

Conceptualizing Creativity in the EFL Learners' Writing: Probing the Perceptions of EFL Stakeholders

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Research Paper

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Abstract: Creativity has a critical role in education in general and second/foreign language (L2) in particular. L2 previous studies have mostly focused on creative writing or teaching and have examined different dimensions of creative writing and teaching, but creativity in L2 writing has received very little attention. The present study has addressed this research gap. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore EFL stakeholders' conceptualization of creativity in EFL learners' writing. To that end, we conducted a descriptive narrative design in which 15 EFL novice teachers, 15 EFL experienced teachers, 10 EFL experts, and five EFL material developers were recruited who provided their narratives and participated in semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data were analyzed thematically, using MAXQDA 24 software. The findings of deductive-inductive thematic analysis showed four themes as the four different conceptualizations: "expanded new ideas in L2 writing show creativity", "enhancing a range of diverse ideas in L2 writing develops creativity in writing", "enough practice to develop imagination to engage readers leads to creativity in writing", and "knowledgeable writers are critical thinkers to make spontaneous ideas". We conclude that creativity in EFL learners' writing can be fostered through the incorporation of psychometric factors. The study highlights several important pedagogical implications regarding the role of psychometric factors in enhancing creativity within EFL learners' writing.

Keywords: Creativity, EFL Learners' Writing, EFL Stakeholders, Psychometrics Factors of Creativity

"A creative act is an instance of learning ... [and that] a comprehensive learning theory must take into account both insight and creative activity" (Guilford, 1950, p. 446).

Introduction

Creativity holds a critical position in education (Beghetto, 2010; Cimermanova, 2015; Kaplan, 2019; Kurt & Önalın, 2018; Meihami, 2022; Skiba et al., 2010; Trnova, 2014). This is due to the importance of creativity in developing various aspects of learning, such as critical thinking (Kaplan, 2019; Wu & Wu, 2020), creative potential (Sun et al., 2022), mindfulness (Henriksen et al., 2020), learning successfulness (Richards, 2013), problem-solving and decision-making (Maley & Kiss, 2017), motivation (Conradty & Bogner, 2019), and personality traits (Henriksen et al., 2021; Wu & Wu, 2020). By its very nature, second/foreign language (L2) learning is a creative process (Smith, 2022). Hence, creativity is an ever-integrated aspect of L2 teaching and learning (Jones, 2016). Higher levels of creativity are considered beneficial for language teaching since they positively correlate with learning

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achievement (Richards & Cotterall, 2016). Moreover, addressing creativity in L2 teaching and learning can enhance L2 learners' imagination, self-confidence, and self-perception (Akyıldız & Çelikk, 2020), which in its own right develops L2 skills and knowledge about language. Since creativity can be defined as the ability to create original, valuable, useful, and appropriate ideas or products (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019), writing can be considered a creative process. When considering the characteristics of L2 writing as a complex, critical L2 skill, it can be assumed that creativity has a significant role in developing L2 writing since it can develop imagination, self-confidence, and self-perception, which are inseparable parts of L2 writing pedagogy.

There are different viewpoints regarding creativity in writing (Esfandiari & Husseini, 2023). The first viewpoint suggests that all writings are creative, regardless of who writes them; therefore, they should be considered unique productions (Cremin & Myhill, 2013; McVey, 2008). This perspective acknowledges that each writer has his or her own distinctive way of writing, making each piece of writing inherently creative. The second viewpoint focuses on creative writing, associated with art-based productions such as poetry, novels, and fiction (Cremin & Myhill, 2013). In creative writing, imagination is a key feature (Burroway, 2011) that allows writers to create significant writing pieces (Mills, 2004). This aligns with the principles of Big C creativity (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009), in which creativity is related to highly defined productions in various domains. Lastly, creativity in writing can be assumed to apply elements such as originality, flexibility, fluency, elaboration, etc. (Guilford, 1967; Weiss & Wilhelm, 2022) in different writing features such as semantics, syntax, coherence, and idea generation. This viewpoint is in line with small c creativity, in which creativity can be viewed in everyday routines, like essay writing or writing a business letter.

One major concern is that we do not know how creativity in EFL writing is conceptualized among EFL stakeholders (Esfandiari & Husseini, 2023; Tajabadi et al., 2024). This may explain the problems about not having a standard rubric to assess creativity in the EFL writing. As D'Souza (2021) noted, one of the main limitations of rubrics is that their origins are unclear. This is due to the fact that we do not have a clear orientation about how different stakeholders in the EFL field, including EFL experts, EFL material developers, and EFL teachers think and practice about creativity in EFL learners' writing. For instance, the Consensual Assessment Technique (CAT) (Amabile, 1982, 1983, 1996) is one of the most widely used instruments to assess creativity in writing, but it only encompasses the experts' conception and judgment about creativity, which lacks the conceptualization of others such as teachers, leading it to be practically difficult to be used in assessing creativity in writing (Kaufman et al., 2008). This is due to the fact that EFL writing skills is the amalgamations of various aspects, including materials provided by the materials developers, teaching methods and techniques provided by teacher educators, and implementing procedures followed by the teachers. Consequently, it is important to consider teachers' perceptions, knowledge, and attitudes regarding creativity in EFL writing to overcome this limitation since they are the practitioners who are in the front line of teaching writing. Additionally, failing to understand the perceptions of EFL experts, materials developers, and teachers may create a gap between theory and practice regarding the development of creativity in EFL learners' writing. This gap arises from our lack of knowledge about the common perceptions of creativity in EFL writing among stakeholders. Understanding these perceptions is crucial for designing activities and programs that effectively bridge the theory-practice divide and align what EFL experts and materials developers prescribe with what teachers actually implement. By doing so, we can come close to the components of creativity in EFL writing so that EFL teachers teach writing for creativity and help learners write creatively. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to conceptualize creativity in EFL writing through exploring the perceptions of EFL stakeholders, including EFL teachers (novice and experienced), EFL experts, and EFL material developers. The study is guided by the following research question:

Research Question One: What are the conceptualization of EFL stakeholders, including EFL teachers (novice and experienced), EFL experts, and EFL material developers, about creativity in EFL learners' writing?

Literature Review

Creativity: Is It Really Difficult to Define It?

Some researchers believe that defining creativity is a complex undertaking due to its multidimensional nature (Batey & Furnham, 2006; Cropley, 2000; Runco, 2004, 2007; Treffinger et al., 2002). Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that it is a misconception that defining creativity is difficult or that a consensus on its definition cannot be reached. This is due to the fact that many researchers have dedicated a substantial amount of time and effort throughout history to identify the fundamental elements/components of creativity that are conducive to mapping the concept of creativity in different fields, including education (Dow, 2022). These elements have been firmly established and are widely recognized in academic and professional circles, leading the researchers to think of creativity in terms of three major dimensions: novelty, usefulness or appropriateness, and social context or environment (Dow, 2022; Plucker, 2022).

One key concept in the definition of creativity is novelty. Many researchers include it while defining and describing creativity in their works (e.g., Guilford, 1950; Kohler, 1929; Kris, 1950). For instance, Kohler (1929) defined creativity as rearranging different components to gain a new perspective and find novel solutions to new problems. According to Kris (1950), the essence of creativity lies in generating novel combinations or revealing new associations through initial processing. Including novelty in his definition, Guilford (1950) defined creativity as the ability to recognize problems, formulate ideas fluently, be flexible in the framework of a concept, come up with novel ideas, synthesize and analyze ideas, reorganize or re-define ideas, and evaluate ideas, all in a novel way. In Thurstone's view (1952), creativity is the ability to generate unique solutions from the creator's perspective, regardless of whether someone else has already created the solution. Moreover, according to Mednick (1962), creativity can be defined as the act of generating novel ideas or associations by combining different elements in distinct and innovative ways. Dow (2022) drew on previous definitions and neatly defined novelty as "the ability to generate novel ideas and solutions to everyday problems and challenges" (p. 9).

