Investigating the Relationship between Creativity and Communicative Language Teaching Among EFL Learners in the College of Education in Kuwait

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Abstract

This study was an exploration into the relationship between creativity and communicative competence in writing which was the result of communicative language teaching. There were 40 subjects who participated in this study from the sophomore students in the English department. The researcher adapted a creativity test including five subtasks taken from Torrance (1962) as a sound measure of creativity compatible with the purpose of the present study. As well, other measures were used such as the end-of-term writing grades which were correlated with the creativity test scores. The correlation between the subjects' total scores on the Creativity Test and their Writing Test grades was highly significant, suggesting that EFL learners with higher levels of creativity demonstrate more achievement on language learning (with particular reference to writing) than those who lack creativity. The study concluded with recommendations and suggestions based on its findings.

Key words: creativity, communicative teaching, English language, college of education.

العلاقة بين الإبداع والتدريس الاتصالي لدى عينة من طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية بجامعة الكويت: دراسة ارتباطية

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الملخص

بحثت الدراسة الحالية العلاقة بين الإبداع وبين التدريس بالمدخل الاتصالي لتنمية الكفاية الاتصالية في مهارة الكتابة من خلال تجربة تم فيها تدريس الكتابة وفق هذا المدخل لمدة فصل دراسي كامل. وقد شملت عينة الدراسة أربعين طالبا في المستوى الدراسي الثاني من طلاب قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية، جامعة الكويت. وقد طوع الباحث للدراسة اختباراً للقدرات الإبداعية مكوناً من خمسة مقاييس فرعية مطوعة عن بطارية تورنس لقياس القدرات الإبداعية (١٩٦٢). والمفترض أنها معدة لقياس الإبداع بما يتناسب مع أهداف الدراسة الحالية. كما استخدم الباحث عدة مقاييس أخرى مثل درجات الاختبار النهائي للمقرر، التي تم إجراء الدراسة الارتباطية بينها وبين درجات الطلاب على مقياس الإبداع. وقد أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن الارتباط بين الدرجات الكلية لأفراد العينة على اختبار الإبداع ودرجاتهم على اختبار الكتابة دالة إحصائياً بنسبة كبيرة. مما يشير إلى أن الطلاب ذوي القدرة الإبداعية العالية يظهرون أداءً عالياً في تعلم مهارات الكتابة عن أقرانهم الذين يفتقرون إلى القدرة الإبداعية. وقد انتهت الدراسة بجملة من التوصيات والمقترحات المشتقة من نتائجها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإبداع. التدريس الاتصالي. اللغة الإنجليزية، كلية التربية.

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Introduction

The term communication has always been associated with the teaching and learning of foreign languages, and hence, the term 'communicative language teaching'. However, language educators have become increasingly concerned with a specific aspect of communication, the concept of communicative competence or communicative proficiency. (Joiner, 1977). Language educators in second language learning/teaching (Rivers, 1972 to cite just a few) have suggested that languages are most effectively learned when they are used for the purpose of communication. Thus, the idea of communicative language teaching is well supported by many EFL writers these days, for example, argues that "learning a language is not merely a matter of recalling beads of items but rather of coming to grips with the ideational, interpersonal and textual knowledge which is realized through effective communication in the target language." The CLT approach is one of the few earlier ELT methods the regard language as the means of communication among people. The aim is to enable pupils to communicate effectively using the proper linguistic and grammatical structures in given situations, and it requires creativity. Communicating does not mean repeating but creating new sentences.

Communicative language teaching (CLT) is often understood as a general approach to L2 instruction whose main objective is "to develop the learner's ability to take part in spontaneous and meaningful communication in different contexts, with different people, on different topics, for different purposes" (Celce-Murcia, Ddrnyei & Thurrell, 1997). Therefore, CLT emphasizes

functional and situational language use and involves communicative tasks that require students to generate ideas on a topic or to participate actively in role-play tasks and simulations in which they have to use their imagination and creativity. Such tasks often require students to retrieve or construct their own ideas, and it is reasonable to suggest that the outcomes depend to a great extent on students' creative abilities.

