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Creativity and the curriculum: Selected aspects

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Abstract

The following descriptive discourse contains the most important data on the notion of creativity (initial section), after which the paper purposefully narrows creativity analysis down to the educational sector exclusively. First and foremost, a recipe for successful creative teaching is considered, together with the list of external and internal conditions to be fulfilled. Thus, the notions of the Fun Factor (FF) and the Creativity Factor (CF), as the two inherent components of the phenomenon of flow, are presented, together with most of the assisting segments that make the appearance and useful application of flow in the classroom possible. Secondly, the notion of the creative approach concerning most of the remaining aspects that assist the very process of FLE is examined.

Keywords: creativity; HOTS; LOTS; language affordances; curriculum; FLE

1. Introduction

Although the term *creative* is generally understood, it is difficult to give a simple definition of creativity, as the very issue of creativity is an extensively broad term. When looking at the spectrum of possible definitions, it appears that at least three

different options are feasible. Generally, creativity is connected with a process (i.e., the very actual act of creating something) or a creative person (i.e., the author of a creative act); or, finally, a creative product (i.e., the outcome of a creative act, for example, innovative forms of language teaching/learning). It is worth stating here that neither of the three possibilities specified above can occur separately. A creative person must always manifest this attribute due to an activity (i.e., a process) which has revealed specific features that deserve to be labeled as creative. At the same time, the process should follow the path of creativity, most often resulting in the appearance of a creative product, i.e., a product which, from the point of view of its potential users, is novel, useful, practical and original.

When assessing creativity from the point of view of classroom-based language education, it seems useful to accept the definition of creativity offered by Boden (2004), who proposes that creativity can be defined as "the ability to come up with ideas or artefacts that are useful, surprising and valuable" (p.1). The notion of item novelty is recognized by Boden either from the perspective of *historical creativity*, which gives room to the production of such a number of ideas and/or innovations that can easily revolutionize the world, or *psychological creativity*, which means the appearance of and direct contact with ideas that are new to an individual. Jones (2012) offers the names "big-C creativity and "little-c creativity," respectively, for the two different types of creativity distinguished by Boden.

The notion of surprise is recognized by Boden (2004) in three different forms of creativity: *combinatorial*, *exploratory* and *transformational*. The first of them can be observed when different mental combinations occur (for example, when one wants to discover the meaning of a metaphor in a poetic/prosaic verse). The second, *exploratory* creativity, refers to an idea that lets one produce the same notion with the help of a new way of reasoning, for example, offering an idea that evidently enlivens the traditional ways of topic interpretation, but does not change the notion in any way. Finally, the third form of creativity, i.e., the *transformational* one, entails the forms of creative behavior that transform outdated ways of topic interpretation into new ones, clearly expanding those which have been – up till now – generally accepted (for example, innovative forms of interpretation of a poem, novel, etc. that have shed new light upon the issues in question).

The third approach to creativity offered by Boden (2004) claims that idea/artefact value should be spotted within words, expressions, or statements that help one apply linguistic strategies useful to achieve certain new notions (for example, when using specific words that could be considered by another person as particularly convincing in a debate he or she has been taking part in).

The aforementioned approaches to creativity are clearly visible in various foreign language education (FLE) processes. As language has been defined to be a system of arbitrarily existing signs that are to be made use of in the process of

communication-aiming message constructions, it is up to the message emitters to construct (re-construct/co-construct) the signs in the messages. It is in such moments that the authors of the utterances are creative, as in most cases they produce novel, so-far unheard of, expressions which are recognized and understood in novel – so-far unspotted – ways. Each of the expressions has to be deemed useful, and many of them accepted as surprising, and/or even valuable.

Consequently, one of the first steps in helping L2 language users to become creative participants in a debate, carried out in a language other than their mother tongue, is to make them aware of the four golden rules (or affordances) a language user has to observe – the ones of: rule-governing, ambiguity, situation and dialogue (Jones, 2016, pp. 20-27).

