

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION ON CREATIVITY: A CASE STUDY OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study is an initial attempt to build understanding about primary school teachers' perception of creativity. Therefore, the ways to identify and to improve creativity among primary school teacher can be developed. In addition, this study examines the factors that enhance creativity and also the obstacles to creativity. Curriculum as the main guidance and underpinning in the implementation of education is also analyzed. Fifteen primary schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia are involved in this study. The data gathering process was carried out from the use of interviews.

This study found that teachers perceived creativity in education as creative teaching, which means that it is an approach to teaching that emphasizes an interesting and effective way of teaching, rather than teaching creativity which refers to teaching for the purpose of providing and nurturing creative thinking in the students (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004). The teachers also perceived that creativity in teaching was a way to prevent the students from boredom so that the students' engagement could be improved. Achieving the target, specifically reaching the best score in the final examinations, was identified as the factor that mostly motivated teachers to use creativity in the classroom. For teachers, Curriculum 2013 opened up more opportunities from them to improve creativity. However, a qualified and more structured training program was still needed to perform. As a result, the teachers could get more comprehensive information and knowledge regarding the concepts and the applications of this new curriculum. Several factors such as the availability of infrastructure or facilities, teacher parallel groups, and workshops and training were identified as ways of improving creativity. Meanwhile, short times provided, paperwork, and other teacher duties were identified as obstacles of creativity.

Based on the findings, this study recommends that the improvement of creativity should be expanded within the syllabus of teacher training, and other teacher qualification programs. It is important because teaching practices in Indonesia, especially in primary school, are dominated by a teacher-centred approach and poor creativity.

This study is divided into some main parts. The first part is the introduction that provides the background related to the main discussion. The second part describes the definitions of creativity based on several sources and becomes the reference to the discussion of creativity in this study. The third part clarifies the role of creativity in the scope of learning activities in classroom. The fourth part presents primary school teachers' perception on creativity.

Keywords: perception, teacher, primary school, creativity, curriculum

Introduction

For about two decades, creativity has been in the spotlight in global education. Since 1990s, countries such as South Korea, UK, Singapore and Japan have implemented creativity in their education system (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2012). Creativity itself cannot be separated from the direction of the latest global economic development, especially the "weightless economic sector" increasingly becoming the mainstream, for example: the service sector, communication systems and electronic markets which are more dependent on intellectual and creative skills than physical strength and reasonability in general (Seltzer and Bentley, 1999). Robinson (2001, 2005) states that there are two major crises currently faced in the global climate. First, global warming threatens the sustainability of the natural environment. Second, the crisis culturally impacts on human resource crisis. It refers to the situation in the education field where the educators tend to make the educational process achieve a target with a single standard. In addition, Robinson also emphasizes that policy conducted in education is generated by (the mindsets of) the stakeholders that largely refer to what they learned 20, 30, or 40 years ago. While the needs of work nowadays have changed in terms of the forms and the patterns, and require new types of skills as mentioned before, including the attitudes and habits of solving problems that have not (even) yet emerged in the present. It includes the ability to see problems from multiple points of view, flexible in dealing with situations and developing imagination. In other words, it takes creativity. Schools as educational institutions are considered to have a vital role in shaping creative human resources.

Creativity

Creativity covers a wide range of scopes, across disciplines and approaches. Creativity can be seen as a personal phenomenon, even the result of interaction between the individual and his social environment (Sternberg and Lubart; 1995, 1999). Creativity can also be viewed separately, as is commonly understood so far, which is associated with the realm of art, for example: visual arts, crafts, theatres, dramas, dance and so on. In its development, this context is often closely related to the creative industry. Another point of view states that creativity appears at certain levels with respect to the level and where it appears; there is a kind of creativity that can influence the level of universal humanity, for instance, in the form of modern theories, masterpieces, or creativity that appears at the level of everyday life and is applied to solve daily problems (Amabile, 1996; Csikszentmihalyi, 1996; and Robinson, 2001).

