

## Strengthening Local Cultural Identity Abroad: *Pitepangan* and *Tembang Dolanan* as Educational Media at the Indonesian Community Centre Muar, Malaysia

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### Abstract

The Javanese Language and Literature Education Study Program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya contributes to the *Kampus Merdeka* humanitarian project, which aims to preserve and promote Javanese culture to the younger migrant workers by utilizing engaging and relevant educational media. This activity aims to strengthen their identity as descendants of Indonesians, particularly through the Javanese language. In the *pitepangan* (greetings) lesson, students were encouraged to learn how to introduce themselves in Javanese. In the *tembang dolanan* (traditional children's songs) session, they were taught to sing three traditional songs: *Menthok-Menthok*, *Lesung Jumenglung*, and *Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul*. The learning activities used the Empowerment-Based Collaboration (EBC) method, emphasizing active collaboration among all involved parties. The steps of the method included initial observation, demonstration, discussion, practice, and documentation. The activity results showed a 75% increase in students' ability to introduce themselves in Javanese, and 82% of the students were able to sing *tembang dolanan* in Javanese. Overall, the understanding of local culture increased by 78%, accompanied by high enthusiasm throughout the learning process. Through the use of *pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* as educational media, the learning model became more varied, enabling students to absorb the material more effectively.

**Keywords:** local culture; Javanese language; educational media

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### Introduction

Local culture is an invaluable heritage that reflects the identity of a nation and is an important part of community character building. Koentjaraningrat, a professor of Indonesian anthropology, stated that the word "culture" comes from the Sanskrit "*buddayah*", the plural form of "*buddhi*" which means budi or mind. Culture, according to him, includes everything related to human reason and mind. In addition, there is another view that this term developed from the phrase "*budi daya*", which means the power or power of the mind

or intellect (Koentjaraningrat, 2004). Therefore, culture is not limited to material aspects, but also includes values, thoughts, and intellectual results that are passed down from generation to generation. In Indonesia, the richness of local culture is seen in the variety of arts, languages, and traditions spread across the archipelago. However, increasingly massive globalization brings serious challenges to cultural preservation efforts, especially in introducing it to the younger generation abroad. Indonesia, as one of the countries with the largest number of migrant workers - more than 3 million people according to data from the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency - faces challenges in maintaining the cultural identity of children of migrant workers living abroad (Chriswuri, 2019). One solution is to use educational media that is targeted, contextualized, and appealing to the diaspora community.

Several previous studies have examined the preservation of Indonesian culture abroad through various approaches, such as teaching dance, traditional music, and regional language training. For example, research on cultural introduction at the Kuala Langat Guidance Studio, emphasizes the importance of cultural introduction at the Kuala Langat Guidance Studio as a strategy to build the spirit of learning and nationalism of diaspora children (Miranti et al., 2024). Likewise, research on the Ponorogo Reyog Dance shows how training in the Ponorogo Reyog Dance can form pride in cultural identity in children of migrant workers in Malaysia (Hartanto et al., 2023). Meanwhile, research proves that traditional games are not just a means of entertainment, but also an instrument for strengthening cultural literacy among students at learning studios in Kuala Lumpur (Djumadi et al., 2023). However, most of these studies focus on large migrant centers and popular cultural forms, while studies that specifically highlight *pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* as media for cultural education among diaspora communities are still very limited. There are not many studies that focus on the use of these two elements of Javanese culture in the context of small communities such as the Indonesian Community Centre (ICC) in Muar, Malaysia, where the number of Indonesian citizens is not as large as immigrant centers such as Kuala Lumpur. In addition, studies on their impact on strengthening cultural identity and character formation of diaspora children in this area are also minimal. This is where the novelty of this study lies: focusing on the use of *pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* as media

for character education and strengthening Javanese cultural identity for the younger generation of diaspora in small communities that are less accessible to similar programs.

*Pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan*, as part of Javanese culture, have great potential to be used as a means of education and preservation of local cultural identity abroad. *Pitepangan* is a form of self-introduction using the Javanese language that not only serves as a medium of social interaction but also as an effective way to introduce Javanese vocabulary, grammar, and cultural values to diaspora children. Meanwhile, *tembang dolanan* are folk songs commonly sung by Javanese children and contain moral messages, educational values, and fun learning approaches through memorable rhythms and lyrics. Wibowo (2013) explains that *tembang dolanan* has two main characteristics: didactical and social. The didactical characteristics can be seen from the function of these songs as a medium for conveying educational values through parables, while the social characteristics reflect their ability to strengthen social relations and foster tolerance. Thus, *tembang dolanan* is a suitable character learning tool for elementary school children because it contains religious values, togetherness, leadership, responsibility, nationalism, and aesthetics. Some examples of popular songs include *Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul*, *Menthok-Menthok*, and *Lesung Jumengglung*.

Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) demonstrates its commitment to supporting cultural preservation through developing the role of higher education in a global society. One form of implementation is involvement in a humanitarian project program, designed to introduce and preserve Indonesian local culture, particularly Javanese culture, to children of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia. This activity not only aims to maintain their cultural identity, but also has a positive impact in the form of strengthening community networks between countries, improving social skills, and cross-cultural adaptation. In line with the thoughts of Koentjaraningrat (1985), the introduction of local culture is an important step in maintaining community identity and fostering pride in the nation's cultural heritage. He emphasized that culture is the result of human interaction with their social and natural environment, and local culture is the foundation of national cultural diversity.

Through this program, UNESA sent fifteen students to be directly involved in cultural education activities at the Indonesian Community Centre (ICC) Muar, Malaysia. The students not only acted as educators but also as agents of social change who brought the spirit of

Indonesian cultural preservation to the diaspora community. By using *pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* as the main educational media, the project is expected to introduce the Javanese language, traditional music, and cultural values in a contextual and fun way to Indonesian children living far from their homeland. This program is not only a real contribution of higher education in maintaining and inheriting the nation's cultural identity, but also provides valuable cross-cultural experience for UNESA students in applying science and human values at the international level.

## Method

Empowerment-Based Collaboration (EBC) is a method that emphasizes active collaboration between all parties involved. The Empowerment-Based Collaboration (EBC) method is relevant to this program in encouraging active involvement between students and teachers. This is important to increase student motivation and participation in the learning process, strengthening understanding of the material. By involving students in discussions and practices, this method allows for more contextual teaching, where students can relate materials such as *pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* to their personal experiences, making learning more meaningful.

This method is implemented in several sessions, consisting of observation, demonstration, discussion, practice, and documentation. In general, this program is implemented in several meetings to strengthen students' understanding of the learning material. In implementing the UNESA Humanitarian Project program to teach and strengthen the identity of local Javanese culture through educational media *pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* to students at ICC Muar, Malaysia, using the following steps:

### 1. Initial observation

The humanitarian project team of the Javanese Language and Literature Education Study Program, UNESA conducted an initial observation before the learning activity was carried out together with the accompanying teacher from ICC Muar, regarding the learning location, number of students, age range of students, and the level of understanding of Javanese that has been understood by students. Through this initial observation, educational media will be prepared according to the needs of the students.

## 2. Demonstration

The humanitarian project team of the Javanese Language and Literature Education Study Program, UNESA, provided a demonstration related to general Javanese vocabulary. After that, they demonstrated how to introduce themselves using Javanese, starting from how to say their name, age, home address, and school. In addition to the demonstration of *pitepangan* material, the humanitarian project team also demonstrated how to sing *tembang dolanan*.

## 3. Discussion

After the demonstration session, a discussion session was held to encourage active student participation in understanding the material being taught. ICC students and the humanitarian project team of the Javanese Language and Literature Education Study Program, UNESA, conducted a question-and-answer session about the material that had been presented. ICC students also held small group discussions to discuss the meaning and value of the *tembang dolanan* that was sung. Students are also asked to share their experiences related to Indonesian culture, so that they can connect more deeply with the material. The purpose of this discussion is to encourage students to think critically and relate learning to their personal experiences, while strengthening their understanding of local culture.