Scholars widely accept that creativity entails generating novel and innovative ideas or products. However, as Stein (1953) noted, the definition of creativity has evolved to include additional criteria, such as the usefulness or appropriateness of the outputs. Stein (1953) recognized the importance of novelty but elaborated that it was not restricted to the individual; rather, it is a process that leads to a novel idea that a group considers significant, useful, or fulfilling at a particular time. Amabile (1982) highlighted the importance of context in determining the value of creativity. She outlined a process that involves identifying the problem, preparing the relevant elements, generating creative responses, and evaluating their usefulness or value. Therefore, the Consensual Assessment Technique (CAT; Amabile, 1982) is a method that entails the assessment of the creativity of a product or solution by a panel of experts in the relevant domain. In alignment with other scholars' conceptualizations of creativity, Amabile regarded novelty and usefulness as vital components of the creative process, defining it as generating novel ideas that are apt for accomplishing a specific objective. To account for external factors affecting usefulness, she suggested incorporating internal elements like willingness to take risks, a unique perspective, intrinsic motivation, and relevant skills and experience into one's personality (Amabile, 1996).

Although novelty and usefulness make up two defining features of creativity, social context also plays an equally important role. As such, researchers have emphasized exploring the connection between creativity and social context. Numerous studies, including those by Amabile (1996), Csikszentmihalyi (1997), and Sternberg (1999), have delved into this relationship. Some scholars suggest that this connection is reciprocal, meaning that social context affects the value and importance placed on creative output, and the creative output can, in turn, influence and shape societal views (Feldman et al., 1994; Gardner, 1993; Runco & Dow, 1999; Sternberg et al., 2002). The association between social context and creativity reminds us of the distinction between Big-C and little-c creativity

proposed by Gardner (1993). Big-C creativity is commonly described as the ability to accomplish something extraordinary and innovative that significantly transforms or changes a particular area of activity or field (Feldman et al., 1994). Accordingly, Big-C creativity holds worldwide importance and has practical applications for the social context as a whole (Dow, 2022). In contrast, little-c creativity refers to creativity that holds personal significance and only benefits a specific individual or a small group (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009).

Theoretical Underpinning of the Study: A Psychometric Perspective of Creativity

The psychometric perspective of creativity states that creativity is measurable (Fernandez-Fontecha, 2021). Divergent thinking was among the first methods of defining and assessing creativity, encompassing measurable components such as fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration (Guilford, 1959). Guilford (1975) defined fluency as the capability to produce numerous ideas or solutions in response to an open-ended inquiry. He categorized fluency into three types: ideational, associational, and expressional fluency. Ideational fluency involves quickly generating a range of ideas that meet specific requirements. Associational fluency refers to creating a list of words related to a particular word. Lastly, expressional fluency includes structuring words into larger units like sentences, phrases, and paragraphs.

The second component of divergent thinking is flexibility. The concept of flexibility refers to the capacity to produce a diverse range of ideas across various categories (Guilford, 1975; Pipes, 2023) or the ability to provide responses from various categories (Dow, 2022). This involves smoothly transitioning and shifting between different types of concepts or generating multiple ideas from separate categories (Guilford, 1968). There are two types of flexibility: spontaneous and adaptive. Spontaneous flexibility refers to an individual's capacity to demonstrate flexibility, while adaptive flexibility involves the ability to produce innovative and high-quality responses. Pei et al. (2017) define flexibility in writing as the ability to connect unrelated concepts and create meaningful ideas. According to Scott et al. (2004), flexibility can be defined as the extent to which one's ideas deviate from their previous ideas or those of others. This is usually determined by categorizing the ideas into broader categories.

The third component of creativity is originality, which is defined by Guilford (1975) as the ability to generate unique or uncommon ideas. According to Runco (2004), originality refers to uncommon, unique, and unusual ideas that can be determined by statistical infrequency. Mumford (2003) defined originality as a process of creation where the perception of originality determines the evaluation of a creative concept. Moreover, Fink et al. (2009) argued that originality results from combining ideas, leading to developing novel insights. Dow (2022) stated that originality can be reflected in responses given by only a small number of individuals. Based on the definition of Kettler and Bower (2017), there is a continuum of originality ranging from Low to high originality. While the former is an ordinary and predictable response lacking novelty and imagination, the latter describes originality as a response that is distinct from other responses, characterized by being unique, unusual, innovative, or imaginative.

Finally, the fourth component of creativity is elaboration, which refers to individuals' ability to develop and expand their ideas within a particular category of responses (Guilford, 1975; Pipes, 2023). In other words, it is the process of enhancing or supplementing ideas to make them more comprehensive or detailed. Similarly, Torrance (1981) defined elaboration as the capability of linking and developing ideas. According to Scott et al. (2004), elaboration is characterized by the extent of intricacy and comprehensiveness with which a specific notion or thought is elucidated and expanded upon. Moreover, Dow (2022) states that elaboration can be defined as a level of detail present in a response. Kettler and Bower (2017) described elaboration as a continuum of enhancing an idea in writing. This involves incorporating elaborate details, metaphors, humor, connections, comparisons, and advanced expressions to make the language more captivating. In the current study, as we followed the psychometric perspective of creativity, these four components of creativity, including fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality were used to frame the methodology of the study.

Empirical Studies on Creativity in Writing

In the following paragraphs, we report the empirical studies related to the main objectives of the study. A chronological order has been followed to give a more precise view of the related studies.

Allison (2004) conducted a study to explore the opinions of English language students and teachers in a specific academic setting about creativity and its relation to English for academic purposes (EAP) academic writing. The data for the study was collected through voluntary questionnaires and interviews with students and teachers who were part of the undergraduate English Language program at the National University of Singapore. However, the interview and questionnaire items did not represent creativity or related concepts. The findings revealed that creativity and its related concepts were used in a limited manner by both students and teachers. The study suggested that there should be a renewed focus on creativity in EAP pedagogy, particularly for English language teachers in multilingual settings

Mozaffari (2013) conducted a study to create and validate an analytical inventory for assessing creativity in creative writing. Through a review of existing literature on creative language, she identified four key qualities of creative writing: image, voice, characterization, and story. To test the reliability of the inventory, 32 samples of creative writing were collected from two literature classes that taught creative writing. The correlation coefficient indicated that the developed rubric was sufficiently reliable. The study concluded that the correlation between rankings of those who used the rubric and the judges who applied their own criteria was comparable to the correlation between the raters who used the rubric and the same explicitly stated criteria, signifying the validity of the rubric.

The relationship between EFL learners' creativity and their writing complexity, accuracy, and fluency was investigated by Nosratinia and Razavi (2016). Data were collected from 185 intermediate EFL learners who completed a creativity questionnaire and wrote two exploratory and descriptive compositions. This study showed that learners' creativity was significantly related to their writing accuracy, fluency, and complexity and could predict 70.1% of writing accuracy, 60% of writing fluency, and 47.5% of writing complexity. However, one critical point concerning this study might be that participants' creativity was measured by their score on the Persian version of O'Neil et al.'s (1992) Creativity Questionnaire, pinpointing the importance of using other data sources such as other questionnaires to measure their creativity

In a two-phase study, Zedelius et al. (2019) examined whether established measures of creativity and computerized linguistic analyses could predict human evaluations of short stories. The first phase involved 133 undergraduate students who did not have an interest in creative writing, while the second phase involved 128 undergraduate students who were interested in creative writing. Six raters in Phase 1 and five in Phase 2 evaluated the participants' short stories using an established evaluation rubric that assessed aspects of creativity, such as associative fluency, divergent thinking and self-reported creative behavior and achievements. The findings revealed that creative writing can be evaluated systematically and reliably, capturing objective features of the text. The evaluation rubric used in the study is also established as a useful tool for assessing creative writing.

Wati (2019) conducted a study to determine the impact of creativity on the writing achievement of third-semester English students. The study used a quasi-experimental design and randomly selected 80 students to participate. The data were collected via essay writing tests and the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking, which was used to classify students into different creativity levels. The data analysis revealed that students with high creativity scores had significantly better writing achievement scores than those with low creativity scores.

D'Souza (2021) systematically searched empirical literature published between 2000 and 2020 to investigate the assessment of creativity in narrative writing. The primary objective of this research was to gather information on the various methods, designs, and findings of various disciplines that attempted to assess creativity in writing and make feedback more effective. Upon reviewing 39 papers that met the selection criteria, the researcher discovered that only a limited number of studies had been

conducted to assess "little-c" creativity in writing, which differs from a more general definition of creative writing. Understanding the features of creative writing is challenging due to the absence of a concrete definition of creativity in writing. The literature has identified four primary research methods for evaluating creativity in writing: Consensual Assessment Technique, rubrics, linguistic computations, and peer feedback.

