

PRESERVING THE MAJAPAHIT CULTURAL HERITAGE IN TROWULAN THROUGH INNOVATIVE INDONESIAN LANGUAGE TEACHING MATERIALS

Merawat Warisan Budaya Majapahit di Trowulan Melalui Bahan Ajar Bahasa Indonesia Inovatif

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan materi ajar bahasa Indonesia digital yang menggabungkan budaya Majapahit di Trowulan untuk memperkuat literasi budaya dan pengembangan karakter siswa SMP. Penelitian menggunakan metode Penelitian dan Pengembangan menggunakan model 4D (Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate). Subjek penelitian meliputi guru bahasa Indonesia, siswa SMP, dan validator ahli yang terdiri dari pakar media dan ahli bahasa/konten. Data penelitian terdiri dari data analisis kebutuhan guru dan siswa, data validasi ahli, data uji kepraktisan, dan data efektivitas. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner, tes, dan lembar validasi. Data kuantitatif dianalisis menggunakan SPSS, sedangkan data kualitatif dianalisis secara deskriptif untuk mendukung interpretasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa bahan ajar digital yang dikembangkan valid berdasarkan evaluasi ahli dan termasuk dalam kategori praktis hingga sangat praktis sesuai respon guru dan siswa. Materi menunjukkan kekuatan dalam relevansi konten, kemudahan penggunaan, kejelasan penyajian, dan integrasi nilai-nilai budaya. Siswa juga menunjukkan respon positif dari segi daya tarik visual, pemahaman, dan kegunaan yang dirasakan. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa mengintegrasikan budaya Majapahit ke dalam bahan ajar digital mendukung pembelajaran bahasa Indonesia yang kontekstual dan bermakna. Oleh karena itu, materi yang dikembangkan layak dan efektif sebagai sumber alternatif pembelajaran berbasis budaya yang selaras dengan Kurikulum Merdeka.

Kata-kata kunci: warisan budaya Majapahit, Bahasa Indonesia, bahan ajar.

Abstract

This study aims to develop digital Indonesian language teaching materials incorporating Majapahit culture in Trowulan to strengthen junior high school students' cultural literacy and character development. The study employed a Research and Development method using the 4D model (Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate). The research subjects included Indonesian language teachers, junior high school students, and expert validators consisting of media experts and language/content experts. The research data comprised teacher and student needs analysis data, expert validation data, practicality test data, and effectiveness data. Data were collected through questionnaires, test, and validation sheets. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, while qualitative data were analyzed descriptively to support interpretation. The results indicate that the developed digital teaching materials are valid based on expert evaluation and fall within the practical to very practical categories according to teacher and student responses. The materials demonstrate strengths in content relevance, ease of use, clarity of presentation, and integration of cultural values. Students also showed positive responses in terms of visual attractiveness, comprehension, and perceived usefulness. These findings suggest that integrating Majapahit culture into digital teaching materials supports contextual and meaningful Indonesian language learning. Therefore, the developed materials are feasible and effective as an alternative resource for culture-based learning aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: Majapahit cultural heritage, Indonesian language, teaching materials.

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INTRODUCTION

The incorporation of local culture in the teaching of the Indonesian language has become more and more important as a response to the challenges of globalization and cultural homogenization which are likely to erode students' link to their cultural identity. Teaching language with emphasis on linguistic mastery only tends to disregard the bigger role of language in nurturing character education and cultural literacy, which are two main elements for the building of national identity and the making of socially responsible learners (Arifin, 2017; Mujahid & Mukminin, 2025; Nisa et al., 2025). Under this view, Indonesian language learning should not only concern itself with the forms and structures of the language but also serve as a channel for the transmission of cultural values and the formation of students' characters.

On the other hand, Indonesian language teaching in schools is still largely influenced by generic teaching materials that fail to correspond with students' socio-cultural contexts, according to empirical research. A large proportion of teaching aids are standardized textbooks that contain very limited local cultural content, making the learning experience quite abstract and less meaningful (Pamungkas et al., 2025; Sukma et al., 2023). Such a scenario is one of the factors for the low level of cultural literacy among students which also involves their ability to comprehend, interpret and embrace the cultural values through texts. Besides that, the inadequate incorporation of cultural values in language learning leads to a poor internalization of character education, which in a perfect world should be part of instructional processes (Rabiah, 2019; Sulistiyo et al., 2020; Suprayitno et al., 2019).

Previous research has shown the positive effects of integrating local culture into language learning on numerous occasions. Rokhman (2010) and Suwignyo & Saryono (2019) point out that culturally relevant teaching makes language instruction more meaningful and effective. Likewise, Tang & Tolla (2017) and Yaacob & Lubis (2022) demonstrated that the incorporation of local cultural elements in teaching materials enhance students' understanding and increase their participation. Moreover, the inclusion of cultural values in the content of learning has been linked to supporting character education particularly with values such as responsibility, mutual cooperation (gotong royong), and social awareness (Casma et al., 2022; Jamaluddin et al., 2022; Palennari et al., 2023). Wahyuni et al. (2019) also bring up the point that embedding local cultural values in learning and evaluation procedures can improve students' social behavior.

Meanwhile, Indonesia is still grappling with the issue of literacy among its students. International comparisons reveal that Indonesian students' reading literacy abilities are still below the world average, an indication that present teaching methods have not been fully able to provide comprehension that is meaningful (OECD, 2023). This brings to light the necessity for teaching methods that link the texts with students' life realities including their cultural surroundings to bring about a better grasp and greater level of interest.

