

DEVELOPMENT OF MANDAILING NATAL FOLKLORE TEACHING MATERIALS BASED ON LOCAL WISDOM OF MARSALI WITH THE AID OF CANVA ONLINE COMICS

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Abstract. This study aims to develop and test the effectiveness of digital comics based on the Marsali method as an interactive learning medium in introducing Mandailing Natal folklore to students. The Research and Development (R&D) method was used in this study, involving five main stages: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. The results of the study showed that the use of digital comics developed with the Canva application, as well as involving students in Marsali practices, successfully increased their interest and understanding of folklore. Of the 30 students who participated, 85% reported an increase in interest in folklore after studying the comics, and 90% felt that the comics helped them understand the material. In addition, the evaluation also showed an increase in active

participation in class discussions. The use of digital comics based on Marsali has proven to be an effective medium in preserving local culture and enriching student learning through a visual and interactive approach that is relevant to the younger generation. This study concludes that digital comics based on local culture can be an effective tool in education, especially in maintaining the sustainability of folklore and cultural heritage in the digital era.

INTRODUCTION

This research was motivated by the research team's concern about the preservation of Mandailing Natal folklore, which is increasingly marginalized from the lives of the younger generation in education. This folklore is not only part of the culture, but also contains moral values that can provide important knowledge for the community in their daily lives. Given its important role, the preservation of Madailing Natal folklore is very crucial, especially in the context of preserving the regional language which is the mother tongue for the Mandailing Natal community (Harjono, 2021)

The 2023 National Mother Language Festival, organized by the Language Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture, recorded 718 regional languages identified as part of Indonesia's cultural heritage. However, there are many factors that have the potential to cause regional languages to become extinct, such as inter-ethnic marriages, lack of language use among young speakers, and the absence of language inheritance from the older generation. This phenomenon shows the importance of preservation efforts, including in the form of folklore. One proposed method is the development of teaching materials in the form of online comics using the Canva application (Setiyawati et al, 2022). Presenting material in comic format is expected to attract the interest of the younger generation and make it easier for them to understand this valuable folklore. The comic format also allows for more dynamic visual delivery, so that students can be more easily involved in learning (Ariesta et al, 2023).

The research team also offers the use of *Marsali* local wisdom as a method to rediscover and collect Mandailing Natal folklore. *Marsali*, which means "borrowing", is a cultural practice of the Mandailing Natal community that appears during the lean season (Deswalantri, et al., 2023). Although there are few studies related to *Marsali*, this study attempts to adapt this method to revive folklore that is potentially lost. This local wisdom is expected to provide a closer approach to the community, so that the process of collecting folklore becomes more relevant and effective (Widana et al., 2023; Citrawan et al., 2024).

In this study, the stories were then adapted into teaching materials packaged in the form of digital comics or online comics based on the Canva application which are more interesting and easily accessible to students. This can be seen from the last five years starting from 2020 to 2024 as follows. Development of a digital comic about the folk tale of Queen Shima containing character values (Maylani, 2020), digital folklore as an alternative innovation in language and literature learning (Harjono, 2021), digital teaching materials for reading Central Kalimantan story texts containing character education and critical literacy (Kriswantara & Perdana, 2021), digital comic design of Arjowilangun Village folklore (Amelia & Purwaningsih, 2021), digitalization of Mandar folk tales (Rusdiah et al., 2023), analysis of the suitability of digital folklore media with emergent literacy needs (Hidayatullah et al., 2023), a digital comic adapting the Timun Mas folk tale through visual character interpretation (Nugraha et al., 2023), and the transformation of the Sasakala Situgunung folklore text into digital comic form as a teaching material for reading for junior high school students (Ridwan et al., 2024). Besides that, Efforts to display folklore learning media using Canva digital comics have been carried out on the folklore of Majene Regency (Asis Nojeng et al., 2023); folk tale "The King of Tambun Sibisa" (Tambunan, 2023); folklore in the school community (Deswalantri et al., 2023); folk tale "Calon Arang" in the Kediri area (Meliana et al., 2024); to Indonesian folklore (Rinasari et al., 2023). However, even though there are relevant studies, there are still significant differences in the methods used, namely the *Marsali* method which is based on local wisdom. This aims to combine local cultural values with modern technology to support more effective learning.