Learners who lack the creativity required for such tasks may have difficulty performing them, which might negatively influence the development of their L2 proficiency. Therefore, a foreign language course offers students numerous opportunities to be creative; learning a new language is indeed a creative process. The rationale for that is that students need to interact with each other by participating in divergent activities that tap their imagination (Hendrickson, 1992).

In spite of the adept observation that the question of the relationship between creativity and success in L2 learning, especially CLT, is an important one, research on this area has been scarce and limited in the L2 field (Densky, 2003). By and large, research done in the past few decades on the relationship between creativity and L2 learning and teaching has been scarce (e.g., Heath, 1983). The reason is that "many have avoided research involved with creativity because of the controversies which surrounded the definition of creativity, its characteristics and its relationship to cognitive development" (Heath, 1987). Furthermore, the only research study done in 1960s was Carroll (1962) where the relationship between creativity and foreign language learning achievement was blurred by in a negative way. Carroll (1990) later justifies that his research bore out this negative relationship between creativity and success in foreign language learning because the situation in foreign language learning and training now is different and better than it was common in the 1960s when memorization and Grammar-Translation Method was the common approach to learning/ teaching. But the state of the art is now different due to the spread of CLT that has actually altered the situation and required a reexamination of this relationship between creativity and academic success in EFL.

The meaning of creativity varies according to the discipline that defines it: however, the model of creativity that rationalist/generativist linguists adopt

is constrained to a mere logical-syntactical proposition: namely, the ability to generate an infinite series of grammatically and semantically well-formed sentences by means of a finite set of rules (Danesi & A'Alfonso, 1989). Creativity in language classroom is a three-level process (Densky, 2003): the first level involves pure manipulation of the components of the target language; the second level involves cultural and situational appropriateness of the domain, i.e., communicative competence, and the third level involves the use of the foreign language as metaphor for production of a unique, novel product, all of which involving some degree of creativity.

The different definitions of creativity, however, refer to a variety of processes or sub-processes involved with creativity such as generating ideas, and actual realization of these ideas. Crudely put in this fashion is that creativity is a cognitive process with the intention of producing a set of alternative responses to a given task; these responses may be seen in some way as novel, original or unusual in some aspect. Therefore, creative thinking in the writing process is an issue that deals with the generation of ideas. Underlying creative thinking in this fashion are four abilities that Carroll (1993) identified:

1. ideational fluency: the ability to think of different linguistic responses that can be categorized into specific classes;

2. associational fluency: the ability to think of different linguistic responses semantically associated with a particular stimulus;

3. sensitivity to problems: the ability to think of problems and their possible solutions;

4. Originality: the ability to think of original linguistic responses to specific tasks.

Originality of ideas generated, sensitivity to problems and problem-solving, and fluency of ideas constitute what Pinker (1995) referred to as 'the intrinsically creative linguistic aptitude': Pinker (1995) describes language as "intrinsically creative - in principle, an infinite number of different sentences could be produced {because} a human head is not big enough to store an infinite number of sentences, or even a hundred million trillion sentences. So what we know when we know a language is a programme, or a recipe, or a set of rules, that can string words together in an unlimited

number of systematic combinations".

However, as earlier alluded, language is a creative behavior. Therefore, the teaching of language, like producing it, requires a creative process that functions at the cognitive level. In this way, communicative language teaching requires that the learning of language ought to be cooperative, self-directed, interactive, and task-based. Densky (2003) aptly observed that 'what is unique about CLT is the role that creativity and creative acts play {in the foreign language learning}. In fact the willingness to participate in a creative way appears to be a prerequisite for success in the CLT classroom". This is because CLT is an umbrella approach that encompasses a variety of theories, methods, and activities associated with L2 or foreign language teaching methodology. And, further and above all, the communicative language teaching approach emphasizes fluency at the cost of accuracy, which is a creative, meaningful process in which learners engage themselves in using the target language in the classroom, and enables learners to take over responsibility for their own learning process. What makes CLT closely linked with creativity is that in real classroom learning and teaching, there is a move from imitation of grammatical patterns and functional dialogue to spontaneous use of the language in original contexts (Densky, 2003).

