SUGGESTIONS AND PROMPTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES IN EXPRESSIVE WRITING

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ABSTRACT

The expressive experience of language learners can be developed and transformed into an enriched, authentic, stimulating and above all autonomous and lasting process through activities that not only enhance language proficiency but also encourage learners to think creatively and express themselves uniquely. Literature and empirical research guides teaching in a variety of interpretive schemes that highlight the uniqueness of each student, improve the communication skills, and allow for a pleasant contact with the language. This paper suggests several activities for creative engagement and unfolding of the imagination and the way of thinking, to cultivate expressive expression and writing in the foreign language.

KEYWORDS

creative writing, activities, authentic expression, second/foreign language

1. INTRODUCTION

Creative writing is the experiential intervention in expressive writing, either in the mother tongue or in the foreign/second language, that will produce innovative, authentic, enriched written productions, and will improve both the communication skills and the meaningful means that will be used. Creative writing as a pedagogical activity will allow a more enjoyable, full of new stimuli, experience to produce texts of a better language level and to develop empathy, imagination, alternative writing and maximizing significant participation in the lesson [1], [2], [3]. Cultural empowerment [4], exchange of knowledge and values [5], [6], vocabulary richness, accuracy in the target language [7], [1], [8] are also favoured, so that foreign language learners experience positive emotions, identities, and habits [9].

The improvement in learning motivation and creativity, as well as foreign language fluency and originality is highlighted by the international literature [10], [11], [12], [8], [13], [14], [15].Linguistic diversity, highlighting ideas, trusting in the emotional richness of everyone and strengthening the self-confidence of those who are taught a foreign language offer a pleasant basis and mood for interaction with the language [1], [16], [17], [18].

Teaching must create opportunities for different ways of understanding, for a variety of interpretative schemes and highlight the uniqueness of each student. Therefore, in the foreign language course, the need to differentiate the teaching, to adapt the activities and methods to the readiness levels, interests and learning preferences of the participants is necessary. Equally essential is the need for authentic learning, where everyone is exposed to a variety of language variations, engages with the language in real contexts that fuel interest. Moreover, the foundation is the active participation in experiential actions and the increase of the encouragement for

participation. All these are possible when we offer recreation and amusement, creative activities, playful writing and speaking breaks, humor, and alternative strategies [19].

With the following proposals our objective is to contribute to the literature, to the teaching experience and to the most essential, qualitative, and long-term learning in the environment of the foreign classroom, so that students find opportunities to participate and express themselves through activities that meet their needs and abilities, to be satisfied with the result of their actions and to strengthen their self-esteem [20], [21]. To suggest actions and opportunities for active participation in class discussions, group activities and in personalized learning paths that can enhance satisfaction and motivation and presentations in a supportive classroom atmosphere where mistakes are seen as opportunities for expression and creativity correction. Therefore, in this article we will focus on practical activities that we have implemented mainly in a foreign language course and that have helped students discover and explore their thoughts and feelings, create meaning and develop critical thinking skills through personal engagement with texts.

2. SUGGESTIONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES IN CREATIVE AND EXPRESSIVE WRITING

Creative writing theory involves the study of literature and the analysis of literary works through personal understanding and interpretation. It emphasizes narrative art, character development, and the use of literary tropes through individual expression with social contribution. Unique patterns and connections can be made by creative writers in their work by drawing on their theoretical understanding of the world and their own experiences and emotional world. Creative writing theory involves the study of literature, the exploration of literary works, and the application of theoretical concepts to creative writing practices [22], [23], [24]. In the field of foreign language, we also take from educational contemporary practices such as text-centered and transactional teaching, differentiated and experiential learning.

The theoretical background of creative writing is rich and multifaceted, drawing from a wide range of disciplines. Thus, texts can be analyzed and produced that are not only creative and original, but also deeply informed by the complexities of language, mind, society, and culture. The same diverse and interdisciplinary background exists for creative writing in a foreign language, incorporating information from SLA, bilingualism, metalinguistics, applied linguistics, cognitive linguistics, and intercultural communication. These theories provide the basis for understanding how foreign language learners can effectively develop and express their creative abilities in a foreign language, enriching both their language skills and creative performance.

