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USING OF HUMOR IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract. The research work presents information about the definition, the structure, and using of humor.

The purpose of this work is to view anecdotes as a way for teaching students foreign language. For this it is necessary to analyze the anecdotes and find their advantages and disadvantages for teaching.

Key words: Communicative Competence, Communicative Language Teaching, humor, anecdote, moral activity, foreign language.

Teaching has been described as 'the most privatized of all public professions'. "Teaching is a moral activity, because it is founded upon a relationship which involves making decisions and taking actions that influence the social, emotional, intellectual and moral development of others in one's care.

Teaching has no use without communication. The ever-growing need for good communication skills in English has created a huge demand for English teaching around the world. And opportunities to learn English are provided in many different ways such as through formal instruction, travel, and study abroad, as well as through the media and internet.

Paul-Emile Chiasson from University of New Brunswick (Saint John, NB, Canada) states that for many the simple mention of humor condors up notions and protests of, "I'm not funny, I don't use humor." " I can't tell a joke; let alone use one in class." For others it is something to be feared, synonymous with classroom disorder and chaos. "I'm not about to start telling jokes, it will mean complete loss of control."

He continues saying that for some this resistance to using humor may simply be a lack of knowledge as to how one may use it effectively in class. "I enjoy humor,

but I don't know how to go about using it, so I don't. I don't want to look foolish." Others associate humor and its use with non-productivity. Students can't be learning if they are laughing. Yet humor is as authentic and as communicative a human reaction and social skill as is greeting and conversing with friends. [8]

Adam Chee W.S. from The International TEYL Journal says that humor is the characteristic that makes something laughable or amusing but humor in the English classroom has more than just the 'effect to induce laughter'; it brings together a chain-reaction by increasing the learner's motivation and self-confidence which creates a positive classroom atmosphere for the smooth acquisition of the language. Joseph Gatt explains it best:

"It is the 'breathing-out of the soul'. When during the lesson the pupils only listen to the teacher, who may be teaching in the same tone, then it is as if they only breathe in and have no opportunity to breathe out. They need humor, which the teacher can find in very different places. Therefore, the teacher must bring in humor during his lessons and this humor should result from the vitality and momentum of the lesson."

From Adam Chee W.S.'s point of view there is little or no doubt that humor is an invaluable teaching aid in the English classroom and that almost all English teachers use humor at one point of time or another in their lesson. As a matter of fact, students have listed humor as an essential quality of a good teacher and the best teachers are known for their ability to release tension in class with humor.

But what exactly is so special about the use of humor in the ESL classroom that helps get the language to flow so freely? It has been observed by Marklin Walker that "students enjoys humor in forms of funny anecdotes" and it is this very 'enjoyment' that makes humor a popular content for teaching English because positive humor helps,

1) Increases Motivation and Self-confidence

"Humor can help the shy and/or timid students to feel that they are a part of the class and to allow them to contribute or participate without feeling humiliated or

vulnerable" (Chiasson 2002). This can act as a means of enhancing student motivation to learn English as well as stimulating recall to the materials taught.

2) Creates a Positive Classroom Atmosphere

The nature of positive humor helps create a "positive atmosphere" which encourages the learners' desire to take part in class conversations by decreasing anxiety and stress.[9]

Anecdotes told in the classroom express our feelings, ideas, and experiences, just like the ones in daily conversations. However, since anecdotes are an excellent way to generate discussion to help students use their language skills, teachers usually have an additional intention in mind: a teaching objective to describe, explain, clarify, or emphasize an aspect of language or content. In practice, we can divide anecdotes used in class into three groups: (1) planned anecdotes, (2) semi-planned anecdotes, and (3) unplanned anecdotes.

1. Planned anecdotes are similar to those used in essays or in oral presentations. The teacher plans when to use the anecdote in the lesson, how to use it, and what kind of an exercise or questions will follow the anecdote. For example, if a language point will be presented, the teacher should decide beforehand which vocabulary items or grammatical structures to emphasize while sharing the anecdote. The anecdote may be written down so the teacher can either read it aloud or tell it using notes. The significance or evaluation of a planned anecdote is also considered while planning and is indicated either at the beginning or at the end of the story.

2. Semi-planned anecdotes differ from planned anecdotes because the complete details are not worked out in advance. In this case, the exact words or sentences are not written down, although teachers do have one or more anecdotes in mind and are prepared to tell them at the appropriate time in the lesson. One strategy is to keep a list of anecdotes and let the student reactions or the flow of the lesson determine which one to share. It is also good to base semi-planned anecdotes on the events experienced by the whole class or by one group of students. For example, an anecdote about a school night or an extracurricular activity that all students participated in reduces the need for explanation and saves time. Individuals can share

their personal anecdotes as well, and if the teacher knows a student's anecdote, she may plan to ask the student to share it at an appropriate time. As with planned anecdotes, it is important to consider the purpose and significance of semi-planned anecdotes beforehand.

3. Unplanned anecdotes come up naturally in the flow of classroom activities and are spontaneously activated by a response, a question, or a discussion that suddenly reminds the teacher of a story that is worthwhile to share with the students. In this sense, unplanned anecdotes are like those that appear in everyday conversation. These impromptu anecdotes may also be provided by students, as one of their experiences may be enlightening or thought-provoking for both their classmates and the teacher. If the point of the anecdote is not clear, either the teacher or the students can indicate the need for an evaluative element, just as a listener might do in a naturally occurring conversation.

In addition, the anecdote can be: Interesting, amusing, often quite tactless and biographical - in part like a close-up picture, fairly odd or halfway so, like a sketch also, deals with intimate matters, differs from articles.

Anecdotes are one of the most economical, easy, and enjoyable ways to introduce meaningful language and content, to practice language skills and subskills, and to help manage classes of various ages and proficiency levels. Experience shows that students are always highly interested in experiences of their teachers and peers. Although some teachers may not feel comfortable with the idea of sharing personal information with their students, others may love to share their experiences and ask similar questions about the students' experiences. How much the teacher shares and asks the students to share depends not on being friends with them but on creating a friendly atmosphere in the classroom. The ideas listed below summarize the benefits experienced while using anecdotes in the classes.

- Classroom management is an important aspect in teaching any course, regardless of subject matter. It is an issue for novice and experienced teachers, for teachers of young or adult learners, and for teachers of beginner to advanced levels.

- Genuine communication occurs in language classes when learners provide their own experiences and information. By listening to anecdotes from the teacher and classmates, asking questions for extra information or clarification, and contributing evaluative feedback as in real life dialogues, the language learners engage in authentic communication.

In conclusion, from my analysis and observation, I can tell that most of the anecdotes are good for using as a warm-up activity and for teaching reading and listening. But taking into consideration the content, the context, the mode of narration the following diagram shows the percentage of the profit that the anecdotes provide for teaching skills.

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