

THE EFFECT OF TEACHER'S CREATIVITY ON NATIVE INDONESIAN STUDENTS' SUCCESS IN LEARNING CHINESE LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Creativity is the ability of a person to produce something new; in the form of ideas or real works that are relatively different from what has been existed before. The problem formulated in this study is: Does the teacher's creativity have an effect on the success of learning Chinese as a foreign language? This research aims to: 1. Know the effect of the teacher's creativity on the success of learning Chinese language in the classroom, and 2. know the types and functions of the teacher's creativity to the Chinese learning process in the classroom. This research is useful for providing information about types and definition of creativity as well as what effect is drawn by a creative teacher to the learning process in the classroom. This research will also make it easier for the teacher to teach the Chinese language more creatively and appealingly. The research method used is descriptive qualitative that describes the situations that occurred in the classroom when the learning is going on with the creative teacher. The study was conducted in the Chinese Language subject in semester 8 at Japanese Literature Faculty of Darma Persada Universitas, Jakarta. The data collected were from observation, interview, and questionnaire.

Keywords:

Students' Success, Creative Teacher, Chinese Language Learning

A. Introduction

Creativity is considered as a form of imaginative activity that can produce original thing¹. Although there is a scientific recognition of the importance of creativity, until now very little research has been done. This is due to the difficulty of the methodology and

because of the belief that creativity is an individual innate factor, so there is little study that can be done to control it.

Teacher's creativity in teaching a foreign language is very important because it can attract students to learn and make them willing to learn the language. The creativity development is closely related to the cognitive development of the individual because creativity is actually the embodiment of

¹ National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCE-1999).

the workings of the brain. Creativity experts, such as Clark and Gowan (quoted by Abraham Marlow) through the Hemisphere Theory say that the human brain is actually divided into two hemispheres: the left hemisphere and the right hemisphere. The left hemisphere of the brain leads to a convergent thinking, while the right hemisphere leads to divergent thinking².

Although humans use both hemispheres, one side generally tends to dominate in each individual's brain. Ideally, the brain is managing and developing its capacity in such a way as to have a good relationship between the two hemispheres, so that they can feel in advance what is needed under particular situation and then use the right way to handle it. However, they tend to remain in the comfort zone of the dominant hemisphere and process the situation according to the right or left brain preference.

It is hypothesized that the right hemisphere is primarily concerned with creative functions, resulting in "dichomania", which divides all functions into left or right hemisphere functions³. While learning Mandarin using both hemispheres of the brain, the right brain serves to study the script, and

²Abraham Maslow. *Creativity in Self-Actualizing People*. In H.H. Mukalel, Josep C. (1959) p. 8.

³Ibid. p. 9.

left brain functions to learn the pronunciation and also *hanyu pinyin*.

Many claims that by studying the Chinese language, a person will be easy to think creatively. The problem formulated in this research is: Does the teacher's creativity have an effect on the success of learning Chinese as a foreign language? This research aims to: 1. Know the effect of the teacher's creativity on the success of learning Chinese language in the classroom, and 2. know the types and functions of the teacher's creativity to the Chinese learning process in the classroom. This research is useful for providing information about types and definition of creativity as well as what effect is drawn by a creative teacher to the learning process in the classroom. This research will also make it easier for the teacher to teach the Chinese language more creatively and appealingly. The teacher will get knowledge about creative thinking in the learning process of Chinese language. So, hopefully, every teacher will be creative in teaching them, rather than be monotonous.

B. Theoretical Framework

Creativity is a common ability to create a new thing as the ability to provide new ideas that can be applied in problem solving or as the ability to see new relationship between the pre-

existing aspects. According to Rogers (in Munandar), that the factors that can encourage the realization of individual's creativity are as follows.⁴

a. Self-interest (Intrinsic motivation)

Every individual has a tendency or drives to realize creativity, realize the potential, reveal, and activate all the capacities owned⁵. This encouragement is the primary motivation for realizing creativity as individuals form a new relationship with their environment in an effort to get the true them. It is also supported by Munandar's opinion that individuals should have intrinsic motivation to do something on their own, in addition to being supported by the attention, encouragement, and training within the environment.⁶ According to Rogers, the internal conditions (internal press) that can encourage a person to be creative include:

a. Openness to experience

Openness to experience is the ability to receive all sources of information from their own life experiences by accepting what

they are, without any defense effort, no rigidity to those experiences and openness to the whole concept, beliefs, perceptions, and hypotheses. Thus, creative individuals are individuals who are able to accept differences.

b. The ability to assess situation based on personal measurement (internal locus of evaluation)

Basically, the assessment of a person's creative product is primarily determined by oneself, not because of criticism and praise from others. Nevertheless, the person is not resistant from the possibility of input and criticism from others. The ability to do experiment or "play" with concepts is the ability to form a combination of things that are already exist.

b. Environmental force (Extrinsic motivation)

Munandar argued that the environment that can affect individuals' creativity includes: family, schools, and society. Family environment is an important force, and is the first and foremost source of the development of individuals' creativity. In school environment, education at every level ranging from pre-school to college can play a role

