EXPLORING THE UTILIZATION OF FOLKTALES AS READING MATERIALS FOR EFL STUDENTS

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Abstract
This literature review examines the utilization of folktales as reading materials for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students. Folktales have long been recognized as valuable cultural resources that can enhance language learning and promote cultural understanding. The purpose of this review is to explore the existing research on the use of folktales in EFL classrooms and identify their potential benefits and challenges. The review follows a systematic approach, gathering relevant studies from various sources such as academic databases, books, and journals. The selected studies cover a wide range of contexts, including different grade levels, language proficiency levels, and cultural backgrounds. The findings indicate that incorporating folktales into EFL instruction offers several advantages. Firstly, folktales provide authentic and engaging reading materials that can capture students' interest and motivation. They also expose learners to diverse language structures, vocabulary, and cultural aspects, promoting both linguistic and cultural competence. Moreover, folktales encourage critical thinking, imagination, and creativity through the exploration of themes, morals, and characters. Strategies such as pre-reading activities, vocabulary support, and post-reading discussions are suggested to overcome these challenges and maximize the benefits of using folktales. As a result, the literature review underscores the potential of folktales as effective reading materials for EFL students. It calls for further research and practical applications that consider context-specific factors to optimize the integration of folktales in EFL classrooms and facilitate language learning and cultural appreciation.

Keywords: Folktales, reading materials, EFL classrooms

INTRODUCTION
Reading proficiency is a fundamental aspect of language learning, and it is particularly important for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in Indonesia to develop strong reading skills. However, many EFL students face significant difficulties in this area. These challenges encompass a range of issues, including limited vocabulary, poor comprehension, difficulty understanding cultural nuances, and unfamiliarity with text structures (Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Addressing these obstacles requires educators to explore innovative approaches that can effectively enhance reading proficiency among EFL students. By identifying and implementing effective strategies, educators can provide tailored support to help students overcome these common reading difficulties and improve their overall language proficiency.

One promising trend in addressing the reading difficulties of EFL students is the utilization of local folktales as reading materials. This approach capitalizes on
the cultural relevance and familiarity of folktales to Indonesian students. According to Upa and Mangalik (2018), by incorporating these traditional narratives into the EFL curriculum, educators aim to engage students with authentic and culturally meaningful content. Folktales provide a rich source of linguistic and cultural context, which can facilitate reading comprehension and language acquisition (Mantra & Kumara, 2018). By immersing students in stories that reflect their cultural heritage, educators can create a deeper connection between students and the English language, ultimately enhancing their reading skills and fostering a positive attitude towards learning.

The deliberate selection of appropriate reading materials is crucial for addressing reading difficulties among EFL students. Reading materials serve as a platform for students to practice their language skills, expand their vocabulary, and develop a better understanding of language structures (Nasir et al., 2019). In addition, when students encounter texts that align with their proficiency levels and interests, they are more likely to engage actively and apply effective reading strategies. According to Anisa (2020), by carefully choosing reading materials, educators can create a conducive learning environment that promotes independent reading, critical thinking, and deeper comprehension. Therefore, incorporating folktales into the EFL curriculum offers a unique opportunity to expose students to culturally significant texts, sparking their interest and motivation to read.

When considering the implementation of folktales as reading materials, it is important to take into account various factors that influence English language learning in the Indonesian context. These factors encompass the linguistic complexity of folktales, students' prior knowledge of folklore, cultural appropriateness, and the availability of suitable resources. Folktales may vary in terms of language complexity, ranging from simple narratives suitable for beginners to more intricate stories that challenge advanced learners (Kusnita et al., 2016). It is crucial for educators and curriculum developers to select appropriate folktales that match students' proficiency levels and provide the necessary scaffolding for comprehension. Additionally, cultural appropriateness should be considered to ensure that the themes and values portrayed in the folktales align with the cultural backgrounds of the students (Ahmadi, 2017). Moreover, the availability of high-quality resources, such as authentic folktales in English translations or adaptations, should be taken into consideration to ensure the feasibility of implementing this approach effectively.

While numerous empirical researches on the utilization of folktales as reading materials has been documented for decades, little research has been conducted in the form of literature review. Hence, the present literature review is conducted to gain a deeper understanding of the utilization of folktales as reading materials for EFL students in the Indonesian context. A similar research has been conducted by Suryani et al. (2021), which categorized ten research articles based on the methodology to see how did the use of folklores impact on student reading ability in narrative texts. However, the researcher finds that there is a room for further investigation within the topic. By conducting a literature review, the present research identified main purpose, research sample, main data collection tools, and major findings from ten chosen empirical research articles. This research also enables the discovery of various approaches and methodologies used in different contexts, allowing for a well-rounded perspective on the integration of
folktales in EFL reading instruction. The contribution to the present study is unique because the exploration of utilizing folktales as reading materials for EFL students from various previous research within the country has been rarely addressed in Indonesia.

