

THE INCORPORATION OF CREATIVITY IN ENGLISH WRITING MATERIALS OF SEVENTH GRADERS

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ABSTRACT

The research aimed to investigate the incorporation of creativity in writing materials for seventh graders. To achieve quality education for junior high school, teachers and school leaders must provide effective learning materials focusing on curriculum objectives and students' skills. Besides, creativity was a skill in Profil Pelajar Pancasila that must be implemented in every learning subject. The research applied a qualitative method. Therefore, the respondents were teachers in four junior high schools from Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi area, especially Bogor, Depok, and Bekasi. In-depth interviews were gathered to explore the information on learning materials used by teachers. Moreover, it was also to explore the type of creativity taught through writing materials. The result shows creativity in learning materials lay in phase while-writing. Then, descriptive text is the most genre to support students' creativity, especially on topics of family, friends, personal information, and neighborhood. Therefore, future design of creativity-incorporated writing materials needs to be carried out supporting other phases of writing using updated learning media.

Keywords: *creativity incorporation, English writing materials, junior high school*

INTRODUCTION

The problem in learning writing has not entirely found the right path. Both students and teachers encounter many problems in class. The issues have been growing fast in the circle of junior high school. The issues that appeared around students are lack of grammar and vocabulary, limited idea of thinking, lack of motivation, and writing structure (systematics) (Amalia, Abdullah, & Fatimah, 2021; Andestend, Mayuni, & Anwar, 2022; Marbun et al., 2022). Moreover, students struggle to come up with ideas to write about (Hidayati, Dewanti, & Rasyid, 2022).

These issues generate the emergence of problems with student creativity. Salim et al. (2020) have argued that writing is an activity that involves cognitive ability and creativity in its implementation. Less motivation, grammatical errors, lack of vocabulary, and limited ideas show undeveloped creativity in learning writing. In line with that, another expert has stated that it is

important for the implementation of creativity in teaching writing because it uses a diverse range of developing ideas (Azahary, 2021). Moreover, creativity is also the highlight of *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. It is explained that students can modify and produce something original, meaningful, useful, and impactful, with the key elements being the production of original ideas as well as the production of original works and actions (Rusnaini et al., 2021).

Creativity could be realized as part of writing. Thus, it is possible to implement it into learning materials, especially for writing using predetermined indicators. Learning materials refer to all materials and tools used as aids in an educational setting with learning as the goal (Hansen & Gissel, 2017). As long as it presents and informs the language being learned, a textbook, workbook, cassette, video, paper, journal article, or something like a written paragraph on the whiteboard can be used as material (Kusuma & Apriyanto, 2018). Thus, creativity, writing, and

learning materials correlate with each other.

Previous research has been conducted on creativity in learning materials. Kasmaienezhadfad, Pourrajab, and Rabbani (2015) have researched students' creativity through pictures in books. They have stated that illustrations and words work well together to make an impression on students (Kasmaienezhadfad, Pourrajab, & Rabbani, 2015). Moreover, they would be able to understand and learn more effectively and efficiently if they use pictures in the text that require illustrative information to improve their reactions to verbal information. As a result, they are increasingly connecting pictures to their personal lives that can create meaning based on their schemas (Kasmaienezhadfad, Pourrajab, & Rabbani, 2015). Another research has been conducted about creativity in digital learning materials for second-year university courses of Math and IT students (Şendurur, Ersoy, & Çetin, 2018).

The result shows that digital learning materials make IT students more productive, flexible, original, and insightful (Şendurur, Ersoy, & Çetin, 2018). It is proven that the final product of IT students is more original than Math students. Besides, Math students approach the process more critically and with more ideas (Şendurur, Ersoy, & Çetin, 2018).

On the other hand, the scope of junior high school also gives research about the mind mapping model of scattergories game in improving creativity. Pudjiastuti (2018) has stated that mind mapping with game scattergories can involve students' curiosity, initiative, risk-taking, cooperation, and tolerance. They are all characteristics of an active person. Not only that, but senior high school also contributes to the study of historical board games towards creativity. Kesuma et al. (2020) have said the historical board game project is designed to increase students' curiosity and motivation to learn by allowing them to integrate different ideas and complete their work independently. Thus, the board game leads to original, innovative, and unique work.

