

Using the Technology of Creative Writing to Develop Students' Creative Thinking in Teaching English

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Abstract

The article reviews the problem of creative writing at foreign language lessons by means of using written and oral tasks at non-language specialties. Implementation of creative writing is proposed as a solution to this problem. Key features of creative writing and their influence on the components of creative thinking are analyzed. The main methods of creative writing and options of their introduction into educational process are described. The analysis of educational potential of creative writing in learning of the foreign language is carried out. The purpose of this work is to study the technology of creative writing to develop students' creative thinking in teaching English. The results of the article could be effectively used as part of the teaching program to improve the pedagogical cycle of subjects of students of Kazan Federal University. It can be also used for everybody who is interested in effective and modern ways of teaching.

Keywords: Student; Language; Learning; Linguistics; Written Speech.



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1. Introduction

Creative writing enables students to use the available lexical and grammatical skills and show the individuality of creative freedom. Experiments with linguistic forms, the discovery of the novel in the language, the sensation of its harmony and rhythm, the enjoyment of the beauty of its sound – all these should be an integral part of teaching creative writing. A teacher should also contribute to this process if he or she wants students to achieve creative expression in writing. Hence, fear in the lesson creates atmosphere which is absolutely unpromising for creativity and creative writing, in particular. Considering methods and forms which can be used in teaching of creative writing in a foreign language, developing an idea is an important part of a written assignment. Such an assignment, as a rule, precedes any written work. This exercise often takes the form of brainstorming, which implies attracting of collective resources. A written assignment can be connected with the collection of factual material based on students' personal experience, for example, in the process of observing nature. An important part of the assignment is the outlining of a written statement. Planning your own creative written text can take the form of a mind map. These schemes can be considered as a stage of preparation for the production of an own text.

2. Methods

The leading method of research is the study of theoretical and methodological literature on this topic. Forms and methods of the organization of occupations are used in a complex and depend on problems of a concrete stage of formation it is possible to allocate the following groups of the methods directed on formation of experience of professional and creative thinking: On a way of the organization of educational activity: a) Structural and logical methods. They are characterized by the stage-by-stage organization of statement of didactic tasks, a choice of ways of their decision, diagnostics and an assessment of the received results (from the simple — to difficult, from the theory — to practice) b) Training methods. They represent activity system on working off of certain algorithms of educational and informative actions and ways of the solution of standard tasks during training (tests and practical tasks in which contents at a standard stage it is necessary to add creativity elements). c) Game methods. This group of methods is characterized by a game form of interaction of subjects of educational process; educational tasks are included in the content of game (business games, professional fights, discussions). As the thinking is the most active and difficult informative process mediated by the speech, its development in learners needs to pay special attention (Levinzon, 2014).

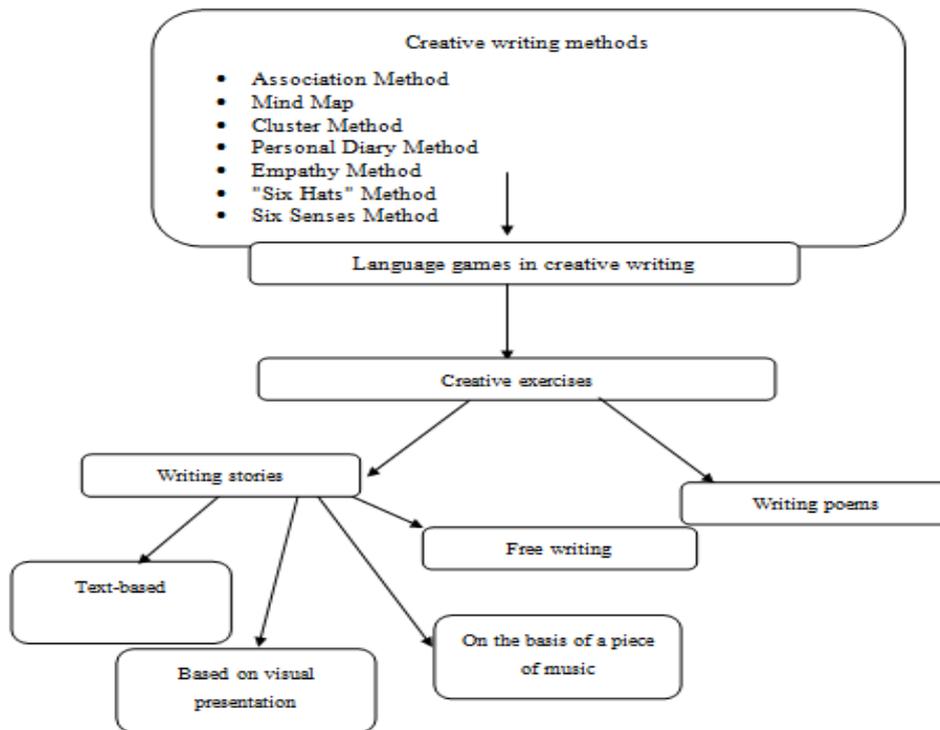
For successful professional formation of the personality, teachers need to remember that one of leading roles in this process belongs to the creative potential which it is necessary not only to develop, but to encourage and support at students in the process of training in higher educational institution. All described conditions and methods of development of creative thinking of students are possible only at the corresponding relation of teachers to this problem since process of preparation for creative occupations much more difficult and takes away more time. Therefore, it is necessary to realize that those professionals whom we will let out from university today, will define a vector of development of our country in the near future, and that, how effectively and quickly they will resolve

