

РОЗДІЛ 2. ТЕОРІЯ ТА МЕТОДИКА НАВЧАННЯ (З ГАЛУЗЕЙ ЗНАНЬ)

INVESTIGATING HUMOROLOGY IN THE PROCESS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

ДОСЛІДЖЕННЯ ГУМОРОЛОГІЇ У ПРОЦЕСІ НАВЧАННЯ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

The article deals with investigating certain aspects of humorology (i.e. the study or science of humor) related to the educational process in the context of English language teaching and learning. It is aimed at proving that humor being deeply embedded into language may be a perfect option from a methodological point of view and serve as a powerful and effective tool in second language acquisition. Functional peculiarities of humor are of interdisciplinary character involving numerous disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, mathematics, medicine etc.

The research on humor and investigation of its linguistic mechanism have been in the focus of attention of many scholars revealing language-humor correlation as well as its beneficial effect on the cognitive process in terms of building teacher-students' rapport, stress release and appropriate feedback. Learners' friendly atmosphere creates team spirit and leads to motivation improvement resulting in learned material increasing retention.

Exceptional nature of humor is related to the sphere of humorology or gelotology (i.e. the study of laughter and its effects on the body, from a psychological and physiological perspective), the latter being used on therapeutic grounds in alternative medicine. Language-humor correlation reflected in pedagogical use of humor as well as the corresponding humor techniques applied have proved to be quite effective and beneficial in academic settings.

Linguistic mechanisms of humor (namely, its semantic, phonological, graphical, lexical, syntactic and pragmatic aspects) can be successfully implemented into training and mastering four integrated basic language skills and highly recommended as a positive and refreshing factor making it possible to avoid routine.

According to humorology findings, humor can be regarded as a powerful tool enhancing cognitive processes. Thus, foreign languages can be taught and learned through humor by applying proper techniques.

Nevertheless, the issue under consideration turns out to be so broad that it clearly deserves further investigation.

Key words: *humorology, language-humor correlation, pedagogical use of humor, humor techniques, humor in academic settings.*

Стаття присвячена дослідженню окремих аспектів гуморології (тобто вивчення

чи науки про гумор), пов'язаних з навчальним процесом у контексті викладання та вивчення англійської мови. Гумор, глибоко закладений у мову, може бути ідеальним варіантом з методологічної точки зору і служити потужним та ефективним інструментом в оволодінні другою мовою. Функціональні особливості гумору мають міждисциплінарний характер і охоплюють численні дисципліни, такі як лінгвістика, психологія, соціологія, математика, медицина тощо.

Дослідження гумору та його лінгвістичного механізму були в центрі уваги багатьох науковців, які виявили його сприятливий вплив на когнітивний процес у плані побудови взаєморозуміння між викладачем і студентами, зняття стресу та встановлення належного зворотного зв'язку. Дружня атмосфера створює командний дух і сприяє покращенню мотивації, що призводить до підвищення рівня засвоєння вивченого матеріалу.

Виняткова природа гумору пов'язана зі сферою гуморології чи гелотології (тобто вивчення сміху та його впливу на організм з психологічної та фізіологічної точки зору), причому остання використовується в терапевтичних цілях у нетрадиційній медицині. Кореляція 'мова-гумор', відображена в педагогічному використанні гумору, а також відповідні гумористичні прийоми, що застосовуються, виявилися досить ефективними та корисними в академічних умовах.

Мовний механізм гумору (а саме його семантичний, фонологічний, графічний, лексичний, синтаксичний та прагматичний аспекти) може бути успішно реалізований у навчанні та оволодінні чотирма інтегрованими базовими мовними навичками та настійно рекомендований як позитивний та освіжаючий фактор, що дозволяє уникнути рутини.

Згідно з результатами інтегрованої гуморології, гумор можна розглядати як потужний інструмент, що покращує когнітивні процеси. Таким чином, іноземні мови можна викладати та вивчати шляхом використання гумору із застосуванням відповідних методів.

Проте питання, яке розглядається у даній статті, виявляється настільки широким, що, безумовно, заслуговує додаткового дослідження.

Ключові слова: *гуморологія, кореляція 'мова-гумор', педагогічне використання гумору, прийоми гумору, гумор в академічних умовах.*

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The problem being regarded. Interest in the linguistics of humor is very popular today and dates as far as classical times. However, the study of humor is a very complicated task, which involves different disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, physiology, anthropology, ethnology, sociology etc.

The specific function of humor that makes people laugh, involves many scholars who investigate the linguistic mechanism that makes humor work. In the article we are going to prove by means of analysis, clarification and exemplification that humor and jokes are deeply embedded in language and this

fact may be beneficially used in English language teaching.

