



RESEARCH ARTICLE

**ROLE OF CREATIVE WRITING IN IMPROVING TECHNIQUES OF ESL LEARNING: A STUDY IN ELT**Dr. Dipti Ranjan Maharana ^{1*}, Mr. Rakesh Kumar Dash ²^{1*}(Associate Prof. of English, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. (Odisha, INDIA)²(PhD Scholar, English, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack. (Odisha, INDIA)

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Doi : <https://doi.org/10.54513/JOELL.2023.10413>**ABSTRACT**

This paper explores the implementation of various creative writing tasks for ESL learners to enhance their creativity and writing skills. Generally, ESL learners face numerous challenges in developing language creativity due to a lack of imagination, creative thinking, self-esteem, and language competence. This paper also emphasizes the skills required for productive creative writing, targeting different approaches to interpreting creativity and contrasting creative writing with expository writing. Additionally, it highlights tactics to improve creative writing skills, such as reading literature from different genres, writing consistently, experimenting with various language styles, using language prompts, and incorporating technology. By mastering these skills, students can improve their ability to express themselves, develop their imagination, enhance their language and vocabulary, and effectively convey their messages. Therefore, to foster creativity in writing, teachers should create an engaging environment that encourages creative and interesting writing in language classes by employing diverse strategies. This qualitative research is based on the close reading of secondary data.

Keywords: *Creative, Writing, Language, Literature, Learners, Thinking and Imagination*

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INTRODUCTION

English is considered a global language and is a mandatory subject in Indian schools. In the Indian context, there are guidelines regarding the syllabus content, but there is no specific directive on the teaching methods to be employed. This gap allows Swedish teachers to be creative in choosing pedagogical strategies to help develop students' language learning. According to *Skolverket* (The National Agency for Education), teachers should ensure that students are provided with opportunities to develop their creativity and practice writing different types of texts, such as poems, stories, and songs (*Skolverket* 2018). Furthermore, *Skolverket* emphasizes the importance of providing opportunities for discussion, reading, and writing to help build students' confidence in their language abilities. In addition, *Skolverket* encourages teachers to create a coherent educational experience that fosters creativity, curiosity, and self-confidence, thus aiding students in developing their language skills. The English syllabus also specifies that students should develop a variety of communicative skills that can be applied in different contexts.

While writing can be challenging for many, it remains an essential skill that needs to be developed. Non-traditional strategies can be particularly beneficial in encouraging students to write and produce texts. Since the 1960s, creative writing has been regarded as a cornerstone of literacy education, with many educators arguing that it offers numerous benefits for learning. For instance, Murugiah asserts that creative writing allows students to use their imagination and creativity to express their thoughts and ideas (Murugiah 2013). Furthermore, Murugiah

challenges the belief that creative writing is an innate ability, proposing that it can be cultivated through consistent, practical lessons.

Similarly, Akther suggests that creative writing exposes students to constructing various types of texts and working with elements like metaphors, fantasy, imagination, chaos, and order. Akther defines creative writing as "a form of writing that expresses feelings, thoughts or ideas in an imaginative way" (Akther 1). Akther also argues that creative writing encourages students to play with language, thereby enhancing their writing skills and improving their overall language proficiency. According to Akther, it is essential for students to have opportunities to engage in language play, as this enhances their ability to learn the language more effectively.

Considering these claims, it is important to investigate to what extent research supports the effectiveness of creative writing in ESL learning, as well as the conditions under which it is most beneficial. Additionally, it is necessary to explore how receptive students are to this approach and how it aligns with the requirements of the Indian curriculum.

SIGNIFICANCE OF CREATIVE WRITING IN ESL LEARNING

A study by Tok and Kandemir examined the effects of using creative writing activities on Turkish pupils' achievements in writing skills, writing disposition, and their attitudes toward English. In a pre-experiment, 31 seventh-grade pupils (17 female and 14 male) participated in a pre- and post-test design. The experiment lasted four weeks. For the pre-test,



two surveys were distributed. To measure pupils' writing achievement, the researcher used a biography writing activity, which was introduced and explained as part of the pre-test. During the second week, the researcher introduced a creative writing activity on a specific topic. In the third week, the pupils were given a picture of a man standing near a lake with two children staring at him from behind bushes. The pupils were expected to create a story based on the image using their imagination. In the fourth and final week, pupils were given four paragraphs, each of which served as an introduction to a story, and their task was to continue the story from the provided paragraph.

