FOSTERING EYL'S CRITICAL LITERACY SKILLS USING THE FOUR RESOURCES MODEL IN FOLKLORE

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ABSTRACT

Literacy instruction is frequently restricted to word decoding and literal meaning understanding in many EFL contexts, especially in early education. This study addresses the necessity of shifting towards critical literacy methods that enable young learners to engage with texts from a variety of perspectives. The aim of this research is to investigate how the Four Resources Model by Luke and Freebody (1999) can be applied to develop critical literacy skills in English Young Learners (EYL) through the use of folklore as a learning medium. The study, which used a qualitative case study methodology, was carried out in an Indonesian seventh-grade classroom. Semi-structured interviews and classroom observations were used to gather data. The results show that combining culturally relevant folktales with the Four Resources Model-code breaker, text participant, text user, and text analyst improved students' vocabulary, grammatical awareness, and capacity to consider the social values and ideologies expressed in texts. The study shows that with the help of organised, context-rich training, young students can go from basic comprehension to critical interpretation.

Keywords: *Conceptual metaphor, Football chants, Semantics, Manchester United, Discourse Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, early childhood education in Indonesia is undergoing significant transformation due to the growing impact of digital technology and multicultural exposure, profoundly reshaping early years learning (EYL). Indonesian children are today exposed to a plethora of information and varied cultural narratives from a young age, rendering the cultivation of critical literacy skills increasingly essential. As education progresses, its objective transcends economic development to cultivate social consciousness and critical involvement with the world (Freire & Macedo, 2005). This transformation is particularly apparent in language education, where the objective extends beyond cultivating skilled communicators to fostering persons who can interrogate, analyze, and reconstruct the narratives that influence society (Fajardo, 2016).

Acquiring a language, particularly a foreign one, transcends mere mastery of vocabulary or grammar. It entails cultivating the capacity to discern meaning, interrogate viewpoints, and relate language to overarching social contexts. In the contemporary landscape, characterized by multimodal, rapid, and ideologically laden information, students

must possess the abilities to critically engage with texts. They must be capable of deciphering not only words but also the intrinsic values, assumptions, and power dynamics inherent in the material they read and hear. This becomes the basis of critical literacy, an educational methodology that challenges learners to "read the word and the world" (Freire & Macedo, 2005) and to interrogate prevailing narratives in the process. Critical literacy transcends basic reading and writing skills; it empowers young learners to examine, interrogate, and contemplate the messages and values inherent in texts, fostering their development as discerning and reflective members of society (Patria, 2022).

In response to these needs, numerous scholars and educators have adopted the Four Resources Model established by Luke and Freebody (1999), which offers a framework for interacting with texts in four interrelated capacities: as code breakers, text participants, text users, and text analysts. This strategy has been utilized globally to enhance both fundamental and advanced literacy abilities, demonstrating efficacy across many cultural and educational settings, particularly for students in underserved, distant, or multilingual regions. A method to close this gap is by using folktales in the Early Years Learning classroom. Folktales, especially fables, are culturally resonant, ethically profound, and linguistically approachable for young learners. When integrated with the Four Resources Model, folklore serves as a potent instrument for facilitating student engagement with both the text and their personal and societal contexts.

Although critical literacy has gained attention in Indonesia's early childhood English education, existing research predominantly focuses on basic literacy skills such as reading and writing, highlighting a notable gap in studies that explore its integration within Early Years Learning (EYL) settings (Mbau & Sugeng, 2019; Hidayat et al., 2025). Research indicates limited application of comprehensive frameworks like the Four Resources Model in Indonesian EYL classrooms, especially in fostering critical engagement with texts beyond surface-level decoding, which is essential in Indonesia's multicultural and digitally influenced context (Gustine, 2018; Rahmawati & Sulistyo, 2021). Furthermore, prevailing challenges such as inadequate teacher preparedness, lack of resources, and entrenched exam-focused teaching methodologies restrict effective implementation of critical literacy approaches (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016; Diani, 2023). This gap underscores the urgency for contextually responsive pedagogical research that integrates culturally relevant materials, including folklore, to support the development of critical literacy skills in young

English learners, ultimately enriching educational practices in Indonesia's diverse learning environments.

A significant challenge in Indonesia is educators' limited understanding and readiness to teach critical literacy, particularly in early years and EFL settings, where literacy is often viewed narrowly as basic reading and writing focused on decoding rather than critical engagement. This is compounded by inadequate training and resources especially in rural areas, alongside a dominant culture of rote learning and exam-focused pedagogy, which restrict students' ability to analyze and question social and ideological meanings in texts (Gustine, 2018; Diani, 2023; Sugiarto & Manara, 2025). Socioeconomic inequalities further exacerbate the literacy divide, with urban students having greater access to books and quality instruction than those in rural regions; meanwhile, the digital age's flood of information underscores the urgent need for critical thinking skills to combat misinformation and support meaningful societal participation (Najah, 2024).

