



## **Fostering Bilingual Creativity in English Poetry Classroom: A Postcolonial Creative Writing Strategy**

**Winda Setia Sari<sup>1</sup>, Anna Tambunan<sup>2</sup>, Citra Anggia Putri<sup>3</sup>, Juli Rachmadani Hasibuan<sup>4</sup>**

English Department Faculty of Language and Art  
Universitas Negeri Medan  
[windasetiasari@unimed.ac.id](mailto:windasetiasari@unimed.ac.id)

Permalink: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24036/ld.v16i2.120365>

Submitted: 11-11-2022

Accepted: 12-12-2022

DOI: 10.24036/ld.v16i2.120365

Published: 12-12-2022

### **Abstract**

The study accentuates bilingual creativity as the pedagogical intervention of postcolonial creative writing strategy in poetry class through the writing of haiku and short poems. Twenty-five students in their freshmen year at the English Department were engaged in reading a culturally local text (Sumatra-Javanese ethnic poetry to compose poetry from a post-colonial perspective). The workshop's five phases exploring, inciting inspirations, drafting, editing, and peer feedback provided the student, as a novice writer, with the benefit of familiarizing themselves with character, theme, and cultural issues; developing a cognitive process to negotiate different meanings in their first and second languages; and exploring creativity to write their own poetry in the second language. The scripts written in English are the product of poetry classes, which reveal students' localized knowledge and cultural literacy. The works reflect the participants' cultural identity, even though English is the dominant language showcased in the almost fifty poems composed by the novice writers. The existence of local languages points to the development of their bilingual creativity; students in the poetry classroom are not only able to handle the meaning in the first and second languages, but also to promote their local culture to the global world.

**Keywords:** *Bilingual creativity, postcolonial writing strategy, haiku, ethnic short poems, pedagogical intervention, second language learning*

### **Abstrak**

Studi ini menggali penerapan dwi-bahasa sebagai intervensi strategi pedagogi dalam penulisan kreatif karya sastra poskolonial di kelas puisi melalui penulisan haiku dan puisi pendek. Dua puluh lima siswa di tahun pertama mereka di Jurusan Bahasa Inggris terlibat dalam membaca teks budaya lokal (puisi etnik Sumatera-Jawa untuk menulis puisi dari perspektif pascakolonial dengan menerapkan penulisan dwi-bahasa atau bilingual). Lima fase lokakarya yaitu mengeksplorasi, mengstimulasi inspirasi, menyusun, mengedit, dan umpan balik rekan memberikan kesempatan manfaat kepada mahasiswa, sebagai penulis pemula untuk membiasakan diri dengan karakter, tema, dan masalah budaya; mengembangkan proses kognitif untuk menegosiasikan makna yang berbeda dalam bahasa pertama dan kedua mereka; dan mengeksplorasi kreativitas untuk menulis puisi mereka sendiri dalam bahasa kedua. Naskah yang ditulis dalam bahasa Inggris adalah produk dari kelas puisi, yang mengungkapkan

pengetahuan lokal mahasiswa dan literasi budaya. Meskipun bahasa Inggris adalah bahasa dominan yang ditampilkan dalam hampir lima puluh puisi yang dikarang oleh para penulis pemula, karya-karya tersebut mencerminkan identitas budaya para partisipan. Keberadaan bahasa daerah menunjukkan berkembangnya kreativitas bilingual mereka; siswa di kelas puisi tidak hanya mampu menangani makna dalam bahasa pertama dan kedua, tetapi juga mampu untuk mempromosikan budaya lokal mereka ke dunia global.

**Kata Kunci:** *Dwi-bahasa, strategi penulisan karya sastra poskolonial, haiku, puisi etnis pendek, intervensi pedagogis, pembelajaran bahasa kedua.*

## INTRODUCTION

Conducting a creative writing workshop in a second language opened some ways to reach meaning-making (Hannuer, 2012; Lida, 2016). Especially in light of the fact that studying across language and culture has become increasingly widespread in recent years, students can experience the learning process in a more personal way. And second language creative writing classroom has evolved into a venue where it is permissible to write creatively local ideas in global English.

One strategy for encouraging the idea of synergy between the target language and the local literary paradigm is to implement creative writing techniques within a postcolonial framework (Mansoor, 2013). The merger of language and culture is effective. In recent years, creative writing has provided a platform for learners to engage in this kind of worldwide celebration of regional culture. The fundamental concern of post-colonial literary academics who try to find a route to the playful nature of English has been the idea of creative writing as an effective technique to promote local culture in English as a global language.

