

Creative Speaking in Foreign Language Learning Systematic Literature

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Abstract:

Creative speaking is an essential component of foreign language learning because it strengthens linguistic flexibility, communicative confidence, and the quality of spoken language production. Nevertheless, classroom practices remain dominated by conventional methods that offer limited opportunities for learners to explore language creatively. This study aims to identify the urgency of speaking creativity, pedagogical solutions proposed in recent literature, and the benefits gained in foreign language learning contexts. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following Kitchenham's (2004) guidelines, reputable scientific articles published between 2020 and 2025 were reviewed from Scopus, ScienceDirect, ERIC, and Web of Science databases. Of the 122 articles initially found, 23 met the inclusion criteria based on the PRISMA flow and were analyzed in depth. Findings reveal three central characteristics of speaking creativity research: (1) task design and contextual support, including digital storytelling, CLIL, social media-based interaction, and collaborative speaking tasks; (2) cognitive and psychological dimensions, such as divergent thinking, cognitive flexibility, motivation, and personality factors; and (3) pedagogical and collaborative innovations, including performative learning, technology-enriched instruction, and plurilingual approaches. Analysis of RQ1 demonstrates that creative speaking is crucial for improving fluency, coherence, accuracy, and communicative effectiveness. RQ2 indicates that creative pedagogical solutions arise through innovative task design, digital tool integration, and supportive collaborative learning environments. RQ3 confirms that speaking creativity contributes significantly to linguistic development, cognitive growth, affective engagement, and 21st-century skills, particularly critical thinking and problem solving. This study concludes that speaking creativity is a core foundation in modern language education and must be integrated through adaptive and innovative pedagogical strategies. Practical implications are offered for teachers, researchers, and curriculum designers to foster creative expression, collaboration, and effective communicative performance in global language learning.

KEYWORDS: creativity in speech; foreign language learning; verbal creativity; systematic literature review; 21st-century competencies

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Berbicara Kreatif dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa Asing dan Sastra Sistematis

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Abstrak:

Keterampilan berbicara kreatif merupakan komponen penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa asing karena mampu meningkatkan keluwesan berbahasa, kepercayaan diri berkomunikasi, serta kualitas produksi bahasa lisan. Namun, praktik pembelajaran di kelas masih didominasi pendekatan konvensional yang kurang memberikan ruang bagi eksplorasi kreatif peserta didik. Penelitian ini bertujuan memetakan urgensi kreativitas berbicara, solusi pedagogis yang ditawarkan dalam literatur terbaru, serta manfaat yang diperoleh dalam konteks pembelajaran bahasa asing. Dengan menggunakan metode *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) berdasarkan pedoman Kitchenham (2004), penelitian ini menelaah artikel ilmiah bereputasi yang terindeks Scopus, ScienceDirect, ERIC, dan Web of Science, yang dipublikasikan antara tahun 2020 hingga 2025. Dari 122 artikel yang teridentifikasi, melalui proses seleksi PRISMA, diperoleh 23 artikel yang memenuhi kriteria inklusi dan dianalisis secara mendalam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kajian mengenai kreativitas berbicara berfokus pada tiga karakteristik utama: (1) desain tugas dan dukungan kontekstual, termasuk *digital storytelling*, CLIL, media sosial, serta tugas berbicara kolaboratif; (2) faktor kognitif dan psikologis, seperti berpikir divergen, fleksibilitas kognitif, motivasi, dan kepribadian; serta (3) inovasi pedagogis dan kolaboratif, meliputi pembelajaran performatif, integrasi teknologi, dan pendekatan plurilingual. Analisis RQ1 menegaskan bahwa kreativitas berbicara diperlukan untuk meningkatkan kefasihan, koherensi, akurasi, dan efektivitas komunikasi. RQ2 menunjukkan bahwa solusi pedagogis kreatif dapat dikembangkan melalui desain tugas inovatif, pemanfaatan teknologi digital, dan lingkungan belajar kolaboratif. RQ3 menemukan bahwa kreativitas berbicara memberikan manfaat signifikan bagi perkembangan linguistik, kognitif, afektif, serta kompetensi abad ke-21, seperti berpikir kritis dan pemecahan masalah. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kreativitas berbicara merupakan fondasi penting dalam pembelajaran bahasa modern dan perlu diintegrasikan melalui strategi pedagogis yang adaptif dan inovatif.

