

Development and Implementation of Integrated English Learning Materials Using Folktales and Legends

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Abstract

This study aimed to: 1) develop and evaluate the efficiency of integrated English learning materials using ethnic folktales and legends of Surin Province for the 21st-century learners; 2) compare students' integrated English skills before and after using the developed materials; and 3) investigate students' satisfaction with the materials. The participants were 50 third-year students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Program in English at Surindra Rajabhat University, selected through purposive sampling. The research instruments consisted of integrated English learning materials based on ethnic folktales and legends of Surin Province, lesson plans, a 60-item multiple-choice pre-test and post-test, and a satisfaction questionnaire.

The data were analyzed using the E1/E2 efficiency criterion, paired-samples t-test, mean and standard deviation. The results revealed that the efficiency of the developed materials was 84.74/85.03 exceeding the 80/80 criterion. The students' post-test scores were significantly higher than the pre-test scores at the 0.05 level of significance. In addition, students reported a very high level of satisfaction with the developed materials ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.16$). The findings suggest that the integrated English learning materials based on ethnic folktales and legends can effectively enhance students' integrated English skills while promoting cultural awareness and learner engagement.

Keywords: integrated English learning materials, folktales and legends, integrated language skills, culture-based learning

Introduction

In real-life communication, language skills are rarely used in isolation. Generally, two or more skills are used simultaneously. Therefore, all four skills of English language-listening, speaking, reading, and writing-are equally essential. Each skill plays an important role in different communicative contexts. Listening and reading are considered receptive skills that enable learners to comprehend complex messages whereas speaking and writing are productive skills that enable learners to communicate effectively.

In the past, English language teaching often emphasized segregated-skill instruction. Under the Grammar-translation Method, language instruction primarily focused on grammatical structures and translation. Later, the Audio-Lingual Method shifted its focus to listening and speaking skills. However, this method emphasizes repetitive drills, which may hinder natural communication and creativity. Teachers played a dominant role in classroom activities, and students practiced fixed language patterns through repetition and memorization.

Many scholars have argued that segregated-skill instruction is inadequate for effective communication. For example, Skehan (1998) and Hinkel (2018) argue that focusing solely on one skill at a time prevents students from developing their language abilities in a balanced manner. Students can encounter difficulties when they have to use the language in real communicative situations. Furthermore, learners who lack foundational knowledge of how to integrate language skills may struggle when they are at a higher level.

Nowadays, the integration of all skills-listening, speaking, reading and writing-are emphasized as a cohesive learning experience in English language teaching. Many teachers have to carefully select and utilize materials that facilitate an integrated approach. Furthermore, they need to design materials that promote the use of authentic language in real- life contexts. It is necessary that the content, teaching methods, and students' abilities are aligned to promote effective learning. Teachers should design lessons that engage and motivate learners while fostering a dynamic and interactive learning environment. Moreover, English teachers need to recognize the importance of integrating multiple skills in the language classroom and select suitable materials that enhance students' language abilities.

Learning materials play a crucial role in language learning because they provide the foundation for classroom instruction and influence the quality of learners' language experiences. Effective materials not only present language knowledge but also create opportunities for meaningful communication, skill integration and learners' engagement. As put by Tomlinson (2013), language learning materials should expose learners to authentic language use, stimulate interest, and support learners in achieving learning objectives. Moreover, materials that reflect learners' cultural backgrounds can enhance motivation and facilitate comprehension by connecting new knowledge with existing experiences.

In this study, the researchers produced teaching materials in which the four skills of English were integrated based on traditional stories and folk literature. As noted by Spiro (2009), stories can be used in various ways, such as practicing listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, encouraging group sharing, team building, cooperative learning, and developing oral fluency. Additionally, recent studies also show that storytelling activities can enhance students' integrated language skills,

engagement, and communicative competence in EFL classrooms. Nguyen and Phillips (2022), for example, found that storytelling facilitated learners' language development through multimodal interaction, scaffolding, and meaningful communication.

The study focused not only on the four language skills but also considered the knowledge of local traditions and culture in order to raise students' cultural awareness in the language classroom. MacDonald et al. (2013) suggest that cultures are embedded in stories, which convey the values and realities of the societies from which they originate. When learners engage with these narratives, they are exposed to different cultural perspectives. Therefore, it is essential to consider the cultural origin of the stories when using them in instruction, as they often refer to traditions that students may wish to explore further. Integrating folktales into language instruction also promotes intercultural learning and cultural awareness. Kim and Lee (2020) argue that folktales provide meaningful cultural contexts that promote language learning while encouraging learners to comprehend different cultural perspectives.

