



Foklore: Enhancing Character Education in EFL Classroom

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ABSTRAK

Cerita rakyat, sebagai komponen penting dalam sastra, banyak digunakan dalam pengajaran bahasa asing di dalam kelas. Mengintegrasikan pendidikan karakter ke dalam kelas sangat penting untuk pengembangan siswa secara holistik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk memberikan kajian yang komprehensif mengenai kriteria pemilihan cerita rakyat yang tepat serta mengidentifikasi strategi yang efektif untuk mengimplementasikan cerita rakyat yang diintegrasikan dengan pendidikan karakter. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan konseptual untuk mengeksplorasi penggunaan cerita rakyat yang diintegrasikan dengan pendidikan karakter, yang membahas aspek apa, mengapa, dan bagaimana. Topik ini masih belum banyak dieksplorasi dalam literatur yang ada. Strategi yang efektif untuk menggabungkan cerita rakyat dan pendidikan karakter di kelas bahasa Inggris yaitu; bercerita interaktif, bermain peran, menulis petunjuk, membaca cerita rakyat, dan proyek penelitian. Dapat disimpulkan bahwa mengintegrasikan cerita rakyat dan pendidikan karakter dapat menghasilkan pengalaman pendidikan holistik yang dapat meningkatkan kemahiran berbahasa dan kesadaran budaya. Implikasinya, para pendidik harus mengintegrasikan secara efektif penggunaan cerita rakyat dalam kelas untuk mencapai bahasa target dan nilai-nilai moral.

ABSTRACT

Folklore, as a significant component of literature, is extensively utilized in foreign language teaching within classroom settings. Integrating character education into the classroom is essential for holistic student development. This study aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the criteria for selecting appropriate folklore as well as to identify effective strategies for implementing folklore integrated with character education. This research adopts a conceptual approach to explore the use of folklore integrated with character education, addressing the what, why, and how aspects. This topic remains underexplored in the existing literature. The effective strategies for incorporating folklore and character education in English language classes, including interactive storytelling, role-playing, writing prompts, reading folklore, and research projects. The study concludes that integrating folklore and character education can lead to a holistic educational experience that enhances both language proficiency and cultural awareness. The implications suggest that educators should integrate the implementation of folklore in the class to achieve target language and moral values objectives effectively.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is a fundamental component of cultural heritage, serving as both a means of communication and a medium for expressing ideologies, values, and worldviews. The extinction of a language leads to the loss of significant cultural heritage, as language functions not only as a tool for self-expression but also as a vehicle for transmitting cultural knowledge. According to (Bauman, 2013), the loss of language results in the simultaneous loss of culture, intellectual property, artwork, and the associated tools for creation. Thus, the extinction of a language signifies the disappearance of the culture it encapsulates, underscoring the critical importance of language preservation for maintaining cultural diversity and heritage.

The rapid advancement of technology has significantly impacted language usage and communication dynamics, particularly among teenagers. Technology has altered the way people interact, making communication more immediate and interconnected. The proliferation of social media, messaging apps, and video conferencing platforms has introduced new forms of expression and communication styles. Additionally, the vast accessibility of information has facilitated the globalization of language, leading to the incorporation of words and phrases from various cultures. These technological impacts have contributed

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to a declining interest in cultural heritages, such as folklore, among teenagers (Winatha et al., 2020). Furthermore, the pervasive influence of technology has affected individuals' character development. Increased interaction with digital devices has led to behaviors characterized by laziness, anti-social tendencies, and ignorance. Many teenagers become engrossed in their virtual worlds, often neglecting real-world interactions and undermining the effectiveness of character education in society (Laksana, 2021; Rochmiyati et al., 2020).

The Indonesian Ministry of National Education has designated character education as a tool to instill various values and shape individuals with strong personalities aligned with Indonesian identity. According to the National Education System, as stipulated by Law Number 20 of 2003, the objective of national education is to cultivate students into individuals who possess faith, devotion to God, and noble character (Abdi, 2023). Specifically, Article 3 of this law articulates that the goal of national education is to develop students' potential to become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Kemdikbud, 2017). The curriculum identifies eighteen values that should be taught, including religiosity, tolerance, communication, environmental awareness, honesty, discipline, hard work, creativity, curiosity, patriotism, independence, democratic values, appreciation, social awareness, a love for reading, and responsibility. Integrating these character education values into the language classroom can be effectively achieved through the use of folklore.

