

Integrating 4P + IC Framework into Japanese Language Textbook Design in Indonesian Higher Education: A Conceptual Study

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Abstract

This conceptual study explores the integration of the 4P framework (Product, Practice, Perspective, Person) and Intercultural Competence (IC) in the design of Japanese language textbooks for Indonesian higher education. Despite the rapid development of Japanese-language programs in Indonesia, most textbooks remain linguistically oriented and provide limited cultural representation. To address this gap, this study employs a theoretical synthesis approach that analyses and connects the content structure of the 4P framework with the intercultural process dimensions of IC. The findings revealed that the integration of 4P and IC creates a holistic learning model in which language, culture, and intercultural awareness are interconnected. The proposed 4P + IC conceptual model positions textbooks as tools for intercultural transformation, enabling students to not only acquire linguistic competence, but also develop empathy, critical reflection, and adaptive communication skills. This model provides a conceptual foundation for developing culturally responsive teaching materials and offers pedagogical implications for promoting intercultural competence in Indonesian Japanese language education.

Keywords: *Japanese language education; textbook design; 4P framework; intercultural competence; higher education.*

1. Introduction

Japanese-language education in Indonesian higher education has undergone remarkable growth over the past few decades (Kusumawati, 2019; Taqdir et al., 2025). This progress is reflected in the increasing number of students majoring in Japanese, establishment of new programs, and diverse use of textbooks across universities (Rosidah, 2018). However, a major challenge remains: how to equip students with not only linguistic competence but also intercultural competence the ability to communicate appropriately and effectively within Japan’s multicultural society (Djafri & Wahidati, 2020; Taqdir, 2025). While the linguistic component of Japanese education in Indonesia has advanced considerably, the cultural dimension often remains marginal and is treated as supplementary rather than integral to language learning (Rahayu et al., 2023).

Many textbooks currently in use, such as *Minna no Nihongo* and *Marugoto*, tend to

emphasize grammar and vocabulary with only incidental references to cultural aspects. This imbalance limits students' opportunities to develop a deeper understanding of how language operates in its cultural context (Šukelj, 2019). In an era characterized by globalization and mobility, especially as more Indonesian students and professionals engage with Japan, intercultural competence is no longer optional; it has become a critical component of communicative success (Liddicoat, 2024).

To address this gap, the 4P framework Products, Practices, Perspectives, and Persons developed by the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (NSFLEP, 2015), offers a comprehensive structure for integrating culture into language teaching (Glisan, 2012). Within this framework, Products refer to tangible or symbolic cultural artifacts such as *sushi* (寿司), *kimono* (和服), or *anime* (アニメ); Practices encompass social behaviors like bowing (*ojigi*), using honorific language (*keigo*), or participating in tea ceremonies; Perspectives reflect the underlying values and beliefs, such as harmony (*wa*), shame (*haji*), and collective responsibility that shape Japanese social behavior; and Persons highlight the individual dimension, emphasizing personal experience, identity, and cultural agency (Kim, 2020; Page & Benander, 2016).

Parallel to this, Intercultural Competence (IC), as conceptualized by (Byram, 1997) and (Deardorff, 2006), provides a strong theoretical foundation for developing learners' ability to engage effectively across cultures. Byram's model identifies key components—cultural knowledge, openness, and interpretative and critical skills—that together constitute intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 2021; Hoff, 2020). Similarly, Deardorff's (2006) Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence outlines a developmental process that begins with attitudes (respect, openness, curiosity), followed by knowledge (cultural self-awareness, sociolinguistic awareness), skills (listening, observing, interpreting), and culminating in both internal (adaptability and empathy) and external outcomes (appropriate and effective communication) (Deardorff, 2009; Sabet & Chapman, 2023; Wang & Dai, 2023).

Therefore, the integration of 4P and IC frameworks is particularly relevant. While 4P provides a structured map for cultural content, IC offers a process through which learners internalize and enact content in authentic interactions (Abidin et al., 2024; Gil-Jaurena, 2017). For instance, when students study Obon (お盆) as a cultural product, they not only learn about its rituals and historical significance but also develop respect for family traditions, an understanding of ancestral values, and the pragmatic ability to participate appropriately in such cultural events (Deardorff, 2020; Moeller & Nugent, 2014).

