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# Exploring Cross-Cultural Moral Lessons and Cultural Retention through Classic Children's Literature

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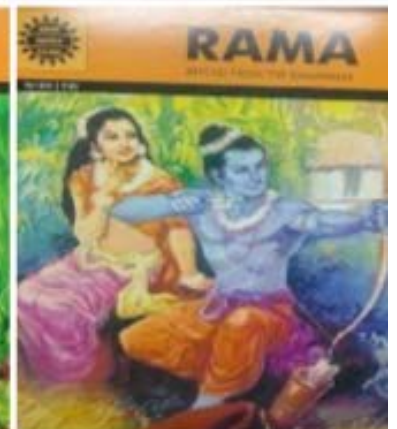
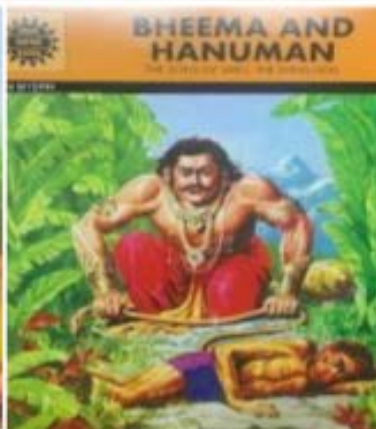
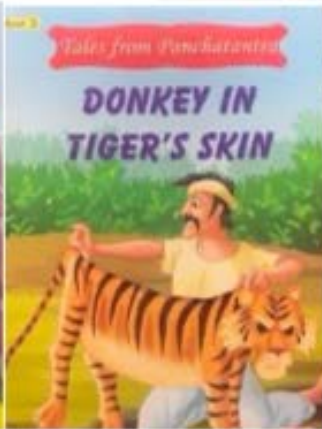
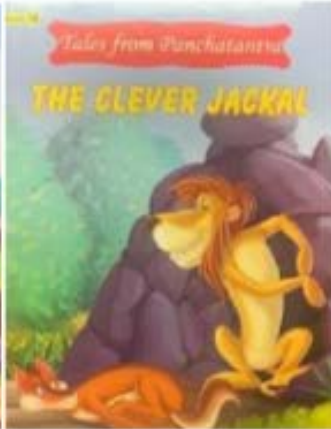
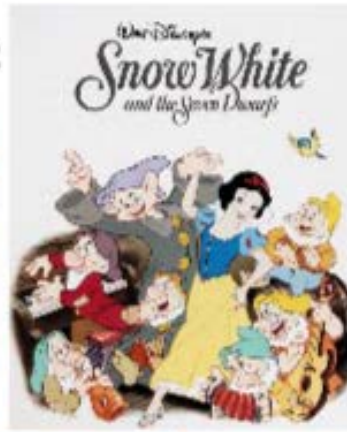
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The Lion & the Mouse



The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing



Some classic children's texts in English & Hindi

# Overview of Methods

1. Ethnographic analysis via SPEAKING model || **Preparatory stage for 2.**
  - a. Comparing English & Hindi texts
    - i. Aesop's Fables* (Lion and Mouse, Wolf in Sheep's Clothing)
    - ii. Disney's Storybook Collection* (Snow White, Peter Pan, Cinderella)
    - iii. Panchatantra* (Lion and Mouse, Clever Jackal, Donkey in Tiger's Skin)
    - iv. Amar Chitra Katha* (Bheema and Hanuman, Rama)
2. Sociolinguistic survey
  - a. Participants familiarity with classic English & Hindi texts
  - b. Participants methods of connecting with culture alongside literature

# Ethnographic Analysis

❖ Why are these texts taught? What are their themes & core lessons?

