

EFL proficiency and self-reported creativity in the production of comedy screenplays

Humor, among other variables such as creative writing and the talent for film and cinema are considered part of the individual's creativity, among many other features (Carson et al., 2005). On the other hand, humor develops with human language development (see GRIALE's work), and so does its complexity and variety of devices in one's discourse. This also means that one's display of humorous devices might also depend on one's foreign language proficiency level (Chen & Dewaele, 2018).

This paper intends to shed light on the role both English as a foreign language proficiency as well as self-reported creativity on the production of a fantasy-comedy screenplay as an in-class activity. With this aim, 82 Media Studies students with an EFL proficiency level ranging from A2 to C1 (mean B2) were asked to write an in-class screenplay as a follow-up activity after having watched 10 episodes of the fantasy-comedy *The Good Place*. They had also received explicit instruction on humor devices and comedy as a genre. Participants were also requested to fill in Creative Achievement Questionnaire (Carson et al., 2005).

The humor and comedy devices in the screenplays were classified according to the 25 categories emerging from the texts produced by the participants, which were in turn classified as linguistic-dependent and non-linguistic dependent. The results show that while proficiency correlates with the total number of humor devices in the screenplays (both linguistic and non-linguistic dependent), Kruskal Wallis tests reveal there were no statistical differences between proficiency groups. Regarding self-reported creativity, creative writing was only correlated with characters' dumbness, while those who considered themselves to excel at humor significantly produced more humor devices, both linguistic- and non-linguistic dependent, according to Mann-Whitney U-tests. Interestingly, those who self-reported to be superior at film and theatre talent significantly produced more surprise-reveal humorous scenes and appeared to convey the characters' comedy personality better.

Results will be discussed in how proficiency might influence one's display of humor devices in quantity and variety, but how self-reported creativity is essential for certain comedy devices to flourish in humorous productions.