

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF FOLKLORE AS A TOOL FOR MORAL INSTRUCTION IN ESL CLASSROOMS IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENUGU STATE

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Abstract: *This study investigated junior secondary school students' perception of folklore as a tool for moral instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL) classrooms in Enugu State, Nigeria. Folklore, as an indigenous oral tradition, has historically transmitted cultural values and ethical lessons across generations, yet its role in formal education has declined in the face of globalization and Western pedagogical dominance. Anchored on Bandura's Social Learning Theory, the study examined how students experience folklore as both a medium of language acquisition and moral development. A survey research design was adopted, with a population of junior secondary students drawn from three schools: Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School, College of Immaculate Conception, and St. Patrick Secondary School, Emene. A total of 105 questionnaires were distributed and retrieved, yielding a 100% return rate. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, with a 2.5 acceptance benchmark. Findings revealed that students perceived folklore as effective in promoting honesty, respect, diligence, and improved language competence, though some viewed it as outdated. The study concludes that folklore remains a relevant pedagogical tool, reinforcing both moral values and communicative skills. It recommends systematic integration of folklore into ESL curricula to strengthen cultural identity, moral reasoning, and language learning.*

Introduction

Folklore, as a form of oral tradition, has long served as a repository of cultural values and moral

instruction in African societies. Within the African context, stories, proverbs, riddles, and folktales have historically functioned as living

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archives of communal wisdom. They not only preserve traditions and identities but also transmit ethical lessons across generations. This dual role of entertainment and moral education makes folklore an indispensable cultural tool. In modern classrooms, especially English as a Second Language (ESL) environments, these narratives take on new relevance. Folklore provides an engaging medium through which students can practice language while simultaneously absorbing moral instruction (Badru & Odutayo, 2023).

The reduction in the importance of indigenous folklore in the school system in Nigeria has become a matter of concern to the school authority, policy makers, and custodians of the culture. In the face of globalization, Western media and online entertainment, children are opening up more to foreign stories than local stories. This exposure tends to marginalize the traditions of the locals and debilitate their influence on what the youths learn in the domains of their moral orientation. Yet scholars have proposed that this divide can be overcome by integrating the study of folklore into ESL teaching to maintain a sense of cultural identity and develop a sense of morality (Okoro & Onuegwunwoke, 2024). Folklore is thus more than mere narrating: it is a teaching method that balances language and education in a mutually favorable relationship.

The junior secondary school stage is one of the most vulnerable stages in the implementation of such interventions. At this level, learners are in the transition gap between childhood innocence and the maintenance of an identity as a teen,

which makes them more susceptible to the adverse influences of their peers and peer pressure. It is also the period when moral reasoning starts to crystallise and it is up to education to reinforce it. Bringing folklore into the classroom, the ESL teacher gets the opportunity to present the students with narratives in which qualities like honesty and respect, hard work, and social responsibility are foregrounded (Adanma, 2025). The stories will not only help students learn the language but also inculcate socially acceptable values. In this way, they develop character and linguistic ability, two beneficial areas of development in their lives.

Studies have always indicated that folktales are usually more relevant to students as compared to the abstract moral messages in the textbooks. Whereas moral values can be taught formally in an abstract or prescriptive manner, in stories of folktales these moral values are presented in concrete characterization and plots. Folktales have long been used in education in Igbo, Yoruba, and other Nigerian contexts, and have served to instill character into students in interesting ways. The stories portray the common cultural contexts and social realities, which warrant socio-cultural connection with the learners (Badru & Odutayo, 2023). Instructors who incorporate folktales in the ESL classroom have found that student attention and participation have increased, there is better participation, and more ability to retain the lesson and the language skills being taught. Folklore is an important aspect of ESL pedagogy, too, as it leads to the advancement of communicative competence. Unlike stiff drills and repetitive learning, folktales allow students to

actively engage in the learning process, share knowledge and reading, and reason about implications. In this way, the learners are inherently provided with additional vocabulary, enhanced ability to build up sentences, as well as a better capacity in listening and understanding. Lexical syntax contributes to the conceptualization of grammar rules and language applications through the contextualization of the same with cultural activities (Okoro & Onuegwunwoke, 2024). Folklore therefore closes the loophole between language learning and cultural learning thus making it an all-inclusive tool in learning.

