

# Use of Folk Stories in Indonesian Language Textbooks as Strengthening Character and Culture of Junior High School Students

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**Abstract.** Folklore or local wisdom in Indonesian language textbooks, both the independent curriculum and the 2013 curriculum, emphasizes the internalization of Indonesian culture as the nation's identity and diversity. Apart from being a way of preserving culture, the use of folklore also provides character learning for students. Additionally, integrating character education from local community wisdom positively instills life skills and moral values in the 21st century. This research aims to describe the use of folklore in Indonesian Middle School books for the 2013 independent curriculum. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. This research's data and sources are texts from the 2013 Indonesian Middle School curriculum and independent curriculum books. The data analysis technique in this research uses content analysis. The results of this research explain the use of folklore by teachers, researchers, and several textbooks used in schools, both the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum, such as Kolosan Dance, Gajah Mada, Wae Rebo, Timun Mas, Anoman, Komodo Island; The use of folklore is considered adequate and has more of a portion of the Indonesian language learning curriculum. Folklore illustrates how to create a written work and also has cultural values that can shape students' character.

**Keywords:** Folklore, Character Education, Local Wisdom, Cultural Values, Cultural Internalization.

## 1 Introduction

Education plays a vital role in developing potential and competence in Indonesian society. One of the goals of education is to develop a smart, virtuous, and civilized national character. Educational issues are related to learning abilities and the formation of students' personalities. Educational success does not only depend on technical knowledge and skills (hard skills) but also on personality skills (soft skills), so improving the quality of students' character education is important[1],[2].

Character education is a structured and planned effort to form, develop, and strengthen positive values, attitudes, and behavior in students. The goals of education are to create a good, responsible personality, high morality, and the ability to contribute positively to society. The Ministry of Education and Culture's policy contained in Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 22 of 2020 concerning the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education for 2020-2024 states: "Pancasila students are the embodiment of Indonesian students as lifelong learners who have global competence and behave by values Pancasila, with six main

characteristics: faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character, global diversity, cooperation, independence, critical reasoning and creativity." Policy Ministry of Education and Culture regarding determining the Pancasila Student Profile is one effort Ministry of Education and Culture in realizing President Joko Widodo's *nawacita*, namely Strengthening Character Education (PPK)[1].

Strengthening the profile of Pancasila students needs to be carried out intensively and comprehensively in all corners of the country, considering that there is an unstoppable decline in children's morals today. The problem phenomena that have occurred in the educational environment recently require the importance of character education strengthening programs, including the problem of moral degradation. An example is the case intolerant (brawls between students), prostitution, promiscuity, bullying, pornography, and cybercrime[3]. KPAI research found an increase in brawl cases in 2020 in Indonesia compared to previous years. Meanwhile, based on KPAI data, the number of cases of pornography and cybercrime among children adds to the record of children's problems[4].

A student can study character education in various ways, one of which is local wisdom, including folklore. Local wisdom/customs are the characteristics or cultural characteristics of a nation that enable that nation to absorb, even adapt, culture from outside or other nations to become unique characteristics and abilities. This must align with the worldview of the surrounding community so there is no change in values. Traditional wisdom is one way to cultivate culture and maintain the authenticity of unwanted foreign cultures. Local wisdom is how people behave and act in response to changes in the physical and cultural environment. A concept that lives in society grows and develops continuously in people's consciousness, from those related to sacred life to those profane (everyday parts of life and an ordinary nature). Local wisdom can be understood as wise ideas that are full of wisdom, have good value, and are embedded and followed by community members. Local wisdom is expressed in the form of words of wisdom (philosophy) in the form of advice, sayings, rhymes, poetry, folklore (oral stories), and so on; social and moral rules, principles, norms, and regulations that constitute a social system; rites, ceremonies or traditions and rituals; as well as habits that are visible in daily behavior in social interactions[5].