Research and publications review: The research on humor goes back to ancient scholars Plato and Aristotle and is related to practically all fields of knowledge, including mathematics and medicine. One of the earliest linguistic discussions of humor is found in Cicero, who distinguishes between humor “de re” and “de dicto.” The difference is universal and resembles many modern-day differentiations between “referential” and “verbal” humor. There exist various schools for the study of humor, and many researches are connected with humorology. In the 1960-s the interest to humor was considered in terms of semantics, by such scholars as A. Greimas, a French structural linguist, V. Raskin, who agreed that jokes consisted of three functions: the first one setting up the story, the second one introducing an incongruity, and the third one is the idea that jokes and humor are a violation of the cooperative principles. Raskin integrated these postulates within the linguistics of humor [3, 12]. In such a way linguistics has gained a privileged role in humorology (or gelotology).

Many studies have been devoted to the relationship between humor and learning. The scholars agree that the effective use of humor can improve learning but they are still conservative in many issues. One of the points is how to use instructional humor effectively. J. Bryant and D. Zillmann, for example, say that using instructional humor “depends on employing the right type of humor, under the proper conditions, at the right time, and with proper motivated and receptive students.” [1, p. 74]. Quite a number of researchers investigate the idea of how humor can “catch and hold students’ attention, increase retention of learned material, relieve stress, build rapport between teacher and students, build team spirit among classmates, smooth potentially rough interactions, promote risk taking, and get shy and slow students involved in activities” [7, p. 465]. Recent studies indicate that students prefer professors who use humor in their instruction and interaction with students to those who do not. The pedagogical use of humor has psychological and physiological impact on learners. The psychological effects of humor and laughter, on one hand, “have been shown to lessen anxiety, decrease stress, enhance self-esteem and self-motivation,” while the physiological impact of humor and laughter, on the other hand, “can aid learning through improved respiration, lower pulse and blood pressure, exercise of the chest muscles, greater oxygenation of blood, and the release of endorphins into the bloodstream” [2, p. 177].

Issues requiring further consideration: In spite of the fact that there are many investigations in the field of humorology still more consideration should be given to the definition of humor. Humor has a high profile in society, it refers to anything people say

or do. Humor is defined by Mindess as “a frame of mind, a manner of perceiving and experiencing life.” [6, p. 21]. V. Ruskin describes it in the following words: “Somebody hears or sees something and laughs. In most cases, this means that the person finds the audial or visual stimulus funny” [12, p. 1]. Ross defines humor as “something that makes a person laugh or smile.” [14, p. 1]. She further emphasizes the strong social aspect of the way people respond to humor. More attention should be paid to expressions of humor that might originate within a certain area and can be considered as culture specific for a certain length of time. This explains “why the humour of the last decade might no longer be appreciated today and why the humour of a civilization different from ours as a rule does not seem ‘humorous’” [13, p. 23].

Many experts, educators and researchers seem to believe in the infinite possibilities of human potential. Traditional instruction, based on automated memorization learning, creates a sense of boredom, and hinders development of learning skills. The researchers should apply more efforts for searching effective mechanisms to help the students improve their ability to get information in a positive way and to develop the capacity and skills that qualify him/her for success in all fields of scientific and practical learning.

The aim of the article: the objective of this paper is to prove that humor and jokes are deeply embedded in language and this fact may be beneficially used in second language acquisition.

The main body. In order to understand how the linguistic mechanisms, (namely, semantic, phonological, graphical, lexical, syntactic and pragmatic spheres) are applied for the presentation of the practical usage of humor in a classroom we should deal with four basic language skills. Chris Kyriacou in his *Essential teaching skills* says: “Judicious use of humor and conveying that you have a sense of humor can play a useful part in helping to establish good rapport and a positive classroom climate” [4, p. 71]. A positive classroom climate can provide a good environment to learn but apart from it there are many other reasons for using jokes, funny games or humor in general during a lesson. For instance, humor is a good vehicle for building bridges between cultures, practicing language items in genuine context, bringing students closer together, releasing tension, developing creative thinking and introducing a refreshing change from routine [5, p. 05].

Speaking is a productive skill in oral mode. A student in order to learn how to speak in a foreign language must master many micro-skills such as pronouncing the distinctive sounds clearly, using stress, rhythmic and intonation patterns clearly, using the correct forms of words and sentences regarding tense forms, cases and gender.

Humor is deeply embedded in the language and a teacher may use the language to make humor more

accessible for students and, vice versa, he or she can use humor to make the language easier to learn [5]. Let us consider an example of a humorous exercise which may be helpful in teaching speaking: A student hears a joke:

Patient: "Doctor! Everybody keeps ignoring me."

