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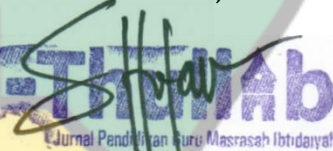
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Development of Leveled Picture Storybook Media Based on Aceh Besar Culture

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Abstract: *This study addresses the limited availability of literacy media appropriate for lower-grade elementary students and the lack of contextual reading materials incorporating local Aceh Besar culture, which reduces the relevance of literacy learning. This research aims to develop and determine the feasibility of a leveled picture storybook based on Aceh Besar culture for lower-grade elementary school students. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of leveled reading materials with local cultural content as a contextual literacy medium, which is still rarely developed systematically. This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach using the ADDIE model, consisting of analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation stages. The research subjects included material experts, media experts, language experts, teachers, and lower-grade elementary students. Data were collected through validation sheets, questionnaires to measure practicality, and interviews. The results showed that the developed media achieved a high level of feasibility based on expert validation, with scores of 91.66% from Indonesian language experts (very feasible), 75% from Acehnese language experts (feasible), and 93.12% from media experts (very feasible). In addition, the practicality test results indicated that the media was rated very practical by teachers, with average scores of 91.66% (Grade I), 95% (Grade II), and 96.67% (Grade III), and received positive responses from students. The media demonstrates potential to improve students' reading literacy while fostering early awareness of local culture. This study contributes by developing a leveled picture storybook integrating structured reading levels with Aceh Besar cultural content, providing a contextual and culturally responsive literacy medium that supports reading development and cultural awareness. However, the study is limited to feasibility and practicality testing on a small scale; therefore, future research should examine its effectiveness in broader contexts with larger samples.*

Keywords: *leveled picture storybook, Aceh Besar culture, culture-based learning media.*



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A. Introduction

Reading literacy is a crucial foundation for students' academic success and lifelong learning, particularly in the early grades of elementary school. Low reading literacy skills can hinder students' ability to understand learning materials across subjects, thereby affecting their overall learning outcomes. In addition, early literacy development plays an important role in shaping students' critical thinking, communication skills, and learning

independence. Therefore, strengthening reading literacy from an early age is an urgent priority in elementary education.

To support the development of reading literacy, the use of appropriate learning media becomes essential. Learning media that are concrete, engaging, and suited to students' cognitive development can enhance students' motivation, facilitate comprehension, and create meaningful learning experiences. Without supportive media, literacy learning tends to be less effective and less engaging for students. Therefore, the selection and development of appropriate learning media play a significant role in optimizing reading literacy learning in elementary schools (Bila, 2023).

One learning medium considered effective in supporting literacy development is picture storybooks. These books combine simple text with engaging illustrations, enabling students to better comprehend content while increasing their motivation and interest in reading. Previous studies have shown that picture storybooks can improve reading ability, comprehension, and student engagement (Aisyah, 2021). However, most picture storybooks used in elementary schools tend to be general and lack contextual relevance to students' socio-cultural backgrounds.

Based on a needs analysis (initial study) conducted through observations and interviews with teachers in elementary schools in Aceh Besar, it was found that the availability of picture storybooks containing local cultural content is still very limited. Existing reading materials are mostly sourced from outside the region and do not reflect local values, traditions, and daily life. As a result, students experience less meaningful and less contextual learning. Integrating local culture into learning is essential to strengthen cultural identity, foster a sense of belonging, and support character development from an early age (Ramadani, 2023).

In addition, another problem identified from the needs analysis is the variation in students' reading abilities in lower grades. Many students encounter difficulties in understanding texts because the level of difficulty is not aligned with their reading abilities. This indicates the need for tiered reading materials that are systematically adjusted to students' developmental levels. Leveled picture storybooks offer a potential solution, as they allow students to develop reading skills progressively from simple to more complex levels (Daniyati, 2023).

Previous studies have explored the development of local wisdom-based picture storybooks and their impact on literacy. Research by Budiarsa et al. (2022) and Krismayanti et al. (2022) shows that culturally based picture storybooks can enhance literacy skills and cultural understanding. However, these studies have not specifically focused on the development of leveled picture storybooks integrated with Aceh Besar cultural content. Therefore, this study positions itself as a development that combines a leveled literacy approach with local cultural integration.