In this line, Nunan (1991) defines five features of communicative language teaching in the following:

1. There is an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language;

2. The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation;

3. The provision of opportunities to focus, not only on language but also on the learning process itself;

4. An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning;

5. An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom (Nunan, 1991).

In this vein, the classroom is seen as preparation for, but not stimulation of, the natural English-speaking environment which equips the EFL learners with tools for creatively generating unrehearsed language performance "out there when they leave the womb of our classrooms" (Brown, 1994).

In this fashion, the nexus is there between communicative language learning/teaching and creativity where curriculum and instruction are designed and implemented to bridge the classroom experience with a real, inventive world. This helps TEFL learners to reflect on their learning both inside and outside of the classroom, and the language class is seen as one-just one source of learning, but not the definitive one. This is because the "focus (is) on the elaboration and implementation of programmes and methodologies that promote the development of functional language ability through learner participation in communicative events" (Savignon, 1991; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Densky, 2003).

Besides, CLT doesn't isolate the language skills, but uses an integrated skills approach. This is accomplished through specific types of curriculum and activities, and specific expectations of the teacher and learner. Unlike the traditional method of learning and teaching, in a communicative language teaching (CLT) approach, learners are required to take part in a number of meaningful activities with different tasks. This is to improve learners' communicative competence by encouraging them to be a part of the lessons themselves.

Furthermore, "communicative activities are believed to encourage subconscious learning of the second language" (Stern, 1992) and involve motivating topics and themes which involve the learner in authentic communication. Much of the motivation comes from the nature of the communicative activities which are similar to activities used in creativity training for the promotion of critical thinking skills. The TEFL learner takes the role of investigator or problem-solver during these activities. The communicative language teaching situations arising from such activities contain an element of doubt for the students which Brumfit & Johnson (1979) think is an important prerequisite for fluency practice.

In communicative language classes, EFL learners engage in various "creative" projects in the communicative classroom such as creating and performing an extended drama, making collages or graffiti which highlight a social issue of personal concern, and role-playing a particular political position in a discussion or debate (Densky, 2003).

All such activities inspiring creativity result in a higher degree of real-

life communication occurring inside and outside of the classroom. These techniques allow a degree of choice commensurate with the creative process, that determine the role of the student; the concepts of selection and doubt are closely linked and lead to a higher level of motivation and creative action on the part of the learner (Brumfit & Johnson, 1979).

The role of the teacher in CLT becomes critical in order for students to adopt and adapt to the communicative style of learning. In this fashion, teachers ought to know who their students are, what their strengths and weaknesses as learners are, what cultural barriers they may have, and what environment is most conducive to their language development.

Scarcella and Oxford (Scarcella & Oxford, 1992) aptly note that teachers are information-gatherers, decision-makers, motivators, facilitators, input providers, counsellors, friends, providers of feedback, and promoters of multiculturalism'. Learners, on the other hand, are active participants in the learning process who engage themselves in the learning process using their critical and creative thinking skills.

The distinction between traditional approaches to TEFL and the communicative language teaching approach is that the traditional methods had been mainly concerned with the receptive skills, i.e., listening and reading, whereas the communicative language teaching approach is mainly concerned with the productive skills of speech and writing - such skills that require much time and attention on the part of the learners and teachers alike (Oxford, 1990). These skills even in remedial programmes of TEFL have been deemphasized or overlooked, especially at earlier language acquisition stages though that was the time these skills needed to be well developed. (Briere, 1966) adeptly remarked that the few reasonable assumptions underlying EFL learners' ability to write at the college level or to produce the language orally at a fluent rate were the product of research that investigated writing or speaking skills amongst early adolescents and adults.

(Briere, 1966) indicated that "within this level of FL acquisition", there exists a wide range of writing ability". He observed that EFL learners in the intermediate level (adolescents and young adults) were often more concerned with producing grammatically correct output. This tends to

restrain or constrain the learners from increasing the quantity and diversity of language necessary for developing an understanding of the complexity of language. Briere suggested that such constraints or limitations in the limbo of accuracy versus fluency discourage the EFL learners from exploring language creatively. For EFL learners are divided between either developing their fluency at the cost of their accuracy, or vice versa.

