Photo Story-Telling of South Amarasi Folklore: A Strategy to Enhance English-Speaking Skills in Young Learners

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Abstract: This study investigates the impact of South Amarasi folklore-based photo storytelling on young learners' English-speaking skills and cultural awareness in under-resourced educational settings. Conducted in Sahraen Village, South Amarasi—specifically at Rumah Singgah Sore Oetepas (a non-formal learning center) and SD Inpres Sahraen (a formal elementary school)—this research employs a qualitative approach supported by descriptive statistics. It evaluates how incorporating local folklore into English lessons can enhance language acquisition and student engagement. The study explores several key questions: How effectively is South Amarasi folklore improving English skills among young learners? What factors influence students' progress through photo storytelling, including prior knowledge and classroom dynamics? How do teachers perceive the integration of local folklore in teaching, particularly regarding its impact on language skills and cultural awareness? These questions are thoroughly addressed through classroom observations, interviews, and pre- and post-test assessments. Findings reveal that folklore-based photo storytelling significantly boosts students' English-speaking abilities and engagement, particularly in environments with limited resources. This research contributes to the broader discourse on culturally responsive teaching, highlighting the value of local content in language education and curriculum development.

Key words: South Amarasi folklore, photo story-telling, English-speaking skills

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini menyelidiki dampak penggunaan cerita bergambar berbasis cerita rakyat Amarasi Selatan terhadap keterampilan berbicara bahasa Inggris dan kesadaran budaya siswa muda di lingkungan pendidikan yang kekurangan sumber daya. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di Desa Sahraen, Amarasi Selatan—tepatnya di Rumah Singgah Sore Oetepas (pusat pembelajaran non-formal) dan SD Inpres Sahraen (sekolah dasar formal)—dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang didukung oleh statistik deskriptif. Penelitian ini mengevaluasi bagaimana pengintegrasian cerita rakyat lokal ke dalam pelajaran bahasa Inggris dapat meningkatkan akuisisi bahasa dan keterlibatan siswa. Studi ini mengeksplorasi beberapa pertanyaan kunci: Sejauh mana efektivitas cerita rakyat Amarasi Selatan dalam meningkatkan keterampilan berbicara siswa? Faktor-faktor apa yang memengaruhi kemajuan siswa melalui cerita bergambar, termasuk pengetahuan awal dan dinamika kelas? Bagaimana pandangan guru terhadap integrasi cerita rakyat dalam pembelajaran bahasa Inggris, terutama terkait pengembangan bahasa dan kesadaran budaya? Pertanyaan-pertanyaan ini dibahas secara menyeluruh melalui observasi kelas, wawancara, serta pre-test dan post-test. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa cerita bergambar berbasis folklore secara signifikan meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara dan keterlibatan siswa. Studi ini memperkuat pentingnya pendekatan pembelajaran yang responsif terhadap budaya lokal dalam pengembangan kurikulum bahasa.*

Kata kunci: *South Amarasi Folklore, Photo Story-Telling, English-Speaking Skills.*

INTRODUCTION

Language is a crucial tool for communication, with speaking being one of the most essential skills in learning English (Haryanto & Melinda, 2022). As a key communication component, speaking requires focused attention and instruction, particularly in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Haddadin, 2022). Teachers must carefully consider the various factors and conditions to deliver effective lessons. In Indonesia, English is not considered a mandatory subject. Some elementary schools only teach English as a local content subject (Khulel, 2021, p.116). However, in the context of EFL, young learners have the potential to acquire and learn a foreign language, and they learn it faster than those who study it after puberty (Sokhiba, 2021). It indicates that early exposure to language learning can result in faster and more effective language acquisition.

Enhancing speaking skills in young learners presents unique challenges, especially when their exposure to the language is limited. Their out-of-class activities typically differ from urban environments in resource-limited settings where access to digital media, internet, and English exposure is minimal (Wilde et al., 2020). Rather than engaging in English music, TV, gaming, or social media, children in these areas spend more time playing outdoors and helping their parents with farming after school. Traditional learning frequently emphasizes rote learning, leaving little possibility for creativity or relevance within the culture and little exposure to language use. This study investigates a novel technique to improve English-speaking skills through storytelling, specifically integrating South Amarasi culture photo storytelling.

Sahraen Village, one of five villages in the southernmost part of South Amarasi district, Timor Island, East Nusa Tenggara, spans 36.8 hectares and lies about 45 kilometres from the provincial capital. It borders Retraen Village to the north and east, Erbaun Village to the west, and the Timor Sea to the south. The village comprises five hamlets, with most residents working as fishermen and farmers (Ruma et al., 2019, p.57). This cultural and geographical setting forms the backdrop for exploring the potential of local folklore in enhancing English Learning. The region also has rich oral traditions, including folklore, passed down through generations. However, these stories are rarely incorporated into the general curriculum, mainly when teaching English. Integrating local cultural components, such as local folklore, into language learning makes classes more entertaining and develops a stronger link between students and their environment (Ellisafny, 2019; Novianti, 2022; Yulianeta et al., 2022). While some studies indicate that stories can enhance literacy and language skills, there has yet to be research on the specific influence of folklore-based visual story-telling on English-speaking skills in areas such as South Amarasi. This study seeks to fill that gap by investigating how the cultural significance of local folklore can improve the effectiveness of language teaching. Khulel (2021) suggests that more research on teaching young learners in rural areas can be conducted into the practice of English in Indonesian elementary schools (p. 126). The current study was conducted in two educational settings in the village: *Rumah Singgah Sore* Oetepas, a non-formal learning site, and Sahraen Elementary School, a formal elementary school. Both colleges are located in Sahraen Village, South Amarasi and confront comparable issues due to insufficient English exposure. For many students, this study was their first exposure to the English language, making it an ideal chance to investigate the effectiveness of utilizing culturally relevant materials to teach basic speaking skills. This strategy was chosen because it provides an exciting, multisensory learning experience that can help students bridge the gap between their native language and English. Students can relate to and comprehend the new language presented by visually conveying stories from their cultural heritage.

