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INTEGRATION OF CREATIVE WRITING IN EFL CLASSROOMS: SENIOR LEARNERS' PERSPECTIVES

Abstract

This study examines the 10th grade learners perspectives on the integration of creative writing into English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Using a mixed-method approach, an online survey was conducted with 30 respondents to explore their views on the potential benefits and challenges of creative writing in EFL instruction. The results show that learners view creative writing activities as tools enhancing their language skills, motivation, and self-expression. However, challenges such as fear of criticism, limited vocabulary, and preference for structured tasks also emerged. This study highlights the importance of meeting learners' needs with supportive strategies to successfully integrate creative writing into the EFL curriculum.

Key words: Creative writing, EFL, learners' perspective, language skills, learners' needs

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ШЕТЕЛ ТІЛІ САБАҒЫНА ШЫҒАРМАШЫЛЫҚ ЖАЗУДЫ ИНТЕГРАЦИЯЛАУ: ЖОҒАРЫ СЫНЫП ОҚУШЫЛАРЫНЫҢ ШКІРІ.

Аннотация. Бұл зерттеу 10-сынып оқушыларының шығармашылық жазуды ағылшын тілі (EFL) сабақтарына кіріктіруге қатысты көзқарастарын зерттейді. Зерттеушілер 30 респондентпен онлайн сауалнама жүргізіп, олардың шет тілін оқытудағы шығармашылық жазудың әлеуетті артықшылықтары мен қиындықтары туралы пікірлерін зерттеді. Нәтижелер оқушылардың шығармашылық жазу тапсырмаларын тілдік дағдыларын, мотивациясын және өзін-өзі көрсетуін жетілдіру құралы ретінде қарастыратынын көрсетті. Дегенмен, сыннан қорқу, сөздік қордың шектеулілігі және құрылымдық тапсырмаларға артықшылық беру сияқты мәселелер де пайда болды. Бұл зерттеу шетел тілі (EFL) оқу бағдарламасына шығармашылық жазуды сәтті біріктіру үшін қолдаушы стратегиялар арқылы оқушылардың қажеттіліктерін қанағаттандырудың маңыздылығын көрсетеді.

Түйін сөздер: шығармашылық жазу, EFL, білім алушылардың пікірлері, тілдік дағдылар, білім алушылардың қажеттіліктері

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ИНТЕГРАЦИЯ ТВОРЧЕСКОГО ПИСЬМА НА УРОКЕ ИНОСТРАННОГО ЯЗЫКА: МНЕНИЕ УЧАЩИХСЯ СТАРШИХ КЛАССОВ

Аннотация. В этом исследовании рассматриваются точки зрения учащихся 10-х классов на интеграцию творческого письма на уроки английского языка (EFL). Исследователями был проведен онлайн-опрос с 30 респондентами, чтобы изучить их взгляды на потенциальные преимущества и проблемы

творческого письма в обучении иностранному языку. Результаты показывают, что учащиеся рассматривают задания на развитие творческого письма как инструменты, улучшающие их языковые навыки, мотивацию и самовыражение. Однако также возникли такие проблемы, как страх критики, ограниченный словарный запас и предпочтение структурированных заданий. В этом исследовании подчеркивается важность удовлетворения потребностей учащихся с помощью поддерживающих стратегий для успешной интеграции творческого письма в учебную программу EFL.

Ключевые слова: творческое письмо, EFL, мнение учащихся, языковые навыки, потребности учащихся

Introduction

Creative writing has become an integral component in English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms, offering learners more than just the opportunity to improve linguistic competence. According to Candanedo, creative writing improves language skills while also promoting personal growth and overall development [1]. Likewise, creative teaching methods have been shown to increase learner engagement, motivation, and academic achievement, making the learning process more enjoyable and effective [2]. It enriches vocabulary, develops imaginations, and improves expressiveness, contributing to foreign language fluency [3]. However, despite these benefits, there are also notable challenges. Some learners may resist creative methods, preferring more traditional approaches, and teachers often lack adequate support for professional development [2]. Additionally, reliance on the native language, limited vocabulary, and highly structured assignments can hinder learners' ability to express original ideas, think critically, and use language creatively [4].

This study examines the integration of creative writing from the perspective of senior high school learners in a secondary school EFL classroom. The aim of this study is to explore the perceptions of 10th grade learners towards future integration of creative writing into the teaching of English as a foreign language, focusing on their views regarding the benefits and challenges of this approach.

Methods

To explore learners' perceptions of creative writing integration, this study employed a mixed-methods approach with quantitative and qualitative data. The study involved 30 learners (16 males and 14 females) from 10th grade classes at a local secondary school.

An online survey consisting of 10 questions was administered to collect data by Google Forms. The survey aimed to explore learners' views on the benefits and challenges of integrating creative writing into EFL lessons. The questions included a combination of multiple choice, Likert scale and open-ended responses, allowing for both quantitative analysis and in-depth qualitative understanding. The quantitative data was analyzed to identify overall trends and correspondences in learners' responses, while the qualitative data from the open-ended questions provided a deeper understanding of their personal perception and attitudes towards creative writing in EFL.

Ethical Considerations

Participation in the study was voluntary, and all personal information was anonymized to protect learners' privacy.

Findings and Discussion

The analyzed data reveals valuable insights on senior learners' perspectives of integrating creative writing in EFL curriculum. Researchers organize data into two main themes: perceived benefits and perceived challenges of future integration of creative writing into curriculum.