According to Torrance (1969), creativity is the process of identifying problems, finding solutions, formulating predictions, testing and evaluating, and communicating the findings. Besides focusing on the existing process, Amabile (1996) clarifies that the product of the work process of creativity must have an element of novelty and give meanings to the groups in which the creative process appears. In line with the concept, Csikszentmihalyi (1996) also emphasizes how creativity can be accepted in the domain where creativity appears and is contextually bound. More specifically, Robinson (2001) highlights that creativity is an activity that involves imagination in it to be designed and intended to obtain the expected results and values. According to the definitions of creativity mentioned above, it can be concluded that creativity has several features that involve imagination, goal-oriented, originality, and output that can achieve the expected goals. The question is that how to teach creativity to students.

Creativity in Learning Activities

Understanding creativity as described before in this study leads the discussion to the role in creativity in education. Creativity is important to be taught in order to encourage the students to train their ability to solve problems, explore possibilities for a problem, learn to investigate, and train them skills to understand something deeply (Starko, 2010). In order to achieve these objectives, Starko proposes strategies that can be applied to improve creativity skills by training the ways in discovering problems, diverging thinking strategies, using metaphors and analogies, visualizing and applying creative dramas, and conducting competitions.

Studies conducted by Carson and Runco (1999) show that the ability to find problems is associated with people who are able to perform problem-solving, flexible, and open-minded. In practice, teachers can create learning activities that encourage students to explore their interests, play and ask questions, and be able to understand questions. Divergent thinking is the ability of a person to see problems from various angles. A strategy that teachers can do is to encourage students to think through many varied ideas, encourage something that is unusual (originality), and unite ideas and build them to perform better improvement (elaboration).

In addition, Bernsteins (1999) identifies 13 "thinking tools" that can be processed and explored by teachers in learning activities to encourage creativity. They are observing, imagining, abstracting, understanding patterns, shaping patterns, analyzing, criticizing while involving physical activities, having empathy with what is felt by things or other people, dimensional thinking, modelling, playing, transforming, and synthesizing. The implementation of the strategies and the elaboration of the thinking tools will embody a creative learning activity.

However, misunderstanding between learning to (cultivate) creativity and creative learning often occurs (NACCCE, 1999 and Starko, 2010). It has a significant difference. In the first definition, the goal of learning is to develop students' creativity. Meanwhile, in the second definition, the teacher creates learning activities in such a way in order to create enjoyable activities. Such learning activities are usually characterized by dynamic learning situations, which are different from habits, and attracting students' involvement. It is an important component for creating effective learning activities. Nevertheless, as long as the learning is not aimed at producing creative students with creative thinking, such learning cannot be said as learning creativity.

Teacher's Perception on Creativity

The findings conducted on teachers from different fifteen primary schools presents several aspects to reveal the teacher's perception of creativity; they are teacher's ideas about the meaning of creativity, the motivation in conducting the learning practice, the teacher's opinions on creativity and the applicable curriculum, the motivation and the factors perceived as obstacles and incentives to develop the learning activities. This investigation was completely conducted to search for information from the teachers' points of view. It is clarified as follows.

First, the teachers associated creativity with teaching skills. The results of an interview shows that creativity in learning was defined as the ability to process learning material and present it in such a way so that students could be interested in and enjoyed the learning process. The teachers considered creativity which was related to the efforts to increase the involvement of students in learning activities. Boredom was believed to be the reason why it was important to implement creative learning activities, therefore teachers needed to create learning activities which were interesting, entertaining, and building the interaction between teachers and students. Teacher-cantered approach, students who are busy summarizing, and lack of interaction often cause students to feel bored and less involved (Entwistle, 1997 and Banning, 2005). The teachers also considered that creativity was related to the strategies applied in learning activities using different methods of habits and optimizing the tools and available learning materials. For example, a teacher employed a variety of pictures displayed in a projector and invites students to sing with lyrics containing the subject being discussed. As a result, what teachers practice in the classroom is creative learning instead of learning creativity (Starko, 2010). The creative way of learning is different and cannot be defined as creative learning as long as it is not aimed at and produces creative thinking skills of the students.