There haven't been many studies conducted on creative writing techniques in post-colonial settings. Sui (2015) found that the presence of a sense of "inferiority" toward English has dominated classroom behavior and production. Since the purpose of classroom activities is still the recovery of national and local identity, the post-colonial setting strongly opposes the idea. Writing in English as a language that has gone global (Global English's) can also help aspiring authors develop their cross-cultural competence (Rosenhan and Galowey, 2019; Kim and Kim, 2018). The idea of composing literary works in many languages, including one's mother tongue, is becoming more prevalent as global English's challenge the hegemony of English (Ahmed, 2020).

In the context of studying English and English literature as a foreign language, the aforementioned notion has generated controversy (EFL). The ability to compose poetry in English which is writing in a second language while maintaining your cultural identity and mother tongue, came through learning to write literary works in the framework of postcolonial literature (Mansoor, 2013). However, in the context of studying English and English literature as a foreign language, the aforementioned notion has generated controversy in EFL classroom instructions. Writing poetry in English has been stigmatized working well with the L1 and an advanced L2 learner. Literature learning especially poetry in the English is less common in L2 academic context Zyngier (1994). He argued that using literature in the L2 classroom presents some difficulties: In literary writings, vocabulary, grammatical structures, and syntax provide challenges for L2 readers and L2 students are expected to learn to write academically rather than creatively. Echoing in the same way, Arshavskaya (2015) suggests the advanced-level ESL writing course content included a necessary creative

writing assignment which means there is not any room for the novice writers. Another study conducted by Hanuer (2012) had been trying to generate a resistance with the presumption that "only professionals, accomplished, and first language English speakers write poetry" when located in an EFL writing setting.

Despite off the hesitancy and worriedness about novice writer's disability to write poetry in English, one of the potential sources in a postcolonial literary setting is to use bilingual creativity, better known as writing in English and exploring local cultural values. Bilingual Creativity or Bilingual Creativity does not only mean writing in two languages. Xiaolong (2019) on his research about bilingual writing with translation practice revealed that bilingual creativity is able to enhance linguistic sensitivity in creative writing workshop participants by writing in different linguistic awareness. Students learn about the interaction of two cultures and two languages. In addition, Sui (2015) conducted an English-language poetry writing workshop that was taught in a Chinese environment as part of his research on the creative writing programs at Chinese institutions. Sui discovered beneficial outcomes when examining the intersections of two cultures and languages English and Chinese including students' self-exploration of local culture and acquisition of global English (global English's) through the act of creating poetry. According to Sui (2015) and Tay (2015), the emergence of multilingual creativity offers aspiring authors the ability to discover their identities as individuals and as language users. As Mansoor (2013) noted that the practice of producing poetry in two languages simultaneously can foster a synergy between the local literary canon and English as the target language. Mansoor used indigenous literary works in the workshop she ran as part of her research to encourage the use of both languages. Participants in the study were advanced students in college classrooms. She looked into how the traditions of different types of Urdu literature could be used in advanced-level English classes that teach creative writing.

The practice of writing with this postcolonial literary trend can certainly be designed in a workshop in a poetry classroom. The practice of crafting poetry in the context of postcolonial literature is therefore found to be very important for research, with a priority on bilingual creativity and the exploration of local culture. Echoing in the same way, this research discusses how bilingual creativity is introduced to second language students; yet, different from the existing studies, the present research focused on novice writers engaging in the processes of reading, thinking, feeling, writing, and playing two languages. This study seeks to provide answers to two queries by concentrating on how to develop bilingual creativity in a second language. What are the strategies of postcolonial creative writing that foster bilingual creativity? How were students engaged in reading a culturally local text to produce poems in a global language?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research uses qualitative research methods with an emphasis on case study research design. A full grasp of the problem under investigation is stressed by the case study research paradigm. The case study approach is used to thoroughly examine a single symptom or phenomenon with a limited scope (Yin, 2009). This research was conducted in English Literature study program of Medan State University with the focus on poetry appreciation class. The class met the requirement of having a specific phenomenon for a case study research and it is likely to be the subject of this study because the students experienced numerous creative processes and difficulties in writing poetry. Case studies, in accordance with Bodgan and Biklen (1997), focus on one context, one individual, or one storage location particular document or event.

Similar to Surachmad (1982), who restricted the case study approach as a strategy by concentrating attention on a case intensely and in depth, the case study has limitations that include: (1) research targets can include people, events, locations, and documents (2) To comprehend the many links that exist between the variables, these objectives are analyzed in depth and detail as a whole, according to each background or context. Peer review, critique, and collective experience are also key components of case study research in the discipline of creative writing (Betty and Sinclair, 2014). The role of the facilitator also provides a space for the activation of learning resources.

