

## Puppet as a Medium in Project-Based Learning (PBL) to Promote English Language Competencies: EFL Students in Indonesia Setting

Ririn Pusparini<sup>1,\*</sup> Bayu Widyanarko<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> SMA Negeri 11 Surabaya, Indonesia

\* Corresponding author. Email: <u>ririnpusparini@unesa.ac.id</u>

## ABSTRACT

Shadow puppets, known as *wayang kulit* in Indonesia, have been used to entertain and as a medium to spread Javanese values. A puppeteer, one who plays the puppets, must have competence in storytelling. Thus, shadow puppet becomes an effective way of teaching a language, exclusively for ELT. However, paper puppets are chosen and used most instead of the leather ones, for they are much simpler to make. This study aims to describe what students can learn from the shadow puppets story as the implementation of project-based learning (PBL) in learning narrative text. Students will choose a particular character from shadow puppets, get references to know more about the character, create puppets from paper, and present what they can learn from the character. They will involve in learning activities collaboratively as one of the PBL principles. Hence, students will not only improve their language skills but also get excellent moral values from the story. Besides, it is hoped that students will be familiar with the cultural heritage, apply the positive attitudes reflected by the story, and use them for their identity. Due to most puppetry involving storytelling, narrative text is considered appropriate to discuss in class.

Keywords: Puppet, Project based-learning (PBL), Narrative text.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In a traditional culture, the puppet is recognized as a doll that can move by pulling a string attached to parts of its body. Besides, we also can put our hands inside it. Moreover, the puppet is an inanimate object which the puppeteer manipulates. Puppeteer is people who manipulate the puppet by movement and sound, so the puppet looks alive. The art of presenting an inanimate object in the form of a living character is the art of puppetry [1].

There are many kinds of puppets worldwide; even Indonesia has at least 28 puppets (*wayang*). They consist of 17 of which are made of leather, five are made of wood, one is made of paper, and the rest are either in the form of masks or human beings as puppet actors [2]. Unfortunately, some of these puppets are already extinct, and some others are in the process of extinction. However, some, especially *wayang kulit* (shadow puppet) in the Java island, remain to exist until now and are considered a highlight of Javanese culture. The *wayang kulit* is the flat one, and it is usually made of buffalo leather. It usually brings a classic story, whereas it contains a beautiful message for lives.

The puppet show is performed not only as entertainment but also as a medium to disseminate moral value to the public [3]. Moreover, Rehymer [1] agrees that puppet is a wonderful toy that can be controlled by a puppeteer and can teach kids and adults about all kinds of things.

Since puppets can offer entertainment, a positive attitude reflected from each character, and language practice, the stories brought by puppets can become excellent materials for students in language learning. In this case, students will not only improve their language skills by reading and practicing the language, but also be familiar with their own culture, get their identity as a member of a culture and society, and change their behavior to be a good person. Briefly, using puppets for classroom instruction allows students to express their feelings and even change their behavior [4].

Nevertheless, it is ironic that nowadays, students know more and better Cinderella, Snow White, or The

Beauty and The Beast as the fairy tales are imported from foreign countries rather than the local stories or stories from their own country. It is not a mistake to learn about other cultures as long as it is good for them due to the moral values in those stories. However, as members of a particular society and culture, they also need to learn and recognize the culture that belongs to their society, for they will be accepted by the society where they live [5]. Besides, it is also significant for students to be prepared to use English to talk about their own cultures when they have to discuss their cultures with people from other countries.

Meanwhile, project-based learning (PBL) is one of the suggested learning models in the current curriculum in Indonesia (the 2013 curriculum) and uses a project or activity as a medium [6]. In this regard, students are active learners, and the role of a teacher is as a facilitator and advisor to help students produce an optimum product as the students' imagination, creation, and innovation. Furthermore, when we get into 21stcentury learning, PBL becomes a hot issue and famous for promoting four students' competencies known as 4C's. covering critical thinking, creativity. communication, and collaboration [7]. Then, when teachers utilize the stories of Javanese puppets as learning materials and the puppet as a medium in PBL, students will be encouraged to think critically and creatively, communicate and work collaboratively. Since puppets are used as a medium in PBL, they could also be known as culture-based projects.

