

BIPA Students' Interest in Folklore Texts Facilitating Cross-Cultural Understanding

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ABSTRACT

Cross-cultural understanding can facilitate Indonesian for Foreign Speakers (BIPA) students because they can learn and understand Indonesian culture by reflecting on their own culture. They can easily imagine the concrete forms of the Indonesian language and culture as well as their application in everyday life. The cultural similarities and differences with the target language culture are good intermediaries in learning the language and establishing cooperation. This article aims to describe the extent to which BIPA students are interested in folklore texts through an open questionnaire. Folklore text is one of the media used by teachers in the process of cross-cultural understanding. The students' interest is closely related to the need for teaching materials containing folklore texts as a cross-cultural understanding effort, especially Japanese and Indonesian cultures.

Keywords: *Cross-cultural understanding, folklore texts, Japanese BIPA, needs analysis.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Graduate Competency Standards in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 27 of 2017, folklore is one of the teaching materials in BIPA learning at the intermediate level 4 with a competency goal of 'Being able to re-express moral messages in fairy tales or folklore'. In this section, students are expected to be able to identify sentences or groups of sentences that contain moral messages in fairy tales or folklore, and be able to compare similar fairy tales and folklore with respective ones of their country (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 27 of 2017).

The Ministry of Education and Culture (2019) has provided folklore texts for teaching materials to fulfill this competency goal. *Sahabatku Indonesia* is the teaching materials used by BIPA institutions in general. These teaching materials are prepared by the Center for Development of Language Strategy and Diplomacy, the Agency for Language Development and Guidance, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. However, it can be seen that the number of folklore texts contained in the intermediate level BIPA teaching materials is still minimal. The information contained in the short story texts has also not been thoroughly reviewed. Cultural information contained in

cultural records is also still limited in number, even though there are numerous Indonesian folklore texts. The values contained in the folklore texts are also diverse, such as cultural values, tourism values, social values, local wisdom values, and so on (Amandangi, Mulyati, & Yulianeta, 2020).

Based on initial observations, it is known that BIPA teachers at Nanzan University, Japan, use simple folklore texts to introduce Indonesian folklore. According to one of them, the number and variety of folklore texts contained in the teaching materials are still very limited. The teacher admits that it is still difficult to find Indonesian folklore texts that are in accordance with the language development of intermediate-level BIPA students, especially to explore the values in folklore and make them a material for discussion.

Taking the results of the observation into account, the provision of teaching materials and enrichment materials are urgently needed. Students find it difficult to implement the Indonesian language properly and correctly without being accompanied by the knowledge of the socio-cultural aspects of Indonesian society (Kusmiatun, 2019; Listyaningsih & Widayati, 2016). Therefore, the provided teaching materials should contain Indonesian cultural values. Cultural strategies are indispensable in supporting the success of the BIPA Program. One of these strategies is by bridging cross-

cultural understanding in BIPA learning through comparative literature. Literature, including folklore, can be a strong bridge in supporting cross-cultural understanding (Armstrong, 2015; Chapelle, 2016; Danandjaja, 2007; Zepetnek, & Vasvari, 2013). The introduction and learning of Indonesian through literature, especially folklore, as supporting teaching materials will make the learning of Indonesian livelier and more interesting and provide a different variation compared to the formative core material (Alaini & Lestariningsih, 2014).

Folklore usually illustrates the culture that produces the story. In the context of BIPA, it cannot be separated from the differences between the students' knowledge of their cultural background and Indonesian cultural background. This difference can be used as a comparison to make it easier for them to understand Indonesian language through Indonesian culture. This can be realized by comparing folklore from two countries, such as Japan and Indonesia. The number of BIPA students from Japan is in the top six of the total numbers of foreigners learning Indonesian. This large number of students opens up opportunities to provide teaching materials related to their culture. Several Indonesian and Japanese folk tales, especially fairy tales, have similarities in tale types and story motifs, so it is interesting to conduct comparative research (Danandjaja, 1997).