Kata Kunci: Kreativitas berbicara; pembelajaran bahasa asing; kreativitas verbal; systematic literature review; kompetensi abad ke-21.

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INTRODUCTION

Speaking skills are one of the main pillars in foreign language learning because they are directly related to the real communication abilities of students. Language proficiency is not limited to grammar and vocabulary, but also includes the ability to use language creatively in order to adapt to various communication contexts. In this case, creativity in speaking is an important factor that encourages learners to express themselves boldly, think flexibly, and produce coherent and interesting speech (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

In recent research developments, creative speaking has been shown to contribute to increased self-confidence (Li, 2025), cognitive flexibility (Kormos, 2024), and collaborative communication competence (Eschenauer et al., 2023). Innovative pedagogical strategies such as digital storytelling (Zhussupova, 2023), Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Guntur et al., 2023), and the use of social media (Febriani et al., 2024) show that creativity can be fostered through instructional designs that are relevant to the real world of students.

However, foreign language learning practices in the classroom still often face obstacles in the form of a lack of task variety, the dominance of conventional methods, and limited media, which tend to make students passive. There are two important issues in this study, namely why is speaking creativity necessary in foreign language learning? How can mapping be done to include solutions and benefits in speaking creativity?

In addition to serving as a core communication skill, speaking ability is an indicator of success in foreign language learning in a global context. The rapid development of communication technology, international mobility, and professional competency requirements have made creative speaking skills a strategic necessity in modern language education. In today's learning ecosystem, students are not only required to be able to convey messages linguistically correctly, but also to be able to express ideas flexibly, interestingly, and effectively in various social situations.

Recent interdisciplinary research trends show that creativity is a key variable in the effectiveness of speaking skills. Studies in psycholinguistics confirm that linguistic creativity facilitates faster and more adaptive information processing, especially in spontaneous communication situations (Kormos, 2024). From a pedagogical perspective, speaking tasks that emphasize problem solving, storytelling, improvisation, or collaborative discussion have been shown to activate higher-level cognitive processes such as idea association, language structure reorganization, and affective expression (Eschenauer et al., 2023; Suzuki et al., 2022). This indicates that speaking creativity not only improves fluency but also strengthens speech quality in terms of coherence, content elaboration, and persuasiveness.

On the other hand, the development of digital technology has significantly expanded opportunities for developing speaking creativity. Media such as virtual learning platforms, digital storytelling apps, mobile-assisted language learning, and social media-based speaking tasks (Instagram Reels, TikTok-based micro speaking practice, or student podcasts) have become pedagogical alternatives that enable students to practice speaking authentically, contextually, and creatively (Zhussupova, 2023; Febriani et al., 2024). The convergence of formal and non-formal learning through digital media provides space for students to develop their linguistic and expressive identities more freely.

However, empirical challenges in many countries, including in the Asian context, show that speaking learning in the classroom is still dominated by conventional techniques such as memorizing dialogues, drilling, and one-way question and answer sessions. These methods do not provide opportunities for students to explore language creatively, so their speaking performance tends to be repetitive and lacks linguistic innovation. The lack of variety in speaking tasks, the underutilization of authentic media, and the limitations of creativity-based instructional design are the main obstacles. This situation shows a gap between the demands of 21st-century competencies and current language learning practices.