Since most puppetry involves storytelling, narrative text is considered an appropriate text to be discussed in class. For this, students will tell a story, entertain their friends as the audience as the narrative's purpose, and cause the audience to think about an issue, teach them a lesson, or excite their emotions [8].

Many studies proposed some learning models or techniques while using puppets in ELT to improve students' language skills. Some studies found that puppets can be an effective medium and material to promote students' speaking competencies [9], [10], [11]. However, no study is investigating how using puppets, exclusively the Javanese puppets in PBL can promote students' four language skills. Thus, it is necessary to provide a clear picture of how Javanese puppets can promote students' language competencies and how these puppets can be used in PBL for learning narrative texts. Briefly, the role of puppets in PBL to promote students' language competencies is the concern of this paper.

# 2. SCHOOL CURRICULUM IN INDONESIA

The education system in Indonesia has developed gradually. It is caused by the demand of the society and

also the situation and condition of a country. Recently, the educational system of Indonesia [12] has launched the 2013 curriculum. Curriculum 2013 is the next step of curriculum development that is from curriculum 2004 and curriculum 2006. One of the differences between curriculum 2006 and curriculum 2013 is the existence of affective (spiritual and social), cognitive, and psychomotor aspects. Meanwhile, in curriculum 2013, affective and psychomotor aspects are also developed besides cognitive to answer and solve the internal and external challenges in this country. Moreover, the 2013 curriculum aims that students get the competency related to the hard skills and the soft skills. For this, the government tries to improve some sectors in education related to school management, materials, teaching and learning process, and time management. It is supported by Richards [13] that curriculum may affect teachers' pedagogical values and beliefs, teachers' understanding of the language nature or second language learning, or their classroom practices and the use of teaching and learning materials.

During the pandemic of Covid-19, the government has released the emergency curriculum to simplify the basic competence for all subjects and focus on the essential competencies that students must achieve as the requirement for the next level [14]. The government offers three options in applying the curriculum: using the 2013 national curriculum, using an emergent curriculum, and simplifying the curriculum independently. In short, there is no change concerning the 2013 national curriculum as a basis of education implementation in Indonesia. Then, schools and teachers should think about the policy regarding the government offers, which is appropriate for their students' needs and conditions.

## 2.1. Narrative Text

As one of the texts stated in the 2013 curriculum, a narrative is a text which tells a story and entertains the audience" [15]. The story in the narrative text is usually fiction or nonfactual. Fiction means that the story is about something imaginative; for example, a fairy tale, folktale, legend, etc. Moreover, learning a nonfactual story will make the students improve their imagination and creativity of thinking. As stated by Emilia [8], there are eleven kinds of narrative text, they are:

- a. Fiction: telling an imaginary story.
- b. Nonfiction: telling about real people, places, and events or experiences.
- c. Realistic fiction: setting in the modern world.
- d. Science fiction: exploring unexpected possibilities of the past or the future by using scientific theories or data and imagination.



- e. Historical fiction: telling the contemporary fiction set in the past, may reference actual people or events.
- f. Tall tales: humorously exaggerated stories about impossible events in which the main characters have extraordinary abilities.
- g. Folktales: telling stories passed by word of mouth from generation to generation
- h. Myth: telling a traditional story, usually by an unknown author, that answers a fundamental question about the world
- i. Legend: telling a story handed down from the past about a specific person who usually demonstrates heroic accomplishments.
- j. Fables: telling brief tales that teach lessons about human nature.
- k. Fairy tales: telling stories about imaginary beings possessing magical powers

Meanwhile, several components build narrative become a good one, they are:

#### a. Orientation

In this part, the writers tell the readers of the story's background. For example, when and where the story takes place and the character's condition. The point is that the writer should be able to engage the reader how the story will behold.