This study aims to determine the effect of picture storytelling on developing English-speaking abilities among young learners in South Amarasi. This study addresses key questions about the impact of using South Amarasi folklore in photo storytelling to enhance young learners' English-speaking abilities. It explores the effectiveness of this method in improving language skills within low-resource educational settings and identifies factors that influence students' progress, such as prior knowledge and classroom dynamics. The research also examines teachers' perspectives on integrating local folklore into English lessons, particularly regarding its impact on language acquisition and cultural awareness. The study contributes to the growing body of research on culturally responsive teaching in EFL contexts by investigating these elements. It offers practical insights for educators working with young learners in underprivileged and rural areas. Additionally, the study evaluates the effectiveness of photo storytelling by considering factors like student engagement, classroom dynamics, and the integration of local folklore in facilitating language learning.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A.   Practical English Teaching and Speaking for Young Learners

When teaching young learners, it is essential to utilize methods that promote language acquisition and actively include students in the learning process (Khulel, 2021). Young learners possess considerable language learning ability. Learning English at a young age is beneficial as young learners are highly effective (Wulandari et al., 2020, p.227). Nevertheless, they need careful handling due to their unique traits distinguishing them from adult learners (Mutiah et al., 2020; Oktavia et al., 2022; Wulandari et al., 2020). The PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) method is notably effective from all the methods. The PPP technique, also known as Presentation, Practice, Production, is a practical way to teach young learners (Ilmiddinovich, 2020). Based on previous studies. The PPP method is notably effective for structuring language lessons and supporting the development of speaking skills and vocabulary development for young learners (Belinda et al., 2021; Le Diem Bui & Newton, 2021; Nayanathara et al., 2023; Nopiyadi et al., 2023; Yahya et al., 2023). It involves three stages commonly used in many learning processes for young learners:

1.   Presentation

In the Presentation phase, new language terms and vocabulary are introduced in a familiar and engaging context for young learners (Katemba, 2022). Using culturally relevant stories, such as South Amarasi folklore, provides a meaningful context that makes new vocabulary and sentence structures more relatable. This phase involves showing AI-generated photos and the teacher storytelling the folktale, helping students connect with the material through visual and auditory stimuli.

2.   Practice

The Practice phase is essential for reinforcing what was introduced during the Presentation phase and is particularly important for developing speaking skills (Yahya et al., 2023). During this phase, techniques like the listen-and-repeat are employed. This technique focusing on the language instruction which students listen to the teacher model correct pronunciation and sentence structure and then repeat what they hear (Asipi et al., 2023). Listen-and-repeat activity

allow students to practice components of the language such as sounds, stress, rhyme, and intonation, which promotes practical pronunciation (Norasiah & Sugirin, 2023). By practicing in a supportive environment, students build confidence and become more comfortable using the new language (Wijaya, 2023). Spoken language matters to these strategies because children imitate the words they hear, repeat them in different situations, and subsequently apply them in communicative activities (Marinic & Moritz, 2024).

3. <u>Production</u>

In the Production phase, students use the language they have learned in context (Vagas, 2021). They might engage in simple conversations or presentations, utilizing pre-formed sentences and guided practice. This phase allows students to demonstrate their understanding and apply their language skills with minimal assistance. This phase is crucial for developing fluency and confidence in speaking. Students engage in tasks such as conversations, role-plays, or applying the language they have learned in practical contexts (Yahya et al., 2023). This phase allows students to experiment with language and build their speaking skills through real-life use.

EFL learners frequently confront particular challenges in developing speaking abilities. These problems include a limited vocabulary, a fear of making mistakes, and insufficient speaking practice. To address these obstacles, create a supportive learning environment where students can practice new language forms without fear of being judged (Sintayani & Adnyayanti, 2022). Interactive activities such as role-playing, group conversations, and storytelling are effective ways to improve speaking skills because they give meaningful settings for language usage (Syafii, 2021). Incorporating culturally relevant materials, such as local folktales, can boost engagement and make language learning more accessible and pleasant for young students (Panji et al., 2022). The PPP technique is particularly effective for young learners as it provides a structured approach to language learning, emphasizing repetition and practical use of language (Ilmiddinovich, 2020). This method supports the development of speaking skills, which are crucial for young learners as they form the foundation for more advanced language abilities like reading comprehension and writing. This technique helps students learn basic language skills and boosts their confidence and enthusiasm to communicate in English.

Speaking is a vital component of language learning, and the PPP method provides a structured approach to developing the skill (Yahya et al., 2023). Combining the Presentation phase with the listen-and-repeat technique during Practice gives young learners ample opportunity to learn, practice, and apply new language concepts (Le Diem Bui & Newton, 2021). This structured approach helps young learners overcome common challenges, such as limited vocabulary and fear of making mistakes, by creating a supportive and engaging learning environment (Nopiyadi et al., 2023). As the students progressed through these stages, they build the confidence and competence to use the language effectively.

