Teaching Practice

Using Folktales to Encourage Extensive Reading in L2

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This paper provides practical guidelines for an alternative technique using folktales to promote extensive reading and increase its value for EFL senior high school students. The technique is based on the production and exhibition of a local folktale poster (*lofopost*), which is made by students after doing extensive reading on local folktales, and then summarizing and identifying the relevant moral values. A lofopost exhibition and presentation by students is offered to create lively class interactions and to give students an opportunity to share their cultural values. This alternative technique for extensive reading is believed to enhance students' reading comprehension by motivating them through reading for enjoyment and by encouraging learning about local culture.

EFL reading teachers usually focus on achieving reading comprehension goals by employing traditional teaching strategies so that students can eventually read certain texts and answer comprehension questions. Strategies employed generally include skimming, scanning, and retelling (Brown, 2007; Field, 2002), as well as other empirically-investigated strategies such as Preview, Question, Read, Summarize, Test (PQRST; Miqawati & Sulisty, 2014), Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review (SQ3R; Graham, 1982), and Collaborative Strategic Reading (CSR; Vaughn et al., 2011). Nation (2009) argued that these intensive reading strategies are still considered insufficient to facilitate students' reading comprehension as they lack the key essence of enjoyable learning. However, there have been studies showing that extensive reading can be an effective way to complement intensive reading (Meng, 2009; Mermelstein, 2014; Renandya, 2007).

A focus on integrating cultural resources into extensive reading is a recent trend. Kumaravadivelu (2003) suggested that in L2 classes, teaching culture should start from the local culture that the students bring to the class as it can help them understand perspectives between their own culture and the L2 culture. This paper presents a teaching practice to encourage extensive reading that focuses on local folktales.

Literature Review

Extensive Reading

Extensive reading has as its main concern grasping the main idea of the text (Richards & Schmidt, 2002) and it is self-selected by the readers according to their reading capabilities (Meng, 2009). These are the two major characteristics of extensive reading, however there are ten additional principles which were offered by Day and Bamford (2002):

1. The reading material is easy.
2. A variety of reading material on a wide range of topics must be available.
3. Learners choose what they want to read.
4. Learners read as much as possible.
5. The purpose of reading is usually related to pleasure, information and general understanding.
6. Reading is its own reward.
7. Reading speed is usually faster than slower.
8. Reading is individual and silent.
9. Teachers orient and guide their students.
10. The teacher is a role model of a reader.

(pp. 137-139)

Extensive reading is different from intensive reading. Extensive reading is not textbook reading where all students are reading the same material and are tested on it. Compared to extensive reading, intensive reading is considered more difficult for EFL learners. Teaching this type of reading usually aims at helping students obtain “detailed meaning from the text, develop reading skills, and enhance vocabulary and grammar knowledge” (Renandya, 2007, p. 135). To achieve these purposes, intensive reading is traditionally more teacher-centered than extensive reading. Moreover, the text for intensive reading is commonly shorter than the text for extensive reading because it is targeted to be finished in one meeting in the classroom. In contrast, the text for extensive reading is longer since extensive reading helps students improve reading comprehension skills through considerable quantities of texts (Renandya, 2007).

The benefits of extensive reading are that it is capable of improving not just EFL reading comprehension skills (Shang, Briody, & Lin, 2007) but also vocabulary and structure acquisition, linguistic skills, reading speed, motivation, and enjoyment of reading, which may lead to good reading habits (Cho & Krashen, 1994; Elley & Mangubhai, 1983; Hafiz & Tudor, 1989; Hayashi, 1999; Janopoulos, 1986; Mason & Krashen, 1997; Meng, 2009; Pitts, White, & Krashen, 1989; Richards & Schmidt, 2002; Tsang, 1996; Yamashita, 2004). The logic is that as EFL learners continue to enjoy reading, they will acquire more vocabulary, understand the main idea of a text faster and therefore read faster since they tend to read easier texts that do not contain challenging sentence formation and unfamiliar words. This in turn leads to motivation to read English texts so that a good reading habit can be built. Thus, the empirical evidence shows that extensive reading in EFL classes helps students build and strengthen their reading skills holistically.

Local Culture in English Language Learning

Culture is an integral part of language learning. The traditional approach of teaching culture focuses only on gaining an understanding of the native speakers' perspective. This has shifted to an approach involving learners as cultural informants (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). The latter approach, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003), aims to bring the learners' cultural knowledge into the classroom in order to provide opportunities for teachers and learners to reflect on their

own culture in addition to the target language culture. The implementation of this approach helps students gain fresh perspectives on their own culture, as well as increase their appreciation of other cultures.