The first affordance, rule-governing, indicates that there are quite a number of culture-specific, conventional rules in a language and that anybody wishing to carry out a dialog in a given language is expected to make use of when needed. However, at the same time, it is still possible to offer a new way of expression that relates to the semantic description of such a rule, thus moving from the area of general prediction into the one of being rule-unique and rule-unexpected. Jones (2016) calls this cognitive behavior thinking "inside/outside the box." This issue is later discussed in detail when de Bono's creative model (i.e., LOTS/HOTS language approach) is presented.

The second rule, specified above as ambiguity, generally rests upon the notion of message inference. As any message has to be interpreted one way or another, its interpretation largely depends on the specific way the message has been presented. Besides word order, which does perform an important function here, it is also the tone of voice of a message (when the spoken form of language production has been taken into account) and/or appropriate punctuation, when its graphic form[1] has been made use of. As Jones (2016) remarks, what appears necessary to L2 users then is "one's ability to read between the lines" (p. 30).

The third affordance recognized by Jones (2016) concerns language situation and allows L2 users to produce and/or reproduce numerous phrases/expressions out of a limited number of words on the one hand, as well as to adapt each of them to logically suit the contexts of as many verbal situations as possible on the other. Such a situation means that when using a language one also has to be responsible for the creation of a given phrase that has been produced. Thus, a given word stops performing the function of just a word only if it goes

[1] Culpeper (1997, p. 42) offers a convincing example when he proposes to interpret the two statements where the only difference is applied punctuation: *Woman without her man is helpless* and *Woman: without her, man is helpless*. As Culpeper rightly observes, both sentences are shockingly sexist, but each time the pointer touches a different sex.

further and – after having been interpreted by its recipient with respect to the context it has been produced in. In this way, a word, when having been spliced to its interpretation, is always recognized as an inseparable pair able to manage semantic relationships. Additionally, following the remarks offered by Tannen (2004), a language teacher should know how framing influences the educational processes of FLE, and what dramatic effects it can evoke.[2]

The final affordance Jones (2016) observes stresses the dialogic nature of language. Such an observation means that linguistic production does "fulfil a slot" (Schlegoff & Sacks, 1973); any statement, when uttered in answer to some earlier said/created expression/remark is at the same time, an invitation to produce some other expression/remark being an answer to the one just said. In this context it is worth mentioning a useful remark given by Littelton and Mercer, (2013) that concerns the human ability to think and/or do things simultaneously, both of the activities being direct results of spontaneity. This response ability observed in humans inherently merges with the affordance of situational language, which results in the appearance of a situation when during a conversation one can never be sure about the interpretation of a statement by its receiver as well as his/her verbal reaction to it.

All of these language affordances contain a large portion of creativity which has to be practiced and implemented during an FL course so as to help its participants discover the inherent nature of language on the one hand and the nature of communication processing on the other. The reasons why such creativity-related issues have to be transferred to FL learners have been succinctly presented above. At the same time, following Jones (2016), it is known that any language teaching syllabus, directly based upon the core-curriculum and its recommendations, cannot simply be a mapping of the course-book unit indications, but should follow a creative design of the whole course. Quite apart from a dilemma whether the language taught ought to map *lingua franca* recommendations, or be a genuine copy of the mother-country original, it is necessary to make L2 learners aware that the principal features of any language remain stable and unchanged. Regardless of the form of FLE they are to follow, in both cases they need a teacher whose teaching philosophy will incorporate the importance of the notion of creativity into the whole process of FL mastering.

[2] Framing refers to the ways we inform message recipients about our extra-linguistic intentions for having said a given expression (i.e., whether we are about to complain, flirt, joke, ponder etc.). In contrast to Goffman's (1974) claims, framing does not focus on the conventionalized forms of behavior, but on the ones that are to instruct the message recipients about the internal nature of the message contents (Jones, 2016).

