

Enhancing English Vocabulary through the Moral Values in Roro Jonggrang Folklore

 <https://doi.org/10.31004/jele.v10i4.855>

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ABSTRACT

Vocabulary development has a critical position in English language learning; however, numerous instructing practices need the connection between culture and ethical integration. Whereas folklore, particularly the story of Roro Jonggrang, offers ethical insights and cultural richness, its potential in vocabulary learning remains underexplored. This consideration points to examining how ethical values from the Indonesian stories of Roro Jonggrang can be coordinated into writing activities to upgrade students' English vocabulary acquisition. Applying qualitative descriptive methods, this study analysed the folklore content utilising content analysis to discover the ethical values and related vocabularies. The findings uncovered eight dominant ethical subjects, like honesty, hard work, humility, responsibility, respect, courage, justice, and wisdom. These topics give important vocabulary when consolidated into reflective writing tasks. The study concludes that writing activities based on the folklore of Roro Jonggrang upgrade vocabulary development and fortify character education, supporting a more relevant and values-driven approach to English learning.

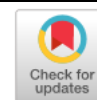
Keywords: *Moral Values; Vocabulary; Folklore; Character Education; Writing Activity*

Article History:

Received 28th April 2025

Accepted 22th July 2025

Published 30th July 2025



INTRODUCTION

The accelerating pace of globalisation and digitalisation has brought about transformative changes in how individuals, especially youth, interact with information and values. While access to information has become easier and more open, this freedom also exposes students to a vast array of cultural content—some of which may not align with the moral and ethical standards of their native societies. According to (Nurisma et al., 2024), current social trends among students, such as lack of empathy, reduced sense of social responsibility, tendency to skip school, and growing individualism, indicate a weakening connection to core ethical values. (Prayogi et al., 2021) and (Feri et al., 2020) further emphasise the weakening of patriotism and the rise of harmful behaviours, including drug use and the diminishing respect for social norms. These findings reflect a broader cultural disconnecting among students, which calls for educational strategies that can rebuild ethical awareness. One promising approach is incorporating cultural elements into English language learning, which not only supports language development but also helps students navigate and critically assess diverse global scenarios (Ula et al., 2025)

In this context, ethical instruction has a critical control, to be specific, not as it were in forming students' characters but moreover in sifting the deluge of gigantic worldwide data. Schools must be responsive not only to scholastic measures but also to students' moral improvement. In this manner, joining ethical values into learning exercises is a critical approach to creating broad-minded people who are able to explore the complex ethical scene. However, although various character education initiatives have been introduced into the

curriculum, they are often theoretical, fragmented, or disconnected from students' lived experiences.

Existing instructive science models for character improvement are promising but still have restrictions. For case, (Puspita et al., 2019) investigated the use of verse as a device to educate children of approximately profound quality, whereas (Pikoli & Lukum, 2021) coordinated audio-visual media to encourage character instruction. Based on (Rahayu et al., 2021), who made a learning module related to ingrained values, and (Sejati et al., 2021), who actualised a QR code-based pop-up book that combined perusing with moral reflection. Moreover, (Supeni et al., 2019) utilised conventional redirections such as the Dakon amusement, and (Sanjaya et al., 2021) utilised Balinese pixie stories to improve moral learning. In spite of the fact that they are compelling, these approaches don't elude dismissing the concurrent change of lingo skills—especially in English, which plays an imperative part in worldwide communication.

As of late, scholarly interest in executing culture in true materials, such as folklore, to coordinate ethical instruction in English dialect learning, has been expanding. Folklores transmitted through verbal conventions and accounts passed down from era to era serve as storehouses of shrewdness, values, and social personality. Concurring with (Gasong et al., 2015), folklores are persuasive in passing on ethical messages and advertising relatable and locked-in settings for youthful learners. Crucially, folklore is naturally wealthy in social expression, ethical issues, and character improvement, making them a consummate medium for teaching tongue and values. This view aligns with (Kramsch, 2013), who highlights that language and culture are deeply intertwined, and that meaningful cultural contexts enrich linguistic understanding. Similarly, (Byram, 1997) asserts that culture-based language learning develops learners' ability to interpret and reflect on cultural meanings, fostering both linguistic and intercultural competence.