arising, still unknown professional issues and problems, depends on quality of the got education and a level of development of their creative thinking (Korneva *et al.*, 2018; Savilova, 2007).

3. Results and Discussion

There are various classifications of exercises in the teaching of creative writing. From the point of view of development of skills and abilities for creative written speech, there are three types of exercises which are distinguished: preparatory, reproductive-productive and productive. The following system of exercises has been developed for teaching of creative writing, in accordance with Fig. 1.

Figure-1. The system of exercises for creative writing teaching



Considering methods of creative writing, the following are being distinguished:

3.1. Association Method

There are different means of organization of these creative writing methods. "Winter" associogram can serve as an example of such organization. "Winter" represents a diagram, in the center which there is a concept that must be revealed through thoughts, ideas, feelings arising from mentioning it. Linked words, concepts, or items are arranged around a central concept or subject by means of using a non-linear graphical layout. The sample task can be as follows: write down all the words associated with "winter" (Fakhrutdinova and Kondrateva, 2016).

Scheme-1. "Winter" associogram.



Among methods of creative writing teaching, a great popularity has been gained by Cluster and Mind map methods (Galscova, 2006).

1. "Mind map" is a method of structuring, classifying and hierarchizing of information. This method, created by Tony Buzan, continues to evolve and improve to this day.

There are various instructions for the implementation of this method. Mind maps can be modified and adapted depending on the goals and tasks assigned to the students. A painted and hand-painted map, apart from vision, involves a muscular feeling that contributes to better memorizing, which is very important for working with new vocabulary. It is more convenient to render a text using the map, which serves as a visual support for retelling. Mind maps can be used to brainstorm and learn new vocabulary, to retell and summarize all the topics that are to be recollected or that are currently being studied, to carry out planning; i.e. mind maps are implemented for activation of speech and cognitive abilities. Tony Buzan believes that you can create maps on any occasion and on any topic, whether it is related to interests, hobbies, and friends, stages of growth, achievements, family, university, thoughts, books or cartoons. Moreover, creation of mind maps is amusing and entertaining, in contrast to linear presentation of

information. In the English classes, mind maps are created in one way or another, depending on the topic, goals, and objectives. In any case, the mind map is a visual way of presenting information: a concept is placed in the center, associations or related ideas, arranged around it, radiate from the central concept. These schemes are sun-shaped, therefore students call them “sun”, correspondingly. “Sun” sounds much more positive and inspiring than “spidergram” (as these schemes are often referred to in methodical literature):

- 1) Mind maps can take shape of mini-maps for visualization, e.g. a mind map on phrasal verbs: a verb is placed in the center; prepositions radiate from the verb; new meanings, which the verb has acquired, are written under the prepositions. It is recommended to write words in English and Russian using different colors so that students can easily focus on one or another language if necessary.
- 2) Mind maps can be related to a specific lexical theme. Composition and the outer attractiveness of mind maps come with experience: students face a task to assemble all the vocabulary units on one topic, distribute them into categories (if possible) and reflect all the links graphically (it causes difficulty for many). It is recommended to write out not only words but also collocations on given topics. Translation must be provided below each word or phrase.
- 3) Mind maps can be used for text rendering. Either a heading of the text or its main idea are placed in the center of the mind map. Phrases and collocations radiate from the center. A sequence of collocations is established by lines and arrows.
- 4) A mind map can be assigned as a part of homework aiming at revising vocabulary and/or retelling a text. If a mind map is drawn at home, then, instead of translating words, students can use pictures, diagrams, icons, cuttings, i.e. introduce a personal component.
- 5) Mind maps are useful to give a summary of a topic, question, issue, etc.
- 6) Mind maps are a helpful tool for brainstorming.
- 7) Mind maps can also assist in planning.

