

Humorous Reformulations and the Acquisition of Students' Interactional Competence

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This paper proposes to deepen the knowledge of two interrelated mechanisms when addressing both the construction of the intersubjective space and the achievement of interactional competence: reformulation and humor. The data processed by ethnographic method, were obtained by analyzing several sequences in which the word is spoken as live interaction to produce different effects (linguistic, cognitive, and relational) in a specific actional microcosm: humor in the classroom. The result of the observations converges on the fact that students are able to create humorous situations through reformulation within a variety of participation frameworks. From all this, it could be deduced that the humorous reformulation sensitizes students towards formal and pragmatic aspects of language use and therefore allows them to improve their language skills and knowledge of social norms.

Keywords: humor, point of view (PDV), reformulation, interactional competence

Introduction

Learning, according to DIEC2¹ means to acquire knowledge and understanding, as philosophical dictionary André Comte-Sponville implies a correlation between subject and object, between mind and world. This adaptation is likely to be affected by the humor in its communicative aspect, which comes from the ability to build links with others, because each individual is determined through contact with others. This paper proposes to deepen the knowledge of two interrelated mechanisms when addressing both the construction of the intersubjective space and the achievement of interactional competence: reformulation and humor, through the analysis of several spoken sequences in which the word is spoken as live interaction to produce different effects (linguistic, cognitive, and relational) in a specific actional microcosm: humor in the classroom.

The Reformulations² and Humor

The reformulation of words and actions plays an important role in the production of conversational humor (Norrick, 1993). A traditional children's game that illustrates this is the game of the phone that consists of the transmission of a word or sentence by whispering it in different people's ears so that when the last player repeats the word or the sentence again in loud voice comic explosion occurs since that word or sentence is very different from what the first player had said.

Theories of humor have noted, on the one hand, the automatic repetition aspect as an actional mechanism

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¹ The dictionary of the Catalan Language Institute.

² From an enunciative viewpoint, the author will talk about reformulation when there is a return to a previous segment (EF) in order to represent it (ER). In this paper the concepts of repetition and reformulation designate the same phenomenon.

(Bergson, 1900) and on the other, the creative aspect of variation. In this sense Degoumois (2012) tells about the dichotomy between the notion of “fixité” and “créativité”. The notion of creativity has to do with the fact that repetition can never be identical because of the change that occurs between the original and the copy, and because of the change of context. This potential for variation and automaticity generates according to Norrick (1993), a fertile ground for the production of humor. In fact, in spontaneous conversation participants re-contextualize or modify the above utterance (or voice) to bring out a new meaning. To Norrick, repetition, particularly, acts as a carrier of sarcasm, irony and wordplay in relation to the previous discourse and it is also useful to identify errors and stylistic idiosyncrasies and increasing their comic sense. He also noted how humor repetition helps to identify inappropriate ways of speaking, and may have meta-linguistic strength when discussing aspects of building sentences and vocabulary from another voice or somebody else. Therefore, jokes allow interlocutors to define an appropriate way to talk in the interaction and help consequently to establish a good relationship among the participants in a conversation (v. interactional competence).

Proposal for the Typology of Reformulations

Next it will be presented a couple of reformulations that are observed in the current corpus. During the analysis, this paper will refer to the usual distinctions between self and hetero-reformulation.

Replay

Constantin de Chanay and Vigier (2010) refer to the replay when the previous utterance (EF) belongs to a discourse placed out of a same interaction. So, the replay refers to the return about an EF that stands in any of the previous sessions to this one.

Paradigmatic Reformulations

In the present corpus, this kind of reformulations has been the most interesting to observe as humor carrier. According to Constantin de Chanay and Vigier (2010), in the paradigmatic reformulations, the locutor³ produces variations rather than corrections of a previous statement in the sense of paradigmatic accumulations.

From the Notion of Social Representation (SR) to the Humorous Dimension

This section will focus on the way this study has treated the notion of SR and which theoretical, methodological and didactic implications the author has mobilized to approach it. In this sense, the viewpoint that makes social psychology, which considers representations as complex phenomena that are composed of several elements: informative, cognitive, ideological, and normative will be noted. The representations include beliefs, values, attitudes, opinions, images, which organize themselves as knowledge of the state of reality. Also, this paper is interested in considering the socio-constructivist perspective of this notion that states that discourse is the place of SR construction and remodeling. This does not necessarily imply that these SR vary, but that it is in this context, the discursive one, that they adopt a sense.

It will be taken into account a couple of approaches, the first one has to do with the Moscovici (1961) positioning from which he maintained that the SRs are not only mental products but also symbolic constructions that are generated in the course of interaction, since SR constitutes a form of knowledge socially elaborated and shared, that it has a practical purpose and contributes to the building of a common reality in a

³ The speaker is understood as the application that produces the utterance: “dans ses dimensions phonétiques et phatiques ou scripturales” (cf. Rabatel, 2013).

social group (Jodelet, 2008).

