
Catholic Inculturation in Ganjuran: A Study of Culture and Its Potential as BIPA Teaching Material

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ABSTRACT

Gereja Hati Kudus Tuhan Yesus (GHKTY) provides a resource for intercultural learning, particularly in the teaching of Indonesian as a Foreign Language (BIPA). In this paper, we have examined the culture and practices of Javanese Catholics in Ganjuran and what it means for BIPA teachers to teach them in this context. The study was conducted with a qualitative approach based on ethnography and participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documents from liturgical archives. The results show that Javanese Catholicism in Ganjuran is a kind of living folklore that combines faith and culture in the form of performative acts, architectural symbols, and oral tradition. Theoretically, this study extends the notion of folklore performance as an inculturative process that involves theology, culture, and pedagogy. Methodologically, it highlights the importance of focused ethnography for the study of religious folklore. Practically, Ganjuran is a cultural learning site where faith, language, and identity come together in a culture-shaping, theo-cultural environment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (Gereja Hati Kudus Tuhan Yesus, GHKTY) at Ganjuran Temple represents the inculturation of Catholic faith in Javanese culture (Qamariyah, 2017). The inculturation at GHKTY is not simply about the use of local symbols in architecture or liturgy, but an ongoing dialogue about universal theology and local wisdom embedded in the community (Lee-Niinioja, 2022). Each visual and ritual component — the temple building, the statue of Christ in traditional Javanese clothing, gamelan music, and prayers in local languages — reflects the ongoing dialogue between faith and culture. Oral and symbolic traditions are the fundamental tools for the community to re-frame and interpret spiritual meaning in the context of history (Juma, 2022). GHKTY is a performative space where Catholic values are made manifest through Javanese culture; the social acts of prayer, song, and ritual together create community and a shared sense of belonging (Bauman, 1986).

The Mass at GHKTY is not only a liturgical ceremony for Javanese Catholics but also an aesthetic experience that connects spirituality with ancestral heritage (Tedjoworo, 2025). According to Sims & Stephens (2005), it is shaped in interaction with society. In this way, inculturation at GHKTY is a living tradition that represents the universality of Catholic sacramentality through symbols and practices which are familiar to the local culture. (Finnegan, 1992) an important role in the construction of belief systems and collective narratives (Osei-Tutu, 2023). Thus, the liturgy at GHKTY can be interpreted as both verbal and ritual performance in which Catholic theology is linked to Javanese cosmology (Widiasih & Rachman, 2022).

In fact, GHKTY has a dual role in the field: as a place of worship and a site of cultural expression, where religious and cultural identity and aesthetics converge to form a cohesive whole. Its cultural inculturation model could, in fact, be used to promote cross-cultural education, especially when considering Indonesian as a foreign language (BIPA). In what we call a context-based pedagogy, foreign learners not only learn the language but also the spiritual and social values of Indonesian culture (Wijayanti et al., 2025). BIPA is also a method of internationalizing the Indonesian language and culture (Nisa', 2022). In addition, BIPA students are interested in Indonesian culture (Zaidah et al., 2023) and are required to acquire cultural knowledge to avoid culture shock, a common phenomenon among foreign students (Fauzi et al., 2025).

The study of Catholic inculturation in Ganjuran in relation to the BIPA teaching has an important relevance in light of the fact that language learning cannot be achieved without knowing how to understand the culture (Xia et al., 2024). Ganjuran is not only a historical object but also a living cultural text to be stood as a manifestation of 'harmony' and 'syncretism' in Javanese society (Mamahit, 2021). Integrating this information into BIPA learning is essential to developing the intercultural communication skills of learners (Abrian & Ardiyanti, 2025). By identifying how Catholic symbols are integrated into Javanese architecture and traditions in Ganjuran, international learners can grasp the values of acceptance and adaptability that are part of Indonesian identity — values that are often difficult to convey in the language-learning process (Mardikantoro et al., 2023). These values can then be integrated into BIPA learning, since the way Catholic symbols are embedded in Ganjuran's Javanese culture provides an authentic context for teaching Indonesian to international students.

The inculturation of Javanese Catholicism in Ganjuran indicates that religious customs are not dogmas but concrete cultural constructs, as they are part of the local culture and embedded in the local community's symbolic and narrative systems of the local community (Kovačević et al.,

2021). (Degh, 2001) and performances. Thus, Catholic practices at GHKTY can be viewed as belief performances that creatively reconcile the universality of faith with Javanese symbols. Culture is not only a means of conveying faith but also of communicating theological values to the local community (Osewska et al., 2021).

Ong (1982) has also explored orality by showing that religious practices in oral societies are based on collective participation and formulaic repetition. Javanese prayers, liturgical songs, and miracle stories are all part and parcel of oral traditions that sustain shared beliefs (Pamungkas et al., 2024). Ong's theory of secondary orality also helps explain how the GHKTY Mass, now broadcast digitally, gains a tangible and participatory dimension of liturgical performativity.