Reviewing the above-mentioned empirical studies on creativity in writing, one can argue that the need to understand the conceptualization of creativity in EFL learners' writing is critical. This is of significance as the lack of a shared understanding of such conceptualization might have detrimental effects on how the construct is evaluated. Furthermore, the rating scales that have already been developed focus on assessing the creativity of literary productions such as poems, stories, narratives, etc. (Vaezi & Rezaei, 2019; Zedelius et al., 2019). Therefore, as a part of a larger study, this investigation was to explore the conceptualization of EFL stakeholders, including EFL teachers (novice and experienced), EFL experts, and EFL material developers of creativity in EFL writing.

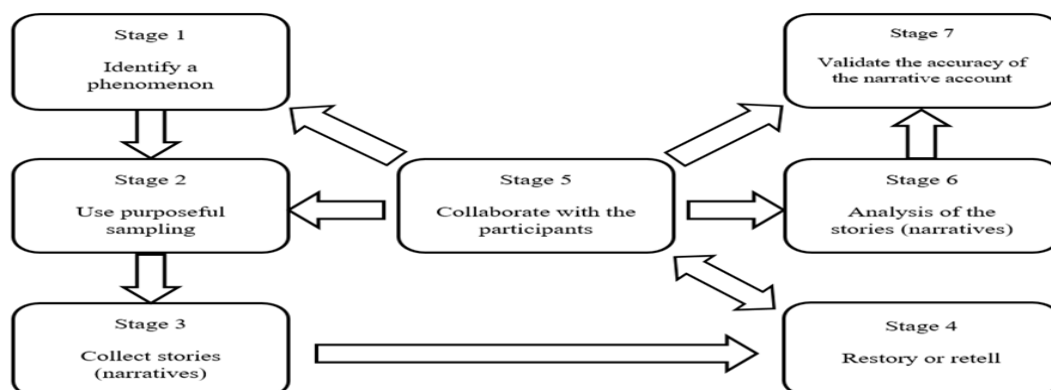
Methodology

Descriptive Narrative Design

We utilized a descriptive narrative design in this study. This design was used to investigate the perceptions of various EFL stakeholders, comprising experienced and novice EFL teachers, EFL experts, and EFL material developers, regarding creativity in EFL learners' writing. A descriptive narrative design is a suitable means of exploring the status of a phenomenon and describing its existence in relation to individuals, groups, or conditions (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2017). As a result, by utilizing the stages of a descriptive narrative design, which consists of identifying a phenomenon, selecting purposeful/maximum variation sampling, collecting stories, collaborating with participants, analyzing the narratives, and validating the accuracy of narratives and data analysis, we obtained the EFL stakeholders' conceptualization of creativity in EFL learners' writing. First, we reviewed relevant literature concerning creativity, teachers' perceptions of creativity, and how to assess creativity to identify gaps in the literature and gain a complete understanding of the phenomenon. Second, we used purposeful sampling to select participants to collect relevant information. The criteria for purposive sampling were year-of-teaching experience for the EFL teachers, being EFL teacher educators, instructing EFL teacher education programs at universities for EFL experts, and developing EFL materials related to writing skills for material developers. Third, participants were requested to produce autobiographical narratives about their perceptions on how to assess creativity in EFL learners' writing either orally or in written form, in either English or Persian. Fourth, the narratives gathered were categorized according to the characteristics of the participants, such as their expertise level (novice or experienced) and their genders, and then we carefully examined the narratives to identify any vague or

Figure 1

Descriptive Narrative Design (Extracted from Edmond & Kennedy, 2017, p. 163)



unclear sections. Fifth, if any utterances were found to be ambiguous, we worked with some of the participants to clarify and expand their statements. Sixth, thematic analysis was used to analyze the narratives using MAXQDA 24. Finally, the rigor of the study was addressed, including credibility, transferability, and dependability. Figure 1 shows the seven stages of descriptive narrative design.

Participants

In the first phase of this study, the conceptualization of EFL stakeholders, including EFL teachers (novice and experienced), EFL experts, and EFL material developers, were gathered on the topic of creativity in EFL learners' writing. To that end, 15 novice EFL teachers, and 15 experienced EFL teachers were recruited. We followed the criterion of expertise in second language teaching provided by Tsui (2005). According to such principals, teachers with five and less than five year-of-teaching experience are categorized as novice teachers and the ones with six or more year-of-teaching experience are considered experienced teachers.

In the current study, 10 EFL experts participated to help the researcher conceptualize creativity in EFL writing. To define EFL experts, we followed three criteria. First, they had to be teacher educators, and second, they had to have academic publications regarding different aspects of EFL writing. The third criterion for selecting the EFL teacher educators was that they had to be the instructors of EFL teacher education programs at universities.

Furthermore, the third group of participants in the current study were five EFL material developers. The criterion we set to recruit these material developers was their developing materials for the EFL writing skills. These five material developers were involved in developing materials concerning EFL writing. It is crucial to note that the principle of data saturation (Ary et al., 2014) was strictly adhered to. Therefore, the number of participants who participated in the first phase of the study could be less than the reported numbers since, for instance, we reached data saturation with eight non-experienced teachers, but we continued with two more participants to adhere to the principles of data saturation. Concerning other participants, the same saturations were reached with fewer participants, but we continued with at least two more participants for each group.

Data Collection Instruments

Autobiographical narrative. The autobiographical narratives were employed to investigate EFL stakeholders' conceptualization of creativity in EFL learners' writing. Before requesting participants to generate their narratives, we discussed the concept of creativity in L2 pedagogy and posed a series of thought-provoking prompts to elicit autobiographical memories (Smorti, 2011) related to creativity in EFL learners' writing. According to Riessman's (2008) fully-formed narrative model (Figure 2), the participants produced their narratives that encompassed six crucial components, including abstract, orientation (introduction), complicating action, evaluation, resolution, and coda. Firstly, participants must recapitulate the key points of their story. Secondly, they should provide orientation by contextualizing the situation, characters, time, and place. Thirdly, they should detail the story's complicating actions or critical turning points. Fourthly, they should provide an evaluation or critique of the main points of their narrative. Next, they should address the resolution or outcomes of the crucial points in their story. Lastly, they should connect all the points they made in their narrative in the coda. Communicating the importance of these components to the participants will be imperative to ensure they produce comprehensive narratives based on their experiences. A narrative frame (Appendix 1) was also sent to the participants to help them with the production of their narratives. The participants were allowed to produce their narratives either orally or in written formats. Therefore, except for two non-experienced teachers, all the participants set their narratives as recorded files. The shortest narrative had around 660 words. Each participant provided one narrative. An example of the narratives produced by EFL experienced teacher was provided as the second appendix.

Figure 2*Riessman's (2008) Model of a Fully-Formed Narrative*

Semi-Structured interviews. To gain more valuable insights into how EFL stakeholders perceive creativity in EFL learners' writing, we also conducted semi-structured interviews with two individuals in each group, including the experienced and novice EFL teachers, EFL experts, and EFL material developers. The interviews had two main purposes. The first was to make clear any ambiguous parts of the narratives produced by the participants, which provided a more comprehensive understanding of the issue. The second was to explore points not previously mentioned in the narratives, thereby enhancing the credibility and thoroughness of the study's findings. The overall objective of conducting semi-structured interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of the impact of creativity on EFL writing and how it can be effectively evaluated.


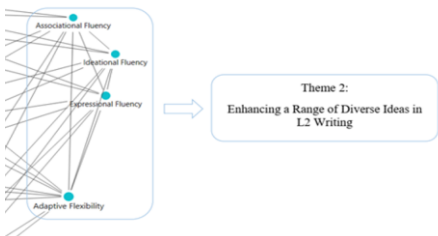
Data Analysis and Rigor of the Study

We utilized reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2020), which involves deductive-inductive approaches (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis allows researchers to examine qualitative data and identify themes based on participants' perceptions (Barkhuizen, 2015). According to Braun and Clarke (2020), reflexive thematic analysis helps uncover reality and underlying themes. In the current study, we employed a deductive-inductive thematic analysis to explore EFL stakeholders' views on creativity in learners' writing. The deductive approach used predetermined codes, while the inductive approach identified new themes related to assessing creativity in EFL writing. For the inductive stage, we followed the six phases Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested. These phases include familiarizing ourselves with the data, initial coding, identifying initial themes, reviewing and refining themes, defining and naming themes, and reporting. MAXQDA 24 was used to aid analysis in this process. The steps that were followed in this study are outlined in Table 1.

