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Religious Legend-Based Ethnopedagogy in Language Learning: Integrating Banjar Islamic Tradition and Examining Student Response

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ABSTRACT

Religious legends offer opportunities to connect language learning with local cultural knowledge, yet their classroom integration and students' responses remain underexplored. This study examines the integration of the Datu Sanggul legend into Indonesian language learning through an ethnopedagogical approach and describes students' perceptions of cultural literacy. A multiphase descriptive mixed-methods design combined narrative content analysis, classroom observations, interviews, and questionnaires involving 100 eleventh-grade students in Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan. The needs analysis revealed strong interest in studying local legends (M = 4.37) despite limited integration of local culture into classroom learning. The legend was integrated through reading, narrative analysis, interpretation of religious, moral, and sociocultural values, group discussions, and reflection on contemporary experiences. The results show that students reported favorable perceptions of cultural literacy (M = 3.35 out of 4; 83.75%), with the highest score for understanding local culture (85.50%) and the lowest for the legend's relevance to their lives (81.75%). These findings suggest that religious legend-based ethnopedagogy offers a culturally contextualized approach to Indonesian language learning.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Educational transformation in the contemporary era extends beyond the transfer of linguistic knowledge and increasingly emphasizes the reinforcement of cultural identity. Within Indonesian language education, language serves not only as a medium of communication but also as a vital instrument for preserving the nation's collective cultural memory (Ratri et al., 2025; Si'ilata et al., 2023; Zhou & Liu, 2023). The proliferation of global cultural influences through digital platforms has prompted a paradigm shift among younger generations. The predominance of global popular culture (pop culture) has resulted in students being more familiar with foreign mythologies than with their own local narratives (Ulu-Aslan & Baş, 2023). This trend has raised concerns regarding the diminishing emotional and intellectual connection to indigenous cultural roots.

Indicators of cultural disconnection are becoming increasingly apparent. Students are often more familiar with international popular narratives than with the oral literature present in their own communities. If unaddressed, this trend may erode students' sense of identity and reduce their social sensitivity to traditional roots. Consequently, it is essential to develop curricula that integrate local cultural values, thereby enabling students to appreciate and preserve their cultural heritage (Hadijaya et al., 2025).

Integrating texts with local cultural contexts offers opportunities to connect language learning with students' cultural knowledge and experiences. However, folktales (legends) have rarely been systematically integrated into Indonesian language learning as a pedagogical resource, despite their potential relevance to cultural literacy (Simanungkalit et al., 2025). Studies on ethnopedagogy and local culture-based learning have largely focused on character development, teaching material development, and cultural preservation. Other studies have demonstrated the feasibility of integrating Indonesian folklore into language teaching materials (Yulianeta, 2025) and the potential of folklore-based learning to enhance students' cultural literacy (Abidin et al., 2023; Zuliyanti & Doyin, 2020). In the Banjar context, research has examined manaqib narratives about revered religious figures and their reception within the community (Dahlan et al., 2024; Jannah, 2018), while recent work has explored how younger generations reinterpret the symbolic meanings of Indonesian folklore (Irlina et al., 2026). Ethnopedagogical approaches have also been shown to support learners' awareness of local culture and the transmission of local wisdom within educational settings (Sakti et al., 2024).

The use of folklore as a learning resource can introduce students to Indonesia's rich cultural heritage while connecting language education with culturally meaningful narratives and values. The adaptation of traditional legends into written literary works offers opportunities to integrate storytelling, cultural preservation, and language and literature education (Youpika et al., 2025). Furthermore, research on digital folktale materials in Indonesian language classrooms has demonstrated improvements in students' writing performance and positive responses to culturally contextualized learning media

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(Ansoriyah et al., 2026). These findings suggest that incorporating culturally relevant narratives into literacy activities can support language development while encouraging students to engage with cultural contexts. Legends, as forms of folk narrative, embody substantial cultural, moral, symbolic, and narrative values relevant to the development of students' cultural literacy. These values enrich vocabulary and text structure and foster awareness of cultural identity and the social significance of language in the local context. In education, ethnopedagogy is an approach that integrates local cultural aspects into teaching practices, ensuring that learning remains closely connected to students' sociocultural experiences. Studies in ethnopedagogy indicate that teaching materials incorporating local wisdom can enhance student engagement and contextualize learning (Kadirovna, 2024; Marwan et al., 2025; Mohd Hashim et al., 2026).

The integration of legend-based ethnopedagogy into Indonesian language learning aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Target 4.7, which emphasizes appreciation of cultural diversity and its contribution to sustainable development, and Target 11.4, which promotes the safeguarding of cultural heritage (United Nations General Assembly, 2020). By incorporating local legends as culturally contextualized learning resources, this approach may enhance students' engagement with local knowledge, cultural values, and oral traditions while supporting the transmission of intangible cultural heritage through education (UNESCO, 2025).

The legend, ethnopedagogy, and cultural literacy are interrelated concepts. Legends, as elements of folklore, constitute an essential part of ethnopedagogy, while cultural literacy represents the intended outcome of their integration. Theoretically, cultural literacy encompasses not only the ability to read texts but also the capacity to understand, evaluate, and internalize societal symbols and values. In the Indonesian context, this form of literacy should be grounded in local wisdom (Abrari et al., 2025; Dwi Fajri & Amrin, 2025; Hosaini, 2025; Wati et al., 2024). Ethnopedagogy offers an approach that regards local wisdom as a source of educational innovation, positioning local knowledge as a contemporary learning methodology rather than a relic of the past.

