

Analysis of the Need for Developing Local Wisdom-Based Fantasy Story Teaching Materials in Jambi for Indonesian Language Learning in Junior High Schools

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the need for developing fantasy story teaching materials based on local wisdom in Jambi for Indonesian language learning in junior high schools. The background of this study stems from the lack of teaching materials that represent Jambi culture, the scarcity of examples of local fantasy stories in national textbooks, and the need for teachers to have teaching materials that are pedagogically and contextually relevant. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with three Indonesian language teachers and approximately 90 seventh-grade students from three schools in Tebo Regency, Jambi, as participants. Data were obtained through teacher interviews, analysis of learning documents, and field notes, then analyzed using data reduction techniques, thematic coding, and cultural and pedagogical interpretation. The results of the study found six main themes: (1) the lack of representation of Jambi culture in teaching materials; (2) the absence of examples of fantasy stories based on local culture; (3) teachers' need for contextual teaching materials; (4) the potential of Jambi folklore as a source of fantasy stories; (5) teachers' expectations for teaching materials that are interesting, relevant, and contain character values; and (6) the preference of students and teachers for interactive digital media such as flipbooks. These findings emphasize the importance of developing fantasy story teaching materials based on local wisdom in Jambi to support the Merdeka Curriculum, improve cultural literacy, and strengthen students' interest in learning. This study provides a basis for the development of teaching material prototypes and effectiveness testing in further research.

KEYWORDS: Teaching materials, Fantasy stories, Local wisdom of Jambi, Merdeka Curriculum, Needs analysis

INTRODUCTION

Educational transformation in Indonesia over the past decade has led to a paradigm shift that emphasizes meaningfulness, relevance, and real-life experiences for students in the learning process. The Merdeka Curriculum was introduced in response to these demands, placing flexibility, differentiation, and contextual learning as its main foundations (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). This curriculum requires teachers to not only teach language competencies structurally, but also to develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and an understanding of the cultural values inherent in the lives of students (Tompkins, 2010). Thus, Indonesian language learning should provide space for students to understand texts contextually in relation to their identity and cultural environment.

However, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in schools still faces obstacles, particularly in the provision of teaching materials that reflect Indonesia's cultural diversity. The national teaching materials that are widely used tend to be generic and do not provide much space for the representation of local cultures. Teachers are often bound by inflexible textbooks, making it difficult to connect Indonesian language learning with students' cultural experiences. This mismatch hinders the realization of contextual learning as required by the curriculum. In fact, the integration of local culture is an important part of developing cultural literacy—one of the essential competencies of the 21st century (Dardjowidjojo, 2003).

Cultural literacy is very important in Indonesian language learning because it is a means for students to recognize and reflect on their local and national identities. In the context of globalization, students are vulnerable to cultural alienation when the teaching materials used do not provide space for them to understand the traditions, values, and cultural symbols of their region. The lack of representation of local culture deprives students of the opportunity to learn and internalize cultural values that are close to their lives (Kosasih, 2021). When learning materials are irrelevant to students' social realities, their interest in learning

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tends to decline and their understanding of the text becomes less profound. Teachers also lose the opportunity to link the material to local wisdom, which is actually a very rich source of learning.

The province of Jambi is one of the regions with a rich culture, especially in the form of folklore. Stories such as Putri Cermin Cina, Putri Pinang Masak, and Kisah Tan Talanai contain moral values, social traditions, and ecological wisdom that reflect the identity of the Jambi people (Ismail, 2017; Jambi Provincial Education Office, 2021). These folk tales have magical elements, special characters, and imaginative settings, making them highly suitable for adaptation into modern fantasy stories (Teeuw, 1988; Zahra, 2019). This adaptation not only enables the preservation of local culture but also provides a fun reading experience that is close to the imagination of junior high school students.

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Previous studies have shown that local wisdom has great potential in increasing students' interest and understanding. However, most of these studies did not directly highlight the context of Jambi, or did not place fantasy stories as the main focus. (Afifah et al., 2023) emphasize that Jambi folklore is rich in character values, but has not yet led to the development of fantasy stories. (Mahmud., 2023) discusses the effectiveness of teaching materials based on local wisdom, but focuses on fishing communities. (Sakaria and Asia., 2021) produced character-based fantasy teaching materials, but did not specify a particular local culture. (Pramudito., 2022) examines the integration of local wisdom in learning, but does not conduct a needs analysis as a basis for developing teaching materials. Meanwhile, (Nuraini., 2023) proves that fantasy stories are effective for learning, but does not relate them to regional culture.