To ensure the rigor of the study, we addressed the finding's credibility, transferability, and dependability (Ary et al., 2014). Credibility (equivalent to internal validity) was addressed using two strategies. First, we collected data from autobiographical narratives and semi-structured interviews based on the study's design. Second, to ensure the accuracy of the obtained themes, we employed member checking by asking some participants to verify whether the themes matched their intended responses. Transferability, which is similar to external validity, is concerned with the applicability of the findings and whether they can be generalized to similar contexts. Therefore, cross-case sampling was utilized to increase the transferability of the findings, wherein different EFL stakeholders, including experienced and novice EFL teachers, EFL experts, and EFL material developers, were recruited for the study. Finally, the dependability, equal to the reliability in quantitative research, was addressed through inter-coder agreement. We asked another coder to analyze 20% of the narratives and interviews (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020) to ensure inter-coder agreement. The result of the inter-coder agreement was 80% of agreement. There was a discussion between the first author and the second coder concerning the 20% of disagreement in codification. It was revealed that the second coder was not oriented about a part of the theoretical aspect of creativity used in this study.

Table 1

Phases of Thematic Analysis (Extracted from Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 87)

Phase	Description of the process	Examples
1	Familiarizing with the data	In the initial stage, data is transcribed as necessary, followed by a thorough reading and re-reading (listening and re-listening) of the information to capture preliminary insights.
2	Generating initial codes	Subsequently, notable features of the data are coded in a systematic manner throughout the entire dataset, which involves aggregating information relevant to each code. We codified the revealing parts of the narratives: -“... to evaluate creativity in writing, we should consider its uniqueness, which lies in crafting an original piece while adhering to established frameworks” -“...when it comes to writing, creativity refers to an individual's ability to generate novel and original ideas and effectively convey them through language.” “... When L2 writers provide a comprehensive explanation [Elaboration] for a new idea [Originality] in their writing, it can be inferred that their writing is creative. This is due to their ability to write extensively [Elaboration] about their ideas which have not been addressed previously [Originality]”. Revealing codes: uniqueness, originality, elaboration
3	Searching for themes	The next step entails grouping these codes into potential themes, where all data pertinent to each proposed theme is compiled. 
4	Reviewing themes	The accuracy and applicability of the themes are then assessed in relation to both the coded excerpts (Level 1) and the entire dataset (Level 2), resulting in the creation of a thematic map to visualize the analysis. Reviewing the literature + The Code Map provided by MAXQDA 24 = Theme 
5	Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis is conducted to refine the specifics of each theme and to articulate the overall narrative conveyed by the analysis, with the goal of developing clear definitions and designations for each theme. Finalizing the themes: Enhancing a Range of Diverse Ideas in L2 Writing Develops Creativity in Writing
6	Producing the report	Finally, a thorough examination of selected, illustrative excerpts is carried out, ensuring that the analysis directly addresses the research question and aligns with existing literature, culminating in the production of a

comprehensive scholarly report of the findings.

Findings

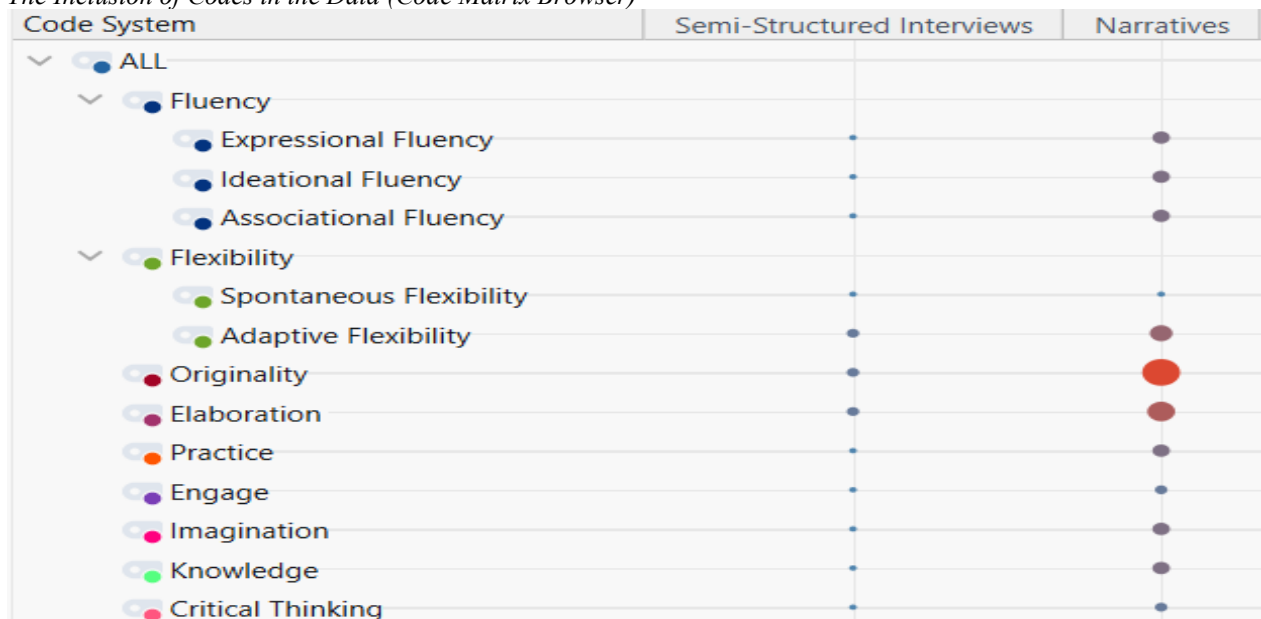
The research question was addressed in this study aimed to obtain the conceptualization of EFL stakeholders regarding creativity in EFL learners' writing performance. The data analysis was carried out to identify specific codes and themes based on the participants' perceptions. A Code Matrix Browser (CMB) was utilized to determine the presence of a priori codes based on the psychometric perspective of creativity. This is the deductive coding since we had some predetermined codes, the psychometric perspectives of creativity. Furthermore, novel themes related to the creativity in the writing of EFL learners were identified. The CMB is a highly effective tool that facilitates the visual representation of codes assigned to documents in a structured and organized manner. It allows users to have a comprehensive overview of the number of document segments assigned to each code, with every existing code meticulously displayed in the matrix. The points where rows and columns intersect showcase the number of segments coded with a particular code, while the size of the symbol accurately reflects the number of code segments assigned to each respective code, as depicted in Figure 3.

The CMB shown in Figure 3 indicates that almost all of the a priori codes of psychometric perspective of creativity were present in the data collected through autobiographical narratives and semi-structured interviews in this study. Additionally, other codes such as critical thinking, knowledge, imagination, engagement, and practice were identified by EFL stakeholders as important for creativity in EFL learners' writing performance. It is important to note that the size of the circle in the group document level of the CMB indicates the emphasis placed on the code. Consequently, the bigger the size of each circle, the more the emphasis has been made on that code in the data source.

Figure 3 gives an overview of how the participants addressed the codes. However, it does not provide a detailed analysis of the significance of individual codes for different groups of participants, such as EFL novice and experienced teachers, materials developers, and experts. To address this issue, we used Code Statistics, which allowed for a more comprehensive examination of the data. Code Statistics is a useful feature of MAXQDA that allows us to assess the importance of obtained codes for different groups in their study using advanced algorithms. We used Code Statistics on coded segments as the unit of analysis to determine the frequency of assigned codes in their chosen documents.

