

## Storytelling Using Reconstructed Indonesian Folktales in English Translation to Improve the Reading Skill Of Primary 2 Students in School X

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### ARTICLE INFO

DOI: [10.19166/jtp.v1i1.3131](https://doi.org/10.19166/jtp.v1i1.3131)

*Article history:*

Received:

13 Desember 2020

Accepted:

20 Desember 2020

Available online:

1 January 2021

*Keywords:*

*Storytelling, reconstructed folktales, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency*

### ABSTRACT

*Folktales are stories originating in people's culture, typically passed on by word of mouth before writing systems were developed. It has been known that children stories are never simple stories. The stories generally contain edifying elements and moral lesson to educate children and shape their characters. These elements are even stronger in folktales as they are potential medium to carry moral education from generation to generation. Unfortunately, not all of them contain teachings that are relevant to today's values and even contain teachings that have unconstructive values. This study used reconstructed folktales Nilam Kandung as the purposes of this study were: (1) to describe the use and implementation of storytelling using Indonesian folktales in order to improve English reading skill towards English comprehension text, vocabulary and fluency of primary 2 students, (2) to analyze primary 2 students' reading comprehension, vocabulary and fluency as they engaged in reading the Indonesian folktales through storytelling method, (3) to identify problems and obstacles that happened during the implementation process. The subjects of this study are Primary 2 students consist of 26 students. The research used classroom action research design and the instruments are tests. The results showed that (1) students' vocabulary, comprehension and fluency as parts in reading skills are enhanced, (2) students' sense of moral education is enhanced (3) storytelling using Indonesian folktales is attractive to students in reading English texts.*

## **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

Many experts and educators who carried out some research found out that the effective way for teaching young learners is to increase children's learning motivation. One of the things they discovered was that children enjoy storytelling. Children enjoy listening stories and understand the conventions of narrative (Ellis & Brewster, 1991).

The limited time of English class at school X has demanded teachers to focus more on the students' improvement through written exercises such as worksheets, homework and tests which result the shortage of time for the teachers to fix and improve the English reading skills particularly in vocabulary, comprehension and fluency of the students.

One of the method that can be used to teach vocabulary, comprehension and fluency of the students is using folktales. Folktale is tradition whose part of the tradition is passed on from generation to generation verbally or through an example which accompanied by gesture or mnemonic device (Danandjaja, 2002). The use of reconstructed Indonesian folktales in English translation delivered through storytelling then finally selected as the preparation time is much shorter. Folktales beautify the moral lessons of life so as to give readers guidance about how they should conduct their behavior. Learning English through folktales enables students not only to develop their English language learning but also to gain deeper understanding of their culture at the same time (Taylor, 1999).

There are many advantages of storytelling for teaching English reading skills to children. Realizing this, the researcher will look thoroughly for story telling using folktales and in the classroom research, the researcher focused only on the reading which is very important for later verbal communication within story telling context. The vocabulary was related to folktales, as it was the unit learnt by the research subject at the time research was conducted. Therefore, the research question used in this research are:

1. To what extent do storytelling using folktales improve the vocabulary, comprehension and fluency as parts in reading skills?
2. To what extent does folktale instill moral education of Primary 2 EFL students and while at the same time enhancing their reading skill?
3. How could folktales improve the students' interests in the learning process?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***The Importance of Reconstructed Folktales***

The Indonesian nation is rich in folktales. Unfortunately, the nation has many destructive and unconstructive folktales have become alarming, especially when the tales are aimed at forming a national identity for future generation. Furthermore, Citraningtyas (2004) mentioned that a number of Indonesian folktales contain disturbing endings and often end with destructive elements, or end with a catastrophe.

Folktales can teach moral values, can 'shape' nation (Johnston, 2000, as cited in Citraningtyas, 2010). If folktales are said to shape a nation, the nation's young generation will be shaped to better quality due to this positive reconstruction.

### ***Reading***

Reading is an important foundation for success as it is a process when readers learn something from what they read and involve it in an academic context as a part of education (Grabe, 2008, p. 5). Here are the principles of the teaching reading which are stated by Anderson in Nunan (2003).

- 1) Exploit the reader's background knowledge
- 2) Build a strong foundation in vocabulary

- 3) Teach for comprehension
- 4) Work on increasing reading rate
- 5) Teach reading strategies
- 6) Encourage readers to transform strategies into skills
- 7) Build assessment and evaluation into your reading
- 8) Strive for continuous improvement as a reading teacher

Teachers should be careful to choose the activity to be the integrated part in teaching reading so that the joy of reading will not be lost. The researcher decides to use storytelling to diverse ways in which students' process information as the students need to develop an appreciation for the joy of reading. This is where the theory of storytelling can become involved in teaching children to read.