Students enjoy hearing stories from their own cultures, which help them recognize the value of cultural heritage. Using local traditional stories in teaching English not only helps students connect with their cultural background but also facilitates comprehension of the lesson. Furthermore, incorporating traditional stories from students' cultures can enhance students' background knowledge. As Nunan (2003) notes, building background knowledge is crucial as it allows students to connect what they already know to what they are learning. Background knowledge includes students' life experiences, educational background, and working experiences, all of which contribute to their understanding of the lessons. Additionally, Lwin (2015) suggests that folktales from any culture when translated into English can be useful for beginners learning simple grammatical features. Since folktales are rooted in oral tradition, their language tends to be less complex than that of academic texts. In the Thai EFL context, Tachom (2021) also found that storytelling activities based on Thai folktales significantly improved students' vocabulary knowledge and increased learner engagement. The study also reported positive student attitudes toward learning English through culturally familiar stories.

Although folktales are widely available in published collections, many local traditional stories remain part of the oral heritage preserved by community storytellers who serve important custodians of local knowledge, cultural values, beliefs, and historical experiences that may not be fully documented in written sources. In the present study, traditional stories were directly collected from local storytellers therefore helps preserve authentic cultural content and ensures that the narratives reflect the unique identity of the community. Furthermore, the use of locally collected stories provides learners with cultural familiar content that is closely connected to their social and cultural backgrounds. Such familiarity can increase learners' interest, motivation and comprehension while simultaneously promoting awareness and appreciation of local cultural heritage. For these reasons, the researchers collected traditional stories from local storytellers and used them as the primary source for developing the integrated- skill English learning materials. The collected narratives were subsequently adapted into language-learning activities that combined listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills while maintaining the cultural authenticity of the original stories.

The contexts of English teaching and learning English today are increasingly complex and varied due to the diverse purposes for which the language is used in our changing era. Consequently, English teachers need to be aware of these factors. Students should also recognize the variety of approaches to English language use. According to Ur (2015), students must understand that they cannot rely on a single model for using English. It is the responsibility of English teachers to make students aware of different language models that vary according to levels of formality and communicative purposes. English writing, for example, differs depending on the context, such as composing an email, writing a formal letter, or sending personal messages to friends. Therefore, English language instruction should expose learners to a variety of language models and provide opportunities for them to practice using English appropriately in different contexts. The syllabus and classroom activities should be designed to reflect these diverse forms of language use.

In developing the materials for this study, the researchers also considered the characteristics of 21st-century learners. According to Larson and Miller (2011), 21st-century learners must be well-prepared with essential skills for the society in which they will work and live. These skills should not be taught in isolation but integrated across all curricula. The Partnership for 21st-Century Skills (2011) has developed a framework outlining the essential skills needed for success, known as “4Cs”: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. Therefore, the researchers created teaching materials to enhance all four of these skills, while simultaneously promoting language development. Recent research also suggests that storytelling-based learning encourages creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking, which are considered essential skills for 21st-century learners (Nguyen & Phillips, 2022).

Although previous studies have reported the benefits of storytelling, folktales, and integrated-skills instruction in English language learning, limited research has focused on the development of integrated English learning materials based on ethnic traditional stories like folktales and legends in the Thai EFL context. In particular, few studies have examined how local cultural resources can be effectively incorporated into teaching materials to enhance integrated language skills, cultural awareness, and 21st- century competencies simultaneously. Additionally, studies that investigated the effectiveness of such materials with university students remain limited. For these reason, the present study aimed to develop and evaluate integrated English learning materials based on ethnic folktales and legends of Surin Province and to examine their effects on learners’ integrated English skills and satisfaction

Review of Literature

Effective materials should not only provide language input but also create opportunities for meaningful language use, learner engagement, and the integration of language skills. Since the present study aimed to develop integrated English learning materials based on ethnic folktales and legends, several theoretical perspectives were reviewed to guide the development of the materials and instructional activities. The review focuses on integrated language instruction, content-based and task-based instruction, using literature in language classroom and material design principles.

Nunan (2003) proposes key principles, including focusing on the learner, developing contextually appropriate teaching methodologies, and organizing instruction through, 1 pre-task, task, and follow-up stages. Effective instructional sequences typically begin by activating learners' background knowledge through questioning, review, or preparatory activities. This pre-task stage is followed by meaningful learning tasks and concluded with follow-up activities that reinforce understanding and provide feedback.

