

## NEEDS ANALYSIS OF COMIC-BASED FOLK STORY TEACHING MATERIALS FOR BIPA LEARNERS

Nurul Lutfhi Aulia<sup>1\*</sup>; Yeti Mulyati<sup>2</sup>; Vismaia S Damayanti<sup>3</sup>; Suci Sundusiah<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1-4</sup>Fakultas Pendidikan Bahasa dan Sastra, Magister Pendidikan Bahasa Indonesia, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia  
Bandung, West Java, Indonesia 40154

<sup>1</sup>nurullutfhi@gmail.com; <sup>2</sup>yetimulyati@upi.edu; <sup>3</sup>vismaia@upi.edu; <sup>4</sup>suci.sundusiah@upi.edu

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### ABSTRACT

*The increasing demand for culturally rich and engaging materials in Indonesian for Foreign Language Speakers (BIPA) programs highlights the need for innovative teaching resources. Existing folk story materials often fail to capture learners' interest or accommodate their linguistic levels, making language acquisition and cultural understanding more challenging. This study aims to analyze the specific educational needs of BIPA learners in relation to comic-based folk story teaching materials, as a foundational step toward developing effective instructional resources. Employing a descriptive qualitative method, data were collected through interviews and questionnaires involving 18 BIPA learners and 30 experienced instructors, along with a review of existing BIPA materials. The results show a strong preference for materials that blend simplified literary content with authentic cultural narratives in a visually engaging format. Learners and instructors identified comics as effective tools for enhancing comprehension and motivation, particularly for beginners. The study concludes that developing comic-based folk story materials addresses current pedagogical challenges in BIPA instruction while supporting intercultural learning. It recommends piloting these materials in diverse learning contexts and refining them based on learner feedback.*

**Keywords:** BIPA teaching materials, folk stories, comic model, language learning, Indonesian culture

### INTRODUCTION

In BIPA (Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers) learning, instructors use various teaching materials, such as textbooks, vocabulary lists, grammar exercises, flashcards, audio recordings, and language learning apps. Despite the various provisions of teaching materials, instructors must be selective in choosing adaptive and practical materials that align with the needs and characteristics of the learners. Textbooks are not inherently harmful, as they contain helpful guidelines and are an inspirational resource for instructors (Maurya, 2022). However, exclusive or excessive reliance on textbooks can negatively affect foreign language learning, as textbooks tend to centralize learning on the instructor, may not suit the classroom context, and often present language in a way that makes it challenging for learners to apply it

in real-life situations.

Textbooks can become dull and demotivating for learners if they focus excessively on grammar with flat explanations, endless exercises, and dull texts (Popkins, as cited in Text Inspector, 2022). Therefore, instructors should complement classroom materials by incorporating realistic, authentic language content that engages learners. Authentic materials have been significantly recommended in second language learning (Liu & Dong, 2024) to develop reading and writing competencies (Zamel, 1982).

Richards (2006) explains that authentic materials are used in second language learning because they (1) provide cultural insights into the target language, (2) offer a realistic picture of language as it is used in everyday life, (3) are more closely aligned with learners needs, and (4) support a more creative approach to learning. Consequently, authentic materials can be

valuable in second-language instruction. This is further reinforced by Liu & Dong (2024), who suggest that authentic materials can significantly benefit learners, especially those unfamiliar with the target language, such as BIPA students.

In the BIPA learning process, cultural material development aims to introduce and enrich BIPA learners' understanding of Indonesian culture so they can utilize this cultural knowledge in their daily lives. Mulyati et al. (2021) explain that providing cultural material equips BIPA learners with the ability to use Indonesian appropriately according to different situations and contexts. In BIPA learning, not all aspects of Indonesian culture can be accessed through visits or observations. Therefore, cultural knowledge can be introduced to BIPA learners through literature and cultural insights.

Literary materials such as folktales or folk stories, as found in official BIPA textbooks such as *Sahabatku Indonesia*, published by the Language Development and Fostering Agency (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa), have been included in the reading competency unit for BIPA 4, as outlined in Permendikbud Number 27 of 2017. The graduation indicators for this competency unit are a) identifying the social and textual functions, b) identifying sentences or groups containing moral messages in folktales or folk stories, and c) comparing similar folktales or folk stories from Indonesia with those from the learner's home country. BIPA learners study folktales or folk stories as a source of cultural representation and a medium for conveying moral messages that benefit everyday life (Amandangi & Mulyati, 2020). With this moral foundation, BIPA learners can accurately actualize themselves using Indonesian.