The performance in GHKTY is not simply a message regarding religion but also a communal act to establish our identity. The Mass, which is accompanied by gamelan and Javanese prayers, is a performative event in which theological meaning is tied to local symbols. According to Lord (1960), the priest and the congregation are singers of stories, and faith is constantly reinterpreted in the performance of a story. So every liturgy is a re-reading of Catholic texts in the local context. The combination of theology and folklore makes religion a living performative discourse (Shulman, 2021). Faith becomes tangible through shared performance and collective understanding (Smaldino et al., 2024). In this way, the inculturated Mass at GHKTY is, in a sense, the encounter of faith and culture and is a manifestation of Bauman and Ong's belief that ritual is a liminal event that is constantly evolving and at the same time a continuum of the sacred and the profane. As a result, religious performativity at GHKTY demonstrates that faith is lived out through culture and culture is an evolving manifestation of faith (Adelakun, 2022).

GHKTY Ganjuran has been studied previously in terms of spatial orientation before and after the 2006 earthquake (Az-Zahra & Subroto, 2025), symbolic meanings of the statue of Jesus (Nariyanti et al., 2023), the Javanese–Hindu architecture and manifestation of God through Javanese architecture (Tridiatno, 2023), zoning design and noise reduction in the worship room (Putri et al., 2025), and the acculturation of Javanese houses in church spatial design (Krismiyo, 2025). Based on these works, the present study also takes a novel approach by examining the Catholic inculturation that appears in GHKTY Ganjuran and its learning material for BIPA teaching.

GHKTY Ganjuran can serve as BIPA teaching material because it integrates language, culture, and religion. The purpose of this study is therefore to examine Javanese Catholic culture and practices at Ganjuran Church and to assess their potential as BIPA teaching material. GHKTY Ganjuran constitutes authentic BIPA material insofar as it conveys local values through prayer, architecture, and ritual, addressing not only linguistic competence but also sociocultural competence. In doing so, it can enhance BIPA learners' cross-cultural understanding of Indonesia's inculturative diversity.

2. METHODS

This study takes a qualitative approach, using a focused ethnographical design to further explore the relationship among folklore performance, religious inculturation, and pedagogical potential in the Javanese Catholic tradition at GHKTY. Such an approach allows for a deep investigation of the social, symbolic, and performative aspects, such as the lived religious practices of a localized community in a specific cultural setting. Focused ethnography was chosen

because it emphasizes depth of observation and contextual interpretation of a community's lived experience rather than broad generalization (Leavy, 2017).

GHKTY Ganjuran is a site of Catholic inculturation in Indonesia. The church building itself resembles a Javanese temple; the statue of Christ wears traditional Javanese attire; and the Mass incorporates gamelan and Javanese-language prayers, integrating the sacred and cultural dimensions of worship into a single performative event. Participants were selected to incorporate a range of related perspectives. The various backgrounds of the participants were chosen to get objective and different views on inculturation in GHKTY Ganjuran: 1) Priests who were able to give theological insights on the process of inculturation; 2) Javanese Catholic congregation members who looked at their life experiences and the symbolic interpretation of liturgy; 3) BIPA instructors who explored the pedagogical potential of GHKTY's inculturative practices in cross-cultural education. This tripartite system enabled triangulation across theological, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions, thereby strengthening the validity of the information and analysis.

In-depth interviews and participant observations were conducted, and the findings were documented. Semi-structured interviews allowed for a more nuanced perspective on the spiritual and cultural experiences of participants in liturgical contexts, as well as on language as social action, in line with oral tradition studies in which the individual and the collective are jointly accountable for linguistic performance (Becker & McCall, 1990). Participants participated in meditation and devotional practices and were asked to record the verbal, musical, and visual interaction as acts of speech. Document analysis involved church archives, liturgical texts, and historical documents of Javanese Catholic inculturation, which provided context for the field data.

Several challenges arose during the implementation of these methods. First, access to certain ritual moments was restricted by their sacred nature, thereby limiting real-time observation. Second, interviewees were wary of describing religious identity and cultural adaptation, and we had to build rapport to ensure the data were richer. Third, the interviewees sometimes told different stories, so we had to follow up with additional interviews. These challenges, however, could have been used to improve our observational techniques and strengthen our interpretive process.

Data analysis was done in parallel with data collection. This involved transcription, thematic coding, and the discovery of new categories such as religious symbolism, language performativity, and pedagogical adaptation. The interpretive approach relied on the principles of performativity (Schechner, 1988) and belief dialectics. Inter-method and inter-source triangulation supported credibility, reliability, and confirmability, and reflective analysis ensured reliability and clarity in interpretation (Pawluch, 2005).

As a result, the researcher functions simultaneously as observer and interpreter, with reflexivity becoming an essential dimension of the ethnographic process. This ethnographic approach makes it possible not only to understand the social meanings of Javanese Catholic performance but also to see how faith, folklore, and pedagogy come together to engage in a constantly changing process of cultural communication and renewal.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were collected from participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The participant observation took place at GHKTY's *Prosesi Agung* celebration

on 23 June 2025, the annual end of the June religious cycle. It is a living ritual space where the dialogue between Catholic spirituality and Javanese culture unfolds. In a theological, historical, and cultural sense, it commemorates the 101st anniversary of GHKTY Ganjuran, the founders and missionaries of faith, the community's gratitude to them and to the future, and the inculturative legacy of the Schmutzer family. In the folkloristic sense, it is a ritual performance that not only confirms our spiritual values but also renews our collective memory, identity, and spirit.



