

## Trends and patterns of gender research in Indonesian folktales: Implications for primary education

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### KEYWORDS

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**ABSTRACT** The increasing awareness of researchers on the importance of gender equality in various fields influences the field of Indonesian literature. Folktales that have been considered as a source of noble values began to be re-evaluated. Various forms of depiction that allegedly contain gender injustice are questioned. However, attention to gender issues in Indonesian folktales and their significance to education has not received serious attention. Using the Google Scholar database regarding the publication of scientific journals of Indonesian researchers in 2015-2021, this paper identifies patterns and trends of Indonesian researchers in analyzing gender issues in Indonesian folktales. Furthermore, a discussion of the implications of these findings for education is presented. This paper argues that the study of gender issues in folktales is still primarily focused on textual analysis. Applied research is needed that focuses on efforts to reconstruct stories from a gender perspective and use them in students' reading texts, especially in primary education. In Indonesia, at the primary education level, folktales are often used as children's reading material. Through these studies, an understanding of gender equality can be taught from an early age.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Gender equality in various sectors of life is a problem faced by every country in the world (Coleman, 2017; Hooper, 1991; Tran & Nguyen, 2020). The hope of equality between women and men continues to this day. Many types of research on gender have been carried out by experts in various sectors, such as the economy (Behrman & Zhang, 1995; Monteon, 2018), agriculture (Tiwari & Shingh, 2020), health (Kiely et al., 2019), military (Takamatsu, 2018), to education (Golob & Makarovič, 2019; Izzati et al., 2019; Mursidin et al., 2018; Paechter, 2021; Tran & Nguyen, 2020). Various solutions have been formulated to address gender issues (Balalaieva, 2019; Fitria, 2021; Kantola & Lombardo, 2018) but they persist. This problem cannot be solved simply because gender issues are not specific to a particular sector but cover all aspects of human life. Therefore, a massive and comprehensive effort is needed to continue fighting for various gender issues.

In Indonesia, the issue of gender equality has become the government's concern. For example, the Presidential Instruction of the Republic of Indonesia Number 9 of 2000 concerning gender mainstreaming in national development shows the government's seriousness in viewing gender issues in Indonesia. Several studies conducted by Indonesian researchers also support this effort. In the economic field (Puspitasari et al., 2013; Romadloniyah & Setiaji, 2020; Itorus, 2016), social (Anindya, 2016; Anisa & Ikawati, 2020; Desiningrum, 2014), health (Faizah & Amna, 2017; Fauziyah,

2017; Rusiah et al., 2018), to education (Barnas & Ridwan, 2019; Warliah, 2017) show gender inequality that occurs in various sectors and the problems that arise.

These various studies show the importance of gender research in Indonesia. The increasing interest of Indonesian researchers on gender issues has also influenced the development of folktales research in Indonesia. As a study area in humanities, humanities is responsible for developing Indonesian people (Sugiarti & Andalas, 2018). This awareness has led to the development of research on gender in folktales in Indonesia

For example, in the field of literature, gender research has been carried out quite a lot. However, the research is still focused on written literature (Hasmawati et al., 2020; Indrapuri & Andalas, 2019; Nasri, 2017; Rokhmansyah et al., 2018). There has not been much research on the wealth of oral or regional literature rooted in local community values. We argue that providing knowledge about gender equality must be done from an early age. Gender education is carried out by referring to the local cultural values of the community. To support the national goals, research is needed that aims to explore the wealth of national culture. One of the richness of Indonesian culture lies in folktales.

The existence of folktales in Indonesian society is crucial because it is the primary medium used by parents to pass on cultural values to their children. Folktales that lives in society is not neutral and needs to be assessed and evaluated (Andalas, 2015). If this problem is not resolved, children from an early age will perceive biased gender roles

(Bussey & Banddura, 1992). and the perpetuation of patriarchal culture limiting men and women's roles (Mcdonald, 2010). This understanding of gender bias will be perceived as a child's worldview from birth to death (Taylor, 2003).

Based on the problems above, this study aims to identify patterns and trends of Indonesian researchers in analyzing gender in folktales. Through these findings, a discussion of the implications of the findings on primary education will also be presented. Understanding this is very important because this research field has not received much attention from researchers, especially Indonesian literature researchers. Indonesian researchers obtained an overview of the development of gender research on folktales through this literature research.