Perceived Benefits

1. Improved Language Skills:

Approximately 70% of learners reported that integrating creative writing may improve their overall language proficiency. Some learners stated that engaging in creative writing tasks would encourage them to expand their vocabulary and experiment with different grammatical structures, which they don't use in traditional writing tasks.

2. Increased motivation and engagement:

Learners indicated that creative writing activities would make English lessons more

interesting. Around 80% of respondents said that the freedom to express their thoughts and emotions creatively would increase their interest in learning English. Comments such as "I like the idea of writing my own stories!" reflect a strong desire for more interesting and dynamic learning methods.

3. Opportunities for self-expression:

Majority of respondents highlighted that creative writing can be a platform for personal expression. Around 75% of respondents felt that it allowed them to explore their ideas, experiences and emotions, facilitating a deeper connection with the language.

Perceived Challenges

1. Fear of Criticism:

A common concern among learners was the fear of receiving negative feedback on their creative work. Nearly 65% of learners expressed concern that they would have to share their work with classmates and teachers, which could hinder their desire to participate in creative writing activities. This fear led to statements such as, "I'm worried that my classmates will laugh at my stories." Such concerns highlight the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment where Learners feel safe sharing their creative expressions without the threat of judgment.

2. Limited Vocabulary:

While respondents acknowledged the potential benefits of creative writing, many also expressed concerns about their limited vocabulary. Nearly 55% of respondents felt that without a reliable vocabulary, they would have difficulty fully expressing their ideas. Comments such as, "I want to write creatively, but I don't know enough words to say what I mean" reflect this limitation. This lack of confidence in word choice can lead to frustration and self-doubt, which can hinder their engagement in creative tasks. Vocabulary development through targeted exercises and exposure to new words can help learners overcome this barrier.

3. Preference for structure:

Some learners indicated a preference for traditional, structured writing assignments over creative writing, feeling more comfortable in familiar formats. Approximately 50% of respondents expressed this sentiment, with some stating, "I like knowing exactly what to write

rather than writing my own stories." This tendency may reflect their previous educational experiences, which emphasized structured assignments, leading to resistance to more open-ended creative approaches. To address this, teachers could consider gradually introducing creative writing assignments alongside structured assignments, helping learners transition to more flexible writing assignments while maintaining a sense of structure.

Discussion

The results of the study reveal dual views among learners regarding the integration of creative writing into the EFL classroom. Although respondents acknowledged potential benefits including improved language skills, increased motivation and personal expression, they also encountered significant challenges such as fear of criticism, limited vocabulary and a preference for structured tasks. These findings are consistent with other studies. For example, Arsovan highlights that creative writing activities in the EFL classroom make a significant contribution to the development of language skills, especially in the areas of vocabulary and grammar [5]. Mardiningrum et al. also highlight the importance of motivation in language acquisition, noting that motivated learners tend to be more deeply engaged in their learning, which improves language retention and performance. Furthermore, they argue that creative writing provides learners with a safe space to explore their identities and express unique perspectives, which is particularly valuable in the context of language learning where learners may feel insecure about their skills [6].

In contrast, researchers Maximilian and Febriana et al. highlight challenges similar to those identified in our study. Maximilian emphasizes that vocabulary and grammar are critical to effective participation in creative writing [7]. Febriana et al. suggest that self-expression through creative writing can help learners overcome their fear of criticism. When learners view writing as a means of sharing personal ideas rather than simply an evaluative task, they feel more confident and less afraid of judgment [8].

These findings suggest that although the integration of creative writing can provide

significant benefits to language learners, teachers need to address the concerns raised by learners to maximize its effectiveness. Creating a supportive environment that encourages open expression and constructive feedback is crucial to helping learners overcome their fear of criticism. Conducting peer review sessions or writing workshops can help create this supportive atmosphere by allowing learners to share their work in a constructive manner. Additionally, incorporating vocabulary building activities such as word games or topic-based vocabulary exercises can enhance learners' opportunities, confidence, and willingness to engage in creative writing. Teachers can also provide models of creative writing, such as samples, to inspire learners and expand their understanding of language use in creative contexts [9].

By focusing on learners' perspectives, this study highlights the importance of understanding learners' needs before the integration of creative writing into curriculum. Such insights can inform teaching strategies that enhance the learning experience and promote the effective use of creative writing in EFL contexts [10]. Ultimately, by addressing the challenges and building on the strengths identified by learners, teachers can create a more dynamic and engaging language learning environment that promotes both linguistic competence and personal growth.

Conclusion

Integrating creative writing into the EFL classroom has the potential to significantly improve language learning through the development of linguistic competence, self-expression and motivation. The findings of this study highlight that although learners recognize the potential benefits of creative writing in EFL education, they also face key challenges such as fear of criticism, limited vocabulary and a preference for structured tasks over open-ended tasks. These challenges highlight the importance of conducting a thorough needs analysis to ensure that creative writing activities are appropriate to learners' needs, abilities and preferences.

Meeting learners' needs is crucial to creating a supportive environment that encourages risk-taking and builds confidence in the creative use of English. Such an environment will not only help to overcome fear of criticism

but will also promote vocabulary development and engagement. The study suggests that creating structured support systems, such as peer review sessions, vocabulary building exercises, and exposure to a variety of writing models, can enable learners to embrace creative writing as a valuable part of their EFL learning journey.

Ultimately, this approach not only builds linguistic competence but also fosters a sustainable, enriching language learning experience. By focusing on both the challenges and benefits that learners perceive, teachers can design a curriculum that develops both language skills and personal growth, thereby making the language acquisition process more meaningful and sustainable.

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