Previous studies have examined the structural features and pedagogical relevance of local legends (Estremera & Mingoy, 2025; Fauzi & Nurizzati, 2024), their role in transmitting cultural values and identity (Quy, 2024), and the incorporation of local wisdom into language instruction (Masri et al., 2025; Setiaji et al., 2026). Taken together, these studies have generally treated legends and folktales as cultural or literary texts, focusing on their structure, value transmission, or character education. Legends about religious figures, which contain accounts of karamah and are rooted in local Islamic traditions, have rarely been examined as ethnopedagogical resources. Little is also known about how such narratives can be discussed inclusively in the classroom and how students respond to them in terms of cultural literacy, particularly in South Kalimantan. Moreover, the application of traditional narratives to 21st-century literacy competencies has received

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limited attention (Aprilliandari, 2021). Research on the Datu Sanggul legend itself has thus far been limited to its community reception (Nuryani, 2021).

This study introduces a novel perspective by positioning the diverse local legends of South Kalimantan as primary tools in culturally responsive language learning, rather than as mere objects of study. The Datu Sanggul legend offers a culturally grounded resource for Indonesian language learning by connecting local heritage and religious-cultural values with literary interpretation, consistent with recent evidence on the pedagogical relevance of local folklore (Simbolon & Mandalahi, 2025). This orientation is conceptually consistent with culturally sustaining pedagogy, which emphasizes the recognition and maintenance of students' linguistic and cultural resources through locally relevant learning experiences (Son, 2024). It also aligns with Indonesia's 2025 Pembelajaran Mendalam (deep learning) approach, which promotes mindful, meaningful, and joyful learning (Anggraena et al., 2025). As a narrative associated with a local Islamic figure, the legend provides opportunities to explore the relationship between religious traditions and community cultural practices, a perspective informed by recent scholarship on religious literacy in Indonesian education (Abdullah, 2023; Suyanto et al., 2024).

Within this conceptual framework, the present study contributes to scholarship on the transmission of local Islamic traditions by showing how a narrative about a revered Banjar ulama can serve as a medium for passing on religious-cultural memory within formal schooling. It further contributes to discussions of religious moderation (moderasi beragama) in schools (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019; Mulyana, 2023) by demonstrating a classroom approach in which religious narratives are treated with respect while diverse interpretations and beliefs are accommodated. Accordingly, this study aims to (1) describe how the Datu Sanggul legend is integrated into Indonesian language learning through an ethnopedagogical approach and (2) examine students' perceptions of their cultural literacy after participating in legend-based Indonesian language learning.

2. METHODS

This study employed a multiphase descriptive mixed-methods design that combined qualitative content analysis, classroom observation, and interviews with descriptive quantitative surveys. The study was conducted in four sequential phases, followed by the integration of qualitative and quantitative findings, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Phases, Procedures, Data Sources, and Analytical Outputs

Phase	Research procedures	Data sources / instruments	Expected analytical outputs
Phase 1: Needs analysis	Identifying students' familiarity with local legends and their learning needs	Preliminary student questionnaire	Descriptive profile of students' needs and cultural familiarity
Phase 2: Narrative content analysis	Close reading, identifying narrative	Original Datu Sanggul narrative; coding matrix	Categorization of religious, moral, and sociocultural values

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Phase	Research procedures	Data sources / instruments	Expected analytical outputs
	elements, and coding ethnopedagogical values		
Phase 3: Classroom implementation	Integrating the adapted legend using the documented instructional approach and learning activities	Adapted narrative, lesson plans, classroom documentation	Description of the instructional procedures
Phase 4: Cultural literacy assessment	Administering a cultural literacy questionnaire and conducting semi-structured interviews	Student questionnaire; interview transcripts	Descriptive response patterns and students' perspectives
Data integration	Comparing narrative themes, instructional documentation, and student responses	Qualitative and quantitative findings	Integrated interpretation of ethnopedagogical integration and perceived cultural literacy

Research Setting and Participants

This study was conducted at SMAN 6 Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia, in October 2025. A total of 100 eleventh-grade students from the school participated, selected via random sampling; all participants completed both provided questionnaires. Interview participants included five students chosen at random and one Indonesian language teacher, selected based on their role as an instructor.

Narrative Source and Content Analysis

The narrative source used is a legend titled "Manakib Datu Sanggul," published in Kandangan, South Kalimantan, by Tim Sahabat and edited by Sahabat Aksara Prima (Tim Sahabat, 2006). This source was complemented by *Datu-Datu Terkenal di Kalimantan Selatan* (Marwan et al., 2022), which provides more detailed content and explanations of the narrative. The classroom teacher (T1) combined the two books into a summarized version for classroom use, retaining the plot, characters, and setting of the original texts. This legend was selected purposively because it contains religious, moral, and sociocultural values, specifically those reflecting perseverance, religiosity, and positive character traits. Narrative segments containing religious, moral, philosophical, and sociocultural values relevant to Indonesian language instruction were selected for analysis. Secondary sources include Indonesian language curriculum documents and relevant scholarly literature concerning the relationship between oral literature, cultural values, and character education (Fazar et al., 2025; Priyono et al., 2026).

The researcher served as the primary instrument for qualitative interpretation, systematically examining the selected segments through close reading and content analysis, while attending to narrative elements such as characters, events, and settings (James, 2023). The analysis involved identifying meaningful textual units, coding them into categories of ethnopedagogical values, and interpreting their educational relevance within the sociocultural context of South Kalimantan (Dourish, 2014; Polkinghorne,

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2005; Ravindran, 2019). The results of this analysis served as the basis for developing a condensed version of the legend for classroom use, adapted by Riky Marliadi, an Indonesian language teacher, to align with the reading proficiency levels of eleventh-grade students.