B. Local Folklore in English for Young Learners

Integrating local folklore into English language teaching is a developing subject of study, especially in regions with strong cultural identities. Numerous research has delved into Indonesian folktales and their potential for teaching languages including English (Anggraini et al., 2022; Bire et al., 2019; Fadhli, 2020; Fitriana & Kusrihandayani, 2017; HL et al., 2020; Indrawati & Purbani, 2020; Laratmase, 2020; Novianti, 2022; Taufina et al., 2019; Uktolseja et al., 2021; Yektiningtyas & Gultom, 2018). Using stories that students are familiar with allows educators to create a more relatable and engaging learning experience. Stories also boost cultural

awareness. However, while there have been studies on using stories in language teaching, the specific impact of employing local folklore in photo story-telling to improve speaking abilities has yet to be thoroughly investigated. This study seeks to close that gap by analyzing the effectiveness of this technique in the context of South Amarasi.

C. Integrating Photo Story-Telling as a Pedagogical Tool and Local Folklore in English for Young Learners

Young learners require creative and innovative teachers; also, teachers need to understand their unique characteristics (Oktavia et al., 2022, p. 383). Early childhood education's use of storytelling has been extensively promoted as it is engaging and considered a natural strategy for teaching and learning with young children (Maureen et al., 2020). Photo storytelling combines visual and textual elements to present a captivating story, making it a valuable teaching tool in language education.

Using visual-based storytelling approaches engages students and encourages them to speak up (Syafii, 2021, p. 226). Sari (2020) emphasizes the importance of designing visual materials for English classes, arguing that the materials create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment than traditional methods. By integrating visuals into lessons, teachers can make learning more interactive and accessible, particularly in language acquisition, where images help bridge the gap between understanding and verbal expression. In language acquisition, photo storytelling allows students to connect visuals with words, enhancing vocabulary and language structures. This strategy also accommodates varied learning types, especially visual learners who may need help with traditional text-based resources. Several studies in Indonesia have investigated the combination of visual storytelling and local folklore in young learners learning, with results indicating that it can significantly improve language abilities by making learning more participatory and engaging (Maya et al., 2021; Rahayu et al., 2022; Rahiem et al., 2020; Sayogie, 2022; Syafii, 2021; Yansyah et al., 2023) However, more research is needed into the effectiveness of this strategy when paired with folklore, particularly in improving speaking abilities in young learners.

METHOD

This section outlines the research design, data collection methods, and analysis techniques used to assess the effectiveness of integrating South Amarasi folklore into learning the English language using photo storytelling. This study employs a qualitative approach, integrating South Amarasi folklore into English-language classes via photo story-telling at multiple levels of education. The methodology includes classroom learning, interviews, and observations to collect thorough data on the approach's effectiveness.

A. Type of Research

This study employs a qualitative research approach, supplemented by descriptive statistics, to investigate the effectiveness of using South Amarasi folklore-based photo storytelling in enhancing young learners' English-speaking skills across two different learning setting. The research explores how students interact with folklore and how it impacts their speaking abilities by conducting classroom observations, interviewing teachers, and analyzing students' speaking

performances. The qualitative data sheds light on how students' cultural backgrounds enrich their language learning while reflecting the teachers' perspectives and experiences.

Descriptive statistics are used to present the results of the pre-tests and post-tests conducted at different schools and educational levels. This statistical data offers a concise summary of the student's progress in speaking fluency and accuracy, which is then interpreted alongside the qualitative findings to provide a complete understanding of the effectiveness of the photo storytelling method. This study comprehensively evaluates the impact of the teaching strategy by combining numerical data with narrative analysis.

B.   Research Subjects

This study included 30 young learners ages 9 to 12 years old from two different educational settings in Sahraen Village, South Amarasi. The participants were elementary school students, including 16 from Sahraen Elementary School, a formal elementary school, and 14 from *Rumah Singgah Sore* Oetepas, a non-formal learning site. Both groups needed more prior exposure to English instruction, and their learning experiences were limited to basic skills such as reading, writing, and math. These two settings provided a unique background for investigating the influence of photo storytelling on English-speaking skills, providing insights into how young learners in both formal and non-formal educational situations respond to this teaching method.

C.   Research Procedure

The research followed an established procedure to guarantee that the narrative strategy was effectively implemented and that comprehensive data was gathered. This technique was separated into numerous significant stages, each to achieve distinct study objectives. The following parts describe the steps involved in the study, from story collection to after the treatment analysis, as well as the instruments and techniques employed at each stage:

1.   Story Collection and Preparation:

Before starting teaching sessions, the researchers conducted a field study in Sahraen Village to gather authentic traditional tales. Two stories from this region were chosen for their cultural significance and linguistic worth. The stories are titled *Faut Esuk and The Legend of Sahraen Village*. The stories were gathered straight from the village elder and have never been published. The stories were then transformed into digital narratives, with AI-generated photos highlighting key elements from each story, making the material more engaging to young children.

2.   Teaching Sessions

In both research sites, the researcher conducted English learning using the stories based on the researchers' preliminary study. The stories were taught using pictorial storytelling techniques. The sessions included storytelling, reading aloud, listen-and-repeat, and group/individual practices.

3.   Pre-Test and Post-Test

Pre-tests were given to students to examine the effectiveness of the photo story-telling strategy and determine their baseline English-speaking skills before the intervention. Following the instructional sessions, post-tests were administered to assess gains in their speaking abilities.

Accuracy and fluency are often used to describe speaking competence (Cendra & Sulindra, 2022, p. 380). This research focuses on pronunciation for accuracy, smoothness, and speech speed for fluency while configuring the students' confidence level in speaking the language (Nikmah & Anwar, 2021). The aspects are chosen because those are the basic aspects that young learners should acquire in dealing with speaking activities.