Research on developing folk story teaching materials for BIPA learners has been widely conducted. For instance, Wardani (2018) analyzes the use of folk story comics for BIPA learners. The results revealed that comics can be a learning medium for students to explore Indonesian local wisdom, morality, history, and culture. Kusmiatun (2018) offers an innovative approach to BIPA folk story learning by incorporating storytelling to develop listening skills, using picture sequences for writing skill tasks and presenting illustrated comics for reading skills. However, this research did not explain the process of developing a teaching model; instead, it focused on using existing teaching models.

Then, a study by Atmaja (2022) focuses on developing interactive teaching materials for reading in BIPA 4 based on Nusantara folklore, utilizing Google Slides as supporting media. The study showed that this teaching material increased learners' interest and understanding of reading texts by combining local cultural content with easily accessible technology. The use of folklore as teaching material introduces learners to Indonesian cultural values and provides a more engaging, interactive, and effective learning experience. This underscores the significant potential

of digital media based on folklore to support BIPA learning.

Prior relevant studies indicate that, to date, no research has been conducted on the development of digital folk story teaching materials using a comic model specifically tailored for BIPA 4 learners. Previous research primarily focused on folk story materials utilizing existing instructional models. Moreover, although folklore is commonly used in BIPA instruction, the exploration of comics as a pedagogical medium remains limited. This presents a gap, considering the pedagogical benefits of comics in second language acquisition. Comics are a form of multimodal text that integrates visual and linguistic elements, enabling learners to interpret meaning through multiple channels (Alim et al., 2024). The visual narrative structure of comics enhances comprehension, reduces cognitive load, and improves learner motivation, especially for beginners unfamiliar with the target language and culture (Liu & Dong, 2024). Furthermore, multimodal materials like comics can scaffold cultural content more effectively, helping learners visualize local contexts, characters, and moral messages embedded in folk stories.

In the context of BIPA, where learners often struggle with abstract or unfamiliar cultural references presented in text-heavy materials, comics can provide a more accessible, engaging, and culturally immersive experience. Therefore, the development of comic-based digital folk story materials is urgent and pedagogically justified. It addresses both linguistic and intercultural learning goals while filling the gap in existing literature and instructional practice. In response to this need, the present study aims to conduct a needs analysis for developing digital comic-based folk story teaching materials tailored to BIPA 4 learners. The goal is to identify learners' and instructors' preferences, expectations, and specific needs, which will serve as a foundation for future development of culturally rich and visually engaging instructional materials. This analysis identifies the learners' specific educational needs and evaluates how comic-based materials can address these needs, as measured through learner surveys, instructor interviews, and the evaluation of existing instructional materials.

## METHODS

The research method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method with a needs analysis approach, aimed at identifying and evaluating the requirements for a folk story teaching material model that meets the needs of BIPA learning. The research subjects consist of 48 participants: 18 BIPA learners from Korea and 30 teachers with experience teaching BIPA.

The research procedure is carried out in several key stages. First, the research design emphasizes learner needs analysis, including exploring preferences, challenges, and expectations regarding

folk story teaching materials. Data is collected through questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and direct classroom observation, providing a comprehensive overview of the learners' and instructors' needs.

Next, data processing and analysis are conducted using a thematic approach. Data collected from the questionnaires and interviews are summarized into several main themes, which serve to inform the development of a teaching material model suited to the learners' needs. Comparative analysis is also performed to examine variations in needs among learners based on their level of comprehension and cultural backgrounds.

The results of this analysis are presented in tables to illustrate patterns, trends, and relationships between variables. The findings are organized objectively in the results section, using both text and tables to facilitate straightforward reading and interpretation of the study's outcomes. The data presented includes the necessity of digital folk story materials, the types of materials most effective for BIPA learners, and instructors' expectations for the development of comic-based teaching materials.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Analyzing the needs of BIPA learners and teachers is essential in developing a folk story teaching material model. This analysis is crucial to ensure the effectiveness of the teaching material in BIPA folk story lessons. The aspects analyzed include (1) the necessity of digital folk story materials in comic form, (2) the type of folk story teaching material needed for BIPA learning, and (3) expectations for the digital folk story comic material to be developed.

