

### **Research Article**

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# The Character Values-Based Folklores as Teaching Resources to Support English Acquisition

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#### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to identify the folklores carrying character values as teaching materials in English acquisition in Indonesia. This exploratory study was conducted in Central Java and Yogyakarta provinces, Indonesia by inviting 139 participants of Junior high school teachers, students, and experts. The data was collected through interview, documentation and observation, and analyzed descriptively using the Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña' scheme, namely data collection, data condensation, data presentation and conclusion (2014). The result obtained 208 folklores categorized as fairytale, legend, and myth. By applying the Processability Theory (Pienemann, 2005), the researchers proposed some ideas in using the folklores which carry character values for supporting the English acquisition among junior high school students in Indonesia. Through an English integrated teaching and learning process, the students not only learnt the moral values from the folklores but also studied and acquired English as their foreign language. The students, who have been familiar with folklores from their hometown, possessed confidence in understanding the main idea of the story though it was written or told in English. They mostly learnt as well as acquired phrasal and lexical morphology of English.

Keywords: character values, folklore, English acquisition

#### 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Character Education

Since 2010, the Indonesian Ministry of National Education has declared the 18 Culture and National Character Education values namely religiosity, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democratic values, curiosity, nationalism, patriotism, achievement appreciation, communicative, peace, reading fond, environmental awareness, social awareness, and responsibility (Kemdiknas, 2011). Those characters have been formulated by considering the students relationships with God, themselves, family, society and environment. Through the national curriculum 2013, the

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students have been introduced with several teaching materials adopted from those 18 values. Based on Ki Hadjar Dewantara's educational concept that national character building is affected by teaching strategies (Majelis Luhur Persatuan Tamansiswa, 2013), this means that teachers play significant roles in shaping the students' characters. Building those characters through indoctrination has not been flourish anymore due to the unfertilized of the students' creativity. Furthermore, the indoctrination opts out the humanistic-affective approach which is mostly applied in Indonesian schools (Hartono et al., 2018).

Some researcher believe that teachers should start by building the nationalism values to the students as the nationalism spirit has faded away among the young generation (Satriawan, 2012). However, others prefer to mix several values into one integrated learning materials. On this position, Rohmiati (2015) suggests that the learning materials chould include various facets of Indonesia such as its geography, nature and legacy.

#### 1.2 Character Values-Based Folklores

Folklore is a story about culture, history, or place which is originally passed down orally from one generation to the next generation existed in certain society (Smith, 2015) which most of them are not documented in the written form (Satriawan, 2012); (Danandjaja, 1995). The forms of folklore vary in fable, myth, and legend. As the story is told orally, many folklores often vanish since no more people retell the story to their children anymore. The folklore brings various values such as religiosity, patience, togetherness, bravery, ethics, compassion, determination, and beauty (Musdalifah, 2016). Junaidi (2017) identified some character values found in seven *Andai-Andai* folklores, existed in Kedurang District, Indonesia, such as religiosity, hard work, creativity, and discipline. In Kedurang, the *Andai-Andai* folklores are introduced in literature subject in elementary schools since most of the main characters in these folklores are children and animals.

In their study, Baiduri et al. (2019) found that most school students in Sumatra forget those Malay folklores through which 74 character values are introduced such as religiosity, tolerance, and social awareness. This previous research suggested to integrate the Malay folklores into school curriculum. In the classroom, the teachers may introduce the Malay folklores into drama, film or video which are depicted to interesting and fun learning model to the students.

#### 1.3 Problem of Research

Considering the characteristics of folklores which are generally in spoken forms, it is a must to document them into written forms. In Indonesia, nowadays, some book publishers have started to release folklores into pictorial books, simplified books, and comics for supporting the folklore preservation. Indeed, business perspective cannot be taken apart. Children, as the main customers, especially love pictures and images in the books. The colorful and attractive book covers, for sure, attract the children to have a look inside the book. Additionally, television in Indonesia is also taking a part in introducing Indonesian folklores through short movies and segments.

The flourish of folklores, subsequently, place them as reading materials in Bahasa Indonesia subject taught in elementary to junior high schools in Indonesia. Another consideration in bringing folklores into school reading texts is because students can learn Indonesian cultures and moral values carried. However, folklores are mostly introduced in Bahasa Indonesia subject. Again, this is because folklores are passed orally in Bahasa Indonesia and other native languages in Indonesia. Indeed folklores can be used for attracting students in learning English (Yang, 2008) without ignoring the cultural and moral values absorbed (Blyznyuk & Nafalska, 2017) into interesting ways (Haratyk & Czerwińska-Górz, 2017) Through folklores written in English, students not only learn the culture and values but also English features notably vocabulary, and syntactical structure in contexts (Warta, 2012). Moreover, teachers also have a great chance to introduce other cultures for building the students' social awareness (Kakampoura et al., 2017).