Despite such obvious advantages, folklore is not properly used in most schools in Nigeria today. Several reasons can be attributed to this trend such as curriculum constraints, teacher preparation, and the overabundance of Western pedagogical theories used in the Nigerian education system. Some teachers have an idea that folklore is obsolete, and the possible way to use it is in an informal context at home, and not with a teacher in a classroom. This disregards the fact that folklore has a special ability to pass on morality in ways that appeal to students especially (Idowu, 2023). The reason why it is very important to understand how students themselves feel about the use of folklore in the ESL classrooms is that ESL will need a rethink of the role of folklore use in its strategies.

Interestingly, recent studies indicate that perceptions of folklore education in schools differ across ages or in different -learning situations. Although to the older students folklore might seem simple and even childish, to the younger

learners it can be interesting, memorable, and transformative. In the case of junior secondary school children, folktales could give them organized chances to study language and morality in the most age-suitable forms (Adanma, 2025). This shows that research on the perceptions of the students in this group can be of great help in the understanding of how folklore can be taught with typifications in formal ESL learning. With such inquiries, divergences between what the curricula are supposed to be and what is experienced by the students in the classroom can also be laid bare.

Use of folklore in the ESL classrooms is also highly consistent with the National Policy on Education of Nigeria which focuses not only on academic but also on moral and cultural orientation. The Nigerian education system aims to advance positive citizenship and social integration as well as cultural maintenance. Folklore is a natural instrument in terms of accomplishing these tasks since it addresses specific realities of the particular area it is created in at the same time that it supports general values. Palmer (2020) agrees with this opinion, stating that, despite the difficulties, folklore is an effective pedagogical tool, which, however, requires consistency with the general orientation of educational policy. Its presence in the ESL classrooms is thus helpful for linguistic growth as well as the national requirement to continue cultural heritage preservation.

Enugu State is a very pertinent context applicable to the study of this issue. Being an educational center in the Southeastern part of Nigeria, English is used as a secondary language and a major medium of instruction. Cultural and linguistic

influences are wide-ranging in this area and therefore it is vital to strengthen cultural identity along with language acquisition. This can be achieved through folklore to provide the students of this era with the moral authority and language ability that would enable them to survive some of the current predicaments. Since junior secondary represents a developmental period of the students, the teaching and learning approaches implemented in junior secondary have immense consideration as regards their personal and academic future. Examining how they perceive folklore-based ESL instruction can therefore shed light on both opportunities and challenges in the current education system.

Against this background, this study investigates junior secondary school students' perception of folklore as a tool for moral instruction in ESL classrooms in Enugu State. By focusing on selected schools, the research aims to uncover how students experience folklore as part of their language learning and moral development. The findings will not only provide empirical evidence for strengthening ESL pedagogy but also contribute to educational policy discussions on cultural preservation and moral instruction. Ultimately, this study seeks to highlight the enduring relevance of indigenous oral traditions and advocate for their integration into modern Nigerian classrooms as a pathway to both academic excellence and moral integrity.

Research Questions

1. How do junior secondary school students in Enugu State perceive the use of folklore as a tool for moral instruction in ESL classrooms?

2. What moral values do students report learning through folklore-based ESL lessons?
3. To what extent do students find folklore effective in improving both their moral reasoning and English language competence?

