



## **PUBLIC DIPLOMACY EFFORTS BY WISMA JERMAN IN INTRODUCING GERMAN CULTURE AND LANGUAGE IN SURABAYA**

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**Abstract:** Culture and language are important aspects in presenting human life. Through language, every knowledge is formed from the culture that has been built. Public Diplomacy is an approach to introducing cultural values, national policies, building interstate relations by state actors or non-state actors to foreign communities. Wisma Jerman is an independent institution engaged in the fields of culture, language and economy. Wisma Jerman is a non-governmental organisation supported by the German-Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EKONID) and the German embassy through Goethe-Institut. This research will discuss public diplomacy efforts by Wisma Jerman through cultural and language approaches in Surabaya. This research uses a qualitative method by collecting various online reference sources such as articles, news and interviews with the main director of Wisma Jerman. The results of this study show the approach by Wisma Jerman through language courses, the implementation of free activities that invite all people in Surabaya about values related to the German state and the use of digital as a medium of promotion and introduction to German culture or language.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The definition of the word culture etymologically comes from the Sanskrit language, namely budhaya with the plural word budhi. The meaning of the word budhaya / budhi is related to mind and intellect. In English, the word culture comes from Latin, namely colore, which means to process or do. According to Nursyam (Arif, 2014) the definition of culture is a dynamic value system resulting from elements of learning that are derived from beliefs, assumptions, habits and rules that allow group members to relate to others. This is a normative cultural value system as a rule for society. According to (Jenks, 1993) Culture is ontologically symbolic representative, namely about what we learn is an ideal aspect of the humanity of a society. Symbolic representation is a form of culture that is diversely grouped through classification and manifestation which then becomes knowledge for humans. The form of this

symbol can be linguistic or can be described in the form of customs, conventions, habits and artefacts.

Language and culture (Altarriba & Basnight-Brown, 2022) are 2 things that are related and influential in shaping perceptual thoughts in the world. Language is a representation of thoughts and knowledge and a tool for communication. The definition of the term language refers to a system of representation on a symbol and refers to a concept and understanding of the concept. Language is an abstract thing, but it is able to present thoughts, beliefs, knowledge and processes in conveying and communicating ideas conveyed by humans effectively. Language influences decision-making, the way a person processes emotions, and the development of cognition, in addition to influencing applied fields and the development of social identity. Culture and language have an influence in shaping perceptions of the world. Language is an important instrument in the socialisation process for human society and culture. Through language, a generation can pass on customs and beliefs to the next generation, and the use of language can define the position of community members within the group (Ilić, 2004).

Hans Tuch through (Melissen, 2005) explains about public diplomacy that it is a communication process from the government to the foreign public to convey ideas, ideas, ideals of the nation, its institutions and culture as well as its national policy objectives. There are 3 points that explain Hans Tuch's definition as a new diplomacy concept. Firstly, public diplomacy is not only conducted by state actors, but both small and large non-state actors as well as supranational and subnational actors can develop their own public diplomacy policies. Secondly, public diplomacy is aimed at foreign communities and needs to have a different strategy in socialising with domestic diplomacy. Thirdly Public Diplomacy is currently only a flow of information with the aim of conveying the positive aspects of a country, so that what is seen in Public Diplomacy activities is only limited to marketing information to the public and controlling the foreign press. The new Public Diplomacy should engage with the foreign public, creating a dialogue to convey its national policies.

In the definition of Public Diplomacy (Melissen, 2005) raised 3 concepts that have a relationship with the concept of public diplomacy. The first separates the notion of public diplomacy from propaganda. Propaganda seems to have the same values and characteristics as public diplomacy because both concepts influence public opinion, but there are differences. Propaganda is a one-way form of manipulation that narrows the view of the audience, whereas public diplomacy is two-way, involving dialogue and trying to understand the perspective of the foreign society. Propaganda and public diplomacy have differences related to the relevance

of interests and communication patterns. The second is comparing the behaviour of diplomacy as nation branding. These two things do have similarities, namely the same thing that is related to the identity of the country and raises cultural values, but these two concepts differ through the dimensions involved in the field. Nation branding is carried out collectively by the state and society, while public diplomacy is limited and related to interstate relations. Finally, the relationship between cultural approaches and public diplomacy. Culture is an important approach to public diplomacy, it is a form of engagement by involving foreign communities rather than just delivering messages, building stable relationships and building long-term relationships in building and winning the hearts and minds of foreign communities. Cultural exchange at the international level is part of international communication where public diplomacy reacts to the relationship of cultural activities, press, and information to social, economic and political realities.