Teaching Integrated English Skills

Previous language teaching approaches often separated language skills, limiting learners' communicative competence in authentic contexts (Skehan, 1998; Hinkel, 2018). Integrated-skill instruction enables learners to develop balanced language proficiency by using multiple skills simultaneously in meaningful contexts. This approach more closely reflects authentic communication and supports higher-level language development.

Modern English language teaching emphasizes the integration of language skills within authentic learning contexts. Teachers are required to select appropriate materials and design activities that align content, teaching methods, and learner abilities to promote effective learning. When implementing integrated-skill instruction, teachers must consider individual learner differences, including language proficiency levels and learning styles. Jing (2006), and Akram and Malik (2010) highlight that integrated instruction requires careful lesson planning to accommodate diverse learners and ensure active participation. Without such consideration, some students may struggle to engage fully in learning activities.

Teaching materials are a crucial component of language learning because they serve as a bridge between instructional objectives and classroom practice. Effective materials provide meaningful language input, opportunities for communication, and activities that promote learner engagement. They also support the integration of language skills by allowing learners to use listening, speaking reading, and writing in connected and purposeful ways. Since the present study aimed to develop integrated English learning materials based on ethnic folktales and legends, principles of material development were considered alongside instructional approaches. In particular, content-based instruction and task-based instruction provide useful frameworks for integrating language learning with authentic content and communicative activities. Therefore, these approaches informed the development of the learning materials used in the present study.

Content-Based and Task-Based Instruction

Integrated English instruction can be broadly categorized into content-based instruction and task-based instruction. Content-based instruction focuses on learning subject matter through the target language, while task-based instruction emphasizes using language to complete meaningful tasks (Ur, 2009). Both models promote active language use, learner engagement, and the development of communicative competence by embedding language learning within purposeful contexts.

In the present study, these two approaches provided important foundations for the development of the learning materials. The ethnic folktales and legends served as meaningful content through which students could learn and practice English, reflecting the principles of content-based instruction. At the same time, the learning activities, which are consistent with task-based instruction. Therefore, both approaches supported the integration of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills throughout the materials.

Using Literature in the Language Classroom

Literature has long been recognized as a valuable resource in language education. Duff and Maley (2007) identify three major benefits of literary texts: linguistic development, cultural awareness, and personal growth. From a linguistic perspective, literary texts provide rich language input, including varied vocabulary, syntactic patterns, and cohesive discourse structures. Culturally, literature offers insights into social values, traditions, and contexts that promote intercultural understanding. In terms of personal growth, literary engagement stimulates emotional response, creativity, critical thinking, and deeper cognitive processing.

Traditional stories are particularly effective for integrated language learning. Spiro (2009) notes that storytelling can support listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through cooperative activities, group discussions, and creative tasks. Similarly, Lwin (2015) emphasizes that folktales enhance language comprehension while fostering cultural awareness among both EFL and ESL learners.

Material Design

Material design is a fundamental component of language instruction because teaching materials function as a bridge between curriculum goals and classroom practice. Well-designed materials should provide meaningful language input, promote learner engagement, and create opportunities for the integration of language skills. Tomlison (2001) argues that effective materials should expose learners to authentic language use, stimulate cognitive and emotional involvement, and encourage communicative interaction. Likewise, Hutchinson and Waters (1989) emphasize that materials should be developed according to learners' needs and should include appropriate content, language focus, and tasks that facilitate language learning. Since the present study aimed to develop integrated English learning materials based on ethnic traditional stories, these principles provided an important foundation for the design, organization, and evaluation of the instructional materials.

Apart from Hutchinson and Waters (1989), Tomlinson (2001) also provides useful principles for developing teaching materials, which can be summarized as follows:

- 1) Set clear goals for using the materials by aiming to enhance students' ability to use the target language. Good materials should include novelty, variety, attractive presentation, appealing content, and achievable challenges.

- 2) Teaching materials should not create unnecessary anxiety but rather help students feel relaxed. There should be ample white space on the page to avoid overcrowding with information. Additionally, the cultural contexts presented should be relevant to the students' own culture.

- 3) Teaching materials should prioritize students' learning over assessment.
- 4) The language used in the materials should be comprehensible, clear, and suited to students' level of understanding.