In accordance with the aforementioned reasons, the present literature review is to answer the following questions:

1. How has research in this area been investigated?
2. What major findings are reported in the studies related to the utilization of folktales as reading materials for EFL students?

METHOD

The present literature review analyzed the existing research on the utilization of folktales as reading materials for EFL students in the Indonesian context. A total of 10 primary research articles were included in this literature review. These articles were identified through a comprehensive search of electronic databases, including Google Scholar, GARUDA, and Research Gate. Thus, the search from various literature was selected to fulfill the paper's objective using inclusion and exclusion criteria. The criteria for articles are stated as follows:

1. Empirical Research
2. Publication year within five years (2017-2023)
3. The research discusses the utilization of folktales as reading materials
4. The research only taken in English as Foreign Language context
5. The setting is education in the area of English Language Learning

In order to answer the questions mentioned earlier, the selected studies were analyzed to find a deeper understanding of the topic. The data analysis involved synthesizing the findings of the included studies to identify main purpose, research sample, main data collection tools, and major findings. In addition, this process also involved summarizing the main findings of each study and comparing them to identify similarities and differences in the results using a grid template.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research reviewed in this paper has highlighted various insight into how has research related to the utilization of folktales been investigated. The following grid template shows the identification of findings from various research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Main purpose(s) of the study</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Tool of data collection</th>
<th>Major findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Mantra &amp; Kumara, 2018)</td>
<td>To explore how folktales can be used as a medium of improving students’ reading skills and major benefits in using folktales for teaching English.</td>
<td>Classroom Action Research (CAR)</td>
<td>Observation checklist and pre-test and post-test</td>
<td>The results indicated that use of folktales by EFL teachers could improve student’ reading skill and widen their vocabulary and at the same time, culture is acquired by the students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Results</td>
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<td>Jayadiningrat &amp; Widiani (2021)</td>
<td>Pseudo-experimental Research</td>
<td>The data were obtained by administering multiple-choice tests and distributing questionnaires.</td>
<td>The results showed that there was a significant difference between the reading ability and the social attitudes of the students taught by using folktale literacy learning and those who were taught by using conventional learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ismail et al. (2019)</td>
<td>Classroom Action Research (CAR)</td>
<td>The results showed that the usage of folklore stories offers authentic reading resources which give the students a chance to intermingle with the text emotionally and involve themselves personally. In reply to this situation, teachers and students always developing and searching for manners to improve reading and vocabulary instruction.</td>
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<td>Upa &amp; Mangalik (2018)</td>
<td>Pre-experimental Research</td>
<td>The results showed the utilization of Sulawesi folktales into the teaching of reading comprehension is effective to improve the students’ reading comprehension.</td>
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<td>Istiq’faroh et al. (2020)</td>
<td>Quasi-experimental Research</td>
<td>The Reading Comprehension Test (RCT) and the Motivation to Learn Scale (MLS) were administered as pre-and post-tests.</td>
<td>The results showed that experimental group students had higher scores on both dependent variables compared to their counterparts. It indicated that Indonesian folktales picture books</td>
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significantly promote reading comprehension and motivation of experimental group students compared to control group students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study (Year)</th>
<th>Methodology</th>
<th>Results</th>
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<tr>
<td>(Anisa, 2019)</td>
<td>To acquire some additional information about the current reading activity in elementary school in Indonesia. Descriptive qualitative Research Using pre-test and post-test</td>
<td>The results showed that the Series of Nusantara Folklore storybooks is recommended to choose by teachers because it assists YLs learning principles that are interesting and authentic.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Nurfadhilah et al., 2017)</td>
<td>To design teaching material to support students in learning of narrative text reading with the local folklore comic. Development Research Expert evaluation instrument</td>
<td>The results showed that using The Crying Stone Comic is able to support teaching reading on narrative text in Year-8 students of Public Junior High School 10, Pontianak.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Wijanarko, 2021)</td>
<td>To describe and identify 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 Classroom Action Research (CAR) Pre-test and tests</td>
<td>The results indicated that he 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. Therefore, they are eager to read more and comprehensively.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(Fraseda et al., 2022)</td>
<td>To develop local folktales content for junior high school students Development Research Interviews, questionnaires, and documentation</td>
<td>In open-ended questionnaire, the students gave positive responses. Most of</td>
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Based on local folktales from the Sanggau regency, them said that local folktales are important to read because by reading local folktales they will preserve the local folktales of the Sanggau regency.

(Baroqqah & Angraini, 2019) To find out whether there was significant improvement of students’ reading comprehension achievement after being taught by using folklore and whether there was significant mean difference of reading comprehension achievement between the students who were taught by using folklore and those who were not.

