The Effectiveness of Digital Comic-Based Fantasy Story Teaching Materials in Indonesian Language Learning

Hasri Fendi[1*)], Delami[1)], Mohamed Razeef Abdul Razak[2)]
[1)]UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, Balai Gadang, Kota Padang, Sumatera Barat, Indonesia
[3)]Institut Seni Kreatif Nusantara (INSAN), Universiti Teknologi Mara, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia
*Corresponding Author, email: hasrifendi@uinib.ac.id

Abstract

Learning Indonesian fantasy story texts often faces obstacles in improving students' understanding due to the limitations of conventional learning media. Integration of digital comics based on local culture is an innovative alternative to increase students' engagement and understanding of fantasy story texts. This study aims to explain the effectiveness of using digital comics based on local culture in learning to understand fantasy story texts. The method used is Research & Development (R&D) with the ADDIE development model, and product trials were conducted on class VII.E students of SMP Negeri 2 Padang with a one-group pretest-posttest design. The sample was selected based on the class with the lowest standard deviation. The results showed that there was a significant increase in students' understanding after using digital comics, as evidenced by the statistically significant difference in pretest and posttest scores. Digital comics have been shown to increase student engagement and overcome the limitations of conventional media. In conclusion, the use of digital comics based on local culture is effective in improving students' understanding of fantasy story texts. The results of this study indicate that innovation in technology-based learning media can be a solution to increase the effectiveness of Indonesian language learning in the digital era.

Keywords: digital comic; fantasy story; teaching materials

Introduction

The Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes Indonesian language learning that integrates mastery of language skills with understanding and appreciation of culture and literature (Ramandhani & Widyartono, 2024). Literary works are used as a learning medium that not only improves language skills but also introduces local and national cultural values (Monica et al., 2024). This approach is designed to link learning materials to real-life contexts, so that students can understand the relevance of language and literature in everyday life and prepare themselves to face global challenges (Zhou & Li, 2022). Thus, Indonesian language learning is not only oriented towards academic achievement but also contributes to strengthening students' character.

Literature plays an important role in language learning because it represents social and cultural values that develop in society (Junyanti, 2024). Through literary works, students can understand various traditions, customs, and moral principles that shape the nation's identity. In addition, literature also functions as an effective educational tool, because it conveys moral messages that are relevant to everyday life (Pratiwi & Megiati, 2024). The themes raised in

literary works often provide deep insights and influence students' mindsets and attitudes in dealing with various situations (Lou & Noels, 2023). A relevant, creative, and fun approach will increase students' motivation to learn actively and deeply (Fadilah, 2020). Therefore, understanding and appreciation of literature not only enriches students' language skills but also helps them understand the values of life in a broader context. One important aspect in learning literature is understanding oral and written literature.

Oral literature is a cultural expression that is passed down from generation to generation through various forms, such as fairy tales, legends, folklore, songs, and oral poetry (Danandjaja, 1994). The uniqueness of oral literature lies in its dynamic nature, where the narrator can improvise in telling the story, so that each performance has its own characteristics. Although there are variations in the narratives that develop in various regions, the moral messages and cultural values contained in the story are maintained, playing a role in shaping the collective consciousness of society (Melucci, 2013).

One of the oral literary texts that can integrate cultural values is fantasy story texts. Fantasy stories have an important role in learning Indonesian because they not only attract students' interest but also stimulate their imagination and creativity (Hikma et al., 2024). This genre often contains conflicts and moral values that are relevant to everyday life, so it can be used as a means to train students' critical thinking skills (Harahap et al., 2025). In addition, in character education, fantasy stories can be an effective medium for instilling values such as courage, cooperation, and responsibility (Sayer, Kristiawan, & Agustina, 2018). Thus, fantasy stories not only function as entertainment but also as educational tools that support students' cognitive and moral development.

The use of fantasy stories in learning Indonesian is increasingly relevant in efforts to shape students' character (Andriani, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility for educators to integrate fantasy stories as an explicit means of teaching character values (Parhan et al., 2024). Through the stories of characters who face challenges with courage and perseverance, students can learn to understand and internalize these values (Ridwan & Ahmad, 2025). This approach also helps students realize the importance of applying moral values in everyday life, so that learning is not only academic, but also contributes to the formation of a stronger and more meaningful personality (Belda-Medina, 2024).

