

**Humor: A Pedagogical Tool for Fostering Writing Skills in English as A Foreign
Language in Colombian Schools**

Julian Alexander Hernandez Meza

Trabajo de Grado para Optar al Título de Licenciado en Lenguas Extranjeras con Énfasis en
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Profesor: Gerson David Zambrano Gómez

Licenciado en Inglés

Universidad Industrial de Santander

Facultad de Ciencias Humanas

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Abstract

Title: Humor: A Pedagogical Tool for Fostering Writing Skills in English as A Foreign Language in Colombian Schools¹

Author: Julian Alexander Hernandez Meza²

Key words: Humor, classroom environment, exploratory research.

Description:

This study deals with the use of humorous stimuli as a tool inside second language acquisition classrooms in Colombia, being in this specific study the English language. The research was carried out in Bucaramanga, Santander. For this project sixty students from a public educational institution participated. They answered a survey regarding the use of humor and the perception they had regarding the implementation of this stimuli in their own classes and the transition of it into the writing skill. The findings showed a vast approval in relation to the implementation of the humorous tools for various purposes during the development of the sessions through the adequate use of different stimuli to reach goals such as the creation of a good classroom environment and the enhancement of the willingness to learn through the use of humor in the English class and the reflection of this tool in tasks of written compositions.

However, it is important to remark that this is just exploratory research and following investigations must be done on a wider stage. Also, for the making of further research is necessary to bear in mind the knowledge of the and appropriate conception on how humor has to be used inside English language classrooms.

¹ Bachelor Thesis

² Human Sciences Faculty. Languages school. Director: Gerson David Zambrano Gómez.

Resumen

Título: Humor: Una Herramienta Pedagógica para Fomentar las Habilidades de Escritura en Inglés como Lengua Extranjera en Colegios Colombianos³

Autor: Julian Alexander Hernandez Meza⁴

Palabras clave: Humor, ambiente en el aula, investigación exploratoria.

Descripción:

Este estudio aborda el uso de estímulos humorísticos como herramienta dentro de las aulas de adquisición de segundas lenguas en Colombia, siendo en este estudio específico el idioma inglés. La investigación se llevó a cabo en Bucaramanga, Santander. Para este proyecto participaron sesenta estudiantes de una institución educativa pública. Ellos respondieron una encuesta relacionada con el uso del humor y la percepción que tenían con respecto a la implementación de este estímulo en sus propias clases y la transición del mismo en la habilidad de escritura. Los resultados mostraron una amplia aprobación en relación a la implementación de las herramientas humorísticas para diversos propósitos durante el desarrollo de las sesiones a través del uso adecuado de diferentes estímulos para alcanzar objetivos como la creación de un buen ambiente en el aula y el aumento de la disposición para aprender a través del uso del humor en la clase de inglés y el reflejo de esta herramienta en tareas de composiciones escritas.

Sin embargo, es importante señalar que se trata sólo de una investigación exploratoria y que las siguientes investigaciones deben realizarse en un escenario más amplio. Además, para la realización de nuevas investigaciones es necesario tener en cuenta el conocimiento de la concepción adecuada sobre cómo el humor tiene que ser utilizado dentro de las aulas de lengua inglesa.

³ Trabajo de Grado

⁴ Facultad de Ciencias Humanas. Escuela de Idiomas. Director: Gerson David Zambrano Gómez.

**Humor: A Pedagogical Tool for Fostering Writing Skills in English as A Foreign Language
in Colombian Schools**

Introduction

The research topic for this project is the use of humor as a tool for enhancing writing skills inside English classrooms in Colombian schools. The idea of using humor as a pedagogical tool is to make a change in the learning processes of a foreign language and its written production, which can often become a stressful task for students. This is the problem that concerns the current investigation. Regarding the aforementioned case, humor would serve as a catalyzer to transform the anxiety produced by SLA into a friendly environment in which learners can feel more comfortable. Also the findings and results of this small-scale study may later become a tool to be used, later on, consciously in classroom management design in Colombian educational institutions.

1. Objectives

1.1. General objectives

Give a solid framework on what is really teaching using humor in the classroom. This includes giving the correct explanation and theories of where humor comes from, which kinds of humor must be used and make clear that the use of humor inside the classroom is not the same as being constantly cracking jokes or making a pseudo stand-up comedy routine in front of the students.

To get an idea on how important the use of humorous stimuli is for the students on their English language sessions.

To make clear how to use humor as a pedagogical tool.

To introduce a new methodology to Colombian English language teachers to improve their classroom environment and student rapport.

1.2. Specific objectives

To introduce the sense of humor as a tool for the enhancement of English language lessons.

Make an exploratory overview on how the students perceive and feel the use of humorous stimuli on a subject that may arouse anxiety during its learning process.