Local wisdom is a form of understanding that exists in a society to regulate people's lives. It is a set of views of life and knowledge manifested in local communities' activities and allows them to solve various problems to meet their needs [6][7]. Local wisdom can be found in community groups and individuals who relate to local wisdom used by the community to control daily life in family relationships, with fellow relatives, and with people in the broader environment[8]. The scope of these policies is local knowledge, culture, and intelligence, so local wisdom is also known as *local knowledge, local wisdom, and ingenious local*.

Local wisdom can be values, norms, ethics, beliefs, customs, laws, and special rules. Local wisdom is synonymous with human behavior related to 1) god, 2) natural signs, 3) environment/agriculture, 4) building a house, 5) education, 6) marriage and birth ceremonies, 7) food, 8) human life cycle and character, 9) health, 10) natural disasters. Meanwhile, the scope of local wisdom Wagiran divides into eight, namely: 1) developed local norms, taboos, and obligations; 2) community rituals and traditions and the meaning behind them; 3) folk songs, legends, myths and folk stories and usually contains specific lessons or messages that are only recognized by the local community, 4) information, data and knowledge collected from community elders, traditional leaders, spiritual leaders, 5) manuscripts or holy books that are believed to be accurate by the community, 6) methods -how local communities fulfill their daily

lives, 7) tools and materials used for specific needs, 8) conditions of natural/environmental resources that are usually used in people's daily lives[9].

Folklore is a form of local wisdom. Folklore or oral stories develop in society and become the property of the local community where the story was born. Folklore is born by word of mouth, and it continues to spread, creating beliefs and heritage from ancestors. Folklore is usually not just a story; folklore is born from advice containing values that function in social life. The inheritance of noble values contained in folklore needs to continue to be carried out to avoid extinction and claims from other communities or countries. Fantasy stories offer a different world from reality and allow the imagination to flourish. This is by folklore, which has stories that are sometimes beyond human logic. In fantasy stories, there is magic, strangeness, mystery, and the supernatural that does not exist in the real world. Students' fictional world or imaginary world varies according to their imagination. Therefore, fiction/fantasy stories are chosen to improve students' imagination abilities expressed in their writing. Based on this, it can be concluded that folklore is suitable for use as an alternative writing learning media[10]–[12].

Fang stated, "Folk literature is literature that lives amid the people." For Fang, folklore is oral literature that lives in society and functions to convey moral messages to the younger generation [15]. Several types of folklore are known to the public. There are three types of folklore, including (1) myth, (2) legend, and (3) folktale[13]. Myths are stories that tell the lives of gods or humans who are given supernatural powers so that the stories are considered sacred for the messages they convey. Legends are folk prose stories that are supposed to have happened by their supporters but are not considered holy, often taking human characters, sometimes having extraordinary characteristics and assisted by spirits; the place of occurrence can be the present or the past[14]. Fairy tales are folk prose stories considered not to have happened and are not bound by time or place[15].

Integrating folklore into learning allows students to get to know the culture. Apart from that, the value of character education in folklore can strengthen students' character. Indonesian language textbooks in junior high schools, especially in grade 7, both the 2013 and independent curricula, contain folklore and local wisdom from various regions. This research aims to describe the use of folklore or local wisdom in Indonesian language textbooks issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia and written by Fairul Zabadi, Sutejo, Mu'jizah, and Dad Murniah using the 2013 curriculum, year of publication. 2013 and revised in 2014[16]; Ministry of Education and Culture, Indonesia and written by Titik Harsiati, Agus Trianto, and E. Kosasih using the 2013 curriculum, published in 2017[17]; Indonesian language book issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology and written by Rakhma Subarna, Sofie Dewayani, and C. Erni Setyowati using the Merdeka Curriculum published in 2021 [7]. The ministry consistently uses folklore and local wisdom from these three books in Indonesia. This form of consistency contributes to the country so that junior high school students in Indonesia understand, love, and maintain the culture that exists in Indonesia.

