

## A viewpoint on folklore education: providing students freedom and empowerment

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### ABSTRACT

Oral folklore tradition is a unique phenomenon in West Borneo. This study aims to gain the lecturer's perspectives and reflection toward its implementation as a project-based activity for encouraging university students to transform local folklore into texts in English. It combines Finnegan's instructional procedure, and Gordon's synectic model and the creative state, which has been defined as creative instruction. Multiple observations and an in-depth interview with the folklore lecturer were conducted for this qualitative investigation. The lecturer is recognized as being exceptionally representative of this study employing purposive sampling under lived experience study because of his proficiency and enthusiasm. Having this creative instruction under supervision makes it clear that there is more room for the student's imagination and creativity to grow throughout this project-based activity. It gives them freedom to freely pursue their interests. Without excluding the possibilities of use in areas where there is still local folklore, this creative instruction is specifically suited for regions that are still rich in oral tradition. Further research is essential, nevertheless, as this study does not go into great detail on the perspectives and involvement among various students, the diversity of cultures and geographies, or the advancement of artificial intelligence (AI).

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a nation with a diversified cultural heritage, which naturally makes it rich in local knowledge. Folklore as an oral tradition has persisted in the community up to the present day. The elderly generation uses it to pass on lessons about the inherent value of life [1]–[3]. Folklore is primarily passed down orally from one generation to the next through stories and legends. The talent of storytelling is maintained and honored by teaching folklore. The cultural identity of a community is greatly shaped and preserved by its folklore. Addressing West Borneo, the Malay population there uses oral literature to transmit values, morals, and customs to the following generation [4]–[6]. The majority of ethnic Dayak communities, meanwhile, are located in West Borneo [7], [8]. They have a well-known oral tradition [9]–[13]. College students who reside in West Borneo are exposed to rich tradition of oral folklore from Malay and Dayak as a form of oral tradition where it is still practiced by local communities. Students' connection to their roots, heritage, and ancestors are facilitated through the teaching of folklore. This is the reason why teaching folklore needs more attention.

Folklore, as a literary work of culture, is a valuable cultural heritage which transmitted orally [14]–[18]. It is a dialectical relationship between literature and reality which gives a reference for the community in understanding and creating reality [19]–[21]. Teaching folklore must go beyond only "explaining" the tradition and performance they were alluding to; it must "interpret" the text in all of its circumstances and demonstrate how relatives used folklore as a tool to manage their social ties in the community [22], [23]. When it refers to college students in West Borneo, in particular, this demands for more effective folklore instruction.

Recent research on folklore education have been creatively made, and this study reviews numerous studies on folklore education from Indonesia (mainly) and some other nations. Several studies support the development of character [24]–[31]. These studies impart attitudes and behaviors in an educational and social setting to students and teachers. Some research promote critical perception in the importance of folklore in teaching culture, critical thinking, and language skills in reading, speaking, and writing [32]–[37]. Another studies idealize the perspective of the student's own culture in its syllabus design and curriculum in an effort to improve learning in the classroom and student achievement [38]–[43]. The utilization of folklore studies within pedagogy is currently advancing with the integration of art and contemporary media to increase the learning outcomes [44]–[54]. These studies use advanced technologies to bring folklore education up to date. The incorporation of folklore with four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and their subsets is emphasized in other studies [55]–[68]. They provide evidence that studying folklore improves student's linguistic proficiency and skills. In light of the prior studies, it will be advantageous to suggest a model of creative and contextual folklore instruction that takes into account pedagogical principles, the teacher's perspective, and the students' own cultures. It provides a realistic reflection of a project-based teaching approach for transforming oral tradition in a university-level folklore course.

This study initiates the lecturer's reflection in teaching folklore class under the implementation of new curriculum namely *Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) in the academic year of 2022-2023. It fuels the spirit of improvement to review towards the proposed creative instruction to encourage the students of a folklore class. This instruction suggests a project-based activity leads the students to creative thinking and collaborative works by providing students rich opportunities to practice [69]–[72]. This reflection comes in casuistical problems in teaching folklore in West Borneo setting. These issues are caused by three different perceptions of the environment, the students, and the common teaching. The first impression focuses on the state of the local culture, where oral tradition is practiced by the local communities and where local folklore is not well documented. The second view is related to the students' lack of English vocabulary and sense of social engagement, which combines social and academic concerns. The third viewpoint focuses on folklore education, which is known to be individual and receptive.

