# LINGUODIDACTIC MODEL OF “DESIGN THINKING” APPLICATION FOR DEVELOPING CREATIVE WRITING COMPETENCE IN PHILOLOGY STUDENTS

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**Abstract:** *This thesis investigates the development of creative writing competence in philology students through the application of a stepwise Design Thinking methodology. Creative writing competence is conceptualized as an integrative construct comprising linguistic proficiency, textual coherence, stylistic awareness, cultural sensitivity, and communicative effectiveness. The study examines the limitations of traditional creative writing instruction in philology education, such as insufficient learner-centered approaches, low student engagement, and limited interdisciplinary integration. Using theoretical analysis, pedagogical observation, and experimental implementation, the research develops and tests a linguodidactic model based on the iterative stages of Design Thinking: empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing. Findings indicate that this model enhances students' creativity, reflective learning, and collaborative skills while fostering higher-quality written production. The study concludes that stepwise Design Thinking provides an effective framework for the systematic development of creative writing competence in philology students.*

**Keywords:** *creative writing competence; philology students; Design Thinking; linguodidactics; stepwise learning; higher education; learner-centered pedagogy*

## Introduction

Background of the Study

Creative writing competence is increasingly recognized as a critical component of philological education. It allows students to articulate ideas clearly, engage in literary and cultural analysis, and communicate effectively in diverse contexts. However, traditional approaches to writing instruction often prioritize grammatical accuracy and theoretical knowledge, neglecting the creative, reflective, and collaborative dimensions of writing.

The evolving landscape of higher education emphasizes learner-centered approaches, process-oriented learning, and the development of 21st-century skills, such as creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving. Within this context, Design Thinking—a human-centered, iterative problem-solving methodology—has been proposed as a pedagogical tool that can foster creative learning and reflective practice.

Research Problem

Despite the potential benefits of Design Thinking, its application in philology and linguodidactics remains underexplored. There is a need for a systematic, stepwise model

that structures creative writing instruction to enhance philology students’ competence in writing.

Research Objectives

To analyze the current state of creative writing instruction in philology education.

To develop a linguodidactic model of stepwise Design Thinking application for creative writing.

To test the effectiveness of the proposed model in improving students’ creative writing competence.

Research Questions

What are the limitations of traditional creative writing instruction in philology education?

How can Design Thinking be adapted to create a stepwise linguodidactic model for developing creative writing competence?

What are the effects of applying this model on students’ writing quality, creativity, and engagement?

Literature Review

Creative Writing Competence

Creative writing competence is widely recognized as a multidimensional construct that integrates linguistic, cognitive, stylistic, cultural, and communicative abilities. First, linguistic proficiency forms the foundational dimension, encompassing mastery of vocabulary, grammatical structures, and syntactic flexibility, which enables writers to articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively. Second, textual coherence refers to the logical organization of ideas, effective paragraphing, and the smooth progression of narrative or argumentative flow, which together ensure that the text is comprehensible and well-structured.

Third, stylistic awareness involves the deliberate and purposeful manipulation of tone, register, and rhetorical devices to achieve specific communicative or aesthetic effects. Writers with strong stylistic competence can adapt their language to suit various genres and audiences, producing texts that are both engaging and contextually appropriate. Fourth, cultural sensitivity highlights the importance of integrating cultural references and intercultural understanding into written texts. This dimension enables writers to situate their work within broader social, historical, and cultural contexts, thereby enhancing authenticity and relevance for diverse audiences.

Finally, communicative effectiveness constitutes the ultimate criterion of creative writing competence, reflecting the writer’s ability to achieve intended effects on readers, whether intellectual, emotional, or aesthetic. Collectively, these dimensions ensure that creative writing competence encompasses not only technical mastery of language but also the capacity to produce coherent, expressive, culturally informed, and purpose-driven texts (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hyland, 2016).

Design Thinking in Education

Design Thinking is an innovative, human-centered methodology that facilitates problem solving through a structured, iterative process. The methodology is organized around five key stages: empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing. In the educational context, these stages encourage students to engage in reflective, collaborative, and experiential learning, promoting creativity and critical thinking.

The empathy stage allows learners to analyze the needs, perspectives, and contexts of intended audiences, fostering sociocultural awareness and learner-centered problem solving. During problem definition, students identify challenges or objectives, which clarifies the scope of the task and establishes purposeful goals for creative engagement. Ideation emphasizes the generation of diverse solutions and encourages divergent thinking, while prototyping enables learners to experiment with ideas, test hypotheses, and refine their work through drafts or practical applications. Finally, the testing stage supports iterative revisi on, peer feedback, and reflective evaluation, allowing students to enhance both the quality and effectiveness of their output.

In higher education, Design Thinking has been widely recognized for its ability to cultivate creativity, interdisciplinary collaboration, and learner autonomy. While it has been extensively applied in technical, business, and engineering disciplines, its application in philology and linguodidactics remains limited. Integrating Design Thinking into creative writing instruction provides opportunities to structure reflective writing, develop stylistic and communicative skills, and support a learner-centered approach aligned with competence-based education principles (Brown, 2009; Kolko, 2015).

