

Developing English Listening Skills: The Use of Fairy Tales and Folktales in Indonesian Elementary School's

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Abstract

In the current era of globalization, the importance of developing listening skills in learning English in elementary schools is increasing. This is due to the increasing cross-cultural exchange and the need for multilingual communication in an increasingly interconnected global environment. This explorative case study examines the use of fairy tales and folktales to develop listening skills in English language learning in elementary schools. Data for this study was collected through interviews conducted using a semi-structured approach with two English teachers who teach in two elementary schools in Central Java, Indonesia. This research used a qualitative case study approach to analyze the data. The results show that fairy tales and folktales can help develop English listening skills among primary school students in Indonesia. However, there are some challenges in implementing fairy tales and folktales as a means to develop listening skills in primary school students such as the non-integration of these methods into the curriculum, and challenges in material selection. The implications are discussed in this study.

Keywords: Challenges; Elementary schools; English language learning; folktales and fairy tales; Listening skills.

INTRODUCTION

English has become an important subject that needs to be learned systematically. In education, there are four aspects that need to be mastered when teaching English: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Listening is a fundamental skill and an important aspect of English language learning, especially for primary school students who use English as a second or foreign language. This is the same as Tanrikulu (2020) opinion Listening is an important skill in everyday life and in the world of education. As one of the receptive skills, listening skills are the first element that students must master. Listening skills can improve a person's communication skills, actively understand messages, and build better interpersonal relationships. According to Afriyuninda & Oktaviani (2021) the most

important language skill is listening, and it is an important part of communication because it allows us to share ideas with others. This is very important in communication because without good listening skills, we will not be able to understand the concepts conveyed by others. This process includes understanding accent, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and meaning. Therefore, listening skills are strongly influenced by vocabulary, pronunciation, and the meaning of words and sentences.

The skills taught in listening ability, learning sometimes feels boring and uninteresting. Yeni Ghonivita, John Pahamzah, Syafrizal (2021) stated that, learning to listen is not an easy thing for elementary school students. Students not only need to understand the meaning of words, they also need to know the spelling of words. At the same time, effective learning in primary schools requires creative and interesting approaches to attract students' attention. As explained by Manukyan A. M. & Durgaryan A. M. (2019) children receive more input than output when they learn a foreign language. In addition, students are still in elementary school level, so teachers need to use things that are interesting to them. According to Sultan (2015) listening skills are one of the most important and difficult language skills to teach for English language learners, where English is a foreign language (EFL) or second language (SLA). Therefore, the development of listening skills is very important to improve, especially when speaking English as a foreign language. Good listening skills help comprehension, knowledge and communication in English and daily life.

The utilization of folktales and fairy tales as learning tools has great potential in attracting students' attention, increasing motivation to learn English, and improving listening skills. As said by Masnur (2019) the use of folklore and fairy tales as teaching materials has dual benefits, namely supporting the learning process of children while stimulating their interest in interesting stories. Folklore and fairy tales are favored by children, so they can be good teaching materials to attract children's attention to lessons. They like stories about talking animals and the humor and magic of the story. According to Mishra & Satpathy (2020) learning with folktales and fairy tales helps children learn English more easily because the style, language and themes are simple. This has great potential to improve students' listening skills and help them learn English more easily. In the opinion of Ida Bagus Nyoman et al. (2018) In addition to improving English language skills, understanding folklore also helps students learn about their own and other cultures' values, beliefs, history, practices and customs celebrated in local and other communities.

Researchers have conducted several studies on the use of folklore and fairy tales in English language learning. Olima et al. (2019) pointed out that fairy tales are an effective way to train language for all age groups, and they are also a rich source for language development. Therefore, fairy tales are very suitable for foreign language teaching. Ilmi et al. (2020) showed that by using folklore learning activities in language classes, students will be motivated to participate more actively in the learning process because they are familiar with the content of the subject matter. Suryani et al. (2021) showed that folklore can increase students' motivation, enthusiasm, and interest in the language comprehension learning

process. In addition, folktales can stimulate discussion and increase students' confidence to be more involved in the learning process. Bainiyazov Daniyar Kuanishbay uli (2023) argues that Teaching listening skills through fairy tales is an effective and fun way to develop students' language skills. Integrating fairy tales into learning can help improve students' comprehension, vocabulary, and general listening skills.

In contrast to previous studies that discuss the use of folktales and fairy tales in English language learning, this study discusses the importance of listening skills in language learning and then focuses on the use of folktales and fairy tales as effective tools to develop listening skills in English among elementary school students. The use of fairy tales and folktales often attract children's attention as they can encourage student motivation and engagement. Therefore, this approach may be more effective in creating a strong interest in English learning. Based on these different aspects, the authors are interested in exploring the use of fairy tales and folktales to develop listening comprehension in primary school students.