One of the cultural elements which have hardly been used as a resource is the Majapahit heritage in Trowulan, Mojokerto Regency. Being a historical site of one of the largest

civilizations in the Indonesian archipelago, Trowulan is rich in cultural major elements, values, and narratives such as unity, wisdom, responsibility, and cooperation. These values are in fact very close to Pancasila Student Profile and character education can be based on these values. Yet, as studies have shown, locally available cultural elements are seldom or even never incorporated in educational materials, consequently making the link between Indonesian language learning and cultural identity an opportunity lost (Kedang & Yuwana, 2026; Mubarok et al., 2025).

On the basis of these facts, there is a substantial disparity between the urgent requirement for instructional methods based on context and culture and the reality Indonesian language teaching in schools. The mainstream teaching materials have not adequately been aimed at incorporating students' cultural contexts, while teachers have been constrained in their efforts to develop culturally integrated instructional resources (Arifin, 2017). Thus, an urgent demand exists for new teaching materials that incorporate local culture in a systematic, structured and pedagogically sound manner.

In line with that, this is the purpose of the present research to come up with digital Indonesian language instructional materials which are integrated with Majapahit culture in Trowulan via Research and Development method. Particularly, the research wants to: (1) find out the needs for Indonesia language teaching materials that are culture-based; (2) create and produce digital teaching materials that are integrated with Majapahit cultural content; and (3) assess the usability and efficiency of the developed materials in enhancing students' cultural literacy and character development. By so doing, the research is hoped to make a contribution to the enhancement of culturally responsive pedagogy and the facilitation of meaningful Indonesian language learning in harmony with the Merdeka Curriculum.

METHOD

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) methodology using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. This method was selected because the study aimed not only to produce a product in the form of Indonesian language teaching materials incorporating Majapahit culture in Trowulan, but also to evaluate the quality of the product in terms of its feasibility and practicality. The qualitative approach was used to analyze feedback and responses from the research participants, while the quantitative approach was applied to process assessment data obtained from validators and users of the teaching materials. The use of mixed qualitative and quantitative approaches in educational product development is widely recommended to ensure both depth of analysis and measurable evaluation outcomes (Badeni & Saparahayuningsih, 2021; Fajarwati et al., 2022).

The development model adopted in this study was the 4D model (Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate) proposed by Thiagarajan et al. (1974). This model was chosen due to its systematic stages and suitability for developing instructional materials grounded in local cultural contexts. The use of structured development models has been shown to produce valid and practical teaching materials in various educational contexts (Kedang & Yuwana, 2026; Maulana et al., 2024). The define stage involved an analysis of learning needs, including curriculum analysis, students' characteristics, the teaching materials currently used by teachers, and the potential of Majapahit culture in Trowulan as a learning resource. The design stage focused on developing a prototype of the teaching materials, which included formulating learning objectives, selecting locally culture-based descriptive texts, designing cultural literacy activities and character reflection tasks, and determining the format and visual layout of the materials. The develop stage encompassed expert validation, product revision, and limited-scale trials with students. The disseminate stage was conducted in a limited manner through teacher

socialization activities and the dissemination of research findings through academic publication.

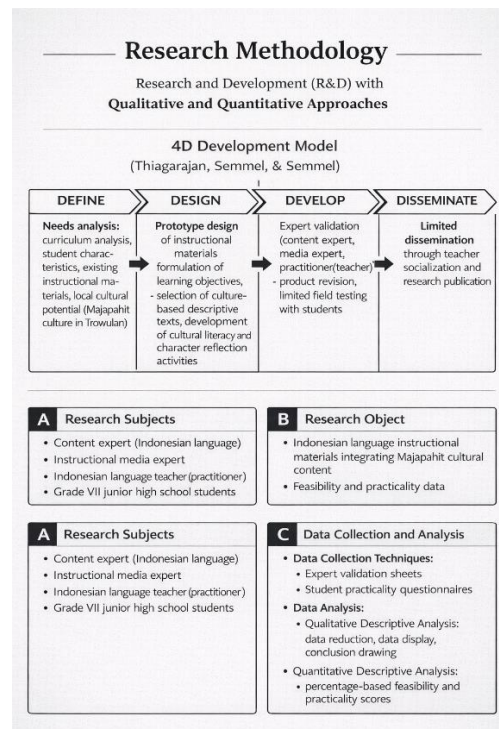


Figure 1. Research Methodology

The research subjects consisted of one media expert, one content expert, one language expert, two Indonesian language teachers, and 26 junior high school students. The experts were involved in validating the feasibility of the developed teaching materials, while the teachers and students participated in the practicality and effectiveness testing during the limited trial phase.

This study was conducted at SMPN 2 Trawas, Mojokerto Regency. The school was selected due to its geographical proximity to the Trowulan historical area, which represents the center of Majapahit cultural heritage. This location was considered highly relevant for developing context-based teaching materials, as it enables the integration of authentic cultural resources into Indonesian language learning.

Data were collected using expert validation sheets, user response questionnaires, and test. The instruments were developed based on theoretical frameworks of instructional material evaluation. The validation sheets assessed aspects of content feasibility, presentation, and language appropriateness, while the questionnaires measured the practicality and user acceptance of the teaching materials by teachers and students. All instruments were validated by experts prior to their use in the study to ensure their validity and reliability.

