

HUMOR IN CHINESE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

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ABSTRACT:

Humor refers to an ability to perceive and express a sense of the clever or amusing. It consists mainly in the recognition and expression of incongruities or peculiarities present in a conversation context or character. Humor is the quality of being funny and is an art of human interaction based on a situation or context. Language teaching and learning involves planning, organizing and practically presenting a learning situation that will raise the learning ability and interest of students. In addition to language teaching skill, the relationship between teacher and student in the classroom is a principal driver to creating a good language learning environment in the classroom. Austin theorized that language use is the sum total of utterances in speech in specific contexts. This “utterance” of speech is called speech act. Humans use the utterance to do something and affect someone through conversation. In the context of the language classroom, in order to assure the learners learning is fun and interesting, a language teacher’s utterance will definitely be motivated toward the learners. Humor is described as the ‘cream’ of teacher’s speech act. Since humor is describe as the quality of being funny and an art of human interaction based on a context., this paper argues that humor in Chinese language learning optimizes the learners learning interest.

Keywords:

humor ,utterance, context, speech act

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Introduction

Humor is a part of virtually every social encounter. The use of humor and wit is intimately related to human nature. Humorous comments are speech acts that have different functions in spoken and written discourse; some involve social satire, a play on words, while others have as their target, criticism of either men or women or a particular group, nation or race (Long and Graesser,1988). Humor in the classroom is performed through linguistic or nonlinguistic means by a teacher. Confucius said that when speech is without content and art, the speaker will not impress. Teacher’s utterance has a subtle influence on the students. Their language is directly related to the merits of the quality of classroom teaching, which can restrict the efficacy of teaching. Linsky (1963) stated that teachers’ language literacy to a large extent determines the student’s mental efficiency in the classroom. In order to attract the students attention, language

teachers’ utterances should be accurate ,concise and with a sense of humor. Humor has the potential to create a more relaxed classroom atmosphere, which in turn cause s students to experience lower levels of anxiety, and thus be more motivated (Wagner and Urios-Aparisi,2009).

Austin (1962) notes that in his speech act the speaker has a motive to say things to the listener, so that the listener will react according to the intention of the speaker. Language teachers’ speech act needs to contain humor as the important element to motivate students. Loomax and Moosavi (1998) suggest that the use of humor in the classroom reduces tension, improves classroom learning atmosphere and therefore, humor will increase the enjoyment of learning. Schmitz (2002) point s out that the use of humor in language courses, not only can make classes more enjoyable, it can contribute to improving students’ proficiency. The use of

humor in language teaching is described as the cream of teachers' utterances in the language classroom, motivating students' learning interest and strengthening the relationship of teacher and students. Nowadays, students must "learn" and know "how to learn". Moreover, the teacher needs to make students "happy to learn" because they hate the boring exam orientated teaching and learning methods (Muhammad Anas et al., 2019; Maluleke & Dlamini, 2019; Mogano & Mokoale, 2019; Mohasoa & Mokoena, 2019). Students hope to be able to learn from a teacher who is always integrating humor in the language learning classroom. In my teaching supervision of trainees in secondary school, I received complaints from my trainees that students seem to have lost their interest in studying Chinese language in schools. Adolescent secondary school students are in a psychologically independent period. They need their teachers to understand their learning needs and be able to communicate with them easily. Teachers who can integrate humor in teaching are more likely to be able to fulfill the students learning needs and demands. Laughter is generally subdued during conversation. Speech will dominate and laughter serves as a phrase break creating a punctuation effect in language. It can allow the shy or timid student in the classroom to participate with the group. This is a new teaching situation in Chinese language classrooms. The objectives of this research are to explore the use of humorous language teaching in Chinese language classroom as a major factor changing students' learning interest, to gauge the feasibility of using humor in the Chinese teaching and learning classroom and to examine the changes in teacher and student relationship after humorous teaching session.

Significance of Study

Humor contains different kinds of wisdom, creativity and ability. Language is the basic of knowledge. Learning a language requires

motivation and interest. Teachers need to use humor to stimulate students in language classroom. If the student has shown learning interest during the language learning period, the teaching will become easy. Importantly, humor can make the learning process become easier. The student will have the interest to search and create new knowledge. This will help the student to enhance their study skills and learn the new knowledge. Students hope that teachers will integrate humor in teaching so that they can learn in a situation that is full of fun and joy. The learning environment in the classroom like this will optimize the learning process and therefore will guide the student to learn and apply the knowledge in their actual daily life.

