

Research Article

Exploration of the Value and Meaning of Local Wisdom in the Fairy Tale "Mentiko Batuah"

Siti Ara ^{1*}, Selvi Alqorona ², Aulia Rizki Hanifah ³, Ocha Nazira ⁴¹⁻⁴ Program Indonesian Language Education Studies, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Samudra, Indonesia; e-mail : ara486054@gmail.com

* Corresponding Author : Siti Ara

Abstract: Fairy tales are an important part of oral literature that reflects the cultural values and local wisdom of the community that supports them. This study aims to explore the values and meanings of local wisdom in the fairy tale "Mentiko Batuah", a folk tale from Aceh that is rich in moral messages and cultural symbolism. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with a hermeneutic approach and content analysis. Data were collected through literature and documentation studies, then analyzed to reveal the cultural messages contained in the narrative structure, characters, conflicts, and symbols in the story. The results of the study show that "Mentiko Batuah" contains various local wisdom values, such as honesty, responsibility, justice, and criticism of greed and betrayal. This story also functions as a medium for character formation and strengthening the cultural identity of the Acehnese people. Thus, this fairy tale not only acts as a means of entertainment, but also as an educational instrument that has relevance in the context of cultural and moral learning. This research is expected to be a contribution to the preservation of oral literature and the development of local cultural literacy studies in Indonesia.

Keywords: Aceh; Cultural Values; Fairy Tales; Local Wisdom; Mentiko Batuah; Oral Literature.

1. Introduction

Fairy tales are a form of oral literature that not only serves as a means of entertainment, but also as a vehicle for passing on cultural values, morals, and local wisdom. The existence of fairy tales in traditional societies is very important, because it is an effective tool for cultural communication between generations. Fairy tales convey life lessons symbolically and imaginatively, and contain profound messages about ethics, wisdom, and the collective identity of a society (Amin, 2020).

In Indonesia, fairy tales have developed very richly and diversely, following the cultural patterns and belief systems of local communities in each region. Each region has its own folklore that contains unique values. One of the fairy tales originating from Tanah Datar, Aceh is Mentiko Batuah. This fairy tale tells of a magical gem named Mentiko Batuah which is believed to have supernatural powers, and is a symbol of wisdom and the temptation of destructive power (Mulyadi, 2015).

Mentiko Batuah fairy tale not only presents a narrative of adventure and wonder, but is also full of symbols and cultural values of Aceh. Values such as honesty, simplicity, responsibility, and self-control appear prominently in this story. In this context, the fairy tale becomes a reflection of the life of the Acehnese people who uphold the customary principle of *basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah* (ABSSBK) (Zulkifli, 2016).

Studying fairy tales such as Mentiko Batuah is important to capture the meaning of symbolism and local values contained therein. In the midst of globalization and modernization, local wisdom is often marginalized by foreign values. In fact, understanding local values can strengthen cultural identity and become social capital to face changing times (Sumardjo, 2020).

Several previous studies have discussed the function of fairy tales as educational media and value transformation. For example, research by Yeti (2019) shows that fairy tales play a

Received: April 19, 2025

Revised: May 02, 2025

Accepted: May 15, 2025

Published: May 17, 2025

Curr. Ver.: May 17, 2025



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.

Submitted for possible open

access publication under the

terms and conditions of the

Creative Commons Attribution

(CC BY SA) license

[\(https://creativecommons.org/li](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)[censes/by-sa/4.0/\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

role in instilling character education values in children. However, studies that specifically explore local wisdom values in traditional fairy tales, especially Mentiko Batuah, are still limited. This is a gap that needs to be filled to enrich the study of oral literature and local culture.

This study focuses on the exploration of the values and meanings of local wisdom contained in the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale. The main objective of this study is to identify values that reflect the culture and local wisdom of the Acehnese people, both implicit and explicit in the story. This study also aims to explore how the values and meanings of these values are represented through the characters, storyline, and symbols used in the fairy tale.

The approach used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach with a content analysis method. This approach allows researchers to interpret the symbolic meaning hidden behind the fairy tale narrative. With this analysis, it is hoped that the noble values in Mentiko Batuah can be revealed and explained in depth, and their relevance to today's society can be critically examined (Krippendorff, 2019).

