

Exploring the Connection between Stability and Variability in Language Classrooms and EFL Teachers' Creativity and Burnout

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Abstract—Burnout and creativity, as two psychological constructs, are considered as variables which may have a considerable impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The present case study aimed at investigating the possible connections between degrees of class stability and variability and levels of creativity and burnout among 6 Iranian EFL teachers. In so doing, degrees of variability and stability, as defined and characterized in the domain of Chaos/Complexity theory, were studied qualitatively in EFL classes in relation to creativity and burnout levels of the teachers. The results suggested a direct relationship between variability and creativity levels of the participants together with a reverse relationship between the variability level and the 'depersonalization' aspect of burnout. In other words, class dynamism and creativity have more shared patterns and seem to be analogous.

Index Terms—variability and stability in complex systems, creativity, burnout

I. INTRODUCTION

Burnout and creativity are two psychological concepts which are predicted to have contrasting effects on the human performance in all situations. Particularly, in an educational context improving learners' level of creativity can have a huge positive impact whereas burnout effects can be detrimental. Burnout for example, as Bryne (1998) stated, has forced a large number teachers to leave their occupations after a couple of years of experience. Other studies have also been carried out to elaborate on the vague aspects of this phenomenon. For example, it was reported that around one third of teachers were not satisfied with their jobs, and that plenty of them, suffer from some degree of burnout (Farber, 2000). To Iwanicki (1983) and many other experts in the field, burnout is a complex phenomenon requiring the close attention of all educators. From this perspective, burnout is a multi-faceted, multi dimensional phenomenon whose various components require more attention and investigation.

Similarly though, creativity as a part of each person's mental abilities, is believed to be composed of some distinct components. From Vygotsky (1995)'s point of view, creativity is an indispensable part of the human existence and the whole society and it is not only an artistic ability that some people possess, but in essence, something that is essential for the process of consciousness. Studies on the concept of creativity and its wide-ranging influence are by far extensive and insightful. Most of these studies point to the fact that teaching should be geared towards practices and patterns that foster creativity and removes boredom and frustration from educational classes.

However, recently chaos/ complexity theory has brought with it new perspectives to the field of linguistics as well as applied linguistics. To learn about this further, we need to know what complex systems are and what specific features and qualities they possess. In essence, Complex systems theory (CST), Dynamic system theory (DST), Chaos theory and 'Emergentism' almost share the same specifics and principles; amongst them CST is the most matured theory with the other three theories as closely associated strands under it (Dornyei, 2009). *Variability and stability*, for instance is one of the main features of any complex system.

It appears that different levels of creativity and burnout on the part of EFL teachers may correlate differently with degrees of variability and stability. Unfortunately, research on determining the possible connection of these two variables i.e. burnout and creativity with the level of class dynamism or variability and stability in EFL context, has remained intact and mediocre.

Thus, the present qualitative study is meant to investigate any possible interaction between degrees of class dynamism or variability, based on the criteria provided by Chaos/ Complexity theory, and the two psychological constructs of creativity and burnout among six Iranian EFL teachers. Put another way, the study has tried to see if there are any shared patterns between creativity and variability in class on one hand and burnout and class variability on the other hand.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Burnout

As for burnout, there exist a wide variety of definitions and elaborations, yet most of them point a similar entity. In this regard, Maslach (1982) referred to burnout as a multi-faceted concept and defined the term as: “a three dimensional syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment that occurs among individuals who work with people in some helping capacity” (p. 3). This is a widely used definition as it covers almost all aspects of the term. Furthermore, Goddard et al. (2006) believed that burnout is a chronic state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion that is experienced by some employees due to the huge amount of work load.

Yet, from a broader perspective, Smith & McWilliams (1980) claimed that burnout develops when an individual's energy and motivation is degrading much faster than it is being retrieved. This is reflected in the feelings of alienation, isolation, depression, irritability and chronic physical ailments (*ibid*).

