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Employing *wayang kancil* storytelling as democratic pedagogy in elementary social studies classroom

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Abstract. Indonesia new curriculum of 2013 which emphasized character education supports teachers to implement creative pedagogy in their classroom. Yet, elementary school teachers have used text-book based instruction in social studies. This study aims to employ *wayang kancil*, or mousedeer puppets as democratic pedagogy in fourth grade social studies in Universitas Negeri Semarang laboratory school. This qualitative analysis used Miles & Huberman. Using interdisciplinary approach, this study integrated *wayang kancil* storytelling in social studies. Results of the integration emerged five democratic concepts: (1) mutual acceptance, (2) living together in differences, (3) respect for others, (4) responsibility, and (5) being fair. Encountering with these democratic elements through *wayang kancil* as medium of instruction promotes students' understanding of democracy.

1. Introduction

Indonesia new curriculum of 2013 which emphasized character education supports teachers to implement creative pedagogy in their classroom. Using creative educational practices, such as storytelling not only to create classroom environment that best meet the needs of all students (Cheeseman & Gapp, 2014) but develop the teachers' experiences as well (McKegney, 2016). Yet, elementary school teachers in Indonesia have used text-book based instruction in social studies where learning process dominated by teachers. Such a teaching method makes students feel bored and the learning becomes less meaningful. Such teachers' lack of creativity is supported by studies which indicate that fairytales are only described as lullaby (Fakhrian, 2017). Fakhrian (2017) criticized *wayang kancil* was always told as *Kancil Nyolong Timun* or the mouse deer steals the cucumber in the farmer's field reflecting the main character of the mousedeer who did something morally wrong. Because of this misrepresentation, it has implication on how Indonesian children consider the mousedeer fairytale bad and unimportant. Teachers also assume that the mousedeer storytelling method is no longer entertaining and powerful educative force (Salam, 2014). However, studies that adapted Ki Ledjar, the prominent *wayang kancil* puppeteer who performed the mousedeer puppet and created *Sanggit Cerita Kancil Nyolong Timun* has given *protection* to the mousedeer fairytale (Pursubaryanto, 1996). He argued that the mousedeer steals the cucumber in the farmer's field, not because of the mousedeer likes to steal, but rather the protected forest where the living animals live has been destroyed by greedy human beings so that there is no more food to eat for the mousedeer, and eventually the mouse deer searches for food in the farmer's field. The studies suggest that the story of *Kancil Nyolong Timun* opens to new interpretation of how the relationship between humans and the environment was critical. Fielding, an American storyteller performed two *wayang kancil* stories, "*Kancil, the Mousedeer of Sumatra*" and "*Kancil Saves the Rainforest of Sumatra*" as a medium of instruction (Pursubaryanto, 1996). The former is used as a means teaching children about one of democratic values of equality. The latter, teaches the importance of protecting the environment (rainforest) from illegal logging (Pursubaryanto, 1996). This accords with studies on teacher education in elementary classrooms focused on learning about, through, and for thick democracy that teachers have a significant influence in determining the concept of democracy in learning (Payne, 2016).



This study of incorporating *wayang kancil* storytelling in social studies aims to revitalize Javanese traditional culture in the form of puppet fables with its main character a mousedeer to elementary students as democratic pedagogy. This study is inspired by Ki Ledjar Soebroto who reintroduced *wayang kancil* by using a story from *Serat Kancil* (writing of Kancil). The employment of *wayang kancil* storytelling is based on '*Demokrasi Rimba Raya*' (Lit. Democracy in the Forest) written by Ki Ananto Wicaksono, or Ki Ledjar's grandson.

Puppet is not merely a beautiful and amusing artwork but also has democratic values for the Indonesians, especially the Javanese. Philosophically, this fine art bears deep meanings related to the life of the Javanese community (Soenarto, 1989; Salam, 2014). There are differences between leather shadow puppets and *wayang kancil*, or mouse deer puppet in terms of time of performance. The leather shadow puppets is performed by an adult puppeteer starting from 09:00 pm to 03:30 am. While the performance of *wayang kancil*, or mouse deer puppet is performed by a young puppeteer at 07:00 pm preceding the grand leather shadow puppet play (Javanese *mucuki*), when children are still awake, enjoy the story of fable puppets, and learn about moral teaching (Waluyo, 2000).

The *wayang kancil* is a type of puppet that depicts fables with a mousedeer as its main character. Historically, several versions related to the story of mouse deer includes a past fairy tale created by Sunan Giri I, or Raden Paku bearing social values, humanity, and God at the beginning of the 20th century, or around 1925 in Surakarta, Central Java. In addition, Raden Mas Said who was a book illustrator, museum conservator, as well as a leather puppeteer introduced the mouse deer puppet in Surakarta was based on a Chinese creator, Bo Liem and the puppet's maker Lie Too Hien. Unlike the fairy tale created by Sunan Giri I, the *wayang kancil* created by Bo Liem was based on the character of the existing ancient puppet characters. In the 1930s *wayang kancil* was famous and because of this *wayang kancil* popularity Raden Mas Said was widely known all over Java island. However, for several decades the *wayang kancil* has lost its fame. In the 1970s Ki Ledjar Soebroto, or his famous name Ki Ledjar, the conservator of *wayang kancil* from Wonosobo, Central Java brought back the mousedeer puppet that was almost extinct in Yogyakarta (Nurwanti, 2013).

