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Author Name(s): Taufik Hidayadi, Muhammad Luthfi Zuhdi, Huda Riyana Yasin

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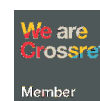
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Economic and strategic policies in indonesia-china cooperation: advancing foreign language education as a tool for cultural and economic diplomacy

Taufik Hidayadi^{1*)}, Muhammad Luthfi Zuhdi¹, Huda Riyana Yasin²

¹ Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia

² Ocean University of China, China

ABSTRACT

Indonesia-China cooperation in the economic field continues to increase in volume. This happened after the normalization of relations between Indonesia and China in 1990, then continued after the 1998 reforms in Indonesia, further activating the interrelationship between Indonesia and China through the policies carried out by President Abdurrahman Wahid, namely: began to visit China and was then continued by the next president. provide greater benefits for Indonesia. In addition, cultural diplomacy initiated by President Abdurrahman Wahid was Indonesia is increasingly placing its trust in China to increase cooperation between the two countries to reach the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreement in 2013. country. One of them is public and cultural diplomacy which includes educational diplomacy, namely by adding curriculum and study programs for Mandarin education at universities in Indonesia. Mandarin is one of the official languages spoken by the United Nations, so the language is considered appropriate to be taught in universities in Indonesia. Mastery of Mandarin provides bigger opportunity in education diplomacy in that shape from student exchange between Indonesia and China, thereby accelerating the understanding of culture, economic progress and technology controlled by China. The existence of this Mandarin language curriculum is a strategic policy for Indonesia. The method in this research is qualitative with a case study approach. Results of this study is expected donate for strategic policies for Indonesia in connection with China.

Keywords:

Strategic policy
Chinese language
Indonesia-China cooperation

Corresponding Author:

Taufik Hidayadi
Universitas Indonesia, Indonesia
Email: taufik.hidayadi02@ui.ac.id

Introduction

In the era of globalization, mastery of foreign languages is an important key in building human resource competence and expanding access to global opportunities (Roinah, 2022) As one of the six official languages of the United Nations (UN), Chinese occupies a strategic position in international diplomacy, trade, and cultural exchange (Gill & Huang, 2023) However, despite its status on par with English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Russian, access to Chinese language learning in Indonesia is still limited compared to English, which has been integrated into educational curricula and accessible course institutions (Ngouo, 2022) This inequality raises fundamental questions about the factors that hinder the development of Chinese language teaching policies in Indonesia, even though China's economic and geopolitical potential is increasingly significant (Ho, 2020).

Indonesia, as a multilingual country with more than 700 regional languages, has adopted a foreign language policy that focuses on English as a global lingua franca (Kirkpatrick, 2012). This policy is supported by a mature educational infrastructure, such as the integration of the English curriculum from elementary to tertiary level as well as the rise of private course institutions (Matear, 2008). On the other hand, the teaching of Chinese faces historical and political challenges, especially due to the discriminatory policies of the New Order era (1966–1998) that prohibited the use of Chinese language and culture in public spaces (Kaske, 2007). Although the policy was repealed after the 1998 Reform, the impact was still felt through the lack of regeneration of Chinese language teachers and the lack of a systematic curriculum framework (Spolsky, 2004).

Historically, the marginalization of the Chinese language in Indonesia began since the New Order imposed assimilation policies that restricted Chinese cultural expression, including the closure of Chinese-language schools (Chong, 2018). This policy has a significant impact on the current generation, where the lack of exposure to the Chinese language leads to limited employment opportunities in sectors that require these skills, such as diplomacy, international trade, and tourism. A case study from the University of Indonesia shows that students with Chinese language skills have a greater chance of getting scholarships and internship opportunities in multinational companies that have business ties with China. Meanwhile, interviews with academics from the State University of Jakarta revealed that the lack of affirmative policies in Chinese language education has slowed down the regeneration of teachers and the development of a more inclusive curriculum (Halim, 1984) including the closure of Chinese-language schools (Chong, 2018). As a result, the younger generation of Chinese-Indonesians lost access to learning ancestral languages, while the general public considered Chinese to be an "ethnic language" (Liu Huang et al., 2008). Post-Reformasi, although the government allowed the teaching of Chinese again, the recovery of the infrastructure was slow due to a lack of political and budgetary commitment (McNaughton, 2003). This is inversely proportional to ASEAN countries such as Malaysia and Singapore, where Mandarin has been integrated in the national education system in response to China's economic influence (Mardasari et al., 2021).