Doctor: "Next please".

In this task a student has to interpret the heard joke and to state his/her opinion about it. While doing it he or she must be using grammatically correct language, right pronunciation and proper vocabulary. This kind of information involves all essential speaking skills whilst it is not boring for a student.

Pronunciation, which is one of the most essential micro-skills in speaking, can be practiced in various ways. For instance, tongue twisters may be a funny method to learn how to pronounce English vowels and consonants and their combinations. According to a definition "a tongue twister is an alliterative group of words designed to twist the tongue and to help the students and children to practice different sounds. Especially with languages like English and French, tongue twisters assist the students in their mastery of the pronunciation of difficult letter combinations" [15]. For example: "She sells sea-shells on the sea-shore."

This short tongue twister practiced aloud in a class can be a source of fun and at the same time it teaches the correct pronunciation of the word combination which may be found difficult for a foreigner.

Reading is another type of language skill which may be taught by humorous methods. In order to master a reading skill a reader has to decipher the script, recognize vocabulary via micro-skills such as associating the meaning of the words with written symbols, figuring out the meaning of the words, recognizing grammatical word classes and vocabulary, getting the most important information, adjusting reading strategies, such as skimming for main ideas or studying in-depth. All of the above-mentioned micro-skills can be achieved by doing different types of exercises, for instance, skimming exercises, comprehension questions, chart exercises and discussion questions [16]. All of those kinds of exercises can be humorous. This humorous text may be a good ground for a reading exercise. A teacher having explained vocabulary in the excerpt may ask his or her students to read it at home. After that he or she can ask them to discuss which parts of the text they found particularly funny. This kind of exercises develops a student's vocabulary and text comprehension.

In order to master a second language, one has to learn how to communicate with other people, he or she learns how to understand them, talk to them, write them and read what they have written. Writing is a productive skill in a written mode. Writing is often considered as the hardest language skill. Below is presented a diagram which shows what must be

taken into consideration during the production of a piece of writing [11, p.6]:

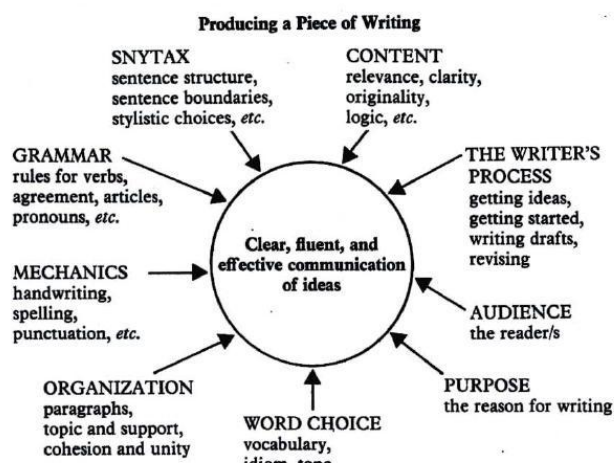


Fig. 1. Producing-a-piece-of-writing

The diagram clearly shows why writing can be problematic. The variety of different sub-skills which must be considered during the process of writing may be taught with a usage of humor which can be highly motivating for students. Let's consider an example of a writing task: A teacher writes three sentences on the board [5, p.177] which are the beginning of imaginary novels. The students have to explain which one is the best for reading the whole book. Humor and usage of jokes in such an activity mostly depends on the student's imagination and sense of humor. However, an exercise has the potential for developing writing skills in a humorous or a funny way. Moreover, this type of group exercise can be used to build up teamwork in a classroom.

According to David Nunan over 50 percent of the time the students spend in a foreign language is devoted to listening [9]. Humor can be a very helpful tool in teaching listening. Let us consider an example of a listening task: a teacher sits in front of the class and slowly reads the story to the learners. As the story goes on the teacher reads a little faster and cuts down the repetitions and explanations. The main aim of the activity is for the learners to follow and enjoy the story [8]. In this type of activity, a teacher can use various texts, it may be a humorous story, a long joke or anecdote. Humor in the exercise makes it more interesting and easier to remember.

Conclusion. The present article has attempted to consider language as a perfect base for humor and jokes. This fact gives the possibility of learning and teaching foreign languages and language features through humor. Given the highest priority to the practical side of humor it was proven that connection between humor and language may be used to learn and teach the language in a funny way. It has been described how humor can be used in academic settings to teach different language skills

and implement various humor techniques which may provoke learners to laugh. This function of humor can be regarded as a powerful tool which allows teachers to attract the attention of students. Nevertheless, the area under discussion turns out to be so broad that it clearly deserves further investigation.

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