AN ANALYSIS OF STUDENTS' READING INTEREST THROUGH FOLKLORE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING AT SMP NEGERI 2 HILIDUHO

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze students' reading interest through the use of folklore in English learning at SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho. The background of this research is based on students' low interest in reading English texts and the need for contextual and interesting learning approaches. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The research subjects consisted of 21 students of class VIII-B. The results showed that reading folklore in English has a number of obstacles, such as limited vocabulary, long texts that make it difficult for students to understand and cause confusion, and complex sentence structures. In addition, several factors affecting reading interest were also found, such as low self-confidence, nervousness, and fear of making mistakes while reading. Most students showed high intrinsic motivation, enjoyment in reading, interest in folklore, good reading frequency, and a positive attitude towards reading activities. With the right approach and appropriate learning support, folklore can be an effective medium to foster students' interest in reading in the context of English language learning.

Keywords*: Reading Interest, Folklore, English Language Learning, SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of folklore in educational practice has been recognized as an important method to increase students' reading interest, particularly in English language learning. Folklore, which include various stories, myths and cultural narratives, serve not only as entertainment, but also as an effective educational resource for improving language skills and cultural understanding. Research shows that culturally relevant materials, such as folklore, can significantly increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process (Nussbaum, 2020). By integrating local folklore into the curriculum, e ducators can create a more comprehensible and immersive learning environment, in accordance with students' cultural background. This connection can increase students' interest in reading, as they find meaning and relevance in the stories they learn.

In addition, folklore is an effective tool for developing critical thinking and comprehension skills. According to (Bakhshaei and Khoshsima 2021) folklore encourages students to analyze themes, morals and character motivations, which are essential skills in language learning and literacy development. Engagement with folklore allows students to

practice reading strategies such as summarizing, predicting and inferring, which ultimately contributes to improving their overall reading ability.

Prior of conducting observations at the research internship site in internship two, the researcher had high expectations regarding students' interest in English. The researcher had done some preliminary preparation and analysis which suggested that students at the school might have a significant interest in learning English. According to Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System: Article 3 of this law states that the purpose of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who are faithful, pious, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. Folklore comprehension can play a role in achieving this goal by instilling cultural and moral values in students.

However, in realita, after making observations in the field, the researcher found many students who did not show interest in English reading. Although the researcher had optimistic expectations regarding students' interest in learning English, the results obtained in the field were different from what was expected. The researcher noted that many students were less than enthusiastic when attending English lessons, and some of them even showed an indifferent attitude towards the material being taught. This suggests that there are significant challenges in the learning process that may be affecting students' interest. The researcher also noted that some students felt that English was a difficult and boring subject, so they tended to lose motivation to learn. The researcher realized that to increase students' interest in English, there needs to be a more innovative and interesting approach to teaching. The researcher is committed to exploring various methods and strategies that can be used to reawaken students' interest, such as the use of more interactive media, the introduction of folklore, and activities that involve students actively in the learning process in the classroom.

The researcher hopes that by applying various innovative learning methods, such as the introduction of folklore, students will be more interested in learning English. The introduction of folklore as a learning medium is expected to provide a more interesting and enjoyable learning experience for students. Folklore that are rich in cultural and moral values can be a bridge that connects students to English in a more relevant and interesting context. The researcher also plans to integrate interactive activities related to folklore, such as group discussions, role plays, and creative projects. In this way, students will be encouraged to actively participate in learning, so that they can experience first-hand the benefits of learning English.

At SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho, an important phenomenon related to students' engagement in reading in English learning emerged, particularly through the integration of local folklore into the curriculum. Observations showed that students who participated in storytelling sessions with traditional folklore experienced a significant increase in their enthusiasm for reading English texts. This change in attitude was particularly noticeable among students who were previously reluctant or uninterested in reading materials. Stories rich in cultural meanings and moral lessons, which resonate with students' experiences, create a bridge between their mother tongue and the English they are learning.

In addition, the integration of folklore in English teaching has created a collaborative learning environment. Students engage in group discussions, share their interpretations of the stories, and even create their own narratives inspired by local folklore. This collaborative approach not only enhances their understanding, but also encourages them to express their

thoughts in English, thus improving their language skills. As students become more interested in the stories, they tend to seek out additional reading materials, both in English and their mother tongue, leading to a broader interest in literature as a whole. This phenomenon highlights the transformative power of culturally relevant content in education, showing how folklore can serve as a catalyst for increased engagement and enthusiasm in language learning

This analysis aims to explore folklore on students' reading interest in the context of English language learning at SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho. By examining students' reading interest towards English language learning, this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how content with cultural relevance can inspire and motivate students in their language learning process.

