



UNIVERSIDAD DE JAÉN
Centro de Estudios de Postgrado

Master's Dissertation/
Trabajo Fin de Máster

HUMOUR AS A TEACHING TOOL IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

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Dpt.: English Philology

November, 2022

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Abstract

Learning foreign languages is a growing necessity in our present society due to the increase in international relations. We must prepare our students to live in a world which becomes increasingly international, multicultural and multilingual. Because of that, it is necessary to contribute to equip students with the skills, knowledge and tools to avail themselves of 21st century opportunities.

Our goal as teachers is to generate life-long learning, so real situations, and authentic use of English need to be provided to students. Humour is one of the best ways to achieve life-long learning and it is for that reason that this Master's Dissertation aims to analyze and evaluate the importance of using humour as a tool that teachers can avail of during the teaching-learning process; to contribute to a more efficient and effective teaching and learning practice; and to determine the positive effects of utilize humour in the English classroom. For the purpose of achieving these aims, a research study is carried out adopting a qualitative technique by means of observation and a survey data analysis with teacher and students as participants.

Humour can contribute to a large extent when dealing with helping students learn a second language within the classroom as it facilitates them not only to create effective or favorable conditions (Watson and Emerson,1988), but also to motivate (Cornett, 1986), increase their learning ability and make the lesson interesting. Humorous situations may also empower "students to express themselves without fear of ridicule and criticism; reduce anxiety and stress" (Cann, Holt & Calhoun, 1999); encourage them to take risks when using their second language and is considered as a source of enjoyment for both teachers and students.

1. INTRODUCTION

“Classrooms in which laughter is welcome help bring learning to life” (Dickinson, D., 1998)

Humour is considered as a trait that covers aspects of the human behavior such as communicative, social, cultural, and psychological (Yus, 2016) and it is considered as genuine and as human as the need to communicate (Chiasson, 2002). This implies that the mastery of humor develops many of the aspects that a student needs to acquire when learning a foreign language.

Humour could have a significant role in the educational sphere. It must be highlighted that teachers nowadays have on their side a large number of methods and approaches (Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), Communicative Approach, Task-based Teaching, etc.), which are products of years of research and investigation, in order to make this process as enjoyable as possible, using positive reinforcements to make students respond positively to the stimuli given at the same time they are acquiring a foreign language.

The link between humour and teaching has been examined in recent years by different pedagogical fields. Because of many studies such as the ones carried out by Schmitz (2002), Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz (2009), Rudasill, Reio, Stipanovic, & Taylor (2010) it has been proved that student's success, even at advanced levels, is influenced by their relationships with and interactions from their teachers and classmates. In the classroom, teachers run into a challenge when it is about involving students in the learning process. One way of achieving teacher-student or student-student connections is through humour. According to James (2004) “humour is a characteristic of the best and most effective teachers” (p.94). For this purpose, humour can be added to the classroom by means of using jokes, memes, riddles, language plays or any other way that make teachers and students feel comfortable, be considered proper for them, and be content based to catch their attention and do not take students' mind off the English lesson.

1.1. Objectives

Given the insignificance when dealing with the use of humour in the English classroom, the prime objective of this Master's Dissertation is to analyse and evaluate the importance and effectiveness of using humour as one of the tools that teachers can avail of during the teaching-learning process. It is important to contribute to a more efficient and effective teaching and

learning practice providing tools that both educational parties involved (students and teachers) could benefit from. Also, another objective of this report is to determine the positive effects of employing humour as tool by means of making students reflect on them when completing the survey. Humour can be considered a significant part of the teaching-learning process when trying to acquire first foreign language proficiency.

1.2. Research questions

To reach the objectives previously mentioned, this document aims to address the following queries:

- i. What are the advantages of applying humour in the English classroom?
- ii. How is humour capable of helping teachers fight against distractions and boredom when working with teenagers?
- iii. Which topics should be considered when including humour in the classroom?
- iv. Do both teachers and students appreciate the positive effect that humour has in the English classroom?
- v. Does humour improve the teacher-learner relationship?
- vi. Why do some teachers refuse to use humour in the English classroom?

1.3 Relevance of the study

Boredom, absence of motivation or disinterest on behalf of the student are some of the causes of school failure. The clarity and means by which knowledge is transmitted, the treatment of the student and the group management of a teacher make the results of their students better or worse. There is a direct link between humour and success in learning, especially when we talk about learning a foreign language as it facilitates the acquisition of the ability to communicate in a foreign language. Many researchers, such as Lynch (2002), Nesi (2012), Garner (2006), state that when we laugh, we feel relaxed due to the fact that stress and tension are reduced in the classroom environment which contributes to being receptive when students face new contents and also when teachers have to teach it. Humour helps teachers capture and maintain students' attention, which sometimes is an arduous work. Also, when we laugh, a positive relationship between teachers and students is created, facilitating learning and supporting a life-long learning and retention, developing their creativity and improving their efficiency on teaching in general. The inclusion of humour in our daily practice will undoubtedly engender a

revolution in foreign language teaching and learning facilitating students' foreign language acquisition.

1.4 Structural outline

To achieve the objectives proposed in the previous section, a roadmap will be provided together with a brief summary of each section's contents. We will start by providing a 'literature review'. Some considerations about humour and its role in foreign language teaching will be introduced. Some of them are the different definitions of humour throughout history; the classification of humour considering aspects such as types, ways of transmission, topics and preparation; the different theories of humour linked to foreign language teaching; and some of the most remarkable benefits of using humour,

The following section of the dissertation highlights the impacts of using humour in language classroom together with a brief explanation of each impact. Subsequently, the teacher's perspective regarding humour is considered as it is a key point in this study because it positively or negatively shapes student's performance in the classroom. After that, the importance of new technologies in language teaching, especially when creating materials and offering teachers a great variety of resources, is underpinned in order to achieve our objectives.

Section three is carried out by means of an information-gathering study which parts are: the research design, participants, tools used to collect the information (survey and observation), together with data-gathering and data analysis.

This research study is followed by the detailed exposition of the results obtained in Google Forms by teachers and students and the discussion with regards to the main aspects which are addressed. This section is divided according to the general perceptions of each group of participants and some brief comments regarding their similarities and differences.

Finally, we close this study by presenting the final conclusions reached, the pedagogical implications derived from the results obtained, the lines for future research and the bibliographical references consulted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Before proceeding to analyse the application of humour within the English classroom, it will be necessary to provide some background knowledge about the topic selected, delimiting the scope of it, providing basic information, and identifying what some researchers have found on the topic.