Anyone learning a foreign language can experience the writing of different textual genres, the use of grammatical structures and vocabulary, and understand the word as a cohesive whole, engage creatively and gain the opportunity to realize the potential of the written word.Our aim is to propose practical activities that will engage students in an experiential, interactive, playful as well as authentic way and allow them to see the written word in an original way, to free their thinking and ideas and to express themselves creatively.

Some examples to improve their linguistic and creative expression in a foreign language are the production of texts through morphological constraints, games with changes in narrative order, time and narrative perspective, stories with specific heroes or with a thematic axis, but also with creative expressions in forms (made by hand or digitally). In addition, the participants can develop texts with multimodal/multimedia material or comics, with recordings in foreign languages. In the same way, they can create scenes such as trailers or posters with interpretations of experiential and personal experiences of a topic, even dramatization of passages, with elements of satire, irony, or

rap rhythm, with cinematic shots and musical texts. Parallelly, they can follow a virtual visit of areas mentioned in their texts or mapping of the places where the author lived and wandered.

The "beginning" games (in both ordinary and unusual ways) or "ending" games (i.e. starting... at the end) are pleasantly suggested creative writing games, for all foreign language levels. An opening sentence could be related or irrelevant to the topic, a statement, a description, but also a language game. Obviously, there are various ways of telling stories: a good title, or even a simple word could give life to an entire story. They can also experiment with acronyms and slogans to introduce their poetry, approach the initials of their names in a serious or playful way, they can sketch the life of an important person, or ridicule social conventions.

Equally, the way we can end our text can inspire any writer. For example, beginning the narrative from the end or the middle of the story could be a technique that would fascinate learners. Or, by offering an open, complete, unexpected ending, a variety of choices to finish the story. For example, they can write a story that ends with a specific sentence or paragraph, such as: "He turned the corner and I never saw him again", "This must have been the best day of his life", "He knew he'd lose his job, but he really didn't care", "He tore up the note in front of my eyes", "I bent down and stroked such a small flower, the only one there was", etc.

Another creative way is to start a story with a question, which can build mutual trust with the reader. As an example, we can cite: "Have you ever eaten ananas at dawn?", "What else could happen today, he wondered", "Coincidence? I don't think so". Similarly, admiration is always a happy way to start, so that it offers immediacy grab attention: "Mmm, delicious!", "It tastes good!", "You're not kidding!".

The element of humour should not be forgotten to integrate into the lesson, as it can create a pleasant atmosphere, provide satisfaction, and even reduce the seriousness of an event. When used positively in teaching, it can help improve relationships and school climate and even increase learning. Any event can be presented in a comical way. A news item from the newspaper, a recipe, an advertising brochure, the weather forecast and even a song can be presented "in other ways" in the foreign language and offer a variety of creative texts.

Another technique used in learning is the imaginative narrative: it is developed guided by the imagination, taking elements of reality but violating the limits of logic, creating a new order or rather disorder of things. The new reality is rendered in naturalistic detail and the reader accepts it. No one reacts when we tell them that Aldin came out of the lamp or that Pinocchio's nose grew when he lied. Another source of literary creation is represented by fairy tales, which, although full of exaggerations and contrasts, will entertain, enchant, teach in their own indirect way. With their simple style, they relieve and purify, with clear and expressive language, with short sentences and imperative reasons. Deliberate repetition and standard opening and closing expressions, the fairy tales improve language learners experiment with writing.

In addition, it is important to include the "popular" voice of others in language teaching. The folk stories or one's "personal" stories. An opportunity for intercultural teaching and interdisciplinary activities. We have a plurality in the class, and everyone has something wonderful to present. In addition, fairy tale can start with current examples: stories with rap music, a story about "an iPhone or a motorcycle with exhaust holes". Another impetus for creative writing is with a mixture of plot elements from some fairy tales or fairy tale characters, or both, to compose a new fairy tale. Or with time interference, which can completely change the fairy-tale appearance of the hero: "Sleeping Beauty: But how beautiful can she be after a hundred years of sleep-in real time?" [25].