One notable example is the Roro Jonggrang folklore, a classical Indonesian legend that teaches powerful lessons about honesty, perseverance, and the consequences of deceit. Most students are, as of now, commonplace with the story, giving a recognisable account for ethical investigation and English lexicon advancement. By locking in understudies within the story through expository composing assignments, understudies can progress their ethical thinking skills and their capacity to specify these thoughts in English. Writing tasks that involve paraphrasing, summarising, and interpreting stories like Roro Jonggrang promote contextualised vocabulary acquisition, which has been shown to be more effective than rote memorisation (Wagner et al., 2021). In addition, writing activities can help students in particular to be able to write academic papers that are characterized by formal, comprehensive and well organized paragraph writing (Zahro et al., 2023).

Recent studies reinforce the effectiveness of folklore in language education. (Nanda et al., 2021) demonstrated that the use of folklore-based texts increases student motivation and moral understanding in English language classes. (Agbenyega et al., 2017) found that students acquire new vocabulary more effectively when it is contextualised within meaningful cultural narratives. (Stonehouse, 2021) expressed that intelligent composing based on socially wealthy stories can cultivate basic considering and more profound lexicon acknowledgement. In the interim, an inquiry from (Borman et al., 2018) appeared that understudies who devour nearby stories within the process of learning English tend to keep in mind new words way better and utilise them accurately in settings. Furthermore, (Aningsih et al., 2022) observed the benefits of combining ethics teaching with language teaching that can support every process that connects etymological competence with moral awareness.

In spite of a few positive discoveries, there's still a basic crevice in investigating how ethical esteem investigation through composing exercises that utilise folklore particularly contributes to English vocabulary improvement. Most prior studies focus either on the promotion of moral education or the teaching of English as a second language, without combining both in a unified instructional strategy. The situation indicates a need for empirical research that bridges this gap by investigating how culturally grounded moral reflection can enhance students' English vocabulary acquisition.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of incorporating moral value analysis of the Roro Jonggrang folklore into writing-based English language learning. It aims to specifically explore whether this kind of integration can both foster critical moral reasoning and significantly aid in students' vocabulary growth. By encouraging students to reflect, write, and analyse the moral dimensions of the folklore, this approach is expected to provide a dual benefit: linguistic enrichment and character formation. This dual focus echoes the interdisciplinary spirit of culture-based language education, as advocated by (Kramsch, 2013) and (Byram, 1997), where language learning serves not only as a linguistic exercise but also as a means of developing intercultural and ethical awareness.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive design to explore how local folklore, specifically Roro Jonggrang can be used to develop students' English vocabulary while simultaneously enhancing their understanding of moral values. As stated by (Huda & Masfufah, 2022), qualitative descriptive research is suitable when a researcher seeks to provide a comprehensive summary of an event in the everyday terms of those events. This way is suitable for language and literature studies research because it helps researchers to explore how students interact with textual content in natural situations.

Data Sources

The primary data source in this study was a printed version of Roro Jonggrang retrieved from *Roro Jonggrang: Kembalinya Pewaris Tahta Kraton Boko* (Sudibyo, 2011) a traditional story published by Galang Press in 2011. This version was selected because of its standardized narrative, cultural authenticity, and clear depiction of moral values such as loyalty, honesty, and sacrifice. The text was slightly adapted for classroom use to ensure readability and accessibility for students with intermediate English proficiency, while maintaining the integrity of the original storyline. In addition to the folklore text, the study utilized students' reflective writing outputs, vocabulary support materials, English dictionaries, and related scholarly references on vocabulary learning and moral education to support interpretation.

Participants and Sampling

Participants in the study were eight students (4 males dan 4 females) from class IPS public senior high school in East Java, aged between 15 and 16 years old. These students were selected purposively based on their English proficiency (scored between 60-80 on school's English assessment) and prior exposure to Indonesian folklore in their curriculum. The purposive sampling technique, as defined by (Palinkas et al., 1968), allows researchers to identify participants who possess specific knowledge or experience relevant to the study's focus. The selection process was supported by the students' English teacher, who helped identify suitable participants based on classroom performance and initial writing samples. All participants were informed about the purpose of the research and voluntarily agreed to take part. Their identities remained anonymous throughout the process.