Research on the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale is not only academically important in the realm of literature and culture, but also has a practical impact on the preservation of local culture. Through documentation and interpretation of existing values, this fairy tale can be used as a source of contextual learning in the world of education. In addition, the reinterpretation of this folk tale can also strengthen the identity of the younger generation in facing the increasingly strong cultural identity crisis (Sarifuddin, 2018).

With this background, this study was conducted to fill the gap in the study of Acehnese oral literature that has not been touched upon in depth, especially in terms of local values and wisdom. The Mentiko Batuah tale was chosen because of its symbolic richness and moral values, as well as its great potential to be used as learning material for character and culture in a multicultural Indonesian society.

2. Literature Review

Oral literature, especially fairy tales, is an important part of folklore studies because it is able to convey cultural, social, and spiritual values of society orally. In this case, fairy tales not only function as entertainment, but also as a means of education and strengthening community identity. According to Danandjaja (2017), fairy tales play an important role in communicating local values to the next generation, in a way that is adaptive and contextual to the society that brings them to life.

Local wisdom itself is understood as noble values that grow and develop in local communities, the result of long interactions between humans and their social and natural environments. This wisdom is reflected in various forms, such as language, customs, knowledge systems, and art, including oral literature. In fairy tales, local wisdom is usually manifested in the form of symbols, characters, conflicts, and story resolutions that reflect the norms that apply in the society where the fairy tale develops (Dewiana, 2023).

In a semiotic perspective, Barthes explains that every narrative contains a sign system that can be read symbolically. This opens up space for reading fairy tales as cultural texts that store layers of meaning. Fairy tales not only convey stories linearly, but also reflect the structure of thinking and life values of a community. Therefore, the semiotic approach is very relevant in analyzing the values of local wisdom in fairy tales such as Mentiko Batuah (Pratiwi et al., 2015).

Mentiko Batuah tale is an Acehnese folk tale that contains moral messages about greed, leadership, and social responsibility. This tale shows the conflict between personal and collective interests, and how power and wealth can be a source of destruction if not managed wisely. These themes are a reflection of Acehnese traditional values that uphold deliberation, consensus, and fair leadership (Mulyana, 2018).

Studies on Acehnese oral literature have been conducted by several researchers, one of which is Mulyadi (2015), who stated that Acehnese fairy tales are full of local customary and philosophical values such as “alam takambang jadi guru” and “adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah”. These values emphasize the importance of balance between spiritual, social, and ecological life in the value system of Acehnese society. Mentiko Batuah, as one of the fairy tales that lives in this society, is a reflection of this principle.

Another study by Syahrial and Zulfikar (2021) shows that Acehnese fairy tales contain local symbols that not only represent characters and events, but also represent power relations and cultural values. Symbols such as gems, forests, or kings in fairy tales usually carry double

meanings that describe the worldview of the community. Therefore, analysis of symbols in fairy tales is important to explore local wisdom in more depth.

Fairy tales as a form of cultural communication have a strong educational function, especially in character building and strengthening children's cultural identity. According to Yeti (2019), through fairy tales, children can learn about honesty, courage, responsibility, and the importance of respecting others and the environment. In other words, fairy tales are a means of cultural-based character education that is very relevant amidst the value crisis that is often experienced by the younger generation today.

By considering the various studies, it can be concluded that the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale is very potential to be used as an object of research in the context of exploring local wisdom values. This study will not only enrich the treasury of oral literature research in Indonesia, but also contribute to the preservation of local culture and the development of educational models based on contextual and relevant traditional values.

3. Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a content analysis method as the main basis for examining the values and meanings of local wisdom contained in the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale. The qualitative approach was chosen because the nature of the data studied is narrative, contextual, and contains complex cultural meanings. According to Moleong (2017), a qualitative approach aims to understand phenomena in a natural context through the perspective of participants or data sources, so it is very suitable for analyzing oral literature such as fairy tales.

The main data source in this study is the text of the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale obtained from oral and written documentation that has been documented in various Acehnese folk literature publications. The researcher chose a version of the fairy tale that had been copied and transliterated into Indonesian from the original Acehnese source to make it easier to analyze and understand in an academic context. In addition to the main text, supporting data sources were obtained from folklore books, cultural studies, and journal articles relevant to the theme of local wisdom and oral literature.

The data collection technique was carried out through library research, namely by collecting, reading, and reviewing various references related to the research topic, including studies of local wisdom theories, narrative structures, and symbolism in fairy tales. This library study aims to enrich the analysis and place the findings in a strong scientific framework. In addition, the researcher also cross-checked other versions of the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale to see the consistency of the elements of value and symbol in various versions of the story.