SPEAKING Model example (*ACK Bheema and Hanuman*)

Setting- Forest/Hanuman's grove

Participants- Bheema and Hanuman (sons of Vayu, wind god)

Ends/Goals- Bheema wishes to find celestial flower for his wife Draupadi at all costs; Hanuman wishes to humble Bheema by interfering with his quest

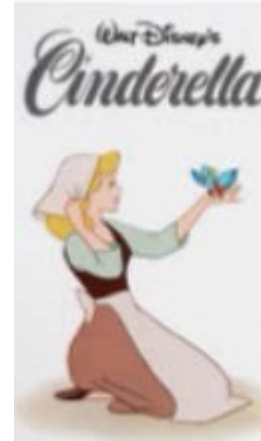
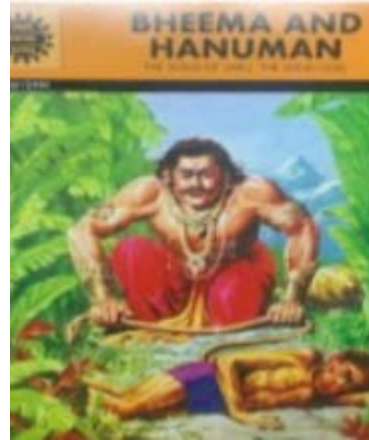
Act Sequence- Bad behavior → Conflict → Good outcome

Key/Tone- Pedantic, entertaining

Instrumentalities- Read independently by children, then discussed

Norms- Shouldn't misuse powers/strength; Bheema is guided by his brother Hanuman

Genre- Mythological short story/comic



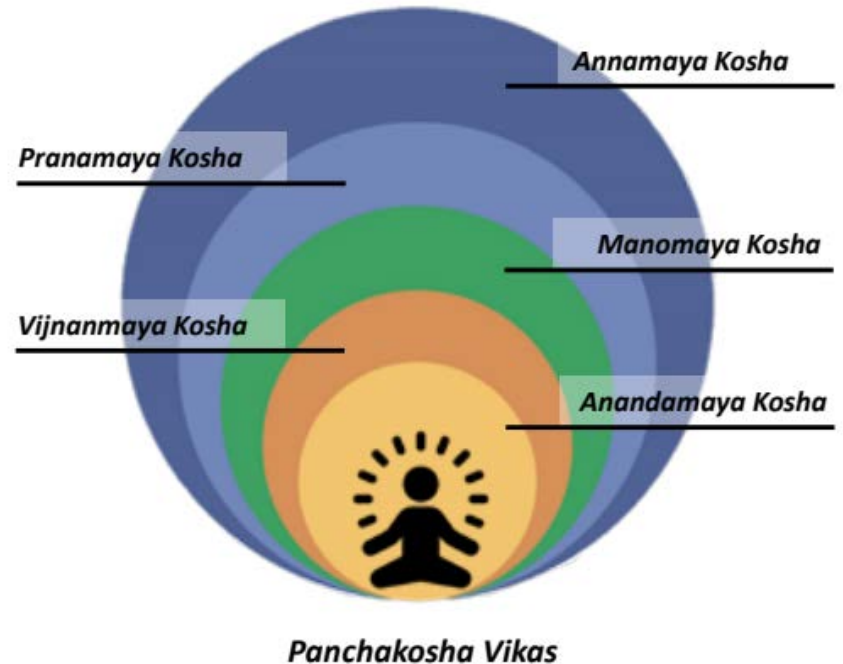
# Ethnographic Analysis - Key Takeaways

Similar with...

- ❖ Instrumentalities
  - Read by adults to children
  - Read by children independently
- ❖ Norms
  - Kindness is rewarded
  - Mind over might
  - Importance of creativity and resilience
  - Think before you act

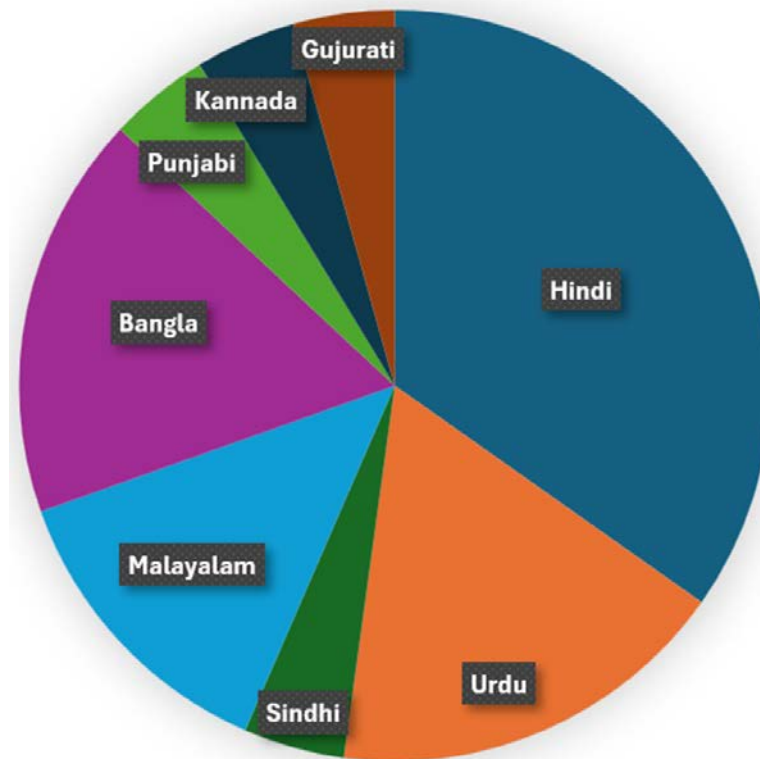
Differs with...

