

Digital Storybook to Transform Character Education of Local Wisdom Figures for Elementary School Students

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Abstract

This study addresses teachers' and students' needs for digital picture storybooks based on *Punokawan* puppet characters in elementary schools in Sukoharjo Regency. The *Wayang Punokawan* storybook media was developed based on a needs analysis in Sukoharjo Regency elementary schools implementing the 2013 Curriculum. This qualitative study indicated Sukoharjo elementary schools' needs. During the Covid-19 pandemic, learning occurred online via Google Meet and with strict health protocols offline. Field study data were obtained through interviews and observations at several elementary schools in Sukoharjo Regency. Fourth graders and their teachers were studied. Technical and data triangulation were used to validate data, and data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing were used to analyze it. The results showed that the initial condition of storybooks at elementary schools in Sukoharjo Regency was good, but it was inadequate to satisfy all parties, including students and class teachers teaching Indonesian language subjects. The textbooks also lacked local material. Teachers and students need digital picture books to improve their writing skills because they will enrich students' knowledge and boost their writing skills.

Keywords: *Digital picture storybook, wayang Punokawan, writing skills*

Introduction

Students' academic success in any field is bolstered by their ability to communicate effectively in multiple languages. Therefore, learning a second language is essential to students' intellectual, social, and emotional development. Learning a new language is an excellent way to connect with others, broaden their horizons, gain insight, and develop their minds and vocabulary (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006). Receptive language abilities comprise the ability to understand what is being read or heard, while productive language abilities cover the ability to express oneself verbally or in writing (Faridah, 2022). The goal of teaching Indonesian is the same as teaching

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any other language: to make the learner a more proficient user of the language and incorporate Indonesian language instruction into classrooms to raise comprehension and fluency levels.

Strong writing skills are crucial in all aspects of life, not just academia (Huy, 2015). At school, students learn and practice fundamental skills, including the art of writing. In this situation, it serves as a medium for education and interaction (Graham, 2019). The term "learning" refers to any endeavor with the explicit goal of fostering the healthy growth of children. This definition claims that everyone should be literate and able to communicate effectively in writing. They argue that writing skills cannot be learned hastily but require early and consistent instruction. Students entering elementary school are expected to have the skills necessary to write effectively and imaginatively.

Cooperation among individuals is required to successfully address poor writing skills. Lack of exposure to writing in early childhood has been linked to learning difficulties in later years. Literacy issues in children can effectively be tackled by first understanding children's early writing skills (Solikhah, et. al., 2022). Almost half of the elementary school students having trouble reading also have trouble writing, and these students are typically quiet and unsure of themselves in class (Genlott & Grönlund, 2013). Nonetheless, the teacher often fails to emphasize the importance of communicating the lesson's central message to the class. Furthermore, apperception is not done first, even though it should be done first to ensure that children can follow the development of the theme being taught (Budiharso, et. al., 2022; Gunio, 2021). Additionally, the instructor does not have the students participate in a post-lesson evaluation of their learning. The LKPD (*Lembar Kerja Peserta Didik*) and student worksheets are the only acceptable forms of assessment for the teacher to record student progress.

The study found that textbooks, typically including student worksheets, were widely used by the teachers observed. The instructor routinely employs such techniques as talking to the class, delegating work, giving examples, and even singing to convey information. Various media, including picture books, children's toys, and real or found objects, are used by the teacher in the classroom. No writing assignments or exercises were provided to evaluate students' writing abilities. The bulk of the responsibility is on students' creative writing skills.

The results we have mentioned match what Trismanto (2017) said about this group's writing skills. He said several problems existed, such as 1) A lack of vocabulary because they did not

like reading and writing. (2) Not learning enough about punctuation, writing rules, word groups, making well-structured clauses and sentences, and putting together paragraphs. (3) It is hard to teach kids how to write in a way fitting their needs and abilities, and (4) Many effective ways to teach them how to write are not present. Accordingly, many students still say that writing is monotonous and boring.