From this study, it is clear that previous research has not combined three important aspects, namely fantasy stories, local wisdom in Jambi, and the real needs of teachers and students. In fact, these three aspects are important prerequisites for producing contextual teaching materials that are effective for use in Indonesian language learning in Jambi. Based on an analysis of the national context, the learning conditions in Jambi, and a review of previous studies, there are several research gaps that need to be emphasized argumentatively so that the relevance of this study becomes clear and strong.

a) Practical gap

To date, there are no fantasy story teaching materials based on local wisdom in Jambi. Schools still use generic teaching materials that do not reflect regional identity and culture. The absence of local teaching materials makes Indonesian language learning less contextual and does not fully support the strengthening of students' cultural literacy.

b) Empirical gap

No research has specifically documented the needs of teachers and students regarding fantasy teaching materials based on local wisdom in Jambi. In fact, understanding user needs is a very important initial stage in the process of developing R&D-based teaching materials. The lack of research on these needs means that the previous process of developing teaching materials was not based on empirical context in the field.

c) Theoretical Gap

There has been no study mapping how Jambi cultural values in folklore can be adapted into fantasy texts for Indonesian language learning. Theoretically, Jambi folklore has strong fantasy elements that have great potential to be developed into modern literary texts. The conversion of folklore into fantasy stories has never been discussed systematically in the literature.

d) Pedagogical Gap

The Merdeka Curriculum provides ample space for local culture-based learning, but there are no concrete guidelines explaining how this integration should be carried out in fantasy story texts. Teachers do not have models or examples of teaching materials that can be used as a reference for effectively integrating local culture into fantasy text learning.

Considering these various issues, this research has academic, cultural, and pedagogical urgency. Academically, this research supports the National Literacy Movement agenda, which encourages the use of culture-based learning resources. Culturally, this research contributes to the preservation of Jambi cultural values through the adaptation of folk tales. Methodologically, this research provides an empirical basis for the initial stage of research and development (R&D), namely user needs analysis. Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the need for Jambi local wisdom-based fantasy teaching materials in junior high school Indonesian language learning based on the perceptions of teachers and students.

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METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that aims to describe the needs of teachers and students related to teaching materials for fantasy stories based on local wisdom in Jambi. This study emphasizes the interpretation of cultural and pedagogical needs that arise in Indonesian language learning practices. The participants consisted of three Indonesian language teachers who taught seventh grade and approximately 90 seventh grade students from three educational units. Purposive sampling was used to determine participants based on their relevance to the research objectives. Teachers were selected because of their direct involvement in the learning process and use of teaching materials, while students were selected to provide an overview of their needs, learning interests, and learning media preferences.

The research was conducted in three schools in Rimbo Bujang Subdistrict, Tebo Regency, Jambi Province, namely SMPN 13 Tebo Regency, MTs Raudhatul Mujawwidin, and MTs Darul Ulum Rimbo Bujang. These three schools were chosen because they have strong local cultural characteristics and are representative of the Indonesian language learning needs in the area. Data collection techniques included teacher interviews, document analysis, and field notes. Data analysis techniques used data reduction, categorization, thematic coding, and cultural and pedagogical interpretation.

RESULTS

The results of this study are presented based on a thematic analysis of teacher interview data, learning document analysis, and field notes. The findings indicate an urgent need for fantasy teaching materials based on local wisdom in Jambi. The following three initial themes describe the actual learning conditions and the gaps experienced by teachers and students in the use of current teaching materials.

1. The Lack of Jambi Cultural Representation in Teaching Materials

The results of the document analysis show that the teaching materials used in Jambi schools are almost entirely sourced from national textbooks. These textbooks do not contain folk tales, legends, or narratives that reflect Jambi culture. All teachers stated that they could not find material that featured local figures, regional cultural values, or story settings that described the social context of Jambi society. This resulted in students learning with teaching materials that did not reflect their cultural identity.

The absence of local cultural representation in teaching materials also limits students' opportunities to learn about Jambi's cultural values. Most of the alternative learning resources available in schools are products of national publishers that are not designed based on local needs. This condition widens the gap between Indonesian language learning and the students' cultural environment. Pedagogically, this hinders the development of cultural literacy, even though cultural literacy is an important aspect of language learning and the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Teachers revealed that the unavailability of local teaching materials made it difficult for them to deliver relevant and contextual learning. They assessed that although textbooks provided competency-based material, they did not allow enough space for regional cultural diversity. As a result, learning took place in a generic manner without involving the social, moral, and traditional values inherent in Jambi culture. These findings indicate that one of the primary needs in learning is teaching materials that are able to explicitly display the cultural identity of students.