- ❖ Act Sequence
  - *Disney*: good behavior → conflict → good outcome
  - *ACK*: bad behavior → conflict → good outcome

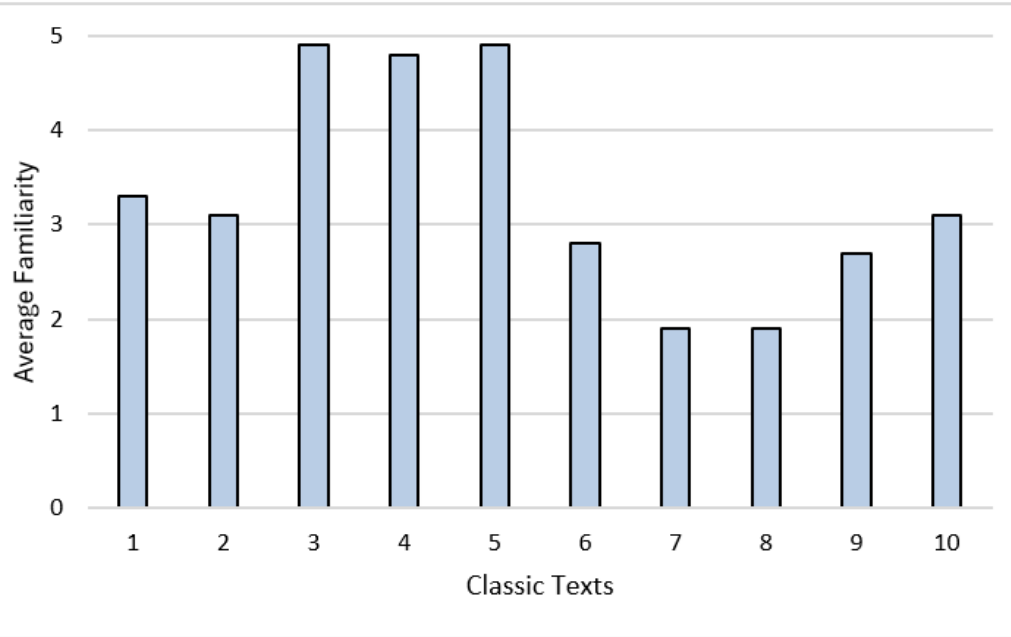


# Sociolinguistic Survey - Participant Demographics

- ❖ 14 South Asian American students (aged 19-22) surveyed
  - Linguistic Diversity of South Asia
- ❖ Asked to rate on scale of 1-5