In addition, Ur (2015) proposes several criteria for effective learning materials, including:

- 1) Establishing clear learning objectives
- 2) Presenting content appropriate to students' proficiency level
- 3) Including clear and engaging illustrations
- 4) Providing interesting content
- 5) Offering a variety of activities that align with students' proficiency levels.
- 6) Organizing the content in a coherent manner.
- 7) Developing integrated language skills

Research Objectives

1. To develop and evaluate the effectiveness of integrated English learning materials using ethnic folktales and legends of Surin Province for 21st-century learners
2. To compare learners' integrated English skills before and after using the developed integrated English learning materials
3. To examine learners' satisfaction with the developed materials

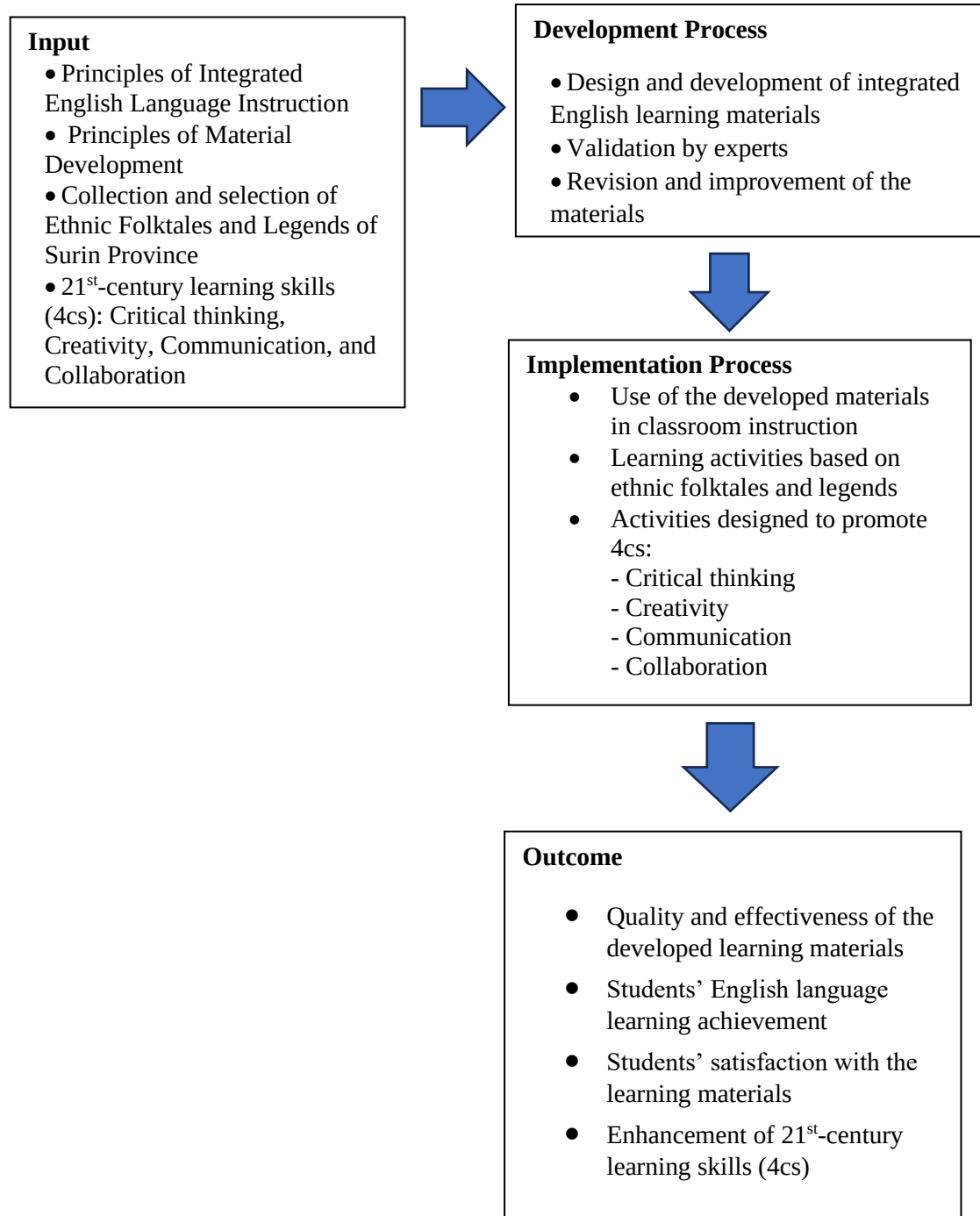
Research Questions

1. Do the integrated English learning materials using ethnic folktales and legends of Surin Province achieve the 80/80 effectiveness criterion?
2. Do learners' integrated English skills improve after using the developed learning materials?
3. To what extent are learners satisfied with the developed learning materials?