The need for digital folk story teaching materials presented in comic format was the central focus of this needs analysis for both BIPA learners and teachers. However, the indicators analyzed for each group differ. For learners, the indicators include (a) BIPA learner knowledge of Indonesian folk stories, (b) learner interest in folk stories, (c) learner attitudes during the instruction of folk story material, (d) the methods used by BIPA learners to read folk stories, (e) the teaching materials utilized by BIPA instructors during folk story instruction, (f) learner responses to the teaching materials used by their instructors, (g) the time required for BIPA learners to read folk stories, (h) the difficulty level of folk story material for BIPA learners, and (i) the necessity of developing folk story materials in different formats.

Table 1 shows that most learners claim to be familiar with Indonesian folktales and are highly interested in the material. However, only some of the learners feel happy when teaching folktale material. Many learners tend to skim through the folktales rather than deeply engage with the text. Most learners consider the folktale texts provided to be interesting, though some feel the material could be more engaging. Regarding reading time, most learners can finish the

reading in approximately 10 minutes. Nevertheless, many learners find the folktale material quite difficult and believe there is a need to develop folktale teaching materials in alternative models that are more accessible and easier to understand.

Table 1 The Necessity of Digital Folk Story Teaching Materials in Comic Format According to BIPA Learners

Indicator	Answer	Quantity
a.	Know	72%
b.	Interested	94%
c.	Happy	61%
d.	Skimming	67%
e.	Text	72%
f.	Uninteresting	72%
g.	10 Minutes	78%
h.	Difficult	94%
i.	Need	94%

Meanwhile, for BIPA instructors, the analyzed indicators include (a) the type of folklore teaching materials used by BIPA instructors, (b) the effectiveness of the teaching materials employed, (c) the importance of folklore content in BIPA learning, (d) teaching material sources, (e) the difficulty of obtaining folklore-based teaching materials for BIPA learners, (f) learner responses to the folklore teaching materials used, and (g) the need for developing folklore teaching materials in alternative formats. The guiding principle for developing digital comic-based folklore teaching materials is synthesised from the findings of both BIPA learners' and instructors' needs analyses. Both learners and instructors recognize the need to develop digital, comic-style folklore teaching materials.

Table 2 The Necessity of Digital Folklore Teaching Materials in Comic Format According to BIPA Instructors

Indicator	Answer	Quantity
a)	Text	50%
b)	Not Effective	57%
c)	Important	97%
d)	Internet	64%
e)	Difficult	63%
f)	Challenges	79%
g)	Necessary	100%

Based on the analysis of Table 2, most BIPA instructors recognize the need to develop digital teaching materials for folktales in the comic format



as an innovative solution for learning. Currently, 50% of instructors still use text-based teaching materials, but 57% consider this model ineffective. Nevertheless, 97% of instructors state that folktale materials are highly important in BIPA learning. Most of the teaching materials used are sourced from the internet (64%), but 63% of instructors admit to facing difficulties finding suitable folktale teaching materials for learners. Additionally, 79% of instructors report that learners need help understanding the existing teaching materials. Against this background, 100% of instructors agree that developing digital folktale teaching materials in the form of comics is necessary to meet the need for more effective and engaging learning resources.

Regarding BIPA learners, they generally recognize popular Indonesian folktales such as *Malin Kundang*, *Sangkuriang*, *Bawang Merah*, and *Bawang Putih*. However, Indonesia has many other folktales rich in moral and cultural values that could also be introduced to BIPA learners. Each region in Indonesia traditionally has its folktales passed down through generations (Handayani, 2022; Waruwu & Kurniadi, 2020). Many Indonesian folktales hold significant value for the communities to which they belong (Nurhuda et al., 2021). As literary works, folktales carry a didactic mission for their audience, as Halfian (2019) explained. In traditional societies, literature (including folktales) serves as an essential tool for preserving a worldview aligned with conventional customs and to instil behavioral values in younger generations. Therefore, folktales introduced to BIPA learners should include popular stories and other tales that convey moral, cultural, social, or historical values.

