

FRENCH CULTURAL DIPLOMACY STRATEGY THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA: ANALYSIS OF IFI INDONESIA INSTAGRAM CONTENT

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the cultural diplomacy strategies of France through the Instagram social media platform, as implemented by the Institut Français Indonesia (IFI). Using a descriptive qualitative approach and content analysis of six selected posts from March to May 2025, the study identifies the effectiveness of cultural content in building audience engagement. The results show that educational content, such as promotions for the LPDP-France scholarship, achieved the highest engagement rate (16.15%), followed by performing arts (3.23%) and film (1.57%). Meanwhile, culinary and interactive content, despite having lower engagement rates, play a crucial role in fostering interpersonal relationships (people-to-people diplomacy). Narrative analysis in captions and the use of Instagram Story features reveal adaptive communication strategies that combine persuasive copywriting techniques with contextual cultural approaches. In conclusion, IFI successfully leveraged Instagram as a tool for digital cultural diplomacy through visual content, emotional narratives, and participatory interactions, effectively strengthening France's soft power in Indonesia.

Keyword: cultural diplomacy, engagement, IFI Indonesia, social media, soft power.

ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini menganalisis strategi diplomasi budaya Prancis melalui media sosial Instagram yang dijalankan oleh Institut Français Indonesia (IFI). Dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dan analisis isi terhadap enam unggahan terpilih pada periode Maret–Mei 2025, studi ini mengidentifikasi efektivitas konten budaya dalam membangun *engagement* audiens. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konten pendidikan, seperti promosi beasiswa LPDP–Prancis, mencatat tingkat *engagement* tertinggi (16,15%), diikuti oleh seni pertunjukan (3,23%) dan film (1,57%). Sementara itu, konten kuliner dan interaktif, meskipun memiliki tingkat *engagement* lebih rendah, memainkan peran penting dalam membangun relasi interpersonal (*people-to-people diplomacy*). Analisis narasi dalam *caption* serta pemanfaatan fitur Instagram Story mengungkap strategi komunikasi adaptif yang memadukan teknik *copywriting* persuasif dengan pendekatan budaya yang kontekstual. Kesimpulannya, IFI berhasil memanfaatkan Instagram sebagai sarana diplomasi budaya digital melalui konten visual, narasi emosional, dan interaksi partisipatif, yang secara efektif memperkuat *soft power* Prancis di Indonesia.

Keywords: cultural diplomacy, engagement, IFI Indonesia, social media, soft power.

INTRODUCTION

Traditional diplomacy focuses on the transition between peace and conflict through mediation and peacemaking¹. This practice is generally limited to private interactions between diplomatic representatives, such as sending envoys to other countries to prevent conflict, negotiate agreements, or maintain bilateral relations. After World War II, diplomacy experienced a development that went beyond government-to-government interactions and became more complex and diverse. This development then gave birth to a new form of diplomacy called public diplomacy.

Public diplomacy refers to government efforts to influence public opinion in other countries as part of foreign policy. Unlike traditional diplomacy, public diplomacy is more open, targets the general public, and focuses on public attitudes and behavior. In addition, public diplomacy encourages interaction between groups across countries through global information flows². In this case, public diplomacy becomes one of the key instruments in the application of soft power³. Soft power itself is defined as the ability to influence others to achieve desired results through attraction and persuasion, not through coercion or payment⁴.

One concrete manifestation of the application of soft power through public diplomacy is cultural diplomacy. Cultural diplomacy is a form of effort that utilizes cultural content to strengthen national unity and integrity, as well as gain recognition and respect from other countries through cooperation and cultural exchange⁵. In line with that, Nye stated that public diplomacy is a tool to reach and influence foreign communities directly, not limited to interactions between governments⁶. In this context, the development of digital technology, especially social media, has also changed the way cultural diplomacy is

¹ Joseph M. Siracusa, *Diplomacy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

² *Ibid*

³ Jan Melissen, *The New Public Diplomacy: Soft Power in International Relations* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

⁴ Joseph S. Nye Jr., “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (March, 2008).

