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SPECIFIC FEATURES AND PRINCIPLES OF USING HUMOUR IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSES

ANNOTATION

Teachers use different tools to sustain students' attention for learning, as students can be distracted easily during the class. Using humour in teaching foreign languages in this sense is one of the methods that can help teachers make their classes not tedious and, at the same time, practical. The particular research employs the method of literature review and semi-structured interview (with two foreign language teachers) in order to find the answer to the following questions: If humour is beneficial in a foreign language class, and if it is beneficial, how can it be implemented in a foreign language class effectively; are there any limitations of using humour during a lesson.

The results show that humour plays a significant role in a foreign language classroom. Teachers employ humour with different aims, such as establishing a light and friendly atmosphere in the class and, in this way, making it less stressful, integrating some playfulness in the class to boost the learning effect and correcting students' mistakes in a non-critical way and other pedagogical purposes. Teachers can start employing humour from the beginner level by using universal types of jokes and scaffolding the material, if necessary.

The limitations of using humour are related to different situations, such as the seriousness of the lesson (e.g., exam) or students' characteristics (considering the level of the established rapport with students and their openness to the use of the teacher-initiated humour). Moreover, in the class, teachers must avoid some "taboo" topics. Following the obtained results, this article also suggests tips for using humour to enhance students' speaking, listening, grammar, and

CHET TILI DARSLARIDA YUMORDAN FOYDALANISHNING O'ZIGA XOS XUSUSIYATLARI VA TAMOYILLARI

ANNOTATSIYA

Talabalarning dars jarayoniga diqqatini jalb qilish uchun o'qituvchilar turli xil vositalardan foydalanadilar, chunki talabalarning e'tibori dars davomida osongina chalg'ishi mumkin. Chet tillarni o'rgatishda yumordan shu maqsadda foydalanish o'qituvchilarga darslarini zerikarli bo'lmasligi va shu bilan birga darslarni foydali o'tkazishiga yordam beradigan usullardan biridir. Ushbu tadqiqotda ilmiy adabiyotlarni o'rganish bilan birga suhbat usulidan quyidagi savollarga javob topish maqsadida ham foydalanildi: Yumorni chet tili darslarida ishlatish foydalimi va agar foydali bo'lsa, yumorni chet tili darslarida qanday qilib samarali ishlatish mumkin; dars davomida yumordan foydalanishda cheklovlar mavjudmi? Suhbat ikki nafar chet tili o'qituvchisi bilan hamkorlikda tashkillashtirildi.

Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, yumor chet tili darsida muhim rol o'ynaydi. O'qituvchilar yumordan turli maqsadlar, ya'ni auditoriyada yengil va do'stona muhit yaratish va shu bilan talabalarda yuzaga kelishi mumkin bo'lgan stressni kamaytirish; auditoriyada yumordan foydalangan holda darslarni qiziqarliroq o'tkazish va shu orqali ta'lim samarasini oshirish; shuningdek, talabalar xatolarini yumordan foydalangan holda juda tanqidiy bo'lmagan tarzda tuzatish va boshqa pedagogik maqsadlarda foydalanishadi. O'qituvchilar yumordan talabalarga ularning chet tili darajasining boshlang'ich davridan boshlab foydalanishlari mumkin bo'ladi. Unda o'qituvchilar yumorning hamma madaniyatlarda tushunsa bo'ladigan universal turidan foydalanishlari mumkin.

Yumorni dars davomida qo'llashning cheklovlari turli-xil vaziyatlarga bog'liq.

vocabulary skills.

Key words: humour, teacher-initiated humour, method of humour, joke, cartoon, pun, universal humour, culture-based humour, linguistic humour.

masalan, darsning jiddiyligi (masalan, imtihon davrida) yoki talabalarning shaxsiy xususiyatlari (talabalar bilan oʻrnatilgan oʻqituvchi-talaba munosabatlarining darajasi va talabalarning oʻqituvchi tashabbusi bilan foydalanilgan yumorga boʻlgan munosabatlari ochiqligini hisobga olgan holda). Bundan tashqari, darsda oʻqituvchilar yumordan foydalanganlarida baʼzi mavzulardan foydalanmasliklari maqsadga muvofiq. Shuningdek, ushbu maqolada talabalarning soʻzlashish, tinglab tushunish, grammatikaga oid bilimlarini va lugʻat boyligini oshirishda yumordan foydalanib darslarni olib borish boʻyicha amaliy maslahatlar ham berilgan.

Kalit soʻzlar: yumor, oʻqituvchi tashabbusi bilan yaratilgan yumor misollari, yumor metodi, hazil, suratlarga asoslangan yumor turi, soʻz oʻyinlari, universal yumor, madaniyatga bogʻliq boʻlgan yumor misollari, lingvistik yumor.

INTRODUCTION

In Uzbek culture, humour has always been an integral part of society. It plays a significant role in bringing people together in different social gatherings and other cultural events. Different humour genres are widely appreciated by our people, such as “Askiya” (“askiya” is the art of using language with the intention of creation of sarcasm, irony, wit, humouristic innuendo and other humorous figurative meanings), “latifa” (a joke is usually told in order to raise a momentum of laughter). Besides, stand-up comedies are also becoming popular nowadays. Our people also enjoy a lot the concerts of the masters of wordplay who gather large audiences (e.g. Avaz Oxunov, Zokir Ochildiev and others.).