#### b. Complication

This stage is where the writers tell how the problem is coming up. Besides, they have to arrange the problem chronologically and coherently from introduction, conflict, to climax. So the readers will understand clearly how the story is.

#### c. Resolution

In this part, the writer should make a problemsolving that leads to the story's ending. It could be a happy or sad ending.

Moreover, Emilia [8] describes narrative language features into six components, those are :

- a. Specific nouns, e.g., stepsisters, housework, etc.
- b. Adjectives in the form of a noun phrase, e.g., long black hair, two red apples, etc.
- c. Time connective and conjunctions, e.g., then, before that, etc.
- d. Adverb and adverbial phrases, e.g., here, in the mountain, happily ever after
- e. Action verbs in the form of past tense, e.g., stayed
- f. Saying verbs that show the utterances, e.g., said, told, and thinking

g. Verbs that show the feeling: thought, felt, etc.

## 2.2. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Education

Since we live in 21st-century society, there is also the advancement in the education face. Besides integrating technology in education that gets attention, the way of teaching attributed to learning models or techniques or strategies implemented in class also must get attention. Some essential skills of the 21st century are relevant for teaching and learning orientation in Indonesia [16]. These skills have been covered in the 2013 national curriculum as 4C's (critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration) that students have to master [17]. The essential skills are as bellows;

## 2.2.1. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Students need to be able to think critically to analyze a problem well and find a good solution. In this case, they need to get used to think analytically, compare any possibilities, and draw a conclusion to get the solution.

#### 2.2.2. Creativity and Innovation

In ELT, the components of creative thinking might be necessary along with critical thinking related to considering numerous ideas, assessing the argument from various angles, and approaching it from different perspectives (flexibility) managed to create meaningful and purposeful texts [18]. Hence, concerning the essential competencies stated in the 2013 curriculum, students have to create or produce texts, spoken and written, at the last of the teaching and learning process.

#### 2.2.3. Social Culture

Indonesia has many cultures, and this is regarded as the people's identity belonging to a particular culture. In other words, as members of a particular culture, people need to be familiar with the culture that belongs to the society where they live, for the society could accept them. To build national unity, people must recognize other cultures to avoid misinterpretation, miscommunication, and diversity.

## 2.2.4. Communication and Media Literacy

Communication skills are essential for students to establish relationships and express ideas written and spoken, verbal and nonverbal. Meanwhile, media literacy is essential for students to understand, analyze, and be aware of how the media is designed and accessed to avoid untruthful information.



## 2.2.5. ICT Literacy

ICT literacy is significant for students to have the ability to formulate their knowledge, express themselves to be creative, and create and produce information. Briefly, they will utilize technology to support their study and their life. The development of technology unconsciously influences students' lives, and then teachers need to use this condition to support the teaching and learning process.

## 2.3. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Models

Below are some learning models implemented potentially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century [19]:

#### 2.3.1. Discovery Learning

Students will solve the problems by initially searching for the causes of a problem. They can get any information from interviewing the experts or people involved and from some references on the internet. Then, they will conclude the concept they find and present it.

## 2.3.2. Project-Based Learning

As in discovery learning, PBL is also started with an essential question or a problem. Students will work in a group and make a schedule to achieve a target or get a solution. Then, they will present a product as a result of their project to the class.

#### 2.3.3. Problem-Based Learning

In this learning model, students will conduct exploration, elaboration, interpretation, and assessment to produce any products of learning where a problem is the first step in collecting and integrating new knowledge based on experience. Furthermore, the inquiry process is begun by raising guiding questions and guiding students to work collaboratively to produce a project.

## a. Self-directed learning

It is a learning process where students will learn a subject by themselves, starting from choosing a topic, applying learning strategies, identifying the sources, and making a reflection or evaluating their study.

#### b. Contextual learning

Teachers need to build a bridge between the materials the students learn with the students' real-life and between new knowledge and the knowledge and experience that the students have had.