2. Teachers' thinking styles and creativity

Undoubtedly, the thinking style of an individual reflects his/her creativity level. For this reason, if the educator's creative deposits are 'suppressed', small wonder the teachers are unable to enhance creativity in their students' school lives (NACCE, 1999). According to Sternberg & Grigorenko (2007, as cited in Dikici, 2014, p.181), there are four main factors which are related to the creative teachers' thinking style, which are grade level, age, subject area, and ideals. From this point of view, older educators have a tendency to be more "executive" and "conservative" than their younger counterparts. The latter, according to the research, tend to be more "creative" and "open." On the other hand, however, they are "less compliant" and/or "conservative" with their students. As the aforementioned scholars have noticed, teaching style becomes "more compliant and conservative, and less active or liberal," as teachers get older (Dikici, 2014). It is to be noticed, however, that more experienced educators present "(...) more creativity fostering practice in comparison to their inexperienced colleagues" (p. 181). In the end, age does not matter, however, it seems to be the teachers' workplace which sets limits. In high school classes educators tend to initiate more creativity-fostering practice than the "(...) teachers in elementary schools" (p. 181).

2.1. Teachers' responsibility

Doubtlessly, "social and affective forces" which influence the creative actions of an individual (such as teachers, school, environment, etc.) are very powerful (Dikici, 2014; MacFarlane, 2009; Sajdak, 2008; Smith, 2009) but, to be honest, also present a huge burden. In spite of the fact that it seems feasible to train teachers and show them how to develop creative deposits and thinking abilities in their students, the issue is much more complicated than it appears to be.

Firstly, let us analyze what Torrance (1962) calls "creative teacher – pupil relationship." That meaningful term envisages "co-experiencing" and "a living relationship" between two precious entities: a teacher and a pupil. As the scholar notes, the relation does not occur in a common "stimulus – response situation," that is when a teacher responds to the stimulus of a particular child and vice versa. Torrance adds that the pressure for "correctness both of stimulus and response" is not sufficient to create a healthy and creative relationship. To do so, the teachers' tasks should aim not only to "bridge the gap between learning and thinking" but also to "break out of the mold" (Torrance,1962, p. 9).

Torrance argues that the creative relationship between a pupil and a teacher takes place similarly to the creative thinking process. It is unconscious and cannot be planned nor programmed, it occurs as a result of *insight*. What is more, to

experience this special relationship the individuals need to be not only open-minded – "[a] creative person loves exploring possibilities" (de Bono, 1993, as cited in Powell, 2007, p. 1060) – but is also determined to go with the flow (Torrance, 1962).

Another crucial feature concerns the fact that the creative connections between a teacher and his/her pupils assume neither errors nor mistakes. According to Cropley (2001), educators should tolerate sensible and bold errors, "reward courage as much as being right" (p. 138), and see mistakes as "individual and constructive efforts towards a self-detected solution" (p. 152). What is more, Moustakas (1961), another researcher in the field, defines errors and mistakes as almost "irrelevant" in the teacher-pupil relation, as the scholar firmly believes that "it is not possible to do right or wrong in such a relationship" (Moustakas, 1961, as cited in Torrance, 1962, p. 10), as "it is so much a matter of *being*, rather than one of acting or being acted upon" (Torrance, 1962, p. 10). Basically, this relationship has a philosophical nature and cannot be measured with the help of a 0-1 digital system.

De Bono and other modern researchers unanimously claim that too much focus on errors and mistakes is detrimental (de Bono, 2006), as it can lead to the appearance of "destructive criticism" which – among "premature attempts to eliminate fantasy," "overemphasis on prevention, fear, timidity," "restrictions on manipulativeness and curiosity" (Torrance, 1962, pp. 8-9) – is able to extinguish pupils' creativity once and for all.

Sadly, students are not taught that being wrong is a natural and healthy stage in various acquisition processes. What is more, "if you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original," as Sir Ken Robinson (2001) constantly argues. This outstanding educator states that society is afraid of mistakes and "stigmatizes" them, starting in schools where "mistakes are the worst thing you can make." As a result pupils are being educated "out of their creative capacities" and become "fearful and bored adults" (p. 41).

The crucial thing in the context of a teacher's responsibility has been aptly expressed by an American psychologist Howard Gardner. The scholar claims that while teaching a topic one should consider "responsibilities to five different spheres: to our personal sphere of values; to other individuals around us (family, friends, colleagues/ peers); to our profession/calling; to the institutions to which we belong; and to the wider world - people whom we do not know, those who will live in the future, the health and survival of the planet" (p. 10). In sum, the teachers' responsibility is much greater than it seems, as their major goal should encompass supplying students with abilities essential for the art of living and, in the second place, for their future professions. Nonetheless, a prominent, but depressed and unsociable student, who is not able to prepare himself/herself a cup of tea presents little realistic chance of finding a good job. Thus, while

enhancing students' creativity educators should not forget about a few important issues: "how to help them find a sense in life, feel connected to the world and understand that they are responsible for their own actions" (p. 11).