Figure 1. *Prosesi Agung GHKTY Ganjuran*, Source: personal documentation

The celebration began at 7:00 a.m. (WIB) with the chanting of *macapat*, a traditional poetic form that is a sacred oral word used in the course of the ritual. The congregation had gathered at 6:30 a.m. for a communal prayer led by a liturgical officer. The worship area was arranged along a processional path leading the priests and liturgical officers toward the temple courtyard, accompanied by traditional dance and the *Kidung Pambuka* (Opening Hymn), while the congregation looked on in reverence. After Communion, the Blessed Sacrament was placed on the altar, prayed over with the *Astuti* devotion, and carried by the priests and liturgical officers three times around Ganjuran Temple to symbolize spiritual circulation and sacred renewal.

As the procession marched, liturgical officers bore *songsong*, *wiruk*, and crosses with candles, and the gathered people knelt in reverence to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Kneeling with Javanese hymns made it a kind of dance of body, language, and belief, a collective performance of transcendence. After the ritual, each member of the congregation received a *gunungan pisungsung*, symbolizing *ngalab berkah* (divine grace), and the ritual fulfilled a social function as an act of communal exchange. In the context of cultural performativity, the *Prosesi Agung* illustrates the convergence of belief performance and cultural continuity, when religious activity is a dialogue between oral tradition and universal faith.

3.1. Liturgical Performance as Cultural Discourse

As we have seen, liturgical practices at GHKTY are a form of cultural performance, a dynamic context in which Catholic faith and Javanese identity are embedded in a semiotic system of ritual signs and embodied expressions. In a local culture-based context, the liturgy and language of prayer, as well as spatial arrangement, gamelan music, and the gestures of altar servers, are a symbolic text in negotiation of spiritual meaning (Dundes, 2007). In a performative anthropological context, we would say performance is not simply a spectacle but also a social act that links belief and community through aesthetic representation. This is seen in the Ganjuran

Mass: the congregation is more involved through prayer, singing, and physical movement, so the ritual becomes a dialogue among sacred text, physical expression, and cultural awareness.

The place of the GHKTY liturgy further demonstrates how religious meaning is constructed within the contexts of text, space, and community interaction. The use of refined Javanese language, pentatonic devotional hymns, and gamelan rhythms creates a sacred space focused on harmony and courtesy, which are fundamental to Javanese cosmology. These ritual elements, in semiotic terms, are cultural dialogues that integrate Catholic theology and Javanese culture. The Mass goes beyond a ritual-based process and becomes a dialogue of spiritual interaction in which meaning is continually transferred through symbol, body, and sound (Ben-Amos, 2020). This religious-cultural dialogue unfolds within the liturgy itself, bridging theology, aesthetics, and social life. In this performative space, spiritual awareness intermingles with artistic expression, and GHKTY emerges as a model of inculturated religiosity a synthesis of faith, culture, and identity.

3.2. Inculturative Symbolism and Local Theology

The *Prosesi Agung* at GHKTY is a great manifestation of inculturative ritual, in which the Catholic faith and Javanese cosmology become a living dialogue between theology and culture. It's not just a liturgical ritual; it is a performance that brings together and reinterprets universal beliefs through the symbolic and aesthetic language of Javanese tradition. It's based on the communal memory that drives the procession: pilgrimage, dance, and offering, and transformation into the worship of the people. Pilgrimages to the tombs of Ganjuran's founders renew the community's spiritual continuity and genealogical unity, connecting historical faith and modern life. But the 2025 theme *Menjadi Orang Katolik yang Cerdas, Tangguh, dan Misioner Sepanjang Hayat* in *Pahargyan Prosesi Agung* sums up this continuity: tradition is not a static inheritance but an evolving proclamation of belief. The *Prosesi Agung*, thus, is a transcultural mechanism for dialogue, a theological dialogue through ritual performance: the universality of faith mixed with the particularities of Javanese identity.

Material symbols are the theological language of the ritual, converting abstract belief into sensory experience. The *anglo* and *dupa*, with their scent and smoke, symbolize prayers rising up towards the divine and connect Javanese cosmology and Catholic liturgy. The *cucuk lampah* and opening dance, which are performed with measured rhythm and solemn grace, symbolize spirituality and inner surrender. Every gesture, color, and object becomes a semiotic sign, a vessel of meaning in the language of Javanese reverence. The interplay of body, sound, and space makes for performative theology: faith is not verbal but lived and expressed in the body. In this way, the ritual is a reflection of the relationship of the sacred and the aesthetic, and of faith to be done as much as it can be said.

And the hierarchical structure of ritual implements aligns with Christ's passion and glorification. The 12 daughters' *breasts* are celestial guardians; the *bantal penyaliban* (nails, hammer, crown of thorns, and whip) represents the Passion as a meditation on sacrifice and hope for redemption. *Lar merak*, *songsong agung*, and *baldegen* protect the Blessed Sacrament, and the *vandel* is a symbol of the universal Church. These elements are combined to create a vertical and horizontal axis of devotion: the divine above and the community below. The ritual creates a moral and social order through performance, and theology, in a sense, becomes a shared experience of living out.

Purification and ancestral reverence are other aspects of the procession. *Tirta Perwitasari* is the sacred water that comes from beneath the temple and is baptized; *kembang setaman* honors ancestors and connects memory and transcendence. These acts are a reflection of the coexistence of Javanese spirituality in the cosmological, genealogical, and theological sense. Their repetition each year allows not only continuity but also a constant horizon for new interpretation. Purification is more than a sacrament; it is a performance of cultural memory that binds us to our collective faith and history.