Inspired by some of the aforementioned perspectives, the lecturer of a folklore class and the researchers promote the awareness that the folklore teaching needs some improvements to empower the students. We encourage a project-based collaboration to convert oral tradition folklore into text with the goal of inspiring students to appreciate folklore, be proud of their local folklore, develop their creativity, and open up greater involvement and freedom in learning. Then, a simple instructional procedure is offered. This instructional procedure is integrated with synectic model and creative state as one of the teaching approaches suggested by Joyce and Weil [73]. In this study, the combination of instructional procedure and synectic model and creative state has been defined as creative instruction.

## 2. CREATIVE INSTRUCTION

Collecting and documenting texts on verbal arts as an oral tradition presents a challenge for the students. Historically, collecting folklore as a material of oral literature is complicated since it was naturally presented in ear (oral) [74], [75]. An easier strategy of handling it is suggested by this study. A simple guideline of collecting oral literature brings creative instruction in this study serve to empower the students in folklore class. The analysis aspects of this creative instruction deal with instructional procedure, and synectic process and creative state.

### 2.1. Instructional procedure

The instructional procedure for the students to convert oral folklore into text is simplified from Finnegan [18] into three steps of procedure namely: collecting, recording, and creating text. Preconception, goal, equipment, setting, and decision-making of what and who need to be recorded are all covered within these steps. This project involves active participation from seven groups of three students. Gathering and recording the best folklore that exists in their communities is the mission.

To give an example, when one group of students is required to select which folklore they will investigate during the actual implementation of the instruction procedure, the group members must come to

an agreement because each one must possess their own idea. The Dayak Kanayatn traditional leader and the relief of Ne'Balungkur story in the Longhouse, for instance, must be identified as the primary and secondary sources of the story if it is agreed that Ne'Balungkur is the tale they want to select. In order to anticipate problems, they must also set up appropriate and multilayer recording equipment before "recording". Multiple smartphones, an action camera, and stationery will be required. The Ne'Balungkur story that has been discovered when matching the plot in the relief must be narrated in writing as the final step in "creating text" before the text can be further translated into English.

## 2.2. Synectic process and creative state

The synectic process focuses on the idea that combining thoughts and genres that sound unconnected may foster creativity and innovative thinking. Gordon [76] created it at the beginning to come up with creative solutions to the problems, one must freely generate ideas about the subject [77]–[80]. It encourages students to think outside of the box and draw on new viewpoints to come up with creative concepts. The synectic process consists of the following seven phases: i) substantive input, ii) direct analogy, iii) personal analogy, iv) comparing analogy, v) explaining differences, vi) exploration, and vii) generating analogy [76]. In phase one, lecturer provides the new topic of the project-based activity. In phase two, the lecturer suggests a direct analogy towards transforming folklore into text. Phase three personalizes phase two. In phase four, students identify and explain the material of their folklore. In phase five, students explain the differences between analogies. In phase six and seven, students suggest and analyze the original topic on its own terms. The creative state, on the other hand, is a mental and emotional condition in which students are particularly receptive to creating original ideas and solutions. Curiosity, openness, and a willingness to learn more about unique and non-linear thinking are characteristics of this mode of thinking. This study addresses the following processes: i) consciousness creativity, ii) emotional process, and iii) problem solving situational through emotional and irrational elements [76]. First, consciousness aids to creativity and increase the capacity of both individual and group. Second, emotional component plays an important role to set new mental pattern where new ideas are possible. The third, emotional, and irrational elements must be understood in order to increase success in a problem-solving situation. The following configuration of the analysis aspects best captures the lecturer's perspective and reflection on reviewing the applied creative instruction. Table 1 configures the analysis aspects best captures the lecturer's perspective and reflection on reviewing the applied creative instruction.

Table 1. The analytical factors in creative instruction

Instructional procedures (IP) [18]	Synectic process (SP) [76]	Creative state (CS) [76]
1. Collecting	1. Substantive input	1. Consciousness creativity
2. Recording	2. Direct analogy	2. Emotional process (new mental pattern)
3. Creating texts	3. Personal analogy	3. Problem-solving situation through emotional and irrational elements
	4. Comparing analogies	
	5. Explaining differences	
	6. Exploration	
	7. Generating analogy	