⁵ Direktorat Warisan dan Diplomasi Budaya. Cultural Diplomacy Guidelines. Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019. <https://kebudayaan.kemdikbud.go.id/ditwdb/pedoman-diplomasi-budaya/>

⁶ Nye Jr., “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power”.

carried out. This shows that public diplomacy does not only target state actors, but also targets society as an important element in international relations.

The development of digital technology, especially social media, has changed the way cultural diplomacy is carried out. Social media allows for the rapid, widespread, and interactive spread of culture. Instagram, as one of the largest visual platforms in the world, is an effective means of displaying culture in the form of aesthetically pleasing images and videos. As of January 2025, the number of Instagram users has reached 1.74 billion users worldwide⁷. This fact is an opportunity for a country to reach a wider audience, especially the younger generation.

Various countries have utilized this potential to expand and strengthen their influence on the international stage through various means, one of which is the use of cultural instruments. South Korea, for example, has succeeded in spreading its cultural influence through the Hallyu wave and the entertainment industry known as the Korean Wave. Japan also expresses its soft power through the popularity of anime and other pop cultures that have gone global. This phenomenon shows how culture is no longer just a national identity, but also a strategic tool in building a positive image of a country.

France, as one of the countries with a strong cultural heritage, is also not left behind in utilizing the potential of cultural diplomacy. Through a public institution called French Institute, the French government carries out its foreign cultural policy under the coordination of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture⁸. The Institut Français has a central role in promoting the French language, expanding the reach of works of art and ideas, and encouraging the mobility of artists to various corners of the world. In Indonesia, the presence of this institution is realized through French Institute Indonesia (IFI) which is one of the real forms of French cultural diplomacy in the Southeast Asia region. The presence of IFI not only represents France's soft power strategy, but also becomes an active cultural interaction space between France and Indonesia. In

⁷ DataReportal, Instagram Users, Stats, Data & Trends for 2025 (March 2025), https://datareportal-com.translate.goog/essential-instagram-stats?_x_tr_sl=en&_x_tr_tl=id&_x_tr_hl=id&_x_tr_pto=sge#:~:text=Instagram%20adalah%20salah%20satu%20platform,seluruh%20dunia%20pada%20Januari%202025

⁸ French Institute, France Institute: Freedom · Creativity · Diversity. French Institute (2025), <https://www.institutfrancais.com/fr>

Indonesia itself, IFI has been present in various regions, such as Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta. Through its presence, IFI is active in promoting French language courses, cultural activities and direct consultations. Not only that, IFI also plays an active role in online media, especially Instagram in promoting its culture.

Several previous studies have discussed the practice of cultural diplomacy carried out by France in Indonesia. Septianie⁹ examined the public diplomacy strategy carried out by the Institut Français Indonesia (IFI) in Yogyakarta, highlighting the dimensions of strategic communication, institutional relations, and information management, but has not discussed social media as the main means of diplomacy. Arcana and Laksman-Huntley¹⁰ analyzed how French language textbooks became soft power instruments that subtly inserted French cultural values, but the context was limited to formal language learning. Nurchaliza et al.¹¹ focused on French public diplomacy in maintaining Paris as the world's fashion center through national strategies and cultural branding, not on institutional practices such as IFI. Meanwhile, Aldrin¹² discussed the implementation of cultural diplomacy through the annual program Pekan Francophonie, which highlights film screenings, seminars, and art performances, but has not yet touched on the use of social media as a contemporary digital communication channel.

Based on the literature, it shows that no one has discussed how the French cultural diplomacy strategy is implemented in the social media realm by IFI Indonesia. In fact, IFI Indonesia actively manages social media, especially Instagram as a means of communication through visual appeal and the narrative messages it conveys. This inconsistency highlights the importance of analyzing the practice of French digital cultural diplomacy. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the communication strategy of French cultural diplomacy carried out by IFI Indonesia through Instagram content as an instrument of soft power in the digital realm.