Fantasy stories have several types, one of which can be folklore. As part of cultural heritage, folklore has a very important function in shaping the identity of a community group. Every story that is passed down from generation to generation is not only entertainment, but also functions as a reflection of the culture, norms, and values adopted by its community. In folklore, various moral and ethical values are stored that have become guidelines for life for previous generations, and should be maintained for future generations (Mphasha, 2015; Tuna, 2016; Mishra & Satpathy, 2020). The educational role of folklore is also very significant, especially in the context of character education for the younger generation. Many folktales teach moral, ethical, and cultural values, such as the importance of honesty, courage, hard work, and respect for others. Thus, folktales serve as educational tools that help the younger generation understand the concept of what is good, right, and just in social life (Tuna, 2016; Harrison, 2016). In this way, folktales not only provide entertainment, but also serve as a means of introspection for the people who listen to them (Mphasha, 2015; Järv, 2015).

In the modern era, the existence of folklore faces various challenges that threaten its existence and relevance. One of the biggest challenges is the loss of relevance due to technological advances and changes in the interests of the younger generation. The rapid development of information technology has shifted the pattern of story consumption from oral to more interactive and dynamic digital forms. As a result, the oral tradition that is the main medium for spreading folklore is fading, creating a void in the values and cultural heritage that should continue to be passed on to the next generation (Premawardhena et al., 2024;

Caesar & Sanasam, 2018). In addition, globalization plays a role in blurring the cultural specifications of a nation. The massive entry of foreign cultures through social media, films, and various other forms of entertainment has shifted the attention of society, especially the younger generation, from local folklore to a more dominant global narrative. This has eroded the traditional moral compass that was previously a guideline in community life, and reduced the relevance of folklore in the context of modern life (Zantaria, 2024).

Based on this, the solution that can be done is to integrate folklore learning into language learning through teaching materials. Teaching materials are one of the fundamental components in the teaching and learning process that play an important role in improving students' understanding of a particular concept or skill (Simanjuntak et al., 2022; Wlekly & Piwowarski, 2022). Good teaching materials not only convey information, but must also be designed by considering the structure, organization, and effectiveness in supporting continuous learning. Therefore, the development of teaching materials must go through several systematic stages, starting from careful planning, preparing a structure that suits students' needs, to evaluating its effectiveness in improving learning outcomes (Rezende et al., 2013; De la Flor López et al., 2016).

In the context of modern education, the approach to compiling teaching materials has experienced rapid development with the integration of technology and innovative learning methods (Kusasi & Najmiati, 2021; Rahmayani & Indriyani, 2024). In addition, the use of digital media such as video tutorials is increasingly being applied to support independent learning, providing flexibility for students to understand the material according to their learning pace (Indriyani, Kurniawati, & Ramadhan, 2023; Ramadhan et al., 2023; Simanjuntak et al., 2022). Not only that, the development of teaching materials must also consider cultural factors and local education policies, so that they can be more relevant to the needs of students in various regions. Based on this explanation, learning fantasy texts in the form of folklore can be integrated into Indonesian language teaching materials.

The teaching materials currently used still have various weaknesses that can hinder the achievement of learning objectives optimally. Along with the increasing use of digital materials, new challenges arise in the form of high cognitive load due to excessive text, making it difficult for students to process information effectively (Wlekly & Piwowarski, 2022). One solution to overcome this problem is to present fantasy texts from folklore in the form of digital comics to make them more interesting. Digital comics, which are a transformation from print to digital media, offer a more dynamic and interactive narrative without the physical limitations of printed pages. In addition, digital comics integrate various modes of communication, such as visual, verbal, and even aural elements, thus enriching students' reading experience (Yefymenko, 2021).

One of the main advantages of digital comics is the higher level of interactivity and immersion compared to printed comics, where users can interact directly through touchscreen devices that allow unlimited rotation and movement control (Ryu, 2016). This provides a more immersive reading experience by presenting more dynamic visual elements and allowing readers to be truly involved in each scene. In addition, ease of access and distribution are the main factors that make digital comics increasingly popular, because they can be accessed through various digital platforms such as personal websites, social media, and special digital comic applications, which allow readers to enjoy their works anytime and anywhere without physical limitations. Many creators now choose to publish their works online, either for free or before or after the printed version is published, thus providing more flexibility in the distribution and marketing of their works (Manuzzato, 2023).

Digital technology also further enriches the reading experience by allowing the integration of additional elements such as sound, movement, and visual effects that cannot be presented in conventional printed comics (Fernández, 2023; Ramadhan, Indriyani, & Sukma,

2022). For example, interactive comic applications can combine these various multimedia elements to create a more immersive and engaging reading experience, making readers more connected to the story presented (Lombard-Cook, 2015). In addition, flexibility in creation and presentation is also a significant advantage, because digital comics are not tied to a fixed format, allowing creators to explore various writing and design methodologies that utilize multimodality and interactivity in richer and more meaningful storytelling (Lombard-Cook, 2015).