Twenty five participants were recruited from one class of English department undergraduate programme. The twenty five students are all beginning writers or novices in their first year. They are enrolled in a study program for English literature. Twenty-one of the participants were female, and nine were male. All of the participants in this group completed their high school education in Indonesian formal settings, where they also primarily studied English as a foreign language

Five consecutive workshops over a 2-month period held virtually. The workshop is divided into 5 phases; exploring, inciting inspirations, drafting, self - reflection and peer evaluation. The research for this study started with an investigation into how students could benefit from reading both local and postcolonial poetry as an enrichment and source of inspiration. The research then moved on to activities for gathering data through five series of workshops and more in-depth data analysis. The phase of development research known as the preliminary stage is where problems and needs are examined and analyzed. A requirements analysis is part of this initial stage of the process. An examination of the creation of literary forms in the context of postcolonial literature with an emphasis on themes of bilingualism which are local culture and events.



**Figure 1: Five stages of creative writing workshop**

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The workshop, which was held over two months, was a series of activities that began with the introduction of the concept of English poetry based on bilingual creativity and the concept of creative writing based on local culture. Reading material for poetry from western (canon) and third-world authors, like those from Hong Kong, China, Nigeria, and Singapore writers, provides enrichment. This reading material has been enhanced online.

During the first phase of research, students read and investigated the works that had been put on e-Learning during the first two weeks. In order for students to recognize the characters and events in Haiku that are extremely similar to their own personal experiences, this reading material enrichment intends to pique their interest in

the idea of bilingual creativity. Also, students are shown some works that pinpoint the integration of Haiku into Indonesian context.

1. As I lay and gaze  
Blue skies and white clouds  
Billowing high above me  
Vast, black and savage  
The thunderstorm approaches  
Looming disaster
2. Morning dew  
Lingers on tobacco leaves  
Smell of ashes
3. Busy roadside  
The day moon fills up  
Beggar's bowl  
(from: <https://indonesiainmyhaiku.wordpress.com/>)

From the silence and serene situation provoked in the line of Haikus by Bahso (Haiku 1), to the haikus describing Indonesian busy road while characterizing the sight, sound and taste of local setting (haiku2 and 3), poetry workshop facilitated students to learn how to become culturally sensitive, broad-minded, and eloquent. So when the two haikus were introduced to them, they analyze the works as a contact poetry. As Sui (2015) wrote that writing "contact poetry" in English may assist EFL students learn new ways of communication since the English language's foreignness may open their eyes to different cultural viewpoints. Students discovered themselves and found fresh ways to connect to the poem and slowly gain ability to communicate a global vision in two languages.

Haiku number 1 is specifically Japanese haiku. Nature with its element like skies, cloud and thunderstorm characterized intense emotion in Japanese context, yet the haikus are universally able to comprehend by the novice writers, given by some description of Japanese themes. Haiku Number 2 and 3 were presented to the students at the subsequent phase in which they learn typical Indonesian figure, setting and character. The rhythmic flow of Japanese came in to the contact of students' attempt to identify localized element of Indonesian's culture. Haiku Tobacco leaves and smell of ashes are compelling to the students. Busy road and beggar's bowl in Haiku number 3 brought vision to Indonesian setting. The images of big city accompanied by the visual imagery of beggar holding the bowl is specifically view of Indonesia. Setting and theme of Haiku in the exploration phase successfully shaped more understanding from participants about the two literary traditions. Participant arrived at a deeper understanding of the quintessential properties of both languages (Sui, 2015).

The workshop in the next phase was a series of activities in stages two and three, namely inciting inspiration and drafting. The session in stage two was designed to provide students a chance to identify their text model during the second week. The model of haiku in this session showcased some Indonesian local content. The following sample of Haiku described wayang both in English and Bahasa Indonesia.



**Figure 2. Model Text**

Bilingual writing not simply writing in two languages, but also writing with awareness of the various linguistic sensitivities, potentially leading to convergence of the two and also leading to a deeper comprehension of the two cultures (Xiaolong, 2019). The model text about wayang is written in two languages and permit any thought for the participants in the workshop to start composing haiku in both English and Indonesia. During this inciting inspiration stage, more sample of model texts were offered and participant discussed the linguistic interaction. Observation to any new ideas and enlighten liven the workshop.