Data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative technic. Quantitative descriptive analysis was conducted by calculating scores in percentage form using a percentage formula to determine the levels of feasibility and practicality based on predetermined criteria. In addition, SPSS was used for inferential statistical analysis, including a normality test and a paired sample t-test, to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching materials by comparing students' learning outcomes before and after implementation. Qualitative data from validators' comments, suggestions, and users' open-ended responses were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The integration of these analyses provided a comprehensive basis for refining the teaching materials to ensure their alignment with the needs of local culture-based Indonesian language learning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study resulted in the development of digital Indonesian language teaching materials incorporating Majapahit cultural heritage in the Trowulan area, developed using the 4D model (Define, Design, Develop, and Disseminate). The research findings are presented sequentially according to the outcomes achieved at each stage of the development process, as described below.

Findings of the Define Stage

The define stage aimed to identify the needs of Indonesian language learning that are relevant to students' characteristics and the local cultural context. Data collection at this stage was conducted through needs assessment questionnaires administered to students and Indonesian language teachers.

Needs analysis served as the primary foundation for developing Majapahit culture-based Indonesian language teaching materials in Trowulan. This stage sought to capture the initial conditions of learning, identify gaps between existing teaching materials and actual classroom needs, and formulate specifications for teaching materials aligned with students' characteristics, Indonesian language learning objectives, the local cultural context, and the requirements of the Merdeka Curriculum. Needs analysis data were collected through student questionnaires and teacher interviews, providing a comprehensive perspective from the primary users of the teaching materials.

Student Needs Analysis

The percentages in the student needs analysis were derived from questionnaire data completed by 26 students. Each response was assigned a score based on a rating scale, after which the total score was calculated and compared with the maximum possible score. The results were then converted into percentage form using the formula $P = \frac{X}{X_{\max}} \times 100\%$. These percentages represent the level of students' needs for the developed teaching materials.

The questionnaire results indicate that the majority of students perceived the Indonesian language teaching materials currently in use as generic and insufficiently connected to the local culture in their environment. Approximately 72% of students reported that Indonesian language learning tends to focus primarily on linguistic rules and text structures, without being linked to cultural and social contexts that are close to students' daily lives.

In terms of learning interest, approximately 78% of students stated that they were more interested in learning activities that employ contextual texts closely related to their experiences, particularly those incorporating local culture and history. Furthermore, around 80% of students expressed a high level of interest in materials highlighting Majapahit culture in Trowulan, as these were perceived as more concrete, relevant, and easier to understand. This interest increased further when the materials were presented visually through illustrations, images of historical sites, and varied learning activities.

Regarding learning activities, approximately 75% of students expected teaching materials that go beyond reading texts and exercises to include discussion, observation, and reflection activities. In addition, about 77% of students indicated that exercises in previously used materials were not organized progressively and did not fully support their understanding. These findings suggest that students require teaching materials that are interactive, contextual, and supportive of active learning.

Teacher Needs Analysis

Interviews with Indonesian language teachers revealed that students' cultural literacy remains relatively low and has not yet developed optimally. Students tend to be more attracted

to popular digital-era content and have limited direct exposure to local culture. Therefore, teachers view contextual learning based on local culture as an essential need for strengthening students' cultural literacy and character development. Teachers also emphasized that Majapahit culture is highly relevant to be integrated into Indonesian language learning, both through descriptive texts and other language skills. However, the teaching materials currently in use are predominantly government-issued textbooks and general literature that do not systematically address Majapahit culture in Trowulan.

From the perspective of instructional media, teachers reported that learning media are still limited to PowerPoint presentations, short videos, printed books, and simple creative media. Teachers highlighted the need for more systematic, visual, creative, and user-friendly teaching materials to enhance students' interest and engagement. Students were also observed to be more enthusiastic when learning activities are designed to be engaging, contextual, and meaningful.

The implications of teacher needs indicate that teachers require Majapahit culture-based Indonesian language teaching materials that are aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum, easy to implement, provide ready-to-use content and activities, and help address limitations in resources and instructional time.

When student and teacher findings are considered collectively, a consistent gap becomes evident: the teaching materials currently used remain generic, while both students and teachers express a strong need for contextual materials, particularly those incorporating Majapahit culture in Trowulan. Students seek active and engaging learning experiences, whereas teachers require systematic and user-friendly instructional resources to support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The analysis further indicates that integrating Majapahit culture into Indonesian language learning has the potential to provide dual benefits: enhancing students' comprehension of Indonesian language content through culturally familiar contexts and strengthening cultural literacy while fostering positive attitudes toward the preservation of local cultural heritage.

Based on the needs analysis, the development of Indonesian language teaching materials incorporating Majapahit culture in Trowulan is both necessary and urgent. Ideally, the developed teaching materials should possess the following characteristics: (1) contextual, featuring Majapahit cultural objects closely related to students' lives; (2) visual and varied, utilizing illustrations, photographs of historical sites, and engaging presentation formats; (3) supportive of active learning through discussion, observation, reflection, and creative production; (4) progressive and structured exercises that facilitate comprehensive understanding; (5) alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum, referring to learning outcomes and objectives; and (6) practicality for teachers, being easy to use, systematic, and supportive of assessment processes.