### ***Strategies for Teaching Reading***

When working on a folktale, it would be highly important to propose exercises requiring the detailed comprehension of every single meaning of each paragraph so that the students will be encouraged to adapt to the true purpose of their reading.

The researcher chose the use of folktales through storytelling as Indonesian folktales have been used as a pervasive tool in sustaining cultural heritage and furthering the nations' traditional values from generation to generation (Citraningtyas, 2016).

Moreover, folktales are stepping stones into the worlds of imagination, fantasy, ideas, philosophy, laughter and even adventure. The reading of reconstructed folktales is aimed to enhance the L2 reading skill of Primary 2 students at School X, *Pantai Indah Kapuk*, Jakarta, and to nurture the students' cultural values.

### ***Reading Skills***

#### ***Vocabulary***

Vocabulary is defined as words we must know to communicate effectively, words in speaking, which are known as expressive vocabulary and words in listening, which are known as receptive vocabulary (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009, p. 385).

Techniques used by the teachers depend on a few factors, such as content, time availability and its value for the learners (Takac, 2008). The techniques applied by the teachers relate to some reasons. Therefore, the teachers usually combine more than one technique. Pinter (2006) suggests teachers to employ planned vocabulary presentation as various as possible.

#### ***Comprehension***

Reading comprehension is defined as the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction and involvement with written language (Snow, 2002, p. 12). Reading comprehension skills become more important as students are promoted to the next levels in the educational system. Each student has his or her own background experiences and abilities to process text. As a result, comprehension skills will be unique to each reader: No two students will interpret the exact same meaning from a text. However, there are certain strategies that can assist readers in improving their comprehension skills (Teele, 2006, 93).

Meltzer, Smith and Clark (2001) mention several strategies to teach comprehension to students:

- 1) Rehearsing (Underlining and taking notes)
- 2) Elaborating (Taking notes by paraphrasing text, forming a mental image, creating an analogy and summarizing)
- 3) Organizing (Outlining and mapping)
- 4) Comprehension monitoring (metacognitive training and self-questioning skills)

## ***Fluency***

Fluency is defined as the ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression (Pennington, 2009, p. 8). Reading fluency is one of the defining characteristics of good reading, and a lack of fluency is a common characteristic of poor readers. Gunning mentions that rates of oral reading vary considerably. In first grade, students in the lowest 10<sup>th</sup> percentile read at a rate of 15 words per minute while those in the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile read 111 words per minute. The range in third grade is 48 to 162 (Hasbrouck & Tindal, 2006) as cited in Gunning (2011, p. 124). Moreover, Gunning states that:

The ultimate goal of reading instruction is to foster students' understanding of what they read. Because silent reading predominates in the world outside school and beyond the early grades in school, the goal of fluency instruction should be to improve silent reading fluency. Ironically, fluency is best improved by developing basic skills. A key cause of dysfluent reading is a lack of proficiency or automatically or both in word analysis skills.

## ***The Importance of Folktales***

Folktales play an important role as one of the teachers' resources in teaching English for young learners. Moreover, folktales become a suitable medium to hand down desired values throughout history due to its stable and repetitive structure (Citraningtyas, 2016). Therefore, the use of folktales to teach reading skills will have two advantages: children learn the reading skill and at the same time absorb the values embedded in the folktales.

Stories for children have been known not only to entertain children, but most importantly to educate them (Citraningtyas, 2011). Folktales are one of the world's oldest teaching tools and can be found in all societies (Spagnoli, 1995, as cited in Citraningtyas, 2016). However, not all folktales contain positive elements, or elements that are suitable for the education of today's children (Citraningtyas, 2004).

## ***Storytelling***

Storytelling is considered to be a different activity from reading aloud but some others do not make such distinction. Storytelling can be used as an effective means to increase early literacy and promote reading comprehension skills (Haven & Ducey, 2007). Children age 6 to 9 are usually enthusiastic about and receptive to storytelling. They participate, ask questions, and even tell their own stories (Del Negro, 2014, p. 22). Storytelling is the perfect alternative activity because it works with children at all literacy levels (Del Negro, 2014, p. 22).

Haven & Ducey (2007) say that storytelling can be used as an effective means to increase early literacy and promote reading comprehension skill. Citraningtyas (2006) stated that:

Folk and fairy tales are believed to influence the behavior of children in a way that reflects societal standards. This makes folktale a convenient vehicle for moral, socio-cultural, and other agendas. It is therefore not surprising that in many countries, including Indonesia, folktales automatically win the heart of every parent who is choosing a suitable text for their children for folktales are texts believed to be derived from authentic cultures, and help to create a community and maintain the customs of their culture.