In two comprehensive studies by Maslach and her colleagues, burnout was found to have three major symptoms (Maslach & Jackson, 1984). These three main components of burnout were explicated by Maslach et al. (2001): (a) the emotional exhaustion that is the feeling of being emotionally overextended and exhausted with one's work; (b) depersonalization as the development of negative and indifferent attitudes toward others and (c) the reduced personal accomplishment which is the loss of feelings of self competence and not being satisfied with one's achievements.

One key figure with regard to burnout is Christina Maslach who has done pioneering research on the concept of burnout. The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), is still used as the most reliable and valid instrument on measuring burnout. However, it is clearly evident that measuring mental and emotional constructs is always a challenging task and one that requires a great deal of precision.

B. Creativity

Speaking of creativity, it is hard to come to one single clear-cut definition of the term. However, creativity, as compared to burnout, has enjoyed a larger body of research by some great experts of the field. In this respect, Dornyei (2005), a key figure in of ELT psychology, stated that research into the concept of creativity is either limited or mediocre. He further maintained that the studies to define creativity have focused on the description of ‘creative person’, ‘creative thinking’ or the ‘creative process/ behavior/production/ performance’ rather than the actual mental construct of creativity. One explanation for this deficiency in the literature of creativity is its fuzzy nature and the fact that it is studied in the field of *soft psychology* (plucker et al., 2004). The problem is that “Soft constructs” are difficult to define or describe due to their unobservable qualities and specifics which make it almost impossible to be measured objectively. In a similar vein, Amabile (1983), described creativity as a combination of three major constructs: intrinsic motivation, knowledge of a field and particular cognitive skills.

Likewise, Carter (2004) believes that the dominant paradigm of research into creativity is based on the discipline of psychology, and that creativity is commonly viewed as a mentalistic phenomenon. He claims that this phenomenon cannot be decontextualised or studied in a disciplinary vacuum or seen as an exclusively mental process and that creativity is a social, cultural and environmental phenomenon as well as a psychological process (cited in Ghonsooly & Raeesi, 2012).

Having studied the pioneering works in this field, Torrance was the one who developed the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) and helped explain some of the vague components of this construct. Torrance (1966) saw creativity as ‘a process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements, disharmonies, and so on. Moreover he continued that, creativity is identifying the difficulty; and eventually searching for solutions, making guesses, or formulating hypotheses about the deficiencies: testing and retesting these hypotheses and possibly modifying and retesting them; and finally communicating the results.

Furthermore, Baer (1993) counts four relatively distinct aspects of divergent thinking: creative fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration. The first one is the ability to produce a large number of ideas; while the second concerns the ability to produce a wide variety of ideas. Further, originality deals with the potential to produce unusual ideas and elaboration centers around developing and embellishing ideas and producing many details (cited in Ghonsooly & Raeesi, 2012). Many experts take these four components as the main building blocks of creativity itself. In a different study, Guilford made a list of cognitive processes which were believed to play an important role in one's creativity. According to Guilford (1950) sensitivity to problems, creative fluency of production, ability to come up with novel ideas, flexibility of mind, synthesizing ability, analyzing ability, reorganization and redefinition of organized wholes, a high degree of complexity of the conceptual structure, and evaluation. Guilford (1959)'s work introduced the idea of ‘divergent thinking’ as the most important cognitive component of creativity. This is the ability to come up with a wide range of possible solutions in addressing a given problem. At that point, this finding was probably the most illuminating study concerning the definition of the term creativity.

Now, seen from a different perspective, Chaos/ complexity theory portrays a different image of the notion of creativity. Freeman & Cameron (2008) believe that where systems are stretched, where conventional rules are not upheld, where a point of criticality is reached, new forms emerge. To them, this is called ‘the edge of chaos’ where systems show a great deal of flexibility and responsiveness and when creativity is developed and/ or fostered. Larsen-Freeman (1997), within the domain of this theory, states that complex systems such as human being, brain, and

languages go through stages of order and disorder/ chaos. “A system at or near the edge of chaos (disorder) changes adaptively to maintain stability and consequently, allows for a high level of flexibility” (2008, p.58). In this sense, flexibility and variability seem to convey an identical concept as regards complex systems.

