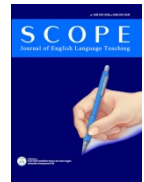




SCOPE

Journal of English Language Teaching

| p-ISSN 2541-0326 | e-ISSN 2541-0334 |
<https://journal.lppmunindra.ac.id/index.php/SCOPE/>



Research Article

Folklore as A Media to Empower Reading Literacy & The Socio-Cultural Values among EFL Students: A Need Analysis

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KEYWORDS

EFL students;
 Folklore;
 socio-cultural value;
 reading literacy.

A B S T R A C T

Indonesia is a diverse archipelago with various ethnicities, languages, and cultures. Recognizing and understanding the socio-cultural values of EFL students promotes cultural sensitivity and respect in the classroom. This is essential for creating an inclusive and harmonious learning environment. This research tends to provide the EFL students with an understanding of socio-cultural values through the use of folklore from Bangka Belitung island Province as a reference for media literacy in this modern era. The socio-cultural values contained in the stories chosen by the researchers are the main focus of this study which can be used as a reflection for the students. The socio-cultural values are found in a collection of folklore from Bangka Belitung island Province which will be used as a medium to strengthen community literacy in cultural and social aspects. A qualitative descriptive study was used in this research. This study's findings are divided into five types; the human-God relationship, values in the human-nature relationship, values in the human-human interaction, and values in the human-self relationship. Piety, religion, deliberation, justice, wisdom, harmony, mutual help, compassion, obedience, sincerity, self-esteem, and humility are values raised by the five groups of relationships.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of literacy must include the study of existence, context, cause-effect, connectedness, adjusting needs, and culture (Simanjuntak, 2021). In the current era, the cultivation of literacy with various sources is still rarely carried out by many people, especially areas that still do not understand the importance of literacy. To improve sufficient understanding in reading literacy, good and correct reading techniques are needed: reading silently and not making sounds, focusing gaze on writing and

not moving the lips or head and not reading word for word which will only increase boredom. Literacy's significance in people's lives cannot be overstated. Giving a speech orally to provide an argument, requires a solid and reliable foundation, which can be achieved by incorporating literacy into all of our activities. Literacy is viewed as more than just a communicative act; it is also part of the habits, customs, and behaviors that shape social relations (Weng, 2021).

Literacy can be defined as the practice of creating and interpreting meaning through socially, historically, and culturally located texts (Kern et al., 2012). This requires at

least a tacit understanding of the relationship between textual conventions and the context in which they are used, as well as the ability to critically reflect on those relationships. Literacy is dynamic not static and varies across and within cultural discourses and communities because it is goal sensitive. It makes use of various cognitive abilities, written and spoken language knowledge, genre knowledge, and cultural knowledge.

In this era of globalization, self-discipline towards literacy needs to be applied to increase our insight and knowledge so that we can continue to advance in the era of increasingly rampant technological onslaught. The rise of technological developments in various parts of the world has taken over our right to remain in traditional culture and has increasingly faded the pride and love of everyone to get the opportunity to get to know more about the importance of cultural and social values, especially in their own area. In this case, self-improvement of cultural and social values is needed by everyone so that they do not fall into the trap and can control themselves in the wise use of technology.

According to (Crossick & Kaszynska, 2014), cultural value is conceived on art and culture's ability to effect change which is defined as the effects that culture has on those who perceive it and the difference it tends to make to individuals and communities. While (Rahmah, 2019) said that Interpersonal values are a set of individual attitudes that are valued as truth and standard behavior in order to achieve electoral and harmonious social life. Sociocultural values are values that are highly respected by the community in order to preserve the heritage left by their forefathers. There are numerous lessons we can learn or apply once we understand sociocultural values. Simply put, this can be seen in how people speak to one another and how they respect one another in terms of culture and social life.

Literacy practices are always embedded in broader social and cultural contexts. People are engaged in their activities, and literacy practices are intentional and embedded in larger social goals and cultural practices (Barton et al., 2000). Therefore, it needs the formation of positive values such as love, pride, social, respect so that they remain true to their original selves. By linking literacy activities with reading media in the form of folklore which is one of the hereditary heritages from our ancestors that can be used as a medium to fortify ourselves to stick to traditional values without reducing modernization, we remain to follow today's life. According to (Abdulabbosovna, 2022), folklore works are deeply rooted in the people's traditions and customs. Furthermore, folklore is deeply rooted in sociocultural contexts. Folklore is defined as social behaviors, customs, traditions, and beliefs that have been passed down through generations in a specific community (Mukar et al., 2020). Increasingly, these days the notion of

literacy practices is expanded to include a variety of modes, most prominently the visual.

