

The Folklore Comics Media for Learning Indonesian as a Foreign Language

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Abstract—Learning Indonesian as foreign language aims to make foreign students proficient in the language, and to understand Indonesian literature and culture. Representing Indonesian literature as a part of local wisdom and Indonesian culture is folklore. This study first aims to analyse the media, which instructors have used in teaching Indonesian as foreign language, especially material related to Indonesian literature and culture, and second to analyse the results of a survey conducted on foreign students learning Indonesian, focusing on their responses on the use of folklore comics as a medium for learning about Indonesian literature. The results of the study first show that folklore has never been used in Indonesian foreign language teaching. The material used to date has merely highlighted Indonesian culture, especially regional dances, art and food, with the use of whiteboards and pictures as media. If used as the learning medium, folklore comic would present the values of local wisdom and ensure that foreign students learn about such wisdom in the depiction of moral and good behavioural values, as well as historical and cultural values. Second, based on the results of the survey of 50 foreign students, it was found that 82% thought that folklore comics were used very well as a learning medium, 12% said they were well used, and 6% said they were good enough to be used as a learning medium in Indonesian literary and cultural learning.

Keywords—comic; folklore; Indonesian as a foreign language

I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country related to oral traditions. Before getting to know the written tradition as today, in various regions in Indonesia oral traditions are very famous and growing rapidly. Stories in oral traditions are delivered orally, a famous example being folklore. Folklore is stories that originate from the community, then grow and develop. They are characteristic of traditions or culture in the community, a culture which is diverse and includes the richness and history of every society in which the stories are told. The spread of folklore is mouth to mouth, meaning that one type of folklore has many story variants. These variants occur because folklore is oral and communal.

In the history of Indonesian literature, folklore is an old type of oral literature. It includes stories that are inherited traditionally from mouth to mouth, and through ceremonial practices. Folklore is a part of collective culture that is passed on from generation to generation traditionally in different

versions, in an oral form or through examples accompanied by gestures or reminders [1]. Folklore can be divided into three types, namely myths, legends and tales. Myths are stories that are believed to have really happened and are considered sacred. They characteristically involve gods or demigods. Legends are stories which have characteristics similar to myths, are also considered to have actually happened, but are not considered sacred. Figures in legends are humans who sometimes have extraordinary powers, and who are often assisted by magical creatures. Tales are people's prose that are not considered to have actually taken place by the owners of the story, and fairy tales are not bound by time or place [2].

Indonesian as foreign language (BIPA) is an Indonesian language-learning program for foreigners held in various universities in Indonesia. It is supported by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education. The considerable support from the two ministries is not only in the form of BIPA learning held in Indonesia, but also through the sending of BIPA teachers abroad to teach Indonesian in overseas countries. The objectives of BIPA learning are that foreign speakers understand Indonesian culture, and that they become fluent in the language, especially in speaking and writing skills as a form of productive language. BIPA learning also aims to make the Indonesian language globalised [3].

Foreign students who want to learn Indonesian are not just learning the language, but also want to know about the literature and culture in which the language is growing and developing. One element of culture is literary work, especially folklore. Through the introduction and understanding of the contents of folklore, foreign students can better understand the value of local wisdom in the language support of a community. Local knowledge is wise, full of wisdom, embedded with good values and followed by the community [4]. The content of local wisdom in folklore will certainly be very useful, especially for BIPA students, so that they are more aware of and understand aspects of Indonesian literature and culture.

Research on folklore has been conducted by several researchers, including the myth of *Pontianak*, who was the most feared supernatural being in Malay folklore. The *Pontianak* is widely recognised as the most dreaded supernatural being in Malay folklore and mythology. Despite possessing such fearsome and horrifying characteristics, the

pontianak peculiarly remains popular among Malaysians as the horror film genre has always been popular among Malaysian and Asian audiences due to its deep roots in religious and superstitious beliefs [5]. Aladdin was a Middle Eastern fairy and was later adapted to Europe. The article discusses the version of Aladdin folklore in Georgia Europe [6]. Research on Indonesian folklore has been conducted, among others, the value of the character of religiosity and honesty in the folklore of Dewi Sritanjung [7]. Other research about the elements of theme, mandate, plot, characterisation and setting in the folklore of Tanah Datar District, West Sumatra [8].