Linguists both applied and theorists concurred that communicative language teaching aims at developing the learner's communicative competence which (Hymes, 1972) defines as the knowledge that underlies the socially appropriate use of language. This definition is what gives language meaningfulness and creativity in use. Competence or specifically communicative competence is contrasted with performance or communicative performance. Most linguists were mainly concerned with the study of language in terms of actual performance. (Hymes, 1974) for example focused his research on the real speaker-listener interaction, which Chomsky referred to as social interaction. Competence is often associated with the oral use of language; however, the writing output cannot be ignored as a productive aspect of language which shows more creativity than the spontaneity of oral discourse.

(Richards & Rodgers, 1999) explained that communicative competence includes the following aspects of language knowledge:

• knowing how to use language for a range of different purposes and functions;

• knowing how to vary our use of language according to the setting and the participants (e.g. knowing when to use formal and informal speech or when to use language appropriately for written as opposed to spoken communication);

• knowing how to produce and understand different types of texts (e.g. narratives, reports, interviews, conversations);

• knowing how to maintain communication despite having limitations in one's language knowledge (e.g. through using different kinds of communication strategies)

Therefore, the more language educators know about the communicative competence of EFL learners, the better they can facilitate the expansion of

that competence that the best research on writing is one which investigates the interaction of oral and written discourse.

It was suggested that 'learners in producing written language may utilize skills of divergent and convergent abilities which may result in communicative competence best produced as creativity in written discourse in which the language learner/user goes back and forth to control for both accuracy and fluency with more empty slots to do the necessary editing and revising' (Mekheimer, 2005). Language production is more than divergent thinking, now that it has to converge on a solution in expressing thoughts clearly. In EFL situations, learners may resort to all that make up their language inputs to present their thoughts and notions probably relying on their first language via transfer to make up for any deficiencies in their production in the foreign language.

Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Zamel (1983) researched the different types of strategies that EFL learners utilize in their writing, concluding that writing is a problem-solving activity in which learners discover novel solutions and exhibit creativity as they go along in their writing. For example, Larsen-Freeman in a study (1981, cited in Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991) discovered that EFL learners may use expanded vocabulary to enrich their lexicon, even relying on their first language in highly creative ways to communicate their thoughts in writing. Even when writers are English as Foreign Language (EFL) students in a language classroom context, their texts always reflect their ability to solve a rhetoric problem, and their awareness of their own communicative goals, of the reader, and of the writing context. (Atkinson, 2003).

The reason is that writing is the process through which meaning is expressed. Writing is a complex process that allows writers to explore thoughts and ideas, making them visible and concrete. Writing encourages thinking and learning, now that it motivates communication and makes thought available for reflection (Mekheimer, 2005). The final product (in writing) in this way will become someone else's meaning. (Veal & Hudson, 1985) emphasized that the appropriate measure used in evaluating writing is dependent on the scope and purpose of the writing assessment as well as the resources available.

Moreover, the cognitive dimension of writing is of particular significance, given its social functions. The development of effective writing skills is an act of empowering individuals – a feature common across cultures inasmuch as this helps them position themselves well in social contexts where they may be influential. Furthermore, writing is most likely to encourage thinking and learning especially when students view writing as a process since the development of writing skills help the learner gain independence, comprehensibility, fluency and creativity in writing. If learners have mastered these skills, they will be able to write so that not only they can read what they have written, but other speakers of that language can read and understand it (Mekheimer, 2005).

The Problem of the Study

Previous research on the cognitive development of human beings, with special reference to creative thinking, has inspired extensive investigations into human development from infancy through preadolescence. However, adolescence and later adult stages were scarcely studied on the pretext that researchers and educators in adolescent and adult studies encountered difficulties assessing and evaluating adolescent needs, especially from learning a foreign language in mainstream classes. This is especially difficult when communicative skills underlie the curriculum and instructional designs for the foreign language the target of learning. For example, one big issue at adolescent and adult stages is the learner's need for materials that ought to develop their oral and writing language at better and faster rates. In this line, (Phillips, 1985) emphasised that oral and written language is very important in the overall development of the adolescent learners of EFL.