Figure 3

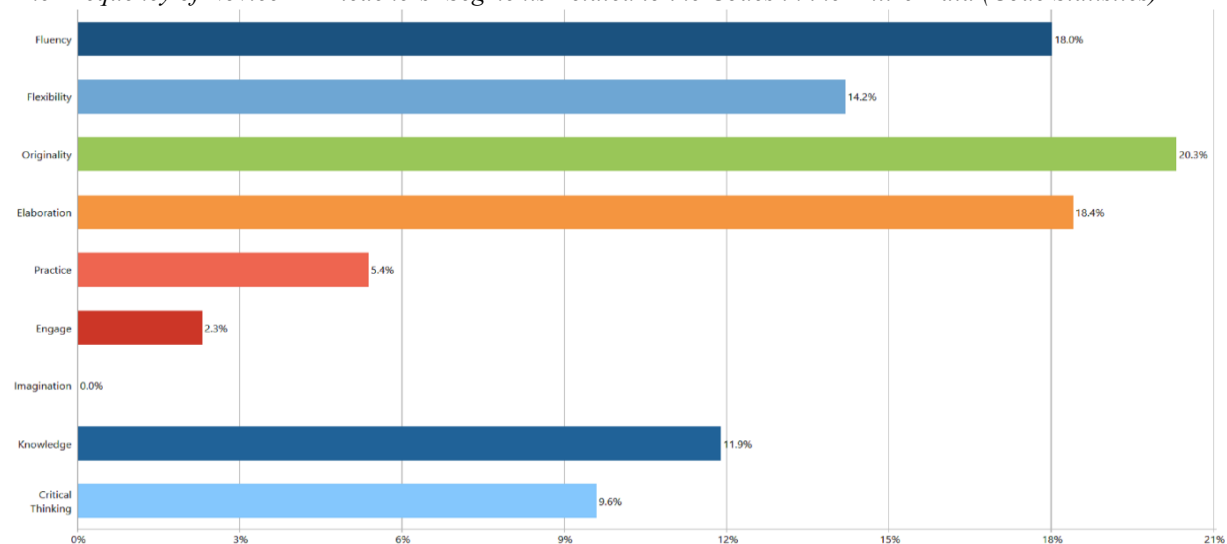
The Inclusion of Codes in the Data (Code Matrix Browser)



As can be seen in Figure 4, most segments in the data obtained through the narratives of novice EFL teachers were about originality. Owing to this, they stated that “..., we should consider writing **uniqueness**, which lies in crafting an **original piece**” (Narrative, NT 11). Then, they considered elaboration to be important in creativity in EFL learners' writing performance. They mentioned that “... **creativity is ... a person's ability to process new ideas ... through expanding and explaining ideas**” (Narrative, NT 4). Concerning fluency, they declared that “... **Individuals who possess creative inclinations ... generating a diverse range of ideas [through] a wide range of vocabulary in their writing**” (Narrative, NT 1). Regarding flexibility, they stated that “...**creativity in writing means the learner's ability to express the same concept in different ways**” (Interview, NT 3). Moreover, novice EFL teachers believed that knowledge, critical thinking, imagination, practice and engagement could help EFL learners to express their ideas creatively. As they sated, “**the key to writing creative essays is to use critical thinking skills ... to consistently practice and apply their acquired skills ... to engage their readers**” (Narrative, NT 12).

Figure 4

The Frequency of Novice EFL teachers' Segments Related to the Codes in the Entire Data (Code Statistics)



Based on the findings presented in Figure 5, it is evident that the narratives of experienced EFL teachers predominantly centered around the subject of originality. In this regard, they stated that “...**developing creativity in writing skills involves exploring new ideas, perspectives, and approaches**” (Narrative, ET 1). The fluency also was critical for them, in which they declared that “... **the key components of creative writing include having an extensive vocabulary, utilizing expressions, examples, synonyms, antonyms, stories, ...**” (Narrative, ET 8). Concerning flexibility, they believed that “... **to facilitate writing, it is essential to establish connections between diverse concepts and generate ideas that are meaningful and relevant**” (Interview, ET 2). Regarding elaboration, they mentioned “... **to produce creative assignments, it is essential to leverage various resources such as form, function, lexis, grammar, coherence, cohesion, and organization**” (Narrative, ET 14)”. The EFL experienced teachers tend to place a higher emphasis on the role of practice in fostering creativity among learners, as compared to their novice counterparts. In their narratives, they argued that “...**consistent writing practice is crucial for L2 learners to refine and enhance their creativity, while also encouraging them to venture into novel concepts and ideas**” (Narrative, ET 10).

Figure 5

The Frequency of Experienced EFL teachers' Segments Related to the Codes in the Entire Data (Code Statistics)

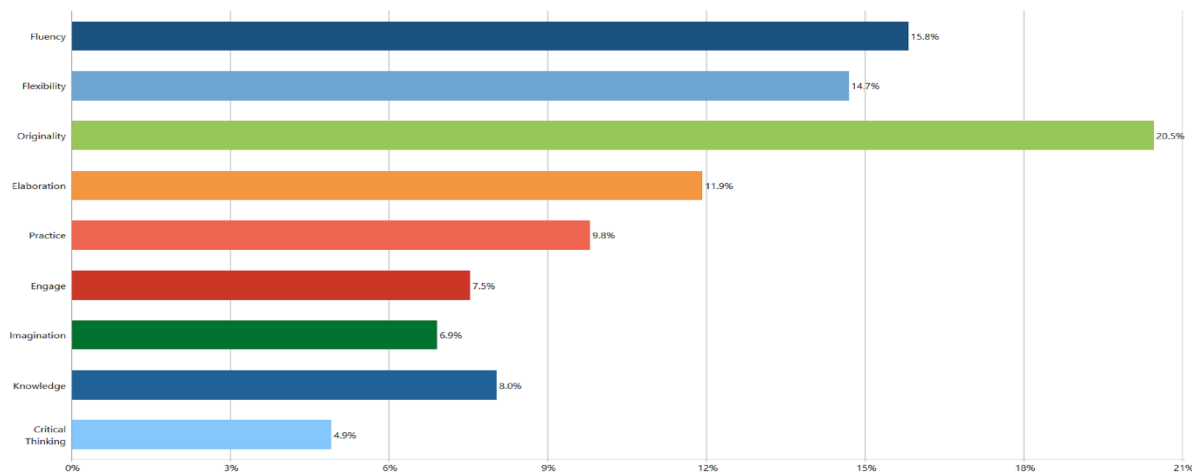


Figure 6 indicated that, upon analysis of narratives from EFL experts, fluency emerged as the most frequent recurring segment. They suggested that “... learners who demonstrate the ability to utilize a **diverse range of vocabulary** and generate a **wide array of ideas** are likely to be more creativity, ...” (Narrative, EX 1). Originality was also critical for EFL experts. They declared that “... one crucial aspect of writing creatively is **innovative and unique ideas**” (Interview, EX 1). Regarding the importance of elaboration, they recommend that “... incorporating **elaboration strategies** such as **anecdotes, examples, references, and explanations** can effectively enhance the creativity in writing” (Narrative, EX 7). Additionally, flexibility was identified by EFL experts important and they believed that “... when evaluating the creativity of written work, it is imperative to consider **the author's capacity to forge connections between disparate concepts and generate a diverse array of ideas**” (Narrative, EX 6). EFL experts also considered imagination, practice, engagement, critical thinking and knowledge as critical factors of creativity in EFL learners' writing. For instance, concerning imagination, they stated that “... to optimize creativity in writing, L2 learners should leverage their **imaginative** faculties. Through **imaginative** exploration, writers can develop **unique and innovative perspectives** that can distinguish their work” (Narrative, EX 4).

