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CORRESPONDENTE

HUMOR IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: A SOCIO-INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

por

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ABSTRACT

HUMOR IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: A SOCIO-INTERACTIONIST PERSPECTIVE

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This research describes naturally occurring EFL classroom interaction. The investigation is grounded on ethnographic methods (Erickson & Shultz, 1981; Erickson, 1992), and follows the theoretical perspective of Interactional Sociolinguistics to analyze language within an EFL context. Initially, I explain my interest in the issue of attitude and motivation and propose approaching the phenomena within a socio-linguistic perspective through the analysis of humorous situations which take place during correction activities. After that, I review the literature on attitude and motivation by discussing traditional concepts and new perspectives on the issue. Next, I provide the methodological procedures adopted in the research by describing the steps used for data collection and analysis.

In the section of analysis, firstly I classify and describe six major participation structures which are found in the segments analyzed. Then, thirteen segments in which humorous situations take place are analyzed.

Microethnographic analysis reveal that humor, signaled through its various manifestations (e.g., laughing, smiling, giggling, word play) has a specific role in the interactions of this FL classroom: the role of facilitator and regulator of the communication among the participants (Foerster, 1990; Erickson, 1982; Tannen, 1991), and that is one of the most recurrent strategies used by the EFL participants during difficult situations to avoid or get out of uncomfortable situations. Moreover, the strategies that generate humorous moments generally have as main goals to amuse and to create involvement and rapport among the participants. Finally, the findings of this study stress the need for developing more research on these topics in other Fl classrooms, exploring more enlarged and diversified data, since the improvement of these aspects will contribute to add more reliability to future socio-interactional studies.

RESUMO

HUMOR NA AULA DE INGLÊS COMO LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA: UMA PERSPECTIVA SÓCIO INTERACIONISTA

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2000

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Esta pesquisa descreve a interação de sala de aula occorrida naturalmente na aula de inglês como língua estrangeira. A investigação basea-se em métodos etnográficos (Erickson & Shultz, 1981; Erickson, 1992) e segue a perspectiva teórica da Sociolingüística Interacional, com o intuito de analisar a linguagem em um contexto da aula de inglês como língua estrangeira. Primeiramente, justifico meu interesse pelo tópico da motivação e da postura e, em seguida, proponho a abordagem do mesmo sob uma perspectiva sociolingüística, através da análise de situações de humor que ocorrem durante atividades de correção. Em seguida, na revisão da literatura, discuto os conceitos tradicionais e as novas perspectivas relativas ao tópico. Na próxima seção, exponho os procedimentos metodológicos utilizados na pesquisa, descrevendo as etapas que sigo para a coleta e análise dos dados. Na primeira seção do capítulo da análise, classifico e descrevo seis estruturas

de participação que foram encontradas nos segmentos analisados. Na segunda seção, treze segmentos nos quais ocorrem situações de humor são analisados. A análise microetnográfica revela que o humor, sinalizado através de suas diversas manifestações (riso, sorriso e suas variações) tem um papel específico na interação da aula de língua estrangeira: o papel de facilitador e regulador da comunicação entre os participantes (Foerster, 1990; Erickson, 1982; Tannen, 1991). O humor aparece como uma das mais recorrentes estratégias usadas pelos participantes da aula de inglês como língua estrangeira durante momentos difíceis para evitar ou sair de situações embaraçosas. Além disso, as estratégias que geram situações de humor geralmente têm como seu principal objetivos agradar ou criar envolvimento e solidariedade entre os participantes. Finalmente, os resultados desse estudo enfatizam a necessidade de desenvolverem-se mais estudos sobre motivação e postura em outras salas de aulas de língua estrangeira, com dados ampliados e diversificados. O melhoramento desses aspectos contribuirá para uma maior confiabilidade nos futuros estudos sócio-interacionistas.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Interest in the issue

The number of people who want or need to learn English as a foreign language has increased notably in the past decades. The reasons that drive people to learn a foreign language range from educational or professional values to personal motives. People from different areas of interest enroll every semester in language schools hoping to achieve their goal of learning English. Most of these candidates are beginners who do not have any previous knowledge of English, and they have hardly any notion of what is expected from them along the course, except that they should hopefully learn the language they are being taught. However, when learning does not seem to happen or learning simply does not improve, students tend to develop a feeling of frustration and generally end up dropping the course. In addition to these types of students, there are those who come to class every now and then, and those who stay on but really do not do the work. This plurality of behaviors in the language classroom frequently turns into a problem for the teacher who is concerned with the progress of the whole group.

Moreover, most foreign language teachers have fuzzy and generic ideas about their students' needs and interests, probably filtered by their own motives, which cannot really cover or fit the various students' motives. In addition, very few teachers seem to be willing to engage in the task of getting detailed

background information on their students' aims in taking a L2/FL course. Therefore, even when the teacher engages his/her students with the genuine intention of fostering the students' learning and the students fail to learn what the teacher intended, he/she is left with the feeling of being pedagogically incompetent (Erickson, 1987).

A plausible explanation for the mismatch between students' expectations and what they get in class is that L2/FL teachers generally ignore their students' needs and motives for learning a foreign language. However, despite this mismatch, a few students of the same foreign language group, although facing similar difficulties, develop positive attitudes towards the language, their teacher and the language environment. These students display more readiness and their participation in classroom activities increases.

The fact that some students progress in L2 language learning, whereas others get to a plateau or give up the course has called the attention of researchers and educators who investigate how affective phenomena such as attitude and motivation enter into second/foreign language learning.

Until recently, the phenomena of attitude and motivation were predominantly studied/approached and treated as cognitive processes, which occur solely inside the mind of the individual. Our prevailing individualistic tradition has tended to keep us from noticing how important the social milieu is in supporting our motivational force for pursuing our goals. As a result, little research has been done on these phenomena within a different theoretical perspective. Thus, it sounds opportune to propose here the investigation of the

phenomena of attitude and motivation in the foreign language classroom as a learning environment within a sociolinguistic perspective.

Therefore, in the research proposed here, I intend to develop the study of affective phenomena of attitude and motivation within this perspective. This means that the actions and sense-making of the participants in this research will be studied through an ethnographically-oriented microanalysis of classroom observation, audiovisual recordings and participant interviewing (Erickson, 1992). The main reason for choosing microethnographic methods for the study of affective phenomena in an educational setting is that through this microanalytic perspective we can better understand "experience in practice" (Erickson, 1992, p. 205) of the participants (students and the teacher). That is, by observing the participants interacting, we can better understand their actions.

Observing students' interactional behavior, mainly within a foreign language learning environment, has become an alternative way to approach phenomena such as attitude and motivation, and understand how they enter the L2 learning situation. And even though accessing students' attitudes and motives is a task that cannot be readily or unambiguously done, it seems to be key for teachers to meet their students' expectations concerning their needs and interests in second/foreign language learning.

This approach represents a challenge because little, if any, research on motivation and attitude has been done within such new theoretical perspectives. On the other hand, investigating students' attitudes and motives within a new theoretical framework will contribute as a starting point in the studies of affective phenomena to come.

1.2. Purposes of this research

Following sociolinguistic lines of the analysis of classroom interaction, this study has two main objectives. The general objective is to investigate some motivated related behaviors in the EFL classroom during correction activities.

The specific objective is to analyze and describe humorous promoting patterns in interactional behavior in a group of EFL beginning students during the correction activities to investigate the relation between humorous promoting behavioral patterns caused by different strategies during the correction activities to the phenomena of attitude and motivation in order to evaluate wheter they signal positive attitude and motivation among the EFL classroom participants.

But, although this research approaches the phenomena of attitude and motivation using ethnographic methods, it is not an ethnography, as defined by Erickson and Shultz (1981). Therefore, providing a precise account of students' actions is not the ultimate goal of this research on language and social interaction. In the study proposed here, my commitment is to describe the actions of participants within a learning environment in order to answer the research questions proposed for this investigation, which are:

1) How do participants react to and make sense of particular tasks, from their own perspectives?

2) What relevant aspects of the interaction may contribute to signal positive attitude and motivation in the EFL classroom?

3) Which strategies do participants use that promote such aspects which may signal their positive attitude and motivation towards a given activity?

1.3. Organization of this work

This work is organized in five chapters: Introduction, Review of Literature, Microethnographic description of an EFL classroom, Data Analysis, and Conclusion.

Chapter 2 presents some traditional concepts of attitude and motivation, in which cognitive researchers treat these phenomena as individual variables. Then, I present new perspectives for the study of the affective phenomena of attitude and motivation. I propose to approach these phenomena following a socio-interactional tradition, according to which the social aspects of any interaction should be considered.

Chapter 3 presents a microethnographic description of an EFL classroom interaction. I begin with a generic description of the extracurricular courses by providing some demographic information about the institution, the participants and the setting where the interaction takes place. In addition to that, I present a broad view of how classes evolved along the semester, concerning number of classes, number of students, drop-outs, among other issues.

In the next section, I describe the bureaucratic process I went through to get permission for collecting the data, to observe classes and record them. Finally, grounded on Erickson (1982, 1992) I discuss the methodology used in the data

analyzed. I close the chapter by presenting a chart with the transcription conventions used in the transcriptions of the segments.

In Chapter 4, I carry out the analysis of the data. This chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section, I discuss theoretical concepts of participation structures. I highlight the importance of including participation structures as the starting point for the analysis of classroom context. Then, I describe the six participation structures identified, based on the transcribed segments analyzed.

In the second section, I approach the phenomena of attitude and motivation within a socio-interactional perspective, through the study of real classroom data. This section is centered on the microethnographic investigation of the visible aspects of classroom interaction such as the use of humor during classroom activities. In order to do so, I analyze some segments in which humorous situations take place. In the investigation, I am concerned with when and how participants of an EFL classroom make use of humor, and the implications it brings forth for the interaction.

In Chapter 5, I conclude the work by providing a summary of the previous chapters. I present the findings and discuss the implications and relevance of this type of investigation for the study of classroom interaction. I also present the limitations of the study and offer suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Attitude and Motivation in the English Language Classroom (ELC): Traditional concepts and new perspectives

2.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will present two different perspectives on attitude and motivation. I will provide an overview of the traditional and new perspectives of attitude and motivation in the English language classroom.

Initially, I will discuss the traditional perspective, according to which attitude and motivation are cognitive factors that should be investigated as individual variables. Then, I will present the new perspective which proposes the construction of a new theory of cognition as a socially situated and transpersonal phenomena. I will point out the limitations in the studies which follow the psycholinguistic tradition, and finally I will suggest approaching the phenomena of attitude and motivation within the sociolinguistic perspective.

2.2. Traditional concepts: Attitude and motivation as learners' individual differences

The different ways learners respond to the L2 learning process have been the object of study of researchers in second/foreign language learning who are particularly interested in investigating how affective phenomena work during L2 learning. Among the various affective phenomena studied, students' attitude and motivation have received special attention in the past decades. *Attitude* is generally linked to a person's values and beliefs, to which he/she behaves accordingly when acting, and consists of "an underlying psychological predisposition to act and evaluate behavior in a certain way" (Gardner, 1985 p.5, cited in McGroarty, 1996). *Motivation* is a combination of an individual's desire to achieve a goal and the effort employed on this (Gardner, 1985). Psycholinguistic studies (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; Dörnyei, 1990) have established a close relation between a plurality of behaviors in the language classroom to students' *motivation* for studying a L2 and also to their *attitude* towards the language.

Besides defining motivation, Gardner (1985) proposed two constructs that govern motivation to learn a language, which he labeled orientations: integrative motivation, which is associated with the desire to be like members of the other language community and to interact with speakers of this community; and instrumental motivation, which is associated with the desire to learn the L2 for pragmatic gains (e.g., to get a job or pass an examination).

According to Gardner (1985, p. 58) what really promotes L2 learning is the association of motivation to learn L2 with integrative and instrumental orientations. He assumes that "if a person is oriented to learn L2 for integrative reasons, he might as well recognize the instrumental value of learning the language and vice-versa. That is, if the learner recognizes the instrumental value for learning a language, he might as well be led to recognize its integrative value.

Gardner (1985) and other researchers on cognition have applied social psychological constructs to the acquisition of English. The methodology employed by them consists basically of developing and administering questionnaires and battery tests to collect data and investigate individual variables (e.g., attitude and motivation). Eventually, researchers make use of laboratory procedures and interviews. Then, the scores obtained in these tests and questionnaires are submitted to factor and correlational analyses before final results are achieved.

The fact that instrumental and integrative orientations have strong connections implies that they should not be taken in isolation. Research conducted by Clement and Kruidenier (1985) and Gardner and MacIntyre (1991) suggest that the definition of integrative and instrumental motivation will differ according to the linguistic/cultural context where they occur. For adults interested in job success, for example, instrumental motivation could be equally or more powerful than integrative motivation (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991).

A different account of motivation is given by another group of researchers (Strong, 1984; Hermann, 1980). Their findings suggest that foreign language learners start showing motivation to learn the FL and positive attitude towards the

TL and TL culture as the learners' proficiency progresses. Hermann (ibid.), for example, believes there is a strong relationship between the learners' achievement in the TL and the attitude he/she starts developing towards the TL and, therefore, towards the other culture. This fact suggests that higher proficiency groups should reveal higher levels of positive attitude and motivation than beginners. Mc Donough (1981) and Graham (1984, cited in Dörnyei, 1990) go even further and suggest that individuals may want to study a foreign language because of intellectual motivation or because of sociocultural motives.

As implied above, researchers and educators have devoted great attention to attitude and motivation as phenomena that should be taken into account to explain L2 learners' success in the language classroom. However, although there seems to be a consensus among researchers that high motivation and positive attitude help promote L2 learning (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Clément, Dörnyei & Noels, 1994), the actual description of how these phenomena work in situation is not a straightforward task.

Despite the several studies conducted so far on issues of attitude and motivation in the area of second/foreign language acquisition (S/FLA), there is no unique or precise explanation on how and to what extent these phenomena interfere with L2 learning. Ely (1986) argues that the specificity of each situation (e.g., a FL classroom) may explain why it is so difficult to predict an individual's feelings and behaviors on the basis of a global trait measurement.

2.3. New perspectives: Attitude and motivation as part of the social milieu

Previous research (e.g., Clément & Kruidenier, 1985) has suggested that the orientations (integrative and instrumental) students have to learn a foreign language will differ according to the linguistic and cultural context where they occur. This assumption finds support in a study conducted by Oller, Baca and Vigil (1977) about a group of Mexican-American women learning English in the United States. The study supported the hypothesis that the relationship between attitudes and attainment of proficiency in a target language (TL) are stronger for learners in a second language setting than for learners in a foreign language setting. Within a sociocultural perspective, this fact suggests that the process of learning a language cannot be taken apart from any situation or social group (Hall, 1995). In this framework, the linguistic and paralinguistic resources used by a group of participants to construct their realities should be treated and defined at the time and place where they occur. In other words, meaning is constructed in the locally situated uses of those resources. Based on this premise, we can assume that human events in particular can be interpreted in multiple ways, according to the different contexts where they occur, and that each situational context studied is unique and therefore will provide different outcomes when investigated.