Thus, based on the above statement, the researcher believed that literature, beside to improve the English reading skill, is also important to revitalize the literacy culture of children in this modern age.

Slavin (2000, p. 327) defines motivation as an internal process that activates, guides and maintains behavior over time. Intensity and direction of motivation may vary though they are difficult to separate. One effective way to motivate children develop their motivation is by reading stories because by when reading stories especially stories in second language, students use all the available resources to try to make sense of it and to find out the ending of the story (Sivasubramaniam, 2006, p. 262).

This statement above stated about the importance of storytelling in motivating children to read. Based on the framework above, the researcher believes that storytelling has plenty advantageous functions as a teaching tool to develop students' reading skill.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *Research Method and Design*

This research was conducted using classroom action research design. The research took place in Primary School X, *Pantai Indah Kapuk*, Jakarta from 5 March 2018 until 3 April 2018. The participants of this research are Primary 2K students consists of 26 students; 15 girls and 11 boys age seven to eight years old. Fraenkel and Wallen (2008, p. 422) mentions that research studies investigate the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or materials are frequently referred to qualitative research.

There is no instrument for the participants to complete and no treatment designed to manipulate variables. Several forms of data are used as observations' note, audio and video recording, open-ended questionnaire, interviews between the researcher and the participants and copy of their works. Then, the data is analyzed inductively, interactively and recursively (Creswell, 2009). The three cycles of classroom action research were conducted in the following four procedures: 1) Clarifying vision, 2) Articulating theories, 3) Implementing Action and Collecting Data, 4) Reflecting and planning informed action (Sagor, 2005, p. 7).

### *Indicators of the Variables*

The objective of teaching reading is to help the learner to get information from the printed page effectively, rapidly and with full understanding (Pratima, 2010, p. 78). The researcher chooses comprehension, vocabulary and fluency as the indicators as they are close to young learners' world especially when English was their second language.

The researcher used the cloze procedure as one of the popular types of reading assessment task (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2010, p. 241). The fluency rubric can provide formative information to guide instructions as well as summative information. It also provides teachers with tools for informing their own instruction and students with a method for guiding their own personal fluency development (Rasinski, 2004, p. 18).

The researcher adapts the rubric for the purpose of adjusting with the theories that she has read. The rubric used for measuring the comprehension and vocabulary is taken from the school's rubric for term test oral reading passage. For fluency, the researcher also uses the rubric from Hasbrouck and Tindal (2006) and Anderson (2008). It could be seen as follows:

**Table 1.** Vocabulary Rubric

<b>Vocabulary (3 points)</b>	
3 points	The student appears with higher understanding of the definition of the vocabulary word and is able to write the vocabulary word accurately.
2 points	The student shows understanding of the definition of the vocabulary word but fails to spell and write the word accurately.
1 point	The student shows no understanding of the definition of the vocabulary word and is unable to write anything.

**Table 2.** Reading Comprehension Rubric

<b>Reading Comprehension</b>	
5: In depth understanding of the story	Answers 9 - 10 questions from the cloze test correctly
4: Adequate understanding of the story	Answers 7 - 8 questions from the cloze test correctly
3: Little understanding of the story	Answers 5 - 6 questions from the cloze test correctly
2: Very little understanding of the story	Answers 3 - 4 questions from the cloze test correctly
1: No understanding of the story	Answers 0 - 2 questions from the cloze test correctly



**Table 3.** Fluency Rubric

Reading Fluency (5 points)	
5 points Grade 5 level	Silent reading more than 175 words per minute.
4 points Grade 4 level	Silent reading 158 – 175 words per minute.
3 points Grade 4 level	Silent reading 138 – 158 words per minute.
2 points Grade 3 level	Silent reading 115 – 138 words per minute.
1 point Grade 1 level	Silent reading less than 115 words per minute.

**Table 4.** Average End-of-Year Reading Rate in Words Per Minute  
Source: Adapted from Hasbrouck and Tindal (2006) and Anderson (2008)

Grade Level	Oral Reading	Silent Reading
Grade 1	59	80
Grade 2	89	115
Grade 3	107	138
Grade 4	125	158
Grade 5	138	175
Grade 6	150	185

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The pre-observation indicated that the conditions of the subjects’ comprehension skill prior to the implementation of storytelling using Indonesian folktales in written English were seen as *very little understanding of the story*, whereas the subjects’ conditions of vocabulary competence showed *understanding of the definition* of the vocabulary word and the conditions of the subjects’ fluency *was not available* to find how many words per minute as the paragraph is too short.