2.2. "Teaching creatively" versus "teaching *for* creativity"

The National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCE), defines creative teaching in an interesting, two-fold manner. In the first case it means teaching creatively and in the second one teaching *for* creativity (NACCCE, 1999). According to NACCE's report, specific explanation of a "teaching creatively" process consists of applying "imaginative approaches" which "fire children's interests," motivate and "make learning more interesting, exciting and effective" (pp. 2-3).

On the other hand, "teaching *for* creativity" is a related practice and consists of the techniques which "develop young people's own creative thinking or behavior." The crucial thing here is that teaching *creatively* is an essential element to teach *for* creativity, the two concepts being closely interconnected. Undoubtedly, the latter is a complex, "demanding process" which "cannot be made routine". Members of the committee, however, identify three teaching behaviors which work in this respect: these are "encouraging, identifying and fostering" forms of teaching practice (NACCCE, 1999, p. 104).

NACCE's (1999) consultants unanimously claim that *encouraging* learners to believe in their creative potential is the first and the most important effort made by teachers. The practice assumes also the goal of a different sort, that is lifelong learning. Thus, the process of *encouraging* should make our students flexible, eager to learn, ask questions and seek solutions throughout their whole life (p. 108). They must be prepared for the world where "trial and error is a tremendously powerful process for solving problems in a complex world" (Harford, 2011, p. 20). Next, educators should *identify* and distinguish different types of "creative strengths" among children to help them "be in their element" (NACCCE, 1999, p. 104). Finally, teachers should *foster* creativity in classroom settings not only by stimulation and memory training, but also by getting the students to understand the way in which the creative process takes place. This form of "meta-cognition" – as John Abbott the president of the 21st-Century Learning Initiative puts it, seems to be "essential in a world of continuous change" (p. 106).

Researchers universally recognize that effective educators should focus both on independent work and competition; patiently answering the students' questions and diversifying materials/conditions to work with in the classroom setting (Cropley, 2001; Newton, 2014; Torrance, 1962). If any of the already mentioned 'commandments' are neglected, the learners who are eager to "(...)

imagine, question, and create will continue to be estranged from unsympathetic teachers, the kind who derail the quick, automatic thoughts of their pupils" (Torrance, 1962, pp. 8-9). Thus, teachers must be incredibly "adventurous-spirited:" if they are not, children will continue to be "(...) robbed of one of learning's most important rewards – namely, thinking" (pp. 8-9). In practice, it means that the educators' difficult task consists in developing creative and critical thinking accompanied by problem solving. Additionally, as indicated by Newton (2014, p. 579), "(...) in the domain of creative thinking students resort to alternatives, analogies and suggestions; they apply critical thinking with explanations and counter-arguments; ultimately, they also try to solve some problems by questioning and seeking for ideas."

As specified above, the two notions are to be given different semantic sources. The first (i.e., teaching creatively) is mostly connected with the teacher's uniquely inspired endeavors in presenting the lesson contents. Teaching creatively encompasses various creativity awakening activities such as special forms of teaching that are based upon highly divergent approaches to course-book topics, making those topics much more learner-friendly. These forms of creative teaching are meant to instill a number of relevant cognitive skills, such as comparing, hypothesizing or questioning which are necessary in various areas of the learners' linguistic curriculum in order to develop many other abilities. Creative forms of education teach learners how to compare and contrast messages, how to evaluate and reflect critically on their own linguistic performance. Reed (2015) observes that creative teaching helps the learners to increase their involvement and motivation in FL learning; it also encourages the learners to develop many meta-linguistic features, such as patience, or resourcefulness which, in turn, help the learners in their endeavors to make the learning process more enjoyable and memorable. Finally, a strong feeling of success and subsequent achievement of evident satisfaction gained from the activities of the learners is what really matters.