Based on the problems identified, this study aims to develop and determine the feasibility and practicality of a leveled picture storybook based on Aceh Besar culture for

lower-grade elementary students. The contribution of this research is to provide a model for developing culturally relevant literacy media that can be adapted in different regional contexts, as well as to support the implementation of contextual and local wisdom-based learning in elementary education.

B. Method

This study employed a Research and Development (R&D) approach using the ADDIE model as proposed by Branch (2009), which consists of five stages: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. This model was selected because it provides a systematic framework for developing and evaluating educational products in line with the objectives of this study (Krismayanti et al., 2022).

The research was conducted in the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year at an elementary school in Aceh Besar Regency. The research subjects consisted of 25 lower-grade elementary students (Grades I–III) as users of the developed media, one classroom teacher, and three experts serving as validators, including a material expert, a language expert, and a media expert. The subjects were selected using purposive sampling based on their relevance to the research objectives, particularly their involvement in literacy learning and media evaluation.

The research procedure followed the ADDIE stages. The analysis stage involved identifying problems in literacy learning and the availability of appropriate media through classroom observations and teacher interviews. The design stage focused on planning the content, structure, and level gradation of the picture storybook based on Aceh Besar culture. The development stage included product creation and expert validation to assess its feasibility. The implementation stage involved limited trials with students and teachers to evaluate the practicality of the media. Finally, the evaluation stage involved revising the product based on feedback obtained from validation and trial results.

Data were collected using three techniques. First, validation sheets were used by experts to assess the feasibility of the product in terms of content, language, and media aspects. Second, questionnaires were administered to the teacher and students to measure the practicality of the developed media. Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teacher to obtain in-depth qualitative data regarding the usability and effectiveness of the product in classroom settings.

The research instruments consisted of expert validation sheets, practicality questionnaires, and interview guidelines. The validity of the instruments was ensured through expert judgment (content validity), where the instruments were reviewed and revised based on suggestions from experts before being used in the study.

Data analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative data from validation sheets and questionnaires were analyzed using percentage calculations to determine the feasibility and practicality categories based on predetermined criteria. Meanwhile, qualitative data obtained from interviews and expert feedback were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing,

following Creswell's (2018) qualitative data analysis framework. The results of this analysis were used as the basis for revising and improving the developed product.

C. Results and Discussion

Analysis Stage

The analysis stage was conducted through classroom observations and interviews with teachers of grades I–III. The findings revealed two main problems. First, the availability of literacy media, particularly picture storybooks containing Aceh Besar cultural content, was still very limited. Most reading materials used in schools were general and lacked contextual relevance to students' daily lives, which reduced students' engagement in reading activities. Second, there were significant variations in students' reading abilities. Some first-grade students were still unable to read, while second- and third-grade students showed varying levels of reading fluency. These findings indicate the need for contextual and leveled literacy media that can accommodate diverse student abilities and support early reading development.

Design Stage

Based on the results of the analysis, the researchers designed a leveled picture storybook integrating Aceh Besar cultural content. The design focused on several key aspects, including the gradation of reading levels from simple to more complex texts, the use of simple and communicative language, and the integration of illustrations with the text. The stories were developed based on local cultural contexts such as daily life, traditions, and values in Aceh Besar. In addition, the structure and layout of the book were adjusted to match the cognitive development and characteristics of lower-grade elementary students, ensuring that the media is engaging and easy to understand.

Development Stage

At the development stage, the product was created and subsequently validated by experts to determine its feasibility. The validation results showed that the Indonesian language aspect obtained a score of 91.66% categorized as very feasible, indicating that the language used was appropriate, communicative, and aligned with students' development. The Acehnese language aspect obtained a score of 75% categorized as feasible, suggesting that although the language was generally appropriate, minor improvements were needed in vocabulary consistency and simplification. Meanwhile, the media aspect obtained a score of 93.12% categorized as very feasible, indicating that the design, layout, and visual presentation of the book were highly appropriate for lower-grade students. These results demonstrate that the developed media is feasible for use with minor revisions.

Table 1. Indonesian language expert validation, Acehnese language validation, and media expert validation

Validation	Average score	Category
Indonesian	91,66%	Very worthy
Acehnese language	75%	Worthy
Media	93,125%	Very worthy

The validation results showed differences in the feasibility categories for the Indonesian language, Acehnese language, and media. These differences can be explained by the assessment characteristics of each aspect and the level of fulfillment of the feasibility indicators used by the experts.

