



# Learning German Through Traditional Dance

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**Abstract.** The world is still not 100% free from Covid-19. Therefore, face-to-face learning can take place on a limited basis or a hybrid or online system. However, the teaching and learning process must continue. The State University of Surabaya also experienced the same thing. For this reason, lecturers must think hard so that the learning objectives in each subject can be achieved maximally with the limitations of the existing conditions. This is also experienced by lecturers of the Schreiben 1 course. The difficulties of semester 1 students in the German Literature Study Program in learning German grammar inspired this research. Considering that students in the first semester do not only learn German grammar, but also learn German culture, the results of this study attempt to answer the problem posed, namely "How to learn German imperative sentences for first semester students of the Unesa German Literature Study Program through dance movements. Traditional German? Qualitative descriptive research was carried out in the lecture process in the Schreiben 1A (3 credit) course with a total of 20 students. The activity lasts 150 min. The digital platform used is Zoom. The methods of training, mentoring and assignments are carried out sequentially and well-coordinated. Based on the results of the questionnaire, the selection of the instruction of the Schuhplattner dance movement as a medium for implementing learning command sentences in German is very appropriate. Through these activities, students not only get the opportunity to explore the material about command sentences, but also apply command sentences according to the situation and conditions. Sooner or later the introduction of German culture to students is expected to affect the rhythm of student learning. In the traditional German dance, Schuhplattner, students have seen the order, togetherness and discipline of the dancers.

**Keywords:** Learning German · Traditional Dance · Language

## 1 Introduction

It is true that many experts in the field of language learning state that someone who wants to learn a language will be more meaningful if he or she also knows the culture of the language being studied. Referring to [1] also stated that *die Beherrschung einer Fremdsprache ohne Erfahrungen mit der fremdkulturellen Tradition nur unvollständig sein kann* (mastering a foreign language is not complete without the experience of foreign cultural traditions). In fact, explicitly states that language is one part of a culture of a society. In a social concept, the relationship or interaction between fellow human beings

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can be done through a means, namely language. It is the language that we will know how the various cultures and ways of thinking of a country's people think. So, it can be said, that the various languages that are owned by various nations will also describe the different cultural patterns and ways of thinking. Therefore, for language learners (foreign) it is certainly very useful if they know the culture of the language being studied. This is important so that students avoid situations of culture shock. Culture shock can occur when a person does not know the social habits of a new culture or is not ready to face a new culture. [2].

In the German literature study program, students learn language skills from the first semester to the sixth semester. In the first semester they also studied Interkulturelle Landeskunde. Therefore, the transfer of knowledge from lecturers to students in the Department of German Language and Literature Unesa must be interesting, interactive, and meaningful, even though the learning process in the classroom is still not entirely done offline. As explained by the Head of the Unesa German Literature Study Program, Yunanfathur Rahman, on the Unesa website January 31, 2022 that German Literature Study Program has prepared special lessons to improve the German language competence of its students. There students are directed to study linguistics, literature, culture, and education which is reflected in each course. Thus, students who have passed the language test by obtaining level B1 can use their German language skills to go to Germany.

As is known, if someone has good language skills, it usually cannot be separated from their knowledge of grammar and vocabulary of the language they are learning. Learning German grammar which is slightly different from Indonesian grammar is a challenge for students of the German Language and Literature Department. Based on the experience and observations made to new students, there are two initial difficulties that they usually encounter in learning German. The first difficulty is the difficulty of learning German grammar. The second difficulty is the difficulty of mastering German vocabulary. For first semester students as beginner learners, Netzwerk Kursbuch A1 is used. There are 12 units in the book. In each unit there is material on German grammar, vocabulary and communicative expressions. One of the topics of German grammar that are discussed in the book Netzwerk A1 is the imperative sentence (*Imperativsätze*). To teach this command line, the researcher connected it with a traditional German dance movement called *Schuhplattler*. To master a dance well requires repeated practice. When practicing dance activities are carried out, instructions are needed. These instructions must be carried out by the dancer. In this context, the role of language appears as a medium of communication between the person being trained and the person being trained. The trainer provides directions and instructions for those who are trained. Lecturers in this case are analogous to being coached and students being analogous to being trained. When the lecturer asks students to do a dance movement, the lecturer will use a command sentence. In German, imperative sentences are called Imperativsätze. Command sentences in German have a different wording pattern from Indonesian.