Previous research on instructional design, such as the IDOL framework (Input, Development, Output, Language Acquisition), has shown that integrating structure and learner engagement can enhance language acquisition outcomes (Arafah et al., 2025). However, in the context of Japanese-language education in Indonesia, research and practice related to 4P + IC-based textbook design remain limited (Nursidah, 2023). This indicates a significant research gap, especially within higher education, where a culturally responsive and globally oriented approach is urgently needed (Djafri & Wahidati, 2020).

Accordingly, this conceptual study aims to examine how the integration of 4P and IC frameworks can inform the design of Japanese language textbooks in Indonesian higher education. By synthesizing theoretical perspectives and findings from previous studies, this study proposes a relevant and applicable conceptual model that supports the development of students' intercultural competence. The study's main contribution lies in offering a conceptual roadmap for 4P + IC-based textbook development, serving as a reference for material developers and educators in advancing culturally grounded Japanese-language education in Indonesia.

2. Conceptual Approach

This study employs a conceptual research approach that focuses on theoretical synthesis rather than on empirical data collection. The method involves reviewing and comparing the major frameworks, 4P, Intercultural Competence, and IDOL, and mapping their potential integration for textbook design. The analysis emphasizes theoretical alignment, pedagogical feasibility, and contextual adaptability for Japanese-language education in Indonesia.

2.1. The 4P Framework

The 4P framework—Products, Practices, Perspectives, and Persons—forms an integral part of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning developed by the National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project (NSFLEP). This framework was created to align foreign language education with the growing need for intercultural communication skills in a globalized world. In the context of Japanese language education, the 4P model helps learners not only understand linguistic structures, but also connect language with the living and dynamic realities of Japanese culture.

The first dimension, Products, refers to tangible and symbolic artifacts that represent cultural expression, such as 折り紙 (*origami*), 寿司 (*sushi*), or 新幹線 (*shinkansen*). These are not merely objects or inventions but reflections of Japanese values, history, and innovation. By studying cultural products, students can grasp how everyday items and artistic forms embody broader aspects of identity and social meanings in Japan.

The second dimension, practices, involves recurrent and meaningful social behaviors rituals, customs, and social norms that structure daily life. Examples include bowing (お辞儀, *ojigi*) as a form of greeting, the use of polite speech levels (敬語, *keigo*), or the act of giving and receiving gifts with both hands. Understanding such practices enables learners to move beyond superficial imitation toward a deeper awareness of why particular behaviors occur and how they function within Japanese social interactions.

The third dimension, perspectives, addresses the more abstract foundations of culture its beliefs, values, and worldviews that shape and give meaning to products and practices. For instance, the avoidance of direct confrontation (腹芸, *haragei*) or the emphasis on group harmony (和, *wa*) reveals the strong collectivist orientation of Japanese society. Without understanding these perspectives, learners risk misinterpreting behaviors, for example, perceiving silence as ignorance rather than as a sign of respect or careful consideration.

Finally, Persons highlight individuals as cultural agents how Japanese people perceive themselves, enact social roles, and navigate evolving values within their communities. This includes generational differences, gender roles, and redefinition of identity in modern and digital contexts. Through this dimension, students come to see culture not as a static set of traditions, but as a living, adaptive process shaped by individuals in everyday life.

The 4P framework provides a comprehensive lens for textbook design by linking language, culture, and human experience. This encourages learners to see linguistic mastery as inseparable from cultural understanding, thereby fostering both communicative competence and intercultural sensitivity.

2.2 Intercultural Competence (IC)

Intercultural Competence (IC) refers to the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately across cultural contexts. It encompasses not only knowledge, but also attitudes, skills, and critical awareness that enable individuals to engage meaningfully with people from different cultural backgrounds. Among the most influential models in this field is Byram's (1997) framework, which identifies five key components: *savoirs* (cultural knowledge), *savoir-être* (openness and empathy), *savoir-compromise* (interpretative skills), *savoir-faire* (interaction skills), and *savoir-engagers* (critical cultural awareness and ethical engagement).