After planning all the materials through folktale entitle *Nilam Kandung*, the researcher began to articulate the theories she has read. She did observation, field-note taking, picture taking and video recording. The researcher applied the reading skills theory through the instruments she had prepared. The subjects showed their interests and willingness to read the story and reminded each other to be quiet. Never been before that the subjects had their initiative to pay attention to a unit that was being discussed unless the teacher first asked them to. Below are the result of the result of study:

**Table 5** Result of vocabulary test

No	Research Subjects	Pretest	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1	APM	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8
2	BW	1.5	1.5	1.9	2.1
3	CN	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9
4	EES	2.0	2.0	2.6	2.8
5	GR	2.2	2.2	2.5	2.8
6	ISF	1.6	1.6	1.7	2.2
7	KAC	2.9	2.7	2.8	3.0
8	RH	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.3
9	RST	1.3	1.3	1.3	2.1
10	RS	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.6

The researcher noticed that there were seven unimproved subjects are slower learners than their friends. They could write the spelling of some vocabulary words correctly if the researcher drilled the words and they are given longer time to think and write. The researcher noticed that during English lesson, NFK always asked the teacher for the spelling of the word that is actually very common for Primary two grader. In one period of English lesson, NFK could go back and forth in the class to ask for the spelling of the word. EWAS, JW, JV, MML and NMM were English remedial classes students. They used to be drilled in the spelling and

reading comprehension during the remedials. RJK never joined remedial class as the parents and the teacher had agreed that it will not help much. He often fell asleep in the class especially after lunch. There was the day when the research happened after lunch. The researcher had to awake him and asked him to wash his face before continuing the lesson. RJK had been examined by the professional psychologist and considered having receptive and expressive language disorder. Therefore, the researcher had anticipated of his vocabulary test result. Based on the rubric, it indicated that the subjects show no understanding of the definition of the vocabulary word and is unable to write anything

**Table 6** Result in comprehension

No	Research Subjects	Pretest	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1	EWAS	1	1	2	2
2	JW	1	1	2	3
3	JV	1	2	3	3
4	MML	1	2	2	3
5	NFK	2	1	5	5
6	RJK	1	1	3	4

The comprehension of the subjects progressed from cycle I to cycle III from 2.3, 4.2 to 3.9. Based on the rubric, it indicated that the subjects answered 7 - 8 questions from the cloze test correctly and the reading comprehension level of the subjects was improved from having little understanding of the story to having adequate understanding of the story. The overall score also shows an improvement as the pretest score was 2.3 and cycle III was 3.9

**Table 7** Result in fluency

No	Research Subjects	Cycle I	Cycle II	Cycle III
1	DEF	3	4	4
2	FD	2	2	3
3	MP	3	4	4
4	MKJ	2	4	4
5	NFK	1	2	2
6	RH	1	1	2
7	RS	3	4	5
8	SAH	4	5	5

There were eight subjects (DEF, FD, MP, MKJ, NFK, RH, RS, SAH) increasing their results. These subjects were the middle level subjects of the class. They do not demonstrate outstanding reading skills but since their learning motivation was increased, their fluency of reading word per minute also increased. There were twelve subjects (APM, CW, CAB, EWAS, EES, ISF, JW, JV, MML, NMM, RST, RJK) who performed steadily. Six of them (CW, EWAS, JW, JV, MML, RJK) never showed improvement in reading word per minute as they obtained 1.0 from cycle I to cycle III. The reasons were similar with the vocabulary test. They were the students who joined remedial classes and therefore their English ability was below the class average. There were six subjects (AS, BW, CN, GR, KAC, MAW) whose results were improved but then falling again.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

One of the factor that makes this reading skill research successful is the storytelling method. Through the method, the learning of English becomes more attractive for the students. Besides, the participated students are lower primary students whom are still developing their

imagination and storytelling is shown as an interesting activity for children because it fits with their needs as imaginative learners. Aside from that, the folktale story, the illustrations and the theme seem to have the capacity to stimulate the students' curiosity, interest and enthusiasm such that the students are keen to engage more deeply with the text and therefore they are eager to read more and comprehensively. Knowing how important and beneficial storytelling using Indonesian folktale is, the researcher suggests every educator to earn the knowledge and skill to make the learning of language more interesting. In order to improve the teaching effectively, teachers should be developed with the skill of teaching literature and reading children books that will make them see the needs of each student as well as the uniqueness of their characters and behaviors.

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