Additionally, early childhood English education, existing research predominantly focuses on basic literacy skills such as reading and writing, highlighting a notable gap in studies that explore its integration within Early Years Learning (EYL) settings (Mbau & Sugeng, 2019; Hidayat et al., 2025). Research indicates limited application of comprehensive frameworks like the Four Resources Model in Indonesian EYL classrooms, especially in fostering critical engagement with texts beyond surface-level decoding, which is essential in Indonesia's multicultural and digitally influenced context (Gustine, 2018; Rahmawati & Sulistyo, 2021). Furthermore, prevailing challenges such as inadequate teacher preparedness, lack of resources, and entrenched exam-focused teaching methodologies restrict effective implementation of critical literacy approaches. This gap underscores the urgency for contextually responsive pedagogical research that integrates culturally relevant materials, including folklore, to support the development of critical literacy skills in young English learners, ultimately enriching educational practices in Indonesia's diverse learning environments.

This study examines the application of the Four Resources Model in an Indonesian EYL classroom utilizing chosen folktales, emphasizing the enhancement of critical literacy. Based on classroom observations and interviews in a fifth-grade EFL class in Indonesia, the study illustrates how folktales can effectively enhance linguistic competence and critical consciousness in young learners.

In considering this context, there is an imperative to reconceptualize early years language instruction in Indonesia by including critical literacy into routine classroom practices. To tackle the issues of teacher preparedness, resource availability, and curricular relevance, a transition from conventional, skills-oriented instruction to a more comprehensive, reflective, and culturally responsive pedagogy is necessary. Utilizing folklore within the Four Resources Model enables educators to provide significant chances for young learners to investigate language, culture, and identity while cultivating the analytical abilities essential for active engagement in a complex, fast evolving world. This strategy enhances fundamental literacy and encourages children to become discerning, critical readers and citizens equipped to engage with and contribute to Indonesia's diverse and dynamic society.

In light of these concerns, this study aims to address the subsequent research question: In what ways may the incorporation of folklore, informed by the Four Resources Model, augment the cultivation of critical literacy abilities in young English language learners within English for Young Learner educational contexts? This research is significant for its potential to enhance equitable and culturally relevant literacy practices, providing practical methods for educators and adding to the broader dialogue on critical literacy in multilingual and multicultural settings.

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy is an educational approach that encourages students to actively analyze, scrutinize, and reflect on the messages, values, and power structures embedded in books. Critical literacy transforms reading from a passive decoding process into an active engagement, encouraging students to analyze whose viewpoints are represented, whose are marginalized, and how language shapes our understanding of the world (Freire & Macedo, 2005; Luke, 2012). This methodology aims to develop linguistic proficiency and critical awareness, enabling learners to become thoughtful, informed, and responsible citizens (Janks, 2010).

In Early Young Learner (EYL) classrooms, with adequate scaffolding, support, and suitable materials, children can participate in critical debates, recognize biases, and examine diverse perspectives using inquiry and dialogue-based approaches (Vasquez, 2014; Wohlwend, 2011; Setyorini, 2017). Research in EFL classrooms indicates that young learners may discern authors' intentions and cultural norms when supported by systematic, reflective

teaching methods (Setyorini, 2017; Gustine, 2018). Nonetheless, obstacles persist in integrating critical literacy with the cognitive development of young learners, necessitating professional development for educators to adopt these approaches effectively (Setyorini, 2017). Notwithstanding these obstacles, literature underscores the need of cultivating critical thinking and social responsibility in Early Years education (Vasquez, 2014).

Four Resources Model

Recent critical literacy frameworks to explore include Luke and Freebody's (1997) four-resource model, Janks' (2000) synthesis model for critical literacy, and Lewison et al.'s (2002a) four-dimension critical literacy model. These frameworks provide methods for classifying textual and instructional processes, along with strategies for categorizing them. This study examines the four resources model proposed by Luke and Freebody. The 'Four Resource Model' (Freebody & Luke, 1990) has significantly influenced the development of literacy programs, with components of the approach integrated into English language curricula in Australia, the United States, and parts of Europe.