According to Kim and Shin (2020), reading interest is a psychological state within a person that affects how much they are motivated to read voluntarily. Interest in reading does not only arise because of duties or obligations, but rather because of internal motivation and curiosity about the content of reading. Someone who has a high interest in reading will usually find and read reading material on their own, without having to be told. This desire to read arises because of a sense of satisfaction, pleasure, and thinking needs that are met through reading activities. Meanwhile According to Roe, Smith and Kolodzie (2018), reading interest is an important part of the learning process and is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. Internal factors include motivation from within a person that makes them interested and encouraged to read. Meanwhile, external factors include the surrounding environment such as family, school, friends, and the availability of appropriate and interesting reading materials. If the environment provides reading materials that are diverse, easily accessible, and in accordance with students' interests, then it can encourage them to read more often.

Reading interest is a student's persistent attention and desire to engage in reading activities. This interest arises because of internal motivation, such as curiosity, satisfaction, and the desire to gain knowledge. According to Evans and Prasetyo (2024), reading interest is also influenced by a learning environment that is supportive and in accordance with students' lives. If learning is tailored to students' experiences and backgrounds, their interest in reading will increase. So, interest in reading does not only come from personal motivation, but is also supported by a pleasant and relevant learning atmosphere. Reading interest is the degree of personal enjoyment and preference a reader exhibits toward engaging with written texts, especially when such texts align with their cultural or intellectual curiosity (Lopez & Carmichael 2023).

Based on the opinions of experts from above, it can be concluded that reading interest is the attention and encouragement from within a person to engage in voluntary reading activities that arise due to internal motivations such as curiosity, personal satisfaction, and the need to gain knowledge which will increase if the reading content is in accordance with the cultural background or intellectual interests of the reader and is supported by a learning environment that is relevant, enjoyable, and easily accessible so that reading interest is formed through a combination of internal and external factors that influence each other.

Folklore

Folklore is a form of cultural expression that reflects the character of community life (Isman et al., 2022). As part of cultural wealth, folklore is closely related to the terms oral

literature, written literature, and a combination of both (Endraswara, 2018). In a broader scope, folklore is used to represent various aspects of life, such as sadness, archetypes, identity, myths, and picaresque forms that contain authenticity and oppression. Folklore is not only a medium of tradition, but also highlights written compositions that inherit the ongoing traditions of indigenous peoples. It reflects a respect for traditional lifestyles that is often overlooked by educators, folklorists and literary critics (Facer, 2019). In addition, folklore can also be seen as an array of expressive cultures, such as oral history, music, and other traditions, which transform into knowledge studies and traditions in various social fields (Zou & B, 2023). Based on the opinions of experts, it can be concluded that folklore is a form of cultural expression that reflects the identity, traditions and collective experiences of a society. As a blend of oral and written literature, folklore serves not only as a medium for conveying traditional values, but also as a representation of emotional and social experiences, such as grief and collective struggle. Although often considered non-linear or less systematic, these characteristics add unique and authentic value to folklore as a medium that records cultural diversity. As such, folklore plays an important role in preserving traditional heritage, while enriching the understanding of identity and tradition across generations.

According bascom (Danandjaja, 1986;50) in ajis ad titin 2022 state that folklore can be divided into three major groups, as follow:

a.Myths

Myth is a story that people believe to be a true event that actually happened. Usually, myths are closely related to gods, supernatural beings, or supernatural powers that are believed to have an important role in the creation and organization of the world. These stories are often used to explain the origin of the world, the existence of humans, and various natural phenomena that cannot be explained scientifically by the people of the time. Myths also often form the basis of a society's beliefs and value system, and thus play an important role in shaping their cultural identity.

b. Legends

Legends are part of folklore that is considered a true story that has happened, although it does not have a sacred nature or religious dimension like myths. Legends usually revolve around the origins of certain places, events or figures that have significance in the local history of a community. For example, legends about the formation of Mount Tangkuban Perahu or the origin of Lake Toba are often told from generation to generation as a way to explain natural phenomena or the history of a region. These stories not only provide entertainment, but also serve to strengthen cultural identity and a sense of pride in ancestral heritage.

c.Fair tales

Fairy tales are a type of fictional story that is generally told with the main purpose of entertaining the reader or listener. However, more than just entertainment, many fairy tales also contain moral messages that can provide life lessons or positive values to the community. The characters in fairy tales often involve magical or supernatural elements that give them a special appeal. For example, characters with extraordinary powers or magical abilities that influence the storyline, such as fairies, witches or other fantasy creatures.