To establish bases for the further investigation of the proper uses of humor on SLA in Colombia.

2. Related research

2.1. Literature review

2.1.1. *Definition of humor*

To define humor, this review draws on Crawford (1994) and Lefcourt & Martin (1986), who define humor as the frequency in communication that generates any positive cognitive or affective response that displays amusement. According to Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1991), humor can either be verbal or non-verbal and can result in comfort and hilarity. Moreover, Jauregui (1998) defines humor as any intentional action or ability that causes amusement. It is important to highlight that humor considers three aspects: culture (target culture), language (use of language structures) and meaning (clarity in meaning) in order to be implemented in the community it addresses.

2.1.2. Humor and Learning

Humor as a friendly classroom environment: The impact that the use of humor has on the learning environment is relevant due to it providing the conditions to facilitate the learning process. It has been found that humor is an element that stimulates comfort and fosters willingness to learn (Genovezou, 1984). A good environment is defined as a place where people are closer to each other (Banas et al., 2011). In the context of a SLA, the majority of students may feel anxious about making mistakes (Blank, Tweedale, Cappelli, & Ryback, 1983). For this reason, the class environment is reflected in the students' performance.

Humor as a pedagogical tool: It has been found that humor is a pedagogical tool in classrooms which helps to develop comprehension and students' skills (Gorham & Christophel, 1990; Bandes, 1988; Bryant, Comisky, Crane, & Zillmann, 1979; Wandersee, 1982). For instance, Fernández (2016) directly asked students for their opinion about the instructors' attitudes and how they use humor in class. The results showed that students have a positive perception on how their teachers manage the class. Furthermore, Tel Aviv University carried out a study with two groups to test the impact of humor as a pedagogical mechanism for enhancing students' performance. The outcomes demonstrated that in the experimental group, the number of approved students was higher than the control group (Torres de Sánchez, 2003).

2.1.3. Humor in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Learning

Humor and English general proficiency improvement: In regard to English as a foreign language, a notable gap is the virtual inexistence of clear guidelines about how to teach English with humor. However, humor is also used in a second language acquisition context. With this previous affirmation in mind and concerning English, Genovezou (1984) claims that in a second language teaching context, laughter and jokes can enhance learning and the overcoming of issues, such as lassitude, in the group. As mentioned before, humor can make interpersonal relationships easier to handle.

Learning a second language is a complex process, in which the degree of anxiety can be raised to high levels. However, humor can work as a double-edged sword, this means, it can either foster English learning or hold it back if it becomes a distraction (Bell & Pomerantz, 2016). Knowing this duality, the teacher must be able to differentiate appropriate humor from an inappropriate one in order to create and generate a positive classroom atmosphere. An example of this are the findings made by Rima (2009) on the use of humor for the creation of an effective SLA classroom environment. The participants involved were 200 female students of introductory, intermediate and advanced English levels. They were from the United Arab Emirates University. The results of this research showed that 80% of the participants pointed out that the use of jokes improved students' attention and 71% of them identified humor as useful in learning difficult material. These findings state an improvement of the classroom environment by reducing some tensions caused by SLA and therefore the optimization of the learning process when humor is used consciously (Kher et Al. 1999). Similarly, Tuncay (2007) found out that the use of jokes can represent useful advantages in English language teaching. Some of these advantages being the use of humor as an ice breaker in the classroom, the improvement of the communication in an English context and the creation of a positive classroom environment.

However, and despite the positive effects that humor can provide, the teacher has to be aware that it is necessary to use a minimum amount of humorous stimulus with the purpose of not letting loose a significant impact on learning.

Regarding the investigation of humor in English learning, a few research studies have been conducted to determine the specific effects that humor has on students' disposition and the use of humor while focusing on specific skills fostering. Reading skills are analyzed after it, writing skills are analyzed.

Humor in writing: Skalicky et al., (2016) conducted research having writing skills as the focal point. For this study, 313 essays were written by the participants who were undergraduate students from Mississippi State University (MSU). Then, these written compositions were analyzed by human raters. The aim of this study was to find the possible different linguistic variables. The methodology implied using creativity and humor rubrics for the proper data collection. The results of the study showed that even in a field such as academic writing in which humorous skills are rarely found, humor can be used and eventually have a positive effect on the written compositions by increasing its quality at a rate of 17.5%. Likewise, a study conducted by Christian (2016) analyzes the context of a writing and reading course at Texas A&M University-Commerce, in Northeast Texas. The instructors decided to set humor as the topic center of the class. Through weeks, the methodology was to ask students to complete particular reading and writing tasks related to humor. At the end of the course, the teachers selected randomly written free-topic pieces of 28 pupils, 16 and 12 men and women respectively. The intention of it was to analyze how the free election of the topic facilitates the learning results. At the end of the course, the results showed that internal motivation and interaction with the language were stimulated in students.