The Four Resources Model serves as a suitable framework for emerging nations and their educational institutions for multiple reasons. It is readily understood by diverse educators, can be swiftly adopted in schools with varied student populations, is suitable for systemic application, and is straightforward to convey to parents and administrators. It may also be utilized in early childhood, primary, and secondary educational environments. Primarily, it offers a framework for all educators, regardless of discipline, to integrate reading skills throughout the curriculum, including science, geography, and others (Firkin, 2015).

As a result, the Four Resources Model is a schema, a teaching tool, and a tool for sequencing learning activities. It is a planning tool and a visual representation of practices and skills in a larger context. Thus, the Four Resources Model serves as a road map for potential textual practices. Luke and Freebody identified four types of language learners:

(a) Code-Breaker: How do I access the construction semiotic system?
(b) Text Participant: Can you tell me how to read this text?
(c) Text User: What should I do with this text?
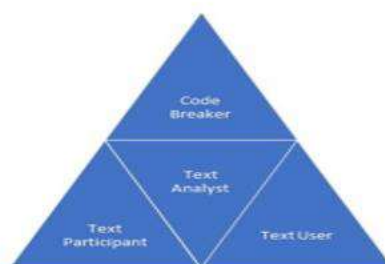(d) Text Analyst: How does the text present me as a user?

Figure 1: The Four Resources Model: Adapted from Freebody and Luke (1990)

The Four Resources Model highlights the development of four essential learner roles. The four types are Code-Breaker, Text Participant, Text User, and Text Analyst (Freebody and Luke, 1990). To assume a learner role, the individual must focus on the relevant literacy activities. The decoding process prioritizes phonetics, lexicon, and syntax. The significance of coherence, genre, and register is underscored in the process of meaning construction. Ultimately, the learner can attain an understanding of the text's application, its connections to other texts, and the capacity to assess the text's effectiveness through analytical techniques. Each activity can be deconstructed into literacy strategies and clusters of teachable skills, enabling students to engage as learners in each of the four reader roles.

This model was selected for multiple reasons. It perceives literacy as a social practice that transcends mere technical text analysis, while also appreciating linguistic analysis. Mcinulty (2014) emphasizes the objective of enhancing students' literacy via coding, semantic, pragmatic, and critical abilities, aligning with the study's linguistic and socio-cultural goals. The methodology conforms to any curriculum, bolstering EFL literacy by improving English proficiency and critical thinking through interaction with linguistic and socio-political textual elements. Brenner (2012) emphasizes its adaptability, since the four resources can be utilized non-hierarchically across various grade levels and customized to meet students' requirements. Ultimately, it fosters holistic literacy, allowing all children to cultivate vital abilities necessary for personal and civic advancement. These considerations validate its application in the critical literacy practice of primary children.

Folklore

The choice of materials is essential for the effective execution of critical literacy in early years language schools. Materials must be both linguistically accessible and abundant in cultural, social, and ethical substance to provoke critical discourse and contemplation (Nikolajeva, 2014). Suitable materials for young learners comprise picture books, storybooks,

and particularly folktales, which provide genuine contexts for examining values, identities, and societal concerns (Zipes, 2012).

Kaltsum and Utami (2015) emphasize folklore's relevance in engaging young learners through culturally meaningful stories that enhance language skills and intercultural awareness. Similarly, Nikolajeva (2016) highlights how children's literature, including folktales, facilitates cognitive engagement by providing narratives that provoke reflection on social values and identities. Pramadhanti and Asyi (2024) discuss the development of teaching materials based on Indonesian folklore, underlining their accessibility and effectiveness for beginner-level learners. These perspectives collectively affirm that integrating folklore into early years English learning enriches linguistic competence, fosters ethical understanding, and nurtures critical thinking skills necessary for young learners navigating a diverse and evolving world.

Folklores are very effective for critical literacy education in early years learning situations. They are captivating, culturally significant, and frequently encompass themes, morals, and character interactions that provoke examination and discourse (Zipes, 2012; Nikolajeva, 2014). Folktales introduce learners to varied linguistic structures and cultural viewpoints, enhancing both linguistic and intercultural proficiency (Bettelheim, 1976). They promote imagination and creativity, while also facilitating discussions on values, challenging stereotypes, and examining different perspectives (Setyorini, 2017).

Studies demonstrate that using folktales in EFL classes can improve students' motivation, language proficiency, and critical thinking skills (Gustine, 2018). Pre-reading activities, vocabulary assistance, and post-reading discussions are suggested techniques to optimize the advantages of folktales and mitigate potential problems, including new language or cultural references (Setyorini, 2017; Vasquez, 2014). Integrating folktales into critical literacy education enables educators to cultivate young learners' skills in questioning, interpreting, and responding to intricate textual meanings, so equipping them for active engagement in a diverse and quickly evolving world (Luke & Freebody, 1999).