Research Question

1. Will humorous language teaching will increase the level of students' motivation to learn?
2. Does humorous language teaching impress students learning Chinese language?
3. Will humorous teaching in Chinese language classroom attract more learners?

Literature Review

Humor is presented as socially and psychologically beneficial to learners, helping to relax them, to create a comfortable classroom atmosphere, to create bonds among classmates, to raise students interest, and simply to make learning more enjoyable. Language teachers are often encouraged to use humor in the classroom (Bell, 2009).

When teachers use humor effectively in the classroom, it can cause result in a number of benefits for teachers and students alike. For example, when teacher integrate humor in their language class, they may receive more student positive evaluations (Bryant et al., 1980) and teachers find that students are more willing to participate in their classes. Additionally, when students take courses from teachers who integrate

humor in their lessons, students become more highly motivated to do well in the class (Gorham & Christophel, 1992). While there are a number of benefits that teachers derive from using humor in the classroom, the most significant reason to study teacher's humor is to better understand its relationship to the quality of student learning.

One theoretical explanation for the effectiveness of humor in the language lesson and learning is based on the gaining and holding of attention of the students through its deliberate use (Ziv, 1979). The theory explains that the use of humor in the classroom may also serve as a powerful means of establishing and maintaining rapport between students and their teacher. The aim of a language teacher in applying humor in the classroom is to reduce tension, to relieve embarrassment, to disarm others who may otherwise be disruptive, to alleviate boredom, to gain favor through self-enhancement and to accomplish other pro-social goals (Gorham & Christophel, 1990). While some teachers may use humor primarily as a means of obtaining popularity with their students, a residual effect may be increased students' learning. Moreover, if students like humorous teachers, they may attend classes more frequently, pay the attention during lesson, and work harder to learn the subject. It is a fact that we are made by those individuals we like, and are more liable to comply with requests that are made by such teachers (Cialdini, 1993). In short, if students like the teacher, they will be more willing to comply with wide range of teacher requests which ultimately can result in a greater learning outcomes.

Research Methodology

This research is using the Sagor's action research methodology. Sagor's action research method (2008) is through the determination of focus of research action, confirmation of developing the action, development of teaching and learning

research strategy, action to be taken to the process of teaching and learning, and also the students learning achievement. Then it will follow with solving the actual problems that found in the process of language teaching and learning and to be match with the research objectives.

Researcher doing the field observations in the classroom has to record the relevant information. Then, analysis to information which are obtained from the observation during teaching and learning in the classroom. Observation research methods in the language classroom is based on several cycle of observation study. Questionnaires has given to the students as the feedback method in the study of teacher using humor in teaching Chinese language. In order for the students to answer the questions in the questionnaires, the contents of the questionnaire must be designed as simple as possible. In addition, researcher asked students questions that to gather the research objective and to show the unbiased factual information, especially in the study of more complex issues to the different types of people is needed to understand the different types of materials. On-line interview is based on interviews with the respondents by using language and non-verbal communication method of investigation. It is not only face to face exchanges, but interviewer using the internet to collect information from respondents. Interview with the Internet can reduce time and increases the efficiency of interviews process. Nowadays, students are fond of using Facebook. Therefore, interviews by using internet will be easy and attractive to students.

Findings

The humor found in Chinese language teaching demonstrates different styles, and comes from different angles. It can be drawn into a number of categories. Appropriate use of humor by teachers as a tool is often based on lesson content and context and also the students' character. Teachers carefully

set up a humorous, in order to achieve the expected benefits. Innovation of humorous teaching style can be used to explore teaching materials and techniques.

Exploring Chinese language textbooks, has uncovered a rich sense of humor material. This type of material can always make students laugh. The laughter at the same time lets the students appreciate the learning material. Humor in such materials can deepen the meaning of the lesson, reappearing to students. Therefore, it will enhance the sense of humor of teacher if, for example, when teaching about the nature and character of a miserly greedy master, the teacher can select the interesting plot for the teaching material. When entering the classroom, his eyes stare at the chalk box and shouts "I had to rob the gold box! ". This teacher's humorous teaching method let the students be surprised and laugh, but importantly, to think deeply.