Quantitative instruments and data analysis

Two types of questionnaires were employed for distinct purposes. A needs analysis questionnaire was administered prior to the learning activities to assess students' interest in local folklore, their prior experience with local culture in the classroom, and their perceived need for legend-based learning materials. Responses were rated on a five-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. A cultural literacy questionnaire was administered after the learning activities; it covered ten indicators presented in Table 4 and utilized a four-point scale: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, and 4 = strongly agree. Given that these instruments employed different response formats, their scores were analyzed separately and were not treated as comparable pre-test and post-test measures.

The cultural literacy questionnaire consisted of 20 statements developed based on conceptually defined cultural literacy indicators. Its content validity was assessed by two experts in Indonesian language education and local culture, yielding an Aiken's V coefficient of 0.91 (Aiken, 1985; Merino-Soto, 2023), while its internal consistency showed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.88. The needs analysis questionnaire was reviewed by an education and culture practitioner and achieved a reliability coefficient of 0.85 from a Cronbach's alpha value. Responses to the needs analysis questionnaire were summarized using frequencies, percentages, mean values, and standard deviations. For the cultural literacy questionnaire, the mean score for each indicator is expressed as a percentage of the maximum possible score, using the formula $P = (M/4) \times 100$, where M represents the mean score for the indicator and P represents the corresponding percentage. The percentage of achievement is interpreted according to the following criteria: 81.26–100% = very high, 62.51–81.25% = high, 43.76–62.50% = moderate, and 25.00–43.75% = low. All results are interpreted as the students' self-reported perceptions following their participation in the learning activities.

Classroom implementation and observation

The adapted legend was integrated into Indonesian language learning on the topic of Appreciating Prose, in accordance with the Phase F learning outcomes of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, using Problem-Based Learning and Discovery Learning within an ethnopedagogical approach. Classroom observations were carried out over two instructional sessions using observation sheets and field notes to document the learning procedures, student activities, and classroom interactions (Etalwewa et al., 2022; Sari et al., 2019).

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Interviews and qualitative data analysis

Semi-structured interviews explored students' experiences with legend-based learning, their interpretations of religious and cultural values, and their perceptions of cultural literacy. Interview data were transcribed and analyzed thematically through familiarization, initial coding, theme development, and theme review (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2021). Credibility was strengthened through the triangulation of data sources, namely narrative analysis, classroom observations, interviews, and questionnaires, so that the identified ethnopedagogical dimensions reflect careful interpretation of the sociocultural structure of the text rather than superficial reading.

Data integration and ethical considerations

Qualitative and quantitative findings were integrated during the interpretation phase by comparing narrative themes, learning documentation, and student responses to construct a comprehensive picture of the integration of ethnopedagogy and cultural literacy as perceived by the students. The data collection process was communicated to and approved by the participating school; institutional permission was obtained through a research permit issued by Lambung Mangkurat University and an official letter from the Principal of SMAN 6 Banjarmasin, with the support of the Indonesian language teachers. Parents or guardians were informed of the study through the school, and the students provided verbal assent after being informed of the study's purpose, procedures, voluntary nature, and their right to withdraw at any time without academic consequences. The identities of the participants were anonymized (e.g., S1, S2, S3 for students; T1 for the teacher) in the reporting of the research results.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Students' learning needs

The research commenced with a needs analysis of the students to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the educational context and requirements. This phase examined students' interest in local folklore, their prior classroom experiences with local culture, and their perceived need for legend-based materials. The results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Needs Analysis

No.	Item	SD n (%)	D n (%)	N n (%)	A n (%)	SA n (%)	SD	Mean (M)
1	Interested in reading/hearing local folklore.	0	3	23	57	17	0.715	3.88
2	The teacher has discussed Banjar folktales.	0	70	23	7	0	0.614	2.37
3	We can learn lessons from the legendary figures.	3	37	47	13	0	0.732	2.70

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No.	Item	SD n (%)	D n (%)	N n (%)	A n (%)	SA n (%)	SD	Mean (M)
4	Want to learn through stories unique to the region.	0	7	16	37	40	0.916	4.10
5	Learning local stories makes lessons interesting.	0	13	47	30	10	0.837	3.37
6	Language learning has been integrated with local culture.	0	63	20	14	3	0.844	2.57
7	I need to study the legend to strengthen my cultural literacy.	0	3	7	40	50	0.747	4.37
8	Learning the legend can strengthen character awareness.	0	0	13	53	34	0.656	4.21
9	Legends are relevant as supporting material for cultural literacy teaching.	0	3	3	44	50	0.698	4.41

Note. N = 100. Response columns show n (%); frequencies equal percentages because N = 100. SD (response category) = strongly disagree; D = disagree; N = neutral; A = agree; SA = strongly agree. SD (statistic) = standard deviation; M = mean.

Descriptive statistical analysis revealed a discrepancy between students' favorable attitudes toward integrating local cultural narratives and their reported exposure to such materials in Indonesian language learning. Students generally perceived local legends as relevant learning resources, as reflected in the high mean scores for Item 7 (M = 4.37, SD = 0.747) and Item 9 (M = 4.41, SD = 0.698). Specifically, 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that studying local legends could strengthen their cultural literacy, while 94% considered legends relevant as supplementary materials for cultural literacy instruction. Furthermore, 77% expressed an interest in learning through regionally distinctive narratives (Item 4, M = 4.10, SD = 0.916). These findings indicate considerable student interest in culturally contextualized learning and recognition of the potential educational relevance of local legends.

