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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

THESIS BOOKLET

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THE CASE OF CREATIVITY IN ENGLISH TEACHER EDUCATION: THE TEACHER EDUCATORS' PERSPECTIVE AT A HUNGARIAN UNIVERSITY

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Introduction

Creativity is an important part of everyday life and is also considered a 21st century skill that is necessary for human beings to possess, and its development is a crucial aim in education in particular (European Commission, 2019).

When considering education, one important area of consideration is the beliefs that teachers hold. Teacher beliefs about creativity will influence how teachers teach and whether they encourage learners to be creative as well. It is known that teachers' beliefs are influenced by the way they themselves were taught (Lortie, 1975).

While teacher beliefs in general about creativity have been studied before, few research endeavours focus specifically on English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers and even fewer on teacher educators. Additionally, no research endeavour in the area of EFL teaching or the area of EFL teacher education has been done in the Hungarian context, a gap that this dissertation intends to fill.

This dissertation aims to understand and explore what beliefs EFL teacher educators working at a Hungarian university hold in connection with creativity, to investigate how creativity appears in their professional practice, particularly in methodology seminars, and to juxtapose these two in order to see how articulated beliefs and professional practice might differ.

Background

The concept of creativity

Creativity is notoriously difficult to define (Pugliese, 2010) and widely different concepts and theories exist in the field. Theories may be grouped based on the classic division of 4Ps: *person*, *process*, *product*, and *place*. Theories that focus on the creative person typically try to understand what characteristics creative people have and who can be creative. The idea that not only famous people but everyday people may exhibit creativity is reflected in the Big-C and little-c distinction where Big-C refers to outstanding creative achievement and little-c refers to everyday creativity of the average person (Richards, 2007). This dichotomy was expanded by Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) who introduced two more categories, mini-c and Pro-C. Pro-C is a midway point between amateur achievement and artistic eminence. Mini-c was created to cover the "creative insights and interpretations involved in the learning" (Kaufman

& Beghetto, 2009, p.3). Another model that should be mentioned in connection with the creative person is the Componential Model of Creativity (Amabile, 1983, 1996). Even though Amabile's model is more focused on the social environment, she also states that creativity requires a person to be intrinsically motivated.

Theories focused on the creative *process* typically describe creativity as a kind of thinking or problem solving. Wallas (1926/2014) considered creativity a problem-solving process and proposed a four-stage model of the creative process: preparation, incubation, illumination, and verification. Guilford (1950) laid the foundations of the psychometric approach to creativity and proposed that creativity has three components: fluency (how many new ideas a person may produce in a given time), flexibility (the ease of changing mindsets), and originality (the unusual and unconventional nature of ideas). Guilford (1968) also created the often-used distinction between convergent and divergent thinking. In connection with the creative process, it should be noted that motivation has an important connection to creativity. While the effect of extrinsic motivation on creativity is debatable, intrinsic motivation is definitely a contributor to creativity (Amabile, 1983, 1996; Ryan & Deci, 2000).

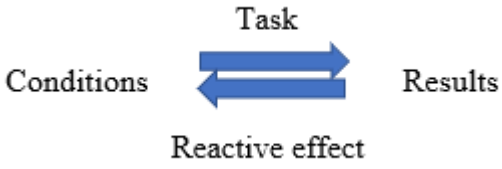
The creative *product* is the end result of the creative process. While such a product may be tangible; this is not necessarily the case. Insights, new ideas, and new metaphors can be seen as products as well in the sense that there is a definable result of the creative process – these are intangible mental products. For example, "the creative insights experienced by students as they learn a new concept or make a new metaphor" (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009, p. 4) can be seen as an intangible creativity product.

The creative *place* refers to the contextual and environmental factors that contribute to creativity, factors which are external to the person. Factors in this area include the role of society (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014), culture (Oades-Sese & Esquivel, 2011), people and relationships (Montuori, 2011; Harrington, 2011), and the physical environment (Davis et al., 2013).

The wealth of theories and the great differences that they display necessitated a careful choice of model for the dissertation. In the end, the two-way model of creativity in ELT was created as a theory that offers reasonable complexity and is specific to the field. This theory states that creativity is a complex phenomenon: certain conditions enable creativity to arise in a sufficient task which leads to tangible or intangible results (Széll, 2021).