Quasi-experimental Pre-test and post-test

The results showed that the use of folklore in the classroom made the students very interested because with this folklore they were not shy when they wanted to read in front of the class about grammatical error.

From the table above, it can be seen that there are ten research articles. Three out of ten research articles employed the Classroom Action Research (CAR). The first research article was conducted by Mantra and Kumara (2018), which aimed to investigate the use of folktales as a means of improving students' reading skills and enhancing their cross-cultural awareness in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. The research employed a classroom action research methodology, consisting of two cyclic learning sessions. The study involved the intensive utilization of selected Indonesian folktales during reading classes. The major finding of the research indicated that the use of folktales by EFL teachers led to improvements in students' reading skills, expanded their vocabulary, and facilitated the acquisition of cultural knowledge. The second research was conducted by Ismail et al. (2019), which aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using local folktales as a reading strategy to enhance students' English vocabulary proficiency in a second-year class at SMA Muhammadiyah Kalosi-Enrekang. The research used a test to measure the impact of interactive reading of Enrekang folktales on students' vocabulary achievement. The results indicated that reading local folktales had a positive impact on students' vocabulary, as evidenced by the participants' performance in the D-test, cycle 1 test, cycle 2 test, and a post-cycle.
The findings also revealed that students had a favorable attitude towards the use of folktales as a vocabulary instruction technique. The study highlighted the potential of using folklore stories as authentic reading resources that emotionally engage students and enhance their vocabulary skills. Both teachers and students are encouraged to continue exploring ways to improve reading and vocabulary instruction based on these findings. The third research was conducted by Wijanarko (2021), which aimed to explore the use of storytelling with Indonesian folktales to improve the English reading skills, comprehension, vocabulary, fluency, and moral education of primary 2 students. The study focused on the reconstructed folktale Nilam Kandung. The data collection instruments consisted of tests to measure vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency. The findings indicated that the use of storytelling with Indonesian folktales had several positive effects: enhancement of students' vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency in reading skills, improvement in students' sense of moral education, and increased student engagement with English texts through the use of folktales. The study highlighted the attractiveness and potential benefits of incorporating Indonesian folktales in English language learning.

Aside of Classroom Action Research (CAR) design, there are two quasi-experimental research. The first was conducted by Istiq’faroh et al (2020), which aimed to address the issue of low reading comprehension and learning motivation among fourth-grade students in elementary schools. The study had two main objectives: developing indigenous folktales picture books and investigating the impact of Indonesian folktales on students' reading comprehension and learning motivation. In this quasi-experimental, there were 49 fourth-grade students which divided into experimental and control groups from two Indonesian elementary schools. Pre- and post-tests were conducted using the Reading Comprehension Test (RCT) and the Motivation to Learn Scale (MLS). The findings revealed that the experimental group, exposed to Indonesian folktales picture books, achieved higher scores in both reading comprehension and learning motivation compared to the control group. This indicated a significant improvement in reading comprehension and motivation among students who engaged with the Indonesian folktales picture books. The second research was conducted by Baroqqah and Angraini (2019), which aimed to determine if teaching with folklore could improve students' reading comprehension achievement. A quasi-experimental design was used with 68 eleventh-grade students divided into experimental and control groups. Data analysis using t-tests showed that teaching with folklore significantly enhanced students' reading comprehension. In addition, the experimental group had a higher mean score compared to the control group, indicating the effectiveness of using folklore in improving reading comprehension.

On the other hand, there were two development research articles. The first one was conducted by Nurfadhilah et al. (2017), which aimed to create educational materials that utilize local folklore comics to enhance students' comprehension of narrative texts. In their research, Nurfadhilah et al. (2017) followed a development research methodology, specifically the ADDIE approach (Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate). The researcher assessed the conditions of both students and teachers and identified their specific challenges and needs in English teaching and learning. Engaging materials were
carefully chosen from West Kalimantan folklore, and a comic was developed based on these materials. The comic underwent evaluation by two experts using an assessment rubric, resulting in a classification of "Very Good." This demonstrates that the comic is well-suited for supporting the teaching and learning of narrative text comprehension. The second research was conducted by Fraseda et al. (2022), which aimed to develop a picture book based on local folktales from the Sanggau regency for junior high school students, specifically for eighth-grade students to support their reading literacy programs. The research focused on understanding the type and process of creating the picture book, as well as assessing its appropriateness. The Design and Development process followed the ADDIE framework, including analysis, design, and development stages. Data collection methods included interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. The findings revealed the students' needs analysis, product requirements, product topics, and product design. Through validation, it was determined that the developed product was suitable for the students' needs.

