

THE UTILIZATION OF LOCAL FOLKLORE AS TEACHING MATERIAL: STUDENTS' VIEWPOINT AND CHARACTER EDUCATION

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Abstract: This research aims to explore students' perceptions of the utilization of local folklore as the English teaching material and investigate the character education in it. The local folklore used in this study is *Ne' Balungkur*, the Dayak Kanayat'n Myth. The character education was analyzed based on character education available in the Curriculum Center of the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of National Education. The researchers employed a qualitative descriptive method to describe students' views on the local folklore of *Ne' Balungkur* & analyze the character education. The findings revealed that the students are interested and motivated when they learned narrative text using *Ne' Balungkur* folklore. They also found that the folklore allowed them to gain new information and English vocabulary. *Ne' Balungkur* folklore incorporate educational characters included in the types of educational characters such as religious, discipline, hardworking, creative, independent, curiosity, friendly, social care, and responsibility. Future study might explore more about local folklore as teaching media with different perspective.

Keywords: local folklore, teaching material, students' viewpoint, character education

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is well-known for its diversity of cultures and ethnicities. A lot of myths, legends, and folklores develop in local communities and have been passed among generations as a result of this riches. This statement is also supported by Bunga et al. (2020) that folklore depicts current facts and objects by describing features of composition and structure, or aspects of processes and changes, so that they become national traits of a diversified culture rich in cultural and historical treasures. These stories have depth in principles of morality, values, spirituality, and local wisdom. This statement is also supported by previous research conducted by Barli et al. (2022) that folklore includes cultural wisdom, traditional intelligence, morality, and societal principles. Given the fact, students can learn a lot of things through folklore that is history, experience, view towards life, customs, ideas, and several other activities that surround the life of the story by studying folklore (Eamoraphan S, 2020; Nopasari et al., 2023).

Dayak culture is one of the remaining cultures which keep the tradition of oral literature in the present. Oral literature is a valuable cultural resource (Djamudi et al., 2020; Agung et al., 2024). The Dayak Kanayat'ness tribe have an oral culture in the form of telling a story, which aims to entertain, encourages virtuous principles, and provide local insights for storylisteners (Seli et al., 2020). One of the oral literatures commonly told is Dayak Kanayat'n folklore. The folklore evolved from ancestral heritage terms that contain many thoughts and are full of beneficial meanings. *Ne' Balungkur* folklore is a myth among the Dayak Kanayat'n people. *Ne' Balungkur's* is one of local folklore from Dayak Kanayat'n tribe. The figure represents an industrious farmer.

His tough personality and positive character makes *Ne' Balungkur* a figure that inspires many Dayak Kanayatn's people until this day.

Regarding its moral value richness, folklore is included in a teaching material especially English classroom. Several scholars believe that English language teachers are able to incorporate cultural knowledge, moral values, and certain linguistic features into the classroom through the utilization of Indonesian folktales in English as learning material. Besides, using folktales in language classes will encourage students in the teaching and learning process (Mishra & Satpathy, 2020). Additionally, the national effort known as character education encourages students to strengthen their morals and attitudes. The value of education in literary works is everything that can be resembled and have benefited from literary works for the reader's advantage so that it may be implemented in their personal lives. According to Sanjaya et al. (2021) religious, nationalism, integrity, independence, and cooperation are the five fundamental traits of personality that character education strengthening movements prioritize. Character education involves two significant objectives, including virtue and goodness. Democracy is built on the foundation of righteous education. Respect and responsibility are thus two fundamental principles that must be established in character education. In accordance with Lickona as cited in (C. M. Reigeluth (Ed.), 2005), several values must be encouraged in character education. These are what they are called: honesty, justice, tolerance, prudence, self-control, helpfulness, compassion, cooperation, bravery, and democratic values. There are moral principles that students may acquire and replicate in their everyday lives through folktales that are communicated in an engaging and easy-to-understand kind of way.