Figure 1

The two-way model of creativity



Note. From Széll (2021).

These results then have a reactive effect on the conditions of creativity. Conditions of creativity include knowledge, creativity-relevant mental skills, motivation, and context. A suitable task is open-ended with appropriate creativity limits. Creative results may be tangible or intangible, and have a reactive effect on the conditions - for example, if students enjoy writing a poem, their motivation can increase because of this (Széll, 2021).

Creativity in education

While creativity is traditionally present in educational policies (Wyse & Ferrari, 2015), education systems are often criticized for the policy not appearing in everyday teaching practice (Cachia et al., 2010). However, creativity training, a specific intervention designed to improve creative thinking skills, is possible based on the existing literature (Feldhusen et. al, 1971; Kurtzberg and Reale, 1999; Rose and Lin, 1984; Scott et al., 2004; Torrance, 1972). While creativity training programmes traditionally focus on the mental processes, the role of the teacher in providing creative education is emphasized in Lin's (2011) framework of creative pedagogy. The three elements of the model are teaching for creativity, teaching creatively, and learning creatively. Teaching for creativity means noticing and fostering students' creativity by providing appropriate opportunities to improve their creativity; teaching creatively is defined as using colourful ways and methods to make learning more enjoyable and effective. Learning creatively means a kind of learning which is focused on curiosity, exploration, and experimentation as opposed to learning because of following instructions to do a certain task or memorise a certain piece of content.

In recent years there has been a growing interest in creativity in the field of EFL teaching and applied linguistics. Research results suggest that higher results on creativity tests correlate with better grades (Ottó, 1998), better narrative task performance (Albert & Kormos

2004), performance in placement tests and oral tasks (Smith, 2013). The growing interest in creativity in the field has led to a boom in available support resources for teachers (Maley & Kiss, 2018, Maley & Peachey, 2015; Pugliese, 2010; Xerri & Vassallo, 2016).

The role of teacher education is important in training creativity; Jeffrey and Craft (2004) found that teaching for creativity is actually very closely related to teaching creatively. Students tend to follow teacher behaviour, which can enhance creativity even if this does not appear as an overt goal. Teacher education programmes should recognize this and teach creativity (Pugliese, 2010). The difficulty in this endeavour originates from the fact that trainees join teacher education programmes after having observed and participated in thousands of lessons, a phenomenon called the apprenticeship of observation (Lortie, 1975). This will result in a set of existing beliefs about teaching which might be neither correct nor beneficial. We do know that beliefs are incredibly resistant to change, and in order to change at all, they need to be challenged and proven unsatisfactory (Pajares, 1992).

Teacher beliefs and creativity

Pajares (1992) defined beliefs as "an individual's judgement of the truth or falsity of a proposition" (p.316). Teacher beliefs cover many areas; beliefs about creativity in general have been extensively studied. Teachers tend to believe that everybody has the ability to be creative and creativity can be trained to a certain degree (Bereczki & Kárpáti, 2018). However, possibly because creativity tends to be only defined implicitly, it is sometimes confused with other characteristics like intelligence (Andiliou & Murphy, 2010). Creativity is also seen as closely related to self-confidence, knowledge, talent, interest, and curiosity and general in nature but more closely related to subjects like arts and science (Bereczki & Kárpáti, 2018).

A major problem of studying teacher beliefs is that they do not necessarily transfer into action. Important factors in the educational context, such as reactions from students and parents, culture, and national policies may prevent teachers from acting on their beliefs (Fives & Buehl, 2012). Little research has been done so far to compare beliefs and teacher practice, and most of their results have only limited value as they are plagued by research design concerns.

Rationale and Research Niche

Beyond being an unavoidable phenomenon of humanity, creativity is considered a 21st century skill that is necessary for human beings to possess in order to lead successful and productive lives in general, and its development is a crucial aim in education in particular (European Commission, 2019). On a policy level, creativity is somewhat important in Hungarian public education as it is present in the National Core Curriculum (Government of Hungary, 2020). While no studies have been done to compare policy to practice, anecdotal claims in the community of Hungarian teachers and educators frequently accuse the education system of stifling creativity.