Therefore, the need for scientific mapping of how creativity is studied, developed, and integrated into foreign language learning is becoming increasingly urgent. To address this issue, this study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine internationally indexed articles from 2020 to 2025 to identify theoretical developments, pedagogical approaches, empirical findings, and models for implementing speaking creativity that have been proven effective. Using the SLR approach with reference to Kitchenham's (2004) guidelines, this study seeks to formulate comprehensive answers regarding the urgency of speaking creativity and mapping innovative solutions that support the improvement of foreign language learning globally.

The results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to researchers, practitioners, and curriculum developers in formulating pedagogical strategies that are more responsive to current learning needs in the development of language learning models that are more adaptive, innovative, and oriented towards the needs of the 21st century.

METHOD

This study uses a systematic literature review (SLR) method that aims to identify, evaluate, and interpret available research in accordance with the formulation of the research problem or topic. This SLR is carried out based on the guidelines proposed by Kitchenham (2004) with three main steps, namely planning, implementation, and reporting. The detailed steps are as follows:

3.1. Planning

The first stage involved reviewing literature related to the research focus. The first step in the planning stage was concept development. At this stage, the researcher determined the topic to be studied, namely creative writing in a foreign language. Then, the researcher determined the research questions that were relevant to the topic, scope, and context of the study, namely: RQ1. Why is speaking creativity necessary in foreign language learning? RQ2. What are the solutions to the problem of speaking creativity? RQ3. What are the advantages of using speaking creativity?

3.2. Conducting

This literature search was conducted using the Scopus, ScienceDirect, ERIC, and WoS databases with the keywords "speaking creativity" and "language learning" with limited years, resulting in 122 related articles. From these 122 articles, the author classified them according to inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Based on the above criteria, relevant data was obtained and used as a data source for 11 of the 122 articles related to "speaking creativity in language learning."



The other articles did not meet the inclusion criteria, namely articles in languages other than English and Indonesian, publications prior to 2020, articles in journals outside the Scopus index, and articles in forms other than articles.

In this step, researchers present the results of data analysis based on predetermined research questions. The presentation of data analysis results takes the form of answers to research questions, comparisons of research results between analyzed articles, and conclusions.

3.3. Reporting

The reporting stage is the final step in SLR, which aims to present the results of literature review in a transparent, systematic, and replicable manner. At this stage, the entire planning and implementation process is documented in a scientific report with a structure that follows international standards for SLR publications. This report includes the presentation of search results, selection, data analysis, and interpretation of findings based on the research questions (RQ1–RQ3).

First, this report presents the flow of article identification and selection using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach. This section shows the number of articles found ($n = 122$), the number of articles eliminated at the title–abstract screening stage, the number of articles that did not meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria, and the final number of articles that were fully analyzed. Each selection stage is explained with a descriptive narrative to ensure transparency of the process.

Second, the report includes the compilation of data extraction tables that summarize key information from the reviewed articles, including the year of publication, country of research, research methods, learning context, dimensions of speaking creativity discussed, and key findings. These tables serve as empirical evidence of the analysis process and enable readers to understand the patterns and characteristics of the literature in the 2020–2025 period.

Third, the results of the analysis and synthesis of findings are presented based on the structure of the research questions. For RQ1, the report highlights the theoretical and pedagogical arguments for why speaking creativity is important in foreign language learning. For RQ2, the report explains the solutions found in various studies, such as task design innovation, the use of digital technology, collaborative approaches, and divergent thinking development strategies. Meanwhile, for RQ3, the report explains the benefits of using speaking creativity in linguistic, affective, and cognitive aspects, as well as 21st-century competencies.

Finally, the report also contains critical reflections on the limitations of SLR, such as limitations in the language of publication, the range of years covered by the research, and the potential for selection bias. The reporting stage concludes with recommendations for further research and practical implications for the development of foreign language pedagogy. Thus, the reporting stage in this SLR ensures that the entire research process is presented comprehensively, accountably, and in accordance with international methodological standards.