According to BIPA learners, Indonesian folktales are interesting reading material because they provide insights into Indonesian culture, highlight cultural differences between Indonesia and learners' home countries, and convey moral messages, history, and the origins of certain places. Folktales are an ancient story that has become a special characteristic for every nation with diverse cultures that embrace the cultural and historical richness of the nation. Based on the needs survey, BIPA teachers also regard folktale material as essential for teaching BIPA learners. This is so learners can understand Indonesia's cultural diversity, historical values, local culture, moral messages, and social values. This aligns with Yasif et al. (2021), who state that by introducing and understanding folktales, BIPA learners can better appreciate local wisdom that supports the language and culture of a community.

Folktale material is taught as enrichment content in BIPA instruction. This aligns with teachers' responses, which suggest that a specialized book or learning material focused on folktales would enrich the textbooks published by BIPA under the Ministry of Education and Culture. According to Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (2018), enrichment books contain content that can enhance textbooks at various levels of formal education. Such books enhance learners' critical thinking skills and broaden

their perspectives on the environment by providing up-to-date knowledge. In addition to substantial content, enrichment books should be presented engagingly to foster students' reading interests. Therefore, developing a folktale-based learning material model that is enjoyable for BIPA learners is essential.

Based on the needs analysis survey, it was found that most BIPA learners read folktales by skimming. Skimming is a technique for quickly reading to grasp the main content within a short time frame (Sari et al., 2024). Hidayat & Rohati (2020) explain that speed reading is a skill to prevent boredom in reading. It is undeniable that when reading difficult or uninteresting material, readers may experience boredom. Similarly, BIPA learners generally skim through folktales due to a lack of motivation for prolonged reading, concerns about time constraints, and a tendency to feel bored. This indicates that the current folktale text model is often challenging for BIPA learners to comprehend.

According to responses from BIPA teachers, 53% use text-based materials, 20% use books, and 27% use other sources. Most learners feel that the teaching materials are uninteresting or demotivating, failing to encourage them to read folktales. Furthermore, the folktale materials used are not designed according to the specific needs of BIPA learners, who require materials tailored to non-native speakers. Consequently, 94% of learners face difficulty in reading and understanding folktales. Another reason is that folktale materials are presented in a non-creative and non-varied format, which does not accommodate the diverse characteristics of BIPA learners. Therefore, 94% of learners and 100% of teachers indicated a need for alternative folktale-based learning materials.

In the needs analysis of both BIPA learners and teachers, particularly concerning the folktale-based learning material model needed for BIPA instruction, the same indicators were examined, including (a) the form of learning materials needed by BIPA learners, (b) the model of learning materials preferred by BIPA learners, and (c) the anticipated response of BIPA learners if folktale learning materials were developed in comic form.

Table 3 The Digital Folktale-Based Learning Material Model Needed by BIPA Learners & Teachers

Indicator	Answer	Learners	Teachers
a)	Digital	89%	100%
b)	Comic	89%	67%
c)	Appropriate	94%	100%

Based on the results of Table 3, BIPA learners and instructors require teaching materials in digital format for several reasons: they can be read on digital devices, are more practical, are highly secure, as files will not get damaged like books, are easily accessible anytime and anywhere, are economical, adaptive, and acceptable to all groups, effective in terms of delivery

and storage, and have a broad reach. This aligns with the characteristics of e-learning materials as outlined by the Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional (2010), which are (a) leveraging the advantages of computers (digital media or computer networks), (b) using multimedia technology, making learning engaging and motivating learners towards self-study, (c) utilizing electronic technology to allow accessible communication among instructors, learners, or peers without formal constraints, (d) being self-contained for independent learning, (e) stored digitally, allowing access anytime and anywhere, (f) facilitating data exchange (information sharing) that can be interactively viewed at any time on a computer, and (g) being capable of containing simulated content, such as animations or videos.

Moya & Camacho (2024) also, explain that using mobile devices in learning can expand the scope and reach of learners. Incorporating digital teaching materials can motivate learners and serve as lifelong learning resources (Munawar, 2020; Putra et al., 2021). Instructors also prefer digital teaching materials that can be easily modified and permanently stored.