METHODOLOGY

This qualitative case study examined the implementation of the Four Resources Model to enhance critical literacy via folktales in an Early Young Learner (EYL) classroom. The case study design was selected for its capacity to offer a comprehensive, contextualized insight into teaching and learning dynamics within an actual classroom setting (Merriam,

2009). The practitioner, serving as both the classroom teacher and researcher, was able to observe, interact with, and reflect on the students' experiences during their engagement with the instructional activities. The study, conducted at a private school in Sukabumi, Indonesia, featured six intentionally selected seventh-grade children representing diverse academic levels: two high performers, two middle achievers, and two poor achievers. The practitioner, serving as both educator and researcher, conducted a sequence of classes utilizing the folktale The Tortoise and the Hare, organized according to the four roles of the model: code breaker, text participant, text user, and text analyzer.

The data collection encompassed classroom observations and semi-structured interviews, concentrating on students' involvement, interpretation, and critical responses to the text. Observational notes documented verbal and non-verbal interactions, whilst interviews provided insights into students' comprehension and reflections. Data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phases of thematic analysis, combining inductive coding with deductive insights from the Four Resources Model. First, observation notes and interview transcripts were read repeatedly for familiarization, with reflective memos capturing initial impressions. Next, meaningful excerpts were highlighted and assigned initial codes. Related codes were then grouped into broader categories, which were refined into themes aligned with the model's roles. Themes were reviewed against the full dataset, defined, and named, with analytical memos documenting scope and interpretation. Data triangulation and member validation were utilized to ensure trustworthiness. Ethical protocols were adhered to, with informed consent acquired from students and their guardians. Pseudonyms were employed to safeguard identities, and participation was consensual.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings and discussion drawing from the data obtained during the field work. Grounded in the principles of the four resources model, the findings and discussion are structured based on four critical literacy models: (1) breaking the code of text, (2) participating in making meaning, (3) using text functionally and purposely, and (4) critically analyzing the text (Luke & Freebody, 1999).

1. Breaking the Code of the Text

In this preliminary phase, as suggested by Luke and Freebody (1999), students were instructed to function as code breakers, a vital role that encompasses the comprehension of fundamental textual elements including alphabets, phonics, punctuation, sentence structures,

and word building. This phase highlighted the processes of decoding and encoding language, necessitating students to understand and interpret fundamental textual codes within the narrative provided. Students were urged to examine both unfamiliar elements and the contextual and background features of the narrative. They were methodically guided through three phases of code-breaking: (1) word recognition, (2) fundamental grammatical structures or sentence patterns, and (3) punctuation (Luke & Freebody, 1999).

The initial phase, vocabulary recognition, entailed a joint reading of the chosen folklore narrative, The Tortoise and the Hare. The teacher and students recited the narrative aloud, sentence by sentence. Unfamiliar terms, especially those not commonly comprehended by most students, were inscribed on the whiteboard and examined together. The vocabulary analysis adhered to a systematic format comprising: Word, Meaning, Synonym, Part of Speech, and Example. The term "bragged" was foreign to several students. It is shown in Excerpt 1 below. T represents the teacher, whereas S1 denotes Student One. To adhere to research ethics, all participants' names are recorded as pseudonyms.

Excerpt 1
S1: Miss, what is *bragged*?
T : *Bragged* is when someone shows off about something. What does that mean?
S1: Like... arrogant, Miss?
T : Yes, that's right!
S1: Ohh! Like Alya, Miss! Yesterday she bought new color pencils from Faber-Castell and she *bragged* about it!
T : Yes, that's a correct example! Now, is it a good thing to brag about something?
Students: Nooo!

The following excerpt illustrates how Student 1 effectively participated in code-breaking by recognising, comprehending, and utilising the meaning of the word "bragged" in a pertinent, personal context. The conversation not only enhanced vocabulary comprehension but also emphasised students' capacity to relate the text to real-life contexts, which is a crucial step in advancing language awareness (Derewianka & Jones, 2016).

The second phase of the code-breaking procedure focused on identifying fundamental grammatical structures or phrase patterns. Following the exploration of the vocabulary term "bragged" in the preceding activity, the learning advanced to analysing its grammatical application within the sentence from the narrative: "the rabbit who always bragged about how fast he was." This transition allowed students to establish links between vocabulary knowledge and syntactic awareness, facilitating their comprehension of how words collaborate to convey meaning in extended textual units.