Senior high school students are expected to understand narrative text through fairy tales, legend, fable, and folklore. However, based on the pre-research observation conducted in one of senior high schools in Ngabang Landak Region West Kalimantan, the researchers found that local folklore gets insufficient portion in the narrative materials. The modelling texts in narrative genre are mostly western fairy tales (Cinderella, Snow White, etc.), fables-both from Indonesia and Western (three little pigs, mouse deer, etc.), and folklore (Malin Kundang, etc.). In fact, the majority of the people in Landak Region is Dayaknese. As previously stated, Dayak Kanayatn tribes has many local folklores. The students should be encouraged to read more local folklores. This is due to preserving local wisdom in their area.

Studies on incorporating local folklore in English materials had revealed that local folklore enhance students' reading interest and motivation (Dikul & Kiting, 2019; Istiq'faroh et al., 2020; Rukmana, 2014). From the teachers' perspective, local folklore is applicable used as narrative modelling as it has close relation with the students' daily context (Eamoraphan S, 2020). Moreover, it can also teach them moral value from the perspective of local wisdom (Tineh et al.,

2023). Although several scholars had conducted studies on local folklore in English materials, however, the students' perception on the incorporation of local folklore in their materials is limited. Revealing students' perception on teaching and learning process is essential since it can evaluate the process. Therefore, the researchers intended to explore the students' view on the use of local folklore in narrative texts genre.

Besides, the studies on local folklore are less focus on scrutinizing character education. Indonesian education prioritizes character education in order to tackle the impact of social changes on behavior among individuals. Many Indonesian adolescents struggle with undesirable behaviors and attitudes. Thus, as an indication of substantial attention for these kinds of problems, the Indonesian government encourages character education (Government Regulation No. 87 in 2017). Recently, research on character education have relied on culture and local wisdom as teaching and learning instruments (Komalasari & Saripudin, 2018; Anggraini et al., 2022; Hidayati et al., 2020; Eko et al., 2020; Effendi et al., 2020; Murwaningsih et al., 2020; Qutni et al., 2022). A few researchers approach character education through the viewpoint of constitution, the principles of culture, personality authority, and the interactions between culture and humans. In this case, Andriani & Aulia (2023) stated that character education may be influenced by local culture and wisdom. Folklore is part of the local wisdom. Folklore offers various benefits in the field of education, including the cultivation of moral ideals to enhance student character (Cremin et al., 2018).

Given the fact, it is necessary to carried out a study of students' view on promoting local folklore in English materials. Moreover, the local folklore from Dayak Kanayat'n is underexplored. Gaining the students' view on *Ne' Balungkur* folklore can contribute a recommendation to the English teachers in Indonesia to consider *Ne' Balungkur* folklore into the materials in EFL classroom. Additionally, to give a strong validation to the appropriateness of *Ne' Balungkur* as the learning materials, it is urgent to investigate the character education containing in the folklore. Therefore, the present study attempts to describe the students' view on *Ne' Balungkur* folklore that had been promoted in their English class and reveals the character education might contain in it.

METHOD

The present study employed qualitative study to depict students' view on *Ne' Balungkur* folklore and analyze the character education on it. According to Effendi et al. (2020) a qualitative study is the post-positivism paradigm for investigating natural phenomena or objects. In the same way that, in qualitative research, the current researcher built the investigation around the subject's point of view. The 36 students of class 10 MIPA B at SMAN 1 Ngabang Kabupaten Landak West Kalimantan were involved as the participants of the study. They were taught narrative text using

Ne' Balungkur folklore for three meetings. After completing the meetings, the students were asked to give their view on the material. Thus, the data were collected using questionnaire and interview to explore the students' view. Additionally, the researchers also use document analysis to investigate the character education in *Ne' Balungkur* folklore. The character education criteria were derived from the Curriculum Center of the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of National Education such as Religious, Discipline, Hardworking, Creative, Independent, Curiosity, Friendly/Communicative, Social Care, and Responsibility. The data was analyzed using interactive model namely data collection, data condensation, data display, dan draw conclusion (Miles et al., 2014).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

The researcher conducted learning activities using local folklore *Ne' Balungkur* for 3 meetings. The significant findings regarding students' perceptions of learning with *Ne' Balungkur* local folklore were obtained after disseminating questionnaires and conducting interviews with respondents as shown below.