Regarding the expected model, 89% of learners and 67% of instructors hope the folk tale teaching materials will be presented in a digital comic format. Instructors believe that comics' varied and distinctive presentation can capture learner interest from lower to higher levels. This is because comics are popular reading materials (Moeller, 2022). Additionally, digital comics can enhance diverse learning motivation, particularly in the learning context, as they serve as intermediaries facilitating material delivery (Ying et al., 2024). Several studies have shown that comics can also motivate advanced and skilled learners (Jannah et al., 2024; Sondang & Derlina, 2022).

Folktales encompass ancient or traditional themes. Therefore, packaging them in a more modern format, such as comics, can be done without diminishing the essence of the folktales. Nafala (2022) explains that comics feature solid visual and narrative elements, allowing readers to engage emotionally while reading. Thus, comics can guide learners to imagine and gain insights into the culture depicted in the folktale. This aligns with Sugiarto et al. (2024), who assert that comics can help learners learn about culture.

Learners also prefer the comic teaching material model because comics are enjoyable and entertaining, as noted by Sudjana and Rivai (as cited in Puspananda, 2022), who define *comics* as a form of cartoons that express characters and narrate a story in a sequence closely linked with images, designed to entertain readers. Comics are concise and compact, making them a viable solution for BIPA learners who struggle to comprehend folktale texts due to their complexity and length. This is further supported by Septialti et al. (2022), who states that comics have a simple presentation style while incorporating a narrative sequence that conveys significant messages in a succinct and easily digestible manner.

In the analysis of the needs of BIPA (Indonesian Language for Foreign Speakers) learners and teachers, particularly concerning expectations for digital folktale teaching materials in comic format, several indicators were examined, including (a) format, (b) size, (c) cover design, (d) cover appearance, (e) font style, and (f) the themes of the stories required.

Table 4 Expectations of BIPA Learners and Teachers Regarding Digital Comic Folktale Teaching Materials

Indicator	Answer	Learners	Teachers
a)	Book	78%	70%
b)	Standard (A4)	89%	67%
c)	Text & Images	94%	100%
d)	Colorful	94%	100%
e)	Font Preference	67%	53%
f)	Indonesian Culture	100%	70%

Based on Table 4, most learners and instructors prefer comics in book format for the indicator regarding the form of teaching materials. Comic books were selected because they are deemed capable of containing stories in a more complete, engaging, and practical manner, and they are less likely to be lost or misplaced. Bonneff (1998) explains that comic books are a type of comic presented in the form of a book and printed as a single unit. Therefore, the stories contained within are complete, cohesive, and integrated. This is an important consideration when developing comics as a model for teaching materials.

Regarding the indicator for the size of digital comic teaching materials, the conclusion drawn is that BIPA learners and instructors desire materials in standard book sizes. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (2018) recommends book sizes such as A4 (210 mm x 297 mm) and B5 (176 mm x 250 mm). Thus, the size of the teaching materials developed in this research aligns with ISO standards and the physical standards for writing textbooks, which include a height of 29 cm and a width of 20.5 cm, or A4 size (Dianina et al., 2022). This also meets the needs of learners and instructors who prefer standard sizes, as it considers readability.

Sun & Yang (2022) explain that readability refers to the difficulty level of written text. The formula for measuring readability is based on the idea that ease of reading or low readability is created through several short words and short sentences. The material will not be complete and cohesive if the comics are presented in a single-sheet format. This is because comic strips are a type of comic typically published in newspapers, magazines, or bulletins, which means their stories are not as lengthy as those found in comic books (Bonneff, 1998).

Furthermore, based on the needs analysis conducted, it was found that BIPA learners and instructors prefer digital teaching materials in the

form of comic books with cover designs that include colored text and images. Images are a crucial and primary component of comics. Alim et al. (2024) explain that comics utilize visual rhetoric to enhance reader interpretation, allowing for deeper engagement with the narrative (p.45). This can be interpreted to mean that comics consist of images and other symbols placed alongside each other in a specific order to convey information and elicit an aesthetic response from the reader.

