THE TEACHING OF CREATIVE WRITING BY COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract:

Strategies to increase the effectiveness of language teaching are continuously sought, including that of creative writing. This paper suggests a possible approach to overcome that problem. Considering the characteristics of a communicative approach in language teaching, on the one hand, and the targeted objectives of creative writing instruction, on the other, it is believed that such an approach, when appropriately implemented in the classroom instructional process, would be appropriate to optimize the effectiveness of students' learning of creative writing. For instance, classroom activities encouraging students to engage in real-life communication and interaction, such as role-playing or group discussions, can effectively teach creative writing. As a conceptual study, this paper was written based on the writers' personal experiences and reflections during their careers of teaching English using a communicative approach. Their practical experiences tailored to their understanding of theoretical underpinnings were then expressed to suggest the classroom techniques of teaching creative writing using a communicative approach to be effectively implemented in the classroom as a part of the language teaching and learning process. As a subjective study, the contents of this paper are desirable to be tried and practiced by teachers and researchers to measure their effectiveness.

Keywords: *Creative Writing, Communicative Approach, Structural and Functional Literary Analysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

There are two major approaches to studying social sciences and humanities (including the teaching of language and literature): structural and functional. The structural approach has become popular since the publication of Cours de Linguistique Generale by Ferdinand de Saussure in 1916 (Allen & Widdowson, 1975, p. 50), although Saussure himself never used the term "structural" in his works (Giddens, 1987, p. 195). The basic principle of this approach is that everything is seen as a building (structure) that consists of related components to form a unity.

The structural approach, as embraced by the New Literary Criticism school, holds significant importance within literary studies. This approach directs analysts to concentrate on the intrinsic elements of literary works, such as language, form, and structure, disregarding extrinsic elements and the author's biography. For New Criticism, a literary work is not just a part of a larger context but an independent and autonomous entity (Darma, 2004). This means that the focus is on the text rather than its historical or biographical context, which can provide a deeper understanding of the work's artistic and literary value.

On the other hand, the functional approach offers a contrasting view. It does not see literary works as stand-alone products but as the outcomes of a creative communication process between the author and the reader, intricately tied to specific contexts. This perspective is evident in literary studies through contextual analysis, which connects literary works as texts to elements beyond literature, such as religious, educational, and social aspects. Another example is the analysis of literary works about the real world based on the belief that they are imitations of real life. This is the

fundamental principle of the mimetic theory of Plato and Aristotle (Houston & Swords, 2022; Selden, 1988; Supratno, 2005).

The communicative approach (Barboza et al., 2022) is also functional because, in this approach, language is seen in terms of its function as a means of communication. This communicative approach is commonly used in language teaching but can also be used for literary teaching. Consistent with this view, literary teachings see literary works as a manifestation of communicative activities between writers and their readers. So, in a communicative view, a literary work is not seen as an object or product in the form of a structure, which is autonomous and context-free, but it must be seen as a process that is always context-bound.

This communicative approach has consequences not only on the perspective of teaching materials but also on teaching strategies and the form of relationships between teachers and learners (Espada-Chavarria et al., 2023). These things will be discussed in more detail in this paper. More specifically, this paper will discuss the basic principles of teaching with a communicative approach and the procedure for teaching creative writing with a communicative approach.

The basic principles of teaching with a communicative approach, as extracted from Sitosanova (2020), Richards and Rodgers (1986), Nunan (1989), Yalden (1983), and Johnson and Porter (1983) are as follows:

1. Contextual
2. Focus on meaning, not form
3. Process-oriented, not product-oriented
4. Student-oriented, not teacher-oriented.

What is meant by contextual teaching is the existence of a close relationship or relevance between the material and the teaching process with the learner's real-life environment. Nunan (1989) called it authentic teaching (Thakore, 2023). Teaching objectives, materials, and activities included in teaching tasks (Nunan, 1989) are all oriented to real conditions in the learner's life. So, the teaching process in the classroom is oriented to real life. In teaching creative writing, for example, the activity carried out by students is that students write a story about an event that has been experienced or an imaginative story. Such teaching is contextual or authentic because such things are commonly done in real life.

Teaching focuses on meaning (Pols & Diepenbroek, 2023), not form. This means that the purpose of teaching is to achieve the ability to understand and convey meaning and not only know and understand the system of structural rules. In teaching creative writing, the goal is that students can express ideas, feelings, or ideas effectively in the form of written works and not only know or understand how to write with the correct sentences and grammar. Meanwhile, in teaching poetry, for example, the goal is for students to understand the content, message, or idea the writer wants to convey, not only know the rhyme structure.

What is important in communicative teaching is the process of teaching, not the product (Din et al., 2021). In teaching, teachers must pay attention to the process of teaching activities, not only good or bad teaching outcomes. The evaluation is also

conducted during the teaching and teaching process, not only the final exam results. So all activities carried out by students, such as discussion activities, questions and answers, presentations, exercises, and all works or demonstrations that students have made, are all considered in determining teaching success. In teaching creative writing, all activities carried out by students, starting from finding ideas or writing all ideas that will be developed in writing or brainstorming, choosing ideas, making writing designs (outline), and developing ideas in writing, must be considered in the teaching and teaching process.

In communicative teaching, the most important thing is that students must be active. That means the strategy teachers use should not be in the form of teachers giving lectures and students just being silent and listening. Students must actively do activities like reading, taking notes, writing, asking questions, discussing, presenting, and others. The teacher's job is as a motivator, meaning that the teacher motivates if there are students who are less enthusiastic or less serious in carrying out the learning process; facilitator means the teacher helps if the student faces difficulties, and stimulators in the sense that teachers provide continuous stimulation so that students feel challenged and continue trying to participate in the instructional process actively.