METHOD

Context and Participant

This study uses qualitative research methods with an approach to descriptive analysis which aims to develop listening skills among elementary school students. The subjects of this research are English teachers in elementary schools. To collect data, the author also used field research, which consisted of documentation and semi-structured interviews. Once the data was collected, the interactive model qualitative data analysis method was used to complete the analysis process. This process includes data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

This explorative case study investigated two private primary schools in Central Java, Indonesia. The researcher selected these schools because they have proven to have outstanding academic achievements and provide consistently high quality education. In both schools, English is taught for 2 hours per week (2 x 45 minutes). We visited both schools and met with the principals to negotiate access and recruit English teachers so that we could develop potential participants. Finally, we were introduced to two English teachers (one from each school) who would participate in the study.

Two English teachers (female teachers) were selected as participants in this study. Regarding the ethics of the study, we contacted and asked for consent that they could participate in this study voluntarily. They also had the right to refuse participation at any stage of this study. The following table shows the demographic characteristics of the two participating English teacher participants (Table 1).

Table1.Demographiccharacteristicof the participant

	School#1	School#2
	Female	Female
Demographic characteristic of the participant	Teacher#1	Teacher#2

Age	31	29
Educational Background	Bachelor Degree	Bachelor Degree
Teaching Experience	2years	3years
Informal Training	-	-

Data Source and Analysis

Empirical data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The use of semi-structured interviews in this study enabled the researcher to collect more detailed and comprehensive data regarding the development of listening skills in primary school students.

The interview guide used includes questions regarding the use of fairy tales and folklore as a means of developing listening skills in elementary school students, as well as questions regarding the challenges faced in implementing fairy tales and folklore as a means of developing listening skills in elementary school students.

To maintain the anonymity of the participants, they were given codes such as "Teacher #1", "Teacher #2". In the interviews we used the Indonesian language to obtain more detailed and in-depth information regarding the participants' opinions and views on the use of fairy tales and folktales as a means of developing listening skills in elementary school students. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. All interview sessions were audio-recorded, so that individual data could be replayed many times.

In this study the authors collected data with in-depth interviews. The author uses data collection techniques to obtain information orally through questions and answers that are directly related to the questions in this study. This study aims to improve students' listening skills in elementary schools through the use of qualitative research methodology that uses an analytical descriptive approach. Qualitative research methods focus on problems based on facts determined through interviews.

As Hansen (2020) says Interviews as a qualitative data collection technique are widely used in research. The interview method is characterized by thorough investigation and thorough observation of the phenomenon under study. Most interviews involve at least two people. One person as the interviewer and the other as the interviewee. The interview subjects in this study were elementary school English teachers.

Data analysis is a very important part of the scientific method because it allows us to interpret data in a way that helps solve research questions. As revealed by Sirajuddin (2016) in his book entitled "*Qualitative Data Analysis*" data analysis activities are the main activities carried out to answer the research questions posed.

Empirical data in this study was collected through semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data analysis step after data collection is key to identifying patterns and themes related to the research objectives. This will allow

the researcher to interpret the information and gain a deeper understanding of the development of listening skills in primary school students.

The researcher collected data from English teachers in elementary schools through survey analysis and interviews. The purpose of this survey or interview is to find out the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding the use of fairy tales and folktales. In addition, it can provide direct insight into the perspectives of English teachers in primary schools on the development of students' listening skills in primary schools.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

This study was designed to develop listening skills among primary school students. The researcher presented two themes that emerged with supporting data based on semi-structured interview data: (1) The use of fairy tales and folklore as a way to develop listening skills among elementary school students. (2) Challenges in implementing fairy tales and folktales as a means of developing listening skills in elementary school students. These two themes of findings answer the research questions. These themes highlight the importance of understanding the effective use of folklore in developing listening skills, while recognizing the challenges that must be overcome to support the effective implementation of folklore.

1. The use of fairy tales and folklore as a one way to develop listening skills among elementary school students.

The first theme that emerged from the interview data was the integration of fairy tales and folklore as a way to develop listening skills among elementary school students. The sub-themes of the researcher's findings emerged from the analysis of interview data describing the use of fairy tales and folklore as a way to develop listening skills among elementary school students, such as (1) Teachers' perceptions of the use of fairy tales and folklore as a means of developing listening skills among elementary school students.