The conclusion of previous research shows that all levels of education have shown creativity indicators applied through learning materials, traditionally or technologically. The creativity indicator generally refers to the originality of work and initiative. As Winaryati and Munsarif (2021) have said, indicators of creativity are making creative work, scientific thinking, and collaborative teamwork. In fact, the indicator cannot be generalized for every stage. It should have its own creative indicator.

However, there is still insufficient research about learning materials and creativity in specific areas with suitable indicators, not in general. The investigation of creativity is needed more in other areas, such as on a personal level, social, and educational (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018). Thus, the design of indicators at every stage needs to be researched more. Then, creativity should be related to a specific area using updated learning materials.

Based on previous research, the term learning

materials incorporated creativity has not been reviewed deeply in the materials. They review only for the general education stage with a minimum explanation about the specific content of learning that incorporates creativity. It could be said they had not reviewed the learning content and creativity inside learning materials based on certain levels and skills. Then, they only explain about students' output of creativity after the learning process ended.

Moreover, learning materials and creativity in English courses are also seldom to be found. This confirms that the analysis of creativity toward certain skills in learning English is still relatively rare. Indeed, for other researchers who want to do similar research, it can be associated with other aspects related to creativity associated with writing (Soraya, 2016). Hence, specific targets of learning, specific skills, and specific creativity indicators should be researched more. Thus, the research aims to investigate the incorporation of creativity in English materials for seventh graders.

Creativity that pushes learners to apply new knowledge and create novel work is a significant part of what makes writing skills so effective in achieving a goal. Therefore, creativity is an important part of the writing process. It contributes to producing good under stable writing (Wati, 2019). Hence, creativity and writing materials are connected. It means creativity impacts the process and result of writing.

In academic research, this analysis of writing materials incorporated creativity is difficult to be found. The easiest analysis found is about creativity in cross-English subjects or for general learning. Therefore, the research would bring a novelty for English writing materials incorporating creativity based *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* with specific indicators dedicated to seventh graders. Hence, the research aims to conduct research and analyze English learning materials and creativity-incorporated for seventh graders. It leads to research questions: (1) To what extent creativity is incorporated into the existing English writing materials for seventh graders? (2) How is creativity incorporated into English writing materials of seventh graders?

METHODS

The research applies a qualitative method. It investigates four junior high schools in Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi, especially from Bogor, Depok, and Bekasi. Schools that imply *Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar* (KMB) are the characteristics of the research object. Two schools are private schools, and the rest is a public school. The research only focuses on seventh graders, and data sources come from English teachers who teach seventh graders. Then, data also come from existing learning materials, which are 19 sample materials. Instruments used to gather the data are in-depth interviews with four teachers. The interview contains about the process of writing learning, creativity in writing, existing learning

materials, and the learning topic. Moreover, a literature review is conducted for creating creativity indicators.

The first step for data procedure analysis is finding creativity indicators for junior high school. The second is analyzing learning materials to investigate the existing writing materials that incorporate creativity. The third is describing the interview result as how creativity is incorporated in writing materials through teachers' perspectives. Last, concluding the result of the analysis based on all the steps. The data procedure can be seen in Figure 1.

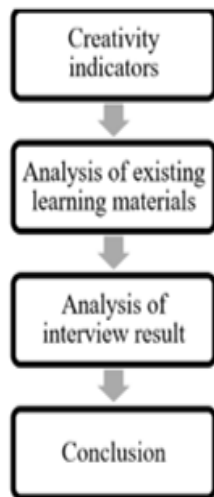


Figure 1 Research Data Procedure

Creativity indicators would be conducted by collecting literature reviews from previous research, *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, and connecting creativity with learning objectives on KMB. Then, existing materials from teachers are analyzed using the indicators. Media and topics of learning are also generated in the analysis. The interview results would be analyzed using the indicators, classify creativity strategy by teachers, and classify topics of learning. Hence, a conclusion would be generated considering the result and discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Students who experience problems with writing cannot be done instantly but sustainably and with guidance (Andestend, Mayuni, & Anwar, 2022). Therefore, guidance for students aims to increase motivation in learning writing. A sustainable way could be done by applying student skills that are integrated with writing. Creativity is a skill that can improve students' writing ability continuously. Thus, it needs to be an apparent learning reference of creativity in writing and then specified again with the level of students and curriculum as well.