## 4. Practice

ICC students who have received local culture learning, *pitepangan*, and *tembang dolanan* are asked to practice in front of the class in turns. Students practice introducing themselves using Javanese and then singing *tembang dolanan*.

## 5. Activity documentation

Documentation techniques are carried out to collect documentation related to learning activities that have been carried out, for example, teaching materials, summaries, student notes, and photos or videos of activities. This is very important to support analysis activities and provide evidence regarding the process and results of learning activities carried out by students and teachers.

## Results and Discussion

Cultural identity is one of the important factors in maintaining one's national identity. The sense of nationalism is now increasingly eroded because foreign cultures can easily enter and influence people's mindsets, especially the younger generation (Alfiana & Najicha, 2022). For diaspora communities living outside their home country, of course, a culture can easily enter and influence the local cultural identity of their home country. The younger generation or children of the diaspora often have difficulty understanding their local culture because their surroundings are dominated by foreign cultures. Therefore, they need to know and understand the culture of their home country from an early age. The Indonesian Community Center, Muar, is a place for children of PMI (Indonesian Migrant Workers) to gain knowledge and learn local Indonesian culture. *Pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* materials are suitable materials to increase children's understanding at ICC, Muar, regarding local Indonesian culture. Through these two educational media, students can learn and learn Javanese, so that their identity and understanding of local culture do not fade.

### 1. Implementation of Local Cultural Learning

As an Indonesian nation, we must participate in maintaining the existence of local culture. By introducing our own local culture, it is hoped that it can foster a sense of love for the homeland, so that children do not lose their identity. Quoting from the Journal of research and community service (Kholidah, 2019), the importance of instilling local culture is as a meeting point for community members from various levels, such as social status, ethnicity, religion, ideology, and politics. Local culture includes customary institutions, traditions that can also function as social rules that have an important impact on regulating the attitudes and behavior of society. Local culture is a social controller of every member of society. As with learning local culture with *pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* materials, it is important to emphasize several deep cultural references. The first is in *pitepangan* learning, in the context of self-introduction, children can learn polite expressions that describe the culture of politeness in interacting, manners, and respect for others. The second is in *tembang dolanan* has an important role in introducing culture while playing, developing creativity, and instilling social values. This learning can also strengthen the sense of Javanese cultural identity, even abroad, while preserving traditions.

Local cultural learning for immigrant children at the Indonesian Community Centre, Muar, Malaysia, was carried out at the end of October 2024. The learning activity was carried out for 2 consecutive days as one of the Humanitarian Project programs by 15 students of the Javanese Language and Literature Education study program, UNESA. This local cultural learning aims to strengthen their identity as children of Indonesian descent, so that all grade levels can participate in this learning. At ICC, Muar, there are 6 classes, with an age range from 6 to 13 years. *Pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* are the main materials taught to students. Learning is divided into 3 sessions, where each session is carried out with all 29 students, 5 UNESA students as teachers, 1 accompanying lecturer from UNESA, and 1 accompanying teacher from ICC, Muar.

## 2. Delivery of *Pitepangan* and *Tembang Dolanan* Material to ICC Students, Muar

Before entering the learning of *pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* materials, students are explained general Javanese vocabulary, especially at the Javanese *ngoko* and *krama* levels related to the learning material. Students are taught how to say good morning, afternoon, evening, and night using Javanese and count using Javanese according to their level. This learning indirectly includes character education, because students also learn polite manners in interacting. Through this character education, students can use their knowledge to apply character values and noble morals in everyday behavior (Rachmadyanti, 2017).

Educators teach *pitepangan* using the *ngoko* language level, to make it easier for students to learn it, because in Javanese, *ngoko* language has a simple and direct nature, without using many formal words or complicated terms. The sentence structure is not too complex, making it easy to understand and use, especially for speakers who are not familiar with Javanese. This is suitable for use, considering that many students do not come from Java.