In the language learning field, the utilization of humour cannot only act as a vehicle of enjoyment but it is an instrument of improving linguistic skills offering students a helpful tool that builds and improves communicative skills on students, on the condition that it is utilized effectively by the teacher.

In this section, we are going to provide a classification which includes its types, ways of transmission, topics to talk about and preparation by the teacher; also, the theories of humour concerning English as a foreign language teaching and the benefits of humour.

2.1 Toward the definition of humour

Humour is a word of Latin origin which at first was referred to good health. In the 18th century, its meaning changed to what we understand by humour nowadays, that is, referring to normal human behaviour (Morrison, 2008, cited in Boyle, 2014) and afterwards, to the current faculty of a human quality (Billig, 2005).

If we analyse the word within the educational framework, humour is defined as “anything that the teacher and students find funny or amusing” (Wanzer, Frymier, Wojtaszczyk & Smith 2006:182). This definition suggest that humour could be anything that comes from either the students, the teacher or even another source that is enjoyed and keeps students involved and interested.

Another different definition proposed is considering humour as “the ability to understand, enjoy, and express what is amusing” (Leung 2004: 1). Here, the concept of understanding should be highlighted as if humour is not understood, the main aim is not met. Following with the concept of ability, it is worth mentioning that it is directly linked with the term competence, and it was Attardo (1994) who defines humour as a competence. Therefore, we could consider humour as a competence which comprises other competences such as linguistic competence,

semantic competence, sociocultural competence, all of them considered the base in foreign language learning and teaching, as it concerns with the knowledge of the culture, communication strategies, discourse rules, grammar, lexicon, social standards and world knowledge.

Linguistically, humour is an act conveyed by participants through verbal or? linguistic, non-verbal or non-linguistic, or a combination of both means. Non-verbal types of humour include gestures, making funny facial expressions whereas verbal humour includes telling puns, funny stories, content related jokes, riddles, funny examples, using irony, metaphors, etc. Many of them will be explained in depth in the next section. Additionally, impersonation, parody, monologues, satire, and skits may be included in the combination of verbal and nonverbal forms (Hativa, 2001).

2.2. Categorization of humour

Different scholars such as Wanzer et al., (2006), Kuipers, (2009); Deiter (2000), James (2004), Gadanidis et al., (2005) have categorized humour in several ways. Hereafter, we are going to mention some of them such as: types (the forms humour takes), way of transmitting it (visual, physical), topics to make fun about, and the different levels of preparation.

2.2.1 Types

The conception of “humour as being a human trait makes it an on-going area of research (Mkadem 2017: 26) over the years giving as a result various types of humour. Some of the most used types of humour are going to be explained in this study which can occur in a specific English as a foreign language classroom.

- **Joke**

A joke is a short form of humour that causes laughter or surprise. Shade (1996) defines the term joke as “something said or done that evokes laughter”. Deiter (2000) considers a joke a risky type of humour as there may be occasions where it does not come off as funny. Norrick (1993) describes jokes as “rapid exchange of humorous lines oriented towards a common, though aimed primarily at entertainment rather than topical talk” (p.29). Hence, we could say that jokes are short statements which require a complex linguistic, cultural and cognitive activity which

requires incongruity detection and incongruity resolution.

An example, one of the most popular jokes are known as the knock-knock jokes. In the classroom setting, jokes as the following one is likely to occur when students are distracted to catch their attention:

- Knock, knock.
- + Who's there?
- Witches
- + Witches who?
- Witches the best film you have ever watched?

- **Puns**

It is a form of word play in which the different meanings or sounds of words are used for an intended humour effect. Puns are defined by Goebel (1958) as: “a form of humour that plays off the ambiguity created when two potential meanings of the same word complete within a sentence” (Goebel 1958: 7). Accordingly, it is a clever use of words. This kind of humour could be kept using with advanced students in high levels of Compulsory Secondary Education such as 3º or 4º year, Baccalaureate or even at the University.

An example of puns could be “School starts this autumn – make sure you don’t fall behind”.

- **Teasing**

Teasing is considered as an intentional provocation in a playful way (Keltner, Capps, Kring, Young, & Heerey, 2001). We should be careful with the use of teasing as by means of teasing we can achieve positive as well as negative effects. That is, teasing can be intended to make someone laugh or it can be in some occasions offensive. Within the classroom, it is necessary to set in advance the limits and never get the negative effects. For doing so, knowing the whole classroom well, being always respectful and teasing in a friendly tone of voice is a must. Teasing could be considered as a way of informal teaching.

An example of a humorous teasing could be:

- Today we are going to work on environmental issues
- + Ok, teacher!
- What is the environment?
- + The topic we are going to work on today.

- **Riddles**

It is a question-answer word game which used to involve an enigma. It is similar to jokes, and it usually ends with a non-expected amusing answer. In foreign language classrooms, riddles are significantly interesting to be used when cultural matters are introduced so “students are encouraged to analyze and discuss ideas by using their higher order thinking skills to solve them” (Shade, 1996:3).

An example is:

Q: What State in the USA is round at the ends and High in the middle? A: Ohio

- **Irony**

Irony refers to a figure of speech in which implicit utterances that involve double meanings are used. In other words, irony occurs when we utter the exact opposite of what is intended. In agreement with Campbell statement: “irony tends to be unclear, bringing two contrasting meanings into play” (Campbell 2017: 14). Irony is considered a sophisticated form of humour in which a fine line between the literal meaning and the intended meaning exists , which can be in many cases contradictory. A similar definition is given by Blake (2007) who stated that the core of irony is “the incongruity between the innocence or ignorance of a participant and the knowledge of the author and audience” (Blake 2007: 19).

An example is: Maria has just got a 2 on his English test. Ann looks at Maria and says, “Good job! You must have studied hard”.

- **Language play**

It is referred to those linguistic forms manipulated by repeating or modifying consciously like syntactic patterns or lexemes (Belz, 2002). But in terms of its relationship with English as a foreign language lessons, language play is focusing on a particular language feature and picking out that feature humorously. It is beneficial to be used in English as a foreign language classrooms because they increase students' recognition and knowledge of particular structures. Whitebread (2012) provides several circumstances in which language plays can be used by the teacher in a classroom for example when a professor makes a mistake or when he/she garbled or slurs a sentence, misspeaks, etc.

