Register journal

Folklore Storytelling: A Study into the Effectiveness of Traditional Short Story for Enhancing Vocabulary Development in EFL Learners

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DOI: 10.18326/rgt.v17i2.279-300

ABSTRACT
This study explores the effectiveness of integrating traditional short stories into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction to enhance vocabulary development among eighth-grade students in South Amarasi. Employing a mixed-methods design, the research assesses the impact of storytelling on vocabulary acquisition by administrating pre-test and post-test assessments to 26 junior high school students. The results indicate a significant 20% improvement in vocabulary knowledge following the intervention. Qualitative insights gathered from teacher interviews reveal several critical findings. Teachers reported challenges in integrating cultural values into the teaching, particularly due to limited

resources. Nonetheless, they confirmed that storytelling and visual media are instrumental in enhancing vocabulary acquisition and cultural awareness among students. The use of traditional stories not only makes learning more engaging but also helps students relate new vocabulary to their cultural backgrounds. The research highlights the pedagogical benefits of storytelling in EFL instruction and suggests that this approach effectively supports both vocabulary development and cultural literacy. The study recommends further research with larger sample sizes and cross-cultural comparisons to gain a deeper understanding of the long-term effects of storytelling on language proficiency and cultural literacy, especially in similar suburban Indonesian contexts.

Keywords: folklore, traditional short story, vocabulary development, storytelling, cultural literacy, south amarasi

INTRODUCTION

Vocabulary is essential for language acquisition, serving as the fundamental building blocks that enable learners to communicate effectively in the target language. Without a robust vocabulary, students may struggle with understanding and expressing ideas, which can hinder their overall language proficiency. As Ariffin (2021) asserts, while grammar is necessary for communication, vocabulary is indispensable—nothing can be conveyed without it. In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, vocabulary acquisition is particularly significant as students navigate a new language. The challenge lies in making this process both engaging and relevant for students, especially young ones. One effective strategy is the integration of local folklore into language instruction. Baleghizadeh and Amiri Shayesteh (2020), highlight that the globalization of English has transformed how culture is incorporated into EFL/ESL contexts. Using real-life examples, such as folklore, can enhance students' understanding and engagement with the subject matter. As Vygotsky (in Panji et al., 2022) emphasizes, young language learners need "scaffolding" that aligns with their developmental stage. In this case, students benefit from learning content that motivates them to study English without feeling overwhelmed. Learning materials that capture students' curiosity, interest, and

imagination can significantly support vocabulary development and overall language acquisition.

Learning materials that stimulate students' curiosity, interest, and imagination are crucial for effective language and vocabulary development. This suggests that educational resources should facilitate language acquisition and encourage students to interact in a manner that prevents them from feeling overwhelmed. Effective vocabulary development is widely recognized as essential for language proficiency (Sari & Aminatun, 2021). For proficient communication in a foreign language like English, individuals must first build a strong vocabulary foundation. A thorough understanding of vocabulary is crucial for foreign language students to achieve proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Coxhead (2021) highlights the significance of a robust vocabulary base for attaining high levels of English proficiency. Learners with an extensive vocabulary excel in the four core language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Conversely, individuals with limited vocabulary often face challenges in mastering these skills. Al-Dersi (2013) e further emphasizes that insufficient vocabulary can substantially impede language development, restricting learners' ability to communicate effectively and confidently in English. Consequently, prioritizing vocabulary development is essential for enhancing overall language skills.

Learning vocabulary through short stories, whether through by reading or listening, has proven to be an effective method for teaching and motivating students to expand their vocabulary (Rahmawati, 2020). Research consistently supports the notion that storytelling enhances vocabulary acquisition for foreign language (L2) learners (Albaladejo Albaladejo et al., 2018; Castillo-Cuesta et al., 2021; Rahayu et al., 2022; Yansyah et al., 2023). Despite years of studying English, middle and high school students in Indonesia often struggle to develop a sufficient vocabulary to communicate fluently in both in spoken and written English (Bire et al., 2019). This situation underscores the need for more effective instructional methods, such as storytelling, to support vocabulary expansion and improve overall language proficiency in English as a foreign language.