3.2. Cluster Method

Cluster method is a brainstorming method in which associations are revealed. The cluster method was developed by Gabriele L. Rico. Sometimes clusters are confused with mind maps. Contrary to certain similarities in methods, they have different purposes. Cluster method is a method based on association, whereas a mind map implies a way of systematization. However, the methods are interrelated. For example, the method of clusters can serve as a starting point for a mind map (Zelenkovskaya, 2012).

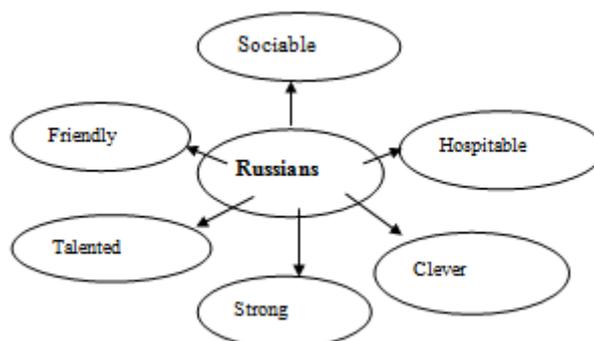
- 1) A keyword;
- 2) Writing words around the keyword. They are outlined and connected to the main word;
- 3) Each new word forms a new core, which causes further associations. Thus, associative chains are created;
- 4) Interrelated concepts are connected by lines.

Possibilities of the use:

- 1) For systematization, revision of the material;
- 2) When working with text;
- 3) When revising at the beginning of the lesson;
- 4) To introduce a topic;
- 5) When collecting the necessary language material;
- 6) For the knowledge control.

The universality of the cluster lies in the fact that you can work with it on a whiteboard (regular and interactive), on a computer and using a notebook; individually, in pairs and in groups:

- 1) On the topic "University" - making such a cluster, we recollect related words and, apart from them, some concepts and facts on the topic.
- 2) When studying the topic "Personality", it is offered to compose three clusters by working individually, choosing the traits of character peculiar to Russians, Americans and Britons (Khovanskaya et al., 2017).



The cluster is useful when working with text. It serves as a kind of a plan, it is good for the first presentation of the studied or preliminary read material. Students who experience difficulties in learning English can use clusters in retelling or other monologues. It is possible to use the cluster as a short test. To do this, students can be encouraged to fill out an empty section of the cluster in groups, or to provide translation suggestions on a particular topic. The

composition of the cluster gives freedom for fantasy and experiment. It can be a starting point for creative study of students (Gali *et al.*, 2017).

3.3. Personal Diary Method

This method is used to collect information and material. Students are invited to divide a sheet of paper vertically into two parts. The first column is entitled "What I saw", the second - "What I thought about what I saw." Usually it is enough to write ½ of a list per day. The purpose of this method is to develop introspection and demonstrate the value of observations, which in the future can help students in creative writing.

3.4. Method of Heuristic "Adaptation" (Empathy Method)

When working with associations, it is very important to present the studied material systematically. One of the most important conditions in the application of the method are facial expressions, gestures, and expressiveness of speech (Plakhova *et al.*, 2017).

Associative methods use associative images. One of the main requirements for associative images is their connection by a common sign. Associative communication can be, for example, through color (black-white), form (square), size (big-small). The value of the idea is in the presence of each of its own associative image under certain requirements: a link and a common theme. The main thing in the method of association is the brightness of the image. The brighter the images are, the easier it is to create links between them; hence, the more words you can remember. Associations must be unusual, non-standard, absurd, ridiculous, imaginative, unexpected, and new. E.g., the English word "bread". It is accordant with the Russian word "delirium" ("бред"). Now imagine that you came to a bakery, and there is no bread. Delirium, right? There is a chain: "bread" - "delirium" - "there is no bread" - "bread". Selection of bright associations allows you to quickly add new vocabulary. It is possible to remember 100 new words a day (Gimadeeva and Nurmieva, 2015).

