

## A Discourse Analysis of Humour in Foreign Language Classes

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### Abstract

The phenomenon of humour in every spheres of one's life has a vital role. This project involves the element of humor in EFL classes. The purpose to conduct this research is to investigate that how much is the application of humor important and effective in EFL classes. Mix method/ Qualitative and quantitative type of research has been used for the study. To collect the data, survey forms and questionnaires were used. For data analysis of the collected data, the application namely SPSS was used by the researchers. So the result shows that it is a good technique to apply the mechanism of humour in teaching especially in foreign language classes.

### Introduction

Humor in Foreign Language Classes is an important factor as it has a positive effects upon second language acquisition. Language instructions can be done through the application of humor which could create a fun in learning process. Critical thinking is also improved through the mechanism of humour.

In EFL classes, humour can play as a motivational tool. Humor in the lives of human beings has an important factor as it releases the anxiety and tension. Same is the case with learning process, if learners are in a state of anxiety, they will not be able to pay attention. To make them relax and to have their attention, it is important to have humorous environment in the class. Sometimes, it makes the learning process more effective and attractive that students become able to learn at very specific time with enjoyment, what the presenter or the teacher wants to teach.

Berk (2003) argued that;

“When I enter the classroom, I want to change the entire atmosphere into one where everyone has fun with the material--even if the material is complex, it helps relieve fear and reduce anxiety.”

The hypothesis of the study is that the application of the mechanism of humor in Foreign Language Classes make the learning environment effective and attractive if it used timely, positively and properly.

## **Humour in Foreign Language Classes**

### **Enhancement of Instructional Process**

Intercultural communication is possible with different ways and sources, but foreign language is also one of the best mean of intercultural communication. Definitely, there are some rules of foreign language teaching. For instance, in EFL teaching a language instructor uses different methods and teaching approaches to make the teaching effective and successful. Farther on, he may use some mechanisms like the humour in the EFL classes, as a motivational tool in his instruction. According to Ali, Iqbal, Ali, Riazuddin and Rahman (2015), it is good and helpful to use humor in teaching of language teaching and learning as the sense of humour can boost and enhance the teaching and learning process in many ways as it has many characteristics [1]. It has great direct and indirect effects on the process of transmitting the information and leaning process and classroom atmosphere.

In the instructional process, there are some things which are necessary to make the learning environment more effective. An instructor may use different techniques and strategies to make the learning environment effective. A teacher may focus the interest of the learners in the class to motivate them properly. Nasiri and Mafakheri (2015) quoted that humour in instruction is a good modern phenomenon which is an important active learning strategy [2]. It can promote retention of information and comprehension in the learning process because it is helpful in keeping the students focus and interest for longer in the targeted situation.

### **Beneficial for Cognition**

Research proved that the instructors should use the mechanism and sense of humour in the EFL instructions as it is supportive and cooperative in language teaching. Pham (2014) admitted in favor of humour in EFL Teaching in his thesis that findings exposed the learners and the instructors from various universities revealed their positive thoughts regarding the application of humor in the instructional process of EFL “English as Foreign Languages Teaching” [3]. This mechanism can be beneficial for cognition.

## **A Safe House in the EFL Classes and Competence**

In classroom interaction, humour and stress free environment is compulsory for better feedback. Humour in the classroom has many functions in different ways which are similar to the safe-house activities. For example, it may be used to discuss the personal identities which are essential in the educational and practical settings. Some lessons become easy and understandable when there is a frankly atmosphere in a class where students with teachers and students with other fellows have a better interaction. Pomerantz and Bell (2011) argued that humour can work to create safe houses in foreign language classes that allow for the acknowledgement, development and valuing of symbolic competence [4]. So in any foreign class the mechanism and the sense of humour are very important on some occasions.

## **A Motivational Device**

Humour, a motivational tool is essential in second or foreign language learning and motivation is linked to students' psychology. Language instructors/ teachers need to motivate the learners by using some techniques. Guilloteaux and Dornyei (2008) admitted that motivation is an essential concept in human psychology [5]. Without motivation a person cannot accomplish his long term goals. There is a link between language teachers' motivational practice and increased level of learners' motivated learning behavior plus the learners' motivational condition.

Some tools and techniques are necessary to be used to make the language teaching and learning environment appropriate and effective. Humour and songs with humour also can be brought into play in a language teaching class by a language instructor to make the targeted situation effective, appropriate and suitable for learning. Rafiee, Kassaian, & Dastjerdi (2010) affirmed that to make the learners stress free and secure in EFL class a teacher needs to different techniques and tools like humour and songs [6]. Because they have the capability of making a proper language learning setting.

