

CITATION

Dewi NLYP, Ciptaningrum DS, (2026). Exploring Constructivism in Primary School Students' Creativity in Speaking Class. Ijomata International Journal of Social Science. 7 (3), 871-876. doi: 10.61194/ijss.v7i3.2123

TYPE Original Research

PUBLISHED 31 July 2026
DOI 10.61194/ijss.v7i3.2123
VOL 7 Issue 3 July 2026

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Exploring Constructivism in Primary School Students' Creativity in Speaking Class

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Abstract

Students' creativity constitutes a central cognitive-pedagogical capacity that supports speaking skill development within a Constructivism framework, particularly in primary education. Despite its theoretical importance, empirical evidence indicates that the integration of creativity-oriented constructivist strategies in speaking classrooms remains limited, especially in developing contexts. Addressing this gap, this study explores how constructivist pedagogy facilitates students' creativity in speaking classes. It examines: (1) how constructivist learning models influence creativity, (2) which learning activities are perceived as effective in stimulating creativity, and (3) the challenges faced by teachers in implementation. This qualitative case study involved two English teachers and thirty fifth-grade students, with data collected from six classroom sessions. Data sources included classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and lesson plan documentation. Students' creativity was operationalized through indicators of idea fluency, originality, flexibility in language use, and elaboration in speaking performance. Data were analyzed using Thematic Analysis to identify recurring instructional patterns. The findings indicate that constructivist practices enhance students' creativity through interactive learning, scaffolding, and performance-based assessment. Teachers perceived project-based learning, contextual tasks, and collaborative discussions as effective in fostering creative expression. However, challenges include limited linguistic proficiency, cognitive readiness, and instructional constraints. This study contributes empirically grounded insights into the operationalization of creativity within constructivist speaking instruction at the primary level.

KEYWORDS

creativity; constructivism; speaking skills; primary students.

Introduction

Constructivism has been widely recognized as a pedagogical paradigm emphasizing knowledge construction through active engagement, reflection, and social interaction (Allen, 2022; Budi Utomo et al., 2023). Within this framework, learners are positioned as active agents who construct meaning based on prior experiences, while teachers function as facilitators who design interactive and student-centered learning environments (Husaini, 2025; Li, 2025). Constructivist pedagogy also challenges traditional transmission-based instruction by encouraging learning through social interaction, experiential processes, and reflective engagement (Wulandari & Hendriani, 2021). In this regard, effective implementation involves creating environments that promote self-directed learning, sensory engagement, and active participation (Brau, 2020; Mahulette et al., 2020). In primary education, such an approach is particularly relevant for speaking instruction, as oral language development requires not only linguistic competence but also active cognitive and social engagement. However, despite strong theoretical grounding, the practical enactment of constructivist principles in primary speaking classrooms remains uneven, particularly in contexts where instruction is still dominated by rote learning and limited student participation.

Parallel to this, creativity has been identified as a critical dimension in language learning, encompassing capacities such as idea fluency, originality, flexibility, and

elaboration in expression (Capron Puozzo & Audrin, 2021; Stolz et al., 2022). Creative engagement enables learners to actively construct meaning and enhances motivation, enjoyment, and confidence in speaking performance. The development of creativity is influenced not only by internal factors such as motivation but also by external support from teachers and peers (Khalifatus Sakdiyah et al., 2024; Pangestu, 2021). However, empirical challenges persist, including students' anxiety, limited linguistic repertoire, and variability in cognitive readiness, which constrain the integration of creativity into speaking pedagogy (Ratnasari, 2020; Satyarini, 2022; Umabiinaturun, 2023). Additionally, difficulties in fostering creative thinking such as generating diverse ideas and expressing them fluently remain prominent in speaking instruction (Nashiroh et al., 2024; Suzuki et al., 2022).

In practice, learning activities do not always integrate creativity systematically. Creative learning should enable students to explore ideas, solve problems in multiple ways, and engage meaningfully in communication (Islami & Armianti, 2020; Ngo, 2024). Indicators such as curiosity, originality, imagination, and willingness to take risks are essential in identifying creative learners. However, in many educational contexts, including Indonesia, instructional practices still emphasize cognitive achievement over creativity, limiting opportunities for exploratory and student-centered learning (Aini et al., 2023; Ismawanti et al., 2023; Pridayanti et al., 2022; Rachmawati et al., 2021).