Wisma Jerman is a language, cultural and economic institution in Surabaya that was officially established in 2011. This institution focuses on the development of language courses and the introduction of German culture as well as the development of political and economic relations in the East Java region, especially Surabaya. Before Wisma Jerman was established, Gothei Institut had already existed in Surabaya as a language and cultural institution officially established by the German government from 1964 to 1996. The closure of Gothei Institut in that year was due to budget cuts from the German government. However, because there was an initiative from Gothei Institut employees, the Gothei foundation was established in partnership with Gothei Institut as a language and cultural course institution. When the institute ran in 1996 until the 2000s the programme was not very successful, so to maintain the language and culture programme the employees involved sought help from the German embassy, Gothei Institut and EKONID. Wisma Jerman was later established by the German-Indonesian partner foundation Germany-Indonesia Chamber of Commerce and Industry (EKONID) and supported by the German embassy through Gothei-Institut Indonesia (Neuber, 2024).

The cooperation carried out by Gothei Institut and Wisma Jerman in the introduction of German culture and language includes several aspects such as providing scholarships for people who have a commitment to become German language teachers to advance German language teaching in Indonesia. To apply for the scholarship, there are 3 institutions representing Gothei-Institut, namely Gothe-Institut Jakarta, Gothei-Institut Bandung and Wisma Jerman Surabaya. Wisma Jerman is also supported by Asyl, Migration, Integrationsfond (AMIF) through Gothei-Institut to provide information for people who want to immigrate legally to Germany through

the Infopoint Deutsch programme. Infopoint Deutsch is a project supported by AMIF, a European Union (EU) financial instrument to support EU member states in implementing European asylum, migration and integration policies (Wisma Jerman, 2024). Wisma Jerman is one of the official German language certification exam providers supported by Goethe-Institut. In addition to the language course programme, through an interview with the main director of Wisma Jerman Mike Neuber, when Wisma Jerman held a cultural programme for the community in Surabaya Goethe-Institut became one of the institutions that played a role in providing presenters/artists who were an important part of the programme held by Wisma Jerman (Goethe-Institut, 2024).

## RESEARCH METHODS

The research used is qualitative, which is a method for studying objects in natural conditions, where the researcher acts as the main instrument. Data collection techniques are combined, data analysis is inductive, and research results place more emphasis on understanding meaning than on generalisation (Zuchri Abdussamad, 2021).

The technique used for research is interview, which is a technique of extracting information through direct conversation between researchers and participants. The development of technology and communication has enabled interviews to be conducted both face-to-face and via telephone, zoom, whatsapp, and others. Interviews can be structured and unstructured with the intention of exploring various information about the focus of the research problem. In addition, documentation is a technique used to collect information through the search for accurate evidence according to the focus of the research problem. Documentation in qualitative research can be in the form of policy documents, biographies, diaries, newspapers, magazines or papers. In addition to these three techniques, documentation can be supplemented with recordings, drawings, photographs and paintings (Waruwu, 2023).

Qualitative research with interview and documentation methods, then the author uses descriptive-qualitative analysis, the data that has been collected in the form of words from various sources is analysed inductively (Rehalat & Nurul 'ainy, 2023). Data analysis techniques are carried out using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. by conducting intensive analysis of data that has been obtained in the field in the form of words in this study, successful data collected through observation sheets and interviews (Rijali, 2018).

From the explanation of the research method used, it will discuss the programmes run by Wisma Jerman as a result of analysis in implementing public diplomacy. Public diplomacy

run by Wisma Jerman is implemented through various kinds of programmes and ways to attract Surabaya residents both with free and paid activities. Through the cultural and language approach, the programmes run by Wisma Jerman can include language courses, cooperation with several educational institutions and communities, holding free or paid open house programmes and in running these programmes social media is a tool used in promoting these activities. In addition to promotion, the use of social media is a tool in introducing culture or language by Wisma Jerman through the use of media technology, especially Instagram. The language courses run by Wisma Jerman are teaching and learning activities between students and teachers about German language and culture. In this activity, Wisma Jerman offers various types of language courses according to levels that are accredited with the provisions of language levels in Germany. This programme is one of the main missions in the field of language and culture in the Surabaya area. The purpose of this activity is of course to introduce and help Surabaya people who want to learn and obtain German language certificates.

In cooperation with educational institutions, public diplomacy carried out by Wisma Jerman is carried out through the provision of activities with universities in Surabaya. In this programme, Wisma Jerman works with Surabaya State University (UNESA) and Airlangga University (UNAIR). The programmes run on the two campuses are different. The programme run at UNESA discusses programmes for study in Germany, while the cooperation with UNAIR. In addition, Wisma Jerman also collaborates with local communities in Surabaya such as Aksi Cinta Indonesia, Surabaya String Orchestra, Lotus Art Course and other institutions. The cooperation is also related to the values of German society and government that can be applied and introduced in Surabaya.