## 2. METHOD

This research was conducted using a literature study with the help of software publish and perish 7. The literature search was carried out using the keywords "folktales" and "gender" against the google scholar database. To obtain data sources relevant to this study's purpose, narrow searches were done for 1) manuscripts in the form of scientific journal articles, 2) the scope of research on folktales, 3) focusing on gender analysis, and 4) published in 2015-2020. Through the search, the following 11 articles were obtained in table 1.

Sources of data that have been collected were not analyzed to see bibliographic relationships but using content analysis. The research data was then processed using an interactive model (Miles & Huberman, 1992), namely reduction, data presentation, interpretation, and concluding.

### 2.1 Pattern and Trend of Gender Research in Indonesian Folktales

The research pattern referred to here is the epistemological aspect used by researchers in obtaining knowledge. This aspect includes themes, issues, approaches, data sources, and methods used. Understanding patterns means paying attention to the repetition of elements used in every existing research. Understanding the pattern of research will lead to the methodological implications used in researching gender in Indonesian folktales. Through these findings, research trends in general gender research on Indonesian folktales will be obtained by existing researchers.

What can be seen from Table 2 above shows the diversity of focus and methods used. These results show the pattern of research conducted by Indonesian researchers on gender in folktales. First, the research themes carried out can be grouped into four topics: the symbolization of women, gender inequality, patriarchal domination, and the objectification of women. The theme of inequality in women's position, which is always inferior with various labels attached, is the focus of research. How women are portrayed by patriarchal and institutionalized culture in folktales is a widely discussed theme in this research. Baiduri (2015) research entitled "The Paradox of Toba Batak Women: A Hermeneutic Interpretation of Ende Siboru Tombaga's Literary Works" is an example. This study shows evidence of local literature that opposes the patriarchal domination that occurs in Toba Batak women. This text shows the existence of injustice, crime, and discrimination against women in the inheritance distribution system. The cultural dimension of the Toba society regarding how

TABLE 1. Research data sources

| No | Title  | Research Article Identity | Author and Year of Publication |
|----|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1  | Spiritualitas-Erotis Ratu Kalinyamat: Menafsir Simbol Kecantikan, Seksualitas dan Birahi yang Terkait dengan Mitos Topo Wudho, Wit Jati Bolong dan Pelacur Keraton Terhadap Pilihan Hidup Pragmatisme-Hedonis Perempuan Jepara |                           | (Rochman, 2015)                |
| 2  | Paradoks Perempuan Batak Toba: Suatu Penafsiran Hermeneutik Terhadap Karya Sastra Ende Siboru Tombaga  |                           | (Baiduri, 2015)                |
| 3  | Cerita Rakyat Timun Emas: Gambaran Runtuhnya Ideologi Patriarkal   |                           | (Sari, 2015)                   |
| 4  | Feminisme Dalam Pergelaran Wayang Kulit Purwa Tokoh Dewi Shinta, Dewi Kunti, Dewi Srikandi   |                           | (Ariani, 2016)                 |
| 5  | Objektivikasi Perempuan dalam Tiga Dongeng Klasik Indonesia dari Sanggar Tumpal: sangkuriang, Jaka Tarub, dan Si Leungli   |                           | (Hapsarani, 2018)              |
| 6  | Citra Perempuan dalam Cerita Rakyat Waindho-Indhodhiyu Pada Masyarakat Wakatobi  |                           | (Putra & Alias, 2018)          |
| 7  | Bias Gender dalam Buku Teks Pelajaran Bahasa Indonesia Sekolah Menengah Atas   |                           | (Ulfah et al., 2019)           |
| 8  | Tubuh Perempuan Pada Cerita Rakyat Jawa Timuran: Jaka Tarub dan Ande-Ande Lumut  |                           | (Iswara, 2019a)                |
| 9  | The Image of Women Figures in Folklore of Kudus Kulon' s Toponyms : A Linguistics Anthropology Study   |                           | (Muthia & Syukur, 2019)        |
| 10 | Pendidikan etika dan gender dalam teks satua I tuung kuning  |                           | (Paramita, 2020)               |
| 11 | Bias Gender dalam Perbandingan Hasil Terjemahan Buku Cerita Anak Dongeng Bawang Merah Dan Bawang Putih Melalui Penerjemah dan Google Translate   |                           | (Wulansari, 2020)              |

the position of women in the inheritance system is voiced as a form of discourse on the patriarchal system that exists in this region.

