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Does multicompetence foster creativity? : the case of accomplished multicompetent foreign language learners

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**DOES MULTICOMPETENCE FOSTER CREATIVITY?
THE CASE OF ACCOMPLISHED MULTICOMPETENT
FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

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Introduction

There is an alleged connection between knowledge of languages and enhanced creativity, based on the assumption that people who speak more than one language are able to take a broader perspective, which can lead to innovative approaches and new solutions. Creativity is a multifaceted term referring to the ability to produce original and valuable outcomes, pursuit of paths of inquiry that others have ignored, taking intellectual risks, and perseverance in the face of obstacles [Sternberg 2001: 361]. The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that might indicate creative abilities in accomplished multicompetent foreign language learners (AML). Multicompetence has been termed as “knowledge of two or more languages in one mind” [Cook 2003: 2]. Knowledge of more than one language constitutes a value that goes beyond the languages themselves and leads to cognitive and behavioural benefits, including the potential for creativity [European Commission 2009: 18; Kharkhurin 2012]. Four factors were investigated: *Openness to Experience, Creative Personality, Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity* and *Need for Autonomy*. In order to measure creativity indices, three instruments were used: a Polish adaptation of the *Revised NEO-FFI Personality Inventory* [Costa, McCrae 1992] – a 60-question measure of the Five Factor Model, by Zawadzki, Strelau, Szczepaniak and Śliwińska [1998], a Polish adaptation of the *Adjective Check List (ACL)* [Gough, Heilbrun 1980] by Juros, Oleś and Wujec [1987] – an instrument that operationalises the con-

cept of psychological need, and the *Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale* [Ely 1995a]. The personality trait of Openness to Experience and the Creative Personality measures were to establish whether the examined subjects are intellectually open, flexible and unconventional rather than traditional, down-to-earth, and unimaginative, whereas Need for Autonomy and Tolerance of Ambiguity are factors linked to creativity on the one hand, and to foreign language learning success on the other.

1. Multicompetence

Cook [2003: 2] defines multicompetence as the compound state of a mind with two grammars. This concept refers to various aspects of language knowledge such as phonology, lexis, pragmatics and syntax. Multicompetence involves the whole mind of the speaker and assumes that a multilingual is a different person from a monolingual. Cook places emphasis on the language user – that is a person who knows and uses a second language at any level. As he has it: “Multi-competence thus presents a view of second language acquisition (SLA) based on the second language (L2) user as a whole person rather than on the monolingual native speaker” [Cook 2002]. An example can be a Polish student of Oriental philology having a conversation with his Korean teacher, a child in Vancouver speaking Chinese at home and English at school, or a tourist abroad. The concept of multicompetence is based on the claim that the L2 user’s knowledge of the second language is not identical to that of a native speaker. L2 users differ from monolingual language users in many ways. Their knowledge of both the L1 and L2 is different, they have a different metalinguistic awareness and they use different cognitive processes. L2 users have different minds and slightly different configuration of neural network connections in the brain from monolinguals [Cook 2002, 2003; Jessner 2008; Kharkhurin 2012].

The aforementioned hypotheses have implications for both second language acquisition (SLA) research and teaching methodology. Traditionally, SLA research methods have compared the knowledge of an L2 user against the knowledge of native speakers. The ultimate target of the process of learning has been to learn to use the language like a monolingual native speaker, in other words, to sound like a native speaker in all aspects of the language. The problem is that, as a large body of research indicates, it is very difficult, if not virtually impossible to become a native speaker, unless one starts to learn a foreign language as a small child [cf. Abrahamsson, Hyltenstam 2008, 2009].

The discussion of native-like L2 learners has usually been related to the critical period hypothesis (CPH) [Lenneberg 1967]. There is much controversy surrounding the possibility of native-like attainment after the critical period. The adherents of the option of native-like achievement after puberty believe that its incidence is quite common and independent of aptitude [cf. Birdsong 2005; Bongaerts 2005, Marinova-Todd 2003], whereas their opponents argue that the incidence of native-like attainment is close to zero, even if the age of onset is pre-pubertal, and that these rare cases of near-native competence result from high FL aptitude [cf. Abrahamsson, Hyltenstam 2008; DeKeyser 2000]. The adherents of the latter stance claim that starting to