Folklore encompasses the traditions and cultural expressions shared orally and publicly among people, and is an integral component of cultures, including traditional languages, prose stories, poetry, songs, theater, games, beliefs, music, and gestures (Ellisafny, 2019). It represents a collection of beliefs, habits, mores, and activities from various cultural groups. Typically disseminated through informal means such as children's play, individual tutoring, and group ceremonies, rather than through formal educational settings, folklore transcends specific histories, ethnicities, religions, or languages, making it a universal aspect of shared culture (Morris, 2023). Folklore embodies values that serve as guidelines for daily life and education, making it a valuable resource for teaching and learning.

Integrating folklore into the EFL classroom not only enriches language learning but also provides a valuable opportunity to impart character education. Integrating folklore into the EFL classroom can be a powerful tool for enhancing language learning and cultural understanding (Kristiawan et al., 2022; Tineh et al., 2023). By incorporating traditional stories, myths, and legends from different cultures, students not only improve their language skills but also gain insights into the values, beliefs, and customs of various societies (Dahal & Bhatta, 2021). Addressing these aspects, this paper aims to present practical methods for integrating folklore and character education in the EFL classroom. By doing so, it seeks to assist EFL teachers in overcoming challenges they may face when incorporating literature into their teaching practices, thereby enriching students' learning experiences and moral development.

2. METHODS

A literature review is a systematic examination and synthesis of theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and other scholarly materials derived from reference sources, which forms the foundation for research activities. This article employs a literature review which aims to construct a coherent framework for understanding and addressing the research problem (Booth et al., 2021). In conducting a literature review, the researcher engages in summarizing, critically analyzing, and synthesizing previous studies to highlight the current state of knowledge, identify gaps, and evaluate the quality and contributions of existing literature from international and national journals by using Google Scholar database. In the initial phase of the literature search using the keyword "folklore in EFL classroom integrated with character education," a total of 20,100 articles were identified. Upon thorough review and examination, 30 articles were deemed directly relevant to the research objective, specifically focusing on the utilization of folklore in EFL classrooms, the selection of appropriate stories, and the instructional strategies employed.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Folklores and Cultural Knowledge

Folklore is an essential component of cultural knowledge, serving as a repository of the traditions, beliefs, and practices of a community (Situmorang et al., 2023). It encompasses a wide range of expressions, including myths, legends, folktales, proverbs, and customs, passed down orally through generations. Folklore reflects the collective experiences and values of a society, providing insights into its worldview and social norms (Alisherovna, 2024; Ellisafny, 2019). This cultural heritage helps to maintain a sense of identity and continuity within a community, preserving its unique characteristics and distinguishing it from others.

Learning folklore is essential for preserving cultural heritage. In an increasingly globalized world, local traditions and stories are at risk of being overshadowed by dominant global narratives (Pardede, 2021). By studying and documenting folklore, it ensures that these unique aspects of cultural identity are not lost. This preservation helps maintain diversity in the global cultural landscape, allowing future generations to appreciate and learn from a rich tapestry of human experiences and expressions.

Folklore also plays a critical role in education, providing a rich resource for teaching language, history, and social values. Stories and songs from folklore can make learning more engaging and relatable, connecting students to their cultural roots (Darmayenti et al., 2021; Inphoo & Nomniam, 2019). Through folklore, educators can impart lessons about resilience, morality, and community, fostering a deeper understanding of cultural norms and historical contexts. This approach helps students develop a sense of identity and continuity, bridging the past with the present.

Cultural knowledge encompasses the accumulated wisdom, practices, and traditions of a community, including language, rituals, art, and social norms (Griswold, 2012). It is crucial for the sustainability of communities, as it informs their methods of adaptation and survival, and fosters resilience and innovation. Moreover, understanding and preserving cultural knowledge is vital for maintaining cultural diversity and fostering global heritage. Cultural knowledge embedded in folklore plays a crucial role in the education and socialization of individuals within a society. (Dahal & Bhatta, 2021; Fadhli, 2020). Folktales and myths often contain moral lessons and cautionary tales that guide behavior and reinforce community standards. This informal education complements formal schooling by providing a deeper understanding of the cultural context in which individuals live, fostering a sense of belonging and continuity (Ardi, 2019).