However, Item 3 revealed a contrasting response pattern regarding the perceived educational value of legendary figures (M = 2.70, SD = 0.732). Specifically, 40% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that lessons could be learned from legendary figures, while 47% remained neutral and only 13% agreed. This finding suggests that students' general recognition of legends as relevant cultural learning resources does not necessarily correspond to their belief that meaningful lessons can be derived from legendary characters. The discrepancy may reflect uncertainty about the moral and cultural significance of legendary figures or difficulties in relating their narratives to contemporary learning contexts. However, the underlying reasons cannot be established from the questionnaire responses alone. This finding highlights the importance of providing explicit instructional guidance to help students interpret characters, narrative

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events, and embedded cultural values rather than assuming that the educational meanings of local legends are immediately apparent to learners.

Despite students' generally favorable attitudes toward culturally contextualized learning, their responses suggested limited prior integration of local cultural materials into Indonesian language instruction. For Item 2 (M = 2.37, SD = 0.614), 70% of respondents disagreed that their teachers had discussed Banjar folktales, whereas only 7% agreed. Similarly, Item 6 (M = 2.57, SD = 0.844) indicated that 63% of respondents disagreed that local culture had been integrated into language learning, while 17% agreed or strongly agreed. These findings reveal a perceived gap between students' interest in local cultural content and their reported classroom learning experiences. Taken together, the results suggest a need for more structured and contextually relevant ethnopedagogical integration that not only introduces local legends as learning resources but also supports students in identifying, interpreting, and reflecting on the religious, moral, and sociocultural values embedded in their narratives.

Ethnopedagogical values of the Datu Sanggul legend

This study uses the legend of *Datu Sanggul*, historically identified as Sheikh Abdussamad, a central figure in the spiritual tradition of the Banjarese. *Datu Sanggul* is regarded not only as a legendary figure but also as the embodiment of indigenous wisdom that harmonizes adherence to Islamic law with deeper spiritual realities. The spiritual connection between *Datu Sanggul* in Tatakan and Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari in Mecca offers insights into traditional concepts of space and time, while also highlighting Banjar's position within the global Islamic intellectual network of the period.

From a pedagogical perspective, the narrative of *Datu Sanggul* conveys moral messages centered on absolute obedience and spiritual determination. The term "*Sanggul*," which refers to the act of waiting for prayer time and wearing a bun, symbolically represents the values of discipline and patience. Datu Sanggul's intellectual legacy, as reflected in the "*Kitab Barencong*," bridges textual knowledge and contextual understanding, transmitting truth through both textual literacy and inner experience (Marwan et al., 2022). Integrating this legend into the formal education curriculum in South Kalimantan, from an ethnopedagogical standpoint, has the potential to reinforce students' identity and character, while also serving as a cultural safeguard against the erosion of traditional values in the modern era.

The narratives surrounding Datu Sanggul's death, including accounts of karamah (extraordinary occurrences attributed to a revered religious figure), can be understood within the broader Banjar tradition of preserving religious and cultural memory through narratives about respected spiritual figures (Dahlan et al., 2024). From an emic perspective, these accounts represent expressions of community beliefs and cultural interpretations rather than empirically verified historical events. Previous research has demonstrated that local folklore provides opportunities for younger generations to reinterpret symbolic meanings and reflect critically on moral, spiritual, and cultural

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values (Irlina et al., 2026). Furthermore, ethnopedagogical approaches emphasize the importance of transmitting local knowledge and cultural values through educational practices (Sugiarto et al., 2025). In Indonesian language education, the integration of Datu Sanggul's narratives therefore requires a culturally sensitive and inclusive pedagogical approach. Teachers should present accounts of karamah as part of the community's cultural heritage, facilitate critical and reflective discussions, and respect students' diverse religious perspectives without requiring them to accept or reject supernatural claims. Accordingly, the educational value of these narratives should be assessed not merely through students' ability to recall narrative events but also through their capacity to interpret cultural meanings, reflect on ethical and social values, and demonstrate respect for different beliefs. Such an approach can support the development of cultural literacy, intercultural understanding, and religious tolerance within an inclusive learning environment.

The content analysis of the Datu Sanggul legend focused on identifying religious, moral, and sociocultural values that could be integrated into Indonesian language learning. The analysis considered how narrative events, character representations, and cultural symbols convey educational meanings within the religious-cultural traditions of the Banjar community. The proposed analytical categories and their instructional applications are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Ethnopedagogical Values, Cultural Meanings, and Instructional Applications of the Datu Sanggul Legend