Figure 6

The Frequency of EFL Experts' Segments Related to the Codes in the Entire Data (Code Statistics)

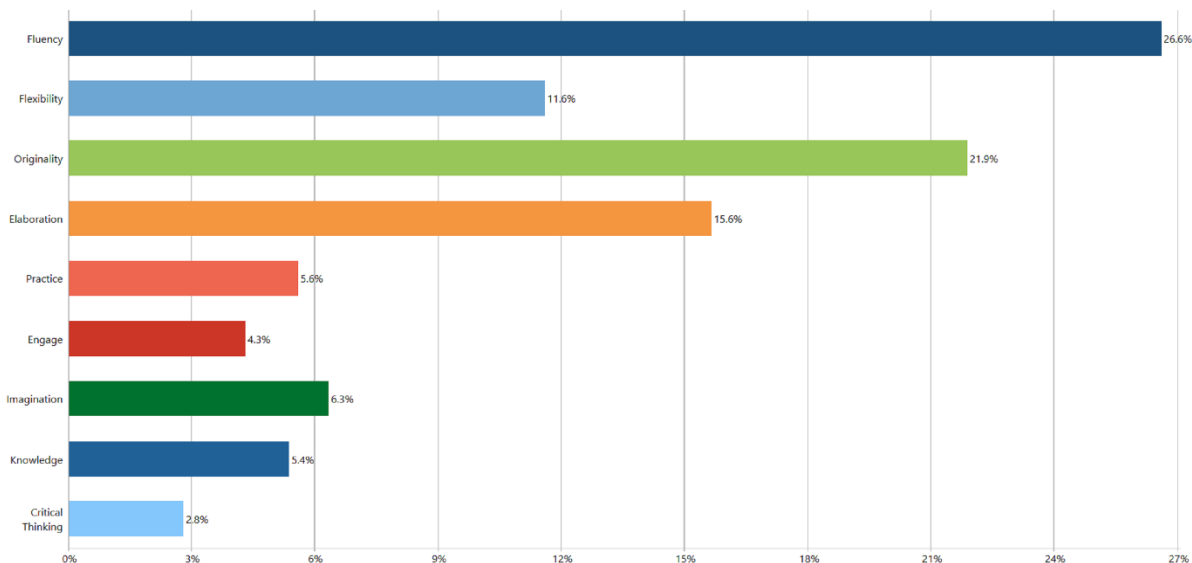
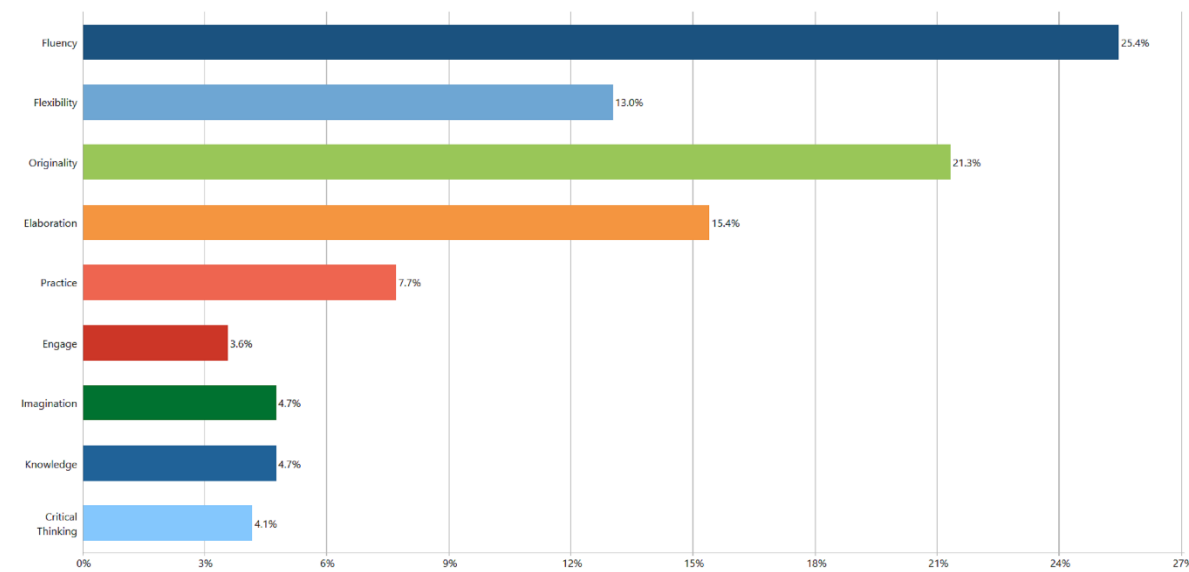


Figure 7 indicates the perceptions of EFL materials developers about creativity in EFL writing. They stated that “...creativity in writing materials should provide this opportunity for the students to be able to combine **different ideas** in a piece of writing... [moreover]... they [students] should be able to

become *idea generators* when studying the materials about how to write in L2” (Narrative, MD 3). Concerning originality, they stated, “... writing material should open *new horizons* for the students to develop their ability in finding *new ideas* in different respects...” (Narrative, MD 5). Regarding elaboration, they declared that “... through the materials, students have to *develop* their writing in terms of *the number of words and expressions*” (Narrative, MD 1). Flexibility was the next important factor for EFL material developers as they argued that “... students should be able to address *different concepts related to various categories of writing*, such as *structure, vocabulary, expression, and transitions*” (Narrative, MD 2). EFL material developers have assigned greater importance to the practice, while EFL experts have highlighted the significance of imagination after flexibility. One of the EFL material developers expressed that “... In my perspective, fostering creativity requires persistent *practice*, which facilitates the development of the ability to generate *novel ideas* across diverse domains” (Narrative, MD 1). Concerning imagination, EFL material developers asserted that “... writing materials should lead to a *change in the vision* of the L2 writers and help them write based on different possibilities which are made by their *mind*” (Narrative, MD 4). Regarding knowledge, EFL material developers believed that “... although practice is critical, the materials should provide both *implicit and explicit knowledge* about creativity...” (Narrative, MD 3). Critical thinking was the next important factor in helping L2 learners to develop their creativity in their writing. According to EFL material developers, “...students should be provided with critical topics, questions, ... so that they *think critically* and give their voice to their writing to develop their creativity” (Interview, MD 1). Finally, in terms of engagement as the least important factor, EFL material developers stated that “... materials should be *interesting* to involve learners in the process of writing to be with their writing” (Narrative, MD 5).

Figure 7

The Frequency of EFL Material Developers' Segments Related to the Codes in the Entire Data (Code Statistics)



Although CMB and Code Statistics are useful in showing the importance of the codes in the data, they do not assist researchers in identifying the main themes necessary for understanding the conceptualization of creativity in EFL learners. These main themes would serve to obtain the overall attitudes of EFL teachers toward creativity in EFL learners' writing performance. To address this issue, we used Code Map, which is a visualization technique that presents a selected set of codes positioned on a map. The arrangement of the codes on the map illustrates their co-occurrence, suggesting that they have been utilized in similar contexts within the data. Each code is depicted in a circular diagram, where the distance between two codes indicates the extent to which they have been employed similarly. Additionally, larger circles represent a higher frequency of code assignment. This clustering approach

has been instrumental in refining and finalizing the overarching themes. Figure 8 provides the results of the Code Map.

As can be seen in Figure 8, there are three zones where the codes are clustered. The first zone, which makes the first theme (Theme 1: *Expanded New Ideas in L2 Writing Show Creativity*), contains a cluster of two codes: originality and elaboration. The EFL stakeholders, including novice and experienced EFL teachers, EFL experts, and EFL material developers, believed that “... *When L2 writers provide a comprehensive explanation [Elaboration] for a new idea [Originality] in their writing, it can be inferred that their writing is creative. This is due to their ability to write extensively [Elaboration] about their ideas which have not been addressed previously [Originality]*”.

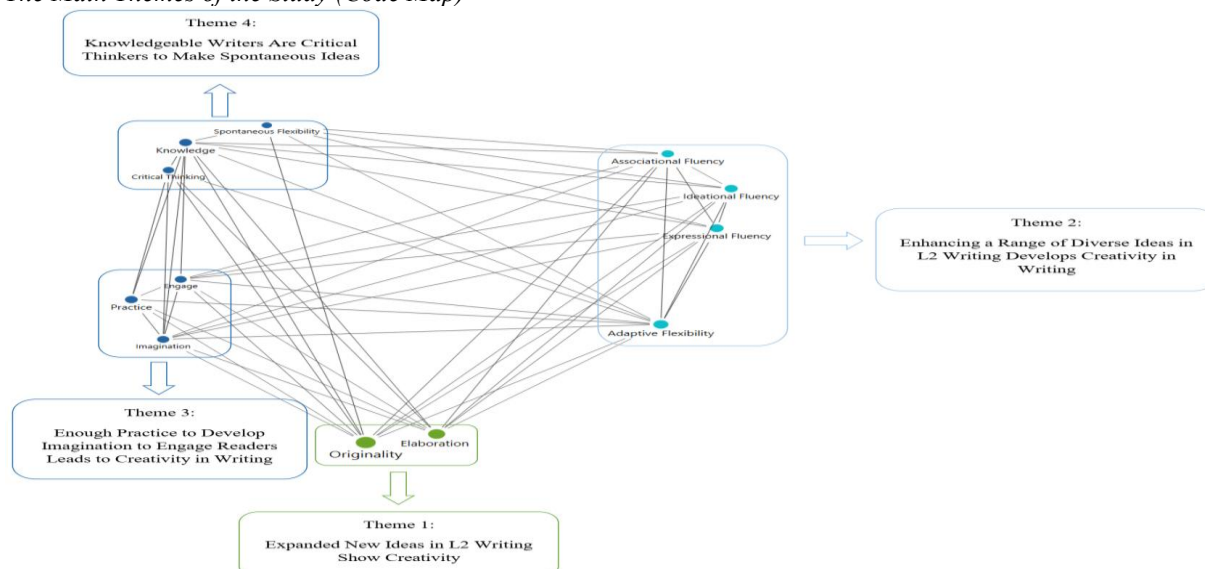
The second zone encompasses four critical factors that lead to the emergence of the second theme (Theme 2: *Enhancing a Range of Diverse Ideas in L2 Writing*). These factors, namely associational fluency, ideational fluency, expressional fluency, and adaptive flexibility, are instrumental in facilitating the creation of a diverse range of ideas across different categories in the process of L2 writing. The EFL stakeholders stated that “... *a writing in which the L2 writer makes various ideas to write about the topic [Fluency] or uses various structured and expression [Fluency] is creative when those ideas can represent different categories [Flexibility] ... for instance, if the writer writes different subtopic sentences for their writing [Fluency], creativity is in their ability to use different strategies to write subtopic sentences, such as anecdotes, examples, statistics [Flexibility]*”.