The ritual offerings, such as *pisungsung*, banana clusters, and *gunungan*, all reflect the *andum berkah* ethic of sharing blessings. These gifts, once blessed and distributed, become symbolic acts of equality and mutual care once more. This practice rejects competitive grace in favor of a collective ethic of generosity, in which faith is at once spiritual and social. The act of sharing sacred abundance reaffirms the community's moral solidarity and shows how the sacred is expressed in social solidarity and cultural reciprocity.

The procession takes place as a series of highly theological actions. The *pradaksina* circles the temple three times and offers up blessings to Ganjuran and the archipelago. The Eucharistic procession is followed by prostration and still adoration, and we are at the crossroads between sacred and profane. The last *kenduri* and *bojana*, which are all welcomed at once, including interfaith guests, show inclusivity as the heart of devotion. These decorative elements of *penjor*, *umbul-umbul*, and *bregada* enhance the atmosphere of the sacred festivity, mixing ritual solemnity with communal celebration in an atmosphere of festivity.

The GHKTY complex is itself an architectural symbol of inculturation. Its meru-style temple and statues of Jesus and Mary in Javanese attire translate theology into a local visual idiom, functioning as texts of faith conveyed through sight, movement, and sound. The layout gives the rhythm of worship to the whole place so that people come into the sacred consciousness through touch and sound.

Each year, the *Prosesi Agung* becomes a celebration of meaning that renews life and affirms that culture remains vibrant yet open to innovation; it stands as a living theology of culture. It merges spirituality, aesthetics, and community ethics into a unified act of belief. The ritual honors the cosmological values of Javanese culture of harmony, respect, and equilibrium, and it is grounded in Catholic sacramental logic. So Ganjuran is not just a holy place; it is an epistemic space of faith and culture that brings meaning to the world. GHKTY's performance in re-creating its traditions reaffirms that inculturation is not imitation but transformation, a dialogue in which divine truth and human creativity are in partnership in a shared act of worship.



Figure 2. *Ganjuran Temple and Mary Statue*, Source: personal documentation

3.3. Oral Tradition and Secondary Orality in Worship

The prayers, hymns, and homilies performed in GHKTY's liturgical life signify the continuity of oral tradition as a living form of faith expression. In the inculturated Mass, prayers, hymns, and devotional hymns are not only a visual symbol of worship, but they are also a performance structure that sets up collective rhythm and memory and is a way of living together as a community to be a part of each other's faith. Liturgical responses like "*Gusti mugi paring rahayu*" or "*Kawula sumarah dhateng karsa Paduka*" create a relationship of communication that binds the people together in common belief in the same way. In the presence of these rhythmic vocal acts of worship at GHKTY, we are performing collective faith, and we are all one, and that can be done only with the emotional and vocal participation of everyone. It is the manifestation of the idea that spoken language is transcendent because it is the language of the people, and in this way, we make sound a communal experience. Digital media in broadcasting the Mass brings this orality to a new and global level, creating a cross-cultural and trans-geographical network of devotion. Technology does not replace oral practice, but rather expands it in an international community, helping to transform local liturgical performance into a global communicative ritual that maintains oral performance in new media.

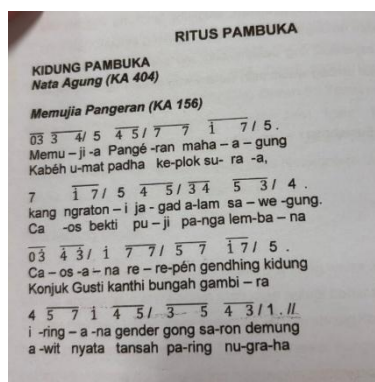


Figure 3. *Ritus Pambuka*, Source: personal documentation

In this sense, GHKTY is a symbolic place where two epistemic traditions, oral tradition and written theology, come together. The liturgical voice is not just a linguistic medium but a theological performance, in which faith is expressed through sound, gesture, and collective rhythm. In this way, oral practice enables us to internalize doctrine through our practice, through our dialogue with our fellow people, in which theology is lived instead of abstractly expressed in a language. Oral language maintains cultural memory and community engagement (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995). The prayers and songs that are passed on from generation to generation at GHKTY are part of this process, as they are mnemonic resources that will evolve and renew meaning in changing social contexts. In this sense, oral tradition at GHKTY is not a lost tradition in the past but a living epistemic system, a process of belief transmission that is living and evolving and that connects ritual action, linguistic performance, and spiritual experience in a culture and theological space that is constantly evolving.

3.4. In-Depth Interviews

a. Interview with Imam GHKTY Ganjuran

In addition to the study of the field experience and documentation, we have conducted interviews with priests of GHKTY Ganjuran to gain a deeper understanding of inculturation

and how it is interlinked with Catholic liturgy, oral tradition, and Javanese symbolic expression to form a living manifestation of faith. The priests said the *Prosesi Agung*, held every June, is a thanksgiving ceremony for the Sacred Heart of Jesus and is a celebration of devotional and cultural renewal. The event integrates processional acts with Javanese songs and temple-like *joglo* architecture to form a hybrid of Catholic spirituality and Javanese aesthetics. The ritual is both a faith practice and a cultural story; it is used to form and transmit the identity of Javanese Catholics and their symbols through generations of people. The *Prosesi Agung* is a living discourse, in which the religious tradition is made to become social and collective memory, and local symbols are combined to form the collective spirituality (Bauman, 1992).