A critical gap emerges from the limited qualitative evidence explaining how constructivist speaking activities concretely elicit observable creativity in primary EFL contexts. Existing studies tend to emphasize theoretical alignment without sufficiently documenting classroom-based processes, teacher strategies, and measurable creativity indicators. Furthermore, there is a lack of integrative frameworks explicitly linking constructivist pedagogy with operationalized dimensions of creativity in speaking tasks.

To address this gap, this study proposes a conceptual framework that connects constructivism, speaking pedagogy, and creativity dimensions. Constructivist learning environments shape speaking instruction through interactive tasks, scaffolding, and collaboration, which in turn foster creativity manifested in fluency, originality, flexibility, elaboration, and risk-taking in oral performance. Within this framework, creativity is treated as an observable and assessable construct emerging from instructional design.

This study contributes by developing a thematic map linking constructivist practices, teacher strategies, and empirically grounded creativity indicators in primary speaking classrooms, triangulated through observation, interviews, and lesson plan analysis. Accordingly, this research aims to investigate: (1) how the constructivist learning model influences primary students' creativity in speaking classes, (2) what constructivist learning activities are perceived as effective in stimulating students' creativity in speaking performance, (3) what challenges teachers encounter in implementing a constructivist approach, and (4) how creativity is operationalized and assessed within constructivist speaking tasks through identifiable indicators and rubric dimensions.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to enable an in-depth exploration of how Constructivism is enacted in primary speaking classrooms. The case was explicitly bounded to one fifth-grade English class in an international primary school in Sleman, Yogyakarta, involving two English teachers and 30 students. Data were collected across six observed lessons over a four-

week period. The uniqueness of this case lies in the intentional integration of constructivist speaking activities within an international school context, allowing detailed examination of how students' creativity is pedagogically facilitated, observed, and assessed.

Data collection involved classroom observations, structured teacher interviews, and lesson plan analysis. Observations focused on identifying creativity indicators, including fluency, originality, flexibility, elaboration, and risk-taking in speaking performance. Interviews were conducted exclusively with teachers; thus, findings reflect teachers' perspectives, observed student behaviors, and documented instructional plans rather than students' internal experiences. A structured interview format (Knott et al., 2022) was employed to ensure consistency across participants, while limited probing was applied to clarify responses and capture contextual depth. Lesson plan analysis examined the alignment between planned instruction and the integration of creativity-oriented constructivist tasks.

The research instruments included observation sheets, interview protocols, and document analysis checklists, all developed based on predefined creativity indicators. Data analysis followed a thematic analysis procedure consisting of codebook development, systematic coding, theme generation, and cross-data validation. Initial codes (e.g., idea generation, student interaction, scaffolding practices) were iteratively grouped into broader themes linking constructivist strategies and creativity dimensions. To ensure trustworthiness, this study applied data triangulation across observations, interviews, and documents, maintained an audit trail of analytic decisions, and conducted peer debriefing to enhance coding reliability. Ethical procedures included institutional approval, informed consent, and confidentiality assurance. The researcher acted as a non-participant observer to minimize bias and maintain objectivity throughout the study.

Result and Discussion

The constructivist learning model influence primary students' creativity in the speaking class

In this section, researchers want to know how the constructivist learning model can influence primary students' creativity in the speaking class through classroom observation, interview, and documentation by analyzing lesson plans. After analyzing, there were four main themes and several sub-themes that arise in influence primary students' creativity in the speaking class based on the constructivist learning model. Consisting of: 1) Implementation of constructivism and creativity, 2) The positive impact of constructivism on creativity, 3) Teacher strategies, 4) Scoring aspects (see table 1).

Implementation of constructivism and creativity

From the coding, it shows that self-discovery, creative projects and tasks can influence primary students' creativity in the speaking class. Based on the results from interview with the teachers, it shows that the students need to get used to active in exploring questions and data independently and teachers should not often spoon-feed students with knowledge sharing. Teachers should show efforts in making students more active and independent in the learning process (Moh Bisri, 2024). Constructivist learning methods also make students practice working on projects that involve creativity.