The role of teacher education is unquestionable in this regard. Seeing how teachers tend to teach as they were taught (Lortie, 1975), it is the responsibility of teacher training programmes to break the cycle of education that lacks creativity. If creativity is indeed crucial and the guidelines of the European Commission (2019) are to be taken seriously, then teacher training is the chance to influence the process and move society towards creativity through helping teachers be more creative. In order to understand the situation better, teacher beliefs about creativity need to be studied to understand what beliefs teachers hold and to what extent these beliefs appear in practice.

While teacher beliefs in general about creativity have been studied before, few research endeavours focus specifically on EFL teachers and even fewer on teacher educators. Some publications address the issue of creativity in teaching English (Maley & Peachey, 2015; Pugliese, 2010; Xerry & Vassallo, 2016). These works typically avoid clearly defining what creativity is, as a widely accepted definition or framework has not yet been made for the profession (Xerri & Vassallo, 2016). Furthermore, they do not typically discuss beliefs about creativity in the context of teacher education. Additionally, no research endeavour in the area of EFL teaching or the area of EFL teacher education has been done in the Hungarian context. Hungarian studies so far focused on the connection between creativity and language learning success (Ottó, 1998), creativity and language aptitude and level of proficiency (Albert, 2006), creativity and task performance (Albert, 2008; Albert & Kormos, 2011). This dissertation intends to fill this gap by taking the first step towards understanding the situation of creativity in teacher training.

Aims and Research Questions

This case study research endeavour aims to understand and explore what beliefs EFL teacher educators working at a Hungarian university hold in connection with creativity, to investigate how creativity appears in their professional practice, particularly in methodology seminars, and to juxtapose these two in order to see how articulated beliefs and professional practice might differ. In order to fulfil this aim, the following research questions were formulated:

1 What characterizes the beliefs about creativity held by EFL teacher educators who work at a Hungarian university? (RQ1)

1.1 What beliefs do these English teacher educators express about creativity in general?

1.2 What beliefs do these EFL teacher educators express about creativity in teaching and learning English as a foreign language?

1.3 What beliefs do these English teacher educators express about creativity in the context of English teacher education?

2 How does creativity appear in the professional practice of English teacher educators at a Hungarian university? (RQ2)

2.1 In what way is the topic of creativity discussed explicitly in methodology seminars in English teacher education?

2.2 How does creativity appear implicitly in methodology seminars in English teacher education?

3 How do professed beliefs and observed practice concerning creativity in English teacher education at a Hungarian university differ? (RQ3)

Research Design and Methods

This case study research is based on the philosophy of pragmatism that aims to explore and understand the beliefs about creativity of EFL Teacher educators working at a Hungarian university. Using qualitative – verbal – data, it also aims to explore and understand how creativity appears in their professional practice, especially in methodology seminars taught by these teacher educators and to compare professed beliefs with professional practice. The participants are seven EFL Teacher educators working at one of the biggest Hungarian universities and they all teach methodology seminars to pre-service EFL teachers at this university. Data was collected in three consecutive steps: via document analysis of course syllabi, two weeks' worth of lesson observation (eight lessons) for each participant, followed by a semi-structured interview with each participant. The data was then analysed using document analysis and thematic analysis as described in Braun and Clarke (2006). For the thematic analysis, Atlas.ti 7.5 was used. As a final step, results were synthesized to compare beliefs and professional practice.

Table 1

Research questions with data sources and methods of analysis

Research question	Data sources	Method of analysis
1. What characterizes the beliefs about creativity held by EFL teacher educators who work at a Hungarian university?	Semi-structured interviews	Thematic analysis
2. How does creativity appear in the professional practice of English teacher educators at a Hungarian university?	Document analysis (course syllabi) Semi-structured interviews Lesson observation	Thematic analysis, document analysis, analysis of field notes
3. How do professed beliefs and observed practice concerning creativity in English teacher education at a Hungarian university differ?		Synthesis of results

The trustworthiness of the research endeavour is ensured in line with Lincoln and Guba (1985). Credibility of the study is established by a thorough examination of available literature in the theoretical background, as well as the linking of results to other research. To improve dependability, procedures of data collection and analysis are outlined in detail in the dissertation, thematic maps created during the analysis are attached in the appendices, and regular consultations with my supervisor helped ensure that data is collected and analysed in an accurate and consistent way. Data collection was triangulated, the data collected and analysed in the study was gathered from several different sources (interviews, documents, and observation). Transferability is ensured through providing thick description of the data collected, the researcher's experiences in order to enable the reader to decide to what extent this piece of research and its findings are transferable to other contexts. Confirmability is established by the detailed description of the research process and by leaving an audit trail, a transparent and detailed record of the research steps taken.