Based on the preceding, the researcher conducted the study and development in State Elementary Schools in the Sukoharjo Regency, focusing on fourth graders as a possible consideration for upper-elementary students. Specifically, the fourth theme of KD 3.5 and 4.5 was this research's focus. Teachers in elementary schools in Sukoharjo Regency, Indonesia, provided the first glimpse into the reality that books used in learning skills applied by teachers to improve students' linguistic competence are primarily regarded as inappropriate. Researchers interviewed several elementary school teachers. Their findings showed that teachers made mistakes when using tools, facilities, or books because they had so much to cover and did not know which books to use. They taught students outside of required thematic textbooks for the 2013 school year. Before proceeding, it is important to note that the 2013 curriculum is the most up-to-date curriculum accentuating the scientific method, authentic assessment, and integrative theme. This curriculum is intended to train the next generation of Indonesians to think critically and creatively, meeting the needs of the modern economy. According to Trismanto (2017) a scientific approach to teaching can give students a head start in their understanding of and enthusiasm for the sciences. Based on interviews and observations, the textbooks used in classrooms appear to be of high quality and align with the goals of the 2013 Curriculum in terms of presentation, language, and graphics.

Because of this problem, a book with pictures and a story based on the *Wayang Punokawan* figures was formed to help fourth graders in Sukoharjo Regency learn how to write in Indonesian. The researcher uses the Picture Story Book Based on the Characters of the *Wayang Punokawan* Figures because it can get students in many elementary schools in Sukoharjo Regency interested in learning Indonesian and entertaining writing skills. Students feel comfortable learning the language with fun writing skills and can easily remember and learn what the teacher tells them. Teachers are also encouraged to use this method to make their own teaching materials, based on the teaching theme as the innovation in social education movement (Tarman, 2017).

Much research has already been done on how media can help improve writing skills. *Wayang* educational media was made by Dwistyan & Setiawan in 2017 as a way for people, especially elementary school students, to learn about the culture of Indonesia's indigenous people. Rosmiati et al. (2020) found that the visual design of media communication through digital animation is vital to helping elementary school children learn. These media also help children develop their senses and motor skills at a young age. Raihani (2007) clarified the issue by showing how digital "Story Telling" can help students improve their writing. The results show a link between the digital storytelling tools in the treatment area and how well the students wrote on the post-test. All these digital stories have crucial effects on how well students write (Donohue, 2021; Kim, et al., 2021). In 2017, Dayu & Anggrasari conducted a study with "Big Book Writing Media," with ample text, pictures, and volume. This implementation showed that SD N 1 Pilangbango Madiun 5th graders can improve their writing skills by writing essays about pictures in "Big Book Writing" after being given "Big Book Writing."

In mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), MobApps like WhatsApp, U-Dictionary, and Email have been used (Haerazi & Irawan, 2020). Thanks to this study, teachers can now write complete descriptive texts. Moreover, the MALL model is better than non-mobile learning in helping teachers improve their writing and critical thinking skills, which will affect how they teach their students. If one wants to improve their writing, one should not forget about traditional learning. The RADEC learning model (Read, Answer, Discuss, Explain, and Create) was used with 38 students (Setiawan et al., 2020). Based on the T-test results, the study found a significant effect of the RADEC model in how well students could write texts that explain something. Then, Chaparro-Moreno et al. (2017) assessed writing skills from the teachers' and students' points of view. The results showed that children's language use improved when they read picture books without words. The teacher's job then is to help with the teaching. One possibility is that the children's work was affected by the fact that teachers helped them more with the wordless picture books.

How the teacher talks, affects how the kids talk, or vice versa, unexplored parts of the book affect how the kids act themselves. This result fits with what Koster et al. (2015) found when they looked at the effects of teaching explicit text structure elements in three different texts:

narrative, persuasive, and contrast-compare. In all studies in this category, students' writing skills improved substantially when they were taught explicitly about text structure.

According to the findings of previous research on writing skills and the application of various media in the classroom to instruct students about writing, they can help students improve their writing skills. However, no research was conducted in the past on the development research related to picture books, *Wayang Punokawan*, or learning how to write. The current study was influenced by many other developments and studies before it. The research methods used differ; each study does not discuss the keywords used in the current research; the only similarities are in the keywords used, such as picture storybooks, *Wayang*, and writing skills, studied independently rather than concurrently.

The Legend of the Birth of Punakawan (Four-disciples)

That the Oneness Sang Syang has a glowing egg, which is then broken by the Oneness Sang Hyang, the egg white is named Ismaya, the shell is named Antaga, while the yolk is named Manikmaya. The two figures are at loggerheads because they want to be heirs to the throne of heaven, the two people hold a competition, Antaga tries to devour the mountain but gets into an accident, while Ismaya succeeds little by little. The Oneness Sang Hyang knew this and cursed both of them and was sent to come down to earth.