2. The Absence of Local Culture-Based Fantasy Stories

The second theme shows that there are no examples of Jambi culture-based fantasy stories in the textbooks used by teachers and students. The fantasy stories included in the textbooks are general in nature, with characters and settings that are not related to the local context. Teachers said that these fantasy stories often feel distant from the students' lives and therefore fail to attract their interest. Students read fantasy stories as purely imaginative texts without any connection to their own socio-cultural environment.

Teachers stated that they wanted fantasy stories that featured characters typical of Jambi, local geographical settings, and meaningful cultural values. This was considered to help students understand the elements of fantasy more easily because they were associated with stories they were familiar with. Teachers also believe that Jambi folklore contains elements of magic, mystical phenomena, and iconic characters that have great potential to be developed into modern fantasy stories. However, this potential has not been utilized in the teaching materials currently in circulation.

The absence of local wisdom-based fantasy stories means that students do not get to experience reading culturally relevant fantasy texts. Fantasy learning becomes abstract, difficult to understand, and lacks context. Teachers emphasize that the existence of local fantasy stories is not only beneficial for students' understanding, but also important for strengthening their cultural identity and sense of belonging to their region. Thus, these findings reveal a strong need to develop examples of fantasy texts based on local wisdom in Jambi that can be used in learning.

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3. Teachers' Need for Contextual Teaching Materials

Teachers expressed an urgent need for teaching materials that are in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially those that emphasize differentiation, contextualization, and character building. They believe that ideal teaching materials are those that are able to integrate moral values, local figures, and elements of fantasy in a balanced manner. Teachers hope that the teaching materials developed will not only provide text examples, but also include explanations of concepts, text structure analysis, and guided learning steps. Teachers stated that the teaching materials they currently use tend to lack a clear pedagogical flow. They need teaching materials that present a systematic learning sequence starting from theory → examples based on local wisdom → guided exercises. Teachers also emphasized the need for teaching materials that help students explore their creative writing skills by utilizing elements of local culture. Thus, the teaching materials developed must be able to provide space for students to experiment, create, and interpret cultural values in fantasy texts. In addition to the material aspect, teachers also need more interesting and interactive learning media in order to increase student engagement. Teaching materials that rely solely on printed books are considered incapable of fostering learning interest among students in the digital age. Teachers hope that teaching materials will be presented in a richer visual format, thereby creating a more dynamic learning experience. These findings confirm that teachers' needs are not only related to the content of teaching materials, but also to the design of media that supports modern learning.

4. The Potential of Jambi Folklore as a Source of Fantasy Stories

The analysis shows that Jambi folklore has great potential to be developed into fantasy teaching materials. Local stories such as Putri Cermin Cina, Putri Pinang Masak, and Kisah Tan Talanai contain magical elements, special characters, supernatural phenomena, and traditional settings that are rich in imagination. Teachers believe that these magical elements can be easily adapted into modern fantasy storylines that meet the requirements for teaching fantasy texts in the curriculum. This potential lies not only in the elements of magic, but also in the cultural values embedded in Jambi folk tales. Folktales contain moral messages, character values, ecological wisdom, and depictions of social structures within communities. Teachers stated that these values can be naturally integrated into fantasy stories so that students not only gain imaginative literacy experiences but also understand local cultural values in an enjoyable way.

In addition, the uniqueness of Jambi folklore is considered to foster students' pride in their regional cultural identity. Teachers emphasize that students need examples of texts that are close to their lives in order for the learning process to be more meaningful. When fantasy stories are developed from Jambi folklore, students can feel an emotional closeness while also reinterpreting their regional culture. These findings show that the development of fantasy teaching materials based on Jambi's local wisdom is not only pedagogically relevant, but also strategic for strengthening cultural literacy.

5. Teachers' Expectations of Culture-Based Fantasy Teaching Materials

Teachers have clear expectations regarding the development of fantasy teaching materials based on local wisdom. One of the main expectations is that the teaching materials developed should be visually appealing and engaging in terms of content, so that they motivate students to read. Teachers want teaching materials that are easy to understand, do not overwhelm students, and are presented in a systematic manner so that they help students understand the concepts of fantasy stories gradually.