Turning to the topic of the current research about using humour in the classroom, almost every teacher laughs with his/her students over some classroom routines and funny situations that occur during the classes. Teachers mostly initiate humour, but sometimes, students also contribute to the funniness. It can be noted that classroom humour occurs involuntarily, as most teachers do not plan to use it beforehand.

There are different techniques to make the lesson interactive. Be it employing technology or using interactive types of methods. However, according to research done by Chiasson [Chiasson, 2002], the key to unlocking many hearts is using successful humour, as most students tend to be closed at the beginning of the class. As students observe that the teacher is employing humour, they assume that the teacher is exceptionally receptive and allows a lighter discipline (of course, without letting students neglect the classroom rules) in which students can feel “at ease” in the class. Some teachers do not use humour, in general (initiate a humorous instance) or avoid using humour as a teaching material, as humour is not considered in the curriculum,

and what is considered in the curriculum needs to be taught, and there is no room left for humour [Heros, 2019; 202]. Some teachers believe that using humour in class is a privilege for those selected ones with an unprecedentedly good sense of humour, or even if they employ humour, they use it without any system as a spontaneous effect raised by a certain situation.

It should be noted that a sense of humour is not only about being able to produce humour, but it also is about enjoying it [McGhee, 1979; 9]. Still, it should be admitted that without practice and confidence and, of course, the will to use humour, igniting humour instances may bring to a farce or failure. Therefore, it needs practice, it needs reading, and it needs research. This research paper explores if humour is beneficial to use in foreign language classes and, if yes, how it can be employed during the classes, from which level of language proficiency one can start using humour and are there any limitations to using it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Currently, learning foreign languages is of high importance, although day by day, the translation technology develops and does a high-quality translation. However, communicating with a native speaker in his/her language raises a good amount of sympathy from the side of the native speaker. In business-related meetings, using the language of the native country may raise the probability of closing the deal [Neeley, 2012]. Therefore, employing effective methods for a faster mastery of a foreign language is essential.

In a foreign language class, students must overcome a language barrier. It should be noted there can be different reasons for students to fail in overcoming that barrier. Students may feel stressed and anxious because their linguistic knowledge is limited [Dörnyei, 2007; 723], and they sometimes think that other students will laugh at them if they express themselves in a foreign language with mistakes. Therefore, Krashen [Krashen, 2009; 7] suggested that the comprehensible input is best acquired in classrooms with low anxiety levels. One of the methods that can be used to create a light atmosphere is employing humour and humour techniques [Nadeem, 2012; 91]. Chiasson [Chiasson, 2002] stated that positive humour creates a positive atmosphere during the lessons, enabling students to communicate more openly in class without feeling stress and anxiety.

Moreover, humour can encourage shy students to develop confidence and contribute to class without feeling that they might be humiliated or attacked. In other words, humour gives students motivation, and they feel safe to use the foreign language [Chiasson, 2002]. Muñoz-Basols expressed the opinion that when students do tasks, it is also motivating if they feel a bit of entertainment: “Whenever our students are amused and entertained during an activity, we as teachers are achieving our main goal: to encourage and motivate students and help them communicate in the target language” [Muñoz-Basols, 2005; 42]. Consequently, as it can be seen, humour, indeed, can assist a foreign language class by firstly alleviating the classroom’s atmosphere and by motivating students to freely communicate with each other without feeling any

barriers. According to Dieter, using humour elements in class can positively affect the learning environment and, eventually, increase “the amount of “what” is taught that is actually learned by students” [Dieter, 2000; 22] Hence, integration of humour may favourably affect the learning environment and boost the teaching effect.

Furthermore, Wagner and Urios-Aparisi deem that cultural awareness is important in foreign language teaching and humour is an integral part of any culture [Wagner & Urios-Aparisi, 2008; 210]. Thus, teaching a foreign language using humour and teaching humour of the target language culture will help the student not only learn the target language elements but also receive the necessary pragmatic competence and intercultural skills, which will be important in case of travel to the target language country or in the authentic communication with the native language speakers.

Farahani and Abdollahi [Farahani & Abdollahi, 2018; 210] in their research emphasized the positive role of humour in the students’ willingness to communicate and in enhancing their speaking skills. Sixty students were chosen for their research and divided into the treatment and the control group. The treatment group studied speaking skills by exposure to the humour techniques, which consisted of, for example, starting a lesson with humorous quotes (or a “thought of the day”), using humorous materials of different genres and telling jokes. However, the control group continued taking the foreign language class in the same delivery method without any changes. As Farahani and Abdollahi [Farahani & Abdollahi, 2018; 208-209] stated that the study confirmed their two hypotheses, which related to the positive influence of teacher-initiated humour on “learners’ willingness to communicate” and “developing learners’ speaking ability”.

Limits to the use of humour in the teaching of foreign languages and English as a foreign language

In his research in Italian and Swedish upper-secondary schools Blackmore [Blackmore, 2013; 23] identified the following teacher-initiated humour types which are most frequent in the class and classified them into positive and negative ones (See Table 1):

Table 1.