Indonesia-China cooperation in the economic sector continues to increase in volume. This happened after the normalization of relations between Indonesia and China in 1990, then continued after the 1998 reforms in Indonesia, which further activated the connection between Indonesia and China through the policy carried out by President Abdurrahman Wahid, namely starting to visit China and then continued by the next president. This provides greater benefits for Indonesia. Of course, this requires diplomatic support that benefits both countries, where such diplomacy can take the form of soft power diplomacy through language media. In addition, the cultural diplomacy initiated by President Abdurrahman Wahid has made Indonesia increasingly trust China to increase cooperation between the two countries, starting from the Strategic Partnership in 2005 to the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership agreement in 2013.

One of the forms of strategic partnership agreed between Indonesia and China is cooperation in the field of education, which includes the provision of scholarships for Indonesian students to study in China as well as academic exchange programs to increase research and innovation collaboration between universities. This certainly requires diplomatic support that benefits both countries, where this diplomacy can be in the form of soft power diplomacy through language media. To support this, Indonesia needs to further improve the mastery of Chinese in higher education. Mandarin is one of the official languages used by the United Nations (UN), so this language is considered suitable for teaching in universities in Indonesia. Mastery of Chinese provides greater opportunities in educational diplomacy in the form of student exchanges between Indonesia and China, thereby accelerating cultural understanding, economic progress, and technology controlled by China.

Universities that have Mandarin study programs are members of APSMI (Association of Mandarin Study Programs in Indonesia), which consists of 27 public and private universities, including the University of Indonesia, Brawijaya University, Jenderal Soedirman University, Surabaya State University, Yogyakarta State University, Solo State University, Semarang State University, Bina Nusantara University, Indonesian Christian University, and North Sumatra University (Nasution, 2016). However, this number is still insufficient considering the need for Chinese speakers in various fields continues to increase. Based on data from Indonesia's Ministry of Manpower (2023), the

demand for workers with Chinese language skills has increased by 35% in the last five years, especially in the trade, tourism, and technology sectors. In addition, a report from the Indonesian Employers Association (APINDO) shows that more than 60% of companies that work with Chinese business partners prioritize prospective employees who have Chinese language skills to improve communication efficiency and business cooperation. Thus, the increase in the number of graduates who master Mandarin is an urgent need to support the competitiveness of the Indonesian workforce in the global market. In addition to cooperation with China, this need also includes workers in Chinese-speaking companies as well as the tourism industry, which is increasingly visited by Chinese tourists.

The position of Chinese before and after the reform was as a foreign language taught in the Indonesian national education system. Meanwhile, the position of the Chinese language in accordance with the legal basis on language has been stated in the National Language Policy and National Language Policy (Halim, 1976). In the document, in practice, the function of language has a difference. This differentiation of functions allows us to place certain foreign languages, especially English, Dutch, German, and French, in a position that is nothing more than their use as a means of communication between nations, as a means that allows us to take advantage of scientific and technological advances in other countries, as well as as a source of material to enrich our national languages (Halim, 1976).

Based on this foundation, the position of Chinese is the same as other foreign languages such as English, Dutch, German, and French. Therefore, it can be said that Chinese should be given a larger portion of teaching in existing study programs at universities, both through increasing the number of Chinese study programs, providing more scholarships for Chinese students and prospective teachers, and integrating Chinese in cross-disciplinary curricula such as business, technology, and international relations. both in public and private universities. This has consequences for the organizers of educational units. Organizers must clearly and definitively understand the reasons for teaching Chinese in the schools, courses, or trainings they lead, not just follow trends or other reasons that are not included in the National Language Politics (Wiley & García, 2016) In addition to legal issues related to the position and function of language, Mandarin is also one of the languages spoken in the United Nations (UN) among six other languages in the world (Hermawan et al., 2020).