The remaining three research articles have different methodology, including pseudo-experimental, pre-experimental, and descriptive qualitative research. The first research article was conducted by Jayadiningrat and Widiani (2021), which aimed to examine the impact of Balinese folktale literacy learning on elementary students' reading ability and social attitudes. It utilized a pseudo-experimental design with a non-equivalent post-test-only control group. Data collection involved multiple-choice tests and questionnaires. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, including Manova-test, were conducted. The results indicated a significant difference in reading ability and social attitudes between students taught with folktale literacy learning and those taught with conventional methods.

In conclusion, Balinese folktale literacy learning positively influenced the reading ability and social attitudes of elementary students. The second research was conducted by Upa and Mangalik (2018), which aimed to investigate the effectiveness of utilizing Sulawesi folktales in teaching reading comprehension. A quantitative method was employed, using a pre-test - treatment - post-test design. The analysis showed that the utilization of Sulawesi folktales significantly improved students' reading comprehension, as evidenced by the higher mean score in the post-test compared to the pre-test. The standard deviations were also lower in the post-test compared to the pre-test. The t-test yielded a significant result (p < 0.05), indicating the effectiveness of incorporating Sulawesi folktales in teaching reading comprehension.

Lastly, a research was conducted by Anisa (2019), which aimed to find a correlation between Extensive Reading, narrow reading, and a series book theory as a method for teaching English to Young Learners in Indonesian elementary schools. Descriptive qualitative analysis was used to examine the reading activities and data was collected through library research and relevant journals. The findings suggest that Young Learners benefit from reading various texts, including the Series of Nusantara Folklore storybooks, which provide interesting and authentic learning materials. The series of storybooks serves as a valuable resource for both extensive and narrow reading in English for Young Learners.

Based on the findings of this literature review, several connections can be provided to existing theories. For instance, the utilization of folktales as reading materials for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students has garnered
significant attention in the field of language education. Folktales, as culturally rich narratives passed down through generations, offer a range of benefits for language learners (Woolley, 2011). In this discussion, we will explore the advantages, challenges, and potential pedagogical implications of utilizing folktales as reading materials in EFL contexts. According to Laila et al. (2021), folktales provide a window into the cultural heritage, traditions, and values of a community. By reading folktales, EFL students can gain insights into different cultures and broaden their understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives.

Language Acquisition: Folktales offer a contextually rich and engaging platform for language learning. They provide exposure to authentic language use, including vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and cultural references. Through reading and analyzing folktales, EFL students can enhance their language skills, including reading comprehension, vocabulary development, and grammar.

Folktales have inherent elements of intrigue, magic, and adventure that can captivate learners' attention and increase their motivation to read. The imaginative and culturally relevant content of folktales can make the reading experience enjoyable, promoting a positive attitude toward language learning. Folktales may contain cultural nuances, values, or beliefs that could be unfamiliar or potentially sensitive to EFL students from different cultural backgrounds. Careful selection and adaptation of folktales are necessary to ensure cultural sensitivity and avoid misinterpretations or misunderstandings.

Some folktales may employ language structures, vocabulary, or syntax that could be challenging for EFL students, especially those at lower proficiency levels. Teachers should carefully scaffold the reading experience by providing appropriate support, pre-teaching vocabulary, and facilitating comprehension through activities and discussions. While folktales can be engaging, it is important to select stories that resonate with the interests and experiences of EFL students. Adapting and contextualizing folktales to suit the learners' cultural and linguistic backgrounds can enhance their relevance and promote meaningful connections.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The finding of this literature reviews indicates that the utilization of folktales into an integrated skills approach can optimize language learning need to be improved. Teachers can design activities that integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking, allowing students to practice various language skills while exploring the themes and messages embedded in the folktales. The utilization of folktales as reading materials presents an opportunity to foster multicultural education in the EFL classroom. Teachers can encourage discussions on cultural diversity, empathy, and tolerance, creating a supportive environment that celebrates different cultures and perspectives. Folktales offer a wide range of narratives, allowing teachers to differentiate instruction based on learners' interests, proficiency levels, and learning styles. Teachers can provide options for students to choose folktales that align with their preferences, enabling personalized learning experiences. Folktales can inspire collaborative projects, such as retelling stories, creating illustrations, or writing sequels. Collaborative activities encourage interaction, communication, and creativity among EFL students, fostering a sense of ownership.
From the reviewed studies, each article was written between 2017 and 2022. One article was written in 2017, two articles were written in 2018, three articles were written in 2019, one article was written in 2020, two articles were written in 2021, and one article was written in 2022. This indicates that the research in this area is still growing recently. Based on the findings discussed in this literature review, it is not feasible to make generalizations across different contexts due to the unique variations in each research setting. Furthermore, additional research is needed in diverse contexts with varying research focuses to further enhance the understanding of the topic.

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