Classroom observations showed that students' participation in speaking activities was uneven and highly dependent on task structure, with greater engagement occurring in interactive activities aligned with Constructivism, and disengagement emerging during less structured or poorly scaffolded tasks. A discrepancy was identified between teacher interviews and observational data, where teachers perceived students as consistently active, while actual

Table 1. Thematizing and Coding from Research Question 1

Theme	Sub Theme	Code
Implementation of constructivism and creativity	Self-discovery	Students explore the material independently
	Creative projects and tasks	Creative projects
The positive impact of constructivism on creativity	Project assignment	Project assignment to create a creative product
	Cognitive skills development	Exploration and analysis process
Teacher strategies	Students collaboration	Peer activity
	Giving feedback	Giving feedback
Scoring aspects	Overcoming students' lack of self-confidence	Overcoming students' lack of self-confidence
	Scoring indicators	Scoring indicators

Table 2. Thematizing and Coding from Research Question 2

Theme	Sub Theme	Code
Context-based learning and discussion	Topic and context relevance	Student enthusiasm for trending topics
	Authentic topic discussion	Discussion on global issues
Project-based learning (PBL)	Project assignment	Project assignment to create a creative product
	Different Task-Based Collaboration	Group discussions and projects

classroom behavior revealed fluctuating engagement influenced by instructional conditions. This indicates that student participation and creativity are not automatic outcomes of constructivist implementation but are contingent upon effective scaffolding, task design, and classroom management.

This theme is in accordance with constructivism theory where teachers familiarize students with creating self-directed learning and are also in line with the characteristics of creativity, namely doing assignments independently and showing high originality in sharing the ideas. However, there are still students who are not active in the learning process and do not show creativity. So, teachers must be able to maximize the implementation of constructivism and students' creativity in speaking class.

The positive impact of constructivism on creativity

From this theme, it shows that project assignment and cognitive skills development can influence primary students' creativity in the speaking class. Based on the results from interview with the teachers, it shows that students' cognitive skills can develop through constructivism. Teachers can observe when students are able to explore and analyze the problems they face and find solutions independently.

This theme is in accordance with the theory of constructivism where teachers make students be more active in the learning process by asking them to do project assignments which are then presented orally. After that, students' abilities in exporting and analyzing things can also be honed. This is in accordance with the characteristics of creativity where students have great curiosity and have good problem-solving skills when exploring and analyzing things.

Learning activities that involve problem-solving provide students with real-life opportunities to practice fluency and confidence in speaking, which encourages real-world problem-solving and enhances communication skills (Ima, 2022).

Teacher strategies

The constructivist learning model can influence primary students' creativity in the speaking class through students' collaboration, giving feedback, and overcoming students' lack of self-confidence. Based on the results from interview with the teachers, it shows that Teachers get students used to doing peer activities so they can collaborate with each other to improve their speaking skills and improve their creativity. Teachers also provide feedback to students to determine their ability to understand the material and find solutions together. Not all students have a high level of self-confidence, so teachers help students to remain confident by randomly appointing students to answer questions or start presentations.

The strategies used by teachers are also in accordance with constructivism theory. Teachers create self-directed learning for students in doing peer activities, then teachers become a learning facilitator in helping students revive self-confidence and provide feedback. The characteristics of creativity can also be seen in teacher strategies. To foster students' creativity in speaking class, teachers need to prepare the strategies that trigger creativity, because with creativity in teaching, it can create more interesting and less monotonous learning (Sojanah & Hadi, 2020). The teacher applies the strategies to make the students have a good problem-solving skill in collaborating on assignments with the peer in the speaking class

Scoring aspects

Findings show that assessment practices shape students' creative behavior by using rubric criteria that emphasize originality, elaboration, and risk-taking, which encourage more varied and expressive speaking within a Constructivism framework. However, commonly used indicators such as content, vocabulary, and grammar primarily measure proficiency rather than creativity, leading teachers to incorporate additional dimensions like originality, flexibility, elaboration, and risk-taking into their rubrics. This study highlights that explicitly integrating these dimensions into assessment enables creativity to be systematically guided, observed, and evaluated in speaking activities.

Constructivist learning activities that are most effective in stimulating primary students' creativity in the speaking class

In this section, researchers want to know the constructivist learning activities that are most effective in stimulating primary students' creativity in the speaking class through speaking class through classroom. After analyzing, there were three main themes and several sub-themes. Consisting of: 1) Context-based learning and discussion, and 2) Project-based learning (PBL) (see table 2).