4.   <u>Classroom Observation</u>

During each meeting in each research setting, the researchers utilized an observation checklist as a short guide to obtain or record information from student activities during the teaching and learning process (Syafii, 2021). The observation provided significant insights into the learning environment, highlighting classroom dynamics and atmosphere. Furthermore, the checklist helped assess how students responded to the various stages of the PPP (Presentation, Practice, and Production) approach, notably during the photo storytelling presentation phase. By observing their reactions, the researchers obtained a better picture of the students' comfort levels, speaking confidence, and general enjoyment of the session.

5.   <u>Teachers' Interview</u>

The addition of teacher interviews offers a qualitative layer to the research, increasing our understanding of students' development and learning environment. Teacher interviews were conducted to better understand students' backgrounds, concerns about learning, and classroom dynamics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Previous research on language acquisition in young learners has primarily missed the possibilities for incorporating specific cultural elements into English language instruction, particularly in South Amarasi culture. While storytelling has been recognized as an effective educational technique, there is a significant lack of research on using local folklore to improve English language skills. This study bridges that gap by proving how South Amarasi folklore can significantly enhance students' speaking skills when combined with visual storytelling. The findings indicate that this culturally sensitive method improves language competency and increases students' connections to their South Amarasi history, resulting in a more meaningful and authentic learning experience.

A.   Learning Process in *Rumah Singgah Sore* Learning Site

The session at Rumah Singgah Sore was conducted using the PPP approach to enhance the students' English-speaking skills through photo storytelling activities. The students were excited about the researcher's arrival, with several arriving before the scheduled start time of 3 p.m. The session began informally with light conversation between the researcher and the students, which helped establish a connection and ease them into the lesson.

The researcher introduced the lesson in the Presentation phase with a photo storytelling activity. A series of photos, generated based on the story of "Faut Esuk", were presented to the students. The researcher first asked the students to identify the objects and scenes in the photos, which helped them acquire new vocabulary. The students were then challenged to arrange the

photos in the correct sequence, turning them into a fun group activity that allowed them to engage with the story visually. This activity prepared them for the storytelling session.

Once the students were familiar with the photos, the Practice phase began. The researcher told the story step by step, using the photos as visual aids to guide the storytelling process. The researcher paused frequently to emphasize key vocabulary, using code-mixing between Indonesian and English to ensure comprehension. The students' connection to the story, as they knew about the Faut Esuk stone and mentioned that it still existed in a forest near their village, further heightened their interest and participation. The lesson continued with a reading-aloud session and a listen-and-repeat activity to reinforce the new vocabulary, allowing the students to practice pronunciation and fluency.

In the Production phase, the students practiced simple conversations based on the story. They were divided into three groups, each assigned specific roles: father, mother, child, sea, and wind. The groups read their dialogues aloud, incorporating the vocabulary they had learned previously, and each group gave a brief presentation. This final phase allowed the students to produce language more independently, applying the new vocabulary and language structures in a meaningful context. The activity also allowed them to show their speaking skills through simple conversation, enhancing their confidence in speaking English.

B.   Learning Process in Sahraen Elementary School

At the beginning of the session at Sahraen Elementary School, the students were initially a bit shy but very excited to have the researcher in their classroom. Friendly interactions before the beginning of the lesson helped to create a welcoming atmosphere, easing the students' nervousness and setting a positive tone for the learning. Incorporating the PPP approach, the researcher captured the students' attention by introducing them to the legend of their village, which they had never heard before. Despite this, the students were eager to learn about their local folklore. In the Presentation phase, the researcher told the story in both English and Indonesian, acknowledging the students' limited English proficiency. As the narrative unfolded, featuring ten men carrying a "*penyu*" (turtle), the researcher invited ten students to participate in the story. This interactive storytelling approach engaged the students, making the story feel more tangible and relatable.

During the Practice phase, the researcher used a combination of reading aloud and listen-and-repeat techniques to introduce new vocabulary and promote language development. Keywords such as "clothes," "sun," "mountain," and "cloud" were emphasized. The researcher read these words aloud and asked the students to repeat them several times. This strategy reinforced correct pronunciation and boosted the students' confidence using the new vocabulary. Although many students were unfamiliar with the words, they consistently attempted to pronounce them, even when they made mistakes. The researcher focused on fostering a fun and supportive classroom atmosphere, ensuring mistakes were viewed as part of the learning process rather than a source of discouragement.

Finally, in the Production phase, the students applied their new vocabulary in simple sentences and phrases, working in groups to practice using the words in different contexts. This phase allowed them to actively produce language in a supportive environment, helping to internalize the vocabulary and use it in speaking activities. The combination of presentation, guided practice, and active production ensured that the students were learning new words and applying them in meaningful and practical ways.

C.   Pre-Tests and Post-Tests Analysis

Each student was assessed on four criteria: Smoothness, Speed, Pronunciation, and Confidence, with scores ranging from 0 to 100. An overall mean score was calculated, and based on these scores, students were categorized into seven (7) performance levels. These levels ranged from Inadequate, Emerging, Progressing, Developing, Satisfactory, Good, to Excellent. Each performance level corresponds to a specific score range on a scale of 0-100. This categorization provided a structured approach to evaluating students' speaking abilities, allowing for targeted feedback and support based on their performance level. The following tables show the results in more detail in the pre-tests and post-tests:

Table 1:
Summary of Students' Pre-Test Analysis of *Kelas Besar* (9-12 years)
***Rumah Singgah Sore* Learning Place**

Students Code	Mean Score	Average Level	General Category
ST01	25,25	1,25	Inadequate
ST02	12,5	1	Inadequate
ST03	64,25	4,5	Developing
ST04	17,5	1	Inadequate
ST05	60	3,25	Progressing
ST06	55,25	2,75	Emerging
ST07	44,25	1,75	Inadequate
ST08	39,5	1	Inadequate
ST09	38,5	2,5	Emerging
ST10	50	2,5	Emerging
ST11	65,75	4,5	Developing
ST12	46,75	2,25	Emerging
ST13	49,5	2	Emerging