Of these, 380 people are at the undergraduate to doctoral levels, 440 people are studying at vocational institutions, and 1,100 people are taking short-term non-degree courses. Based on data in the relevant literature, it is known that of the total number of Indonesian students in China, only 12.2% have received scholarships from the Chinese government, either through the China Government Scholarship (CGS), scholarships from the provincial government in China, or scholarships from the Confucius Institute as shown in the table below.

Table 1. Chinese Language Center in Indonesia in 2019

Name of the center Chinese	Inaugurati on time	City	Chinese Partner Universities
Universitas al Azhar Indonesia	2010.11.9	Jakarta	Fujian normal university
Universitas maranatha	2011.2.9	Bandung	Hebei normal university
Universitas hasanuddin	2011.2.22	Makassar	Nanchang normal university
Universitas negeri Surabaya	2011.5.19	Surabaya	Central china normal university
Universitas negeri malang	2011.2.14	Malang	Guangxi normal university
Universitas tanjungpura	2011.11.26	Pontianak	Guanxi minzu university
Universitas sebelas maret	2019.3.11	Solo	Xihua university
Tourism (Tourism confusius institute, TCI) Universitas Udayana	2019.12.10	Bali	Nanchang normal university

Source: CRI Online, 2020. The Chinese Language Center that is increasingly showing the confidence and inclusivity of the Indonesian people. Indonesia CRI Online.

The low utilization of this scholarship is due to the lack of socialization of information related to studies in China to various schools in Indonesia, so access to this information is still limited. In

addition, the relatively strict requirements compared to other countries are an obstacle in itself. To be able to study at the undergraduate and master's levels in China, prospective students are required to have Chinese language proficiency at the HSK 4 level with a minimum score of 200, and the intermediate level in the HSKK exam with a minimum score of 60.

As of April 2022, the placement of Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) in Hong Kong is the highest compared to other countries. Based on PMI placement data, the main destination countries for Indonesian labor placement include Malaysia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Saudi Arabia, Brunei Darussalam, and South Korea (Natalia, 2021). 5 Highest settlement countries on Figure 1.



*Data period revoked on April 1, 2022

Figure 1 Data on the Distribution of Indonesian Migrant Workers in 2022

The data shows that the distribution of Indonesia's migrant labor is concentrated in the East Asian region, especially in Hong Kong and Taiwan. These two regions, in addition to mainland China and Singapore, use Chinese as the official language. Therefore, the need for Chinese language mastery in various sectors of work is becoming more and more significant. In addition, data on tourist visits from the East Asian region, namely China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, show a fairly high number as shown in the Table 2.

Table 2. Number of Foreign Tourists to Indonesia by Nationality

National	Number of foreign tourist visits to Indonesia by nationality	
	2020	2021
Hong Kong	2.625	2.432
India	111.724	6.670
Japan	92.228	5.952
South Korea	75.562	9.497
Pakistan	4.110	974
Bangladesh	12.866	1.001
Srilanka	4.300	620
Taiwan	35.680	1.398
Tionghoa	239.768	54.713
Timor leste	994.590	819.488
Other Asia	18.584	2.096
Total asia (Exc ASEAN)	1.529.037	904.841

Source: BPS RI (2022)

This also strengthens the need for translators or tour guides who are competent in Chinese. Thus, the increasing flow of labor and tourist migration from Chinese-speaking countries to Indonesia increasingly demands adequate Chinese language proficiency. In addition, the presence of tens of thousands of foreign workers from China in Indonesia also further strengthens the urgency of mastering Mandarin for Indonesian people who interact with this community group. This is mainly related to various strategic projects, such as the construction of the Jakarta-Bandung high-speed train network on the island of Java as well as industrial projects outside Java, such as the construction of nickel smelters and other industries.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the role of educational diplomacy as an instrument of public diplomacy in the strategic relationship between Indonesia and China, focusing on Chinese teaching as a form of educational cooperation. In addition, this study also seeks to identify optimal strategies in strengthening Chinese language study programs in Indonesian educational institutions to support bilateral strategic policies of the two countries in social, cultural, and economic aspects.