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which emphasizes that human beings acquire knowledge, values, and behaviors through a process of observation, imitation, and modeling. Unlike traditional learning theories that focus solely on reinforcement or conditioning, Bandura argued that much of learning takes place within social contexts. Learners watch others perform actions, internalize what they observe, and then reproduce those actions in appropriate contexts. This makes the environment and the models within it powerful determinants of behavior and learning outcomes. In educational settings, Social Learning Theory highlights the importance of teachers, peers, and cultural symbols as role models who shape the attitudes and behaviors of students (Idowu, 2023).

Folklore, as a cultural and narrative form, provides an ideal platform for applying Social Learning Theory in ESL classrooms. Characters in the stories portray both good and evil, allowing the learners to get examples of what they should emulate and what they should not. An example says a folktale might have a wise and honest character rewarded, and a lying deceitful character punished. Such portrayals will have the effect of evoking models, which students can observe, process, and embody in their circles of moral cognition, a process articulated by

Bandura. After repeatedly seeing such patterns in the stories, students develop an understanding that moral actions are rewarded by social approval whereas immoral actions are punished. So folklore is a method by which moral teaching is conveyed in a pleasing memorable culturally intimate mode.

Reinforcement of behavior is also mentioned in Social Learning Theory. Students absorb these reinforcements as virtuous behaviors when they get to hear comparisons of morally good deeds being rewarded as exposed through stories. In the same vein, when negative actions within the folklore are subjected to some train of discipline or lampoon then the students would find them unenviable and will emulate less of them. This combination of modeling and reinforcement is in line with the objective of school-based moral education. Folklore, therefore, not only models behavior but also provides moral consequences that strengthen students' ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Within ESL classrooms, these lessons are doubly effective because they are embedded in language-rich narratives that also improve listening, speaking, and comprehension skills (Okoro & Onuegwunwoke, 2024).

Another critical aspect of Bandura's Social Learning Theory is the concept of self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to perform a particular behavior. Through folklore, students are exposed to characters who overcome challenges through resilience, courage, or intelligence. When learners identify with these characters, they may develop a stronger belief in their ability to practice similar virtues in real life. For example, a student who

listens to a folktale about diligence and success may be more motivated to study hard and persevere in academic tasks. This self-belief is a direct extension of observational learning, where students not only see moral actions modeled but also begin to envision themselves capable of reproducing those actions (Bandura, as cited in Idowu, 2023).

The integration of folklore into ESL classrooms further demonstrates the reciprocal nature of Social Learning Theory. Bandura proposed that learning occurs within a triadic reciprocal interaction of behavior, personal factors, and environment. In this case, folklore represents both a personal and environmental stimulus: it reflects cultural identity, provides moral frameworks, and situates students within meaningful learning contexts. Students respond to these stories by adjusting their behavior, while teachers reinforce the process through discussions, reflections, and language exercises. This cyclical relationship underscores how folklore-based instruction can simultaneously nurture linguistic competence and moral consciousness, fulfilling dual educational objectives.

Lastly, Social Learning Theory gives credence to employing native traditions in formal learning as it focuses on the fact that learning does not entail abstract rules but is within the lived cultures. Such experiences are reflected in folklore since it is rooted in the morals and social existence of Nigerian people. When translated to the context of ESL classrooms, it can fill the gap between culture at home and school, and allows for making the learning process more realistic and successful.

By learning and reading stories, students not only enhance their language skills, but also put their character into shape as they learn to observe the moral lessons and internalize them. The Social Learning Theory as proposed by Bandura is therefore the best theoretical basis for this study with an emphasis on how observation, modeling, reinforcement, and self-efficacy work within folklore-based teaching to affect not only moral growth but also language learning and acquisition.