Table 2:
Summary of Students' Post-Test Analysis
***Kelas Besar* (9-12 years) *Rumah Singgah Sore* Learning Place**

Students Code	Mean Score	Average Level	General Category
ST01	48	2,87	Emerging
ST02	29,25	1,5	Inadequate
ST03	70,75	5,25	Satisfactory
ST04	46,75	2,75	Emerging
ST05	66,5	4,25	Developing
ST06	61	4	Developing
ST07	50	2,5	Emerging
ST08	48,75	2,5	Emerging
ST09	43,5	3	Inadequate
ST10	60,5	4	Progressing
ST11	65,5	5	Developing
ST12	55,5	3	Emerging
ST13	60	3	Progressing

The pre-test and post-test results for Rumah Singgah Sore Learning Place students reveal noteworthy progress in English-speaking skills. Initially, most students were in the "Inadequate" or "Emerging" categories, indicating limited proficiency. However, the post-test results highlight significant improvements. Students who were previously in the "Developing" and "Progressing" categories, such as ST03 and ST05, demonstrated substantial gains, moving into the "Satisfactory" level. This progress underscores the effectiveness of the instructional strategies employed.

Although students like ST02 and ST09 showed only modest improvement and remained in the "Inadequate" category, the overall trend is positive. The data suggests that while many students benefited from the intervention, continued support is needed for those struggling, ensuring all students can reach their full potential.

Table 3:
Summary of Students' Pre-Test Analysis Sahraen Elementary School

Students Code	Mean Score	Average Level	General Category
ST14	62	4	Developing
ST15	59,25	3	Progressing
ST16	72,75	3	Good
ST17	62,5	4	Emerging
ST18	54,5	2	Emerging
ST19	44,25	1	Inadequate
ST20	62,5	4	Developing
ST21	74,25	3	Good
ST22	60,5	2	Progressing
ST23	44,25	1,25	Inadequate
ST24	60,25	4	Progressing
ST25	52,25	2	Emerging
ST26	49,75	1,25	Emerging
ST27	27,75	2	Emerging
ST28	51	2	Emerging
ST29	34,75	1	Inadequate
ST30	26,5	1,25	Inadequate

Table 4:
Summary of Students' Post-Test Analysis Sahraen Elementary School

Students Code	Mean Score	Average Level	General Category
ST14	62	4	Developing
ST15	59,25	3,5	Progressing
ST16	72,75	5,5	Good
ST17	62,5	4,25	Developing
ST18	54,5	3,5	Progressing
ST19	44,25	1,5	Inadequate
ST20	62,5	3,5	Progressing
ST21	74,25	6	Good

ST22	60,5	3,5	Progressing
ST23	44,25	2	Inadequate
ST24	60,25	3,25	Progressing
ST25	52,25	2,75	Emerging
ST26	49,75	2,25	Emerging
ST27	27,75	1,5	Inadequate
ST28	51	2,5	Emerging
ST29	34,75	1,75	Inadequate
ST30	26,5	1,25	Inadequate

The pre-test and post-test results from Sahraen Elementary School reveal significant progress in English-speaking skills, with notable improvements across performance levels. Initially, many students were in the "Inadequate" or "Emerging" categories, indicating a low proficiency. By the post-test, most students had moved up to higher levels, with those starting in "Developing" and "Progressing" making substantial gains. For instance, ST16 and ST21, who were already performing well, maintained or enhanced their proficiency, reflecting the effectiveness of the learning strategy. However, some students, like ST19 and ST29, showed only limited improvement and remained in the "Inadequate" category, highlighting the need for ongoing, targeted support. Overall, while the trend is positive, addressing the diverse needs of all students remains crucial for further enhancing their English skills. The analysis of Table 5 is on a seven-point scale rating from Likert, finds the following recapitulation:

Table 5:
Detailed Comparison Table of Pre-Test and Post Test Elementary School in Sahraen and a Learning Place

Aspect	Category	Pre-Test: Sahraen Elementary School (%)	Post-Test: Sahraen Elementary School (%)	Change: Sahraen Elementary School (%)	Pre-Test: *Rumah Singgah Sore* (%)	Post-Test: *Rumah Singgah Sore* (%)	Change: *Rumah Singgah Sore* (%)
Smoothness	Inadequate	52.29%	23.53%	-28.76%	100%	46.15%	-53.85%
	Emerging	29.41%	20%	-9.41%	55.25%	50%	-5.25%
	Developing	11.76%	20%	+8.24%	0%	15%	+15%
	Satisfactory	0%	11.76%	+11.76%	0%	30%	+30%
	Good	5.88%	25%	+19.12%	0%	45%	+45%
	Excellent	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	+5%
Speed	Inadequate	30%	20%	-10%	30%	10%	-20%
	Emerging	50%	45%	-5%	50%	35%	-15%
	Developing	10%	25%	+15%	10%	20%	+10%

Aspect	Category	Pre-Test: Sahraen Elementary School (%)	Post-Test: Sahraen Elementary School (%)	Change: Sahraen Elementary School (%)	Pre-Test: *Rumah Singgah Sore* (%)	Post-Test: *Rumah Singgah Sore* (%)	Change: *Rumah Singgah Sore* (%)
	Satisfactory	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	+20%
	Good	10%	10%	0%	10%	30%	+20%
	Excellent	30%	20%	-10%	30%	10%	-20%
Pronunciation	Inadequate	20%	20%	0%	35%	25%	-10%
	Emerging	30%	40%	+10%	25%	30%	+5%
	Developing	30%	20%	-10%	20%	20%	0%
	Satisfactory	0%	10%	+10%	10%	15%	+5%
	Good	10%	15%	+5%	20%	25%	+5%
	Excellent	10%	5%	-5%	0%	0%	0%
Confidence	Inadequate	46%	20%	-26%	43.75%	27.75%	-16%
	Emerging	29.41%	20%	-9.41%	55.25%	50%	-5.25%
	Developing	11.76%	20%	+8.24%	0%	15%	+15%
	Satisfactory	0%	11.76%	+11.76%	0%	15%	+15%
	Good	11.76%	25%	+13.24%	0%	45%	+45%
	Excellent	0%	0%	0%	0%	5%	+5%