Major findings

1 What characterizes the beliefs about creativity held by EFL teacher educators who work at a Hungarian university? (RQ1)

The data from the interviews used to answer the first research question revealed that participants mostly hold beliefs that are harmonious with how creativity is defined in this dissertation and what the literature says in general. In everyday life, creativity is defined in different ways; some common associations include problem-solving, novelty, and art. In connection with teaching and learning English as a foreign language, participants believe creativity to be very important as it is a life skill as well as something that makes teaching and learning fun and results in increased motivation and decreased boredom and burnout. On the other hand, creativity is seen as insufficient to being a good teacher and other skills and knowledge like methodological knowledge and social skills were mentioned as indispensable. Apart from wanting to enjoy teaching, participants mentioned changes in the world such as online education because of Covid-19 as a factor that presses them towards being creative. The sudden nature of switching to online education with no or very little preparation in essence provided creative task constraints: teachers had to achieve certain aims without the use of any of their normal tools. For example, if a trainer had used card distribution in person

to assign roles to learners, they would have needed to come up with an alternative for the same function. This is an open-ended task that presses the trainer to reach out to new ideas. For language learners, creativity is believed to be helpful in self-discovery of learning-related preferences like learning styles and in making communication easier.

Barriers and enablers of creativity emerged as a theme in beliefs; the biggest barrier identified was the education system, which does not support creativity as it has an exaggerated focus on knowledge transfer as opposed to training skills, is burdened by an overloaded curriculum and a severe lack of time and funding, and a culture of competition and performance pressure. Other barriers identified were student beliefs and attitudes and error correction practices. While a lack of barriers is helpful, other enablers of creativity were listed. These were experience and methodological knowledge of the teacher, energy invested in teaching, an accepting and supporting atmosphere, personality with appropriate self-esteem to allow risk-taking, and a degree of freedom which is enough but not too much.

If the conditions are sufficient, teachers' creativity can emerge in different ways, focusing on different areas. Lesson planning and the related creation or modification of materials was mentioned most often as areas that allow teachers' creativity to flourish, other areas included the physical environment, dealing with spontaneity, handling individual differences, incorporating learner interests, community and relationships, and alternative assessment.

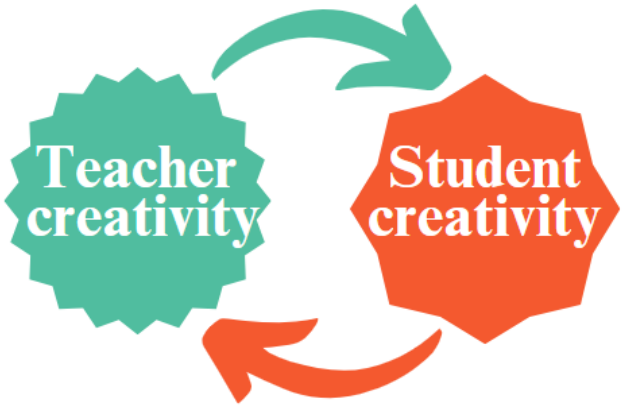
Figure 1

Areas of teacher creativity.

Teacher and learner creativity are seen as inherently connected. It is mainly the teacher's responsibility to create the required conditions for creativity to flourish. Teachers also inspire creativity by being a good example and inspiring learners to follow. This is seen as the best and most important way how teacher education contributes to fostering creativity.

Figure 2

The connection between teacher and learner creativity.