6. "Six Hats" Method

Within a framework of the method, cognitive process of thinking is subdivided into six modes. Each mode is represented by a hat of a different color. Here is a brief description of each color.

- Red Hat. Emotions. Intuition, feelings, and preperceptions. (What feelings do I have about this?)
- Yellow Hat. Benefits. (Why is it worth doing? What are the advantages? Why can this be done? Why would this work?)
- Black hat. Caution. Judgment. Evaluation. (Is it true? Will it work? What are the disadvantages? What is wrong here?)
- Green Hat. Creativity. Different ideas. New ideas. Suggestions. (What are some of the possible solutions and actions? What are the alternatives?)
- White Hat. Information. Questions. (What information do we have? What information do we need?)
- Blue Hat. Organization of thinking. Thinking about thinking. (What have we achieved, what should we do next?)

At the beginning of a seminar-type lesson, a teacher introduces problem aimed at teamwork of the whole group. E.g., at the English language lesson students are asked to express their opinion on the topic of "university". This task can be performed individually and in groups using the "Six Hats" method. Each group should analyze a proposed plan from the perspective of the way of thinking, characteristic of the color of a hat chosen.

- White Hat
E.g. Prepare a 1-minute story about your university by including only facts, figures, and without argumentation.
 - Red Hat
E.g. Prepare a 1-minute story about your university by including as many different adjectives as possible, both with negative and positive connotation.
 - Black Hat
E.g. prepare a 1-minute story about your university by including as many negative features as possible.
 - Yellow hat is a hat of sunny and life-affirming color. Yellow is associated with optimism, hope, and positive thinking. The image of the "sun-color" thoughts is a persistent search for positive aspects and constructing positive conclusions.
E.g. prepare a 1-minute story about your school by including as many positive characteristics as possible).
 - Green Hat.
E.g. prepare a 1-minute story about your university by including as many future innovations as possible.
 - Blue Hat.
E.g. prepare a 1-minute story about your university by including as many interesting ideas as possible from other groups (Dulmukhametova *et al.*, 2017)
- cribe your university
HELP! Useful Vocabulary
- 1) Building/rooms:
 - (+) brightly painted/decorated, spacious comfortable, contemporary, enormous, cozy, impressive, attractive, elegant, magnificent, stylish, welcoming place, well-organized.
 - (-) depressing, gloomy, noisy, old-fashioned, tasteless, cramped, uncomfortable.
 - 2) Students and teachers:
 - (+) friendly, funny, helpful, confident, highly-gifted, bright, classy, fashionable, good-looking, graceful, impressive, relaxed, smart, stylish, trendy, motivating, well-organized, qualified, experienced, popular with.

(-) boring, noisy, disorganized, strict, irritable, lose one's temper, bullies, hit and kick, victims of theft, to play truant.

3) Lessons and activities:

(+) interesting, motivating, well-organized, hard-working, atmosphere, stimulating, friendly atmosphere, to experience joy/happiness/excitement, to use different methods and activities, to employ modern teaching techniques and aids.

(-) long, boring, noisy, disorganized.

Solving problems; carrying out experiments; doodle on the desk; developing a habit for; getting acquainted with somebody; participating in all kinds of discussions and conversations; holding/going on educational excursions and trips activities.

4) University and behavior problems

negative influence of school environment/bullies/theft; the teachers wouldn't force their ideas on the pupils; wearing a uniform would not be compulsory; to be able to choose subjects and teachers/a student council makes the rules; a lot of... and less...; the atmosphere would be more relaxed. The above methods of creative writing can be used by students to elaborate creative written works. When teaching creative writing, we can use various written games. With the help of these games, you can easily find the connection between words and sentences, create different situations of a fantastic nature. They require students to think and produce ideas and fantasies spontaneously, which will create the basis for creative writing. In addition, the game character of these exercises will create a special atmosphere of ease and self-confidence, an atmosphere of creativity. Another form of creative writing is poetry. Work with poetry can be diverse: the creation of blank verses or "haiku," the writing of short humorous quatrains, the writing of ordinary poems of different poetic meters on a certain topic, etc. Moreover, there are exercises of great interest which are based on instrumental music without words. The subjective associations of the listener are influenced by the mood of a musical piece. These associations are in the focus of attention. Music loses its independent sound and becomes a means of stimulating creativity and creative writing. Influence of a musical piece depends on its choice. For example, meditative music fits well when describing a fantastic journey.

