VERBAL CREATIVITY IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE: COMPONENTS AND INDICATORS

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Abstract. *This thesis looks at verbal creativity in learning English as a foreign language. It reviews how researchers define creativity and verbal creativity. It then proposes three components of adolescent learners' verbal creativity: motivational, cognitive-linguistic and communicative-activity. For each component, the thesis gives clear indicators and three levels. These indicators can help teachers assess and develop creativity in both written and oral speech.*

Keywords: *verbal creativity, divergent thinking, fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, creative writing, speaking, adolescent learners, EFL.*

INTRODUCTION

Today, schools are expected to teach more than language rules. Learners need to think independently, express new ideas and solve problems. Creativity is one of these key skills. In English lessons, it appears mainly through speech: when learners write a story, invent a dialogue or explain an idea in their own way.

However, verbal creativity in a foreign language is still poorly defined. Some studies treat it as general creative thinking (Guilford, 1950; Torrance, 1966). Others focus only on creative writing products (Yemez & Dikilitaş, 2022). Recent research also shows that learners are usually less creative in a foreign language than in their first language, because their language resources are limited (Hyusein et al., 2025). As a result, teachers often lack clear criteria for assessing and developing their learners' creativity.

The aim of this thesis is to clarify the concept of verbal creativity in EFL learning and to propose its components and indicators for adolescent learners.

MAIN PART

1. Creativity and verbal creativity. Guilford (1950) linked creativity with divergent thinking, meaning the ability to produce many different ideas for one

problem. Torrance (1966) turned this idea into measurable traits: fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. Vygotsky (2004) argued that creativity is not a rare gift. In his view, every child creates when they combine past experience in new ways, and imagination grows with experience and language.

In applied linguistics, Carter (2004) showed that creativity is part of everyday talk, not only literature. People play with words, repeat and change patterns, and invent new expressions. Jones and Richards (2016) and Maley and Kiss (2018) argue that creativity should be a normal goal of language teaching, not an extra.

Based on these views, we define verbal creativity in EFL learning as *the learner's ability to produce new, varied and personally meaningful ideas in the foreign language, in both written and oral speech*. This definition covers two forms of speech, not only writing. It also links creativity with the learner's real language resources.

2. Components of verbal creativity. Sadykova and Shelestova (2016) described creative activity in foreign language learning through motivational, cognitive and operational components. Studies of creative writing in EFL usually measure fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration (Alshuaifan, 2024; Khanh, 2026). Building on these works, we propose three components for adolescent learners (Table 1).

Table 1. Components and indicators of verbal creativity

Component	Indicators
Motivational	Interest in creative tasks; willingness to take risks with language; low anxiety when expressing new ideas
Cognitive-linguistic	Fluency (number of ideas); flexibility (variety of ideas and viewpoints); originality (unusual ideas); elaboration (adding details); variety of vocabulary and structures
Communicative-activity	Creating texts (stories, dialogues, poems) in writing; expressing and developing ideas orally; adapting ideas to the listener or reader; working creatively with others

3. Levels. Each indicator can be rated at three levels:

Low: the learner gives few, mostly copied or predictable ideas and needs strong support.

Medium: the learner gives several relevant ideas, with some new details, but mostly uses familiar patterns.

High: the learner gives many varied and original ideas, develops them in

detail and expresses them freely in writing and speaking.

These indicators make verbal creativity observable. Teachers can use them in rubrics for writing tasks and for speaking tasks such as storytelling or role-play.

CONCLUSION

Verbal creativity in EFL learning is more than creative writing. It is the ability to produce new and varied ideas in the foreign language, in both written and oral speech. It has three connected components: motivational, cognitive-linguistic and communicative-activity. Clear indicators and levels make this quality possible to assess and develop. In our further research, these criteria will be used to design gamified creative writing tasks and to evaluate their effect on adolescent learners' verbal creativity.

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