The second one is about the teacher's motivation in conducting the learning activities. As part of the assessment of teacher's perception, motivation is important to find out because it is believed to be the main fuel in creativity (Amabile, 2009). Motivation is divided into two types, namely intrinsic (from within) and extrinsic (from outside the self) motivation. For the teachers, their intrinsic motivation is to gain satisfaction and personal pleasure when they have learned well. In other words, personal satisfaction was achieved when the learning activity was not monotonous; they supposed that they did something good, and students had better understanding of the material. Meanwhile, the factor that influenced the extrinsic motivation was the optimal achievement by the students, both the minimum achievement criteria (KCM) and the school standard of the National Exam (UN) passing grade. On the other hand, parents were also mentioned as part of teacher's motivation because they often put a target on their children so they could send their children to prominent schools. Actively participating students also encouraged the teachers to develop the learning activities.

Third, related to curriculum, the teacher suggest that the current 2013 curriculum provides more opportunities to be more creative because it requires teachers to explore wider themes and learning methods, for example by playing roles and games. The implication is that there is a need for a more supportive allocation of energy, time, and equipment, and especially through understanding of the concepts proposed in the curriculum. Particularly regarding the understanding of the material concepts and methods employed as suggested in the curriculum 2013, the teachers supposed that the socialization of the curriculum was barely adequate. Additional socialization of the programs and the other efforts are needed in order to provide more comprehensive understanding. On the other hand, the teachers stated that the time allocation was very limited seen from the amount of material to deliver. Moreover, the teachers were also required to deal with various school administration stuffs that are time-consuming. The availability of supporting learning equipment was also considered as lacking so that it inhibited the learning activities. It indicates that there was a gap between the concepts arranged in the curriculum and the real conditions of its implementation.

Fourth, some things that could encourage and became obstacles for the improvement of learning activities conducted by teachers were (1) parallel teacher groups; it provided opportunities for teachers to exchange experiences and useful methods to apply in the

classroom, (2) supporting equipment; the availability of equipment such as pictures, realia and even projectors were very helpful to deliver the materials, but some obstacles were found in the school that became another problem, (3) the time allocation, creative learning took a longer time to be implemented because it involved a variety of equipment and method that were time-consuming, while the allocated time was barely adequate, (4) education and training were believed to be effective contribution in improving the quality of the teachers, and (5) monitoring and evaluation of both principals and colleagues had a positive effect on the teachers to maintain their performance.

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COMMERCIAL MUSIC (POP CULTURE) STYLES AS THE MAIN MUSICAL SOURCE OF PRESERVATION OF ENDANGERED LANGUAGES IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT.

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Abstract

Nowadays, the acknowledge of the big amount of endangered languages around the globe is still increasing while the preservation of them still in question due to the lack or the harm of linguistic policies as well, the hegemony of national languages that, in order to establish a more standardised national linguistic paradigm pushes the minority/native language into a state of emergency in its preservation. In the age of information and globalisation, different media has been utilised in order to promote the preservation of endangered languages, among them, publications in different areas like science, humanities and literature. Besides that, music has been also playing an important part in this terms due to its popularity and its social impact. In this paper will be focused in the commercial/pop culture music and its musical, linguistic and social implications since most of this musical expression are evidently considered as alien to the musical tradition in each case and paradoxically at the same time promoting the preservation of an endangered native language since this last one is considered a fundamental part of the traditional identity of each society.

Keywords: Endangered Languages, Native languages, Languages national policies, Language preservation; Rap/Hip-hop Music; Globalization, Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa

Introduction

In the early decades of the 21st century, it is reported that, among the sum of the languages in the world 6.909, the number of endangered languages almost 3000 of them are considered endangered. Due to many factors such as discrimination, lack of support from governmental and non-governmental organizations and even educational and/or political conflicts, these endangered languages pass through a very complicated situation. Many programs have been applied to the luckiest communities, some of these programs with a low impact in the decreasing graphics that forecast a fast extinction of languages. But one thing has been observed as an efficient and "natural" media for the preservation of languages: music.