Other research about the model of teaching material for the local content of folklore with regard to character education in elementary schools, focusing on Bengkulu folklore. The contents of instructional materials were adjusted to the basic competencies in elementary schools, which are designed for four language skills, namely listening, reading, speaking, and writing [9]. Research about comics designed from *wayang* stories. Based on the results of this research, it was concluded that *wayang* comics were a medium to escape from political pressure, when in 1955 comics were impounded and burned. *Wayang* comics portray the struggle of various groups with an identity political interest in Indonesian ideas [10]. Research about masculinity in Indonesia's online webtoon comics. Webtoon is an online media network that provides comics on websites. Their article analyses homosexuality and masculinity in Apitnobaka's *No Homo* comic. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that men in the comic are described as alpha and are not dependent on others. If the opposite happens, then the individual is not recognized as a real man. Homosexual orientation is considered something that is deviant and not Indonesian, but an influence of Western culture [11].

Based on the results of previous studies, it appears that research on the folk-based comic learning medium aimed at BIPA students has not been conducted before. Therefore, this article will analyse this medium for BIPA students. This is an important area, because in BIPA learning students need to be introduced to folklore, in this research Surakarta folklore in particular, so they become more familiar with Surakarta's local wisdom. To introduce folklore, an interesting learning medium is needed, one of which can be through comics. Comics as the drawing of pictures in a deliberate sequence, intended to convey messages and create an aesthetic value in their appearance. Comics are a medium that have supporting elements in the form of pictures and words. These images and words provide functional content through words, gutters, captions and panels [12].

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research is a qualitative in nature and employs an explorative approach. It is intended to answer questions formulated in accordance with the research method [13]. The study subjects were BIPA students at Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta. The data were related to BIPA learning at the university, especially cultural learning and the learning media used; to five informants (BIPA teachers and students); to documents (observation results, and records of interviews with BIPA teachers and students) for analysis; and to questionnaires

distributed to 50 students. Data collection techniques were conducted through observation of BIPA learning, especially observations of the use of instructional media before the use of comics by the teachers in culture-related learning. Interviews were also conducted with the informants, the BIPA teachers and students related to the learning media that they had been using, the effectiveness of these media, and the responses of the BIPA students regarding the comic story learning medium. Document analysis was performed through an analysis of the interviewee records, records of observations, and the questionnaire results. Data analysis using the interactive model analysis comprised data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions [14].

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. BIPA Learning Media Used in Indonesian Literary and Culture Learning

Based on the observations and interviews with teachers and BIPA students, BIPA teachers usually used laptops and LCDs, pictures, and videos about traditional food and markets and tourist attractions in Surakarta as learning media. BIPA students also visited traditional markets, ate traditional food, and visited the tourist attractions in Surakarta accompanied by the teacher. This was established from the interview with student A, who stated:

The teacher often uses pictures of traditional food in Surakarta when teaching. Then she invites us to eat *serabi, nasi liwet* and *selat*. It's good (August 3, 2018).

Student M agreed with student A:

I saw the pictures of tourist attractions in Surakarta (August 3, 2018).

Based on the interviews with the BIPA students, the learning media used were audio and audio-visual. The learning method was discovery learning, in which the students were invited to eat traditional food, which had originally been seen in pictures. Interviews were also conducted with BIPA teachers on the media they used in teaching. Teacher C stated the following:

In teaching, I use various learning media. Specifically, for Surakarta literary and cultural material, I mainly use audio-visual media in the form of videos that I have downloaded from YouTube (August 5, 2018).

Teacher R agreed with teacher C that the learning media used were pictures of tourist attractions, and videos of traditional markets or food in Surakarta. When the teachers were asked whether they had ever used material about Surakarta folklore, both teachers C and R said that they had not. Therefore, when they were offered Surakarta folklore as teaching material, they were very interested. The researcher explained that the content of folklore was easier for foreign students to understand, so delivery would be supported by learning media in the form of Surakarta comic folklore with interesting images and colours.

Folklore is excellent material for teaching BIPA students, considering that it contains local wisdom and moral values,

both for readers and listeners. This is in accordance with the results of research stating that there are three representations of living philosophy in folklore, namely divinity, social and humanitarian society, and the natural surroundings [15]. According to the other research, folklore serves to convey the value of character education to readers and contributes to cultivating the noble attitudes and behaviour of readers through literary works [16]. Therefore, folklore should also be a teaching material in BIPA learning, as an easy package to facilitate student learning.