C. *Variability and Stability in Complex Systems*

Prior to understanding the concept of variability and stability, it is absolutely crucial to define complex systems. A complex system is “that its behavior emerges from the interaction of its component; the emergent behavior is often non-linear, meaning disproportionate to its causal factors” (Freeman & Cameron 2008, p. 2). Additionally, complex systems are characterized by features such as *openness to energy, adaptation, heterogeneity, dynamism, interconnectedness, non-linearity, unpredictability* and etc. Given this definition, it can be easily deduced that language classrooms, learners, teachers and human brain are all obvious examples of a complex system as they all share the characteristics mentioned by Freeman and Cameron (2008) with respect to complex systems.

Complex systems always maintain a certain degree of stability as well as variability. In other words they are both stable and variable. Stability perpetuates the total identity of a system whereas variability allows for development and dynamism in the system (Freeman & Cameron, 2008). More specifically Cameron and Freeman put it as ‘variability around stability’ or in other terms we can say ‘unity in diversity’.

Further they maintained that sticking to the concept of variability around stabilized patterns could be indicative of how patterns of classroom actions may be altered to increase the benefit to language learning through finding ways to perturb systems out of attractors and into new trajectories. Put another way, to what extent teachers in their classes keep away from their own tendencies and old habits (attractors) in language instruction and develop new ways and ideas (new trajectories) to favor learning more dynamically.

Moreover, through the lens of chaos/ complexity theory, Freeman and Cameron (2008) defined teaching as “*managing the dynamics of learning*”. Embarking upon this view, Larsen Freeman (2006) asserted that teaching does not result in learning; in essence, learners devise their own paths to learning. In this sense, the approach to be advocated is neither curriculum-based nor learner-centered but it would be *learning centered*, in which the learning leads the teaching process and not the other way round (Freeman and Cameron, 2008). In the same vein, they confirmed that what a teacher does is manage and serve their students learning in a way that is in accordance with their learning processes.

For the purpose of this study, there seems to be a lack or mediocrity of research on the relationship between the concept of variability and stability and creativity and burnout. The researchers found no empirical study which explored creativity and burnout from this perspective and believe that this study can bridge the gap in the related literature.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Participants*

This research was conducted so as to study 6 English language teachers, including 3 males and 3 females. These participants taught English in different language institutes in the city of Mahhad.

Regarding the age range, the average age of the sample group was around 31, ranging from 22 to 37. Moreover, all the participants possessed at least 5 years of experience in teaching English as a foreign language in Iran. In this study, the “convenience” sampling technique (Dornyei, 2007) was employed in order to facilitate the procedures.

B. *Instruments*

In the present study two empirical tests have been used. Firstly, the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) (Torrance, 1998) was employed to measure the participants’ creativity on 4 different components of fluency, originality, elaboration, and flexibility. Questions 1-22 assess fluency, 23-33 cover elaboration, 34-49 captures originality and finally questions 50-60 pertain to flexibility. In this case, the participants had to answer 60 questions. Every question includes 3 choices, each having a different value: (A)=0, (B)=1 and (C)=2. Then the overall score was obtained out of 120. This overall score represented the general creativity level of each participant.

Secondly, the Maslach’s Burnout Inventory (MBI) (Maslach & Jackson 1986) was applied to measure the level of burnout components in each participant. The participants had to answer 22 questions regarding the ‘frequency’ and ‘intensity’ of burnout. In this test, 9 items were specified to measure ‘emotional exhaustion’, 8 items to measure ‘reduced personal accomplishment’ and 5 to assess ‘depersonalization’. However, in the present study, the Persian translations of both TTCT and MBI were used in order to improve comprehensibility, as the participants’ different English proficiency levels may affect their understanding of the test items and thereby their responses.