⁴ Utami Munandar, *Pengembangan Kreativitas Anak Berbakat* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1999).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

in growing and enhancing their creativity. In social environment, the growing cultures in society also influence the creativity. Roger stated that environmental conditions that can develop creativity are characterized by the occurrence of:

a. Psychological security

Psychological security can be formed through three intertwined processes, as follows:

- 1) Accepting individuals as they are with all their strengths and limitations.
- 2) Seeking for atmosphere in which there is no external evaluation (or at least non threatening effect).
- 3) Providing empathic understanding, sharing feelings, thoughts, individual actions, and being able to see from their point of view and accept it.

b. Psychological freedom

The psychologically-free environment provides an opportunity for the individuals to freely express symbolically their thoughts or feelings. Munandar states that factors that affect creativity can be thinking ability and personality traits that interact within a particular environment.

The factor of thinking ability consists of intelligence and the enrichment of thinking materials in the form of experience and skills.⁷

Besides, there are varieties or differences in creativity across individuals as mentioned by Hurlock, they are as follow:⁸

1) Sex

Boys show greater creativity than girls, especially after their childhood stage. Mostly, this is due to the differences in the treatment of boys and girls have gotten. Boys are given the opportunity to be independent, urged by peers to take more risks, and encouraged by parents and teachers to show more initiative and originality.

2) Socio-economic status

Children from higher socio-economic social group tend to be more creative than children from the lower one. The former's environment gives more opportunities to acquire the knowledge and experience necessary for the creativity itself.

⁷Ibid.

⁸ Elizabeth B Hurlock. *Perkembangan Anak Jilid 2* (translated by Meitasari Tjandrasa), (Jakarta: Erlangga, 1993)

3) Birth order

Children from different birth order exhibit different levels of creativity. This distinction emphasizes the environment rather than the innate capability. Those born in the middle, the last, and as the single child may have high creativity than the first child. Generally, the first child is more pressed to adjust to the expectations of parents. This pressure is more forcing them to become the obedient, not the creator.

4) Family size

Children from small families, others being equal, tend to be more creative than children from large families. In large families, the way to educate them authoritatively in a less favorable socio-economic condition may further influence and hinder the development of creativity.

5) Urban vs. rural environment

Children from urban environment tend to be more creative than those from rural environment.

6) Intelligence

Every smart child shows greater creativity than the less intelligent child. They have

more new ideas to deal with the social atmosphere, and are able to formulate more solutions to the conflict encountered.⁹

Guilford (In Munandar) asserted some characteristics of creativity, as follows.¹⁰

- a. *Fluency of thinking*, namely the ability to generate many ideas that come out from one's thoughts quickly. In this aspect, the emphasis is on quantity, not quality.
- b. *Flexibility*, namely the ability to produce ideas, answers or varied questions, be able to see a problem from different perspectives, look for alternatives or different directions, and be able to use a variety of approaches or ways of thinking. A creative person is a person who is flexible in thinking. They can easily abandon the traditional way of thinking and replace it with a new way of thinking.
- c. *Elaboration*, namely the ability to develop ideas and add the details of an object, idea or situation.¹¹

⁹Elizabeth B Hurlock. *Perkembangan Anak Jilid 2* (translated by Meitasari Tjandrasa). Jakarta: Erlangga, 1993.

¹⁰ Munandar, *Pengembangan Kreativitas Anak Berbakat*.

¹¹ Munandar.

One of the most widely quoted fundamental theories is the Wallas' theory put forward in the book entitled "The Art of Thought" which states that the creative process includes four stages, as follows.

- a. *Preparation stage*: this stage involves preparing to solve problems by collecting data or information, learning patterns of thinking from others, asking others, looking for answers, and etc.
- b. *Incubation stage*: this stage involves stopping the information gathering and getting oneself out of the problem for a while. The person does not think about the problem consciously, but "puts it out" in the unconscious realm.
- c. *Illumination stage*: this stage involves the emergence of "insight" after the emergence of inspiration or new ideas.
- d. *Verification stage*: this stage involves testing stage of the new idea or creation to reality. This stage needs critical and convergent thinking. The process of divergent thinking must be followed by the process of convergent thinking.¹²

¹² Harold Homer Anderson, *Creativity and Its Cultivation: Addresses Presented at the Interdisciplinary Symposia on Creativity, Michigan State University, East*

From the various notions asserted by experts to explain the meaning of creativity above, it can be concluded that creativity is the ability to create something new, the process of constructing ideas that can be applied in solving problems, as well as a useful activity.

C. Research Method

The research method used was descriptive qualitative that describes the situations that occurred in the classroom when the learning was going on with the creative teacher. The study was conducted in the learning of Chinese language in semester 8 at Japanese Literature Faculty of Darma Persada University, Jakarta. The data collected were from observation, questionnaire, and interview.

Data measurement was done in this study employed Likert-scale format, as follows.

Assessment on The Teacher's Teaching Performance Results

Component	Enough	Good	Very good
Teacher's creativity in teaching			
The use of teaching media			

Lansing, Michigan (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1959).