## **2 Research Methods**

This research is a qualitative descriptive study describing the use of folklore in teaching writing in grade 7 at junior high school. This research's data and data sources are teaching materials or learning media that contain elements of folklore that are given to students. The sources for this research are three books published by Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, which is now Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi (Ministry of

Education, Culture, Research and Technology) 2013 curriculum textbooks, independent curriculum textbooks, teacher learning media, and other sources used by teachers[18]. The data collection techniques were interviews with information from sources and field observations by directly observing the learning and documentation. The data analysis technique used is content analysis. Content analysis is used to analyze texts in teaching materials, teaching media, and other sources teachers use in learning Indonesian based on local content[19].

### 3 Result and Discussion

The educational process, both formal and non-formal, is the foundation for an Indonesia with good character. In psychology, education aims to form character manifested in the subject's essential unity with his behavior and attitude to life[20]. The Indonesian language learning mechanism containing local wisdom is running well. The books students use contain folklore or local wisdom in Indonesia and various aspects of the material in learning to write, read, speak, and listen. The following is a presentation of folklore and wisdom in the 7th-grade SMP Indonesian language book students use.

#### 3.1 Indonesian Language Book Published 2017 Curriculum 2013

##### 3.1.1 Colossal Dance "Ariah"

Teks 2

**Gebyar Pementasan Tari Kolosal Ariah**

Drama tari kolosal "Ariah" dipentaskan di area Monas. Pementasan tari kolosal ini dalam rangka hari jadi Kota Jakarta ke-386. Drama musikal "Ariah" diambil dari cerita Betawi. "Ariah" menceritakan pejuang perempuan muda Betawi yang penuh semangat dan mempunyai martabat. Atilah Soeryadjaya memprakarsai dan menjadi sutradara cerita rakyat Betawi ini. Selain itu, seniman serba bisa itu juga menulis naskah dan sekaligus menulis lirik lagu pementasannya. Dari awal sampai akhir, pementasan ini sangat memukau.

Pertunjukan dimulai pada pukul 20.00. Pertunjukan dibuka dengan nyala api yang berkobar di depan tugu Monas. Di bagian barat kembang api meluncur deras ke langit Jakarta diiringi alunan musik mengentak keras. Penonton bersorak-sorai kaget sekaligus terpesona. Tata lampu yang didukung cuaca cerah malam itu semakin menambah kedahsyatan suasana pembukaan. Pertunjukan awal melibatkan Monas sebagai latar. Monas nampak gagah dan menawan karena berkali-kali disoroti gambar-gambar indah sebagai latar cerita.

Setelah sukses memukau penonton pada acara pembukaan, penonton disuguhi kemunculan 200 penari yang menjadi inti drama Ariah. Para penari berlenggak-lenggok di atas tiga level panggung miring dengan sudut 15 derajat. Kostum warna-warni tradisional Betawi nampak semarak dibalut sinar lampu yang dramatis. Erwin Gutawa mengaransemen lagu-lagu Betawi dengan syahdu. Musik menggetarkan suasana.

Adegan puncak benar-benar mengaduk-aduk emosi penonton. Beragam suasana hati semakin dirasakan penonton. Nuansa keceriaan permainan anak-anak wak wak gung disusul suasana romantis Juki dan Ariah. Adekan berganti dengan suasana seru latihan silat antara Ariah dan Juki. Pergantian suasana berlangsung sangat cepat. Puncak ketegangan semakin terasa pada saat para



Sumber: <http://freemagz.com>  
Gambar 1.3 Pementasan Drama Tari Ariah

Figure 1. Text description of the Colossal Dance "Ariah" in the 2017 Indonesian language book page 15