C. *The Validity and Reliability of the Instruments*

Regarding the English version of the burnout test, Maslach and Jackson (1981) examined the reliability of MBI with the use of alpha and the following results were gained: emotional exhaustion (alpha= 0.90), depersonalization (alpha= 0.79) and reduced personal accomplishment (alpha=0.71) (cited in Ghojari, Nabavi & Shirkoul, 2005). The reliability of this inventory for its Persian translation, however, was studied by Badri Gargari (1995) who arrived at the following

results in her study: emotional exhaustion ($\alpha = 0.84$), depersonalization ($\alpha = 0.75$) and reduced personal accomplishment ($\alpha = 0.74$) (cited in Ghobari, Nabavi & Shirkouli, 2005; Farahmand, 2007).

The validation and translation of this inventory was done by Filiyan (1992) in Iran. In his study, Filiyan used test-retest method to find the reliability of this inventory. The reliability was found to be .78 (cited in Ghobari, Nabavi & Shirkouli, 2005; Talaei, Mohammadnejad & Samari, 2007).

As with the creativity test, the Persian version of TTCT was used in this study; it has been translated and modified by Abedi (1993). Using the test-retest method, he gave the test to the students of secondary schools in Tehran and gained the following reliability scores: fluency: $r = 0.85$, flexibility: $r = 0.85$, originality: $r = 0.82$, and elaboration: $r = 0.80$. Further, the total reliability of the test was reported to be between 0.80 to 0.90. In addition, the validity of the test was calculated by Abedi (1993) through concurrent validity method. He achieved meaningful and significant reliability correlations of the four subscales between the two versions of creativity test. For instance, $r = 0.497$ for originality subscale and $r = 0.468$ for fluency were obtained (cited in Ghonsooly & Raeesi, 2012).

D. Procedures

The participants i.e. the six English teachers were asked to fill out the creativity and burnout questionnaires and bring them back within two days. The MBI is expected to take 10-15 minutes to complete while the TTCT can take a bit longer, that is 15-20 minutes. Once the researchers collected the questionnaires, they were checked to see if they had been completely filled out.

Subsequently, six in-depth interviews were conducted with these 6 English teachers, to check for the extent of 'variability and stability' in their real classroom environment. During the interviews the respondents had to answer about 10 questions, already made by the researchers, so as to measure and study the given concept thoroughly; the questions were made according to the concept of variability and stability defined earlier. Each interview took around 30 minutes allowing for the extraction of as much detailed information as possible. Additionally, these 6 teachers were observed in their classes a couple of times (2-3 times) without any notice to make sure their teaching manners and patterns in real class conditions matched the descriptions they had provided earlier in their interviews. The researcher used 'semi-structured' interviews, in that the respondents are allowed to elaborate and expand their answers. As for the class observations, an unstructured model of observation was utilized in order to allow for more flexibility without a predetermined check list, and also to include and investigate any unpredictable aspect of the classes observed.

Regarding the analysis and interpretation of the interviews and the observations of this qualitative research, the model presented by the Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Charmaz K., 2006), has been applied in which a theory is generated from data systematically obtained from social research (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In so doing, once all the data had been collected through observation and face-to-face interviews, the interviewees were coded into 3 distinct groups. Therefore, they were divided into three codes: Code (1), Code (2) and Code (3). For each group a whole series of features and characteristics was specified based on the assumptions borrowed from the concept of Dynamism in Classroom, Complex Systems and Variability around Stability in the domain of Chaos/Complexity theory.

In this regard, sticking to the course syllabus and teachers' lesson plans forced by the institutional policies plus teachers' own tendencies and teaching habits is to be considered as the *stable* and the fixed pattern of their teaching whereas providing new educational materials and handouts together with innovative classroom activities other than those of course components is deemed as the *variable* and dynamic pattern. Here the groups are labeled as *High*, *Low* or *Average* variability.