In addition to presentation, teachers hope that teaching materials will convey the character values and moral messages of Jambi folklore. These values are considered important in helping students develop positive character traits while understanding their local culture. Thus, teachers believe that culture-based fantasy teaching materials must combine aesthetic, pedagogical, and cultural elements in a balanced manner.

Teachers also emphasized the importance of teaching materials that are relevant to the culture and experiences of students. Teaching materials that feature characters, settings, and events that are familiar to students' cultural lives are considered more effective in improving their understanding of the text. Therefore, teachers want teaching materials that are relevant, contextual, and reflect the socio-cultural environment of Jambi.

In terms of media, teachers expressed a strong preference for digital teaching materials, especially interactive flipbooks. Flipbooks are considered capable of combining text, images, colors, and attractive displays, making them more suitable for junior high school students who enjoy visual learning. In addition, digital presentation is considered to be in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which encourages the use of innovative media in learning.

6. Preference for Interactive Digital Media (Flipbook)

Findings from observations and interviews show that students have a strong preference for interactive and visually appealing learning media. Students stated that they are more interested in digital media that feature animations, illustrations, and

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interactive navigation than traditional printed teaching materials. Digital media such as flipbooks are considered to be more effective at attracting attention, maintaining focus, and making the process of reading stories more enjoyable.

Teachers also support the use of interactive digital media because it makes it easier for them to explain fantasy story material. Flipbooks are considered to provide more lively and varied content, making it easier for teachers to visually demonstrate story structure, plot, and fantasy elements. Teachers believe that digital media helps students better understand fantasy stories because it combines cognitive and visual aspects in a single learning experience.

Flipbooks are considered effective for presenting Jambi-based fantasy stories in a modern format that suits the needs of the times. This medium allows for the integration of text, images of local culture, character illustrations, and design elements that are in harmony with Jambi folklore. Students can read in a more interactive way, while teachers can deliver more creative and digitally literate lessons. These findings confirm that the use of interactive digital media is an important requirement in the development of local fantasy teaching materials.

DISCUSSION

This discussion interprets the research results based on contextual learning theory, cultural literacy, local wisdom, and previous research. The relationship between the findings and the conceptual framework shows that the need for teaching materials for fantasy stories based on local wisdom in Jambi is relevant pedagogically, culturally, and curricularly.

1. Kontekstual The Relevance of Findings to Contextual Learning Theory

Research findings show that the teaching materials used in Jambi schools do not reflect local culture and are not relevant to students' experiences. This condition is in line with the constructivist views of Vygotsky and Piaget, which emphasize that students construct knowledge through social interaction, personal experience, and the connection of material to their living environment. Learning becomes more effective when students study material that is close to their lives and culture, because this context helps the process of constructing meaning.

In Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, cultural experiences are one of the "mediating tools" that help students understand abstract concepts through connections with their immediate culture. This is reflected in the need for teachers to use examples of Jambi-based fantasy stories that can connect fantasy concepts with the cultural reality of students. Similarly, Piaget's constructivism principle emphasizes that students understand new concepts through the schemata they already have; thus, teaching materials that feature local characters, Jambi settings, and regional cultural values can strengthen the process of assimilation and accommodation in learning. Thus, the results of the study confirm that Indonesian language learning that does not utilize local culture has the potential to lose context, making it difficult for students to understand fantasy texts in depth. The integration of Jambi folklore into fantasy teaching materials is a strategic step towards implementing contextual learning in accordance with the principles of constructivism.

2. Cultural Literacy as a Competency in the Independent Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum encourages contextual, student-centered learning that is responsive to local culture. Research findings show that the absence of locally-based materials prevents learning from supporting the strengthening of students' cultural literacy. Teachers believe that local teaching materials not only aid text comprehension, but also foster cultural identity and regional pride.

Cultural literacy is part of essential literacy in the 21st century. In the context of Indonesian language learning, cultural literacy provides space for students to learn about the traditions, moral values, and social characteristics that exist in their society. When students read fantasy stories rooted in Jambi folklore, they not only understand the elements of fantasy, but also internalize cultural values in an enjoyable way. This supports the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum, which prioritizes character building and cultural preservation through learning.

Thus, the findings of this study reinforce the urgency of using teaching materials that are able to integrate local culture as a means of shaping students' identity, while also supporting the development of cultural literacy competencies.