Findings of the Design Stage

At the design stage, the researchers developed the design of the digital Indonesian language teaching materials incorporating Majapahit culture based on the needs analysis conducted during the define stage. This design process was directed toward producing teaching materials that not only align with the learning outcomes of the Merdeka Curriculum but are also contextualized to students' cultural environment in the Trowulan area. Accordingly, the design stage focused on formulating learning objectives, selecting descriptive text materials, developing learning activities, and designing assessment and research instruments.

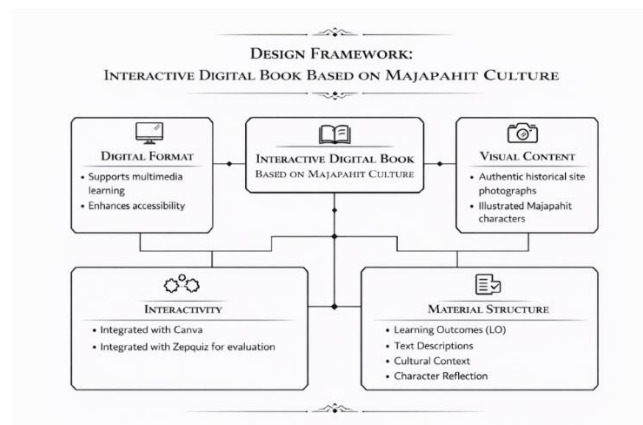


Figure 2. The Design Stage

The formulation of learning objectives was developed with reference to the Indonesian Language Learning Outcomes for Phase D, which emphasize mastery of descriptive texts and the development of multimodal literacy relevant to students' daily lives (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The objectives were designed to enable students to identify the structure and linguistic features of descriptive texts and to describe Majapahit cultural objects in a coherent, factual, and reflective manner. This approach aligns with the principles of context-based and local wisdom-oriented learning, which position cultural experience as a primary learning resource (contextual learning) and enhance the relevance of instructional content to students' lived experiences.

The selection of instructional materials was designed to integrate Majapahit cultural content—such as historical sites and cultural artifacts—with the aim of providing meaningful learning experiences closely connected to students' social realities. Examples of the instructional materials include:

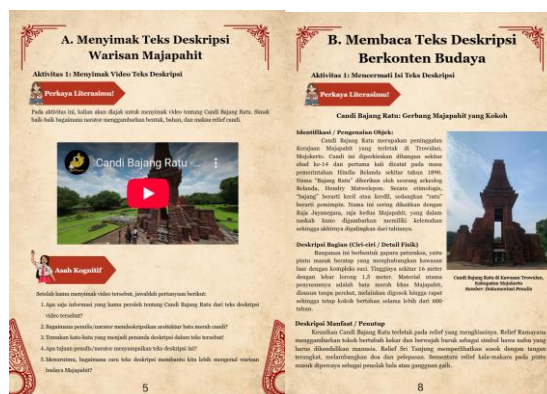


Figure 3. Example of Selection of Learning Materials

The integration of local cultural content into teaching materials has been shown to support improvements in literacy comprehension and 21st-century skills, as it strengthens students' cultural identity and enhances the connection between instructional content and their authentic experiences. Accordingly, the instructional materials were designed by utilizing Majapahit cultural objects in Trowulan, including Bajang Ratu Temple, Tikus Temple, Brahu Temple, Segaran Pool, and the Trowulan Museum. Each cultural object was presented through descriptive texts, visual images, and observation-based activities that support students' understanding of the characteristics of the described objects.

The designed learning activities comprised reading comprehension tasks, observation of cultural visuals, discussions of cultural values, language-focused exercises, and descriptive writing assignments. In addition, during the design stage, research instruments were developed,

including expert validation sheets, teacher and student practicality questionnaires, interview guidelines, and classroom observation sheets. This design served as the foundation for developing the teaching material prototype in the develop stage.

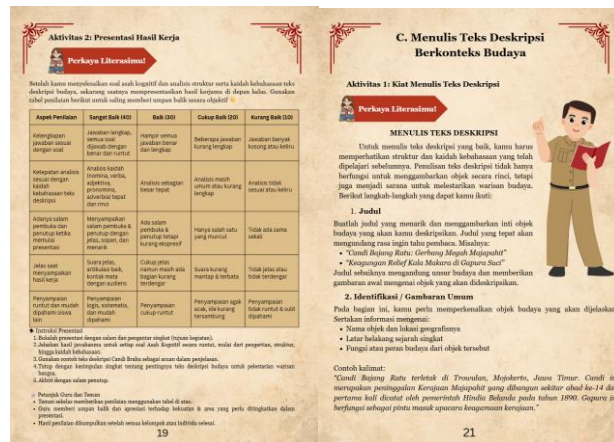


Figure 4. Examples of Learning Activities

During the design stage, the researchers also developed research instruments, including expert validation sheets, student response questionnaires, interview guidelines, and classroom observation sheets, to ensure that the developed teaching materials could be evaluated in terms of content feasibility, linguistic accuracy, media quality, and practical usability. Accordingly, the design stage resulted in a structured, contextual, and needs-responsive blueprint of Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials, which served as the foundation for the development stage aimed at producing teaching materials that are feasible, practical, and relevant.