⁹ Nani Septianie. "Strategi Diplomasi Publik Perancis Melalui Institute Français Indonesia (Ifi) Di Yogyakarta Tahun 2012-2019." (Skripsi, Universitas Islam Indonesia, 2022).

¹⁰ I. G. G. B. Arcana and M. Laksman-Huntley, "Cultural Diplomacy in French Language Teaching Manuals," *Francisola* 5, no. 2 (2020).

¹¹ N. I. Nurchaliza, A. E. Hara, and D. Susilo, "Diplomasi Publik Prancis dalam Mempertahankan Paris sebagai Pusat Fashion Dunia," *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional* 16, no. 1 (2023).

¹² B. G. Aldrin, "Implementasi Diplomasi Budaya Prancis di Indonesia Melalui Program Kebudayaan Pekan Frankofoni Tahun 2014," *Journal of Social Research* 1, no. 5 (2022).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, a method that depicts, describes, and explains the actual events of the object being studied based on the context when the research was conducted¹³. This research method is used to understand and describe the French cultural diplomacy strategy implemented through social media, especially through the official Instagram account of the Institut Français Indonesia (@ifi_indonesia). This approach was chosen because it is able to reveal symbolic and narrative meanings in visual and text content, as well as understand how cultural messages are communicated and received in digital space.

The main method used is qualitative content analysis. This analysis was conducted on six selected contents from the Instagram account @ifi_indonesia published in the period from March 3 to May 22, 2025. The sample selection was carried out purposively, based on two main criteria: (1) the relevance of the content to the dimensions of cultural diplomacy (such as language promotion, culinary, art, or culture), and (2) a high level of digital interaction (engagement), which reflects the response and involvement of the audience. This engagement is measured through the number of likes, comments, and shares, referring to the engagement rate metric as an indicator of the effectiveness of social media communication¹⁴.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

¹³ Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Bisnis: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, Kombinasi, dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2017).

¹⁴ Raffaele Filieri, Dorothy A. Yen, and Qionglei Yu, “#ILoveLondon: An Exploration of the Declaration of Love towards a Destination on Instagram,” *Tourism Management* 85 (2021)

