



The Use of the Putri Pukes Legend as a Local History Learning Resource for Sixth-Grade Students at SD Negeri 9 Lut Tawar

Arizka Amanda^{1*}, Handoko²

^{1,2}Study Program of History Education, Indonesia Institute of Arts Culture Aceh, Indonesia

*Correspondence e-mail: arizkaamanda@isbiaceh.ac.id

Abstract

History learning in elementary schools tends to be informative and memorization-oriented, making it less contextual and meaningful for students. This study aims to analyze the cultural values, symbolic meanings, and pedagogical potential of the Putri Pukes legend as a local history learning resource. Employing a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, the research was conducted at SD Negeri 9 Lut Tawar, involving sixth-grade students as subjects. Data were collected through documentary study and literature review of the Putri Pukes legend text and relevant scholarly sources, then analyzed using content analysis techniques through the stages of reduction, categorization, and interpretation. The findings show that the Putri Pukes legend contains cultural values reflecting the life of the Gayo peoples such as obedience to parents, responsibility, patience, sacrifice, and the relationship between humans and nature while also carrying symbolic meanings that represent collective memory and the community's interpretation of the past. Pedagogically, the legend has the potential to serve as a local history learning resource that helps students understand historical material more contextually and develops their historical empathy and imagination. Accordingly, the Putri Pukes legend functions not only as cultural heritage but also as a relevant learning medium for history education in elementary schools.

Keywords: legend, local history, history learning, elementary school, Putri Pukes.



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INTRODUCTION

History learning at the elementary school level plays an important role in helping students recognize the past, the social environment, and the cultural identity surrounding them. Through such learning, students are expected not only to acquire knowledge of past events but also to develop historical and cultural awareness as part of identity formation (Romadi & Kurniawan, 2017). In practice, however, history learning is still often delivered in an informative manner and focuses on memorization, which makes it feel abstract and distant from students' experiences. This condition is in line with the findings of Aderoben, Darmawan, and Saripudin (2024), who

observed that history learning in Indonesia tends to emphasize cognitive-factual aspects and fails to build students' affective engagement with past events. Therefore, more contextual learning resources that can be easily connected to students' everyday lives are needed.

One resource that can be utilized is folklore. As part of oral tradition, folklore serves not only as entertainment but also carries cultural values, collective memory, and the worldview of the community (Fic & Ďoubalová, 2014). Folklore that develops in a particular region is part of a broader tradition rich in local wisdom and can have a positive influence on students when presented creatively in the classroom (Romadi & Kurniawan, 2017). Within this framework, myths and legends can be understood as cultural narratives that represent how a community interprets the world, remembers the past, and affirms its identity (Vlachaki et al., 2019).

In historical studies, myths and legends are indeed not treated as literal historical facts. They must be read critically because they may be formed and sustained through specific social, cultural, and even ideological contexts (Rao, 2019). Nevertheless, myths still carry educational value. In history learning, myths and legends can be used as an initial pathway to build students' historical empathy, historical imagination, and cross-cultural understanding (Vlachaki et al., 2019). Historical empathy itself refers to students' ability to understand the ways of thinking, feeling, and acting of people in the past within their social and cultural contexts, and it is considered an essential competency for meaningful history learning (Aderoben et al., 2024).

In the local context, the Gayo community possesses a rich oral tradition, one of which is the Putri Pukes legend related to Lake Laut Tawar. This story is not only known as a symbolic narrative but also represents the Gayo community's connection with space, cultural values, and local identity. A study by Juraini et al. (2022) shows that the Putri Pukes legend contains moral and cultural values such as responsibility, religiosity, sacrifice, courage, and trustworthiness. Meanwhile, Syahfitri et al. (2025) affirm that Putri Pukes has pedagogical potential as culture-based teaching material because it conveys values of respect for parents, obedience to customary norms, patience, and the relationship between humans and nature.

Nevertheless, previous studies have largely examined Putri Pukes within the scope of moral and cultural value analysis, or in its use as teaching material for BIPA (Indonesian for Foreign Speakers) programs (Juraini et al., 2022; Syahfitri et al., 2025). In fact, studies on myth in

history education indicate that cultural narratives can help students understand the past in a more proximate, contextual, and meaningful way (Vlachaki et al., 2019). Furthermore, the use of folklore as a basis for local history learning has proven effective in instilling local wisdom values and strengthening students' cultural awareness (Romadi & Kurniawan, 2017). Accordingly, there remains a research gap in examining Putri Pukes not merely as a folktale or a source of cultural values, but also as a local history learning resource for elementary school students.

Based on the above, the Putri Pukes legend is relevant to be utilized as a local history learning resource in elementary schools. Its use is not intended to treat the entire content of the story as historical fact, but rather as a cultural narrative that can help students understand meanings, symbols, local identity, and the ways in which the local community interprets the past in a more contextual manner (A Rahimin, 2019; Fic & Ďoubalová, 2014; Vlachaki et al., 2019). The present study departs from this gap, namely the limited research that specifically positions the Putri Pukes legend as a local history learning resource for building historical understanding among elementary school students.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design, aimed at understanding the meanings, cultural values, and pedagogical potential of the Putri Pukes legend in the context of local history learning at the elementary school level. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to examine phenomena in depth and in context, particularly those related to oral traditions and the cultural environment of the community (Creswell, 2014).

The research was conducted at SD Negeri 9 Lut Tawar, with sixth-grade elementary school students as the research subjects. The selection of this location was based on the geographical proximity of the school to the Putri Pukes Cave site, so that the legend under study has a direct connection with the social and cultural environment of the students. This proximity allows the history learning process to be carried out more

contextually, as students not only become acquainted with the story textually but also understand its connection with the real space surrounding them.