Another equally important advantage is the educational potential of digital comics, because they can be used as an effective learning tool to help students understand complex concepts in a more interesting and interactive way. Digital comics can also function as a means of critical reflection on texts and become a safe medium for students to write stories about uncomfortable concepts, thereby improving their critical thinking skills. In addition, digital comics also contribute to the professional growth of teachers in a unique way, providing innovative alternatives in delivering teaching materials and encouraging learning methods that are more adaptive to technological developments (Sockman et al., 2016). With all these advantages, digital comics not only present a more interesting and in-depth reading experience, but also become a very relevant medium in the world of education, the creative industry, and the digital era as a whole. Based on this explanation, the purpose of this study is to explain the effectiveness of using local culture-based digital comics in learning to understand fantasy story texts in Indonesian language learning.

Methods

This type of research is Research & Development (R&D) which aims to develop teaching materials in the form of digital comics based on local culture in learning fantasy story texts in Indonesian language learning. The development model is based on the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation & Evaluation). This study produces teaching materials in the form of digital comics according to student needs and learning situations. Teaching materials are based on the Independent Curriculum. The product trial was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Padang. This school was selected using a purposive sampling technique with the criteria of students registered at SMP Negeri in Padang City; open to innovation; able to establish good cooperation; and have adequate facilities and infrastructure to conduct research. The trial schedule is adjusted to the school curriculum so that the product developed is suitable for use at that time. The research instrument is a test that has been validated in advance. Data is analyzed descriptively with statistical testing. Students selected as trial subjects are limited based on the lowest standard deviation, namely 40 students in class VII.E. In this study, the design used was one pretest-posttest design because one group of students was used as the sample for this study. The testing process involves the following two main stages. First, a pre-test is conducted before the digital comic-based teaching materials are applied in the learning process. The purpose of the pre-test is to obtain an initial picture of students' knowledge and understanding of the topic to be taught. The pre-test also serves as an initial diagnosis to identify areas where students may experience difficulties before the material intervention is carried out. Second, a post-test is conducted after the digital comic-based teaching materials are applied. The purpose of the post-test is to assess the extent to which the teaching materials used have improved students' understanding of fantasy stories and the character values contained therein. The post-test allows researchers to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials and see changes in students' knowledge and skills after using the materials. The design of this study can be seen in the following table.

Table 1. One Group Pretest-Posttest Design

Pretest	Treatment	Posttest

T1	X	T2

Description:
- T1: Test to measure students' understanding of fantasy story texts before using digital comics based on local culture.
- X: Treatment given to research samples using digital comics based on local culture.
- T2: Test to measure students' understanding of fantasy story texts after using digital comics based on local culture.

Result and Discussion

Testing the effectiveness of the product developed by digital comics based on local culture in learning to understand fantasy story texts in Indonesian language learning is done through hypothesis testing. The analysis is continued by assessing students' understanding of fantasy texts through tests. The results of the analysis of student class learning outcomes are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Student Learning Outcomes

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
pretest	40	65.00	88.00	76.1500	8.94585
postest	40	65.00	96.00	87.8250	7.72902

Based on the results of descriptive analysis of student learning outcomes data, it was found that there was a significant increase between the pretest and posttest scores. The average student learning outcomes in the posttest showed a higher number than the pretest, which indicates a development in students' understanding of the fantasy story text learning material after receiving treatment in learning, namely the use of digital comics based on local culture. In addition, the maximum score achieved by students in the posttest was also higher than the pretest, which shows that some students were able to achieve a more optimal level of understanding after following the learning process. This finding shows the effectiveness of the learning intervention given in improving students' academic achievement. Thus, the results of this study confirm that the learning approach applied contributes positively to improving student learning outcomes. To find out whether the treatment has a significant effect or not, a hypothesis test is carried out. Before conducting a hypothesis test, it is necessary to conduct a prerequisite analysis test in the form of a normality test. Based on the normality test that has been carried out, the following data were found which can be seen in the following table.