The second one is related to the role that socially shared representations plays in the processes of understanding and of assimilation of the knowledge that disciplines like didactics have promoted. Therefore, that approach considers the fact that the representations retained by learners can facilitate these processes or hinder them in return. It is in this point where the logical bond between social representations and education is articulated.

The analysis of the corpus that this paper presents focuses on the observation of the linguistic practices of the class group members. So it will be necessary to speak about the concept of linguistic representation (LR).

Cécile Petitjean (2011) speaks about the notion of LR as an SR that is centered in the linguistic practices of the actors, which are keys to understand how they construct and organize their social reality together.

The notion of LR is necessary to deal certain dimensions of the interactional competence, in particular the humorous dimension. Interactional competence is the set of knowledge that is available to the social actors from which they can collectively describe the linguistic, gestural, and sequential resources that will enable them to adapt themselves to social practices (Petitjean & Priego-Valverde, 2013, p. 45).

The humor represents one of the different aspects of the different procedures that actors exploit methodologically to cope with their activities in interaction. It is considered that humor has different functions in interaction, such as providing a form of connivance among the participants, creating complicity and, finally, maintaining the tie among the interlocutors. Linguistic practices that LR are centered on are only studied from the observation of the materials that construct them, thanks to which these practices are put in circulation in the social sphere through the discourse in interaction.

In this sense, the type of data involved and the analysis modalities of these make a real-time observation of the actors' positioning in relation to the contents that they put in circulation.⁴ Furthermore this helps to find the relationship between the activities of discursive modulation and the degrees of L/E⁵ discourse adhesion in the emergent SR (Petitjean, 2011). In this sense, the notions of SR and LR are imbricated in the concept of point of view (PDV). The contribution of this approach, in terms of the SR and LR nature, resides in the reconfiguration proposed of the ties between *Ego* and *Alter*: the Bakhtine's (1965) dialogism, and the enunciative polyphony of Authier-Revuz (1984), that puts forward the idea of the presence of the other one in the ego discourse and that it goes beyond the opposition *me/you* to reach the multiplicity of voices.

Petitjean (2011) and Simona Pekarek-Doehler and Morel (2013) privilege this approach and it is corresponded to the praxeological conception of representations, from which an observation of the representations in action comes out, that is to say, not only through the discourse about their practices but through the actual actors practices.

Point of View (PDV)

The L, in any production, has the option to take over or not⁶ the propositional content of the utterance that they produce. In addition, this propositional content, that is called PDV, can be shared, or not, by other partners, which leads to define the concept of postures.

⁴ cf. cronogenesis (v. methodology).

⁵ The enunciator (E) or enunciators (e) correspond with an enunciative position which the speaker (L) adopts in his discourse and this enunciative position makes reference to different voices that L convenes in his discourse "pour envisager les faits, les notions, sous tel ou tel PDV" (cf. Rabatel, 2013).

⁶ cf. *prise en charge*.

PDV term derives from sociology and it is understood as the positioning adopted by the participants in a conversation facing the utterances that are produced in it, considering that in a conversation participants are negotiating and continuously adapting their utterances to different purposes, one of which may be to reach consensus. If everyone disagrees, it is difficult for the conversation to progress and similarly if everyone agrees.⁷ Thus, interlocutors adapt and modalize different PDV that has been surfacing during the interaction to come to an understanding. Therefore, the positions correspond with the relationships among the different linguistic E in the linguistic co-construction of the same PDV. In this negotiation, Rabatel (2013) distinguishes three different positions: the co-enunciation, the under-enunciation, and the sub-enunciation.

The co-enunciation is the co-production of a shared PDV by several E; the under-enunciation is the co-production of a dominant PDV that L1/E1 reformulates in order to give the impression that the same thing has been said but with some modification for the purpose of the argumentative orientation that most benefits him according to his intentions. The sub-enunciation is the co-production of a dominated PDV which the L1/E1 reformulates while moving away from it, since this PDV comes from a source to that L1/E1 concedes a prominent statute.

So, in a semantic and cognitive level, the co-enunciation involves thinking and talking to the other ones; the under-enunciation speaking and thinking above the other ones—therefore, taking a higher position, at least, in the cognitive level, with a symbolic and institutional benefit; and the sub-enunciation, refuting the words of the other ones.

Methodology

This paper will be approached through a qualitative and ethnographic method, based on the observation, the analysis, and the interpretation of the interactions in the classroom. To obtain the corpus presented it has been recorded⁸ a session of approximately one hour duration of social science class (11-12 years old) of the first degree of compulsory secondary education in a high school. This recording has taken place during the second term of the year. Regarding the students,⁹ at that time of the year they have already spent quite a lot of time together so that the relationships among them have been able to settle in the class. It is believed that it is necessary to bear this information in mind when observing the comical episodes that can take place in the classroom, since all these elements contribute to create a determinate class atmosphere in which, humor, among other phenomena, gestates.

The type of exchange observed in the classroom is, mostly, the dyadic one; even though interactions are often more complex and it will be necessary to refer a plurality of roles and relationships that alternate among the different interlocutors.