Taking into account that the understanding of any phenomena involved in the process of second/foreign learning has a close relation with the context in which they are studied, particular attention should be given to the interaction of person and situation (Ely, 1986). This suggests that by developing a qualitative

analysis of classroom learning and teaching, the researcher will be emphasizing the importance of social interaction in second/foreign language learning. Therefore, the study of interactional aspects of situated EFL classroom teaching and learning within a sociolinguistic perspective sounds opportune for the understanding of the role of attitude and motivation in second/foreign language learning.

As already suggested, until recently, the study of issues of attitude and motivation has been traditionally approached through a quantitative psycholinguistic perspective (Oller, Baca & Vigil, 1977; Strong, 1984; Dörnyei, 1990; Gardner & MacIntyre, 1991; Larsen-Freeman & Long, 1991, among others). However, despite the predominance of studies developed within this perspective, this tradition was criticized by the sociologist Goffman (1972) who has pointed to a serious limitation in the studies which follow a psycholinguistic orientation. He pointed out that most studies in this area have neglected the social situation in which individuals conducted themselves.

Nowadays, the position held by Goffman (1972) finds support in the studies of sociolinguists such as Gumperz (1981, 1982, 1992), Erickson (1981, 1982, 1987, 1996); Ochs, 1994 and Kramsch, 1991, among others. They propose the construction of a new theory of cognition as a socially situated and transpersonal phenomenon. That is, they propose a socially grounded theory of learning in which success and failure cannot be defined solely in terms of *individual variables* (see Gardner, 1985) such as self-esteem, self evaluation, anxiety, beliefs, and risk taking. Moreover, most of these variables still do not have a clear cut definition (Ellis, 1985).

According to this qualitative perspective, researchers on S/FL learning should pay special attention to the situation and the social group in which individuals are studied. This is in keeping with the sociohistorical position held by Hall (1995), to whom language use and language learning are "socially motivated and constrained activities" (p.221).

In this sense, it is important to emphasize that while psycholinguists have been developing research on issues of attitude and motivation, other studies on similar issues, outside SLA (Second Language Acquisition), have been carried out within the sociolinguistic perspective (e.g., Erickson, 1987, 1992, 1996; Gumperz, 1981, 1982, 1992; Tannen, 1984a, b; Ochs, 1994; Kramsch, 1991).

2.3.1. Qualitative studies of second/foreign language learning

Concerning the area of second/foreign language learning, little qualitative research has been developed (e.g., Poole, 1993; Neves, 1995; Spitalnik, 1996; Gesser, 1999; Gil, 1999). And more particularly on issues of motivation and/or attitude in second/foreign language teaching and learning, only a few studies including these issues have been developed within this perspective.(e.g., Strauss, 1992 (theoretical account); Garcez, 1995; Dalacorte, 1999).

A standard account on language attitude and motivation is given by McGroarty (1996). In her theoretical account she gives definitions and discusses ways of measurement of attitude and motivation in past research. She also provides an overview of the most current approaches to language attitude and

motivation, illuminating the sociolinguistic significance of these topics. She holds the position that phenomena such as attitude and motivation "account for differences in classroom processes and students outcomes" and that "they shape the environment for instruction and individual efforts of teachers and students in important ways" (p. 3).

A similar language socialization perspective is defended by Poole (1993). She holds the position that teacher-student interactional sequences are motivated and pervaded by underlying cultural ideologies, and therefore language acquisition and sociocultural knowledge should be viewed as a whole.

More recently, a study on motivation within a similar perspective was developed by Dalacorte (1999). Grounded on the Vygotskyan sociocultural theory, and using ethnographic methods for data collection, she investigated six students of a group of EFL beginner students at UFMG (Universidade Federal de Goiás). In her study, she emphasizes the importance of interaction in the process of FL learning. The results of her research supported the hypothesis that learners' motivation interferes with their decision to participate in class, and that motivation may be affected by both internal and external factors.

Another microethnographic study on FL learning was developed by Garcez (1995). Following the socio-interactional perspective, he has analyzed a group of twelve students making use of a computer-assisted language learning (CALL). His work showed evidence that revealed different levels of actualization of the instructional computer program. Microethnographic evidence suggested that the different styles students used to approach the program for the construction of a

learning environment had a close relation with motivational and interactional factors.

Also following the interactional socio-linguistic perspective, Spitalnik (1996) investigated interactions between three teachers and their students in an EFL classroom. Her work focused on the use of positive affective discourse strategies by the EFL participants during the teaching-learning process. She found that all strategies which are marked by affect help learners in acquiring communicative competence, since these strategies help create less asymmetrical relationships. She also found that these strategies facilitate negotiation of meanings and contribute to solve conflicts.

Thus, the study proposed here is grounded on the premise that everything that people do during their existence is somehow motivated. And, despite the fact that motives are difficult to identify, the idea that human behavior is motivated is a worldwide accepted premise within most of the academic and non-academic milieu.

Moreover, people in the world tend to see other people's actions and their own from an outside perspective. The participants of an interaction simply act in the world, which means they do not articulate their actions within an 'emic view'. In other words, given that interactants are not able to account for what they do in the interaction, researchers in this area are the ones who are in charge of providing a means for accounting how social actors make sense of what they do. They are particularly concerned with the ultimate goal of describing to outsiders what goes on in a given situation and also of explaining why people act in a

particular way. Therefore, in this study I investigate the phenomena of attitude and motivation in the language classroom within a sociolinguistic perspective.

2.4. Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I have presented an account of two different perspectives for investigating the phenomena of attitude and motivation. Initially, I presented the traditional view supported by authors that follow a psycholinguistic theoretical orientation for the investigation of these phenomena in the SL/FL teaching/learning process. Similarly, I also presented the theoretical account given by sociolinguists, who propose the construction of a new theory of cognition as a socially situated and transpersonal phenomenon. I closed the chapter by proposing the investigation of the phenomena of attitude and motivation following this new perspective.

In the next chapter, I will provide a description of the methodological procedures I adopted in this research, by describing the ethnographic elements which make up my study.

CHAPTER 3

Steps Towards a Microethnographic Description of an EFL Classroom Interaction

3.1 Introduction

As I anticipated in the previous chapter, I decided to approach the phenomena of attitude and motivation through a sociolinguistic perspective. In order to carry out this study, I have used ethnographic techniques to get into the visible aspects of the phenomena being studied.

This chapter aims at describing how I developed the ethnographic research before I analyze the interactional data selected. Furthermore, the description of the ethnographic elements of this research will help situate the reader in terms of understanding how the data were collected, organized and transformed into the final research data.

First, I will begin with a generic description of the extracurricular courses of languages at UFSC (Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina), where the data were collected. I will briefly describe the English course and its position within the other language courses offered by the institution. In this section, I will also include some relevant ethnographic aspects of my research, such as the group choice, who the participants are, their previous knowledge of the language, their

previous contact with the members of the group and with the teacher. In addition to that, I will present a broad view of how classes evolved along the semester, concerning number of classes, number of students, drop-outs, participant-researcher relationship, among other issues. This section also includes a figure of the place where the data were collected and classes were observed.

Second, I will describe the bureaucratic process I went through to get permission to collect the data, to observe classes and record them. Finally, I will discuss the methodology used in the data analyzed. Before closing the chapter, a chart with the transcription conventions will be presented to the reader.

3.2. The context

The data for this study were collected in a group of beginning EFL students at the CCE (Centro de Comunicação e Expressão) at UFSC. The group is one among a number of other extracurricular language courses offered every semester to the community by the DLLE (Departamento de Língua e Literatura Estrangeiras) at this university. The number of students who apply for the English courses is highly superior (around 80%) than the number of students who apply for the other foreign languages offered by the language department. Although the course is open to any person interested in learning English and who will pay the fees, most of the candidates are undergraduate students who are regularly attending academic courses at UFSC.

Before joining a group in an English class, students who have already studied a FL and want to go to a higher level are submitted to a placement test

which assesses the candidate's proficiency in the language. These students are then placed in different group levels. The extracurricular classes of English are generally taught by master's and doctor's students and professors at UFSC, and they make use of the same textbooks of the regular undergraduate English course of "Letras". Likewise, teachers predominantly adopt the communicative approach in their classes.

Although some candidates have to undergo a classificatory test before joining a group, their performance along the course will differ: whereas some who engage in the course may soon want to drop out, others will be willing to learn and will persist in order to learn the language, despite the problems and difficulties that usually occur in the process of learning a foreign language.

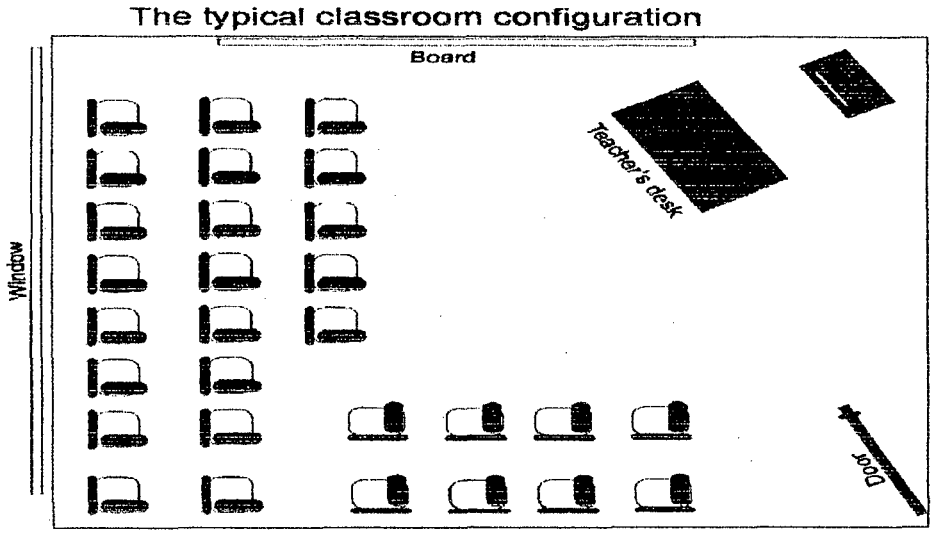
The participants of this study were a group of beginning EFL students who attended the first semester of the extracurricular course of English, their teacher and the researcher. Initially, there were 25 students enrolled in the group (07 male students, 18 female students). As the semester progressed, 10 students dropped the course for different reasons, and 02 were transferred to another group. Finally, at the end of the term, there were a total of 13 students who attended classes until the end of the semester. Among them, 03 male students and 10 female students were approved.

My decision of looking at a group of students within the extracurricular courses of English was highly influenced by my previous teaching experience with EFL students in this institution (UFSC) where I have been teaching English since my undergraduate course. As a teacher, I could observe the students in the groups I taught going through similar problems I had faced during the process of

learning a foreign language. I knew from previous experience that there is usually a distance between students' needs and interests and the teachers', and this non-revealed distance frequently goes unnoticed or is simply ignored.

3.2.1. The location

The typical classroom configuration of the classroom was the following:



3.3. The process of negotiating entry

The data for this study was collected during the first semester of 1998 through video recording and participant observational fieldwork, following the procedures proposed by Erickson (1992). The first step I took in order to get the consent to collect the data for my research was to have an informal talk with the

teacher in charge of the EFL beginning group, and to explain to her the purposes and procedures of my research.

Having informal permission granted by the teacher, the next step was to obtain a formal permission from the language department. I wrote an official letter addressed to the coordinators of the DLLE requesting formal permission to record the encounters (classes). In that letter, I specified the main objectives of my research, the group I intended to record, the teacher in charge of the group and the time of the classes. I also specified the number of classes to be recorded.

Once permission was granted from the language department, the teacher and I set a day when I met the group. In this meeting, I explained to them the importance of that interaction for sociolinguistic research purposes. I also informed them about the risks of their being studied and thus tried to maximize their protection by guaranteeing confidentiality of data, keeping their identities secret (Erickson, 1982) by using fictitious names in the transcribed data to protect their identities.. And finally, I requested their collaboration with my project.

3.4. Data collection and methodological procedures

For the analysis of patterns of interactional behavior in the EFL classroom, this study applies Gumperz' s (1981) naturally occurring interaction among the participants of an English language classroom aiming at establishing a relation between participants' actions and the phenomena of motivation and attitude.

The data was collected throughout the first school semester of 1998, from March to July. Along the semester, I observed the group of EFL beginning students and took field notes of the classes. From the eight classes recorded, some of the most representative segments were selected, and then transcribed for deeper analysis. The selected segments served to illustrate interactional patterns of behavior.

Initially, demographic information about the group, the course and the learning environment were collected. Then, I proceeded with the collection of interactional data, which consisted, basically, of the application of two integrated approaches: the approach of ethnographic participant-observation and of sociolinguistic microanalysis of audiovisual records of human interaction (Erickson, 1992, 1996).

The proposed research began by sampling through general participant observation of a group of beginning EFL students. I also recorded the routine interactions of this group of beginners at regular intervals during the semester in order to confirm recurrent events that kept coming around during classroom observation. These sampling recordings supplemented the periods of observation and they also provided the data from where passages were extracted and analyzed.

In addition to classroom observation and audiovisual recording, field notes were taken during class observation and recording, and they were incorporated into the other data for further analysis. McGroarty (1996) explains that ethnographic observation and student interviewing are procedures used with the intent to explore implicit language attitudes that organize interaction. In other words, the researcher on social interaction has to infer the students' attitudes by

observing their actions and relating them to the students' opinions and beliefs accessed in the interviews. For this research, this procedure was carried out by comparing what the students said they do in particular interactional/learning contexts, what they believe is ideal behavior for those occasions when learning a foreign language and their actual performance in class.

In order to get acquainted with students' opinions and beliefs about the various aspects involved in learning a second/foreign language, students were interviewed[1] so that their answers and commentaries can be analyzed against their behavior during classroom interaction.

The criterion for selecting the segments for analysis was based on classroom performance in terms of interactional patterns, not in their performative ability in the foreign language. The criterion concerned students' active participation in class: students' participation in the activities , students' volunteering, students' initiative, students' readiness, and other visual signs that show whether the students are or are not willing to interact for learning the target language.

The interactional data were collected by using a semi-professional video-camera from the English Language Department. A total of eight video-tapes were used in the video recording of eight classes, which resulted in approximately 12 hours of audio-visual recorded material. The recordings were complemented with field notes which were kept in a notebook.

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[1] Although the participants were interviewed, the recorded data was not used in this work do to space and time constraints.

When the data collection was ready, some passages of the recorded classes were selected and transcribed for deeper analysis. The transcription conventions that will be used in Chapter 4 are mostly those that have been developed by Jefferson (1984).

Key to transcription conventions

(.)	indicates micro-pause of less than 1 second
(1.2)	indicates timed pause (in tenths of a second)
:	indicates an extension of the sound
?	upward pointing arrows indicate rising intonation
,	indicates continuing intonation
><	indicate quicker talk
↓↑	indicate marked falling and rising shifts in intonation
° °	indicate quieter talk
[ ]	brackets indicate interruption or overlapped speech
=	indicates no interval between the end of a turn and start of the **next**
((italics))	indicate details of the conversation, transcriber's interpretation of the action
( )	indicates unintelligible words or transcriber doubt
(word)	indicates uncertain transcription
underlying	indicates emphasis

3.5. Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, I initially gave a brief description of the extracurricular courses offered by UFSC. Then, I provided a more detailed description of the context in which data were collected, by describing relevant ethnographic aspects about the EFL courses, the participants and the setting. Then I proceeded to explain how the process of negotiating entry took place.