Narrative Episode and Textual Evidence	Ethnopedagogical Values	Cultural Symbols and Meanings	Application in Indonesian Language Learning
Datu Sanggul's pursuit of religious knowledge. The narrative describes his journey to study with Datu Suban. (Marwan et al., 2022)	Perseverance, commitment to learning, humility, and respect for teachers.	The journey to seek knowledge represents dedication to education, while the teacher–student relationship reflects the importance of respecting scholarly authority within Banjar Islamic traditions.	Students identify characters, settings, motivations, and moral values. Through guided discussion, they reflect on perseverance, respect for teachers, and the relevance of these values to their educational experiences.
Religious devotion and personal discipline. The narrative portrays Datu Sanggul as a figure associated with religious devotion, patience, and spiritual commitment. (Marwan et al., 2022)	Religiosity, discipline, patience, responsibility, and spiritual commitment.	Religious practices represent devotion and ethical responsibility within the cultural and religious life of the Banjar community.	Students analyze character traits and religious values represented in the narrative. They connect these values with contemporary experiences involving discipline, responsibility, and personal conduct.
The Kitab Barencong and the transmission of religious knowledge. The narrative associates Datu Sanggul with religious scholarship and his relationship with Sheikh Muhammad Arsyad al-Banjari. (Marwan et al., 2022)	Appreciation of knowledge, intellectual responsibility, respect for scholars, and the transmission of cultural knowledge.	The Kitab Barencong represents a symbol of religious intellectual heritage and the preservation of knowledge within Banjar Islamic traditions.	Students identify cultural symbols and analyze their meanings. Through group discussion, they examine the importance of preserving local intellectual traditions and communicating cultural knowledge across generations.

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Narrative Episode and Textual Evidence	Ethnopedagogical Values	Cultural Symbols and Meanings	Application in Indonesian Language Learning
Accounts of karamah in the Datu Sanggul narrative. Stories of extraordinary occurrences associated ` with the religious figure form part of the community's cultural memory. (Marwan et al., 2022)	Respect for religious traditions, cultural awareness, reflective thinking, and respect for different beliefs.	Karamah narratives represent expressions of community belief and religious-cultural memory rather than independently verified historical events.	Students interpret the narrative from an emic cultural perspective, distinguish traditional beliefs from historical evidence, and discuss the importance of respecting religious and cultural diversity.

The proposed analysis identifies several interconnected dimensions of ethnopedagogical values in the Datu Sanggul legend. Religious values are represented through the narrative's emphasis on devotion, spiritual commitment, and respect for religious knowledge. Moral values are reflected in perseverance, discipline, patience, and responsibility, while sociocultural values emerge through the representation of teacher–student relationships, intellectual heritage, and the preservation of local religious traditions. These values provide opportunities to connect literary interpretation with the cultural experiences of students in South Kalimantan. In particular, the representation of Datu Sanggul's dedication to seeking knowledge offers a context for discussing perseverance and respect for teachers. The Kitab Barencong provides a cultural symbol through which students may explore the transmission of religious knowledge and its significance within Banjar intellectual traditions.

The narratives concerning karamah require a culturally sensitive interpretation. Rather than treating extraordinary occurrences as empirically established historical facts, the learning activities approach them as expressions of community beliefs and cultural memory. This perspective enables students to examine religious narratives critically and respectfully while recognizing the relationship between local Islamic traditions and Banjar cultural identity. Within Indonesian language learning, these ethnopedagogical values are connected to reading, identifying narrative elements, interpreting cultural symbols, discussing moral and religious meanings, and reflecting on their relevance to contemporary life. Accordingly, the Datu Sanggul legend can function not only as a literary text but also as a culturally contextualized learning resource that provides opportunities for students to engage with the religious, moral, and sociocultural dimensions of local heritage.

Integration of the legend in classroom learning

Kurikulum Merdeka incorporates the topic of "Appreciating Prose" for 11th-grade high school students, selected for its suitability for integration into language learning. This topic comprises four sub-topics: Reading Prose Texts, Listening to Prose Texts, Writing Prose Texts, and Presenting Prose Texts. The objective is to enable students to interpret prose texts and to identify and articulate the meanings embedded within them. Interpretation may involve reconstructing the historical meaning of a story, guided by the

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author's intent as implied in the narrative or external data, or focusing on realistic fictional prose by analyzing cues and narrative structures that reflect real-life occurrences. This approach allows readers to uncover nuanced and profound meanings.

The teaching module implemented in this study corresponds to Phase F, which includes elements of reading and viewing, and aligns with the third Learning Objective Flow (ATP). The targeted learning objectives are for students to critically analyze themes, characters, settings, plots, points of view, and language styles in prose texts, and to appreciate prose by articulating personal assessments, responses, and reflections on the aesthetic, moral, and cultural values presented. These objectives form the basis for integrating ethnopedagogy. The instructional activities integrated Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Discovery Learning within an ethnopedagogical approach to Indonesian language instruction. The learning activities were designed with reference to the Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP; Learning Objectives Sequence), which organizes learning objectives derived from the Capaian Pembelajaran (CP; Learning Outcomes) for Phase F, generally corresponding to Grades XI–XII of senior high school. PBL was employed to facilitate students' exploration of contextual issues related to local cultural values, while Discovery Learning supported their systematic interpretation of narrative elements and ethnopedagogical meanings embedded in the Datu Sanggul legend. During the learning process, students examined the narrative, identified relevant cultural and religious values, and explored their meanings through textual analysis and group discussions. Students then connected the story to contemporary situations, emphasizing the relationship between Indonesian language learning, cultural identity, and cultural literacy. These activities were intended to encourage critical engagement with local cultural heritage while providing opportunities for students to articulate and reflect on the relevance of traditional values in contemporary society. The instructional procedures and their corresponding learning activities are described in the following subsection.

The learning process began with an apperception activity led by the teacher, which involved presenting audiovisual media about local wisdom in South Kalimantan. The teacher subsequently introduced types of legends, specifically relating them to the legend of Datu Sanggul. Among the 100 students who participated in the needs assessment, 70 students (70%) disagreed that their teachers had previously discussed Banjar folktales in Indonesian language classes, while 23 students (23%) expressed neutral responses and only 7 students (7%) agreed. These findings indicate that most respondents reported limited classroom exposure to Banjar folktales. However, these responses do not directly establish students' prior familiarity with the Datu Sanggul legend, as the questionnaire did not specifically assess their knowledge of this narrative.