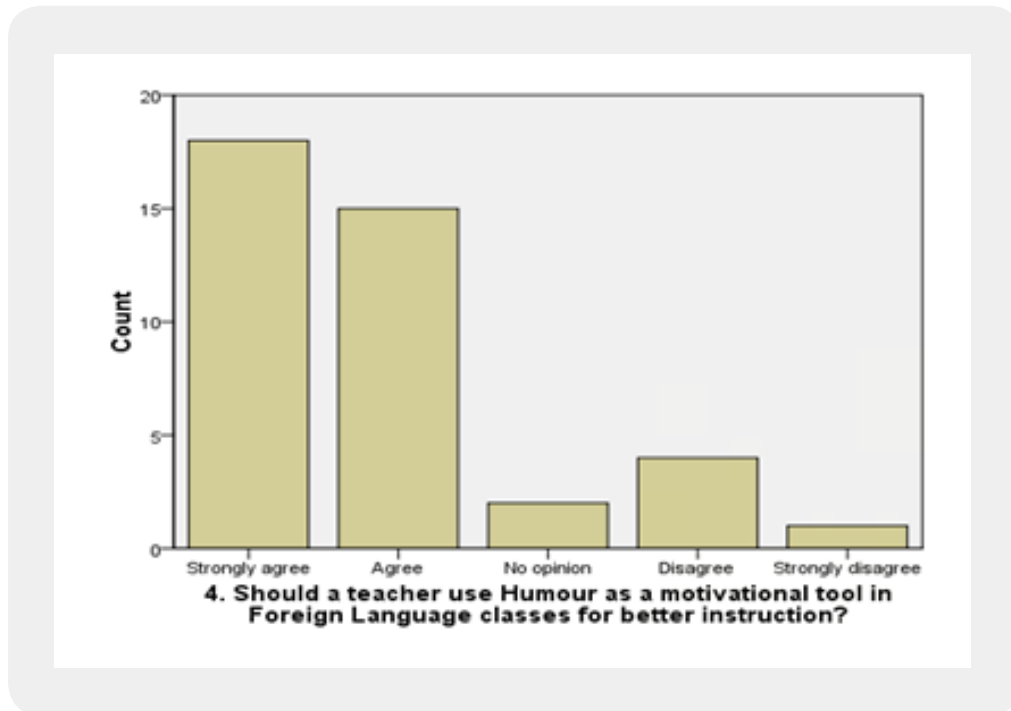
## **Creativity and Critical Thinking Promoter**

Creativity and critical thinking skills keep a vital role in one's life. A person with creativity and critical thinking is considered a competent and an able person. There are several things that help in boosting creativity and critical thinking skill in a person. The mechanism of humour is also helpful in the matter of the creativity and critical thinking skills. According to Lovorn (2008), humour is a natural approach used in interaction and communication commonly [7]. It is supportive in boosting the critical thinking skills and the creativity. It is also helpful in promoting values and teaching civic responsibilities and moral behavior.

The researchers have used qualitative and quantitative type of research for the study. For data collection survey forms/ questionnaires were used. Two language institutes were chosen for data collection in District Skardu of Gilgit Baltistan randomly and two in District Lahore. The four language learning institutes were Inspirational Academia Gamba Skardu, Sir Sultan English Language center Skardu, Star Institute Township Lahore and Spoken English Language and computer center Model Town Lahore. The total number of the participants was forty. Ten students were selected via random sampling from each targeted institute.

Questionnaires were distributed to ten students randomly and were collected on the same day. The queries students did not understand were made under explained by the researcher on the spot.

For the analysis of collected data, the researcher used SPSS. So the result shows that it is a good step to use the mechanism of humour in teaching especially in teaching of foreign language classes.



The above chart in SPSS shows the majority of learners in Foreign Language learning classes agreed with the idea that a teacher should use Humour as a motivational tool in Foreign Language classes for better instruction.

On the other hand, out of the total number (40) of the participants 33 students were agreed with the idea that humour enhances and supports the instructional process in Foreign language Classes. Thirty two students agreed with the idea of humour as good source of communicational process in language acquisition. Thirty participants were in favour the application of humour and told that humour is supportive in prompting critical thinking and creativity in Foreign Language Classes. Twenty percent students agreed with the idea that a teacher should not apply Humour in Language learning classes. Eighty Eight percent participants agreed that humour application is helpful in generating competence in the language learners in the classes. Sixty percent participants told that its application can make the lesson easy. Only five percent students had the idea that humour can make the lesson or lecture complex and boring in the class. Fifty five percent students agreed that a teacher should use humour in 1st language in the foreign language classes while teaching and out of 40 students only 13 participants agreed that humour should be applied continuously in the Language learning classes.

The statistics show the authentic results about the investigated queries that the mechanism of humour is an important phenomenon. It has vital role in teaching especially in foreign language classes. Its application can make the learning setting attractive and easy. It is useful in making the instructional process easy and understandable as well as it enhances the communicational process in the targeted situation. Results shows that humour is supportive in prompting critical thinking and creativity in Foreign Language Classes and it should be applied by the teachers as a motivational tool in Foreign Language classes for better instruction. The mechanism of humour is helpful in generating competence in the Language learners as well as its application make the lesson easy for the foreign language learners in a targeted situation. Even a teacher may use humour in 1st language while delivering his lecture to motivate the language learners but the humorous statements should be transited in foreign language also thus the learning process may proceed also. But it should be kept in mind that should not be used all the time or continuously in the class.

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