Apart from textbooks form, the presentation of independently-learned materials are in the form of non-textbooks or in the form of enrichment materials. Enrichment materials can support the learning process with flexible properties. In formal conditions, teachers can use this enrichment materials to complement teaching materials or as independent and group assignments. Teachers and students can study enrichment materials independently to meet the information needs related to folklore texts. They can also be used as a complementary supplement to literacy, especially Indonesian cultural literacy. Enrichment materials can overcome time constraints because when students learn Indonesian and the specified learning activities are completed, they can continue the learning activities themselves. In addition, enrichment materials can overcome the differences in the characteristics of students because students who can learn quickly do not need to wait for other students. Likewise, students who need to repeat the material can do so without disturbing the activities of other students. This allows the concept of independence in learning to be formed optimally.

The development of cross-cultural-based Indonesian-Japanese folklore enrichment materials combined with the concept of electronic books (e-books) are expected to be used optimally. The use of information and communication technology in learning Indonesian for foreign speakers will facilitate the distribution and

dissemination of information. This is because education is a process of communication and information between educators and students. Education is a process that contains educational information, which has elements of educators as sources of information, media as a means of presenting ideas and educational materials, as well as the students themselves (Jacobsen, et al., in Siroj, 2015).

This article aims to describe the extent to which BIPA students are interested in folklore texts. The interest of students is closely related to the need for teaching materials containing folklore texts as a cross-cultural understanding effort, especially Japanese and Indonesian cultures.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Folklore Texts

Folklore is a story that is conveyed orally, passed down both horizontally--the same generation--and vertically--between generations. In society, no individual claims the story as her/his own because the story is seen as belonging to a particular community/collective (McCormick & White, 2011). According to Bascom, as quoted by Danandjaja (2003), folklore is divided into three, namely: (1) myths, (2) legends, and (3) fairy tales.

As a form of literary work, folklore also has a structure as an element of story building. Stanton (2012) divides story building elements into three parts, namely facts, themes, and story tools. The three can also be referred to as the factual structure and factual level of a story (Nurgiyantoro, 2013). The facts of the story consist of plot, characters, and setting. In addition, folklore has one story structure namely story motifs. The motif of the story is an element of the story that stands out and is unusual in nature (Danandjaja, 2007). Meanwhile the means of the story consist of title, point of view, style and tone, symbolism, and irony.

2.2. E-Book as BIPA Enrichment Materials

Enrichment materials are a type of materials used in learning and teaching activities. In principle, any kind of materials can be used for learning materials. Enrichment materials are the source of teaching materials in the form of reference books for certain subjects arranged systematically and simply with instructions. Such books contain materials that can improve, develop, and enrich students' abilities (National Education Ministry Bookkeeping Center, 2008). People are more familiar with enrichment materials using the term reading books

or library books. These books are intended to enrich the insight, experience, and knowledge of its readers. An enrichment book in this article is defined as a book that contains material that can enrich and improve the mastery of science, technology, art, and skills and that can shape the personality of students, educators, education managers, and other communities.

There are various forms of enrichment materials, including print, web-based and e-books. In simple terms, e-books can be understood as electronic books or digital books. An e-book is a digital version of a book that generally consists of a collection of paper containing text or images. The e-book itself converts the text and images into digital information in both plain text, pdf, jpeg, lit, and html formats. E-books are a form of media-morphosis from printed or conventional books (Severin & Tankard, 2005). Saadiah (2008 in Yusminar, 2014), defines e-book as an electronic version of a traditional printed book that can be read using a personal computer or by using other information technology tools. An e-book reader can be a software application on a computer; for example, "Read" from Microsoft which can be downloaded for free or on a smartphone.

3. METHOD

The research design used in this study was descriptive qualitative. This is based on the fact that 1) the research data are in the form of verbal response to questionnaires and information from literature studies, 2) the research is carried out naturally, and 3) the researchers act as the main instrument. The questionnaire was filled out by randomly selected intermediate-level Japanese BIPA students. The documents that were analyzed are national and international journals with topics that are related to research. The questionnaire was compiled using google form and it was distributed to Japanese BIPA students randomly. Three BIPA students were selected because they met the research criteria, namely Japanese BIPA students who had studied folklore texts.

The obtained data was then analyzed by using a qualitative approach. The qualitative approach was paired with technical content analysis, namely drawing conclusions by identifying the special characteristics of a message objectively and systematically.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following Figure presents the data obtained through the electronic questionnaire. The explanation is accompanied by several response diagrams that 18 respondents have given. First, the respondent's response is related to the preference for reading story texts originating from Japan, or stories native to the respondent's area.