Discovering humorous teaching materials, is also desirable in conjunction with innovation in specific teaching content or the situational humor skills of teaching. This innovative humor, may be both designed in advance or incorporated spontaneously. For example: at one point, a Chinese language teacher asked a girl to stand up for a quiz. She was looking at her books while giving the answers. Other students reported her cheating to the teacher. The teacher did not criticize her directly, but funnily spoke, saying, " you probably don't know about it, to peek is a very important capability - Perhaps I want people to have this strange ability. ' The students laughed, but still looked at him doubtfully. He went on to say: ' peeking is with eyes in the lightning speed from the pages you had passed through. The use of the fastest speed captured your need access to the information like this is called scan-speed reading. This is a very important reading skill, that wouldn't you just use a little time to

cultivate of it? Of course, during the examination, you should not develop this ability you have."

The teacher explanation caused gales of laughter from students. This spontaneous humorous moment allowed the creation of an atmosphere of a friendly moderate. It did not undermine students ' enthusiasm, but it gave the students both well-intentioned advice and criticism. Flexible teaching like this can be full of excitement and a meaningful art. This requires teachers to have a both skill and great experience.

When teacher integrates humor in a language class, they should let the humor arise naturally, encourage it, and keep it relevant to the teaching topic. Teachers shouldn't feel discouraged if at first the humor doesn't meet their expectations. Provine (2000) states that the reaction of a teacher to the topics may be the most amusing part. Like all things, proper preparation is needed for proper delivery.

A good language teacher using humor in the classroom will never force himself to use it during every class. Experienced language teachers can easily try different genres, ways of learning or cartoon in the teaching because the class is made up of individuals with different needs from their teacher. Humor works best as a natural, on-going part of classroom learning. Teachers has to be very careful that they do not over use it, for it could loose its value and effect. With practice teachers develop a personal style and comfort zone with humor. The use of humor will depend on the teaching content being taught and the availability of appropriate material. Language teachers should also have a specific goals or objective in mind. Teachers using humor in their teaching must be well prepared. However, when humor is planned as part of the teaching strategy, a caring environment is established, there is an attitude of flexibility, and an

open style of communication between student and teacher in the classroom. So a tone is set that allows for human error, with a freedom to explore alternatives in the learning situation. This reduces the authoritarian role of the teacher, allowing the teacher to become a facilitator of the learning process. Fear and anxiety, only natural in a new and unknown situation, becomes less dominant, as a partnership between student and teacher is developed.

Discussion

Modern teaching will not only requires students to learn and to discover knowledge by themselves but it also to allow the students to study happily. Therefore, to achieve this purpose, humor is an important way of teaching language. Humor is one of the interesting and efficient ways of stimulating students' learning interest.

1. Classroom as an Active Learning Environment

The classroom is an important part of teaching and learning location. Laughter will create a positive learning environment in the classroom. It will bring teaching and learning easy, and effectively. In the active learning classroom, students can participate actively in the teaching and learning process. It will help students learn by creatively and without tense. Humors will be the art of teaching. It will motivate the students to learn happily (Mottan, 2019).

2. The Lubricants of Teacher and Students Relationship

Humor brings laughter and creates a peaceful learning situation. This can avoid psychological gap between teacher and students. Therefore, it will create a good teaching and learning environment in the classroom. When teachers lack of a sense of humor behaviour may be simple and rude, creating an emotional confrontation between teachers and students. For example: a male student in the

Chinese language class was often fond of talking nonsense in the classroom. In this situation, the teacher can give him an advice without anger, but with a smile, "speaking of nonsense is to consume a certain amount of energy, you're not trying to lose weight, aren't you?" This student will stop the nonsense and be silent. The others will not only be giving a happy smile but respect to the teacher (Tan, 2019).

3. To stimulate students' learning interest

One of the basic characteristics of humorous teaching is fun. It is closely related to the students' learning interest. Humor that is integrated into language learning can lead to students' emotional resonance, and stimulate students' learning interest; to cause curiosity in learning and make what may be dull into a spiritual enjoyment of learning. In short, humor can stimulate students' desire to search for knowledge, passion and power.