- Yesterday, I made a kitchen sandwich at home
- + A kitchen sandwich?
- I just wanted to check if anyone was paying attention.

- **Memes:**

Memes are verbal expressions (oral or written) linked to images or video clips, around an idea, mood, behavior, style, etc. spread via the Internet. It was Dawkins who in 1976 coined the term meme as a noun that suggests the conception of a cultural transmission unit. They spread quickly, they can be changed, and they can be forgotten or grow to be widely accepted by the population (Konstantineas; Vlachos, 2012). We can consider memes as one of the most effective ways to teach culture through humour. Blackmore (2001) states that memes travel from one person to another, from one generation to another by means of gestures, writings or speeches containing ideas, symbols, practices, typical of a culture.

Nowadays, internet memes are rapidly diffused by anonymous people. When images or videos containing concepts or ideas are considered funny and easy to understand and they are sent and viewed by a great majority, they are considered of internet memes. Therefore, it can be said that memes are linked to digital culture.

An example of a meme that we can use in the English classroom is:



Figure 2: Meme example. Photo image taken from Wright English webpage: <https://www.wrightenglish.com/blog/sf-th>

2.2.2 *Ways of transmission*

After having revised the main kind of humour types that can be used in a English as a foreign language classroom, we will now proceed to explain the different forms we find them:

- Funny stories and anecdotes: a story or anecdote told in a humorous way to provoke laughter is one of the most used and easiest ways of introducing humour in the English foreign language classroom (McKeachie and Svinicki, 2006). They used to be powerful as students remember them easily, they are also catchy and increase their interest. Also, asking them to tell funny stories or anecdotes increase rehearsal.
- Humorous comments: let students take a brief break while they are learning something tough and follow with it in some minutes in a refreshed way.
- Visual humour: memes, cartoons, pictures, comic strips, etc. which contain humorous messages are a kind of humour that can be introduced any time. They can be prepared by teachers and do not need any situation to occur. When humour comes by means of visual information students' attention is enhanced.
- Physical humour: tone changed, exaggerated pronunciation, making gestures, mimicking, etc. trigger much laughter among students and improve the classroom environment (Bryant et al., 1980).

2.2.3 Topics

We can say that humour has a powerful effect on people. Research shows that in those situations in which people consider something funny; they tend to focus on it, and retain it longer (Carlson, K. A., 2011) but teachers should be careful with the topics we select to joke about (Deiter, 2000; Garner, 2006). Topics should be carefully chosen and related to concepts presented during the lecture. There are some topics students do not welcome. For instance, Wanzer et al., (2006) provide a list gathering certain subjects or off-limits topics that students do not like to joke about such as those related to sexual, religion, politics or offensive topics.

Humor used to be culture-language and context dependent. A teacher who jokes about an outdated topic which is no longer familiar to students do not cause the desire effect. A student whose mother tongue is Spanish is less likely to consider funny a variety of topics compared to native English-speaking students (Cooper et al., 2020).

The content on which we base humour should be something close to students, something really interesting for them, including current trends or hot topics, topics that are open to personal interpretation and opinion, and, as I have said at the beginning of this section, related to the English subject contents.

2.2.4 Spontaneousness vs Prepared humour

Humour works as one of the most authentic ways for learning while using a foreign language. When we talk about humour, we can find two ways of using it: in spontaneously or in a prepared way.

We understand as spontaneous humour the one that comprises real communicative occurrences in which teachers and students use a language. The spontaneous use of humour is considered “language for enjoyment, for the self, for its own sake” (Cook 2000: 230) and scholars refer to it as “a real speech event which is created, and not simulated” (Trachtenberg 1979:93). On the other hand, prepared humour is studied, simulated humour which could often seem unnatural.

According to Wanzer, Frymier, Wojtaszczyk and Smith (2006), some teachers prefer prepared humour as they consider to be safer having an ace up their sleeves which gave them more control over the class situations. Other teachers prefer spontaneous humour as they find difficult

to prepare a joke (as we cannot plan the situations in class). When humour is spontaneous a more natural use of the language is made. So, it can be deduced that spontaneous humour could be more interesting as it is surprising and unexpected.

2.3 Theories of Humour

There are multiple theories of humour, including Script-based semantic theory, computer model of humor, ontic-epistemic theory of humor, misattribution theory, O'Shannon model of humor, etc.) which try to offer an explanation about what humour is, what would be considered humorous and what social functions it serves. Among the most popular ones, we are going to explain those related to its application in the English as a foreign language classroom and although we explain them separately, we should keep in mind that many examples of humour can be explained by more than one theory. In other words, these theories have a combinative effect. Superiority theory, incongruity theory, release theory or the General Theory of Verbal Humour are all used as a source of motivation.

2.3.1. *Relief Theory*

The main claim of relief theories is that humour leads to relaxation as humour reduces psychological tension by allowing us to face our fears, decrease nervousness and embarrassment. Laughter is normally referred as “a physical reaction to calm oneself from worries or anxious feelings” (Lynch, 2002). It provides a “a safety valve to release pent-up tensions” (Nesi 2012: 80). “Also, it is considered that when the teacher used humour while teaching difficult aspects of the subject, students are much more relaxed and enjoyed learning it” (Garner, 2006).

From the point of view of linguists such as Dewey (1894), Sigmund Freud (1905 [1974]) or Spencer (1911), the relief theory just outlined is interesting to the extent that it explains the motivation process underpinning word play... (Ermida, 1968). Ross (1998) gives an explanation about this theory too affirming that laughter is a sign of threat being overcome.

2.3.2. *Incongruity Theory*

The Incongruity theory's main claim is that “people laugh at things that surprise them or at things that violate an accepted pattern of thinking” (Wilkins & Eisenbraun 2009: 352). In this theory, humour results from out of place elements apparent in the text joke instead of seeking

for the obvious. Incongruity theories have attempted to identify those inappropriate features of the world which provoke laughter (Billig 2005: 38).

Ermida (1968) believes that humour results from dissimilarity between previous thoughts and the humour instance that changes the recipient interpretation. He stated “when we catalogue something as funny, it is because the unexpected perception of an incongruity makes us forget our initially incorrect interpretation, and, as if in a game, seek for a surprising meaning we had not waited for” (Ermida, 1968). According to the theory, humour emerges from contrast and surprise.