## 3. METHOD

This study comprises an array of objectives with an overview on the combination of Finnegan's instructional procedure and Gordon's synectic model and creative state which has been defined as creative instruction. First and foremost is to gain the lecturer's perspective on the promoted project-based instruction of converting local folklore into text through creative instruction. The second objective is to obtain the lecturer's reflection towards the implementation of the creative instruction. A folklore class in one of universities in West Borneo which implements the curriculum of *MBKM* received the proposal for this qualitative study by involving seven groups of three students. The lecturer is recognized as being exceptionally representative of this lived experience study employing purposive sampling due to his knowledge and enthusiasm for teaching folklore. Lived experience starts out with tangible reflection and the attempt to describe a meaningful phenomenon which accumulates through times [81]–[84]. Since this study is concerned with unique and delicate traits and skills, however, purposive sampling should be used [85], [86]. The favorable prerequisites for this study are that the participant has eight years of experience teaching folklore, be passionate about local stories, be passionate about teaching, and be beloved by students due to the enjoyment he brings to learning. Multiple observations and in-depth interview with the lecturer of folklore class were conducted. The associated factors involving: steps of Finnegan's instructional procedure [18] and Gordon's synectic model and creative state [76] are combined to reveal the lecturer's perception and reflection on the applied creative instruction in folklore teaching to transform the greatest local folklore into English-language folklore text. The blueprint of this study has been illustrated in Figure 1.

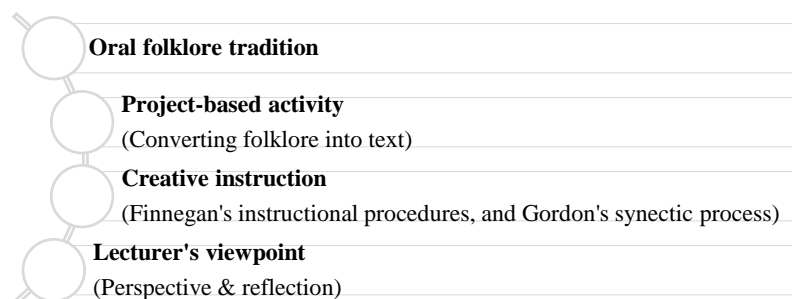


Figure 1. The blueprint of the study

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Results

Multiple observations in the folklore class demonstrate how much the students value the project-based learning environment. The student's completion of this project appears to be a leisurely recreational activity. They are driven by a desire to discover the greatest folklore in their community that fits their preferences. Both inside and outside of the class, the happiness is apparent. With the project, they appear to be enthusiastic. During the in-depth interview, the lecturer unequivocally affirms it when answering: "How do your students feel about the implementation of project-based activity?"

*"I never find my folklore class is so alive. The students are enthusiastic when discussing the project in the classroom. I even heard them talking about their folklore-hunting plan while having lunch at the canteen."*

The conducted in-depth interview provides the lecturer's viewpoint on creative instruction. He is aware that teaching folklore is a crucial subject since it gives children a sense of identity and helps them to personalize their culture. Owing to his experience teaching folklore over the years, new teaching techniques should be able to make learning folklore enjoyable [87]–[89]. He believes that since he lives and works in West Borneo, where oral tradition is still practiced today, there is a higher need for folklore documentation [9]–[13]. More than that, a new strategy for instruction must encourage students' creativity as well as be enjoyable.

*"In my perspective, teaching folklore is very important to root the students to who they are. However, conventional folklore teaching in receptive strategy may not in the heart of the students. We need new teaching strategy to activate the student's participation and collaboration. I know they can be very creative because they are gen Z."*

The analysis of the configuration of the analytical components in this study indicates the substantial impact of the creative instruction under the lecturer's point of view, as shown in Table 2. This study examines the impact of the creative instruction on teaching folklore by taking into account the lecturer's perspective and reflection on the analytical aspects. From the standpoint of the lecturer, the initial instruction of collecting creates the synectic process of substantive input and direct analogy. The creative state belongs to consciousness creativity and problem-solving situation. Those involvement are reflected in the collaborative coordination among the students when they have to decide which folklore is best to explore since they belong to various local communities. Each village has their own unique and interesting folklore to be selected. Every group is allowed to select the folklore that appeals to them the most. Group five is used as an example because its members are from various Dayak villages. They desire to investigate their own beliefs regarding the folklore. One student is curious about *Putri Dara Itam*, another adores *The Origin of Landak River*, and a third is interested in Ne'Balungkur. They need to decide on the best possible tale to investigate. Considering the source to tell the story, the value of the tale for Dayak community, the validation of the story, and the access to the village to hunt the story, they finally decide to explore Ne'Balungkur. They made this choice for a number of reasons, including that they are aware of the best prominent Dayak figure to tell the tale who is accessible to them, that rice is sacred to the Dayak people [13], [90], [91], and that a relief illustrating the Ne'Balungkur story had been carved in a Dayak longhouse nearby.