The main activity was a structured presentation on Prose Appreciation, emphasizing the legend of Datu Sanggul using a scientific approach. The teacher explained the importance of appreciating the legend as both cultural heritage and a marker of local identity. Students engaged in independent reading of the legend of Datu Sanggul to reflect

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on the material prior to class discussion. Subsequently, students received worksheets with guiding questions to facilitate analysis of the text's elements, content, values, and structure.

Following the reading, students engaged in discussions to address worksheet questions concerning cultural values, morals, and character. This stage involved structured exploration through active reading, story mapping, identification of intrinsic elements, and analysis of values and cultural context. Students also examined cultural symbols within the text and connected them to contemporary contexts.

Classroom observations across the two instructional sessions documented students' participation in reading, interpreting, and discussing the Datu Sanggul legend. During the learning activities, students engaged in individual reading and completed structured worksheets designed to guide their understanding of narrative elements, including characters, settings, events, and plot. Their participation was facilitated through story mapping, identification of intrinsic elements, and interpretation of the religious, moral, and sociocultural values embedded in the narrative.

During group discussions, students worked collaboratively to address questions concerning the cultural meanings and moral messages presented in the legend. The discussion activities provided opportunities for students to exchange interpretations, identify cultural symbols, and relate the values represented in the narrative to contemporary experiences. Particular attention was given to perseverance, discipline, patience, religiosity, and respect for knowledge. These activities positioned students not merely as recipients of cultural information but as active participants in interpreting and constructing meaning from local narratives.

The classroom observations also highlighted the importance of a culturally sensitive approach when discussing accounts of karamah associated with Datu Sanggul. Rather than presenting extraordinary occurrences as empirically verified historical facts, the teacher's instructional framing positioned these narratives as expressions of the Banjar community's religious beliefs and cultural memory. Students were encouraged to examine their cultural and symbolic significance while maintaining respect for different religious interpretations. This approach did not require students to affirm or reject supernatural claims but instead directed their attention toward understanding the narrative's cultural context, religious significance, and underlying values.

Overall, the two instructional sessions demonstrated how the integration of local religious narratives could create opportunities for collaborative learning, literary interpretation, and cultural reflection. Through guided reading, group discussions, and contextual interpretation, the Datu Sanggul legend was explored not only as a prose text but also as a representation of Banjar Islamic heritage and a resource for developing students' cultural awareness.

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Students' perceptions of cultural literacy

After the learning activities, students' perceptions of cultural literacy were surveyed using a questionnaire covering ten indicators. The mean, SD, and achievement percentage for each indicator are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Cultural Literacy Indicators

No.	Cultural Literacy Indicators	Mean	SD	Achievement (%)
1	Understanding of local culture	3.42	0.684	85.50
2	Recognition of cultural values	3.38	0.693	84.50
3	Understanding of cultural identity	3.36	0.704	84.00
4	Appreciation of local culture	3.40	0.682	85.00
5	Interest in learning local culture	3.29	0.729	82.25
6	Perceived clarity of learning materials	3.31	0.720	82.75
7	Cultural awareness	3.34	0.714	83.50
8	Perceived relevance of the legend	3.27	0.737	81.75
9	Pride in local culture	3.39	0.695	84.75
10	Interest in culture-based learning	3.36	0.704	84.00

The descriptive statistical analysis of the ten cultural literacy indicators revealed mean scores ranging from 3.27 to 3.42, with standard deviations ranging from 0.682 to 0.737 and achievement percentages ranging from 81.75% to 85.50%. The highest mean score was recorded for understanding of local culture (M = 3.42, SD = 0.684; 85.50%), followed by appreciation of local culture (M = 3.40, SD = 0.682; 85.00%). Recognition of cultural values also demonstrated a favorable response (M = 3.38, SD = 0.693; 84.50%), while understanding of cultural identity recorded a mean of 3.36 (SD = 0.704; 84.00%).

Regarding students' engagement with local cultural learning, interest in learning local culture obtained a mean of 3.29 (SD = 0.729; 82.25%), whereas interest in culture-based learning recorded a mean of 3.36 (SD = 0.704; 84.00%). Students also reported favorable perceptions of the clarity of learning materials (M = 3.31, SD = 0.720; 82.75%). Furthermore, cultural awareness achieved a mean of 3.34 (SD = 0.714; 83.50%), while pride in local culture reached a mean of 3.39 (SD = 0.695; 84.75%). The perceived relevance of the legend to students' lives recorded the lowest mean score (M = 3.27, SD = 0.737; 81.75%), although it remained within the very high achievement category.

Overall, the ten indicators demonstrated favorable student perceptions of cultural literacy following the integration of the Datu Sanggul legend into Indonesian language learning. These findings suggest that students perceived the learning activities positively in terms of cultural understanding, appreciation, identity, awareness, and engagement with local cultural heritage.

These results suggest that integrating ethnopedagogy into Indonesian language learning may support a more contextual learning process and broaden students' perceived understanding of cultural values present in their social environment. In this context,

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cultural literacy is defined not only as the ability to recognize cultural elements but also as the capacity to understand the meanings, values, and cultural identity that are integral to students' social lives. The high achievement in the local cultural understanding indicator suggests that regional legends may facilitate students' comprehension of the surrounding culture. Legends function not only as literary narratives but also as vehicles for transmitting cultural values, including worldviews, social norms, and representations of community identity. Thus, the use of regional legends in learning may enable students to connect academic content with cultural experiences encountered in daily life. This connection is essential, as learning becomes more meaningful when the material is relevant to students' social contexts.

