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Riddles and puns in the ESL classroom: adults talk to learn

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Introduction

The concept of interaction plays a significant role in theorizing about the process of second language learning (for example, Pica 1994a; Gass 1997) and interest in the role of interaction in second language learning has become a significant aspect of the research agenda of the field. From a Vygotskian sociocultural theory of mind perspective, learning occurs *in* the interaction, not as a result of it (Donato 1994, 2000; Lantolf and Appel 1994; Swain 1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2001a, 2001b; Swain and Lapkin 1998; Lantolf 2000a, 2000b; Swain, Brooks, and Tocalli-Beller 2002). A few recent studies (Lantolf 1997; Sullivan 2000a, 2000b; Broner and Tarone 2001; Bell 2002; Beltz 2002) have investigated the role that playing with language has in such interaction and thus in second language learning. With the exception of Lucas (2005), these studies have been restricted to an examination of spontaneous language play and most of them have disregarded the humorous effect this form of language may have on language learning.

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the importance of play in child development. For him, play is a site for learning which leads to development. To quote:

> [P]lay is in advance of development, for in this manner children begin to acquire the motivation, skills, and attitudes necessary for their social participation. During preschool and school years the conceptual abilities of children are stretched through play. In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior, in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself
>
> (Vygotsky 1987: 129).

Vygotsky (1987, original 1926) argued that play is not an 'accidental whim, a pastime, but an important vital necessity' (ibid.: 88) and that nearly all of our (adult) most fundamental and most characteristic reactions have their origin and develop 'in the course of the games we play as children' (ibid.: 89). Vygotsky argued that play and work are not polar opposites but that they in

fact share 'the same psychological nature' because 'games are the natural form of work in children … as preparation for [their] life in the future' (ibid.: 93). Play then entails more than having fun, joy and/or pleasure. Moreover, even though play and games are leading activities of children and move forward their development, it continues to promote development in adulthood even though it may no longer be the leading activity of adult life.

Cicogna, Danesi, and Mollica (1992) argue that adults seem to derive great pleasure from playing with words and language, as evidenced by the inclusion of crossword puzzles, plays on words, and puns in most daily newspapers and by the amount of space puzzle magazines and books occupy on book shelves. In spite of the fact that there have been some attempts in second language pedagogy to include play and problem-solving games in the curriculum (Mollica 1976, 1979; Omaggio 1982; Danesi 1989, 2002, 2003; Cicogna *et al.* 1992; Danesi and Mollica 1994), it can be said that the experimental literature considering the learning efficacy of such an element is not extensive. As Danesi (2003) points out,

> [V]ery little has been done in the way of giving the topic of ludic techniques thorough empirical treatment. Two clear factors have nevertheless emerged from the sketchy literature and from anecdotal evidence. First, such techniques seem to be supportive of language acquisition processes. Second, for such techniques to be effective, they must be designed with specific instructional/learning objectives in mind
>
> (ibid.: 112).

Furthermore, Danesi (ibid: 112) notes that 'rarely has anyone ventured to design a syllabus, or teaching system, aimed at making the whole SLT [second language teaching] process ludic in orientation'. To date, second language acquisition studies that investigated language play in language learning explored the topic from different, yet somewhat overlapping, perspectives. Language play has been studied as a social, ludic phenomenon (Cook 1996, 1997, 2000; Sullivan 2000a, 2000b) as a form of private speech (Saville-Troike 1988; Lantolf 1997, 2000a) and as an enhancement of sociolinguistic competence (Broner and Tarone 2001; Tarone 2002). What all views of language play have in common is the manipulation of both the form and the meaning of the linguistic item, though one can take precedence over the other depending on the instance of language play.

The data in this chapter come from an in-depth study carried out on the intentional inclusion of humorous language play in a second language curriculum (Tocalli-Beller 2005). We provide examples of peer–peer interactions as learners unravel the meaning of puns and riddles. Over time and together, the students work out the meaning of the puns and riddles by talking to each other, sharing their expertise or previous knowledge and providing the necessary feedback so that later, on their own, they can define the meaning of key words and understand the basis of the humor. The students' languaging

– which includes feedback the learners give each other (sometimes using the teacher or a dictionary as a resource) and the co-construction of meaning – is, it is argued, a source of second language learning. In this study, we are able to show how the students move from no knowledge of the 'semantic triggers' (what is needed to 'get' the riddle or pun), to being able to define the triggers and use them in a sentence, and even explain the riddle or pun to others. This is done by tracing what happens in the collaborative dialogue (languaging) of the students using a pre-test/post-test/delayed post-test design. Through such a design, and by making use of microgenetic analyses of the on-task interactions, we trace how learners moved from non-comprehension to spontaneous use mediated by their dialogue *about* language.