The study found some differences between the pre- and post-tests, although the difference was not substantial. The results indicated that implementing creative writing activities effectively increased pupils' writing achievements and positively affected their writing disposition. However, the results also revealed a minor difference between the pre- and post-tests in terms of pupils' attitudes toward creative writing, which did not change significantly. Similarly, Akther investigated the effectiveness of creative writing in language learning within both Bangla and English language instruction using a questionnaire and classroom observation. The study involved 40 elementary pupils, ranging from first to fifth graders, equally divided into two language instruction groups. Twenty pupils were taught in Bangla, following the National Curriculum of Bangladesh, while the other 20 were taught in English, following the International Curriculum. Both groups practiced creative writing along with the four key language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and

writing. The questionnaire results revealed an overall positive effect of creative writing on pupils, regardless of the language of instruction, with additional benefits observed in the English-language instruction approach.

These studies provide evidence that creative writing positively supports language learning in ESL classrooms. Both Tok and Kandemir and Akther showed that creative writing enhances language skills, such as vocabulary development and writing disposition. Akther also demonstrated that creative writing can influence pupils' motivation and increase their interest in writing.

STRATEGIES OF CREATIVE WRITING

Several studies go beyond merely assessing overall effects and instead examine how the specific approaches to implementing creative writing tasks influence outcomes. Nino and Paez conducted research exploring creative writing strategies at a school in Ibague, Colombia. Their study involved 28 pupils—16 girls and 12 boys, aged 10 to 11 years old—who had low-average English proficiency. The study lasted for ten months, with sessions occurring three times a week for approximately four hours per week. The researchers employed an action research methodology, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The qualitative method focused on describing behaviors and reactions, allowing pupils to express their preferences for literature and creative tasks and to share their opinions on post-activity reflections. Meanwhile, the quantitative approach helped measure pupils' mistakes and attitudes toward planning, and provided data to track their writing progress.



The study was conducted in two cycles. In the first cycle, field notes were used to identify issues in planning, and some literary strategies were employed to collect data. In the second cycle, more strategies were introduced, which had a positive effect on pupils' motivation and writing development, as confirmed by surveys and interviews. The results emphasized the importance of incorporating pupils' opinions during the planning phase. All but one participant showed interest in poems, comics, and short stories about heroes, animals, and fiction. Most participants expressed enjoyment in reading fiction, while biographies and summaries were less favored. Furthermore, the pupils expressed a desire to develop their writing skills for academic purposes, and after applying specific writing strategies, their mistakes in grammar, vocabulary, spelling, and punctuation decreased. Acrostics and calligrams played a significant role in this improvement, with posters and comic strips having the most substantial effect on pupils' language learning (Nino and Paez).

Murugiah, however, found that the manner in which creative writing is introduced significantly impacts pupils' language acquisition. He noted that introducing new subjects during creative writing lessons using elicitation methods was more effective than traditional approaches. Akther further demonstrated that the structure of lessons plays a critical role in determining writing success, with elicitation proving to be especially effective when introducing different creative writing topics (Akther).

Guillén and Bermejo provided additional evidence on the importance of the approach to creative writing. Their findings indicated that encouraging

pupils to engage actively in the creative process improved their vocabulary, linguistic intelligence, and spatial intelligence. Both Akther and Nino and Paez also demonstrated that pupil confidence significantly influences writing development. Confident writers excelled during creative writing activities, while less confident writers relied more on their books and teachers for support (Akther; Nino and Paez).

CONCLUSION

From the reviews and theories on creative writing, it is clear that the techniques of creative writing can be effectively applied in the ESL classroom to help learners develop their competence in language skills. Creative writing can support and benefit ESL learners if it is taught with enthusiasm and variation. Akther found that structuring lessons with elicitations and introducing topics in creative writing sessions improved language learning (Akther). Moreover, several studies indicated that self-confidence is a critical factor in developing pupils' writing skills (Akther; Healey; Murugiah). Both Healey and Nino and Paez found that participants who enjoyed creative writing found it easier to learn and improve their writing abilities (Healey; Nino and Paez). Additionally, Guillén and Bermejo emphasized that working step by step with repetitive vocabulary is crucial in developing creative writing skills (Guillén and Bermejo).

The studies presented agree that creative writing supports language learning and helps pupils acquire skills in grammar, vocabulary, phonology, writing discourse, and disposition (Murugiah; Tok and Kandemir; Akther; Nino and Paez; Guillén and Bermejo; Healey). However, Healey argued that



overly rigid "schooled writing" could negatively impact pupils' writing skills and confidence. Therefore, it is essential to approach creative writing instruction in ESL classrooms with care, ensuring that learners feel comfortable and well-supported in their language learning journey (Healey).

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