Colossal dance is a performance performed en masse by various groups and ethnic groups. This dance usually involves choreography with a specific theme, such as drama. The colossal

dance "Ariah" is a musical drama that tells the story of a young Betawi female fighter who is full of enthusiasm and dignity. The enormous dance drama "Ariah" was staged in the Monas area. This colossal dance performance was in celebration of the 386th anniversary of the City of Jakarta in 2013. This colossal dance appears in the Indonesian language book published in the 2017 and 2013 curriculum in descriptive text material. The competencies expected in this learning are identifying information in descriptive texts about objects (schools, tourist attractions, historical places, and the atmosphere of regional arts performances) that are heard and read; determining the content of text descriptions of objects (tourist attractions, historical places, regional arts performances, traditional fabrics, etc.) that are heard and read; examine the structure and linguistic elements of descriptive texts about objects (schools, tourist attractions, historical places, and the atmosphere of regional arts performances) that are heard and read; present data, ideas, impressions in the form of text descriptions about objects (schools, tourist attractions, historical places, and the atmosphere of regional arts performances) in writing and orally by paying attention to structure, language both orally and in writing. The educational value taught in this material is struggle and hard work.

### 3.1.2 Komodo island



Sumber: Foto pribadi  
Gambar 2.2 Cerita Fantasi bermuatan Pulau Komodo

Cerita fantasi merupakan salah satu genre cerita yang sangat penting untuk melatih kreativitas. Berfantasi secara aktif bisa mengasah kreativitas. Kamu bisa menjadi penulis hebat. Harry Potter termasuk cerita fantasi yang sangat terkenal. Di Indonesia kita memiliki penulis hebat yang menulis berbagai cerita fantasi. Di antara penulis hebat cerita fantasi itu adalah Ugi Agustono dan Joko Lelono. Ugi Agustono menulis cerita fantasi berdasarkan pengamatan terhadap komodo dan suasana di pulau Komodo. Joko Lelono juga menulis cerita fantasi dengan nuansa lokal. Kamu juga dapat belajar menulis fantasi dengan belajar secara tekun dan tidak takut berkreasikan. Kamu dapat seperti mereka.

**Figure 2.** Fantasy text material containing Komodo Island in the 2021 Indonesian language book, page 44

Komodo Island is located in the eastern part of the Nusa Tenggara Islands, Sumbawa Island. Komodo Island is known as the natural habitat of the animal [Komodo dragon](#). This island is one of the areas [of Komodo National Park](#) managed by the Central Government. In [1910](#) The Dutch named this island on the southern side of East Nusa Tenggara Province the nickname Komodo Island. This story begins with Lieutenant [Steyn van Hens Broek](#), who tried to prove the Dutch troops' report about the presence of a large animal resembling a dragon on the island. Steyn then killed a Komodo dragon and took the documentation to [the Museum and Botanical Garden in Bogor](#) to be researched. In 2009, Komodo National Park was named a finalist in the "New Seven Wonders of Nature," only announced in 2010 through online voting at [www.N7W.com](#).

Komodo Island in textbooks Indonesian was internalized in a story entitled The Power of the Blue Tail of the Nataga. The story tells of several groups defending their territory. The story certainly happened with moral messages and character education values that students can take

away. This story is a folk tale that was then internalized into a fantasy story. In learning Indonesian, the development of stories is a critical point. This is related to writing skills, and imagination is really needed in developing stories. Incorporating folklore into fantasy stories is undoubtedly a perfect thing; of course, apart from learning about history, students are also directed to have strong thinking power in developing a story idea so that learning outcomes in teaching are Students can convey ideas, thoughts, views, directions or messages to submit suggestions, solve problems and providing solutions orally in the form of logical, critical and creative monologues and dialogues. It can be achieved well.

### 3.1.3 Gajah Mada

Judul		Belajar dengan Gajah Mada
<b>Orientasi</b> Mengenalkan latar, tokoh		Minggu pagi yang cerah Ardi, Handi, dan Dani berada di Candi Trowulan. Mereka merupakan siswa pilihan dari sebuah SMP yang sedang melakukan tugas pengamatan untuk karya ilmiah remaja. Di tengah keramaian orang yang sedang berwisata, mereka sibuk menyelesaikan laporannya.
<b>Komplikasi</b> Timbul masalah hingga masalah memuncak		<p>"Toloong," tiba-tiba terdengar suara Handi berteriak minta tolong. Dani dan Ardi yang berada tidak jauh dari tempat itu segera berlari menghampiri. Betapa kagetnya mereka berdua melihat Handi berada di sebuah lubang dan hanya kelihatan tangannya. Dengan reflek Ardi dan Dani menarik berusaha menolong Handi. Tapi "Aaahh..!" terdengar teriakan keras dan mereka bertiga terseret masuk ke lubang itu.</p> <p>"Dimana kita?" Ardi bertanya sambil menatap tembok sekelilingnya yang memancarkan kemilau keemasan.</p> <p>"Tempat apa ini?" Handi dan Dani bertanya hampir bersamaan.</p>