In the Opening Rite, hymns like *Memuji Pangeran* and *Noto Agung* are performed with gamelan accompaniment and Javanese dance, transforming sound and movement into ritual action that enhances the spiritual beauty of the liturgy and the social dimension of the ceremony. Through this combination of music and movement, the liturgy becomes a space of embodied faith expressed through rhythm and gesture — evidence of how the Catholic structure is adapted to Javanese culture while still preserving its theology. The priest emphasized that *macapat* songs are not only devotional prayers but also teaching tools (a language of morality and theology) and are educational and communal in nature, meant to be taught and shared with the people. The church's active practice of encouraging children and youth in *macapat* and gamelan shows the way to spiritual regeneration through teaching and practicing the arts, thereby helping the church maintain culture and spiritual formation.

The iconography of Jesus and Mary, clothed in traditional Javanese attire, *Sang Maha Prabu Yesus Kristus Pangeraning Para Bangsa* and *Dijah Marijah Iboe Gandjuran*, serves as a visual manifestation of inculturation, translating universal theology into culturally resonant symbols. In a semiotic context, these representations serve as localized expressions of divine universality and resonate with Propp's (1984) notion of cultural transformation, in which inherited symbols are molded to new social contexts. This visual transformation represents the interaction between form and meaning where theological truth is expressed in the aesthetic codes of Javanese tradition to make it possible for universal values to be absorbed through familiar visual language.



Figure 4. *Sang Maha Prabu Yesus Kristus Pangeraning Para Bangsa*, Source: personal documentation

The priest also stressed that inculturation at GHKTY is not only an aesthetic process but also a social practice, as in the *Kenduri Nusantara* festival, where interfaith leaders from the region gather for a meal. Socially, this represents a manifestation of faith expressed through solidarity, fraternity, and openness among believers. As a means of encounter, it also places Catholic spirituality in the context of a larger cultural pluralism in Indonesia so that in GHKTY, the inculturative faith is spiritually and socially transformative (Hobsbawn & Ranger, 1983). The interviews show that inculturation at GHKTY is not static but a very dynamic theological process and is constantly being re-energized by dialogue between tradition, faith, and society that is embedded in the contemporary Javanese Catholic identity.

b. Interview with GHKTY Ganjuran Congregation

In detailed interviews with two members of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Church (GHKTY), Ganjuran, FT (a lifelong Ganjuranioner) and PY (an annual pilgrim), I learned that the *Prosesi Agung* is a spiritual, social, and cultural experience shared across generations, communities, and regions. FT views the procession as part of both faith identity and culture, while PY regards it as a meditation that brings peace and spiritual intensity. It is a ritual not only in its mode of performance but also because it functions as a collective act of memory, linking participants to a shared spiritual and cultural heritage.

The *Prosesi Agung* is at once a process of memory and performance: shared memory and symbolic meaning are recalled and enacted through ritual participation, while symbolic manifestation expresses both faith and culture, connecting them to everyday life. FT views these elements as expressions of cultural pride and communal identity, while PY sees them as a form of spiritual deepening that strengthens communal bonds. Together, these views demonstrate that the *Prosesi Agung* is a dialogue between faith and aesthetics: rituals are a symbolic connection of theology and art. A *Ritus Pambuka* in the Javanese language, with *its Noto Agung* chant of intentions and prayer, is a time for internal communion and divine encounter. The language used in worship is a performative art, words that embody faith and thus the feeling of belief are expressed in tone and ritual. FT mentions the post-pandemic changes in music and liturgical attire, but PY sees the ritual as a spiritual essence. This transition from adaptation to stability is an important part of invented tradition because the newness of meaning is not lost at the expense of history.

Oral prayers and hymns such as *Siwir-siwir* and *Ganjuran Katresnan Jati* demonstrate the power of oral tradition to convey faith and morality beyond comprehension. Even when linguistic meanings are not fully understood, the sound and tone convey spiritual emotion and a sense of community belonging, aligning with the assertion that oral performance is a communal act. When Catholic Youth (OMK) and interfaith communities take part in Ganjuran's practices, it serves as a reminder that faith is inclusive. For students, it underscores that engagement with the language and culture of Ganjuran also fosters the ability to communicate across faiths and cultures and to appreciate the linguistic and cultural differences that emerge from such encounters. In that sense, the Ganjuran tradition is a living cultural system, a place where faith, art, and humanity coexist across linguistic and belief lines, epitomizing the integration of inculturated Catholicism into the Javanese world.

c. Interview with BIPA Instructor

An interview with a BIPA instructor (EZ) for field condition analysis, which is essential to material learning (Sukarni, 2024), revealed an integrative pedagogical methodology that uniquely and progressively links linguistic learning to cultural context. EZ explained that beginner learners are introduced to everyday cultural practices — dress codes, dining etiquette, and social politeness — that reflect Indonesia's communal and moral values. At the intermediate level, learners are introduced to social activities such as communal food festivals, weddings, and ceremonies, enabling them to engage with Indonesia's cultural communication structures. Advanced learners then move on to more abstract cultural topics — such as religious symbols, philosophy, and local wisdom — to think about the spiritual and ethical context of Indonesian culture. Culture is both a medium and a problem here, as it connects language to social experience and, in this way, must be sensitive to interpretive neutrality regarding religious or ideological content. Educators need to foreground universal humanistic values as well as respect, solidarity, and compassion to maintain balance in a multi-faith, multicultural learning environment.