EFL learners should be encouraged to utilize their creative abilities in developing their communicative competence in order to adequately be able to express their needs and ideas in comprehensible English output (oral or written discourse) in real-life or semi-real situations, with native as well as nonnative speakers of English. This is the pinnacle of language acquisition per se. Thus, the EFL learner who can address and solve real-life problems with language through an optimal use of the linguistic possibilities or potential she has (move from competence to performance) and through

clear communication of ideas, thoughts and needs in a creative process are ones who are successful at language learning.

The problem of the present study is latent in the exploration of the relationship between creativity and communicative language teaching in the processes of developing communicative competence latent in written discourse.

Therefore, the problem of the study can be explained in the research question as below:

How significant is the relationship between creativity and communicative language teaching aimed at developing communicative competence as expressed in written discourse?

EFL learners who are taught communicatively into the foreign language would make all efforts to express their thoughts, ideas, or needs in the target language, even by borrowing from the first language because they are taught well that the goal of language learning is to convey meanings in a comprehensible fashion to listeners or readers. Some think that EFL learners, especially creative ones, look more interested in the meaning and content rather than the form as they perceive language as a social vehicle to establish and express social or personal identity in the target language community.

In language teaching, too, the communicative approach, which prioritizes the conveying of meaning over form, offers 'a view of the language learner as a partner in learning; [encouraging] learner participation in communicative events and self-assessment of progress' (Savignon, 1993), and incorporates the notion that the 'development of language control proceeds through creativity, which is nurtured by interactive, participatory activities' (Rivers, 1992).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between creativity and communication language teaching in written tasks among EFL learners in the English Department at the College of Education in Kuwait.

Hypothesis of the Study

The following hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1. There was a statistically significant positive correlation between creativity and communicative competence in written tasks amongst EFL sophomores in the English Department.

2. There were no statistically significant differences between males and females as to their correlation coefficients on the creativity test in relation to their writing grades.

Significance of the Study

This study was an exploration into the relationship between creativity and the process of learning in EFL at college level. Recognizing the role of creativity in communicative language teaching of writing and recognizing the differences amongst EFL learners hitherto with respect to creative potential and communicative competence could have implications in formulating new approaches or methods for developing written discourse in EFL.

Implications of the study would help EFL curriculum planning in designing writing programmes that are geared towards developing creativity in the students.

Methodology

This study has its objective as examining creativity in relation to the process of attaining a level of communicative competence in writing in English as a foreign language. Therefore, this study utilized the descriptive method of research by survey.

Subjects

The participants in this study were 40 (18 Males and 22 Females) freshmen enrolled in the English Department, College of Education, Kuwait University (18 males, 16 females). The researcher was the actual instructor for the participants in the year of the study and the year before; the general approach to language teaching for those participants has been communicative in that the EFL learners were frequently involved

in communicative tasks and activities that engage them in meaningful interactions amongst themselves and their instructor. All participants were studying English language skills as part of their academic preparation for the license of becoming prospective EFL teachers; so they were studying English language skills subjects such as Writing, Listening, Phonetics and Phonology, Translation, etc. The participants' level of proficiency in English ranged from lower intermediate to upper intermediate.

Apparatus

The researcher adapted a creativity test including five subtasks taken from Torrance (1962) as a sound measure of creativity compatible with the purpose of the present study. The test, developed in English by the researcher, included five tasks, namely, consequences, unusual uses, common problems,, categories and associations. The test required that participants provide as many responses as they could think of for each task.

The creativity test was developed into two parts, A and B, with each part containing an alternative topic to reduce the chances that a creative participant would be impeded by the language of the task or the task's topic cue incomprehensibility. The participants were instructed to answer either Part A or Part B, or both of them, with no negative effect on their scores.

The Consequences Subtask provided situations for subjects asking them to provide as many consequences as they could think of. For instance, one item was given this question and an alternative on it: Part A: What would happen if man lived on the moon? Part B: What would happen if smarter spatial beings invaded the earth? An example of a student response to Part A was "Spatial stations would be established between the moon and the earth for transporting water to moon." An example of a response to Part B was "Man would be distinguished like dinosaurs".

The Unusual Uses Subtask assesses the originality of responses by encouraging participants to supply unusual uses for common objects. For instance, Part A (Water) generated such responses as For drowning and killing ants instead of harmful insecticides', and Part B (Food) generated a response like "enriching the barren soil".