In EFL contexts, the approach which integrates students' own culture into English language learning undoubtedly gives some particular benefits to students. By allowing students to explore their own culture, their anxiety in English learning can be minimized because they bring what they are familiar with into the learning context and thus they may feel more motivated (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Students also get the opportunity to compare and contrast their local culture with English culture to develop their cross-cultural understanding (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; McKay, 2000) and to promote meaningful learning (Barfield & Uzarski, 2009). Meaningful learning occurs when students relate the target culture with their own cultural components and values.

In the ELT context in Indonesia, for instance, there has been an effort to incorporate English culture as well as local / home culture in English textbooks as suggested by a number of researchers (e.g., Majdzadeh, 2002; Shin, Eslami, & Chen, 2011; Victor, 1999), namely by inserting English versions of Indonesian folktales in English textbooks. This effort is actually in line with the spirit of national education that "is rooted in the religious values, national cultures of Indonesia, and one that is responsive to the needs of the ever-changing era" as stated in Indonesian educational policy (Act of the Republic of Indonesia, p. 6). As part of the national education system, policy makers for the teaching of English in Indonesia have recognized the necessity of local culture to maintain the spirit of national education and to facilitate cross-cultural competence. Additionally, the practice of incorporating Indonesian folktales into ELT supports the Indonesian government's objective of preserving and promoting local cultural knowledge among Indonesian students to counter the negative effects of globalization associated with western culture in English language teaching and learning.

In combining these principles of extensive reading and the value of culture, particularly local culture, we propose an EFL teaching practice involving local folktales, as described in the following section.

Reading for Lofopost

Extensive reading and culture learning in EFL can be combined in a novel technique we call *reading for lofopost*, in which *lofopost* is the acronym for *local folktale poster*. This technique incorporates both the major characteristics and the principles of extensive reading including reading material, learner's preference and role in reading, reading activity, and the teacher's role as a model. The idea of using a poster in this technique was based on Renandya's (2007) suggestion that post-reading tasks in extensive reading should be interesting and less laborious.

This technique can be implemented in teaching narrative texts since the folktales used for the extensive reading are categorized as narrative texts. This technique requires students to do extensive reading of a local folktale of their choosing and then produce a poster. Through extensive reading, the students are expected to understand the story in the folktale and then to design a poster which contains relevant images, a summary of the story in sequence based on the images, and the moral value of the story. Language skills demonstrated in the lofopost activity are not only reading skills but also communication skills when speaking during the lofopost exhibition to express their interpretations of the moral value of the story. In addition, this technique is recommended for upper secondary students, and requires previous instruction in speaking and presentation skills. In other words, teachers need to make sure that the students already have enough practice of these skills before applying this technique.

Requirements

Several local folktales in English or translated by teachers are needed. There should be a sufficient number so that every student can choose without compromise or overlap. In situations in which the local folktales are written in students' local language, the teacher can provide an English version of the folktales. This version can ensure that the text uses language suitable for the students' level of proficiency and is neither too long nor too short. The teacher can also select appropriate topics for the students and select those folktales that students may not be familiar with to make the reading activity more interesting and more challenging. If possible, the folktale should have one or two images to ease the students in designing their poster. In addition to folktales, the teacher prepares a model or a basic format of the lofopost with the complete parts: summary, relevant images, and moral values. A suggested example of a basic format is shown in Figure 1 and a student example is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Suggested lofopost format.

Figure 2. Student example of lofopost.

The Implementation of Reading for Lofopost

The procedure can be summarized as follows. First, the teacher gives the reading instructions about the narrative text using one or two examples (see Appendix A). The instruction may include previewing and brainstorming toward the selected text as prereading activities; reading the text, identifying the characters, the structure of the text (i.e., orientation, complication, resolution) and the moral value of the text as a postreading activity. Some comprehension questions can also be assigned to the students (see Appendix B).

Secondly, the teacher provides the students with a number of folktales exceeding the number of students and asks them to choose one they want to read at home. In this step, several important points are emphasized. They need to understand the story and make a lofopost, which shows a summary of the story, relevant images and the moral value. The summary should be at least five sentences and not more than ten sentences (or at least 75-150 words). The images can be drawn by the students or taken from other sources like magazines or the Internet. They are also allowed to decorate their lofoposts as creatively as possible because a lofopost exhibition will be held to promote class interactions. A model of the poster as in Figure 2 can be shown to the students. The students are also informed of the two-week allotted time for both extensive reading and making the lofopost, which is considered sufficient given that the folktales are not too long to read, so the remaining time can be used for making their lofopost. During this time, the students need to report their progress to the teacher about their extensive reading activity and the draft of their lofopost design using a simple book record (see Appendix C).