Different forms of teacher-initiated humour experienced by students in the study of Blackmore

Appropriate humour		Inappropriate humour	
Italy	Sweden	Italy	Sweden
sarcasm (agreed)	personal anecdotes	sarcasm (intelligence)	ethnicity
irony	sarcasm (consensus)	personally directed	intelligence (grades)
physical (slapstick)	funny voices/dialects	socioeconomic status	cultural background
facial expressions	irony	cultural background	socioeconomic status
smiling	body language	physical appearance	gender (sexism and
related/unrelated jokes	physical (slapstick)	“bad day” behaviour	orientation)
gesticulation	self-deprecating jokes	religion	
	related/unrelated humour		

As can be drawn from the data illustrated in Table 1, teachers often use

sarcasm, irony, and situational jokes. However, irony and sarcasm can also result in inappropriate effects, as shown in Table 1. Hostile humour or harsh sarcasm can harm students' motivation and self-confidence [Bryant & Zillman, 1989; 69-70]. It may be difficult for some students to understand humour techniques such as irony and satire in the classroom [Bryant & Zillman, 1989; 72]. Therefore, when using this type of humour, teachers should be careful and use it in a light form.

Furthermore, it is necessary to mention that humour and humour elements used in teaching must be connected with the aim of teaching (e.g. the practice of a linguistic form) and suggested to be used in a planned manner [Schmitz, 2002; 95]. In the opposite case, students can easily be distracted. Dickhäuser [Dickhäuser, 2002; 121] believed that humour should be limited in time and sometimes cannot be a standard part of every lesson. There are some situations which require extreme seriousness (e.g., exams). He considered lessons in which there is nothing but laughter as wasted time because, in this way, no learning objectives can be realized.

Hohenhaus pointed out that the teacher must remember that there are some limitations to using humour and humorous elements in the context of foreign language teaching [Hohenhaus, 2000; 445]. Humour can have a negative effect if the teacher uses a derogatory type of humour and makes the class or individual participants the 'victims' of the used humour element. Furthermore, Deneire [Deneire, 1995; 287-288] suggested excluding ethnicity-related jokes and sexual and political humour from classroom use. Ethnic jokes can form stereotypes in learners about particular people or ethnic minorities, damaging the context of intercultural learning. Hohenhaus [Hohenhaus, 2000; 445] also added death and religion to the taboo topics list. Obscene topics cannot be covered in class because of societal values and psychological reasons. Humour related to politics promotes the formation of stereotypes about a country's political system; moreover, one usually needs background information to understand political humour.

How to use humour techniques in a foreign language class

In general, any attempt to use humour and humour materials of different genres in teaching to facilitate learning in order to attain a specific pedagogical goal or a learning outcome in a classroom can be referred to as the implementation of the 'humour technique' (e.g. teaching vocabulary by using comic strips). There are several options for implementing humour during the lesson, but a particular system is lacking. According to Schmitz, the use of humour and humorous elements in class must be planned. The element of humour in the classroom should be an integral part of the language material or skills which is taught according to the lesson unit. One can receive a positive result if one tries to use humour spontaneously (or gives the impression of spontaneity when using humour) with the students. However, one must avoid using humour without intention in the classroom [Schmitz, 2002; 95]. Also, Deneire [Deneire, 1995; 294] pointed out that teaching something new to students by using humour is not suggested. However, humour can be used to reinforce the "acquired knowledge" that can be presented as an example of the taught elements in the class.

One practical way of using humour during a foreign language class, as Kleppin suggested, can be orally correcting a student's mistake because the corrections adopted through humour are better remembered [Kleppin, 1998; 270]. However, it can be highlighted that one must ensure that the learner and his language skills must not be the object of laughter.

Starting from which level of foreign language proficiency can humour be employed

It is interesting according to The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) starting from which foreign language proficiency teachers can start using humour during the lesson. Schmitz claims that using humour as a teaching and learning technique should start at the beginning of foreign language learning and that it can be continued systematically through the entire acquisition process. It is vital in this case that the teacher has to choose the right piece of humour, taking into consideration the level of language skills of the learners. One should also pay attention to the authenticity of the content of the selected humour element; in other words, the piece of humour (a joke or a pun) that is chosen should be related to the target language culture [Schmitz, 2002; 95-96]. For teachers who want to use humour elements in the classroom (telling a joke or practising grammar with the jokes) but have a cautious feeling that the learners can have difficulties with the vocabulary of the texts, Schmitz suggests that the necessary vocabulary and other related information can be explained to the learners beforehand. Hence, the learning effect and the aim of employing humour can be achieved. The content of the humour element must be understandable to the learners, which could be achieved by scaffolding and teachers' explanations. Spontaneous jokes are appreciated well by students; however, planning humour (as mentioned) can increase the efficacy of its employment.