The statement is classified as a complex sentence, with a main clause "the rabbit" and a relative clause "who always bragged about how fast he was". The teacher observed that the relative pronoun "who" provides descriptive details about the subject, while the verb phrase "always bragged" indicates a habitual conduct in the past tense. The line "about how fast he was" was succinctly described as a complement serving as the object of the verb "bragged." The comprehensive analysis was not directly conveyed to students but guided the teacher's scaffolding choices throughout the course.

Given the developmental stage of seventh-grade English learners, the grammatical complexity of the sentence was reduced throughout instruction. The teacher concentrated solely on components suitable for their proficiency: identifying the subject, the past tense verb, and the definition of "always" as an adverb of frequency. This modified training is evident in the subsequent classroom interaction, which continues the vocabulary topic from Excerpt 1:

Excerpt 2
T : Now, what kind of word is *"bragged"*?
S1: A verb, Miss.
T : Which verb form?
S1: The second verb form, because it ends with *-ed*.
T : Correct! So, what does the second verb form show us?
S1: Past tense, something that already happened.
T : Exactly! What is the subject of the sentence?
S1: *The rabbit.*
T : Excellent. And what does *always* tell us?
S2: It means he did it many times?
T : Yes, it's called an adverb of frequency. So, the sentence means he used to brag again and again. Can anyone make a similar sentence using *always*?
S2: *She always helped her mother in the morning.*

This interaction demonstrates the development of grammatical comprehension through a scaffolded and contextualised methodology. Student 1 and Student 2 identified the verb "bragged" as a past tense verb and recognised "always" as an indicative of habitual activity. Utilising teacher prompts and peer examples, students starting formulating their own basic past tense sentences incorporating adverbs of frequency, so illustrating their developing syntactic awareness. This highlights a crucial element of the code breaker role: facilitating kids' ability to decode words while also fostering their understanding of sentence structure in a manner suitable for their age and skill.

The third stage of the code-breaking procedure emphasised enhancing students' understanding of punctuation and recurrent linguistic norms typically present in narrative texts. At the outset of this stage, the teacher presented fundamental punctuation marks suitable for the students' proficiency, including periods (.), commas (,), quote marks (" "), apostrophes ('), question marks (?), and exclamation marks (!). The class succinctly examined the roles of various punctuation marks, with the teacher offering clear examples to demonstrate how punctuation aids in organising thoughts, signalling pauses, conveying emotion, and differentiating conversation from narration (Winch et al., 2020).

To actively include students in identifying punctuation within context, the teacher directed the class to examine the full text. They collaboratively discovered and enumerated all discernible punctuation signs, regarding the procedure as a method of code-searching. The class identified a total of 16 periods, 7 commas, 14 sets of quotation marks, 6 apostrophes, 2 question marks, and 2 exclamation marks from this assignment. Upon identification, the teacher moved the class's focus to the question and exclamation marks, highlighting their grammatical functions as well as their emotional and expressive significance within a narrative.

A question mark was located in the line, "Why should I hurry?" Upon initial observation, the sentence seems to constitute a straightforward inquiry. Through class discussion, the students were led to recognise that this is not a legitimate inquiry but a rhetorical question illustrating the hare's hubris. The hare, assured of his swiftness, posed the inquiry not out of doubt, but due to his sense of superiority and his underestimation of the tortoise. The teacher encouraged the students to envision the hare's appearance or vocalisation while delivering the statement, possibly with a smile, elevated eyebrows, or a derisive tone. A number of students subsequently rehearsed reading the sentence aloud with various expressions that corresponded to the hare's arrogant demeanour, enhancing their comprehension of the interplay between punctuation, character, and tone.

The class examined an instance of an exclamation mark in the sentence, "I'll win easily!" The punctuation served not merely as a sign but expressed the hare's excessive confidence and enthusiasm. The teacher requested that students perform the hare's dialogue, urging them to amplify their tone, loudness, and facial expressions to convey the character's feelings effectively. This practice enabled students to associate written punctuation with oral

delivery and interpretative reading, emphasising that punctuation marks provide insights into a character's mood, intention, and attitude.

Based on the preceding discussion, the educator executed a sequence of organised and scaffolded exercises to assist students in navigating the code-breaking phase of reading. These encompassed tasks centred on vocabulary recognition, when students detected novel terms and examined their meanings, forms, and contextual usage. The instruction subsequently advanced to the examination of fundamental grammatical structures, wherein students were directed to recognise subjects, past tense verbs, and basic sentence patterns present in the tale. Finally, students were acquainted with punctuation and recurring textual norms prevalent in narrative genres, including quote marks in conversation and the use of temporal markers. These three interrelated tasks allowed students to analyse the linguistic and structural characteristics of the text, establishing a robust basis for reading comprehension. Equipped with a reinforced comprehension of the text's functionality at the lexical and syntactical levels, students were subsequently ready to advance to the next phase: deriving meaning from the text through the interpretation of its concepts, messages, and context.