Both of them were then sent to come down to Earth, after that Semar asked a companion to be a friend when he became a guardian of the knights, the Oneness Hyang agreed and the character was named Bagong who was created from Semar's shadow, after that the meeting with Petruk and Gareng, starting from the two people respectively named Bambang Saki and Bambang Sukodadi who were performing austerities to prove their supernatural powers, during the fight, Semar came who broke up the fight, then Semar cursed the two of them to be ugly, because they had done bad things from here Gareng and Petruk were made his adopted sons.

The Philosophy of the Semar Figure

Semar, often also called *Ki Lurah* Semar he is often said to be a god because he has so much knowledge, white hair means that every human being will be confronted with the divine, his left hand holding back means that Semar does not like to bring bad things or ugliness, his right hand points out that there is only one God in the world.

The Philosophy of the Gareng Figure

Gareng, Punakawan's most disabled character, crossed eyes symbolize not liking to see bad things, limping legs indicate that walking or stepping must be careful, his left hand is tight which means he doesn't like to take things that don't belong to him.

The philosophy of Petruk Figure

Petruk is the most cheerful *Punakawan* character, his tall body means he has a lot of knowledge, his belly is distended which is often called a hollow bag, which means he has a lot of knowledge but cannot share his knowledge life

The Philosophy of the Bagong Figure

Bagong, is a child born from the shadow of Semar who was created by the Oneness Sang Hyang to accompany Semar's journey, so that his nature and characteristics are almost the same, wide Bagong's eyes which signify thirst for knowledge which shows alertness and curiosity, wide mouth is an expression of admiration for a success, his broad forehead is a symbol of an intelligent person.

Methods

This study suggests a qualitative methodology, meaning that rather than numerical data, it draws its information from interview transcripts, field notes, personal documents, memoranda, and other official documents (Sugiyono, 2016). Qualitative research is the right choice if one has a research problem but does not know the variables (Creswell, 2012). The literature may not tell you much about one's study. Therefore, they will have to rely on exploration to learn more about it from the people experiencing it. Therefore, qualitative methods can be used to discover both substantive and procedural aspects of this research. Researchers are interested in the state of classroom textbooks and the demand for digital picture storybooks from teachers and students because they believe these will positively impact students' ability to express themselves in writing.

The social event inside and out information for peculiarities emerging during the exploration time frame can be aided by a behavioral shift known as perception. Primary school teachers in Sukoharjo Regency were among the witnesses selected through a purposeful testing cycle. The scientist relied on perception and records to compile data. In the context of the 2013 curriculum educational program, documentation interaction entails instructors researching the learning

system through chronicles, reports, photographs, and records/portfolios. The researcher used the source and method triangulation, described each step of the research process, and documented thoroughly before beginning data transcription to ensure the accuracy of the data in this study. On top of that, we double-checked all our notes, activities, and interview transcripts to ensure that we had accurate and reliable information to report.

In addition to the data analysis of this study refers to Miles & Huberman (1994) that uses data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens and addresses important things, classifies, directs, discards what is unnecessary, and organizes data to be more systematic so that meaningful conclusions can be drawn. The reduced data can provide a sharper picture of what needs to be pursued. Drawing conclusions from words, writings, and social behavior of the actors relate to the needs analysis. This activity includes lesson planning, learning implementation, and evaluation of implementation results.

Results and Discussion

Conditions of the Storybooks

Fourth graders in Sukoharjo Regency were observed. During the Covid-19 pandemic, learning was observed on February 2, 2022, online via Google Meet or offline with strict health protocols. During learning, students studied the storybook. Some students focused on reading, and some on writing. Many students studied the book's pictures. Therefore, the teacher repeatedly reminded students to follow instructions. Some students followed the teacher's instructions and finished on time. Some students focused less on reading books and complained that the text was too long, so the teacher asked them to finish reading.

Based on preliminary research in elementary schools in Sukoharjo Regency, teachers and students say the initial condition of storybooks for learning writing skills is good because the existing storybooks are part of the thematic book as a textbook and a teacher and student handbook (Ernawati, 2014). This storybook is integral to students. In addition, the elementary school, the textbooks used as teacher handbooks in fourth grade are thematic books from one to nine. Teachers use one LKS and reference source to assist in implementing learning activities in the classroom. These findings were based on the outcomes of observations and interviews with resource persons on Wednesday, January 5, 2022. In addition, several fourth-grade students had difficulty learning how to write. This situation was discovered based on the findings of an

investigation. Similarly, Saputro & Wijayanti (2021) stated that this difficulty must be confronted in "Textbook Centered" learning, and avoiding the difficulties that arise is impossible.