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Unfortunately, in Indonesia, not many teachers prefer folklores as a part of their English teaching materials. Most of them generally pick the texts provided on the subject text books. The reading passages in English text-books mostly displays based on the tense structures sequently started from Simple Present Tense, Past Tense, Progressive Tense and Perfective Tense with various topics which are closed to the learners' daily lives and experience.

#### 1.4 Research Focus

Choosing the appropriate reading texts or listening materials in English learning process affects greatly on the students' vocabulary inventory and syntactical patterns understanding. The students learn how language and culture relate each other dynamically (Mzimela, 2016). The students pick up and analyze words and expressions from the folklores which commonly are different from those they use daily. Besides, the students can still grasp the moral values carried for establishing their characters. Through the folklore passages, the students may also express themselves socially by understanding their cultures (Bulut & Bars, 2013), (Oguma, 2016). This means that it is very possible bringing folklores into the school system (Okediji, 2017).

The present study is designed to map the folklores existed in two provinces in Indonesia, Central Java and Yogyakarta. The results of this mapping are, then, analyzed with the respect of the English acquisition features and character building values introduced to junior high school students. The current research is basically depicted to the preliminary research of integrating folklores into English subject for supporting the English acquisition as the foreign language in Indonesia without ignoring the national character building set by the government. The further research will be also designed to create the integration of English-presented folklores into technology.

### 2. Research Methodology

The current exploratory study on folklores existed in Central Java and Yogyakarta provinces, Indonesia invited 139 participants from 6 junior high schools from both provinces equally. The participants consisted of 48 teachers, 46 students, and 45 Javanese folklores experts. The schools participated in this study were State Junior High School 5 Bantul, State Junior High School 4 Kulon Progo, State Junior High School 5 Gunung Kidul, State Junior High School 1 Ngluwar Magelang, State Junior High School 1 Jogonalan Klaten, and State Junior High School 5 Kebumen.

The data was collected through observation, documents, and interview. The researcher did observation as well as documents on the use of folklores in teaching and learning process in the selected schools before doing the interview with all participants. The documents required in the present study were textbooks, worksheets, library references. The obtained data was analyzed descriptively by following the (Miles et al., 1994) and (Tavakoli & Esmae'li, 2013) steps; data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion.

For gaining the national character values found in folklores in Central Java and Yogyakarta, Indonesia, the research designed a rubric as follows:

Character Values	Indicators
1. Religiosity	Perform worship
	Stick to religious teachings
	Follow the religious teachings
	Be grateful for God's gift
2. Tolerance	Respect others
	Do not obtrude
	Be open-minded
	be patient
	be helpful and generous
	Never compare one to another
	-

Table 1. The Rubric of Folklore Character Values

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Indicators
Create a calm, safe, and peaceful atmosphere
Dispel a commotion
Avoid violence
Show a harmony Maintain paggeful atmosphere
Maintain peaceful atmosphere Do not differentiate among religion, ethnicity, and race.
Take benefits of environment without causing damage
Reuse and recycle
Maintain the nature
Preserve environmental cleanliness.
Keep and preserve culture, customs and traditions.
Respect for culture and country.
Uphold the culture and country.
Place the public interest above
Defend the nation
Loyal to the country
Sacrifice for the country
Follow and obey the rules
Give sanctions for the offenders
Carry out duties and obligations consistently
Express sincere feeling
Say frankly
Do not cover up lies.
Provide trusted evidence
Be brave as a right attitude
Do the duties and obligations. seriously
Keep fairness
Keep promises
Keep your promises that have been set. Do apology
Be able to take right choices
Respect others works
Appreciate others achievement
Do not underestimate others.
Work hard to reach the goal
Struggle and pray for achieving the target
Create useful things
Never give up.
Believe in efforts planned
Be curious
Never give up in searching the answers
Be open-minded in learning
Develop useful things
Think critically
Do innovation
Be confident
Love reading
Be interested in books
Love searching detail information and writing
Have curiosity and think critically
Be broad-minded
Use the language properly and correctly.
Show polite attitude.
Be adaptable
Never underestimate others.
Do not depend on others
be responsible
believe in self capabilities solve problem independently
Show strong character
Never give up
riever give up

Character Values	Indicators
17. Democratic Values	Be open-minded
	Be fair and wise
	Never cheat.
	Discuss all problems
	Respect the decisions
18. Social Awareness	Have gentle attitude and solidarity
	Be sympathy and empathy
	Be sincere and helpful
	Be socially sensitive
	Be generous
	work together
	Have affection, attention, humility, and loyalty to others.

The experts have validated the above rubric by considering the 18 character values formulated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture.

#### 3. Research Results

The data showed that Central Java and Yogyakarta provinces in Indonesia had 208 folklores spread in 6 regencies. The insight data can be seen clearly on the table below.