Folklore and cultural knowledge are also vital for cultural sustainability and the promotion of diversity. In a globalized world, the preservation of local traditions and practices is essential for maintaining cultural diversity and preventing homogenization. Folklore helps to sustain linguistic diversity by preserving oral traditions in indigenous and minority languages (Calzada, 2013; Nanda et al., 2021). This cultural richness contributes to the global mosaic of human experience, fostering mutual understanding and respect among different cultures.

In conclusion, folklore is a vital component of cultural knowledge, serving as a living repository of traditions, beliefs, and practices that define a community's identity. Its preservation and study are essential for maintaining cultural diversity in a globalized world, offering a counterbalance to dominant global narratives. By embedding cultural heritage in education, folklore enriches learning experiences, fosters socialization, and strengthens a sense of identity and continuity. Moreover, folklore provides a powerful means of resistance and resilience for marginalized communities, preserving their history and asserting their rights. Through the lens of folklore, people gain valuable insights into the collective memory and diverse experiences of humanity, ensuring that the rich tapestry of human culture continues to thrive and inspire future generations.

Indonesian Folklores and Character Education

Indonesian folklore, rich in cultural and historical heritage, plays a vital role in character education (Fadhli, 2020; Mutiarani & Rahman, 2019). Folktales, myths, and legends from various regions in Indonesia offer a window into the values, morals, and wisdom of past generations. These stories often emphasize virtues such as honesty, bravery, kindness, and respect, providing an engaging and relatable means for educators to instill these values in students. By integrating folklore into the curriculum, educators can foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage while promoting moral development and ethical behaviour (Morris, 2023).

The diverse cultural landscape of Indonesia means that its folklore is equally varied, with each ethnic group contributing its own unique stories and traditions (Ellisafny, 2019; Fadhli, 2020; Mutiarani & Rahman, 2019). These tales often reflect the social and moral fabric of the communities they originate from. For example, the story of "Malin Kundang," a tale of a disobedient son turned to stone for disrespecting his mother, teaches the importance of filial piety and respect for parents. Such narratives not only entertain but also reinforce social norms and expectations, making them effective tools for character education.

Character education through folklore is not limited to moral lessons; it also encourages critical thinking and empathy (Johan et al., 2021; Winatha et al., 2020). When students analyse and discuss these stories, they learn to understand different perspectives and cultural contexts. This process helps them develop empathy by putting themselves in the shoes of the characters and considering the consequences of their actions. Furthermore, many folktales are metaphorical, which allows for a variety of interpretations and encourages students to investigate deeper meanings and moral dilemmas (Winatha et al., 2020). This promotes critical thinking in the classroom.

Incorporating Indonesian folklore into character education also supports the development of language and literacy skills. The rich, descriptive language found in folktales enhances vocabulary and

comprehension, while the narrative structure helps students understand story elements such as plot, character, and setting (Mutiarani & Rahman, 2019; Nadeak et al., 2020). Additionally, retelling and dramatizing these stories can improve oral communication skills and boost confidence in public speaking. These language skills are essential for academic success and effective communication in various aspects of life.

Finally, the use of Indonesian folklore in character education aligns with contemporary educational approaches that emphasize holistic development. By addressing cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of learning, folklore-based character education provides a well-rounded approach to student development. It encourages not only academic achievement but also the cultivation of virtues and social skills that are essential for personal and societal well-being. Through the timeless wisdom of folklore, Indonesian educators can inspire and nurture the next generation to become morally responsible and culturally aware citizens.

Selecting Folklores for EFL Classroom

Implementing folklores in a language classroom can be an effective strategy to engage students while providing cultural context and enriching their language skills. Folklores, being rich in cultural heritage and moral lessons, can captivate students' interest and foster a deeper understanding of the language. Before implementing folklores in the classroom, the teachers choose the folklores that meet the needs and interests of the students. Like short stories, the folklores have the aspect of a short story such as the player, theme, setting, plot, and messages (Ellisafny, 2019; Mutiarani & Rahman, 2019). According to (Pardede, 2021) several considerations in choosing the suitable literature for the students are; the folktales being chosen length wholly cover within the course hours, they fit the students' vocabulary and syntactic structure level, they suit the stories to the students' needs and abilities; they suit the stories' linguistic and stylistic level to the students' proficiency level; and they make sure that the amount of background information required.