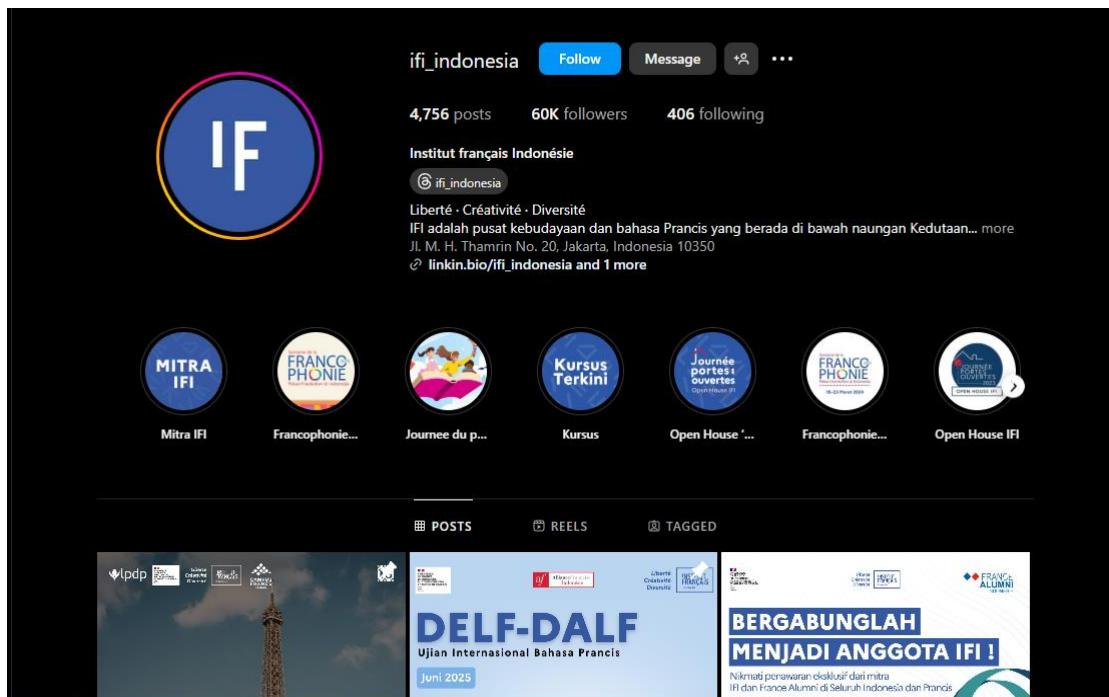


Figure 1. Instagram Profile View @ifi_indonesia

The appearance of the Instagram account @ifi_indonesia, which is under the auspices of the French Embassy in Indonesia, shows its active role in conveying cultural messages to the Indonesian public digitally. This account shows consistency in building cultural communication through attractive visuals and narratives that are relevant to the local context. Along with the increasing number of followers, as well as a fairly intense activity pattern, this account is recorded as being able to publish around 1 to 4 contents a day. Data as of May 22, 2025 shows that the @ifi_indonesia account has around 60 thousand followers, follows 406 accounts, and has uploaded 4,756 contents in total. This consistency shows the existence of a planned digital communication strategy that is oriented towards local audiences.

This strategy is evident from the use of various Instagram features such as highlight stories which includes themes such as "Francophonie", "Courses", "IFI Open House" and so on. Through these features, IFI archives thematic content that is educational and interactive. This strategy supports French cultural diplomacy with an approach to people-to-people diplomacy, which is to establish direct connections with the community through visual content that is inspiring and easily accessible. IFI not only promotes the French

language and culture, but also opens up a space for cultural dialogue with the local community through campaigns such as “Francophonie” and the promotion of language classes that are tailored to the needs of the Indonesian audience. Thus, this account is a concrete example of how foreign cultural institutions can carry out effective digital diplomacy through social media platforms.

Types of Cultural Content and Diplomacy Strategy of IFI Indonesia on Instagram

In a period of three months, namely from March 3 to May 22, 2025, the Instagram account @ifi_indonesia has shared 127 contents that are directly related to the practice of cultural diplomacy. Of all the contents, six contents with a high level of engagement highest per category were selected for further analysis. These six contents represent various forms of cultural communication, such as films, performing arts, education, interactive activities, and culinary. In line with Nye's opinion, cultural diplomacy is an instrument to attract the attention of foreign audiences through the use of cultural resources, political values, and policies that are considered morally legitimate¹⁵. The cultural contents published by @ifi_indonesia reflect the cultural diplomacy strategy implemented through social media platforms. The following are the six contents with the highest engagement rates that implemented cultural diplomacy to the general public in the period from March 3 to May 22, 2025.

Table 1. Six Cultural Content with the Highest Engagement Per Category (March 3 - May 22, 2025)

Content Type	Example Posts	Date	Like	Comment	Share	Total Engagement	Engagement Rate
Film	French Film Screening Schedule and Introduction	March 5, 2025	705	16	223	944	1,57%
Performing Arts	French Musical Theatre Schedule	March 12, 2025	1,389	27	522	1,938	3,23%
Cultural Festival	Opening Schedule of Semaine de la Francophonie	March 12, 2025	292	11	51	354	0,59%

¹⁵ Nye Jr., “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power.”

Education	LPDP-France Cooperation	March 27, 2025	8,175	220	1,297	9,692	16,15%
Culinary and Cooking Class Workshop	Cooking Class Schedule with Chef Simon Boudoin	15 May 2025	341	13	134	488	0,81%
Interactive Content	Club de Conversation Schedule	March 7, 2025	125	0	19	144	0,24%

From the table, it can be seen that educational-themed content has the highest engagement, with a total of 9,692 interactions¹⁶. This high response indicates that international education opportunities, such as the LPDP-France scholarship collaboration, are very attractive to the public, especially young people who are the majority of Instagram users. According to data from the Meta advertising tool quoted by Datareportal, as many as 45.9 percent of the Indonesian population who meet the age requirements (over 13 years old) used Instagram in early 2025¹⁷. This figure shows the dominance of young users on the platform, while strengthening the relevance of IFI Indonesia's communication approach. In line with Nye's thinking, education is one of the main pillars in the strategy of soft power, because it is able to build long-term relationships and strengthen cross-cultural understanding¹⁸. In this context, IFI has succeeded in articulating a cultural diplomacy strategy through an academic opportunity narrative that is not only informative, but also in line with the characteristics and needs of its digital audience.