2.2. Theoretical framework

2.2.1. Theories of humor

Communication can be perceived as funny taking into account three theories: incongruity theory, superiority theory, and arousal theory (Booth-Butterfield & Wanzer, 2010). First, the incongruity theory proposes that for humor to occur surprise or contradiction is necessary, in that way people will notice humor by emphasizing the cognitive aspect rather than emotionally or socially (Berlyne, 1960). Second, the superiority theory states that underestimating others and making fun out of them foments the feelings of superiority in people (Gruner, 1978, 1997; Martin, 2007; Morreall, 1987). However, the authors point out that this is not necessarily malicious and, on the contrary, it can be seen as something without hostility and playfulness. Lastly, the Arousal theory states that humor is a complex mixture of emotional and cognitive factors (Martin, 2007). Another theory is the Instructional Humor Processing Theory (IHPT) proposed by Wanzer, Frymier, & Irwin (2010). It is based on teachers' attitude which can affect students' learning process positively or negatively. Also, the authors anticipate that IHPT should speed up students' learning process. For teachers, in the development of the class it is important to use humor in the context of learners; it does not mean to leave academic topics and purposes out of the class (Bolkan et al., 2018). According to Goodboy, Booth-Butterfield, Bolkan., & Griffin (2015), humor is effective in the classroom when it follows a three-step logical order. First, Students have to perceive incongruity. Otherwise, the information will be confusing. Second, students have to resolve the incongruity. Finally, students build an effective response with the message. In other words, students feel comfortable with the instructor's humor while they are having class.

2.2.2. Appropriate and inappropriate humor

Both kinds of humor can occur in learning and, therefore, have consequences in its development. In particular, Torres de Sánchez (2003) states that an accurate application of humor does not emphasize on laughing at students but creating amusement situations in which they can be involved without malicious intentions. Harris (1989) and Snetsinger & Grabowski (1993) mention that race, household, disability or the students' appearance are inappropriate topics for cracking jokes. As well as sarcasm and insult enter into this category (Edwards & Gibboney, 1992). In the same way, sexual humor is considered inappropriate only if the class is not related to the same topic (Kher, Molstad, & Donahue, 1999). Teachers must think carefully before implementing any kind of humor in their classes.

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants and data collection process

The participants for this research were sixty eleventh grade students from a public school in Bucaramanga's metropolitan area. Their range of ages is between fifteen and eighteen years old and all of them come from middle/working class families. The instrument used to collect the data was a survey. It contained six questions regarding their perception on the use of humor during their English classes and the transition of humor into writing tasks. It is also important to remark that the surveys were originally carried out in Spanish due to the level of English of the

students and in order to avoid possible mistakes or confusions in the answers given that they do not have a complete domain of their second language.

A major difficulty presented in the data collection process included the initial difficulty to gather information in a lesser amount of time due to the adverse situation of the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore the health policies necessary to prevent infection. For this reason, the surveys had to be carried digitally via google forms.

3.2. Data analysis

The procedure for the data analysis of this research was the following: First, having a graphical view of the answers given by the participants. Second, having the analysis made question by question. And finally, giving an overview or conclusion from the outcomes of each question by having also in consideration the theories and the previous research made in order to achieve a deeper analysis.

3.3. Relevance and ethics

This study is, particularly, relevant for the English teaching field in Colombia as it is currently the first research project regarding the use of humor as a tool for enhancing SLA. In regards to the protection of the participants for this project, in the first instance I reached them inside the physical classroom. Then, I explained to them the research topic and the exploratory

nature of the investigation. Besides this, I also discussed with them how their identities, as well as the names of the institutions they study in, and the data provided would remain protected by me and would not represent any risk in the future. If the participant accepted to take part in the research, the second step, due to the adverse pandemic situation, was sending the survey link via email.

4. Description of the research context

This quantitative study is exploratory. For that reason, the research was made on a small-scale and having as a data recollection instrument a digital survey carried through Google forms regarding the perception of the participants about the use of humor as a tool in their SLA context.