In Japanese language education, IC allows learners to move beyond grammatical accuracy to cultural appropriateness. For example, when using the expression すみません (*sumimasen*), students must understand not only its linguistic form but also its social nuances—whether it functions as an apology, a polite attention-getter, or an expression of shared social responsibility. Developing intercultural competence helps students to interpret such nuances and respond in ways that respect cultural expectations.

Deardorff (2006) expands on this idea through her Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence, which organizes IC development as a progressive process. The model begins with foundational attitudes such as respect, openness, and curiosity, followed by the acquisition of knowledge and skills, including cultural self-awareness, sociolinguistic sensitivity, listening, observing, and interpreting. This leads to both internal (such as adaptability, empathy, and flexibility) and external outcomes (effective and appropriate communication in intercultural interactions) (Deardorff, 2009; Wang, 2024; Sabet & Mohseni, 2023).

Incorporating IC into Japanese language learning ensures that students develop not only linguistic proficiency, but also intercultural mindfulness. By understanding the relationship between language and culture, learners become better equipped to interpret meaning, negotiate differences, and participate in intercultural communication with confidence and empathy.

2.3 Integration of 4P and IC

The integration of 4P and Intercultural Competence (IC) frameworks creates powerful synergy between cultural content and the process of intercultural learning. While the 4P framework provides a clear structure for what should be taught and the tangible and organized aspects of cultural knowledge, IC addresses how knowledge is internalized, interpreted, and applied in authentic communicative contexts. Together, these frameworks ensure that language education does not stop at linguistic proficiency, but extends to intercultural understanding and responsiveness.

For instance, when students learn about 茶道 (*chadō*) or the Japanese tea ceremony, as both a Product and Practice, they are not simply memorizing the steps of the ritual. They also develop attitudes of appreciation toward simplicity and tranquility values that reflect the concept of 侘寂 (*wabi-sabi*) alongside the historical knowledge of Zen philosophy and the social etiquette expected in formal situations. Through this process, learners cultivate not only cognitive knowledge, but also the affective and behavioral dimensions of intercultural competence.

Such integration allows Japanese language textbooks to transcend their basic communicative purposes and function as instruments of cultural transformation. They become spaces where students learn not only to speak the Japanese language, but also to think and interact in culturally responsive ways. This approach is particularly significant in Indonesian higher education, where graduates are expected to operate and contribute effectively in a globally connected and culturally diverse environment.

2.4 Other Models of Instructional Material Development

Beyond the 4P + IC framework, several other models have been employed in language education to guide the design and development of teaching materials. One notable example is the Input, Development, Output, Language Acquisition (IDOL) model, originally developed for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. The IDOL framework offers a systematic approach to ensure that instructional materials are not only content-rich, but also aligned with learners' needs and continuous learning processes.

The Input phase involves needs analysis, literature review, and initial content identification. The development focuses on prototype design, technological integration, and expert validation. The Output phase produces final materials, such as textbooks or digital modules, while Language Acquisition emphasizes iterative implementation and evaluation to

ensure sustained learning effectiveness. This cyclical and participatory structure makes the IDOL an effective model for practical and evidence-based material development.

The IDOL model has been successfully applied to the creation of context-specific learning materials, such as digital EFL modules for nursing students, designed around real-life clinical communication scenarios. Its strength lies in its methodological rigor and participatory approach, which involves teachers, learners, and content experts at every stage. However, while robust in design and validation, IDOL places less emphasis on cultural integration. It tends to focus on how materials are developed rather than what cultural dimensions should be included within them.

By contrast, the 4P + IC framework provides a stronger foundation for embedding structured cultural content and fostering measurable intercultural competence. If IDOL addresses how instructional materials are created, 4P + IC clarifies what should be included, particularly in terms of the cultural dimensions and intercultural learning outcomes. For example, in a unit on 挨拶 (*aisatsu*) or greetings, IDOL might emphasize scenario-based activities for communicative practice, whereas 4P + IC ensures that the lesson incorporates the product (greeting forms), practice (social contexts), perspective (the value of respect), and person (social role and identity). This integrated approach nurtures not only linguistic fluency but also cultural empathy and appropriate interactional skills.