EZ added that oral traditions are rarely taught to beginners because of the narrative richness and allegory of oral traditions. However, elements such as the *Ritus Pambuka* from GHKTY can be integrated into education, starting with universal themes and progressing to more symbolic and ritualistic elements. The multimodal approach of reading texts, audiovisuals, and reflective cultural discussion helps students develop vocabulary while also providing the social and spiritual context needed to understand our world. In this way, language learning shifts from linguistic acquisition to experiential learning, through which social ethics and faith-based values are also developed (Bauman, 1992). For advanced learners, EZ added, materials on religious inculturation (such as those drawn from GHKTY) are best suited to building deeper understanding and intercultural competence, whereas they are not appropriate for beginners. As such, the reaction of learners to such material is more based on their own religiosity and cognitive state than geography or nationality. Thus, effective teaching is reflective and adaptable, able to manage cross-cultural sensitivities while fostering a broad understanding of spiritual and cultural diversity.

As EZ pointed out, religious inculturation is a doctrine, but education should not be based on religious doctrine but on human values, love, cooperation, and humanity. As this framework suggests, GHKTY-based materials can serve not only as linguistic assets but also as tools of cultural diplomacy that exemplify Indonesia's pluralistic religiosity and intercultural harmony. By including the GHKTY tradition in the international BIPA curriculum, international students can understand how the Indonesian identity is formed through inter-religious coexistence and openness. It is this approach of cultural pedagogy that is the basis of language learning and cross-cultural negotiation, in which language learning is transformed into intercultural learning, and BIPA is no longer only a linguistic tool but a way to develop human empathy, spiritual understanding, and respect for the diversity and plurality of culture within the archipelago.

3.5. Pedagogical Dimension: Tradition as BIPA Teaching Material

The findings indicate that GHKTY Ganjuran liturgical practices and symbolism are highly relevant of culturally rooted and authentic BIPA instruction. The inculturative tradition of

Ganjuran is rich in linguistic, pragmatic, and semantic aspects and provides a strong and engaging basis for intercultural pedagogy and language learning as well as socio-religious understanding. Javanese prayers, translated into Indonesian during the liturgy, are clear examples of this integration of bilingualism, alongside Javanese manners and hierarchical respect. These materials are what instructors can use to teach grammatical and lexical forms while also incorporating the ethical and cultural background of communication. This is an approach to contextualized language learning and a way to conceptualize language as a cultural expression of cognition, behavior, and identity rather than as a neutral medium of exchange.

The inculturative Mass is also a space for teaching that explores religious discourse, symbolic meaning, and communal interaction in the context of daily life. In these rituals, people experience language as a performance: a lived, social experience of speech, gesture, and symbolic interaction. Experiential learning builds practical and intercultural skills in learners and teaches them to interpret the language as a physical gesture and not just verbal or nonverbal signs. This is why the Ganjuran tradition expands beyond its devotional nature to a pedagogical pathway to intercultural literacy. Teachers can help children to get a feel for Indonesia's diversity of religions in BIPA and learn to respect linguistic differences from one another and develop empathy. In this respect, the GHKTY tradition is evidence of how faith-based culture can shape transformative, inclusive, and meaning-oriented language education.

3.6. Theoretical Implications: Ganjuran as a Theo-Cultural Performance Space

The aggregate findings in GHKTY Ganjuran paint it as a theo-cultural space where theology, folklore, and pedagogy come together in living performances that embody spiritual devotion and cultural creativity. The congregation is deeply involved in constructing theological meaning and cultural identity through Catholic faith and Javanese symbolic expression. Inculturation here is not a passive adoption of local tradition but a continual re-emergence of religious meaning through culture. The GHKTY experience is an example of how universal faith can be embedded in the world and how the model can be applied in language and cultural education, through the use of intercultural and experiential learning models.

Table 1. *Synthesis of Research Results and Pedagogical and Cultural Implications*

Main Theme	Description of Field Findings	Theoretical Analysis and Interpretation	Pedagogical and Cultural Implications
Liturgical Performance as Social Action	The Mass at GHKTY was performed with gamelan accompaniment, prayers in Javanese Krama, and active participation from the congregation. Movement, language, and music formed an expressive whole.	According to the concept of performance as communication, liturgy is understood as a social act that creates meaning through symbolic interaction. The congregation acts as both actors and audience, collectively shaping the meaning of faith.	It can be used as a performative learning model to introduce cultural expressions in a religious context, strengthening cross-cultural communicative competence for BIPA learners.