Endraswara (2005:163) states, "Writing is the best pouring of thoughts in the process of thinking on paper about an idea." The creative process, as quoted by Endraswara (2005:165) from Darma (1984:13), who quotes Ghiselin, is "the process of change... in the organization of subjective life," which means that the creative process is a process of change in the organization of personal life. In this paper, creative writing (Tsao & Nogues, 2024) is writing a story about an event based on personal experiences experienced in real life and based on imagination.

Regarding creativity in writing (Allagui, 2022; D'Souza, 2021) and Tamsir (1991:1), as quoted by Endraswara (2005:165), states that "writers are like cameramen who aim at the long journey of human life or something humanized." Furthermore, Nonka (1992:3) in Endraswara (2005:165) also revealed that "personal experiences, observations of the events around us, from reading books or watching movies, even from dreams can be story ideas that can move the imagination to create."

Because this creative writing teaching uses a process approach, the role of teachers is significant as a motivator and facilitator. Some principles to be compliant with are: (1) There must be optimal communication between teachers and learners; (2) Teachers must create a warm, pleasant atmosphere and stimulate learners to process and create both individually and in groups freely; (3) Teachers must be able to overcome differences of opinion between learners, and (4) Teachers must also be able to control the process so as not to deviate (Endraswara, 2005).

2. METHOD

This is a descriptive, conceptual study. It describes an ideal phenomenon of teaching creative writing using a communicative approach. The writers conceptualized such a phenomenon based on their practical experiences and reflections. The data were collected by reflecting on the instructional process that the writers have experienced as

teachers, which is then tailored to their knowledge and understanding of the constructs of creative writing instruction in compliance with the characteristics of a communicative approach. Class observations are conducted to gather documentation about implementing the communicative approach and its impact on students' engagement and participation through field notes. Moreover, interviewing students and instructors is used to gain insights about their experiences and perceptions. Then, students' creative writing samples are collected to examine their writing skills improvement.

The conceptualized circumstance was then described verbally, making it apparent to the readers how creative writing could be taught using a communicative approach.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Relevant to the teaching steps of creative writing suggested by Moody (1991), several stages are presented in this part representing the classroom instructional process of creative writing in compliance with the characteristics of the communicative approach. The lesson phases are as follows:
1. Retelling a story
2. Retelling a story from a fresh angle or looking at it differently
3. Imaginary episodes (retelling with imaginary episodes)
4. Original writing

To do the first stage, students read a story, watch a movie, or listen to someone telling a story. Then, based on what they can digest, they are stimulated and guided to retell the story they already know in written form. Teachers can start by providing provokes in the form of questions that lead to how the story begins, what happens next, why it happened this way, how next, how the story ends, and so on.

In the second stage, learners are asked to talk according to their own style, abilities, views, and experiences. They are allowed to retell the story based on their own experiences. This disclosure may be different from the original story. The goal is to train learners to develop their imagination. From the already-known stories, learners are asked to retell them in their own style and abilities, which are not necessarily the same as the original story.

In the next stage, learners are trained to create imaginary episodes of already-known stories. Teachers ask learners to create their own stories to fill in the missing episodes, such as sad scenes or sexy ones, and then learners are asked to fill in their own versions. For this, learners must understand the story's context so that the written episodes can relate to the story as a whole.

In the final stage, learners can create their own stories with themes that the teacher may give them or with free themes they like. With a theme that learners themselves like, they will find it easier to develop ideas. They may write about events they have experienced or seen in their environment or even events that exist only in the world of imagination.

Classroom Implementation

Several steps are taken to apply creative writing instruction with a communicative approach in the classroom simulation.

1. The teacher explained that the purpose of teaching creative writing is for learners to be able to write stories about an event freely, whether the event is actually experienced, seen, heard by the learners themselves, imaginative essays, or a combination of all. This is important so that learners know what to do so that teaching activities become meaningful.

2. To develop writing ideas, teachers asked learners about the most fun and memorable events or the saddest and most painful ones that learners have experienced and remember the most. Questions are asked orally to learners individually, and learners answer in an outline. For example, a student might say, "I was once slapped by my teacher. I remember that event until now, the time, the place, who was there at that time, and why it happened." Each learner submitted his or her own experience. That way, the topic of conversation becomes actual and contextual.

3. After that, the teacher asks questions to direct learners to find components that can be told, for example, who was involved in the event, when and where it happened, and what the order of events was. That way, learners can begin to be introduced to the terms characters, settings, and plots.

4. The learner writes each component as an outline that will be developed into a story. After that, learners are given time to start writing stories based on the outline that has been made. When learners are busy writing, teachers come to each student to help if anyone needs it.

5. After finishing writing, learners are asked to read their writing in turn. It will increase their motivation to show each other's abilities because everyone wants to tell their story. At the same time, the teacher evaluates the learner's process and the results of their writing.

6. Finally, learners are motivated to continue practicing and practicing without being overshadowed by the fear of being wrong, afraid of bad results, or other worries. Those whose writing is good can be rewarded by pasting their work on the wall magazine. That will further increase learners' motivation.

The above steps comply with the teaching characteristics of the communicative approach because the topics and tasks are contextual, meaningful in the context of the learner's life, and important to the process. The learners are constantly stimulated to be active, and the instructor's role is only as a motivator and facilitator.

4. CONCLUSION

English learners can effectively acquire creative writing ability by exerting a communicative approach. As it implies two components, creativity and writing, the classroom language teaching and learning process should contain activities that encourage creativity and boost writing practices. Considering the features of a communicative approach, i.e., contextuality, focus on meaning, product orientation, and learner-centeredness, creative writing activities are conducted in the classroom and

comply with such features. In that way, the instructional process is expected to be effective.

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