Degenery	Ту			
Regency	Fairytale	Legend	Myth	Total
Bantul	6	24	4	34
Kulon Progo	5	27	4	36
Gunungkidul	6	30	3	39
Magelang	3	30	1	34
Klaten	2	29	2	33
Kebumen	4	27	1	32
Total	26	167	15	208

**Table 2.** Type of Folklore Found in Central Java and Yogyakarta Provinces

Among the 6 regencies involved in the current study, the highest and the lowest number of folklores were existed in Gunung Kidul and Kebumen with 32 and 39 folklores respectively. Whereas, the four other regencies supported between 33 and 36 folklores. The 208 total amount of folklores found were classified into three with legend (167) was the highest followed by fairytale (26) and myth (15).

Table 3. Character Values in Folklore Base on Regencies at Central Java and Yogyakarta Province

		The Number of Folklore						
	Character Values	Bantul	Kulon Progo	Gunung Kidul	Magelang	Klaten	Kebumen	
1.	Religiosity	7	9	8	5	14	4	47
2.	Nationalism	7	6	9	8	2	9	41
3.	Environmental awareness	4	11	5	3	10	7	40
4.	Patriotism	7	12	5	2	7	6	39
5.	Responsibility	12	2	4	2	5	7	32
6.	Social Awareness	7	3	4	3	8	6	31
7.	Achievement Appreciation	9	7	3	4	1	4	28
8.	Hard work	3	5	1	1	3	6	19
9.	Communicative	1	4	2	2	5	1	15
10	Honesty	5	2	1	-	1	5	14
11.	Tolerance	3	2	-	-	2	6	13

		The Number of Folklore						
	Character Values	Bantul	Kulon Progo	Gunung Kidul	Magelang	Klaten	Kebumen	
12	Discipline	4	1	1	1	4	2	13
13	Creativity	8	-	2	-	1	2	13
14	Curiosity	2	2	2	2	1	3	12
15	Democratic Values	-	3	1	2	-	6	12
16	Independence	1	3	3	1	2	1	11
17	Peace	-	4	2	-	3	-	9
18	Reading Fond	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
	Total	81	76	53	36	69	75	390

The data above shows that folklore which carries religiosity places the highest number with 47 folklores spread in 6 regencies, i.e. Bantul (7), Kulon Progo (9), Gunung Kidul (8), Magelang (5), Klaten (14), and Kebumen (4). The very interesting one is that reading value is only showed by one folklore from Bantul entitled *Ki Ageng Suryomentaram*, the 55<sup>th</sup> prince of Sultan Hamengku Buwana VII, the King of Yogyakarta. Based on this folklore, the prince Ki Ageng Suryomentaram had a high interest in books. He loved reading history, philosophy, psychology, and religious books. He also took English, Dutch and Arabic languages courses.

### 4. Discussion

The integration of local folklore in English subject taught in junior high school might be valuable in building the 18 students' characters as proposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture as well as the students' English acquisition.

A folklore entitled *King Agung from Mataram Kingdom* from Bantul regency, for example, told about the king habit in doing Friday Prayer in Mekkah, the Holy City of Moslems in Arab. This is illogic, however, this actually carries a moral message that Islamic followers must do a worship Jummah Prayer on Fridays as a part of their obedience on the Islamic teachings. In other words, *King Agung from Mataram Kingdom* folklore bring the religious character building. Another example is *Umbul Sigedang* folklore from Klaten. *Umbul* means a water spring. When the Dutch Army occupied Indonesia, they built irrigation channels from the spring to the Dutch sugar cane factory in Ceper, Klaten. The construction of the irrigation channel was very environmental friendly without cutting many trees. Along the channel, farmers also got the benefit from the channel for the field irrigation. Thus, the water spring *Umbul Sigedang* was used not only for business but also for society without destroying the nature. From the two examples above, either teachers or students can analyze and adopt the folklores moral values into lives. Besides, folklores in English can also be used to promote the English acquisition.

Linguistically, *Past Tense* forms are used frequently in folklore as it talks about something in the past. In Indonesia, generally, *Past Tense* materials in English subject are closed to the students' past lives such as their lives when they are children, their past holiday, their past sweet memory and many more. Some are taken from a short story or English simplified story such as *Snow White*, and *Bears and Dragon*.

