

## The Use of Folktale to Improve Reading Comprehension of The Eighth Grade Students'

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### ABSTRACT

*This research is aimed at finding out whether the use of folktales can improve the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Sigi. The sample was selected using the random sampling technique. The sample of this research were 54 students, which were divided into 27 students of class VIII B as an experimental group and 27 students of class VIII D as a control group. The data were collected through the reading test that consisted of pre-test and post-test. The mean score of the experimental group on the pre-test was 42 and the control group was 42. Then, the mean score of the post-test for the experimental group was 67 and the control group was 59. The data were analyzed statistically using the t-test formula with degrees of freedom  $N_x+N_y-2=27+27-2=52$ . The findings show that the t-counted value is 4.364 while the t-table value is 2.006. This means that the t-counted is higher than the t-table. Therefore, the research hypothesis is accepted. These findings answered the question from the problem formulation that the use of Folktale can improve reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Sigi. The implication of this finding is that Folktale can improve students' literacy, make learning more enjoyable, and boost their activeness and engagement in the learning process.*

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### 1. Introduction

The majority of students struggle to focus on the substance of the text, identify the main idea, organize arguments, and follow the flow of thought. Inappropriate teaching methods at this school are not the only cause of the issue; low reading comprehension levels, limited reading experience, and a lack of enthusiasm or focus are also contributing factors. Reading comprehension is the element that most influences the process of improving reading ability. According to Linse (2005), reading comprehension refers to reading for meaning, comprehension, and entertainment. Furthermore Abidin (2010), reading comprehension can also be defined as a series of processes that the reader to find information and understand the information contained in a reading text. That means reading comprehension is also the main key in learning a language.

Reading comprehension is important for junior high school students as it helps develop important skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, and overall academic success. It prepares students for further education, better communication, understanding, interpreting, and being able to analyze complex material. Cruz Neri et al. (2021), argue that good reading comprehension competence is very necessary and is a prerequisite for reading, understanding various literature of other subjects, such as science, social studies, mathematics and others. So to improve understanding of a material, the students must practice reading comprehension skill to make it easier to understand the content of reading. Therefore, reading comprehension serves as a core skill to develop other skills.

Using folktale in teaching reading comprehension in junior high school is a good approach. Thi and Nhung (2016) state that there are various reasons for employing folktales in teaching English as a foreign language as they provide authentic, rich, and meaningful input, and can help motivate young learners to learn the language, particularly in reading as a language skill. As folktales are rich in literary allusions and fun characters, they are engaging and accessible to students (Fairuz et al., 2022.; Nahdhiyah et al., 2023; Junaid & Andini, 2025). In addition, the stories usually include moral teachings and cultural values that can broaden students' perspectives. Folktales also provide ample opportunities for discussion, prediction, and imaginative analysis, all of which can improve reading comprehension and stimulate critical

thinking in students. Even struggling students can engage with the material and improve their understanding by adapting folktales to suit different reading levels and learning preferences (Yaumi et al., 2023; Abbas et al., 2023; Sahib et al., 2019; Junaid et al., 2023).

Moreover, integrating folktales into reading lessons encourages collaborative learning and intercultural awareness. When students share and compare folktales from different regions or countries, they not only strengthen their reading comprehension but also develop respect for diverse traditions and values. Group activities such as role-playing, dramatization, or rewriting the story endings foster creativity and teamwork while reinforcing vocabulary and narrative structures. This interactive environment helps students internalize linguistic patterns and narrative sequencing, making the reading experience both enjoyable and educational.

## **2. Methodology**

The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative method. This method has the function of classifying and describing data that show psychological conflicts and conflict resolution efforts of the characters Razan and Sameer in the *Jayyibat Al-eid* series. The data are then presented in the form of descriptions through words. This study also uses a literary psychology approach. This approach uses Kurt Lewin's psychological conflict theory to identify conflicts and Sigmund Freud's ego defense mechanism theory to find conflict resolutions. Kurt Lewin (1935) states that there are three types of conflicts that focus on goals that influence our decision-making process (Davis & Buskist, n.d.). The first type of conflict is Approach-Approach Conflict, which occurs when there are words or behaviors of characters that show two positive valences. The second type of conflict is Avoidance-Avoidance Conflict, which arises when a character's words or behavior show two negative valences. The third type of conflict arises when a character's words or behavior show one positive valence and one negative valence (Approach Avoidance Conflict). Another approach to literary psychology is the ego defense mechanism, as proposed by Sigmund Freud. This approach serves to describe the words and actions of characters that reflect their attempts to resolve the conflicts they face.

The data source for this study is a series directed by Ali Alattas and Said Zagha and produced by Nora Aboushousha. Produced by ContentZilla, this series was released in 2023. The data consists of sentences or narratives as well as the behavior of the characters Razhan and Sameer. The technique used to collect the data was the observation and note-taking technique. The function of this technique is to carefully and closely observe every word and behavior expressed by the characters Razan and Sameer as the data source for this study. The researcher then proceeded to record every statement made by the characters Razan and Sameer that was considered relevant to the research and could help in finding the answer to the research question.