The Common Problems Subtask required that subjects to list a number of

problems that could possibly occur in two everyday situations: going to an examination (Part A), and making tea (Part B). Responses to Part A bore out a variety of responses such as falling ill or having an accident, and a possible solution in the two cases was report the college and defers the exam to a later time or has it in hospital. Part B responses were mainly concerned with ingredients and recipe needed for making tea; e.g. one problem could be that no sugar is available, and a possible solution is sweetening it with chocolate or sweet.

The Categorization and Classification Subtasks measuring ideational fluency asked the students to list as many as they could that pertain to a given category: e.g. Things that are yellow or more often yellow than not (Part A), and things that circular or more often circular than not (Part B), generating such responses as names for fruits or animals or birds that are yellow, or other objects that take the shape of the circle.

Associational Fluency Subtasks included such items that present the subjects two words and ask them to supply a third one that could be semantically associated with the other two. Example of Part A was rain and soil, and a common response was plant, and an example of Part B was paper and pencil that generated such responses as writing or testing.

The Creativity Test was validated by a jury of educational psychologists, English curriculum and Instruction methodologists and psychometricians in the College of Education, Kuwait University. Validation was for face and content validity, and the recommendations and suggestions of the jury were taken into consideration when developing a final version of the test. Then, the test was assesses for reliability and consistency using a test-retest and Alpha Cronbach, bearing a relatively high reliability (alpha = 0.81).

Furthermore, the researcher/instructor asked the participants, upon the completion of their answers to the Creativity Test to see their answers and to determine the most and fewest ideas and with the researcher identify the top and bottom 25% of students based on how they viewed the responses and performance on the Creativity Test. As well, the researcher identified the top and bottom 25% students based on their performance in the Writing Classes in English based on portfolio assessment and final Writing Exam grades of the participants in the end of term Writing Exam. The ratings of

the researcher/instructor and the ratings of the students> grades were used as the measures of the relationship between creativity and communicative competence in writing in the present study.

Procedures

The participants were voluntarily sampled for the study. They were introduced to the study and its purpose. Then, the participants were administered the creativity test with clear instructions as to how to provide their answers in answer sheets, with the test items strictly timed (each item on the test took 5 minutes on each task). Then, after completing the answer sheets, they, in groups, were asked to order the number of answers to determine the most and least answers generated to decide on the top and bottom 25% of plausible responses. The creativity Test was scored for fluency (number of appropriate, plausible answers for the subtasks), originality (frequency of occurrence of the responses of the whole sample), and elaboration (level of detail in their responses), and flexibility was scored for the number of times each individual participant changed from one category of response to another. Those four criteria correlate highly with one another, while originality, elaboration, and flexibility correlate highly with fluency (Carroll, 1993). The tasks in the creativity test were scored for fluency by the count of the participants responses and were also rated for elaboration on a 4-point scale ranging from No Elaborate to All Responses Elaborate. Scoring was done by two raters other than the researcher. The results of the Creativity Test findings were correlated with the Writing Test scores of the participants.

Results of Study

The correlation between the subjects' total scores on the Creativity Test and their Writing Test grades was highly significant, suggesting that EFL learners with higher levels of creativity demonstrate more achievement on language learning (with particular reference to writing) than those who lack creativity. A summary of the descriptive statistics for the participants (Females and Males) is given below:

Table (1)
Descriptive Statistics for the Subjects

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Variance	Range
Females	22	75,34	21,45	459,98	56-30
Males	18	61,24	16,34	266,84	48-27

Furthermore, it was disclosed that females outperformed males on their creativity-writing score correlations, and there appeared to be more association between female creativity and their academic performance on the writing test. Then, a t-test was run to compare variances about means for males and females' scores on creativity and writing grades. The table below summarizes the findings:

Table (2)
t-test Comparing Variances of Mean Scores for Males and Females on Creativity Test and Writing Grades

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value
Females	22	75,34	21,45	4	-2.36*
Males	18	61,24	16,34		

* p < 0.05

A significant t-value of -2.36 was found at a higher level of confidence (95%) between the two means. This indicates that females who are creative are better achievers than males on writing tests.