Students can be divided into two groups. One group is offered to listen to the Beethoven Symphony No. 7, the other - "Yesterday". Then students are asked to write a short story based on associations, emotions, feelings caused by the musical piece. In the training of creative writing, a special role is also played by exercises based on visual aids. As in the case of a musical piece, the image becomes a means of encouraging creative writing. Students can also be divided into groups and offered to write a short story on the basis of the proposed visual aids: paintings, photographs, posters, signs, and even all kinds of drawings.

a) Free writing. The exercise is structured as follows: the writer-narrator begins a sketch of the situation, which is short and concise. In this situation, the narrator cannot see, but can hear two speakers, one in front of him, another – behind. Two interlocutors conduct a dialogue among themselves, mainly focusing on the "blind" storyteller than each other (the conversation of the participants should develop in parallel with the narrator during the whole dialogue).

b) Writing stories in groups. There are probably two options for this exercise. The first is as follows: students sit around the table, in front of each there is a sheet of paper with the name of a student. At the command of the teacher, students begin to write a story, for example, with the phrase "It was a dark and stormy night". The teacher should warn students not to write about students in the classroom. After three minutes the teacher asks the students to pass the sheet to the neighbor on the left / right. The next student continues to write the story started by another for three minutes and then passes it around. Toward the end of this exercise, the teacher announces students that they must finish the story. The second option of this exercise is that each student begins to write their story, and each subsequent student will continue it.

Making short stories, stories and fairy tales on behalf of some hero, object or animal, the continuation of any broken plotline, the renewal of a story at its inception or its completion, the continuation of an unfinished literary work, essays on a selected topic or quotation, a story using names of groupmates, descriptions of an unfamiliar book by its name or cover – all this can be attributed to the technology of creative writing. One of the most common exercises, based on the technology of creative writing, is writing a letter. This task is multifunctional. Letters can be different (personal, family, business, problem, with an expression of gratitude, congratulation, invitation, etc.). Letters can be drafted in accordance with different targets and addressed to different persons, but with the same content or with changes to the same text. Particular attention should be paid to the preparation of questions to the addressee, to determine their place in the letter (Pilipenko, 2000). At the last stage it is supposed to establish a collective or individual correspondence, using e-mail as well. As we have already noted before, computer technologies can be successfully used in the teaching of writing. Creating comics on a computer using special websites (www.makebeliefscomix.com and www.toondoo.com) (Bono, 2017) gives students an opportunity to develop creative writing skills in an easy, interesting, and enjoyable way. Compared to public speaking or reading out ready-made works in the classroom, this way of communication allows students to express their thoughts through characters. Owing to this, tension caused by psychological barriers disappears, and the stress, associated with fear of being condemned for something by peers, is minimized. These sites, despite the ease of use, allow you to get professional results. Comics, that students can be proud of, do not require special computer skills and can be created even with minimal writing skills (Chukalova et al., 2018).

Sites such as www.ourstory.com and www.glogster.com allow you to create your stories individually or in groups, selecting additional visual, audio or video material for them, sharing them with your classmates or teachers by mail, in social media. Almost any social media (Facebook, Twitter, VK, etc.), as well as many programs, such as

Skype, allow you to create conferences, general correspondence, give the teacher the opportunity to ask a general theme, to which students can compose texts, dialogues, opinions, invent stories. The use of these resources can take creative writing beyond the classroom and make homework entertaining and exciting (Zhitkova, 2009). The inclusion of the creative writing technologies in a context of educational and informative communicative activities for acquisition of a foreign language allows reaching qualitatively new level of proficiency not only in a written form of communication, but also a foreign language as means of cross-cultural communication in general.

4. Summary

Thus, the use of creative writing in foreign language classes is focused on the development of motivation to learn a foreign language, the formation of skills in all types of speech activity. It is an excellent means of intensifying and optimizing the learning process. The writing of creative texts serves the development of creative thinking, personal development, broadening of the horizon, and should be actively used in the lessons of learning a foreign language (Villalobos, 2013).

5. Conclusions

In order that process of training foreign languages in general and to types of speech activity in particular on the basis of the principle of creativity could find reflection in activity of foreign language teachers in educational institutions, it is expedient to carry out preparation in this plan a future teacher of a foreign language, and the teacher improving the professional qualities in the system of professional development.

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