Findings of the Develop Stage

The develop stage focused on product development through feasibility testing of the teaching materials via expert validation and product revision. At this stage, the prototype of the Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials designed during the design stage was validated by instructional media experts as well as Indonesian language content and linguistics experts. The validation process aimed to ensure that the developed teaching materials met quality standards in terms of media design, content accuracy, and linguistic appropriateness before being implemented in the limited trial phase. Validation of instructional media products typically involves evaluation by multiple expert validators—namely content, media, and language experts—to determine the level of validity of the developed teaching materials (validity evaluation).

The validation assessment was conducted using a Likert-scale questionnaire with specified rating categories to evaluate the feasibility of the media, content, and language aspects of the teaching materials. A four-point Likert scale was employed, as it is commonly used in instructional material development studies to minimize neutral bias, thereby enabling a more objective and decisive assessment of product validity prior to trials with students and teachers.

The results of the media expert validation indicate that the developed digital teaching materials achieved high scores in terms of media attractiveness, instructional presentation feasibility, and media utilization. These findings suggest that the visual design, cultural illustrations, material layout, and instructional flow were perceived as effective in capturing students' attention and enhancing learning engagement. Previous studies in digital instructional media development have similarly shown that high validity in media aspects is associated with the media's capacity to stimulate learners' interest and engagement in the learning process.

The technical quality aspect of the media received a satisfactory rating, indicating that the media were generally suitable for use but still required minor technical refinements, such as improving font size consistency or optimizing visual displays across different devices. This finding reinforces the view that the technical quality of digital media is a critical factor influencing the successful implementation of teaching materials, as digitally valid and operable media tend to support instructional effectiveness.

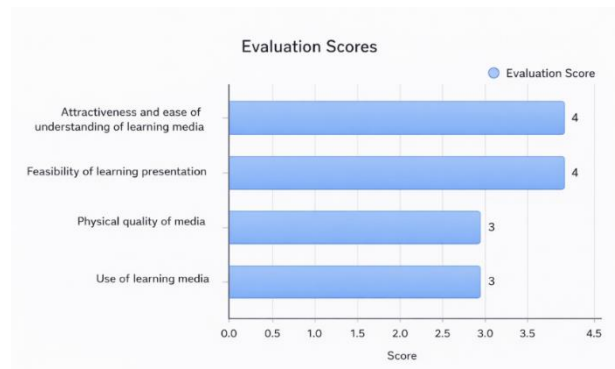


Figure 5. Media Expert Validation

The results of the content and language validation indicate that the aspects of alignment with learning objectives, conceptual accuracy and material exposition, assessment items or exercises, and reference lists received a score of 4, corresponding to the very valid category. These findings demonstrate that the instructional content is aligned with the learning outcomes of the Merdeka Curriculum and is relevant for supporting the strengthening of students' cultural literacy and character development. Moreover, the integration of local cultural content enriches contextual text comprehension, as local culture-based instructional materials enhance relevance and understanding.

Nevertheless, the aspect of linguistic accuracy received a score of 3, categorized as sufficiently valid, indicating that while the language used in the teaching materials is generally communicative, revisions are still required to improve consistency in spelling and precision in word choice. Addressing these linguistic aspects is essential, as language readability plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of literacy instruction, particularly in Indonesian language learning. Previous studies suggest that teaching materials grounded in local culture and learners' contexts can enhance learning comprehension and student motivation; however, linguistic features must be carefully adjusted to ensure accessibility and to avoid hindering the learning process (Astuti, S., Syarifuddin, & Vianty, 2025).

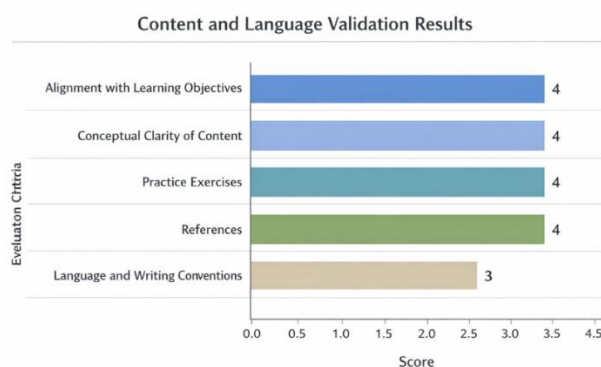


Figure 6. Content & Language Expert Validation

Based on the results of media validation as well as content and language validation, limited revisions were conducted, particularly concerning media quality and linguistic

refinement in accordance with the validators' recommendations. Following these revisions, the teaching materials were deemed valid and suitable for implementation in the limited trial phase. Accordingly, the develop stage demonstrates that the Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials meet feasibility criteria as assessed by experts, indicating their potential to support contextual and meaningful Indonesian language learning.

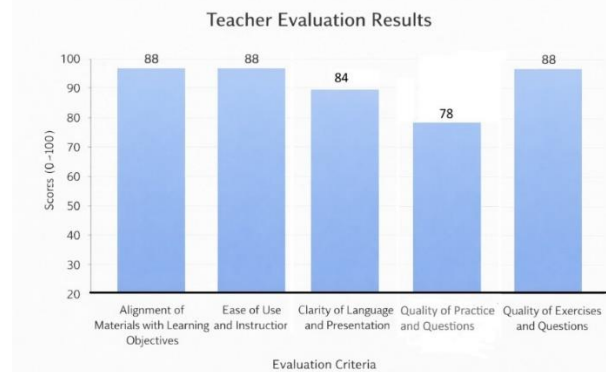


Figure 7. The Practicality of Digital Teaching Materials Based on Teacher Assessment

The practicality test of the Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials from the teachers' perspective was conducted using a four-point Likert-scale questionnaire (1–4), which was subsequently converted into percentage scores to determine the level of usability and the suitability of the materials for authentic classroom learning contexts. The practicality of digital teaching materials is a critical indicator in development research, as it reflects the usefulness of the product when directly implemented in instructional practice.