Data analysis was carried out using the content analysis method developed by Krippendorff (2018), a way of identifying, categorizing, and interpreting story elements such as characters, settings, conflicts, symbols, and plots to find cultural values and the meaning of local wisdom contained therein. The analysis process was carried out in stages, starting from in-depth reading (close reading) of the text, marking important meaning units, to grouping data based on the themes of mutual cooperation values, honesty, togetherness, religiousness, social responsibility, justice, and steadfastness of honor.

In analyzing the meaning of local wisdom, researchers also use a hermeneutic approach to explore the hidden meaning behind the symbols or events in the story. The hermeneutic approach allows researchers to interpret the cultural context and local values based on the social experiences of the Acehnese people which are the background of the story (Nasution, 2018; Zulfikar).

To maintain data validity, researchers apply source triangulation techniques by comparing findings from the Mentiko Batuah text with supporting literature such as Acehnese ethnographic records, previous research results, and oral literature theories. This validity is important to ensure that the interpretation of local wisdom values truly reflects an accurate understanding of the culture in question. In addition, the researcher's sensitivity to the cultural context is an important factor in maintaining the objectivity of the analysis.

Overall, this research method is designed to explore the deep meaning hidden behind the narrative structure of the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale. Through the content analysis and symbolic interpretation approach, this study is expected to be able to reveal the heritage of cultural values of the Acehnese people that have been stored in oral traditions. In this way, the results of the study are not only academically relevant, but also provide real contributions to efforts to preserve and revitalize local Indonesian culture.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the analysis of the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale show that this story contains various local wisdom values that are full of moral, social, and cultural messages. One of the main values revealed is the importance of honesty and integrity. In the fairy tale, the depiction of greedy and dishonest characters finally faces the consequences of their actions, while sincere and wise characters find happiness. This shows that the Acehnese people instill the value of honesty as the foundation of community life (Subrotod & Nailufar, 2022).

4.1. Value of Mutual Cooperation

The value of mutual cooperation in the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale is reflected in the actions of the community who together seek solutions to the threat caused by the greed of one of the characters. When the situation becomes critical, they do not act alone but rather deliberate and make decisions collectively to maintain mutual safety. This attitude shows that the spirit of mutual cooperation is not only a practical action but also part of a moral value that is passed down from generation to generation. In Acehnese society, this value is still alive and is seen in the practice of community service building public facilities, helping others during disasters, stories of involvement in religious and traditional events (Yulyani, 2020). The meaning of the value of mutual cooperation is that mutual cooperation is not only a practical action, but also part of a moral value that is passed down from generation to generation. This reflects the spirit of togetherness in solving common problems, which is still alive in the social practices of the Acehnese people such as community service or helping others in disasters (Hidayah, 2015).

4.2 Value of Honesty

The value of honesty in the old medicine fishing fairy tale teaches the importance of not being greedy and always holding on to the truth. Yes, this is very relevant in the lives of the Acehnese people today, such as the practice of village deliberations (or village deliberations) where people are open and honest in making decisions regarding land disputes, inheritance, or boundary issues. In addition, in everyday life, honesty is also applied in the process of electing a village head which is carried out openly. Without any cheating or fraudulent practices (Harahap, 2020). The meaning of honesty in Acehnese society is prioritized, especially in village deliberations. Transparency and openness in making decisions, without any deception or manipulation, show that honesty is the foundation of social and political life in Acehnese society. (Sulaiman, 2016).

4.3 Value of Togetherness

The value of togetherness in the Mentiko Batuah fairy tale can be seen in the harmonious relationship between the characters in the story who always help each other. In the life of the Acehnese people, this togetherness is reflected in mutual cooperation activities, such as cleaning the meunasah (prayer room) together or in commemorating Islamic holidays. Here, since individuals play an active role without expecting a reward, it shows the importance of togetherness to achieve common goals (Maleh, 2019). Meaning Togetherness teaches the importance of contributing to a common goal without expecting anything in return. In Acehnese society, this is seen in activities such as cleaning NASA together and celebrating Islamic holidays that strengthen social bonds among community members (Ismail, 2017).