The open house programme held by Wisma Jerman is a free or paid programme that invites people in Surabaya. The programme usually contains things related to German culture. This programme is not only held once a year but several times. The activities carried out are usually not only based on history but how the essence of the material is interesting to discuss for the community, besides the availability of presenters who have a background related to Germany is also a consideration in this programme.

The use of digital technology is a tool used by Wisma Jerman in carrying out German public diplomacy on the internet. Social media is one of the tools in promoting the programmes held by Wisma Jerman. X, youtube, instagram, facebook and youtube are social media used by Wisma Jerman. In social media, not only promotion, but the platform is also used as a forum for the introduction of culture and language by Wisma Jerman. In addition to social media, the

website is also a digital platform used by Wisma Jerman. The website explains the programmes run by Wisma Jerman, the introduction of culture, language and promotions to offer living and working in Germany. In essence, the use of digital is used for public diplomacy, both the introduction of culture, language and introducing the vision and mission of the German state.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The language programme is a programme that has existed since the 1960s in public diplomacy by the German government officially and by Wisma Jerman until now. The cultural and language programme run by Wisma Jerman through language courses is a teaching and learning activity by Wisma Jerman for the people of Surabaya and its surroundings who want to learn German and usually students who learn German wish to live in Germany. Wisma Jerman is also one of the three institutions that provide German language certification exams apart from Goethe-Institut Jakarta and Goethe-Institut Bandung. Wisma Jerman is supported by the German embassy and Goethe-Institut Indonesia to be an institution that introduces culture, language and examinations in obtaining German language certificate. The courses offered by Wisma Jerman have a curriculum that explains the country and culture of Germany. The culture covered includes German attitudes, mindsets and specialities. In addition, the culture taught is the general way of life of the German people such as the use of transport, shopping habits, and ways of interacting in Germany. From 2017-2023, Wisma Jerman has taught around 9,857 students who want to learn German, and the average student who studies at Wisma Jerman takes the German language exam to be able to live in Germany (Neuber, 2024).



Figure 1 data on the number of students in Wisma Jerman



According to (Deutsche Welle, 2024), an international media outlet from Germany, Germany currently needs more than 280,000,000 migrant workers. This is due to the fact that many boomers have left the workforce, creating labour challenges in Germany. German interior minister Nancy Faeser also relaxed the rules on immigrants in Germany to make it easier and more attractive for qualified foreign workers to take up positions in Germany. With this in place. With the support of the German embassy and Goethe-Institut Indonesia, Wisma Jerman provides German language certification exams and provides information related to life in Germany, this is a form of public diplomacy with a cultural approach in Germany in seeking labour needs by the German government.

Cooperation programmes between institutions or communities are also a way for Wisma Jerman to carry out its public diplomacy. With educational institutions, Wisma Jerman collaborates with the University of Surabaya (Unesa) in introducing education in Germany. This activity is the German Swiss Higher Education Fair (GSHEF). This activity is expected for students who want to study further in Switzerland or Germany. According to Dhahana Adi, the chief executive of GSHEF explained that this activity is a form of introduction to German culture, education, and economic cooperation in Indonesia (Umami, 2022). In addition to working with Unesa, Unair is one of the universities that cooperates with Wisma Jerman in continuing careers in Germany. The cooperation carried out is to provide information through an activity entitled Deutsch NextGen. In this activity Siti Amina, a German Library consultant at Wisma Jerman explained that currently the German government requires more than 164,000 workers. In this activity, representatives from Wisma Jerman explained about the system and opportunities to work in Germany. The advantages and conditions in the activity were also explained, such as the excellent quality of the work system, the productivity of working hours and the provisions for a career in Germany such as requiring language certification at least level B1 and C1 (specifically for workers in the health sector) (Puspita, 2024).

Working together with local communities is also a form of public diplomacy by Wisma Jerman by organising inviting activities for the people of Surabaya. Magical Christmas Fantasia is a concert held by Wisma Jerman by inviting German pianist Carolina Fischer and collaborating with Surabaya String Orchestra. The concert was an introduction to culture through classical music from German pianists and an introduction to Carolina Fischer's album Magical Christmas Fantasia. Not only collaborating with the music community, this activity was also supported by the German embassy and also UNIKA Widya Mandala Surabaya (Putra, 2023).

Wisma Jerman in collaboration with Aksi Cinta Indonesia (ACI) and Lotus Art Course (LAC) organised a painting exhibition with various activities. This activity aims to provide a message for the community to care about the environment. Each work displayed has a message of concern for the environment. In this activity also held a painting auction where the proceeds from the sale of paintings will be donated as much as 25% for planting 1000 Mangrove trees in Wonorejo. Painting activities with participants aged children to teenagers are also part of giving attention to the environment among young people. The activities carried out are a form of social action through art, this is an important form of education that can be given to children in a fun way (Redaksi, 2024). In addition to holding a painting exhibition, Wisma Jerman together with ACI held Senandung Alam Concert. This concert also involved several other communities such as Climate Fresk Indonesia, and the East Java Narasi community. The purpose of this concert was to campaign for environmental issues through a charity concert and as a fundraiser for 1000 mangrove trees in Wonorejo. Through the approach of painting and concerts, Wisma Jerman and several communities raised awareness of the environmental crisis and protecting it is for everyone (BASRA, 2024).

