Herri Mulyono
Indonesia

Book Review: A. Maley & N. Peachey (eds.), *Creativity in the English Language Classroom*, British Council, 2015, 172 pp.

Creativity is an essential element for effective and successful teaching and learning in school classrooms. Many sources have suggested that creative teachers can have an impact on the improvement of students' academic achievement (Fisher, 2004; Richards, 2013). Unfortunately, defining what is called 'creativity' is an elusive task (Fisher & Williams, 2004). It is so because creativity is a multifarious concept, which can be interpreted in different ways depending on how it is perceived, i.e., as 'a property of the actor', as 'processes', or 'products' (Fisher, 2004, p. 8). This book, edited by Maley and Peachey, is not particularly aimed to discuss the complex definitions of creativity, but it explores practical classroom activities that demonstrate what creativity is really about. It also presents classroom procedures that teachers can follow in order to promote creativity in real classroom practices.

The book comprises 18 chapters with a foreword, an introduction and an overview of creativity. It is very refreshing that these 18 chapters are written by 20 well-known English language teaching (ELT) researchers, practitioners and professionals. The chapters deal with practical classroom case studies that promote creativity within varied settings of English language teaching practices: within young learner contexts, secondary schools, adult learning environment and higher education settings. The exercise of creativity presented by the authors in the book chapters, therefore, can be regarded as good practices that teachers from all levels of English language education can adopt and experiment with in their contexts. In other words, the book addresses "the growing demand for more creative approaches to the teaching of languages" as expected by the editors (p. 12).

The overview section is fundamental for understanding the chapters that follow. In the section, one of the editors, Alan Maley, briefly discusses the what, the why and the how of creativity. What is important to emphasise is the use of lower case 'c' creativity across the book chapters that represents the construct of creativity on the basis of daily routine. Maley also provides a list of useful resources, which helps teachers encourage creativity in the classroom. Such a discussion and resources of creativity not only offer teachers some universal procedures for implementing creative ideas in classroom activities (p. 6), but also help readers follow the authors' arguments at ease.

The 18 chapters in the book are apparently divided into four themes, including approaches to creativity, creative individuals, creative classroom instructions, and creative use of instructional materials and media. Four chapters deal with approaches to creativity, namely chapter 3, 4, 10 and 15. In Chapter 3, the author, Carol Read, presents seven pillars of creativity that are fundamental in primary foreign language classrooms, including self-esteem, a creativity model, opportunities, creative questions, making connections, exploration of ideas and finally critical reflection. Although the author addresses these seven creativity pillars to the primary foreign language classrooms, they are still possible to be applied in higher levels of language education. In addition, Chrysa Papalazarou's writing in chapter 4 offers a visible-thinking approach to promoting creative thinking and, in chapter 10, Libor Stepanek shares his thoughts on how to improve teachers' communication skills in responding students' contributions to classroom activity. Finally, in chapter 15, Phoung thi Anh Le suggests the use of 'a reader-response approach' to encourage creativity in literature classrooms.

Chapters 12, 13 and 16 discuss creative teachers and students. Chapter 12, *Creating Creative Teachers,* addresses the need for creative thinking skills training. By citing her previous survey results (cf., Constantinides, 2014), the author, Marisa Constantinides, argues that teacher training courses so far have not provided opportunities for teachers to develop their ability to think creatively. Thus, in the chapter, the author offers some activities that promote the development of aspects of teachers' "cognitive make-up" (p. 115). Furthermore, chapters 13 and 16 focus on creative learners. In chapter 13, the author, Marjorie Rosenberg, discusses the learners as resources for creativity, whereas Tessa Woodward, in chapter 16, suggests a framework that facilitates the development of students' creativity.

The issues of creativity in language classroom instruction are addressed in eight chapters. In chapter 5, *Personal and creative storytelling: telling our stories*, David Heathfield argues that storytelling activities can be used to stimulate teachers' and students' creative communication. Jill and Charlie Hadfield discuss a creative

technique to teach grammar in chapter 6. Chapter 7, *From everyday activities to creative tasks,* shows teachers how to embed creativity in daily teaching activities. In chapter 8, the author, Jürgen Kurtz, focuses on creating an 'attractive learning environment that can facilitate the development of EFL students' oral creativity in classroom interaction (p. 73). Malu Sciamarelli's discussion on mascot-inspired projects in chapter 11 is really interesting. She suggests project-based learning activities that teachers can employ to promote creativity. In addition, chapter 14 and chapter 18 similarly suggest the use of creative writing to promote creativity in the language classroom, which makes the two chapters different is classroom settings. In chapter 14, Peter Lutzker describes the practice of creative writing for secondary school students, while in chapter 18, Zarina Markova focuses on primary classrooms. Such different settings thus influence the techniques and classroom procedures presented by each of the authors. In the last chapter, Victoria Hlenschi-Storie shares her experience of incorporating drama and creative writing as a blended tool to promote creativity. As she argues, both drama and creative writing can be alternative resources to stimulate teachers' and students' creative ideas.

Finally, creative use of instructional materials and media is presented in three chapters, including chapter 1, 2 and 9. In chapter 1, *Medium: companion or slave?*, Andrew Wright discusses the potential use of media and materials available in teachers' environments. He particularly aims to raise teachers' awareness of the creative use of their voice, body, pets, walls, school corridors, playground, papers and cards, and other things available to them. His thoughts presented in the chapter are really inspiring, especially for teachers who teach at schools with limited resources. Brian Tomlinson's ideas about how to use coursebooks creatively appear in chapter 2 and, in chapter 9, Kathleen M. Bailey and Anita Krishnan seem to add what Andrew Wright has explained in his chapter earlier. Specifically, they provide a number of "creative uses of images and objects by English teachers who have worked in under-resourced areas" (p. 84).

In summary, the book has drawn an interconnection between the ability to think creatively and problem-solving ability in order to define creativity in English language classroom contexts. What is interesting in the book is that it not only facilitates teachers' understanding of what creativity really is, why they need it and how to promote it in classroom practices, but it also helps teachers nurture and develop their own self-creativity and, of course, their students'. In addition, the ways that each of the authors presents their thoughts about creativity, the classroom procedures and potential resources for classroom activities are really impressive, they are logical, they use language that is familiar to the readers, which

makes them easy to follow. The book is worth reading for English teachers as it contributes to the area of ELT. The publication of the book has answered what teachers have been waiting for: creative language teaching approaches that can apply within different contexts.

References

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