Research Procedures

The research was conducted in three stages. The preparation stage involved developing teaching materials, including the selected folklore text and reflective writing prompts designed to guide students in exploring moral values through their own words. These materials were validated by two English teachers to ensure clarity, appropriateness, and alignment with the study objectives. In the implementation stage, the students participated in a 90-minute classroom session where they read and discussed the Roro Jonggrang story under the guidance of the researcher. After the discussion, students completed a writing assignment in which they were asked to identify at least one or more moral values found in the story and explain them in English using their own vocabulary. The final stage involved collecting the students' written responses and organizing them for analysis.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out through content analysis, a systematic method for identifying patterns and drawing inferences from text, as described by (Krippendorff, 2022). First, the researcher read and coded each student's written output to identify expressions of moral values and the vocabulary choices used to articulate them. A codebook was developed to categorise recurring values such as honesty, hardwork, humility, responsibility, respect, courage, justice, and wisdom. The vocabulary used to describe these values was then examined for linguistic accuracy, contextual relevance, and richness. The pragmatic literary theory of (Teeuw, 1994) served as a guiding framework in interpreting how students constructed meaning through their written responses, particularly how they internalised moral messages embedded in the folklore narrative. This approach emphasizes the role of the reader not only as a passive consumer but as an active interpreter who negotiates meaning through language, particularly in cultural and moral contexts.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, a second English teacher was invited to review a subset of student responses to validate the coding and interpretation. During the reduction phase, data that were unclear or unrelated to moral value expression were excluded, and the remaining relevant vocabulary was examined in detail. The final stage of analysis involved interpreting the extent to which students were able to meaningfully express moral values in English and how this reflected their engagement with both the language and the cultural content.

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were strictly observed. Students were informed of the study's objectives, and their participation was entirely voluntary. All data were anonymised and used solely for academic purposes. The documentation process was conducted in a transparent and systematic manner to ensure the study's replicability and academic integrity.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Roro Jonggrang, an Indonesian folklore, tells the story of a princess named Roro Jonggrang who is pursued by Prince Bandung Bondowoso after he conquers her kingdom. To avoid marrying him, Roro Jonggrang imposes an almost impossible condition: the prince must construct a thousand temples in a single night. With the magical help of thousands of genies, Bandung Bondowoso almost succeeded; however, Roro Jonggrang tricked him by creating the illusion that it was morning. Angered by his dishonesty, Bandung cursed him, turned him into a stone statue, and completed the thousandth temple (Sudibyo, 2011).

Based on this story, this study yielded the results that implementing the Roro Jonggrang folklore into English writing activities helped students to explore and internalize eight important moral values, namely: honesty, hard work, humility, responsibility, respect, courage, justice, and wisdom. Through the given reflective writing assignments, students not only illustrated vocabulary improvement but, moreover, made a critical engagement with the moral dimensions implanted within the story. These ethical values consistently arise as imperative topics in students' written reflections, offering wealthy opportunities for language acquisition and character education.

The use of folklore as a learning medium has been widely recognized for its potential in introducing moral teachings and cultural insights, especially in language and literature classes (Widiyanto et al., 2022). In addition to preserving Indonesian cultural heritage, the story of Roro Jonggrang serves as an effective teaching tool for character education, which can help students to internalize the urgency of the life lessons contained in traditional narratives (Marlina, 2018). In table 1 are students' findings regarding moral value vocabulary through the process of identifying sentences or conversations in the story of Roro Jonggrang.