Profil Pelajar Pancasila is the students' characteristic in KMB. Based on it, creativity has indicators (1) expressing feeling/idea, (2) creating

original work, and (3) solving the problem using the flexibility of thinking (Satria et al., 2022). Besides, the research has found the indicators of creativity as fluency (combining ideas), flexibility (thinking in many ways), originality (unique or new), and elaboration (expanding perspective) (Prayati, 2020; Soraya, 2016). Prayati (2020) has said that in writing for junior high school, students must present ideas concerning a story. They must be creative in order to present a proper narration using sophisticated language. It represents some points for junior high school in writing: idea, work result, genre, and experience.

Based on curriculum (KMB), writing aims to communicate ideas into organized and simple paragraphs. Moreover, they can present imaginative or informative text. Those objectives lead to some points for creativity. Imaginative means the ability to fantasize through short stories written in words (Nazila, Adisaputera, & Saragih, 2020). The creative process generates thinking, which allows students to use their imagination to generate ideas, questions, hypotheses, and experiments (Winaryati & Munsarif, 2021). Then, informative means students must understand how to write a good text that expects the reader to obtain complete information (Utomo, Albaekani, & Pahlevi, 2020). Thus, imaginative and informative are related to expressing ideas and using experience and strategy to write paragraphs that are connected to creativity in writing.

The previous indicators and learning objectives could lead to specific creativity indicators for junior high school. They could be elaborated into suitable indicators of creativity in writing skills, especially for seventh graders. The indicators can be concluded in Table 1.

Table 1 Creativity Indicators for Junior High School

Indicators		Descriptions	Code
Person	1.	Solving the problem in group or individual	C1
	2.	Experience or own knowledge	C2
Process	3.	Combining idea into paragraph	C3
	4.	Combining paragraph into genre of writing	C4
Press	5.	Flexibility	C5
Product	6.	Original work/idea	C6

Table 1 shows that the main indicators are person, process, press, and product. Person means personality, intellect, self-concept, and behavior (Maley & Kiss, 2018), where the person is related to the individual characteristics of the writer. Thus, it is connected to how students complete their work using their knowledge in pairs or independently. Process means generating ideas in writing (Prayati, 2020), where the process is related to arranging sentences

into a good paragraph. As a result, it leads the genre of text. Press concerns about inflexibility (Maley & Kiss, 2018) lead students to have flexibility in expressing their ideas. Then, product means that when an idea is embodied in tangible form, it becomes other material. Thus, it is also said to be the output of learning or work results.

These indicators would be used as a benchmark of creativity in learning writing. In addition, these would be used for analyzing existing learning materials. Thus, codes are needed for analysis. Then, to know the incorporation of creativity into existing materials, table analysis is needed for gathering the data. This part is conducted to answer research question one: To what extent is creativity incorporated into the existing English writing materials for seventh graders? The analysis will be explained using Table 2.

Table 2 Analysis of Existing Writing Materials

Learning Media	Learning Materials	Creativity Indicators
E-module	1. Describing daily routine	1. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
	2. Describing home	2. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
	3. Describing hobby	3. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
	4. Describing place	4. C1, C4
	5. Describing experience	5. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5
PDF	6. Describing job	6. C1, C3, C4, C5
	7. Describing family	7. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
	8. Describing thing	8. C4
	9. Describing animal	9. C4
Module	10. Describing job	10. C1, C2, C3, C4
	11. Describing favorite thing	11. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
	12. Describing famous person	12. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5
	13. Describing animal	13. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5
Text-book	14. Describing favorite thing	14. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
	15. Describing friends	15. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
	16. Describing famous person	16. C1, C2, C3, C4
	17. Describing a picture	17. C1, C2, C3, C4
	18. Describing feeling in place	18. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5
	19. Describing their own picture	19. C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6

The analysis found that the materials are delivered into two media types: technology-based and traditional. They use e-modules and PDFs as technology-based media because of how it is accessed using an internet connection. They do the task using a device, then printed module and textbook are

traditional, without any technology.