I began the third point by proposing the sociolinguistic approach for the investigation of phenomena of attitude and motivation. In the next three paragraphs, I start discussing the criteria for selecting the data for further analysis. Finally, I close the chapter by adding some information about the equipment used for data collection, and the number of hours recorded.

In the next chapter, I will describe the analysis of the data following a sociolinguistic perspective. As already stated, I decided to work within a social tradition because this allows me to investigate the phenomena of attitude and motivation through a different perspective from the prevailing individualistic tradition that most cognitive studies have followed until recently.

Through careful firsthand observation of the video-recorded data, I could notice that there were recurrent situations in which the use of different strategies by the participants of the interaction had a determining influence in the development of the interaction. For example, I could notice that through humorous situations, that is, through situations in which the participants of the interaction make use of humor-generating strategies, they seem more motivated

than in other situations. The use of these strategies is likely to play an important role for recovering the conversation and maintaining the participants involved in the ongoing interaction.

These first hand observations suggested that the phenomena of attitude and motivation could be investigated through the analysis of the visible aspects of the interactions, such as the analysis of humor in the EFL class.

CHAPTER 4

Observing Attitude and Motivation in an EFL Class: Humor, one of the visible aspects that counts

4.1. Introduction

Chapter three presented a demographic description of the participants of an EFL group and of the institution where the data was collected, and proposed a microethnographic investigation as the methodology for the collection, description and analysis of the data, following the steps proposed by Erickson (1982).

The main objective of this chapter is to report on this microethnographic investigation of the visible aspects of attitude and motivation through the study of real classroom data. In order to do so, first of all, I provide an account of the structures of participation in the study of classroom interaction identified in the EFL classes I observed and to describe them. Second, I am going to analyze the segments in which one of the visible aspects that may signal positive attitude and motivation, namely *humor*, takes place.

4.2. Data analysis I: Identification of participation structures

In this section, I will provide a description of the six structures of classroom participation that were identified in the audio-visual recorded data.

Identifying structures of participation turned to be relevant in this study because they reveal the different ways participants make use of resources during classroom interaction. According to Erickson and Shultz (1981, p. 148), "these structures include ways of speaking, listening, getting the floor and holding it, and leading and following".

I have conducted the analysis of participation structures as a traditional path in micro-ethnographic linguistic studies. Through this analysis I might be able to focus on some visible aspects of attitude and motivation. Moreover, identifying these structures has helped me to have a more comprehensive view of the phenomena being studied.

4.2.1. Relevance of participation structures for the analysis of classroom data

A closer look at the video-tapes revealed that the various interactional events that take place along the classes present a variety of dispositions, depending on the number of the participants directly involved in the interaction, and on the role and the rights and obligations each one displays during these events. For example, during some classroom participation structures students are likely to have more opportunities to actively participate in the activities, as when the teacher elicits answers from them. In other situations, their rights are more restricted and they display a more passive role as, for example, during teacher explanation.

Participation, then, is a central aspect, the starting point of the study of speaking. It can be expressed in units of participation such as Goffman's participation framework (1974, 1981), Goodwin' s participant framework (1984), or as participant structure, as termed by Philips (1983), Erickson (1982), Gumperz (1981) and Au and Mason (1983). In this study, I have decided to use the expression *participation structures* to refer to these units of participation. O'Connor and Michaels (1996, p. 69) argue that, although these are related notions, "in work on participant structures in classrooms, the emphasis is in the ways that particular roles and alliances tend to arise out of fairly stable arrangements in classroom organization" .

Participation structures can be described as "the conventional configurations of interactional rights and responsibilities that arise within particular classroom activities as these are set up purposefully by the teacher" (O'Connor & Michaels, 1996, p. 67). In other words, participation structures are models of interactional etiquette that involve the participants' reciprocal rights and obligations in social interaction (Au & Mason, 1983; Philips, 1983; Erickson & Mohatt, 1982). According to Erickson and Mohatt (1982), these models account for the actions of the participants in any given interactional occasion. They account for "how people get a turn to speak or allocate turns at speaking to others, how people hold the floor once they have a turn at speaking, how people ask questions in appropriate ways and provide relevant answers in appropriate ways" (p.139). Goodwin (1984) argues that taking participation as a unit of analysis provides the analyst with empirically more sound ways to study interactional phenomena.

Given the importance of participation as a unit of analysis, in this work, I take the notion of participation structure according to Philips (1983) as the starting point for the analysis of the data collected. Philips (1983, p.78) defines these structures as structural arrangements of the interaction, which differ "in the number of the students in the interaction with the teacher, the non-verbal structuring of attention, and the principles used in regulating students' turn at talk".

Through careful firsthand observation of the EFL group I investigated, most of the different kinds of participation structures that could be identified are likely to be expected in an EFL classroom. In addition, the analysis of the seven structures identified is centered on the participation structures which occur in the speaking segments of the classroom (grammar lessons, correction of tasks, classroom discussions and pair work oral practice). The criteria for differentiating the structures are based on *who controls the topic of discussion and the role and the number of speakers in the interaction.*

In the following paragraphs, I will provide an overview of the six different participation structures[2] which have been identified in the classroom setting I observed. In Type I, which I term *single turn structure*, turn-taking is controlled by the teacher who calls on a single student by posing a question to which he/she solely is expected to answer. In Type II, the *pair allocated turn structure*, the teacher usually nominates two students, one to ask and the other to answer a question or more questions. This type of structure occurs mainly during the correction of exercises and other oral practice activities.

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[2] The labels used for these structures were adapted from Au and Mason (1980) Philips (1983).

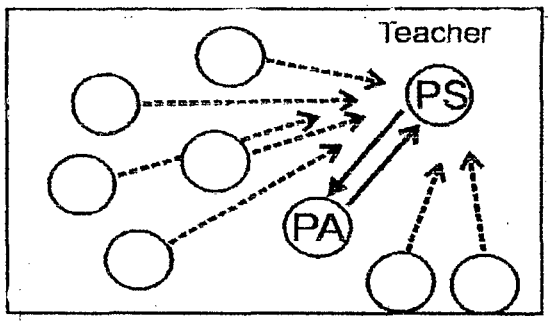
A less conventional type of structure is Type III, the *single-joint structure*. In this type of structure, as in the single turn structure, while the teacher speaks to one student, another one spontaneously joins them in the conversation to give his/her contribution. The fourth type of structure identified is Type IV, the *open-turn-teacher-centered structure*, which consists basically in the teacher staying at the blackboard explaining and checking students' comprehension through questions. Although the teacher is the lead speaker, any student can have access to the floor to ask for clarification or to give their contribution. Another less conventional type of structure is Type V, the *student-topic initiated structure*. It differs from all the other structures in that the student, not the teacher, controls the topic of discussion. Finally, the last type of structure identified is Type VI, the *free pair work activity structure*, a structure similar to the pair allocated turn, where even though students work in pairs, they are not nominated by the teacher, that is, students can choose their partners. The teacher's role consists of monitoring the group by alternating between listening to pairs' performance or participating in the activity with equal status with the students.

In the next section, I will proceed with a more detailed description of the participation structures I have identified in the EFL group studied. The different configurations of each participation structure will be illustrated in a diagram that appears below each one. In order to identify the speakers in the diagram, I will adopt the labels used by Shultz, Florio and Erickson's (1982) study. The term *primary speaker* will refer to the participant who produces the talk, and the term *primary attender* will be used to refer to the addressee who becomes the primary

speaker next. Those people who do not participate actively in the ongoing talk, but who must pay attention, are the *secondary attenders*.

4.2.2. Detailed description of the participation structures identified

Type I: The single turn structure



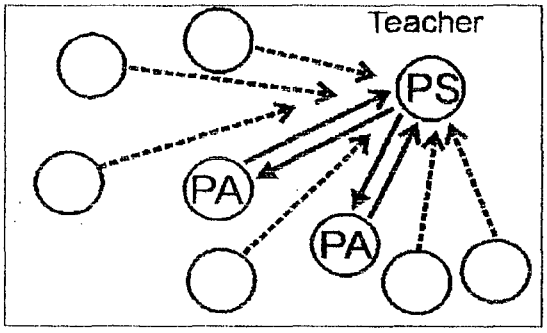
Primary Speaker = PS →
Primary Attender = PA ←
Secondary Attender = SA ---------->
Teacher = T

In the *single turn structure*, the discourse format that prevails is the traditional teacher question-student response-teacher evaluation sequence. In this type of participation structure, the teacher nominates a student to answer a question posed by her. The teacher controls the topic, and then she repeats, questions, corrects or praises the responses of the student explicitly nominated. In these "spot light" situations, some students' speech may be inhibited and the teacher is perceived to be "putting the child in the spot" (Au & Mason, 1983, p. 147). The students studied seem to experience a great discomfort within this type of participation structure. In general, in this participation structure, most of the learners, when put in the "spot light" perform situationally inappropriate

behavior: they keep silent, fail to answer a question, stammer, or start a nervous giggling. On the other hand, there are others who display a completely different behavior/reaction when being put "in the spot", and use specific strategies such as playing jokes to deal with a difficult situation.

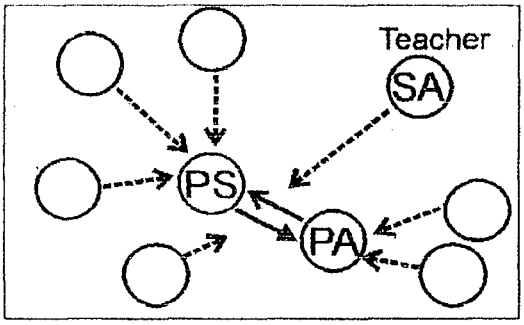
Type II: The pair allocated turn structure

(first moment)



Primary Speaker = PS →
Primary Attender = PA ←
Secondary Attender = SA ---------->
Teacher = T

Type II (second moment)

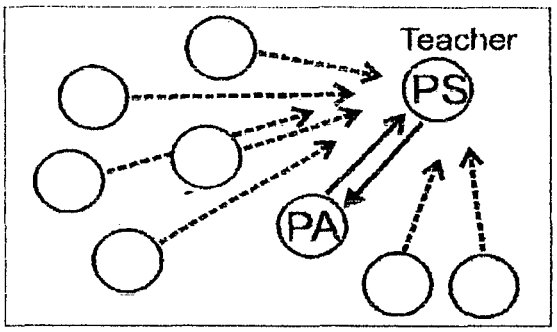


Primary Speaker = PS →
Primary Attender = PA ←
Secondary Attender = SA ---------->
Teacher = T

Similarly to the single turn structure, in this type of participation structure the teacher also controls the topic and allocates turns by nominating a pair of students to talk. Once turns are allocated, only the nominated students are supposed to speak. However, as a turn-taking controller, the teacher eventually takes the floor for correction, or to ratify their utterances, usually by using non-lexical vocalizations (e.g., uh huh, yeah, right, that's it) termed "back channels" (see Erickson & Shultz, 1981).

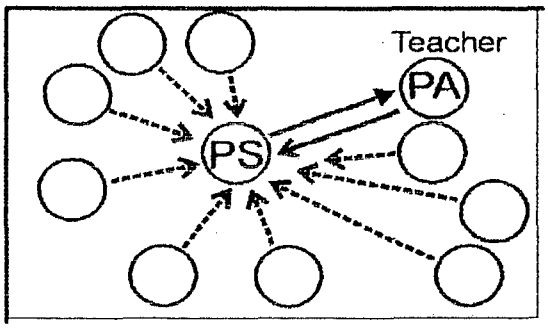
Type III: The single/joint structure

(first moment)



Primary Speaker = PS →
Primary Attender = PA ←
Secondary Attender = SA ----------->
Teacher = T

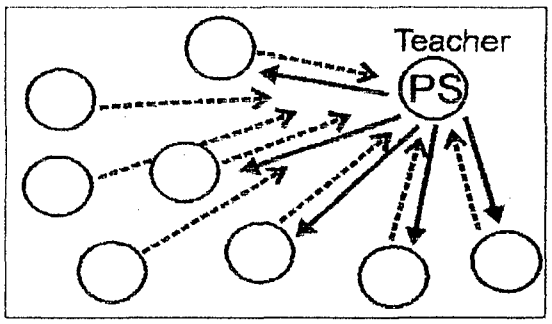
Type III (second moment)



Primary Speaker = PS →
Primary Attender = PA ←
Secondary Attender = SA ---------->
Teacher = T

In this participation structure, while the teacher answers a student's question or clears out a student's doubt, other students can participate in the interaction, giving their contribution. This is the case, for example, when, during the activity of correction, a student fails to give a correct answer and asks for clarification. Meanwhile, the other non-ratified participants in the group may want take the turn and help the teacher, producing a sort of "parallel teaching".

Type IV: The open-turn-teacher-centered structure



Primary Speaker = PS →
Primary Attender = PA ←
Secondary Attender = SA ---------->
Teacher = T

In this type of participation structure, the teacher is the main speaker, but students are allowed to interrupt to ask for clarification or to give their contribution. During teacher-focused instruction (teaching a grammar point, for example), the teacher spends some of the time at the blackboard, providing examples and afterwards, checking students' comprehension.

There is a special case of this structure identified in the data. In this subtype of pattern IV, the teacher asks an open question addressed to the whole group, so that all participants may have access to the floor. That is, speaking rights are distributed equally among students. Usually, the teacher poses a question or provides an explanation, and then the turn is given to the group so that they can supply answers on their own, or cooperate by producing answers jointly with their class-mates.

Staying silent seems to be the most common behavior in a situation like that. Speaking is face-threatening since the student who volunteers an answer is exposed to judgments of the group, which may be positive or negative. Therefore, during this classroom configuration, the student who verbalizes something risks losing face[3].

On these occasions, eventually one student will volunteer an answer. When it does not happen, there is usually a long pause of silence and the activity is only resumed when the teacher, as the topic controller, manages to make participants feel at ease. This is generally achieved through a humorous situation.

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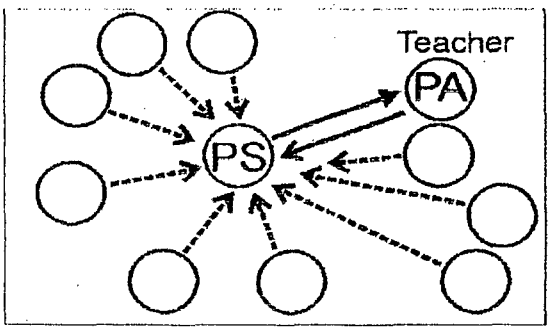
[3] Goffman (1967) suggests that *to lose face* means "to be in wrong face, to be out of face, or to be shame-faced" (p. 7).