There are many didactic issues that clearly favor creative teaching by encouraging the learners to feel that what they are currently taking part in will make them engaged members of society. Consequently, learners stop being passive, always following orders and fulfilling the expectations of others, instead, they start asking questions and assessing the relative level of any activity they have been requested to participate in. They not only expect constructive feedback but also various forms of praise and acceptance. Accordingly, the learners take responsibility for their own learning endeavors by being more aware and involved, knowing that what really matters in life is effort, hard work and persistence.

The creative approach does not appear of its own volition, there is always a reason, a foundation that is responsible for the appearance of uniquely creative behavior. This may be a text, a picture, an idea or a gesture, anything that

inspires the imagination or evokes emotions. Such questions, stories and/or gestures encourage the learners to invent and/or participate in their own sets of activities by recognizing the existence of an area in which they may effectively develop solutions to a number of ready-made problems and expectations. Such a sudden opportunity to play soon changes into an opportunity to test the solutions and/or to see and feel the results of their experiments. Experience is the best teacher and its final results are remembered for years (Reed, 2015).

At the same time, the second educational aspect, that is, teaching for creativity, rests upon an assumption that lesson participants, mostly due to numerous intended creativity-aiming actions initiated by the teacher, will change their approach to learning instead of just limiting their linguistic activities to those included in LOTS. Naturally, both LOTS and HOTS have to be planned, inserted into lesson designs and, subsequently unveiled, by the teacher during lessons. It is believed that such forms of effective lesson organization will guide the learners towards a more conscious understanding of the lesson materials. Not only will the lesson participants learn what it means to search for the plain and simple topic-connected data, but also how to make use of it.

Both LOTS and HOTS, effectively connected with the idea of the function of creativity, are to be nurtured and delivered in a tactful and sensible way in the area of FL education. Reed (2015) suggests the application of what she calls the seven pillars of creativity. These are as follows: (1) build up positive self-esteem; (2) model creativity yourself; (3) offer children choice; (4) use questions effectively; (5) make connections; (6) explore ideas; and (7) encourage critical reflection. Each of the presented pillars is expected to strengthen the creative approach in the learners, thus getting them more involved in various cognitive creativity-based activities.

Positive self-esteem is necessary because it makes the learners feel secure and more certain about their linguistic activities. Following the remarks offered by Reasoner (1982), such learners behave in a far more competent way, discovering the existence of their individual strengths, an area allowing them to participate in various divergent activities that teach them to respect the views of others and accept working routines, where collaboration and/or interaction become the norm. It is also in this delicate process of building one's self-esteem that the learners discover that any conscious creativity-linked form of activity is also strongly connected with risk-taking and the feeling of being responsible for one's ultimate results.

Being creative has multiple faces. This means that each of its users has to find (and appropriately adjust) his/her own version (or model) of creativity; the creativity that he/she will assess as most useful and most compatible with his/her expectations. The forms of creative application to deal with different language topics effectively employed by the teacher during lessons will be picked up by the learners. They have to be given appropriate models for their own

creative development and it is the teachers who are expected to provide them to the learners. In her search of the fastest way to find out what forms of creative language act are the most appropriate for each of us (both teachers and learners), Pennycook (2007) goes through detailed analyses of "the textual worlds of others". Thus, the process of modeling one's creativity is to be observed in continual attempts to understand and effectively analyze the description of the external world offered by many different sources. The learners, who have experienced a number of different forms of creative description, will have a much simpler task ahead of them when they are expected to act accordingly. Encouraging the learners to observe things in an out-of-the-box manner will require many novel suggestions.

However, unique forms of classroom behavior should never remain innocuous. Quite the contrary, they are to be employed purposefully with scrupulous planning on the part of the teacher (cause and effect). Each of the classroom participants will be expected to behave creatively and informed that the final responsibility for their linguistic behavior rests solely upon them. They have to develop autonomy and obtain control over the learning processes, starting with mini-decisions (such as who to work with during a lesson) up to maxi-decisions (such as what to study).