In the third zone, six codes exist that cluster into two parts. The first part comprises practice, imagination, and engagement, and these codes lead us to the third theme (Theme 3: *Enough Practice to Develop Imagination to Engage Readers*). In this regard, EFL stakeholders asserted that “... *utilizing imagination in writing, particularly in non-academic texts [Imagination], enables L2 writers to involve readers in their writing [Engagement] showcasing creativity ... also encompasses how L2 writers integrate their personal features into their writing. For instance, a risk-taker L2 writer can display bravery by defying the norms. Consistent practice is imperative in developing imagination and involvement in the writings of L2 writers who write creatively*”.

This zone has another code cluster with three codes: critical thinking, knowledge, and spontaneous flexibility. The combination of these codes leads us to another theme (Theme 4: *Knowledgeable Writers Are Critical Thinkers to Make Spontaneous Ideas*). Regarding these results, EFL stakeholders believed that “... *Knowledge is power; therefore, knowledgeable L2 writers [Knowledge] are thinking smoothly and critically [Critical Thinking], ... They can write about different topics from different angles [Flexibility]... Thus, such a piece of writing is a creative one*”.

Figure 8

The Main Themes of the Study (Code Map)



Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore EFL stakeholders' conceptualization of creativity in EFL learners' writing. The findings showed four themes as the four different conceptualizations in this regard. The themes include: "expanded new ideas in L2 writing show creativity", "enhancing a range of diverse ideas in L2 writing develops creativity in writing", "enough practice to develop imagination to engage readers leads to creativity in writing", and "knowledgeable writers are critical thinkers to make spontaneous ideas". The themes showed that EFL stakeholders' conceptualization of creativity in EFL learners' writing go around the theoretical aspects of creativity, especially the one we used in this study: a psychometric perspective of creativity. In the following paragraphs, the ways creativity is conceptualized in EFL learners' writing are discussed.

Expanded New Ideas in L2 Writing Show Creativity

The first theme we found about the conceptualization of EFL stakeholders concerning creativity in EFL learners' writing was "expanded new ideas in L2 writing show creativity." This theme highlights the significance of originality and elaboration in enhancing the creative abilities of L2 writers. As noted by Dow (2022), originality serves as a fundamental component in the generation of novel ideas. For L2 writers, originality not only fosters distinct expressions in a foreign language but also encourages the exploration of unfamiliar concepts and perspectives, thereby enriching their writing style and voice. In addition to originality, elaboration plays a vital role in the creative writing process. According to Pipes (2023), elaboration encompasses the development and enhancement of ideas, thereby making them more comprehensive and detailed. When L2 writers actively engage in elaboration, they can expand on their original concepts, providing deeper insights and more nuanced arguments.

This combination of originality and elaboration is essential, as it empowers writers to transform initial ideas into well-developed pieces that effectively engage their audience and to have more ideas (Tajabadi & Meihami, 2024). Furthermore, the interaction between these two elements enables L2 writers to address topics that may have been previously overlooked or underexplored. As these writers gain confidence in their ability to generate and elaborate on ideas, they are better positioned to present novel perspectives, contributing meaningfully to discussions within their language-learning community. Ultimately, nurturing both originality and elaboration in L2 writing not only fosters creativity but also empowers writers to communicate their thoughts and experiences more effectively and authentically. The integration of originality and elaboration significantly enhances the creativity of EFL learners. When these two components are effectively combined, they create a powerful dynamic that allows students to articulate their thoughts and ideas in more nuanced and innovative ways. Originality encourages learners to consider unique perspectives and to generate new ideas (Weiss & Wilhelm, 2022), while elaboration facilitates the expansion of those ideas, adding depth and detail (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). Consequently, EFL learners who embrace both originality and elaboration are likely to produce written work that is creative.

Enhancing a Range of Diverse Ideas in L2 Writing Develops Creativity in Writing

The second theme we found in this study is "enhancing a range of diverse ideas in L2 writing". This theme emerges from the principle of enhancing a range of diverse ideas in L2 writing, highlighting the significance of various types of fluency. This theme underscores the integration of associational, ideational, and expressional fluency, along with adaptive flexibility, as crucial components in fostering creativity among EFL learners' writing. Guilford's (1975) definition of fluency as the ability to generate a multitude of ideas or solutions provides a foundation for exploring how these fluencies interconnect. Fluency facilitates the generation of diverse ideas and concepts in L2 writing, allowing EFL learners to express themselves more creatively (Pipes, 2023). Furthermore, adaptive flexibility encourages EFL learners to forge connections between unrelated ideas, resulting in innovative and meaningful compositions (Pei et al., 2017). Together, these elements enable EFL learners to approach writing tasks with a broader perspective, encouraging them to experiment with different structures and viewpoints.

Enough Practice to Develop Imagination to Engage Readers Leads to Creativity in Writing

The third theme derived from the data analysis is “enough practice to develop imagination to engage readers”. This theme is centered around three codes: practice, imagination, and engagement. It underscores the importance of consistent writing practice in cultivating imagination, which is essential for effectively engaging readers. L2 Writing in a second language presents complexities and is a critical skill, with creativity playing a vital role in its development. According to Kaufman and Sternberg (2019), creativity nurtures imagination, which serves as a gateway to new possibilities (Hyry-Beihammer et al., 2022; Thomas, 2019). Imagination is a crucial cognitive process that enables EFL learners to improve their creative expression in writing (Romadhon & Heriyawati, 2023). Another key factor in fostering creativity in EFL learners' writing is the role of practice. Writing is a skill that predominantly develops through practice rather than formal instruction. Moreover, the role of practice is significant in nurturing creativity in EFL learners' writing. Engaging in writing allows individuals to convey their personal thoughts and ideas (Dorn & Soffos, 2023). As such, regular writing practice is imperative for developing the imagination of EFL learners and for enabling L2 writers to engage their readers more effectively.

Knowledgeable Writers Are Critical Thinkers to Make Spontaneous Ideas

The fourth theme we found based on the conceptualization of EFL stakeholders about creativity in EFL learners' writing was “knowledgeable writers are critical thinkers to make spontaneous ideas”. This theme emphasizes the essential co-occurrences among knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the ability to generate spontaneous and creative ideas in EFL learners' writing. This theme emerged from the interplay of critical thinking, knowledge, and spontaneous flexibility. Knowledge serves as a cornerstone for creativity; without it, the creative act becomes limited (Plucker, 2022). A solid grasp of language structure, vocabulary, and context enriches a learner's potential to express themselves creatively. Furthermore, critical thinking is crucial for developing and refining creative products. It enables learners to analyze their thoughts, question assumptions, and construct coherent arguments (Kaufman & Sternberg, 2019). The association between critical thinking and argumentative writing is significant, with studies showing that EFL learners who engage in critical analysis tend to produce more creative essays (Pei et al., 2017). Spontaneous flexibility, as described by Guilford (1968), refers to an individual's ability to adapt and generate a variety of ideas. EFL learners who demonstrate flexibility in their writing by integrating diverse aspects of language—such as syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and discourse—are likely to produce more creative and engaging texts. This ability can be nurtured through practice and exposure, fostering an environment where learners feel encouraged to explore various linguistic expressions.