Type V: The student-topic initiated structure

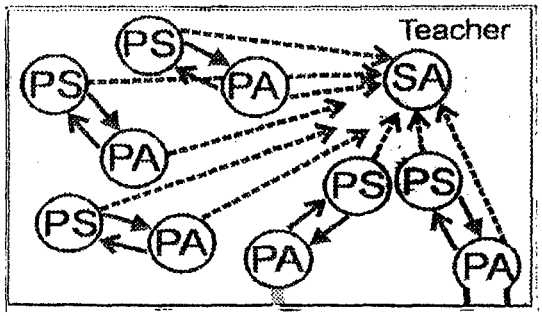


Primary Speaker = PS →
Primary Attender = PA ←
Secondary Attender = SA ---------->
Teacher = T

In the *student topic initiated structure* it is a student, not the teacher, who controls or introduces the topic of discussion. The student obtains his/her turn by simply beginning to talk (asking a question or commenting on something).

This structure usually appears when, after providing the explanation of a new content, the teacher usually assigns a task to work with it. Eventually, before she proceeds to the instructions, a student takes the floor to ask for further clarification. Students also take the floor to comment or criticize on a task before or after it has been done.

Type VI: The free pair work activity structure



Primary Speaker = PS →
Primary Attender = PA ←
Secondary Attender = SA ---------->
Teacher = T

The *free pair work structure* refers to an interaction in which pairs of learners initiate and control the interaction. This type of participation structure differs from the *pair allocated turn structure* because the students are outside the direct supervision of the teacher, and they are free to choose their partners for performance. Sometimes the teacher asks students to walk around the classroom and exchange partners. Once they are carrying out the activity in pairs, the teacher is not able to control every pair's performance. She participates in the activity in equal status to the rest of the group. Eventually, she provides help when requested by a pair partner. The data revealed that in the pair work structures, in which the teacher does not have total control of their speaking, learners display more readiness and willingness to participate. They also look more comfortable than in circle lessons when they are put on the spot. In terms of teacher's social control, this structure belongs to the students, while in all the other participation patterns the teacher has control of the students. That is, the other structures "belong" to the teacher.

The analysis of the data has shown that, among these structures, there are three types that require more active public participation of the students: the single turn structure, the pair allocated turn and the single-joint structure. These structures are more likely to put all the participants' attention on the learners who publicly participate either after being nominated or by volunteering to do so. These types of structure of classroom participation are prevailing within speech activities[4] such as "correction of tasks", "teacher explanations" and "classroom discussions".

The analysis has also shown that some participation structures differ from the others due to the specific role the participants play, and the strategies they use when projecting their identities as language learners and as professional academics at interaction. For example, in some structures, e.g., the single turn structure, when students are expected to take a more active role, the low status learners[5] use unexpected strategies such as refusing to talk or simply answering minimally. On the other hand, the high status learners make use of certain strategies when facing those situations such as using humor as a strategy to avoid losing face and to display alignment with the group.

Finally, from the analysis of the data, humor seems to be a strategy frequently employed by the participants within this participation structure. This is a strategy mostly used by the teacher, but some students (the ones which project a

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[4] O'Connor and Michaels (1996, p.70) say that "speech activity is typically used to name a temporally extended, conventionally recognized level of activity". . . "Such activities differ across communities in their particulars but are recognizable on the basis of their recurrent, central participant roles and purposes".

[5] The expressions "low status learners" and "high status learners" were termed by myself, but the ideas that originated them were taken from the works of authors such as Tyler (1995), Poole (1993), Scollon & Scollon (1991), Gass and Varonis (1991).

higher status while interacting in classroom) also recur to the strategy of humor in different interactional situations.

After having described the various participation structures which were identified in this EFL class, I will proceed with the analysis by narrowing down the corpus of this study. In the second part of the analysis, I will deal with humorous passages/situations which take place within correction activities. Therefore, within these passages, humor will be viewed as a visible signal of motivation and attitude.

4.3. Data analysis II: A micro-ethnographic view of humor in the FL classroom

Humor has been largely approached since the work of Aristotle to Freud through Hume and Kant, and they have provided us with many theories in their attempts to define and analyze this phenomenon (Chiaro, 1992). Most works on humor, however, have been concerned with the physiological and psychological aspects of it. In this section, I will be concerned with the sociolinguistic aspects of humor by analyzing the ways in which humorous effects are achieved in interactions of an EFL classroom. As a further step, I will establish a link between what happens during these events to the phenomena of attitude and motivation. The reason for choosing humor for the analysis of EFL classroom interactions finds grounds on the fact that the presence or absence of humor seems to be a defining phenomenon when dealing with the affective phenomena of attitude and motivation. Foerster (1990), based on Freud's theory, comments on the positive

effects laughing may bring in pedagogic situations. Concerning the role of laughing in the classroom, some of the positive aspects mentioned by him are that laughing brings about relief and relieves anxiety and frustration. Thus, taking this criterion into consideration, I have decided to analyze situations of humor that are produced during correction activities.

Defining humor, however, is not a straightforward task since its stimuli may vary from culture to culture and from person to person. Nevertheless, a sounding definition for humor is provided by Koestler (1974, cited in Chiaro, 1992, p. 4). He says that "in all its many-splendoured varieties, humor can be simply defined as a type of stimulation that tends to elicit the laughter reflex". In addition, Chiaro (1992) points out that humor is generally provoked by non-verbal stimuli, but when words are involved in the creation of humor, they become part of the stimulus. In other words, it does not seem convenient to detach non-verbal from verbal stimuli since both types of stimuli are inextricably linked.

4.3.1. Reasons why humor can be a cue to positive motivation and attitude

According to various interactional studies on verbal and non-verbal manifestations (e.g., Foerster's, 1990, studies on FL classroom; Erickson's, 1992, 1996, works on classroom interaction; Tannen's, 1984a, studies on ordinary interactions), *laughing*, the most clearly identifiable clue to humor, plays the role of a facilitator and regulator of the communication among the participants.

Concerning FL interactions, Foerster (1990, p. 92-93) says that "En classe de langue étrangère, les comportaments verbaux et surtout non verbaux des interlocuteurs manifestent les marques d'une situation paradoxale". (In EFL classrooms, both verbal and non-verbal behaviors of the participants show signals of a paradoxical situation) [my translation]. Paradoxical, in the sense that both the linguistic and non-linguistic behavior of the participants (teacher and students) in a FL class have an implicit expectation that the participants should display spontaneous behavior, but at the same time they should show their best linguistic and non-linguistic behavior. Furthermore, Foerster (ibid.) favors the use of laughing as a strategy that helps to create a favorable environment for FL classroom interactions, as it can help the participants to overcome that paradox. In his own words:

[6] Laughing together makes the relationship among the members stronger. Playing, as a pedagogic strategy, gives the learner the opportunity to laugh at other things, rather than at linguistic production inability. Playing favors humorous expression at the verbal and situational levels, and therefore, it constitutes an important means of appreciation) [my translation].

4.3.2. Linguistic and paralinguistic features of humor

For the analysis of the segments in which humorous effects are achieved during interactions of the group of beginning EFL students, I will be concerned

[6] "Rire ensemble renforce les liens entre les membres d'un groupe. Le jeu, en tant que stratégie pédagogique, donne à l'apprenant la possibilité de rire d'autre chose que de la maladresse dans la production langagière; il favorise l'expression humoristique au niveau verbal et situatiannel et constitue ainsi un important moyen de valorisation" (Foerster, 1990, p. 93).

with linguistic features (verbal stimuli), such as prosody (intonation, pace, rhythm, voice quality) as well as paralinguistic features (non-verbal stimuli) such as laughing, smiling, gestures, body position, gaze, and the like. It is through a close examination of the use of these elements by the participants that interactional moments will be regarded as humorous.

In order to simplify the analysis of humorous segments I will not only take into account laughing, but also other manifestations of the comic mode[7] such as smiling, giggling, chuckling and word play[8].

4.3.3. Delimitation of the corpus: correction activities

Correction activities are those interactive situations that routinely take place in the classroom in which a participant corrects or provides feedback to another. In classroom interactions, it is generally the teacher who corrects or provides feedback to the students.

The EFL classes I observed are permeated with recurrent correction activities within other speech activities such as grammar explanations, group discussions and oral presentations. These corrections offer rich sources of patterned behavior for analysis. Essentially, in the analyzed data, it is during these activities that humor is used by the participants representing a recurrent pattern of behavior.

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[7] Throughout this chapter, the phrase *comic mode* will be used interchangeably with the word *humor*.

[8] Chiaro (1992, p. 4) suggests that "the term word play conjures up an array of conceits ranging from puns and spoonerisms to wisecracks and funny stories" and that it cannot be separated from humor, as humor is closely linked to laughter.

In the following section, I am going to analyze thirteen correction activity segments in which humorous effects are achieved. At the end of the analysis, a table summarizing the strategies and their goals will be provided.

4.3.4. Humor generating strategies

During FL interactions, laughing and its variations are recurrent extra-linguistic strategies which have a specific role in humorous FL classroom situations (Foerster, 1990). As already suggested above, humor is a phenomenon that is generally signaled by means of *non-verbal stimuli*, which come in the audio-acoustic form, e.g., laughing, or through any expressive extra-linguistic gesture, e.g., making faces, miming and smiling (ibid.).

Two types of humor generating strategies, verbal and non-verbal occur during the following examples: Example # 1 is a correction activity, having a *pair allocated turn structure* of classroom participation. The main humor generating strategy that causes people to laugh during this correction activity is the *pace of the intonation* that one of the participants employs when reading.

On this occasion, the group is carrying out the correction of the dialogues from the course text-book. As usual, the teacher conducts the activity by nominating a pair of students to read the dialogue to check both their answers and their pronunciation. This time, she nominates Will (W) and Bete (B) to read (line 1). After a short pause (line 2), Will takes the turn and addresses Bete with a question (line 3), to which she starts answering promptly (line 4). But she is interrupted by the group which bursts into laugher (line 5).

Example # 1

1.T.: let's try the next one (.) Will (.) letter a (.) and Bete letter b

2. (0.5)

3.W: did you take ah winter vacation last year?=

4.B:= ((in fast and fluent intonation)) yes I did (.) [I went to ((inaudible))]=

5.Sts.: [((laugh))]

The humorous situation in this case is likely to be generated by the *rhythm* of Bete's fluent reading, which is not usual in a group of FL beginners. Bete's reaction is one of amusement, and as soon as she realizes what caused the group to laugh, she aligns with the group and joins them in laughter (lines 6, 7). Lia's (L) verbalization "atropelou" (quite fast) signals that Bete's fast reading brought about the comic mode (line 8). And this is ratified by the teacher who also comments on Bete's reading pace (line 10). In short, the whole group gets aligned to show the participants' appreciation of the task.

6. B.: = [looks at the group and joins

7. them in laughter))]=

8. L.: =atropelou

9. (0.2)

10.T.: =very fast, né (.) Will (.) rapidinho

Humor can also be triggered by *verbal stimulus*, through the manipulation of language, e.g., *word play*, and *pronunciation* (intonation, stress, rhythm). The following segment illustrates a situation in which the way words are pronounced generates a humorous mode which involves the whole group.

The following humorous passage happened within a correction activity that has an *open turn structure of classroom participation,* where the teacher asks an open question which anybody in the group can answer (line 1). What generates humor during the correction activity is the way the teacher pronounces the words, lengthening a sound and using a playful intonation. In this particular sequence of moves (=turns), the group answers in chorus (lines 3 and 8) to each of the teacher's question, and she ratifies their correct answers by repeating their utterances (lines 4 and 9).

Example # 2

1.T.: do you like Julio Iglesias?

2. (0.3)

3.Sts.: yes, I like him very much=

4.T.: =yes, I like him very much (0.2) oka::y

5. (0.4)

6.T.: how's school?

7. (0.5)

8.Sts.: pretty good=

9.T.: =pretty good (.) ok

10. (0.6)

After the short embedding triggered by Tati's (Ta) clarification request (line 11), and the teacher's clarification (lines 15, 16), the correction activity resumes and the group keeps oriented to providing answers to the questions posed by the teacher.

11.Ta.: o que quer dizer pretty good?

12. (0.2)

13.J.: ((inaudible))=

14.Ta.: =ah, sim=

15.T.: no (.) pretty good depends on the emphasis Joe (.) because maybe is:: ok (.)

16. depends (0.5) do you ever study English?

17. (0.3)

But in line 18, the learners' choral answer "yes, every day" causes the teacher to reply with an ironic "okay", followed by laughter (line 19). In this case, the lengthening of the diphthong [eI] is what causes the ironic effect. The students seem to understand the teacher's ironic tone as if saying "you don't study every day, do you?", which refers back to the question asked in line 16, and aligns with her in laughter, displaying agreement (line 20). Also, Will's move overlaps the group's reply and aligns with the teacher by uttering a similarly ironic-like "very" (line 21), which in spite of not being "correct English usage", is ratified by her.

18.Sts.: yes, every day=

19.T.: =oka:::y [((laughs))]

20.Sts.: [((laugh))]=

21.W.: =[very]=

22.T.: =very ((laughs))

In example # 3, a correction activity which has a *single turn structure*, humor is also triggered in several ways. Before the segment, the teacher asked the students to write about their routines. Here, she asks each student to read their

texts for correction. She nominates Joe (J) to start reading about his routine (line 1). As soon as he gets ready, Joe starts (line 3), but immediately, the teacher interrupts him to give feedback. By asking Joe "quem que acorda?" (who wakes up?), in line 4, the teacher seems to give a partial acceptance of his sentence and, at the same time, the *emphatic playful intonation* (high pitch) of the word "quem" (who) in line 4, is likely to be heard as an indication that his utterance needs to be complemented. Joe's giggling answer "eu" latching on the teacher's "quem que acorda?", seems to carry the implication that although he recognizes to have omitted the pronoun, this is something he already knew. Then, the teacher somehow justifies her interruption by making a comment introduced by her chuckling (line 6).

Example # 3

1. T.: so (0.3) ↑Joe (0.5) tell about your routine, Joe
2. (1.5)
3. J.: firsty (0.2) wake up =
4. T.: =quem que acorda?=
5. J.: =((giggling)) eu=
6. T.: =((chuckling)) então tem que falar, senão eu não entendo
7. (0.2)

By doing this, the teacher seems to have succeeded in creating rapport with Joe, who resumes reading about his routine (line 8). What follows is a sequence of latching with just one brief phonological correction (line 12), and

then it proceeds with the teacher echoing Joe's words, as a strategy for ratification.

8. J.: firsty I waky up=

9. T.: =uh huh

10. (0.3)

11.J.: I gety upy (0.2) I waysh the face=

12T.: =wash the face=

13.J.: =wash the face (0.5) u::h I::: brush the::: teeth=

14.T.:= teeth=

15.J.: =teeth (0.3) I: I comb the: the hair=

16.T.:=uh huh

17. (0.9)

18.J.: I have breakfast=

19.T.:=uh huh

20. (0.2)

21.J.: I go to schoul=

But, in line 22, the teacher takes the turn and draws Joe's attention to not having used the expected sentence connectors "them", "after that" in his description by using both Portuguese and English. But the stimulus which seems to trigger off her and the two students' laughter is the *playful teasing tone* of her voice when making the remark. Laughing, in this case, seems to indicate that the business of the exchange has been completed and that the assessment is finished.