To make the transcription of the data obtained and to carry out its analysis, the dimensions that the consolidated group of research of the Barcelona University—Plurilingualism and Language Learning (from now, PLURAL group)—proposes have been considered. So, it will be taken three dimensions into account: the interlocutive dimension, the thematic dimension, and the enunciative dimension.

In order to analyze the data obtained, fragments that contained humorous passages (or that were recognized

⁷ cf. *tournerait en rond* (Rabatel, 2013).

⁸ The author has recorded that session with three cameras: a Sony DCR-SX65E, a Samsung Digital Cam vd-dc161/XEF, and a Panasonic VHS-C Movie Camera NV-R10.

⁹ The author has used a pseudonym in order to keep their identity hidden.

as humorous by the participants as evidenced by their laughter or by their verbal, para-verbal, or non verbal productions) and that were also related to the reformulation have been isolated from the transcription.

These fragments belonging to the transcription of the social science class that this paper presents have been arranged in chronological order since the cronogenesis notion, typical of the didactic contract, gives quite a lot of information to understand the mood changes that are produced in the interlocutors and that are translated into the emergency and the management of the different PDV, thus, the appearance of humor. Besides, the chronological disposition of the fragments is indispensable information to understand how it advances in both the time axis of the session and in learning.

Context

Regarding the group that has been recorded it was comprised of 35 pupils: 16 boys and 19 girls aged between 12 and 13—there are two 14 year-old repeating students. In class different levels of learning have been observed. As for the lesson plan, it has consisted of the study of prehistory that took place on Friday 22 February 2013 from 11.30 am to 12.30 am. Only a pupil out of the 35, Minerva, missed the lesson.

Besides, Genoveva, Eudald, Gustavo, Karina, Mohamed, Iván, Alberto, Brenda, and Ares¹⁰ were taking their second-chance examination of the first term and were distributed in the classroom in a different way, while the rest of the group were having the actual lesson. To finish this section, it is important to point out that the disposition of the pupils in the classroom has been the following one (see Figure 1).

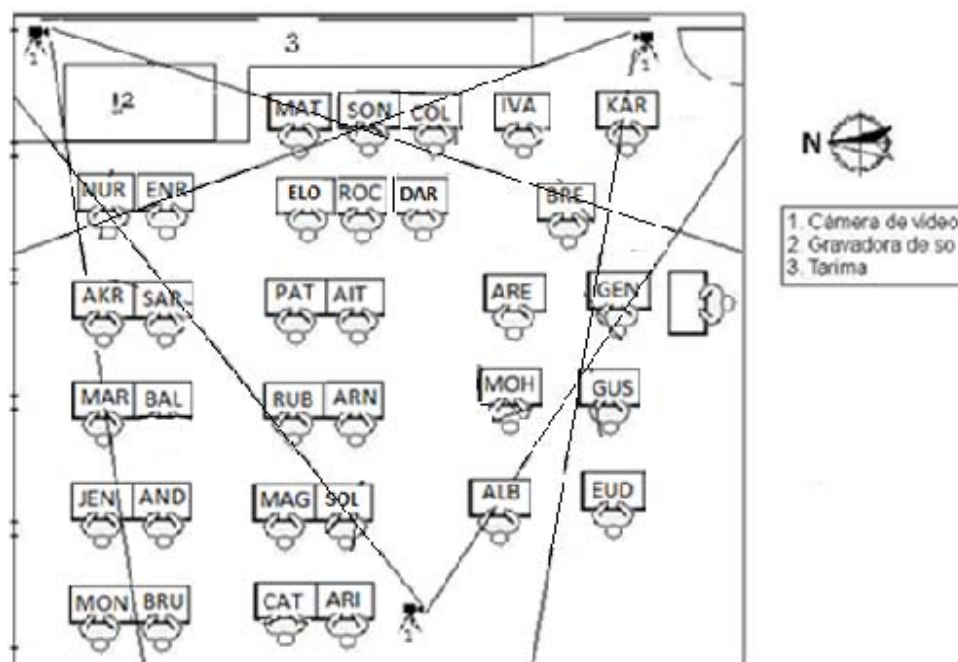


Figure 1. Localization of the students within the classroom.

Data Analysis

Example (1)

The first four examples—(1), (2), (3), and (4)—correspond on the segment of structuring and, precisely,

¹⁰ The names of the students and the teacher are not real.

the action that it is being carried out is that of explanation. In this first example, the teacher asks the pupils at what age they believe people were considered elderly in the prehistory. This moment will constitute the EF from which it will originate a comical fragment further on in the conversation (v. infra):

