Increasing Reading Comprehension through the Use of Kaili Folktales

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Abstract

The research employed Kaili folktales to increase reading comprehension of the ninth grade students at Junior High School 20 Palu. The primary research question is whether incorporating Kaili folktales through this environment my increase students' reading comprehension. The research used a pre-experimental design in a quantitative approach that included a pre-test, treatment, and post-test. The research population was the 87 ninth grade students of Junior High School 20 Palu, with 29 students as sample from class IX B selected through purposive sampling. The research instrument was a reading comprehension test that was given as a pre-test and post-test. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 22. The results showed that using Kaili folktales increased students' reading comprehension significantly, as evidenced by a higher mean score in the post-test compared to the pre-test (62.028>34.221). The p-value determined of 0.00, which is lower than the alpha value of 0.05, supported the conclusion that applying of Kaili folktales increased students' reading comprehension statistical significantly. As a result, the researcher concluded that Kaili folktales might effectively increase students' reading comprehension of the ninth grade at Junior High School 20 Palu.

Keywords: *Reading Comprehension, Kaili Folktales, Pre-Experimental*

Introduction

Reading and comprehension are inseparable from one another, particularly according to Elleman and Oslund (2019), comprehension is one of the most complex human behaviours. In a general way, these behaviours include the act of understanding or grasping the meaning of something. Comprehension is the ability to derive meaning from information, ideas, or concepts, which is often frequently happens through mental processing, interpretation, and combining of various information components. Brown (2004) identified three essential reading comprehension strategies. Implementing these strategies can help students analyze, internalize, and derive meaning from the text, allowing them to gain comprehension from their reading. However, even with the use of these strategies, students may still struggle to fully comprehend the text's content.

In addition, the researcher observed the learning process of the ninth grade students at Junior High School 20 Palu in order to assess their English competence, particularly in reading comprehension. The information as indicated that the students' reading skills proved still lacking. There was an important to note disinterest to engage with English text, which derived from the idea that such materials were difficult. Furthermore, students' motivate to improve their English reading abilities was inhibited by a lack of

interest in the subject matter. Existing educational material included narrative text that contained folktale, which was a reading material class. This folktale, however, was not obtained locally and was very generic. The lack of flexibility made the book less interesting to students who have grown up reading similar stories. Moreover, some text included new folktales, which contributed to a loss of interest due to a lack of prior knowledge, hindering the learning process.

Mukundan (2003) supported this viewpoint by emphasizing the need of providing reading materials that are correspond to students' prior knowledge, experiences, interests, emotions, and culture. Furthermore, Putra & Komang (2021) believed that contextual learning in critical in increasing students' ability to integrate subject matter, allowing them to comprehend and apply their learning in real-life settings. The use of contextual media in teaching helps teachers to encourage students to analyze, interpret, and evaluate information, supports the development of critical thinking abilities and facilitates deeper levels of knowledge. Contextual media serves to simplify complicated concepts by putting them in relatable circumstances, making the learning experience more engaging and meaningful for students.

According to Latief et al. (2021); Richards & Renandya (2002); Kramsch (2013), maintained that globalization undermines local cultures by encouraging the adoption of non-local principles threatening the preservation of understanding. Experts emphasized the need of integrating local culture, particularly that of the Kaili ethnic population, into learning materials for inquiry and retention of principles. Because cultural components are inherent in language teaching, effective instructional materials that include culture and language information as well as different experiences are crucial. Therefore, incorporating parts of the local Kaili culture, such as Kaili folktales, into instructional materials is an effective strategy. Aside from preservation, including local Kaili culture into the school environment creates an authentic context for learning. This connection to their cultural past enables students to more easily relate academic subjects to prior knowledge, boosting comprehension, and the overall relevancy of the subjects.

Additionally, Herawati (2017) states, Kaili folktale reflected the culture, situation, conditions, and character of the Kailinese. Furthermore, Sari et al., (2020) argued that the Kaili people have a folktale that strengthened their sense of unity and identity regarding their origins. Therefore, the researcher had been explored and translated the collection of stories originating from the Kaili ethnic group in Palu, specifically the Kayumalue region of the North Palu sub-district where the school had been conducted research is located into English and were named Kaili folktales by herself. For this reason, Kaili folktales can be defined as contextual media in increasing students' reading comprehension at Junior High School 20 Palu, because they have background knowledge of these stories. These folktales served as contextual media, addressing the concerns of the students and increasing their motivation. It also certainly enhanced comprehension, but also facilitated a better understanding of complicated subjects. The contextual character of these folktales was critical in building strong memory anchors, which make it easier for students to recall material later on. Agustina et al. (2018) supported this means of teaching, suggesting that incorporating contextual media into learning processes can make education more entertaining and meaningful for students. This increased relevance promotes students motivation to actively participate in the learning experience. Consequently, such material can be used in a variety of school settings, providing to a wide range of learning capacities and cultural backgrounds.