The literature review shows that the development of folklore teaching materials has been widely studied, but there is still a research gap in the context of using online comics as a teaching medium. Many previous studies have discussed various aspects of folklore but the focus on innovation in developing teaching materials based on *Marsali* local wisdom by utilizing more sophisticated digital technology is still rare. This study not only seeks to reintroduce Mandailing Natal folklore but also to create a new approach to teaching that is more interactive and enjoyable for students.

The urgency of this research is very high, considering that the preservation of local culture integrated with the world of education is an important step in maintaining national identity. With the decreasing interest of the younger generation in local culture, an innovative and interesting approach is very necessary to attract their attention (Sinambela et al, 2022). Through this research, it is hoped that continuity can be established between local culture and education, so that future generations can recognize, appreciate, and preserve their cultural heritage. In addition, this research is also expected to contribute to the development of a more inclusive education curriculum that reflects the diversity of Indonesian culture.

METHOD

This study uses the Research and Development (R&D) method with a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to develop teaching materials in the form of digital comics that highlight the Mandailing Natal folklore. The study was conducted in three schools: SMKN1 Padangsidempuan, SMA Muhammadiyah 11 Padangsidempuan, and SMK Swasta Panca Dharma, involving 10 students per school. The research stages include needs analysis, where data is collected through interviews and literature reviews regarding students' interest in folklore. In the design stage, digital comics are developed using the Canva application, taking into account students' visual appeal and cognitive suitability. In the development stage, comics are validated by education, language, and culture experts, followed by revisions to ensure accuracy and relevance to the curriculum. The implementation stage was carried out by testing the comics on students and observing their involvement. In the evaluation stage, questionnaires, observations, and interviews were used to assess the effectiveness of the comics in increasing students' interest and understanding of folklore (Ratnawati, K., 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the innovation and success of the integration of the *Marsali* method in the development of Canva-based digital comics as a means of improving the storytelling of the Mandailing Natal community. The success of this approach is not limited to the acquisition of materials; it also includes the way the *Marsali* method involves students and the local community in the learning process. One aspect of this approach that is not always appropriate is the emphasis on intergenerational collaboration. By involving the younger generation in the story-making process through the *Marsali* practice, students not only have unlimited access to valuable knowledge resources, but also strengthen their ties to their community. This creates a safe social network where students can ask questions and learn without the distraction of the experiences of their elders. This practice helps to generate feelings of power and determination.

In addition, by adding visual and interactive elements, the use of digital comics as a teaching tool encourages students to interpret stories in a more imaginative way. Students are inspired to engage in creative processes beyond reading when presented with visually appealing comic images. Students can write dialogues, illustrate characters, or compose their own versions of folktales to help them understand the moral of the narrative more deeply. Because it shifts the emphasis from passive to active learning where students participate as both producers and consumers, this method is unique. The emergence of digital comics increasingly shows that traditional cultural preservation efforts are no longer necessary. The researchers offer practical examples of how creativity and technology can be applied to preserve the relevance of regional culture in the digital era by transforming folktales into comic book formats. This is in line with contemporary perspectives that

underline the importance of innovation in education as a means to attract the interest of future generations.

Overall, this study offers a new paradigm in cultural preservation that integrates contemporary technology with traditional knowledge to produce a comprehensive and long-term strategy. Students learn about the ideals that underlie their identity as members of a wider society in addition to the Mandailing Natal folklore through the use of the *Marsali* method in an interesting and unique learning environment.

This research follows the Research and Development (R&D) stages which consist of five main steps: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation.

1. Analysis Stage

In the analysis stage, the researcher conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the students' needs and learning contexts in the three schools that were the research locations: SMK N 1 Padangsidempuan, SMA Muhammadiyah 11 Padangsidempuan, and SMK Swasta Panca Dharma. The data collection method involved semi-structured interviews with local language teachers and students, where each group contributed to a deeper understanding of the desired learning methods. The interview results showed that students had significant interest in interactive learning media. As many as 80% of students stated that they preferred learning formats that involved visuals and interactivity compared to traditional narrative delivery which was considered monotonous. For example, a student from SMKN 1 Padangsidempuan said, "Folk tales often feel boring when only read. If there are pictures or comics, I would be more interested."