2. Text Participant

Upon finishing the code-breaking phase, students transitioned to the subsequent level of the critical literacy model: deriving meaning from the text as active participants. At this step, students were instructed to transcend superficial understanding and commence comprehending the message, theme, and significance of the narrative. The objective was to assist students in perceiving the narrative not merely as a series of events but as a representation of authentic values, emotions, and social conduct (Luke & Freebody, 1999; Vasquez, 2017).

The session commenced with a class discourse regarding the story's moral. Students were enquired, "What lesson can be derived from The Tortoise and the Hare?" Responses focused on concepts such as "avoid arrogance," "do not undervalue others," and "steady progress prevails." To enhance the link, the educator recounted a personal experience that resonated with the narrative's theme, illustrating the intersection between fictitious characters and real-life circumstances (Widodo, 2016). Following the teacher's narrative, students were prompted to recollect and disclose any analogous experiences. This request encouraged numerous students to contemplate their personal experiences, so engaging their past

knowledge, which is essential for meaning-making (Tungka, 2018; Leland, et al. 2017). A student, S5, recounted a narrative that reflected the hare's hubris:

Excerpt 3
S5: Last semester I had an English exam. I think I'm the best at English in my class and everyone knew I'm the smartest in English! So, I didn't study at all for the exam. But when we finished the exam, *nilai aku dibawah KKM, aku remedial, Miss*. [my score was below passing grade, I got remedial, Miss]. I was so shy, and since then, many of my friends talked about me behind my back."

This narrative demonstrated that Student 5 successfully internalised the moral of the text and applied it to a personal experience of failure and introspection. The student acknowledged that pride and insufficient preparation could result in unforeseen outcomes, similar to how the hare lost the race by underestimating his rival. The emotional tone, shame, and social discomfort indicated that the student had cultivated a heightened awareness of personal development, exemplifying the transforming capacity of critical literacy (Janks, 2014; Vasquez, 2017). Another participant, Student 6, presented a contrary viewpoint. S6 identified more with the tortoise, a figure frequently underestimated, rather than the hare.

Excerpt 4
S6: "*Miss, kan, kaka aku cantik, putih, pinter, selalu ranking. Beda sama aku. di rumah itu sering dibangga-banggain sama keluarga, dia juga sering ngejekin. Aku sering ngerasa kesaingan. Tapi aku join speech competition dan aku menang juara satu. Dari situ orangtua aku bangga sama aku. Aku juga jadi lebih pede.* [Miss, my older sister is beautiful, fair-skinned, smart, and always top of her class. She's different from me. At home, my family always praises her, and she often teases me. I often feel like I'm competing with her. But then I joined a speech competition and I won first place. After that, my parents were proud of me. I also became more confident.]"

This reflection demonstrated how Student 6 identified with the resilience and understated determination of the tortoise. Although without the accolades afforded to their sibling, the students utilised that difficulty as impetus to diligently strive for individual achievement. The student's experience reflected the underdog concept of the narrative while illustrating personal agency and self-empowerment, highlighting how narrative texts can affirm students' identities and emotional journeys (Leland et al., 2017; Vasquez, 2017).

These conversations and personal anecdotes demonstrate how students, as active participants, engaged with the narrative beyond its superficial meaning. Students engaged in the meaning-making process by establishing personal connections, contemplating character features, and acknowledging moral implications (Luke & Freebody, 1999; Janks, 2014). They not only comprehended the narrative but also interpreted its significance and its relevance to

their own experiences.This phase validated the efficacy of storytelling in assisting young learners in examining themes of self-worth, comparison, humility, and perseverance. The text emphasised that literature can reflect students' real experiences, facilitating emotional processing, challenging assumptions, and fostering confidence (Tungka, 2018; Widodo, 2016).

3. Text User

During this phase, students were anticipated to cultivate an understanding of the functional dynamics of texts within real-life situations, specifically about their purpose, audience, and social application (Luke & Freebody, 1999). During this phase, students examined how narrative texts mirror and uphold cultural and ethical norms. This corresponds with Luke's (2000) perspective that the text user role encompasses pragmatic activities wherein readers evaluate how technical attributes like structure, form, and style are employed to fulfil communicative objectives. Ludwig (2003) asserts that a proficient text user must discern the objectives of a text, its target audience, and the actions or responses it solicits from readers in particular settings.