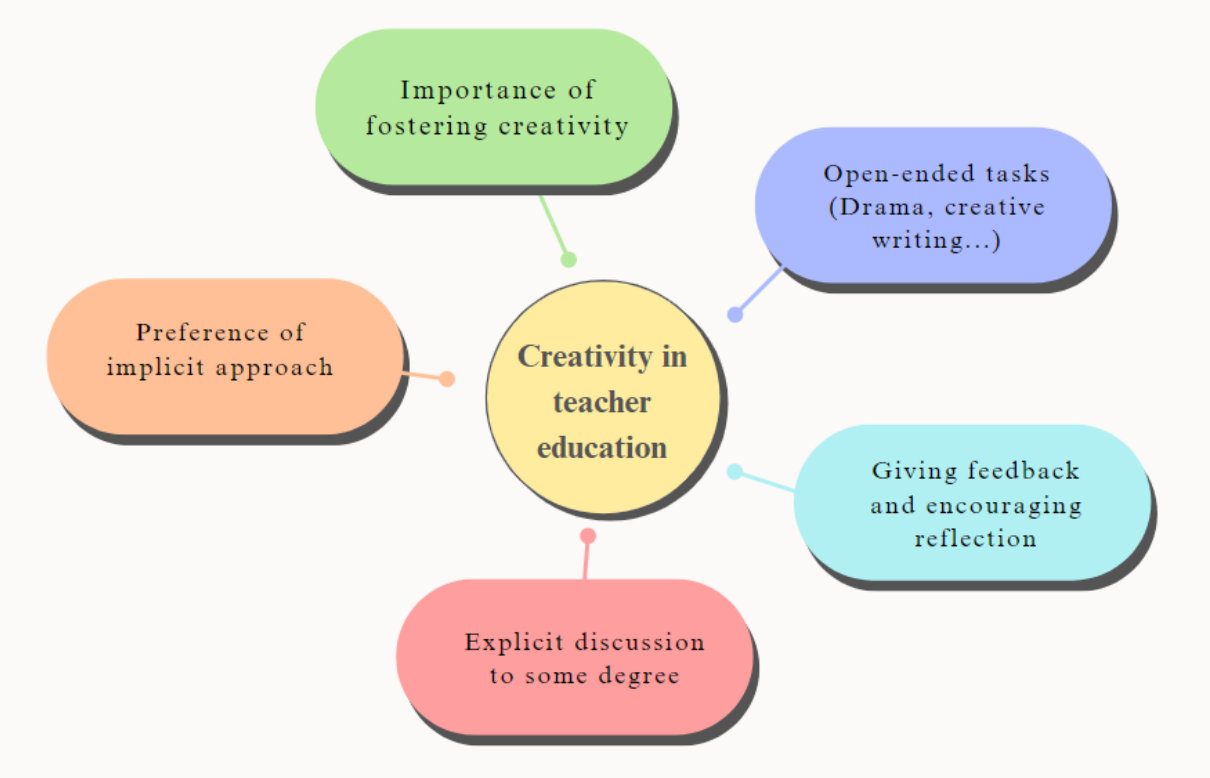


Participants agree that creativity is not discussed explicitly as a separate topic but believe that it is discussed on the basis of necessity, in connection with specific situations. There is also lack of agreement whether explicit discussion should receive more focus in teacher education, and if so, how this should be done.

Giving appropriate feedback and supporting self-reflection were seen as other important factors that help teacher trainees improve their creativity. Task that are believed to foster creativity are considered open-ended with appropriate creative limits; specific tasks mentioned were drama and improvisation, creative writing, mind maps, project work, art-related activities, and open-ended problem-solving tasks. The listed tasks and their characteristics were in harmony with how creative tasks are defined by this dissertation. Overall, participants articulated complex beliefs which constitute a consistent system.

Figure 3

Summary of beliefs about creativity in teacher education.



2 How does creativity appear in the professional practice of English teacher educators at a Hungarian university? (RQ2)

To answer the second research question, data collected through document analysis and from lesson observation was used and this revealed that creativity is not a separate topic by itself in methodology seminars. Explicit discussion of creativity in connection with a specific situation or related topic might sometimes happen, depending on the situation, the group, and the educator. The observed instances show that this rarely happens, and even when it does, explicit discussion is restricted to the use of the term as a general adjective or a phenomenon of which people have a pragmatic, implicit understanding.

Figure 4

Example of implicit understanding of creativity.