3.4. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To ensure that the selected articles are relevant and of high quality, this study applies the following inclusion and exclusion criteria:

a. Criteria for Inclusion

- Type of article: Reputable international journal articles (Scopus, WoS, ERIC, ScienceDirect).
- Year of publication: 2020–2025.
- Publication language: English.
- Research context: Foreign language learning (second language learning).
- Specific topics: Studies discussing speaking creativity, verbal creativity, creative speaking, innovating speaking tasks, or creative speaking pedagogy.
- Research methods: Empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods), experiments, quasi-experiments, case studies, or theoretical reviews relevant to speaking creativity.
- Document availability: Full text accessible.

b. Criteria for Exclusion

- Articles with topics on creativity unrelated to speaking skills (e.g., creativity in writing, art, design).
- Articles discussing native language or first language (L1) learning, not foreign languages/L2.
- Opinion papers, editorials, proceedings that have not undergone rigorous peer review.
- Duplicate articles or revised versions of the same publication.
- Articles that do not provide empirical data and are not relevant to the research questions.

Criteria for inclusion/exclusion

Factor	Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Context/Scope	Speaking creativity in language learning	General speaking creativity
Language	English, Indonesian	Languages other than these two
Year	2020 – July 2025	Before 2020
Article Quality	Scopus, Elsevier, WoS, ERIC, SINTA 2	National journals below SINTA 2
Publication Type	Original research articles	Proceedings, novels, textbooks, essays, etc.
Method	All research methods	-

3.5. PRISMA Flow Diagram (Descriptive + Table)

Table 1. PRISMA Flow of Study Selection

Selection Stage	Number of Articles	Description
Identification	122	Articles identified through Scopus, ScienceDirect, ERIC, and WoS using the keywords “creative speaking,” “speaking creativity,” and “language learning.”



Duplicates Removed	18	Duplicate articles across databases.
After Duplicates	104	Articles proceeded to title and abstract screening.
Title and Abstract Screening	59 eliminated	Not relevant to speaking creativity; focused on other skills; or situated in non-foreign-language contexts.
Articles for Full-Text Review	45	Articles assessed based on inclusion–exclusion criteria
Articles Excluded in Full-Text Review	22	Did not meet criteria (e.g., lacked empirical data, focused on technology without relevance to speaking creativity, or used an insufficiently relevant methodology).
Articles Included in the Synthesis	23	Final articles analyzed to address RQ1–RQ3.

The identification process found a total of 122 articles from four international databases. After removing 18 duplicate articles, 104 articles remained for the title–abstract screening stage. At this stage, 59 articles were eliminated because they did not meet the topic relevance criteria. A total of 45 articles were then analyzed in full (full-text). Of these, 22 articles were excluded because they did not meet the inclusion criteria in terms of methodology, context, or relevance to speaking creativity. Finally, 23 articles met all the criteria and were used in the synthesis of the findings of this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on a review of the literature, it appears that 11 articles discussing creativity in speaking have three main characteristics, namely task design and contextual support, cognitive and psychological factors, and pedagogical and collaborative innovation.

Research on creativity in foreign/second language speaking skills in the period 2022–2025 generally emphasizes the relationship between creativity and oral communication performance. Several studies highlight how creativity affects the quality of oral language production, both through differences in speaking task types, as in the studies by Suzuki et al. [3] and Qin [2], and through the support of pedagogical strategies such as digital storytelling, the use of social media (Instagram), or the CLIL approach, which has been shown to encourage courage and fluency in speaking as well as creative thinking, as in the studies by Roza & Rustam [9] and Guntur et al. [11], and Febriani et al. [10]. These characteristics indicate that creativity is not merely an internal factor but is also triggered by the learning context and task design.

In addition, international research shows that there are cognitive and psychological dimensions to creativity in speaking a foreign language. Several studies link creativity to linguistic aspects [3], thinking skills [12], and even the influence of personality on second language acquisition [6]. Other research expands on the context of bilingualism and plurilingualism, which can strengthen verbal creativity [8]. In fact, the integration of performative and collaborative activities in learning has been proven to support creativity as well as communication competence [7].