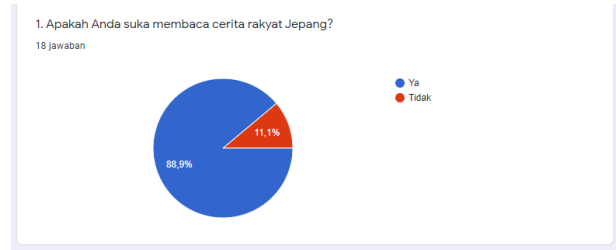


Figure 1 Respondents' responses on Japanese folklore texts

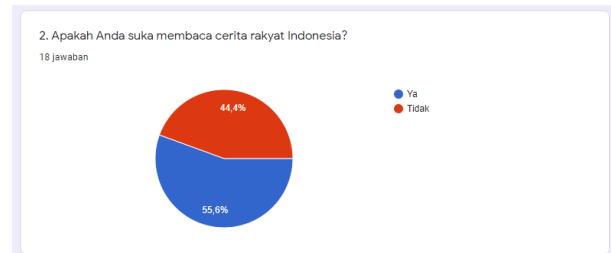


Figure 2 Respondents' responses on Indonesian folklore texts

As seen in Figure 1, all respondents or as many as 88.9% stated that they like reading folklore texts originating from Japan. In addition, 11.1% stated that they did not like reading Japanese folklore texts. The language used in the folklore text was not mentioned in the questionnaire. This means that the language of the text may be Japanese. The diagram presented in Figure 2 shows the results of the accumulation of the respondents' answers about reading Indonesian folklore texts.

It can be seen that most of the respondents or as many as 55.6% stated that they liked reading folklore texts from Indonesia and 44.4% did not like reading Indonesian folklore texts. The language used in the folklore text was not mentioned in the questionnaire. This means that the language of the text may be in Indonesian or Indonesian folklore in Japanese. The following presents the reasons the respondents like and do not like reading folklore texts.

- 1) Folklore is interesting! And has many moral messages.
- 2) Folklore is unique and contains many messages in it
- 3) I got folklore from my parents telling me about them
- 4) In folklore text, there many interesting characters and messages too
- 5) I like reading
- 6) The folklore texts are in textbooks, I don't like reading because they are too long
- 7) I like them since I was a child
- 8) There are many interesting stories

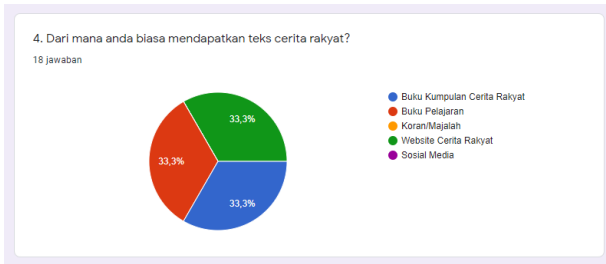


Figure 3 Respondents' responses on the source of the folklore texts

Some of the other reasons have some similarities with the above-mentioned statements. Some of the reasons why the respondents like folklore texts include internal reasons; reasons originating from within themselves and external reasons or due to external influences. One of the internal reasons is because someone has a special interest in folklore, so that the story texts are considered interesting and fun to read. External reasons include the fact that the folklore texts are listed in textbooks with attractive design and language so that someone is interested in reading the text. The following figure shows the acquisition of folklore texts.

Figure 3 shows that 33.3% of respondents got folklore texts from textbooks, 33.3% got them from folklore websites, and another 33.3% got them from folklore text books. Some of the BIPA students read folklore texts because the texts are in textbooks or in printed form. Other students read it because they have a collection of stories so that they have knowledge of folklore texts that come from story books or folklore anthologies in printed form. Meanwhile some read folklore texts they obtained from websites because some folklore texts are presented in electronic and web-based form. Next, the following diagram shows the accumulated results of the respondents' answers about their interest in exploring folklore text material.

Figure 4 shows that most of the respondents or as many as 66.7% stated that they were interested in studying folklore text materials, and 33.3% stated that they were not interested in studying folklore texts. This response has led the researchers to believe that most students have a deeper interest in folklore text material. Next, the following diagram shows the accumulated results of the respondents' answers about their interest in exploring Indonesian culture through folklore texts.