Empirical Review

Okoro and Onuegwunwoke (2024) examined the effectiveness of folktales in the realisation of receptive language skills of students attending secondary schools in the Orlu Metropolis in Imo State. The design used in the study was a descriptive one; in which the classroom activities were analyzed through students' responses to determine the effects of folktales on comprehension and reflection of morals. The results indicated that folk tales aroused interest among learners and therefore led to better listening and speaking proficiencies in addition to enabling students to think about ethical issues that were reinforced in the tales. The researchers pointed out that folktales are a two-fold tool: they also develop language skills aiming to instill cultural and moral values. They suggested that the teachers not only consciously incorporate folktales into ESL teaching, but also render classrooms more culturally responsive. The parallels with the current study are that both studies are concerned with focusing on the usage of folklore as a pedagogical device to teach languages and offer moral education. However,

the distinction is that whereas both Okoro and Onuegwunwoke investigated the secondary schools in Orlu, the study under analysis considers, based on students, junior secondary schools in Enugu State and, in particular, their perspectives on folklore in ESL classrooms.

Adanma (2025) considered the use of oral literature as a means of moral education in the senior secondary school in Ikeduru Local Government Area in Imo State. The research evaluated the moral instruction used through oral narratives and the applicability of such instruction in the modern classroom relying on a qualitative survey of students and teachers. The results revealed that, even though oral literature has changed, it was still a strong source of influence in the development of moral reasoning as students could also examine and verbalize the virtues (honesty, kindness, and communal responsibility) found in the stories. The research found that the education of cultural heritage and moral studies could not be left in the background since folklore is incorporated in the school curriculum. It was also suggested that schools increase the amount of instruction time they allow for oral literature, as well as educate teachers on how to effectively deliver the oral literature. The similarity with the present study lies in their shared focus on folklore as a moral instructional tool. However, the difference is that Adanma concentrated on senior secondary schools, while the current research is situated at the junior secondary level within Enugu State, where moral formation is at a more formative stage.

Badru and Odutayo (2023) explored parents' perceptions of the efficacy of Yoruba folktales in cultivating moral values among youths. The study used interviews and questionnaires administered to parents and guardians in Yoruba-speaking communities to understand how children internalize values from storytelling. Findings showed that folktales effectively instilled moral values such as honesty, diligence, respect for elders, and communal solidarity. The study emphasized that parents viewed folktales not only as entertainment but as essential moral instruction that continues to influence children's behavior in contemporary society. The authors recommended that parents and schools collaborate in reviving storytelling traditions to complement formal education. The similarity with the present study is the recognition of folktales as vital instruments for moral development. The difference is in perspective: while Badru and Odutayo investigated parental perceptions in Yoruba communities, the current study investigates students' own perceptions in ESL classrooms in Enugu State.

Idowu (2023) conducted a study examining senior secondary school students' perceptions of the challenges facing literature teaching and learning in Ogun State, Nigeria. Using a mixed-methods design, the researcher identified key issues such as limited instructional resources, teacher-centered approaches, and students' declining interest in literature. However, the study also highlighted the historical role of folktales in character formation and language development, suggesting that their neglect has contributed to students' disengagement. Findings

revealed that re-integrating folklore into literature instruction could help restore student interest and reinforce moral values. Recommendations included curriculum reforms that prioritize indigenous narratives and professional development for literature teachers. The similarity with the current study is the recognition that folklore shapes both moral and linguistic outcomes. The difference is that Idowu's research primarily emphasized challenges in literature teaching broadly, while the present study is directly centered on folklore as a moral instructional tool in junior secondary ESL classrooms in Enugu State.

Awe and Ewata (2020) analyzed ICT psychomotor teaching strategies as applied to the oral English classrooms in Akure, Nigeria, and concentrated on the elements of cultural performances, including folktales. The research design was experimental, and it aimed to examine how the stories performed with the help of ICT could enhance the engagement and moral motivation in students. The results indicated that the usage of technology in performing folktales enriched the interest of the students, enhanced, and pronounced the morals learned in the tales. The researchers surmised that cultural equipment, such as folk narratives, can be successfully translated to the arena of discussions in the classroom in the contemporary system of education that is based on technologies. They advised combining the old tradition of storytelling with ICT to design a model of hybrid teaching. The similarity with this paper entails the fact that both recognize the good potential of folklore in terms of moral and linguistic enhancements. The

point of distinction as concerns the manufacturing of this study and that of Awe and Ewata is that the former explored the ICT-supported learning in Akure, whereas the latter investigates instructional process in junior secondary schools in Enugu State without specifying of specific incorporation of ICT.