**1. Students' view on *Ne' Balungkur* Folklore
 Students' interest on Indonesian folklore**

Based on the results of the questionnaire, almost all of the students are interested in Indonesian Folklore, as shown in figure 1 below.



Figure 1. Students' Perceptions about their interest in Folklore from Indonesia.

The majority of students prefer the stories from Indonesia instead of foreign folktales. Based on the interview the students shown their interest.

Excerpt 1.

Student A : "I like stories from within my own country, particularly those which comprises Indonesian culture and local wisdom, in order to gain a greater awareness my country's heritage"

Excerpt 2.

Student B : "The Indonesian folklore is also interesting when it is compared to stories from foreign countries"

The students thought that they want to acquire knowledge about their own culture and Indonesian folklore is unique in regard to folklore from other countries.

Students' interest on local folklore *Ne' Balungkur*

Several students said that they like *Ne' Balungkur* folklore. The result of students' interest shown in figure 2 below.



Figure 2. Students' Perceptions about their interest in Local Folklore.

Figure 2 shows were highly motivated and interested when they learned narrative text using *Ne' Balungkur* Folklore. They said:

Excerpt 3.

Student C : "I like *Ne' Balungkur* folklore as a way to learn more about local culture, even if it is in the form of myths, and I also like to hear stories from the past."

Excerpt 4.

Student D : “Local folklore is one of the cultures that exist in particular regions, I believe that the story is extremely interesting and may contribute to my knowledge. We can develop our own local folklore and retell it to others so that folklore continues to be preserved.”

Excerpt 5.

Student E : “I think knowing and learning the folklore of *Ne’ Balungkur* makes me more familiar with ancient Dayak Kanayatn beliefs.”

Based on the views of the participants, they are interested in knowing local culture and they realized that culture in each region has its own uniqueness thus making it interesting to learn. Besides, local folklore increases students’ curiosity, motivation, and reading interest.

Students’ view on moral value on *Ne’ Balungkur* Folklore

There are also some students' impressions regarding their experience in learning local folklore of *Ne’ Balungkur*. Figure 3 illustrate the students’ view on the moral value on *Ne’ Balungkur* folklore.

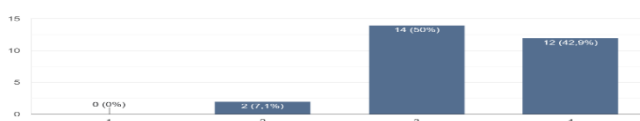


Figure 3. Students’ Perceptions on Moral Value in *Ne’ Balungkur* Folklore

The majority of the students thought that *Ne’ Balungkur* is full of moral value. Based on the interview, they can easily identify the moral values on it.

Excerpt 6.

Student F : “*Ne’ Balungkur*’s story has numerous moral principles that are both instructional and motivating, one of which is *Ne’ Balungkur*’s tenacity in achieving things, particularly farming. He is an attentive worker and a person of great faith”.

Some students also said that *Ne’ Balungkur* is an attentive worker and faithful person. The finding corresponds to Djamudi et al., (2020) stated that folklore can provide valuable moral precepts to deal with the situation.

Students’ view on the benefits of learning narrative text through *Ne’ Balungkur* Folklore

The open-ended questionnaire enabled the students to explore more about the benefits they got after learning narrative text using *Ne’ Balungkur* folklore. Excerpt 7-10 reveals the students’ view on this topic.