107 TEACHER: more or less approximately	107 PRO: més o menys aproximadament
108 CLASS: 68	108 CLA: 68
109 TEACHER: 68/ (...)	109 PRO: 68/ (...)
115 RUBÉN: 20	115 RUBÉN: 20
116 TEACHER: 20 there are many differences ¿aren't there? from the almost 70 that they are telling me over there to the 20 here	116 PRO: 20\ hi ha moltes diferències ¿eh? dels gairebé 70 que diuen per aquí als 20
117 CLASS: 70	117 CLA: 70
118 TEACHER: 70 ¿ok? to you Nowadays maybe a person of 40 is already old ¿isn't it? Nowadays	118 PRO: 70 ¿val? per vosaltres a dia d'avui potser una persona de 40 anys ja és gran ¿no? a dia d'avui
119 CLASS: 60	119 CLA: 60
120 TEACHER: ok/ but if now you think of an elderly person/ 60 70/ ¿yes? at that time life expectancy is much lower because_ because_ the conditions in which they lived aren't the conditions and the comfort that we have Nowadays_	120 PRO: val/ però si ara penseu en una persona gran/ 60 70/ ¿sí? en aquella època l'esperança de vida és molt més baixa perquè_ perquè_ les condicions en què vivien no són les condicions i les comoditats que tenim a dia d'avui_

Example (2)

As a result of the nomadic concept, reformulated from the handbook, the explanation results in the eating habits in the prehistory. In turn 168, the teacher makes students understand that when someone talks about the relationship that settles between the eating habits and different cultures, it is tended to think of the case of “pork” or of the “beef” in “India”, however, the science teacher, Lali, provides them with other cases to collate such as the case in England and the fact that there they “do not eat rabbit”. The opposition between “our” habits and those of others as to eating is marked by the use of the verbal persons and the pronouns: “we”, “us”, “they eat”. Aitor selects himself (T 170) by adding an axiological comment possibly because of the change to colloquial register, which makes students laugh the students in the following turn. This turn will start a series of paradigmatic reformulations. Baltasar (T 179) recycles turn 174 and associates some information: “They hunt on the wing” with “chopsticks”. From this reformulated connotation with the iconic gesture he adds: “you will achieve what you have set your mind to”. The teacher, in turn 180, accepts and follows the humorous look of the *non sequitur* Baltasar's utterance, while opening a series of exchanges in which the co-construction of the humorous sequence is appreciated.

This fragment is interesting to analyze both at semantic, pragmatic, and enunciative levels. Regarding the semantic point of view, the humor rests on a game of associations that derives from the semantic isotopie that is organized around a hyper-subject: the exoticism of the Western culture. This isotopie unfolds at the same time at three levels in the interaction with its respective connotators:

First level: disgusting food: rat (T 168), flies (T 170), ants (T 176), sharks (T 178)

Second level: way of eating: They hunt flies on the wing with chopsticks (174, 179)

Third level: martial arts: On *Karate kid* they say if you hunt a fly you will be able to achieve everything you wish (T 179, T 181, T 186, T 190).

This thematic progression that is moving further away from the issue that the teacher's turn 168 had adopted—which works as a digression of the explanation about food in the prehistory—is the origin, partly, of the humorous tone of this fragment.

168 TEACHER: but without being_ we always speak about pork_ or about beef or like this ¿don't we? in India/ as a particular case _ in England for example_ do not eat rabbit\ rabbit in England it is considered derived from rat\ however here we\ I do not know if you like it or not ¿don't you?\ it is an a little special meat that not everyone likes_ but it is a meat that you can find in any supermarket and in any butchery ¿did you know this?	168 PRO: però sense ser_ sempre parlem del porc_ o de les vaques o així ¿no? a la Índia/ però sense anar tan lluny_ a Anglaterra per exemple_ no mengen conill\ el conill a Anglaterra es considera un derivat de la rata\ en canvi nosaltres aquí\ no sé si us agrada o no ¿eh? és una carn una mica especial que no a tothom els agrada_ però és una carn que et trobes a qualsevol supermercat i a qualsevol carnisseria ¿sí? ¿ho sabíeu això?
169 CLASS: yes	169 CLA: sí
170 AITOR: The Chinese eat flies/	170 AITOR: los chinos comen moscas/
171 CLASS: @@@	171 CLA: @@@
172 TEACHER: sorry ¿what you have just said? [¿what?]	172 PRO: ¿com perdona? [¿qué?]
173 AITOR: [flies]	173 AITOR: [moscas]
174 RUBÉN: They hunt them on the wing and they eat them	174 RUBÉN: les pillen a l'aire i se les mengen
175 TEACHER: fine	175 PRO: bueno
176 CLASS: and also ants_	176 CLA: i formigues també_
177 TEACHER: of course	177 PRO: clar\
178 MAGDA: and sharks_	178 MAGDA: i taurons_
179 BALTASAR: XXX chopsticks* and you will achieve what you have set your mind to	179 BALTASAR: XXX los palillos chinos* y puedes hacer todo lo que te propongas
*(he makes a gesture with the forefingers and thumb to indicate that he takes the chopsticks))	*((fa un gest amb els dits índex i polze per fer veure que agafa uns palets xinesos))
180 TEACHER: ¿oh yes?	180 PRO: sí ¿no?
181 BALTASAR: I learned it in karate kid	181 BALTASAR: lo aprendí en karate kid
182 CLASS: @@@	182 CLA: @@@
183 TEACHER: ¿have you ever done this?	183 PRO: ¿tu ho has fet això?
184 BALTASAR: no\ I do not know how to use chopsticks	184 BALTASAR: no\ no sé usar los palillos chinos
185 CLASS: @@@	185 CLA: @@@
186 TEACHER: @@@ then listen Baltasar maybe when you hunt a fly you will be able to achieve everything you wish XXX	186 PRO: @@@ doncs mira Baltasar potser el dia que cacis una mosca podràs aconseguir tot allò que et proposis XXX
187 CLASS: @@	187 CLA: @@
188 TEACHER: it would be good *¿wouldn't it? ¿yes? We might start to do it_	188 PRO: estaria bé *¿no? ¿sí? podríem començar a fer-ho_
*→ ((Baltasar nods))	*→ ((El Baltasar fa que sí amb el cap))
189 BALTASAR: XXX the chopsticks	189 BALTASAR: XXX los palillos
190 TEACHER: If a problem finding chopsticks I may get them for you/ This is not necessarily a problem @@@	190 PRO: si el problema són els palillos ja te'ls proporciono jo/ per això no hi ha problema @@@
191 CLASS: @@@	191 CLA: @@@
192 TEACHER: this weekend I will order Chinese food	192 PRO: aquest cap de setmana encarrego menjar xinès a casa
193 BALTASAR: @@@	193 BALTASAR: @@@
194 TEACHER: and I'll bring your chopsticks on Monday\ tell me/	194 PRO: i et porto dilluns els palillos\ digue'm/