Discussion moves to how trainees are expected to do the grammar presentation
Jackie: So it's next week and it should be 5-10 minutes.
Trainee: So it has to be interactive?
Jackie: Yes, it has to be interactive. Use your creativity!
The discussion moves on to another topic.

Implicitly, creativity is more present in methodology seminars and the conditions for its emergence are generally fulfilled. Participant teacher educators possess necessary methodological knowledge and trainees also possess a sufficient level of language that enables creativity. Signs of motivation were observed both in case of educators and trainees. The context was mostly favourable; educators had adequate time in their courses to allow for creativity, they had enough space both literally and figuratively, and they were successful in creating a friendly, accepting, and non-judgemental atmosphere. There were also sufficient tasks during the course that allowed creativity to flourish. These tasks appeared in all participants' lessons and they carry creative potential because they are open-ended and have sufficient creative limits that enable creativity to flourish. Observed creative tasks can be divided into three main categories: warmers and peer teaching sessions, tasks that required creativity from both educators and trainees, and tasks with unrealized creative potential. The latter means that despite having an appropriate task, opportunities for creativity were sometimes missed, which could have been because of motivational problems, time issues, or lack of awareness.

3 How do professed beliefs and observed practice concerning creativity in English teacher education at a Hungarian university differ? (RQ3)

The third research question necessitated using all data sources by comparing articulated beliefs and observed practice. For some beliefs it is impossible to judge whether they influence action because the context might be different or some other factors might make lesson observation an insufficient source of information. Regarding those beliefs that could be observed in practice, participants' articulated beliefs and classroom practice seem to mostly align. Participants displayed the skills they deemed necessary to have in order to foster creativity, invested energy in avoiding barriers like over-correction and in creating a

supportive group atmosphere. Their creativity was observable in different areas; investment in lesson planning resulted in varied and interesting lessons and they also handled unexpected situations in a skilful manner.

On the contrary, some beliefs were only present to a limited degree. Participants mentioned that creativity is not discussed explicitly as a separate topic but on a needs basis when the opportunity arises. Document analysis showed that it is certainly true that there is no such topic in the course; however, occasional discussions of creativity also display a mixed picture. While participants stressed the importance of this, in reality explicit discussions in the classroom rarely moved beyond casual mention. There was no occasion when the topic of what creativity is and what constitutes as creative was discussed in a lesson and there was also no occasion when the importance of creativity as an aspect of teaching or tasks was discussed. Even when creativity is mentioned in connection with reading or creative writing, the issue was not pursued in detail. The most detailed discussion related to creativity was in a lesson when a peer-teaching session focused on creative writing without setting appropriate creative limits and this consequently led to a discussion of the necessity of these limits. However, the necessity of limits was discussed and presented as a characteristic of a good writing task in general and not of creativity specifically.

Figure 5

Discussing aspects of a creative task without naming it.

Trainee instructs the group on the basic rules of 'Whose line is it anyway'. Trainees have to act out a situation in groups and when someone claps one of them has to insert their word they received on a slip of paper. The game proceeds with varying levels of enthusiasm, some groups really get involved in acting, and one trainee actually shout when the role requires them to. Glenn participates in the last situation. After having finished, there is a whole-group discussion of the task: What level is it good for? What are the benefits? How can you help your students a bit?

Closely connected to this issue is the belief about the importance of creativity. All participants expressed the belief that creativity is very important for both teachers and for learners, and for them as teacher educators. Some evidence of this view certainly emerged from the data; participants appear to aim for creative teaching and invest energy into this aspect of their professional lives. However, this importance only partially influences how they educate future teachers. In the lessons I observed there were several opportunities where

further discussion of creativity would have been possible but this did not happen. Beyond explicit discussion, there were instances when trainees acted in a way that lacked or discouraged creativity and educators did not comment on this; for example, when a trainee handled a warmer about riddles as a convergent task with one good solution or when another trainee in a peer-teaching session created a very standard and somewhat boring by-the-book presentation-practice-production type of session. My lesson observation notes were continuously amended by my thoughts and reflections, and it is perhaps telling that on the margin of this particular peer-teaching session I wrote "epitome of uncreative teaching". On the other hand, I realize how difficult it is to say exactly *how* important something is for participants as this is not measurable and people use language differently to describe their meaning. Thus, another possible reason of the contradiction between the professed importance and these actions could be that 'very important' has a different meaning for me personally. The possibility of my own bias as a researcher also has to be mentioned here; my interest in creativity might also skew my view of how important it really is and how that importance should appear in action.