In general, Nhung (2016) considered that there are various reasons for employing folktales in teaching English as a foreign language as they provide authentic, rich, and

meaningful input, and can help motivate young learners to learn the language, particularly in reading as a language skills. Westland (1993) also suggested that using folktales is one strategy to enhancing students' reading skills. It was due to the fact that folktales are easy to read and have a manageable length, allowing students to conclude the discussion and analysis of the folktales in a single learning session. Folktales are one of the literary genres that could be employed in the reading classroom to help students develop their language abilities, encourage them as well, and increase cultural understanding and tolerance. Other impacts by Yusuf (2017) discovered that employing folktales in reading comprehension learning and teaching can promote students' interest in the reading class, students' participation in the discussion, students' self-confidence, and even make struggling active.

Method

To investigate the effectiveness of Kaili folktales in increasing reading comprehension, the research used a pre-experimental design and quantitative approach. It is important to emphasize that this research only included one class.

The research was divided into six meetings, where the first meeting to administer the pre-test to determine prior knowledge of the research, four meetings to administer the treatment, and the final meeting to administer the post-test. The research population consisted of the ninth grade students from Junior High School 20 Palu. There are three classes, included IX A to IX C. There are 87 students throughout total in the population. The sample was chosen purposively, based on the consultation with the English teacher, and eventually IX B, which consisted of 29 students. This class was chosen because of the documented difficulties in interpreting reading material, which corresponded to the research focus.

The researcher used a single instrument to collect data, with test items administered in both the pre-test and post-test in stages. Throughout the treatment sessions, several teaching approaches were used with regard of various Kaili folktales, including "The Nunu Tree," "The Origin of Kayumalue," "The Tragedy of Kayumalue," and "Randa Ntovea." After collecting data, the acquired data was statistically analyzed with SPSS 22 for Windows evaluation.

Results

The instrument used was a test that included both pre-test and post-test items. The research confirmed its conclusions using statistical analysis of the data collection, specifically by comparing the pre-test and post-test scores of students.

This section displays the students' reading comprehension scores in both the pre-test and post-test, including the mean score and standard deviation among students, to improve the reading comprehension of the research results. Tables were used to organize the data, and the SPSS 22 program was used to calculate the scores. The table below illustrates the classification of students' pre-test and post-test reading comprehension scores.

Table 1. The Classification of Students' Reading Comprehension Scores in Pre-Test and Post-Test

Classification	Score	Pre-Test		Post-Test	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	81-100	-	0 %	2	6.89 %
Good	61-80	2	6.89 %	12	41.37 %
Fair	41-60	7	24.13 %	12	41.37 %
Poor	21-40	10	34.48 %	3	10.34 %
Very Poor	0-20	10	34.48 %	-	0 %
Total		29	100.00 %	29	100.00 %

The table below shows that students' post-test results were higher than their pre-test scores. During the pre-test, no students (0%) received a "very good" score. Two students (6.89%) received a "good" score, while seven (24.13%) received a "fair" score. The majority of students, 10 (34.48%), received "poor" or "very poor" scores. In contrast, the post-test table shows that two students (6.89%) received a "very good" score. A higher percentage of students, 12 (41.37%), received "good" and "fair" scores. Only three students (10.34%) obtained a "poor" score, while none received a "very poor" score.

After organizing the students' reading comprehension score into categories, this research provides insights into the total mean score and standard deviation in both the pre-test and post-test, allowing for an in-depth comparison. The results are shown in the paired samples statistics table below.

Table 2. The Paired Samples Statistics of Pre-test and Post-test

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre Test	34.221	29	17.9703	3.3370
	Post Test	62.028	29	12.9550	2.4057

As presented on Table 2, the mean score for students in the pre-test was 34.221, whereas the mean score for the post-test was 62.028. The pre-test of standard deviation was 17.9703, while the post-test of standard deviation was 12.9550. These data indicate a significant improvement in students' reading comprehension test performance as a result of the integration of Kaili folktales.