The activities organised by Wisma Jerman, be it painting exhibitions and nature concerts, are inseparable from the connection to provide environmental awareness of climate change. This is inseparable from how the German people view that the current climate change is a big challenge for humans. According to a survey by the (European Investment Bank, 2021), 62% of Germans support the government to take action to address climate change through public behaviour. This view of climate change is inseparable from the political left's view of radical changes in individual behaviour to address climate change. In addition to the German public, which is influenced by leftist political views, the German government also provides policies to protect the environment through its ambition to achieve climate neutrality by 2045 and negative emissions by 2050. The climate change policy is published in the federal climate change law, which was approved in 2019 and amended in 2021 (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023).

Open house activities or public activities that are open to the society are also held by Wisma Jerman to introduce German culture or celebrations related to Germany. As in the Fit Und Gesund activity. This event is an open house activity that is routinely held every year by Wisma Jerman. The Fit Und Gesund activity is an activity with the theme of health and fitness. The theme taken is adjusted to the activities of the Euro 2024 football competition held in Germany. Fit Und Gesund activities are divided into two programmes, which focus on healthy





eating seminars, yoga and functional training activities, while the second programme is filled with several quizzes or interesting games related to German language and culture (DINAS KOMUNIKASI DAN INFORMATIKA PROVINSI JAWA TIMUR, 2024).

There are several programmes held by Wisma Jerman that are inspired by local culture such as the East Side Gallery Meets Surabaya art exhibition and Oktoberfest. East Side Gallery Meets is a mural art exhibition at Wisma Jerman inspired by East Side Gallery Germany. East Side Gallery Germany is a mural on the Berlin Wall, Germany that has universal values and values freedom. Because of this, Wisma Jerman was inspired to create a local version of the mural and present Surabaya (Ramadhan, 2024). Unlike East Side Gallery Meets, which is open for free to the public, Oktoberfest is a special event held annually by Wisma Jerman and is paid. Oktoberfest is an iconic cultural festival in Germany, this festival is not only held for one day but several days. In 2024 Oktoberfest will be held from 21 September to 6 October. At Oktoberfest, visitors will be introduced to local German culture such as Bavarian beer, not only drinks, but also speciality foods such as pretzels, sausages, and hendl (roast chicken) that can be enjoyed accompanied by German music. Through this activity, visitors will get a typical German experience because they can directly experience cultural elements both in activities and celebrations through the food and drinks served (Ramadhan, 2024).

In conducting activities and introducing culture and language in Surabaya, Wisma Jerman also utilises digital technology to promote and introduce language and culture. There are several platforms used by Wisma Jerman such as social media and websites. Through social media, Wisma Jerman displays various kinds of culture and promotions about cultural activities or courses organised by Wisma Jerman. On the website, people can see various kinds of interesting information about Wisma Jerman both from the vision and mission raised. Not only programmes but the Wisma Jerman website also explains about, information on living consultation in Germany, institutions related to Wisma Jerman in the formation as an institution that has cooperation with the Jemran government such as Goethei-Institut Indonesia, EKONID and the German embassy.



Figure 3 Wisma Jerman Instagram



Figure 2 Wisma Jerman Youtube

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The introduction of culture and language is one way to convey public diplomacy by a government/non-government actor in introducing its national policies or values owned by a country to foreign communities. Public diplomacy currently focuses on a country's soft power approach and involves foreign communities as a form of reciprocity in measuring the understanding of the values of actors who carry public diplomacy to foreign communities. Culture and language that present ideas, ideas, symbols of human understanding of other humans are an introduction to the approach used by Wisma Jerman as an effort of public diplomacy, especially in Surabaya.

With the support of other institutions that play a role in the presence of Wisma Jerman in Surabaya such as the German Indonesian partner foundation, Goethe-Institut Indonesia, EKONID and the German embassy, Wisma Jerman is able to introduce culture and language in Surabaya to date. Various programmes are implemented by Wisma Jerman in introducing the values of German culture, both language, habits, cultural festivals, environmental values and so on. Inviting local communities in the introduction of German culture is also carried out by Germany as a form of collaboration and approach in Surabaya. In carrying out public diplomacy in Surabaya, Wisma Jerman also organises various interesting activities and can be enjoyed by the people of Surabaya both free and paid events.

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