Applications in Language Education

Although widely applied in business, engineering, and technology disciplines, Design Thinking’s application in philology is limited. Existing research suggests that it supports student engagement, creativity, and learner-centered instruction. Integrating Design Thinking into writing instruction can align linguistic knowledge with practical, reflective writing processes (Norman, 2013).

Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-methods research design, integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the development of creative writing competence in philology students. The combination of methods allows for the triangulation of data and a deeper understanding of both measurable outcomes and experiential aspects of the learning process.

Participants:

The study involved philology students enrolled in a higher education institution. Participants were divided into two groups: a control group and an experimental group. The control group received traditional writing instruction, focusing primarily on grammar, text structure, and academic conventions. The experimental group participated in learning activities structured

according to the stepwise Design Thinking model, which included the stages of empathy, problem definition, ideation, prototyping, and testing.

Data Collection:

Data were collected using multiple instruments to capture both performance outcomes and student experiences. Writing assessments were employed to evaluate key dimensions of creative writing competence, including originality, textual coherence, stylistic flexibility, and communicative effectiveness. Classroom observations recorded the level of engagement, collaboration, and participation in iterative writing activities. In addition, student feedback surveys gathered information on attitudes toward creative writing, learning motivation, and reflective processes.

Data Analysis:

Quantitative analysis was conducted to compare improvements in writing competence between the control and experimental groups, identifying statistically significant differences in performance outcomes. Qualitative analysis focused on classroom interactions, student reflections, and feedback responses, providing insights into engagement, iterative practice, and the overall effectiveness of the Design Thinking-based pedagogical approach. The integration of qualitative and quantitative findings enabled a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of the stepwise Design Thinking model on students' creative writing competence.

Linguodidactic Model

The proposed linguodidactic model for developing creative writing competence is structured around the five stages of the Design Thinking methodology, adapted for philology students.

Empathy: In the first stage, students analyze audience needs, contextual factors, and relevant cultural elements. This process enhances their pragmatic and sociolinguistic awareness, enabling them to consider the perspectives, expectations, and cultural backgrounds of potential readers.

Problem Definition: During this stage, students identify specific writing goals, central themes, or creative challenges. Clarifying these objectives promotes focus, direction, and purposeful engagement with the writing task.

Ideation: Students then generate a wide range of ideas through brainstorming sessions and collaborative discussions. This stage encourages creativity, divergent thinking, and the exploration of alternative approaches to narrative, argumentation, or stylistic expression.

Prototyping: In the prototyping stage, students produce drafts and experiment with narrative structure, style, rhetorical devices, and other expressive elements. This allows them to test and refine their creative decisions while applying linguistic and stylistic knowledge in practice.

Testing: The final stage involves iterative revision, peer review, and teacher feedback. Students refine their texts based on constructive evaluation, enhancing textual quality, coherence, and reflective skills.

The model is cyclical, enabling multiple rounds of ideation, drafting, and revision. It promotes interdisciplinary integration by combining linguistic, literary, and cultural knowledge. Furthermore, the model encourages collaborative learning, learner autonomy, and active engagement, supporting the development of both creative and communicative competencies in philology students.

Results

The experimental group demonstrated significant improvements across several dimensions of creative writing competence. Students exhibited greater originality and creativity in their written texts, producing work that reflected innovative ideas and imaginative expression. Their texts also showed enhanced coherence and structural organization, with clear sequencing of ideas and effective use of cohesive devices. Additionally, students demonstrated increased stylistic variation and expressive flexibility, adapting tone, register, and rhetorical strategies to suit different communicative and literary contexts. Engagement in iterative writing and collaborative activities, such as brainstorming, peer review, and draft revision, was also noticeably higher among the experimental group. Classroom observations confirmed that students actively participated in all stages of the Design Thinking process, showing heightened motivation, confidence, and willingness to experiment with new writing strategies. Survey responses further indicated that students perceived writing as a dynamic, iterative, and reflective process rather than a fixed, final product.

Discussion

Design Thinking supports the development of creative writing competence in several ways. First, it encourages students to cultivate empathy and audience awareness, enabling them to consider readers’ needs, expectations, and cultural contexts when producing texts. Second, it structures the writing process as an iterative and reflective activity, allowing learners to experiment with ideas, revise drafts, and engage in metacognitive evaluation of their work. Third, it promotes interdisciplinary and collaborative learning by integrating linguistic, literary, and cultural knowledge, while also fostering peer interaction and shared problem-solving. Finally, it aligns with learner-centered pedagogy and competence-based education principles, emphasizing autonomy, active participation, and practical skill development.

Effective implementation of the stepwise Design Thinking model requires careful teacher preparation and deliberate integration into the curriculum. Teachers must be trained to facilitate iterative writing cycles, guide collaborative activities, and provide constructive feedback. Future research could explore the long-term impacts of this approach on creative writing competence, as well as its adaptation to digital and hybrid learning environments to further enhance accessibility, engagement, and student outcomes.

Conclusion

The study concludes that a stepwise Design Thinking model is effective for developing philology students’ creative writing competence. The model integrates linguistic, stylistic,

cultural, and communicative dimensions, while fostering reflective, collaborative, and creative learning. Implementing this model in philological curricula contributes to higher-quality student writing, increased engagement, and preparation for professional and academic tasks.

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