Excerpt 7.

Student G : “*Ne’ Balungkur* local folklore gave me new information about the local culture of the Dayak Kanayatn people’s farming tradition in ancient time”

Excerpt 8

Student H : “The new information that I got about local culture, especially the Dayak Kanayatn people, namely the process of cultivating land and planting seeds, to harvesting.”

Excerpt 9.

Student I : “Reading *Ne’ Balungkur*’s story can improve vocabulary because the story contains some vocabulary that is still unfamiliar for me. So, when I read and remember them my English language skills improve”

Excerpt 10.

Student J : “I am sure that reading *Ne’ Balungkur* folklore can add new English vocabulary that I just know. Through reading many books and folktales, of course we will get new vocabulary”.

Based on the above findings, it reveals that *Ne’ Balungkur* folklore is beneficial for the students in terms of giving new information about traditional farming and enhance the students’ vocabulary. This is in line with previous research conducted by Ida Bagus Nyoman & Dewa Gede Agung Gana,(2018) which states folklore and literature can enhance language learning by motivate students, promoting cultural awareness, and proficiency. Moreover, previous research

conducted by Amin & Hidayat,(2023) also stated that learning folklore can increase new English vocabulary.

2. Character Education in *Ne' Balungkur* Folklore

Ne' Balungkur folklore is derived from the Dayak Kanayatn tribe. *Ne' Balungkur* is a mythological person of the Dayak Kanayatn people, descended from the divinity of heaven. *Ne' Balungkur* lived and was regarded as an industrious farmer. Although mankind had not yet embraced religion and continued to practice rituals and beliefs, *Ne' Balungkur* thought that the Creator, or God Almighty, preserved and sustained life and the universe as a whole. *Ne' Balungkur* made a decision to meet *Jubata*/God and seek provide guidance on how to cultivate lots of crops so that he could have a huge thanksgiving feast for his family and the whole community. Unexpectedly, the figure of *Jubata* sought by *Ne' Balungkur* manifested as a decrepit old man dressed in a long white robe and white beards. When *Ne' Balungkur* met him, he explained why he wanted to meet *Jubata* and received guidance from the old man. At the end of the story, *Ne' Balungkur* noticed that he meets *Jubata* through a late-night dream. In this section, the researchers describe the result of analysis on character education containing in *Ne' Balungkur* folklore based on character education in the Curriculum Centre of the Research and Development Agency of the Ministry of National Education. There are 18 educational values, such as Religious, Honesty, Tolerance, Discipline, Hard work, Creative, Independent, Democratic, Curiosity, Nationality Spirit, Patriotism, Appreciate Achievement, Friendly/Communicative, Love Peace, Reader, Environmental Care, and, Social Care and Responsibility. Based on the analysis, *Ne' Balungkur* folklore contains nine characters education namely Religious, Discipline, Hardworking, Creative, Independent, Curiosity, Friendly/Communicative, Social Care, and Responsibility.

a. Religious

One of the character education values is Religious. Religious is attitudes and behaviors that are obedient in carrying out the teachings of the religion they profess that he/she adheres to (Kemendiknas, 2011). The following is a part of the *Ne' Balungkur* Myth folklore that shows that *Ne' Balungkur* was a religious person.

“Along with the path of life, farming and continuously farming, *Ne' Balungkur* changed his mind when he started farming again. He really hoped to meet *Jubata* (the Creator of heaven and earth). He longed and imagined what *Jubata's* face looked like in his mind, whether like a beautiful angel or the Almighty God from heaven. He could not imagine *Jubata's* face in real life. *Ne' Balungkur* did not want to stay in his delusion to look for *Jubata*”.

The religious character is shown in *Ne' Balungkur's* desire to meet *Jubata*/Almighty God the Creator. *Ne' Balungkur* believes that when he meets *Jubata*, he wants to express his wish to get abundant crops (Barli et al., 2022). However, *Ne' Balungkur* does not know what God looks like, but he still believes that the creator of heaven and earth exists. Thus *Ne' Balungkur* set out to find God by wandering from a hill to another.