The sudden emotion of surprise and satisfaction sometimes cause the reaction of laughter (Krikmann, 2006). For McGhee (1997) humour can be best explained as “as a cognitive-affective experience, in that it consists of a characteristic combination of cognitions, and it goes along with characteristic forms of arousal variations” (p.21). His definition suggests that incongruity-based humour must involve two properties. First, a kind of unrelated information unknown to the receiver. Second, a cognitive process of manipulating that information in a form of language plays (McGhee, 1997).

2.3.3. Superiority Theory

This theory states that we laugh at the shortcomings and bad luck of others on account of making us feel better about ourselves. It mainly emphasises the superiority of the producer of the humorous utterance from the recipient of that humour. This theory goes back to Aristotle and Plato’s philosophy which analyzed that “laughter arises in response to weakness and ugliness” (Ruch 2008: 29). This theory is characterised by stereotyping and misjudgements and as well as criticism about a target who would be an individual, a social group, and a way of thinking. That is, as Krikmann (2006) states, humour is said to be directed against some collective or person, typically on ethnic, political, or gender grounds. This form of humour is usually found in comic and drama utterances. Bardon (2005) claims that “The Superiority Theory is the theory that the humour we find in comedy and in life is based on ridicule, wherein we regard the object of amusement as inferior and/or ourselves as superior” (Bardon 2005:463).

An explanation of the failure of this theory is indicated by Billig (2005), who said that “the superiority theory emerged in social settings very different from those of today. Now, it is common to point to the cruelty of much humour in former times. In less open-minded times delight was taken in the suffering of others.

2.3.4. *The General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH)*

In 1994, Attardo developed a theory of humour explaining the joke construction. “This knowledge resource embraces all the necessary information for the verbalization of a text. It is responsible for the accurate term of the text and for the placement of the functional elements that compose it” (Attardo 1994: 223). According to this theory, a text can be considered humorous when it is in accord with two opposing scripts or cognitive structures that provide standard information about everyday situations and routines. This theory allows researchers to examine verbal humour from a linguistic standpoint (Attardo 2001: 22).

Attardo (1994) stated that a joke is constructed by six sources of knowledge explained as the following:

1. The script opposition; it deals with theme selection.
2. The logical mechanism, refers to the various mechanism that connects different humorous scripts. They are ranked from simple (pun) to complex (analogies).
3. The situation, which describes the objects, instruments, circumstances, etc involved in the joke.
4. The target, which describes the person or group of people who become the aim of the joke.
5. The narrative strategy. “The information in the told has to be cast in some form of narrative organization, either as a simple narrative, as a dialogue (question and answer), as a (pseudo), riddle, as an aside in conversation, etc.” (Attardo 2001: 225).
6. The language, which includes all the words and other linguistic units used for the verbalization of the text.

2.3. Benefits of humour

The following points emphasize the different benefits that humour possesses and provides a summary for the study of humour in the English classroom.

2.4.1. *Humour’s Physiological benefits*

Within the beneficial physiological effects of humour, and its most prominent indicator, laughter, we observe that endorphins’ levels rise (Berk et al., 1989), blood pressure decreases (Fry & Savin, 1988), muscles relax (Fry, 1992), the immune system of the body improves

(Martin & Dobbin, 1988), circulation is stimulated, and breathing is improved (Fry & Savin, 1988). On account of this, we can affirm that humour is a helpful tool when facing illness (Cousins, 1979). Even Cousins describe laughing as an “internal jogging”. In conclusion, it appears that science backs up the adage "laughter is the best medicine".

2.4.2. Humour's Psychological benefits

When humour is used for constructive and enriching purposes, it has been demonstrated to lessen tension and depression (Deaner & McConatha, 1993; Wooten, 1996), minimize anxiety and stress (Lehman, Burke, Martin, Sultan & Czech, 2001; Cann, Holt & Calhoun, 1999), boost self-confidence (Frecknall, 1994), and strengthen motivation (Cornett, 1986).

Obviously, these results are positively appreciated to people dealing with much pressure. It is obvious that when we are engaged in learning a second language, a certain level of anxiety and tension can be developed in some learners. In the end, learners are practicing new skills and taking in new knowledge, and hence the difficulty and risk of failure is present. To avoid this feeling and achieve effective learning, motivation is needed. Humour is an effective tool for achieving motivation in students as they consider the learning process enjoyable and fun, rather than an incredibly tedious or monotonous task (Berk, 1996; Kher, Molstad & Donahue, 1999). Even in those situations where failure in learning happens, the utilisation of humour will reduce the seriousness of its effect, help learners to recover their self-esteem and provide them the capacity to accept their mistakes and learn from them (Morreall, 1997).

2.4.3. Humour's Social benefits

A laugh or smile is a universal gesture recognized as an expression of happiness, closeness, and acceptance to another person. It is acknowledged that people who make us laugh and who have a good sense of humor are considered to be more popular than those who are not (Billig, 2005; Morrison, 2008). When humorous comments are shared among a group, the group mood and relations are more likely to improve (Senior, 2001) and the group member tend to be more receptive and open-minded while they listen to each other's thoughts (Morreall, 1997; Tamblyn, 2003). Laughing surrounded by people is a pleasant experience. Moreover, humour used to eliminate tense situations (Morreall, 1997; Axtell, 1998). Morreall (1997) also enumerated some situations in which humour may be considered to be a great support: apologizing, telling problems or unpleasant news, warning, handling conflicts, critiquing, among others.

3. HUMOUR AS A TEACHING TOOL IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

Classroom environment undoubtedly matters during the teaching-learning process. A language classroom where students do not feel intimidated or threatened, nor face ridicule or receive any negative criticism contributes to learning, breaks the ice, catches and holds their attention, improves their mood, reduces anxiety levels, increases comfort and creativity, and even proves a high level of involvement, motivation and confidence in students.

The impact of using humour in language classes, teachers' perspectives on humour and the link between new technologies and humour to succeed in language teaching are three crucial issues covered in this section.

3.1 Impacts of using humour in language classes

Many researchers such as Ronald Berk (2002), Sudol (1981), Krashen (1987), Welker (1977), Muñoz (2005), Tosta (2001), have paid special attention on humour as an indispensable element after considering its positive aspects affecting learning in the classroom. These researchers all coincided on some reasons for using humour within the classroom atmosphere such as its relaxing and comforting effect (Sudol, 1981), its interest gathering (Welker, 1977), its consideration as tension reducing resource (Terry and Woods, 1995), its approaching effect between teacher and students (Larson, 1982) and its impact on increasing student motivation and interest (Kristmanson, 2000).