Finally, upon collecting all the work, the lofopost exhibition is held. This activity is ideally divided into at least two sessions. At the first session, half of the students will show their lofopost, present the summary, moral values, as well as their comments orally. The other half walk from one lofopost to another listening to presentations and are encouraged to ask questions or give comments to the presenters. The second session will be similar to the first session with different students presenting their lofopost.

Evaluation

The teacher can conduct a process assessment on (1) a comprehension question activity and (2) the book record. This is only aimed at knowing the students' progress and motivating them, not at giving them any score. Meanwhile, during the lofopost exhibition, the teacher can assess each part of the summary separately (i.e., orientation, the emergence of conflict, complication and resolution). We suggest using the scoring rubric by Brown and Abeywickrama (2010) for its practicality (see Table 1). As this rubric is not intended to assess writing skills, the focus of the assessment is only main ideas and supporting details which make up students' comprehension of the folktale. Furthermore, to assess the design of the lofopost, we suggest using the rubric as shown in Appendix D, adapted from NCTE / IRA (2006). Moreover, the teacher can evaluate the moral value presented by the students on the basis of the relevance between the moral value and the content of the folktale.

Table 1

Reading Skill Rubric Proposed by Brown and Abeywickrama (2010)

Score	Criteria
3	Demonstrates clear, unambiguous comprehension of the main and supporting ideas
2	Demonstrates comprehension of the main idea but lacks comprehension of some supporting ideas
1	Demonstrates only a partial comprehension of the main and supporting ideas
0	Demonstrates no comprehension of the main and supporting ideas

Follow-up Activity

Students can be asked to identify what cultural components are encoded in the story. To make the follow-up activity more challenging, students could be asked to find similar cultural components from other countries; for example, a student chooses a folktale of *Punakawan* from Indonesia which contains an iconic cultural drama of shadow theatre called *Wayang*. To do the follow-up activity, s/he might try to find shadow theatre in folktales from other cultures such as Cambodia, which is called *Lakhaong Nang Sbek*. This way the students from Indonesia will learn that such shadow theater also exists in Cambodia yet with different forms.

Possible Limitations and Solutions

The first major limitation is the preparation time for collecting the folktales, translating, designing the model of the lofopost and preparing a book record. Once created, these can be reused in subsequent classes. The second major limitation may be a limited number of local folktales in each region. The teacher can add other folktales from different areas or different countries which still represent similar characteristics of their culture or region. The other solution to this limitation is to pair the students to do extensive reading with the same folktales. The teacher could also solicit students' help in finding folktales as long as the students who submitted them chose different ones.

Conclusion

Extensive reading is one method to improve EFL students' reading skills; especially in that it is a powerful way to raise their motivation to read English texts. This could happen due to its major characteristic of grasping the main idea of a text without being tested at the end, which may spoil the pleasure of reading for some students. Integrating culture learning in extensive reading might add more value since students can improve not only their reading ability but also their intercultural competence. To address these two areas of importance, reading for lofopost is proposed as an alternative activity for teaching reading in which extensive reading is the main activity and culture can be learned from the content. It is also apparent that this technique meets the major characteristics and ten principles of extensive reading: the folktales are easy to read and have various topics, the students are allowed to choose the folktales based on their preferences, the reading activity becomes less demanding, and the teacher acts as a good model and facilitator. Future studies will look at implementing this technique to empirically investigate its efficacy in terms of students' reading comprehension and perception of this technique.

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Appendix A
English Version of Sample Folktale from Kalimantan, Indonesia
The Legend of Batu Hapu Cave
(Marini, 2015)

In Tapin, South Kalimantan, there is a tourist destination. There is a cave and people name it Batu Hapu Cave. Local people say that there is a legend how the cave was made. Do you want to know the story?

There was an old woman who lived with her only son. The woman's name was Nini Kudampai and her son's name was Angui. They were really poor while Angui was still a kid. He was kind and very helpful. His father died when he was a baby. Though he was very young, he behaved like an adult. He knew he had to help his mother to earn a living. And that made his mother love him very much.

Angui had three pets. They were a white pig, a white dog, and a white cock. He liked playing with them after helping his mother. It was a beautiful day when Angui was playing with his three pets. A rich merchant was passing Angui's house. He stopped and paid attention to the kid. He liked Angui very much. He asked some people about Angui. And when he knew that Angui came from a poor family, he wanted to adopt Angui.

The rich merchant came to Angui's house. He talked to Nini Kudampai. He told her that he wanted to adopt Angui. He promised that he would let Angui go home and live with her after Angui was an adult. And he also promised that he would give Angui a good education.