From an enunciative point of view, the syllogism introduced by the teacher in turn 186 and that recycles, by diaphony, turns 174 and 179, is interesting:

T 174: “[Chinese] They hunt them [flies] on the wing and they eat them”

T 179: “XXX [hunts flies with] “chopsticks and you will achieve what you have set your mind to”

T 186: “then listen Baltasar maybe when you hunt a fly you will be able to achieve everything you wish”

In turn 186, the teacher reorients the impersonal speech of T 174 and T 179 towards her objective: Baltasar, that is to say, to the second person: “you will achieve”, “you have set your”. The teacher has this student under her spell and by semantic isotopie creates this ironic utterance that the student's success is based on the possibility of his hunting a fly. This customization hides implicitly another PDV [= you will pass your exam when you set yourself to do so]. Besides, the utterance of T 186 has three different enunciators, one of which coincides with the speaker:

E1: the speaker who assumes the game started by the student.

E2: the teacher who ironically recycles the above utterances and therefore, she replies consciously to the provocation that this student starts.

E3: the tutor who uses this utterance to tell the student that if he wants he can manage to pass the exam.

The humor participates in the clash of these three postures and of the implicit PDV that derives from them and that the class identifies because it is part of its conversational history from which a series of roles are associated with each member of the group.

From a pragmatic point of view, the power struggle which is sustained from turn 179 to 194 between Baltasar and the teacher is outstanding. The irony, which emanates from the under-enunciated turn 186, mentioned above (cf. *supra*) has to be interpreted in a humorous key, as both the teacher and the pupils' laughter illustrate—including Baltasar's (T 193). In this sequence, humor presents the confrontation between student and teacher and at the same time it works to remind the student that no matter how funny he tries to be, his objective is to pass the compulsory secondary education, and that is why he is in a classroom. That is to say, the humor mobilized by the teacher puts the student in his place in relation to the institutional role that he develops in the classroom, but she uses the tools that the student provides her with in order to cope with a delicate situation without making use of the power that has hierarchically been conceded to her.

Example (3)

The teacher proposes them to define the concept "history" as a possible exam question. Then Mariona asks her about the anecdote that the teacher had explained in the 12 February session (v. *supra*) making use of the replay.

236 MARIONA: Lali ¿what was it that you said that the succession is succ-?	236 MARIONA: Lali ¿què era allò que vas dir que és la successió succ-?
237 TEACHER: it is the succession of events	237 PRO: és la successió de successos
238 ANDREA: history is the successive succession	238 ANDREA: la història és la successió successiva
239 TEACHER: [successive events occurred in succession]	239 PRO: [successiva de successos succeïts successivament]
240 CLASS: [successive events occurred in succession]	240 CLA: [successiva de successos succeïts successivament]
@@@	@@@
241 AITOR: ¿what?	241 AITOR: ¿cómo cómo?
242 CLASS: XXX	242 CLA: XXX
243 ARIEL: you did not tell us about it	243 ARIEL: a nosaltres no ens ho vas dir
244 TEACHER: ¿did not I say it to you?	244 PRO: ¿no us ho vaig dir?
245 CLASS: no:::	245 CLA: no:::
246 ENRIC: yes/ me yes/I wrote it down/	246 ENRIC: sí/ yo sí/ yo lo tengo apuntao/
247 TEACHER: of course\ it was with half of the group_	247 PRO: clar\ era amb la classe partida_
248 ANDREA: the history of the events	248 ANDREA: la història dels successos
249 TEACHER: ¿look Enric has it in his notebook/	249 PRO: ¿mira l'Enric ho té apuntat/
250 ENRIC: I wrote down it here	250 ENRIC: lo tenia aquí
251 TEACHER: {((to the group C1 students)) @@@ the definition of history is an anecdote that I explained to them the first day that we taught prehistory at university	251 PRO: {((als alumnes del grup C1)) @@@ la definició d'història és una anècdota que els hi vaig explicar que els hi deia que el primer dia que vam fer classe de prehistòria a la universitat}