#### c. Role-play and simulation

Students will learn better when they can learn by doing. Hence, role play and simulation can help students practice what they have to learn.

#### d. Collaborative learning

It is a kind of interaction philosophy and human living style that takes working together or togetherness as an effort to get an objective [6].

## e. Small discussion

Through this activity, students will practice sharing and communicating knowledge and experience for solving a problem in a small group.

Exclusively in collaborative learning, the role of a teacher is as a manager or facilitator, whereas students are the ones that must be active. If collaborative learning sees a student as individual learning, it touches the students' character, primarily if he/she interacts with others or with the teacher. This condition will make students feel safe in the hope that they can face any changes or problems together. Moreover, Larsen-Freeman and Anderson [20] claim that collaborative learning is a way of learning and a theme to be communicated about and studied. Some activities included in collaboration activities are problem-solving activities, project-based, group investigation, and role play.

Furthermore, as the concern of this paper to implement, project-based learning is a potential learning model to apply the 21st-century essential skills and activities like self-directed learning, contextual learning, role play, collaborative learning, and small discussion.

## 2.4. Project-Based Learning (PBL)

Problem-based learning is started with essential problems for which they are to collaboratively research and propose potential solutions [21]. PBL encourages students to learn about skills and strategies in achieving the target. In this regard, students are conditioned to think about group management, time management, selfdirected learning, transferring knowledge, and other lifelong learning skills while finding information to solve the problem. In PBL, students must learn the content and skills necessary for solving the problem through collaborative research, discussion, and strategic planning. In addition, creating a schedule is significant for them to manage their works for what they have to do at first, and so on.

Characteristics of project-based Learning (PBL) are:

- a. Students determine what project they will design
- b. There is a problem or challenge to solve.
- c. Students design the process for getting a solution or achieving a target.
- d. Students are responsible for accessing and managing the information they gather.
- e. Evaluation takes place continuously.



- f. Students regularly reflect on what they are doing.
- g. A final product (not necessarily material) is produced, presented, and evaluated for quality.
- h. The students' final products are highly appreciated.

The steps in conducting the project-based learning can be explained as below:

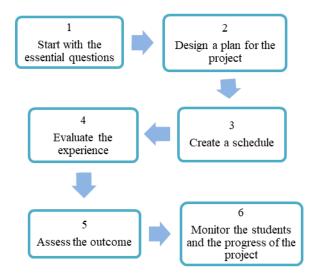


Figure 1 Steps in conducting the project-based learning

The diagram could be explained as follows:

1. Begin with a problem in the form of an essential question

Learning is started with the essential question, which is the question that can give students a job to do an activity. Taking a topic based on the real world is started by a deep investigation and a topic taken relevant to students.

#### 2. Design a plan for the project

A plan is done collaboratively between a teacher and students. The plan contains the rules, choosing activities that can support answering the essential questions by integrating the possible subjects and getting to know the references and the instruments to help do the project.

#### 3. Create a schedule

Teachers and students work collaboratively in creating a plan in conducting a project. The activities could be; 1) creating a timeline to conduct the project, 2) deciding the project deadline, 3) guiding the students to do something new, 4) getting together with the students when they do something unrelated to the project, 5) asking students to make an explanation of why they take a particular activity to accomplish the project.

#### 4. Monitor the students and the project progress

The teacher is the one who is responsible for monitoring students' activities during the accomplishment of the project. To ease the monitoring process, the teacher can make a rubric to record all the essential activities.

#### 5. Assess the outcome

Assessment is conducted to help the teacher measure the standard achievement, evaluate each student's progress, give feedback to the students' understanding, and help a teacher arrange the next learning strategy.

#### 6. Evaluate the experience

At the end of the learning process, the teacher and students reflected on all activities, including presenting the project. This process can do individually or in a group. Students are asked to talk about their feelings and experience during the project. The teacher and students discuss revising the work during the process until the new inquiry could answer the problem arising at the first learning step.