Table 1. Continued

Main Theme	Description of Field Findings	Theoretical Analysis and Interpretation	Pedagogical and Cultural Implications
Inculturative Symbolism in Architecture and Ritual	The architecture of GHKTY resembles temples and joglos, statues of Jesus and the Virgin Mary dressed in traditional Javanese clothing, and the use of flower offerings and batik in rituals.	These symbols represent belief in performance, namely a form of faith expressed through local forms.	It can be used in intercultural learning to understand how symbols work in cross-religious and cross-cultural contexts, enriching BIPA teaching materials based on cultural semiotics.
Oral Traditions and Prayers in Javanese	Prayers, devotional songs, and homilies are in Javanese with a repetitive pattern and distinctive intonation. The liturgy is also broadcast online on YouTube.	In line with the theory of secondary orality, oral traditions in GHKTY are transformed into digital forms, combining orality and literacy. Oral performance strengthens social cohesion through collective participation.	It can be used as teaching material to introduce linguistic and pragmatic variations in Indonesian, as well as to understand the social function of religious communication in local culture.
Communal Participation and Ritual Aesthetics	The entire congregation is actively involved in the procession of prayer, singing and offerings. The ritual atmosphere emphasizes harmony, politeness and harmonious values.	Performance is participatory and fosters a sense of social togetherness. Harmonious values reflect the cultural grammar of Javanese society, which is oriented toward harmony.	It can be used to build cross-cultural pragmatic awareness in BIPA, especially in learning politeness and collective communication.
Integration of Faith and Culture as a Living Discourse	Inculturation doesn't stop at symbols, but is manifested in the way people think, speak, and pray. Faith becomes part of everyday cultural expression.	This practice reflects recomposition in performance, namely the renewal of the meaning of faith each time it is practiced. GHKTY becomes a living folklore space, a place where faith and tradition are in constant dialogue.	The GHKTY tradition has the potential to be a cultural learning site for BIPA students to understand spiritual, social, and language values in the context of Indonesian culture.

The research shows that Javanese Catholic practice at GHKTY is very much performative, symbolic, and participatory. The liturgy is more than a religious ritual; it is cultural communication and affirmation of community identity and spirituality. Architecture and ritual symbolism reflect a harmonious synthesis of Catholic theology and Javanese cosmology, and oral traditions serve as channels through which faith and moral values are brought to life through collective participation and repetition. GHKTY, both theologically and semiotically, embodies the fluid dialectic of sacred universality and local particularity, in which belief is constantly reinterpreted through cultural forms and social performance.

From a pedagogical point of view, the GHKTY tradition is an excellent source for culture-based BIPA education. The liturgical language, symbolic gestures, and oral practices provide real material for teaching linguistic structure, such as register and religious lexicon, as well as pragmatic competence through politeness, reverence, and social interaction. In addition, through GHKTY's performative setting, it is possible to engage in intercultural literacy, and students can make sense in daily social and symbolic contexts. This approach is consistent with context-based

pedagogy, where language learning is rooted in real cultural performance and ethical, aesthetic, and communal meaning are woven into it.

Table 2. *Synthesis of Research Results and Potential Utilization in BIPA Teaching Materials*

Aspect	Main Finding	Potential Utilization in BIPA Teaching Materials
Linguistic	Prayers and songs in Javanese in the liturgy, the congregation's response with distinctive expressions.	Used as material for religious vocabulary, cultural expressions, phonology exercises, and authentic texts in listening and speaking classes.
Culture	Participation of the congregation in the Grand Procession, the use of Javanese traditional clothing, and social interaction in the church.	It is used as a case study on Javanese customs, interactive dialogue for role playing, and discussion material on social norms.
Symbol	Temple-style architecture, statues of Jesus and the Virgin Mary in traditional Javanese clothing, and gamelan as accompaniment.	Used for descriptive learning, analysis of the meaning of symbols, and introduction to Javanese art and aesthetics in a religious context.
Intercultural	The presence of foreign pilgrims interacting with local people.	Presented as a simulation material for cross-cultural communication, critical reflection on the encounter of faith and local identity.

3.7. The GHKTY Tradition as an Expression of Inculturation of Faith and Culture

The liturgical traditions of GHKTY Ganjuran exemplify inculturation in practice — the dialogical translation of Catholic theology into the symbolic and aesthetic landscape of Javanese culture. The Grand Procession, Javanese prayers, and temple-joglo-styled architecture all show that universal spirituality is contextualized, culturally and geographically, within local artistic and cosmological expressions. Ganjuran is not only a religion but also a social tradition that maintains links the tradition and lived faith, and that integration makes ritual a cultural mechanism of spiritual renewal, to the point that the Catholic faith is integrated into the aesthetic and moral fabric of Javanese identity.

Through a performance-theory lens, inculturation at GHKTY is a kind of cultural act of communicative act in which ritual performance is a blend of theology, art, and social principles. GHKTY gamelan music, macapat chants, and gunungan food items are not decorative rituals but performative expressions of community solidarity, gratitude, and divine communion. These acts demonstrate the social nature of folklore as a shared, communal lived experience. In this way, GHKTY is a sacred place of worship and a cultural stage, where faith and folklore merge to maintain a dialogue between the transcendence and tradition.

3.8. Oral Tradition as an Instrument of Intercultural Pedagogy

The oral traditions and symbolism of GHKTY Ganjuran, as explained in the interviews with priests, congregants, and BIPA teachers, are of great pedagogical value as they constitute a medium through which faith formation and intercultural education are learned. Such as the macapat chant, Siwir-siwir prayer, and Kidung Ganjuran Katresnan Jati are all artistic expressions and as such verbal and musical systems of moral transmission, with communal ethics and theological understanding written in rhythmic and melodic language. Oral tradition is a living store of collective memory shared by generations of people with the same beliefs. For BIPA learning, these oral forms are authentic language materials that may enhance language proficiency

and provide knowledge of the Javanese language, as well as bring the Javanese concept of speech levels and politeness to life through intercultural communication and the use of Javanese in GHKTY liturgy.