When selecting folklore for classroom use, teachers can incorporate local folklore such as "Malin Kundang," "Sangkuriang," "Timun Mas," "Bawang Merah Bawang Putih," "Ande-Ande Lumut," and "Sang Kancil," among others. Utilizing native folklore is beneficial for imparting essential cultural aspects of the target language, which is crucial for fostering intercultural awareness. Translating local short stories into English not only aids in language skill development but also enhances students' understanding of their own culture. Local folklore often excludes complex expressions (such as idioms and slang) and intricate language patterns, making it more accessible for students. Additional benefits of using local folklore include the prevention of cultural conflicts and the inculcation of cultural values and identities (Nanda et al., 2021; Pardede, 2021; Widiyanto et al., 2022). To ensure students develop intercultural awareness, it is highly recommended to use both local and native folklore interchangeably. This approach allows students to compare and contrast local values with foreign ones, enriching their cultural understanding and appreciation. By incorporating a balanced mix of local and native folklore, teachers can provide a comprehensive learning experience that promotes linguistic proficiency, cultural awareness, and intercultural competence (Lubis & Bahri, 2021).

Implementing Folklores in Language Classroom

There are some strategies to effectively integrate folklore into English Foreign Language (EFL) classroom:

a. Interactive Storytelling

Using interactive storytelling in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms can effectively integrate folklore that enhancing both language proficiency and cultural awareness. The traditional Indonesian folktales can create an immersive learning environment that captivates students' interest and encourages active participation. Interactive storytelling allows students to engage deeply with the narratives, thereby improving their speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills (Nurhayati et al., 2019). This approach not only makes learning more enjoyable but also provides a contextualized understanding of language use, helping students to grasp the subtleties of English in a meaningful and culturally rich context. Furthermore, integrating Indonesian folklore through interactive storytelling can significantly contribute to character education, an essential aspect of the Indonesian educational system. Folktales are rich with moral lessons and cultural values, offering students opportunities to explore and reflect on virtues such as honesty, bravery, and kindness. By discussing and acting out these stories, students can internalize these values and apply them in their daily lives. This method fosters critical thinking and ethical reasoning, as students are encouraged to analyze characters' actions and the consequences of their decisions (Fadhli, 2020). Ultimately, interactive storytelling not only enhances language skills but also nurtures well-rounded individuals who are aware of and appreciate their cultural heritage and ethical principles.

b. Role-Playing and Drama

Role-playing and drama are effective in fostering both language acquisition and moral growth in EFL classroom. These strategies provide an immersive and interactive learning environment in which students actively engage with the information, thereby improving their language skills through experience learning. Students practice speaking and listening in contextually rich circumstances by acting out characters from Indonesian folktales, which improves their pronunciation, fluency, and comprehension. Furthermore, the collaborative nature of role-playing and drama exercises promotes communicative skills and cooperation, as students must negotiate meaning, solve difficulties, and assist one another in order to deliver a coherent and entertaining performance. Moreover, role-playing and drama make it easier to include character education into EFL instruction by bringing to life the moral and ethical precepts found in Indonesian folklore (Syukri et al., 2022). These activities inspire students to think about the characteristics and values portrayed in the stories, such as honesty, courage, and empathy, and how these relate to their own lives. Students obtain a deeper understanding of ethical principles and are challenged to critically assess their behaviors and judgments when scenarios involving moral quandaries and character development are dramatized. This immersive method not only strengthens language skills but also fosters character development, assisting students in developing a strong moral compass and a sense of cultural belonging. Thus, integrating role-playing and drama in EFL classrooms not only enhances linguistic competence but also nurtures holistic development and ethical awareness.