Learning activities with the topic of command sentences in the first semester are interesting to discuss. Understanding command sentences is very important in communicating, so that later communication misunderstandings will not occur. In addition, considering that the foreign language learning process that is required to be interesting,

the lecturer can try to link the application of the command sentence material in German with the students' knowledge of *Interkulturelle Landeskunde* (intercultural studies) which they are studying in the first semester. That's what inspired this research with the formulation of the problem: How is the learning of command sentences (*Imperativ*) in German for first semester students of the Unesa German Literature Study Program through traditional German dance moves? This paper will answer it based on experience and observations made.

## 2 Literatur review

### 2.1 Dance as a Work of Art

Dance as a work of art emphasizes the expression of the soul which gives shape through the medium of motion. Motion is a basic element in a dance activity. The dance movement is an act of functionalization of the human body. The human body which has limbs such as head, body, hands, and feet needs to be trained to produce movements in dance. In addition, the support for motion in a dance includes, among others, the range of motion, distance, position, position, and power to produce movements that are weak, strong, elastic or rigid. According to [3] feminine dance movements have the following characteristics: (1) the volume of movement tends to be narrow, (2) the legs are raised low, according to the character of a woman, (3) the arms are raised low and (4) the movements tend to be slow and soft. Meanwhile, dance movements that are masculine have characteristics: (1) the volume of movement tends to be broad, (2) the legs are raised high to show valor, according to the male character, (3) the arms are raised high and (4) the movements are strong and hard. For someone who likes dancing, the practice of dancing will be able to provide a perceptual, critical, cultural, productive, and creative experience. In addition, dancing can be used as a means of expression, communication, play, talent development and creativity [3]. In general, dance activities at the most basic level feature very simple, lively, and joyful movements. For example: (1) the form of motion in place of clapping hands, (2) the form of imitating appropriate movements such as flying butterflies. However, because dancing is universal, every human being can do it and enjoy it. The role of dance as an art in the world of education can be interpreted as a positive impact caused by these activities. As an educational medium, dance strives to educate students to be kind, respect parents and others, and avoid deviant behavior and hone feelings within the learner [4].

### 2.2 Traditional German Folk Dance

According to [4] traditional dance comes from an ethnic community so that the dance elements are built in accordance with the traditional values and styles of the community. Therefore, traditional dance patterns are usually passed down from one generation to the next, so they are very regional in nature. Because dance is one of the cultures that cannot be separated from people's lives, it can be said that dance is a cultural product that is owned by every region of the country.



**Fig. 1.** Batavia dancer

As in Indonesia, which has a variety of traditional dances, Germany also has them. Traditional dance is a dance that has experienced a long journey of life and is a characteristic of an area. This traditional dance is divided into three categories, namely primitive dance, folk dance, and classical dance [3]. Folk dance or folk-dance is a dance that developed among the people with a simple composition of motion and accompaniment but paying attention to common interests. Groups are the hallmark of this dance. Usually, folk dances develop in areas far from the city center.

Each traditional dance has a different dance set. For example, traditional German dance costumes. Traditional German dance costumes consist of unique outfits for both men and women. For women's clothing there are wide bands, high socks, long and wide skirts, low heels, and lacy tops. For men's clothing, there is a white shirt hem, a certain size of pants (not trousers) which are usually made of cowhide, and a hat with accessories. Every state in Germany has its own traditional dances. For example, in the state of Bavaria most of the citizens call their folk dances by the name of Bavarian dances. One of the traditional Bavarian folk dances that is still known in Germany today is the *Schuhplattler* dance at Fig. 1.

### 2.3 German Grammar for Beginners

German language learning in Indonesia is currently available from high school to university level. Even when the Covid-19 pandemic came, the learning process continued. Where learning is done through digital platforms, one of which is Zoom.

To master each of the themes in the *Netzwerk A1* textbook, of course, it is necessary to master grammar, or grammar and vocabulary. In addition, there are also provided there are many phrases in German that people can use to communicate. The communicative expression is called *Redemittel*. Some examples of communicative expressions, such as: (1) communicative expressions that can be used to express positive comments, (2) communicative expressions that can be used to give attention, (3) communicative expressions that can be used to express the order one by one, and (4) communicative expressions that can be used to end an activity and other expressions.