In addition to education, content about performing arts and films also shows a high level of engagement. Posts about the schedule of French musical theaters received 1,389 likes, 27 comments, and 522 shares with a total engagement of 1,938 and an engagement rate of 3.23%¹⁹. Content about the schedule of French musical theaters is delivered through digital posters and captions that are persuasive and emotive, so that they can arouse public curiosity and interest. Meanwhile, posts about the screening schedule and introduction of

¹⁶ Institut Français Indonesia [@ifi_indonesia], "LPDP-France Cooperation," Instagram photo post, March 27, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHsqD6dz6il/>

¹⁷ DataReportal, *Instagram Users, Stats, Data & Trends for 2025*

¹⁸ Nye Jr., "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power."

¹⁹ Institut Français Indonesia [@ifi_indonesia], "French Musical Theatre Schedule," Instagram photo post, March 12, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHFABu5BFYL/>

French film garnered 705 likes, 16 comments, and 223 shares, resulting in a total of 944 interactions and an engagement rate of 1.57%²⁰. Although both contents only present information in the form of schedules and event introductions, these findings indicate that social media remains an effective cultural communication tool, especially in creating interest in upcoming cultural experiences. IFI Indonesia's delivery of information via Instagram uses strategic communication that develops a series of simple and consistent themes so that it succeeds in creating emotional closeness which is key in the digital cultural diplomacy strategy.

According to Nye, cultural appeal is an important element in soft power strategy, because it is able to shape public preferences and attitudes without using coercion²¹. This is reinforced by Cull, who emphasizes that creative media such as art and film are part of symbolic cultural diplomacy, which has a profound impact on the formation of national image²². In this context, IFI Indonesia utilizes the potential of digital visuals not only as a means of information, but as a means of curating a dynamic and aesthetic French cultural image. This approach is in accordance with the concept of high culture in cultural diplomacy, namely the use of art as a means to display cultural excellence aimed at attracting the interest of both the elite and the public. By presenting promotional content for art and film events in a planned manner on social media, IFI expands the influence of French culture through a symbolic representation strategy that is in line with the characteristics of the audience and digital in Indonesia.

Culinary content and interactive activities such as Cooking Classes and Conversation Club, despite having a relatively lower engagement rate compared to other categories, still plays a strategic role in building emotional closeness between French culture and Indonesian audiences. The announcement post for the schedule of "Cooking Class with Chef Simon Baudoin" uploaded on May 15, 2025 recorded 341 likes, 13 comments, and 134

²⁰ Institut Français Indonesia [@ifi_indonesia], "France Film Screening Schedule and Introduction," Instagram photo post, March 5, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DG2nizJgsc/>

²¹ Nye Jr., "Public Diplomacy and Soft Power."

²² Nicholas J. Cull, "Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616, no. 1 (March 2008)

share, with a total of engagement of 488 and engagement rate by 0.81%²³. Meanwhile, the upload of the “Club de Conversation” schedule received 125 likes, no comments, and 19 shares, resulting in a total of 144 interactions and engagement rate by 0.24%²⁴. Although the figure is quantitatively low, these two contents have strategic value in the context of digital cultural diplomacy. These two activities reflect the practice of people-to-people diplomacy, namely a form of diplomacy that emphasizes direct interaction and exchange between individuals or groups from different countries, cultures, or societies, with the aim of increasing mutual understanding, strengthening cooperation, and building friendly relationships²⁵.