Relevant Research

The first research was conducted by Nurfadillah (2018) entitled "The Use of Folklore to Improve Students' Reading Comprehension". The main focus of the study was on

improving students' reading comprehension through the use of folklore, not on reading interest itself. By using an experimental approach, it emphasizes more on students' cognitive learning outcomes after folklore-based learning, while my research is more descriptive in nature that analyzes students' interest or interest in reading folklore-based English texts.

The second research, conducted by Yuliana (2017) titled "The Effect of Using Folklore on Students' Motivation in Learning English" also has a different focus. She examined the effect of folklore on students' general motivation in learning English, while my research specifically examined reading interest, which is one aspect of motivation, but not identical overall. My research is more concerned with students' interest in reading English stories.

The third research conducted by Rahmawati (2020) in her research entitled "Indonesian Folktales as Reading Materials to Promote Students' Cultural Awareness and Interest" combines aspects of cultural awareness and interest in reading. Meanwhile, my research only focuses on the aspect of reading interest through folklore in the context of English language learning. Rahmawati's research also places folklore as a means of enriching learning materials with a stronger cultural dimension, while you make folklore a tool to examine how much students' reading interest in English texts.

The fourth research by Abdollahzadeh and Aliakbari (2021) entitled "The Role of Folklore in Enhancing English Language Learning Motivation" examines how the integration of folklore in English language learning can affect students' learning motivation and reading interest. The main focus of this research is on the role of folklore as a tool to enhance motivation in general, including cognitive and affective aspects related to the English learning process. Whereas my research specifically focuses on analyzing students' reading interest through folklore in the context of English learning, not on overall learning motivation. In other words, I examine aspects of students' reading interest, such as how interested they are in reading folklore-type reading texts in English.

METHOD

In general, research techniques can be defined as scientific methods used to collect data with specific purposes and applications. Creswell (2017) explains that qualitative research is an approach used to understand the meaning constructed by individuals or groups in their social context. This research often involves collecting data through interviews, observation, and document analysis to gain deep insight into the experiences and perspectives of the research subjects. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) define qualitative research as a process that places the researcher directly into the context of the world being observed. This research involves a variety of interpretive and material practices that aim to explain the world in a more real way, by studying phenomena in their natural environment and understanding their meaning based on the perspectives of the individuals involved. describes qualitative research as an approach that emphasizes the use of words and in-depth narratives, rather than measurement or quantification in the data collection and analysis process. This qualitative research focuses on efforts to explore a more comprehensive understanding of the experiences, beliefs, and actions or behaviors carried out by individuals. With this approach, researchers seek to gain richer and deeper insights related to how someone experiences a phenomenon, what they believe, and how they act in a particular context bryman (2016).

Overall, the researcher decided to use a qualitative method because this method is very relevant and effective in exploring and obtaining data directly from the field, which is related to students' reading interest. The focus of this research is to understand more deeply how folklore can influence students' interest in reading at SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho. A qualitative approach was chosen because it was able to provide a deeper insight into students' experiences and views related to folklore, as well as how it influenced their tendency to read. Therefore, data collection conducted directly in the field is very important to obtain accurate and valuable information.

Source of Data

Research data sources were sources that provide information or data used in the research process. In this research, researchers will collect data methodically at the research site by conducting interviews, questionnaire, and documentation.

Instrument of the Research

According to Sugiyono (2019: 156), a research instrument is a tool or device used by researchers to measure and evaluate phenomena that occur, both natural and social, which become objects or subjects observed in a study. This instrument is designed to systematically collect data on various aspects of the phenomenon under study, be it related to natural events or social aspects that affect society or individuals in the context of the study.