One more learner-friendly pillar of teaching creativity results from the way questions are asked during a lesson. Nonetheless, what can often be observed during numerous lessons is the stereotypical IRF (initiation-response-feedback) manner. The questions, when asked, direct the learners towards checking the comprehension of the textual contents and its subsequent application in ready-made answer patterns. Learners are hardly ever requested to assess the sense of the message received, evaluate its importance or personal usefulness and/or analyze the ways a given semantic message has been constructed. What is often aimed at instead is to find out whether the learners understand the context of a text and whether they are ready to find the reason-result co-occurrence in the text. Such forms of textual handling usually put the learners into ready-made answer patterns which evidently remain helpful when evidencing their knowledge about the course of events presented in the text, but which usually fail to personalize the text. This is why the learners have to be offered a totally different way of questioning. Reed (2015) observes that apart from the "old" questions that are to evidence the learners' basic (i.e., text-related) knowledge, there should be "new" questions that direct the learners towards presenting their own opinions that concern different facts and/or protagonists the learners can find in the text. It is with the help of such questions that the learners are encouraged to move much closer towards creative behavior. When they are expected to present their personal opinions, assess the forms of behavior observed in the text protagonists, and evaluate the results of their activity, will various forms of creative involvement not only be practiced, but also internalized.

An approach like this will help the learners remain within the atmosphere of divergent teaching/learning which, in turn, provides many brainstorming techniques and tasks, where various issues coming from different points of view are to be assessed and evaluated. The atmosphere of creative exploration of various ideas will finally permit the learners to remain within an attitude of experiment and play with various ideas and cross-checking opinions. Reed (2015) believes that constant functioning within such an atmosphere appears to be one of the strongest and most evident forces that helps the learners not only model their creative attitude, but also effectively upgrade it.

The final, seventh, pillar of creativity focuses on the enhancement and encouragement of the learners' critical reflection in everyday linguistic activity. What has been done, should be assessed and evaluated by the learners again, so that they are able to see both positive and negative sides of the issue in question. Such a procedure shows that a thread leading from one activity to another always exists and that all the activities when assessed together may offer many seemingly lost and long forgotten answers. As Reed (2015) states, language learners can assess validity and value of creative work only through the lens of critical reflection. It is in this way that the level of creative thinking may broaden creative possibilities which have to be looked at one more time. With time, such secondary assessment of creative involvement in each stage of topical construction should help the students recognize the necessity of critical assessment.

The two approaches to creativity presented above, that is, the one where the teacher's creative involvement is recognized as a pattern of creative processing to be followed by students, and the one where the teacher's scrupulously planned creativity awakening activities are meant to shape divergent and creativity-bound forms of classroom behavior, have a few points in common or even integral to each other. Each of the creativity fostering pillars requires the involvement of both the teacher and students, likewise, each of the processes specified in the teaching for creativity section will never take place without active and well-designed lesson organization even if it goes off the already well beaten path into the unknown. That is, *creativity*.

2.3. Mood and playfulness vs. creativity

Undoubtedly, "social and affective forces" which influence the creative actions of an individual possess an extraordinary power, as MacFarlane (2009, p. 1063) aptly observes. When making an attempt to consider mood and its implications for creative development, it is commonly claimed that "(...) too much anxiety can be harmful for creative thinking" (Smith, 1993, p. 37). What may surprise one here is the fact that anxiety at a moderate level seems to be "a necessary consequence

of creative work" due to the fact that "the process of creation," with its "inspirational phase", brings about "dormant conflicts and problems" (p. 37). What is more, anxiety seems to be "a promoter of creative functioning", as it increases "the inner tension" and "raises the necessary creative temperature" (p. 37).

The lack of a clear answer regarding influence of anxiety on creative processes results from the correlation between mood and creativity. According to researchers from the Coastal California University, extraverts are more creative when they are in a positive mood in contrast "(...) to introverts who, shockingly, have to be in a negative mood to achieve more creative goals" (Naylor, Kim, & Pettijohn, 2013, p. 148). This observation results from the fact that individuals with an extravert type of personality seek happiness; in our case, they want to be happy before the creative tasks start. In contrast to that, introverts do not have to feel happiness to perform highly creative tasks (cf. Naylor et al., 2013, p. 151).