Code 1: High-variability (dynamism): Teachers who normally do not stick firmly to the procedures in the textbooks, lesson plans, course syllabus and tend to act unpredictably and innovatively; they bring their own handouts to class very often, do not follow every single activity in the books; add, omit and edit the predetermined materials so as to make it more interesting and viable in class conditions. Moreover, they do not have a fixed and unchanging pattern of teaching in their classes and therefore their students often have no idea how the teacher is going to act on a given task. Also they might happen to change the order of the tasks in a given textbook. Neither the teacher nor the learners get bored in this type of class.

Code 2: Low-variability (dynamism): As opposed to the previous group, teachers in this category are inclined to act based on a predetermined syllabus and with very few variations in the course of the term. The procedures and activities are mostly predictable in their classes and they follow a fixed lesson plan almost all through the course. Further, they have a tendency to get bored and frustrated with the repeated materials and teaching approaches they apply repeatedly; they only employ a limited range of approaches to their teaching English rather than teaching eclectically and selectively.

Code 3: Average-variability (dynamism): An intermediate level of variability between the High and the Low group codes.

Once it was decided that to which group code each of the 6 participants belonged, a comparison was drawn between them and their creativity and burnout test results to see whether or not there existed any relationship between any pair of them, that is: (a) *variability and burnout* in class or (b) *variability and creativity* in class.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Descriptive Statistics

Primarily, the results from the TTCT indicate that the mean score for the creativity index is around 85 (out of 120); that is, the total sample has enjoyed an “average level” of creativity which ranges between 75-85 based on the description provided by the test manual. Regarding the differences between the two genders, while the male index is 80.24, the female index is 83.04. However, all participants fall into the “average creativity” level of the test manual.

As for burnout, it is clearly evident that the levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization for the whole population are fairly low; 14.50 and 4.20 respectively. Furthermore, the mean score for personal accomplishment (38.77) again indicates the average frequency of burnout in the sample population is below average. Consequently, a ‘low’ frequency of burnout can be considered for the sample in this study. Moreover, the mean scores for the male and female groups were not noticeably different when compared to the whole population mean scores. Overall, the results of the mean scores point to a fairly ‘high’ creativity level, ‘low’ frequency in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and an average frequency level for personal accomplishment. Table I illustrates the mean scores for creativity and burnout components in the whole sample.

TABLE I.
THE MEAN SCORES OF THE CREATIVITY AND BURNOUT COMPONENTS IN THE WHOLE SAMPLE

		Creativity	Emotional exhaustion	Personal accomplishment	Depersonalization
N	Valid	6	6	6	6
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Mean		85.70	14.50	38.77	4.20
Minimum		63	13	10	6
Maximum		109	37	50	24
Maximum score possible		120	48	54	30

B. Findings

After a thorough analysis of the interviews, the participants were classified into the 3 variability (dynamism) codes which were already devised. Furthermore, their creativity levels together with the indexes of burnout components were studied and considered in relation to their variability levels. Table 2 puts together all the information regarding the levels of variability, creativity and burnout for the 6 interviewees. In this table the raw scores of creativity and burnout tests have been converted to grades of “very low”, “low”, “average”, “high” and “very high” according to the conversion manual of the tests. This was done so that comparison with the variability codes would be possible.