4.4 Religious Values

The religious values contained in Mentiko Batuah are clear from the attitude of the character who repents and regrets his actions. In the life of the Acehnese people, this value is also manifested in the megang tradition, namely the slaughter of animals to share with others before Ramadan. In addition, in the megang activity, the Acehnese people not only share food, but also share kindness with the surrounding environment, which strengthens religious and social values in everyday life (Hasan, 2021). The meaning of religious values is reflected in the act of sharing and kindness, as in the megang tradition. This shows how the Acehnese people integrate religious values with social actions, strengthening spiritual and social relationships in everyday life (Hasan, 2018).

4.5 Value of Responsibility

The value of social responsibility, the main character in mathematics has a great responsibility for the safety of his village. This value of social responsibility is also very relevant in the context of today's Acehnese society. For example, the involvement of youth in preserving the local environment and culture, such as in activities to preserve historical sites or in maintaining environmental cleanliness, reflects a high social responsibility towards society and future generations (Siregar, 2022). The meaning of the value of social responsibility is that social responsibility includes an active role in preserving culture and the environment. This is reflected in the involvement of youth in preserving local culture and maintaining environmental cleanliness, which shows that the Acehnese people care about the future (Zulfikar, 2019).

4.6 Value of Justice

The value of justice in the Mentiko Batuah Tale, the decisions taken by traditional leaders illustrate the principle of justice applied to the common good. In Acehnese society, it can be seen in the resolution of customary disputes, where decisions do not only benefit one party, but consider the rights and interests of all parties involved. For example, the resolution of customary land issues is carried out by involving all parties through a fair deliberation mechanism (Zulkifli, 2018). The meaning of this value is that justice is upheld with the principle of deliberation involving all parties to ensure fair and equal decisions for all members of the community. This shows that Acehnese society prioritizes the principle of justice in every aspect of life, especially in resolving customary disputes (Kamal, 2020).

4.7 The Value of Persistence

The value of determination Determination in preventing rocks can be seen from the text of the main character who tries to maintain the honor of his village despite facing many obstacles. In the life of the Acehnese people, this determination can be seen in the spirit of the community in fighting for their rights, such as in efforts to maintain local traditions and cultures that sometimes face the challenges of modernization. For example, in the implementation of traditional ceremonies that are still held even though there is an increasingly growing influence of foreign culture (Putra, 2020). The meaning of the value of determination teaches the importance of sticking to principles and values despite challenges. The Acehnese people show determination in maintaining local traditions and cultures despite the pressures of increasingly developing modernization (Abdullah, 2021).

4.8 Honor Value

The value of honor, honor in this world is very important and this value is reflected in the attitude of the main character who maintains his self-esteem and dignity even in difficult situations. In Acehnese society, maintaining honor is also something that is highly respected, both in personal life and in relationships between communities. For example, in relationships between families and in carrying out customs, maintaining the honor of oneself and family is very important (Nasution, 2021). The meaning of the value of honor is a value that is highly valued in Acehnese society. This is reflected in the efforts of individuals to prevent dignity and self-esteem, both in personal relationships and in social relationships between families, showing that honor is the foundation for building a social reputation (Syarif, 2020).

In addition to moral values, this tale also contains strong symbolism. For example, the treasure called "Mentiko Batuah" not only represents material wealth, but also symbolizes the trials of life that test human character. The meaning of this symbol shows that wealth is not the ultimate goal in life, but rather a moral test in the context of local culture, wealth must be managed wisely, honestly, and fairly, because if not, it can be a source of division and suffering. Semiotic analysis shows that wealth in this story is not neutral, it is a tool that can bring blessings or destruction depending on how humans treat it (Yuliana, 2018).

Mentiko Batuah tale also shows the Acehnese customary law system that is integrated with the life of the community. Sanctions against violators of values, such as expulsion from the village or social rejection, are raised in the story as a form of moral lessons that are enforced in society. This shows how customary law is used not only as a social regulatory system, but also as a means of character education (Taufik, 2015).

Narratively, the plot of this fairy tale is linear and dominated by a causal structure, namely one event causes another event. This makes it easier for the audience to understand the cause

and effect of each character's actions. The story is structured with an emotional rhythm that increases to a climax when the consequences of greed appear, then closes with a resolution that teaches a lesson. This structure is effective in conveying moral messages to the wider community, especially in the context of oral culture.

In a hermeneutic perspective, this fairy tale reflects the collective reflection of the Minangkabau people on human relations with power, wealth, and morality. Interpretation of the symbols and events in the fairy tale opens up the understanding that this story is not only a form of public entertainment, but also a means of social and spiritual education that is passed down from generation to generation (Sari, 2019; Maulida, 2020).