Unfortunately, many Indonesian learners face difficulties in understanding the *Past Tense* grammatical structures. Even, students majoring English often face difficulties in acquiring this past patterns. English. Widyastuti (2015) found that among 27 university students majoring English in Yogyakarta, there were only two students who passed Stage 2 of Processability Theory English acquisition development. The interesting finding of the study was that most participants were very difficult in arranging Past-*ed* structure required on Stage 2, the phrasal morphological development of the Processability Theory. Based on the Processability Theory, the language learners follow lexical, phrasal, and inter phrasal developmental stages morphologically which cannot be jumped each other

(Pienemann, 2005). This means that learners cannot acquire the higher stages before passing the lower stages. Another research on the similar finding was done in 2010 among three Indonesian family members who had been living in Australia for one year. The father was a master student who had been learning English formally for around 10 years and 3 month English intensive course before departing to Australia. The mother was a housewife who had learnt English for 10 years formally at schools. The daughter took an English course in Indonesia before going to Australia. The study found that even though both father and mother received their formal English learning, they hardly produced Past -ed patterns in their conversation (Zhang & Widyastuti, 2010).

By considering the both previous research on the English acquisition, the structure of *Past –ed* seems very difficult to be acquired among Indonesian learners. One of the reasons is because the structure of expressing the past events in Bahasa Indonesia and English are different. In Bahasa Indonesia, past events are marked by time markers such as *sekarang* (now), *kemarin* (yesterday), *besok* (tomorrow) without changing the main verb, while in English the verb form is altered based on the tense or time (Widyastuti, 2015). Therefore, for helping learners in acquiring the *Past Tense*, the English teaching and learning materials must be closer to the students' backgrounds socially and integrated in English macro skills practices.

As the learners have already been familiar with the folklores around their regencies, bringing folklores into English learning materials help students in gaining their confidence in understanding the story. By applying a Task-based Learning (Willis, 1996), for instance, the students on the Pre-Task stage share their own background knowledge on *Gua Nagabumi* folklore from Bantul Regency. It carries a discipline character portrayed on the main character named King Panembahan Senopati from Mataram Kingdom who was just and wise. The Pre-Task stage is then followed by the Report and Reading Task, that is reading the *Gua Nagabumi* folklore. During the reading, the students work in pair for searching, listing and analyzing the education characters found in the selected folklore. Finally, the last stage, Language Stage, the teacher points the grammatical patterns the students found from the read folklore.

In facts, the students recognize the past forms not only from the reading form, but also from other macro skills namely speaking, listening and writing. The integrated and frequent used of past pattern in those English macro skills, for sure, make the students be familiar with. Reading and listening tasks are used for gaining input on the past forms. Meanwhile, speaking and writing are for the past form production practices. This is understandable as the students must have various practices which make them to use the language naturally. A Strategy Inventory for Language Learning Strategy (SILL) Version 7.0 (Oxford, 1990) study on 26 new university in Indonesia students found that most participants preferred to use cognitive English learning strategy rather than other strategies (Widyastuti & Gemilang, 2019). The cognitive strategy comprises of four sub strategies namely practicing, receiving and sending messages, analyzing and reasoning, and creating structure for input and output. The practicing sub strategy became the most popular among the 81% participants who chose cognitive strategy. This means that the typical of the learners was still beginners. They did repetition, practiced the linguistic systems, recognized and used the grammatical patterns and formulas.

Besides supporting the phrasal morphological acquisition, folklores also prospect in supporting the lexical acquisition. This refers to the learner vocabulary inventory. By listening to a recorded folklore, for example, the students have to take notes some new and difficult words and phrases which are discussed together with the teacher later on. The language production practices such as in speaking and writing help the students to restore and recall the new vocabulary they gain from listening exercises. In this case, again, the integrated model is required to make the students be familiar with the vocabulary.

Therefore, both phrasal and lexical morphological development acquisition discussed above basically can be fulfilled by integrating the folklores into the English teaching and learning formally in the classroom. Those should be presented spirally so that the students can grasp and produce the language actively in speaking and writing. Empirically, second or foreign language learners reach the

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acquisition gradually if they are familiar with the patterns through various tasks and forms cyclically in the syllabus (Skehan, 1996; Veselinovska et al., 2011). Similarly, Ostovar-Namaghi & Gholami (2018) found that the learning materials compiled spirally affected on the students in understanding the materials cognitively and built positive impacts psychologically such as reducing anxiety and increasing the motivation.

#### 5. Conclusions and Perspectives of Further Research

English as a foreign language in Indonesia still becomes a never ending interesting phenomenon to be discussed. On one hand, the government wish to increase the nationalism as well as other character values among young learners by introducing more folklores in Bahasa Indonesia subject. It might be true that learners successfully identify and adopt the character values set by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, however, it would be more interesting if the folklores also exist in English subject. There are at least three benefits can be gained. The learners can gain their confidence in reading the folklores as they have ever heard the selected folklores. The learners are still able to learn the character values seen on the folklores. Last, they can learn and acquire English as their foreign language morphologically. As a very limited research on the English acquisition among Indonesian learners using Processability Theory, further research on this field is still required. Another prospective further research is creating interesting or interactive media using technology for preserving the local folklores. The media can be the teaching and learning media attached on the English subject formally at schools.

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