In terms of teaching, teachers noted that the teaching methods used so far have been less able to attract students' interest, especially in regional language lessons. Most teachers agreed that overly traditional materials and monotonous delivery hindered students' understanding of the values contained in folklore. Further literature review shows that the use of visual media, such as comics, can increase students' motivation and interest in learning materials. Previous research (Setiyawati et al., 2022) showed that students tend to understand information more easily when presented in visual form, which confirms the initial findings from the interviews.

In addition, the researcher also explored the *Marsali* method, a local cultural practice of the Mandailing Natal community in collecting folklore, as an approach in this study. This practice prioritizes the involvement of the younger generation in accessing and documenting folklore from the older generation, which has the potential to increase students' sense of ownership and pride in their culture. By utilizing this method, the researcher hopes to build a closer connection between students and their cultural heritage, thus motivating them to learn more about Mandailing Natal folklore. Overall, the analysis phase provides a clear picture of students' needs for innovative and relevant learning media, and shows the potential of the *Marsali* method in preserving local culture through education. This study emphasizes the importance of an adaptive and participatory approach in educating the younger generation about the values contained in their folklore.

2. Design Stage

After understanding the students' needs and implementing the *Marsali* method, the researcher proceeded to the design stage to design teaching materials in the form of online comics. *Marsali*, as a local cultural practice in collecting folklore, is an important approach in developing this material. The researcher chose a relevant folklore, namely "Si Bulus-Bulus

Si Rumbuk-Rumbuk,” which has a strong moral message and can be applied in the context of students’ daily lives.

The process of adapting the story into comic format is carried out by paying attention to several important aspects:

- a. Narrative Development: The story “Si Bulus-Bulus Si Rumbuk-Rumbuk” was adapted by emphasizing relevant and interesting key elements. The researcher reconstructed the plot, explored the conflict, and highlighted the resolutions taken by the characters in the story. The *Marsali* method was used to summarize the various versions of the story that exist in the community, so that the researcher could choose the strongest and most appropriate elements to share with students.
- b. Visual Design: The comic was designed using the Canva application, which allows researchers to create engaging and interactive illustrations. In this case, the images used were taken from elements of Mandailing Natal culture, such as traditional clothing and natural backgrounds, to provide an accurate context. The illustrations are not only decorative, but also serve to clarify the context of the story and add visual appeal. Bright colors, expressive characters, and dynamic design elements are expected to attract students’ attention and increase their engagement.
- c. Simplification of Text: The text in the comic is simplified to ensure that students can easily understand the dialogue and narrative presented. The language used in the comic is adapted, combining elements of Mandailing and Indonesian, so that students can feel close to their culture. The use of familiar and simple phrases helps students understand the values contained in the story.
- d. Interactivity: Researchers also consider interactive elements, such as short quizzes or reflective questions at the end of each chapter, which encourage students to think critically about the values contained in the stories. By using *Marsali*, students are encouraged to participate in the process of collecting folktales, so they feel they have a role in preserving local culture.

By following the steps above, the researcher succeeded in designing an online comic that not only conveys the Mandailing Natal folktale in an interesting way, but also maintains the cultural values contained therein. The results of this design are expected to be able to increase students’ understanding and interest in the subject matter, as well as strengthen their love for local cultural heritage.

3. Development Stage

At this stage, the comic is fully developed using the Canva application, integrating narratives obtained through *Marsali* practice. *Marsali* practice involves students in the process of collecting folklore by interacting directly with the older generation, especially community leaders who still have knowledge of Mandailing Natal folklore. Collecting narratives through this method provides an authentic dimension and enriches the comic content with elements that are close to local social and cultural realities.

The comics that have been developed then go through several stages of validation by experts, including:

- a. Validation by Educational Experts: Educational experts check the suitability of comics to the curriculum, ensuring that these teaching materials are not only relevant to educational goals but can also increase students’ interest in learning.
- b. Validation by Linguists: Linguists verified the use of Mandailing and Indonesian in the comics to ensure smooth communication and accuracy of the use of terms that exist in

Mandailing culture.

- c. Validation by Cultural Experts: Cultural experts check the authenticity of the folktales being adapted and ensure that the depiction in the comics does not remove the original essence of the folktale.