Further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of local or traditional stories with young language learners in educational settings where exposure to the target language is limited (Albaladejo Albaladejo et al., 2018). Traditional short stories, once transmitted with specific meanings, have become increasingly unfamiliar to the general population (Panji et al., 2022). Research by Widyahening and Rahayu (2021) demonstrated using traditional short stories significantly enhanced students' vocabulary comprehension. Furthermore, as vocabulary learning progressed, students' barriers - such as embarrassment, anxiety, discomfort, and fear -gradually diminished. Traditional stories offer substantial value beyond vocabulary acquisition; their application as tools for character development can deepen students' understanding of local culture and improve their character education. Language teachers might incorporate character qualities into their curricula by utilizing local Indonesian wisdom (Shaleha & Purbani, 2019).

Folklore or traditional short stories typically reflect the native language and cultural context of a region. An alternative perspective posits that a conventional short story is a narrative drived from collective imagination and transmitted through generations (Rahmawati & Kusmiatun, 2019). Recently, integrating cultural aspects into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction has gained traction, particularly in regions where English is not widely spoken (Agustina et al., 2019; Evy Tri Widyahening & Sri Rahayu, 2021; Nurhikma, 2022; Pelo, 2018; Sayogie, 2022; Yektiningtyas, 2019). In South Amarasi, Nusa Tenggara Timur (NTT), finding culturally relevant and contextually appropriate learning resources presents a significant challenge. Traditional storytelling, particularly folklore, offers a unique opportunity to bridge this gap by connecting students with their cultural heritage while enhancing their language learning experience. This study examines how effectively traditional short stories from Sahraen, South Amarasi, can be used to expand the vocabulary of eight-grade junior high school students. By incorporating culturally relevant content into language instruction, this approach aims to improve vocabulary acquisition and foster a deeper cultural awareness among the students.

This study aims to achieve the following objectives: to examine the impact of introducing traditional short stories on EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition, and to identify the challenges associated with teaching English in the context of incorporating folklore storytelling into EFL instruction. The paper is structured into several key sections, including an introduction with a review of relevant literature, a detailed methodology, results from pre-and post-tests, and interviews with teachers. The study seeks to contextualize its findings within the framework of existing research, offering valuable insights, instructional implications, and recommendations for future investigations. It highlights the potential of folklore storytelling to enhance EFL learners' vocabulary acquisition and cultural literacy.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a mixed-method approach, specifically an explanatory design to investigate the impact of local traditional short stories on vocabulary acquisition among junior high school students. The sequential explanatory design involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data followed by qualitative data in two successive phases of a single study (Ivankova et al., 2006). By integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, this study combines data from students' assessments with insights from teacher interviews to provide a comprehensive analysis. Quantitative data were obtained through pre-tests and post-tests related to the traditional short story, which assessed vocabulary development. The tests were designed to be consistent in structure and content, ensuring that both the pre-test and post-test measured the same aspects of vocabulary knowledge. This approach helped maintain reliability across different testing sessions. Qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with the English teacher, offering insights into student engagement, responses to cultural material, and teaching challenges. These qualitative observations provide context and enhance understanding of the learning process by explaining interactions between students and cultural material, thereby complementing and enriching the quantitative findings

The participants in this study consisted of 26 junior high school students from a Junior High School in Sahraen, South Amarasi. Throughout the study, the students were introduced to an Amarasi traditional short story through a storytelling strategy. Table 1 below presents an overview of the participants' primary demographic data:

Table 1. Demographic Information of the Participants

Demographic Information	Details
Age	12-14 Years
Grade Level	8th Grade (60%), 9th Grade (40%)
Gender	Male: 30%, Female: 70%
Cultural Background	Timor Amarasi (90%), other ethnic groups (10%)
Language Environment	Timor Amarasi (Mother Tounge, commonly used daily), *Bahasa Indonesia* (situational, formal context)

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the study's participants, primarily eighth-grade students aged 12 to 14. Among them, 70% were female. A significant majority, 90%, identified as Timor Amarasi, and their daily interactions occurred predominantly in the Timor Amarasi language (*Uab Amarasi).* This shared cultural background notably enhanced the students' engagement in folklore-based storytelling activities. Their cultural familiarity fostered a more meaningful and immersive experience, facilitating greater participation and a stronger connection with the storytelling content.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy, both pre-tests and post-tests were systematically administered. The pre-test was given before the introduction of the folklore-based photo storytelling activities to establish the students' baseline vocabulary. Following the implementation of the strategy, which engaged students in folklore-based photo storytelling, a post-test was conducted to assess any changes or improvements in vocabulary. The post-test was designed to match the pre-test in both structure and content, ensuring a valid and relevant comparison between the two assessments.