Beyond cultural understanding, the findings revealed favorable student perceptions of local culture, as reflected in the high scores for appreciation of local culture (M = 3.40, 85.00%) and pride in local culture (M = 3.39, 84.75%). Similarly, the cultural awareness indicator showed a positive response (M = 3.34, 83.50%). These descriptive findings suggest that students perceived local cultural heritage positively and recognized its relevance to their cultural identity. The results further highlight the pedagogical potential of integrating local cultural narratives into Indonesian language learning to facilitate contextual engagement, cultural reflection, and appreciation of local heritage. Nevertheless, these findings represent students' self-reported perceptions rather than direct evidence of changes in their attitudes or cultural literacy.

The comparatively lower score for the relevance of the legend to students' lives suggests that connecting the religious, moral, and sociocultural meanings of traditional narratives with contemporary experiences may require more explicit instructional guidance. This interpretation is consistent with the needs analysis, in which 40% of students initially disagreed that lessons could be learned from legendary figures (Item 3), whereas the interview data reported below indicate that, after guided reading and discussion, students identified religiosity, discipline, patience, and respect for knowledge as values represented in the legend. Although the two data sources are not directly comparable, this pattern suggests that explicit interpretive guidance may help students recognize the educational meanings of legendary characters. Nevertheless, the questionnaire findings indicate generally positive self-reported perceptions of cultural understanding, awareness, and appreciation in the context of legend-based Indonesian language learning. These findings are consistent with recent scholarship highlighting the pedagogical relevance of local legends and ethnopedagogical approaches in culturally contextualized education (Estremera & Mingoy, 2025; Johan et al., 2019; Kasanova, 2025; Zikri et al., 2024). Accordingly, integrating local oral traditions into Indonesian language learning may provide a meaningful pedagogical opportunity to engage students with regional cultural heritage. However, the descriptive nature of the present study does not permit causal conclusions regarding improvements in students' cultural literacy, which would require further investigation using comparative or longitudinal research

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designs (Putra et al., 2024). Therefore, an ethnopedagogical approach based on oral tradition can be considered a promising strategy for supporting cultural preservation in language education.

Students' favorable perceptions of their cultural literacy suggest that the integration of the Datu Sanggùl legend into Indonesian language learning can provide a contextual and meaningful learning experience. In local legend-based learning, students not only passively receive information about culture but also construct their understanding through the process of reading, interpreting, discussing, and reflecting on the cultural values contained within the story. Through this process, students have the opportunity to connect learning experiences with social and cultural realities close to their lives, which may deepen their cultural understanding. These findings are consistent with a constructivist view of learning, suggesting that local legends function not only as cultural texts but also as mediating tools through which students actively construct cultural knowledge and identity.

Students' interview responses

The interview findings indicated that students generally responded positively to the integration of the Datu Sanggul legend into Indonesian language learning. Representative interview excerpts are as follows.

> *"I only just learned about the legend of Datu Sanggul, and I am interested in finding out more about it." (S1, interview, 2025).*
> *"As it turns out, local legends such as the legend of Datu Sanggul are just as compelling as those found in books or on television. This legend offers many valuable lessons, particularly regarding culture and religion." (S2, interview, 2025).*
> *"I agree with the idea of instruction based on local culture." (S3, interview, 2025).*
> *"Lessons based on local legends turn out to be enjoyable; they foster a love for local culture and allow us to apply what we've learned to our daily lives." (S4, interview, 2025).*
> *"Local legends teach us about life values that are close to us." (S5, interview, 2025).*
> *"At the beginning of the lesson, some students appeared interested because the story presented featured a local figure from South Kalimantan. While some students had heard the name Datu Sanggul, they lacked a deep understanding of his story and the values embedded within it. As the narrative was introduced, the students showed curiosity and began asking questions about the figure. Some were able to connect the values in the story to their own lives—for instance, the importance of discipline in their studies, exercising patience when facing difficulties, and showing respect toward their teachers. Nevertheless, connecting the story in its entirety to the students' personal experiences still requires guidance and prompting questions from the teacher." (T1, interview, 2025).*

The thematic analysis generated three main themes: (1) increased knowledge of local culture, (2) appreciation of cultural values and exemplary qualities, and (3) interest in local culture-based learning. Most students explained that, before the learning activities, they had heard the name Datu Sanggul but had limited knowledge of the figure's narrative, cultural significance, and associated values. Reading and discussing the legend helped students develop a more structured understanding of its characters, events, cultural symbols, and local context. The interviews also indicated that students identified religiosity, discipline, patience, commitment to learning, and respect for knowledge as important values represented in the legend. Several students considered

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these values relevant to their lives, particularly in relation to fulfilling responsibilities, managing time, and developing commitment to learning.

Discussion

The findings are also consistent with the principle of ethnopedagogy, which views local culture as a relevant and contextual learning resource. Ethnopedagogy positions local wisdom as the foundation of the educational process, so that students not only master cognitive aspects but also understand the values, norms, and cultural identity of their community (Mukhibat, 2020). The Datu Sanggul legend embodies various cultural values, such as religiosity, exemplary behavior, wisdom, and harmonious relationships with the social environment, which can be transformed into learning resources. When these values are integrated into Indonesian language learning, students may not only develop language skills and literary appreciation but also enhance their ability to understand, interpret, and appreciate local culture as part of their identity.