According to the findings of Tim Harford, a British journalist and broadcaster, these studies help explain why "disruptions make us creative" and "certain kinds of difficulty, certain kinds of obstacle can actually improve our performance." This standpoint is shared with the thought-provoking observations of Smith (1993) who claims that "creative functioning grows out of complications and flourishes in an atmosphere of moderate uncertainty" (p. 41). Following the explanations offered by Naylor et al. (2013), one has to notice that negative mood, resulting in high creativity performance, is probable by the application of a reward system in the form of promotions or pay rises for creative workers. It is relatively easy to discover that in the school environment the evaluation system functions analogically.

As shown above, anxiety can be helpful, but in specific cases which constitute exceptions to the general rule. Basically, it is a positive mood that fully fosters creativity. The state of relaxation is able to release creativity waves and reduce anxiety blockage. It is important to point out that for science creativity is a feature of thought processes which is fully operational when there is little or no interference coming from negative feelings. The hypothesis finds its confirmation in research conducted by Japanese scholars (cf. Yamada, 2015), who claim that "being in a positive mood facilitates flexible thinking and consequently leads to the production of unconventional and atypical ideas, typical for divergent thinking" (p. 284). The crucial thing, however, concerns the fact that positive mood does not exert influence on convergent thinking (Yamada, 2015), which assumes the appearance of only one appropriate answer.

2.4. Creativity and the curriculum

Creativity, as "a complex development system," formed by cognitive, social, and emotional processes (Feldman, 1999, as cited in Selvi, 2005, p. 354), deeply and

"dynamically" interacts with the act of learning (Selvi, 2005). At this point, however, many questions that appear are aptly summarized by Gardner (2001). The scholar asks *what* and *how* we should teach in order to educate generations of creative, flexible young people, able to "adapt quickly to new challenges," for example, in their workplace, and "changing circumstances" in their everyday life (cf. Robinson, 2001, p. 1).

According to the results of a survey launched by the European Commission in 2009, the teaching community is almost equally divided in terms of creativity perception in school curricula. Understandably, the results vary among teachers and by countries due to the fact that "school curricula are country specific," as the survey points out. Thus, for half of the teachers creativity is a very important element of the curriculum, whereas the other half neglects it totally (Cachia, 2009, p. 16). The reason why 50% of the teachers are creativity opponents may be seen in the stereotypes that accompany the analyzed notion. To start with: creative issues correlate only with art; secondly, it seems to be limited only to lucky, gifted individuals; and finally "(...) creativity may be identified with undisciplined behavior and unruly spontaneity" (Robinson, 2001, p. 43). The crucial observation concerns the fact that for many educators creativity is to be seen in "every domain of knowledge and every school subject" (Robinson, 2001, p. 43). Thus, it should not be basic only for "intrinsically creative subjects such as arts, music or drama" but needs to be regarded as a form of "transversal skill" (Cachia, 2009, p. 7). However, school reality shows an entirely different scenario. Due to the "lack of time, together with organizational problems and lack of suitable resources" (Ott, 2010, p. 168), educators are reluctant to introduce creativity into the classroom setting. Following the conclusions drawn by Ott (2010), the teachers are often de-motivated or, simply, have no idea how to foster creativity in their classrooms.[3]

One surprisingly disturbing concept is that the hierarchy of subjects is believed to be the same everywhere on Earth (Robinson, 2006). Maths and languages rank the highest and precede the humanities. At the end there are the arts, in a specific sequence: art and music before drama and dance. Consequently, artistic subjects are being neglected. Robinson (2001) worries that children are educated "from the waist up." The educational system forgets about learners' bodies and stubbornly seems to "focus on their heads," "slightly to one side." The scholar bitterly adds that, "public education around the world is mainly

[3] It is worth noting that Ott's second, sad enough, observation seems to stand in close opposition to the classical definition of method offered by Richards and Rodgers (2001). The two scholars proposed that one of important components of a method is to be labeled *design*, which means that it is teachers who are to decide and creatively (i.e., following the definition of creativity suggested by Boden (2004)) plan how to introduce a given curriculum-indicated notion into a lesson.

interested in producing university academic staff." This academic achievement being "the aim of schooling" is, understandably, criticized by many researchers (e.g., Ketsman 2013; Noddings, 2003; Robinson 2006) who have noticed that creativity enriched by imagination, play and "lingering" is considered, unfortunately, to be just an extra-value in the curriculum (Ketsman, 2013, p. 1), or is "(...) destined to be developed in extracurricular activities" (Zhang, 1999, cited in Dikici, 2014, p. 197). In the classrooms there is less time for "lingering," that is, for students' own reflection about a topic and 'self-relation to the world' as, following Ketsman's (2013) bitter remark, teachers must "(...) race to prepare students for a test or any type of standardized assessment" (p. 1).