Therefore, combining the procedural strengths of IDOL with the cultural depth of 4P + IC could lead to a hybrid pedagogical model that is both systematically developed and rich in intercultural content. Such a model would be especially relevant in Indonesian higher education, where students are expected not only to master linguistic skills, but also to adapt and contribute meaningfully within multicultural professional and academic environments.

3. Result

3.1. The 4P Framework in Japanese Language Textbooks

The findings of this study indicate that the 4P framework (Product, Practice, Perspective, and Person) serves as a strong conceptual foundation for designing culturally oriented Japanese language textbooks (Moran, 2001). Rather than treating culture as an optional supplement, the 4P framework posits it as an integral part of language learning. This approach enables students to understand Japanese through the social and cultural contexts in which it naturally occurs, allowing them to see language as both a communicative and a cultural phenomenon.

Within the context of textbook design, Product encompasses various tangible and symbolic cultural artifacts such as 和食 (*washoku*), 折り紙 (*origami*), 和服 (*kimono*), and アニメ (*anime*). These elements function as entry points through which students can engage in Japanese culture in a concrete and relatable manner. By learning through familiar examples of food, art, and literature, students can build meaningful associations between linguistic forms and cultural concepts that shape them. Such an integration bridges the gap between vocabulary acquisition and cultural understanding.

The next dimension, Practice, refers to the social behaviors and everyday interactions that structure Japanese society, such as お辞儀 (*ojigi*) or bowing, the use of honorific language (敬語, *keigo*), and the custom of giving gifts (お土産, *omiyage*). These practices teach students that language is more than a system of grammar: it is a reflection of social relationships and cultural values. For instance, different forms of *keigo* illustrate hierarchical relationships and the nuances of politeness that are deeply embedded in Japanese communication. Understanding these patterns allows students to interpret the intentions behind language use, rather than focusing solely on their form.

The third dimension, perspective, leads learners to explore the underlying values and worldviews of Japanese culture. Concepts such as 和 (*wa*), which emphasizes harmony; 恥

(*haji*), a moral and social sense of shame; and 間 (*ma*), an awareness of space and timing in interaction, are central to Japanese thought and behavior. By examining these perspectives, students learn to interpret cultural practices not merely as habits, but as manifestations of a coherent system of values and beliefs. This awareness helps them avoid cultural misinterpretations and fosters empathetic engagement with Japanese society.

Finally, Person highlights the role of individuals as cultural agents in how Japanese people perceive their identities, perform their social roles, and negotiate values amid rapid changes in modern life. This dimension allows students to recognize that Japanese culture is not static; it is continuously evolving through the experiences and choices of individuals in an increasingly globalized world. By engaging with this perspective, students gain a more nuanced understanding of diversity within Japanese society, including generational shifts, gender roles, and urban-rural contrasts.

The 4P framework provides a comprehensive conceptual structure for developing Japanese-language textbooks that integrate linguistic and cultural learning. This enables educators to design lessons that go beyond grammar and vocabulary, fostering authentic and dynamic learning experiences rooted in the living culture of Japan. Through this approach, language learning becomes a pathway for cultural insight, personal reflection, and intercultural understanding.

3.2. The Intercultural Competence (IC) Framework

Analysis of the Intercultural Competence (IC) frameworks proposed by Byram (1997) and Deardorff (2006) reveals that IC plays a crucial role in bridging linguistic proficiency and intercultural interaction. It provides a foundation for understanding how language learning extends beyond mastering grammatical structures to encompass the values, norms, and worldviews of other societies. Within the context of Japanese language education, IC enables learners to empathetically, openly, and reflectively engage with cultural differences, developing the capacity to interpret meaning through both linguistic and sociocultural lenses.

The IC framework comprises four essential dimensions: attitude, knowledge, skills, and critical cultural awareness.

The first dimension, attitude, involves curiosity, openness, and appreciation of other cultures. These qualities form the foundation for intercultural growth, encouraging learners to suspend judgments and approach new perspectives with empathy. In Japanese language learning, such an attitude helps students move beyond surface-level understanding and fosters a genuine interest in how Japanese people think, communicate, and behave. Without openness, language study risks become purely cognitive activities detached from real human connections.