Research conducted by other researchers also supports the findings generated in this study. In these studies, it is shown that folktales, as a cultural product of Indonesian society, shows impartiality to the position of women in the structure of society (Ariani, 2016; Baiduri, 2015; ?; Iswara, 2019a; Muthia & Syukur, 2019; Paramita, 2020; Putra & Alias, 2018; Ulfah et al., 2019; Wulansari, 2020). This is what makes women's position inferior in Indonesia because the cultural products of society have shown how the world view of Indonesian society is in positioning the roles of men and women. On the other hand, texts that deconstruct the subordinate role of women in Indonesian culture are also the main themes to show women's superiority, for example Sari (2015).

Second, the issues discussed in the existing research related to myths of sexuality, discrimination against women, gender bias, inequality, and the character of women. This picture shows that quite a lot of problems are

TABLE 2. Gender research patterns in Indonesian folktales

| No | Theme   | Issue   | Approach                | Data Source           | Method                          | Researcher              |
|----|---|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1  | A symbol of beauty, sexuality, and lust for women | The myth of sexuality in Queen Kalinyamat                 | Hermeneutics            | Document              | Interpretation                  | (Rochman, 2015)         |
| 2  | Gender inequality                                 | Toba Batak women discrimination                           | Hermeneutics            | Literary works (text) | Interpretation                  | (Baiduri, 2015)         |
| 3  | Patriarchal Domination                            | The absence of patriarchy                                 | Feminism                | Folktale (text)       | Content Analysis                | (Sari, 2015)            |
| 4  | The position of women in Javanese culture         | Woman in Purwa Shadow Puppet                              | Feminism                | Performance           | Values & relevance              | (Ariani, 2016)          |
| 5  | Objectivization of women                          | The objectification of women in folklore                  | Feminism                | Folktale (text)       | Interpretation of texts         | (Hapsarani, 2018)       |
| 6  | Woman image                                       | Woman characters in folklore                              | Feminism                | Folklore (text)       | interpretation                  | (Putra & Alias, 2018)   |
| 7  | Gender Bias                                       | Subject-object, writer-reader gender bias                 | Feminism                | Folktale (text)       | Critical discourse analysis     | (Ulfah et al., 2019)    |
| 8  | Woman Body  | The representation and role of the woman body in folklore | Feminism                | Folktale (text)       | Interpretation                  | (Iswara, 2019a)         |
| 9  | Image of female figure                            | Female figure in location naming                          | linguistic anthropology | Ethnography           | linguistic interpretation       | (Muthia & Syukur, 2019) |
| 10 | Gender inequality                                 | Gender inequality in Folklore                             | Semiotics               | Folktale (text)       | Interpretation                  | (Paramita, 2020)        |
| 11 | Gender bias                                       | Gender bias of google translated text & translator        | Linguistic translation  | Folktale (text)       | Linguistic & structure of story | (Wulansari, 2020)       |

found regarding women in Indonesian folktales. Throughout the literature search described in table 2, only research conducted by ? shows a different pattern. In the research entitled “*The People’s Story of Timun Emas: A Picture of the Collapse of Patriarchal Ideology*” the absence of men is shown as a symbol of the collapse of patriarchal ideology. This story is one of the folk tales that do not support or at least illustrate the dominance of patriarchal culture in the cultural products of society.

Third, the research approach used by researchers is mostly feminism (Ariani, 2016; Hapsarani, 2018; Iswara, 2019b; Muthia & Syukur, 2019; Putra & Alias, 2018; Sari, 2015). Other approaches used are Hermeneutics (Baiduri, 2015; Rochman, 2015), Anthro-linguistics (Muthia & Syukur, 2019), semiotics (Paramita, 2020), dan translation (Wulansari, 2020). One of the reasons for the diversity of approaches is the differences in the fields of research. As far as the search, this difference does not provide a significant difference to the interpretation results obtained. This is because gender is an ideological emancipatory paradigm (Eveline et al., 2009). Although the interpretations are carried out with different approaches, the ideological dimensions of the folktales texts studied show the same thing because they are produced in the same culture.