TABLE II.
LEVELS OF VARIABILITY, CREATIVITY AND BURNOUT FOR EACH PARTICIPANT

Participants	Variability code	Creativity	Emotional exhaustion	Personal accomplishment	Depersonalization
Teacher (1)	Average	Average	Low	High	Low
Teacher (2)	High	Very high	Low	Average	Very low
Teacher (3)	High	High	Average	High	Low
Teacher (4)	Low	Low	Average	Low	Average
Teacher (5)	High	Low	Low	Average	Low
Teacher (6)	High	High	Low	High	Low

Note: Throughout the article, teachers 1-6 are referred to as ‘T1’-‘T6’

It can be understood from the table that participants’ level of variability in class is quite analogous to that of their creativity levels. Only one participant, that is teacher 4, has got reverse rates of creativity and variability which can be ignored. In contrast, all other 5 participants have comparable and similar degrees of the two variables. Therefore, it can be stated that there is a direct relationship between creativity as a mental psychological construct and variability/dynamism as a behavioral pattern in language classrooms. Put another way, the more creative the teachers are the more dynamic they are and the more variety they bring to their classes. Further, they try to change their teaching techniques more often in order to arrive at a better and more effective approach to teaching.

On the other hand, it was hard to find a general pattern between burnout and dynamism. In this case, variability appeared to have little interaction with the two dimensions of burnout, emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment. However, among all three components, depersonalization had a reverse relationship with degrees of variability; meaning that the lower the level of depersonalization the higher the level of variability. In other words, teachers who were more depersonalized tended to be less dynamic in their classes and changed their teaching approaches very rarely.

Interestingly though, when asked to give a proportion for the stable and variable patterns of their teaching, almost all the participants confirmed that an average of 30% (ranging from the lowest, 25%, to the highest, 35%) is the room they devote to creativity, new ideas and change in their teaching experiences, while around 70% is given to old, fixed methods they normally apply in order to teach English as well as their teaching tendencies, habits and biases. Stability perpetuates the total identity of a complex system and variability allows for new developments and dynamism; given

this definition by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), it appears that the greater percentage ought to be designated to *stability* as it brings security and order to a language classroom.

As with unpredictability in class, 3 participants, that is T2, T3 and T6, stated that students might be aware of the main procedures of the class but they do not have any knowledge about the details of *how* the tasks are going to be delivered by the teacher. Thus, they know the general patterns but not the specifics of the teacher's approach. As a result, a certain degree of unpredictability was applied in their teaching methodology which as they put it, enhanced the quality and effectiveness of both learning and teaching. Further, they maintained that too much unpredictability might result in degrees of stress, anxiety and confusion on the part of learners, and that there should be a balance. Others, however, mentioned that they were so eager to act more unpredictably as it relieves *boredom* in class, but that it was not the case in their classrooms and they had to stick to a standard, well-practiced set of procedures throughout the semester.

In addition, almost all agreed that they did not follow all the procedures and steps through a given lesson plan provided either by the textbook or teachers themselves, and that they normally had a general plan of what they had to cover for a specific session. To them, this allows for more adaptation and flexibility regarding the details with which they can deliver the specified activities and tasks under real class conditions.

Later, through further investigations during the observation sessions of these 6 teachers, the researchers came to realize that T2, T3, T4 and T6 reflected the same behavior and teaching patterns as they had described in their interviews. In their classrooms it was noticed that students' level of *motivation* and *willingness to communicate* (WTC) can have a considerable impact on the teachers' actions and reactions and thereby on variability and flexibility in the way they instructed; however, these two notions were not measured empirically in this research study and it is the researcher's best speculation. Further, they all concurred that a fixed predetermined course syllabus and lesson plan could never be applied with high precision and match, and that implementing a standard degree of variability, dynamism and flexibility around the specified material and methodology should be made an integral part of teaching.

V. CONCLUSION

Regarding the main research question i.e. whether or not the concept of 'variability around stability' has anything to do with creativity index and/ or burnout, the findings showed fairly strong connections between creativity and variability/ dynamism in classrooms. The observations and interviews with the participants implied that the more creative the teachers are the more dynamic they tend to be, and the other way round; that is, the more changes and variety the teachers bring to their classes the more creatively they can teach. This finding is supported by Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008), asserting that creativity appears at 'the edge of chaos' where systems show a great deal of *flexibility* and *responsiveness*. In this study the terms *flexibility* and *variability* are referred to interchangeably and reflect the same concept.