3. Relevance to Local Wisdom in Jambi

Findings on the potential of Jambi folklore as a source of fantasy stories show that local stories have narrative structures rich in fantasy elements—such as characters with special powers, magical settings, and supernatural phenomena. This indicates that Jambi's local wisdom is not only relevant as cultural material, but also effective as material for learning imaginative texts.

The integration of Jambi folklore into fantasy teaching materials can encourage student creativity because they can develop their imagination through fictional characters and events that remain rooted in local traditions. In addition, the moral values and ecological wisdom in folklore can strengthen character education, which is one of the main objectives of Indonesian language

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learning. The use of local wisdom also has the potential to foster a sense of belonging and pride in regional culture among students. In learning, this can increase student motivation, participation, and interest in reading. Thus, the relevance of local culture is not only symbolic, but has a direct impact on the quality of learning.

4. Connection to Previous Research (Strengthening Novelty)

The findings of this study are in line with Afifah et al. (2023), which shows that Jambi folklore is rich in character education values and relevant for use in learning. However, Afifah's research did not focus on adapting folklore into fantasy texts, so this study fills that gap. This study also shows differentiation from Mahmud (2023). Although Mahmud emphasizes the effectiveness of teaching materials based on local wisdom, the context of his research focuses on fishing communities and does not highlight Jambi culture or fantasy adaptations. Thus, this study has room for innovation because it is specific to Jambi culture and the fantasy genre.

(Sakaria and Asia., 2021) developed teaching materials for writing fantasy stories with character values, but did not make local wisdom the main basis. This study complements that study by showing the importance of explicitly integrating local culture into fantasy learning. Meanwhile, (Pramudito., 2022) researched the integration of local wisdom in Indonesian language learning, but did not place teacher and student needs analysis as the foundation. This study goes beyond that study by presenting a more concrete and focused needs analysis.

Thus, this research has novelty in three aspects: (1) focus on Jambi culture, (2) adaptation of folklore into fantasy, (3) analysis of user needs (teachers and students). This strengthens the position of research as a valid basis for the development of teaching materials.

5. Implications of Findings for Indonesian Language Learning

The findings of this study have a number of important implications for Indonesian language learning in schools. First, the teaching materials used by teachers must be contextual and reflect local culture in order to make learning more meaningful. The representation of Jambi culture in fantasy texts can increase reading interest while enriching students' understanding of their cultural identity. Second, guidelines are needed for adapting folk tales into fantasy stories. Teachers need a clear pedagogical structure, starting from basic concepts, examples of texts based on local culture, to targeted exercises to develop students' ability to write and analyze fantasy texts.

Third, the use of digital media such as flipbooks is essential in learning. Interactive media can increase student motivation, support digital literacy, and is in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which encourages innovation in learning.

Fourth, Indonesian language learning can be a means of preserving regional culture. The integration of local wisdom into fantasy texts provides space for students to learn about and appreciate the culture of Jambi, thereby enabling schools to play an active role in preserving this cultural heritage.

CONCLUSION

This study produced six main themes that describe the real need for Jambi local wisdom-based fantasy story teaching materials at the junior high school level. The results show that the teaching materials used in Jambi schools do not yet feature representations of local culture, do not provide examples of fantasy stories that are relevant to students' identities, and do not yet meet the pedagogical needs of teachers. In addition, teachers expect teaching materials that are more contextual, structured, and provide examples of fantasy stories adapted from Jambi folklore. The preference of students and teachers for interactive digital media, especially flipbooks, also reinforces the need to develop teaching materials in a more modern and attractive format.

These findings highlight the urgency of developing fantasy teaching materials based on local wisdom in Jambi. Local teaching materials are not only in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes contextual learning, but also support the strengthening of cultural literacy and increase students' interest in learning. The integration of Jambi cultural values into fantasy texts allows students to understand imaginative elements while internalizing positive characteristics and the culture of their region.

In practical terms, this research has a number of implications for Indonesian language learning. Teachers gain a clear picture of the direction in which teaching materials should be developed to meet the needs of their classes. Schools are advised to provide learning resources based on local culture to enrich their teaching materials. Local governments can also use these findings to promote literacy programs oriented towards preserving Jambi culture through education.

This study is the first step in the process of developing teaching materials based on Research and Development (R&D). Therefore, it is recommended that further research develop prototypes of fantasy story teaching materials based on local wisdom in Jambi and test them in learning to determine their effectiveness, usability, and impact on students' interest in learning and

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understanding. This next step is necessary to ensure that the teaching materials developed can be used optimally in a school context.

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