By analyzing the results of the pre-test and post-test, we measured the impact of the strategy on the students' vocabulary development. This comparative analysis revealed significant advancements or progress made by the students, thereby offering insights into the strategy's effectiveness. The quantitative data from these tests, supplemented by qualitative observations, provided a comprehensive evaluation of the strategy's success in enhancing students' English language skills. Additionally, it is essential for the teacher to not only define the vocabulary words for students but also to explore their meanings in depth (Rahmawati, 2020). This deeper analysis was complemented by the teacher's observations, which offered a practical perspective on the implementation and effectiveness of the approach. Together, these methods aimed to triangulate findings, thoroughly assess the strategy's effectiveness, and inform future instructional practices.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from this study provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of integrating traditional short stories and visual aids into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction. This section explores the impact of these strategies on vocabulary development and cultural literacy among students.

Statistical Analysis and Impact of Traditional Storytelling on Vocabulary Development

The section presents a statistical analysis of the vocabulary test results obtained from the pre-test and post-test evaluations. The objective of this research is to assess the effectiveness of traditional short stories in increasing vocabulary development among junior high school students. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics to provide a comprehensive overview of student performance across both assessments. Additionally, a paired samples t-test was conducted to determine whether the observed differences in vocabulary scores before and after the intervention were statistically significant. The results of these analyses are summarized in the tables below:

Table 2. Summary Description of the Test Data

Description	Pretest	Post Test
Mean	48,08	75,77
Standard deviation	21,8	18,6
Maximum Score	80	100
Minimum Score	10	40

Table 3. Summary of t-Test Paired Two Samples for Means

Description	pre-test score	post-test score
Mean	48,08	75,77
Variance	496,15	361,38
Observations	26,00	26,00
Pearson Correlation	0,41	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0,00	
df	25,00	
t Stat	-6,27	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0,00	
t Critical one-tail	1,71	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0,00	
t Critical two-tail	2,06	

Based on the results, the mean score increased from 48.08 in the pre-test to 75.77 in the post-test. Concurrently, the standard deviation decreased from 21.80 in the pre-test to 18.60 in the post-test, and the variance reduced from 477.07 to 347.48. These reductions suggest that the variability in scores around the mean became narrower, indicating a more consistent performance among students following the intervention. Then, the t-test results further support the effectiveness of the storytelling strategy. The paired samples t-test revealed a significant difference in vocabulary scores before and after the intervention, with a t-statistic of -6.27 and a p-value of 0.00 (two-tailed). This statistical evidence underscores the positive impact of integrating traditional short stories into EFL

instruction, highlighting its potential to enhance vocabulary development among students.

The mean scores of the pre-and post-test differ statistically significantly, as evidenced by the computed t-statistic of -6.27 and a p-value of 0.00, both for one-tailed and two-tailed tests. The absolute value of the t-statistic exceeds the critical t-values, which provides strong evidence against the null hypothesis. This statistical analysis supports the alternative hypothesis, indicating that the exposure to traditional short stories significantly enhances EFL students' vocabulary acquisition. The negative t-statistic further underscores the effectiveness of the storytelling strategy, as it indicates that the post-test scores substantially exceed the pre-test scores. The very low p-value reinforces the conclusion that the observed changes are unlikely to be due to random chance, thereby confirming the validity of the results. This suggests that the storytelling strategy not only improved average performance but also reduced variability in students' results, indicating a more uniformly distributed improvement. Overall, integrating traditional short stories into the EFL curriculum has positively impacted both cultural literacy and vocabulary development among students. The vocabulary assessments reflect a marked improvement in understanding from the pre-test to the post-test phases, highlighting the effectiveness of this instructional approach.

Throughout the study, eighth-grade students exhibited considerable enthusiasm and engagement. The systematic approach, which integrated traditional short stories with interactive activities, fostered a positive learning environment that significantly enhanced their vocabulary development. The students' responses, along with the observed improvements in their vocabulary skills, underscore the effectiveness of storytelling as a pedagogical tool in EFL instruction. However, it is important to consider that the impact of the storytelling intervention may vary in different contexts. Factors such as the availability of advanced technology and resources could influence the comprehensiveness, engagement, and overall effectiveness of the storytelling approach. Thus, while the current findings demonstrate the benefits of

storytelling in this setting, similar interventions in technologically advanced or resource-rich environments may yield different outcomes.