4. To improve students' creative ability

Humorous in teaching is a sign of wisdom. Congress has a sense of humor. It can stimulus and develop the creativity of the students. Humor helps the students to think and reason, because it can make students feel comfortable without any stress. Therefore, students are free to develop innovative ideas in a pleasant learning atmosphere. Students dare to envisage and creatively to receive new knowledge. This will be form a positive learning attitude in the classroom as the they are more willing to express themselves.

5. Consolidation of knowledge and memory

Humor can help students understand what they have learned. It can also deepen students' memory. From the psychological point of view, while students in the learning process, their brain will be fatigue. If there is an appropriate use of humor in teaching, the laughter will gives a good relaxing moment to students from time to time, so that it can

reduce fatigue and to stimulate the brain. Therefore, humor is to enhance the learning interest by creating a relaxing learning situation.

Recommendation

Humor as an effective tool in teaching. It plays an important role by giving teachers pleasant and efficient completion of the task of teaching. Humor as a teaching tool, basically is not just confined to the general characteristics, but also has educational functions. Therefore, it is advised that in the teaching process, the use of humor be incorporated in some of the principles.

The Unity Of Solemn And Harmonic

Basically, the use of humor in teaching is a beautiful teaching art form, but it must be used in appropriate ways. The appropriate ways will be reflected in the aspects of quantity and quality. In a language classroom although humor is often used during language lesson, it doesn't bring the desired effect to the teaching and learning in the classroom. The students feel boredom and even unhappy. For example, if a teacher saw some students dozing, he was publicly ridiculed, "Do you know what it is monkey's hobby?". This sarcastic style of humor though had amused everyone, hurt the student's self-esteem. The quality of using humor in teaching must not be hurtful or vulgar, nor simply as amusement, but with a high aesthetic value and educational value.

Humorous Teaching Is To Serve The Needs Of Teaching

The use of the humor in teaching language is a useful form of teaching. It is a tool for the teaching towards success. The sense of humor can be a means to achieve specific teaching objectives. Therefore, the frequency of use of humor and is determined by the needs of the teaching content of the decision. Humor is often used to inspire the students learning. Students learn effectively by the

positive thinking and their desire to know facts, with shared appreciation and acceptance of being a learner. The laughter stimulates a deep thinking or imagination, so that teacher can motivate their students to learn about the flexibility and creative thinking. Humor can be used for the purpose of motivating the student to learn and acquire knowledge in the classroom context. If the teacher is using humor in teaching without purpose or content, it appears at the expense of the teaching, and will be a waste of learning time in the classroom.

To Fulfill The Actual Needs Of The Students

In teaching, the teacher is the embodiment of a humorous initiative. In this context, students are trained to have a humorous perception of the subject. If the humor in teaching is beyond the students' needs, it is difficult to resonate with it, becoming deformed or stale. The only reason for using humor in teaching in the classroom is the students. Teaching with humor only should be considered to consistently enhance students understanding and acceptance. There are differences in the styles of thinking of the students in upper and lower secondary forms. The ability of the thinking is depends on the perceptual experience in the daily life. The lower form students mainly needs on direct experience in learning, while the thinking of upper form students has gradually more abstract, because they are in the rapidly developing a more dialectical thinking process. The upper form students are able to understand the deeper meanings of language, thus humor should be use in a different level. If a language teacher does not consider the student's experience, cultural background knowledge differences between teachers and students, the students will not learn to appreciate the use of humor in the language classroom. Therefore, the content of teaching and the level of humor principally should consider the level of students' understanding and acceptance, and teachers and

students will enjoy the refreshing sense of humor in the language classroom.

Conclusion

Humor in Chinese language classrooms can increase students' learning interest. Students may dislike Chinese language class if teachers use lecture method of teaching. There is no attractive learning environment in the classroom. Humor in teaching Chinese language can increase students' learning interest. In addition, it will strengthen the teacher and students relationship in the classroom. This will reduce the disciplinary problem in the Chinese language classroom. Since humor is the cream of teachers' speech act, it will make students receptive to teacher's criticism and instruction in the classroom. The learning environment will be full of joy and inspiration.

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