This conceptualization of creativity in EFL learners' writing emphasizes a procedural process. First, knowledge is fundamental for critical thinking, as it enhances individuals' ability to make informed decisions, solve problems, and generate ideas (Golden, 2023). As EFL learners advance their knowledge of English—from syntax to discourse—they become more adept at overcoming language challenges and making sound decisions when tasked with idea generation. Second, the development of knowledge promotes critical thinking among EFL learners during writing practice, fostering greater flexibility in their thinking (Guilford, 1968). This flexibility allows them to explore a wider range of options while writing, leading to more creative outcomes. By cultivating their understanding of the language, learners can draw from a richer repertoire of vocabulary and structures, enabling them to express their ideas more clearly and effectively.

Conclusion and Implications

The objective of this study was to investigate the perceptions of EFL stakeholders regarding creativity in the writing of EFL learners. The findings and subsequent discussions indicate that creativity in EFL learners' writing can be fostered through the incorporation of psychometric factors, namely fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration (Dow, 2022; Guilford, 1959; Pipes, 2023). Furthermore, it can

be concluded that specific elements, such as practice, engagement, critical thinking, knowledge, and imagination, serve as essential components for enhancing these psychometric factors of creativity in writing (Golden, 2023). Thus, the conceptualization of creativity in EFL learners' writing can be approached from both theoretical (psychometric factors of creativity) and practical (practice, engagement, critical thinking, knowledge, and imagination) perspectives.

The study highlights several important pedagogical implications regarding the role of psychometric factors in enhancing creativity within EFL learners' writing. First and foremost, it emphasizes the necessity for explicit instruction that incorporates these psychometric factors into EFL writing classes. By doing so, teachers can foster a more creative writing environment that aligns with learners' cognitive processes. Additionally, materials developers are urged to integrate these factors into EFL writing resources, ensuring that students encounter creativity-enhancing elements in their learning materials. Furthermore, EFL teacher education programs and training courses should make it a priority to provide both preservice and in-service teachers with a clear understanding of these psychometric factors. This knowledge is crucial for educators to recognize the significance of these factors in their teaching practices. By developing this awareness, teachers can play a vital role in nurturing creativity among EFL learners, thereby improving their writing skills. Ultimately, the alignment of teaching strategies, materials, and teacher preparation with psychometric insights can lead to a more effective EFL writing curriculum that promotes creative expression and deeper engagement in the learning process.

It is essential to acknowledge the limitations. A primary limitation is that we did not have access to a comprehensive range of EFL teachers, materials developers, and EFL experts while conceptualizing creativity in EFL learners' writing during the initial phase of the research. Additionally, it is noteworthy that all participants in this study were situated within the Iranian context. Further research studies are required to confirm the obtained themes in quantitative studies. Developing scales to address the perceptions of EFL teachers to assess creativity in EFL learners' writing. This can be done through exploratory and confirmatory statistical analyses. Moreover, future studies can develop a rubric to assess creativity in EFL learners' writing.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors have no conflict of interests.

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Appendix 1

Dear Teacher,

With greetings and respect

Creativity is a fundamental element that contributes to quality across various domains, particularly in the field of education. The development of creativity is paramount, especially in the context of learning English as a foreign or second language, where creativity plays a vital role in the educational process. Consequently, it is imperative that English teachers incorporate innovative methods and techniques into their instructional practices to enhance educational outcomes. A comprehensive understanding of creativity in English writing will enable educators to teach writing skills more effectively by emphasizing the critical factors that influence creative expression. Moreover, these factors ought to be considered when assessing students' proficiency in English writing.

At present, there is a lack of an established assessment scale specifically designed to measure creativity in English writing skills. We seek to draw upon your extensive experience in English instruction, particularly in teaching writing, to first explore the conceptual framework of creativity in writing and subsequently identify the relevant factors for evaluation. By examining these essential components of creativity in English writing, educators will be better positioned to integrate them into their teaching methodologies, thereby promoting and cultivating creativity among their students.

It is essential to clarify that creativity in writing encompasses more than the composition of stories, poetry, or literary works; it also includes the ability to produce a variety of text types.

Accordingly, we respectfully request your assistance in conducting our research by sharing your perspectives regarding the role of creativity in writing skills and the methods for evaluating it. We welcome your narratives in either written form or as audio recordings.

As you compose your narrative, please adhere to the following recommendations:

- Begin with a broad overview, proceed to share specific experiences, and conclude with your insights.
- Start from your earliest experiences and progress to your current understanding of the topic.

In conclusion, we wish to express our gratitude for your willingness to contribute your time and insights. Your narratives will significantly aid us in advancing our understanding of creativity in English writing and its evaluation.

Please submit your narratives (either written or spoken, in Persian or English) to the email address provided below.
fatemehusseini99@gmail.com

Appendix 2

Narratives on Creativity in L2 Writing

Creativity in EFL writing involves thinking outside the box, coming up with new ideas, having a unique style, and avoiding being too predictable.

At Nemoone-Dolati Senior High School, I had a remarkable student who consistently ventured into unconventional compositions, pushing the boundaries of traditional writing styles. I recall one instance vividly, where she delved into a narrative about a dreamland in which memories could be stolen. Her approach to composition writing was notably distinct from her peers. Beyond her narrative ingenuity, she demonstrated a keen interest in poetic expression, precisely writing her words to capture the flow of language. Her utilization of poetic devices such as metaphor, imagery, and rhyme added depth to her compositions.

I believe that one of the essential elements for success in EFL writing lies in the willingness to take risks. In my opinion, proficient writers are those who boldly go through new and unexplored areas in writing that no one has mapped yet. They fearlessly experiment with various styles and genres, thereby uncovering fresh avenues of creativity.

Creative writing is an expressive form of literature that wholeheartedly embraces the writer's imagination, innovation, invention, and distinctive style. It is a world where the emotions of the author permeate the narrative. Moreover, creative writing captivates its audience, drawing them into the details of that imaginary world.

In evaluating writing creativity, I employ a multifaceted approach, considering various criteria. These include the originality of ideas, the element of surprise in conclusions, the conscious avoidance of clichés, and the adept utilization of personal imagination.

In my own classes, assessing writing creativity is illustrated through specific assignments. For example, the students are tasked with writing a short story. Then, I look for originality in their pieces of writing by assessing whether their stories introduce unique ideas, rather than relying on clichés. Additionally, I gauge the element of surprise in their conclusions, examining whether they effectively defy the readers' expectations in order to capture their interest. I also encourage them to delve into their own imagination, prompting them to explore unique perspectives and narrative angles. Finally, I assess their ability to draw up fresh narratives, looking for evidence of skillful storytelling that engages the reader and brings the story to life. By considering these criteria, I can provide comprehensive feedback to help students enhance their writing creativity in English.

There are several effective methods to aid EFL learners in enriching their writing skills through fostering creativity:

- *Exploration through different writing styles and genres*: Encouraging learners to engage in trial and error across a spectrum of writing formats, including poetry and scriptwriting, is crucial. Experimenting with diverse genres not only broadens their creative scope, but also facilitates novel modes of self-expression.
- *Immersion in diverse forms of artistic expression*: Exposure to a range of materials such as literature (poetry, drama, fiction, etc.), art, music, and films is essential. By actively consuming different mediums through reading, watching, and listening, learners will be able to derive inspiration for their own creative endeavors. In essence, external stimuli play a pivotal role in igniting the spark of creativity within them and nurturing their writing prowess.

From my perspective, one effective way to enhance writing skills and foster creativity is through a project-based approach that integrates use of a wide range of writing styles. For instance, students could embark on a multimedia project where they experiment with different formats such as short stories, poems, and even screenplay/plot writing. By encouraging them to explore these diverse genres, they not only expand their creative views, but also gain valuable experience in adapting their writing to different audiences and purposes.

To further enrich their creative abilities, I sometimes ask students to analyze literary works, listening to music, and watching animations. Through these experiences, students draw inspiration for their own creative writing projects. For example, after analyzing a classic poem or film scene, students could be asked to write their own interpretation of the story, encouraging them to apply their creative insights.