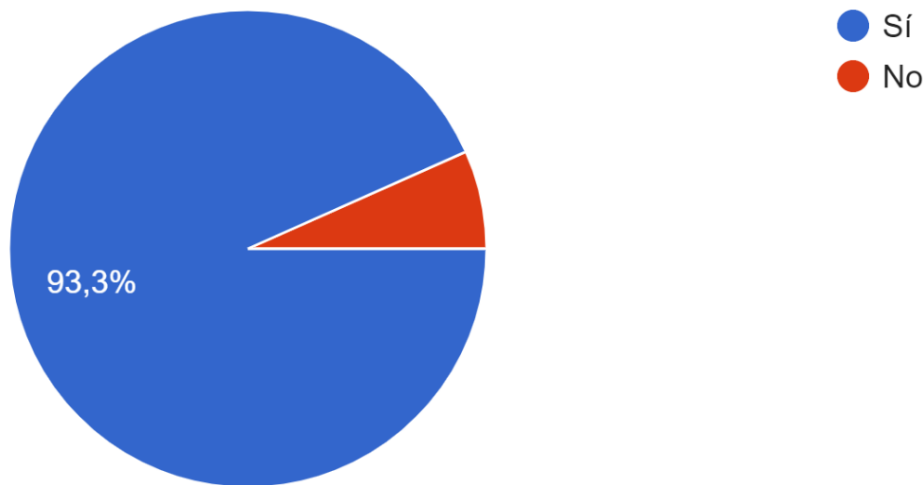
Is important to remark that this study is currently the first and only regarding the use of humor in English teaching in Colombia.

5. Findings

5.1. Question 1: Do you consider that the use of a sense of humor in teaching a second language, English in this case, is a good strategy to implement and/or necessary?

Figure 1.

Considera que el uso del sentido del humor dentro de la enseñanza de una segunda lengua, inglés para este caso, es una buena estrategia a implementar y/o necesario?



For this question, the results showed that fifty-six participants answered “Yes” while only four of them said “No”. This translates on an approbation rate of 93.3% for the use of humor as a tool in the second language acquisition process among students against 6.7% of disapproval on the implementation of this strategy. All in all, humor as a tool inside the English classes has a vast popularity and reception among the participants.

However, and even having a vast majority backing up the strategy of the use of humor inside the sessions, is important to remember the findings made in 2016 by Bell & Pomerantz which state that it is a must to use the tool in an appropriate and responsible way due to its double-edged nature that may create an improvement in terms of environment and performance of the class or on the contrary create a distracting disrupture of the class flow and the intended results that the teacher using the tool may aim for. Besides this, and with humor being of a subjective nature, the teacher must be aware on the effective use of the strategy by being precise on the involvement and understanding of the students and the topic being treated by using an stimulus that encompasses to a common or global sense of humor by having on consideration the

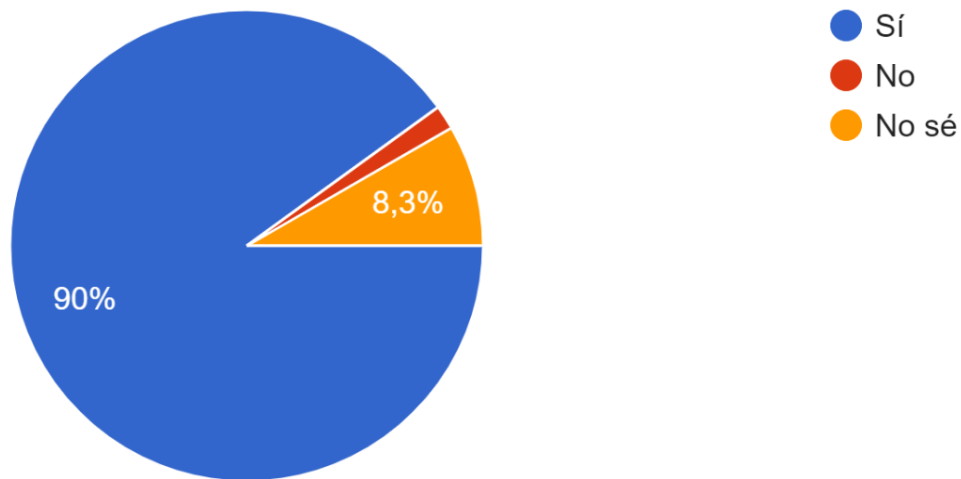
Arousal theory proposed by Martin (2007) instead of a self-centered one that might only appeal and understood by a minority of the pupils.

Another vital feature for the successful implementation of the strategy and the consequent rise in the rates of approval is the teacher's own consciousness of when to and how to use the tool adequately. It is a must to measure the amount of humorous bits used inside the session among either the introduction, development or feedback of the topic given, as well as the correct tone and delivery of the stimuli to generate a positive impact in order to avoid a contrary reaction that may translate in awkwardness and forced laughter. Moreover, it is necessary to be especially careful if the strategy is implemented into the feedback due to the thin line that divides the perception of use of an appropriate approach and what may appear mockery from the teacher and therefore cause harm and negativeness to the student's learning process.

5.2. Question 2: In your experience, when there is a humorous stimulus during the development of the class, have you felt that on your part there is a greater interest in the development of the session and therefore you understand in a better way the subject matter that is being treated?

Figure 2.

En su experiencia, al haber un estímulo humorístico durante el desarrollo de la clase, ¿Ha sentido que de su parte hay un mayor interés en el desarrollo de la sesión y por ende entiende de mejor manera la temática que se está tratando?