# Familiarity of English and Hindi Classic Texts

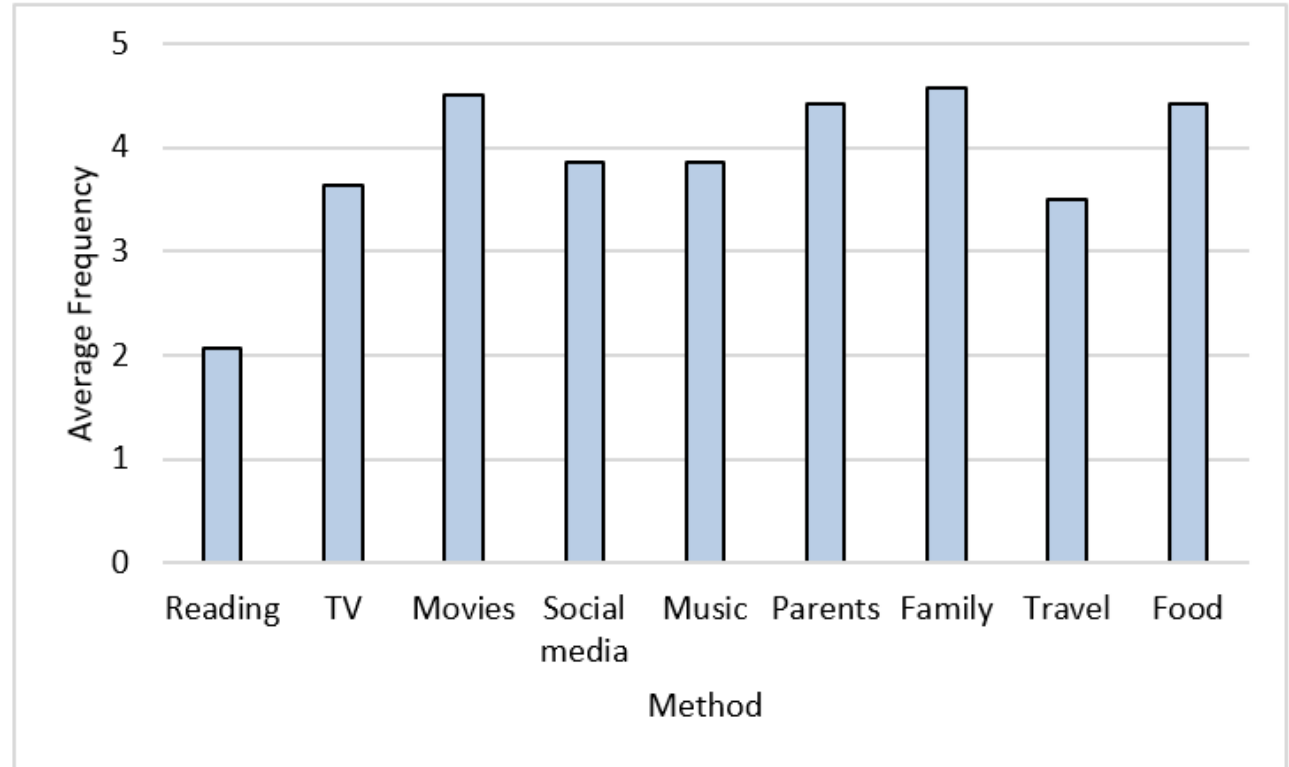


- 1: **Aesop's Fables** - *The Lion and the Mouse*
- 2: **Aesop's Fables** - *The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing*
- 3: **Disney Short Stories** - *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*
- 4: **Disney Short Stories** - *Peter Pan*
- 5: **Disney Short Stories** - *Cinderella*
- 6: **Panchatantra** - *The Lion and the Mouse*
- 7: **Panchatantra** - *The Clever Jackal*
- 8: **Panchatantra** - *Donkey in Tiger's Skin*
- 9: **Amar Chitra Katha** - *Bheema and Hanuman*
- 10: **Amar Chitra Katha** - *Rama Retold from the Ramayana*

# Methods of Connecting with Culture

Other methods:

- ❖ Friends
- ❖ Fashion
  - Makeup
  - Clothes
  - Jewelry
- ❖ Sports





**“The way in which I stay connected with  
my culture has changed  
over the years”**

57.2% participants agreed with a scale of 3 or  
more.

# Discussion & Conclusion

- ❖ Literature has been an important avenue for instilling sociocultural lessons in education.
- ❖ While frequency of “reading” is comparatively low as a method over other categories like “food” and “movies”, Contemporary English and Classical Hindi texts have shown to be **iconically important**
- ❖ Having a source of reinforcement can help with retention
- ❖ This demographic is branching out with different forms (food, movies, etc.) that were seen to be about as popular as family (the likely “reinforcers”)
- ❖ Can tailor children’s cultural education and help foster a sense of community amongst those who connect with these shared experiences based on findings
- ❖ Future studies can be done investigating the nuances of specific South Asian origins, religious belief systems, and household circumstances and their effect on cultural retention.

# Culture is dynamic

My culture means...



“Culture as ‘an evolving connected activity, not a thing’ ...culture was not a text to be read, because it gave a misleading impression that culture is static, closed and given” (Zhu 194)

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