In writing learning, it is found that learning material refers to the descriptive text genre. It reveals that 19 learning materials appeared as descriptive text. Through those materials, learning topics could be grouped into personal information, family, environment, job, and daily routines. The learning topics seem to be found in CEFR A2 as international learning objectives. The objective is that they can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to personal, family, local environment, and employment (CEFR, 2001).

Other analyses found creativity in learning materials that mostly take the form of tasks. This is in line with Gralewski (2019), who has said that creativity is the ability to generate new and, in some sense, valuable solutions to specific tasks and problems. Generally, creativity is conveyed through orders to do tasks or instructions.

“Take a picture of your house and write in the box what you can find in it” is one of the examples of the task in materials. “Take a picture... write... you can find” means they have to use their experience to solve the problem. They have to describe based on the picture they take and what they found in the surroundings by arranging sentences to be a paragraph. This task supports freely thinking about what they see, and of course, it also attracts students’ interest. They would choose what they are interested in their environment. Thus, it also leads to original work for the result because students have different experiences. They would see different buildings of their house. This case appears in learning materials of hobby, family, favorite thing, friend, and local environment; hence, all indicators are absorbed well for these topics.

However, not all learning materials engage all indicators of creativity. The example of instruction, “Rearrange the jumbled paragraphs to make a good descriptive text!” has minimal creativity. This creativity only includes problem-solving individually and combining sentences and paragraphs into a good text. Students do not need to express their ideas and experiences in sentences.

Then, “Make a description of this job on a picture” and “Write five sentences about Rosa’s work. Use information based on the text above” are examples of instruction that limit students’ creativity in conveying their ideas because their creativity is limited by pictures, tables, and previously stated information. Students could still express their ideas, but the limitations of students regarding determined pictures, tables, and previous information could decrease their motivation to write. Thus, it is possible to copy other sources such as the internet and their friend’s work.

This case also happens in learning materials to describe actresses/athletes, animals, and places. When students do not know the artist, the animal, and the place yet, seeing descriptions from various sources is possible happened. Therefore, the originality generated in their work might not be valid. Thus, the topics

about jobs, famous people, describing certain pictures and places, and animals are unsuitable for applying creativity because not all indicators are absorbed well.

On the other hand, the writing phase, pre-writing, writing, editing, and revising are the four distinct stages of the writing process that students should master (Batubara, Rahila, & Rahmadani, 2021). Contrast with that, Rofii, Murthado, and Rahmat (2019) have argued that three stages of writing are examined: pre-writing, writing, and post-writing. Nabhan (2019) has explained that pre-writing is concentrating on brainstorming. He has also stated that writing is creating an initial draft of the text that focuses on organization and idea development, and post-writing is peer review and revision. Thus, for junior high school, the writing phase could be defined as pre-writing, while-writing, and post-writing. If creativity is inside students' tasks or exercises, it could be concluded that creativity effectively works on creating paragraphs. Thus, it is related to phase in while-writing; however, creativity beyond while-writing is also found in materials.

The sentence, "In my friend's room, there are two guppies: *tuturan ini menjelaskan mengenai jumlah ikan cupang*" on behalf of the paragraph presents creativity indicators, but it does not fulfill all the indicators. It only presents a genre text of descriptive text and combines ideas into paragraphs (C3) and (C4), but it does not present student's work activities and express students' ideas.

Most of the creative indicators that appeared are arranging paragraphs into the genre of text (C4) and solving the problem (C1). The most seldom engaging material is the originality of work (C6), which means every writing work has a genre. Then, most of the creativity appears in students' assignments. Therefore, problem-solving is one indicator that often appears in materials. Moreover, supporting the originality of the work is still less attention, even though it will lead students to understand how to create it and avoid plagiarism that would affect students in the future.