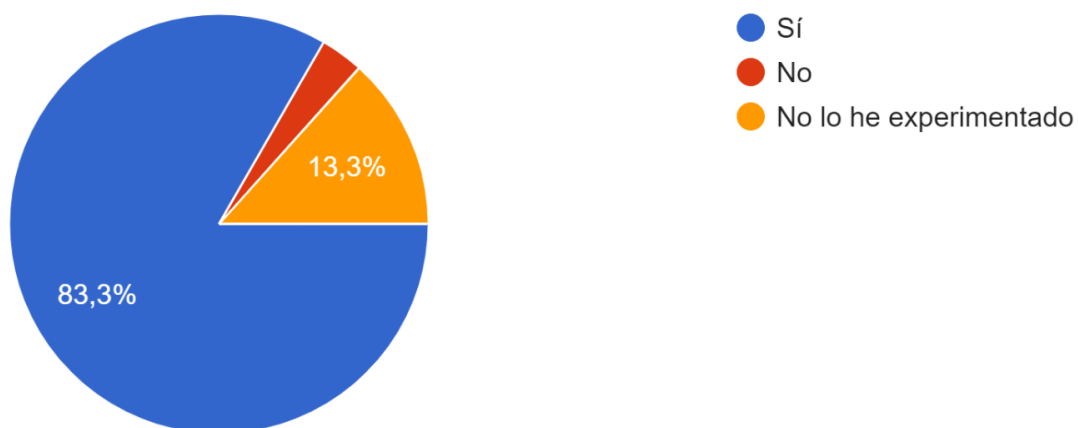
The results show that 90% (fifty-four) of the participants have experienced an enhancement in both interest and understanding of the topic treated during the session when there is presence of humoristic tools in the middle of it, while 8.3% (five) of them do not know or haven't noticed an improvement. However, only 1.7% (one) of the participants has not had an increased response on his/her experience when there is exposure to humor during the development of the session. Nevertheless, it is important to remark that the exposure to humor that the participants of the study had during their classes was mostly casual and sporadic given by possible hilarious situations or a clever delivery made by the teacher every other session. With that being said, this sheds light on the implementation of humoristic bits, even with this intermittent exposure, as an effective strategy for the enhancement of the learning environment and therefore a later positive performance boost regarding the second language acquisition.

Then, given the results and similarly to the findings made by Rima (2009), it can be deduced from the students' answers that a vast majority of them have felt an optimization of their learning process when there is humoristic exposure during the development of class.

5.3. Question 3: Have you felt that the presence of humor in the development of the English class sessions has improved the learning environment and therefore participation increases and the fear or anxiety produced by the possibility of giving a wrong answer or mispronunciation decreases?

Figure 3.

¿Ha sentido usted que al haber presencia de humor en el desarrollo de las sesiones de clase de inglés se aprecia un mejor ambiente de aprendizaje y por ende la participación aumenta y disminuye el miedo o la ansiedad producida por la posibilidad de dar una respuesta o una pronunciación errónea?



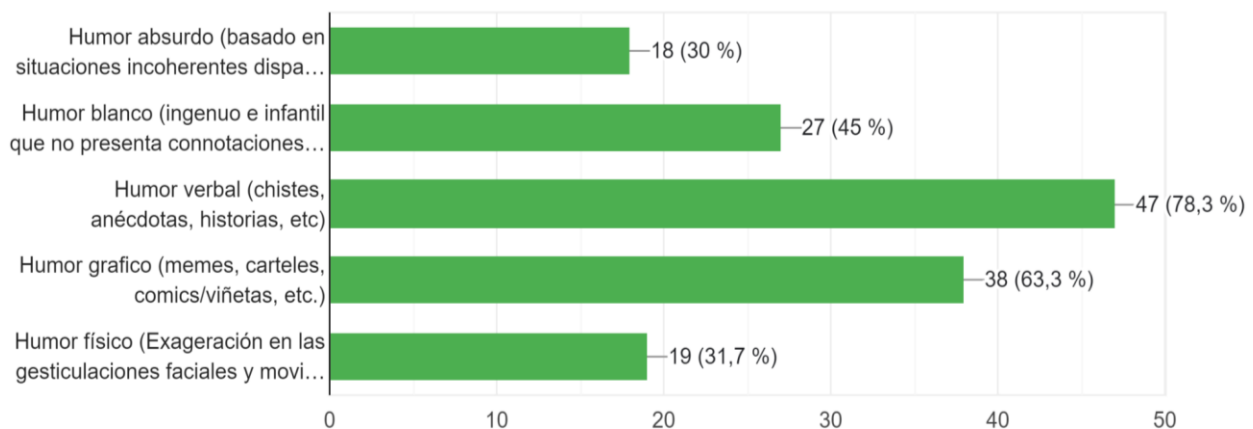
The outcomes for this question regarding the classroom environment improvement for the learning process through the use of humor showed that fifty (83.3%) students gave an affirmative answer, while just two of them (3.3%) were negative and eight participants (13.3%) were not aware of it. Then, it can be deducted that although there is a gap of 6.7% in terms of affirmative answers regarding humor implementation in comparison to the previous question, the results keep being cohesive and it can be stated that there is still a massive approval from the students towards the use of humor for the enhancement of the classroom environment. Nonetheless, it is important also to restate the claim made in 2003 by Torres de Sánchez who said that a correct implementation of humor does not imply specifically the explicit presence of laughter but rather it implies the generation of circumstances of enjoyment in which the students might feel safe. This given situation may be created, as suggested for Tuncay (2007), through the introduction of a joke that will fulfill the role of an ice breaker between the instructor and the learners that will subsequently foster an assertive communication and thus a positive classroom environment. These previous statements also go hand in hand with the claims made in 1984 by Genovezou that postulates humor as an encouragement element which may be translated in the pupils' willingness to learn in a comfortable environment for knowledge.