Ronald Berk (2002) affirmed that laughter can have many psychological and physiological benefits and it also has direct consequences when dealing with learning and teaching, primarily in some meaningful teaching spheres: classroom atmosphere, teacher-learner relationship, test performance and student response. In addition, Krashen (1987) made several contributions, being the Affective-filter hypothesis the most remarkable, regarding the negative effect that anxiety can cause on students when trying to learn a foreign language. In subjects like English, humour can help increase self-confidence (Frecknall, 1994), motivation (Cornett, 1986), and bring teachers closer to students and vice versa (Rudasill, K. M., Reio, T.G., Stipanovic, N. & Taylor, J. E., 2010). Muñoz (2005) stated that “humour is nearly related to memory since it is easier to recall an event that occurred in a humorous context” (p.24). On the other hand, Tosta (2001) asserts that “the funny teacher is not a clown figure, he is a serious professional who believes in the meaningfulness and effectiveness of having fun while learning and making

precise distinctions” (p.27). However, humour could also be considered negative on some occasions. One can consider humour having positive or negative effects basing his opinion only on the outcome of any humorous act. Authors such as Bergen (1992) or Muñoz (2005), came to the conclusion that “teachers who use strategies that promote the link between humour and learning usually provide students with their best school experience especially when these ESL teachers share the same background culture with most of students” (Bergen, 1992). Muñoz (2005) states that “humour facilitates the acquisition of vocabulary and helps distinguish literal from figurative meaning” (p.42). In a similar way, it helps grow the visual retention and enhance the ability to find solutions whether linguistic or not. The activities that are carried out in the English classroom to consolidate humour range from proverbs, games, jokes, exaggerated pronunciation, etc. The work of this kind of activities shows the way to acquire language proficiency.

Many authors such as Clabby (1979), Larson (1982), Welker (1977) or Deneire (1995) made contributions regarding the impacts of using humour in the classroom. Clabby (1979) pointed out that humour significantly aids English language learners while Larson (1982) stated that humour could produce a constructive effect in providing mnemonic examples, keeping students' attention, and facilitating the improvement of the relationships between teachers and students. Furthermore, Trachtenberg (1979) considered that any sign of humor within an English as second language classroom context is considered as a perfect vehicle for cultural patterns teaching and learning and Welker (1977) stated that humour is adequate as a way to handle both students and teachers' errors and mistakes in a compassionate and humane manner. Deneire (1995) also contributed regarding this issue. He strongly emphasises the meaningfulness of employing humour to teach culture together with language. He pointed to using humour through anecdotes based on cultural information to teach students the hidden cultural boundaries of the language they are learning. Deneire (1995) stated “the humour caused by the clash of cultures serves as an excellent teaching device” (p.189). Similarly, Deneire (1995) also advocated for teaching students cultural concepts through the use of authentic and real instances of funny texts written in the target language.

Pragmatically and linguistically speaking, humour has a direct impact in any grammatical categories such as phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax and a combination of the last two (syntax+lexicon). Some examples follow:

a) Phonology

An American citizen in a British medical center asks the doctor: “Did I come here to die?” The doctor answers: “No, it was yesterdie”. British-American phonological differences tend to catch students’ interests and make them fun. In this example, the British doctor confuses the verb “to die” with the noun “today” as they pronounce it similarly. This example can help teachers explain phonological differences between the two varieties of English at the same time students have a good time.

b) Morphology

“I never heard of *Uglification*”, Alice ventured to say. “What is it?” The Gryphon lifted up both its paws in surprise. “never heard of uglifying!” it exclaimed. “You know what to beautify is, I suppose?” “Yes,” said Alice doubtfully: “it means—to make—anything- prettier.” “Well, then,” the Gryphon went on, “if you don’t know what to uglify is, you are a Simpleton” (Carroll 2000: 144). A clear example is provided in *Alice in Wonderland*, as they play with word formation. This use of humour can help teachers when explaining the English suffixes and words’ shape and forms in specific sentences.

c) Lexicon

Client: “Waiter, do you serve crabs here?” asks a customer. Waiter: “We serve everybody. Just have a seat at this table, sir.” (Vega, 1989). In the example provided by Vega (1989), we can see that a word meaning misunderstanding is carried out, they confuse crustacean with the term referred to a disagreeable person. This use of humour can help teachers explain polysemy.

d) Syntax

Student 1: “The principal announced that he is going to stop laughing on campus. Student 2: “No kidding! Next thing you know, he will want us to stop laughing too.” (Vega, 1989). Vega (1989) also provides us with another example of humorous sentences in which word order is meaningful.

e) Lexicon + Syntax

“How can you make a horse fast? Don’t give him anything for a while” (Vega, 1989). In this example, students can see a mistake made by mixing the two examples analyzed above, lexical and syntax misunderstandings.

Besides the pragmatic, cultural and linguistic applications in language teaching and learning, humour advantages for language discourse patterns. According to Schmitz (2002), students who have been exposed to humour in the classroom are more equipped to understand and respond to this endearing and genuine aspect of speech in actual communicative language exchanges. Moreover, to expose students to real examples of language in conversations and to illustrate its patterns of usage, English teachers should incorporate humorous instances and tasks in explanations, oral interviews, role-plays, or written dialogues. Additionally, it is meaningful for students to create and use their own humorous texts in discourses. They should also give appropriate corrective feedback on the utilization and style of humour (Trachtenberg, 1979).

In terms of the psychological aspect, humour and laughter prompt shy students to participate more in language lessons since they feel like a part of the group. Therefore, we can say that humour is “a way of fighting against those language learners who are too nervous, shy, or afraid to communicate in a foreign language” (Provine 2000: 36). Students’ feeling of being heard and the fact of what they are saying is worth hearing are also meaningful in learning. These two aspects make them feel motivated when continuing their language learning. Matters of learning motivation and foreign language communication anxiety are essential to this subject as they directly affect a foreign language classroom (Getie, 2020).

However, it is highly relevant to point out in this section that humour isolated does not get the results that have been exposed throughout this section and on some occasions, abusing humour can hinder learning and possibly ruins the entire lesson plan. To get the most, we should think about humour as another tool that teachers have on their side, to be used in communicative classroom activities, which must be previously planned and consider specific pedagogical objectives behind it.