Cooking classes not only introduce gastronomy as part of culture, but also create a direct sensory experience that involves active participation from the audience. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) gastronomy is interpreted as the art of preparing delicious dishes. In the context of French cultural diplomacy, gastronomy plays a role as a representative element of culture because it not only introduces typical French food, but also facilitates cultural exchange through the introduction of French vocabulary in the culinary field²⁶. On the other hand, Conversation Club opens up informal dialogue spaces that allow audiences from different backgrounds to interact with each other using French and sharing common interests. This participatory approach not only creates emotional bonds but also forms long-term positive perceptions of the promoted culture²⁷. In the digital context, interactions such as likes and comments on these contents can be seen as forms of micro-engagement that demonstrate authentic interest in French culture. This confirms that the success of cultural diplomacy is not solely measured by quantitative numbers, but by the depth of involvement and the quality of the human experience that is built.

²³ Institut Français Indonesia [@ifi_indonesia], “Cooking Class Schedule with Chef Simon Boudoin,” Instagram photo post, May 15, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DJrFQ6TtJdq/>

²⁴ Institut Français Indonesia [@ifi_indonesia], “Club de Conversation Schedule,” Instagram photo post, March 7, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DG5UvG7t8ER>

²⁵ DiploFoundation, People-to-People Diplomacy (2025), <https://www.diplomacy.edu/topics/people-to-people-diplomacy/>

²⁶ KBBI Web, “Gastronomi,” n.d., <https://kbbi.web.id/gastronomi>

²⁷ Cull, quoted in J. G. Payne, “Reflections on Public Diplomacy: People-to-People Communication,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 53, no. 4 (2009)

Finally, cultural festival-themed content, such as uploading the Opening schedule Francophonie Week achieved 292 likes, 11 comments, and 51 shares, with a total engagement of 354 and an engagement rate of 0.59%²⁸. Although the level of interaction is not as high as other categories, this content still has significant symbolic value because it presents France as a nation that upholds its cultural heritage, language, and Francophone solidarity. This upload shows how cultural diplomacy is carried out through inclusive public celebrations with a global celebratory nuance.

Francophonie Week itself is an annual event celebrated in various countries every March to commemorate the French language and Francophone culture. Cultural festivals are a form of expression of symbolic diplomacy that strengthens cultural narratives and expands the influence of national culture in the international community. In line with that, Cull emphasized that cultural diplomacy plays a strategic role in shaping a country's image through cultural representation in the form of public events. The promotion and organization of events like this contribute to shaping long-term perceptions of national identity in the eyes of the global community²⁹.

Narrative Analysis in IFI Indonesia Instagram Captions

Captions are short texts that complement images, videos, or other visual content on social media, including Instagram. The goal is not only to provide additional context to the content displayed, but also to attract attention and build interaction with the audience³⁰. In digital communication practices, captions have a strategic role because they are able to convey messages persuasively and shape public perception of the identity being communicated. Specifically, captions can also be included in the realm of copywriting, namely the art and technique of writing texts designed to promote certain products, services, or ideas persuasively³¹. As part of a copywriting strategy, effective captions contain important elements such as interesting word choices, call-to-action, and messages

²⁸ Institut Français Indonesia [@ifi_indonesia], “Opening Schedule of Semaine de la Francophonie,” Instagram photo post, March 12, 2025, <https://www.instagram.com/p/DHGMn7BtZth/>

²⁹ Nicholas J. Cull, “Public Diplomacy: Taxonomies and Histories,”

³⁰ Ruri Mabruri, “Caption vs. Copywriting: Perbedaan dan Hubungannya,” October 22, 2024, <https://ruri-mabruri.staff.ut.ac.id/2024/10/22/caption-vs-copywriting-perbedaan-dan-hubungannya/>

³¹ *Ibid*

that are relevant to the characteristics of the target audience. The ability to compose communicative and emotional captions can strengthen the impact of the message conveyed, while increasing the level of audience engagement with the content.