Based on the research focus that has been determined, the researcher will use three different types of data collection instruments, namely and questionnaire, interview and documentation . These three instruments were chosen because each has advantages and relevance that are very suitable for the research objectives to be achieved

Data collecting Technique

The techniques used to collect and analyze data are referred to as data collection techniques. In this research, various data collection methods were applied, including:

 a. Questionnaire

According to Wiersma and Jurs (2020), a questionnaire is one of the important tools in research that is systematically arranged to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire consists of a number of questions made in a standardized format, so that all respondents answer with the same guidelines. The purpose of this format is so that the data obtained is consistent, relevant, and comparable.

b. Interview

An interview is a type of verbal communication, therefore it is a conversation aimed at gathering information, or it can be regarded as a data collecting strategy involving question and answer sessions between the researcher and the item under examination. In this method, the interviewer's inventiveness is required because the outcomes of the interview under study are heavily reliant on the investigator's ability to identify, record, and analyze each answer. There are three sorts of interviews, namely structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews (Abdussamad 2021, p. 143).

c. Documentation

The documentation method is used to collect information in the form of text, images and notes that can provide additional data. The documentation data needed by researchers in this study includes photos, voice recordings and videos during the research (Salsabilla 2023, p. 36).

Data Analysis Technique

The data analysis technique in research is the process of processing, organizing, and interpreting the data that has been collected to obtain conclusions that are meaningful and relevant to the research objectives. The data analysis technique used in this research is according to miles and huberman in his book "qualitative data analysis technique sourcebook". data analysis techniques consist of three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing and verification.

a. Data Reduction : This process involves simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data obtained from the field. The aim is to select data that is relevant to the focus of the research, making it easier to draw conclusions.

b. Data Display : This stage presents the data in an organized form, such as a matrix, graph, or chart, so as to facilitate understanding and further analysis. Data presentation helps researchers to see patterns, relationships, or trends that emerge from the reduced data.

c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification : At this stage, researchers draw conclusions from the data that has been reduced and presented. The conclusions drawn need to be verified to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, so that they can be accounted for.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings

The researcher used observation as a data collection technique and conducted the research at SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho in class VIII-B. The researcher made observations in class VIII-B in English lessonss with a total of 21 students.

The Result of Questionnaire

The indicators in the questionnaire used in this study, namely intrinsic motivation, enjoyment of reading, preference for folklore, frequency of reading, and attitude towards reading, were developed based on the theoretical framework of reading interest that has been developed by a number of experts. This theory emphasizes that reading interest is influenced by internal factors such as motivation, curiosity, and a positive attitude towards reading activities, as well as external factors such as the learning environment and the availability of relevant and interesting reading materials (Roe, Smith, & Kolodzie, 2018; Alieto et al., 2020). In addition, this theory views that interest is a tendency that arises voluntarily du e to a sense of liking or interest in an activity, which is closely related to individual comfort and pleasure when engaging in reading activities (Conard, 2021; Lustyantie & Aprilia, 2020). Based on this theoretical framework, the questionnaire indicators were designed to comprehensively describe the psychological and contextual aspects that influence students' reading interest, particularly in the context of English language learning through folklore media.

Table 1. Questionnaire result

No.	Indicators in Reading Interest	Sub-Indicatorts	Statements	Total Students			
				A	D	SD	SA
1.	Intrinsic Motivation	• *Ketertarikan alami siswa terhadap aktivitas membaca*	• *Saya merasa senang membaca teks bahasa Inggris terutama cerita rakyat.*				

No	Indicator	Sub-indicator	Statement				
				10	6	-	5
		• *Perasaan puas dan senang ketika membaca teks bahasa Inggris, khususnya cerita rakyat*	• *Saya merasa membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris menyenangkan dan menarik.*	10	8	1	2
2	Reading Enjoyment	• *Tingkat kesenangan siswa ketika terlibat dalam kegiatan membaca*	• *Saya menikmati waktu membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris di kelas.*	4	11	1	5
		• *Minat siswa terhadap bahan bacaan berbahasa Inggris*	• *Saya suka membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris meskipun di luar pelajaran sekolah.*	3	5	2	9
3	Preference for English Folklore	• *Ketertarikan siswa terhadap teks cerita rakyat berbahasa Inggris*	• *Saya lebih suka membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris dibandingkan jenis teks lainnya.*	12	5	-	4
		• *Perbandingan dengan jenis teks lainnya*	• *Cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris membuat saya lebih tertarik membaca*	11	6	3	1
4	Reading Frequency	• *Seberapa sering siswa membaca teks bahasa Inggris*	• *Saya sering membaca teks bahasa Inggris di rumah atau di perpustakaan.*	5	10	4	2
		• *Intensitas membaca di luar jam pelajaran*	• *Saya membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris setidaknya seminggu sekali.*	14	5	-	2
5	Reading Attitude	• *Pandangan positif siswa terhadap membaca*	• *Saya membaca penting untuk meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris saya.*	11	1	3	6
		• *Motivasi meningkatkan kemampuan membaca*	• *Saya termotivasi untuk menjadi pembaca yang baik dalam bahasa Inggris.*	11	2	1	7