3.2 Teachers’ perspective regarding humour

At this moment the educational system needs teachers who own highly developed communicative skills and qualities such as originality and sensitivity as well as sense of humour. However, there exists “an ambiguous attitude towards humour” (Astapchuk, S., Barun, A. Vayavodzina, S., Dauhiala, N., Dauhiala, D., & Zhukava, T. 2021: 1). in the teaching setting as many teachers are afraid of using humour since they think that in humorous situations they lose their authority (Azizinezhad & Hashemi, 2011). We should keep in mind that stating

humorous instances and allowing laughing moments in class, does not signify that teachers need to be humorists.

Within the teacher's roles we do not find those related to an authoritative image. Instead, he/she should be a facilitator, prompter, guide, etc. Moreover, one of our main responsibilities is to ease students into acquiring English as a first foreign language, and if humor does so at the same time it makes the lesson enjoyable and arouses students' interest and attention, it should be considered a must.

“From a teaching point of view, the use of humour, as a pedagogical tool, help when trying to create pleasant environments to develop our professional activity successfully, contributing to increase our professional competence and pedagogical skills, and will become one of the conditions when professional difficulties are needed to be solved as humour make it easier to scope with problems and difficulties that a person can encounter” (Astapchuk, S., Barun, A. Vayavodzina, S., Dauhiala, N., Dauhiala, D., & Zhukava, T.; 2021). Watson and Emerson (1988) said that “when humour is planned as part of the teaching strategy, a safe environment is established, there is an attitude of openness and communication between student and teacher” (p.89).

3.3 The importance of new technologies in language teaching and its link with humour

In this section, we are going to attempt to explore the implications of the Internet related to humour withing the classroom. A great technique to enhance learning in a foreign language lesson is through laughter and if we mix it with the use of technology, we can get great results from our students (Astapchuk, S., Barun, A. Vayavodzina, S., Dauhiala, N., Dauhiala, D., & Zhukava, T.; 2021).

Nowadays, one of the most noticeable manifestations of humor is Internet-based humour. Many studies (Nouredine, A., 2017) have been done on the advantages of technology use in English language teaching and learning.

On the other hand, recent studies have realized that “receiving and sending jokes was the most common online political activity during the United States 2004 presidential election” (Shifman, L., Coleman, S. & Ward, S. 2007: 2) and that “over a third of Internet users in the United Kingdom use the Internet to find cartoons, jokes, and other humorous material” (Dutton et al., 2005).

Regarding the link between humour and technology within the educational sphere, technology offers teachers many tools to allow students work on the language in a motivational way. Websites such as *image chef* or *iloveimg*, were created to make it easy for anyone to take or modify amusing photographs and add text to them creating personalized images with the content of the course in order to complement teaching. The creation of memes by means of webpages such as *meme generators*, *meme producer*, *meme factory* or *make a meme*, will help them retain new vocabulary and illustrate grammar rules. It can also be used as a creative writing prompt. Moreover, integrating cartoons is another effective way to work on humour using technology. Some free online cartoon making tools, which can be used to entertain and engage learners of all ages are *Chogger*, *Strip generator* or *Witty Comics!*

4. TEACHERS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWPOINT REGARDING USING HUMOUR IN THE ENGLISH CLASSROOM

4.1 Research Design

The present work analyses data quantitatively. "Multiple triangulations" (Denzin, 1970) will be employed as, on the one hand, multiple sources of information will be analyzed such as people with different roles in the language teaching context: English language teachers, and English language students (data triangulation); and, on the other hand, different methods are used to collect the data: observation, surveys, interviews, etc. (methodological triangulation).

I have conducted a thorough analysis to meet the goals of the present study adopting a quantitative technique: observation and a survey. The survey was designed by gathering the most common benefits mentioned on previous section that humour has when used in English classroom activities. The aim of this selection was to deal just with the main humorous' benefits in order to trigger teachers' and students' thoughts. The survey was designed in two different versions, one provided to teachers, and another provided to students. Some utterances of the survey are similar in the two versions provided so that comparisons can be made between the two groups of study.

Prior to survey design, one month's classroom observations of using humour in the third and first year of Compulsory Secondary Education in English classes were made. This previous observation is done with the goal of seeing what reactions students have when humour is introduced, how the use of humour can have positive effects on students, if other teachers use

it as a tool and, if so, how teachers tend to introduce it. In order to observe that on students, slightly humorous samples are provided in different moments of the classroom (after an scold interruption, before explaining difficult content, when trying to explain cultural differences, etc.). In the case of the teachers, I have attended different English lessons as a listener to see if they use humour and how.

4.2 Participants

The information analyzed in the present research have been provided by English as a foreign language teachers and students at the Juan de la Cierva High School, in Vélez-Málaga, Málaga, during the 2021-2022 course. Thirty-six students and nineteen English teachers have been chosen to take part in the study.

The Students' selected attend the four different grades of Compulsory Secondary Education and their age varies from thirteen to sixteen years old. Their level of English comprises lower and upper intermediate. If we analyze the students who have participated in this study, we find those with excellent grades, those who do not have such excellent grades, even those who fail. When the research was carried out, the students selected to participate were all taking three hours' English classes per week taught by a Spanish native teacher. They all had a highly welcome for more English input activities different from those they find in the book.

The teachers are both men and women, in this case, 15 men and 24 women, aged between twenty-five to early sixty-one. The thirty-nine teachers have previous experience as English teachers in this High School (some of them for more than 10 years), so that some of them are familiar with the students' various English proficiency levels and the kinds of tools that lead to greater results because they have taught them in the past.

4.3 Tools

The survey provided to both groups contains utterances regarding the benefits of humour in the teaching of English as a foreign language and in order to be as reliable as possible, it is explained to students that the data provided will be anonymous and for research purposes.

First, students were asked to carefully read the statements aloud and ask for any meaning they did not know as the survey was in English. They were asked about their perception, feelings

1 2 3 4 5

Totally disagree ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Totally agree

Teachers' statements are about their assumptions of humour whether it is an enriching teaching strategy or not, and their conception about what they observed in the classroom when using it.

3.4 Data Collection

At the end of May, the questionnaire was distributed (by means of QR codes or links) to the thirty-nine students at the High School during the 5 last minutes of their lessons. It was distributed to the teachers during a regular weekly English department meeting. The survey's completion time was established in a week, so all data were collected and analyzed at the beginning of May.