In the context of cultural diplomacy carried out through social media, Instagram captions act as digital narratives that articulate cultural values while building emotional closeness with the global public. IFI Indonesia, as a representative of French cultural institutions, actively utilizes Instagram to communicate various forms of French cultural expression through visual and text content that is packaged attractively. With a narrative approach that is tailored to local audiences, as well as techniques copywriting appropriately, the caption on the @ifi_indonesia account is not only informative, but also becomes an effective cultural diplomacy tool. Therefore, the analysis of the narrative in the caption of the six categories of cultural content with the level engagement highest is important to understand how IFI Indonesia's communication strategy is implemented in the digital realm.

1. Films: French Film Screening Schedule and Introduction

Captions on film content are generally informative by conveying film details such as title, screening schedule, and event location. The narration is direct, but enriched with emotional expressions such as emojis and exclamations. For example, in celebration Francophonie Week, the caption opens with a casual greeting such as "better watch a movie at IFI!" which combines light humor with event promotion. Although short, this narrative successfully creates a French cultural context through the introduction of cinema and the creation of a collective viewing experience. This strategy reflects an effort to convey Francophone culture in an attractive and easily accepted package for young audiences.

2. Performing Arts: Musical Theatre Schedule It's Life

The captions on the performing arts content display narrative and descriptive styles. The opening sentence "Hello #SahabatBentara" shows a personal and informal approach. The explanation of the meaning of the phrase "C'est la Vida" in two languages strengthens the cross-cultural dimension, while the performance description contains elements of dance, music, and pantomime that are designed

aesthetically. The invitation to participate associated with the moment of Ramadan is a form of adaptation to the local context. This narrative shows how French cultural diplomacy is communicated through an emotional artistic approach, while building connections with the social reality of Indonesian society.

3. Cultural Festival: Opening Schedule Semaine de la Francophonie

The caption's narrative is celebratory and inclusive. With the opening "Semaine de la Francophonie 2025 is officially open!", the caption reflects the spirit of a global cultural celebration full of togetherness. The use of phrases such as "an evening full of surprises, fun and togetherness" and the expression "À bientôt !" reinforce the warm, French atmosphere. The caption, while brief, is effective in conveying a symbolic message about the Francophonie's identity as a cultural network that unites French-speaking countries around the world.

4. Education: LPDP-France PhD Scholarship

Captions in educational content convey informative and persuasive narratives. Information is systematically arranged starting from the program background, advantages, to future hopes. The language used still feels familiar with the addition of light phrases such as "study while eating croissants" which ground academic issues. The use of emojis and casual expressions shows that IFI is able to communicate serious topics with an approach that is close to the digital communication style of the younger generation. This reflects an educational diplomacy strategy that not only emphasizes prestige, but also relevance and closeness to local audiences.

5. Culinary and Workshop: Cooking Class Schedule with Chef Simon Boudoin

The narrative in this caption emphasizes the value of hands-on experience and sustainability. By conveying that participants can "enrich their culinary vocabulary" while taking the cooking class, this caption demonstrates the integration of language and cultural learning. In addition to the functional aspect, the message emphasizing "reducing food waste" gives an environmental dimension to cultural activities, showing that cultural diplomacy can also promote global values such as sustainability and ethical consumption. This caption shows that culinary activities

can be an effective interactive educational medium in the context of cultural diplomacy.

6. Interactive Content: Schedule Conversation Club

This caption uses the approach problem-solution with rhetorical questions as an opener, such as "Have you often tried practicing French in various ways but still not succeeded?" This strategy is effective in building emotional connections with audiences who may experience similar challenges. Casual language and solution-oriented narratives create an inclusive and enjoyable learning community atmosphere. More than just an event promotion, this caption builds a participatory ecosystem of cultural dialogue, making the activity a real representation of practical people-to-people diplomacy.