Additionally, the following indicator relates to the font type in digital teaching materials for comic books. Both BIPA learners and instructors selected More Sugar Thin as the most appropriate font. This font was the most frequently chosen among the options provided because it is perceived as more suitable and commonly used in comic-style materials. The next indicator relates to the expected themes of the folktales. Based on the needs analysis conducted, it was indicated that the themes desired and needed by BIPA learners and instructors are those related to culture, history, the origins of places, and universal themes found in other countries. The chosen themes should also align with the learner proficiency levels. For beginner BIPA learners, the themes presented should be relatable to everyday life to facilitate understanding. Meanwhile, for intermediate and advanced BIPA learners, the themes should vary to broaden their knowledge of values present in folktales.

Therefore, the folktale *Ande-Ande Lumut* from East Java was chosen for this research, considering the needs of both learners and instructors and the story's benefits. The folktale *Ande-Ande Lumut* bears similarities to royal-themed stories like *Cinderella*. Furthermore, Ju (2017) found a resemblance between the Indonesian folktale *Ande-Ande Lumut* and the Korean folktale *Kongjwi Patjwi*. The motif is similar, as both feature a character who marries someone of high status. In *Ande-Ande Lumut*, the main character is a prince, who parallels the characters in *Cinderella* and *Kongjwi Patjwi*. The character in *Kongjwi Patjwi* is a judge during the Joseon era, holding a position of nobility and influence.

The results of the needs analysis revealed several specific preferences from both BIPA learners and instructors. Regarding the form of the teaching materials, most respondents preferred a book format with standard dimensions. The cover design was expected to include both text and colorful images. For the font type, the majority selected More Sugar Thin as the most suitable for comic-based teaching materials. In terms of content, the most favored comic themes included culture, history, origins of places, and universal values, such as those found in the folktale *Ande-Ande Lumut*.

## CONCLUSIONS

BIPA learners, as foreign speakers of Indonesian, have diverse backgrounds, learning objectives, and

strategies that significantly influence their learning experiences and the effectiveness of teaching materials. Conducting a needs analysis is a crucial step to identify the specific requirements of both learners and instructors in the context of folktale-based BIPA learning. The findings of this study reveal a strong demand for digital teaching materials presented in the form of folktale comics.

Both learners and instructors recognize that folktales are rich in cultural, moral, and historical values that can deepen learners' understanding of Indonesia. However, the current teaching materials often lack variety in presentation and are predominantly text-heavy, which leads many learners to skim the texts, feel bored, or struggle with comprehension. This indicates that folktales presented through digital comics could offer a more accessible and engaging alternative.

The preference for digital comic teaching materials is driven by their practicality, accessibility, and interactivity. Digital materials can be accessed flexibly, enabling learners to study independently while maintaining motivation. Comics, as a visually appealing and lightweight medium, facilitate imagination and support learners in grasping the cultural contexts embedded in folktales.

The development of a comic-based teaching model is expected to make folktale materials more enjoyable and stimulating, thereby increasing learner enthusiasm. Combining text and images, comics enhance emotional engagement and vividly portray Indonesian cultural values, aligning with the view that comics provide an engaging and meaningful educational experience.

This study has limitations, including the limited sample size for the needs analysis, the absence of empirical testing on the effectiveness of digital comic folktale materials, and the necessity of cultural adaptations to better serve learners from diverse backgrounds. Future research should involve larger populations and quantitatively evaluate the impact of such materials on language proficiency. Moreover, the integration of interactive technologies like augmented reality (AR) and the inclusion of local folklore from learners' home countries could further enrich and contextualize the learning experience.

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from the needs analysis), N. L. A.; Performed the analysis (Assisted in validating the interpretation of data results), S. S.; Wrote the paper (Drafted the manuscript and compiled input from co-authors), N. L. A.; Wrote the paper (Gave feedback and suggestions for improving the structure and clarity of the manuscript), Y. M.; Wrote the paper (Reviewed and revised the manuscript, especially in the theoretical background), V. S. D.; Wrote the paper (Contributed to the revision and refinement of the final manuscript), S. S.; Other contribution (Supervised the research process and ensured academic rigor), Y. M.; Other contribution (Provided guidance on integrating folk stories into language learning materials), V. S. D.; Other contribution (Supported methodological refinement and alignment with BIPA curriculum needs), S. S.

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