The table below shows a matrix of intercorrelations between Creativity Test Sub-tasks Scores and Writing Grades:

Table (3)
The matrix of intercorrelations between Creativity Test Sub-tasks Scores and Writing Grades

	Creativity Factor				
	1	2	3	4	Writing Grades
Originality	0,21	0,23	0,25	0.21*	0.31*
Sensitivity to Problems		0,24	0,22	0.34	0.44*
Ideational Fluency			0,24	0.25	0.48*
Associational Fluency				0.56**	0.49*
Total Test Score					0.56**

*p < 0.05; ** p < 0.01

The participants' scores on the subtasks of the creativity test were all significantly correlated with writing grades as a function of language learning success grounded in communicative teaching/learning methodology. Furthermore, there exist individual variations between individual learners on creativity as determined by the creativity test scores.

The relationship between students' creativity as represented in the four creativity factors and the students' writing test grades could be interpreted in the light of communicative classroom instruction where students were required to supply a variety of ideas in the communicative language tasks and practices. Such a finding verifies the hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between creativity and foreign language learning achievement that is the result of communicative language teaching.

The findings of the present investigation confirm previous research findings which indicated that writing is an essentially creative process involving the three aspects of creativity - producer, product, and process, and that writing is a problem-solving activity for EFL learners to discover about novel solutions (Atkinson, 2003; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Zamel, 1983; 1982). Furthermore, writing skills that are developed in a communicative language teaching setting tend to correlate with the learners' creative thinking skills because learners in producing written language may utilize skills of divergent and convergent abilities which may result in communicative competence best produced as creativity – a result that confirms other researchers' findings (Mekheimer, 2005).

Common sense and experience and findings from the present study indicated that communicative competence which is the result of fluency attained in communicative EFL classrooms at the cost of accuracy is associated with creativity - an important criterion of which is fluency of ideas. This suggests that communicative language teaching promotes the development of functional language used in everyday language situations (Savignon, 1991; Sato & Kleinsasser, 1999; Densky, 2003).

Conclusions, Recommendations and Suggestions

Creativity is an important factor that may contribute to success in foreign language learning, especially if teaching methods that can promote creative

use of the language were incorporated into the language curriculum, such as CLT.

It is recommended, based on the findings of this study, that the communicative language learning curriculum be designed with such tasks that enrich both the language of the students and their uses in real life situations. For instance, teachers can also use and assign for homework personalized questions which require a communicatively valid usage of comparisons in the answer(s).

As well, the EFL curriculum must be designed around everyday problems in order to encourage the learners to use the language for communicative purposes as fluently as they can. Problems must be presented in a fashion that can remove the constraints on the creative idea generation process. Providing broad problems or alternatives to the problems may help learners to supply as fluent solutions, as they can possibly do. Thus, problems need be not too narrow nor too vague in order to stimulate creative thinking on the part of the students and fluent use of the language input in the learning.

Teachers are also required to provide cues for their students when they supply answers to specific questions so that they may be guided to correct answers. In this way, communicative language learning exercises need to be graded on a continuum from guided practice to semi-guided to free exercises depending on the type of language input and the nature of the learning task.

Teachers should also be facilitators to learning, information gatherers, but not direct information providers unless they ask a lot of questions that may help learners communicate with the language. In this way, teachers are advised not to be judgmental when their students supply fluent answers to the questions they ask in communicative classes, because whatever irrelevant the answers might be, they can be still very creative or at least stimulating more creative responses in other students. Therefore, teachers need to provide more cues when they ask their questions.

Students need to be given their opportunities to practice the language inside and outside the classroom. Since teachers can only control for the inside classroom practices, the classroom setting should be reset to allow for communicative language use. For example, using cooperative groups for

learning the language will be more conducive to more language use orally and in writing than the tradition teacher-centered approach.

The present researcher would suggest the following for further research in the topic:

- Exploring creativity in its relationship to communicative language teaching on a large sample of secondary school students;

- Investigating the effects of problem-solving and cooperative learning in a CLT setting on developing oral and written skills in EFL college students;

- Examining the relationship between creative thinking skills vs. critical thinking skills and foreign language learning after the communicative approach to learning EFL.

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