Students replay this anecdote, in which the importance of sharing knowledge remains evident in the cohesion of a group. In this session, the pupils of group C2 laugh (T 240) because of the replay of the anecdote in class, but the other half do not know what their classmates are telling about and they ask about it (T 243).

Example (4)

Ruben corrects the tribes organization's exercise, and the student-teacher dialogue (T 341 to T 347) leads to the reflection that the teacher had proposed about the age humans (in prehistory) were considered elderly (T 347), which is consisted of the T 120's reformulation (v. Example (1)).

341 TEACHER: mm and ¿how are tribes organised?/ come on/ Rubén @@@	341 PRO: mm i ¿com s'organitzen les tribus?/ va/ Rubén @@@
342 RUBÉN: @ well eh::	342 RUBÉN: @ bueno e::
343 AITOR: not now\	343 AITOR: ahora no\
344 RUBÉN: @ men go hunting and women and children help to kill small animals and to:: gather food	344 RUBÉN: @ els homes van a caçar les dones i els nens petits ajuden a matar animals petits i a:: recol·lectar
345 TEACHER: rather than killing is hunting ¿isn't it? It is not to kill for fun it is to hunt:: to eat @@@ ¿and what about the elderly::?	345 PRO: més que matar és caçar ¿eh? no és matar per matar és caçar:: per menjar @@@ ¿i els ancians::?
346 RUBÉN: ah/ and the elderly the rituals ¿don't they?	346 RUBÉN: ah/ i els ancians els rituals ¿no?
347 TEACHER: when we speak about elderly_ I didn't say before_ we are speaking about people in their thirties, aren't we? At that time_ when you said seventy_ I didn't say this_ an elderly XXX	347 PRO: quan parlem d'ancians_ abans no ho he dit_ estem parlant de gent de trenta anys ¿eh? en aquesta època_ que abans deïeu setanta_ no ho he dit això_ un ancià XXX
348 IVÁN: that's it you at that time::	348 IVÁN: o sigui tu en aquella època::
349 TEACHER: {(making fun)} ¿I beg your pardon? ¿What?}	349 PRO: {(fent broma)} ¿eh? ¿què?}
350 CLASS: @@@	350 CLA: @@@
351 TEACHER: me at that time ¿what? I would already kick the bucket ¿you mean?/ @@@	351 PRO: jo a aquella època ¿què? ja estaria al foso ¿no? vols dir/ @@@
352 CLASS: @@@	352 CLA: @@@
353 TEACHER: you would already have buried me ¿you mean?/ →((Iván nods))	353 PRO: ja m'hauries enterrat ¿no? vols dir/ →((L'Iván fa que sí amb el cap))
354 BALTASAR: a ques- a question @@@	354 BALTASAR: una co- una pregunta @@@
355 TEACHER: {(to Iván)} and you already:: you would be a grown-up man ¿ok::? You would have to go to hunt_ you would not be a child either::}	355 PRO: {(a l'Iván)} i tu ja:: series un home hecho y derecho ¿eh::? hauries d'anar a caçar_ això d'infant tampoc series::}
356 BAL: XXX	356 BAL: XXX
357 TEACHER: it means_ to assume responsibility → ((Iván nods))	357 PRO: vol dir_ assumir responsabilitat → ((L'Iván fa que sí amb el cap))
358 BALTASAR: it would be XX man	358 BALTASAR: seria XX hombre
359 IVÁN: you see::* to have one foot in the grave *(He takes the catalan notes, he looks at me and he nods to me once))	359 IVÁN: mira és::* tenir un peu a la tomba *((agafa els apunts de català, em mira a mi i em fa un cop de cap))
360 ME: @@@	360 JO: @@@
361 ELOI: @@@ to have one foot in the grave @@@	361 ELOI: @@@ tenir un peu a la tomba @@@
362 AKRAM: @@@	362 AKRAM: @@@
363 CLASS: XXX	363 CLASS: XXX
364 IVÁN: {(he says it for the rest of the class)} it would be that sentence*/ Lali at that time would have one foot in the grave_ *(He looks at me))	364 IVÁN: {(ho diu per la resta de la classe)} eso seria la frase aquella*/ que la Lali en aquella època tindria un peu a la tomba_ *(em mira))
365 TEACHER: @@@	365 PRO: @@@
366 ME: @@@	366 JO: @@@
367 COLOMA: poor Lali	367 COLOMA: pobre Lali
368 TEACHER: ((to Coloma)) {(ironic tone)} no\ no_ let him speak_ let him speak_ let him speak} @@@	368 PRO: ((a la Coloma)) {(to irònic)} no\ no_ ell que xerri_ tu deixa'l_ tu deixa'l} @@@
369 IVÁN: But I don't do it in a mean-spirited way @@@	369 IVÁN: pero no lo hago con maldad @@@

Humor in this fragment appears from turns 347 to 348. In turn, the teacher speaks in first person of the plural (we “talk”, “we are”) to refer both to her and to historians.