The idea to create the *wayang kancil* came to mind when Ki Ledjar created animal masks for a carnival. In the 1980s he developed a breakthrough mousedeer puppet story-based and produced hundreds of various shapes of fable puppets. The puppets consist of such characters as mousedeer, elephant, tiger, buffalo, bird, grassland, river flow, mountain, and other characters which supported the illustration of the mousedeer story. He became a puppeteer of its creation since some shapes of the fable puppets are comical which attract children to learn about tropical animals and Javanese values (Nurwantri, 2013). Recent studies conducted by Wardani & Widiyastuti (2015) on integrating thematic learning model based on *Wayang Kancil* to teach character education values to elementary school students in Surakarta, Indonesia. She found out that the integration of thematic learning with the *wayang kancil* nurtures the characters of independent, discipline, and trustworthy as democratic values among students. In addition, Varela's studies (2014) on "*Wayang Hip Hop: Java's Oldest Performance Tradition Meets Global Youth Culture*," indicate that the innovation of puppet show draws the young audience attention. Similar studies conducted by Suryanto and Waluyo (2017) on developing *wayang kancil* media through Indonesian folklores was able to instill character education to fifteen elementary school students in Central Java. These studies imply that the *wayang kancil* performance opens new creativity that simultaneously maintains traditional heritage of the Javanese fable puppet and change its context.

2. Methods

The study employed qualitative method (Merriam, 1998) with a researchers' intervention in the form of a sub-thematic unit, Human and Environment by incorporating *wayang kancil* storytelling in social studies. Method for data collection included observation, interviews, and artifacts (Merriam, 1998). Four students in Universitas Negeri Semarang elementary laboratory school were selected for the study to elucidate the views of students, especially their understanding of democracy when encountered with *wayang kancil* storytelling. The criterion strategy to determine the sample used Miles & Huberman (1994). The interview used a semi-structured open-ended format that allowed for comfortable dialog (Cresswell, 2014).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Analysis

By incorporating educational practice, especially *wayang kancil* enabled students to engage a democratic classroom environment appropriate to students' context (Cheeseman & Gapp, 2014). This study aimed to analyze the students' understanding of democratic concepts when encountering in *wayang kancil* storytelling. The incorporation of *wayang kancil* engaged subjects' inquiries or exploration of democratic concepts based on the characters' conversation in *wayang kancil* storytelling '*Demokrasi Rimbaraya*' which include five emerging themes: mutual acceptance, living together in differences, respect for others, responsibility, and being fair.

Theme 1: mutual acceptance

Mutual acceptance in democracy includes listen to other peoples who are talking, like asking other peoples' opinions, consider better opinions, and willing to accept opinions that are considered better. In '*Democracy in the Forest*' storytelling, the scene 1 indicates the conversation between the Lion king and the loyal servants to hold a grand meeting that shows that there is mutual discussion and listen to the opinions of other parties.

- The mouse deer : "my goodnessit seems that you are sad, it seemsif we may know your Majesty?"
- The Lion king : "Actually I want to confer with all of you faithful servants who always accompany me in joy and sorrow, but it seems uncle elephant and wolf are not visible. Ape please call uncle elephant and wolf here right now, tell them there is some thing that must be discussed immediately."
- The ape : "Yes, your Majesty."

Theme 2: living together in differences

Living together in differences in democracy include willing to listen other people' different opinions, do not hate other people who are of different stances, not forcing others to follow their own views, and respect for others who differ in their views. In "*Democracy in the Forest*," different values are shown when the mouse deer is coming to crocodile to invite him to a grand meeting of the jungle residents. Different responses delivered by crocodile with a bit anger to the mouse deer, which is actually just a misunderstanding because of the wiles of the wolf. However, the mouse deer remains respectful and does not hate him, but instead listens to the explanation of the crocodile, then explains what really happened about the message of the Lion king to the crocodile and other animals.

- The mouse deer : "Hey crocodile, is there something wrong that you are so angry with me? Even though I come here with an invitation from His Majesty the Lion for tomorrow morning meeting"
- The crocodile : "You, the Lion's henchmen, do not just bring untrustfull message to us."
- The mouse deer : "Please be patient, crocodile. Please explain the problem to me"
- The crocodile : "Just now the servant of the king, the wolf came to my place and said that I was not invited to the tomorrow meeting, for I was fired from this forest membership. Outrageous, the old Lion played dismissal arbitrarily."
- The mouse deer : "Oh, apparently that's the story." "Sorry crocodile, actually His Majesty did not fire anyone in the jungle and the grand meeting for tomorrow morning, the king invited the people in the forest without exception, including you crocodile."
- The crocodile : "Oh no, that means I have been instigated by the cursed wolf. Luckily, you came here quickly, because if you did not the palace would be destroyed and war would arise. Look across there, I have mobilized all the crocodiles to prepare attacking the palace!"

