Constraints of Creativity in educational site.

Masatoshi Adachi

This study examines how creativity is influenced by both formal tasks and informal group interactions in a project-based learning (PBL) environment. The research focuses on group subtitling activities in a university Media Translation Course (MTC), where students worked together to create subtitles for film clips.

The main purpose of the study is to examine how different types of constraints influence collaborative creativity. Specifically, the study addresses the following research questions: (1) How do formal and informal dynamics within group work interact to facilitate or hinder creativity? (2) What types of constraints emerge in the process, and how do they affect the group's creative performance?

The research uses two key ideas as its theoretical framework: bounded rationality (Simon, 1957) and creative contributions (Sternberg, 2006). Bounded rationality helps explain how people make decisions when they have limited time and information. Creative contributions describe how people work with existing ideas—sometimes keeping them, sometimes changing them, or combining them in new ways.

Data were collected in 2025 using three methods: audio recordings of group discussions, fieldnotes to describe nonverbal behavior, and interviews with students after the activities. These data helped identify two main types of constraints that affected creativity: feedback constraints and power constraints. Feedback constraints occurred when students focused too much on the teacher's advice, which reduced their willingness to take creative risks. Power constraints appeared when one student had a strong influence on the group, making it harder for others to share ideas.

The study found that creativity was more active at the beginning of the group work but became more limited over time. Students started with many ideas, but as the activity continued, they often followed feedback or group leaders instead of exploring new options. This situation made it difficult for the group to enter a state of group flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), where members feel highly engaged and creative together.

This research shows how creativity in language learning can be shaped—and sometimes reduced—by classroom conditions and group dynamics. It suggests that teachers should design PBL activities that support shared decision-making and encourage all group members to contribute. These findings are useful for applied linguistics, especially in understanding how students create meaning together in translation and other communicative tasks.

References

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