The Indonesian language validation obtained an average score of 91.66% and was categorized as very feasibility because almost all assessment indicators were optimally met. The language used in the graded picture storybook was deemed to conform to good and correct Indonesian language rules, including sentence structure, vocabulary choice, and spelling. Furthermore, the language used was deemed communicative, efficient, and appropriate for the cognitive development and reading abilities of lower-grade students. The clarity of the sentences and the appropriateness of the language to the learning objectives also supported the readability of the text, thus significantly encouraging the early stages of reading learning.

Meanwhile, the Acehnese language validation obtained an average score of 75%, categorized as feasibility. This category indicates that the use of Acehnese language in the storybook generally conforms to the rules and cultural context of Greater Aceh and is understandable to students. However, the lower score compared to Indonesian indicates that several aspects still need improvement, such as consistent vocabulary use, dialect variations, or simplification of certain terms to make them more easily understood by lower-grade students. Therefore, although the Acehnese language used meets the eligibility criteria, minor improvements are still needed to optimize its use in learning.

The media expert validation results obtained an average score of 93.125%, categorized as very appropriate. The graded picture storybook media was deemed excellent in terms of visual appearance, design, and functionality. The illustrations presented were deemed attractive, clear, and relevant to the story content, thus helping students visually comprehend the reading. The layout, font size, color selection, and neatness of the design were also deemed appropriate for the characteristics of lower-grade students. Furthermore, this media is practical for use in learning because it requires no additional supporting materials and is easily integrated into classroom reading activities.

Thus, the differences in eligibility categories for each aspect indicate that the graded picture storybook media overall meets the eligibility criteria for use in learning. The Indonesian language and media aspects are categorized as very suitable because almost all indicators are met very well, while the Acehnese language is categorized as suitable

because it meets the eligibility standards but still requires improvement in several aspects for optimal performance.

Implementation Stage

The implementation stage involved limited trials with 25 students and three teachers from grades I–III. The results showed that in grade I, the media was helpful in supporting early reading, particularly through the use of illustrations, although simplification of text was still needed for some students who were not yet literate. In grade II, the media was considered appropriate for students' reading abilities and supported independent reading activities. In grade III, the media was highly suitable for students with diverse reading abilities, as the structured levels allowed students to read according to their capabilities. Overall, the implementation results indicate that the media can be effectively used in classroom learning.

Evaluation Stage

The evaluation stage was conducted based on feedback from expert validation and field trials. The revisions made included simplifying vocabulary at the early reading levels, improving the consistency of Acehnese language usage, and refining the layout and visual design to enhance readability. These improvements were aimed at optimizing the quality of the media so that it better aligns with students' needs and learning conditions. Practicality Test Results The practicality of the media was measured through questionnaires distributed to teachers of grades I, II, and III. The results showed high practicality scores, with 91.66% for grade I, 95% for grade II, and 96.67% for grade III, all categorized as very practical. These findings indicate that the media is easy to use, suitable for classroom conditions, and can support daily literacy learning activities without requiring additional resources.

The assessment covers aspects of display design, media technical quality, usability, and reading level gradation, which are systematically arranged from easy to difficult. Furthermore, the results of the practicality test based on the questionnaire responses of grades I, II, and III teachers showed average scores of 91.66%, 95%, and 96.67%, respectively, categorized as very suitable. These findings indicate that the media is easy to use, appropriate for classroom conditions, and supports daily reading and literacy learning activities.