It is also the character of the heroes that also helps in the unfolding of fiction writing: the content of the hero will be brought to life by the paper. That's why we need to know our hero fully, to know

his actions, his words, his innermost thoughts. We can create three types of heroes: protagonists, secondary and inactive. Therefore, we can "invade" the text and form different characters and heroes, bring our hero to life through many questions: "what is his name; what is he to you; where did you meet him? What is his physical appearance? What is his character? What are his habits? What does he like and dislike? How does he spend his time? What is his job? What would you like to do together? How do you feel when you are together? Where he goes, what his clothes are, what he thinks about, what he has in his pockets, what he worries about, what he plans to do, what birthday present he always wanted, what important thing happened to him when he was 10 years old, what his actions, his friends, his memories, his family, where he should go, who won't follow him, what his expectations and dilemmas are" and so on.

In addition, a character's habit, the knowledge that comes from the senses, a thought, a thought, a conflict, a reaction, or a statement can create great writing, great ideas, and clever sentences. Alternatively, a narrative can be created from the point of view of a minor character or object, an autobiography of the protagonist or another person can be presented, for example "Snow White's mirror, the autobiography of a singer (John Lenon), a writer (Italo Calvino), my grandfather who emigrated to America, a fictional character, an inspiration from a photo album or a postcard".

Mixing plot elements, characters, twists, and new developments. As a procedural approach, creative writing offers the freedom of thought and the flexibility of personal experimentation in writing, free self-expression and the capture of the student's personal ideas, and emotions [26]. Changes in the stories, lengthening scenes, or group story compositions, writing texts for the back cover, are enjoyable creative compositions in the foreign language as well. Creating a travel guide to a destination, turning the supporting character into a protagonist, creating autobiographical comics, a hero's diary, presenting the feelings-thoughts of the main character, adding, or removing characters and humorous scenes or eliminating comic elements, interviewing adults or classmates about their childhood memories and experiences, these are original and enjoyable foreign language teaching activities for all ages and foreign language levels.

The creation of a digital or printed poster, the writing of an original script or science fiction stories, the soundtrack of lyrics or movie scenes, the narration from different points of view, as if they lived in another era or through sketches, painting, captions, alternative titles, advertisements, or slogans lend a playful and expressive power to foreign language teaching. Even in the form of writing a fictional biography or essay or an interactive play, a poetic speech, participants are encouraged to express themselves creatively. Students can learn to express their personal meanings, gain grammatical accuracy, proficiency and originality of vocabulary choice, sensitivity to rhyme, rhythm, tone and sound, and the way texts are combined.

Another approach is with the densest form of spoken expression, poetry. It is an art that gives value to words, emphasis on meaning, and fertile ground for creative writing exercises. As much linguistic freedom as possible is presented, the energy is released from the collaboration of the reader or listener. Usually, one encounters a poetic subject, contrasts or images, a specific vocabulary, and of course, the sense of the word as a carrier of sound. A playful example is with Concrete poems, a curious phenomenon: instead of simply using words to suggest a particular visual concept or image, the poem's words are arranged on the page in such a way that they resemble the shape of the thing they describe.

What's more, the students can write texts, such as limericks or haiku, acronyms, songs, or they can change style and text type in the text: they decide to write a news story, philosophical text, poem, theatrical work, letter, etc. It is interesting the experimentation with textual genres and the creation of a variety of texts, such as narratives, letters, complaints, descriptions, advertisements, monologues, postcards, recipes, etc. Additionally, assumptions about how something might have

happened, can form an interesting plot of the story. For example, "a welldressed lady is found walking alone on the train platform, she has no documents, no luggage, she remembers nothing", "a teenage girl runs happily and non-stop around the neighbourhood", etc. As the stimulus topic is announced, students are encouraged to express their ideas freely and spontaneously. Group members are in a state of creative overstimulation and quickly and spontaneously say words or phrases that come to mind. The presentation of ideas occurs at a rapid pace. Ideas can be logical or irrational, related, or not to the stimulus. The more spontaneous the nature of the opinions, the greater the chances of hearing original ideas. All ideas should be recorded.

