

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Problems

In recent years, the integration of folklore in educational practice has been recognized as an important method to increase students' reading interest, particularly in English language learning. Folklore, which include various stories, myths and cultural narratives, serve not only as entertainment, but also as an effective educational resource for improving language skills and cultural understanding. Research shows that culturally relevant materials, such as folklore, can significantly increase student motivation and engagement in the learning process (Nussbaum, 2020). By integrating local folklore into the curriculum, educators can create a more comprehensible and immersive learning environment, in accordance with students' cultural background. This connection can increase students' interest in reading, as they find meaning and relevance in the stories they learn.

In addition, folklore is an effective tool for developing critical thinking and comprehension skills. According to (Bakhshaei and Khoshshima 2021) folklore encourages students to analyze themes, morals and character motivations, which are essential skills in language learning and literacy development. Engagement with folklore allows students to practice reading strategies such as summarizing, predicting and inferring, which ultimately contributes to improving their overall reading ability.

Prior of conducting observations at the research internship site in internship two, the researcher had high expectations regarding students' interest in English. The researcher had done some preliminary preparation and analysis which suggested that students at the school might have a significant interest in learning English. According to Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System: Article 3 of this law states that the purpose of national education is to develop the potential of students to become human beings who are faithful, pious, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

Folklore comprehension can play a role in achieving this goal by instilling cultural and moral values in students.

However, in reality, after making observations in the field, the researcher found many students who did not show interest in English reading. Although the researcher had optimistic expectations regarding students' interest in learning English, the results obtained in the field were different from what was expected. The researcher noted that many students were less than enthusiastic when attending English lessons, and some of them even showed an indifferent attitude towards the material being taught. This suggests that there are significant challenges in the learning process that may be affecting students' interest. The researcher also noted that some students felt that English was a difficult and boring subject, so they tended to lose motivation to learn. The researcher realized that to increase students' interest in English, there needs to be a more innovative and interesting approach to teaching. The researcher is committed to exploring various methods and strategies that can be used to reawaken students' interest, such as the use of more interactive media, the introduction of folklore, and activities that involve students actively in the learning process in the classroom.

The researcher hopes that by applying various innovative learning methods, such as the introduction of folklore, students will be more interested in learning English. The introduction of folklore as a learning medium is expected to provide a more interesting and enjoyable learning experience for students. Folklore that are rich in cultural and moral values can be a bridge that connects students to English in a more relevant and interesting context. The researcher also plans to integrate interactive activities related to folklore, such as group discussions, role plays, and creative projects. In this way, students will be encouraged to actively participate in learning, so that they can experience first-hand the benefits of learning English.

The narratives can arouse curiosity and foster a love for reading, which in turn can improve language skills and academic achievement. Research by Adnan et al. (2022) emphasizes the importance of integrating local culture in language education, showing that students are more likely to engage with texts that reflect their own experiences and heritage.

At SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho, an important phenomenon related to students' engagement in reading in English learning emerged, particularly through the integration of local folklore into the curriculum. Observations showed that students who participated in storytelling sessions with traditional folklore experienced a significant increase in their enthusiasm for reading English texts. This change in attitude was particularly noticeable among students who were previously reluctant or uninterested in reading materials. Stories rich in cultural meanings and moral lessons, which resonate with students' experiences, create a bridge between their mother tongue and the English they are learning.

In addition, the integration of folklore in English teaching has created a collaborative learning environment. Students engage in group discussions, share their interpretations of the stories, and even create their own narratives inspired by local folklore. This collaborative approach not only enhances their understanding, but also encourages them to express their thoughts in English, thus improving their language skills. As students become more interested in the stories, they tend to seek out additional reading materials, both in English and their mother tongue, leading to a broader interest in literature as a whole. This phenomenon highlights the transformative power of culturally relevant content in education, showing how folklore can serve as a catalyst for increased engagement and enthusiasm in language learning.

This analysis aims to explore the influence of folklore on students' reading interest in the context of English language learning at SMP Negeri 2 Hiliduho. By examining the relationship between folklore and reading interest, this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of how content with cultural relevance can inspire and motivate students in their language learning process.

1.2 Formulation of the Problem

Based on the background, the problem formulations in this research are :

1. What are the factors that influence students' interest in reading?
2. What internal and external factors influence students' interest in reading English texts, particularly in the form of folklore?

1.3 Objective of the Research

The objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the factors that influence students' interest in reading
2. To explore how the integration of folklore as reading material influences students' overall engagement and motivation in English language learning.

1.4 Significance of the Research

The significances of this research are:

1. Theoritically

This research can be used insights to the teachers on how folklore can be used as a tool to increase students' interest in reading in English language learning.

2. Practically

- a. For writers, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide assistance to writers to analyze students' reading interest through folklore.
- b. For teachers, it is hoped that this research can be a source of reference in using or utilizing folklore in teaching English in the classroom.
- c. For researchers, it is hoped that this research can be a source of evaluation to conduct further research, besides that this research can be used as a reference source for further research.
- d. For students, it is hoped that the research can help students increase their interest in reading as well as their understanding in learning English.
- e. For University of Nias, This research is hoped to be a useful and relevant reference in the Library and contribute to future researchers who are interested in exploring similar topics, particularly in the areas of literacy, reading interest, and the use of folklore in education.