This research is expected to make an academic contribution in enriching the study of educational diplomacy as part of the soft power strategy in international relations. Practically, the results of this

study can be a recommendation for policymakers in developing educational cooperation between Indonesia and China, especially in improving the quality and availability of Chinese language teaching programs in Indonesia. In addition, this research can also provide insight for educational institutions and the public regarding the importance of mastering Chinese as a means of communication and negotiation in the context of global relations.

Methods

The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative research with a case study approach. This research aims to understand the phenomenon of educational diplomacy between Indonesia and China in the context of soft power through Chinese teaching cooperation. The case study approach was chosen because it is suitable for answering exploratory research questions, such as "how" and "why" a phenomenon occurs (Yin, 2017) The concept table is presented by Yin (2017) as Table 3.

Table 3. Robert's Case Study Concept. K Yin

Strategy	Question Study	Control	Contemporary
Experiment	How, Why	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, What, Where, How many, How much	Not	Yes
Archive analysis	Who, What, Where, How many, How Much	Not	Yes and No
Historical	How, Whay	Not	Not
Case study	How, Whay	Not	Yes

The data in this study consists of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders, such as academics, education ministry officials, as well as representatives of educational institutions involved in cooperation with Chinese educational institutions. In addition, the observation of Chinese language teaching programs at several universities in Indonesia is also part of the primary data collection. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from various academic literature, bilateral cooperation reports, government policy documents, and official publications that discuss educational diplomacy and soft power in international relations (Creswell, 2014).

The data analysis process is carried out using the thematic analysis method, where the data that has been collected is categorized into main themes related to educational diplomacy. Triangulation techniques are used to ensure the validity of data by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and document studies (Miles et al., 2020) In addition, the interpretation of the data was carried out by considering the theory of public diplomacy and soft power to understand the implications of educational cooperation between Indonesia and China. The results of this analysis are then used to provide policy recommendations in strengthening the Chinese language study program as part of Indonesia's education diplomacy strategy.

Results and Discussion

The Role of Education Diplomacy in Indonesia-China Strategic Relations

Education diplomacy plays a crucial role in strengthening bilateral relations between Indonesia and China through scientific and cultural exchanges. As part of public diplomacy, the teaching of Chinese in Indonesia is one of the main strategies used to build cross-cultural understanding and deepen the bond between the people of the two countries. Nye (2004) mentioned that soft power, including in the form of educational diplomacy, has a long-term impact in building a positive image of a country and increasing its influence at the global level (Nye & Jr., 2005) In the Indonesia-China context, this educational cooperation not only strengthens academic relations but also contributes to economic and social development in both countries.

According to Prantl (2022), strategic diplomacy involves state and non-state actors in building and communicating national interests (Prantl, 2022) In Indonesia-China relations, educational institutions play a role as a bridge in establishing closer cooperation. To date, as many as 23 universities in Indonesia have established partnerships with universities in China in various aspects,

including education, research, and business development. This partnership shows that education is not only a means of knowledge transfer, but also an important instrument in building trust and deepening bilateral relations between the two countries (Maulana, 2018).

The existence of the Confucius Institute in various universities in Indonesia is a clear proof of the educational diplomacy carried out by China. This institution not only focuses on teaching Chinese but also provides training for teaching staff, provides teaching materials, and provides scholarships for Indonesian students who want to continue their studies in China. Özkan (2015) emphasizes that public diplomacy aims to influence public opinion and build intercultural dialogue to strengthen international relations (Özkan, 2015) Thus, the existence of the Confucius Institute is a strategic tool in expanding the influence of Chinese culture in Indonesia through education.