Why most German learners tend to think that German grammar is difficult. That opinion will be expressed here. We know that there are two most important elements of a language, namely words and sentences. Referring to [5] that the most important elements of language are words and sentences. Thus, if someone learns a language, then

inevitably they have to learn both. Furthermore, according to [6] mentions the definition of German sentences as follows: Sentences consist of several words. The words have different functions in a sentence. The first word in the sentence is capitalized). In addition, referring to [7] explains that sentence is a unified unit of one subject and the verb is conjugated with respect to the subject. If you look closely at the opinion of Barkowski, it is known that the German sentence pattern can be said to be "a bit" different from the Indonesian sentence pattern. So, the opinion of most of the first semester students who are studying German sentence construction is correct, if they have difficulty learning verbs (*Verben*).

Indonesian recognizes verbs such as eat, drink, come, learn, and so on. If the verb follows the subject, then the verb does not undergo any changes, such as: I eat, you eat, he eats, we eat, you eat, they eat, you eat. This is not the case in German grammar. With the verb eat, German sentences read: *ich esse, du isst, er/sie/es isst, wir essen, ihr esst, sie essen, Sie essen*.

## 2.4 German Imperative Sentences

One of the grammatical discussions in the Netzwerk Kursbuch A1 textbook is *Imperativsätze* (command sentences). This grammatical discussion is interesting because the construction or arrangement of imperative sentences in German is not the same as imperative sentences in Indonesian. In German grammar, command sentences are divided into three types, namely: (1) imperative sentences addressed to the 2nd person singular and informal, namely "you" (*du-Form*), (2) imperative sentences addressed to the 2nd person. The plural is "you" (*ihr-Form*), and (3) the imperative sentence addressed to the 2nd person singular and formal is "you" (*Sie-Form*). Command sentences that use the *Sie-Form* command sentence pattern are widely used at the beginning of learning in the first semester. *Sie-Form* command sentences focus more on the application of verbs in the form of Infinitives (original verbs). As is known, to compose a complete sentence requires a verb. Some of the verbs used to compose the sentence need to be combined with the prefix and some need not be combined with the prefix. An example of a command sentence where the verb needs to be combined with a prefix is: *Erzählen Sie!* The prefix *er-* there remains attached to the word *zählen*. Meanwhile, examples of imperative sentences where the verbs do not need to be combined with prefixes are: *Kaufen Sie ein!* The prefix *ein* here must be separated from the word *kaufen*.

Since the German imperative involves a verb, it is necessary to learn about the verb. Referring to [7] describes various classifications of verbs. Classification of verbs according to semantic criteria, namely: (1) activity-based verbs, (2) incident-based verbs, (3) verbs that based on the situation. Classification based on the formation of other parts of the verb, namely: (1) full verb, (2) auxiliary verb, and (3) modal verb. Classification of verbs according to morphological criteria: (1) reflexive verbs, (2) strong verb, (3) weak verbs, (4) weak irregular verbs, (5) separate verbs from their prefixes. Further explanation about the formation of verbs in imperative sentences in German according to [8].

The formation of imperative sentences of weak verbs (*schwache Verben*) has the following rules. (1) The formation of imperative sentences for the 2nd person singular (d) is formed by removing -n or -en in the infinitive verb. This form without mentioning

the second person singular again. For example: *Kaufe mir ein Buch!* The formation of imperative sentences using weak verbs can also be done by removing the verb endings; (2) The formation of imperative sentences whose verbs have roots ending in *-d*, *-t*, *-ig*, *-m*, *-n* with consonants other than *-l-*, *-r-* cannot be done without *-e* at the end of the imperative form, (3) For verbs ending in *-en* in the infinitive form, they will lose the *-e-* in the last syllable of the root. The same thing often happens with verbs ending in *-ern*; (4) The formation of imperative sentences for the 2nd person plural according to the conjugation of the 2nd person plural in the form of persons without including the personal pronoun *ihr*; (5) Formation of imperative sentences to greet people formally according to the conjugated form in *Präsens* form and has a singular and plural meaning. The personal pronoun is placed after the verb.

The formation of imperative sentences derived from strong verbs has the following rules. (1) Imperative sentences for the 2nd person singular verbs that do not change the root vowel to *-me-* in the *Präsens*-form from the imperative for the 2nd person singular such as weak verbs. For example: *Komme morgen zu mir!*; (2) Verbs that change the root vowel sound into *-me-* in the *Präsens*-form, forming the imperative for the 2nd person singular from the 2nd person singular *Präsens*- form. The verb conjugation ending is omitted; (3) Verbs written and sign form imperatives from their conjunctive forms; (5) Imperative forms for the 2nd person plural and for personal formal greetings are formed as in weak verbs.