Fourth, the source of research data for existing research comes from the results of folktales documentation. That is, the story is not an oral story that lives in society. The fundamental research in 2. uses the results of folktales documentation as the object of research material. Fifth, the research analysis method shows diversity. The analytical method used shows uniformity in the form of textual inter-

pretation. This is because the material object used by the researcher is folktales text.

These results indicate that the textual analysis model uses folktales texts to dissect the patriarchal ideology in the text into patterns that always appear in existing research. The findings of this pattern also show that the trend of research on gender issues in Indonesian folktales focuses on the textual dimension. Gender analysis of the products of oral culture has not been carried out. Compared with the cultural richness of oral stories, research on gender issues in folktales that live in the community still receives very little attention. There is quite a lot of folktales in Indonesia, with various local cultural riches owned by the people in it (Andalas, 2015; Sulistyorini & Andalas, 2017).

### 3. RESULT & DISCUSSION

One of the essential roles of folktales in elementary education level students is as a literacy medium (Ektiningtyas-Modouw & Karna, 2013). In addition to formal education, folktales also has an important position for the people of Indonesia. Folktales is also used as a means of passing on values between generations (Andalas & Qur’ani, 2019). Folktales contains the values, ideas, and worldviews of the people who own the stories (Andalas, 2017, 2018; Dundes, 1969). As a medium for transmitting knowledge and values, folktales should not only be considered as a means of inheritance but the content of folktales should be assessed within the framework of education. Folktales consumed by children will form a variable understanding of gender (Hanni, 2015; Paynter, 2011). Therefore, the form of children’s learning must be free from inequality or gender bias. Children

should acquire as neutral an understanding as possible regarding gender.

Folktales as the author's ideological space provides dozens of interpretation spaces for readers to follow the ideology offered (Sugiarti & Andalas, 2018). This happens because folktales is not isolated from the community's cultural, political, social context, which ultimately forms the worldview of the writer, reader, and audience (Arimbi, 2009). The various divisions of roles inherent in each character, regarding how to be a man and a woman, are a form of representation of the gender ideology of Indonesian society. These various ideologies are embodied in literary fiction spaces which the readers will receive.

Based on the existing research that has been discussed in the previous section, it appears that the research conducted is still textual. These studies still approach folktales as a textual phenomenon and emphasize the dimensions of textual criticism. As an ideology, to change gender problems that arise in society, applied research is needed that is not only aimed at dismantling the textual dimension but is constructive so that it has an impact on society.

Elementary Education level is the beginning of children's learning and life. At this level, the role of researchers to be actively involved through applied research is very necessary. This is because the current research is still textual. If the research conducted is still limited to textual criticism, various problems regarding gender understanding that should be taught from an early age to children cannot be realized. For this reason, applied research is needed, for example, through the reconstruction of folktales from a gender perspective. Various research results need to be tested and then used in student learning. This deficit does not mean that basic research is not essential. However, basic research can serve as a supporting framework for applied research. Unfortunately, as far as literature searches that have been carried out, no applied research has been found that can directly impact gender problems that occur.

Applied research at the basic education level is essential because childhood is a significant period that will affect children's lives to adulthood. This stage is the initial stage for children to learn to understand various realities and react to them. Through reading materials or fairy tales that they consume every day, children will get information on attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors that they will emulate and apply in their lives. In this position, it is essential to be aware of the stereotypes that are widely practiced by patriarchal cultures regarding how men and women should play a role in life. If children are presented with gender-biased stories from an early age, this will affect how children perceive various things in their future lives.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results presented, it appears that the textual analysis model uses folktales texts to dissect the patriarchal ideology in the text into patterns that appear in existing research. The findings of this pattern also show that the trend of research on gender issues in Indonesian folktales focuses on the textual dimension. Gender analysis of the products of oral culture has not been carried out. Applied research is needed that aims to reconstruct the story and be implemented at the elementary education level. This is important because gender as an ideological dimension must be countered with real action to change society. Folktales

consumed by children will form a variable understanding of gender. Therefore, the form of children's learning must be free from inequality or gender bias. Children should acquire as neutral an understanding as possible regarding gender.

This initial survey research was limited to textual analysis. The data sources used are limited to research reports in scientific journal articles from 2015-2020. Various other reports in the form of proceedings or essays are not the object of study. For this reason, more comprehensive research is needed using various scientific reference sources, such as books or proceedings, to get a comprehensive picture of the development of gender research in Indonesian folktales.

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