In sum, there is a high percentage of perception on the decrease of conflict, which translates in a better classroom environment, when there is presence of humor and therefore proves right the findings made by Torres de Sánchez (2003), Tuncay (2007) and Genovezou (1984).

5.4. Question 4: Taking into account the findings of Edwards & Gibboney (1992), humorous elements during the development of classes such as double sense, satire and irony can be detrimental to the process of learning a second language. That being said, and leaving aside the elements previously presented, please check the types of humorous stimuli that you are aware of and have encountered during the development of your English classes:

Figure 4.

Teniendo en cuenta los hallazgos de Edwards & Gibboney (1992), elementos humorísticos durante el desarrollo de las clases como lo son el doble sentido, la sátira y la ironía pueden ser perjudiciales para el proceso de aprendizaje de una segunda lengua. Dicho esto, y dejando de lado los elementos previamente presentados, por favor marque los tipos de estímulos humorísticos que usted conoce y ha encontrado durante el desarrollo de sus clases de inglés:



The results showed that the students encountered in the development of their English language sessions that there was usage of several stimuli that the participants were aware of, with these being ranked in the following way:

In first place, verbal humor was used through jokes, anecdotes, stories, among others, and was noticed with a rating of 78.3% of coincidence with forty-seven (47) check marks. In second place, the use of visual tools in the form of graphic humor such as memes, comic strips, among others was agreed with a 63.3% of coincidence with thirty-eight (38) check marks. In third place, the use of white humor, which is characterized for being innocent and harmless, was noticed with a 45% of accordance by having twenty-seven (27) check marks. Followed in fourth position by a perception of the use of physical expressions and exaggerated gestures to achieve physical humor was spotted with a rating of 31.7% of coincidence with nineteen (19) check marks. Finishing in fifth position, with a razor's edge rating of 30% of awareness on the use of absurd humor during the sessions with a coincidence of eighteen (18) check marks.

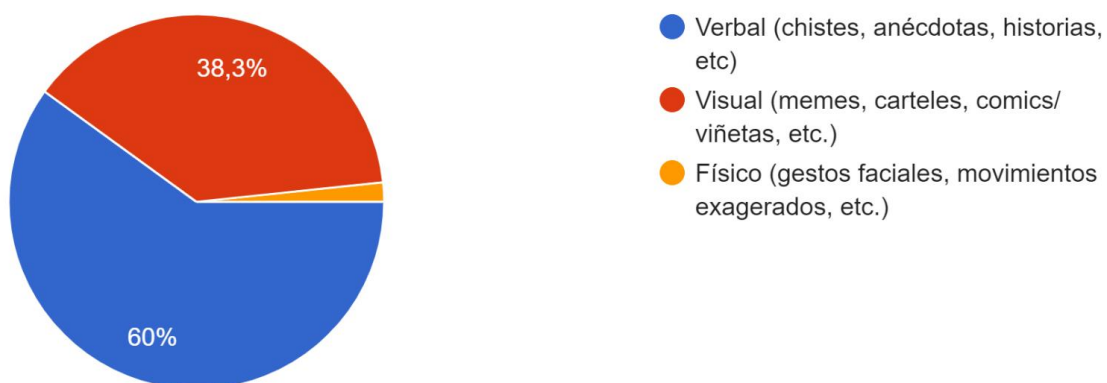
Then, it can be claimed that the participants are constantly being exposed to different kinds of humorous stimuli and aids into their English classes with the most common being verbal humor. However, it is important to remark that even when verbal tools may have the most regular use, there is no disregard to other ways of adding humor as a tool into the SLA process. Moreover, it does not mean that a mixture of different stimuli is not possible in order to reach a specific response from the students by getting their attention through just one method. For instance, there may be a situations such as the explanation of a topic in which an anecdote or a joke can be made, in which the "punchline" instead of being an hilarious verbal one-liner may come in the form of an slightly exaggerated facial expression such as making a gesture by raising the eyebrows, or explaining an activity by using graphical humor and follow it by making a comical comment with the intention of adding to the instruction given by catching their attention and boosting the morale of the students ahead of a planned exercise.