Besides, the results suggested that there should be a larger proportion of stability in class instructions and trends (that of 70%) compared to the percentage of variability (around 30%); since too much variety, change and flexibility might deviate the class from its main instructional objectives. On the other hand, sticking firmly to lesson plans, following fixed procedures in teaching, employing a limited range of activities and fixed approaches and tendency in being predictable, were indicative of the 'stable' part of an English class. From their perspective, creativity implied the same sense as variability and flexibility did. Further the results confirmed that too much stability can have a reverse effect as it might kill creativity on the part of both the teacher and the learner, and consequently reduce the level of class dynamism. Teachers ought to alter their instruction methods from time to time and experiment with newer and more creative practices so that they can build upon their teaching knowledge and experience. In this regard teachers biases, beliefs, tendencies, and old habits pose serious obstacles to positive change and variability in class.

As opposed to creativity, burnout and class dynamism did not seem to have any shared pattern and teachers' level of burnout appeared to have no or very little interaction with variability and flexibility. However, it appears that one aspect of burnout, that is depersonalization, and variability tends to have an indirect relationship in almost all six teachers. Put simply, teachers with higher levels of depersonalization indicated lower degrees of variability while those with low depersonalization levels reported high flexibility and dynamism in their classrooms. As a result, it can be deduced that teachers with severe depersonalization levels seldom change their teaching methodology and tendencies; they leave little room for change and creativity in their classes and thereby very low variability.

Thus, the null hypothesis of the research study was rejected as creativity and variability reflected shared patterns and analogous degrees. Creativity and variability are directly related to one another and boost each other on a large scale. Teachers who are more creative are prone to act more selectively and innovatively, this way they can create a more desirable atmosphere in which learning takes place at a faster rate. On the other hand, there is a tradeoff between variability and depersonalization, that is, the more dynamism the less depersonalization.

Moreover, the researchers' guess is that learners' level of motivation and willingness to communicate (WTC) is likely to function as an intervening variable with regard to the connection between the two main variables under study rate of variability in teaching. MacIntyre et al. defined WTC as readiness to enter into discourse at a given time with a specific person or persons, using a second language (cited in Dornyei, 2005). It was observed that more motivated students encouraged their teachers to act more dynamically and creatively whereas, learners' with low levels of WTC and motivation dissuaded teachers from being innovative and flexible. The learners demonstrated more willingness to

interact in groups and pairs rather than involving in whole class participation; this, may partially be due to lower levels of anxiety within groups and pairs. Weak student involvement and engagement in class activities affected teachers performance and creativity. In this case teachers tended to stick to fixity and normal teaching methodology with no incentive to bring any change and variety to class. In the same way Amabile (1998) considered 'motivation' as one of the three major components of creativity together with expertise and creative-thinking skills.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of this study particularly address language teachers, educational supervisors, and textbook and syllabus designers.

The findings suggest that material developers allow for more dynamism and variability via developing tasks and activities that foster creativity in teachers and learners rather than killing it or fostering burnout. Tasks that require learners to resort to critical thinking as well as divergent thinking can be an offered possibility in this respect. The course books should offer a variety of exercises and activities to provide more learning and teaching opportunities for learners and teachers in class.

Furthermore, it is recommended that teachers avoid static teaching by incorporating a certain degree of dynamism through lesson plans that are not limited to a series of fixed and predetermined procedures but are open to change and variation. They can and in fact should edit and omit the content of their textbooks and incorporate new materials into their lesson plans so that practicality and plausibility of the activities and tasks will be improved. This, in turn may result in more engagement and efficiency in fulfilling a task successfully on the part of students. Teachers' handouts and teacher developed activities are but a few examples of the materials which bring variety and kill boredom in language classrooms. Similarly, educational supervisors can train teachers to teach more creatively and dynamically and enable them to make independent changes when and where necessary.

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