In Ekiti State, Deji-Afuye and Deji-Afuye (2025) examined the sociocultural interplay between the beliefs of ESL teachers and the use of technology in their classroom practices. As we can read, these researchers used interviews and classroom observations and investigated how the teachers compromised between the new digital tools on the one hand and traditional cultural resources for the teaching of folklore on the other hand in the ESL classrooms. Results showed that those teachers who valued and gave more attention to such local cultural contents as stories could establish more inclusive learning spaces, whereas teachers who valued only the digital approach tended to ignore the moral and cultural teaching. This necessitated the study to adopt a moderate position in which folklore employs the use of technology-based learning that maintains cultural identity and good teaching of the language. The parallels with the current study are the fact that both acknowledge the existence of folklore as a tool in inclusive and value-oriented ESL teaching. The distinction though is in the sense that in the study, they investigated the beliefs and practices held and conducted by the teachers whereas the present study is on the perceptions of students in junior secondary schools in Enugu State.

Nwobodo and Donatus (2017) discussed the correlation between school climate and academic adjustment of learners in secondary schools in Enugu State with special focus on cultural and moral practices of teaching. Using a survey design, the study examined the impact of school environment and teacher dispositions as well as their instructional materials on both moral and actual academic results. The results indicated that the use of folklore in morality education led to a tremendous change in the social adjustment of students and their attainment. As the study indicated, the positive climate of the school with cultural resources like folktales results in the holistic development of students. These authors suggested that schools intensify the application of the indigenous oral practices together with contemporary study programs. The line of similarity with this study is that it pertains to Enugu State and it acknowledges the importance of folklore in building morals. The variation, however, lies in the fact that Nwobodo and Donatus have researched school climate in general whereas the present study has explored the same concept concerning the perception of students about morality through folklore in ESL classrooms.

Methodology

This study adopted the survey research design, which was considered most appropriate because it allows the researcher to gather data directly from a defined population and analyze their opinions systematically. A survey design is suitable for studies focusing on perceptions, attitudes, and experiences since it relies on structured instruments to collect quantifiable

information. By using this approach, the researcher was able to capture students' views about folklore as a tool for moral instruction in ESL classrooms in a standardized manner. This design also ensured that data could be easily analyzed statistically, thus enabling clear interpretation of students' responses. Furthermore, the design provided an avenue for identifying general patterns and trends in the perception of students, which aligns with the objectives of this study. The choice of survey research design is, therefore, justified by the need to generate reliable and generalizable data from the selected schools.

The population of the study comprised all junior secondary school students from three schools in Enugu State, namely: Godfrey Okoye University Secondary School, College of Immaculate Conception, and St. Patrick Secondary School, Emene. These schools were purposively selected to represent a cross-section of students within the Enugu metropolis who are taught English as a second language. Junior secondary school students were chosen because they are at a critical stage of moral and linguistic development, where exposure to folklore could have significant formative impacts. The schools also provide a blend of private and mission-based educational settings, thereby offering diverse contexts for examining the research problem. By focusing on these institutions, the study was able to generate a balanced understanding of students' perceptions. Thus, the target population was carefully defined to ensure relevance to the study's objectives.

Three schools were sampled where 105 students were sampled in these schools to form the sample size of the study. The researcher placed 105 questionnaires and collected the 105 questionnaires back leading to a 100 percent return rate. This exhaustive response made the data set not only comprehensive but also reliable to keep in considering the difficulty that is normally faced when one surveys but has gaps in the responses. It was considered that the sample size was sufficient as it offered adequate representation in the sample schools, and its size could be manageable to conduct the analysis. The completeness of the retrieval of questionnaires also boosted the validity of the results since there were no data losses of the participants involved. This large response rate indicates that there is a great degree of engagement by the students meaning that the subject spoke to them.