Theoretical background

Languaging: an aspect of second language learning 'in flight'

All learning is mediated by semiotic tools. An important mediational tool is language. Within the input–interaction–output model (Block 2003), language is viewed as a conveyer of a fixed message. However, in a Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical perspective, language is seen to have a second function: it serves as a cognitive tool—a tool of the mind. In this sense, language is an activity of the mind which mediates cognitive functioning by compelling the speaker to push thinking into the meanings created by the culture that are encoded in language. It is in the dialectic between meaning and contextual needs that sense is created and thinking completed. This activity has been conceptualized as 'languaging' (Swain in press) to indicate (1) language is an activity (a process), not an object (a product) (Swain 2005); (2) that the activity of speaking and writing (the activity of producing language) have key functions in externalizing cognition, manipulating it, and internalizing it; (3) that individuals are agents in the developmental processes which are realized in interaction. So, by observing and analyzing speaking as it mediates thinking, we can observe learning in progress. (Vygotsky 1978; 1986; Wertsch 1985; Donato 1994; Lantolf 2000b; Swain 2000b). In this way, speaking makes cognitive activity visible as language knowledge is co-constructed in language use.

Second language learning research informed by a sociocultural theory of mind situates second language learning in the dialogic interactions between learners and learners, learners and themselves, and learners and the artifacts available in their world, for example books, computers, etc. This dialogic interaction—languaging—is one source of learning. Among other things, the concept of languaging allows us to recognize that knowledge is constructed and co-constructed through its use (Swain 2000b). The knowledge that is constructed may be about mathematics, biology, etc., and it may also be about a second language as in the case of the ESL learners in this study.

Languaging takes place when individuals encounter a cognitive (or affective) problem and solve it by interacting with others, the self, or a cultural artifact. A microgenetic analysis of languaging allows us, in the words of Vygotsky (1978), to 'grasp the process in flight' (ibid.: 68) 'from its social origins through historical processes to task completion, the term 'historic' referring to the duration of the activity from its origin and its evolution to its end' (Platt and Brooks 2002: 373–4).

Humor in everyday speech

Carter (2004) and Carter and McCarthy (2004) present excerpts from their corpus of adult native-speaker interaction in the UK and Ireland which involve and evolve from linguistic creativity. The researchers include 'playing with language forms to entertain others' (Carter and McCarthy 2004: 64) among the purposes of linguistic creativity in everyday language. Analyses of the corpus reveal a number of characteristic features of spoken discourse. In the words of Carter:

> [First], that ordinary, everyday language is far from being either everyday or ordinary (on the contrary, it is pervasively 'artful'); second, that verbal play with language is often undertaken for humorous purposes, serving in part to bring people closer together and member-shipping them inclusively; third, that this kind of linguistic creativity and inventiveness is almost always contextually embedded in so far as it depends on the social relations which obtain between participants …; that it is a *frequent*, not exceptional feature of ordinary, everyday language use and that it is not an uncommon but a *common* practice to share pleasure, align viewpoints and create convergence in and through language and to do so often by means of creative play with language
>
> (2004: 108).

Friendly joking is a salient element in social discourse. In the words of Norrick (1993: 193), 'joking around is a natural part of friendly conversation, because we talk to enjoy ourselves'. Nerlich and Clarke (2001) also present examples of everyday discourse and note 'how much people play with multiple meanings in their daily linguistic interactions and how much of their linguistic interaction is structured by the play with multiple meanings' (ibid.: 2).

Coupland (2000) demonstrates that small talk and casual conversation of varying types are endemic even in professional settings; the CANCODE corpus in Carter (2004) and Carter and McCarthy (2004) support this claim. Block (2003) argues that the marginalization of ludic talk, that is, of humorous and playful uses of language by SLA researchers has resulted in a lack of attention to what is variably known as 'small talk' (Coupland 2000) or 'casual conversation' (Eggins and Slade 1997). These discourses should not be regarded as purposeless or peripheral. On the contrary, 'small talk' or

'casual conversation' should be considered as part of the foundation of 'the establishment, maintenance and strengthening of social ties' (Block 2003: 71).