Context-based learning and discussion

Interview results revealed that discussion techniques using contextualized discussions can stimulate students' primary creativity in the speaking class. Students are enthusiastic about discussions about trending topics and global issues. The teacher always engages in discussions with students to enhance their speaking skills and to see whether students' creativity is evident in the discussion process.

In the discussion process, the teacher applies constructivism, which encourages students to be active in the learning process. By initiating discussions with context, students automatically respond and share their opinions. This also aligns with the creative character, where students can have great curiosity and easily express opinions. By frequently discussing topics within the contexts they enjoy, it is hoped that students' creativity and speaking skills will develop well

Table 3. Thematizing and Coding from Research Question 3

Theme	Sub Theme	Code
Students' cognitive and language abilities	Difficulty organizing ideas	Unstructured delivery of ideas
	lack of contextual knowledge	Students not familiar with the topic
	Undirected language exploration	Using words without meaning or context
Challenges in implementing the method	Problems in group assignments	Problems in group assignments
	The absence of a creativity measuring tool	No creativity assessment rubric
Internal student problems	Lack of self-confidence	Lack of self-confidence

(Sofiana & Salimi, n.d.; Yulianti & Gunawan, 2019).

Project-based learning (PBL)

The interviews revealed that project-based learning (PBL) can enhance student creativity. By carrying out project assignments and task-based collaboration, students can demonstrate creativity (Kirkpatrick, 2023). Characteristics of creativity that can be seen in this case include having great curiosity, easily expressing opinions, and high originality in presenting ideas. Furthermore, the teacher also applies constructivism, namely being able to prepare the learning environment and create self-directed learning. By implementing project-based learning (PBL), the teacher has created a learning environment that aligns with constructivism, which encourages students to complete assignments without asking many questions of the teacher. Students are trained to be able to express and solve problems independently so that their creativity increases (Masrinah et al., 2019; Umabiinaton, 2023).

Challenges do teachers face when implementing a constructivist approach to stimulating primary students' creativity in the speaking class.

In this section, the researchers want to know the challenges teachers face in implementing a constructivist approach to stimulating primary students' creativity in the speaking class through the results from interviews and classroom observations. After analyzing, there were three main themes and several sub-themes that arise in implementing a constructivist approach to stimulating primary students' creativity. Consisting of: 1) Students' cognitive and language abilities, 2) Challenges in implementing the method, and 3) Internal student problems (see table 3).

Students' cognitive and language abilities

Students who still experience difficulties with cognitive skills and language abilities can make it difficult for teachers to implement a constructivist approach in the speaking class. From the interview results, teachers still found that some students were still unable to convey their ideas in a structured manner. Students who were unfamiliar with the discussion topic also created difficulties for teachers, because what was discussed was not fully understood by the students. Teachers also needed to be fully aware of the topics that were understood by all students in the class. Later, the teacher discovered that some students shared ideas and opinions without meaning or context, and this could disrupt the focus

of other students because other students might imitate them and do the same thing. Of course, it would be difficult for the teacher to optimize students' creativity by applying constructivism if there were still students who lacked cognitive and language abilities.

Challenges in implementing the method

The next changes are about the Problems in group assignments and score rubric. When doing group assignments, it is not uncommon for teachers to see that students are not optimal in doing the assignment. There are students who don't want to do the work, there are students who fight with their group friends which makes it difficult for the teacher to enhance students' creativity in speaking. This suggests that teachers must create a more engaging learning environment and minimize the challenges previously encountered. By creating a positive learning environment by implementing several appropriate strategies, it can influence students' creativity so that students can explore and develop their creativity according to their talents and interests.

Then, based on interview results, teachers in grade four are did not have assessment rubric that focuses on students' creativity. Not all teachers at this school have incorporated creativity scoring. Interviews results revealed that only fifth-grade teachers have incorporated creativity scoring, while others have not. The teachers still have quite difficulty in assessing whether each student has shown creativity and whether the score results are in accordance with the characteristics of creativity or not.

Internal student problems

Students' internal problems can also make teachers difficult in implementing a constructivist approach to stimulating primary students' creativity in the speaking class. Based on the results of interviews with teachers, there are still students who lack self-confidence. According to teachers, there are some students who are still afraid of being wrong in expressing their ideas and opinions and this makes teachers need additional time to make some students confident again in speaking to show their creativity. However, the students felt confident from the results of observations, it is indicated that most students felt confident in speaking English with their peers and teachers. In conclusion, there is a difference between the interview and the observation results, the students looked more confident in speaking when researchers conducted observations.