Figure 1: Delivery of *Pitepangan* Material

Regarding the *pitepangan* material, students were initially explained the definition of *pitepangan*. According to *Bausastra Jawa, Poerwadarminta, 1939*, *pitepangan* comes from the word “*tepan*” which means to know or recognize, so in Indonesian it can be interpreted as an introduction. So in this learning, students are invited to learn to introduce themselves using Javanese. The introduction includes name, age, address, and school of origin. According to (Handayani & Hangestinarsih, 2018), the habit of using Javanese can be a means to apply character values such as tolerance, discipline, communicative attitude, and love of peace. Therefore, through this material, students not only learn language but also understand the importance of politeness, respect, and cultural identity in communicating.

Table 1. *Pitepangan* Material During Learning

<b>Javanese language (Ngoko)</b>	<b>In the Indonesian language</b>
<b>Greetings, Based on Time</b>	
<i>Sugeng Enjing</i>	<i>Selamat Pagi</i>
<i>Sugeng Siyang</i>	<i>Selamat Siang</i>
<i>Sugeng Sonten</i>	<i>Selamat Sore</i>
<i>Sugeng Dalu</i>	<i>Selamat Malam</i>
<b>Numbers 1-10</b>	
<i>Siji</i>	<i>Satu</i>
<i>Loro</i>	<i>Dua</i>
<i>Telu</i>	<i>Tiga</i>
<i>Papat</i>	<i>Empat</i>
<i>Lima</i>	<i>Lima</i>
<i>Nem</i>	<i>Enam</i>
<i>Pitu</i>	<i>Tujuh</i>
<i>Wolu</i>	<i>Delapan</i>
<i>Sanga</i>	<i>Sembilan</i>
<i>Sepuluh</i>	<i>Sepuluh</i>

Example from <i>Pitepangan</i> /Introduction	
"Jenengku ..."	"Namaku ..."
"Umurku ... taun"	"Umurku ... taun"
"Alamat omahku ana ing ..."	"Alamat rumahku ada di ..."
"Aku sekolah ing ..."	"Aku sekolah di ..."

After receiving the *pitepangan* material, in the next session, the students were also invited to learn the *tembang dolanan* material. One of the cultural heritages that used to be popular with children (Javanese) is *tembang dolanan* (Veronika et al., 2017). Children aged 5-12 are still easily influenced by things that interest them, such as songs and music. This can foster motivation, a sense of joy, comfort, and enthusiasm for learning (Retnoningsih, 2019). *Tembang dolanan* is part of a form of modern Javanese literature in the form of folk songs or chants. *Tembang dolanan* implicitly has lyrics or verses that contain educational elements. Therefore, in addition to being used as a means of entertainment, *tembang dolanan* can also be used as a means of character learning. This is in line with the opinion of (Latifah & Wathon, 2021) , which states that efforts to instill character education of love for the homeland to students can be channeled through songs that contain values of love for the homeland. *Tembang dolanan* is a teaching medium based on local Javanese wisdom that is right for motivating immigrant children to love the homeland of Indonesia. There are many *tembang dolanan* in Java with characteristic values contained in them. Some of the *tembang dolanan* taught to students are *tembang dolanan* entitled *Lesung Jumengglung*, *Menthok-Menthok*, and *Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul*.



Figure 2. Delivery of *Tembang Dolanan* Song Material

In addition to teaching students to sing *tembang dolanan*, the teachers also explain the meaning of each *tembang dolanan* that is sung. Each *tembang dolanan* contains an implicit educational message. Using *tembang dolanan* media, children can learn about types of animals, plants, social life, the natural environment, and much more (Sari, 2020). Likewise, with the songs played by *Menthok-Menthok*, *Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul*, and *Lesung Jumengglung*, all three contain character values that can be learned and applied by elementary-level students. The following are the lyrics and meaning of the *tembang dolanan* songs taught.