Iván personalizes the utterance of the teacher making use of the personal pronoun: “You” (T 348) and sets the recipient utterance that he leaves unfinished on purpose as it is shown with the suspensive intonation that he uses. In this way, he proposes a ludic frame that the teacher accepts in the following turn and that the pupils ratify with their laughter of turn 350.

Lali recycles anaphorically turn 348 (“at that time”) and she enjoys herself by concatenating other possible continuations (T 351 and T 353) to the student utterance, which he had left open (T 348). These continuations are dialogical since they intend to be the echo of the student's voice in turn 348, as the epiphora in the teacher's turns 351 and 353 illustrates: “¿you mean?”. Besides, they are axiological constructions, since they have

pejorative meanings ("I would already kick the bucket" turn 351, "you would already have buried me" turn 353) that are conveying batological and redundant tone, as a token of humor.

However, the teacher takes a step further, and counter-attacks in turns 355 and 357. At the beginning of turn 355: "you would be a grown-up man (...)" she refers, in an elliptical way, to the structure proposed by the pupil in turn 348: "you at that time". To achieve her target she describes what a 12-year-old prehistoric human would be like making use of the reformulations as it is indicated in the outline:

(T 355) you would be a grown-up man/You would have to go to hunt/you would not be a child either (T 357) To assume responsibility

This accumulation of arguments places the teacher in a higher position in relation to the student. It may be said that these arguments have a taxemic character since they help the teacher to restore the institutional role which pupil's comments seemed to have clearly undermined. This status that the teacher restores from turns 355 to 357 is strengthened, on the one hand, thanks to the litotic value, as a token of irony, in the teacher's utterance in turn 368, since the implicit PDV that emanates from this utterance is [= let him speak because it's me who decides on his marks], and on the other hand, the pupil's apologies in turn 369. Obviously, the laughter that accompanies turns 368 and 369 let understand the non serious ludic character, of the fragment.

Example (5)

This last example belongs to the closing segment of the session. Students spend the last few minutes to do exercise 18, which they will correct the next day. The pupils are already tired of the class and they start to be worried. Thus the teacher is closely watching out their reactions in this sense she addresses to Genoveva, in a funny tone, and through the reformulation of part of a student's utterance ("you see"), to make the researcher an accomplice of her observation (T 428) she looks at her. This fact leads Iván to make his opinions heard and to join the conversation, more informal by this time, not so academic. The teacher interrupts him in turn 431, which amuses Roc (T 432). Iván wants to have the last word and he reformulates again adding laughter in order to soften the exchange and set the humorous use in this context, [not in a mean-spirited way] (cf. T 369). Eloi laughs (T 434). The teacher does not take point in the exchange and focuses on another pupil that has already finished working.

426 TEACHER: in this case_ ¿Genoveva what happens to you?	426 PRO: en aquest cas_ ¿Genoveva què et passa?
427 GENOVEVA: you see that he is asking for my Paleolithic notes _	427 GENOVEVA: és que m'està demanant lo del paleolític_
428 TEACHER: you have an answer for everything ¿haven't you? {{{(she looks at me)}}} you see they always have an answer @@}	428 PRO: teniu resposta per tot ¿eh? {{{(em mira a mi)}}}
429 IVÁN: you see::: you see:::	és que sempre tenen resposta @@}
430 ELOI: @@	429 IVÁN: és que::: és que:::
431 TEACHER: ¿what? ((in front of Iván))	430 ELOI: @@
432 ROC: take that/	431 PRO: ¿què? ((davant de l'Iván))
433 IVÁN: {{{(looking down)}}} you see:::} @@	432 ROC: toma/
434 ELOI: @@@	433 IVÁN: {{{(baixant la mirada)}}} és que:::} @@
435 IVÁN: you see that you are always saying/ you see:::	434 ELOI: @@@
	435 IVÁN: és que sempre dius/ és que:::

In turn 433, Iván makes use of the role that he has adopted in the last analyzed fragment (v. supra), through which he leaves his student role to adopt that of debater (T 359 and T 364). The teacher, who notices it, sets boundaries favoring the appearance of the humor (T 431).

Session Summary

In this session, the author has focused on two cases (T 179 and T 348) in which two pupils maintain a

symmetrical position with the teacher. This catching-up with regard to positions in class means an attack to the public image of the teacher, in a more explicit way in the second case. Then, the teacher resorts to the ironic tone to legitimate her hierarchical position while avoiding the conflict that, all that might have brought about.