Only a few teachers use storybooks as literacy because, at the end of each thematic book, folk tales and fairy tales are present from several regions used for literacy, usually after sub-theme three before changing to another theme. Folklore from this region teaches elementary-aged children's attitudes and moral values (Igba et al., 2019). Cohen (2017) uses various museums collecting *wayang* to learn about the virtue and unfavorable of humans and human relationships from these *wayang* collections. According to Afriyanti & Somadayo (2020), folklore can increase children's creativity. They developed *wayang beber* media based on local wisdom to teach third-grade students story writing. Based on the explanation above, folklore or local wisdom can improve students' cognitive, affective, and writing skills.

However, not many picture books are present on each actually presented theme, and even fewer with pictures on one page (the other page is reading text and enrichment for the main text). Students we spoke with are more likely to read and write if they can access visuals in their textbooks. Meanwhile, a minimum of six requirements exists to render a textbook available in teacher training manuals. Competency standards, basic competencies, indicators, learning materials, learning activities, and assessments are the six pillars upon which a quality storybook rests. This table displays the results of a feasibility study conducted on thematic textbooks for the fourth grade. See table 1.

Table 1
The Feasibility Analysis of Grade 4 Thematic Textbooks

Rated components	Score					Description
	1	2	3	4	5	
Core competencies (SK)				√		It is in accordance with the curriculum 2013 because it has brought up SK and KD (but needs improvement)
Basic competencies (KD)				√		It is in accordance with the curriculum 2013 brought SK and KD
Indicator (Display subchapter)				√		It is in accordance with the curriculum 2013 brought SK and KD
Learning materials			√			It's good enough and quite interesting
Learning activities			√			Pretty good but still presents material Quite a lot of learning.
Evaluation			√			Not arranged sequentially by using the task group and independent.

The public needs quality textbooks, including students, teachers, and the institution's manager and person in charge of the learning process. A useful textbook cannot be separated from the manufacturing process with basic standards, such as 1) general instructional objectives, now called competency standards/core competencies, 2) specific instructional goals (basic competencies), 3) indicators, 4) learning materials, 5) learning activities described through learning strategies, and 6) evaluation testing the skills. Table 2 shows an assessment tool for writing textbooks.

Table 2

Example of Assessment Toolkit for Thematic Textbooks for Indonesian Language Subjects Learning Writing Skills

No	Rated components	Score					Description
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	Content			√			Enough
2	Organization			√			Enough
3	Grammar			√			Enough
4	Vocabulary			√			Enough
5	Mechanicals				√		Good

From the table above, we can see that the researcher gives a score of 3 for the content component, meaning that it is already focused on the topic. However, some topics are not detailed and can be understood by students. Then the organizational component has a value of 3, meaning it is enough. It implies that ideas are expressed clearly, logically, and well-organized. Furthermore, the grammar part has a score of 3, suggesting that it is comparatively good and interesting. The vocabulary part has a score of 3, indicating good words or idioms used. In contrast, the mechanics part has a score of 3, suggesting correct writing. Moreover, the table below shows thematic books 1–9 and Student Worksheets for each theme, which can be used to evaluate the content from an academic point of view and see its possible use.

The researcher's content assessment of 4 aligns with the requirements of the 2013 curriculum. The theme's adaptability to the times is thus relatively high, with a value of 3, indicating that the theme has been successfully updated. In addition, the component on methodology receives a 4, indicating that it is very good and interesting; the readability receives a 3, implying that it is relatively good. Moreover, the graphic receives a 4, suggesting that it has used writing correctly. Contrarily, the motivation receives a 4, indicating that it has provided good encouragement and

powerful motivation. Then, the presentational aspect receives a 3 because it succeeds only on the book's exterior and lacks on the interior. The information above shows that fourth graders require explicit directions and a topic reflecting contemporary trends to benefit from enrichment materials and practice questions.

The researcher's content is rated 3 according to the 2013 curriculum. The theme's adaptability is 3, making it comparatively modern. The methodological component has a score of 3, suggesting that it is good and interesting. The readability score is also 3, showing that it is good but not necessarily easy to understand; some students may need help. The graphic component scores 4 because it uses correct writing. However, the motivation component scores 4 because it provides strong encouragement and motivation. Nonetheless, the display component scores 3 because it is only good on the book cover but contains too much material.

The Student Worksheets, even though thematic books provide more content but less practice. Students' knowledge and outlooks tend to improve after reading contemporary picture books. According to Alpiyah et al. (2021), children's picture books encourage creative thinking. According to Mitchell (1997), picture books are a hybrid of visuals and text. Pictures are worthless as narrative devices unless accompanied by words. The pictures and text in picture books work well together to tell a story. Pictures and words are two kinds of media, as suggested by Lukens (1998). Together, they will comprise a whole in the illustrated book.