The analysis results indicate that, in terms of alignment between instructional materials and learning objectives as well as learning outcomes (Capaian Pembelajaran), the teaching materials achieved a percentage score of 87.5%, which falls within the practical category. This finding suggests that the content, learning activities, and exercises in the teaching materials are aligned with the instructional demands of descriptive text learning. Alignment with learning outcomes is a key component in assessing practicality, as teachers require resources that can be readily implemented to guide instruction toward targeted competencies.

Regarding ease of use and clarity of instructions, the teaching materials also obtained a percentage score of 87.5%. Teachers reported that the materials were easy to use without requiring complex technical adaptations and provided clear instructions to support the learning process. The aspect of language clarity and material presentation achieved a percentage score of 84.38%, indicating that the language used was sufficiently communicative and appropriate to students' developmental levels. Well-organized and contextualized material presentation supported teachers in explaining linguistic concepts meaningfully, particularly when the teaching materials were integrated with local cultural content. The quality of material presentation directly influences students' readability and comprehension during learning activities.

In terms of the quality of exercises and assessment items, the teaching materials obtained a percentage score of 78.13%, which falls within the moderately practical category. This result indicates that while the exercises and assessment items were considered sufficiently relevant to the content, there remains room for further refinement. The development of varied and cognitively challenging tasks is an important indicator of teaching material practicality, as it encourages deeper cognitive engagement among students. Meanwhile, with regard to the feasibility of the teaching materials as learning resources, a percentage score of 87.5% was obtained, indicating that teachers considered the materials suitable for use as supplementary or alternative learning resources alongside standard textbooks. This result underscores that

systematically designed and contextually grounded digital teaching materials can meet instructional needs and enrich students' learning experiences.

Overall, the results of the teachers' practicality test indicate that the Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials fall within the practical to very practical categories, thereby confirming their suitability for use in junior high school Indonesian language instruction. These practicality findings further reinforce the evidence that the development of digital teaching materials grounded in local contexts and guided by an instructional design model is capable of producing applicable and user-responsive products for classroom implementation.

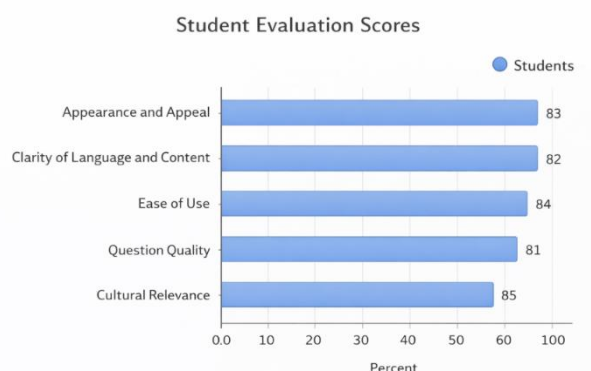


Figure 8. Practicality of Teaching Materials Based on Student Assessment

The practicality test from the students' perspective also revealed positive responses, with high practicality percentages across all assessed aspects. In terms of visual appearance and attractiveness, the teaching materials achieved a percentage of approximately 83%, indicating that the illustrations and design were effective in capturing students' attention and enhancing learning engagement. Visual attractiveness is considered a crucial component of multimedia learning, as it can significantly influence students' learning motivation.

The aspect of language and content clarity obtained a percentage of approximately 82%, indicating that students were able to understand the instructional content adequately. The use of simple and contextual language facilitated students' ability to relate descriptive text materials to their cultural experiences in the surrounding environment. Regarding ease of use, the teaching materials achieved a percentage of approximately 84%, demonstrating that students were able to use the materials independently without significant difficulty. This level of usability reflects that the interface and structure of the digital teaching materials adhere to user-friendly principles in technology-enhanced learning.

The quality of exercises and assessment items obtained a percentage of approximately 81%, indicating that the tasks were sufficiently clear and aligned with the instructional content. Students' acceptance of relevant assessment items serves as an indicator that the evaluation design of the teaching materials met practicality standards. The highest percentage, approximately 85%, was obtained in the aspect of usefulness and cultural value. Students reported that the teaching materials not only supported their understanding of Indonesian language lessons but also enhanced their knowledge of Majapahit culture. These findings indicate that digital teaching materials can serve as an effective medium for strengthening students' cultural literacy and character development through contextualized language learning.

Dissemination Stage

The disseminate stage represents the final phase of the 4D development model and aims to disseminate teaching materials that have been validated and deemed feasible for use. In this study, the dissemination stage was conducted in a limited manner, taking into account the

research context, participant characteristics, and the primary objective of development—namely, to provide an alternative set of Indonesian language teaching materials incorporating Majapahit culture to support junior high school students' cultural literacy and character development. Dissemination is a critical component of the development cycle, as it ensures that the product is not only theoretically valid but also accessible and usable by the intended users.