METHODS

The current research has employed the method of literature review and a semi-structured interview. A literature review was conducted to critically analyse the literature relevant to using humour in foreign language classes to understand the researched issue in-depth and relate the analysis outcomes to this study. The rationale for using a semi-structured interview was to see the perspective of the teachers who currently teach foreign languages and employ humour actively during their classes. Since the teachers mostly initiate humour during the class, their pedagogical observations were highly interesting for this research. Hence, a semi-structured interview was used to extract more quality data to compare it with conducted literature review results. The research population was two teachers: one male and one female. Both teachers teach foreign languages in a Higher Educational context. One teacher is employed at the University of Giessen (female, Respondent 1 – teacher of German, all levels), and the other works at Westminster International University in Tashkent (male, Respondent 2, teacher of English, all levels). The rationale for choosing teachers from different countries was that it was intended to compare the opinions of teachers who teach in different contexts. Before the interview, the ethical issues were

considered by explaining to the participants the purpose of the research thoroughly, and the Respondents were assured that the obtained data would be used only for research purposes and that they could withdraw from participation at any moment they wished. Overall, the study employed ten open-ended questions related to the research questions this work pursued to answer. The questions asked were about why teachers employ humour during their classes, the effects of humour on students, and if teachers prepare the humorous instances beforehand; from which level of language proficiency, according to Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), one can start employing humour during the class, what type of humour teachers often employ and if it is possible to learn to use humour during the class.

RESULTS

This section concentrates on the description and the discussion of the obtained results. The first question intended to find out why the teachers use humour during the classes. Respondent 1 replied that she uses humour during the class in order to make the lesson's atmosphere relaxed and friendly, and sometimes she corrects the mistakes of students, as sometimes language play (a genre of humour) serves as a more positive approach to mistakes correction:

"...because this mistake is not perceived as a mistake, but student may react: "Oh well, well really, that's funny, what did I say now? Did I say something wrong?" But not like, "Oh God, I made a mistake again". Then really because of that the mistake somehow perceived quite normally".

Respondent 2 also expressed a similar opinion, stating that he uses jokes in the lesson to make the classroom environment friendlier and that the humour he initiates is not usually planned.

Regarding whether humour is related to the learning outcomes of the class, Respondent 1 stated that she never plans to use humour related to the learning outcomes. If she initiates humour, it is rather spontaneously based on a suitable situation. However, she continued that humour can sometimes be planned in the framework of a particular unit, which is related to the learning outcomes. To the question of at what part of the lesson the teacher employs humorous discourse, both teachers replied that usually humour comes naturally bound to a specific situation, and none of them prepares humorous instances beforehand to employ it in a certain period of a lesson. However, Respondent 1 noted that sometimes, in German textbooks, different humour instances may emerge (e.g. cartoons, humorous texts, jokes), and they also fit at a particular time during the class (can be the beginning or the middle of the class). To the question related to what effects the teacher-initiated humour has on students, Respondent 1 replied that it mostly has a positive effect on the atmosphere of the class and makes it less stressful, and she asserted that when students do not feel stressed, they learn better, as humour stimulates the learning process and motivates them:

"Humour has a very good effect on the students, because the situation is not as serious as it always is in class, when humour is used. That relaxes the atmosphere, and, when you don't have any stress that [humour] makes everything really stress-

free. And then, when you don't have stress, then maybe you learn a little bit better”.

Respondent 2 stated that using humour creates an amusing environment in which students can learn the language with fun:

I actually always use humour, as humour creates a kind of fun environment for them [students] to learn.

When teachers were asked what the possible limitations of using humour can be, Respondent 1 answered that it is essential that teachers take into account the language proficiency of students and their background knowledge of the target language culture because:

“If you make a joke and the learners don't understand that [...] Linguistically don't understand or also culturally do not understand, then it [the intended effect from joke] goes away and then [...], they [students] are a bit confused”.

Moreover, Respondent 1 highlighted that the used humour should be positive and not make the students the object of derisive jokes.

Respondent 2 replied that a possible limitation can be not using humour related to some “taboo” topics (such as religion, politics, age, ethnicity, etc.) and if there are no resonating students in the class (for humorous instances to be successful, there should be students who accept humour as a part of the lesson):

“Sometimes if the students do not accept it [humour] properly because some students associate humour with some kind of unserious maybe surface type of teaching, they sometimes think that it's not the teaching at all”.

When asked from which language proficiency level of students, according to CEFR, can teacher start using humour, Respondent 1 shared the opinion that some of the humour instances (jokes) can be already understood in A1 and A2 levels when the scaffolding is done or when it is formulated in a linguistically simple way. At the same time, the teacher warned that the frequency of using humour at the beginner level should be high as:

“the learners - they cannot yet understand the foreign language so well. And then they get confused and they may often ask “what do you mean by that?””

To the same question, Respondent 2 replied that using humour starting from the beginner level is possible when it is simple and if the teacher uses scaffolding:

“I sometimes - I can use Uzbek language to explain to students some subtleties which they do not understand or make the jokes simpler. Besides I can write on board some words which students may feel difficult to understand”.

When asked about culture-specific humour, namely, if teachers employ humour from the target language culture, both respondents replied that it is sometimes difficult for students to understand. It can be related to the fact that most students lack background cultural knowledge of the target language nation and may not know modern trends in the target language’s society. Respondent 1 stated that she sometimes uses humorous songs from the target language culture:

“A few songs I have already used and it was also funny. People [students] can't understand it right away but when you continue to work with the lyrics of the song, yes, then they see “ahh, that's something” (Respondent 1).