Implementation of Traditional Storytelling in EFL Instruction: Process and Pedagogical Strategies

The research commenced with translating traditional short stories from Timor Language into English to maintain their original meaning and cultural significance. The Timor Language, being the native language of the South Amarasi People, is widely used by the students both inside and outside the classroom. The challenge of acquiring English proficiency is further complicated by the students' deep immersion in their native language from early childhood (Bire et al., 2019). Following the translation, the researchers collaborated with the English teacher and eighth-grade students at a junior high school in Sahraen, South Amarasi. The English teacher played a pivotal role in facilitating the research and ensuring the effective implementation of the planned activities. This collaboration was essential for integrating the translated traditional short stories into the EFL curriculum, thus bridging cultural and linguistic gaps while enhancing the students' English language learning experience.

On the first day of the intervention, students were informed that they would be learning English through their traditional story titled "*Maka Ma Pena*," supplemented with related pictures. This announcement generated considerable excitement among the students, who expressed a strong desire to participate. Observational data indicated that the students were highly engaged and enthusiastic about the class. The English teacher noted the students' keen willingness to engage in the activities. The class was structured into distinct phases to maintain student engagement and ensure effective learning. The session began with an introduction, during which the researcher outlined the objectives of the class and emphasized the importance of vocabulary acquisition. Students were asked questions about their prior understanding to assess their initial vocabulary knowledge. Additionally, fun icebreaker activities were conducted to help students feel comfortable and motivated to participate actively in the learning process.

Before the storytelling session, students took a pre-test to assess their initial vocabulary knowledge, establishing a baseline for subsequent comparison. The researcher, with assistance from the English teacher, commenced the teaching session, ensuring that students received thorough support throughout their learning experience. The traditional short story "*Maka MaPena,*" was presented with accompanying illustrations to aid comprehension and retention of new vocabulary. Interactive class discussions facilitated by Wordwall software make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. As noted (Çil, 2021), Wordwall effectively enhances students' vocabulary knowledge. Rodríguez-Escobar findings also indicate that pre-service EFL teachers consider Wordwall highly beneficial for teaching and acquiring English vocabulary and for providing feedback beyond conventional methods. During the session, students drew, and colored objects mentioned in the story and assembled them on a large piece of cardboard. They also composed and displayed the full version of the story on the cardboard. Each group presented their work and discussed the themes of the story. The pre-test scores varied from 10 to 80, with a mean score of 48.08, predominantly falling within the Emergent Beginner or Upper Novice categories. In contrast, post-test scores ranged from 40 to 100, with an average score of 75.77. Most students demonstrated significant progress, advancing to higher proficiency levels with an average improvement of 27.69%. While most students showed notable enhancement and moved to higher proficiency categories, a few remained at the same level. Overall, the intervention effectively enhanced vocabulary proficiency for the majority of students.

According to Warmansyah and Nirwana (2023), storytelling methods can effectively foster students' creative potential and enhance various aspects of their development. A comprehensive review session was conducted to reinforce essential vocabulary and the moral values from the stories, ensuring that all students fully understood the content. Finally, a post-test was administered to evaluate improvements in vocabulary knowledge. The results of the

post-test were compared to the pre-test scores to assess the effectiveness of the storytelling intervention.

Integrating Local Culture and Language Learning: Insights from Teacher Interview

The interview with the English teacher provided valuable insights into the challenges and implications of integrating local cultural values into school instruction. Several key findings emerged from the responses:

1. Challenges in Teaching EFL

A significant challenge highlighted by the English teacher is the insufficient within the school. Specifically, there is a need for more reliable access to consistent energy and dependable internet connectivity to efficiently utilize digital instructional materials. In an environment marked by frequent power outages and intermittent internet access, the ability to integrate modern educational technologies - such as digital textbooks, interactive learning platforms, and multimedia content - is severely hampered. Winarni et al. (2022) argue that inadequate success in language learning often reflects low productive language skills, which can be exacerbated by limited access to educational resources. The English teacher remarked:

"The Internet is not always stable, and sometimes the electricity goes out several times a week, making it hard to rely on digital media. So, one of the difficulties is when I have to employ digital media or integrate Kurikulum Merdeka-based material. Not having sufficient support is difficult." (The teacher - Author's Translation)

Another challenge is the reliance solely on textbooks provided by the school. Due to resource constraints, teachers frequently depend on the standard textbooks and basic materials available, which may lack contextual content and local cultural insights. This limitation can impede the incorporation of relevant, culturally rich content into the curriculum.

