

Role of Traditional Stories for English Language Education

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Abstract

Traditional stories like folktales, fairy tales, myths and fables are different and older in emergence from short stories, a more modern form of narratives. As traditional stories are frequently narrated in Indian multilingual households, they can serve as a rich resource of language learning in the ESL classroom. In this paper I will discuss the potential of traditional stories to facilitate English language education. I shall also elaborate on a host of socio-cultural advantages of using traditional stories as additional language teaching materials for the ESL classroom. I will conclude by providing evidence from Indian ESL classrooms where traditional stories have been found to be an effective pedagogical resource.

Keywords: traditional stories, folktales, myths, fables, fairytales, English language education

Introduction

Traditional stories have a rich tradition of being passed on from one generation to the other in the oral form. There are four types of interesting formats of traditional stories—*folktales*, *fairy tales*, *myths* and *fables*. Their appeal lies in their oral form and their ancient heritage. Thus traditional stories contrast with short stories, which are a recent phenomenon emerging only at the beginning of the 19th century. Furthermore, a single author usually writes a short story whereas there is no authorship of traditional stories as they belong to the people. Just look at the term “folktales”: *folk* means people and *tales* means stories.