Respondent 2 added that sometimes, in groups with higher language proficiency, he can use some video clips related to or stemming from the target language culture. However, before playing the video clips, the teacher explains some culture-specific notions and gives some facts related to the video. He also finds it helpful to work with video transcripts in this case.

When asked what genres of humour the teachers employ mostly during the class, both teachers answered that the humorous instances they create are related to a particular situation that occurs during the class or jokes that are associated with certain events that occurred in the class and the unit topics which are being discussed. Furthermore, sometimes textbooks also offer funny cartoons, joke texts (and other hilarious texts).

Question 9 related whether implementing humour in foreign language classes can be trained. Respondent 1 replied that there can be trainings for that but emphasized that humour is a natural trait of a human being, and therefore, she employs humour when it is suitable during the class. Respondent 2 also supported the opinion of Respondent 1 and stated that some people have a natural talent for that. The last question was related to the possible suggestions the Respondents could give to the teachers who would like to employ humour in their classes. Respondent 1 replied that if teachers want to employ humour but feel insecure about their humour skills, teachers can use textbooks containing tasks and exercises based on humour materials. Teachers can choose the material that suits the language proficiency level of students. Respondent 2 suggested that when employing humour during the class, the teacher can use scaffolding by providing students with some vocabulary and text scripts (if the teacher uses audio-visual materials).

DISCUSSION

This section will discuss the obtained results by comparing the opinions of the interviewed teachers with the results of other scientific studies and present relevant interpretations. The teachers' replies regarding humour's ability to create an "easy" atmosphere, which boosts the learning process, goes together well with the findings of Chiasson, Dieter and Muñoz-Basols. Humour, as the mentioned researchers discovered, is an effective tool to motivate students during class by creating a less stressful condition for learning. As Krashen asserted, helping students overcome the "affective filter" by creating low anxiety situations for the learners [Krashen, 2009; 22]. The findings show that teachers do not employ a certain system to use humour during the class, and the humour that they initiate is spontaneous. This can be explained by the lack of guidelines that would assist the teachers and a lack of human materials integrated into the curriculum [Heros, 2018; 202]. However, Schmitz claimed that using humour in the classroom should follow a plan. Besides, according to Bell [Bell, 2011; 150], humour is an integral part of culture and elements of the target language culture's humour need to be integrated into the teaching curriculum of foreign languages because the integration of humour will enable students to develop their intercultural skills of understanding of cultural patterns of the target language

culture and creates conditions for students to enhance their pragmatic competence by learning to correctly identify humour, comprehending it, appropriately responding to it and possibly producing humorous instances themselves. One of the Respondents mentioned the correction of mistakes by the use of humour, which is parallel to the conclusions of Kleppin [Kleppin, 1998; 270] regarding the humorous approach to working with students' mistakes. Kleppin suggested that using humour to correct mistakes works well for retention, and interviewee 1 also noted that students admit their mistakes, which is "hinted" at with positive humour without discouraging their spirits. Regarding the possible limitations of using humour in the class, Respondent 1 noted that students should be able to understand the humorous piece (both linguistically and culturally). They should not be made the objects of a derisive joke, and Respondent 2 pinpointed that teachers must avoid taboo topics. According to Hohenhaus [Hohenhaus, 2000; 445] derogatory type of humour diminishes the useful effect of humour implementation in the class; Blackmore's [Blackmore, 2013; 23] findings also showed that some genres of humour can bring a negative effect, such as tough sarcasm, which can be personally directed, also, jokes related to ethnicity, religion, death should be in taboo topics list, as discussing the mentioned topics in a humorous discourse may harm the relationship of the teacher and students who may, essentially, feel discouraged. Moreover, as it was emphasized, students need specific knowledge for some jokes. Regarding the linguistic understanding of humour, which was mentioned by Respondent 1, this may occur in the context of foreign language teaching, which is in line with the claim of Schmitz [Schmitz, 2002; 102], who expressed the opinion that if students do not understand humour, then the effect which was expected from it and pedagogical aim can be wasted. Therefore, it was suggested that for students to understand the jokes, the teacher can provide the necessary vocabulary beforehand (pre-teaching), which can be an effective tool. Regarding the reply of Respondent 2 that some students consider the usage of humour as not serious from the side of the pedagogue, this contradicts the opinion of Khodrami and Nia [Khodrami & Nia, 2014; 980] as they stated the classes in which students are under inappropriate discipline, may sometimes intimidate students by restricting them to express their opinions freely. Therefore, classes with high spirits could be of more use. As mentioned by Dickhäuser [Dickhäuser, 2002; 121], sometimes humour does not go together well with the scenario of the class, which can be the time of students' preparation for the exams or exam time itself. However, sometimes, even during exams, humour is employed; a piece of laughter connected with the context tends to relieve the pressure, but overuse of humour is not suggested. Respondent 1 opted for using humour starting from the beginner's level, which Schmitz also proposes. As Schmitz mentioned, at the beginners level, teachers can use more of a universal type of humour that can be understood in all cultural contexts based on the level; Schmitz suggested using gradation, namely with intermediate-level students, teachers can employ culture-specific humour and in advanced level all types of humour (including linguistic joke) can be employed. Regarding culture-specific humour, the interviewees expressed that students may sometimes find it difficult, but when they use it, they use scaffolding