Limited dissemination was carried out through socialization activities and initial implementation of the digital teaching materials with junior high school Indonesian language teachers within the research setting. The revised teaching materials, refined based on expert validation results, were introduced to teachers through focused discussions addressing the conceptual framework of material development, content structure, and instructional strategies for descriptive text learning. At this stage, the researchers also explained the integration of Majapahit cultural content into literacy activities, enabling teachers to gain a concrete understanding of how the materials could be applied in contextual learning. This dissemination approach facilitated direct knowledge transfer while allowing opportunities for reflection on adapting the materials to specific classroom needs.

In addition to teacher dissemination, limited dissemination was also conducted through small-scale implementation of the digital teaching materials with students. During this phase, the materials were used as supplementary resources for Indonesian language instruction on descriptive texts. Students were guided to read texts, observe visual representations of Majapahit culture, complete exercises, and write descriptive texts based on cultural objects in their local environment. This process provided students with initial experience in using locally culture-based teaching materials and supported contextual understanding of the learning content.

At the dissemination stage, students demonstrated a high level of enthusiasm toward the use of the teaching materials. This was reflected in their active participation during the learning process, such as asking questions, engaging in discussions, and providing positive responses to the materials. In addition, one student stated, "The learning becomes more interesting because the materials are connected to the surrounding environment." This finding is further supported by the results of the student response questionnaire, which showed a high percentage of positive responses toward the use of the teaching materials.

The dissemination results indicate that students demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm, particularly when instructional materials were linked to cultural narratives and environments closely related to their daily lives. Similar findings have been reported in the literature, suggesting that the dissemination of teaching materials integrating local cultural content can enhance student engagement due to increased relevance to learners' social and cultural contexts.

The disseminate stage in this study was not conducted on a broader scale due to limitations in time and research scope. Nevertheless, the limited dissemination provides preliminary evidence that the Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials have the potential to be implemented more widely in schools with similar cultural characteristics. Conceptually, the success of this initial dissemination indicates that locally culture-based teaching materials function not only as instructional resources but also as a means of preserving cultural heritage through meaningful learning processes.

Accordingly, the disseminate stage confirms that the Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials developed through the 4D model are not only theoretically and technically feasible but also demonstrate positive initial acceptance within the school context. These findings strengthen the position of the teaching materials as a pedagogical innovation with the potential to support cultural literacy and character development, while also opening opportunities for future research involving large-scale dissemination and quantitative evaluation of the materials' effectiveness on student learning outcomes.

Discussion

The results presented in the previous section demonstrate the feasibility, practicality, and initial effectiveness of the Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials developed through the 4D model. However, beyond describing these findings, it is essential to interpret them in relation to existing theories and previous studies in order to understand their broader pedagogical significance. Therefore, this section discusses the findings by linking them to the theoretical framework of contextual learning, culturally responsive pedagogy, and TPACK, as well as comparing them with prior research on culture-based language learning and character education. Through this analysis, the study aims to highlight the contribution of the developed teaching materials to enhancing cultural literacy, student engagement, and meaningful learning in Indonesian language education.

According to this research, the digital Indonesian language teaching materials featuring the Majapahit culture in Trowulan are very much needed. This is primarily because the materials previously used in the classrooms were almost entirely generic, had little connection to the local context, and most importantly, lacked a systematic inclusion of local culture.

The defining phase discloses that the majority of students are expecting learning materials that are very much intertwined with their daily lives, whereas teachers, on the other hand, desire materials that are very systematically arranged, visually appealing, user-friendly, and in line with the Merdeka Curriculum.

Viewed academically, this means that a meaningful Indonesian language learning experience is not just dependent on one's ability to master the textual structures but also significantly on whether the learning materials are relevant to the students' socio-cultural contexts. A similar view has been shared by Rokhman (2010), who points to the crucial role played by multicultural-based Indonesian language materials, and Suwignyo & Saryono (2019), who found a positive impact of culturally responsive teaching on the relevance of language learning.

In the designing phase, turning Majapahit cultural artifacts, like Bajang Ratu Temple, Tikus Temple, Brahu Temple, Segaran Pool, and the Trowulan Museum, into descriptive texts is the living proof that local culture can be a genuine learning resource. The idea of using cultural elements in language education to raise students' comprehension, literacy, and engagement has, in fact, been strongly supported by Tang & Tolla (2017), Yaacob & Lubis (2022), Maulana et al. (2024), Mubarok et al. (2025), and Kedang & Yuwana (2026).

By incorporating the heritage of Majapahit, therefore, the educators are not only adding beauty and variety, but at the same time, they are also opening a channel between the language skills, cultural literacy, and character-building elements of the students.

Besides, the authorities' approval at the developing phase shows that the teaching materials could be generally classified as valid even highly valid ones.

Particularly, the instructional design aspects such as the extent to which the goals were aligned, the accuracy of the concepts involved, how the content was presented, and the overall media design were found to be very good and in line with the standards. These observations of the present study resonate well with those of Pratiwi et al. (2025), Astutik et al. (2026), Firdaus & Pratiwi (2024), Rahman et al. (2024), and Rostianingsih & Chang, 2015) who have pointed out that digital and visually enriched learning media can significantly motivate students and improve their overall learning experiences and engagement.

What is worthy of note is that the aspect of language, which was only moderately valid, pointed at some deficiencies that still need to be worked on, namely, diction accuracy, spelling consistency, and readability. This view is, in fact, fully consistent with that of Sukma et al. (2023) and Pamungkas et al. (2025) who pointed out that the quality of language teaching

materials is dependent not only on the relevancy of content but also on the linguistic clarity, instructional coherence, and cognitive appropriateness.