Table. 1 Findings of Moral Value Vocabulary

No	Moral Value	Sample Vocabulary/Phrases from Students	Interpretation
1.	Honesty	Lie, trick, dishonest, she lied to him, she got punished	Deceit leads to consequence

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2. Hard Work	Work hard, best effort, build, tried so hard, worked all night, asked spirits to help	Perseverance but not always successful
3. Humility	Proud, arrogant, humble, problems, cleverness, curse	Arrogance leads to conflict
4. Responsibility	Decision, accept, choice, mistake, consequence, she paid for that	Accountability for actions
5. Respect	Force, respect, feelings, marry, woman	Autonomy and dignity
6. Courage	Brave, stand up, protect, risk, powerful, trick, plan	Moral courage in the face of domination
7. Justice	Not fair, punish, justice means consequence, too much punishment	Fairness and proportional consequence
8. Wisdom	Think carefully, no wisdom, angry decision, acted with emotion	Wisdom as moral and rational judgment

Honesty

In the Javanese folklore of Roro Jonggrang, the theme of honesty, or, more accurately, dishonesty, plays a significant role in shaping the plot and the moral consequences that follow. The story centers on Prince Bandung Bondowoso, who falls in love with Roro Jonggrang and desires to propose to her. In an attempt to avoid marrying him, Roro Jonggrang deceitfully demands that he build a thousand temples in a single night. When the prince nearly succeeds with supernatural help, Roro Jonggrang tricks him by creating a false dawn, leading the prince to fail by one temple. In reaction, he reviled her to end up the final statue, the final one of a thousand unfinished temples.

Several students illustrated the concept of honesty in relation to Roro Jonggrang's act of deception. Student 1 wrote, "*She lied to the prince by faking the morning. That was dishonest, and she got cursed.*" Student 2 stated, "*She tricked him with the fake dawn. Lying made the story end badly.*" These reflections show how students connected dishonesty with consequence, using vocabulary such as lie, trick, fake, curse, and dishonest. They demonstrated the ability to express moral interpretation using relevant English terms grounded in context.

In this context, honesty can be defined not just as the act of telling the truth but as the alignment of one's words, actions, and intentions. According to research by (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989), honesty in communication includes verbal honesty and behavioral integrity, especially in cross-cultural or moral stories where actions are often more important than words. Roro Jonggrang's actions, although based on self-defense, violate and hide her true intentions and manipulate reality, which leads to tragic consequences.

From an academic point of view, analyzing the value of honesty through this folklore permits students to engage in ethical reasoning and character analysis. The value of honesty serves as an interface between character education and language improvement. Students not, as it were, learn about cultural heritage but are, moreover, critically empowered to look at how dishonest behavior can lead to deadly results, hence reinforcing moral consideration through language learning.

Hard Work

The phrase "hard work" usually refers to the meaning of passion and effort to achieve a goal, which often requires physical and even mental effort. In the context of the Roro Jonggrang folklore, the narrative contains meanings that can be seen from several sides and go beyond its original meaning. The phrase, which centers on Prince Bandung Bondowoso's attempt to build a thousand temples in a single night to complete a challenge from Princess Roro Jonggrang, symbolizes how hard work, even when driven by love and determination, can still fail in the face of control and deception.

Students also demonstrated understanding of the value of hard work through Prince Bandung Bondowoso's efforts. Student 3 wrote, "*He worked all night without stopping, building the temples with magic.*" Student 4 stated, "*He tried his best to win her, but sometimes hard work is not enough.*" Common vocabulary included work hard, try, best effort, all night, and build,

indicating that students internalized both the physical and emotional connotations of perseverance within a cultural narrative.

Linguistic research has identified the meaning of "hard work" not only as an act of perseverance but also as a design formed in the social sphere that develops through relevant utilization (Glueck, 2020). Their research underlines that vocabulary acquisition is strengthened when learners implement words embedded in culturally rich stories, which allows for deeper cognitive processes and enthusiasm.

This task is related to reflective learning practices, which enhance vocabulary acquisition and moral reasoning. In addition, when students write about the story, they not only engage in deep vocabulary processing but also enhance long-term acquisition (Othman, 2025). Instilling the meaning of hard work in the context of a story like Roro Jonggrang helps students prove how vocabulary relates to values, emotions, and social dynamics that make the learning experience meaningful and holistic.