If liturgical texts and songs are translated into Indonesian, BIPA students can see how deeply spiritual and social meanings are encoded in language use, and how linguistic work can be seen as a reflection of cultural logic and moral consciousness. This approach is consistent with context-based and spiral pedagogical frameworks that focus on experience-based learning, participation and observation, symbolic interpretation, and ethical thought. Students learn more than vocabulary and syntax; in oral traditions, they are exposed to word, sound, and meaning as the foundation of intercultural dialogue and spiritual literacy.

3.9. The Role of Inculturation in Cultural Diplomacy and Global Literacy

The inculturation conducted at GHKTY Ganjuran is both a spiritual expression and a form of cultural diplomacy that reflects Indonesia's pluralistic identity. When Catholic theology is fused with Javanese symbolism, rituals like Kenduri Nusantara reflect interfaith harmony and mutual respect, turning religious faith into a performance of unity. This integration demonstrates that faith can bridge cultural and religious divides and allow tolerance and compassion to be shared moral values. GHKTY's traditions have been used within BIPA pedagogy to provide authentic cultural materials to promote intercultural literacy and global awareness. Through experience, the students have been exposed to the local values of harmony and community and have become empathetic and ethical in language. Thus, GHKTY's inculturation demonstrates that faith, culture, and education are interconnected as drivers of global understanding and cultural diplomacy, and that Indonesia is a model of spiritual inclusivity and cultural dialogue.

3.10. Conceptual Relevance to the Study of Folklore and Oral Tradition

From a folkloristic perspective, GHKTY is a living tradition, as that symbolic heritage is constantly renewed through communal performance and reinterpretation. Rather than a static heritage, the tradition develops through negotiation between faith and culture, so that the theology is complete, but the society is changing. Ritual aesthetics, musical arrangements, and liturgical attire are all changing, and sacred expression doesn't lose its spiritual character. This is an indication of continuity through transformation; tradition survives not by refusing change but through a living expression of belief and identity.

The connection between orality and performance at GHKTY indicates how faith is embedded in collective action. Songs, prayers, and chants are performative texts that carry meaning with them, all while they are spoken, and as we do so, we regain the memory and spiritual consciousness. This oral part is the basis of community life and cultural identity. Youth and interfaith groups also come from an inclusive environment of preservation, where tradition is a vehicle for solidarity and discussion. GHKTY is thus an epistemic space, where language, identity, and faith are constructed together through embodied communication.

The above findings call for further analysis of the social and cultural relevance of these rituals to the daily life of the Ganjuran community and of how they can be incorporated into BIPA learning. In the liturgy, Javanese language, etiquette, and symbolism are woven into the message of community, cultural identity, and the kinds of interactions that reinforce the sense of mutual respect and cooperation within the community. These dynamics create tangible ways of implementation of BIPA, for example, in field-based learning activities involving local devotional

events, Javanese liturgical texts as a practical way of illustrating the culture-conscious speech acts, or in small-scale ethnographic projects that encourage students to observe and interpret the cultural context behind ritual performance. These efforts show that Ganjuran's inculturative tradition is indeed a living manifestation of faith and folkloric life, and a widely known, hands-on pedagogical tool for building linguistic and intercultural competence.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that inculturative liturgical practices at GHKTY constitute an ongoing and vibrant tradition in which spirituality, language, and culture interact within an integrated system of cultural meaning. GHKTY is a dialogue in which the Catholic faith and Javanese culture are integrated through processions, hymns, architecture, and visual symbolism. The process of inculturation is not only a display of religious aesthetics but a performative discourse that connects social, moral, and humanitarian values. In this living setting, theology is embodied through culture, and culture itself becomes a vehicle for theological reflection and shared solidarity, affirming that faith is best understood within its cultural context.

In this context, the GHKTY tradition has great potential as context-specific BIPA material. Its linguistic expression through Javanese-Indonesian prayers develops grammatical and lexical competency; the pragmatic aspect of politeness promotes intercultural sensitivity; and its symbolic and moral narratives provoke reflection on social harmony. This integrative approach resonates with intercultural literacy and context-based learning, positioning Ganjuran as a place where language, faith, and cultural identity intersect naturally.

GHKTY's inculturation is also an essential part of cultural diplomacy. Through this approach, GHKTY enhances Indonesia's soft power by projecting an image of tolerance and faith-based inclusivity rooted in local wisdom, a living tradition that links folklore, education, and cultural diplomacy.

The study recommends integrating GHKTY's inculturative practices into BIPA education through culturally relevant teaching materials. Some of the Javanese language prayers used in the liturgy, Ganjuran architectural vocabulary (i.e., *candi*, *arca*, *perwara*), and the narrative of Christ in Javanese dress can be translated into reading texts, vocabulary lists, and cultural interpretation tasks. Additionally, multimodal activities such as analyzing gamelan patterns of the Mass, describing ritual sequences, and conducting field observations are authentic learning experiences that enhance language learning and increase intercultural understanding. Not only will these materials help to contextualize language learning within a living cultural context, but they will also reinforce the relevance of local heritage in BIPA education.

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