Research Framework

The study entitled "*Development of Integrated English Learning Materials Using Ethnic Folktales and Legends of Surin Province for 21st-Century Learners*" was conducted based on the following research framework:

Figure 1
Research Framework



Research Methodology

This study employed a quasi-experimental research design.

Participants

The population for this study comprised 200 students enrolled in the Bachelor of Education Program in English at Surindra Rajabhat University. The sample consisted of 50 third-year students from this program enrolled in the course “*Learning Management for Thinking Skill Development through Children’s Literature*”, during the first semester of the academic year 2023. The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: 1) they were third year students in the Bachelor of Education Program in English, 2) they were officially enrolled in the target course during the study period, and 3) they were available and willing to participate in all research activities throughout the intervention. This group was chosen because the course content directly incorporated children’s literature and thinking-skill development, which aligned with the objectives of the study.

Instruments

The research instruments used in this study included:

1) Integrated English learning materials: Materials developed based on ethnic folktales and legends of Surin Province

2) Lesson plans: Eight lesson plans were developed to accompany the integrated English learning materials. The sixteen stories were organized into eight instructional units, with each lesson plan consisting of two stories that followed the same instructional sequence. Each lesson plan specified learning objectives, instructional procedures, learning activities, teaching materials, and assessment methods to ensure that the materials are implemented systematically.

3) Pre-test and post-test: A 60-item multiple-choice test designed to assess integrated English skills before and after the intervention.

4) Satisfaction questionnaire: A questionnaire used to assess students’ satisfaction with the learning materials developed by the researchers.

Procedures and Data Analysis

The study was conducted through the following procedures:

1) Relevant literature on theories and approaches in English language teaching, teaching material development, local literature, and the study area was reviewed.

2) Local storytellers were interviewed to collect traditional stories and legends.

3) In developing the materials, the researchers selected 16 traditional stories from the collected data. These included four stories each from local legends, folktales, fairy tales, and animal tales. Stories were selected based on their representation of cultural uniqueness, lifestyles, and beliefs, ensuring that they were neither offensive nor contrary to morality and local traditions. The length of the stories was appropriate for the learners’ language level, being neither too long nor too short. The selected stories were then reviewed by experts to examine their content accuracy and cultural appropriateness.

4) The stories were translated into English. Additional details, such as situational dialogues or setting descriptions, were incorporated to provide students with models for daily communication (e.g., greeting, thanking, apologizing, and giving directions) and to offer insights into cultures, traditions, and lifestyles of the ethnic groups. The vocabulary used in the stories was appropriate for the B1 level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The translated stories were reviewed by six experts for accuracy and appropriateness. The translated stories were reviewed by six experts for accuracy and appropriateness.

5) The selected stories were divided into sixteen lessons and implemented through eight lesson plans. Each lesson plan integrated two stories and followed the same instructional sequence consisting of Introduction, Language Focus, Let's Talk, Read the Story, Check Your Understanding and Let's Discuss which are explained as follows:

Introduction: This part introduces the traditions, cultures, beliefs, and ways of life reflected in the story.

Language Focus: This part presents vocabulary and idioms from the story, along with grammatical structures. It also includes vocabulary and grammar exercises.

Let's Talk: This part consists of speaking practice activities. Students will practice speaking using the expressions from the story.

Read the Story: This part presents the full story for students to read and comprehend.

Check your understanding: After reading the story, students answer comprehension and analytical questions about it.

Let's Discuss: This part encourages students to apply a variety of language skills. They will write, discuss, share ideas, and respond to the story in their own ways, while encouraging creativity.

6) After the experts examined the accuracy and appropriateness of the developed materials, the researchers constructed 60 multiple-choice items for the pre-test and post-test based on established testing criteria. Each test item consisted of four choices. The tests were then evaluated for validity using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC). The analysis revealed that all test items obtained IOC values higher than the acceptable criterion of 0.50, indicating that the test items were appropriate and consistent with the intended objectives. The validated tests were subsequently administered to 30 students who were not part of the sample group. After the test scores were analyzed to determine item difficulty and discrimination index, the researchers administered a pre-test to students before instruction using the developed materials. Following the instruction period, a post-test was administered to assess students' improvement. Concurrently, the researchers created and refined a satisfaction questionnaire to assess students' satisfaction. The initial draft was reviewed by experts and piloted with 30 students for preliminary feedback. After finalizing the evaluation form, the researchers used it to collect data.