Humility

The vocabulary word "humility" often refers to down-to-earthness. However, when examined in a deeper linguistic and moral-educational context, particularly through traditional folklore like Roro Jonggrang, it unfolds as a complex value that goes beyond modesty. According to a recent study by (Krumrei-Mancuso et al., 2020), humility in the discourse of education in this era is considered a multidimensional construct that combines cognitive self-awareness, affective openness, and behavioral simplicity. What is meant is that humility is not just about thinking less of oneself, but thinking less of oneself by cultivating social harmony, empathy, and a willingness to acknowledge one's own limitations.

In the Roro Jonggrang story, humility becomes a nuanced value that is more implied than directly stated. Within the story, Roro Jonggrang is portrayed as a princess who has a brilliant and decisive character but also appears to be in need of humility in manipulating Prince Bandung Bondowoso. Her refusal to marry and her attempt to betray him by faking the dawn appear to be a key intellect, but also a presumptuous nature that in the long run drives her to being cursed to become a stone. In contrast, humility might have invited dialogue, negotiation, or mutual respect. Her downfall, therefore, becomes a moral lesson on the consequences of arrogance and deceit, underscoring the educational value of humility as a moral compass in both leadership and relationships.

The concept of humility appeared in students' reflections as an implied moral value. Student 5 commented, *"They were both too proud. If they were more humble, maybe no one got cursed."* Student 6 added, *"Her cleverness turned into pride, and it caused problems."* Vocabulary such as proud, humble, problems, cleverness, and curse reflected student awareness of the dangers of arrogance and the virtue of modesty, even when not explicitly named in the story.

Humility vocabulary as a target in writing assignments helps foster character education and refers to priorities in the current Indonesian curriculum (Kemendikbud, 2022). Writing about humility vocabulary in the context of local folklore is in line with planning for culturally responsive teaching. When students are asked to reflect on the moral values embedded in familiar narratives, they tend to engage more deeply with the language and the lesson. Vocabulary learning, then, becomes a vehicle for character building.

Responsibility

In the story of Roro Jonggrang, the vocabulary of "responsibility" is closely related to the storyline and the actions of the actors, especially the choices and consequences felt by Roro Jonggrang and Bandung Bondowoso. The original folklore does not explicitly mention the concept, but the moral dilemmas and social obligations of the actors implicitly convey it.

In academic context, recent research has promoted this definition to include emotional and social dimensions. According to (Wang et al., 2016), accountability in language learning refers to a person's behavior, such as ethical decision-making attitudes and the ability to consider the effects of actions on others, a definition that agrees with the ethical dimension in the Roro Jonggrang story.

In the story, Roro Jonggrang is caught between her responsibility to her father (Prabu Boko) and the greater moral responsibility to her kingdom and herself. Her act of deception –

tricking Bandung Bondowoso into believing that dawn had arrived – while seen as clever, also raises questions of ethical responsibility. She dishonestly chooses to defend his own government, a decision for which he suffers the punishment of turning into stone. The consequences here show the cultural interpretation of the meaning of responsibility; responsibility is not only about intention but also about truth, duty, and sacrifice.

Moral responsibility was associated with the consequences of the characters' actions. Student 7 wrote, *"She made a decision to lie, and she had to accept what happened."* Student 8 reflected, *"He got angry and turned her into stone. That was his choice."* The use of decision, accept, choice, lie, and consequence shows that students were able to link actions to outcomes, a core element of ethical literacy and character development.

From a character education viewpoint, the story certainly educates students about the value of responsibility for one's activities. It can be conceded that Roro Jonggrang does have amazing insights, but her attitude in making choices leads her to interminable results. As expressed by (Tiara Ramadhani et al., 2024) in character education, responsibility is one of the six central moral values, and executing it through folklore permits students to lock in with theoretical values in a culturally important way.

Respect

Within the Indonesian folklore of Roro Jonggrang, the word "respect" incorporates a noteworthy meaning, not as a linguistic element but as a depiction of social and ethical values embedded within the conventional story. In spite of the fact that the precise representation may not be specifically utilized within the unique Javanese form, its conceptual nearness is strongly implanted within the discussions and activities of the characters. For example, the moment Bandung Bondowoso, after ousting her father's kingdom, forces Roro Jonggrang to marry presents a struggle between control and individual desire. Roro Jonggrang's refusal, inferred in her intelligent request for a thousand temples, can be interpreted as a request for regard, but moreover for herself, but also for her family, social conventions, and womanhood.