In this study, the steps taken to analyze the data were as follows. First, watching and listening to the *Jayyibat Al-eid* series carefully and repeatedly, especially the speech of the main characters who were the main sources of data in this study. Second, identifying data in the series that corresponded to the research questions regarding the psychological forms and resolutions of the characters Razhan and Sameer in the film. Third, classifying the identified data based on the forms of psychological conflict according to Kurt Lewin and conflict resolution based on Sigmund Freud's theory of ego defense mechanisms. Fourth, applying and analyzing the data in the series that has undergone the identification and classification process into Kurt Lewin's theory of psychological conflict forms and conflict resolution based on Sigmund Freud's theory of ego defense mechanisms. Fifth, describing the results of the analysis and drawing conclusions so as to find the right answers in accordance with the problem formulation that has been made.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

The research employed a pre-test to assess the baseline reading comprehension abilities of students, focusing on their understanding of narrative texts. During this pre-test, students responded to multiple-choice and reading questions based on a provided text, allowing the researcher to evaluate their initial competencies. The primary aim was to establish a reference point for students' reading comprehension before any instructional interventions were implemented. The results of this assessment offered valuable insights into the specific areas where students struggled, such as identifying main ideas and making inferences. These findings guided the planning of targeted instructional activities designed to address the identified weaknesses and improve overall reading comprehension.

Following the instructional treatment, which involved the use of Folktales, a post-test was administered to measure the students' progress in reading comprehension. This post-test mirrored the structure of the pre-test, with students answering similar questions to facilitate a direct comparison of their performance. The analysis of pre-test and post-test

scores aimed to determine the effectiveness of the treatment in enhancing students' reading comprehension skills. The findings from this comparison are expected to provide insights into the impact of narrative texts on students' learning outcomes

### 3.1. Pre-Test Results

Prior to the administration of the treatment, a pre-test was conducted to assess the students' reading comprehension abilities. The mean score of the experimental group was 42, with the highest score recorded at 63 and the lowest at 23. Conversely, the control group mean score was 42, with the highest recorded at 60 and the lowest score at 26. The results of the students' pre-test revealed that there was a lack of reading comprehension. This indicates that both groups began with relatively similar proficiency levels, ensuring the validity of subsequent comparisons. The pre-test results also highlight the need for targeted instructional strategies to enhance students' reading comprehension skills.

### 3.2. Post-test Results

After completing six treatment sessions, a post-test was given to evaluate the development of students' reading skills. The counted data above revealed that the post-test mean scores of the experimental and control classes different. The mean score of the experimental group was 67, while the control class was 59. It demonstrated that students' achievement in the experimental group after receiving treatment was much higher than in the control class without treatment.

**Table 1. Analysis of Mean Scores from Pre-test and Post-test**

Group	Pre-test	Post-test
Experimental (N=27)	42	67
Control (N=27)	42	59

The table presents a comparison of the results from pre-tests and post-tests for both the experimental and control groups. The experimental group, consisting of 27 participants, demonstrated a significant increase in scores, rising from 42 in the pre-test to 67 in the post-test, indicating an improvement of 25 points. Conversely, the control group, which also comprised 27 participants, exhibited only a minor increase, advancing from 42 to 59, which corresponds to a gain of merely 17 points.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The hypothesis testing is to obtain a result showing whether the research hypothesis is accepted or rejected. After knowing the t-counted value of this research, the researcher calculates the t-table value using df 52 (27+27-2). Using a two-sided test with a significance level of 0.05, the derived t-table value for df 52 is 2.006. As a result, the research hypothesis is accepted because the t-counted value (4.364) higher than the t-table (2.006) It may be concluded that the use of folktale can improve the reading comprehension of the eighth-grade students of SMP Negeri 13 Sigi.

**Table 2. T-Test Results**

Variable	Value
t-count	4.364
t-table	2.006
Decision	H <sup>a</sup> accepted

The table presents the findings of an independent t-test performed to determine if there is a significant difference between the two groups. The computed t-value is 4.364, in contrast to the critical t-value of 2.006 at 52 degrees of freedom and a significance level of 0.05. Since the computed t-value surpasses the critical value, the alternative hypothesis (H<sub>a</sub>) is accepted.

### 3.4 Interpretation of Results

The results from the post-test indicate that 18 out of 27 students (66.67%) in the experimental group attained scores classified as "successful" ( $\geq 70$ ), whereas only 1 out of 27 students (3.70%) in the control group achieved this level. The overall increase in scores was markedly greater in the experimental group, suggesting that the use of folktales significantly enhances students' reading comprehension.

Findings show that folktales are effective in enhancing students' comprehension skills, supporting previous studies with similar results. The study involved experimental and control groups, both given pre-tests and post-tests on narrative texts. Initial results revealed students struggled with vocabulary and comprehension, relying heavily on the teacher instead of dictionaries. The experimental group then received eight sessions of folktale-based instruction, focusing on narrative structure and comprehension exercises. Post-test results indicated significant improvement in the experimental group, with 18 students achieving the minimum mastery criterion, while the control group showed no notable progress. Overall, the research concludes that using folktales is an effective medium for improving students' reading comprehension.

### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of folktale media is an effective method for learning reading comprehension because it trains skimming, scanning, critical thinking about the relationship between stories and everyday life, and most significantly, it provides new vocabulary, making reading an interesting activity. Furthermore, the findings of this research answered the research question of whether using folktale as a learning medium can improve the reading comprehension skills of students in grade VIII at SMP Negeri 13 Sigi. The improvement in students' post-test scores demonstrates that folktales can significantly enhance engagement and comprehension when compared with traditional teaching methods. This approach also fosters cultural appreciation by exposing learners to diverse moral values and storytelling traditions. Consequently, incorporating folktales into the curriculum can serve as a sustainable strategy for developing both language proficiency and critical literacy skills among junior high school students.

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