In addition to strengthening academic ties, educational diplomacy also has an impact on economic and trade cooperation. Many Indonesian graduates who have Chinese language competence get wider job opportunities in companies that have business relationships with China. This is in line with research conducted by Sahlberg (2006), which shows that investment in language education and academic exchange can increase the competitiveness of the workforce and strengthen economic cooperation between countries (Sahlberg, 2006) With the increasing number of Indonesian workers who have Chinese language skills, business relations between the two countries are growing and providing greater economic benefits.

Therefore, educational diplomacy between Indonesia and China has developed into an important element in strengthening bilateral relations in various sectors. Not only a tool to build cultural understanding, cooperation in the field of education is also a foundation for increasing investment, trade, and strengthening social relations between the peoples of the two countries. As stated by Qin (2024), the sustainability of educational cooperation can strengthen the stability of bilateral relations and create a wider network of cooperation (Qin, 2014) Therefore, the strengthening of educational diplomacy in the future needs to be encouraged so that its benefits can be increasingly felt in various aspects of life.

Optimal Strategy in Strengthening Chinese Language Study Programs in Indonesia

In an effort to strengthen the Chinese language study program in Indonesian educational institutions, an optimal strategy is needed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of teaching. One of the main strategies is to increase cooperation between Indonesian universities and universities in China in the form of academic exchanges, the provision of scholarships, and the improvement of the quality of teaching staff. Previous studies have shown that international cooperation in language education can improve students' competencies as well as expand their academic and professional networks (Norwood & O'Connell, 2007) In addition, academic exchange programs involving lecturers and students contribute to deeper cross-cultural understanding as well as increase motivation to learn (Chen & Yang, 2016). Therefore, this kind of collaboration can be the main pillar in increasing the competitiveness of Chinese study program graduates in Indonesia.

Several universities in Indonesia have adopted the teaching model of flagship programs such as the British Council and the Fulbright Program that focus on language education as a tool of diplomacy. This model emphasizes a communication-based approach that allows students to not only master the linguistic aspects, but also understand the social and cultural aspects of the language being studied (J. T. Lee, 2015). A similar approach has been applied in Chinese language programs in various countries, where language teaching is combined with cultural understanding to improve the effectiveness of communication and interaction with native speakers (Gong et al., 2020). Thus, the adoption of approaches that have proven successful in other countries can accelerate the improvement of the quality of Chinese language study programs in Indonesia.

In addition to academic strategies, the use of technology in Chinese language learning is also a crucial factor in supporting the sustainability of this study program. The use of technologies such as online learning platforms, interactive applications, and artificial intelligence in language analysis can assist students in improving their language skills in a more flexible and adaptive way (Betaubun et al., 2023). Previous studies have shown that the integration of technology in language learning can increase the effectiveness of the learning process, especially in the aspects of speaking and listening

skills (Kawinkoonlasate, 2019). Therefore, the development of digital infrastructure and training for teachers in utilizing technology is an important step in strengthening the Chinese language study program in Indonesia. Based on the following table, a comparison can be seen between various educational programs used as instruments of public diplomacy by several countries.

Table 4. Comparison of Outstanding Scholarship Programs

United Kingdom		United States		China	
The British Council		The Fulbright Program		Confucius Institute	
English for adults, kids, and teens		English Teaching Assistant Program (a part of Student Program)		Confucius Institute Chinese learning programs	
English exam service		Fulbright Teacher Exchanges		Chinese language test	
Cultural year and festivals		National Geographic Storytelling Fellowship		Confucius China Studies Program	
International Exhibition of BC collections		Arctic Initiative (policy issue research a part of Schorol Program)		Chinese Bridge Competition	
Higer education strategic partnerships		Fulbright American Students Award		I sing Beijing	
Institutional Links (collaborative research)		Seminars		Base for international promotion of Chinese	
Active Christians (network of community leaders)		Abroad Program		Online Confucius Institute	
Teaching Center Network		Fulbright Association		Confucius Institute Scholarship	
Conversation of our times					