3. Concluding remarks

The process of language education seems simple at first glance, but becomes more and more complex when delving deeper and deeper into its various nooks and crannies. Officially, apart from the core-curriculum itself, which clearly indicates the segments of teaching material which are to be dealt with during given periods of time, there are also many course-books (accompanied by – advertised as immensely useful - Teacher Books), where - as the teachers are assured – not only can they find handy and thrilling topics, but also plenty of invaluable information on how to effectively deliver each of them to the learners. Many such course-books even offer portions of ready-made materials, telling the teachers when, how and how long each of the topical exercises ought to be dealt with. Small wonder that some of the less experienced teachers tend to reveal visible symptoms of losing their sense of orientation, quite often forgetting the fact that neither the meticulously planned core curricula nor anonymously addressed course-books will replace them in their necessary syllabus-related endeavors.

Being an educational signpost for both the teacher and students, the syllabus entails most of the learner-focusing information; the data included there should not only help the teacher appropriately shape his or her classroom behavior, but also effectively introduce any of the L2 issues that have to be mentally grasped by learners. There are many well-known (and even quite popular) indications that concern the specific data which ought to be placed in individually elaborated syllabuses. Some of them clearly refer to a number of particular details, while others cover more general segments. Nonetheless, however, there is at least one issue that is of utmost importance and this is the issue of learner interest. It is relatively easy to discover the fact that any learner who has lost interest in an activity will most often do worse in material retention. A teacher whose learners do certain (planned) tasks because of the ever-existing external force influencing their activities, should not expect long-lasting results of their

teaching efforts. In very many situations, such an educational procedure will most certainly result in short-term material retention and the appearance of many educational nightmares, such as speaking anxiety, fear of error and/or various forms of apprehensive L2-related approaches.

This paper makes an attempt to suggest what to do in order to avoid or at least put aside all these unwelcome situations. By means of postulating the introduction of creativity as a commonly-observed segment of the teachers' educational involvement we would like to suggest a gradual change in the very process of creating a term-long syllabus (despite the unfriendly approach of many school administrators towards the issue in question). Most of the issues specified in the paper have been deemed important, if not necessary, segments of FLE, as it is with the effective implementation of all of them that a FL teacher can come up with a meticulously-planned FL syllabus. Following the stance offered by de Freitas and Yapp (2005), it is only a topic-aware and fully autonomous learner who has been effectively nurtured and helped to be correctly customized and, additionally, offered genuine individual topic approach, that has a chance to understand what it means to learn a foreign language, as well as what it means to use it purposefully. Additionally, what has been succinctly pinpointed by Davies (2005), it is only the learner who has been recognized as truly able to understand the ultimate reasons for getting involved in the whole FL educational processing, that has a chance to approach the process of FL education from a cognitive point of view. It seems to be high time to reconsider most of the behavioral issues, still proposed in quite a number of contemporarily offered FL education processes.

This is, among others, why contemporary FL teachers are not only to introduce into their syllabuses the awareness that the whole process of FL education ought to contain information that any language contains certain rules, but also that these rules are subjected to a number of inter-language manipulations, which result in the appearance of practical application of the remaining language features, such as ambiguity, context dependence and dialog-proximity. It is only with the use of all the principal features of language application that an FL learner is able to recognize why he/she has to apply any of the FL-education tasks. An approach to the process of acceptance of the phenomenon of language has openly been hailed by Repka and Šipošova (2014) who state that an analysis of language has to be approached from two opposite directions: the one of its existence and the one of its practical application. To sum up, one may come to the conclusion that the very process of foreign language education is not only incomplete, but simply misleading and outdated.

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