learn a foreign language after this period typically results in non-native attainment. Numerous studies on ultimate attainment provided evidence for a negative correlation between age of onset of acquisition and ultimate attainment of L2 proficiency [Abrahamsson, Hyltenstam 2008, 2009; DeKeyser 2000; Long 2011; Moyer 1999]. Recorded native-like proficiency is usually limited to certain phonetic or morphosyntactic aspects of a foreign language [Bongaerts et. al. 1997; van Boxtel, Bongaerts, Coppens 2003]. What is more, high levels of proficiency achieved by learners postpubertally are attributed to exceptional language aptitude [Abrahamsson, Hyltenstam 2008, 2009; Ioup et. al. 1994; Morgan et. al. 2007; Obler 1989; Sawyer, Ranta 2001].

Cook, a pertinent opponent of the common stereotype that L2 users are imperfect imitations of native speakers, postulates a liberated approach to foreign language learning. In his estimation people should be measured by their success in being L2 users, not by their failure to speak at a native speaker level [Cook 2012]. The goal of an L2 learner should be to become an efficient L2 user, not to pass for a native speaker. Bilingualism and multilingualism are a norm – the majority of people in the world use more than one language [Crystal 1997; Giussani et. al. 2007]. According to Bhatia and Ritchie:

One must conclude that, far from being exceptional, as many lay people believe, bilingualism/multilingualism – which, of course, goes hand in hand with multiculturalism in many cases – is currently the rule throughout the world and will become increasingly so in the future [2006: 1].

Nevertheless, most people do not attain equal competence in both, let alone all the languages. People who function like native speakers in all aspects in two languages are an exception to the rule.

2. Creativity and multicompetence

According to Sternberg and Lubart: “creativity is the ability to produce work that is both novel (i.e., original, unexpected) and appropriate (i.e., useful, adaptive concerning task constraints)” [2004: 3]. Many different components must converge for creativity to occur. Sternberg presents six: intellectual abilities, knowledge, styles of thinking, personality, motivation, and environment. Creative functioning is connected with certain personality factors: self-efficacy, willingness to overcome obstacles, ability to take risks, ambiguity tolerance, and task-focused, intrinsic motivation. In the words of Sternberg: “it is clear that intelligence is a prerequisite for creativity because creative products are high in quality” [2001: 361]. One of the intelligences in Sternberg’s *Theory of Successful Intelligence* [2002] is *creative intelligence*, which denotes the ability to cope with novelty. Because learning a foreign language involves divergent thinking and a substantial amount of coping with novelty, creative intelligence plays a significant role in this process. Creative intelligence involved in learning a foreign language or in adapting to a foreign culture is domain-specific, that is different from the types of creativity employed in other domains.

In a similar vein, Kharkhurin [2009, 2012] argues that there is a link between bilingualism/multilingualism and creativity. The process of constant switching from one language to another and constant operating in two linguistic code systems facilitates a dual linguistic perspective. Bilinguals are more metalinguistically aware, which makes them more cognitively flexible. In a bilingual mind the same concept is connected to two different linguistic conceptual networks, therefore bilinguals can see the same thing from different perspectives. This results in a diversity of associations, which is a source of divergent thinking. The enhanced conceptual representation can facilitate cognitive flexibility, as well as novel and creative ways of thinking. A multilingual mind is more adaptable. Multilinguals have a superior executive function capacity connected with the management of two or more active language systems [Bialystok et al. 2005]. This capacity is advantageous for problem solving, abstract thinking, creative hypothesis formulation, and concept formation skills. These abilities and skills, may, in turn, enhance the potential for learning subsequent languages. As Singleton and Aronin hypothesise: "Multilinguals have a more extensive range of affordances available" [2007: 83].

When it comes to research endeavours specifically undertaken to investigate individual differences in creative people, it should be pointed out that certain personality traits were identified, for example autonomy, introversion and openness, as well as enhanced tolerance of ambiguity [Kharkhurin 2009: 92-95; Houtz 2009: 95-97]. Many of these characteristics also refer to multicompetent individuals. Kharkhurin [2012] presents the influence of multilingual experience on one's creative potential, based on the findings of his longitudinal empirical study. The research aimed at comparing the creative abilities of monolinguals and bilinguals sharing the same linguistic and cultural background, as well as culturally and linguistically different bilinguals, generally confirms the hypothesis that cross-culturally and linguistically experienced people display a higher level of creative potential. One of Cook's postulates with reference to multicompetence is that it affects the user's mind. Multicompetent people, due to their multilingual and multicultural experience, can become more inventive, creative, and open to new experience [Cook 1992]. In the light of these assumptions, it transpires that there is a greater potential for creativity among people who know more than one language, however, currently available research does not provide evidence for a solid, incontrovertible relation between multilingualism/multicompetence and creativity [European Commission 2009; Kharkhurin 2012].