Color Description:

Language Education	Network	Contry Studies & Research
Cultural Events	Internet & New Media	Educational Exchange

Source: Tool selection for public diplomacy flagship (Processed)

From the table above, it can be seen that the Confucius Institute has various programs that can be an example for the development of Chinese language study programs in Indonesia. The results of previous research by Fareen (2017) show that a global needs-based approach in foreign language curricula can improve learning effectiveness and the relevance of graduates to the job market. In addition, research by Wang et al. (2022) confirms the importance of access to quality teaching resources in improving students' competence in Chinese (T. Wang et al., 2022). Therefore, strategies that can be implemented include developing curricula that are in line with global demands, increasing access to quality teaching resources, and optimizing academic exchange programs with institutions in China, as supported by a study conducted by Samira & Karfa (2024) that highlights the benefits of academic exchange in improving students' language skills and cultural understanding (Samira & Karfa, 2024).

Implications and Policies of Chinese Language Teaching

The strengthening of Chinese language teaching in Indonesia has a wide impact, covering academic, social, cultural, and economic aspects. Socially, the increase in the number of graduates who master Mandarin can strengthen the relationship between Indonesian people and the global Chinese community, contributing to increasing cross-cultural understanding and reducing misunderstandings between nations (Christian, 2024). Better cultural understanding also helps reduce stereotypes and strengthen social integration, especially in areas with significant Chinese populations. In many countries, bilingual education programs that include Mandarin have been proven to increase multicultural awareness among students (Y. Wang & Phillion, 2009). Therefore, the integration of Chinese in the Indonesian education system can be a strategic step to enrich the social and cultural experience of the community more broadly.

From a cultural perspective, cooperation between Indonesia and China in the field of education provides an opportunity for both countries to introduce and understand each other's cultural heritage. Academic and cultural exchange programs, such as those facilitated by the Confucius Institute, have proven effective in increasing appreciation of Chinese culture in various countries, including Indonesia (Xu et al., 2020). In addition, scholarship programs provided by the Chinese government allow Indonesian students to study directly in China and understand the cultural values that underlie the country's social policies and practices (C. K. C. Lee & Morrish, 2012). Through this approach, bilateral relations develop not only in economic and political aspects, but also in a deeper socio-cultural dimension.

In the economic aspect, mastery of the Chinese language is a competitive advantage for the Indonesian workforce amid increasing Chinese investment in Indonesia. Infrastructure and manufacturing projects involving Chinese companies require a workforce that not only has technical skills, but is also able to communicate in Chinese (Li-Hua & Khalil, 2006). In countries with close economic ties with China, such as Malaysia and Singapore, graduates who are fluent in Chinese tend to have higher job opportunities compared to those who do not (Tsang, 2001). Therefore, strengthening Chinese language teaching in Indonesia can increase the readiness of the workforce in the face of global competition and expand access to the wider international labor market.

On the other hand, the policy is based on the real conditions and needs of students in Indonesia today, not on the conditions of the 60s when Chinese schools were still standing. The legal umbrella that covers all policies in the implementation of Chinese language teaching is the National Language Policy. The Ministry of Education and Culture has the obligation and interest to realize it at all levels of education, starting from the formal level such as high school (high school and vocational school) and higher education (universities and academies), to non-formal levels such as courses, training, and other informal education. In the past, Chinese-language schools were reserved for children of Chinese descent. Currently, the teaching of the language is aimed at all students in Indonesia, regardless of their Chinese background or not. Its purpose is as a means of communication in the transfer of science and technology from countries that use Chinese and Han scripts. These positions, functions, and objectives can be summarized as follows: (1) Chinese is a foreign language; (2) Chinese language teaching is carried out to build the Indonesian nation and state; (3) Chinese language teaching is intended for all students in Indonesia; (4) Chinese language teaching is used in the transfer of knowledge and technology from China, Taiwan, Singapore, or other countries that speak Chinese; (5) Teaching Mandarin must utilize Sinika linguists from Indonesia and Mandarin teachers in Indonesia.