The second dimension, knowledge, refers to understanding the social values, communication systems, and cultural contexts that shape linguistic behavior. This includes an awareness of the sociolinguistic and pragmatic norms that govern interactions in Japan. For example, the use of *keigo* (honorific language) not only reflects politeness, but also signals social hierarchy and interpersonal sensitivity, which are central aspects of Japanese communicative behavior. Developing such knowledge allows students to use the language appropriately and contextually, rather than relying solely on memorized expressions.

The third dimension, skills, involves the ability to interpret and relate cultural meanings across different contexts. Students with strong intercultural skills can bridge the differences in perceptions between Japanese culture and their own culture. For instance, they learn to understand why indirect communication is often preferred in Japan to maintain social harmony (和, *wa*). These skills also encompass adaptability, the ability to adjust one's communicative behavior to suit both formal and informal settings. Through these processes, learners become capable of negotiating meaning and building a mutual understanding across cultures.

The final dimension, critical cultural awareness, is at the core of intercultural

competence. It entails the capacity to reflect on and evaluate cultural practices, both one’s own and those of others, through an ethical and analytical lens. This reflective process helps students move beyond stereotypes and develop a balanced, informed understanding of cultural differences. For Japanese language learners, such awareness encourages them not only to appreciate Japanese values but also to critically examine their own cultural assumptions and communicative behaviors. It transforms language users into culturally conscious individuals who can act responsibly in intercultural contexts.

The IC framework provides a comprehensive pedagogical foundation that integrates the cognitive, affective, and reflective learning dimensions. In the context of Japanese language textbook design, embedding IC allows students to move beyond learning “about” the language to learning “through” it acquires the ability to use Japanese appropriately, respectfully, and empathetically when engaging with speakers from different cultural backgrounds.

3.3. Conceptual Integration of 4P and IC

The conceptual synthesis of this study reveals that the 4P framework (Product, Practice, Perspective, and Person) and Intercultural Competence (IC) are complementary and mutually reinforce in Japanese language education. The 4P framework provides a structured and organized foundation for cultural content, whereas IC offers a process-oriented perspective that emphasizes awareness, empathy, and intercultural skills. When combined, these frameworks create a holistic learning model that extends beyond linguistic mastery to the cultivation of the cultural understanding and sensitivity embedded within language use.

In this integrated approach, the 4P framework addresses the question of what should be taught, whereas IC addresses how learners process and internalize cultural knowledge. For example, when students study 茶道 (chadō) or the Japanese tea ceremony, the elements of Product and Practice introduce them to the tools, stages, and etiquette involved in the ritual. However, deeper intercultural learning occurs when learners explore perspectives such as the underlying values of simplicity and balance expressed in the philosophy of 侘寂 (wabi-sabi). Through Person, students reflect on these values in relation to their own experiences and cultural context. This reflective process transforms language learning into meaningful intercultural dialogue between the self and others.

The integration of 4P and IC highlights the functional relationship between content and processes in intercultural education. The Product and Practice dimensions of 4P contribute directly to the knowledge and skills components of IC, while Perspective and Person strengthen attitude and critical cultural awareness. Thus, every cultural element taught in the textbook serves not only as a cognitive input, but also as a medium for developing empathy, ethical reasoning, and cross-cultural understanding. Through this process, the textbook evolves from a static source of linguistic information to a transformative medium through which students interpret, compare, and appreciate cultural differences.

Furthermore, this integration underscores that learning Japanese should be understood as a two-way process involving both engagement with the target culture and reflection on one’s cultural identity. Learners are not expected to imitate native speakers; rather, they are encouraged to understand their unique cultural position as participants in intercultural communication. Through the 4P + IC framework, students develop intercultural thinking skills and the ability to navigate differences, negotiate meaning, and communicate effectively without losing their sense of self or cultural grounding.

Essentially, the conceptual integration of 4P and IC produces a comprehensive pedagogical model in which language, culture, and social interaction are harmoniously interwoven. This model enables learners not only to understand what is said and how it is said but also why it is expressed in particular ways within the Japanese cultural context. Consequently, textbooks based on the 4P + IC framework have become strategic instruments

for fostering intercultural competence and the ability to communicate with effectiveness, sensitivity, and ethical awareness across global cultural boundaries.