Table 2. Lyrics of the song *Tembang Dolanan Lesung Jumengglung*, Creation Ki Nartosabdho

<b>Lesung Jumengglung</b>	
<b>Song Lyrics</b>	<b>Translation in Indonesian</b>
<i>Lesung Jumengglung, sru imbal-imbalan</i>	<i>Bunyi lesung, suaranya saling bersahutan</i>
<i>Lesung jumengglung, mangleker mangungkung</i>	<i>bunyi lesung, dipukul kemudian bersuara meliuk-liuk</i>
<i>ngumandhang ngebegi sajroning padesan,</i>	<i>berkumandang memenuhi seisi desa</i>
<i>Thok, thok, thek, thok, thok gung, thok</i>	<i>Thok, thok, thek, thok, thok gung, thok</i>
<i>thok, thek, thok, thek, thok, gung,</i>	<i>thok, thek, thok, thek, thok, gung,</i>
<i>thok, thok, thek, thok, thok gung, thok</i>	<i>thok, thok, thek, thok, thok gung, thok</i>
<i>thok, thek, thok, thek, thok gung</i>	<i>thok, thek, thok, thek, thok gung</i>

Table 2 explains the lyrics and meaning of the *Lesung Jumengglung* folk song. The *Lesung Jumengglung* folk song is taken from the word “*lesung*”, which is a traditional Javanese tool for pounding rice into rice. Once the rice is pounded using a mortar, it will produce a loud and reciprocating sound, which in this song is repeated with the rhythm “*thok, thok, thek, thok, thok gung*”. The *Lesung Jumengglung* folk song describes the life of village people who are full of hard work and togetherness. The repeated sound of the mortar creates a picture of daily life in the countryside, where farming activities and rice processing are symbols of survival and life that never stops. These lyrics also carry a message about perseverance and harmony between humans and nature.

Table 3. Lyrics of the song *Tembang Dolanan Menthok Menthok*, Creation RC Hardjasoebrata

<b>Menthok Menthok</b>	
<b>Song Lyrics</b>	<b>Translation in Indonesian</b>
<i>Menthok-Menthok tak kandhani</i>	<i>Menthok-Menthok aku nasehati</i>
<i>Mung lakumu angisin-isini</i>	<i>Perilakumu memalukan</i>
<i>Mbok ya aja ngetok ana kandhang wae</i>	<i>Jangan hanya diam di kandang saja</i>
<i>Enak-enak ngorok ora nyambut gawe</i>	<i>Enak-enak mendengkur tidak mau bekerja</i>
<i>Menthok-Menthok mung lakumu</i>	<i>Menthok-Menthok jalanmu</i>
<i>Megal-megol gawe guyu</i>	<i>Menggoyangkan pantat membuat tertawa</i>

Table 3 explains the lyrics and meaning of the *Menthok-Menthok dolanan* song which contains advice to children through the metaphor of the nature of the *menthok* animal. The *menthok* animal is described as a lazy bird, and its job is only sleeping in the cage. Despite its lazy nature, the *menthok* animal looks cute because when it walks, its buttocks will sway left and right while wagging its tail. The message that can be taken from the song is that everyone must have a sense of shame, should not be lazy, and only eat and sleep (Novitasari et al., 2022). From the song, it can be interpreted that the song uses the metaphor of the nature of the *menthok* animal to convey a moral message. This approach is also in line with (Winarti, 2010), which states that the *Dolanan* song uses simple and easy-to-understand language, and contains cultural values that can be used as a means of communication in Javanese. Children will understand more easily if the advice given is compared to the animals around them. This is by research by Heriwati (2007), which states that *tembang dolanan* has the special feature of poetry with beautiful words and full of symbolic meaning, containing moral messages that can be given to children as good advice.

Table 4. Lyrics of the song *Tembang Dolanan Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul*, Creation Jubing Kristianto

<b>Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul</b>	
<b>Song Lyrics</b>	<b>Translation in Indonesian</b>
<i>Gundhul gundhul pacul cul, gembelengan</i>	<i>Anak kecil yang memiliki kepala gundul dan banyak tingkah</i>
<i>Nyunggi nyunggi wakul kul, gembelengan</i>	<i>Membawa bakul nasi di atas kepalanya dengan banyak tingkah</i>
<i>Wakul ngglimpang segane dadi</i>	<i>Bakul nasinya jatuh, nasinya</i>