22.T.: =e cadê os then, after that ((in a teasing tone)) aí já se perdeu tudo pelo

23. caminho [((laughs))]

24.J.: [((laughs))]

25. W.: [((laughs))]

In the segments described above, humor is triggered off by the *rhythm or pace of intonation* employed by the participants when asking and answering questions, as shown in examples #1 and #2. Another equally effective way of generating humorous moments in this EFL class is by changing the tone of voice to produce a humorous comment, as shown in example # 3.

4.3.5. Goals of humor-generating strategies

Among the several participation strategies (e.g., clarification checks, silence, laughing, smiling, giggling, chuckling, word play) identified and used by the interactants of the FL classroom observed, those which trigger humorous or comic moments such as word play and pronunciation (intonation, rhythm, pace) generally have as their main goals to *amuse* and to *create involvement and/or rapport* among the participants. These goals identified in the classes observed are likely to be part of any classroom interaction in which the participants resort to humor-generating strategies.

The speaker who shows the greatest use of strategies of humor to achieve these different goals is the teacher. This is partly explained because the teacher is the participant who holds the turns most of the time as she has the highest status in the group. Owing to these two reasons, she is able to make use of the comic mode as a strategy intended to amuse and create involvement (among other goals) between the participants of the group.

Further data analysis reveals that the use of humor-generating strategies during correction activities have more specific purposes such as to *avoid or break uncomfortable moments*. These seem to be strategies recurrently used by the teacher with the purpose of lowering the affective filter (see Krashen, 1985), mainly when addressing shy students, and which help to create a relaxing atmosphere for the development of class activities.

Most of the time, the teacher displays an informal attitude towards the EFL group. This informality is expressed mostly in the humorous situations she is able to create to get students involved in the tasks. In other words, the use of humor-generating strategies may not only help to lower the learners' affective filter, establishing a relaxing atmosphere, but it is also used as a teaching resource that contributes to lessen or avoid uncomfortable moments which tend to come out during the teaching-learning process.

Example # 4 shows how the teacher uses humor to get students involved in the task and even to keep conversation moving. As usual, the teacher's procedure within a segment having a *pair allocated turn structure* is to assign two students turns for the correction of written exercises (line 1). After the teacher instructs the pair on the mechanics of the exercise, Uli (U) takes the turn and asks Lia (L) a question (line 3) which she does not understand and asks for repetition (line 5). The teacher takes the turn and repeats the words, but mispronounces the word "fur" as "feer" (line 6), and Uli ratifies the teacher's pronunciation by immediately repeating it (line 7). Then, in line 8, the three long seconds indicate that Lia still does not know the meaning of the word "fur", but does not ask for clarification.

Example # 4

1.T.: Uli (.) now you ask Lia, ok

2. (3.0)

3.U.: e::h how much is a:: fur coat?

4. (2.0)

5.L.: what?=

6.T.: =feer coat=

7.U.: =feer coat

8. (3.0)

In time, the teacher realizes the problem and avoids the disruption of the conversation by translating the unknown vocabulary (line 9). Lia's soft voice and the lengthening of "uh" suggests she is getting a little uncomfortable (line 10). Realizing this fact, the teacher shifts code and produces a humorous comment about the topic (line 11), and the group aligns with her in laughter (line 12).

9.T.: feer coat é um casaco de pele, né=

10.L.: =(então about) u:::h=

11.T.: =[((laughs))] bota thousand nisso, né [((laughs))]=

12.Sts.: [((laugh))] [((laugh))]

In the next move (line 13), Lia seems to have recovered her confidence and takes the turn, speaking in a clear, loud voice. The teacher takes advantage of the relaxing and involving atmosphere and takes the opportunity to add more information to the content being studied (line 14), and again she succeeds in her intents to create involvement with the class. This fact is evidenced through Lia's

laughter (line16) right after the teacher's laughter (line 15), showing that alignment between teacher and student has been recovered.

13.L.: =two thousand (0.2) reais=

14.T.: =ok (.) ai você vai fazer aquele comentário, assim (.) ↑o:::h it's expensive

15. ((laughs))=

16.L.: =((laughs))=

The segment above illustrates a situation in which the participants of the EFL group make successful use of humor-generating strategies with the aim of avoiding uncomfortable moments and creating involvement among them, particularly, when dealing with uncomfortable situations which may cause a disruption of the conversation during the development of an activity.

Example # 5 illustrates how the teacher manages to *get a student out of an uncomfortable situation* that threatens the development of a class activity.

This passage takes place during the correction of the task named "20 questions"[9]. In order to check "yes/no" questions written by students, the teacher asks one of the students, Will, to read up his questions. After having asked a lot of questions, Will is still not able to guess the name of the artist the class is thinking of. Realizing that, the teacher interferes and poses a final question (line 1). Then, after a one-second pause, Bela (Be) reveals the artist's name (line 3). Will's reaction is of annoyance, displayed in the tone of his voice and in the high pitch he uses to say "e eu vou saber de (inaudible)" (line 4). His unexpected reaction

[9] "20 questions" is a game in which one student thinks about a person or thing and the rest of the group tries to guess who the person/thing is by asking yes/no questions, to a maximum of 20 questions.

(during classroom observation Will was usually good-humored), though, causes the group to laugh as if teasing him (line 5).

Example # 5

1.T.: (unclear) Will (.) who is it? (0.5) tell us

2. (1.0)

3.Be.: a:h Edson Capri=

4.W.: = ((using high pitch intonation)) e eu vou saber de (inaudible)=

5.Sts.: =((laugh))=

This playful teasing goes on in Nanda's repetition of the artist's name (line 6). Then the teacher aligns with Will and justifies his ignorance about artists' names (lines 7, 8, 10, 11). But she does that in a *playful tone*, followed by laughter (line 8). Both her tone and her laughter establish another comic situation which is confirmed by the group's laughter (line 12). As the group is laughing, Will takes the turn and is also able to justify his failure (line 13).

6.N.: =Edson Capri=

7.T.: =Will doesn't know if it's the (names of an actors and

8. actresses) ((laughs))=

9. Girls: =((exchange information about the actor mentioned))=

10.T.: =é que vocês tem que falar exatamente a novela que ele trabalha (.) que aí a

11. gente::=

12.Sts: =[((laugh))]

13.W.: [novela] (que eu me atrapalhei) (inaudible)=

Realizing that Will is still a little annoyed, the teacher takes the turn again, and addresses Will with a comment on his excuse mainly by a lengthened o::h (line 14) and then laughs at her own words (line 15). The group aligns with the teacher (line 16) and laughs in overlap with her, and Will surrenders and smiles, too. The comic mode only stops when the teacher takes the turn, switches code (from Portuguese to English) and asks the group to stop.

14.T.: =Will (.) não assiste novela (0.2) ↑o::h não está informa:do (0.5)=

15. = [((laughs))]=

16. [((the group laughs, Will smiles))]

17.T.: =ok (.) now let's stop, please (.) let's stop, ok (.) let's stop, ok

Examples # 4 and # 5 above have shown how interactants make use of humor generating strategies to amuse and create involvement and rapport among themselves. More specifically, example # 4 has shown how one of the participants in this EFL class (the teacher) makes use of laughter as a strategy to avoid or break uncomfortable moments, creating a relaxing atmosphere for the development of class activities. Similarly, in example # 5, the teacher also makes use of laughing as a humor generating strategy to get a student out of an uncomfortable situation that threatens the continuity of the activity.

4.3.6. Humor as a way of projecting the participants' identities and/or saving the participants' faces

The use of humor made by the participants of this EFL group is one of the most effective strategies that takes place during the correction activities analyzed. During these activities, the way the participants make use of humor-generating strategies helps them to convey their identities as professionals of education and as language learners (Ochs, 1994). For example, while some participants project the identity of *high status EFL learners* by making autonomous use of humorous strategies when faced with difficult situations and thus being able to participate actively in the ongoing conversation, others behave differently, projecting the identity of *low status learners*, keeping silent or only responding minimally when requested by the teacher, i.e., they do not participate actively in the ongoing talk.

Ochs (1994, p. 288) defines "social identity" as a term used to describe the "social statuses, roles, positions, relationships, and institutional and other relevant community identities one may attempt to claim or assign in the course of social life". She argues that "speakers attempt to establish the social identities of themselves and others through verbally performing certain *social acts*[10] and verbally displaying certain *stances*[11]". For example, we may want to construct our identities as members of a community, as members of a professional organization, as teachers and as language learners.

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[10] "Social act" means displaying behavior such as making a request, interrupting someone, contradicting another person (Ochs, 1990).

[11] "Stance" means "a display of a socially recognized point of view or attitude" (Ochs, 1993, p. 288)

Similar to the notion of social *identity* is the notion of *face* discussed by Goffman (1967). He defines *face* as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line[12] others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (p. 5). Based on this premise, we can say that in any type of social encounter, such as in the EFL class, learners worry about presenting themselves as competent interactants. And due to the fact that they are adult beginners learning a new language, they seem aware of the stigma attached to incompetence, and therefore they try to disguise this incompetence in many ways (Tsui, 1996). One of these ways is by making use of humorous strategies to smooth over or cover up their incompetence. In such situations, we may say that the speakers are protecting and/or saving faces.

During correction activities, when language learners are more likely to lose face, the use of humorous strategies conveys a visible signal that the participants are working hard to save face, constructing this way their identities as high status language learners. Contrariwise, when the participants do not seem able to make use of these strategies successfully, we may say that they are likely to lose faces, and therefore project the identity of low status language learners.

Most of the interactional sequences reveal that it is the teacher who makes interactional effort to help students complete the tasks. However, some students also make use of various strategies when interacting in class, specially when facing difficult learning situations. Therefore, the use of humor-generating strategies in an autonomous way confers to a learner a high status position. For example, some learners use extra-linguistic resources such as mimics and gestures

[12] "Line": "a pattern of verbal and non-verbal acts by which he expresses his view of the situation

when trying to make themselves understood in the target language, especially when dealing with unknown vocabulary or unknown linguistic structures.

Within segments having *pair allocated turn structure*, for example, the use of humor-generating strategies is recurrent among the participants of this EFL group. The use of these strategies contributes to project their identities as language learners, as these are "spot light" situations where learners struggle to save faces. This will be illustrated in the following segments.

In example # 6, the teacher asks two students to read a dialogue that was assigned as homework. The sequence reveals that despite the great difficulty Marilu has in speaking in the target language, she manages well and does not let the conversation break down, even when dealing with a face threatening situation in which she is put in the "spot light".

Immediately after the teacher assigns turns (lines 1-2), Bel reads her part (line 3). When Marilu (M) takes the turn (line 5), her stuttering reveals she is notably nervous. But, although she gets stuck in the first words, she finds her way out of the uncomfortable situation by resorting to a humorous strategy: she appropriates the words of a well known funny TV commercial (line 5). Her strategy is ratified by the teacher who usually uses humor as a way to lower the affective filter and to avoid creating uncomfortable situations, mainly when a student displays insecurity to speak. The teacher aligns with Marilu and repeats her lexicalization (line 6) in such a way that it also reminds the other students of the funny TV commercial. The teacher's intonation is ratified by Marilu's

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and through this his evaluation of the participants, especially himself." (Goffman, 1967, p. 5).

utterance (line 7) which reinforces the triggering of the laughing sequence (lines 8, 9)

Example # 6

1.T.: a::h (.) let's follow the next one (.) let's try the o::h (.) the one (0.2) Bel (.)

2. could you try(.) you and Marilu, please (.) Bel e a Marilu (read)=

3. Bel: =what did you do on Saturday?

4. (0.3)

5. M.: I::: I (.), I, I, I::=

6. T.: =I, I, I [I:::

7. M..: [(aquele cara da tv que não sabe falar inglês)]

8. Sts.: [((laugh))=

9. T.: =((laughs))=

Once the comfortable environment is established, what follows is a scaffolding[13] sequence in which Marilu and the teacher jointly participate in the construction of meaningful propositions. Although still facing difficulties in the target language, with the help of the teacher, Marilu is able to complete the task.

10. M.: =what, não é?=

11. T.: =no, the past of go (.) went=

12. (0.2)

13. M.: I wentch to Boston which my friends u:::h he: (.) come é (.) we=

14. T.: =we=

15. M.: =we taked=

16. T.: =no, [no=

[13] Scaffolding is a strategy mostly used by an expert in his/her efforts to help a novice complete a task beyond his/her level of competence (Poole, 1992).

17. M.: [taked=

18. T.: =no, no=

19. M.: =tok=

20. T.: =took (.) took (.) the past of take, ok

21. (0.2)

22. M.: took a tour of the:: city (.) then (.) then::: [we] we u::h went shopping=

23. T.: [uh huh]

24. T.: = uh huh (.) that's it

Example # 7 illustrates another humorous situation that is created within a correction activity. As soon as the teacher instructs the students on the mechanics of the task and assigns them turns (lines 1, 2, 3, 4), Uli immediately gets the floor and begins the conversation (line 5).

Example # 7

1. T.: let's see (.) Bel (.) the next one (.) Bel (.) you a::re a, ok (.) and: Yris b (0.2) e

2. você ((pointing to Uli)), que é um cavalheiro, vai ser o Carlos, né (.) e a Bela

3. vai ser a Sally (.) então vamos lá (.) é só prá lê o diálogo prá gente vê o que

4. eles tão pedindo aqui óh (.) vamos lá=

5. U.: =hello:! ((and looks at Bel))

6. (2.0)

7. ((some students mutter something, others laugh))=

The two long seconds of complete silence between lines 5 and 7 indicate that, for some reason, the conversation has broken down. Then, only when the group starts muttering and laughing (line 7), does the teacher realize there is something going wrong (line 8). The group's laughter and Uli's puzzled look (line

9) confirm that he is lost. The teacher then indicates the right page and turn (line 10). In her intention to make Uli feel comfortable, Bel makes a playful comment (line 12). The way he reacts to her comment shows that apparently he has understood that she has read it from the book. And by asking "aonde é que tá isso?" (line 13) in a puzzled way, Uli reveals that he is still lost. The series of misunderstandings, which reaches a climax at Uli's question (line 13), triggers off a humorous situation signaled by the learners' laughter in line 14.

8. T.: =((addressing Uli in a teasing tone)) aonde você tá?=
9. Sts.: =((laugh, Uli looks puzzled))=
10. T.: =é na page sixteen (.) é só prá lê lá (.) vai lá, Bel (.) é a Bel que começa
11. (0.2)
12. Bel: ((joking)) o: Uli (.) eu (innaudible) eu não tenho outro=
13. U: =[(aonde é que tá isso?)]=
14. Sts.: [((laugh))]

Despite the face-threatening situation Uli is caught up in because of his distraction, he has the ability to cope with this type of situation, projecting himself as a high status student who profits from the comic mode to save his face and thus avoids having an uncomfortable moment by blaming his partner, Will, for his mistake. The move in line 17 shows how the other students confirm his status by laughing at his comment.

15. U.: =é ele o (culpado) ((points to Will)) que nós tamo ainda na página
16. [(anterior)=
17. Sts.: [((laugh))

Example # 8 takes place within a segment having a *pair allocated turn structure* in which the teacher nominates a pair of students to read out the dialogue in the book in order to check the answers. The segment illustrates one of the embedded situations in which one correction activity is temporarily suspended and another correction activity is opened. This happens on one of those rare occasions when Paul[14], a weak student is directly nominated by the teacher to participate in this type of activity. As usual, the teacher selects pairs and assigns turns for them to read their answers, while the rest of the group follows them reading in the book.