Discussion of Research Outcomes

Regarding humor functions it is necessary to take into account the connivance function, the feeling of belonging to a group: The fact that someone can participate in collective laughter because he has understood a joke creates some ties and complicity between the speaker and the interlocutors. In this sense, it is important to give significance to the effort that the history teacher makes to activate the conversational history among the students and the complicity with these through the introduction of jokes. The humor functions that have been highlighted in the observed examples are:

(1) Interactional competence activator. Humor appears from communication and, therefore, it enables to develop the communicative and interactive competence of each individual. As it has been seen in the conceptual frame, humor is an interactional competence dimension, and provides a reflexive dimension of meta-communicative level since it draws the interlocutor's attention to the importance of the discursive context.

(2) Social framework. As Bergson (1900) said, humor has a tension control function that can appear in the group even though it has also an educational function, since when someone laughs at the inappropriate behavior of some community member the group to whom he belongs pushes him to change this attitude in order to be integrated into the group. This fact draws attention to the social dimension of humor (Examples (2), (4), and (5)).

(3) Monopolizing function of the hierarchical role in the students mobilized interaction. This function often implies the contempt of the teacher's role or an attack to the classmate's public image, even though it is also a function mobilized by the history teacher (Examples (2), (4), and (5)). According to Lethierry (1997), humor can be understood as an identity construction tool since it enables to move away from oneself and to take distance from one's utterances and therefore it favors a form of relationship with the world, it is like a mirror that helps to accept oneself. According to Wittgenstein's (1953/2009) prospect rather than a tool humor becomes an existential position.

Next it will be mentioned humoristic interactional competence dimensions implemented by the teacher first, and by the pupils next:

In the corpus, two possible answers are observed in the teacher's reaction on the king of humoristic turns that the students start coinciding with the observations carried out in the Béatrice Priego-Valverde and Cécile Petitjean work (2013).

There is humorous ratification on the teacher's side when the humorous contents generated by the pupils help to create connivance among the participants, aside, and in those case in which these humorous contents generated by the pupils convey pertinent information with the didactic contents in progress.

Besides, when the humor ratification is produced, the humor tokens produced by the teacher are meta-communicative (Canestrari, 2010) and they refer, in a non verbal level, to the smile and the teacher complicity face and, in a para-verbal level, to the laughter and to the change in intonation. As communicative tokens, the teacher keeps on unfolding humorous utterances proposed by the pupils.

However, the teacher usually makes it explicit when pupils make bad use of their humorous competence theming the bad behavior of the actors attack (Example (5)). So when the students' humorous utterance is not

ratified, the teacher's meta-communicative tokens notified, from a semantic and referential point of view, which include gesture signals, at non verbal level, which punish the proposed situation and which are accompanied with comments, at a verbal level, such as: "what" [~We do not mock or laugh at anybody] (Example (5), T 431).

So, the reaction of the teacher depends on the type of humor started by the pupils and can be of two types: Either she takes into account the students' proposal and she takes part in it, or she makes meta-communicative penalizing comments about the interventions carried out by the students.

In short, the teacher legitimates a type of humorous competence aimed at co-operation: She has the objective of strengthening the class cohesion and guiding the interlocutors' behavior not only in the class but in any communicative situation.

As to the students, the humorous competence is shown like a competitiveness tool: It is mobilized since it helps them to obtain and to maintain a privileged interaction space. The ludic dimension is present there and is reflected through the laughter and through the intention of making others laugh since humor makes them visible in the class interaction. Besides, the ludic frame is the one preferred by pupils to the detriment of the academic contents. So, ludic reformulations are seen as a pleasant parenthesis that frees participants temporarily of the tedious task of education/learning and of the reality of school work.

Conclusion

Reformulation, with an articulation in conjunction with humor and laughter, states a type of appreciation on the part of the interlocutor, therefore, a mutual understanding proof of the participants in the interaction (Degoumois, 2012). From a social perspective, the ludic reformulations sensitize pupils with linguistic aspects, pragmatic as well as formal. Pupils advance in their linguistic consciousness and in the social rules knowledge when generating a caricature or making a joke (Cekaite & Aronson, 2004).

Besides, this study shares the observation that Petitjean and Priego-Valverde (2013) make within the framework of their research in relation to the interlocutors' position: "l'enseignant contrôle le jeu pour satisfaire certains objectifs tandis que les élèves sont dans le jeu" (p. 59). This polarization helps pupils to learn how to create and to provide forms and occasions to introduce humor in an appropriate cultural way, like a distinctive form of the social interaction.

So, firstly, in the didactic area it is necessary to take humor into account as an interactional competence aspect with a relevant importance in the linguistic process and, secondly, it is necessary to understand the institutional logic involved in the discerning of certain dimensions of the humorous competence, since it will take part, in several degrees, in the reconfiguration of resources that will privilege pupils in relation to others, and, in general, in their life trajectories.

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