3. Openness to Experience and Creative Personality

Openness to Experience is one of the factors in the Five Factor model of personality [McCrae, Costa 2003]. Connected with originality and flexibility, it expresses an appreciation for art, emotion, adventure, unusual ideas, imagination, curiosity, and a variety of experience. People who score high on Openness are imaginative, curious, flexible, novelty seeking, untraditional, and interested in art. Low scorers are practical, conservative, conventional, and down-to-earth. Openness includes a cognitive aspect, which means that people who score high on general cognitive ability tend to display openness to new experiences and intellectual curiosity and flexibility [Corno et al.

2002]. The factor of Openness to Experience, due to its relationship with intellectual functioning, seems to be the most powerful personality variable in learning a foreign language capable of exerting influence on its outcomes [Dörnyei 2005]. Its correlation with verbal intelligence is estimate at. 30 [Nosal 1999: 256]. Openness is a relatively stable and the most genetically dependent factor of all the Five Factors with influence of genetic factors on Openness estimated at. 61 [Nosal 1999: 244]. Additionally, it involves a great potential for creativity [McCrae 1987], which, as has been mentioned, is associated with multilingualism/multicompetence [Cook 2002]. The construct of Creative Personality, included in the psychological trait of Openness to Experience [McCrae 1987], was operationalised by Gough and Heilbrun [1980] as the desire to act and think differently from the norm as well as a talent for originality.

4. Psychological Need for Autonomy

Need for Autonomy denotes the necessity to act independently of other people and of social needs and expectations. People with high Need for Autonomy are independent, stubborn and firm [Gough, Heilbrun 1980].

In line with Betts [2009], who conducted research on gifted autonomous learners, an autonomous learner is one of a few possible profiles of gifted learners. Not all gifted students are able to become autonomous. Based on evidence from research studies he claims that this is the result of the educational system, which does not create an opportunity for gifted students to develop two prerequisites for autonomy: creativity and independence. Betts regards gifted autonomous learners as independent, self-directed, perceptive, knowledgeable, and accepting of self and others. These learners perceive their abilities as an opportunity to make a positive contribution to the world. One prominent characteristic of gifted autonomous learners is a positive self-concept and self-esteem. What is interesting, they are often creative and successfully manage to combine their creative and cognitive abilities into an independent and self-directed learning style. Like all gifted and successful learners they display an extremely high level of motivation, termed as “passion learning” [Betts 2009: 84]. They view learning as a life-long pursuit and desire to pursue passion in depth. Summing up, it appears that the three factors: giftedness, creativity and autonomy create a cluster of psychological characteristics which can contribute to foreign language learning success.

5. Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity

Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity is a cognitive learning style which refers to the degree to which a learner is cognitively willing to accept ideas that are in contradiction with his/her own belief system or structure of knowledge. This term is related to intellectual openness and tolerance of contradiction. People who display a high level of tolerance of ambiguity are open to accepting innovative and creative solu-

tions as well as inconsistencies and exceptions in foreign language grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation [Ely 1995b: 87-95].

6. The study

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors that might indicate creativity in accomplished multicompetent foreign language learners (AML). The following personality measures were investigated: Openness to Experience [McCrae, Costa 2003], Creative Personality and Psychological Need for Autonomy [Gough, Heilbrun 1980], and Tolerance of Ambiguity [Ely 1995b]. The aim of the study was to establish whether the examined subjects are intellectually open, flexible, independent, and unconventional, rather than traditional, down-to-earth, narrow-minded, and unimaginative. The psychological tests (the NEO-FFI and the ACL) were conducted by a professional psychologist, to comply with the criteria of credibility and validity as well as formal requirements.

6.1. Hypotheses

Three research hypotheses were formulated:

1. AML will score high on Openness to Experience;
2. AML will score high on Creative Personality and Need for Autonomy;
3. AML will score high on Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity.