by explaining the necessary information beforehand. Schmitz also proposed this strategy, which supported some culture-specific knowledge pre-teaching, making it easier for students to understand the used piece of humour [Schmitz; 2002, 7]. Related to the matter of the skill of using humour in the pedagogical practice can be taught, interviewee 1 expressed that there may be possible courses or trainings. However, the fact that humour is a natural human trait was expressed by both Respondents, meaning that those with this talent are more successful in humour integration in the classes. As Heros mentioned, according to the survey she conducted in the framework of her research, a lot of teachers would like to incorporate humour in the class, but they do not know how to do that. Currently, the interest in integration of humour into foreign languages is rising. A solid number of investigations regarding the theory of the usage of humour in teaching foreign languages is available. Some of the research related to incorporating humour into teaching practice is compiled in books. In such research, researchers also provide practical tips to teachers who would like to employ humour in their classes in a deliberate manner. Heros, in her research, for example, suggested some strategies to employ humour in foreign language classrooms, such as analyzing video clips that use humour, requesting students to gather humorous texts, conversations from L2 magazines and TV programs, and teachers as the source of the humorous discourse when teaching a foreign language (e.g. when working with vocabulary), employing language play, students produce humorous instances themselves based on the input (e.g. comic strips), asking students to tell stories regarding funny situations when learning foreign language [Heros; 2018].

Practical tips to incorporate humour in teaching foreign languages: Using humour to enhance speaking skills of students

Currently, in pedagogy there is no exact system to implement humour in teaching in English to enhance students' speaking abilities. One of the reasons for that could be that this research area is relatively young, although, there needs to be more investigation to be done in this sphere. Students' willingness to speak can depend on different factors: possessing not sufficient linguistic tools, facing 'affective filter' [Krashen, 2009; 22] and being not able to overstep the language barrier, curriculum design (as, besides teaching speaking, teachers should also enhance students other skills) [Khan & Ali, 2010; 3577] being shy and not feeling 'safe' to speak (as they may be afraid of teacher's negative comments or students ridicule because of the mistakes they can make when speaking), teacher-students relationship, the degree of strictness of the discipline [Khodrami & Nia's, 2014; 980] during the class. If the teacher sets a serious tone in the class, students' willingness to speak may be low. In contrast as it was mentioned in the literature review and by the respondents of the conducted interview high-spirited classes can positively affect student's engagement in the class and their openness to participate classroom discussions and in accomplishing the tasks.

Some of the possible tasks to engage students into speaking could be gamification of the process by using humour techniques. One of such activities can be employing telephone messenger (or sometimes is also called Chinese whisperer) game. It can be adapted to enhance students speaking skills:

The instruction:

Teachers selects volunteer students (4 or 5) and puts them in one line. Then teacher whispers a sentence of a vocabulary (which is the question of the current topic) and ask the student to pass the message to the next student. The next students should continue the procedure.

The didactic value of this task is practice of the lesson's material in a more interactive manner. Students usually take some humorous and distorted messages to one another. This brings them joy and the same time they practice their speaking skills.

Another type of activity which may encourage students to speak is "negotiation of meaning" type of tasks. For this teacher can provide students with different types of humorous texts, including jokes, and ask students to discuss the meanings of the underlined words in pairs:

"A man spoke frantically into the phone: "My wife is pregnant and her contractions are only two minutes apart!"

"Is this her first child?" the emergency operator asked.

"Are you serious!" the man shouted? "This is her husband!"

After students discuss the texts in groups, teachers may facilitate the discussion by asking comprehension questions (to make sure that the students have understood the jokes and underlined words). As a continuation of a speaking task the teacher can ask the volunteers to retell the jokes in front of the whole group.

Role plays can also be a useful task to enhance students speaking skills. The teacher needs to give students some scenarios (another option can be providing students with funny dialogues) which encourages them to use humour. One of the examples can be asking a pair of students to role-play the following scenario:

"You are working in an office and must spend a lot of time at your desk. A coworker whose desk is right next to yours keeps a lot of smelly food on his desk and constantly eats there? Can you jokingly say something to show him that you do not like this, but still want to keep a pleasant tone and a good relationship?" [Petkova, 2017; 225]

This activity helps students to practise their speaking skills and at the same time production of humorous instances in a foreign language. By the end of the task the teacher can provide students with feedback.

Using cartoons and joke texts to teach and practice grammar skills

Cartoons are authentic target language materials which can successfully be incorporated into lessons. One of the language aspects which can be trained by using humorous cartoons could be grammar. In order to understand a cartoon a student needs some background cultural baggage as cartoons mostly represent cultural trends which are popular at a certain period. Below (See Figure 1) is the example on a using humorous cartoon to exemplify a rule of using present simple in the meaning of future.

Figure 1.

Cartoon used as a material to teach future forms (Present simple for schedules)



This cartoon [Popovic, 2012] could be used as an illustration to the grammar rule regarding using present tense to give the meaning of future when it is used for schedules. Another example to teach future forms is given in figure 2 [Popovic, 2012].