c. Writing Prompts

The use of writing prompts in integrating folklore and character education in EFL classroom can foster both linguistic skills and moral development. The teacher can create engaging and culturally relevant writing tasks that encourage students to explore and articulate complex ideas in English. These prompts can vary from creative storytelling to reflective essays, allowing students to practice a range of writing styles and techniques. Through this process, students enhance their vocabulary, grammar, and composition skills, while simultaneously gaining a deeper understanding of narrative structure and cultural context (Tineh et al., 2023). Writing about familiar folklore also provides a sense of comfort and motivation, as students are more likely to engage with content that resonates with their cultural heritage (Lubis & Bahri, 2021). In addition, writing prompts based on folklore can play a significant role in character education by prompting students to reflect on and internalize the moral lessons embedded in these stories. For instance, a prompt might ask students to write about a time when they demonstrated a virtue found in a folktale, such as bravery or kindness, thereby encouraging them to connect the story's themes to their personal experiences. This reflective practice helps students develop critical thinking and ethical reasoning skills, as they analyze the actions and decisions of characters and relate them to their own lives. Moreover, discussing and sharing their written responses with peers fosters a classroom environment where moral values and cultural stories are actively explored and appreciated. Thus, writing prompts not only facilitate language learning but also contribute to the holistic development of students, enriching their moral and cultural education.

d. Reading Folklores

Reading folklore in an EFL classroom is an approach for integrating cultural education and character development with language learning. Folklore, with its rich narrative traditions and moral lessons, serves as an excellent medium for enhancing students' reading comprehension and vocabulary while immersing them in Indonesian cultural heritage. By analyzing the text, students improve their critical reading skills, inferential thinking, and ability to understand complex sentence structures by analyzing the text. Moreover, discussing the stories in class allows for collaborative learning, where students can share interpretations, compare cultural elements, and engage in meaningful conversations, thus fostering a deeper understanding of the English language within a familiar cultural context. Stories from Indonesian folklore often highlight virtues such as honesty, bravery, and kindness, providing a platform for discussing these values in a relatable and engaging way. Through guided reading activities, students can explore the actions and motivations of characters, reflect on the consequences of their decisions, and draw parallels to their own experiences and societal norms (Ismail, 2019). This reflective process promotes moral reasoning and ethical thinking, helping students internalize positive values and apply them in real-life situations. Thus, reading folklore not only enhances language proficiency but also cultivates a strong moral foundation and a deeper appreciation for cultural heritage.

e. Research Projects

Research projects offers students with opportunities for independent inquiry and critical thinking. Assigning research projects on topics related to Indonesian folklore, teachers can engage

students in exploring the cultural and moral aspects of these stories while developing their research and analytical skills in English (Agung et al., 2024). For example, students could be tasked with investigating the historical origins of a particular folktale, analyzing its themes and moral lessons, or exploring its influence on Indonesian society. Through this process, students not only deepen their understanding of folklore but also enhance their language proficiency as they engage in reading, writing, and presenting their research findings. Furthermore, research projects promote character education by encouraging students to reflect on the ethical values portrayed in folklore and consider their relevance to contemporary society. For instance, a research project might prompt students to examine how characters in folktales demonstrate virtues such as honesty or perseverance and how these virtues can be applied in real-life situations. By conducting research and presenting their findings, students not only enhance their language skills but also develop a deeper appreciation for moral values and cultural heritage. Additionally, collaborating on research projects can promote teamwork and interpersonal skills, as students work together to gather and analyze information. Overall, research projects offer a comprehensive approach to integrating folklore and character education into EFL classrooms, fostering both linguistic and moral development.

In conclusion, integrating folklore into the classroom enables teachers to create a dynamic and enriching learning environment that supports language development, cultural understanding, and personal growth. Through the use of folklore, students can develop the four essential language skills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking—while simultaneously benefiting from character education. Moreover, this approach facilitates the learning of cultural heritage, providing students with a deeper appreciation of their own country's traditions as well as those of other cultures around the world.

4. CONCLUSION

The integration of folklore with character education can significantly enhance the development of cultural knowledge, personal growth, and language proficiency in students. To effectively implement this integration, it is essential to select folklore that aligns with the students' needs and interests. Additionally, various pedagogical strategies, including interactive storytelling, role-playing, writing prompts, reading folklore, and research projects, can be employed to facilitate this integration within the EFL classroom. It can be implied that in an EFL classroom, the use of folklores can foster cultural awareness and appreciation, promoting empathy and a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives. Additionally, folklores often convey moral lessons and values, helping to build students' character and ethical decision-making skills. This study primarily examines the integration of folklore and character education in the EFL context, focusing on implementation strategies. However, further research is required to identify more effective methods and strategies for integrating folklore and character education, particularly in addressing the challenges faced by teachers and proposing viable solutions.

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