Table2.Sample data analysis

Emergent themes	Data	Sources
The use of folklore and fairy tales to improve listening skills	A total of 8 out of 10 students stated that with fairy tales and folktales made them prefer to listen (perception). Students show a positive attitude towards learning when fairy tales and folktales are used (attitude). Students are actively involved in listening to fairy tales and folktales (behavior).	Semi-structured interviewed

Challenges in implementing fairy tales and folktales as a means of developing listening skills	There are limited resources in accordance with the curriculum and efforts to adjust the content of the story to the students' level of understanding (challenge) . Therefore, I use fairy tales and folktales for the development of listening skills when there are extra hours/tutoring, and I choose stories that are appropriate to the students' level of understanding (solution) .	Semi-structured interviewed
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a. Teachers' perceptions of the use of fairy tales and folklore as a means of developing listening skills.

Teachers have different ideas or perceptions regarding the use of fairy tales and folklore as a means of developing listening skills among elementary school students. In this context, the different views among teachers create complex dynamics in the approach to using fairy tales and folktales to teach listening skills. The following vignette shows how teachers respond to this.

Teacher vignette: Teachers' Perceptions of the Use of Fairy Tales and Folktales as a Means of Developing Listening Skills.

Teacher #1

From my view, the use of fairy tales and folktales on these students has a positive impact, because with fairy tales and folktales they are more enthusiastic to listen. (Teacher#1, in-depth interview, November 18, 2023, Researcher Translation).

Teacher #2

I consider the use of fairy tales and folklore as a fun learning experience. I think through this method in learning they become more relaxed and fun. And it can build students' emotions. (Teacher#2, in-depth interview via telephone, November 18, 2023, Researcher Translation)

Based on interview data, it was found that teachers support the use of fairy tales and folklore as a means of developing listening skills. However, according to teacher #1's perception, there are still students who have difficulty in learning to listen. Learning to listen is not an easy thing for elementary school students. Students not only understand the meaning of words, but also the spelling of words. This is in line with the importance of creating a comfortable learning environment so that students do not feel burdened (Ghonivita et al., 2021).

At the same time, effective learning in primary schools requires creative and engaging approaches to capture students' attention. Children receive more input than output when they learn a foreign language. In addition, because the students are young, teachers need to use things that are interesting to them (Manukyan A. M. & Durgaryan A. M., 2019). Using fairy tales and folklore techniques can help students become more interested in the story and empathize with it more. Folklore and fairy tales are favored by children and are suitable as teaching materials to

increase children's interest in learning. They like stories about talking animals and the humor and magic of the story (Masnur, 2019). Therefore, it is important for teachers to understand and adjust their approach by using folktales and fairy tales as a means of developing listening skills in elementary school students.

1. Challenges in implementing fairy tales and folktales as a means of developing listening skills in elementary school students.

The second theme selected from the interview data was the challenges in implementing fairy tales and folktales as a means of developing listening skills. The subthemes that emerged from the interview data were (1) the use of fairy tales and folklore to develop listening skills is not integrated into the curriculum, (2) challenges in selecting folklore and fairy tale materials that are suitable for the level of understanding of elementary school students for the development of listening skills.

a. The use of fairy tales and folklore to develop listening skills is not integrated into the curriculum

The first subtheme that emerges from the interview data is that the use of fairy tales and folklore to develop listening skills is not integrated into the curriculum. Currently, the utilization of fairy tales and folktales to develop listening skills is not applied in both schools because it is not integrated into the curriculum. Therefore, teachers need to optimize their learning time. This encourages teachers to choose to use fairy tales and folktales to develop listening skills during additional lessons and tutoring. The following vignette shows how teachers respond to this.

Teacher vignette :the use of fairy tales and folktales to develop listening skills is not integrated into the curriculum

Teacher #1

Yes, it's not in the curriculum, but I apply these tools during additional classes.
(Teacher#1, in-depth interview, November 18, 2023, Researcher Translation).

Teacher #2

True, although it is not in the learning curriculum, but I use it during tutoring after learning hours. (Teacher#2,in-depth interview via telephone, November 18, 2023, Researcher Translation)

This data shows that both teachers encourage the use of fairy tales and folktales as a means of developing listening skills, even though they are not implemented in the learning curriculum. This reflects a commitment to engaging students in more diverse and interesting learning, whether formally integrated into the curriculum. Some studies have shown efforts to integrate fairy tale and folklore methods into learning activities, for example by optimizing the use of SBL (Scientific Based Learning) based fairy tales with the development of folklore-based teaching materials (Tiyani, 2017). Although not directly integrated into the curriculum, these initiatives reflect the recognition of the importance of using folklore and fairy tales in the educational environment.