The theme of respect was discussed in relation to consent and autonomy. Student 1 stated, *"He forced her to marry. He didn't respect her feelings."* Student 4 noted, *"She wanted to be respected as a woman, not just as a prize."* Students used vocabulary such as force, respect, feelings, marry, and woman, demonstrating awareness of social and gender-based power dynamics embedded in the tale.

In recent educational linguistics research, respect is often described as a multidimensional vocabulary item that includes recognition of the rights, dignity, and governance of others, which is often contextualized into interpersonal, sociocultural, and educational relationships (Hamsiah et al., 2023). This definition is more than the meaning of politeness, reflecting emotional intelligence, critical thinking, and ethical positions in discourse. Respect is considered a relationship between the social and cognitive, which makes it urgent in language teaching and character education.

The folklore conveys a clear moral value: respect must be earned, not demanded through power. Roro Jonggrang's story challenges the conventional power dynamic between male conqueror and female subject. Instead of following his will, she voices her ideas again and tests Bandung's determination in carrying out the challenge from him. From an educational perspective, the narrative of this exact situation is a rich source for teaching respect as a moral and educational value.

According to the study of (Dahanayake, 2023), character education involves developing positive character through core values such as respect, honesty, and responsibility. The use of the Roro Jonggrang folklore in the classroom is in line with this principle, allowing learners to be immersed in culturally rooted stories that promote empathy and ethical reasoning.

Courage

According to research (Adam et al., 2024), vocabulary such as courage represents what they mean by words that simultaneously carry denotative meaning and cultural or moral significance. In folklore, courage often embodies a character's rejection of fate, resistance to injustice, or commitment to values, as seen in Roro Jonggrang's resistance to marrying Bandung Bondowoso. In spite of being outmatched in terms of strength, her determination in

keeping up her honor and securing her kingdom speaks of a nuanced sense of boldness – not fair boldness in a fight, but ethical resistance established in independence and intelligence.

Reflections on courage focused on Roro Jonggrang's resistance. Student 2 wrote, *"She was brave to trick a powerful man and protect herself."* Student 5 added, *"Even though she knew the risk, she still made a plan. That's courage."* Vocabulary like brave, protect, risk, powerful, trick, and plan indicate a nuanced understanding of moral courage, emphasizing emotional and strategic aspects.

In this setting, the vocabulary of courage goes past its lexical function and gets to be a beginning point for exploring character education. The concept of Indonesian character instruction refers to values such as judgment, duty, and flexibility (Kemendikbud, 2021). The deceit carried out by Roro Jonggrang, said to be vital to maintaining a strategic distance from constrained marriage, can be examined as an act of courage – albeit a broader ethical one – that energizes basic dialog among students about when and how courage crosses with profound quality, particularly when choices are constrained. Consolidating such vocabulary into writing works out and gives profitable scholarly openings. Writing around the courage vocabulary in Roro Jonggrang enables students to understand contextualize, analyze, and reframe it.

Recent educational inquiry supports this approach. (Min, 2021) found that relevant vocabulary writing connected to actor investigation essentially moved language retention and basic thinking forward, particularly when learners engaged with stories that were culturally relevant.

Justice

According to a linguistics study by (Shen, 2003), the term justice is defined not only as fairness or the administration of law, but also as a culturally constructed principle that is often context-bound, shifting across narratives, identities, and socio-political structures. This complex definition is useful when analyzing traditional stories, where the vocabulary of justice may be described through metaphors, character fates, or moral consequences, rather than legal systems.

In Roro Jonggrang, Prince Bandung Bondowoso seeks to marry Roro Jonggrang after defeating her father in battle. Her refusal and demand to build a thousand temples in an instant is a test of passion, cunning, and ultimately a demand for justice for the death of her family and the invasion of her territory.

Students connected justice with fairness and the consequences of revenge. Student 6 stated, *"It was not fair to turn her into a statue. He was angry but too extreme."* Student 7 reflected, *"She was wrong, but the punishment was bigger than the mistake."* Words such as fair, punishment, wrong, extreme, and statue suggest that students could evaluate ethical proportionality and justice beyond basic cause and effect.