Lastly, it can be deduced that although there is a predominant stimuli, being verbal humor, there is use of several others inside the development of the English language sessions and that those catalyst appeal mostly to the approach of Berlyne's (1960) Incongruity theory, and in accordance with the three logical steps for the humor effectiveness in the classroom proposed in 2015 by Goodboy, Booth-Butterfield, Bolkan & Griffin that these incentives are always framed into healthy and positive humor in order to make them feel comfortable and avoiding in the learners the negative effects presented in 1992 by Edwards & Gibboney.

5.5 Question 5: For you, in the English class, what type of humorous stimulus do you find and/or feel is most effective in the development of second language learning and production activities:

Figure 5.

Para usted, en la clase de inglés, qué tipo de estímulo humorístico le parece y/o siente que es más efectivo en el desarrollo de las actividades de aprendizaje y producción de la segunda lengua:

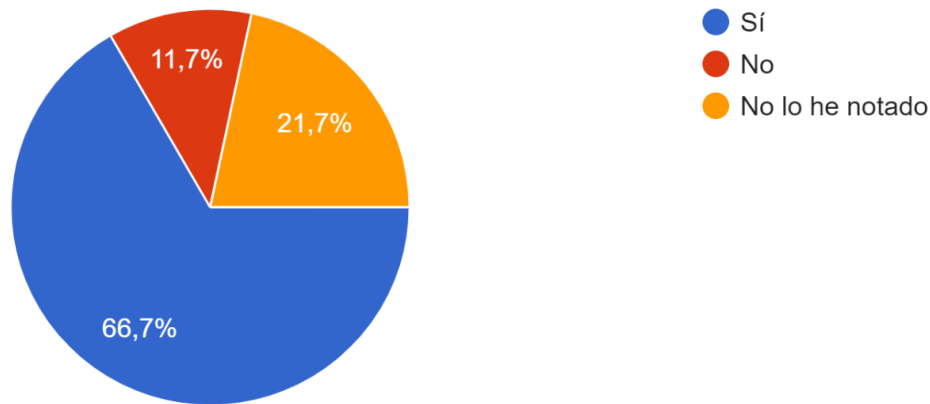


The results showed that thirty-six (60%) students prefer verbal stimuli, twenty-three (38.3%) of them lean into visual tools, and only one (1.7%) have a preference for the use of physical expressions. This outcome is in concordance with the results from the previous question and shows a major response from the students to humorous verbal incentives, although, without leaving aside the affinity for other kinds of humoristic bits. However, it is mandatory to state that according to the findings made by Bolkan et al. (2018), the bits of humor used during the class shall be within the context of the session and the students without leaving the academic fundamentals out of the equation. Then, it can be claimed that even though the participants have different preferences regarding the humoristic tool, for the majority of them verbal means have more effectiveness in their learning process. However, it does not mean that the use of just one sort of stimuli can guarantee better performances by focusing on the higher percentage, it is recommended to use a mixture of tools along the sessions.

5.6. Question 6: Do you consider that the humor used during class can be reflected in a written form in your compositions such as essays, stories, anecdotes, among others?

Figure 6.

¿Considera usted que el humor usado durante la clase puede ser reflejado de manera escrita en sus composiciones tales como ensayos, cuentos, anécdotas, entre otros?



The outcome shows that there can be transference from the humor used during the session into written compositions by having forty students (66.7%) giving an affirmative answer, seven of them (11.7%) giving a negative one and thirteen of them (21.7%) did not notice the reflection of humor inside their compositions. These percentages are congruent with every result from every previous question made by having and acknowledgement to the use of humor as a positive tool for the fostering of the learners SLA process, and although there is only 66.7% of approval in this question it is not a negative result at all given that just a small number of them have a categorical negative perception, but there is a significant percentage of students that are unsure or even unaware of the possibility of the reflection of the humoristic incentives into their writing processes due to factors such as having little or intermittent humoristic exposure or even not having an specific instance where humor is matched with the required writing tasks, and these students represent a possible improvement in the approval ratio if the stimuli is properly added and carried into the English language sessions.