The data in this study consist of primary and secondary data. The primary data comprise the text of the Putri Pukes legend as it developed within the Gayo community, while the secondary data were obtained from various written sources, including scholarly articles, books, and previous research findings relevant to the study of myth, oral tradition, and history learning. The use of multiple data sources aims to obtain a comprehensive understanding and strengthen the analytical foundation (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data collection was conducted through documentary study and literature review. The documentary study was used to examine the Putri Pukes legend text from various written sources, while the literature review was carried out to explore theoretical concepts and previous research findings related to the object of study. These techniques were chosen because the research focuses on textual analysis and conceptual interpretation rather than on the measurement of quantitative variables (Bowen, 2009).

Data analysis was conducted using content analysis techniques, aimed at identifying, classifying, and interpreting the meanings contained within the legend text. The analysis was carried out in several stages: data reduction by selecting relevant parts of the story, categorization based on cultural values and symbolic meanings, and interpretation by linking the findings to history-learning concepts such as historical empathy and historical imagination. The final stage involved drawing conclusions regarding the potential of the Putri Pukes legend as a local history learning resource (Krippendorff, 2018).

The validity of the data was maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing the results of the legend-text analysis with various relevant scholarly sources. In addition, referential adequacy was used to ensure that the resulting interpretations have a strong theoretical basis and can be academically accounted for (Moleong, 2017).

The focus of this study is directed at the analysis of cultural values in the Putri Pukes legend, its interpretation within the context of the local history of the Gayo community, and its potential utilization as an environment-based history learning resource in elementary schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Values in the Putri Pukes Legend

Based on the analysis of the Putri Pukes legend text, the story was found to contain a number of cultural values that reflect the life of the Gayo community. These values include obedience to parents, responsibility, patience, sacrifice, and the relationship between humans and nature. The value of obedience to parents appears as the central conflict of the story, namely when the main character experiences the consequences of disobeying her mother's message. This indicates that within the local culture, parental advice holds an important position as a moral guide in life.

In addition, the legend also displays the values of patience and steadfastness in facing difficult situations. The figure of Putri Pukes is portrayed in a state of strong emotional turmoil, yet from that very point emerges the moral message passed down to the community. The study by Juraini et al. (2022) similarly shows that the Putri Pukes story contains moral and cultural values such as responsibility, religiosity, sacrifice, courage, and trustworthiness, reflecting the value system of the Central Aceh community.

On the other hand, the story also illustrates the close relationship between humans and nature. The transformation of the character into stone in the Lake Laut Tawar area can be read as a symbol linking human experience with the geographical space they inhabit. From this perspective, the legend serves as a means for the community to explain its environment and attribute meaning to its living space.

Symbolic Meaning and Representation of Local History

The analysis shows that the Putri Pukes legend carries symbolic meanings that can be linked to an understanding of local history. The transformation of the character into stone need not be understood literally but rather as a representation of the values, norms, and collective memory of the community. In this context, the legend functions as a medium for preserving and transmitting social memory.

More broadly, myths and legends in Southeast Asian historiography cannot be regarded as the sole cause of contradictions in historical facts. Although both are often viewed as doubtful in terms of factuality, historiographical problems are in fact also influenced by authorial bias, anachronism, oral sources, and errors of interpretation. On the other hand, myths and legends still hold significant value because they can function as instruments for legitimizing power, shaping national identity, fostering unity, and reflecting the values and worldview of society in a particular period (A Rahimin, 2019).

Thus, the Putri Pukes legend can be understood not as literal historical fact but as a cultural narrative that preserves traces of values and the ways in which the Gayo community interprets the past and its environment.

The Potential of Legend as a History Learning Resource

The Putri Pukes legend has strong potential as a local history learning resource in elementary schools. The story presents material that is close to the cultural experience of students, thereby helping them understand historical concepts in a more concrete and meaningful way.

Legends can be used to build students' historical empathy and historical imagination. Furthermore, research by Syahfitri et al. (2025) shows that Putri Pukes has potential as culture-based teaching material that can be integrated through reading activities, discussion, and presentation.

Implications for History Learning

The use of legend in history learning helps reduce the abstract nature of the material and bridges historical concepts with students' experiences. Moreover, this approach encourages a more interpretive and contextual mode of learning.

Overall, the Putri Pukes legend possesses strong cultural values, symbolic meanings, and pedagogical potential for use in local history learning at the elementary school level.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the Putri Pukes legend contains strong cultural values that are relevant to the life of the Gayo community, such as obedience to parents, responsibility, patience, and the relationship between humans and nature. These values not only serve as moral messages but also reflect the value system and worldview of the community, which has been passed down through oral tradition. In addition, the Putri Pukes legend carries symbolic meanings that can be linked to an understanding of local history. The story need not be understood as literal historical fact, but rather as a cultural narrative that preserves collective memory, social meaning, and the ways in which the community interprets its past and environment. In this context, the legend functions as one medium for understanding history in a more contextual manner, particularly within communities whose oral traditions remain strong. Furthermore, the findings show that the Putri Pukes legend has pedagogical potential as a local history learning resource in elementary schools. Its use in the classroom can help reduce the abstract nature of historical material while encouraging students to understand the values, meanings, and socio-cultural contexts underlying a given narrative. Through this approach, history learning focuses not only on mastering facts, but also on developing historical empathy, historical imagination, and cross-cultural

understanding. Accordingly, the Putri Pukes legend can be positioned not only as cultural heritage but also as a relevant and contextual learning medium. Its utilization in history learning is expected to help students build a more meaningful understanding while strengthening their connection with local culture and community identity.

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