The researcher primarily used a structured questionnaire in the form of Students' Perception of Folklore as a Tool of Moral Instruction in ESL Classrooms. The survey was formulated in a way that would capture the opinions of students concerning the inclusion of folklore in ESL learning and how it boosts moral lessons. It included the questions that were organized in the form of a four-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree/Disagree), allowing quantification of the students' opinions. The instrument was separated as per the research questions and sufficient coverage of every section of the research objective was done. The questionnaire equivalents were implemented by making use of past related studies and giving them an extensive evaluation based on the questionnaire equivalents on clarity

and validity to be able to make their reliability. Such a design gave the instrument a user-friendly effect and applicability to junior students.

The mean and the standard deviation were used as the principal methods of statistics in analyzing the data of the study. This was based on mean scores, which allowed the researcher to deduce general trends in the perception of students, and the standard deviation allowed him to get information on the degree of agreement or variability of responses. Again a decision rule benchmark was established at a value of 2.5: any item that achieved a mean score of 2.5 or more was defined as an agreed perception, whereas scores below 2.5 were not an agreed perception. This score threshold is in line with general survey research convention when conducting educational research with a Likert-type scale. These statistical measures were used and interpret data objectively and consistently. Through this approach, the researcher could come up with valuable indications regarding the

usefulness of folklore in the promotion of moral teaching in ESL classrooms.

In summary, the methodology combined a well-structured survey design, a defined student population across three schools, a complete sample of 105 respondents, and a reliable instrument for gathering data. The choice of mean and standard deviation as analytical tools provided a clear and systematic basis for decision-making. This methodological framework positioned the study to achieve its objectives of examining students' perceptions of folklore in ESL classrooms as a tool for moral instruction. By following this design, the researcher ensured that the findings would be both empirically sound and practically useful for educators, curriculum planners, and policymakers.

Results and Analysis

Research Question 1: *What are students' perceptions of folklore as a tool for moral instruction in ESL classrooms?*

Table

Students' Perception of Folklore as a Tool for Moral Instruction

Item	Statement	N	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Folklore makes moral lessons clearer	105	3.42	0.56	Accepted
2	Folklore is relevant in ESL classrooms	105	3.18	0.63	Accepted
3	Folklore is outdated in modern schools	105	2.01	0.72	Rejected
4	Folklore improves classroom engagement	105	3.33	0.59	Accepted
5	Folklore provides examples of real-life issues	105	3.25	0.66	Accepted
6	Folklore should be included in the curriculum	105	3.40	0.55	Accepted

Research Question 2: *What moral values do students report learning through folklore in ESL classrooms?*

1

Table

2

Moral Values Learned through Folklore

Item	Statement	N	Mean	SD	Decision
7	Honesty	105	3.51	0.54	Accepted
8	Respect for elders	105	3.38	0.61	Accepted
9	Hard work	105	3.46	0.58	Accepted
10	Teamwork and cooperation	105	3.29	0.63	Accepted
11	Kindness and empathy	105	3.36	0.60	Accepted
12	Obedience to authority	105	3.21	0.65	Accepted

Research Question 3: *How effective is folklore in enhancing both moral and language development among junior secondary students?*

Table

3

Effectiveness of Folklore in Moral and Language Development

Item	Statement	N	Mean	SD	Decision
13	Improves moral reasoning	105	3.44	0.57	Accepted
14	Enhances vocabulary	105	3.27	0.64	Accepted
15	Improves listening skills	105	3.22	0.61	Accepted
16	Improves speaking and storytelling skills	105	3.31	0.59	Accepted
17	Strengthens critical thinking	105	3.18	0.66	Accepted
18	Makes learning more enjoyable	105	3.35	0.62	Accepted