At the university and college levels, the achievement of proficiency levels starts at the lowest level (Precommunicative) in the first year. Repetition at the Precommunicative level is carried out because not all first-year students have received Chinese lessons in high school before. From the second to the fourth year, every year there is a significant improvement in the mastery of Chinese vocabulary and scripts. In the second year, the level achieved is Communicative, the third year reaches the Effective level, and in the last year in college can reach the Productive level. For those who are interested in delving into specialized fields such as Chinese medicine, engineering, economics, and so on, Chinese language proficiency must be above the Productive level, i.e. at the Selective level.

Table 5. Comparison of Chinese Language Proficiency Levels

Secondary education	Non-formal	Course Training And others	Precommunicative	600-1000 words 200-400 words han
		Public high school /Madrasah Aliyah	Options (general topics Language (deeper general topics)	600-1000 words 200-400 words han
	Formal		Precommunicative	600-1000 words 200-400 words han
		Vocational high schools	Precommunicative	600-1000 words 200-400 words han
Higher education (universities, academies) of Chinese study programs	Year 1	Non-technical/ specialist fields	Precommunicative	600-1000 words 200-400 words han
	Year 2	Non-technical/ specialist fields	Communicative	1000-1500 words 400-600 words han
	Year 3	Non-technical/ specialist fields	Effective	1500-2500 words 600-1000 words han
	Year 4	Non-technical/ specialist fields	Productive	2500-3500 words 1000-1750 words han
Specialties	Technical /specialist fields		Selective	3500-5000 words 1750-3000 words han

Source: (Sutami, 2016)

Conclusion

Educational diplomacy plays a strategic role in strengthening bilateral relations between Indonesia and China, especially through the teaching of Chinese which is the main instrument in building cross-cultural understanding. Increased cooperation between educational institutions from both countries, including the presence of the Confucius Institute and various scholarship programs, has encouraged scientific exchange and strengthened social and economic ties. With more and more Indonesian graduates mastering Mandarin, there are greater opportunities for them in the labor sector related to Chinese investment in Indonesia. This is in line with the soft power theory which states that cultural and educational influences can improve international relations in a sustainable manner.

The implications of this educational diplomacy include various aspects, both academic, social, and economic. Academically, cooperation in Chinese language education allows for the improvement of the quality of teaching staff and the development of a curriculum that is more relevant to global needs. Socially, increasing cultural understanding between Indonesian and Chinese people can reduce stereotypes and strengthen relations between nations. Meanwhile, in the economic aspect, graduates with Chinese language competence have a competitive advantage in the international labor market. Therefore, national education policies need to support the teaching of Chinese as part of a broader cultural diplomacy strategy.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. The use of qualitative methods with a case study approach limits the generalization of findings to a wider context. The limited number of respondents in interviews and observations can also cause bias in the interpretation of the results. In addition, the minimal use of quantitative data makes it difficult to objectively measure the impact of educational diplomacy programs. External factors such as bilateral political dynamics and policy changes have not been fully analyzed, while the research approach does not use longitudinal analysis, making it difficult to capture long-term changes. This study also tends to assume a positive relationship between education and diplomacy without considering the potential for cultural resistance or other inhibiting factors.

Theoretically, this study confirms that educational diplomacy can be an effective tool in building harmonious bilateral relations through soft power. Therefore, further studies on the effectiveness of the Chinese language study program and its impact on diplomatic relations need to be conducted. Practically, the Indonesian government needs to expand educational cooperation with China, including increasing the number of student exchange programs and strengthening digital infrastructure in Chinese language teaching. In addition, optimizing the role of competent local teachers in the field of Sinika linguistics is also a strategic step in strengthening education-based cultural diplomacy.

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