The steps in the research on folklore in the form of a comic as a learning medium were as follows. First, exploration of Surakarta folklore using the snowball sampling method and by interviewing informants until complete data were obtained. Nine types of folklore were found in Surakarta. Second, deciding which folklore could be developed as a comic as a learning medium. The folklore chosen was based on: (1) an easy plot; (2) maximum number of main characters of four; (3) maximum of three background locations; (4) a third person perspective; (5) a good theme and containing moral values to introduce local wisdom to the BIPA students. This local wisdom included the values of harmony, cooperation and hard work. Third, the arrangement of the folklore comic as a learning medium was based on the above criteria above. Before the arrangement, the script was written with notation and dialogue between the characters. The arrangement of the folklore comic used the following aspects: (1) use of language and short sentences, having denotation meaning and being easy to understand for BIPA students; and (2) the making of comic fits with the script, colour and interesting composition.

Below is an example of a dialogue in the creation of a comic *The Legend of Kampung Jagalan Surakarta*. Maheso Prawiro is a *panewu* (representative of the Kingdom of Surakarta). Every morning, he tours the village to check the condition of his community. One day, Maheso Prawiro talks with a stall owner named Santoso while drinking a glass of hot coffee.

- Santoso : *Sorry Mr. Maheso Prawiro, I want to tell you something, May I?*
- Maheso Prawiro : *What's up San?*
- Santoso : *Look at Sir, lately meat has been experiencing shortages in availability. Besides the problem, many customers have been asking about the quality of the meat we sell.*
- Maheso Prawiro : *The quality?*
- Santoso : *Regarding whether before being slaughtered the livestock were healthy or sick; there are government permit or not, ways and means for slaughter, according to health standards. They often ask me about this, Sir. Up to now this has been traditional.*
- Maheso Prawiro : *Yes San...This needs serious*

handling. Later in the meeting at the palace, I will convey this to Kanjeng Sinuhun Pakubuwono X (The King of Surakarta Palace)

Santoso : *Thank you, Sir.*

Maheso Prawiro : *You are welcome*



Fig. 1. Example of folklore that had been developed into a learning medium in the form of a comic.

B. Responses of the BIPA Students about Folklore Comics as a Learning Media

The folklore comic learning media was used in BIPA learning as literary and cultural material. Student responses at this stage were obtained in the form of interviews and questionnaires. To assess the feasibility of the learning media that has been created, the measurement scale used was the Likert scale. The assessment aspects consisted of a 'very good' criterion with a score of 5, a 'good' criterion with a score of 4, an 'average' criterion with a score of 3, a 'bad' criterion with a score of 2, and a 'very bad' criterion with a score of 1.

The research instruments to gather information from the BIPA students consisted of text (appropriacy of lettering and letter size to be easy to read). In addition, pictures were used to see the composition and quality of the pictures. Suitability of the material used in this study included choice of text and pictures, script and pictures suitable for the language development stages of BIPA students, readability of the message delivered to the readers, coherence of the script, stimulating creation and critical thinking in the BIPA students.

Based on the results of the survey of the 50 foreign students learning Indonesian as foreign language it was found that 82% thought that folklore comics were used very well as a BIPA learning media, 12% said that comics were used well, and 6% said that folklore comics were just good enough to be used in literary and cultural learning. Therefore, most of the BIPA students had very good responses to the comic learning media.

Based on the interview results, the students said that the folklore comic was used very well as a learning media because of the interesting story, because the pictures were appropriate to the story and were colourful, and because the Indonesian language used was easy to understand so the story could be followed very easily. On the other hand, the respondents said that the learning media interest would lead to imagination, creativity and critical thinking amongst the students. They would be able to develop these three skills through speaking practice, answering questions asked by the teacher such as "what would you do if you became character A in the folklore?", or "what is character A in the folklore?". Students could also learn writing skills through activities such as "paraphrasing the folklore "or "writing the folklore in the form of a narrative".

IV. CONCLUSION

The learning media traditionally used are whiteboards, video, laptops, and LCDs. Teachers have never used the comic medium. Folk stories that can be used as a comic-based learning medium involve folklore, which contains the values of local wisdom, enabling students to learn about the local wisdom of Indonesians, and their moral, historical and cultural values. Based on the results of the survey of 50 foreign students learning Indonesian as foreign language 82% of respondents thought that folklore comics were very well used as a BIPA learning media, 12% said they were well used, and 6% said they were just good enough to be used as a BIPA learning media in literary and cultural learning.

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