The results of this development process show that the comics developed not only successfully convey moral messages and local cultural values in an interesting way, but are also able to build student involvement in preserving Mandailing folklore. Dynamic illustrations, narratives that are close to students' daily lives, and interactive integration that involves students in collecting stories through *Marsali*, successfully create a fun and meaningful learning experience.

4. Implementation Stage

In the implementation stage, the online comics that have been developed were tested on 30 students from three schools, namely SMKN 1 Padangsidempuan, SMA Muhammadiyah 11 Padangsidempuan, and SMK Swasta Panca Dharma. Each school involved 10 students who were given access to the comics through an e-learning platform. Students were asked to study the comics for several weeks, and after they finished reading, a discussion was held to deepen their understanding of the folklore presented.

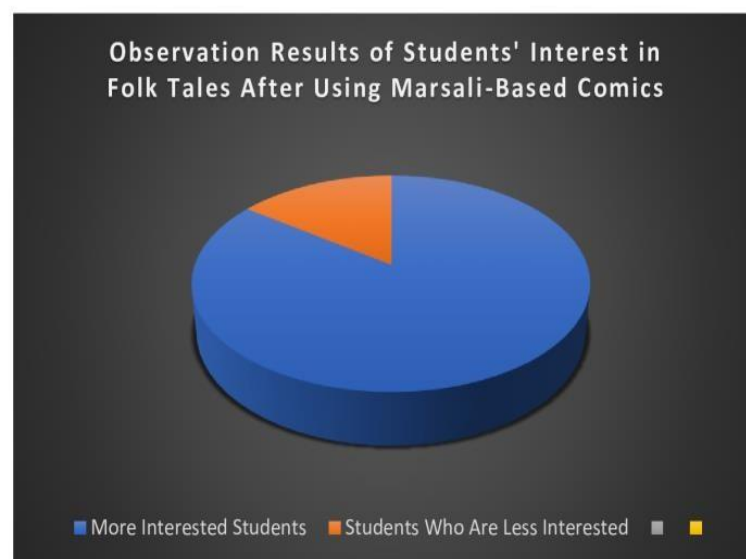


Image 1. Student Interest

The graph above shows the results of observations regarding student interest after using *Marsali*-based comics in learning Mandailing Natal folklore. Of the 30 students who participated, 85% reported that they felt more interested in learning folklore after using this comic. The implementation of comics accessed through an e-learning platform makes it easier for students to understand the material, and post-learning discussions help deepen their understanding of the cultural values contained in the story. The use of *Marsali*-based comics not only increases students' interest in folklore, but also deepens their understanding of local cultural values. Discussions after learning help add a critical dimension to understanding the morals and wisdom contained in Mandailing Natal folklore.

5. Evaluation Stage

In the evaluation stage, various instruments were used to measure the effectiveness of *Marsali*-based comics as teaching materials. A questionnaire distributed to 30 students showed that 90% of students felt that the comics helped them understand the Mandailing Natal folklore. These results indicate that the visual format presented through comics, as well as interactions involving the *Marsali* method, are able to deepen students' understanding of local cultural materials. In addition, observations made during the learning process showed an increase in active student participation in class discussions. Students were more enthusiastic about discussing moral messages and cultural values contained in the story. This more active interaction shows that comics not only function as an interesting visual medium, but are also able to encourage student involvement in a deeper learning process.

Interviews with students and teachers also supported these findings, with 92% of students reporting that they felt more engaged in learning using *Marsali*-based comics compared to conventional teaching methods. Teachers also appreciated the comics because they not only increased students' interest in folklore, but also made it easier for them to teach the material in a more interactive and relevant way to the younger generation. The overall evaluation showed that the digital comics had a positive impact on increasing students' interest and understanding of Mandailing Natal folklore and enriching local cultural learning in schools.

CONCLUSION

This study proves that the development of digital comics based on the *Marsali* method has succeeded in increasing students' interest and understanding of Mandailing Natal folklore. By involving students in the process of collecting stories through *Marsali*, as well as presenting materials visually and interactively through comics developed using Canva, this study shows that 85% of students are more interested and 90% feel helped in understanding folklore. In addition, validation by education, language, and culture experts ensures that comics are in accordance with the local curriculum and culture, while evaluations show an increase in students' active participation in learning and discussions.

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