Table 3. The Paired Samples Test of Pre-test and Post-test

		Paired Differences							
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	Pre Test - Post Test	-27.8069	18.5542	3.4454	-34.8645	-20.7493	-8.071	28	.000

The statistical analysis, conducted at a significance level of 0.05 with a degree of freedom (df) = N-1, where N = 29 and df = 28, found a probability value less than alpha (α) at 0.00<0.05. It means that the alternative hypothesis (H1) was accepted, while the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected. In conclusion, there was a substantial difference in teaching reading comprehension before and after the integration of Kaili folktales. The researcher concluded that Kaili folktales effectively can increase students' reading comprehension of the ninth grade at Junior High School 20 Palu.

Discussion

The researcher investigated the effects of the acquired results in this research. The distribution of the test, implementation of the treatment, and data collection for the experimental group clearly indicated that the research hypothesis was achieved. This statement was validated by the results of pre-test and post-test in the experimental class.

Kaili folktales are traditional stories that have been passed down through generations and are strongly established in the cultural impact of the Kaili ethnic group in the Palu region. These oral narratives preserve the community's beliefs, values, and history. Siradjuddin (2020) emphasized the various aspects of these folktales, which range from mythology to moral principles, as well as their function in representing distinct settlement patterns and spiritual foundations. Engaging with local experts and cultural organizations can help anyone obtain a deeper understanding of Kaili folktales and their importance in maintaining the cultural heritage of the Kaili ethnic group in the Palu region.

Based on the results of the research, including Kaili folktales into the classroom setting has proven to be a valuable media for increasing students' engagement and interest in interpreting reading text in English. The familiarity of these stories served as an effective motivator, capturing students' attention and providing a sense of delight in the learning process. The success of this media became clear when Kaili folktales were shared with the students, who responded by curiosity. The stories, which focused on apparent events and locations, generated the students' interest, encouraging them to use smartphone translators to try in understanding the content. Skinner (1957) also cited that curiosity as a strong motivator, highlighting the student's high level of motivate for learning and comprehend anything that directly relates to their lives and surroundings.

In essence, incorporating Kaili folktales into the curriculum served an additional role: it assisted language learning while also creating an interesting and culturally diverse educational environment. This can be in line with Lwin's (2015) viewpoint, which emphasizes that such an approach goes beyond the constraints of the traditional classroom, providing students with meaningful connections to their past while still providing critical language skills. Students not only received an appreciation for the cultural relevance of Kaili folktales through this way, but they also created the framework for effective language acquisition and self-sufficient study.

According to Saadatnia et al., (2017), literal understanding requires students to extract specific information from a paragraph in a text. Therefore, the observed progress in literal reading comprehension skills, where certain students at SMP Negeri 20 Palu specifically shown progress in literal reading comprehension skills by being able to identify characters, places, and main events within narrative texts. The students correctly identified the main characters, understood the time and context, and determined the plot. Their capacity to capture precise elements, such as crucial events and character developments, demonstrated a increased capacity to comprehend the text's substance in depth. Furthermore, most of students indicated progress in recognizing the direct meaning of words and phrases in the text. They could correctly use crucial language from the story, allowing them to specify information obtained from the reading comprehension.

Although, the integration of Kaili folktales at SMP Negeri 20 Palu has been shown to increase students' reading comprehension. Incorporating these local folktales into the curriculum capitalized on students' familiarity with the stories, providing a relevant and

meaningful framework for language acquisition. The observed beneficial outcomes, demonstrating various levels of improvement and success in narrative text comprehension, highlight the success of incorporating Kaili folktales into the classroom. The strategy did not only improved students' language skills, but also developed their appreciation and comprehension of their local cultural heritage.

Conclusion

Following an in-depth data analysis, the researcher can obviously conclude that the use of Kaili folktales can increase students' reading comprehension in the ninth grade at Junior High School 20 Palu. The significant differences in mean scores between the pre-test (34.221) and post-test (62.028) within the experimental class support this result. Furthermore, the t-test results demonstrated that the students' achievement in reading comprehension was significantly lower than $\alpha =0.00<0.05$. As a result, while the null hypothesis (H_0) was rejected, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) was accepted.

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