To sum up, creativity in learning materials has been applied in the form of student work that is expressed through digital and traditional media. In general, learning materials use all indicators of creativity, but some materials only use certain indicators. Students' creativity is more emphasized in making paragraphs to form a story with a genre. On certain topics, creativity indicators could not be fully applied. However, the creativity in learning materials is in line with the learning objectives.

This section answers through interview sessions with teachers regarding research question two about how creativity is incorporated into English writing materials of seventh graders. The focus of the questions is on applying creativity to writing creativity. Moreover, the topic of learning that incorporates creativity is also asked. The interview results can be seen in Table 3.

The interview results in Table 3 show that most topic comes up about family. The most used genre

is descriptive text; however, another genre, such as recount text, is used to increase creativity. The topic used for recount text is holidays, in which they have to tell the experience about what they did in the past.

Table 3 Interview Summary

Schools	Creativity Implied	Topics	Code
School A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Instruct the students to write about their best experience (in holiday) - Instruct the students to write about a sad or negative experience in their lives. - Inquire with students about their ideas for one topic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Holiday - Daily activity - Family 	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5
School B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Giving students the freedom to write what they think (opinion). - Giving freedom to write their experience. - Emphasized on originality (avoiding describing famous people (can see internet). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People or friend - Family - Surrounding environment 	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
School C	Warn/remind them to create their own text, without seeing examples in books or the internet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Friend - Myself - Family 	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6
School D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Give orders not to cheat and do what they can. - Give instructions to make a story according to their own experience. - Give instructions to describe an event according to what they think. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Family - Holiday - School 	C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6

In learning topics, teachers also avoid topics that can reduce motivation to write. Teachers say that some topics are not suitable to be applied in learning writing. Biographical topics of people and animals are rarely used to avoid duplicate work. These topics are often found on the internet, making it easier for students to copy. Learning topics about students' daily

lives, family, and the environment that students often encounter that are emphasized on familiar topics are prioritized.

Then, the creativity taught by teachers is applied using instruction in assignments. The common instruction used is giving freedom to write about what they want and think. They would be given one topic only and have to write down their ideas and experiences without any limitation. In addition, three schools have implemented an element of originality in writing, such as avoiding learning topics, giving chance students to look at sources, creating their own text, and not cheating on other resources.

Moreover, creativity indicators that appeared the most are solving problems, utilizing ideas and experiences, making paragraphs into genre, and flexibility of thinking. Through analysis, the practice of creativity by teachers is sharper than learning materials. It could be concluded that teachers apply more creativity indicators as a whole.

From the teacher's perspective, creativity is divided into several implementations: experience, idea, and originality. These three things support creativity indicators because they believe those are part of students' needs and learning objectives in KMB. Moreover, in the analysis, it is found that all creativity indicators are well applied. Furthermore, it is also said that the teaching is in line with the learning objectives in the curriculum.

Teachers' perspectives and learning materials have similarities in terms of learning topics that could enhance students' creativity. Another similarity shows that both believe student creativity is formed through drill. However, both also show differences. Creativity applied by teachers is more comprehensive and emphasizes original results while learning materials prioritize completing existing tasks or solving problems.

CONCLUSIONS

The research seeks to determine the creativity in writing materials for seventh graders. It has shown creativity appeared in the genre of descriptive text. Moreover, several learning topics could boost students' creativity compared to others. The creativity indicator most shown is C1, solving problems in groups or individuals. Solving problems means completing tasks or producing a new work in the proper text genre. Moreover, original work (C6) is also easy to find in the teacher's strategy for teaching writing. Unfortunately, the originality of work is rarely found in materials. In short, creativity applied through teachers is more exhaustive than learning materials. However, both of them support using topics of family, personal information, friends, and local environment to support the whole of creativity indicators.

Despite the fact that the research contains the study's results and information, it also has several limitations. The limitation is that the research does

not discuss, explain, and design up-to-date media of writing materials that also support creativity in writing. The research only focuses on analyzing creativity incorporated into writing materials. Further research regarding creativity and writing materials can be continued for designing and developing writing materials with creativity incorporated for junior high school using utilization-specific technology-based media. It is important to be undertaken to support ICT design. Later, materials design is expected to adapt to current student needs.

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