Table 3. Data Normality Test

Tests of Normality						
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre_test	.182	40	.002	.853	40	.000
Post_Test	.257	40	.000	.748	40	.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction						

Based on the results of the normality test, it was found that the data was not normally distributed because sig. < 0.005. Therefore, the hypothesis test was carried out through non-parametric statistics or the Wilcoxon test. Based on the statistical tests carried out, the results of the Wilcoxon test can be seen in the following table.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing

Ranks		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
PostTest - PreTest	Negative Ranks	6[a]	11.00	66.00
	Positive Ranks	33[b]	21.64	714.00
	Ties	1[c]		
	Total	40		
a. PostTest < PreTest				
b. PostTest > PreTest				
c. PostTest = PreTest				

Test Statistics[b]	
	PostTest - PreTest
Z	-4.526[a]
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
a. Based on negative ranks.	
b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test	

Based on the ranks table, it shows that there are 6 students who showed a decrease in scores from the pre-test to the post-test. Furthermore, there are 33 students who experienced an increase in assessment and there is 1 student who did not experience a change in score. Furthermore, based on the results of the statistical analysis shown in the table, the Asymp Sig. (2-tailed) value shows a number smaller than 0.05. This indicates that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test results, so that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. In other words, the development of digital comics based on local culture has proven effective in improving students' understanding of fantasy story texts in learning Indonesian at the secondary school level. Thus, the integration of digital technology in local culture-based learning materials can be an innovative alternative in increasing the effectiveness of learning in the digital era.

Based on the results of the study, it shows that the development of digital comics based on local culture is effective in learning fantasy story texts for middle-class students. The results of this study are supported by previous studies. The results of the study show that digital comics based on local culture are effective in learning Indonesian, especially in fantasy story texts. Digital comics not only increase student engagement but can also be a solution to overcome the limitations of conventional learning media. Zakiyah et al. (2022) developed an Indonesian language textbook based on digital comics that are oriented towards critical thinking skills. The results show that this digital comic media is valid in terms of content and is suitable for use as a learning resource, so that it can minimize obstacles in the learning process due to media limitations. Other studies also support these findings. Susilawati (2017) found that the use of digital comics in teaching writing narrative texts increased student engagement and understanding. Kirchoff (2017) stated that digital comics can introduce digital literacy and shape students as competent digital citizens. In addition, Vie and Dieterle (2016) examined the role of comics as scaffolding in improving critical literacy, finding that students became more reflective of the ideology presented in the comics. This is in line with the integration of multimodality and critical literacy that is more than just the use of technological tools.

In the context of developing learning media, Devista and Kadafi's (2021) research shows that the Make Beliefs Comix page is an interesting platform for developing digital comics as learning media. The advantages of this platform are easy access without having to download the application, its use does not require drawing skills, and ease of operation and cost efficiency. However, there are several limitations, such as the need for a stable internet connection and supporting devices, such as a computer or laptop, to make it easier to use.

In addition to fantasy story texts, digital comics are also relevant in learning anecdotal texts. Karina and Payanti (2022) state that digital comics can be accessed anytime and anywhere using a cellphone, especially through social media such as Instagram. The use of digital comics in this context stimulates the development of students' thinking skills in discussing controversial issues, as well as being a solution to students' low interest in learning Indonesian. Furthermore, Georgaka and Pouroutidi (2016) found that creating digital comics can encourage group collaboration and collaborative writing, creating a more positive learning experience for students. Meanwhile, Wahab, Wasis, and Indana (2016) showed that comic-based teaching materials are valid, practical, and effective in improving student learning outcomes and making them more active in the learning process. Overall, the integration of local culture-based digital comics in Indonesian language learning has proven effective in improving student learning outcomes. With its various advantages, digital comics are an innovative alternative in presenting learning materials that are more interesting and relevant to current technological developments and student needs.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the development of digital comics based on local culture is effective in improving students' understanding of fantasy story texts. The results of the statistical analysis showed a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, indicating an increase in students' understanding after using this learning media. This finding is in line with various previous studies that highlight the effectiveness of digital comics in increasing student engagement and literacy. In addition, digital comics are able to overcome the limitations of conventional media in learning Indonesian, so that they are more adaptive to the needs of students in the digital era. The use of digital platforms also facilitates access and creation of digital comics as innovative teaching materials. However, the implementation of this media requires adequate technological infrastructure support, including digital devices and a stable internet connection. Therefore, the integration of digital comics based on local culture can be an alternative solution in improving the effectiveness of learning at the secondary school level.

As a suggestion, educators are advised to optimize the use of digital comics in learning Indonesian, especially in fantasy story texts. The government and educational institutions need to provide access to digital devices and training for teachers so that they can develop and utilize digital comics effectively. In addition, further research can further explore how digital comics can be applied in various types of texts and wider levels of education. The implications of this study indicate that innovation in technology-based learning media can improve student engagement and learning outcomes. The use of digital comics also encourages the development of students' digital literacy, which is an essential skill in the modern era. Thus, the integration of technology in learning not only improves the effectiveness of teaching but also shapes students as more reflective and adaptive learners. In the future, collaboration between academics, teachers, and technology developers is expected to produce more varied learning media that are in accordance with the needs of students.

Acknowledgments

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