Ne' Balungkur sought advice from an old man, who advised him on how to farm to get abundant yields. In his dream after the harvest thanksgiving feast, *Ne' Balungkur* believed that the old man was the *Jubata* he had been looking for.

b. Discipline

The next educational character found in *Ne' Balungkur* is Discipline. Discipline is an action that shows orderly and obedient behavior to various rules and regulations (Kemendiknas, 2011).

The following is a part of the *Ne' Balungkur* Myth story that shows that *Ne' Balungkur* was a disciplinarian.

“When the farming season arrived, *Ne' Balungkur* prepared to open his fields in the hilly area. Before clearing the land, he determines the land that is considered suitable to be used as a field. After choosing one of the lands or one of the new places, *Ne' Balungkur* looks at the stars at night, as a benchmark for the right time for *Ngawah* activities or marking the place to be used as a field. The stars in the sky at night become the benchmark and measure for the time of *Ngawah* (the custom of cutting down a few logs to mark the land for the field). When the right star is chosen to open the field, finally the *Ne' Balungkur* family and the whole community go to the place where the land will become a field. The next morning, they leave with equipment such as; pickaxe, machete, sharpening stone, katoro, tarinak. And they cut down, weeded the wood in the location of the field until it was finished according to the area of the field that the family wanted. *Ne' Balungkur* thinks that the felled wood should be dried for a period of time ranging from one month to two months, until the wood is dry and suitable for burning in time. After the field has been burned, the charcoal and dust must be deposited for about 7 days. Then on the 8th to 10th day, it is time for the *Ne' Balungkur* family and the whole community to go down to the fields to dig the land. They plant their fields with rice, corn, and vegetables, such as cucumber, *paranggi*, spinach/*arupm/jagor*, *ansabi*, *gamakng* (winter gourd), *bijan*, *anyali/jawa'*, and turmeric”.

Ne' Balungkur, a disciplined individual in the Dayak Kanayat'n community, follows all rules and manages the farm effectively, using all available time and tools. He and his family, along with the farmer group community, ensure a well-planned and organized farming experience.

c. Hardworking

The next educational character possessed by *Ne' Balungkur* is Hardworking. Hardworking is a behavior that shows earnest efforts in overcoming various obstacles, and completing something as well as possible (Kemendiknas, 2011). The following is a part of the *Ne' Balungkur* that shows that *Ne' Balungkur* was a hardworker.

“*Ne' Balungkur* and his family, along with the *Ale'atn* (farmer group), meticulously control seeds in the *tugalan* (hole) to prevent insects from damaging them. They also clean and remove grass between plants to prevent interference with the seedlings' growth”.

Ne' Balungkur is a trully hardworker. After planting seeds in the field, he does not leave the plants alone. *Ne' Balungkur* and his family regularly control the condition of the growth and development of the crop seedlings in their fields. Routines are carried out such as cleaning the growing weeds. *Ne' Balungkur* conducts stricter protection of the plants in his field to avoid harmful pests.

d. Curiosity

The fourth educational character possessed by *Ne' Balungkur* is Curiosity. Curiosity is a mindset and action that aspires to know more thoroughly and broadly about what one learns, observes, and hears (Kemendiknas, 2011). The following is a part of the *Ne' Balungkur* Myth story that shows that *Ne' Balungkur* was have a high sense of curiosity.

“After the Ngabati ceremony, *Ne' Balungkur* thinks and imagines about how to get a better harvest from the fields in the coming year. He thinks he will increase the harvest beyond this year's harvest. While sitting 'marundo'/reflecting in front of the door of a simple wooden house with a sago leaf roof, his mind wandered far into the future. Not just fantasizing, but the reality he wants, so that the results he obtained exceed the previous harvest”.