Conclusion

Pedagogical implications and future directions for research

Pedagogical implications of this research are far-reaching. Concentrating on the unit of investigation itself, the area that most obviously requires action is where there is disagreement between the views of participants or between beliefs and action. This area is the question of explicit discussion of creativity; some participants believe this should gain more prominence while others did not think so. Perhaps a department-level discussion could be opened on the topic to understand the reasons behind differing views and to see if these differences can be reduced and a common ground can be found. Furthermore, participants' beliefs about the extent of creativity-related discussion seem slightly misaligned with observed practice, which means that awareness raising in the area could prove beneficial. Making sure that teacher educators understand what creativity actually is, how it works, and how to foster it can help them step beyond the limits of implicitly developing creativity and help them introduce a discussion on its importance into teacher education. One possible way to do this is to create a workshop for the methodology team or even the entire department in order to enable professionals to share views, opinions, and current practices. This could also be a chance to raise teacher educators' awareness about how and why explicit discussion of creativity could

benefit trainees. To name a few examples, creativity could help future teachers in creating their own materials or supplementing coursebooks to suit learners needs and to compensate for their disadvantages. It could contribute to finding new ways to achieve specific aims (for example, finding another engaging way to practice the present perfect when a group is already really bored with it), or it could lead to using materials in unique ways (for example, finding different uses for a favourite photograph or a YouTube video). Creativity could also help handle unexpected situations through improvising.

The topic of creativity could be discussed in connection with various existing areas covered in methodology seminars; for example, teaching speaking, teaching writing, or 21st century skills in the classroom. While the teacher training programme is full and introducing new elements might prove to be difficult, the benefits may outweigh the costs in this case. Unfortunately, due to the scale of this research endeavour there is little data that specifically supports this point, yet one piece of data does stand out in this regard. One of the participants emphasized how explicit teaching of creativity is important because otherwise trainees might fail to see the relevance and consider it a waste of time:

> It's very important, not only in our classes, but in pedagogy classes. They do creative things, but they need to see the sense in it. So in most classes where we played games and made mind maps they didn't tell us what this is good for. And we considered it a waste of time. I think current students are the same, or that's the impression I get from a few comments, they don't say positive things about pedagogy classes. Yet I think they wanted to instil creativity, and they are still trying to do so, just the method is not working. […] We should explicitly explain what creativity is and why it is important, not only have them make mind maps, but they should see the aim. And someone who has knowledge on it should say these things. I don't talk about it in class because I don't have the knowledge. (Arden)

Following from this, discussing creativity explicitly in methodology seminars could be beneficial. Future teachers would profit from understanding how creativity offers many potential benefits in their own practice and how it contributes to the creativity of their students. Teacher educators are in a unique position of being able to directly influence their trainees' views and future practice both by setting an example and explaining why these practices are important through explicit teaching. Trainees should understand how their teaching impacts themselves and students and how teaching creatively and teaching for creativity are connected. For example, if a trainee teacher understands that creativity might increase motivation through enjoyment for both the teacher and the student, they might be

more willing to invest energy into creative teaching as they understand its importance. Implicit learning is still possible if this factor is missing; however, trainees might see the importance of creative solutions as less and might rely on tried-and-tested, by-the-book solutions more.

Regarding teacher education, it has to be emphasized that methodology seminars are only one component of teacher education, no matter how important. There possibly are many different courses where creativity has or could have a role, and this might also shape future teachers' beliefs and practices. These courses should be investigated by future research to create a fuller picture of the situation of creativity in English teacher education. Similarly, the situation at other universities needs to be investigated in a similar fashion both inside and outside Hungary in order to draw more general conclusions.

Naturally, these conclusions go beyond the context of teacher education. Further research should focus on teachers working in different contexts, either in primary and secondary education or in the private sector. Understanding different needs, opportunities, and priorities inherent in these different contexts could inform policy makers as well as teacher education about how to better prepare teachers to be able to teach creatively and foster creativity in their varying environments.