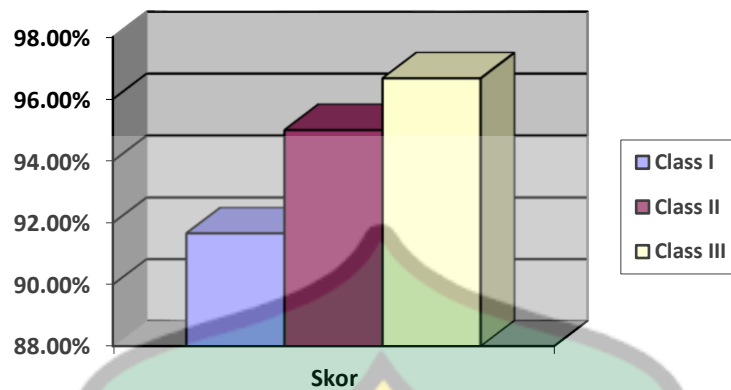


Figure 1. Questionnaire responses of grade I, II and III teachers

Description of the Developed Media

The developed product is a leveled picture storybook based on Aceh Besar culture, designed specifically for lower-grade elementary students. The book consists of several reading levels arranged progressively from simple to more complex texts. Each level contains short texts with controlled vocabulary, supported by colorful and relevant illustrations that reflect the story content. The stories incorporate local cultural elements such as traditions, daily activities, and social values, allowing students to connect the reading material with their real-life experiences. The visual design, including font size, layout, and color selection, was carefully adjusted to suit the characteristics of young learners.



The research results indicate that the graded picture storybook based on Aceh Besar culture is suitable for use as a learning medium for early literacy in elementary schools. This suitability is reflected in the fulfillment of aspects of display design, language, and systematic gradation of reading levels from simple to complex. The integration of illustrations with the story helps students understand the reading content visually, while the use of simple and communicative language supports students' decoding and comprehension abilities.

These findings are consistent with learning media development theory, which emphasizes that effective media must align with students' cognitive characteristics and developmental stages to create meaningful learning experiences (Kartikawati, 2025). Compared to previous studies by Budiarsa et al. (2022) and Krismayanti et al. (2022),

which only focused on culture-based picture storybooks, this study offers a more comprehensive contribution by integrating a leveled reading system, thereby addressing both contextual relevance and differences in students' reading abilities.

Furthermore, the integration of Aceh Besar cultural content enhances the value of the developed media. The stories reflecting daily life, traditions, and local values enable students to connect reading materials with their real-life experiences. This finding strengthens the concept of contextual learning theory, which states that learning becomes more meaningful when it is related to students' social and cultural environments (Dwiyasari, 2023). In contrast to conventional reading materials that are often decontextualized, the developed media provides culturally relevant content, which not only improves comprehension but also fosters cultural awareness and identity among students.

From the perspective of reading level gradation, the results show that the gradual increase in text difficulty effectively accommodates differences in students' reading abilities. This result is in line with leveled literacy theory, which highlights that structured progression from simple to complex texts can improve students' confidence and motivation in reading (Masyithoh, 2024). Unlike previous studies that did not incorporate systematic leveling, this research demonstrates that leveled picture storybooks can function as differentiated learning media, supporting both struggling and advanced readers within the same classroom.

In terms of practicality, the positive responses from teachers indicate that the media is easy to use, does not require additional resources, and is suitable for classroom conditions. Students also showed high interest in the stories and illustrations, which increased their engagement in reading activities. These findings support the view that practical and user-friendly media significantly influence the successful implementation of learning innovations (Hartoto, 2023). Compared to prior studies, this research provides stronger empirical evidence by including practicality data from multiple grade levels (I, II, and III), thus demonstrating broader applicability of the product.

Furthermore, the integration of local cultural values in the storybook contributes not only to literacy development but also to character education. Through stories containing values such as togetherness, religiosity, and local wisdom, students are introduced to their cultural identity from an early age. This result confirms and extends previous findings (Fadhilah, 2023) that culture-based learning media are effective in improving reading comprehension and shaping students' character. The novelty of this study lies in combining cultural content with a leveled reading approach, which has not been widely explored in earlier research.

However, this study is limited to feasibility and practicality testing in a limited setting and short implementation period. It does not yet measure the effectiveness of the media in significantly improving students' reading literacy skills through experimental or large-scale studies. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct effectiveness

testing using experimental designs and involve a larger sample to strengthen the generalizability of the findings.

D. Conclusion

The study concludes that the graded picture storybook based on Aceh Besar culture is feasible and practical for use in early literacy learning in elementary schools. Validation results show high feasibility from Indonesian language experts (91.66%) and media experts (93.12%) in the very suitable category, and Acehnese language validation (75%) in the suitable category. Practicality test results from teachers of grades I, II, and III (91.66%, 95%, and 96.67%) indicate that the media is easy to use and appropriate for classroom implementation. This study has practical implications as the developed media can support differentiated and contextual literacy learning in elementary schools. However, the study is limited to feasibility and practicality testing on a small scale. Therefore, future research should examine its effectiveness through larger-scale studies and explore its development in digital formats and other cultural contexts.

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