Based on the results of the questionnaire given to students of class VIII-B at SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho, it was found that there are various factors that cause students to have difficulty in reading English in class, namely:

1. Reading Motivation
    a. Students' natural interest in reading activities

On the statement "I feel happy reading English texts especially folklore" *(Saya merasa senang membaca teks bahasa Inggris terutama cerita rakyat)* there were 10 students who answered

Agree (A), 6 students chose Disagree (D), no students chose Strongly Disagree (SD), and 5 students chose Strongly Agree (SA). Most students show interest in reading English texts, especially folklore. This can be seen from the majority of students who answered Agree and Strongly Agree. The absence of students who chose Strongly Disagree indicates a positive response to the material.

 b. Feelings of satisfaction and pleasure when reading English texts, especially folklore

On the statement "I find reading folklore in English fun and interesting" *(Saya merasa membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris menyenangkan dan menarik)* there were 10 students who answered Agree (A), 8 students Disagree (D), 1 student Strongly Disagree (SD), and 2 students Strongly Agree (SA). Although most students gave positive responses, there were still some students who felt less interested or did not find folklore in English as something fun. This suggests a difference in reading comprehension or experience among students.

2. Reading Enjoyment
 a. Students' level of enjoyment when engaged in reading activities

On the statement " I enjoy reading folklore in English in class" *(Saya menikmati waktu membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris di kelas)*, there were 4 students who chose Agree (D), 11 students Disagree (D), 1 student Strongly Disagree (SD), and 5 students Strongly Agree (SA). These results show that most students have not fully enjoyed reading activities in class. This may be due to a lack of interest in the classroom atmosphere, the way the material is delivered, or difficulties in understanding the content of the reading.

 b. Student interest in English reading materials

In the statement "I like reading folklore in English even outside of school" (*Saya suka membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris meskipun di luar pelajaran sekolah)*, 3 students agreed (A), 5 students disagreed (D), 2 students strongly disagreed (SD), and 9 students strongly agreed (SA). This indicates that some students have a high interest in reading independently outside of class, although others are still less motivated in reading outside of lessons.

3. Preference for English Folklore
 a. Students' interest in English folklore texts.

On the statement "I prefer to read folklore in English than other types of text" (*Saya lebih suka membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris daripada jenis teks lainnya)* there were 12 students who answered Agree (A), 5 students Disagree (D), and 4 students Strongly Agree (SA), and no one chose Strongly Disagree SD). This shows that most students have a higher interest in folklore than other types of texts.

 b. Comparison with other text types

For the statement " Folklore in English makes me more interested in reading" *(Cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris membuat saya lebih tertarik membaca)*, 11 students chose Agree (A), 6 students Disagree (D), 3 students Strongly Disagree (SD), and only 1 student Strongly Agree (SA). this data shows that there are still a number of students who do not feel an increased interest in reading. This shows that students' interest in folklore has not been fully distributed.

4. Reading Frequency
 a. How often do students read English texts

For the statement "I often read English texts at home or in the library" *(Saya sering membaca teks bahasa Inggris di rumah atau di perpustakaan)*, there are 5 students who Agree (A), 10

students Disagree (D), 4 students Strongly Disagree (SD), and 2 students Strongly Agree (A). These results indicate that most students are not used to reading independently outside of class, which may be due to a lack of access to reading or personal motivation.

   b. Intensity of reading outside class hours

In the statement " I read folklore in English at least once a week" *(Saya membaca cerita rakyat dalam bahasa Inggris setidaknya seminggu sekali)*, a total of 14 students stated Agree (A), 5 students Disagree (D), and 2 students Strongly Agree (SA), with no Strongly Disagree (SD) responses. This shows that most students have a fairly regular habit of reading folklore in English.