3.4. Conceptual Model of a 4P + IC-Based Japanese Language Textbook

Based on the integration of the 4P framework and Intercultural Competence (IC), this study proposes a conceptual model for a 4P + IC-based Japanese language textbook that positions language and culture as mutually reinforcing learning dimensions. The model envisions the textbook not merely as a linguistic tool, but also as a medium for cultivating intercultural awareness. Through this approach, learners are guided to understand the Japanese language within authentic cultural contexts, while developing empathy, reflection, and the ability to engage meaningfully across cultures.

The conceptual model consists of two interrelated layers: the cultural content layer (4P) and intercultural process layer (IC).

The first layer organizes textbook content thematically through the four dimensions of cultural Product, Practice, Perspective, and Person, progressing from concrete to abstract aspects of cultural learning. The second layer provides a pedagogical roadmap that guides learners to internalize, reflect upon, and apply cultural knowledge by developing open attitudes, cross-cultural understanding, communication skills, and critical awareness. Together, these layers ensure that the textbook not only systematically structures its content, but also shapes the learning process to foster holistic intercultural competence.

Each unit in the textbook follows a four-stage integrative sequence.

1. The first stage, product introduction, familiarizes students with Japanese cultural artifacts, symbols, or representations related to the topic, such as traditional foods, clothing, and popular art forms.
2. The second stage, practice exploration, introduces the social customs and communication norms associated with language use in real-life contexts.
3. The third stage, perspective understanding, invites students to explore the underlying values and worldviews behind these practices, such as the emphasis on harmony (和, wa) or respect for the social hierarchy.
4. Finally, the fourth stage, personal reflection, encourages students to reinterpret their learning experiences by comparing them with their own cultural contexts and articulating personal insights into the values they have studied.

This reflective process enables learners to cultivate intercultural awareness while reinforcing their cultural identities through global interactions. The model also embeds IC dimensions within each learning stage. During the Product and Practice stages, instruction emphasizes the development of knowledge and interaction skills through observation, simulation, and communicative tasks. In the Perspective and Person stages, learners are encouraged to develop attitudes toward openness and critical cultural awareness through reflective writing, cross-cultural discussions, and case studies of intercultural encounters. In this way, each cultural element functions not only as cognitive content but also as a vehicle for building empathy and intercultural reasoning skills.

Moreover, the 4P + IC model is designed to be flexible and context sensitive, allowing adaptation to the diverse educational settings of Indonesian universities. Japanese cultural themes can be linked to local values such as politeness, mutual cooperation (gotong royong), and respect for others, helping students identify intersections between the Japanese and Indonesian cultural frameworks. This contextual approach strengthens the relevance of the textbook to learners' sociocultural realities, while expanding their intercultural perspectives toward a more global and inclusive understanding of culture.

Conceptually, the 4P + IC-based textbook model represents a new paradigm in Japanese-language pedagogy. By integrating systematic cultural content with intercultural learning

processes, textbooks bridge linguistic competence and intercultural competence. Students are not only taught how to use Japanese correctly in a grammatical sense, but also how to interpret, respect, and adapt to the cultural values and communicative ethics of Japanese society. Thus, this model serves as a conceptual reference for developing textbooks and curricula in Japanese language education at the tertiary level, aimed at nurturing reflective learners and globally minded individuals, or what Byram (2008) calls intercultural citizens.

4. Discussion

The integration of the 4P framework (Product, Practice, Perspective, and Person) with Intercultural Competence (IC) in Japanese-language textbook design marks a new direction in intercultural and reflective language education. The findings highlight the complementary nature of these two frameworks: 4P provides a structured foundation for cultural content, whereas IC offers a pedagogical process that fosters awareness, empathy, and intercultural communication skills. Consequently, Japanese language learning can no longer be viewed merely as the transmission of linguistic knowledge; it becomes a process of internalizing cultural values and experiences that broadens students' perspectives on a diverse social world.

Theoretically, this integrative approach shifts the focus of language education from a structural paradigm to an intercultural paradigm. Traditional Japanese language textbooks often emphasize grammar, vocabulary, and sentence patterns, while neglecting the cultural meanings that underlie communicative practices. As a result, learners may become grammatically proficient yet struggle to interpret the social intentions behind Japanese communication. The 4P + IC framework directly addresses this gap. It encourages learners not only to study what is said in Japanese, but also why it is expressed in a certain way and how they can respond appropriately within intercultural contexts.