The implication of justice in the tale aligns with several educational character values, such as honesty, responsibility, and respect. When using folklore such as Roro Jonggrang in language lessons, especially English, in vocabulary enrichment and moral learning, justice becomes the initial concept to discuss fairness, consequences, and ethical choices.

Students can be guided to evaluate characters' decisions – Was Roro Jonggrang justified in her actions? Was Bandung Bondowoso fair in turning him into a stone? These reflective questions allow learners not only to practice their English skills but also to develop moral critical thinking, as supported by recent findings in character education. (Putri et al., 2024), argue that folklore-mediated learning fosters emotional literacy and character awareness when vocabulary is linked to moral.

Wisdom

In the traditional Javanese folklore of Roro Jonggrang, the vocabulary of "wisdom" unites deeply rooted moral concepts beyond mere intelligence or cleverness. Although the story of Roro Jonggrang often highlights themes such as deception, loyalty, power, and wisdom, the decision-making of the characters is what drives the tragic outcome of the story. Wisdom here is not only about knowing what is right, but also acting on it with foresight, empathy, and moral clarity.

Contemporary linguistic studies define wisdom as a multidimensional construct that integrates knowledge, reflection, and compassion (Walsh & Walsh, 2015). This definition is particularly useful when analyzing characters in traditional narratives like Roro Jonggrang, where decisions are often influenced by personal desire rather than thoughtful judgment. In this tale, Bandung Bondowoso, despite being powerful and clever, lacks emotional wisdom—he lets his ego and vengeance dictate his actions. Roro Jonggrang, on the other hand, shows situational intelligence by tricking the prince, but her act of deceit backfires, resulting in her own downfall. The story subtly implies that true wisdom involves both strategic thinking and ethical reasoning.

The reflections on wisdom explored decision-making and moral foresight. Student 8 wrote, *"If she had thought carefully, she would not have lied."* Student 3 observed, *"He had no wisdom. He just reacted with anger, not thinking first."* Vocabulary like wisdom, think carefully, reacted, anger, and lie show that students were able to distinguish between intelligence and thoughtful moral judgment, which is central to the educational aim of using folklore for character learning.

This interpretation agrees with the current concept of education that places wisdom in character education teaching. Based (Setya et al., 2024), wisdom is a core component of moral development in literature and folklore for children. When implemented in English learning, especially in writing-based activities, the vocabulary of "wisdom" can act as an entry point for students to explore deeper moral and emotional themes.

CONCLUSIONS

This study shows that combining the moral values from Roro Jonggrang folklore with English writing activities helps students improve their vocabulary and build moral awareness. Through writing tasks based on local story, students learn new words while thinking about good character and values. The result suggest that folklore can be a useful learning tool that connects language learning with character education. These findings suggest that integrating culturally embedded moral instruction into EFL contexts not only enhances linguistics outcomes but also deepens students' ethical reasoning a dual focus rarely achieved in conventional vocabulary pedagogy. For curriculum design, this approach can be used to create learning materials that include local culture. Teachers can develop English lessons that use folklores to teach vocabulary, writing, and values at the same time. By including stories lika Roro Jonggrang in the curriculum, language learning becomes more meaningful, relevant, and connected to students' cultural background.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to express their deepest gratitude to Universitas Islam Darul 'Ulum, Lamongan, for providing academic support, resources, and facilities throughout the research process. Special thanks are also extended to the Department of English Language Education for their encouragement and valuable feedback during the preparation of this study.

We are sincerely grateful to our academic advisors, whose guidance, constructive criticism, and insightful suggestions have significantly enhanced the quality of this work. Their unwavering support has been instrumental in every stage of the research.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes to the students who participated in this study for their enthusiasm, cooperation, and thoughtful reflections. Without their active engagement, this research would not have been possible.

Finally, we would also like to acknowledge the contributions of colleagues, peer reviewers, and editorial staff whose efforts have helped refine and improve this manuscript. Any remaining errors are solely the responsibility of the authors.

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