Suggestions and activities that can provide the opportunity to become familiar with the reading strategies of approaching the textual genre, to connect the text with personal experiences, but at the same time to cultivate the creativity and imagination of the individual, producing authentic (oral or written) discourse [28], is the finding, for example a poem that complements, corresponds, contrasts with the original, simplifying and rewriting an incident, creating a newspaper with articles, advertisements, news based on the characters and episodes of the text, presenting the information gathered after research on a topic, even a summary in fifteen to fifty words (as a telegram). The so-called "word hunt", i.e. finding some specific words (five to ten) that describe the text and justify the choice. "The book or story without words", which will not use words or text, but other techniques and media, such as illustrations, photographs in print or video clips, etc. Making a board game based on the story or creating a travel notebook with photographs, postcards, magazine clippings, etc. showing the different locations.

In addition, "author's privilege", an activity to take on the role of the author and change the story's premise, or a creative one-minute promotional message to promote the book, a slowmotion pantomime of a character or a scene, in which those involved are asked to respond, or the organisation of a public debate for and against a topic, in which the author (played by one of the students) can participate. Alternatively, the poem can be combined with a variety of audiovisual material, such as artwork, photographs, music, videos, multimedia applications, etc., to create a variety of material, visual, musical, etc.

Another attractive technique for learning a foreign language is when someone interjects into the text by asking a question: "What would happen if...?" – "What would happen if...?". There is always an "if" that can change the story. The different assumptions to be made help participants to demonstrate divergent thinking and a "legitimacy" of freedom to "enter" the text and modify it. As a result, the story will begin to unfold differently, with twists in structure (for example, start a story from the end at the beginning), in style (turn drama into farce) in plot (continue the story and write a different ending: unpleasant, unlikely, cute, touching, gruesome), in the characters (which hero would you like to be and why), in the narrative perspective (turn the narrative text into a comic strip) and in the setting (the story happened today or happened elsewhere). For example, they can continue the story by writing their own ending, imagine themselves in the story, add, remove, or transform characters in the story and think about whether the hero had made a different decision. If the story had happened in a different city, place, if it was set in the past, future or present. Students could change the story at the point where the plot reaches its climax and even change scenes in the story, starting from a different point. Alternatively, they could imbue objects with animistic elements. Or they could write the same text in different styles: philosophical, scientific, and special vocabulary, dialect, caustic, ironic, playful, clever, declarative, diplomatic, dramatic, didactic, and reflective, formal, popular, simple, and unpretentious, oral, literary, polysyllabic, pompous, and so on.

Through art and painting they can start activities of audiovisual literacy, aesthetic expression, and creative writing. More creative, divergent, and personal questions can follow, such as "How would you dress to the correct soundtrack of the painting?", "If... the painting had a voice, what would it

say?, "What would you like to happen in a particular scene, imagine and describe the event in terms of....". The teacher chooses a famous piece of art from the target language and participants look at it and describe the scenario using only adjectives and nouns (brainstorming). Alternatively, the teacher chooses an abstract composition and participants "get into" the picture, describing it with all senses: smell, touch, taste, hearing. They can place and describe human figures in paintings where human activity is absent. Or in a portrait they can write a monologue, creating a psychological portrait of a person.

Of particular interest is the dialogue between two paintings or two sculptures or the attempt to discover the personality of a figure. There is also narrative painting: "what happens suddenly, what happens next. The narrative image of the painting is a stimulus to write a newspaper article, to create a television or radio report, to describe the moment as if a crime had been committed, or to put a quartet of paintings in order and write a story. Another example may arise through changes in the point of view of the narrative or multiple narrators (for example, in first person - with a narrator who knows everything about himself and his environment or as if he were the real protagonist of the story, or in third person, second person singular - usually as a monologue), or by the narrator at different moments in his life (as a child, as an adult), etc. [27].