## 3. MEDIA

Media refers to any format used to convey information. There are kinds of media, such as text, audio, visual aids, real objects, video (motion), and multimedia. Here, puppets come to visual aid media.

There are 13 things to be considered when selecting media, and those are as follows:

- a. Think pedagogy first, technology second.
- b. Identify the characteristics of the learners.
- c. Analyze the lessons to determine the needs.
- d. Consider all the technology options.
- e. Think about students' level of competency concerning technology use.
- f. Select media based on practical factors.
- g. Consider time available.
- h. Plan for alternate media where possible.
- i. Provide a clear, well-organized structure and good directions.
- j. Prepare the desired media before teaching.
- k. Count the direct and indirect costs to the student.
- 1. Arrange for copyright clearance.
- m. Be sure to license any software to distribute.

Moreover, five questions should be considered in determining and choosing media [22] as follows: (1) Is it easy to prepare?; (2) Is it easy to apply in the classroom?; (3) Is it interesting enough for students?; (4)Is it authentic and meaningful?; and (5) Can it develop or enhance the students' language ability?



#### **4. PUPPET**

There are many kinds of puppets, such as; finger puppets, hand and glove puppets, body puppets, hand and arm puppets, blacklight puppets, sock puppets, light curtain puppets, string puppets, push puppets, shadow puppets, rod puppets, water puppets, tabletop puppets, animation or digital puppets, and many others. This paper discusses the use of shadow puppets related to the local story of Javanese Indonesia, known as *wayang*.

There are some advantages of using puppets as media in ELT as follows [23]:

- a. Students can effectively practice their English skills.
- b. The learning process is more fun and interesting
- c. There is no pressure
- d. Students can express what they feel freely
- e. The teacher can personally transform common learning barriers, negative behavior, and negative moods.
- f. Students can overcome language barriers to speak
- g. Students are stimulated to communicate confidently.
- h. Students can learn or get moral value from the story.

Meanwhile, the disadvantages of using puppets as media in ELT as below:

- a. To make puppets is a complicated matter.
- b. Many students make the media not too practical for the teaching and learning process.

c. Seeing the puppet may distract the students or cause them not to pay to what the puppet is saying because they are too busy focusing on the puppet's movements and how it looks.

To anticipate the disadvantages of using puppets in class, students will make paper puppets instead of leather puppets, for they are easier to make. Besides, PBL is implemented for students who have to work, produce, and perform in a group. This way can make the teaching and learning process much more effective for the class with a considerable number of students. Then teachers also have to provide a task or what students have to do when they enjoy the performance so that the learning objectives can be achieved. The task could be in the form of a list of questions that students can answer from the class performance.

## 5. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF USING PUPPETS IN PBL FOR TEACHING NARRATIVE TEXT

As suggested learning model in the 2013 national curriculum, PBL is also a potential learning model in 21st-century education. It covers contextual learning, role-plays to practice the language, collaborative learning, and group discussion. These activities are reflected in each stage of PBL. The procedure of the implementation of using puppets in PBL for teaching narrative text can be illustrated as follows:

Basic Competence	:	<ul> <li>3.10 Differentiate the social function, text structure, and language features of several simple narrative texts, spoken and written, by asking and giving the information attributed to the legend according to the context of use.</li> <li>4.10 Getting the text meaning in a context concerning social function, text structure, and language features of narrative text, spoken and written, for the simple legend text.</li> </ul>	
Topic	:	Legend	
Sub Topic	:	Mahabarata	
Objectives	:	<ol> <li>Students can identify the language features.</li> <li>Students can identify the generic structure.</li> <li>Students can explain the social function.</li> <li>Students can apply the language features appropriately to the text</li> <li>Students can compare each character</li> <li>Students can find detail information implicitly.</li> <li>Students can retell the story.</li> </ol>	
Time Allotment	:	3x TM	