After the teacher explains the mechanics of the task and nominates the pair (lines 4, 5), Paul (P) starts reading enthusiastically (line 7), in such a way that when Nanda (N) takes the turn (line 9), he speaks in overlap with her, interrupting her (line 10). Nanda immediately looks at the teacher as if asking for her interference.

Example # 8

1.T.: P.: (.) vamos lá (.) já fez Paul?

2. (0.2)

3.P.: eu fiz a um=

4.T.: =a primeira já (0.2) so (.) Paul you are a (.) and Nanda you are b, ok (0.2)

5. just read, ok (.) everybody (.) now you check, please (.) go ahead

6. (0.3)

7.P.: ((reading enthusiastically)) can I help you?

8. (0.2)

[14] Classroom observation revealed that the teacher tended to allocate turns to brighter students, while weak and shy students were usually neglected.

9.N.: how much [is] ((she looks at the teacher in interrogation))=

10.P.: [I]

Then the teacher holds Paul in line to wait for his turn (line 11), by making a remark in a playful teasing tone. Her spontaneous remark makes everybody laugh (line 12), with the exception of Paul who does not seem to align with the teacher and remains serious (line 12). Looking notably puzzled and a little disconcerted, Paul only resumes the task after the teacher re-assigns turns and asks him to continue reading (line 14).

11.T.: =((in a teasing tone)) calma aí (.) ela nem perguntou ainda=

12.Sts.: =((the group laughs, Paul remains serious))=

13.P.: =((looking puzzled, starts pulling his ear)) eu não sou b?=

14.T.: = tu é o a (.) ela é o b (0.2) ((changing to a serious tone)) começa, please=

At this point, Paul's initial enthusiasm has faded away. Then, in line 17, when Nanda makes a mistake (but she is not corrected by the teacher), Paul gets uncertain about the answer (line 19) and relies on the teacher for confirmation. Although it is likely to be Nanda's faulty grammar question that causes Paul to feel confused, the teacher interrupts the task and addresses Paul to explain the mistake (lines 21, 22 and 24).

15.P.: =((looking a little disconcerted, he resumes reading)) can I help you?

16. (0.2)

17.F.: how much is this jeans?

18. (0.2)

19.P.: it's: (.) it is ((looks at the teacher for confirmation)) it is (1.0) não?

20. (0.3)

21.T.: espera só um minutinho (.) o jeans ali a:::h se você se referir ao jeans ele é

22 plural tá (.) porque=

23.P.: =plural?=

24.T.: =ele não tem duas pernas?=

Differently from other students such as Marilu (example # 6) and Uli (example # 7), Paul does not dare to break the asymmetry between himself and the teacher. Instead, he simply acknowledges the mistake as his, projecting the identity of a low status learner. Moreover, the sequence of moves shows that, in example # 8, the use of humor-generating strategies fails to achieve the goal of establishing rapport among the two focal participants (Paul and the teacher).

The examples above show that the participants of this EFL group project their identities as language learners in different ways. In example # 6, the student (Marilu) works hard to save her face before the group, and despite her low competence in the language, she succeeds in doing so. In example # 7, Uli shows his ability to cope with face threatening situations like the one he was caught up in. As a high status learner, Uli displays a contrasting behavior to that of Paul's (example # 8) when facing an uncomfortable situation.

Differently from these two learners, in example # 8, the participant (Paul) projects himself as a low status language learner due to his failure to become engaged in the humorous situation created by the teacher.

The next extract illustrates another example of a humorous situation created within a correction activity, which is oriented to *create involvement*

among the participants, mainly between the teacher and the student who is "on the spot", since, as already suggested, it is during moments like this that the nominated students have the opportunity to project themselves as high or low status language learners, for example, by making autonomous use of humor-generating strategies.

In example # 9, the class proceeds with the correction of homework. The teacher assigns some students turns to read out their descriptions for correction. When it comes to Will's turn (line 1), initially he seems a little disconcerted and smiles timidly when saying he has not done it (line 2). The teacher seems surprised at his answer (it is the first time Will has not done his homework) and she immediately repeats the question in confirmation (line 3). Will turns his body on the chair, showing visible uneasiness (line 4), but proposes to talk (line 5). Realizing the student is willing to participate, the teacher ratifies his proposal (lines 6,7).

Example # 9

1.T: Will (.) what did you write (.) about your family (.) and you?=
2.W.: =((smiles, looking a little ashamed)) não fiz=
3.T.: =no (.) you didn't ?=
4.W.: =((looks at the teacher, chuckles and stretches back looking a little
5. uneasy)) não escrevi, mas posso falar=
6.T.: =((smiling)) no,no (.) that's ok (.) no problem (0.2) say:: uh: o que cê quer
7. dizer about your family

But, although teacher and student display a cooperative behavior, the two long seconds Will spends looking at his notes suggests he is still insecure about

how to start (line 8). Then, as usual, the teacher recurs to a humorous strategy by shifting code and changing the tone of her voice (line 9). The way Will reacts to the teacher's question (laughing when answering to her, in line 10) suggests that the affective filter has been lowered down, avoiding this way, a break in the conversation. The moves that follow ratify that a cooperative behavior between the two focal participants (teacher and student) has been established (lines 11, 12), favoring the continuation of the activity (line 14).

8. 2.0= ((Will looks at his notes))

9.T.: ok? (.) ok? (0.2) ((high pitch, teasing tone)) ↑ vai falar ou não vai falar, Will?=

10.W.: =falo ((laughs))=]

11.T.: =((bursts into laughter)) ele diz que vai falar depois não fala ((laughs))=

12.W.: =((cleaning his throat)) deixa eu falar

13. (0.2)

14.T.:= ((in a serious tone)) one or two sentences about you and your family, ok

15.W.: ((looking relaxed)) tá bom, deixa eu falar

The sequence in example # 10 was extracted from an activity in which the group carried out the correction of the vocabulary exercise from the book. The segment shows how a student changes roles with the teacher. This is in keeping with Basso (1972, p. 71) to whom "roles and statuses are not fixed attributes", that is, roles and statuses are likely to change according to the situation and way participants project their identities during an interaction.

In the next correction activity, students are asked to suggest types of clothing while the teacher writes them on the board. The sequence shows that Bel somehow changes role with the teacher when she comes up with a new item (line

1) whose meaning the teacher does not know. While Bel explains the new vocabulary, it is the teacher who turns her attention to her. It is at this moment that we can say that the teacher and the student have exchanged roles. Interestingly, when Will also comes up with another item (line 6), he is not ratified by the teacher who has turned her attention to Bel who has become the focal speaker.

Example # 10

1.Bel.: and dress-coat

2. (0.2)

3. T.: dress=

4. Bel: =coat=

5. T.: dress-coat?=

6. W.: =shirt

The negotiation between Bel and the teacher proceeds until line 14 when the teacher seems to have finally agreed on the meaning of the new vocabulary item brought by Bel.

7. (0.2)

8. Bel: (inaudible)

9. (0.3)

10. T.: dress-coat is casaco?=

11. Bel: =casaca=

12. T.: [casaca]

13. Bel: [casaca]=

14. T.: =ah! Ok=

In line 15, Will tries to get the turn again, but without success, since the teacher resumes the discussion about the item introduced by Bel (lines 16-19). When they seem to have come to an agreement about the new vocabulary item, a student asks the meaning of the new item (line 20) and Bel takes the turn before the teacher and answers her classmate (line 22). But the teacher takes the floor right after Bel, and provides a longer explanation (lines 23, 24 , 25) while Bel tries to get the turn by repeating the word "casaca" in overlap with the teacher (line 26). The teacher keeps the floor and starts making humorous commentaries (lines 27, 29), with which the whole class overlaps in laughter (lines 28 and 30).

15. W.: =shirtch=

16. T.: =dress-coat (.) ah! É separado (.) é isso?=

17. Bel: =é (.) tem tracinho no meio=

18. T.: = ((writing it on the board)) opa, ok (0.2) dress::-coat

19. (0.2)

20. St.: casaca?

21. (0.2)

22. Bel: é, casaca=

23. T.: =casaca é aquilo que eles usam quando vão numa festa bem chique, né (.)

24. que eles botam aquele sobretudo (.) não é sobretudo [é usado] só para

25. grandes festas=

26.Bel: [casaca]

27.T.: = é porque você não teve a oportunidade [((laughs))]=

28.Sts.: [((laugh))]

29.T.: =de participar de uma festa muito chique [((laughs))]

30.Sts.: [((laugh))]

Examples # 9 and # 10 illustrate two different situations in which the successful use of strategies by the participants of an EFL class helps to convey their identities as high status language learners. In example # 9, Will aligns with the teacher in response to her humorous strategy, and is able to save his face before the group. In example # 10, although the student (Bel) herself does not make use of humorous strategies to project herself as a high status learner, she somehow engages the teacher in the creation of the comic mode, which seems to be triggered by a seemingly never-ending negotiation.

4.3.7. The other side of the coin: When there is silence, no humor

Up to now, I have shown situations where, in most of the cases, the students are brought into participating, helped by humorous generating strategies. Contrariwise, there are situations where silence, instead of humor, becomes the dominant element of the interaction, and communication breaks down.

One of my first impressions during classroom observation was that the students have the knowledge of when they are expected to speak, and when not to speak. The problem is that, in many cases, when they are expected to do so, they do not know *what to say*. In such a situation, the most appropriate behavior seems to remain silent, not risking losing face. During written activities, for example, silence is the expected etiquette, but when the task requires speech activity, silence sounds "out of line" or inappropriate (Basso, 1972).

Some participants of the EFL group I observed showed reluctance to speak in front of their class-mates, and did so only when absolutely necessary, as when

directly addressed by the teacher. The following example shows one of these situations in which silence or reluctance to speak due to shyness breaks the expected classroom etiquette and is thus interpreted as inappropriate. This sequence takes place within the activity of "correcting exercises from the book". As the usual procedure, the teacher checks the first item with the whole group, then she asks students to read their answers. The teacher addresses Rod to read the answer (line 1). After a delay of three seconds (line 2), Rod (R) hesitates before he risks an answer. His hesitation is displayed through his murmuring u:::hm (line 3), in the uneasy scratching of his head and in his soft low voice when reading. Bel tries to help him (line 4), but the teacher either doesn't listen to her or simply does not ratify her participation.

Example # 11

1. T.: R.: (.) the next one, please
2. (3.0)
3. R.: u:::hm ((smiling timidly and starts scratching his head)) what is (your) name?=
4. Bel: =her name
5. (0.9)

Despite the teacher's effort to help him (line 6), Rod does not seem to be willing to cooperate. His inaudible answer (line 8) reveals his reluctance to speak. But the teacher does not give up and gently persists on the matter by shifting code to facilitate his understanding (line 6). Despite the teacher's effort to engage Rod in the task, his inaudible answer displays his reluctance to speak (lines 8, 10).

6. T.: olha na resposta, lá (.) oh (.) o pronome já tá lá

7. (0.5)

8. R.: (inaudible)=

9. T.: =ãh?=

10.R.: =(inaudible)=

Still speaking in Portuguese, the teacher changes her tone of voice to a teasing intonation when saying the word "a:i"[15] (line 11). This initially sounds like a reprimand, but her smiling right after the "ai" leaves no doubt she is trying hard to make Rod feel at ease to speak. Then, in line 13, when Rod seems about to be willing to engage in the conversation with the teacher, he literally gives up, and the teacher takes the turn again and provides the answer she is trying to get from him (lines 14, 15). Finally, after the teacher's explanation, the group provides the expected answer in chorus (line 17), and Rod joins the group in overlap (line 18), which is ratified by the teacher (line 19).

11. T.: =ai, Rod (smiling) (0.2) tu vai perguntar o quê:?

12. (2.0)

13. R.: é::: qual é o:: sei lá=

14. T.: ↑o::h, a resposta é (.) her name's Rosa (0.2) qual é a pergunta? (0.2) qual é o

15. nome dela, né (.) seria a pergunta, né

16. (0.5)

17.Sts.: [what is her name]=

18.R.: [what is her name]=

19.T.: =what's her name

[15] The intonation of "ai" here is similar to that Brazilians use when feeling pain.

By repeating the group's answer, the teacher ratifies it as the expected one and closes the interactional session with Rod.

4.3.8. Failing humor generating strategies

Different types of non-verbal strategies convey a variety of meanings that are sometimes hard to be decoded (Foerster, 1990). Laughing, for example, may sometimes convey emotions such as shyness, hostility or aggression. On the other hand, it may also express satisfaction, relief, complicity, approval and pleasure, among other feelings (ibid.).

Moreover, although the use of humor-generating strategies generally reaches positive results, the data revealed that there are also discrepant moments when the use of these strategies by the participants does not achieve positive goals (e.g., creating rapport or involvement or simply amusement). Due to the fact that the way each learner deals with humor in the classroom contributes to reveal his/her projected identity, and his/her attitude towards the language environment, the teacher and his/her classmates, I am also concerned with these discrepancies in the analysis of the humorous situations.

The next segment exemplifies one of those discrepant situations in which the use of humor-generating strategies does not help to create amusement or involvement among the focal participants. On the contrary, smiling and chuckling seem to create uncomfortable moments.

Example # 12 takes place during the correction of a dialogue from the book. As usual, after students have completed the dialogue, the teacher assigns

two students to read it for correction (line 1). After a pause of nine tenth of a second (line 2), Bela (Be) gets the floor and reads the first question (line 3). When Bete (B) takes her turn, she hesitates a little because she is not sure about the pronunciation of the word "them" (lines 5, 6). Then, the teacher utters the correct pronunciation (line 7). Bete repeats it (line 8) and the teacher ratifies her pronunciation by repeating it again (line 9). Still hesitant, Bete resumes the reading (line 10), but again she produces a faulty pronunciation, which is corrected by the teacher (line 11).

Example # 12

1.T.: let's try the next one (.) Bela (.) letter a and Bete (.) letter b

2. (0.9)

3.Be.: what did you do on saturday night?

4. (0.3)

5.B.: I had friends ófter, óver, over and I cooked dinner for ten (0.2) ((looks at the

6. teacher)) qual é a diferença ten, (then)?=

7.T.: =them=

8.B.: =them=

9.T.: =them=

10.B.: =then (.) then we watch (.) [watched]=

11.T.: [watched]

As Bete does not get any feedback from the teacher, she proceeds (line 12). Bete's reading then becomes truncated, with lots of misplaced pauses (line 12). She seems aware of her poor reading and although she smiles, she shakes her head in self-disapproval (line 13). The eight tenths of second of silence (line 14)

without anybody taking the turn points to a disruption in the conversation. This fact suggests that in this event of correction there is little alignment between the participants, and in particular between the focal student and the teacher. That is, the teacher does not interfere, as she does in other situations, to break the uncomfortable situation or to help create a relaxing atmosphere for the development of the task. Therefore, for the task to proceed, Bete has to attract Bela's attention by touching her (line 15). Bela's interjection "↑oh!" confirms her distraction which is ratified by her chuckling, before she proceeds. Bete aligns with Bela and chuckles in overlap with her. Bela and Bete's chuckles (lines 16, 17), though, do not seem to change the arythmical interaction, rather than that, the two students' behavior suggests the uncomfortable situation has not been overcome.