Figure 3. Fantasy text material containing the story of Patih Gajah Mada

Gajah Mada is a historical figure known as Mahapatih or prime minister of the Majapahit kingdom in the 14th century. Gajah Mada is famous because of the Palapa oath, which prevented him from tasting delicious spices before succeeding in uniting the archipelago. In the story that developed, Gajah Mada was described as a strong hero who had the spirit of leadership and had high ambitions to be able to liberate a region; Gajah Mada was known as an inspirational character whose nature can be used as an example as a learning medium, especially in story learning, in the lesson Discuss Indonesia Gajah Mada is told in the fantasy story chapter which is developed into a unique story so that students can understand the content of the story.

The 2013 Curriculum Indonesian Language Book focuses on the story of Gajah Mada, which is a story that tells about three children who were suddenly thrown into the tunnel of time and met Gajah Mada; in this story, Gajah Mada talked about his previous struggles and one time Gajah Mada asked The three children spoke about what they had prepared to become valuable people. The three of them also answered what they had prepared to become valuable people, but unfortunately, being bright alone was not enough. In this story, they were taught to have good qualities or behavior. This is one of the characteristics of the 2013 curriculum, namely that it emphasizes moral values[21].

In the 2013 curriculum, the competencies that students must have are understanding, applying, and analyzing based on their curiosity about science, technology, and humanities. In learning to understand the content of the text, students need to be given stories that are simple and can be understood by students. Through lesson plans, teachers can internalize literary

literacy through reading and writing activities so that learning to discuss Indonesia, especially in learning to write story texts, can run well by bringing stories familiar to the community. Of course, students will understand better. Learning to write, especially those related to the power of imagination[18].

### 3.2 Indonesian Language Book Published 2017 Curriculum 2013

#### 3.2.1 Wae Rebo, Manggarai, NTT.



**Figure 4.** Description text material containing Wae Rebo in the Indonesian language book published in 2021, page 22

We Reboor Waerebo is a remote and mysterious traditional village in Manggarai Regency, East Nusa Tenggara. Wae Rebo is one of the cultural tourism destinations in Manggarai Regency. Located at an altitude of 1,200 meters above sea level. In this village, there are only seven leading houses or Niang. Wae Rebo was declared by UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage in August 2012, excluding 42 other countries. Wae itself, in the Manggarai language, means "water." Wae Rebo is a village with origins. The Wae Rebo people believe that their ancestor, Empo Maro, and several of his families sailed across the vast ocean and landed in Labuan Bajo, Flores Island. They continued their journey overland towards the north until they arrived at a village called Waraloka. Based on stories handed down from generations of parents in Waerebo Village, Empo Maro then traveled overland and moved from one village to another, starting from Waraloka to Nangapa'ang, Todo, Popo, Liho, Modo, Golo Ponto, Ndara Golo and Golo Damu before settled in Waerebo Village. Empo Maro chose to live in Waerebo Village because he received a message through a dream to live and spend his time in this traditional village. The 2021 Indonesian language textbook tells a story about a village above the clouds called Wae Rebo. The book A Tour Guide explains the history and parts of houses or buildings and their use in Wae Rebo for visiting tourists[14].