Legend is a type of folklore that is thought to have occurred in the past, but sometimes it is based on history and imagination. This study will use several local stories that emphasize the strengthening of social and cultural values. A variety of typical regional folklore which lives among the people conveys moral messages in a community (Kaltsum & Utami, 2015). Integrating folklore into EFL classes allows students to connect with the material on a personal and cultural level. This not only enhances their understanding of language but also instills a sense of pride and identity. Cultural context significantly influences communication styles, expressions, and social norms. Understanding sociocultural values help EFL students communicate effectively by recognizing the nuances of language use, gestures, and social cues within the Indonesian cultural context. Folklore encompasses the traditional beliefs, customs, stories, and practices of a community, and integrating it into language learning can have several benefits, especially in strengthening sociocultural values. The purpose of analyzing the folk literature is to describe the diversity of Indonesia which consists a lot of values as reflected by Indonesian characters. The characters which are described in a lot of folklore and those all represent and project connection to the diverse cultures of Indonesia (Aprilliandari, 2019).

There are many theorists refer to the multimodal form of expression (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020) as a more accurate way of describing contemporary communication. This research refers to the theory Brunvard who states that folklore can be defined as materials in culture that are circulated traditionally among members of any group in different versions, either orally through traditional examples. The study that will be carried out in this study is aimed at exploring the effectiveness of folklore which acts as an object of increasing the socio-cultural value of the local community. Therefore, a balance is needed in using these two things. Improving the quality of literacy that needs to be raised so that our cultural assets are maintained and in the midst of society remain attached to the values of love, social, pride, respect for regional works and even want to bring this asset to a level such as the widespread use of technology today. A new tradition in thinking about the nature of literacy, focusing on what it means to think of literacy as a social practice. So that it can provide material for the community to use as a groundwork for strengthening its cultural values. The value of giving is one that must be applied or handed, it will be received in equal measure (Suryadin et al., 2022).

The effectiveness test can be seen in the community's knowledge of the story and the values it contains in general. Furthermore, the general public's eagerness to

learn in order to make it easier for the author to organize data and information neatly and methodically. In this study, the researchers discussed the importance of literacy by using media in the form of folklore stories which have many advantages, especially in the approach of cultural and social values in society. Especially folklore from Bangka Belitung Province. Folklore is highly influenced by the surrounding culture and enjoy learning about culture and traditions. It is an opportunity to learn a foreign language, such as English, while at the same time developing a love for the culture (Uktolseja et al., 2021). Furthermore, viewed from various people's perspectives, their reading interest is very lacking and that is what publishes the writing of this scientific article. Folklore used as a medium to empower EFL students' literacy can be a creative and effective approach. Moreover, folklore, to a great extent, help students develop their critical reading skill, fluency, and vocabulary and comprehension ability of particular events (Mantra & Kumara, 2018). In this way, the cultural heritage that is possible in the form of written works that describe many things about people's lives can continue to be known. Hence, it can continue to be applied by EFL students in the future.

METHOD

This study utilized a qualitative research design with a descriptive method to describe social, cultural, and literary works concerns (Sulistiyorini & Andalas, 2017). The data source was obtained from an analysis of several selected folklores based on the social and cultural aspects of the story. The folklore used as material for analysis was taken from several regions in Indonesia with a focus on the Bangka Belitung region. The 5 stories used to collect socio-cultural values consist of *Asal Usul Pulau Belitong*, *Si Penyumpit*, *Bujang Katak*, *Putri Pinang Gading*, and *Asal Usul Tanjung Penyusuk*. The data sources used include a brief description of the storyline that is clear and describes the socio-cultural life related to people's lives. Data collection was carried out by carefully reading the core stories chosen by the researcher. Then the story raised by the author to be used as a reference for its value analysis is adjusted to the values mentioned by the author in the discussion section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A policy, behavior, and community dynamics are all colored by culture. Thus, it is assumed that culture has a relatively strong influence on the behavior of the community that follows it. Cultural implications can be seen in many aspects of life, including people's behavior. Then there is the social aspect, which is an abstract concept that can be felt by the community in the form of good behavior that can be accepted in the wider community and can be used as a life lesson, and bad behavior is defined as

behavior that is not commendable displayed so that the community as readers do not follow it.

As a result, in a more in-depth examination of this socio-cultural aspect, the values of manners in a story really stand out. Cultural values are broken down into five human relations classifications: (1) the values in human-God relationship, (2) the values in human-nature relationship, (3) the value in Human-society relations, (4) the values in human interactions with others, and (5) the values in human-self relationship (Djamaris et al., 1996).

1. *The Values in Human-God Relationship*

The most fundamental relationship in the nature of human existence in this world is the embodiment of the human relationship with God as the Holy One, the Almighty. Human express their love for God in various ways and forms because they want to return and unite with God. The values of piety, love of prayer, and capitulate stand out in human relationships with God.

a. *The Importance of Piety*

Humanity's duty is to believe in God. Humans, as creatures, must fully realize God's characteristics as the creator of humans. This statement implies that all humans must place their trust in God. Humans must believe that if God does not allow it, there is no effort or power that can affect or destroy.

b. *Religious Value*

Humans are God's servants and weak creatures in His presence. As a result, humans must pray to God in order to obtain something. Praying is begging and asking God for something; it is done not only in difficult situations, but also in happy situations. Human will always be close to their creator and grateful to Him if they pray. We pray because we believe that only God can provide us with what we seek, as long as the prayer is of a good nature and does not harm others. This statement implies that humans pray to express their dissatisfaction with God. So it is believed it by inquiring for something seriously and asking for something that is good and does not harm other people, God will guarantee it.