### 3 Methodology

In accordance with the formulation of the problem proposed, namely "How is the learning of command sentences (*Imperativ*) in German for the first semester students of the Unesa German Literature Study Program through traditional German dance movements?", this research is classified as qualitative research. Here, researchers are required to dig up data based on what is said, felt, and done by the data source. Therefore, this qualitative research obtains data based on what is happening in the field, experienced, felt and thought by the data source [9]. This type of research also does not use numerical calculations [10]. In addition, this descriptive research is in accordance with the research objective to describe the information contained in the data collected.

This research was conducted on 20 first semester students of class A in the German Literature Study Program Batch 2021 during the Schreiben 1 course with a weight of 3 credits. The topic of German grammar is *Imperativsatz* (Imperative Sentences). Lecture time is 150 min. The Zoom digital platform was used as a place of learning because lectures at that time were still online. In addition, as an effort to collect data on understanding activities, the lecturer gave questionnaires to 20 students who were in the Zoom room. The results of the questionnaire to determine the problems and knowledge obtained by students.

The discussion of this command line refers to the material of the *Netzwerk Kursbuch A1* textbook. Based on experience, imperative sentences need to be introduced and taught from the beginning of the lecture, because these types of sentences will always appear in teaching and learning activities. It should also be noted that first semester students are also given information and lessons about intercultural culture (German Indonesian), namely

*Interkulturelle Landeskunde*. German cultural products can be known by students. One of the products of German culture is the traditional German dance called *Schuhplattler*. In an effort to introduce the *Schuhplattler* dance to students, it is necessary to introduce the basic movements of the *Schuhplattler* dance. Here the pattern of command sentences is introduced to students. To achieve this goal, a method is needed. There are three methods used in this research. The first method is the training method, followed by the mentoring method, and ends with the assignment method.

## 4 Results

This activity consists of three stages, namely: the training stage, the mentoring stage, and the assignment stage. Before further describing the activities in this stage, it is necessary to know the field conditions at that time. There were 20 students involved in this activity from class A consisting of 7 boys and 13 girls. Of the total students, only 1 student has ever studied German in high school. Thus, 19 students have never studied German. This course is called *Schreiben 1* (3 credits). Lecture activities will be held on December 6, 2021 and last for 150 min from 08.40–11.10. The implementation space is using the Zoom digital platform. Since the beginning of the *Schreiben 1* lecture, lecturers and students have made a commitment together to be on camera or face to face via Zoom. This is to monitor student activities during lectures. However, if there are students who are very unlikely to do so, the lecturer gives permission after receiving a report from the student concerned. For example, signal conditions that do not support or minimal credit quota and so on.

Furthermore, the steps of the activities carried out by the lecturer are described before, during, and after the activity takes place.

A. The steps taken by the lecturer in the pre-activity stage: (1) Manage the Zoom class. Class management is carried out by the lecturer for the 20 first semester students of class A before the lecture begins. Preparation of conditions for the *Schreiben 1* class carried out using the Zoom platform. Perform student attendance. (5 min), (2) Perform perception. This step is to build students' initial motivation by relating what they already know and experience. However, the lecturer still accepts student questions about what obstacles students experience regarding the material previously given. There are questions asked by students about verbs followed by the *Dativ* form. (7 min), (3) Explain the purpose of the lecture and the competencies that will be possessed by students. The three objectives of the lecture include: (a) students are able to compose command sentences from the verb *trennbare Verben* and *untrennbare Verben*, (b) students are able to apply *du-Form*, *ihr-Form*, *Sie-Form* commands, and (c) students are able to understand sentences. Commands heard in traditional German dance movement activities. (3 min).