Nini Kudampai was so touched. She was in a big dilemma. She was happy that her only son would get a good education, however she was also sad that she would not see her son anymore. She finally agreed with the merchant's plan. She let him adopt her son.

With a big ship, the merchant and Angui sailed to the city. He raised Angui very well. He sent Angui to the best school. And he also taught him how to do business. Angui was smart. He could understand everything very fast. The merchant was very happy. He slowly gave some of his business to Angui. And Angui paid the trust by giving the merchant a lot of profit.

Angui was adult, the rich merchant planned to give all his business to Angui. However the rich merchant asked Angui to get married before he could receive the entire merchant's business. Angui agreed.

Angui had fallen in love with a girl. He knew it was time for him to get married, especially when the merchant had promised to give him all the business. He did not waste much time. Angui proposed to the girl and the girl happily accepted him.

Angui and his wife were very happy. Also, they were very rich. The merchant remembered his promise to Nini Kudampai. He told Angui to go home. But Angui refused. The merchant then reminded Angui about his promise. His wife also asked Angui to go to his hometown. Angui gave up. He asked his crew to prepare his ship. They would sail to Tapin.

The news spread very fast. People were talking that Angui would go back home. His mother finally heard the news also. She brought Angui's pets, the white pig, the white dog, and the white cock.

Nini Kudampai was standing at the harbor. When she saw Angui, she called out his name. Angui saw his mother. She looked very old and shabby. He was ashamed. His wife asked him who the old woman was, but he said that he did not know her. He then asked his crew to continue sailing. The ship did not stop.

Nini Kudampai was so sad, and she was also very angry. She cursed Angui for ignoring her. She had been waiting for her son to come back. And when he arrived, he ignored and did not want to admit her as his mother.

God heard the old woman's praying. Suddenly the rain fell down heavily. Thunder attacked the ship. It turned upside down! The ship finally stranded. Slowly the ship changed into a big stone. Later, the big stone slowly changed into a cave. People then named the cave as Batu Hapu Cave.

Appendix B
Sample Comprehension Questions in a Post-Reading Activity
Based on the English Translation of the Folktale “The Legend of Batu Hapu Cave”
(Marini, 2015)

Answer the following questions based on the folktale entitled “The Legend of Batu Hapu Cave.

1. What is the folktale about?

2. Who are the major characters in the folktale?

3. Where did the story take place?

4. What is the main idea of Paragraph 4?

5. How did the merchant raise Angui?

6. What is the main idea of Paragraph 8?

7. Why did Nini Kudampai feel sad and angry with Angui?

8. What does the word ‘shabby’ in “She looked very old and shabby” (Paragraph 11, Line 2) mean?

9. Which part of the folktale indicates the resolution?

10. Can you mention the moral value of the folktale?

Appendix C
Simple Book Record of Extensive Reading Activity

Name: _____

Class: _____

No.	Student's Progress	Date of Report	Feedback	Teacher's Signature
1.	Reading the selected folktale			
2.	Making a summary of the folktale			
3.	Identifying the moral values from the folktale			
4.	Making the lofopost			

Appendix D
Rubric for Assessing the Lofopost Appearance
(Adapted from NCTE / IRA, 2006)

Categories	4	3	2	1
Use of Images	All images are related to the topic and make it easier to understand.	All images show acceptable understanding / relevancy with the topic and most make it easier to understand.	Some of the images used do not relate to the topic and some still make it easier to understand.	All images do not relate to the topic.
Organization	Summaries of folktales are presented based on accurate generic structure of narrative text.	Summaries of folktales are presented, not following accurate generic structure of narrative text, but still help the reader understand	Summaries of folktales are not presented in accurate generic structure of narrative text, making it hard for the reader to understand.	Summaries of folktales appear to be disorganized.
Layout and Design	Use various colors and font sizes. All information on the poster is in focus and can be easily viewed and identified from 6 ft. away.	Use less various colors and font sizes. Most of the information on the poster is in focus and the content easily viewed and identified from 6 ft. away.	Use less various colors and font sizes. Most of the information on the poster is in focus and the content is easily viewed and identified from 4 ft. away.	Use few colors and only one type of font size. Much of the information on the poster is unclear or too small.
Mechanics	No spelling errors. No grammar errors. Text is in author's own words.	Few spelling errors. Few grammar errors. Text is in author's own words.	Some spelling errors. Some grammar errors. Most of the text is in author's own words.	Many spelling and / or grammar errors. Text is copied OR the whole text is copied (despite the accurate spelling and grammar).