6.2. Subjects

The subjects were 44 AML examined with regard to their personality characteristics. They were mainly philology students and post-graduates from Polish universities. Six were doctoral students. There were 31 females and 13 males in the group. The subjects' ages varied from 21 to 35 (24.5 on average). They were either nominated by their teachers or encouraged by co-workers or class-mates to participate.

The level of proficiency of the sample in at least one foreign language was advanced (C1 or C2)¹. All the participants were highly advanced in English. Fourteen (32%) were highly advanced in one foreign language, 19 (43%) in two languages, 8 (18%) in three, 2 (4%) in four, and 1 (2%) in five languages. If they spoke more than two foreign languages, their level of proficiency in the additional languages was usually communicative (A2/B1+). The number of languages they were learning varied from 1 to 11 (4.5 on average), and included European and non-European languages. The European languages included: English, German, French, Italian, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Spanish, Portuguese, Irish, Welsh, Russian, Hungarian, Romanian, Croatian, and Latin. The non-European languages were the following: Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Hindi, Turkish, Arabic, Mongolian, Korean, and Hebrew, among oth-

¹ All the achievements were formally confirmed by official documents: certificates acknowledged in Poland and diplomas from universities. In the case of Chinese philology students, both their native and non-native teachers evaluated their rate of progress in comparison to their classmates. One of the Chinese language teachers (a professor working at Warsaw University), evaluated the level of Chinese of her students according to the Council of Europe norms.

ers. Altogether, the group consisted of 3 (7%) bilinguals, 13 (29%) trilinguals, 9 (20%) quadrilinguals, and 10 (23%) pentalinguals²; 9 (20%) participants spoke more than 5 languages, the highest number being 11 languages. All the achievements were formally confirmed by official documents: certificates acknowledged in Poland and diplomas from universities in the case of an advanced level of a language.

6.3. Instruments

The Polish adaptation of *the Revised NEO-FFI Personality Inventory* [Costa, McCrae 1992] by Zawadzki, Strelau, Szczepaniak and Śliwińska [1998] is a psychological personality inventory; a 60-question measure of Five Factors: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism, and Openness to Experience. There are 12 statements per factor each to be answered on a 5-point scale. The subject can score from 0 to 4 points for each answer, and for some questions the scoring order is reversed. The raw results range from 0 to 48 points per scale and are converted into sten scores. For the purpose of the study only the factor of Openness to Experience was analysed.

The Polish adaptation of the Adjective *Check List ACL* [Gough, Heilbrun 1980] by Juros, Oleś and Wujec [1987] is an instrument that operationalises the concept of psychological need. The ACL consists of 300 adjectives. The respondent marks all the adjectives that describe him/her and leaves blank those which are not self-descriptive. The ACL can be scored on 37 scales in five categories, including *Modus Operandi scales*, *Need scales*, *Topical scales*, *Transactional Analysis scales*, and *Origence-Intellectence scales*. For the purpose of this study only 2 categories were analysed: the Origence-Intellectence scales and the Need for Autonomy scale. The Origence-Intellectence scales measure Creative Personality, defined as the desire to do and think differently from the norm and a talent for originality. It consists of four subscales assessing the balance between preferences for affective-emotional (origence) and rational-realistic (intellectence) moods of functioning.

Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale [Ely 1995a] is an instrument for measuring tolerance of contradiction in learning a foreign language. The responses in a Likertscale format indicate the degree of ambiguity tolerance in foreign language learning, which denotes the ability to accept inconsistencies in a foreign language.

6.4. Results and interpretation

6.4.1. Openness to Experience

In the process of data analysis, Openness to Experience raw scores are converted into a ten-point standardised scale. The sten scale has a mean of 5. Scores within the range of 4-7 are considered to be average, while sten scales of 1-3 and 8-10 can be treated as low or high, respectively. The subjects' mean score was 6.159 (see Table 1). This means that the factor of Openness to Experience was minimally above average in the sample. However, it was the highest score of all the results in the Five Factor personality inventory. Moreover, in a previous study conducted by the present author, it

² The terms "bilingual", "trilingual", and "quadrilingual" were adopted from Dewaele [2007] and do not refer to proficiency levels

was the only factor that revealed statistically significant differences between the groups of accomplished multilinguals, termed as ‘gifted L2 learners’ and mainstream English philology students [cf. Biedroń 2010]. This means that the AML can be imaginative, curious, flexible, novelty seeking, untraditional, and interested in art, rather than practical, conservative, conventional, and down-to-earth.

