How to Learn English Language Through Humor

Dina Yousefi

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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Jokes	9
Riddles	46
Tongue Twisters	56
Misuses of English	64
One liners	66
Nursery rhymes	72
Humorous poems	87
Humorous passages	90
Miscellaneous things	92
Homographs	94
Homophones	98

Introduction

If you want to fully learn a language, then it's important to be able to understand the jokes told in that language. This is especially useful in English because jokes form an important part of the English language and culture. It is difficult to understand jokes in a new language, but, here, I have tried to give you the vocabulary you might need in order to understand the jokes. We keep on asking ourselves how we can promote that real communication, and motivate students to listen and to speak in English. We know we have to involve them in the dynamics of the class. As Contesse (1995:2) points out: "Student-student interaction in small groups is thought to offer a number of advantages" (Richards and Lockhart, 1994, Brown, 1994): it reduces the dominance of the teacher over the class, it promotes collaboration among learners, it offers a more comfortable, relaxed atmosphere, it enables the teacher to work more as facilitator or consultant, it can promote learner responsibility and autonomy... but its crucial advantage is that it can increase the quantity of student talking time (STT) in the classroom".

The literature on the topic stresses the importance of humor as a means of enhancing student motivation to learn English. It was Dulay and Burt (1977) who first introduced the concept of affective filter. Afterwards it was Krashen (1982: 32) who noted that a low affective filter corresponded to high motivation, self-confidence, and a lack of anxiety. He explained that the Affective Filter Hypothesis implied that our pedagogical goals

should not only include supplying comprehensible input, but also creating a situation that encourages a low filter. In this respect, humor can help in lowering that affective filter, reducing anxiety in the class, and encouraging students' desire to take part in what is being said in the class.

Students can profit from the language contained in jokes if we, as teachers, select them carefully and grade their level of difficulty. Moreover, several skills can be practiced through the use of jokes: listening, speaking, and reading. As Valmaaa Iribarren (1992: 39) points out: "At the end of the semester, I realized that the students not only had improved their listening skills but also had learned to select jokes and read them to others appropriately and fittingly".

The advantages and benefits of using jokes for enhancing student participation can be found in Trachtenberg (1980: 9) who mentions a number of points in favor of joke use:

- Jokes are short and can be told within the space of a few minutes.
- 2. They are rule-governed.
- There is a wide range of speech patterns within the single genre of joke.
- 4. Jokes are common to all cultures.
 - 5. Jokes embody a culture.

- 6. Speech behavior that is learned by listening to jokes and by telling jokes can be generalized to speech acts other than the joke.
- 7. Jokes are funny. They relax the tension in the classroom.

DeFelice (1996: 43), working in a context similar to ours, writes: "Teaching in a monolingual/monocultural, non-English speaking environment can at times be frustrating. You want your students to genuinely communicate with each other in socially acceptable ways, and at the same time become more aware of cultural traits.../... What is needed in a classroom is a reaction that is real because it is spontaneous. This is where jokes and funny stories can come in handy."

So, both from the literature cited above and from our own point of view, we find several advantages in the use of jokes for the teaching of English:

- The students like them, so they are a source of motivation.
- They lower the affective filter and create a relaxed atmosphere in the class.
- Most jokes are short so it does not demand long periods of attention while listening.
- Many jokes are a good way of presenting cultural aspects of the language.

- We can help our explanations and the understanding of the content by using gestures.
- Students react to what they have just heard. They show approval or dislike of the punch line.
 - If we choose the correct ones, jokes are easy to tell and easy to understand.
 - Jokes try to integrate the psychological, psycholinguistic, sociological, discourse and strategic components.
- They employ a variety of skills: first reading, second, speaking, and third listening.

Of course, not everything is advantage. There are some inherent risks for foreign learners in this word-play: the double meanings may not be apparent to our students, and without that sudden light bulb realization, the joke may not seem clever or furmy.

In this book, the reader will find various categories of jokes as well as other humorous and funny stuff which are intended to empower the teachers and learners of English to practice language more authentically.

چگونه زبان انگلیسی را از راه طنز بیاموزیم؟

دينا يوسفي

انتشارات امید مهر

معرفي كتاب

اگر کسی قصد آن داشته باشد که زبان انگلیسی را به صورت کامل فرا بگیرد ناگزیر از آن است که قدرت درک شوخ طبعی در متون زبان انگلیسی را پیدا کند چرا که طنز و شوخ طبعی بخش قابل ملاحظه ای از فرهنگ و زبان انگلیسی را تشکیل می دهد. معلمان زیان انگلیسی همواره در پی آنند که به نحوی فراگیران زبان را به سوی کاربرد و استفاده عملی از زبان انگلیسین در موقعیت های کاملا واقعی فرا خوانند و به آنان انگیزه و شوق کافی برای تکلم به زبان انگلیسی بدهند. یکی از روشهای فراگیری زبان خارجه که بدان کمتر توجه شده است استفاده از طنز و شوخ طبعی است. مطالعات و تحقیقات موجود در این زمینه، شوخ طبعی، در انواع گوناگون آن، را از عوامل انگیزه بخش فراگیری زبان خارجه دانسته و آن را از بعد عاطفی و شناختی برای امر فراگیری زبان لازم و ضروری فرض کرده است. از جمله مزایای این روش می توام به موارد زیر اشاره کرد: افزایش سرعت یادگیری، استفاده از بعد فرا-فرهنگی زبان، به کار گیری رفتارهای زبانی گوناگون، استرس زدایی از زبان آموز، بیان و درک آسان، فعال کردن دانش زمینه ای فراگیران، تاکید ہر جنبه های کمتر کار شده زبان، استفاده از تمام مهارتهای زبانی، افزایش تعامل بین شاگردان با یکدیگر و با معلم زیان در کلاس درس، افزایش توان مسئولیت پذیری و خود آموزی زبان آموز و افزایش مدت تکلم به زبان انگلیسی در کلاس هاس زبان و سایر موارد که ذکر آن فراتر از این سطور است. این کتاب برای معلمان زیان انگلیسی و نیز خودآموزان حرفه ای زبان نگاشته شده است. در این کتاب نمونه هایی، ولو اندک، از جوک ها، معماها، جملات قصار معروف، آوازها، آرایه های ادبی، اشعار و متون فکاهی، و نظایر آن آورده شده است. امید است که مطالب مندرج در این کتاب مورد قبول خاطر معلمان و فراگیران زبان انگلیسی قرار گیرد،