Analyzing the pre-test and post-test data from the Sahraen Elementary School and Rumah Singgah Sore Learning site reveals distinct impacts of integrating South Amarasi folklore-based photo storytelling into English learning. At Sahraen Elementary, students showed noticeable improvement in confidence and pronunciation, likely due to their initial exposure to English and gradual adaptation to the new content. The percentage of students classified as "Inadequate" in smoothness and speed decreased, while there was an increase in students moving to higher proficiency levels. Conversely, Rumah Singgah Sore students, who had prior English exposure and a more interactive learning environment, demonstrated significant gains in smoothness and pronunciation. This highlights the effectiveness of incorporating culturally relevant and engaging materials into lessons, which appears to have enhanced specific aspects of their English-speaking skills.

The findings underscore the efficacy of using culturally relevant photo storytelling as an instructional strategy in bridging the gap in English proficiency, especially for students with limited prior exposure to the language. Rumah Singgah Sore's higher engagement and improvements in smoothness and pronunciation suggest that interactive and contextually

meaningful lessons can significantly boost language skills. However, the variability in progress between the two settings indicates that while foundational English knowledge is critical, the method's effectiveness depends on prior exposure and classroom dynamics. The success observed at Rumah Singgah Sore suggests that combining cultural relevance with interactive teaching methods can create a more effective learning environment. Future research should explore how to replicate these positive outcomes across diverse educational contexts and address any resource limitations to enhance the overall impact of such instructional approaches.
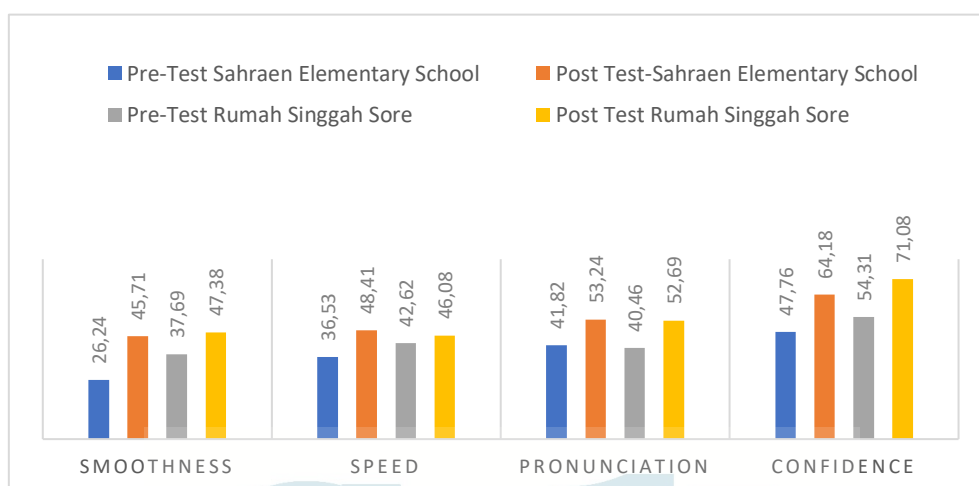
Figure 1:
The chart of Impact of Photo Storytelling on Young Learners English-Speaking Skills: Pre-Test vs. Post-Test Analysis

Emphasizing the students that began in the "Inadequate" category during the pre-tests and moved to the "Emerging" category in the post-tests, the chart shows the notable increases in students' English-speaking ability. At first, many children from both Sahraen Elementary School and Rumah Singgah Sore showed poor performance based on their placement in the "Inadequate" category in many different spheres, including smoothness, speed, pronunciation, and confidence.
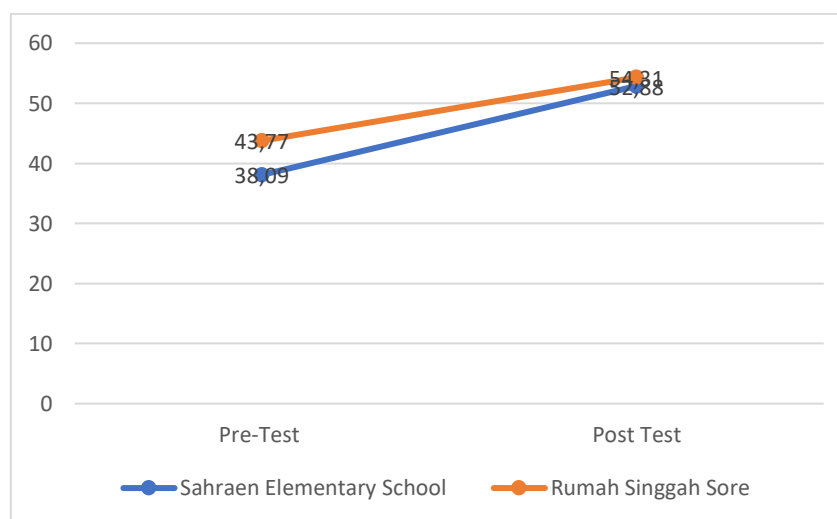

Figure 2:
The chart of Pre-Test and Post Test Results

The post-test results following the intervention demonstrate an apparent change; that resulted numerous students to move from "Inadequate" to "Emerging." Particularly in terms of pronunciation and smoothness, this improvement in their speaking skills marks development. The development shows that the teaching method—especially picture storytelling with South Amarasi folklore—effectively improved the students' fundamental English competency. Students showed that focused and culturally relevant approaches can have a significant influence on language learning for young learners by raising their performance to a more competent level from a low base.