Furthermore, this research endeavour focused on investigating creativity from the teachers, more specifically the teacher educator's point of view, interviewing and observing participants who work in teacher education. Though the observation necessarily concentrated on the trainees themselves to some degree, only their actions and behaviour were present and even that was not the main focus of investigation. Future research should focus on understanding the trainee's views and beliefs and contrasting it to observable behaviour. This in turn could also inform teacher education on how to better help trainees become creative teachers.

Lastly, at the policy level decision makers should aim to rectify the issues that emerged in connection with the education system. While these beliefs were not investigated in action as this research endeavour did not focus on public education, a thorough research-based investigation of problems in connection with public education should be conducted. Based on its findings, steps should be taken to correct emergent problems such as an overloaded curriculum and not enough time and funding.

Limitations

This dissertation has a number of limitations. The structure of the research is based on the interview following the lesson observation step in order to ensure that the teacher educators do not know what aspect of their lesson is being observed and why. Nevertheless, EFL teacher education is a small profession in the Hungarian context – professionals know each other and communicate regularly. Unfortunately, this opens up the possibility of some participants knowing about the focus of my investigation beforehand. As a result, the chances of the Hawthorne-effect, which means that participants behave differently when they know they are being watched (Dörnyei, 2007), are increased.

Another limitation is due to the social desirability bias, which means that participants may act and comment in a way that they consider to be socially accepted (Dörnyei, 2007). As mentioned earlier, creativity is considered important in theory and in policy, yet does not usually appear in practice. Most likely, participants will be aware that creativity is something they should, theoretically, strive for in their professional practice. This was partly offset by my paying increased attention to the way the questions in the interview are worded and participants were repeatedly reminded that there are no correct answers and their personal opinions and beliefs are important and these are what I am interested in.

A practical limitation is evident in the nature of the case study itself and the number of participant teacher educators. As this was a case study, there is no way to know how the situation is different at other universities in Hungary. Additionally, financial and time constraints limited the scope of this investigation.

Another issue that emerged during data analysis and writeup is that quotes and observation notes obtained from different participants do not appear in a completely balanced manner. I paid attention to put equal effort into observing and interviewing each participant. After introspection and additional review of the data, I arrived at the conclusion that this is not a case of favouritism; put simply, the topic and nature of this investigation make it likely that not all participants will appear in the final product in the same ratio. Teaching styles and habits differ, topics of observed lessons differ, and even creative ability or the motivation to be creative might differ between participants. I was mostly concentrating on the presence of certain creativity-related phenomena, which means that when such phenomena occurred it required detailed description of details. These altogether naturally led to some participants appearing to hold a more prominent role in the dissertation.

Related to the previous point, one might claim that certain pieces of observation notes have been chosen seemingly arbitrarily to illustrate certain points in the dissertation. During designing the study, I made the decision to use my two-way model to help process the data I have and guide the analysis. This also means I accepted the fact that certain pieces of observation notes that are relevant to each point of the model might seem to have been chosen arbitrarily exactly because they were picked to support a specific point and the focus of observation was guided by a fairly strict path provided by the research question and the two-way model of creativity. I believe that these restrictions were necessary in order to keep the focus of analysis.

A further limitation of this study stems from the sensitive nature of this investigation. Because of teacher training being a small profession where most individuals know each other, I had to take severe steps to ensure that participants' identities were protected. Unfortunately, this very often meant that I could not provide even codenames for certain pieces of data, for example course-related information, certain pieces of observation notes, or even quotes as I felt that this would set up such a complex and detailed picture of each participant that it would become possible to guess their identity by process of elimination. This necessarily impinges the quality of the thick descriptions.

Lastly, the insecurity of the working mode of tertiary education resulting from Covid-19 caused problems in this research. From the beginning of Covid-19 until the days this dissertation was finalized, teaching at this university fluctuated between periods of online and offline teaching in a way that could not be predicted in advance. This meant that in case of one of the participants, lessons were observed fully online. In case of another participant, illness and time constraints resulted in me only being able to observe 4 lessons instead of the 8 originally intended.

Publications connected to the topic of the dissertation

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