"We struggle to acquire learning resources besides the school's textbooks. Consequently, we frequently rely on these textbooks and the basic materials provided. I have occasionally intended to supplement with external resources, such as designing activities or texts based on local settings or contexts, including using

fables. However, even when I try to find these materials online, the results are often unsuitable for implementation". (The teacher - Author's Translation)

This finding aligns with the results of a study conducted by Sulistiyo et al. (2021), which identified several shortcomings in the reading texts and images used in educational materials. Their research found that the content was often too generalized, lacking in cultural information and relevance to the English textbook's thematic focus. Additionally, the images were typically in black and white and lacked detailed content, further limiting their educational effectiveness.

Furthermore, the limited resources and technology available to teachers in the research setting restrict their ability to develop diverse learning media and materials. This constraint can impede the implementation of innovative teaching methods. Shadiev and Yang (2020) emphasize that encouraging the use of technology allows teachers to adapt their classroom activities and strategies to maximize make the effectiveness of available resources. Students generally show enthusiasm for incorporating technology in foreign language classrooms (Klimova & Polakova, 2020). The current limitations in the research setting may also impact the effectiveness and appeal of storytelling, suggesting that results could differ in environments with more advanced technological support. Purnama et al. (2022) highlight that children's creativity is often more effectively stimulated when stories are presented with technology-based illustrations.

2. Integration of Cultural Values in Teaching

The interview results also showed that integrating storytelling and local cultural values into EFL teaching methods could be highly beneficial. Despite recognizing the advantages, traditional storytelling has not yet been widely adopted in current practices. The teacher noted:

"*From 2018 until now, I never considered implementing or incorporating local cultural values into my teaching. After participating in the PPG program, I just started thinking about where we encountered Kurikulum Merdeka, which includes integrating cultural values and local wisdom into the learning process. When I collaborated with the researcher, I realized how vital this is to be implemented.*

Although I've never done it before, I'll use it in my future classes." (The teacher - Author's Translation)

The teacher's statement reflects a growing interest and intention to incorporate local tales into her teaching practices. However, she primarily relies on textbooks provided by the school while predominantly lacking specific cultural content. The cultural elements included in these textbooks often do not represent local traditions but rather offer limited glimpses of the target language and other cultures (Baleghizadeh & Amiri Shayesteh, 2020).

3. Effectiveness of Storytelling and Visual Media

The interview findings emphasize the positive impact of storytelling, particularly when enhanced with pictures and illustrations, on engaging students and improving their comprehension. The teacher observed:

"*Students were enthusiastic about learning local stories from folklore and found it easier to understand and relate to the content when we used storytelling with pictures.*" *(The teacher - Author's Translation)*

"Students listened to the story and saw the picture. Their minds were able to navigate and correlate the story with pictures. Although students may not have comprehended the pronunciation, watching the picture allows their brains to associate. So I think it's quite helpful." (The teacher - Author's Translation).

Pictures provide a visual context that aids students in inferring the meaning of unfamiliar words that they might not fully grasp through pronunciation alone. By presenting visual representations of concepts, students can connect these images to the vocabulary they are learning, which enhances comprehension and retention. This is supported by Pushpanathan (2017), who noted pictures can serve as tools or media to encourage students to describe the objects or people depicted. Observing these images allows students to understand concepts more deeply, often without the need for extensive verbal explanations from the teacher. Thus, pictures facilitate more profound and effective learning.