Figure 4 Respondents' interests to further explore folklore texts



Figure 5 Respondents' Interest to explore Indonesian culture through folklore texts

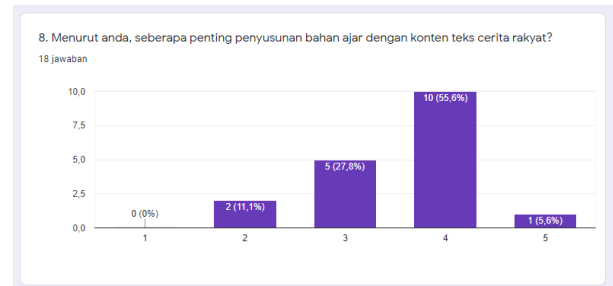


Figure 6 Respondents' opinions on the presentation of the teaching material with folklore texts

Figure 5 shows that most of the respondents or as many as 83.3% stated that they were interested in exploring Indonesian culture through folklore texts. The rest, 16.7% said they were not interested. This means in general BIPA students are interested in exploring Indonesian culture. One way to introduce culture is through folklore texts. The cultural content in a folklore text is needed for students to get complete knowledge.

The Figure 6 presents the respondents' opinions on the importance of making preparation for teaching materials that contain folklore. In total, 11.1% of respondents gave a score of 2 and 27.8% gave a score of 3. A score of 4 was chosen by most of the respondents or 55.6%. Meanwhile, the other 5.6% gave a score of 5. The score indicates that the preparation of teaching materials or materials with folklore texts is considered important to very important by BIPA students.

Furthermore, the students agree that teaching materials can be presented in electronic form or commonly known as E-Books. Electronic books are more accessible, easier to obtain and read, and more practical because they are not heavy to carry. The students' opinions about the form of this teaching material are conveyed in question number 7 in the questionnaire. E-books are considered more effective because, currently, learning uses communication technology more in practice. Apart from the COVID-19 pandemic as the reason, electronic books are considered more practical because students can obtain it more easily.

The next section is an explanation of the knowledge that the respondents have as Japanese BIPA students. The questionnaire contains questions about folklore texts that the respondents had read (see Figure 7).



Figure 7 List of folklore texts the respondents read

Based on further examination, several Japanese and Indonesian folklore texts have similar story motifs and messages. These texts can be used as content in the teaching materials for Japanese BIPA students. It can also be used to facilitate the introduction and exploration of the culture. Further research on literary analysis or comparison can be carried out on Japanese and Indonesian folklore texts. The results of this comparative study have the following benefits:

- a. For teachers, the results of comparative literature research are used as knowledge about comparative literature, especially in comparing Indonesian and Japanese folklore texts. Teachers can also make policies in the use of enrichment materials based on the needs of the BIPA students, especially Japanese BIPA students.
- b. For students, enrichment materials from a comparative study of Indonesian and Japanese folklore can be used as a source of independent learning and as a source of knowledge of Indonesian and Japanese culture to avoid culture shock. As free reading material, enrichment materials can improve cultural literacy for students.
- c. For BIPA organizing institutions, the results of comparative literature research can be used as consideration that enrichment materials for Indonesian-Japanese folklore texts can be obtained through electronic books. Popular folklore will make it easier for BIPA institutions to introduce Indonesian folklore to students, especially students from Japan. In addition, enrichment materials can help smooth the delivery of material, especially related to folklore in Indonesia which have similar narrative elements with folklore texts originating from Japan.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and results of the needs analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that Japanese BIPA students have an interest in Indonesian-Japanese folklore text material. They also expressed interest in learning Indonesian culture through folklore texts. The students agree to the preparation of BIPA teaching materials with folklore text material in electronic form or e-books. Indonesian folklore texts that can be used as content are folklore texts that have similar motifs or messages because the students already have basic knowledge through native Japanese folklore texts.

In addition, it can be concluded that further research on comparative literary studies Japanese folklore and Indonesian folklore is needed. The results of further research analysis can be in the preparation of teaching materials or BIPA enrichment materials. There are several benefits of comparative literary studies, one of which is to minimize the cultural shock of Japanese BIPA students. This is because the content of Indonesian culture contained in folklore texts can be clarified by comparing them with the Japanese culture in Japanese folklore texts.

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