Overall, the results of the analysis show that Mentiko Batuah is not just a folktale, but also a medium for conveying local wisdom that includes ethics, social, spiritual, and cultural symbolism. This fairy tale is a rich and relevant source of learning to be studied in the context of cultural studies and oral literature, and has great potential to continue to be taught as part of preserving the nation's cultural identity.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the fairy tale "Mentiko Batuah" is a form of local wisdom that is full of cultural, social, and moral values of the Acehese people. This story not only contains elements of entertainment, but also becomes an effective educational media in conveying moral messages to the community, especially the younger generation. Values such as honesty, responsibility, greed, and justice are conveyed symbolically and contextually in the story, reflecting the outlook on life and social norms adopted by traditional communities.

In addition to being a cultural reflection, this tale also displays a distinctive narrative structure that supports the delivery of the message. The symbol of Mentiko Batuah as an heirloom treasure has a deep meaning about the importance of maintaining noble values and not being tempted by greed. The process of searching for and fighting for the treasure reflects the social dynamics that often occur in real life, making this tale relevant to be analyzed in the context of contemporary culture.

The suggestion from this research is the importance of preserving traditional fairy tales such as "Mentiko Batuah" through documentation and integration into the education curriculum. Thus, the younger generation can better recognize and appreciate local cultural heritage that contains positive values. In addition, further research can expand the study of folklore from other regions with a semiotic, structural, or anthropological approach, to enrich the treasury of science and foster a spirit of love for the nation's culture.

Local governments and cultural institutions are also expected to play an active role in exploring and publishing traditional fairy tales through digital and print media. This is important to answer the challenges of modernization and globalization that threaten the existence of traditional oral literature. Collective awareness of the importance of preserving folklore will help strengthen local cultural identity amidst the flow of global culture.

References

- [1] M. Amin, *Fairy tales as a medium for transmitting cultural values in traditional Indonesian society*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Adiluhung, 2020.
- [2] J. Danandjaja, *Indonesian Folklore: The Science of Gossip, Fairy Tales, and Others*. Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 2017.
- [3] S. Dewiana, "Local wisdom in oral literature: A study of the representation of cultural values in Nusantara fairy tales," *Journal of Humanities and Culture*, vol. 15, no. 1, pp. 45–58, 2023.
- [4] M. Ismail, "Social values in the culture of Acehese society," *Scientific Journal of Islamic Sociology*, vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 45–58, 2017.
- [5] K. Krippendorff, *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2018.
- [6] H. Mulyadi, *Mentiko Batuah: A symbolic analysis of Acehese fairy tales*. Banda Aceh: Malikussaleh University Publisher, 2015.
- [7] B. Mulyana, *Leadership and social values in Acehese folklore*. Banda Aceh: Akademika Publisher, 2018.
- [8] A. Nasution, *Hermeneutics and text interpretation in cultural studies*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2018.
- [9] N. Pratiwi, A. Lestari, and T. Rahman, "Semiotic analysis of Nusantara fairy tales: A case study from Roland Barthes' perspective," *Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 67–79, 2015.
- [10] Sarifuddin, "Preserving local culture through folklore: Reactualization of traditional values in character education," *Journal of Education and Culture*, vol. 22, no. 1, pp. 34–45, 2018.
- [11] M. Sari, "Hermeneutic interpretation of cultural values in oral literature," unpublished.
- [12] H. Subrotod and R. Nailufar, *Moral values in Nusantara folklore: A study of the role of characters and cultural messages*. Jakarta: Penerbit Literasi Nusantara, 2022.
- [13] A. Syahrial and R. Zulfikar, "Local symbolism in Acehese fairy tales: Power relations and cultural values in oral literature," *Journal of Local Cultural Studies*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 34–49, 2021.
- [14] A. Taufik, *Customary law in Acehese folklore: Social function and character education*. Banda Aceh: Ar-Raniry Press, 2015.
- [15] R. Yeti, "Fairy tales as a medium for children's character education," *Journal of Child Education*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 55–63, 2019.

- [16] R. Yuliana, *Symbolism and moral meaning in Indonesian folklore*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2018.
- [17] T. Zulfikar, "The role of the younger generation in preserving Acehese culture and sustainable development," *Journal of Education and Socio-Culture*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 102–115, 2019.