6.4.2. Creative Personality trait

In the ACL test, the scores within the range of 40-60 on the percentile scale are treated as average, and 50 is the mean score. The mean score of the AML was 54.886. It can be observed that the sample was, again, a little above average on the Creative Personality scale (CPS), and on the high origence, high intellectence scale (A2) (see Table 1). These results suggest versatility, unconventionality and individuality in the sample.

6.4.3. Psychological Need for Autonomy

The mean score on the Need for Autonomy scale was 57.477 on a scale of 1 to 100. It was a moderately high result, but the highest of all the scores on all the 37 need scales (see Table 1). This score refers to all domains of life and is not limited to foreign language learning. However, the fact that Need for Autonomy was the dominant need of the AML indicates that they can be independent and aware foreign language learners, ready to take responsibility for their learning process.

6.4.4. Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity

The mean result of the sample on the Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity was 27.232 on a scale of 11-44 (see Table 1). The higher the score, the lower the

Table 1

Descriptive statistics for the AML

Factor	mean	minimum	maximum	SD
NEO_O	6.159	2.000	9.000	1.627
ACL_CPS	54.886	42.000	78.000	8.272
ACL_A1	47.136	33.000	70.000	9.118
ACL_A2	56.068	37.000	80.000	11.081
ACL_A3	42.613	23.000	66.000	9.206
ACL_A4	48.750	29.000	72.000	11.058
ACL_AUT	57.477	39.000	82.000	9.578
AMB_TOL	27.232	11.000	40.000	6.406

* $p < .05$

NEO_O = Openness to Experience; ACL_CPS = Creative Personality; A1 = high origence, low intellectence; A2 = high origence, high intellectence; A3 = low origence, low intellectence; A4 = low origence, high intellectence; ACL_AUT = Need for Autonomy; AMB_TOL = Tolerance of Ambiguity

tolerance of ambiguity. The score of the AML was average. This means that they might be able to accept inconsistencies in the target language, however, this cognitive style does not dominate in the sample. The high standard deviation indicates differentiation of the sample with respect to this factor. In a previous study conducted by the present author, the level of tolerance of ambiguity in the sample of accomplished multilinguals was compared to 'mainstream English philology students'. Both samples displayed an average level of second language tolerance of ambiguity. Nevertheless, this factor was higher in the accomplished multilinguals and the difference was close to significant [cf. Biedroń 2012].

7. Discussion and conclusions

The present article was intended to provide a brief overview of crucial issues connected with the relationship between multicompetence and creativity. There is an increasing body of evidence which reveals an enhanced potential for creativity among people who speak more than one language [cf. European Commission 2009; Kharkhurin 2012]. Multicompetence constitutes an added value which results from perceiving the world from different perspectives. This diversity of experience contributes to being successful in various domains of life, including foreign language learning. Multicompetent people are better at problem solving and at abstract thinking, and more creative in formulating hypotheses and defining concepts.

The purpose of the study presented here was to investigate factors that might indicate creative abilities in accomplished multicompetent foreign language learners. The study set itself the goal of confirming three hypotheses: 1. AML will score high on Openness to Experience ('Five Factor Model'); 2. AML will score high on Creative Personality and Need for Autonomy ('Psychological Need'); 3. AML will score high on Second Language Ambiguity Tolerance. The subjects were 44 highly competent foreign language learners – mainly philology students and postgraduates.

The research hypotheses were partly confirmed. The highest scores were obtained in Openness to Experience and Creative Personality. These results accord well with the hypothesis that people who speak more than one language tend to display openness to new experiences and intellectual flexibility [cf. Kharkhurin 2009]. What is more, Openness to Experience is connected with seeking novelty and creativity, which can be facilitative in developing language learning strategies, finding solutions to problems, taking intellectual risks, and, generally, adapting to new situations. This result suggests that individuals who are non-standard, independent, flexible, and open to new experiences are predisposed to succeed in foreign language learning. An alternative interpretation is also possible, namely that the multicultural experience of foreign languages learning opens the mind to new experience in general. As far as Need for Autonomy is concerned, the subjects gained the highest score for it of all the scores in all 37 need scales. This result indicates that autonomy as a capacity including abilities and attitudes that allow a learner to take responsibility for his/her process of learning can constitute a link between multicompetence and creativity. The last factor, that is Second Language Ambiguity Tolerance, fell within

the average range. Perhaps, in the case of the AML it was rather the need for perfectionism in foreign language learning that dominated their learning preferences than the willingness to accept inconsistencies in the target language.