After the harvesting of the crops and the post-harvest traditional procession *Ne' Balungkur* thinks about the strategy he should take to get a better harvest from his fields in the upcoming year. He thinks of increasing the yield beyond this year's harvest. This shows that *Ne' Balungkur* is a long-term thinker and has a high curiosity.

e. Friendly/Communicative

One of the educational characters possessed by *Ne' Balungkur* is Friendly/Communicative. Friendly/Communicative is an action that shows a pleasure in talking, getting along and working cooperate with others (Kemendiknas, 2011).

“His steps stopped, when he saw a shadow, an old man limping in front of him. White hair, hunchbacked body and quite skinny. *Ne' Balungkur* greeted in a rather loud voice, *Do...Ne', Sae kita!*“(Grandfather, who are you?). At once the old man looked back, near the *dangau* (hut). The old man immediately stopped by the hut and sat on its porch. *Ne Balungkur* also walked over to the grandfather in the same hut. *Ne' Balungkur's* first words to Grandfather were, "Where are you going?", Grandfather replied with a friendly smile, "I'm not going anywhere. Just here". In turn, the grandfather asked, "Where are you going, are you the owner of this hut and field, it is already dusk, do you spend the night here?" *Ne Balungkur* replied, "I don't spend the night here. These huts and fields do not belong to me. I want to meet Jubata, with the purpose that Jubata give a way so that the results of my fields are plentiful”

Ne' Balungkur, a friendly and communicative individual, encountered an unfamiliar old man while wandering on a hill. They engaged in an interactive conversation, discussing *Ne' Balungkur's* purpose of meeting God and his wishes. The old man provided valuable advice on achieving abundant crops, showcasing *Ne' Balungkur's* strong communication skills.

f. Social Care

The next educational character in the person of *Ne' Balungkur* is Social Care. Social Care is behaviors and mindsets fueled by a desire to help others and communities in need (Kemendiknas, 2011).

“Finally, a thanksgiving feast was held that morning. Almost everyone came, young and old, children, men and women. They attended and enjoyed the thanksgiving feast for the bountiful harvest of *Ne' Balungkur's* family. During the thanksgiving feast, *Ne' Balungkur* was surprised to see the presence of the grandfather he had met in the past days and also in dreams. When the villagers went home, one by one of them were given food as souvenirs to take home with them. Not to be overlooked are gifts for the grandfather who has given advice, especially in terms of farming”.

When it comes to celebrating the harvest thanksgiving feast, *Ne' Balungkur* does not pick who to invite, but rather invites everyone in his home village. Although he reaped more than the other villagers, this did not make him arrogant; instead, he was incredibly being generous. As a result, it may be concluded that he has an educational character, namely social care.

g. Responsibility

The last educational character possessed by *Ne' Balungkur* is Responsibility. Responsibility is a person's frame of mind and actions in carrying out his duties and commitments to himself, society, the environment (natural, social, and cultural), the state, and God Almighty.

Ne' Balungkur does not want to go without important food, particularly rice. For him, more is better than fewer, especially because his children have grown up with 12 of them, which is a strain on the cost of life, particularly for food.

Ne' Balungkur is the responsible head of the household. In addition to trying to make the fields produce good results, *Ne' Balungkur* must also support and provide for his family of 12 children. Even so, he never complains about what happens. He takes everything patiently. This shows that *Ne' Balungkur* is a responsible person.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study show that local folklore is appropriate to be used as English materials for narrative text. The students were interested and motivated learning narrative text using local folklore, *Ne' Balungkur*. Moreover, the folklore empowers some applicable character education for the students. The study contributes to the broader understanding of the role of folklore in education and character development, providing valuable insights for English language teachers in Indonesia and beyond. However, the present study does not accommodate the diversity of local folklores in broader cultural society. Future studies need to explore the possibility of using local folklore to teach characters education through advanced media and technology.

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