3.5 Data Analysis

	I believe humour increases my ability to learn a foreign language	I think humour reduces tension and stress	I consider humour a waste of time	I feel the teachers close to us when humour is used	I consider that humour makes the classroom interesting	I think humour is distracting	I find humour difficult to understand	I feel motivated when humour is used in the classroom
Average of the results after having completed the survey	5	5	1	5	5	1	1	5

Figure 4: Students survey mean scores. Google Forms. My own (2022)

	I consider that humour moves students closer to teachers	I find students motivated when humour is used	I find difficult introducing humour in the English classroom	I consider that students participate more when humour is used	I find students distracted when humour is used
Average of the results after having completed the survey	5	5	1	5	2

Figure 5: Teachers' survey means scores. Google Forms. My own (2022)

Students' and teachers' percentage expressing their opinions regarding using humour as a tool in a lesson for English as a foreign language was presented in the next two figures.

	I believe humour increases my ability to learn a foreign language	I think humour reduces tension and stress	I consider humour a waste of time	I feel the teachers close to us when humour is used	I consider that humour makes the classroom interesting	I think humour is distracting	I find humour difficult to understand	I feel motivated when humour is used in the classroom
Totally agree (5)	75%	69,4%	0%	80,6%	77,8%	66,7%	0%	88,9%
Agree (4)	22,2%	30,6%	0%	19,4%	16,7%	25%	2.8%	11,1%
Neither agree nor disagree (3)	2.8%	0%	0%	0%	5,6%	8.3%	2.8%	0%
Disagree (2)	0%	0%	16,7%	0%	0%	0%	13,9%	0%
Totally disagree (1)	0%	0%	83,3%	0%	0%	0%	80,6%	0%

Figure 6: Students survey percentages. Google Forms. My own (2022)

	I consider that humour moves students closer to teachers	I find students motivated when humour is used	I find difficult introducing humour in the English classroom	I consider that students participate more when humour is used	I find students distracted when humour is used
Totally agree (5)	78,9%	78,9%	0%	84,2%	0%
Agree (4)	21,1%	21,1%	10,5%	10,5%	10,5%
Neither agree nor disagree (3)	0%	0%	10,5%	5,3%	5,3%
Disagree (2)	0%	0%	26,3%	0%	47,4%
Totally disagree (1)	0%	0%	52,6%	0%	36,8%

Figure 7: Teachers survey percentages. Google Forms. My own (2022)

5. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

5.1 Students' General Perceptions

The results obtained after analyzing the survey are listed in figure 6. As it can be seen from the table, the utterance of whether they believe humour increases the ability to learn a foreign language, 75% of them totally agree with that, 22,2% agree with that and 2,8%, just one student, neither agree nor disagree. Neither of the twenty-nine students who have done the survey have answered that they disagree or totally disagree. It has been a pleasant surprise to find that more than 50% of the students considered humour as a way of increasing their ability to learn English although its use is rare.

When it comes to the statement of whether they think humour reduces tension and stress, 69,4% of the students totally agree with that and 30,6 % agree with that. The percentage of students who answered neither agree or disagree, nor disagree or totally disagree was 0%. This is in line with the aforementioned statement in which it is declared that most students find using humour as something positive in the English as foreign language classroom, they do not consider that it creates tense situations, on the contrary, they consider that using humour reduces it.

Regarding the third statement of the survey of whether they consider humour a waste of time, 83,3% totally disagree with that and 16,7% agree with that. No students who have done the survey have answered that they neither agree or disagree, agree or totally agree. I consider this statement one of the more revealing as they think its use is effective for their learning process.

The fourth statement, which involves their opinion regarding the role of the teacher while using humour, of whether they feel the teachers close to us when humour is used has been answered with 80,6% of the students totally agreeing and a 19,4% agree with that. Once again, no students who have done the survey have answered that they neither agree or disagree, agree or totally agree. The closeness between teachers and students is a must in a classroom environment and using humour it has been proved that it is achieved (Larson, 1982).

When it comes to the statement of whether they consider that humour makes the classroom interesting, 77,8% totally agree with that, 16,7% agree with that and 5,6%, that is two students, neither agree or disagree. Neither of the twenty-nine students who have done the survey have answered that they disagree or totally disagree. The fact that students consider that an English lesson is interesting is difficult to achieve and humour can achieve it.

Another important aspect to analyse is whether they find humour distracting or not. The results obtained have been similar to those of the previous statements, 66,7% totally agree with that, 25% agree with that and 8.3% have selected that they neither agree or disagree. This statement is essential as our aim as teachers is not using it to distract them but to give them a break at the same time, they learn something new about the language they are attempting to learn. If the results show they find it distracting, maybe we should not consider it as a tool.

Regarding the statement about whether they find humour difficult to understand, 80,6% totally disagree with that, 13,9% agree with that, and 2,8% neither agree or disagree and the other 2,8% agree. Nobody totally agrees with that. As we can see, the great majority understand humorous prompts. For those who do not understand it, an explanation will be provided. Here the words of Attardo (1994) when referring to humour as competence are corroborated. Comprehending humour requires a knowledge of the culture, communication strategies, discourse rules, grammar, lexicon, social conventions concerning language use, and world knowledge.

The last statement they have to grade, regarding whether they feel motivated when humour is used in the classroom, has a massive agreement. 88,9% of the students totally agree and 11,1% agree.

5.2 Teachers' General Perceptions

The results obtained by the teachers' survey about using humour in the English class are listed in figure 7.

As it can be seen from the table, the utterance of whether they consider that humour moves students closer to teachers, 78,9% totally agree and 21,1% agree with that. Neither of the nineteen teachers who have done the survey have answered that they neither agree or disagree, agree or totally agree. This utterance coincides with those answered by students as it is one of the benefits using humour has (Berk, 2002).

Another utterance which coincides with the one answered by students regarding motivation, whether they find students motivated when humour is used, the same results in the previous utterance has been collected. 78,9% totally agree and 21,1% agree with that. Neither of the nineteen teachers who have done the survey have answered that they neither agree or disagree,

agree or totally agree. Motivation is a must when learning a foreign language and this tool has been proven to be a source to achieve it (Cornett, 1986).

An important utterance for teachers in order to use it or not is whether they find humour difficult to be introduced in the English classroom. The answers here were varied. No teachers agree with that, 10,5% agree with that, another 10,5% remains neutral and neither agree or disagree, 26,3% disagree with it and 52,6% totally disagree with it. This statement is linked to Wanzer, Frymier, Wojtaszczyk and Smith (2006) contribution and we can conclude after analyzing the results that although there is a majority who do not find it difficult, there are other teachers who probably refuse using it as they find it difficult to be introduced.