7) The developed materials were implemented in a classroom setting with the sample group through eight lesson plans during the instructional period. The activities were designed based on the 21st-century learning framework, particularly the development of the 4Cs: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. Students participated in individual, pair, and group activities designed to promote integrated language learning. Communication skills were developed through

discussions, storytelling, oral presentations, and sharing opinions about the story. Collaboration was fostered through group tasks and cooperative learning activities. Critical thinking was encouraged through comprehension and analytical questions that required students to interpret, compare, and evaluate story events and characters. Creativity was promoted through activities such as story retelling, role-play, drama activities, and creating alternative endings. Following the instructional period, a post-test was administered to assess students' improvement. After that, the satisfaction questionnaire was administered to collect students' perceptions of the developed materials.

8) Finally, the researchers analyzed the data using the E1/E2 efficiency criterion based on the 80/80 criterion to determine the efficiency of the developed materials. A paired samples t-test was also conducted to compare students' integrated English skills before and after the intervention. Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated to analyze students' satisfaction with the developed materials.

Material Design Framework

The materials were designed based on the principles proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (1989, pp. 108-109), Tomlinson (2001), and Ur (2015). Hutchinson and Waters (1989, pp. 108-109) suggest that when creating teaching materials, teachers should consider the following elements:

1) *Language input*

Language input in teaching materials should be varied to engage students' interests. A variety of content types should be included, such as reading passages, dialogues, poems, news articles, or song lyrics.

2) *Content focus*

The content used in teaching materials must align with students' language abilities and be comprehensible to them. This content can be based on linguistic contexts, such as reading passages, news articles non-linguistic or visual contexts, such as pictures, illustrations and other visual materials.

3) *Language focus*

Teaching materials should offer opportunities for students to practice the language in various contexts, thereby improving their language skills.

4) *Tasks*

Teaching materials should include tasks or activities designed to enhance integrated language skills. The primary goal is to enable students to use the target language effectively.

Research Results

This section presents the findings regarding the effectiveness of the integrated English learning materials, the improvements of students' integrated English skills, and students' satisfaction with the developed materials.

Efficiency of the Learning Materials

The integrated learning materials based on ethnic folktales and legends achieved an efficiency value of 84.74/85.03, which exceeded the established criterion of 80/80. The findings indicate that the developed materials were effective both during the learning process (E1) and in terms of learning outcomes (E2), confirming their instructional quality and suitability for integrated English skill development.

Improvement in Integrated English Skills

A paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare students' scores on integrated English skills before and after the implementation of the learning materials. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Comparison of Pre-test and Post-test Scores on Integrated English Skills (n = 50)

Test	Full Score	M	SD	Mean Difference	t	df	p
Pre-test	60	25.02	3.80	26.00	18.42	49	< .001
Post-test	60	51.02	2.88				

Note. $p < .05$ was considered statistically significant.

As shown in Table 1, students' post-test scores ($M = 51.02$, $SD = 2.88$) were significantly higher than their pre-test scores ($M = 25.02$, $SD = 3.80$). The mean difference between the two tests was 26.00 points. The paired-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant improvement in integrated English skills following the intervention, $t(49) = 18.42$, $p < .001$. These findings indicate that the integrated English learning materials effectively enhanced students' integrated English skills.

Students' Satisfaction with the Learning Materials

Students' satisfaction with the developed materials was assessed across four aspects: content, format and design, learning activities, and assessment and evaluation. The findings indicated a very high overall level of satisfaction ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.16$).

Table 2

Students' Satisfaction with the Integrated English Learning Materials (n = 50)

Aspect	M	SD	Level
Content	4.86	0.35	High
Format and design	4.95	0.22	High
Learning activities	4.96	0.21	Very High
Assessment and evaluation	4.99	0.11	Very High
Overall	4.97	0.16	Very High

The highest satisfaction scores were reported for assessment and evaluation ($M = 4.99$, $SD = 0.11$) and learning activities ($M = 4.96$, $SD = 0.21$), indicating that students particularly appreciated the interactive activities and well-organized assessment methods included in the materials. Content ($M = 4.86$, $SD = 0.35$) and format and design ($M = 4.95$, $SD = 0.22$) also received high rating, reflecting positive perceptions of instructional relevance, cultural appropriateness, and the visual organization of the materials. Overall, the findings indicate that the integrated English learning materials were engaging, well-structured, and effective in supporting students' learning.