Through the analysis of six captions with different levels of engagement highest, it is seen that IFI Indonesia does not only use social media as a means of conveying cultural information, but also optimizes it as a strategic cultural diplomacy space. Each caption is designed with a language style that suits the characteristics of the content and audience, ranging from informative to emotional, from formal to casual, and from symbolic to participatory. This narrative strategy shows that IFI is able to combine techniques of copywriting effectively with a strong diplomatic message, making the caption a relevant, persuasive, and impactful instrument of cultural communication. Thus, Instagram captions not only function as visual complements, but also as digital narratives that strengthen the practice of French cultural diplomacy in Indonesia through a communicative and audience-based approach.

Utilizing Instagram Stories as a Strengthener of Cultural Diplomacy Interaction with Audiences

One of the features utilized by the Institut Français Indonesia (IFI) in supporting the practice of digital cultural diplomacy is Instagram Story. This feature allows the delivery of messages that are real-time, temporary, and interactive, because the content only lasts for 24 hours. Unlike permanent uploads on the feed, Instagram Story offers flexibility in forming casual and two-way communication. The use of this feature strengthens the people-to-people diplomacy approach because it opens up space for direct participation

between cultural activity organizers and the public. This approach is in line with Payne's view which emphasizes that the success of public diplomacy does not only depend on the delivery of one-way information, but also on direct involvement that allows for the formation of mutual understanding and meaningful interpersonal relationships³².

Based on observations of the Instagram account @ifi_indonesia in the period from March 3 to May 22, 2025, it was found that the Instagram Story feature was used consistently to support cultural communication. Its main functions include delivering short-term event information, live coverage of activities, re-uploading content from the community and participants, and utilizing interactive features such as polls, quizzes, and Q&A sessions about French language and culture. Interactive activities such as vocabulary quizzes or DELF test simulations are effective forms of micro-engagement in creating active participation, although they are not always recorded in public comments. In addition, Story content is re-curated into thematic highlights, such as "Frankofoni 2025," which functions as a digital archive and extends the life of the cultural messages that have been conveyed. This shows that IFI is not only using social media as a promotional tool, but also as a means of managing sustainable cultural information.

In the context of cultural diplomacy, the use of Instagram Story by IFI Indonesia reflects the transformation from one-way communication to participatory communication that is responsive to the digital characteristics of today's audience. As emphasized by Payne, the relational approach is the most effective way, because similarities are most easily understood through direct dialogue between two or more parties³³. This approach is reflected in how IFI creates a dialogue space through features that allow spontaneous and informal involvement from the Indonesian public. Thus, this strategy is not just a form of information distribution, but part of building symbolic and emotional closeness between France and Indonesia. The use of Instagram Story strengthens the function of digital cultural diplomacy as a means of building cross-cultural understanding that is more equal, participatory, and contextual.

³² J. G. Payne, "Reflections on Public Diplomacy: People-to-People Communication," *American Behavioral Scientist* 53, no. 4 (2009)

³³ *Ibid*

CONCLUSION

This study shows that social media, especially Instagram, has become a strategic tool for the Institut Français Indonesia (IFI) in implementing French cultural diplomacy practices digitally. Through an analysis of the six contents with the highest engagement in each category, it can be seen that IFI not only conveys cultural information but also develops narratives that are in line with the characteristics of the local audience. Educational content has the highest level of engagement, followed by performing arts and films, proving that education and visual media are key instruments in attracting public attention and conveying cultural values emotionally.

In addition, culinary content and interactive activities such as Cooking Class and Club de Conversation, despite having a lower engagement rate, still play an important role in building interpersonal relations or people-to-people diplomacy. Likewise, content themed on cultural festivals such as Semaine de la Francophonie, despite its relatively small engagement, has a strong symbolic value. This celebration emphasizes France's commitment to maintaining Francophone solidarity and promoting the French language and cultural identity internationally. This reflects the practice of symbolic diplomacy that expands cultural influence through public events and collective rituals.

IFI's success lies not only in the visual strength of the content, but also in the composition of communicative and emotional captions as part of an effective copywriting strategy. The use of Instagram features and a contextual narrative approach show that cultural diplomacy in the digital era is no longer just about representation, but also about active public participation and involvement. Thus, IFI Indonesia is able to implement soft power France in a relevant and impactful way through creative, adaptive and strategic cultural communication.

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