The clarity in delivering the materials			
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D. Findings and Discussion

The teachers [lecturers] of Chinese language in Indonesia so far are performing a fixed teaching from the syllabus and also textbooks available. In this study, they, the Chinese language teachers I, intended to think creatively in teaching basic Chinese language. Thus, as what Guilford (In Munandar) proposed regarding the characteristics of creativity, they include as follows.¹³

1. Fluency of thinking
2. Flexibility of thinking
3. Elaboration

Chinese language teachers are encouraged to have fluency of thinking in organizing the learning process in classroom like in learning *Hanyu Pinyin* or Chinese alphabet that has 4 tones, namely *āáǎà*. They can teach it like teaching choirs in learning to sing.

For example, in mentioning the vocal *ā*, the teacher can say as taking sound in the first singing because the sound pronounced in this vowel is a flat vowel. The second example is the vocal *à*. In pronouncing this vowel sound, the students are asked to sound as humans

are angry because the sound of this vowel is stomped.

Flexibility in thinking can be exemplified by giving ideas to the students in learning Chinese language. For example, they can use small notes to memorize by combining the three main elements in learning Chinese language, namely the script, *Hanyu Pinyin*, and its meaning.

Elaboration can be exemplified in the Chinese language lesson through using the right brain. So, much creativity is required in learning it. The thing that the teacher often uses in teaching Chinese characters is to give a parable, such as a letter 田 is considered the same shape as the farm field because the meaning of this letter is 'rice field'.

Another example is the letter 人 when given a round shape above it and a line in the middle of it will form a human shape. Hence, it means 'people'. And, the letter 大 when added a circle on it, then it is like a fat person. Thus, it means 'great'. Mapping thoughts like this allow the students to memorize each letter easily, so the teacher often asked them to memorize the script to map the shape of the existing forms in accordance with the thoughts of each student.

Based on the Wallas theory put forward in the book entitled "The Art of Thought" which states that the creative process includes 4 stages, then the

¹³ Munandar, *Pengembangan Kreativitas Anak Berbakat*.

Chinese language teachers perform the stages, as follows.¹⁴

1. *Preparation stage*: they prepared the materials along with the media and understood the students' demography who will learn the language e.g., whether they have studied the language or not; and what age they are along with their school background and their goal of learning Chinese language. It is necessary to know what kind of learning process is suitable for them, and what materials are in line with their preference.
2. *Incubation stage*: after knowing all the required information, then the teacher started to think and make the syllabus and the appropriate lesson plan.
3. *Illumination stage*: during the learning process, the teacher preferred to get new idea in the learning process which is then applied to the students. For example, if they looked bored in the learning process, then they made a word game or used picture card to provide a guessing game in Chinese language.
4. *Verification stage*: this last stage is the stage to use all of the creativity the teacher had either planned or newly emerged one.

In accordance with the meaning of creativity itself (a general ability to create and provide new ideas that can be applied in problem-solving), the ability to see new relationship between elements that are already existed is also concerned. So, it can be concluded that the Chinese language teachers often spontaneously emulates the creative ideas in the classroom when the students look confused and bored.

Creativity in the individual teacher is necessary. In addition, to be creative, the teacher must look attractive. Creative things that they can do in the classroom must not only be realized through the materials in the book, but also come out of the book. For example, in learning vocabulary they can use games that have been known by the students, such as games to arrange the alphabets into a series of words and so forth.

Other findings obtained from the questionnaire given to the students at the end of the lesson were the majority of them stated 'very good' in the explanation of the learning materials; both in the use of learning media and in the creativity of the teacher in teaching. So, the mean score of Chinese language class I was 9. This shows that the spontaneous creativity of the teacher in controlling the teaching and learning process in the classroom is needed.

¹⁴ Graham Wallas, *The Art of Thought* (California: Harcourt, Brace, 1926).

The learning process was largely in line with the syllabus as well as the lesson plan, but in every meeting, the teacher's creativity appeared in the delivery of the subject lesson and also in the question practice, such as telling a short story with a certain theme, then the teacher distributed a blank paper and asked them to draw some vocabularies that have been learnt. To mention a few, a 萝卜 'carrot'-themed story leads the teacher to just mention the word 萝卜 and give a mapping of thoughts like: this food is the favorite of rabbits, is orange, and grows from the ground. Then, the students were asked to describe it in the provided paper.

D. Conclusion

Creativity is the ability of a person to produce something new; both in the form of ideas and real works that are relatively different from what has been existed before. The teacher further adds that creativity is a higher-level thinking skill that implies the escalation in thinking ability, characterized by succession, discontinuity, divergence, and integration between each stage of the development.¹⁵

It can be concluded that the teacher's creativity is very influential on

¹⁵ Sriti Mayang Sari, "Peran Warna Interior terhadap Perkembangan dan Pendidikan Anak di Taman Kanak-Kanak," *Dimensi Interior 2*, no. 1 (2005): pp-22.

the success of learning in the classroom. Creativity in the learning of Chinese language can be seen when the students are learning, and when they are enjoying the learning process in the classroom. A teacher must have good creativity that is either spontaneous or planned before.

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