In the context of Indonesian higher education, the 4P + IC model aligns closely with the current institutional demand for globally competent graduates, individuals who can interact effectively across cultural boundaries. The model provides a platform for students to cultivate a dual cultural awareness: understanding Japanese culture while reflecting on their own. For instance, when comparing the Japanese concept of 和 (wa), or harmony, with the Indonesian value of rukun (social harmony), students learn to identify universal human values while appreciating their distinct cultural expressions. Such comparative reflection nurtures intercultural thinking, a critical skill in 21st-century language education that enables learners to interpret and mediate between different cultural systems.

Beyond its theoretical contribution, the model offers significant pedagogical implications for textbook design and teaching strategies. A 4P + IC-based textbook can be organized thematically, with each unit integrating the four cultural elements of Product, Practice, Perspective, and Person, accompanied by learning activities that develop attitudes, knowledge, skills, and reflection. For example, a unit on keigo (honorific language) would not only teach grammatical rules, but also explore the cultural values of respect and hierarchy embedded in its use. Reflective dialogue, cultural scenario analyses, and real-world case studies can further enhance students' intercultural sensitivity. Thus, this model supports linguistic achievement, while promoting critical awareness of Japanese social norms and communicative ethics.

Conceptually, the 4P + IC framework redefines the language teacher's role as a cultural mediator. In this approach, teachers are not mere transmitters of linguistic knowledge but facilitators who help learners uncover the meanings behind cultural interactions. This role requires a high degree of intercultural awareness and reflexivity, as teachers guide students in bridging the gap between Japanese and local cultures. Hence, building the intercultural capacity of Japanese language educators is vital for the successful implementation of this model in higher education institutions.

Furthermore, the results of this study posited the 4P + IC model strategically in

comparison with other instructional design models such as IDOL. Although both frameworks emphasize systematic instructional development, they often treat culture as an ancillary rather than a central element. The 4P + IC model fills this gap by combining a systematic cultural structure (4P) with reflective learning process (IC). If the IDOL framework answers the question of how the materials are developed, the 4P + IC framework addresses what and why cultural content matters in language education. This integrated approach thus unites the “what,” “how,” and “why” dimensions offering a more comprehensive vision for Japanese language pedagogy.

However, this study had certain limitations. The proposed model requires empirical validation through classroom trials, prototype development, and needs analysis involving both learners and instructors. Such empirical studies would help determine the model’s measurable impact on students’ intercultural competence and inform refinements of pedagogical design, intercultural assessment, and localization within diverse Indonesian learning contexts.

This discussion affirms that integrating 4P and IC not only enriches Japanese language education, but also establishes a new paradigm for language learning in Indonesia. The 4P + IC model promotes a humanistic, reflective, and globally oriented approach, positioning students not merely as users of language but also as interpreters of cultural meaning and ethical actors in intercultural communication. By placing culture at the heart of language learning, a 4P + IC-based textbook has the potential to strengthen higher education in Indonesia by preparing graduates who embody a balanced combination of linguistic competence, cultural empathy, and global awareness.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of the 4P framework (Product, Practice, Perspective, and Person) and Intercultural Competence (IC) provides a strong conceptual foundation for the development of culturally and interculturally oriented Japanese-language textbooks. The 4P framework offers a systematic structure for organizing cultural content, while IC emphasizes learning processes that cultivate awareness, empathy, and intercultural communication skills. Together, these frameworks promote a more holistic model of Japanese language education, in which linguistic proficiency is inseparable from an understanding of the values, norms, and social practices embedded in Japanese culture.

The proposed 4P + IC-based textbook model positions textbooks as pedagogical media that connect language, culture, and intercultural awareness. It offers practical guidance for educators and curriculum developers in designing learning materials that are contextual, reflective, and responsive to global communication needs. Through this model, students are not only trained to achieve linguistic fluency, but also to become culturally sensitive communicators capable of engaging ethically and effectively in multicultural settings.

Future research should empirically validate this model through classroom implementation, textbook prototyping, and needs analysis among both learners and instructors to ensure its effectiveness in enhancing intercultural competence in higher education.

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