Personal analogy and comparing analogies combine with consciousness creativity in the process of recording. The students prepare their trip itinerary, the recording equipment, the recording techniques, and the contact information for the community representative at this stage. These signal an interest in expressing their creativity. The lecturer thinks that this stage is advantageous for the students since it gives them more exposure to society. For instance, group three needs to borrow a customized offroad motorcycle for the trip to the village due to the clay road, and they also carry a few clothes for an overnight stay. They come equipped

with one action camera, two extra mobile phones, a book, and a writing instrument for taking notes as their recording equipment.

The procedure of creating texts, which includes explaining difference, exploration, and generating analogy along with new mental processes and problem-solving scenarios, is the last step in the quest for knowledge. The most stimulant for students' cognitive processes is provided during this final stage of the instructional procedure. The students have to dedicate a lot of effort to transcribing the text, forming a cohesive storyline, compiling the folktale, and then translating it into English. The students generally spoke the local language when interviewing the storytellers to gather folklore. Dayak, a local language, and Indonesian are mixed together in the transcription's rough form. The students must translate it into Indonesian and locate the equivalent words for particular dictions. After that, they must convert the finished transcription into English. For instance, when group five encounters the terms "nabas" and "nabankng" when discussing the phases of traditional farming, they must come up with an analogy to distinguish between the meanings of the two terms because, in Indonesian, they both mean "*memotong/menebang pohon di ladang*." But they are not the same because nabas is removing small trees and bushes from the land and *nabankng* is removing big trees from the land.

Table 2. The lecturer's point of view on the analytical factors

IP	The involvement of SP and CS	Explanation
1. Collecting	SP1-SP2-CS1-CS3	Collaborative task involves student's realization to decide their most valued folklore to be explored.
2. Recording	SP3-SP4-CS1	Individual and groups' creativity to prepare the devices and methods in recording.
3. Creating texts	SP5-SP6-SP7-CS2-CS3	Students need effort to narrate the generated folklore story. Students feel emotional to identify & explain the explored folklore.

## 4.2. Discussion

The implementation of instructional procedures in folklore classes increases student participation, which fosters creativity in group projects while maintaining mutual respect and decision making. According to [77], [92]–[94], this is accurate. The exposure to vocabulary increases as a result of the process of writing texts where analogies are crucial, which benefits students' vocabulary development. It is verified by [80], [95], [96]. Numerous studies that concentrated on using the synectic approach to teach writing claim that it has a good effect on students' writing abilities [97]–[103]. However, none of these have been used in folklore classes.

This study updates conventional teaching by using creative instruction. It offers the students more freedom to complete the project-based activity as they believe they fit in. To work with their peers, they have the option of selecting their favorite folklore. More effective communication, teamwork, creativity, and problem-solving in context are all maintained. These are the outcomes of lecturer's reflection and evaluation of good teaching practice that is put to proof in an effort to enhance prior teaching practice.

With the implementation of the *MBKM* curriculum from the ministry of education and culture of the republic of Indonesia [104], this study represents a major advance in the study of folklore teaching at the university level in Indonesia. Several studies confirm although lecturers and students adapt to this strategy, it is nevertheless challenging especially in English studies [105]–[108]. When analyzing the findings and implementation from this study, it becomes clear that the *MBKM* policy is backed up by the employment of creative instruction for teaching folklore. The material produced for this folklore project may also be converted to be implemented in other courses' final assignments for writing, translating, and interpreting courses. The implementation of this conversion may increase student's motivation, freedom, and support in learning.

In a broader sense, folklore documentation is really necessary. Folklorists are advised to build collections of tangible artifacts from cultural groups whose work has yet to be represented or gathered [109], [110]. Studying oral traditions from each community, region, and nation results in recorded rich cultural literacy, which is necessary for collecting and saving folklore. Any type of project with adult students that includes trying to discover folklore can benefit from this creative instruction.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This creative instruction is very appropriate when it is implemented in area and community where oral tradition is still in harmony with the culture. It gives students actual autonomy and creativity while offering a wide range of opportunities for collaboration as well as creativity. This strategy also supports the *MBKM* policy and any folklore-hunting endeavors involving adolescents. Working with young learners using this strategy is desired; it is an accessible chance to do due to the rapid growth of artificial intelligence (AI).

This study encourages another scholar to work on an evaluation of instructional design, explore national folklore from the viewpoints of both lecturers and students, and investigate cultural diversity.

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