Students drafted short poems and haiku poems during the second week and third week of poetry class. Digital poetry from the website [www.haiku-indonesia.com](http://www.haiku-indonesia.com) is also a part of this investigation into the recognition of Haiku poetry. Students have also been given the chance to compose drafts of haiku poetry and their own brief poems based on regional customs and culture during this stage's second week. Writing poetry would make second language writers more engaged and experience meaningful re-contextualization of poetry making (Hanuer, Lyda, and Chamrasti (2014, 2016, and 2016). Personal and recollective elements in three lessons covering diverse topics like food, material cultures, traditional house and traditional dance were explored in this drafting phase. The almost two-hour-long seminar produced 50 haikus and 10 short poem. The indigenous cultural content was chosen so that pupils may reflect on the local they observed in their environment. Themes on places and memory were also practiced at this level to hone the skill of writing poems about. The drafting phase accomplished by students developing the routine tasks and posting them on e-learning. Another 40 haiku showcasing regional culture were prepared by this student as part of a routine assignment. The following are some tentative product before proceed into the peer review phase.

**Table 1. Student model**

Student model 1	Student model 2	Student model 3
Sinabung Mountain Karo's people biggest Fear When eruption comes	Ask for some money, My brother replied to me "Uwani Piro"	Javanese and Bataknese And how blessed I am Caught in the middle

The third week's workshop activities included receiving feedback and going through a "revision" phase. During the same week, these two phases were completed.

Each pupil brought a poem draft. This stage was all about giving friends a place to comment on their draft haiku. Each pupil traded assignments. Additionally, the zoom "sharing screen" displays comment recommendations. Following peer evaluation, the revision step was completed, and the following week, students presented their finished creations.

## Discussion

The research found that students in a poetry classroom have been engaged in the creative process of writing poetry by completing the five phases of postcolonial creative writing strategies. The strategies and the intervention conducted by the facilitator worked well during the first two phases. The strategies included connection and recontextualization. Some English haikus and short poetry were learned as model texts and comprehensible input to produce their own poetic written performances. The reading of model poetry stimulated students to open intercultural communication among some students coming from different ethnic groups in Indonesia. The discussion of how they perceived the traditional "songket" and "ulos" in their own cultural background while making connection with the short poetry of "quilt" by African American woman poets worked well in the context of making connection. The strategies in the two first phases provoked this kind of connection process. Further in the research, the phases of exploration and inspiration have been utilized to get students to think creatively in two languages to make the connection between two cultures.

Making connections was followed by other strategies called recontextualization. Sui (2015) proposed this model in his university-level poetry writing workshops in English in China. This strategy transformed well-known figures of speech into new images, ideas, and feelings so that they had a more general significance. This novice writer may not have general ideas to start with the poetry writing project, yet coming into the third phase of the workshop, which was drafting and peer review, students were ready to add new images in their cultural context. Poetry shown in the previous sessions clearly showcases students' ability to seek new meaning by recontextualizing L1 elements into their context.

Students overcame the transition from reader to writer from an active reader to a learner writer—by studying the writing of others. They researched the haikus and other brief poems that were published online and discovered the aspects of regional culture highlighted on the websites. Some works of post-colonial writers and local poets were introduced to the participant; they do not brought the empty baggage with them prior to the drafting phase. They observed specific works and discuss in the classroom. Surprisingly, they began to develop their own poetic identity. At poetry writing workshops, the value of example poems should never be understated. Students attempt to provide their own poetic descriptions in English by drawing inspiration from the notions, motifs, techniques, rhythmic patterns, and or sounds of a model poem. At this point, students were ready to offer their own poetic descriptions in English.

To improve both students' learning experiences, encouraging group learning and developing independent learning skills were conducted in the final phase of the workshop. This how students engaged in reading the locally cultured poetry to produce a more globalized poem. Group learning in the peer review phase gave students opportunity to learn their peer indigenous or ethnic poems, and they responded to specific themes in the context of their culture. Their cultural background caused contradictory concept among them. And regarding the same subject, various students have incredibly divergent and occasionally conflicting viewpoints. The student writer is then reminded of the significance of taking readers' reactions into account. Class did



not gone chaos but would seem to look as lively as students pursue the happiness of sharing each other. The significance of English poetry in the Indonesian context was clearly explained to the students as one of the principles of bilingual creativity. They read specific cultural context to produce global English.