Music as Media of Preservation of Languages

Music has been accompanying human societies for ages, and within the mere production of notes, rhythms and harmonies, it's been also used to complement the rhymes of the poetry and literary works. And, until today, these musical pieces around the world have been the recipient of a big amount of texts, preserving them in the form of musical pieces, whether in classical, folk and also pop/commercial forms.

In the second decade of the 21st century, an extraordinary phenomena is happening towards music and language. It's actually one of the faces of globalisation; this means that not only the main languages such as English and lately, Spanish as the language of predilection but

also a huge number of other languages have been on the race into popular music, but also endangered minority languages from all around the globe.

Among all the musical styles spreaded worldwide, rap and hip-hop have been surprisingly the best option for many vocalists at the moment they find a musical expression to perform in their native languages.

Rap and hip hop are musical styles developed by Afro-Americans in the USA and later followed by Chicano communities. Since the 1980's in the whole USA, Afroamerican communities started this movement post R&B, Soul and Disco styles in order to explore a new musical expression based mainly on rhymes over a musical looped pattern.

This is how rap and hip-hop gained popularity, first, within its communities and later in the musical industry; what finally ended up in spreading it, to non Afro Americans, within USA and abroad.

The [characteristic of its] simplicity of their loop basis, makes these styles tend to be more focused on the lyrics rather than in the melodic, harmonic or rhythmic patterns. This simplicity is taken as an advantage in order to make more lyrics about protests, and/or issues that concerns the community.

This fact (the rhyme prioritised over the musical structure and motives) has been a crucial factor for the expression of rappers and hip hoppers around the globe as well. Making this musical style, one of the most popular music to rescue endangered languages around the globe. Some of the unlike cases are enlisted below:

1. Welsh (Wales, United Kingdom) - Mr Phormula, Genod Droog, Lluwybr Llaethog, y diwygiad
2. Catalá (Cataluña, Spain) - Cac Blac, Porta
3. Diidxazá (Oaxaca, Mexico) - Juchirap, Many Rap
4. Mixteco (Oaxaca, Mexico) - Una Isu
5. Bahasa Karo (North Sumatra, Indonesia) - Wira QeTa, Wisnu Bangun
6. Bahasa Jawa (Central Java & Yogyakarta Provinces, Indonesia) - Jogja Hip Hop Foundation
7. Bahasa Sasak (Lombok Island, Indonesia) - Big Noeng
8. Tsonga (Limpopo, South Africa) - TEam Yati Boss

These are just few examples of rap and hip hop music around the world, that, surprisingly chose the same musical style to express their concerns towards cultural, social and politic issues in their native languages. It's a well known reality that Rap and Hip Hop went worldwide long before it appeared in minority languages, this brief paper aims to point out how, for example, in the British paradigm coexist other languages besides English, yet unfortunately it has being put aside while monolingustic politics have been ruled in the British region. Same case can be found in other paradigmas like in Spain, Mexico and in other Spanish majority speaking countries; while Spanish language has been in top of all languages in those countries through centuries, most of minority language communities still struggling with discrimination in many ways. Seems like Spanish language would be the only one working in those countries. In the case of indonesia, the standardization of education through

Indonesian language, has made the population little less aware of the importance of their native language, in the recent years, a new motto has been popularised that reads “Utamakan Bahasa Indonesia, Pelajari Bahasa Asing, Lestarikan Bahasa Daerah” (“prioritise Indonesian Language, Learn a Foreign Language, Preserve the Local language”); despite the good intentions, it seems that many native languages in Indonesia have seen a decay in their usage, while native speakers -like in many other regions around the globe- can barely use the whole richness of their native language.