4.1. Characteristics of research on speaking creativity

Type of Content	Term	Reference
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Empirical study	Creativity, task type, L2 speech production	Suzuki, S., <i>et al.</i> (2022) [1]
Empirical study	Learner creativity, task planning, and narrative speaking	Qin, J. (2024). [2]
Empirical/Theoretical	Creativity and linguistic features (argumentative & narrative texts)	Kormos, J. (2024). [3]
Empirical/Review	Creativity and linguistic features (argumentative and narrative texts)	R.F.J. Haans (2024). [4]
Emperical	Creativity, learning independence, and speaking skills	S. Muslimah [5]
Empirical study	Personality, creativity, and L2 learning	C. Li (2025) [6]
Empirical (pilot study)	Creativity, communication competence, and collaborative learning	S. Eschenauer <i>et al.</i> , (2023) [7]
Review/Conceptual	Plurilingual creativity, bilingualism & creativity	A.V. Kharkhurin (2024) [8]
Case study	Digital storytelling, academic public speaking, and creativity	R.Zhussupova (2023) [9]
Empirical	Communicative materials via Instagram, creativity, and speaking	S.R. Febriani <i>et al.</i> (2024) [10]
Empirical	CLIL approach, speaking skills, creative thinking	M. Guntur <i>et al.</i> (2023) [11]

Creativity in speaking is necessary in foreign language learning because it serves as the main driver of fluency, courage, and quality of oral expression. A review of 11 recent studies shows that creativity enables learners to generate new ideas, adapt language to the context of the task, and build more coherent and engaging communication. Furthermore, creativity has been proven to strengthen critical thinking, independent learning, and cognitive flexibility, which are essential in dealing with diverse communication situations. Through innovative pedagogical strategies such as digital storytelling, CLIL, or the use of social media, creativity not only improves language skills but also fosters motivation and courage to speak in multilingual classrooms. Thus, speaking creativity becomes an important foundation for learners to master foreign languages in a more meaningful, adaptive, and communicative way.

4.2. Mapping creativity in speaking in recent research

The problem of creativity in speaking in foreign language learning usually arises due to a lack of task variety, low motivation, limited media, and the dominance of conventional methods that make students passive. The solution is to introduce innovative learning strategies such as the use of task-based learning, digital



storytelling, the CLIL approach, and interactive social media. In addition, teachers need to foster a collaborative and supportive environment that encourages students to express themselves boldly, as well as pay attention to psychological factors such as learning independence and self-confidence.

The benefits of using speaking creativity are significant, as students are not only able to produce more fluent, varied, and coherent speech, but also develop critical thinking skills, cognitive flexibility, and confidence in communication. Creativity makes language learning more meaningful, enjoyable, and relevant to real-world contexts, so that students' speaking skills develop in line with 21st-century life skills such as collaboration, problem solving, and innovation.

Most research on creativity in foreign language learning still focuses on the relationship between creativity and specific task performance (e.g., narrative, argumentative, or digital storytelling), while internal learner processes such as metacognitive strategies, emotional regulation, and social interaction dynamics have not been explored extensively. Furthermore, studies are still limited to university and high school contexts, so further research could be directed at primary education or non-formal learning communities to see how speaking creativity develops from an early age. Another gap lies in the lack of longitudinal studies that track the development of speaking creativity over the long term, as well as its relationship with artificial intelligence technology, which is now increasingly present in language learning.

CONCLUSION

This discussion emphasizes that speaking creativity is a strategic element in foreign language learning because it connects linguistic ability with the courage to express oneself, critical thinking, and adaptation to various communication contexts. Various recent studies show that creativity is not only influenced by individual factors, but also by instructional design, technological support, and a collaborative learning environment.

Thus, speaking creativity needs to be positioned as one of the main orientations in the development of language learning models, while also opening up new areas for more in-depth research related to internal processes, different educational contexts, and the use of digital innovations.

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