It has to be borne in mind that none of the results reached a high level. The results of the tests on Openness, Creativity, and Need for Autonomy fell within the average range according to the norms. Nonetheless, they were the highest scores gained by the subjects in the personality tests. Therefore, hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 have been satisfactorily confirmed. Hypothesis 4 has not been corroborated because the result of the test on ambiguity tolerance was average. This is not to be interpreted as evidence against the significance of ambiguity tolerance in creativity development in multilinguals. As has been mentioned above, the sample of the AML comprised thoroughly selected successful foreign language learners whose main goal was perfect foreign language expertise. For these language learners perfectionism was a priority. What is more, the studied sample was relatively small and therefore great caution should be exercised when interpreting the results, especially with respect to possible cause–effect relationships.

The question concerning the manner in which multicompetence and creativity are related has not only generated the most interest among theorists and researchers, but it can also be seen as having a great relevance to everyday teaching practice. Cook [2001], for example, proposes the systematic use of the first language in the classroom by means of *alternating language approaches*, such as *reciprocal language teaching* in which pairs of students alternatively teach each other their languages, or methods which actively create a link between the L1 and L2, such as, for example the *New Concurrent Method*, *Community Language Learning*, or the *Bilingual Method*. Cook also criticises the common belief that L2 learners should strive to achieve a native–like level of competence. In this estimation the success in learning a foreign language is equivalent to native–like competence. As he argues:

The L2 learner's goal is then 'full native speaker competence', paraphrased as 'perfect command' or 'language mastery'. L2 learners are failures because they do not attain the same competence as native speakers. [...], the cumulative effect in the SLA literature is clear and almost unanimous: L2 learners are failures compared to native speakers [Cook 1997: 36].

Instead he proposes to replace the term *L2 learner* with a more accurate term *L2 user*:

To respect the multi-competence idea, we can never regard an L2 user as an unsuccessful native speaker, only as a different kind of person in their own right, an extrapolation of Labov's argument about difference between speakers not entailing deficit [Labov 1969]. So the term 'L2 user' often became preferred to 'L2 learner' since it allows the person to achieve a final state rather than to be a perpetual 'learner' always on the way to native speaker status but doomed never to get there [Cook 2008:19].

According to European Commission [2009], creativity, which is central to innovation, is a key contributor to economic growth and social cohesion. There is a considerable body of evidence in support of the argument that multilingualism/multicompetence

result in creative and innovative outcomes for individuals and societies gained through multicultural diversity in social and working life. Creativity is partly developed through social interactions; therefore, it should be fostered in education as a significant factor for social and economic success in the *Knowledge Society*. All of these claims provide a basis for the European Commission's [2009: 6] pronouncement that:

The ability to communicate in several languages is a great benefit for individuals, organizations and companies. It enhances creativity, breaks cultural stereotypes, encourages thinking 'outside the box', and can help develop innovative products and services. These are all qualities and activities that have real economic value.

The final conclusion is that although there is no solid evidence for a link between multicompetence and creativity, a greater potential for creativity among multicompetent learners is repeatedly voiced in the literature. Definitely, further research on bigger samples of learners and with the use of more complex instruments measuring not only psychological traits, but also the ability to create new objects or ideas would contribute to the understanding of the fascinating phenomenon of multilingualism/multicompetence.

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Summary

Does multicompetence foster creativity?

The case of accomplished multicompetent foreign language learners

The purpose of this study was to analyse personality factors which can indicate creative abilities in 44 accomplished multicompetent foreign language learners. Four factors were tested: *Openness to Experience*, *Creative Personality*, *Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity*, and *Need for Autonomy*. The analysis revealed that the factors of Openness to Experience, Creative Personality and Need for Autonomy are moderately high as compared to the norms, whereas Second Language Tolerance of Ambiguity is average. These results suggest that people who are creative, non-standard, independent and open

to new experience can be successful foreign language learners. The results may contribute to the understanding of the relationship between multicompetence, creativity, and success in learning a foreign language.

Key words: *creativity, multicompetence, personality, accomplished multicompetent foreign language learners*