The comparative analysis of English-speaking skill development between *Rumah Singgah Sore* Oetepas students and Sahraen Elementary School reveals several key factors influencing the study's outcomes. These factors include educational priority and exposure, foundational knowledge in English, challenges faced by teachers, classroom dynamics, student engagement, and the role of local folktales in English language learning.

1. Educational Priority and Exposure

Sahraen Elementary School and Rumah Singgah Sore focus primarily on fundamental skills like reading, writing, and math, with English introduced only at the secondary level (Mutiah et al., 2020, p.1371). This gap highlights the importance of incorporating English learning through storytelling, representing new learning from the usual learning. For many students, this study marked their first exposure to English, emphasizing a considerable gap in their previous learning experiences. This study aimed to bridge that gap by introducing English through photo storytelling, offering a more engaging and culturally relevant language learning method. The learning process involved using photos related to the folklore story of *Faut Esuk and The Legend of Sahraen,* allowed students to acquire new vocabulary through visual aids. Students actively participating in activities such as arranging photo sequences and practicing conversation from the story. The researcher also used listen-and-repeat technique to introduce English words. Despite their limited English exposure, the students' excitement in acting out story scenes helped make the learning experience memorable.

2. Insufficient English Foundations

Students in both settings displayed a notable lack of Basic English knowledge, with unfamiliar common phrases and self-introductions. This deficiency was evident from the pre-test data, showing that most students were in the "Inadequate" category for smoothness, speed, pronunciation, and confidence. The photos allowed students to visualize the words, helping them connect the images and the English vocabulary. Then, the repetition and pronunciation practice of basic words, such as "clothes," "sun," and "mountain," helped students build a foundation despite their limited prior exposure to English.

3. Students Reluctance to Speak in English

The reluctance of students to speak, driven by limited vocabulary and the fear of making mistakes, significantly impacted their language development outcomes (Syafii, 2021, p. 260). This apprehension was evident in the initial pre-test results, where students hesitated to engage in speaking activities at the elementary school and the learning site.

The learning process at Rumah Singgah Sore addressed this reluctance by creating a relaxed environment with activities that incorporated fun and group work. The photo storytelling activity

encouraged students to speak, as they were already familiar with the objects and scenes in the photos. Meanwhile, at Sahraen Elementary School, the researcher's effort to create a low-stress environment helped reduce students' anxiety, allowing them to practice pronunciation without fear of making mistakes. Post-test results showed noticeable improvements, particularly in the "Emerging" category, indicating that exposure to English in a context that resonated with students helped alleviate some of their fears.

4.   Teachers Difficulties

Based on the teacher's interview, financial constraints and limited resources presented significant challenges for the teacher at the learning site. The fact that lessons were offered for free at this non-formal site directly affected the availability of necessary teaching media and learning sources. Additionally, the scarcity of readily accessible media in the classroom further contributed to the challenges (Wulandari et al., 2020, p.231). Khulel (2021a) also supports this that starting up a class on English in schools might be challenging due to limited resources. The teacher also pointed out that textbooks were not designed to include local content particularly relevant to the Amarasi region. This gap underscored the importance of culturally relevant materials in language learning. Despite these difficulties, the teacher at Rumah Singgah Sore created an engaging learning environment by utilizing creative activities that required minimal resources. In contrast, Sahraen Elementary School, while constrained by the curriculum and school's facilities, benefited from the researcher's involvement. The introduction of interactive English learning exercises that engaged the entire class was particularly appreciated, as they focused on improving English skills and enhancing students' cultural awareness by integrating authentic materials from their own village.

5.   Classroom Dynamics and Student Engagement

Observations revealed that students at Rumah Singgah Sore, Oetepas were more active during learning than at Sahraen Elementary School. This higher engagement, reflected in the significant improvement in smoothness and pronunciation, can be attributed to their previous exposure to English and a more interactive learning environment. The relaxed setting and smaller group activities at Rumah Singgah Sore allowed greater individual participation and interaction. At Rumah Singgah Sore Oetepas, students showed progress in smoothness, increasing from 0% to 40%, and pronunciation, improving from 15% to 20%. In contrast, students at Sahraen Elementary School, who had hardly any prior English experience, mainly progressed in confidence and pronunciation. The post-test results indicated an increase in confidence in students categorized as "Emerging" and "Developing" (Students' numbers in the emerging category decreased from 27.75% to 43.75%) and pronunciation (from 35% to 25%).

6.   Understanding of Local Folktales

Based on the classroom observations and interviews with the teachers, students in formal and non-formal educational settings were unfamiliar with the stories of "Faut Esuk" and "The Legend of Sahraen Village". This lack of knowledge highlights the uniqueness of incorporating culturally relevant material, such as local folklore, into English learning. Integrating local content provided a fresh learning opportunity, helping bridge the gap between students' cultural backgrounds and the new language they were learning. Integrating local stories made the learning experience more relatable and meaningful. At Rumah Singgah Sore, students' personal connection to the story of "Faut Esuk", which they recognized from their village, heightened their interest and participation. Similarly, at Sahraen Elementary School, the interactive

storytelling process involving the students as characters in the story made the lesson more engaging and memorable.