There is always something wonderful for language learners to think and write about, inspired by family photos, cut out of magazines or the Internet, borrowed from their classmates. Pictures have great power and can create a situation, a simulated environment, an artificial event, that resembles a real event. Participants are asked to establish a direct relationship with the image, to enter it mentally, to identify with the persons, choosing an imaginary role for themselves. The visual stimuli allow to produce discourse and engagement with a variety of textual genres, e.g. illustrating songs, creating interview reports, creating portraits of classmates, creating comic strips, written story continuation, narrative imagery, intervention or modification of a virtual scenario, oral continuation of the comic strip story, etc. Similarly, proverbs are another fun and entertaining genre that inspires creative writing. "Folk sayings", those phrases containing rules, judgments, or advice, which in the form of metaphors explain in a simple way certain situations in life. Pupils can illustrate them, begin, or end their text with these phrases, create similar proverbs for other texts, for their own lives or for various situations. They can imagine a story "inside" the proverb or they can transfer proverbs from their native language.

The use of the dictionary is also a pleasant activity: both the creation of stories from random or specific words, and the creation of rhyming poems, for group or individual compositions, even combining surreal and dreamlike situations, in the logic of Elytis, Dali, Ernst, Miro, Engonopoulos, Breton. In the game of words, the definition of objects is not completed by the discovery or creation of new words and puns, but by the generation of ideas with the aim of creating the text.

Another technique, which is very useful for creative development in the foreign language classroom, is writing through different boundaries, which stimulates creativity, since "we put barriers inside ourselves and force ourselves to overcome them". There are many ways to use creatively the constraints and the limitations. These may be related to the time required to write a story, the length and type of text, and even the way of writing. All of these can be used as writing breaks. In general, visual, and auditory stimuli (a movie, an advertisement, a song, a podcast) are important resources for language teaching. Research that can precede writing is also interesting. Data and information from various texts (newspaper articles, pictures, personal accounts, testimonials, internet searches and anything else necessary to develop the topic) are collected, recorded, evaluated, and classified. The communicative and emotional power of the event which will prompt the student to acquire a personal relationship with the simulated event, to enter it by choosing a fictional role, to identify with persons and events and through identification to act, express and record thoughts, feelings, and behaviours.

3. CONCLUSIONS

In all categories and sentences, the reader, as a "co-creator, focuses with "selective attention" each time on specific points of the story, experiences an imaginary world based on his own reactions, interprets the verbal symbols based on the emotional and spiritual world, relating its elements to himself or with the help of his imagination and experiences. Literature seeks to emerge as part of the participants' living reality with a liberating effect on their personality. It should be noted that other forms of creative expression may be used, such as art, music, movement, role play, and that such expression should always be optional. The educational intervention may involve either simple, short exercises, in which spontaneity is excessive, or the planning and implementation of activities. These are textual events in which individuals participate. They aim at acquiring cognitive and socio-emotional writing strategies and seek to produce and organise ideas mainly in the pre-writing phase.

In foreign language education we want to provide students with opportunities for dynamic and autonomous expression, to be inspired by authentic and useful material, to communicate their ideas and feelings effectively. At the same time, to approach and manipulate language with precision and originality. When it comes to foreign language teaching, we should focus on authenticity, communication/exchange of views and experiences, interaction, research and innovation of teaching/learning methods, collaboration, and creativity to produce a unique product in the foreign language [29]. The important thing is how we interpret the text, how we approach the text, the image, the sound of the message, what creative questions we ask and answer, how we have multiple and alternative interpretations. Thus, interpretation becomes part of the equation [30], the new text is never the same as the original, the new meaning is never the same as the previous meaning, it is a new voice, a unique synthesis and encoding of meanings, it is an act of transformation. Therefore, we produce representations of ourselves through the active interpretation of what we have seen, read, or heard, or we produce meanings and messages to communicate with others through speech, writing or images. All these paradigms expand thinking, train memory, and tap one's potential, encouraging dialogue, linguistic expression, and semantics [8]. The abundance of words encourages pluralism of opinions, fosters cooperation and teamwork [31]. As aptly described by Καλογήρου [28] "reading as well as interpretive access to the text is presented as an open, undefined process that is constantly renewed through the exchange of subjects and communication conditions".

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