Thus, the positive cultural literacy perceptions reported in this study may be associated not only with the use of the legend-based teaching materials but also with the application of constructivist and ethnopedagogical principles, which provide space for students to actively construct cultural knowledge through authentic learning experiences. These findings support the view that local culture-based learning may be an appropriate strategy for supporting cultural literacy and the cultural identity of the younger generation amidst globalization.

The emic approach to the karamah narratives also carries implications for tolerance and religious moderation. By presenting accounts of extraordinary occurrences as expressions of the Banjar community's beliefs and cultural memory, rather than requiring students to affirm or reject them as historical facts, the learning activities created space for students to engage respectfully with a local Islamic tradition while acknowledging that their peers may interpret it differently. This stance reflects key principles of religious moderation, including tolerance, a balanced attitude toward religious claims, and accommodation of local culture (Kementerian Agama RI, 2019), and positions the Indonesian language classroom as a site where religious heritage can be discussed without either dogmatism or dismissal. This interpretation is consistent with evidence that implementing moderation values in Indonesian schools fosters a safe and respectful environment for students of different faiths (Mulyana, 2023). Students' interview remarks describing the legend as offering valuable lessons about culture and religion suggest that such respectful engagement occurred, although the present data do not directly measure tolerance or moderation attitudes. Future studies could therefore examine more explicitly how emic, legend-based learning shapes students' dispositions toward religious diversity.

Previous studies have shown that ethnopedagogical approaches can strengthen students' character and cultural identity through contextual learning (Marwan et al., 2025; Mukhibat, 2020; Sakti et al., 2024). Research on folklore-based language learning has likewise reported improvements in students' understanding and engagement (Abidin et

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al., 2023; Ansoriyah et al., 2026). These studies also indicate that legends serve not only as literary materials but also as means of transmitting cultural values and identity within communities (Quy, 2024), which is consistent with the results of the present study.

The results suggest that legend-based ethnopedagogy offers a relevant approach for integrating local cultural values into Indonesian language learning and supports the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Target 4.7, which emphasizes appreciation of cultural diversity and its contribution to sustainable development. Consequently, incorporating local legends into Indonesian language learning may contribute to educational goals that extend beyond academic achievement, including cultural preservation in the context of globalization.

CONCLUSION

This study illustrates the pedagogical potential of religious legend-based ethnopedagogy through the integration of the Datu Sanggul legend into Indonesian language learning and the examination of students' responses to the learning activities. Addressing the first objective, the findings illustrate how the legend was integrated through narrative analysis, interpretation of religious, moral, and sociocultural values, discussion of cultural symbols, and reflection on their relevance to students' contemporary experiences. Regarding the second objective, students reported generally favorable responses to legend-based learning, particularly in their self-reported perceptions of cultural literacy, with an overall indicator achievement score of 83.75%. The needs assessment also revealed a discrepancy between students' interest in culturally contextualized learning and their reported classroom exposure to local cultural materials. These findings highlight the potential of religious legend-based ethnopedagogy to connect Indonesian language learning with Islamic heritage and Banjar cultural traditions while providing context-specific insights into students' responses to culturally relevant learning experiences. The study also shows how narratives about local Islamic figures can be transmitted in formal schooling in ways that respect diverse interpretations, in line with the principles of religious moderation. Practically, the findings suggest that Indonesian language teachers can use religious legends as culturally relevant texts, provided that they offer explicit guidance for interpreting characters and values and present karamah narratives as part of the community's cultural heritage.

Nevertheless, the findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations. The study focused on a single religious legend and students from one city, Banjarmasin, which limits the transferability of the findings to other cultural and educational contexts. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported questionnaire data may introduce response bias and does not provide direct evidence of students' demonstrated cultural literacy. The absence of pre- and post-learning comparisons and a control group also prevents causal conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the instructional approach. Future research should examine multiple local religious-cultural narratives across diverse educational

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settings and incorporate comparative or longitudinal designs, performance-based assessments, and additional qualitative evidence to evaluate changes in students' cultural literacy and the broader educational relevance of religious legend-based ethnopedagogy.

DECLARATIONS

Author Contributions: The first author drafted the manuscript and collected field data. The second author formulated the theory and validated the instruments. The third author analyzed the descriptive data. The fourth author analyzed the statistical data. The fifth author edited and refined the language. The sixth author contributed to the qualitative data analysis, verified data trustworthiness through member checking and peer debriefing, and critically revised and edited the manuscript. All authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and accept responsibility for their respective contributions.

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Generative Artificial Intelligence Use Statement: The authors used ChatGPT (OpenAI) to assist in editing specific parts of the manuscript. The authors are responsible for reviewing and verifying all content developed with the aid of AI, including the accuracy of references, interpretations, and academic arguments. The authors bear full responsibility for the originality, integrity, accuracy, and conclusions of the published work.

Ethics Approval and Informed Consent: This study involved 100 eleventh-grade students at SMAN 6 Banjarmasin, South Kalimantan, Indonesia. Data collection methods included questionnaires, classroom observations, and semi-structured interviews, all of which were disclosed to the institution. Formal authorization and approval were obtained in the form of an official letter signed by the school principal, along with a research permit from Lambung Mangkurat University. Parents or guardians were informed through the school, and all students provided verbal assent prior to participation.

Data Availability: The de-identified data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to applicable ethical and institutional restrictions. Individual student information will not be disclosed to protect participant confidentiality.

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