Creative writing workshops must include examples of a variety of approaches so that each aspiring writer can discover their own through experimentation (Gross, 2015). In line with the statement, the experimentation in this research utilized postcolonial strategies for implementing bilingual creativity in a poetry workshop by providing the novice writers a chance to explore the work of others through all the sequences in the workshops. Not only did they learn from the work of L1 writers, but the peer review phase provided another opportunity for them to learn about ethnic works written by their friends in the classroom. The experiments in this study were situated beyond imitation; they were experiments with re-conceptualization.

## CONCLUSION

Using postcolonial writing strategies, students easily recognize subjects, societal issues, cultural concepts, or character types that are known to their sociocultural surroundings. Given the emphasis on bilingual creativity, poetry as a product of learning and creative processes, represents many of the students' localized cultures and beliefs. They recreate localized, or nativised, variations of English Haiku and short poems that have been extensively acknowledged by researchers in the studies of postcolonial literature and "World English's". Their Batak, Sumatran, and Javanese identities are represented in the language utilized. Students progressed in the direction of bilingual creativity step by step, encountering and overcoming a variety of challenges along the way. English has shaped the new voices of second language students who write poetry in English. It has become a key part of how they choose to express their poetic and personal identities through their chosen bilingual expression.

## REFERENCES

- Ahmed, Sameer. (2020). Decentring English through bilingual creative practice, *New Writing*. DOI: 10.1080/14790726.2020.1810279
- Arshavskaya, E. (2015). Creative Writing Assignments in a Second Language Course: A Way to Engage Less Motivated Students. *InSight: A Journal of Scholarly Teaching*, 10, pp.68-78.
- Batty, Craig., & Jennifer Sinclair. (2014). Peer-to-peer Learning in the Higher Degree by Research Context: A Creative Writing Case Study, *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, 11:3, 335-346, DOI: 10.1080/14790726.2014.932814.
- Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. K. (1997). *Qualitative research for education*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Disney, D. (2014). *Exploring Second Language Creative Writing: Beyond Babel*, John Benjamin Publishing Company, Available at: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=eZTOAwAAQBAJ>
- Gander, Forrest. (2018). Ethical dilemmas in the translation of poetry into English, *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/23306343.2018.1489462
- GEOK-LIN LIM, S. H. I. R. L. E. Y. (2015). Creative writing pedagogy for world Englishes students. *World Englishes*, 34(3), 336-354.
- Gross, P. (2015). "Roots in the Air": the teaching of creative writing in UK universities. *Scriptum: Creative Writing Research Journal*, 2(1).



- Hanauer, D.I. (2012). Meaningful literacy: Writing poetry in the language classroom. *Language Teaching*, 45(1), pp.105–115.
- Hanauer, D.I. (2010). *Poetry as Research: Exploring Second Language Poetry*. Writing, John Benjamins Publishing Company. Available at: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=UiBBxu1c3zIC>.
- Jabrohim., Chairul Anwar., Suminto A. Sayuti. (2003). *Cara Menulis Kreatif*. Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Kim, Min Kyung., & Soyeon Kim. (2018). A poetic inquiry into learning English as an additional language: Korean learners' perceptions through sijo, Korean poetry, *Language Awareness*, DOI: 10.1080/09658416.2018.1527344
- Mansoor, Asma. (2013). The Recipe for Novelty: Using Bilingualism and Indigenous Literary Genres in an Advanced Level L2 Creative Writing Context in Pakistan, *New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing*, 10:1, 52-66, DOI:10.1080/14790726.2012.742550
- Pavlenko, A., & Lantolf, J.P. (2000). Second language learning as participation and (re)construction of selves. In J.P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning*, p.155–178. Oxford: OUP.
- Qiu Xiaolong. (2019). Bilingual writing vs. translating, *Asia Pacific Translation and Intercultural Studies*, 6:2, 129-136, DOI: 10.1080/23306343.2019.1674568
- Rosenhan, C., & Galloway, N. (2019). Creativity, self-reflection and subversion: Poetry writing for Global Englishes awareness raising. *System*, 84, 1-13.
- Sui, G. (2015). Bilingual creativity: University-level poetry writing workshops in English in China. *English Today*, 31(3), 40
- Suvilehto Pirjo. (2017). Messengers in the shadow: a case study in creative writing and dreams, *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, DOI: 10.1080/08893675.2018.1396735
- Tay, Eddie. (2009). Multiculturalisms, Mistranslations and Bilingual Poetry: On Writing as a Chinese, *New Writing*, 6:1, 5-14, DOI: 10.1080/14790720902898699
- Zyngier, S. (1994). Literature in the EFL classroom: Making a comeback? *PALA Occasional Papers*, 6, 3-16