Teachers have an important role in terms of improving the quality of learning. They should also be able to select, design and use appropriate learning media. By choosing the right learning media, teachers can motivate students, keep students interested in learning, and create an inclusive and creative learning environment (Muktadir et al., 2022). In line with decentralization and regional autonomy policies, teachers' freedom to choose and develop standards and competencies allows teachers to be the best and equipped to build students' capacity (Sulastri et al., 2020). This provides more freedom for teachers to develop their creativity in learning to determine learning in the classroom. With this freedom, teachers can change learning methods according to students' wants and needs. They can use fairy tales and folktales as learning tools. In addition, teachers also need to continuously develop themselves through training and continuing education to update their knowledge and skills in various learning media (Nisa et al., 2024). Therefore, teachers must remain relevant and innovative when facing challenges and changes in the world of education.

b. Challenges in the selection of fairy tale and folklore materials that are suitable for the level of understanding of elementary school students in an effort to develop listening skills.

The second subtheme that emerged from the interview data was the challenge of selecting fairy tale and folklore materials that are appropriate to the level of understanding of elementary school students in an effort to develop listening skills. The teachers still have difficulties in adjusting the materials to the students' varied abilities and potentials, and have unique strengths and weaknesses. This is the basis for the importance of education, which is to help develop individual potential and overcome shortcomings (Sarawati et al., 2022). The following vignette shows how teachers respond to this.

Teacher vignettes: challenges in selecting fairy tales and folktales that are appropriate to the comprehension level of elementary school students for listening skill development

Teacher #1

In choosing the material, it is difficult to adjust the understanding of the students, because there are students who have a higher level of difficulty, and there are also students whose level of understanding is already good. Usually students understand more easily if there are pictures.

(Teacher #1, in-depth interview, November 18, 2023, Researcher Translation).

Teacher #2

In choosing the material, I grouped some students who are still struggling and those who can already, these two groups are handled by one teacher each. This makes it easier to choose the material (Teacher #2, in-depth interview via telephone, November 18, 2023, Researcher Translation).

Teachers have their own ways or techniques in dealing with the challenges in selecting fairy tale and folklore materials that are appropriate to the level of understanding of elementary school students for the development of listening skills. According to teacher #1, when selecting learning materials, the challenge is

to consider the difference in difficulty between students of different abilities and adjust to students' understanding. Some students may have a higher level of difficulty, while others may already have a good understanding. Meanwhile, according to teacher #2's perception, in selecting materials, dividing students into two categories: students who are still having difficulties and students who have mastered the material. Each group is supervised by a teacher in charge, making it easier to adjust the learning materials. In this case, teacher #1 has challenges that have not yet found the right solution. However, this does not pose a challenge to teacher #2, in other words, teacher #2 can overcome the challenge of selecting fairy tale and folklore materials that are appropriate to the level of understanding of elementary school students for the development of listening skills.

In this context, the development of listening skills becomes increasingly complex as teachers strive to create relevant and meaningful learning experiences for each individual in their classrooms. However, it is still a challenge for teachers to choose teaching materials that are suitable for students' level of understanding. A solution that can be done is to identify folklore reading materials and find folklore reading materials that are in accordance with the abilities to be achieved (Abdul Azis & Hajrah, 2017). In this case, teachers have an important meaning in the world of education (Afandi et al., 2021), this is reflected in their strategic mission and function in developing high-quality human resources (Puji Astutik & Hariyati Nunuk, 2021). Teachers are not only responsible for delivering lessons, but also for ensuring that each student understands and applies the knowledge well. By using the right methods, teachers can help students develop good listening skills, shape their character, and improve their understanding of the cultural and moral values contained in stories.

CONCLUSION

We must acknowledge the limitations of our study in terms of applicability or generalizability. This study only recruited two (2) English teachers in two elementary schools in central Java, Indonesia. This makes it impossible to generalize the results of this study. Despite the limitations, this study provides insight into the development of listening skills using fairy tales and folklore in English language learning among elementary school students.

Based on the data presented earlier, this study has themes that highlight the importance of understanding the effective use of fairy tales and folklore in developing listening skills, while recognizing the challenges that must be overcome to support the effective application of fairy tales and folklore. Our themes include (a) Teachers' perceptions of the use of fairy tales and folktales as a means of developing listening skills. (b) Challenges in implementing fairy tales and folktales as a means of developing listening skills. (c) Challenges in selecting fairy tale and folklore materials that are appropriate to the level of understanding of elementary school students for the development of listening skills.

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