School, Yala, Thailand. The use of short stories in learning has been proven to support a more meaningful learning process and contribute to cross-cultural understanding.

Short stories can be developed as a standard teaching medium in culture-based BIPA. With this approach, the learning process becomes more contextual and fun, and has the potential to strengthen learners' intercultural competence. The experience at Phatnawitya School shows that education, especially through language learning, can be an effective instrument of cultural diplomacy. The use of short stories can be replicated in other multicultural areas, as a strategy to introduce Indonesian culture softly (*soft diplomacy*).

Based on this, short stories have proven to be useful in improving Indonesian language competence for foreign speakers and conveying Indonesian cultural values in a subtle and touching way. The role of teachers is very important in adapting short stories to the needs of learners and guiding their cultural meaning. In this context, short stories are a strategic tool of cultural diplomacy in building understanding, interest, and appreciation for Indonesia in the eyes of foreign learners.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the implementation of short story learning in BIPA classes at Phatnawitya School, it can be concluded that literary media, especially short stories, have strong potential in supporting the improvement of Indonesian language competence while introducing Indonesian culture in a meaningful way. Short stories facilitate learners in understanding the cultural and language context in an integrated manner, thus helping the process of internalizing cultural values in language learning. The use of short stories as a learning medium has also been proven to be able to encourage active involvement of learners in language activities and creative works. This research provides an overview that a culture-based approach through literary texts can be a strategic alternative in the development of BIPA teaching materials. However, this study has limitations in the scope of location and the limited number of participants, so it is suggested that further research can explore the use of other literary texts and be carried out in various cultural contexts to deepen the understanding and effectiveness of BIPA learning in building language competence as well as intercultural skills of foreign learners. Thus, this result is expected to be a reference for teachers in designing materials that are not only communicative, but also relevant to the needs and backgrounds of foreign learners, and are able to strengthen the role of the Indonesian language as a tool for cultural diplomacy in the international arena.

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