12.B.: =a video ((lowering her voice)) (.) and (.) what did you (0.2) do (.) on the
13. (.) weekend? ((smiles timidly and shakes her head in self-disapproval))
14. (0.8)
15.B.: ((smiling, Bete touches Bela to call her attention for her turn))=
16.Be.: =oh! I stayed home ((chuckles)) (.) [andy:::]
17.Be.: [((chuckles))]

4.3.9. Code switching & humor in correction activities

In order to analyze the humorous events, we need to understand how humor is constructed, that is, it is necessary to define what signals humorous events in a given situation (e.g., in a FL classroom). To do that, I rely on

Gumperz's (1982, 1992) theoretical framework. He suggests that speakers make use of signaling or contextualization cues to signal shifts in the conversation. These cues can be of verbal or non-verbal nature.

In addition to laughing and its variations, in the EFL beginning group I investigated, three different types of situations when the teacher uses code-switching (from English to Portuguese) are observed generally indicating that there is a change to the comic mode. One of them is when the teacher shifts from English to Portuguese, as shown in examples, 3 (line 4), 4 (line 14), 7 (line 2), 9 (line 9), 13 (lines18, 29). Another occurs when the teacher uses the two codes interchangeably (Portuguese and English or vice-versa) in the same utterance, as in examples 4 (line 11), 7 (lines 1, 10), 8 (lines 4, 14), 9 (line 6) and 11 (line 14). A third one takes place when a remark is followed by its translation, as described in example #1 (line 10), 4 (line 9). Thus, most of the segments analyzed so far present code-switching as signaling of a humorous moment.

The following sequence illustrates one situation in which the participants make use of these contextualization cues to signal shifting from the serious tone to the comic tone. Within a correction activity, the teacher instructs the students on the mechanics of the exercises (lines 1, 2, 3), before they proceed with the correction. Throughout the segment, the teacher nominates students to give answers to her questions and the learners provide their answers (lines 4, 5 ,6 ,7 ,8 ,9 ,10 ,11 ,12 ,13 ,14 ,15 ,16 ,17). The classroom tone changes in line 18 when the teacher shifts code and comments on Tati's mistake (line 18). Her commentary is followed by the group's laughter (line 19). At this moment, we can say that the

serious tone has given way to the humorous tone, signaled by the participants' laughter.

Example # 13

1.T.: okay?! (.) next exercise, ok (.) letter c you should complete with the correct
2. pronouns (.) pronoun (0.2) u:h do you like Helen? (.) u:h Rod (.) what did you
3. answer?
4. (1.5)
5.R.: ((smiling)) do you like Helen? Yes, I like her very much.
6. (0.2)
7.T.: her ok (.) uh huh (.) Cris (.) do you like leandro and leonardo?
8. (0.2)
9.Cris: no, I don't like them=
10.T.: =ok ((inaudible)) (.) Tati (.) does Paul like pop music?
11. (0.2)
12.Ta.: yes, I love it=
13.T.: =he loves it=
14.Ta.: =he (.) he's loves it=
15.T.: =no (.) he loves it
16. (0.2)
17.Ta.: ((smiling)) he loves it=
18.T.: =não bota ésse onde não tem [((laughs))]=
19.Sts.: [((laugh))]

In line 20, the teacher resumes the serious tone. This is signaled by her changing code (from Portuguese to English), and this continues until line 27. Then, in line 28, Marilu comes up with an observation about the task. Once more, the serious tone of classroom discourse gives place to the comic/humorous tone,

here signaled by the teacher's humorous comment and laughter (line 29). This tone is acknowledged by the group who aligns with the teacher in laughter by making humorous remarks (lines 30, 31).

20.T.: =Marilu (.) do they like Romario?=

21.M.: =yes, they like him a lot

22. (0.2)

23.T.: uh huh (.) uhm::: five (.) Bel (.) does Pat like Roberto Carlos?

24. (0.2)

25.Be.: no, she hates him=

26.T.: =him (.) ok (.) him=

27. (0.3)

28.M.: daí tu colocou aqui no:: ((smiling)) no enunciado "you" e não tem, né?

29. (0.2)

29.T.: é (.) só prá enganá, né [((bursts in laughter))]

30.Sts.: [((laugh))]=

31.Tati: =faz parte=

32.T.: =((gigling)) prá ver se voces tavam acordados, né ((laughs))

In this section, I have briefly discussed and illustrated how code switching is used by the participants of an EFL classroom during correction activities as a strategy that signals humorous situations.

4.10. Summary of the analysis of humor in the data investigated

The following table summarizes the findings of the analysis of humor in the correction segments investigated.

Segment N°	Humor Signaling Strategy/humor generating strategy	Strategy Goal	Goal achieved?
#1	laughing, code switching/pace of intonation	create involvement/rapport avoid uncomfortable moments lower affective filter	YES
#2	laughing/playful intonation	avoid communication breakdown	YES
#3	laughing, chuckling giggling, code switching/playful intonation	get a student participant out of an uncomfortable situation	YES
#4	laughing, code switching/playful comment	create involvement/rapport avoid uncomfortable moments	YES
#5	laughing/learners' and teacher's comments	create involvement/rapport avoid uncomfortable moments	YES
#6	laughing/playful intonation	save face before difficult situation	YES
#7	laughing, code switching/teacher's playful intonation and learner's comment	avoid uncomfortable moments; get student out of an uncomfortable situation	YES
#8	laughing/teacher's comment and playful intonation	get a student out of an uncomfortable situation	NO
#9	laughing, code switching/teacher's comment, high pitch, playful tone	create involvement among participants; lower affective filter	YES
#10	laughing/teacher's comment, playful tone	create involvement among participants	YES
#11	none/teacher's comment, playful tone	get a student out of uncomfortable situation; lower affective filter	NO
#12	chuckling/silence	save face; avoid uncomfortable moment	NO
#13	laughing, code switching/teacher's comment and laughter	create involvement among the group	YES

As shown in the previous sections, humorous situations were triggered off during individual corrections, in pair-corrections or in group-corrections (whole class corrections). The types of feedback within the activity of correction analyzed were related to 1) phonological mistakes (examples 4, 5, 9, 10, 2), semantic mistakes (examples 1 and 8, and 3) and mistakes related to the pragmatic use of the target language (examples 2, 11, 13).

4.11. Summary of the chapter

In Chapter 4, I initially gave an account of the relevance for including the identification and description of participation structures as the starting point in the study of classroom interactions. Then, I provided a description of the seven participation structures identified in the EFL group I observed.

In the second part of the chapter, I proceeded with the description of humor within a socio-interactional view, managing to establish a link between the strategies of humor used by the participants and the phenomena of attitude and motivation. Finally, I classified and analyzed the segments which illustrate humor-generating strategies within correction activities.

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Findings, Pedagogical Implications, Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

5.1. Summary and findings

This study described naturally occurring face-to-face interactions in an EFL classroom setting. The study had as its main objective to approach the phenomena of attitude and motivation within a sociolinguistic perspective, through the analysis of humorous situations which take place during correction activities.

Since I was particularly interested in the visible aspects of classroom interaction, I decided to investigate the phenomena of attitude and motivation grounded on ethnographic methods, according to Erickson and Shultz (1981).

There were two main purposes for this study: first, I proposed to analyze and describe patterns of interactional behavior in a group of EFL beginner students. Secondly, I proposed to relate these behavioral patterns to the phenomena of attitude and motivation and show how they enter the second/foreign language learning situation.

In Chapter 2, I provided an overview of the traditional and new perspectives of attitude and motivation in the English language classroom.

I first discussed the traditional perspective, according to which attitude and motivation are cognitive phenomena that occur solely inside the mind of the

individual. Researchers on cognition (e.g., Gardner, 1985; Clément & Kruidenier, 1985; Dörney, 1990) have investigated these phenomena as individual variables and have applied social psychological constructs to the acquisition of English. Moreover, they have made use of quantitative methods to investigate learners' individual differences such as administering questionnaires and battery test to collect data and investigate individual variables.

Then, I moved on to a discussion of the new perspective which proposes the construction of a new theory of cognition as a socially situated and transpersonal phenomena (Gumperz, 1982; Erickson, 1996). Grounded on this social theory, I emphasized the importance of developing a qualitative analysis for the study of classroom interaction. I also pointed out the limitations in the studies which follow a psycholinguistic tradition and suggested approaching the phenomena of attitude and motivation within the sociolinguistic perspective.

In Chapter 3, I presented a demographic description of the EFL classroom I observed, and I also described the methodology that I used to carry out the microethnographic analysis. First, I described relevant aspects of the context of investigation. I provided a demographic description of the institution (UFSC), the extracurricular courses, and of the EFL group I studied. I also explained the bureaucratic processes I went through to get permission to collect the data.

In the same chapter, I moved on to describing the steps I followed for the collection of data, and then I started the discussion of the methodological procedures employed in the research. These procedures consisted, basically, in the application of two integrated approaches: the approach of ethnographic

participant-observation and of sociolinguistic microanalysis of audiovisual records of human interaction (Erickson, 1992, 1996).

After having provided a comprehensive view of the context of investigation and of the methodological procedures employed in the research, I turned to the analysis of the data, in Chapter 4. The analysis was divided into two sections. I started the chapter by taking the notion of participation structures as the departing point for the analysis of the data collected. According to Goodwin (1984), taking participation as unit of analysis provides the analyst with empirically more sound ways to study interactional phenomena. The six participation structures identified were: *the single turn structure, the pair allocated turn structure, the open turn structure, the single-joint structure, the student topic initiated structure* and *the free pair work structure.* These structures differed one from the other "in the number of the students in the interaction with the teacher, the non-verbal structuring of attention, and the principles used in regulating students turn at talk" (Philips, 1983, p. 78). I noticed that some of these structures such as *the single turn structure, the pair allocated turn structure and the single-joint structure* require more active participation of the student participants, mainly because these types of participation structures are prevailing within speech activities such as "correction of tasks" and "classroom discussion". Moreover, it was within these structural arrangements of the classroom that some student participants performed situationally inappropriate behavior: they kept silent, failed to answer a question or responded only minimally.

On the other hand, there were some student participants that displayed more willingness and readiness to participate in the activities regardless of the

participation pattern that that organized the interaction. They also looked more comfortable when engaging in the activities. These students were able to make use of strategies to avoid or get out of uncomfortable or difficult situations. The use of humor-generating strategies was one of the most recurrent resource used by them in these situations. They aligned with the teacher and with each other in laughter or other humorous manifestations when a humorous situation was triggered off.

After having described the various participation structures that were identified in this EFL classroom, I moved on to the analysis of the segments in which humorous situations take place within correction activities. I decided to approach the phenomena of attitude and motivation through the analysis of humorous situations because humor seems to be a cue to positive attitude and motivation. Therefore, the use of humorous strategies in the situations analyzed was viewed as a defining phenomenon when dealing with affective phenomena of attitude and motivation. Both verbal and non-verbal stimuli were considered in the analysis.

I analyzed thirteen correction activity segments in which humorous effects were achieved. The analysis showed that humor, signaled through its various manifestations (e.g., laughing, smiling, giggling, code switching) had a specific role in the interactions of this FL classroom: the role of facilitator and regulator of the communication among the participants (Foerster, 1990; Erickson, 1996; Jefferson, 1984).

Data analysis revealed that the use of humor generating strategies in the FL classroom has definite goals. The strategies that generated humorous moments

generally had as their main goals to amuse and to create involvement and rapport among the participants. Moreover, further analysis revealed that the use of humor-generating strategies had more specific goals. Laughing, for example, was one of the most recurrent humor-generating strategies used by the participants of the EFL group to avoid, break or lessen uncomfortable moments. Laughing and its variations were also used to get a student out of an uncomfortable situation that threatened the development of a class activity. It is important to point out that these strategies were mainly used by the teacher as a teaching resource that contributed to establishing a relaxing atmosphere during the learning-teaching process. Some student participants, however, also engaged in the creation of humorous situations, either by making spontaneous use of humor or by aligning with the teacher when she made use of this teaching resource.

In addition to the goals mentioned above, data analysis also revealed that the use of humor-generating strategies can be a way of projecting the participants' identities and/or saving faces. This assertion is grounded on Ochs' (1994) notion of projection of identity and on Goffman's (1967) notion of face.

The analysis of some segments showed that the use of humor-generating strategies by the participants helped to convey their identities as professionals of education and as language learners (Ochs, 1994). Concerning the student participants, they projected their identities either as high status or as low status learners. The student participants that projected the identity of high status learners were those who were able to make successful use of strategies when confronted by difficult situations (e.g., making autonomous use of humorous strategies or aligning with other participants in the creation of humorous situations). However,

those student participants who behaved differently in similar EFL classroom situations, keeping silent or only responding minimally when requested by the teacher, projected the identity of low status learners.

Similar to what happens in the construction of their identity as language learners, during correction activities the use of humorous strategies by these participants conveyed visible signals that they were working hard to save face. Contrariwise, those who did not seem able to successfully make use of these strategies, we may say that in their attempts to protect face, they ended up losing face.

There were also discrepant situations when silence, instead of humor, was the dominant element of the interaction. The analysis of segments revealed that some student participants showed reluctance to speak in front of their class-mates. They did that only when absolutely necessary, as when directly addressed by the teacher. This inappropriate behavior during speech activities not only broke the interactional etiquette, but invariably led to communication breakdown.

However, although humor-generating strategies generally reached positive results, data analysis revealed that there were discrepant moments in which the use of these strategies did not achieve goals such as creating involvement, rapport or amusement among the participants. On the contrary, strategies such as laughing, smiling and word play seemed to produce uncomfortable moments. In other words, the fact that some participants did not align with the others during these situations resulted in humor-generating strategy failure.

A last, but not least aspect that the analysis of data revealed is that code switching recurrently signaled humorous events. In the EFL group I observed,

there were three types of situations when the teacher switched code to produce a comic mode. One of them was when she shifted from Portuguese to English. Another occurred when the teacher used the two codes interchangeably. A third one took place when a remark was followed by its translation.

5.2. Pedagogical implications

Most research done so far on second/foreign language acquisition/learning has approached affective phenomena such as attitude and motivation as individual variables. Researchers on cognition have neglected the social aspects that are involved in any interaction such as in classroom interactions. Therefore, this study proposed approaching the phenomena of attitude and motivation within the perspective of interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1981, 1982, 1992). The relevance of adopting this new perspective is that it will contribute to improve the more abstract models of attitude and motivation that already exist.

Another equally important reason for investigating students' motives for studying another language and their attitudes towards this language is that, by doing so, teachers will be better prepared to meet their students' expectations and needs. Understanding learners' attitudinal behavior seems to be key for the teacher to meet his/her students' needs by selecting adequate materials and by designing programs and planning activities which offer instructional alternatives (Larsen-Freeman (1991).

As an educator, I believe in the premise that there are choices people can make in their own immediate circumstances and these choices will certainly have

consequences for social change in the wider educational context and in society. Moreover, although the way every student responds to learning is the result of a series of interrelated factors, it is within classroom interaction that the teacher can more deeply observe and investigate his/her students' attitude and predisposition toward the language they are learning.