5. Reading Attitude

   a. Students' positive view of reading

On the statement "I read is important to improve my English" *(Membaca itu penting untuk meningkatkan kemampuan bahasa Inggris saya)* 11 students chose Agree (A), 6 students Strongly Agree (SA), 1 student Disagree (D), and 3 students Strongly Disagree (SD). The majority of students realize the importance of reading as a way to improve their English skills, although there are still a small number who have not shown this awareness.

   b. Motivation to improve reading skills

In the statement "I am motivated to become a good reader in English" *(Saya termotivasi untuk menjadi pembaca yang baik dalam bahasa Inggris)* there were 11 students who answered Agree (A), 7 students Strongly Agree (SA), 2 students Disagree (D), and 1 student Strongly Disagree (SD). Most of the students showed high motivation to become good readers in English, which is a positive indicator towards improving their reading interest and ability.

The Results of Interview

   Based on the results of interviews conducted with students of class VIII-B, the following are the opinions of the twenty-one students who have been interviewed:

Table 2 : Interview Result

No.	Interview Questions	Student Response
1	Do you like reading folklore or plain text in English? Why?	All students had different and varied opinions. Some students (E, P, M, P, F, D, Y, A, Y, J, N, B, J, A, P, R, R, F) stated that they prefer to read folklore in English because folklore are more interesting, entertaining and not boring. These stories make them more enthusiastic in reading because they often contain cultural values and exciting storylines. Two other students stated that they preferred plain text in English. They argued that plain texts, such as lesson materials, are easier to understand and get straight to the point (M, K).
2	What kind of English reading do you like the most? (for example: stories, comics, articles, fairy tales).	Most students like folklore, such as fairy tales. They feel that fairy tales are interesting because they contain elements of entertainment, moral messages, and storylines that are fun and easy to follow. Reading fairy tales also makes them more enthusiastic in learning (E, P, M, P, F, D, J, T, N, B, J, A, P, R). There are also students who prefer comics on the grounds that the pictures in the comics help them more easily understand the content of the story and add attraction when reading (R, F, M, K, Y, A, Y).
3	How often do you read English outside of school?	Twenty-one students had the same answer, namely that they rarely read English texts outside of school lessons because they found it difficult to understand the content of the text, especially if there were many words that they did not know the meaning of. In addition, they often read or watch things in Indonesian, so they are not used to reading English texts by themselves at home (E, P, M, P, F, D, Y, A, Y, J, T, N, B, J, A, P, R,

		R, F, M, and K).
4	Have you ever read folklore in English lessons?	Reaction all students (E, P, M, P, F, D, Y, A, Y, J, T, N, B, J, A, P, R, R, F, M, K) answered that they had learned or read folklore in English learning. The stories they use are usually about legends or fairy tales from various countries, including from Indonesia which are translated into English. Although at first it was a bit difficult for students to understand because the language was different, but after a while they were also interested because the story was interesting and there were pictures in the story so that it made students curious to read the story.
5	What folklore have you read and liked? Why did you like it?	Some students gave different opinions. Some students (E, P, M, P, F, D, Y, A, Y, J, and T) they liked reading the story of malin kundang in Indonesian because the story was interesting, and contained moral values, and the storyline was easy to understand and there was a sad part when Malin was cursed to become a stone. Some other students also like stories like fairy tales, the stories they read are timun mas and shallots and garlic (N, B, J, A, P, R, R, F, M, and K).
6	Do you find the folklore interesting to read in English?	All students have different opinions. some students are quite interested when reading stories in English such as (M, P, F, D, Y, A, Y, J, and P) because this is their chance to learn English and can at the same time learn new vocabulary and increase their understanding of English in a fun way. Some other students are not interested in reading stories in English because they think English stories are difficult to understand the story because there are many words they don't understand, and they are confused about following the storyline (E, P, R, R, F, M, and K).
7	Does reading folklore in English help you learn new vocabulary?	All students had the same answer, saying that reading folklore in English can help me add new vocabulary. The problem is that there are many words in the story that they have never met before, so they learn the meaning of the word while reading. Moreover, because the story is interesting, they are more eager to find out the meaning of the words and don't get bored quickly (E, P, M, P , , D, Y, A, Y, J, T, N, B, J, A, P, R, R, F, M, and K).
8	What kind of stories would you like to read in English lessons?	All students have different and varied answers. Some students said they prefer to read stories that are exciting and easy to understand, such as adventure stories and funny stories (E, P, M, P, F, D, Y, A, Y, J, T, and N). while other students said that they like to read stories that are short, illustrated and the language is easy to understand (B, J, A, P, R, R, F, M, and K).
9	Do folklore help you understand the content of English reading more easily?	Some students said that folklore is quite helpful in understanding the content of English reading. because the story is familiar, so even though there are difficult words, they can still guess the meaning of the storyline (P, F, D, Y, A, Y, J, E, P, and M). Different from other students said that folklore were not very helpful because folklore in English made them confused and many words were not understood, and also the language was too difficult or the sentences were too long (R, F, M, K, B, J, A, P, and R).