7.   Differences in Aspects of Development

The data reveals significant differences in development between the two groups. At Rumah Singgah Sore Oetepas, students showed considerable improvements in pronunciation, with more students advancing to the "Emerging" and "Developing" categories in pronunciation (e.g., from 20% to 15%). In contrast, Sahraen Elementary School students with hardly any prior English learning experience showed notable progress in confidence and pronunciation, though their advancements in smoothness were less pronounced. In the confidence aspect, the students had progressed, and the number of students in the inadequate category decreased from 43.75% to 27.75% and pronunciation from 35% to 25%. These differences underscore the impact of prior exposure, classroom dynamics, and the unique learning processes on students' language development. At Rumah Singgah Sore, combining photo storytelling, cultural relevance, and interactive group activities created a more engaging learning environment, resulting in better overall improvements. At Sahraen Elementary School, despite limited prior exposure, the emphasis on repetition and role-play exercises helped build confidence and familiarity with new vocabulary.

CONCLUSION

This research has highlighted the beneficial role of integrating South Amarasi folklore into photo storytelling to improve young learners' English-speaking skills. By incorporating local cultural content into language lessons, students exhibited greater engagement, enthusiasm, and confidence in speaking English. The comparative study of learners in two distinct educational settings—Rumah Singgah Sore Oetepas and Sahraen Elementary School—demonstrated that culturally relevant materials can be valuable in language acquisition, even in settings with limited resources. Furthermore, the use of local folklore not only enhanced language development but also deepened students' connection to their cultural heritage. Teacher feedback confirmed that this approach fostered a more enthusiastic attitude toward English learning and heightened cultural awareness among the students. This study contributes to the ongoing discourse on culturally responsive teaching by showcasing how local traditions can be effectively integrated into language education to boost language proficiency and cultural understanding.

Despite the positive outcomes, several limitations of this study should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research was conducted with a limited sample size, focusing on two educational settings in South Amarasi. This limitation may affect the generalizability of the findings to other regions or academic contexts. Additionally, the study primarily measured short-term improvements in language skills, leaving a gap in understanding the long-term effects of folklore-based photo storytelling in English language education. Another limitation is the specific cultural and linguistic context in which the research was conducted, which may not fully apply to learners from different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, resources and classroom environment constraints, particularly in non-formal education settings, may have influenced the overall impact and effectiveness of the storytelling activities.

Future research could address these limitations by expanding the sample size and including a more comprehensive range of educational contexts. Exploring the long-term effects of folklore-

based teaching and examining how various types of folklore impact different aspects of language learning could offer further insights. Expanding the research to include a more extensive and diverse group of learners, as well as various cultural contexts, would provide a broader understanding of the effectiveness of this teaching approach. Schools, particularly those in low-resource areas, should be supported in developing and accessing educational resources, incorporating local cultural content. These resources could include photo storybooks, digital storytelling tools, and other culturally relevant materials for language teaching. Investigating how more technology supports these teaching methods could uncover additional strategies to enhance educational practices. In conclusion, incorporating local folklore into English language instruction is a practical approach to improving language skills and fostering cultural understanding. The positive results from this study support the use of culturally relevant materials in education, aiming to create more engaging and effective language learning experiences.

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APPENDICES:

Assessment Rubric for Beginner English-Speaking Skills

Criteria	Excellent (7)	Good (6)	Satisfactory (5)	Developing (4)	Needs Improvement (3)	Emerging (2)	Inadequate (1)
Smoothness	The student can speak with a good flow, using simple sentences with minimal pauses and errors.	The student communicates basic ideas with some fluency. Pauses and errors occur but overall speech is understandable and coherent.	The student can form simple sentences, but fluency is affected by noticeable pauses, and errors occur frequently. The main idea can still be understood.	The student attempts to communicate but struggles with fluency. Frequent pauses and errors disrupt the flow of speech, but there is still an effort to convey meaning.	The student makes basic attempts at communication but often hesitates or stops. Fluency is limited, and frequent errors make it difficult to follow.	The student shows minimal fluency with significant pauses and fragmented speech. Communication is possible, but understanding is challenging.	The student can produce only a few words or phrases, with little to no fluency. Communication is very limited and often unclear.
Speed	The student maintains a natural pace throughout, appropriate for the beginner level.	Speech pace is generally appropriate, with occasional pauses that do not affect comprehension.	The pace is somewhat inconsistent, sometimes too fast or slow, affecting fluency, but it is still understandable.	The pace fluctuates, sometimes too fast or too slow, leading to difficulties in understanding.	Speech is often either too fast or slow, making comprehension challenging.	The pace is inappropriate most of the time, making comprehension difficult.	Speech is extremely slow or rushed, resulting in very limited comprehension.

Pronunciation	Pronunciation is clear and contributes to overall fluency, with minimal errors.	Pronunciation is generally clear, though some errors are present, they do not hinder understanding.	Pronunciation is mostly clear but includes frequent errors that may sometimes affect comprehension.	Pronunciation issues are common and occasionally hinder communication.	Pronunciation frequently causes misunderstandings, leading to difficulties in following the speech.	Pronunciation issues are major, making it challenging to understand the speech.	Pronunciation is very unclear, making speech nearly incomprehensible.
Confidence	The student speaks with confidence, showing minimal hesitation or self-correction.	The student demonstrates confidence, though with occasional hesitation or self-correction.	The student is reasonably confident but shows noticeable hesitations and self-corrections.	The student hesitates frequently, affecting fluency but still makes an effort to communicate.	The student lacks confidence, with frequent hesitation and difficulty maintaining speech.	The student has very little confidence, with constant hesitation and unclear speech.	The student shows no confidence, with extreme hesitation and difficulty in speaking clearly.