### 3.2.2 Anoman



Figure 5. Folk Poetry material containing the story of Anoman, page 41

The Roman story in Indonesian language learning is found in the independent curriculum book, which is contained in the folk poetry chapter in fantasy stories. The Roman story is a folk tale later developed into a fantasy story. The story of Anoman or Anoman Obong is one of the Ramayana stories, an epic tale of life originating from India. The Ramayana tells the story of Rama, a prince who was looking for his wife, Sita, who Ravana kidnapped. Anoman, or Hanuman, was a white monkey with extraordinary powers and a bhakti (faithful admirer) of Rama. Anoman plays an essential role in the search for Sita and plays a courageous and loyal character.

The development of folk tales into fantasy stories certainly has a goal: to make it easier for students to understand the material. By turning folk tales into fantasy stories, students will have broad thinking power in developing fantasy stories in Indonesian language learning books. The Anoman story is internalized into the story. Namely, a monkey with courage and fighting spirit in defending his territory because his persistence in maintaining power can contain a moral message that can be taught to students. Students can also create other versions of fantasy stories by developing them from local folklore so that the stories they create have meaningfulness.

### 3.2.2 Timun Mas (Golden Cucumber)





Figure 6. Fantasy story text material containing the story of Timun Mas, page 59

Timun mas is a folk tale in the form of a legend from Central Java. Timun Mas tells the story of a farmer who planted a cucumber when he was surprised by the plant growing well. One day, a baby's voice was heard in the cucumber, and when he opened the cucumber, he saw a human baby, but unfortunately, the baby was the baby of a giant. This story develops in society. The tale of Timun Mas can, of course, be internalized into a story which can then be used as teaching material. In the Independent Curriculum, the tale of Timun Mas is found in fantasy text material, which then has the title The Story of Golden Courage.

The folklore of Timun Mas contained in the Independent Curriculum book tells of the courage of Gold, who tried to fight off a giant attack to protect his family. Gold is depicted as a strong and brave child who is not afraid of anything until, in the battle, Gold wins and the giant loses. Learning Indonesian, mainly including folklore, certainly significantly influences students' understanding; as proven by including folklore in learning, student learning outcomes improve [22]. The learning outcomes that must be obtained in this learning are that students can appreciate and appreciate honest, disciplined, caring (tolerance, cooperation), polite, self-confident, understanding and applying knowledge (factual, conceptual, and procedural), trying, processing and presenting in the concrete realm (using, parsing, assembling, modifying and creating) and the abstract realm (writing, reading, calculating, drawing and composing) by what is learned at school and other sources with the same point of view/theory, in this learning when the material is linked to folklore material the learning results obtained by students are good.

Internalizing folklore in Indonesian language textbooks, especially in teaching writing in junior high schools, is an approach that is rich in cultural and literary values. Internalization is a process where students understand intellectually and absorb and digest the values contained in folklore. With a deep understanding of folklore, teachers can introduce folklore to students, discussing the characters, setting, conflict, and moral messages contained. Then, in the lesson, holding a class discussion about the elements of folklore can help students understand better and become emotionally involved with the story. Student learning outcomes, especially in writing material, become more interesting because the material presented is linked to folklore, so students' enthusiasm for understanding the material increases. In addition to student learning

outcomes, students internalize literacy through activities to understand folklore texts. The research results show that learning to write using folklore is an essential competency both in the syllabus and teaching modules developed with local wisdom-based learning, which is more effectively used in learning because of the learning media used in the learning process[23].

Literacy activities carried out by internalizing regional culture benefit from instilling exemplary character, love of regional culture, religion, and honesty. Students are also used to thinking critically by reflecting on culture, telling stories orally, and accepting differences in views on diversity. This aligns with Abidin's opinion, which states that literacy activities emphasize the principle of developing oral culture and awareness of diversity in society[24].

#### 4 Conclusion

The activity of internalizing folklore in learning makes learning more effective. Folklore is a story that is close to society. Folklore, then included in learning points, will improve learning outcomes. Apart from that, learning to write using folklore will help students understand the character values that develop in society because folklore contains excellent character education values. Apart from that, learning by incorporating local wisdom in learning to write aims to instill a sense of care or love for folklore so that it can be used as advice and advice.

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