Therefore, this study has been an attempt to attract our attention to the importance of considering the social aspects of interaction, particularly, when studying classroom interaction. And despite this study proposed to investigate patterns of behavior of an EFL group, the analysis carried out here may serve more to promote reflections on classroom issues rather than providing an exact account of the actions of the participants.

In this work I initially proposed to investigate the phenomena of attitude and motivation, but the aspect that showed greater relevance was humor. And, although definite assertions can not be done, the investigation has raised questions and brought about answers that directly or indirectly may contribute to the FL teaching/learning process, and that may also be relevant for foreign language teaching-learning research.

Concerning the teaching-learning process, the analysis of humorous situations within correction activities, we may say that the use of humorous strategies in the classroom is closely connected to other affective phenomena and thus was likely to be equated with attitudinal and motivational behavior conveyed by the participants during classroom interaction. Humor in the classroom appeared as an element that brings about relaxation. In the FL classroom I investigated, humor worked as a facilitator, helping to solve conflicting or

uncomfortable situations. In addition, the use of humorous strategies during classroom interaction facilitated communicative competence because these strategies gave place to break asymmetrical relationships. As for pedagogical implications, the findings of this study suggest that FL teachers should first check how they can evaluate humor in the classroom through a reflection of their own teaching.

Thus, through the analysis and description of humorous situations in a FL classroom interactions, I made my attempt to establish a link between these visible aspects and the phenomena of motivation. The findings suggest that the way humor appears in the teaching-learning process may reflect whether or not student participants display positive or negative attitude and motivation towards the language, their teacher and the environment.

5.3. Limitations and suggestions for further research

Although investigating students' attitude and motivation within this new theoretical framework contributed as a starting point in the studies of affective phenomena to come, a lot still has to be done in this sense. Reinforcing what was said in the introduction chapter, approaching the phenomena of attitude and motivation within a new theoretical and methodological perspective represented a challenge to me because little research on these phenomena has been done within such a new theoretical perspective.

Given this lack of research on these topics, more research should be conducted in other FL classrooms. Also, data analysis should be enlarged and

diversified. The improvement of these aspects would contribute to add more reliability to future socio-interactional studies.

APPENDIX

The appendix presents the transcribed segments used as examples in the chapter of analysis.

Example # 1

1.T.: let's try the next one (.) Will (.) letter a (.) and Bete letter b

2. (0.5)

3.W.: did you take ah winter vocation last year?=

4.B.: =((in fast and fluent intonation)) yes I did (.) [I went to ((inaudible))]=

5.Sts.: [((laugh))]

6.B.: =[looks at the group and joins

7. them in laughter))]=

8.Lia: =atropelou

9. (0.2)

10.T.: =very fast, né (.) Will (.) rapidinho

Example # 2

1.T.: do you like Julio Iglesias?

2. (0.3)

3.Sts.: yes, I like him very much=

4.T.: =yes, I like him very much (0.2) oka::y

5. (0.4)

6.T.: how's school?

7. (0.5)

8.Sts.: pretty good=

9.T.: =pretty good (.) ok

10. (0.6)

11.Ta.: o que quer dizer pretty good?

12. (0.2)

13.J.: ((inaudible))=

14.Ta.: =ah, sim=

15.T.: no (.) pretty good depends on the emphasis Joe (.) because maybe is:: ok (.)

16. depends (0.5) do you ever study English?

17. (0.3

18.Sts.: yes, every day=

19.T.: =oka:::y [((laughs))]

20.Sts.: [((laugh))]=

21.W.: =[very]=

22.T.: =very ((laughs))

Example # 3

1. T.: so (0.3) ↑Joe (0.5) tell about your routine, Joe

2. (1.5)

3. J.: firsty (0.2) wake up =

4. T.: =quem que acorda?=

5. J.: =((giggling)) eu=

6. T.: =((chuckling)) então tem que falar, senão eu não entendo

7. (0.2)

8. J.: firsty I waky up=

9. T.: =uh huh

10. (0.3)

11.J.: I gety upy (0.2) I waysh the face=

12T.: =wash the face=

13.J.: =wash the face (0.5) u::h I::: brush the::: teeth=

14.T.:= teeth=

15.J.: =teeth (0.3) I: I comb the: the hair=

16.T.: =uh huh

17. (0.9)

18.J.: I have breakfast=

19.T.: =uh huh

20. (0.2)

21.J.: I go to schoul=

22.T.: = e cadê os then, after that ((in a teasing tone)) aí já se perdeu tudo pelo

23. caminho [((laughs))]

24.J.: [((laughs))]

25. W.: [((laughs))]

Example # 4

1.T.: Uli (.) now you ask Lia, ok

2. (3.0)

3.U.: e::h how much is a:: fur coat?

4. (2.0)

5.Lia: what?=

6.T.: =feer coat=

7.U.: =feer coat

8. (3.0)

9.T.: feer coat é um casaco de pele, né=

10.Lia: =(então about) u:::h=

11.T.: =[((laughs))] bota thousand nisso, né [((laughs))]=

12.Sts.: [((laugh))] [((laugh))]

13.Lia: =two thousand (0.2) reais=

14.T.: =ok (.) aí você vai fazer aquele comentário, assim (.) ó:::h! it's expensive

15. ((laughs))=

16.Lia: =((laughs))=

Example # 5

1.T.: (unclear) Will (.) who is it? (0.5) tell us

2. (1.0)

3.Be.: a:h Edson Capri=

4.W.: =((using high pitch intonation)) e eu vou saber de (inaudible)=

5.Sts.: =((laugh))=

6.N.: =Edson Capri=

7.T.: =Will doesn't know if it's the (names of an actors and

8. actresses) ((laughs))=

9. Girls: =((exchange information about the actor mentioned))=

10.T.: =é que vocês tem que falar exatamente a novela que ele trabalha (.) que aí a

11. gente::=

12.Sts: =[((laugh))]

13.W.: [novela] (que eu me atrapalhei) (inaudible)=

14.T.: =Will (.) não assiste novela (0.2) ó::h! não está informa:do (0.5)=

15. =[((laughs))]=

16. [((the group laughs, Will smiles))]

17.T.: =ok (.) now let's stop, please (.) let's stop, ok (.) let's stop, ok

Example # 6

1.T.: a::h (.) let's follow the next one (.) let's try the o::h (.) the one (0.2) Bel (.)

2. could you try(.) you and Marilu, please (.) Bel e a Marilu (read)=

3. Bel: =what did you do on Saturday?

4. (0.3)

5. M.: I::: I (.), I, I, I::=

6. T.: =I, I, I [I::

7. M.: [(aquele cara da tv que não sabe falar inglês)]

8. Sts.: [((laugh))=

9. T.: =((laughs))=

10. M.: =what, não é?=

11. T.: =no, the past of go (.) went=

12. (0.2)

13. M.: I wentch to Boston which my friends u:::h he: (.) come é (.) we=

14. T.: =we=

15. M.: =we taked=

16. T.: =no, [no=

17. M.: [taked=

18. T.: =no, no=

19. M.: =tok=

20. T.: =took (.) took (.) the past of take, ok

21. (0.2)

22. M.: took a tour of the:: city (.) then (.) then:::[we] we e::h went shopping=

23. T.: [uh huh]

24. T.: = uh huh (.) that's it

Example # 7

1. T.: let's see (.) Bel (.) the next one (.) Bel (.) you a::re a, ok (.) and: Yris b (0.2) e

2. você ((pointing to Uli)), que é um cavalheiro, vai ser o Carlos, né (.) e a Bela

3. vai ser a Sally (.) então vamos lá (.) é só prá lê o diálogo prá gente vê o que

4. eles tão pedindo aqui óh (.) vamos lá=

5. U.: =hello:! ((and looks at Bel))

6. (2.0)

7 ((some students mutter something, others laugh))=

8. T.: =((addressing Uli in a playful teasing tone)) aonde você tá?=

9. Sts.: =((laugh, Uli looks puzzled))=

10. T.: =é na page sixteen (.) é só prá lê lá (.) vai lá, Bel (.) é a Bel que começa

11. (0.2)

12. Bel: ((joking))o: Uli (.) eu (inaudible) eu não tenho outro=

13. U: =[(aonde é que tá isso?)]=

14. Sts.: [((laugh))]

15. U.: =é ele o (culpado) ((points to Will)) que nós tamo ainda na página

16. [(anterior)=

17. Sts.: [((laugh))

Example # 8

1.T.: Paul (.) vamos lá (.) já fez Paul?

2. (0.2)

3.P.: eu fiz a um=

4.T.: =a primeira já (0.2) so (.) Paul you are a (.) and Nanda you are b, ok (0.2)

5. just read, ok (.) everybody (.) now you check, please (.) go ahead

6. (0.3)

7.P.: ((reading enthusiastically)) can I help you?

8. (0.2)

9.N.: how much [is] ((she looks at the teacher in interrogation))=

10.P.: [I]

11.T.: =((in a teasing tone)) calma aí (.) ela nem perguntou ainda=

12.Sts.: =((the group laughs, Paul remains serious))=

13.P.: =((looking puzzled, starts pulling his ear)) eu não sou b?=

14.T.: = tu é o a (.) ela é o b (0.2) ((changing to a serious tone)) começa, please=

15.P.: =((looking a little disconcerted, he resumes reading)) can I help you?

16. (0.2)

17.F.: how much is this jeans?

18. (0.2)

19.P.: it's: (.) it is ((looks at the teacher for confirmation)) it is (1.0) não?

20. (0.3)

21.T.: espera só um minutinho (.) o jeans ali a:::h se você se referir ao jeans ele é

22 plural tá (.) porque=

23.P.: =plural?=

24.T.: =ele não tem duas pernas?=

Example # 9

1.T: Will (.) what did you write (.) about your family (.) and you?=

2.W.: =((smiles, looking a little ashamed)) não fiz=

3.T.: =no (.) you didn't ?=

4.W.: =((looks at the teacher, chuckles and stretches back looking a little

5. uneasy)) não escrevi, mas posso falar=

6.T.: =((smiling)) no, no (.) that's ok (.) no problem (0.2) say :: uh: o que cê quer

7. dizer about your family

8. 2.0= ((Will looks at his notes))

9.T.: ok? (.) ok? (0.2) ↑((high pitch, teasing tone)) vai falar ou não vai falar, Will?=

10.W.: =falo ((laughs))=]

11.T.: =((bursts in laughter)) ele diz que vai falar depois não fala ((laughs))=

12.W.: =((cleaning his throat)) deixa eu falar

13. (0.2)

14.T.: =((in a serious tone)) one or two sentences about you and your family, ok

15.W.: ((looking relaxed)) tá bom, deixa eu falar

Example # 10

1.Bel.: and dress-coat

2. (0.2)

3. T.: dress=

4. Bel: =coat=

5. T.: dress-coat?=

6. W.: =shirt

7. (0.2)

8. Bel: (inaudible)

9. (0.3)

10. T.: dress-coat is casaco?=

11. Bel: =casaca=

12. T.: [casaca]

13. Bel: [casaca]=

14. T.: =ah! ok=

15. W.: =shirtch=

16. T.: =dress-coat (.) ah! É separado (.) é isso?=

17. Bel: =é (.) tem tracinho no meio=

18. T.: =((writing it on the board)) opa, ok (0.2) dress::-coat

19. (0.2)

20. St.: casaca?

21. (0.2)

22. Bel: é, casaca=

23. T.: =casaca é aquilo que eles usam quando vão numa festa bem chique, né (.)

24. que eles botam aquele sobretudo (.) não é sobretudo [é usado] só para

25. grandes festas=

26.Bel: [casaca]

27.T.: = é porque você não teve a oportunidade [((laughs))]=

28.Sts.: [((laugh))]

29.T.: =de participar de uma festa muito chique [((laughs))]

30.Sts.: [((laugh)]

Example # 11

1. T.: Rod (.) the next one, please

2. (3.0)

3. R.: ã:::hm ((smiling timidly and starts scratching his head)) what is (your) name?=

4. B.: =her name

5. (0.9)

6. T.: olha na resposta, lá (.) oh (.) o pronome já tá lá.

7. (0.5)

8. R.: (inaudible)=

9. T.: =ãh?=

10.R.: (inaudible)=

11. T.: =ai, Rodrigo (smiling) (0.2) tu vai perguntar o quê:?

12. (2.0)

13. R.: é::: qual é o:: sei lá=

14. T.: o::h, a resposta é (.) her name's Rosa (0.2) qual é a pergunta? (0.2) qual é o

15. nome dela, né (.) seria a pergunta, né

16. (0.5)

17.R.: [what is her name]=

18.Sts.:[what is her name]=

19.T.: =what's her name

Example # 12

1.T.: let's try the next one (.) Bela (.) letter a and Bete (.) letter b

2. (0.9)

3.Be.: what did you do on Saturday night?

4. (0.3)

5.B.: I had friends ófter, óver, over and I cooked dinner for ten (0.2) ((looks at the

6. teacher)) qual é a diferença ten, (then)?=

7.T.: =them=

8.B.: =them=

9.T.: =them=

10.B.: =then (.) then we watch (.) [watched]=

11.T.: [watched]

12.B.: =a vídeo ((lowering her voice)) (.) and (.) what did you (0.2) do (.) on the

13. (.) weekend? ((smiles timidly and shakes her head in self-disapproval))

14. (0.8)

15.B.: ((smiling, Bete touches Bela to call her attention for her turn))=

16.Be.: =oh! I stayed home ((chuckles)) (.) [andy::]

17.B.: [((chuckles))]

Example # 13

1.T.: okay?! (.) next exercise, ok (.) letter c you should complete with the correct

2. pronouns (.) pronoun (0.2) u:h do you like Helen? (.) u:h Rod (.) what did you

3. answer?

4. (1.5)

5.R.: ((smiling)) do you like Helen? Yes, I like her very much.

6. (0.2)

7.T.: her ok (.) uh huh (.) Cris (.) do you like Leandro and Leonardo?

8. (0.2)

9.C.: no, I don't like them=

10.T.: =ok ((inaudible)) (.) Tati (.) does Paul like pop music?

11. (0.2)

12.Ta.: yes, I love it=

13.T.: =he loves it=

14.Ta.: =he (.) he's loves it=

15.T.: =no (.) he loves it

16. (0.2)

17.Ta.: ((smiling)) he loves it=

18.T.: =não bota ésse onde não tem [((laughs))]=

19.Sts.: [((laugh))]

20.T.: =Marilu (.) do they like Romario?=

21.M.: =yes, they like him a lot

22. (0.2)

23.T.: uh huh (.) uhm::: five (.) Bela (.) does Pat like Roberto Carlos?

24. (0.2)

25.Be: no, she hates him=

26.T.: =him (.) ok (.) him=

27. (0.3)

28.M.: daí tu colocou aqui no: ((smiling)) no enunciado "you" e não tem, né?

29. (0.2)

29.T.: é (.) só prá enganá, né [((bursts in laughter))]

30.Sts.: [((laugh))]=

31.Ta.: =faz parte=

32.T.: =((giggling)) prá ver se vocês tavam acordados, né ((laughs))

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