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that junior secondary school students in Enugu State generally perceive folklore as a relevant and effective tool for moral instruction in ESL classrooms. As shown in Table 1, students strongly agreed that folklore makes moral lessons clearer (Mean = 3.42), improves engagement (Mean = 3.33), and should be formally included in the school curriculum (Mean = 3.40). However, they rejected the claim that folklore is outdated

(Mean = 2.01), which underscores its continued relevance even in modern classrooms. This aligns with the work of Okoro and Onuegwunwoke (2024), who found that folktales in Orlu secondary schools stimulated student interest, improved comprehension, and fostered moral reflection. Similarly, Idowu (2023) emphasized that neglecting folklore has weakened students’ interest in literature, suggesting that its reintegration could enhance both moral orientation and language learning. The

convergence of these studies with the present findings demonstrates that folklore is not merely a cultural relic but an effective pedagogical resource in contemporary ESL contexts.

The results further showed that students identified honesty (Mean = 3.51), respect for elders (Mean = 3.38), and hard work (Mean = 3.46) as key virtues learned through folklore (Table 2). Other values such as teamwork, kindness, and obedience also recorded high acceptance rates, highlighting the broad moral spectrum that folklore can transmit. These findings correspond with Adanma (2025), who reported that oral literature remains a powerful means of instilling virtues such as honesty, kindness, and communal responsibility among senior secondary students in Imo State. Likewise, Badru and Odutayo (2023) found that Yoruba folktales were effective in cultivating honesty, diligence, and respect for elders among youths. The consistency across these studies and the current research shows that folklore reliably transmits core African moral values across different regions, age groups, and cultural contexts. Importantly, the present study confirms that even junior secondary school students, who are at a formative stage of moral development, recognize and appreciate these virtues within folktales.

On the question of folklore's effectiveness in enhancing both moral and linguistic development, the results were also strongly positive. Students agreed that folklore improves moral reasoning (Mean = 3.44), strengthens vocabulary (Mean = 3.27), and improves listening and storytelling skills (Means = 3.22 and 3.31,

respectively) (Table 3). These outcomes align with Awe and Ewata (2020), who demonstrated that folktale performance in ICT-supported oral English classrooms improved students' pronunciation and reinforced moral instruction. Similarly, Deji-Afuye and Deji-Afuye (2025) found that ESL teachers who integrated folklore into digital classrooms created more inclusive and culturally grounded learning environments. The current study reinforces these insights by showing that folklore not only supports language development in listening, speaking, and vocabulary but also simultaneously strengthens critical thinking and moral reflection among learners.

Finally, the findings revealed that the positive perception of folklore among students in Enugu State resonates with earlier observations about its contribution to holistic student development. Nwobodo and Donatus (2017) showed that the integration of folklore in moral education improved social adjustment and academic performance in secondary schools in Enugu. This is consistent with the present study's finding that students view folklore as both enjoyable and educational, thereby bridging the gap between cultural identity and formal schooling. Taken together, these findings and the reviewed empirical evidence affirm that folklore serves a dual function in ESL classrooms: enhancing communicative competence while transmitting enduring moral values. The study therefore contributes to the growing body of evidence calling for the revival and structured integration of folklore into Nigeria's formal education system,

particularly at the junior secondary level where character formation is most critical.

Educational Implications

1. Folklore can be used in ESL classrooms to make moral lessons easier for students to understand.
2. It helps students develop both language skills and good character at the same time.
3. Using folklore connects classroom learning to students' cultural background.
4. Teachers can use folktales to make lessons more engaging and interactive.
5. Schools that integrate folklore into teaching will promote both academic and moral growth.

Recommendations

1. Teachers should include folklore regularly in ESL lessons.
2. Curriculum planners should make folklore a formal part of the English syllabus.
3. Workshops should be organized to train teachers on how to teach with folklore.
4. Parents should also encourage storytelling at home to support school learning.
5. Government should provide resources that preserve and promote indigenous folklore in education.

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