Discussion

This study aimed to: 1) develop and evaluate the efficiency of the integrated English learning materials using ethnic folktales and legends for the 21st-century learners; 2) compare students' integrated English skills before and after the implementation of the materials; and 3) assess students' satisfaction with the developed materials. The findings are discussed as follows:

1. The analysis demonstrated that the developed materials achieved an efficiency value of 84.74/85.03 (E1/E2), indicating that they met the established 80/80 criterion. The efficiency of the materials may be attributed to several factors, which are summarized as follows:

1.1 The research team aimed to incorporate local literature that resonates with the students' cultural background, as many of them are from the region where the stories originate. This approach helps students understand the lessons within familiar cultural contexts, reflecting the beliefs and ways of life embedded in the narratives. Such cultural familiarity facilitates comprehension and fosters an appreciation for local cultural heritage. Furthermore, the development of these materials was informed by Schema Theory, which emphasizes the integration of new information with existing knowledge frameworks and the process of modifying them (Mandler, 1978, as cited in Carrell, 1983).

1.2 The contents and activities were organized to ensure clarity and coherence. The effectiveness of the developed materials may also be attributed to their systematic organization and consistent lesson structure. The materials were designed to provide learners with a clear sequence of learning activities, enable them to become familiar with the instructional process and focus more on language learning tasks. Such structured learning experiences may reduce cognitive burden and facilitate comprehension. This finding is consistent with Nunan (2003), who emphasizes that effective instruction should be organized through a sequence of pre-task, task, and follow-up activities that supports the findings of Wongpinit et.al. (2016), who reported that clearly organized materials and activities contributed to students' comprehension and language performance.

The effectiveness of the materials may also be explained by the principles of content-based and task-based instruction that guided their design. The materials were developed using ethnic folktales and legends as the core content, allowing learners to learn English through meaningful and culturally relevant subject matter rather than through isolated language exercises. According to content-based instruction, language learning is enhanced when learners engage with interesting and comprehensible content that promotes meaningful communication. The cultural themes reflected in the stories provide authentic contexts for language use and enabled learners to connect new knowledge with their existing background. Furthermore, the materials incorporated principles of task-based instruction through activities such as storytelling, discussion, role-plays, problem-solving tasks, and creative responses to the stories. These activities required learners to use language for meaningful communication and interaction rather than simply practicing grammatical forms. As a result, students were able to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in an integrated manner while actively participating in the learning process. The findings therefore support the view that content-based and task-based approaches can effectively promote language learning when learners engage with meaningful content and authentic communicative tasks.

2. After the implementation of the materials, students' post-test scores of the sample were significantly higher than the pre-test scores ($p < 0.05$). This result may be attributed to several factors as follows:

2.1 The materials were systematically developed based on established principles of English language teaching experts, which led to significant improvement in the integrated English skills of the sample group. The learning process followed an appropriate sequence, beginning with the activation of learners' prior knowledge to facilitate the understanding of new content. The instructional materials encouraged learners to connect new knowledge with their existing experiences, thereby making the lessons more relevant to their social and cultural contexts. This integration of background knowledge with new information helped learners develop their language skills systematically.

2.2 The clear organization of contents and activities in each unit together with a consistent lesson structure, familiarized students with the learning process, and supported better comprehension of the lessons. Wongpinit et al. (2016) supported this view in their study on the development of reading materials using folk tales of the Khmer ethnic group in the southern Isan region. Their finding indicated that a well-structured format of contents, exercises, and activities helped students better understand the learning content and anticipate the learning process. A well-organized material structure also enhanced students' comprehension and language proficiency. Even when the content became more complex, the organized lesson structure enabled students to understand the lessons more effectively and further develop their analytical and evaluative skills.

2.3 Additionally, the researchers developed the materials based on a conceptual framework that included essential 21st-century skills, known as the "4Cs": critical thinking, communication, collaboration (teamwork) and creativity. The materials effectively promoted the development of these skills among students.

3. The level of students' satisfaction with the materials created by the researchers was very high ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 0.16$). Several factors may have contributed to this result:

3.1 Students had background knowledge of the stories or legends presented in each unit because the contexts—encompassing lifestyles, traditions, cultures, and beliefs—reflected aspects of their daily lives. This cultural familiarity facilitated their understanding of the lessons and fostered a sense of appreciation of the local culture presented in the materials. Additionally, the materials heightened students' awareness of the value of their local literary and cultural heritage.