- The mouse deer : “Crocodile, why are you so quick to take decision to attack, while the news you receive is not yet clear? Anyway, please come to the meeting tomorrow and undo your intention to attack the palace, because doing so means you are against the country.”
- The crocodile : “Alright, I’ll undo my intention to attack the palace and Tomorrow I will definitely come to the meeting. Hmm, let me eat the cursed crocodile raw.”
- The mouse deer : “Since everything is clear I’d better to go, good afternoon.”

Theme 3: respect for others

Respect for others in democracy includes willing to listen to other people’s opinions, give others the opportunity to express their ideas, respond to the opinions of others with polite and kind manners and language, and do not mock other people for differing opinions. In “Democracy in the Forest” in scene five is shown when the mouse deer announced to all the inhabitants of the jungle that the grand meeting held by the Lion king was aimed at replacing the Lion king when he died and election was held democratically. It can be seen when the mouse deer invited each animal’s presence to nominate himself/herself and talk his or her vision and mission, while there is a nominee who is talking all the participants in the meeting listen and give mutual respect.

- The mouse deer : “My fellow citizens of the jungle country that I respect. This grand meeting was indeed not like the meetings we used to hold. This meeting was indeed impressed suddenly and it was true because His Majesty decided to abdicate his throne (and the audience began to be noisy talking about rumors and commented on the explanation of the mouse deer, then) calm down, calm down I have not finished talking (then they were quiet) this time the king did not appoint or nominate his son to replace him, but would be chosen from those who want to nominate and have the support of all the inhabitants of this jungle. Everyone can run for it and for that we invite anyone to start running for office.”

Theme 4: responsibility

Responsibility in democracy includes always convey the mandate obtained to the rightful, carry out the task assigned well, carry out the the best task that can be done in the best way, and results oriented to the best in completing the task. In “Democracy in the Jungle” the values of responsibility is shown in dialogue when the mouse deer and other servants of the king are willing to carry out their duties as good servants of the king, do it in a good manner and the best results, and deliver all the king’s messages embedded in a trustworthy attitude.

- Lion king : “It would be better we have a grand meeting tomorrow, considering my health is getting worse, and while I’m still alive.” (all were surprised and did not expect the king to make a decision so quickly). Then
- The mouse deer :”Hm, is that right, Your Majesty, but if it is your wishes, we are ready to do it.”
- Lion king : “Yes, and do all also agree with this decision?” (then they agreed). For this reason, I normally assign the mouse deer and the wolf to invite all the representatives of the animals of this jungle to attend the grand meeting, to prepare a meeting place in Graha Shaba Satwa, I leave it to the apes, and for security as usual I leave it to the elephant to secure the meeting.”
- The mouse deer :”Alright, My Majesty, I will carry out the task.”

Theme 5: being fair

Being fair in democracy includes listen to all opinions honestly and objectively, respect for others as self respect, give other people opportunity to argue, and not being discriminatory. In “Democracy in the Forest” fairness is shown when the mouse deer decides to take temporary government due to a vacuum of power after the Lion king died as well as many victims of civil war. Mouse deer also decides not to involve the wolf and decides on fugitive status of the wolf because according to the guise cipher wolf is the person who causes civil war. The decision is taken objectively and impartially, and the decision-making must be immediately determined and be fair to all residents of the jungle because the country is in an emergency status.

The tiger	:”Agreed, but what about the wolf, shouldn’t he be involved as well?”
The mouse deer	:”Not at all and vice versa, for wolf from this moment we declare fugitive and must be arrested immediately since we process the data from the guise cipher report it turns out he was the person who caused this dispute.”
The ape	: “From the start I am suspicious of the wolf and my suspicion was true.”
The elephant	: “For that we have to move quickly, the enemy has begun to expand his territory, for that we must work together to crush them, besides that we must quickly find the wolf and catch him because he must be responsible for this.”
The tiger	: “Let us depart right now, uncle because I have prepared an army of tigers of all classes.”
The mouse deer	:”Let’s go, uncle.”

4. Conclusion

This study proposes to make scholarly contributions to several strands of academic inquiry. Foremost, this study found out that *wayang kancil* storytelling that can be incorporated into social studies holds potential for increasing students’ higher order thinking skills and cultivating democratic concepts. While social studies educators would agree that teachers use *wayang kancil* storytelling as democratic pedagogy could enhance inquiry of democratic values, no Indonesian teacher has systematically researched students’ interaction with storytelling to assess storytelling’s power to enhance democratic values.

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