| 10 | Do you think English teachers should often use folklore in lessons? Why? | All students gave different answers. Some students (M, P, F, D, Y, A, Y, J, T, and N) said that English teachers should often use folklore in lessons because the stories are interesting and can make learning not boring. While other students said that English teachers should not often use folklore because not all students like folklolre, and sometimes the language is difficult to understand (B, J, A, P, R, R, F, M, K, E, and P). |

Discussion

Data Analysis and Interpretation of the Questionnaire Result

Based on the five results of the questionnaire data analysis covering intrinsic motivation, reading enjoyment, preference for folklore, reading frequency, and attitude towards reading, it can be concluded that students generally show a positive interest in reading activities especially if the text used is English folklore because this kind of text is considered more interesting, close to their cultural experience, and able to arouse curiosity so as to encourage them to be more actively involved in reading activities both inside and outside the classroom, However, the fact that not all students enjoy reading in class shows that the method of delivering the material needs to be adjusted to be more interactive and fun so that the learning process not only conveys the content of the text but also creates a learning atmosphere that supports students' emotional involvement, therefore the use of folklore as a teaching medium has great potential in increasing reading interest when combined with learning strategies that are relevant, contextual, and able to stimulate motivation and active participation of students in the English learning process.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of the Interview Result

Based on the results of interviews conducted with students in class VIII-B, a more in-depth picture of their perceptions, experiences, and obstacles they face in reading folklore texts in English was obtained. Most of the students stated that they preferred reading folklore compared to regular texts because they were considered more interesting, fun, and easy to understand, especially because they were familiar with the content of the story and the moral values contained in it. They also felt that folklore texts have an exciting plot and often contain touching messages, which arouse curiosity and emotional engagement during reading. This statement is reinforced by Ainley and Hidi's (2021) theory which emphasizes that reading interest develops more strongly if the text has personal relevance and is able to evoke affective responses such as pleasure or inspiration. In this context, folktales successfully trigger situational interest which can develop into individual interest when readers feel personally connected to the content.

The Research Findings Compared to the Latest Related Research

The findings in this study reinforce the results of several previous studies that highlight the role of folklore in improving students' reading interest and English language skills. In general, the results of this study are in line with recent studies showing that the use of contextualized and local culture-based teaching materials can boost students' motivation, engagement and literacy skill development.

Research by Abdollahzadeh and Aliakbari (2021) showed that students who were taught using folklore in English language learning showed a significant increase in reading

interest and learning motivation. These results are consistent with the findings at SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho, where most students showed high interest in English folklore due to their familiarity and proximity to their culture.

Another study by Suwardi and Pratama (2022) also found that using folklore as a learning medium improved students' reading and writing skills. In their study, students were not only more active in reading but also able to express ideas in writing better. These findings are in line with this study, which shows that students are more enthusiastic and actively involved in reading when the subject matter is in the form of culturally relevant folklore.

Furthermore, Khoshsima and Zeynali (2020) examined the effect of culturally relevant texts on ESL students' reading comprehension and found that texts such as folklore can improve comprehension because students can relate the content of the story to their personal experiences. This is consistent with the findings from the interviews in this study, where students found it easier to understand the content of familiar stories, even though the texts were in English.

Overall, this study strengthens and extends previous findings by providing concrete evidence in the local context, that the use of folklore as teaching materials is not only culturally relevant, but also effective in building students' reading interest, text comprehension and emotional engagement in English language learning.