Consequently, from these results, it can be inferred that there is a high rating of reflection of the humoristic tools into written language from the participants. These results prove the findings made by Skalicky et al., (2016) and Christian (2016) giving an overview of the possibility of

making advances in writing by introducing humor as one of the factors during the classes. Besides this previous positive balance, it is also imperative to the teacher to motivate and help the learners in the practice, transference and performance fostering of their writing skills by allowing and encouraging the students to be as creative as possible in their compositions and to not being afraid of writing outside their conventional comfort zone while working on a given structure depending if the task revolves in the writing of stories, anecdotes or even essays. Bearing this in mind, an accurate suggestion for the implementation of this teaching strategy might be the adequate use of the Instructional Humor Processing Theory (IHPT) proposed in 2010 by Wanzer, Frymier, & Irwin.

6. Analysis and discussion

In their answers, the vast majority of participants display an inclination for having humor applied to their SLA process and in accordance with Rima (2009), a high percentage of them agree that humor can be used to introduce or explain topics that could make a student feel overwhelmed because of its complexity. Also, this keeps the idea of creating a good class environment (Genovezou, 1984) and the attention catching role that humor can play inside a classroom, especially in English classes. Also, and conveying with Tunkay (2007), a slight majority of participants agree on the preference on the use of verbal humoristic aids on the explanation of a difficult topic. However, this does not mean that the rest or the combination of all kinds of elements aren't effective for them. As well, most of the students agree that it is

possible to make the transference into writing skills, this coincides with the findings of Christian (2016).

In spite of all the previously stated, it is compulsory to remark that although the results are satisfactory, they are far from ideal and there is a big margin of improvement in the perceptions and use of humor as a pedagogical tool for English teaching. For instance, it can be said that the humor perceived by the participants of this study was mostly intermittent and derived from the teacher's own cleverness to read the classroom and his/her skill to create an appropriate stimulus to foster the classroom environment by, perhaps unawarely, putting into practice the humor theories of Crawford (1994) and Jauregui (1998). In addition to this, a remark to be made is the necessity there is to generate awareness in the teachers regarding what humor really is, how it works inside the classroom and specially how it must be used to reach a concrete concept that later will be used in the English sessions and the consequent enhancement of these for the creation of a proper learning environment as the one proposed by Banas et Al. (20011).

Lastly, it needs to be said that this may serve as the starting point for the conception of humor as a tool in Colombian education and there is a long way ahead and lots of work to do regarding the raise of awareness and giving legitimacy to humor as an enhancement alternative for SLA. The next step for this project will be making research in a higher stage similar to the ones carried out by Christian and Skalicky et al. in 2016.

7. Conclusion

For this specific exploratory research, the target field was the English classes in Colombian schools. With this purpose, the participants involved in the study were sixty eleventh grade students from a public school in Bucaramanga. They were asked about the use of humor in their own classes and the transference of this tool into the writing skill. With this being said, it is necessary to affirm that the results of this research were positive in the sense of accomplishment in the resolution of, both, the problem and the research questions. It was found that, indeed, language teachers make use of humor as a tool in their classes. Also, one of the objectives derived from the use of humor is the creation of a good class environment as defined by Banas et Al. (2011), in which the students can feel comfortable, this aims to eliminate the possible tensions inside the classroom and the anxiety produced by learning a foreign language. Another purpose of the tool is to originate student rapport.

Furthermore, it is important for teachers who want to include humor as an element inside their classes to reach and study the theories of humor as the ones proposed by authors such as Crawford, Berlyne, Booth-Butterfield, Wanzer and Martin just to name a few of them and have a better understanding on what humor is, how it works and ultimately getting the conception that humor inside the classroom goes beyond being funny and being surrounded by laughter. In fact, and as stated by Jauregui (1998), and supported by Torres de Sánchez (2003), it implies the creation of situations of amusement for the learners while having in consideration cultural, linguistic and content aspects to be included in order to create an effective catalyst that will generate a subsequent adequate learning environment. This appropriate environment as noted by authors as Genovezou (1984), Kher et Al. (1999), Rima (2009) among others plays a key role in

the acquisition of a second language and the achievement of the ultimate goal, which is getting across an assertive and effective teaching and learning process.

To finish, it must be said that it is vital to conduct different studies in wider scales as the ones carried out in the Mississippi State University (MSU) by Skalicky et al. (2016) or in the Texas A&M University-Commerce by Christian (20016) regarding the topic that concerns this research for further acknowledgement and adequate use of humoristic tools in Colombian classrooms. With this being said, it is important to understand the use of humor and the impact that this tool can cause in the pedagogy field and how the classes are taught and the enhancement of the English teaching process.

8. Comments for further investigations

It is a must as teachers to be concerned with the second language acquisition and learning processes of our students, and for that same reason we have to evolve in our ways of teaching by having alternatives or adding enhancement tools as the ones presented on this exploratory investigation. However, it is important to keep investigating these alternatives in bigger stages and using different methods in order to reach a certain level assurance on the correct use of these tools, and even more on the ones as variable as the sense of humor, which can be a changing one given its subjectivity and the different humoresque trends that will be appearing through the pass of time.

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