<i>sak latar</i>	<i>berserakan sehalaman (kemana-mana)</i>
<i>Wakul ngglimpang segane dadi sak latar</i>	<i>Bakul nasinya jatuh, nasinya berserakan sehalaman (kemana-mana)</i>

Table 4 explains the lyrics and meaning of the *Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul* folk song. The song has a meaning that everyone should not be arrogant and must be careful in acting so that their wishes succeed. Overall, although the song describes a situation full of chaos, on the other hand it also contains humor. The lyrics of the song about a child who acts up so much that his rice spills can give a cheerful impression and can invite laughter from the listener. Therefore, the song is often sung by children while playing. This is in line with the findings in (Suprayogi, 2018), which revealed that *Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul* teaches the importance of humility and caution in acting, especially for leaders. This song illustrates that arrogance can lead to failure and destruction, like a basket of rice that spills due to carelessness. This is also in line with research by (Sugiyono, 2018), which states that *tembang dolanan* has important character education values, such as humility, responsibility, and caution. The *Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul* song teaches children to be trustworthy, not arrogant and careful in acting, so as not to experience failure and destruction (Dhalu & Santosa, 2020).

### 3. *Pitepangan* Practice and Singing *Tembang Dolanan* Songs

Before starting, the educator ensures that the students have a basic understanding of the structure of self-introduction in Javanese, called “*pitepangan*,” by providing examples of Javanese ngoko introductions regarding name, age, address, and school of origin, as well as children's songs that they already know. In this practice, the educator uses the demonstration method, where the educator demonstrates and the students imitate. This aligns with the scaffolding principle in Vygotsky's learning theory. This method is effective in helping students build their understanding of skills gradually. Research by (Supeni, 2015) shows that the use of Javanese *tembang dolanan* in learning can improve children's motor skills and self-confidence through role-playing and the use of gamelan media. The teacher begins by demonstrating how to introduce oneself in Javanese and *tembang dolanan* songs in front of the students, after which the students imitate the example given by the teacher. After listening to the material presented, the students note down the important points

written on the blackboard. Recording important material by the students aids in the process of internalization and reflection. According to research by (Dewi et al., 2019), the use of Javanese folk songs in Javanese language learning can strengthen character education through behavioral habits aligned with the song's meaning. In the practice of teaching *tembang dolanan*, the teacher explains the meaning contained in the *tembang dolanan*, then sings it repeatedly to help students memorize the lyrics. These songs often have lyrics that are easy to remember because they use repetition of words or phrases. Before the class ends, students are asked to share what they have learned. Some students are asked to take turns coming to the front of the class to introduce themselves in Javanese and sing the *tembang dolanan* they have learned. After the lesson ends, the educator acknowledges the students' efforts and achievements in learning.



Figure 3. Students Practice *Pitepangan* and *Tembang Dolanan* in Front of the Class

Through practice in front of the class, it can be seen that students' knowledge of the Javanese language and culture has increased. Around 75% or 20 students already understand how to introduce themselves using Javanese, and around 82% or 24 students can sing Javanese folk songs. Their pronunciation of vowels and consonants in each Javanese word has also increased by around 78%, and almost all children can pronounce Javanese words correctly. In addition, students also receive character education through the noble values of Indonesian culture contained in the lyrics of the folk songs.

## Conclusion

The local culture learning program implemented by students of the Javanese Language and Literature Education Study Program, UNESA, at the Indonesian Community

Centre, Muar, Malaysia, has succeeded in providing a positive impact on immigrant children of Indonesian descent. Through *pitepangan* and *tembang dolanan* materials, students gain knowledge about the Javanese language and culture and can strengthen their identity as a generation of Indonesian descent.

This activity took place in three sessions over two days, involving 29 students aged 6-13 years. The *pitepangan* material helped students learn to introduce themselves in Javanese, while *tembang dolanan* such as *Lesung Jumengglung*, *Menthok-Menthok*, and *Gundhul-Gundhul Pacul* provided education in moral and cultural values. Through direct practice, students showed improvements in training and understanding of the Javanese language and were enthusiastic in the learning process. This program proves the importance of introducing local culture to maintain identity and connect diaspora children with their cultural roots.

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