Another important aspect to be analysed is whether teachers consider students to participate more when humour is used. 84,2% totally agree, 10,5% agree, 5,3% neither agree or disagree and nobody disagrees or totally disagrees. Participation facilitates the acquisition of the ability to communicate in a foreign language (Krashen, 1982).

Finally, teachers have to provide their perception of whether they find students distracted or not when using humour. Here, as it happened with the third statement, answers here were varied. No teachers agree with finding distracted students when using humour, 10,5% agree with that, 5,3% do not have a clear opinion and neither agree or disagree, 47,4% disagree and 36,8% totally disagree. As we checked when we asked students about distractions, teachers have quite different perceptions about it. Some of them consider humour to distract students.

In addition to the perceptions observed and analyzed separately between teachers and students, results obtained from the survey show that there are also similarities and differences focus more on agreements and disagreements between their perceptions that can be interesting to be analyzed.

5.3 Teachers' and Students' Similar Perceptions

The previous tables show the results of teachers' and students' viewpoint regarding the use of humour in the English as a foreign language classroom. Both objects of study have shown having the same perception when we talk about humour and its relationship between teachers and students and humour-motivation link.

Researches have certainly shown that a favorable student-teacher relationship is really

important for students' outcomes and at all ages. When teachers use different ways of teaching which take into account students' needs and individual differences together with those that take into account students' voice as well, we obtain as a result a higher participation, greater proof of motivation and better results. It is also remarkable the good environment created, and even a positive mood and feelings on them (not disruptive) are noticed. These positive feelings are not only towards learning but also towards the general conception of school across grade levels. That is, favorable teacher-student relationship is directly linked with higher student involvement in the learning process, better behaviors and outcomes.

Motivation has always been a key element as it helps to successfully achieve the objectives of English as a foreign language classroom (Cherry, 2014). Only with the right amount of motivation students will be able to develop the correct attitude and found themselves involved in the pedagogical procedure. It is a challenge for teachers to find activities that engage and interest students, so they get involved in the learning procedure. Working with humour is a way to motivate students because they see the real use of the language they are learning (Kristmanson, 2000).

5.4 Teachers' and Students' Different Perceptions

Teachers and students have different perspectives on how to use humor in the classroom when learning English as a foreign language. They differ when we link distraction and humour. General perceptions of the level of distraction have shown, as in Vance (1987), that some teachers consider that when humour is used it can be distractive to some students (just one or two) on some occasions whereas students do not consider it at all. This discrepancy between both groups shows that although students were aware that the activities that use humour are catching, some teachers considered that at least once they find distracted students. In other words, it is important to know what is effective for students when a new tool is introduced by teachers so we can plan and design effective lessons.

It is important that in order to allow students to acquire the English language, teachers can adapt and modify the tools, materials and guidance they use in the classroom to match the students' needs. In this case, a solution could be to limit the use of humour. Previous studies (e.g., Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Javidi & Long, 1989; Neuliep, 1991; Downs, Javidi, & Nussbaum, 1988; Bryant, Comisky, & Zillmann, 1980;) have shown that two or three humour samples in a single lesson can be effective in promoting student learning, but further use is not recommended.

Although, there is not a clear-cut line regarding the amount of humour that can be considered excessive, it is better to limit it and not to abuse its usage. Instead of that, better results are achieved when teacher mix it with the use of any other of the other amount of tools teachers have on their side to achieve the objectives proposed.

6. LINES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The outcomes of this research can contribute to the educational field (methodology) by providing teachers with a useful and efficient classroom tool for foreign language lessons in the future in order to develop students' fullest potential and achieve educational success and interest in learning a foreign language. For doing so, it would be interesting to carry out this study in different levels, contexts, with larger size of participants and longer in order to analyze if the same findings can be obtained or not, to continue exploring the utilization of humour in foreign language learning and teaching for the benefits of all English as a foreign language learners and teachers and for further pedagogically oriented research in this field.

7. CONCLUSION

In closing, it is gratifying to find that most teachers and students agree that using humour in the classroom can have enriching effects when learning a foreign language.

After a funny situation, an appropriate sphere of learning is created in the classroom. Thanks to the brain reward circuit stimulated in a healthy and simple way, "humour can help students understand concepts and lesson content which helps to mentally engage with the course material" (Shatz & Coil 2008: 106). This way, students can easily remember the content the joke was related to.

Humour fosters closeness, intimacy and cohesion between teachers and students. It is of paramount importance to mention that when a positive social and emotional learning environment is created, learning is facilitated. Also, it is worth mentioning here that humour helps children get involved with other students and learn to express their emotions as it also teaches children to be aware of other's feelings such as for example to adapt humour according to how other people respond to it and it helps students see things from other points of view.

Motivation is considered as one of the main aspects in students' second language learning process (Ermida, 1968). Although the majority of second language learners are familiar with

the importance and relevance of the English language outside school, some students are lacking motivation to learn it (Cornett, 1986).

When introducing difficult topics, humour can help to ease the tension and keep the students interested (McCabe, C., Sprute, K., Underdown, K., 2017). The fact of gaining their attention during the lesson hour is key when learning a foreign language (Deiter, 2000; Garner, 2006). Humour is one of the easiest and most productive ways of making classes interesting for students. Just telling a funny story or a joke can easily grab their attention.

It is true when people say laughter is the best medicine. Cann, Holt & Calhoun, (1999) or Lehman, Burke, Martin, Sultan & Czech (2001) have shown that humour reduces stress, and helps people cope with it. Students often face failures, tension, frustrations, and boredom, between others. If the classroom becomes a stressful environment, negative emotions will be caused, and learners will not acquire the objectives of the second language subject which can even lead to depression symptoms and anxiety at younger ages (Deaner & McConatha, 1993).

All in all, we as teachers must be aware of the relevance of our subject in student's future and make our subject motivating enough in order to develop students' fullest potential, educational success and interest in learning a foreign language. The knowledge of English is, nowadays, a basic need for personal, professional, and cultural development.

Laughter and humour are intrinsic qualities for humans. They play a noteworthy role in our everyday social interaction, as it does in other aspects of our lives. Therefore, rather than disregarding it, we should include it into our regular teaching and learning procedures in the classroom (Chiasson, 2002).

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