Limitation

This research was conducted to the maximum to achieve optimal results. However, it has limitations. This study was conducted in a single international primary school in Sleman, Yogyakarta, involving only two English teachers as participants; therefore, the findings should be interpreted as context-specific rather than broadly generalizable. In line with this limitation, claims regarding the effectiveness of particular instructional activities are framed as situated insights emerging from this bounded case within a Constructivism context, rather than definitive conclusions applicable across settings. Nonetheless, this study offers analytical value by generating a preliminary framework and assessment rubric for creativity in speaking tasks, which can serve as a basis for further empirical testing and refinement in broader educational contexts. The results may not be generalizable to all schools, each with its own unique set of teachers, students, and environments. Furthermore, this research only used a qualitative research approach. Interpretation of data from observations, interviews, and lesson plan analysis relies heavily on the research findings. These results are not strong enough to statistically prove cause and effect. Ideally, a mixed method approach would be used to achieve optimal results.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the implementation of Constructivism in primary speaking classrooms was associated with the emergence of observable creative behaviors rather than implying direct causal effects. These behaviors were reflected in indicators such as fluency (generating multiple ideas), flexibility (using varied expressions), originality (producing unique responses), and elaboration (developing ideas in detail). From a theoretical perspective, this suggests that constructivist learning environments characterized by interaction, scaffolding, and meaningful feedback facilitate conditions under which students can actively construct and express ideas, thereby supporting the development of creative thinking in speaking performance. The study also found that certain instructional activities, such as project-based tasks, context-based learning, and collaborative discussions, were perceived by teachers and observed in practice as supportive of students' creative expression. However, these findings should be interpreted cautiously as context-bound insights derived from a limited case, supported by observation episodes where students demonstrated idea variation, active participation, and willingness to express opinions. Importantly, variability in implementation was identified, as not all teachers consistently applied creativity-oriented assessment rubrics, indicating uneven integration of creativity across instructional practices.

Furthermore, the role of assessment emerged as a key pedagogical mechanism, where the inclusion of creativity indicators in scoring rubrics functioned to guide student behavior and make creativity observable and assessable. This represents a novel contribution of the study in proposing a context-specific rubric framework that links constructivist practices with measurable creativity dimensions in speaking tasks. Despite these contributions, several challenges were identified, including students' limited linguistic proficiency, cognitive readiness, and constraints in instructional implementation. Addressing these challenges requires more systematic support, particularly through targeted teacher training in designing structured yet flexible speaking tasks, applying scaffolding strategies, organizing collaborative group work, and providing feedback that emphasizes idea

development rather than solely linguistic accuracy. Institutional support is also necessary to ensure consistency in implementing creativity-oriented pedagogy across grade levels. In sum, this study contributes a nuanced, empirically grounded account of how creativity is enacted within constructivist speaking instruction, offering a preliminary framework and assessment rubric that can inform future research and pedagogical practice. However, given the qualitative case study design and limited participants, these findings should be viewed as analytically transferable rather than universally generalizable, with applicability depending on similar classroom contexts and instructional conditions.

Suggestion

This research can give recommendations to maximize creativity in speaking lessons based on constructivism. Teachers can try using learning media that students enjoy most to increase interest and reduce boredom in speaking tasks that involve creativity. To enhance students' focus and creativity in speaking classes, teachers are recommended to implement structured constructivist scaffolding through clearly designed tasks, such as problem-based prompts, role-play scenarios, and project-based speaking activities that require idea generation and personal expression. In addition, the use of supportive tools such as digital storytelling platforms, interactive presentation applications, and gamified assessment systems can facilitate engagement while encouraging students to demonstrate creativity through originality, flexibility, and elaboration within a Constructivism framework. Furthermore, teachers should apply explicit creativity-oriented rubrics and provide formative feedback that emphasizes idea development and risk-taking, thereby guiding students to actively construct and express their ideas in meaningful speaking contexts.

Future researchers are also advised to explore further the impact of student creativity on speaking skills based on constructivism. This research does not focus on all grades of primary school students, but only on a few. Therefore, it is hoped that future research can explore student creativity at all grades of primary school. The researchers also hope that this study can be used by future researchers seeking references regarding student creativity, particularly in speaking skills based on constructivism.

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