When it comes to actual implementation, teachers as well as students were on the same page giving positive responses. Hence, the digital teaching materials are deemed very suitable for the classroom setting. First of all, the materials are reported to be easy to use by the teachers, coupled with the fact that the materials go well with the learning outcomes and are great in providing an alternative resource. On the other hand, students have a few very nice things to say about the materials too. They are visually attractive, user-friendly, clear in content, and carry the cultural values. These results are quite in line with Fajarwati et al. (2022), Badeni & Saparahayuningsih (2021), and Istiyono et al. (2021) who have argued that teacher preparedness, quality of instructional materials, and the appropriateness of learning strategies are the factors influencing the success of character education.

Therefore, developed materials are not only sound in theory but are also very much responsive to the actual conditions of the classrooms. In comparison with previous works, the current results offer new perspectives that develop the prior research done on the incorporation of culture in language and character education. Rabiah (2019) for instance, explained that Indonesian language courses can offer a way for character education, whereas Pratiwi et al. (2025) revealed that it is the Indonesian language textbooks that carry the moral values.

Sulistiyo et al. (2020) and Suprayitno et al. (2019), further highlight that language learning, more often than not, moral values constitute the hidden curriculum. This study, however, beyond merely identifying cultural or moral values, also systematically develops a digital teaching material product based on Majapahit culture using the 4D model.

So, in that respect, it strengthens and extends the work of Wahyuni et al. (2019), who explored the integration of gotong royong values in social attitude assessment, as well as the work of Wahyuni et al. (2025) that showcases the transformation of local cultural practices into the culturally responsive literary learning.

The results of this study are quite congruent with contextual learning theory and culturally responsive pedagogy. When learning materials are culturally and environmentally relevant to students, the learning that takes place is more meaningful because students can, not only comprehend the materials better, but also come to appreciate the texts through their experiences, identities, and cultural heritage.

The importance of integrating pedagogical, technological, content, and cultural knowledge into culturally responsive learning has been highlighted by Ghaemi & Boroushaki (2025), Haga (2025), Nisa et al. (2025), and Chanwaiwit (2025). In the TPACK framework, the created resources provide a synthesis of content knowledge in Indonesian language, pedagogical knowledge in descriptive text, digital technology, and culture of Majapahit as a contextual base.

And the results here coincide with the ones by Kristiawan et al. (2022), who point out the significance of enhancing teachers' TPACK in producing technology-based instructional materials.

With regard to character education, the teaching materials based on Majapahit culture make it easier for students to internalize the values of culture, identity, responsibility, and the preservation of local heritage. Few authors that have focused on the significance of character education as a value-based learning component are Casmana et al. (2022), Setiyatna & Mualim (2024), Siswanto et al. (2024), Sarifah et al. (2025), and Abdillah et al. (2025).

Besides, Jamaluddin et al. (2022), Palennari et al. (2023), Kistoro et al. (2024), Parmini & Wardhani (2025), Poh et al. (2025), Gamaputra et al. (2025), Kotten et al. (2025), (Sampurno, 2025), and Martadi & Sampurno (2025) have revealed that local values, arts, traditions, songs, and cultural narratives are quite capable of supporting character formation. Thus, this study

supports the theoretical viewpoint that it is character education which to a greater extent succeeds when values are imparted through tangible cultural experiences rather than abstract normative instruction.

First, the academic implication of this research is that it provides a blueprint for the creation of digital Indonesian language teaching materials that can, through local heritage, integrate linguistic literacy, cultural literacy, and character education. This study addresses various academic disciplines such as instructional material development, contextual learning, and culturally responsive pedagogy with the Merdeka Curriculum as the overarching framework. Secondly, practically, the developed materials have the potential of being alternative learning resources for teachers, which will facilitate in making learning of descriptive texts more fun, visual, and meaningful. Thirdly, for learners, these teaching aids will likely result in elevated motivation levels, better reading comprehension, descriptive writing mastery, and a greater appreciation for the preservation of Majapahit culture.

Lastly, the school level adoption of this product will signify an inventive culture-based learning model which can also be applied to other regional cultural contexts. To sum up, the outcomes reveal that Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials are not only capable of satisfying validity and practicality standards but also have a huge pedagogical volume along with the values of culture and character building a strong presence. These data are in favor of supporting the line of research that local culture is an essential element in education, broadening the concept of culturally responsive teaching through digital instructional materials, and granting a valuable offer to the enhancement of cultural literacy and character development among students in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the development of Majapahit culture-based digital Indonesian language teaching materials using the 4D model is both feasible and practical for junior high school learning. The materials were validated by experts and received positive responses from teachers and students, indicating their suitability in terms of content, presentation, usability, and alignment with learning objectives. The integration of local cultural elements, particularly Majapahit heritage in Trowulan, enhances the contextual relevance of learning and supports students' comprehension of descriptive texts.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the developed teaching materials effectively promote students' cultural literacy and character development by connecting language learning with their socio-cultural environment. Students showed high engagement and positive attitudes toward the materials, suggesting that culturally responsive and digitally supported instruction can create more meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, these materials can serve as an alternative resource for implementing culture-based Indonesian language learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum and have the potential for broader application in similar educational contexts.

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