3.2 The sample group, consisting of students from the Bachelor of Education Program in English, demonstrated positive engagement with the developed materials. In particular, the activities included in the "Let's Discuss" section encouraged students to extend their learning beyond story comprehension through creative and communicative tasks. As part of the implementation of the developed materials, students participated in activities such as storytelling, role-play, short drama performances and storybook creation based on the stories they had studied. These activities promoted collaboration, creativity, and communicative confidence while providing opportunities for meaningful language use. The findings suggest that the materials supported not only language development but also active learner participation and creative expression.

Limitation of the Study

1. The study relied primarily on quantitative data, including achievement test scores and satisfaction ratings. Qualitative data such as interviews, reflective journals, or open-ended responses, were not collected. As a result, the study was unable to provide deeper insights into students' learning experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to the use of the developed materials.

2. The study employed a single-group design, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Since no comparison group was included, it is difficult to determine whether the observed improvements were solely attributable to the developed materials or to other factors that may have influenced students' learning outcomes.

3. The materials were developed using ethnic folktales and legends from Surin Province and were implemented with students from the same local context. Therefore, participants may have been more familiar with the cultural content and background knowledge embedded in the materials than learners from other contexts. This contextual familiarity may have contributed to the positive learning outcomes observed in the study.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the study demonstrated that the integrated English learning materials successfully enhanced students' integrated language skills and achieved an efficiency level that exceeded the established criterion. Students also reported a very high level of satisfaction with the developed materials. These findings suggest that ethnic folktales and legends can serve as valuable resources for integrated English language learning while providing meaningful cultural content for instructional purposes.

In addition, the findings suggest that ethnic folktales and legends can serve as valuable content for integrated English language learning by providing meaningful and culturally relevant contexts for language use. The materials were designed to integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills through a variety of learning activities, thereby supporting learners' opportunities to use English in meaningful ways.

Furthermore, these materials are versatile and can be applied in various educational contexts, supporting both language skill development and literary learning. Teachers may also incorporate the stories into supplementary activities, such as English camps, storytelling events, role-play performances, or cultural learning projects.

Recommendations**Applications of the Materials**

The integrated English learning materials, based on folktales and local legends of ethnic groups in Surin Province, provide activities that promote integrated language development. The guidelines for materials development and the applications of the materials can be summarized as follows:

1) Guidelines for Material Development

- Incorporate stories from diverse ethnic groups to present varied cultural perspectives and broaden learners' cultural awareness.

- Select literary texts that are culturally relevant to learners and appropriate to their language proficiency levels to facilitate comprehension and meaningful language learning.

- Design learning activities that integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills within a coherent instructional sequence.

- Incorporate activities aligned with 21st-century learning skills, particularly communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity to provide opportunities for meaningful language use.

- Develop materials with a consistent lesson structure and clear instructional progression to support learners' understanding and participation throughout the learning process.

- Consider adapting local stories into various formats, such as digital stories, animations or multimedia materials, to increase accessibility and learner engagement.

2) Guidelines for Classroom Implementation

- Teachers may adapt the instructional approach used in this study by integrating local stories and culturally relevant content into English language lessons.

- Learning activities should be designed to support the development of integrated language skills through meaningful communication and interaction.

- To promote 21st-century learning skills, teachers may incorporate activities aligned with the 4Cs framework. Communication can be developed through storytelling, presentations, and discussions; collaboration through pair and group work; critical thinking through analytical and reflective questions; and creativity through role-play, story adaptation, and alternative ending activities.

- Local stories from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds may be incorporated to provide learners with diverse cultural perspectives while maintaining relevance to the local context.

- Teachers may extend classroom learning through supplementary activities such as storytelling events, cultural projects, role-play performances, and creative writing tasks.

Recommendations for Future Studies

1) This study utilized a single-group design to compare students' integrated English skills before and after instruction with the developed materials. Future studies should consider conducting comparative research involving an experimental group and a control group to provide stronger evidence regarding the effectiveness of the materials.

2) Future studies may incorporate qualitative data collection methods, such as interviews, focus group discussions, reflective journals, or open-ended questionnaires, to gain deeper insights into learners' experiences.

3) Future studies may replicate the material development process described in this study using different types of literary texts, populations, or educational settings. Such studies would help determine the applicability and effectiveness of integrated English learning materials across diverse learning contexts.

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