According to 2 values that develop the relationship between humans and God, it can be proven by the origin of folklore from Bangka Belitung island province from the part of the folklore:

As a result, the king was angry and begged forgiveness and asked God to destroy the place where the intimate relationship took place, so that his name would not be tarnished in the eyes of society. By God's will, then the

place was hit by heavy rains and hurricanes which caused the peninsula where his daughter lived to be separated from the island of origin, namely the island of Bali. As a result, the separate island was named Belitong.

The relationship between humans and God, specifically between a king and his creator; is central to this story. When the king faced difficulties, he always tried with God's blessing as the ultimate destination for every result he had achieved. As long as humans always pray in any situation and condition, their belief in the existence of the Almighty God will become stronger. Thus, as a value that can be apply by the EFL students to always believe in the power of prayer and help them cultivate the religious values within themselves. They also cannot underestimate the power of prayer and a strong will.

2. *The Human-Nature Relationship*

Nature represents the unity of human life wherever it exists. Human ideas and mindsets form, color, or even become the object of this environment. Humans perceive nature differently depending on their culture. There are cultures that regard nature as something to be feared, cultures that regard nature as something to be conquered, and cultures that believe humans can only strive for harmony with nature. The value of using nature stands out in the relationship between humans and nature.

The story that can be adopted to introduce the worth of nature come from a folklore entitled *Si Penyumpit*. Here is the part of the story that proven the value:

While Penyumpit was sitting in the hut watching over Pak Raje's rice fields, a wild boar appeared to enter his master's rice fields. Swiftly, Penyumpit threw the spear he was carrying towards the wild boar. Then, Penyumpit followed the trail of drops of blood into the forest. When he was getting further into the forest, Penyumpit was surprised by the change of the pig he injured into a beautiful princess. He was silent for a few moments because he could not believe what he was seeing. Penyumpit went from the presence of Putri Malam to look for kemunting leaves. Immediately, he pounded the leaves into powder and smeared it on the princess's wound.

More specifically explaining about nature, namely when the blowpipe drives away the wild boar that has damaged Pak Raje's rice plants to protect the rice plants so that the ecosystem is not damaged. In addition, the kemunting leaf plant can be used to heal the wounds of the princess of the

Night who has turned into a wild boar. In this case, the values from the folklore that the EFL students may adopt and use are preserving the trust of others, having empathy, and being responsible for the environment around them and each other as well.

3. *Human-Society Relations*

Human relations with society are values that are related to the interests of members of society as individuals. Individuals or individuals attempt to conform to societal values in order to group themselves with existing members of society who are concerned with common interests rather than self-interest. Togetherness is the most important interest in a group or society. Consideration, justice, and wisdom are cultural values that exist in human relationships with society.

a. *The Value of Thoughtful Consideration*

Consideration to reach an agreement is a habit that the community frequently employs, particularly to solve problems. Problem solving will be considered and discussed collaboratively in a joint forum. While settlements are made based on the thoughts and considerations of deliberation participants, and with deliberation, the big problems are reduced and the minor ones are eliminated. Deliberation must be fostered in the contexts of family and community life.

b. *The Value of Justice*

Justice is one of the admirable traits. A just leader is one who is well-liked by his followers. The value of justice is a value that upholds everyone's rights in a matter based on impartiality, balance, and equity. Realizing social justice for the entire community entails a united society in which every member has the same opportunity to grow, develop, and learn to live according to their abilities. All efforts are directed at the people in order to foster in an increase in people's quality, so that prosperity is achieved equally and without exception for all.

Furthermore, it can be beneficial for the EFL students to enrich their reading literacy as well as learn the social values within the folklores. It can be guidance for the EFL students to not left their root behind just because learn a foreign language. It is can be the best way to introduce folklore to the EFL students with the intention of improving their reading habit. Meanwhile, folklore is not only to entertain the EFL students, but also give them experiences the diversity of their culture from other regions and to comprehend the values as well.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of collecting five different types of folklore from Bangka Belitung, it is possible to conclude that each story

contains socio-cultural values that are used as reflection material for the community to strengthen the students sense of cultural and social love for their respective regions. The values contained are explained through five types of relationships: the values in human-God relationships, the values in human-nature relationships, the values in human interactions with others, and the values in human-self relationships. The values of piety, religiosity, deliberation, justice, wisdom, harmony, help, compassion, obedience, sincerity, self-esteem, and humility emerge from the five types of relationships. Based on the values presented in this study, the community will be greatly aided in fortifying itself against the increasingly rapid technological developments. Because of love and understanding for local culture is fading among EFL students in Indonesia, it can be necessary for them to learn foreign language without leaving their root behind. The case presented through media literacy is likely to increase the risk of losing identity and cultural history passed down from our forefathers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

If any, please write in this section. Acknowledgment is only related to the source of research funding by writing down the contract number.

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