The Research Findings Compared to Theories

The findings of this study support several theories that have been explained in the literature review, especially those related to students' reading interest through folklore. First, the theory from Roe, Smith, & Kolodzie (2018) states that students' reading interest is influenced by internal factors such as motivaton, and external factors such as the availability of interesting reading materials. In this study, students showed high intrinsic motivation when reading folklore familiar to their culture, so this is in line with the idea that emotional and cultural relevance play an important role in shaping reading interest.

Furthermore, Bakhshaei & Khoshsima (2021) state that the use of folklore can stimulate critical thinking skills, strengthen reading comprehension, and increase students' cognitive engagement. The findings of this study support this theory, because students tend to be more interested and active when reading folklore that contains moral values and cultural contexts that they are familiar with. They not only read, but also analyze the content of the story and the characters.

In addition, Gay (2018) in Culturally Responsive Teaching emphasized the importance of incorporating local cultural elements into the learning process to improve learning effectiveness. This study found that students more easily understand and enjoy texts derived from local stories such as Malin Kundang or Si Kancil, compared to standard texts from textbooks. This suggests that the use of folklore is a form of implementing culture-based learning that supports learning engagement and success.

Furthermore, Adnan et al. (2022) explain that the integration of local culture in language learning can build a bridge between students' experiences and the foreign language they are learning. The interview results in this study showed that students felt more confident when reading stories that they were familiar with, even though the texts were in English. This proves that familiar cultural experiences can lower psychological barriers in learning a foreign language.

The findings of this study support previous theories on the importance of meaningful, contextualized and culturally-based reading materials in improving students' reading interest and language skills. Folklore is proven not only as entertainment, but as an effective pedagogical tool in English language learning, especially in the context of junior high school students who are still building the basics of literacy and foreign language skills.

Although most modern literature theories support the use of contextualized texts such as folklore to increase students' reading interest, there are also theories that are less relevant or not fully in line with the findings of this study. One example is the traditional formal academic text-based approach that focuses on language structure and rigid grammar in learning to read. This approach is assumed to systematically improve students' linguistic skills, but often neglects the affective and motivational aspects of reading. Martinez and Xu (2021) in their research on the effectiveness of academic texts in second language teaching stated that the use of academic texts that are too complex or irrelevant to the students' context actually decreases engagement and causes boredom, especially for junior high learners who are still shaping their reading interests. This contradicts the findings of this study which show that emotional engagement and cultural closeness through folktales actually increase students' interest and motivation to read.

In addition, the standardized approach of one-way literacy learning that emphasizes cognitive evaluation alone without considering students' cultural diversity is also considered less relevant in the context of English language teaching in secondary schools. Turner and Li (2022) criticize this approach because it tends to standardize reading materials without considering the learners' socio-cultural background, which risks distancing students from the texts they read. In the findings of this study, students showed increased interest in reading when the texts had moral and cultural values familiar to their lives, something that cannot be achieved through generic or universal texts.

Similarly, the purely extrinsic motivation theory which states that the provision of incentives such as grades or prizes is the main driver of reading activity proved less effective in this context. According to Ahmed and Broderick (2023), reliance on extrinsic motivation in learning to read results in superficial and unsustainable engagement, in contrast to intrinsic motivation born out of a sense of interest and relevance of the text content, as found in this study. Therefore, while reward-based approaches can encourage reading activity in the short term, the findings of this study show that value-, culture- and emotion-based approaches have a more significant impact on the formation of a stable interest in reading.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Based on the research conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho, it can be concluded that the integration of folklore in English language learning has a significant impact on students' reading interest. Students showed a relatively high intrinsic motivation when reading English texts, particularly those in the form of folklore. The cultural familiarity embedded in folklore contributes to students' engagement and enjoyment in reading activities.

Given the time constraints that limit researcher from conducting more optimal research, it is recommended that future researcher can allocate more time so that each stage of the research can be carried out in depth. In addition, the number of respondents should be

expanded, for example by involving more than one class or institution, so that the research results are more representative. The preparation of research instruments, especially questionnaires, also needs to be prepared more thoroughly by considering its validity and reliability. Finally, the selection of research topics should refer to relevant and contextual issues so that the research results make a more tangible and applicable contribution.

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