Figure 2.

Cartoon used as a material to teach future forms (Will for immediate decisions)



After presenting the grammar rules using cartoons as illustrations, teachers can use cartoons also for practising purposes. One can use empty word clouds on the cartoons and ask students to fill them in using the knowledge regarding the grammar rule they learnt and in order to make the activity more amusing one may ask students to make humorous points. See the example below in figure 3 [Popovic, 2012].

Advantage of this type of activity can also be drawn for the enhancement of the pragmatic competence of students. As students need to follow the right pattern of the dialogue and write the piece which is suitable and at the same time could be accepted as funny. Yet, it may seem to be difficult, therefore the right cartoons should be selected based on the level of language proficiency of students. In order to scaffold the exercise, the teacher can give the versions of replicas which students could choose to fill in the cloud. Students need to choose the replica which is funny and seems to them to be humorous.

Figure 3.

Cartoon used as a material to teach future forms (Using 'will' to mean promise)



Another option of reinforcing grammar knowledge could be using joke texts. Generally, texts are flexible materials and the teacher can use them to create multiple types of activities. For practising grammar skills gap filling exercise can be an option for a drilling type of activity:

A simple exercise to practise the knowledge of question formation and negation in Present Simple:

“Instruction: use do, does, don’t or doesn’t to complete the jokes”

- Dad,a dishwasher wash dishes?

- Yes, Billy. That’s right

- And a bus driver drive buses?

- Yes.

- Anda weightlifter lifts weights?

- Yes, why all these questions?

- Well,a shoplifter lift shops? [Woolard, 1999; 2]

Using audio-visual materials to develop students’ listening skills

One of the ways to stimulate students’ interest and also develop their listening and at the same observe pragmatic skills in action can be using humorous videos. The choice of audio-visual material for teaching works well as for multiple reasons: it helps to drag students’ attention; the interest which audio-visual materials tunes students to stay engaged and involved in completing the task and it somehow makes it easier to explain complex ideas (by setting more accessible examples) and the it was motivates students being at the same time vicarious, explicative, aesthetic and recreational [Fernandez & Fontecha, 2008; 41]. Moreover, canned laughter in the videos help the audience to better orient in the moment as it gives them a hint that in a concrete moment in which canned laughter is used that moment is when the protagonists in the video in the video are engaging in a humorous interaction or created a humorous instance.

Fernandez and Fontecha used the sitcom ‘Friends’ to teach students some of the

pragmatic competence by incorporating Grice's Conversational model. Besides, there are other sitcoms which can be used for this purpose. One of them could be the Big Bang theory. This is a sitcom about the group of scientists and their daily lives. It can be noted that there are video clips on the YouTube in which the implicatures are well exemplified. In order to make it easier for the students, the complex words from the videos can be pre-taught. Moreover, after watching the video sequence students can be given the text of the sequence in order to do various activities such as comprehension check and gap filling exercises.

As for comprehension check exercises, after watching a video sequence or listening to an audio (e.g. podcast), students can be presented some questions which can be about understanding of the gist of the sequence and humour instances. Below is the example for comprehension check questions for a listening activity of a humorous sketch "Fire practice" [Shcherbakov, 2021]:

Overall understanding questions:

1. Why did Foggins come to the fire station?
2. What object did the fire chief call as the most significant equipment in the fireman's work?
3. Why did the fire chief organize the telephone practice?

Understanding of humour questions:

1. Why did Foggins panic when the chief told that frequently fires start in people's houses?
2. What was the mistake made by Boggins during the telephone call practice?
3. Why did the fireman chief panic at the end of the sketch?

Gap filling exercises can be a necessary practice to check detailed listening skills. Below is the example for a gap filling exercise for a listening activity based on a humorous audio – "A Twenty Minute Speech" [Shcherbakov, 2021]:

Instruction:

Listen to the recording and fill in the blanks with articles - a(n), the; prepositions - on, off, of, up, about, after, at, by, for, out, in; conjunctions - so, and, but; grammatical forms such as is, had, was; pronouns - I, she, her, this, that, what, them, you, you, him, he, when, him, his and homophones - to, too, two; our, hour. There can be more than one word in the omissions.

_____ important businessman _____ asked _____ give _____ twenty-minute speech _____ another city. _____ busy _____ write _____ himself, _____ asked _____ secretary _____ put one together _____ large book _____ speeches which _____ desk.

_____ typed _____, _____ picked _____ just _____ time _____ rush _____ plane. _____ gave _____ speech, _____ ran _____, _____ audience _____ getting very restless _____ bored _____ end _____. _____ businessman got back _____ office, _____ complained _____ secretary _____. "_____ told _____ supposed _____ be _____ twenty-minute speech!" _____ said _____ bitterly. "_____ gave _____," _____ answered, "_____ original _____ copies. _____ original _____ read _____ meeting, _____ copies _____"

files, _____ checked _____”.