To elucidate this concept, the teacher initially equipped students with a foundational comprehension of the text user position. The class analysed many straightforward texts (e.g., a poster, a fairy tale, and a social media caption), deliberating on their purpose, target audience, and the anticipated reader engagement with each text. Students collaborated in small groups to discern analogous characteristics in other known texts, including narratives they had read or encountered at home. This exercise engaged students' existing knowledge regarding the utilisation of texts in constructing meaning in daily life.

Subsequent to this fundamental activity, the students employed the text user lens to analyse the primary narrative text under examination. The teacher directed students to ascertain the narrative's purpose, contemplate the target audience, and deliberate on the circumstances or motivations for reading or recounting the story. The majority of students detected that the narrative was crafted to impart a moral lesson regarding behaviour, specifically with arrogance and perseverance, and that it was aimed at children, frequently conveyed by parents or educators to promote qualities such as humility and diligence.

Students were tasked with comparing the narrative to other texts with analogous moral objectives during a debate. This prompted a perceptive contribution from Student 7 (S7), who established a significant connection to a well-known children's television program:

Excerpt 5

T   : "Is there another story that has a similar purpose to *The Tortoise and the Hare*?"
S7 : "Yes, Miss. It's like *Upin Ipin*, when Fizi bragged about having a mom and dad to be respectful to, while Upin and Ipin are orphans. Then Fizi's friends got angry at him, and he sobbed in shame."

This excerpt demonstrates the student's comprehension of how literature convey moral teachings and how analogous themes such as humility, empathy, and contemplation manifest across diverse cultural expressions. It also demonstrates that students could critically analyse various narrative forms and identify common communicative intents.

In a separate conversation, the teacher enquired why several fables employ animal protagonists rather than humans. This inquiry prompted a contemplation on genre tropes and audience attraction, resulting in the following response:

Excerpt 6

T: "Why do you think this folklore uses animals to teach lessons?"
S8: "Because children usually like animals, it makes the story funnier and more exciting. So, this kind of story is made for children, Miss."

S8's reaction underscored a developing understanding of how the selection of form and character is deliberately employed to enhance the text's accessibility and engagement for particular audiences. It also highlighted how textual characteristics are influenced by cultural anticipations regarding the readership and their responses. Through these activities and debates, students began to exhibit an increasing capacity to analyse the functionality of texts and the rationale behind their construction. They were no longer merely reading for comprehension of a narrative; they were analysing the interplay between language, audience, purpose, and social context. This advancement signified their evolution into proficient text users, equipping them for the subsequent phase: becoming text analysts who critically assess how texts influence readers, communicate beliefs, and mirror power dynamics.

4. Text Analyst

The concluding phase of the four resources model designated students as text analysts, urging them to transcend mere comprehension and application of texts to critically examine how texts influence readers, embody values, and potentially harbour implicit assumptions, biases, or ideologies (Luke & Freebody, 1999). At this juncture, students became acquainted with the concept that no text is impartial each work embodies specific perspectives, which may favour certain voices while marginalising others (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2015). This technique entailed instructing students to pose critical enquiries, such as: Whose voices

are represented or omitted? What principles or ideals does the narrative advocate? In what manner are power and identity depicted in the text?

The teacher commenced this phase by rereading the narrative The Tortoise and the Hare and encouraging the students to critically analyse the characterisation. Students were instructed to examine the views and judgements inherent in the text, rather than concentrating exclusively on the moral message, and to analyse how these elements may shape the reader's understanding.

In a reflection exercise, students were prompted to evaluate if the narrative accurately portrayed both characters or had a specific bias. This prompted a more profound inquiry into whether the narrative extolled humility or unjustly condemned confidence. Student 7 articulated a notably reflective response, interrogating the depiction of confidence in the narrative.

Excerpt 7

"I think in this story, being confident is shown as something bad. But actually, it's okay to feel good about our own abilities. Meanwhile, people like the tortoise, who are quiet, are not always right either. We need to be confident." (S7)

This discovery demonstrated the student's emerging ability to question the prevailing narrative of the story, indicating that confidence, when moderated, ought not to be perceived unfavourably. S7's analysis contested the text's fundamental presumption that humility invariably surpasses self-assurance, advocating for a more nuanced viewpoint on personality traits and conduct. A fellow student, S8, challenged the narrative's comprehensiveness and impartiality. They contemplated the potential omission of essential background material in the narrative, which could profoundly influence readers' interpretations of the characters' behaviours.