Figure 2 Basic course outline of using puppets in PBL

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Steps	Learning Process			
Step 1     1. Have you ever heard the traditional story shown in puppet/wayang postart With the       Start With the     2. What is the story? What about a legend?       Essential Question     3. What is the setting?				
	<ul><li>4. Who are the characters?</li><li>5. What is the conflict?</li></ul>			
	6. What is the solution to the conflic			
	<ul><li>7. What can you learn from the legend?</li><li>8. What is your opinion about the legend? Agree or disagree?</li></ul>			
Step 2	e leader. They will also decide what Mahabarata			
Design a Plan for the Project	story they want to discuss, for example, the birth of Gatotkaca. Then, students can start to divide the works among the group members concerning finding the data/information from any sources, such as; internet, newspaper, etc, at home for their topic chosen. Moreover, the teacher and students can create the assessment rubric.			
Step 3 Create a Schedule	Meeting			
	<ul> <li>2: Every group member finds the data/information about the legend they will such as the story, the characters, the conflict, the solution, and the moral They discuss the data in a group. Then, they will make a dialog based on they have found. They can make improvements to the story as long as no the essential meaning of the story.</li> <li>3: Students present the puppet</li> </ul>			
	performance in class. In this case, they have made the paper	The materials students need to make puppets are: 1. scrap paper for drawing		
	case, mey have made the paper	2. stiff paper (used manila folders work)		
		<ol> <li>pencils</li> <li>eraser</li> </ol>		
		5. scissors		
		<ol> <li>hole punches</li> <li>paper fasteners</li> </ol>		
		<ol> <li>1/s" dowels or thin sticks</li> <li>masking tape</li> </ol>		
	puppets at home.	10. small nails		
		11. 4 x 6" (10 x 15 cm) foam pieces		
	<b>新</b>			
	Procedures 1. Have students sketch out their ideas for figures on scrap			
	paper. Encourage them to think about the main shape of the figure and how that form will convey a sense of			
	attitude, an emotion, or a value. Have them draw one			
	shape for the body and legs. Draw the arms separately. Older students can draw the arms in two pieces—one			
	from shoulder to the elbow and the other from the elbow			
	to the hand. 2. Cut out the scrap paper and place the shapes on the stiff			
	paper or used manila folders. Trace around the shapes and cut them out.			
	3. Punch holes in the shoulders for the arms and at the tops			
	of the arms and again at the elbows if they made the arms in two pieces.			
	<ol> <li>Use paper fasteners to assemble the pieces.</li> <li>Use small nails to puncture patterns where light can go</li> </ol>			
	through the puppets.			
	6. Have students color their puppets with markers.       Adapted from Gomez         7. Use tape to attach the dowels or thin sticks to the puppet       (1003)			
	body and the arms. 8. Make or find a shadow screen or a light source and look			
	at the shadow of the puppet			
Step 4 Monitor the	The teacher monitors the students' work for every meeting.			
Monitor the Students and the				
Project Progress	Students present the surget and	as and the tenships and the most size such size		
Step 5 Assess the				
Outcome	-	ions for students to answer based on the class performance.		
Step 6	Students and the teacher conduct reflec	tion.		
Evaluate the				
experience				



## 6. CONCLUSION

Puppets could be effective media in ELT since students will learn best in fun activities. The role of puppets is not only for entertainment but also as a medium for language teaching and learning. In learning a language, students can use puppets as a medium to communicate and express their ideas and feelings confidently with all of their attention. Besides, they will also learn positive attitudes brought by the characters in the story, either encouraging children, expressing their feelings, or changing their behaviors to be a good person. Although we live in the 21st century nowadays, students need to be familiar with this cultural heritage will apply the positive attitudes reflected by the story and use them for their identity as members of society. Eventually, we recommend that teachers use puppets in ELT, especially for teaching narrative texts since they give entertainment and outstanding moral values. Besides, the use of puppets in PBL can promote students 21st-century essential skills: critical thinking and problem solving, creativity and innovation, social culture, communication and media literacy, and ICT literacy.

## **AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS**

The writers work collaboratively to write the manuscript starting from conceptualization, data curation, analysis, sources, drafting, and editing.

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