"When we employed the traditional short stories in this research, I discovered a lack of learning material that includes cultural values or contextual aspects from their environment. Students learn more from different cultures. For example, because they rely primarily on school textbooks, they are more familiar with folktales from

other places, such as Malin Kundang, Roro Jonggrang, and others from Java. However, they are unfamiliar with the folktales of their region. Therefore, I consider they must learn about their local folktales." (The teacher - Author's Translation)

Kristiawan et al. (2022) support the teacher's statement by noting that in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, such as Indonesia, teachers often rely heavily on textbook resources to develop students' language skills. Additionally, short stories included in basic textbooks frequently lack local cultural relevance, resulting in a deficiency in students' cultural understanding (Rahmawati & Kusmiatun, 2019). Ideally, teachers should serve as models of both language and cultural literacy, demonstrating proficiency in the language being taught as well as an understanding of its contextual and cultural aspects (Bland, 2019). This approach underscores the importance of teachers being well-versed in both the language and the cultural context to effectively support students' learning.

4. Cultural Relevance and Engagement

The interview with the English teacher highlights how incorporating traditional short stories into English learning enhances both cultural relevance and students engagement.

"Most people I know here are from the suburban areas, and they are known for their deep admiration of their culture. They are very convinced about issues related to their homeland. As a result, when educational authorities implement initiatives to integrate cultural products into education, they become conscious of the cultural values being preserved. Objects in the environment can also serve as resources for learning to their children." (The teacher - Author's Translation)

The study explores how traditional short stories from Sahraen, South Amarasi can enhance language instruction. It illustrates how incorporating culturally significant stories into classroom teaching can bridge the gap between students' native cultural contexts and the target language. This approach preserves the stories' original meanings and cultural relevance, providing students with a unique opportunity to engage deeply with the cultural context of the language they are learning. By introducing new vocabulary within the framework of these culturally rich narratives, students not only expand their language

skills but also gain insight into the values embedded in the stories. This approach fosters a more integrated language learning experience, where language development is closely linked to cultural understanding.

Integrating local folklore into EFL learning can bridge the gap between tradition and modern education. This approach honors the society's deep respect for its culture, connects new learning to students' prior knowledge and experiences, and provides a familiar and engaging foundation for language acquisition. Such integration enhances learning outcomes and fosters students' sense of pride and belonging. Additionally, it balances global and local perspectives in EFL education. While students learn English, they also acquire media that enables global communication, all the while grounding their understanding in their cultural context (Sung, 2014).

Teacher interview provides qualitative insights into the significance of cultural relevance in language learning, while the quantitative pre-test and post-test results offer clear evidence of vocabulary development. This dual methodology enables this study to capture both measurable outcomes and the processes underlying the success of culturally relevant storytelling in language instruction. Key implications for language teaching include the incorporation of visual aids, such as photographs and multimedia, to enhance vocabulary acquisition and retention. Teachers are encouraged to adapt their methods to local contexts, considering infrastructure limitations and available resources. The findings highlight the importance of integrating traditional storytelling into EFL settings as a powerful approach to vocabulary expansion. By using stories as a tool for language acquisition, teachers can create engaging and stimulating learning environments that promote deeper vocabulary interaction and, consequently, improved language competence. However, the selection of short stories should be tailored to students' proficiency levels, preferences, and the length of the short stories (Zainal et al., 2022). Overall, this study underscores the potential of storytelling in language

pedagogy, presenting it as a viable strategy to enhance EFL teaching and foster students' language development.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess how incorporating traditional short stories into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction could enhance students' vocabulary development. The findings indicate that storytelling, particularly through local folklore, is an effective strategy for improving both vocabulary and cultural understanding. By integrating stories that resonate with students' cultural backgrounds, educators can create engaging learning experiences that not only enhance language skills but also enrich students' cultural awareness. This approach allows students to connect new vocabulary with meaningful contexts and their own cultural experiences, thereby making the language learning process more relevant and effective.

Despite the valuable insights provided by this study, several limitations must be acknowledged. The small sample size of just 26 students from a single junior high school may limit the generalizability of the findings to broader populations of EFL students. The results observed in this specific setting may not be applicable to other schools or regions due to variations in educational environments, resources, and student demographics. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impacts of storytelling on EFL students' language and cultural literacy, future research should include cross-cultural studies and largerg sample sizes. Expanding the sample sizes would enhance the generalizability and reliability of the results across different groups. Additionally, conducting studies across various cultural contexts would provide into how storytelling influences students in diverse settings. Furthermore, the short duration of the treatment period and constraints such as limited access to digital resources should be considered. Future research should explore whether the benefits of storytelling persist over extended periods and investigate ways to improve teaching methods to be more effective

and culturally relevant. Such innovations could significantly enhance students' language and cultural literacy.

Acknowledgements

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