The above discussion leads one to conclude that the textbooks the teacher employs are comparatively suitable for presentation, language, and graphics. Nevertheless, they could not satisfy all parties, according to the findings from the resource persons, both from the perspectives of students and class teachers teaching subjects in Indonesian. It was true from the theme's perspective, the content's appropriateness, the provision of motivation, and the appearance.

Transforming Characters of Four Disciple

The figures of the four-disciple: Semar, Gareng, Petruk and Bagong are popular for Indonesian students especially who reside in Java Island. The moral value of each figure is used for the live philosophy for the Javanese. Based on the characters of each figure, students are encouraged to write a paragraph based on the character of the figures. In the complex passages students are asked to write a longer text more than one paragraph. The story's characters serve as a teaching

tool for students in this interactive digital book. After learning from the characters, students also think they want to follow or imitate what the characters in the story do.

From the text of writing, students expose characters adopted from the four-disciple. The characters include: (1) patient, (2) responsible, (3) diligent, (4) hard work, (5) respecting parents (6) Pious, (7) cheerful, and (8) get along well with the family. The characters have been adapted in the students' writing and they are expressed in the flow of ideas in the paragraph level. The context of the characters may appear because Semar is the father. Gareng, Petruk and Bagong are brothers that are cheerful, responsible and diligent. Specific characters that this study implies are they are religious and respect much to parents or older brothers. In context of teaching the digital book story is essential for enhancing the elementary school learning environment focusing on developing students' writing abilities. Previous studies have also confirmed these findings, stating the necessity of digital storybooks to improve elementary school students writing abilities.

Many studies have found the need for picture storybooks to improve writing skills, such as writing deficiencies in various sectors. Munirah et al. (2019) reported that third graders at SD Negeri 37 Pa'rasangang Beru, Bantaeng Regency had low writing ability. None of the 35 students scored 85 on the writing test. Eliyanti et al. (2020) found that students' writing skills are low because minimal teaching materials are present and not all curricula are covered. Thirty-three of the students studied lacked the qualifications to write very good scientific articles. Nearly 50% of elementary school children struggling with reading also struggle with writing, causing learning loss (Thomas et al., 2020). Researchers see learning loss as an educational setback (Engzell & Verhagen, 2021).

Teachers can use digital media to bring lessons to life to solve the problems described above. Multimedia can make the past seem alive and tangible, according to Bulter & Clouse (1994). Matthews (2012) say textbooks promote appropriate learning. They can highly impact children's lives with a developmentally and maturely appropriate learning environment to achieve learning goals. Furthermore, elementary schools need thematic teaching materials. Digital teaching materials strengthen students' character to allow them to withstand globalization. Digital Picture Storybook is one such resource.

The findings show that students required picture storybooks. The book is a resource that educators can use to encourage students to develop their reading interest and their social skills.

Students' immediate surroundings can inspire both the characters and settings in the story they are writing. Students may find it helpful to use reflective question sheets to participate in self-assessment activities. Therefore, it is essential to create a digital picture book based on character education for the character of *Wayang Punokawan*.

This study has a novelty that teaching writing using model of local figures can be innovated using digital textbook. As the book becomes interesting for students, the contents can be well written by students. Additionally, characters education that adopt the figures are easily imitated through writing.

Conclusion

This study's findings indicate that the presentation of data, language, and graphics in the textbooks utilized by the instructor has high quality. It is valid from both students' and class teachers' perspectives who teach Indonesian language subjects. However, according to the findings of the resource persons, the appearance, the provision of motivation, the theme, and the appropriateness of the content are not sufficient to satisfy all parties. The findings also show that the initial condition of the storybooks used in elementary schools in the Sukoharjo Regency is good. However, more local material is needed in those schools. In addition, an immediate demand exists for digital picture storybooks that can help teachers and students improve their writing skills. This demand extends to both students and teachers because educators can use the book to assist students in developing their reading interests and social skills. The students' surroundings could inspire the story's protagonists and settings. Students may find that the addition of reflective question sheets is helpful when conducting a self-assessment of their learning. Accordingly, it is necessary to create a digital picture book based on the concept of character education inspired by the character of *Wayang Punokawan*.

This study has its limitation in that the study subjects are elementary students. It may produce paucity in developing the writing products and the characters the student will adopt. Future research is suggested to assign research subjects involving high school students through independent study. The scope of writing can also be developed in terms of argumentative essay or scientific writing.

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