Excerpt 8

"In the story, we only hear the tortoise's part. What if the hare was actually sick, so he needed to rest? Or maybe the tortoise took a shortcut. We don't really know what happened. But still, we shouldn't be arrogant like the hare." (S8)

S8 demonstrated a developing understanding of the partiality of texts and the necessity for readers to contemplate the omissions therein. Although S8 concurred with the narrative's superficial theme of humility, the student recognised the intricacies of real-world conduct and the potential for alternate interpretations. This signifies a crucial transformation in literacy development: acknowledging that texts embody manufactured realities, and that interrogating them is both legitimate and essential.

Furthermore, the educator employed narrative imagination as a technique to enhance critical reflection. Students were instructed to reconceive the story's conclusion by contemplating, "What if the hare expressed remorse?" A student provided a significant reply:

Excerpt 9
T : "What if the hare apologized after the race?"
S9: "Maybe he felt guilty… then the tortoise forgave him."
T : "That's an interesting thought. Why do you think the tortoise would forgive him?"
S9: "Because maybe the tortoise knows everyone can make mistakes. And if the hare says sorry, it means he wants to be better."
T : "So what do you think is the new lesson if that part was added to the story?"
S9: "Hmm… That we shouldn't just laugh at people when they lose or make fun of them. And if someone says sorry, we have to forgive."

This extract illustrates how the students commenced not just to interrogate the message but also to reformulate and rehumanise it, demonstrating a progression towards ethical reasoning, perspective-taking, and textual alteration. The contemplation in S9 transformed the moral lesson from a simplistic admonition against arrogance to a more nuanced and empathetic comprehension of accountability and forgiveness.

Through these classroom exercises and introspective discussions, students exhibited a developing capacity to analyse, reinterpret, and reconstruct texts informed by their own reasoning and personal experiences. Despite their evolving critical terminology, they were starting to comprehend that writings are inherently biassed and that readers possess the agency to interact with them actively, interrogate their significance, and potentially reinterpret them to embody justice, empathy, or divergent perspectives. This third phase signified the culmination of the four literacy roles, and more significantly, the students' evolution from passive recipients of meaning to critical and reflective participants in language and literacy activities.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasises the value of applying Luke and Freebody's Four Resources Model to enhance young English learners' critical literacy abilities by including folklore. The four roles of code breaker, text participant, text user, and text analyst are used to help build key linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural competencies. Interviews and observations in the classroom show that young students are able to progress from superficial understanding to more in-depth consideration and analysis of societal ramifications. As code breakers, they improved their comprehension of punctuation, grammatical structures, and word decoding.

As text participants, people started to see stories as reflections of real-life values, feelings, and social behaviours rather than just moral tales. As text analysts, students showed the ability to analyze how folklore conveys cultural values and may contain implicit assumptions, prejudices, or ideologies. As text users, learners tailored their comprehension of stories to real-world goals and audiences. These results imply that the Four Resources Model provides young students with opportunity to cultivate critical consciousness as well as basic literacy abilities when it is methodically incorporated into education.

Building on these realizations, a number of useful ramifications for enhancing literacy instruction in Early Young Learner (EYL) settings became apparent. First, training teachers is essential. There is little room for critical involvement because many instructors still confound literacy with simple decoding and comprehension. Therefore, professional development programs should educate teachers with useful tactics, scaffolding techniques, and discussion starters that guide students through each of the four roles in order to enable them to implement the Four Resources Model effectively. Second, curriculum integration is required to guarantee that critical literacy is included into basic literacy modules rather than being viewed as an enrichment activity. In order to satisfy language proficiency objectives and promote thoughtful and socially conscious learners, tasks based on the Four Resources Model can be matched with national frameworks like the Pancasila Student Profile. Lastly, there is a lot of educational potential in using a variety of folkloric resources. Teachers can legitimize students' origins, make lessons more culturally relevant, and promote cross-narrative comparison to reveal other points of view by utilizing Indonesia's rich cultural legacy of fables, myths, and legends. This promotes inclusivity and intercultural awareness in addition to deepening understanding. In sum, the study demonstrates that combining the Four Resources Model with culturally grounded folklore provides a practical, context-sensitive pathway for strengthening both literacy skills and critical capacities in young learners. Such an approach not only enriches classroom practice but also contributes to the broader goal of nurturing reflective, socially aware citizens capable of engaging with Indonesia's diverse and dynamic society. Overall, the study shows that integrating culturally based folklore with the Four Resources Model offers a useful, context-sensitive approach to enhancing young learners' critical thinking and reading abilities. In addition to improving classroom instruction, this method advances the larger objective of developing thoughtful, socially conscious individuals who can interact with Indonesia's dynamic and diverse culture.

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