Full text:

An important businessman was asked to give a twenty-minute speech in another city. He was too busy to write it himself, so he asked his secretary to put one together for him out of a large book of speeches which she had on her desk. She typed one out for him, and he picked it up just in time to rush off to his plane. But when he gave his speech, it ran on for an hour, and the audience was getting very restless and bored by the end of it. When the businessman got back to his office, he complained to his secretary about this, I told you it was supposed to be a twenty-minute speech!” he said to her bitterly. “That’s what I gave you,” she answered, “the original and two copies. The original for you to read at the meeting, and two copies for the files, after you have checked them” [Shcherbakov, 2021].

Using puns to enhance students’ vocabulary skills

Vocabulary is one of the most significant elements in teaching foreign languages. As humans can only communicate by using the words and importantly the meaning of the words must comply the context. One word can have multiple meanings depending on the context it is used. A student has to develop the necessary pragmatic skills in order to understand the right meaning of the word by interpreting it from the given context. Therefore, learning vocabulary and knowing its correct usage is very important in L2 classes. Himood and Ghaneer in their research on using humour techniques for teaching EFL vocabulary came to conclusion that using humour can significantly contribute to the acquiring of the new vocabulary. Because humour techniques were used in the classes it raised students’ “attention, interaction, ability to acquire, learning, retention and recalling of the target vocabulary” [Himood & Ghaneer, 2019; 2078]. One of the techniques to expand students’ vocabulary can be using puns. Puns can also be used to help students better understand the implied meaning. Pun is a type of the humour which is based on the wordplay. Puns are used in almost every culture in the world. Puns are very important to help students to enhance their understandings of the multiple meanings of the words. One of the activities which could be employed to help students to increase their vocabulary can be using humorous texts which could be a poem, a short story or a sketch. Minschew and Hopper in their article regarding humour techniques bring an example of a humorous text “My resume” (A perfect job) in which students have to find out the right meaning of the implications:

“My first job was working in an *orange juice factory*, but I got *canned*, couldn't *concentrate*. Then I worked in the woods as a *lumberjack*, but I just couldn't *hack it*, so they gave me the ax. After that I tried to be a *tailor*, but I just wasn't *suited* for it, mainly because it was a so-so job. Next I tried working in a *muffler factory* but that was too *exhausting* Then I tried to be a *chef*, figured it would add a little *spice* to my life, but I just didn't have the *thyme*. I attempted to be a *deli worker*, but any way I *sliced it*, I couldn't *cut the mustard*. My best job was being a *musician* but eventually I found I wasn't *noteworthy*. I studied a long time to become a *doctor*, but I didn't have any *patience*. Next was a job in a *shoe factory*; I tried but I just didn't *fit in*. I

became a professional *fisherman*, but discovered that I couldn't live on my *net income*. I managed to get a good job working for a *pool maintenance company*, but the work was just too *draining*. So then I got a job in a *workout center*, but they said I wasn't *fit* for the job. After many years of trying to find steady work I finally got a job as a *historian* until I realized there was no *future* in it. I could have been a *Violinist*, but I'm too *high-strung*, A *Bowler*, but it's not up my *alley*, A *Magician*, but the urge *vanished*, A *Librarian*, but I *shelved* the idea, A *Plumber*, but it was only a *pipe-dream*. My last job was working at *Starbucks*, but I had to quit because it was always the same old *grind*. So I *retired*, and I found I am perfect for the *job*"

As Minchew and Hopper pointed out that one use of the above-mentioned text could be used in a reading out loud and defining the meanings of the words task. The teacher reads the first two lines and makes emphasis on the words which are used intentionally as a word play. In the first two lines, for example, the humour is ignited by the authors words' choice of "canned", "concentrate" and "working in an orange juice factory" [Minchew & Hopper, 2008; 233]. He/she explains the punchline of the intended humour and goes on reading the text again stressing the words which are aimed to create humorous effect and student's role would be to guess the meaning the provided pun instances. It should be noted that while reading sometimes teacher will need to explain some cultural information and by need some words. Another option for an activity for this text could be asking students to underline the puns and try to explain the meaning to their partners. By doing this exercise, students will develop their pragmatic competence of understanding the implicature and at the same time increase their vocabulary. Students with intermediate level should be comfortable to work with this task.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, one may state that humour if implemented based on a specific system and if used in an appropriate measure can result in positive results. It creates a light atmosphere which helps students to overcome their affective filter and increase their willingness to participate in the class more actively which, in its turn, stimulates the learning progress of the students. Implementation of humour can be planned and it can serve to cover learning outcomes in the class. Different types of activities can be employed, among them are, asking students: to negotiate meaning, analyze humorous texts, retell a joke, participate in a role play activity, do exercises using cartoons (or comic strips), listen to audios or watch humoristic shows. However, it can be noted that activities are not limited with those which this research mentioned. Teachers can create more activities, tasks and exercises depending on the learning outcomes of a certain class and L2 level of proficiency of students. It can be noted that by necessity teachers can scaffold the presented materials, for example, some of culture specific information and complex vocabulary can be explained beforehand. It is important to follow some limitations of employing humour in the class. Students value light (not "biting") type of humour and dislike when it is person-oriented derisive jokes. It is also suggested not to involve "taboo" topics in the humorous discourse in the

classroom. Hence, taking humour to a foreign language class can be amusing and at the same time useful if teachers develop their competence of humour application in the class by following the guidelines of researchers.

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