B. The steps taken by the lecturer in the activity stage: (1) Play a video related to the topic of *Imperativ* (command sentences). To find out the extent to which students understand the video they have seen, questions have been prepared by the lecturer. There are five questions that must be answered spontaneously by students. In the Zoom room, students were seen to be active in answering questions in German (10 min); (2) Start the training process by explaining about *Imperativsatz* in German in the form of *du-Form* and *ihr-Form*. For imperative sentences that use the *Sie-Form* form, it is repeated

a little, because this form has been given at the previous meeting (20 min); (3) Provide opportunities for students to ask about things that are not clear (3 min); (4) Ask students to compose five command sentences based on their own ideas and provide opportunities for students to present their answers. The results of the wrong answers are immediately corrected together (10 min); (5) Asking students to find the command sentence from the text in the PowerPoint by underlining the command sentence. The text given is entitled *Im Herbst das Immunsystem stärken* (source: *Studio d A1 Kursbuch*, p. 194). The text contains instructions for people to take care of their health. In this activity, the mentoring process begins by dividing students into breakout rooms. Lecturers are present in each breakout room, each room consisting of 4 students. Students' difficulties and incomprehension of command sentences can be detected here. After finishing the students returned to the main room (10 min); (6) Explaining the relationship between reading texts and physical activity to get a healthy body, so people need to cultivate their bodies. Forms of exercise can be done through dance movements. Because students are in the German Literature Study Program, they need to know one of the simple German dances, namely *Schuhplattler* (5 min); (7) Play a video of a traditional German dance, namely *Schuhplattlern-Bavarian Folk Dance in Munich* from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u-CsMBM5Iqg> twice and ask students to record at least six dance moves seen in Indonesian (8 min); (8) Ask students to translate dance movements from Indonesian to German. Lecturers help provide solutions if difficulties are found when students experience writing problems (14 min); (9) Give orders to each student to stand up and perform dance moves in the Zoom room. Ordered dance moves such as: Applause!, Raise your hand!, Spin you around in a circle!, Turn your body!, Look to the left!, Look to the right!, Stomping your feet!, Raise your left leg!, Raise your right foot!, Hold your friend's left hand with your right hand! (15 min).

C. Steps taken by the lecturer in the post-activity stage: (1) Starting the assignment process by providing opportunities for students to change the command sentences from dance movements that originally used *Sie-Form* to *du-Form* and *ihr-Form* (10 min); (2) Ask students to demonstrate two dance moves based on the orders of a friend. In order for all to get the same opportunity, the student serial number 1 orders the student serial number attendance 2. Next, the student serial number attendance 2 orders the student serial number attendance 3 and so on until it's finished (20 min); (3) Reflecting on lectures to obtain constructive impressions, messages and criticisms of the learning process and continued with the provision of questionnaires sent via WhatsApp Group to be filled out by students (10 min).

Based on direct observations and the results of the questionnaire obtained, it can be obtained an overview of learning command sentences (*Imperativ*) in German for the first semester students of the Unesa German Literature Study Program through traditional German dance movements.

Based on the feedback from 20 completed questionnaires, the following student responsive results were obtained: (1) It was easy to understand the *Sie-Form*, *du-Form* and *ihr-Form* commands in German theoretically (45%), (2) Feel the need to master command sentences in learning German (100%), (3) Experience of seeing traditional German dances (10%), (4) The first experience of learning German material through



**Fig. 2.** Implementation of learning imperative sentences in class via zoom

traditional German dance movements (100%), (5) Finds it difficult to understand command sentences in German spoken by the lecturer (25%), (6) Can perform movements quickly after hearing command sentences in German instructed by their own friends (60%), (7) Do not make a move, if the command sentence in German is not understood (100%), (8) Have fun learning German through dance moves (90%), (9) Feel very happy if understanding the lecture material is associated with students' psychomotor skills (85%), (10) Feeling very eager to learn German traditional dances offline (90%). The photos Fig. 1 shows the implementation of learning imperative sentences in class via zoom. The students were instructed to put their hands on their waists: "Put your hands on your waist!" (*Ihr Form: Legt eure Hände auf eure Taille!*) (Fig. 2).

## 5 Conclusion and Suggestion

From the results of the activity to answer the formulation of the problem posed, it can be concluded that the process of learning German grammar, in this case imperative sentences for first semester students in the Unesa German Literature Study Program through traditional German dance movements, is said to be successful. This can be seen from the enthusiasm of students in attending lectures. Even though there were problems experienced by students because of the poor signal at their residence, they were back in the Zoom room. This shows that students are still enthusiastic and want to follow the lecture until the end. In addition, online learning becomes not boring for students if the lecturer is able to manage it well so that students feel satisfied. Coherent, meaningful, and meaningful learning for the continuity of the dynamic teaching and learning process. Aspects of learning should receive balanced attention, to create harmony between the development of cognitive, psychomotor and affective abilities of students.

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