The ubiquity of language play in talk indicates that playing with language is indeed part of what 'would normally be held to be part of a native speaker's competence in a particular language' (Lyons 1996: 24). Furthermore, Cook (1997, 2000) argued that '[k]nowing a language, and being able to function in communities which use the language, entails being able to understand and produce play with it, making this ability a necessary part of advanced proficiency' (2000: 150). Notwithstanding this, much of the current focus on classroom interaction and task-design disregards this kind of speech. With the exception of a few studies (Lantolf 1997; Sullivan 2000a, 2000b; Broner and Tarone 2001), scant attention has been paid to the role and impact of language play in second language learning.

Humor in task-based interaction

Tasks are considered to be the back-bone of the input–interaction–output model (Block 2003) and have become a topic of research in the field of SLA (for example, Bygate, Skehan, and Swain 2001; R. Ellis 2003). In general, researchers agree that tasks are designed to promote the natural and authentic use of language that focuses on meaning rather than on form (Nunan 1989; Skehan 1998). Skehan identifies different task-based activities for language learning:

1 completing one another's family trees;
2 agreeing on advice to give to the writer of a letter to an agony aunt;
3 discovering whether one's paths will cross (out of school) in the next week;
4 *solving a riddle* [emphasis added];
5 leaving a message on someone's answering machine
(1998: 95–6).

To date, however, no studies have looked into the potential of riddles and puns as language learning tasks.

According to Long (1985), tasks reflect real-world activities, which are after all 'the hundred and one things people *do* in everyday life, at work, at play, and in between' (ibid.: 89). A good deal of current second language pedagogical research, however, directs its attention towards the sort of interaction found in what people do 'at work' and turns away from what people do 'at play', that is when interaction happens in a friendly, relaxed, leisure-type of context. In other words, second language pedagogical research focuses on the simulation of the conversations students might engage in when doing more transactional and goal-oriented activities such as the tasks exemplified by Long (1985), be it making an airline or hotel reservation, borrowing a library book, giving a street direction, etc.

With this focus on conversations that are work-based, transactional and practical came an emphasis on meaning rather than on form. As Swain and Lapkin (2001) put it: '[w]ith a few exceptions … definitions of communicative tasks emphasize the importance of a focus on meaning.' However, they argue that an alternative view 'is that a task can still be considered communicative even if learners focus quite explicitly on form' (ibid.: 100). Moreover, Cook (1997) argues that a great deal of adult speech is form-oriented. He notes that although adult language is usually conceived as 'doing things [and] making meaning' (ibid.: 228).

> many conversations between friends and intimates contain little information, and may be regarded as instances of play and banter. These discourses are not … 'task-based'. They are language for enjoyment, for the self, for its own sake. And they are often fantasies – not about the real world, but about a fictional one in which there are no practical outcomes (ibid.: 231).

In his recent book on task-based learning, R. Ellis (2003) distinguishes unfocused production tasks from focused communicative ones. The former are designed to elicit samples of learner production and are not targeted for students to use a specific linguistic feature. Focused communicative tasks, however, are designed to elicit attention to and use of specific features. Within focused communicative tasks, R. Ellis distinguishes three types: (1) structure-based approach tasks, (2) comprehension tasks (enriched input tasks and interpretation tasks) and (3) consciousness-raising tasks. Ellis considers the first two to make use of implicit learning processes. Consciousness-raising tasks, on the contrary, are intended to cater primarily to explicit learning processes and thus are designed to attract attention to language and develop awareness since these processes promote language learning through logic, reasoning, and problem-solving. Furthermore, whereas structure-based and comprehension tasks are built around content of a general nature (for example, stories, pictures of objects, opinions about someone you like), consciousness-raising tasks make language itself the content (R. Ellis 2003). For the present study, to understand the riddles and puns, the students inevitably had to focus on certain words or idiomatic expressions if the humor were to be understood. In this way, the riddles and puns (the language play pieces) 'isolate[d] a specific linguistic feature for focused attention' (R. Ellis 2003: 234) and thus catered for explicit learning as a consciousness-raising task requires.

Understanding and using second language humor

Humor is a highly valued art and practice across societies. In western societies, humor is an essential element of everyday interaction and of socialization (Boxer and Cortés-Conde 1997). The theory of humor most commonly linked to classroom pedagogy is the cognitive-perceptual theory (Vizmuller-Zocco

1992). This theory assumes that humor results from playful situations, more specifically, when 'the perceiver meets with an incongruity (usually in the form of a punch line or a cartoon) and then is motivated to resolve the incongruity either by retrieval of information in the joke or from his/her own storehouse of information' (Suls 1983: 42). From these situations, two characteristics of the rational human being arise: problem-solving and amusement. The former is manifested by explaining the incongruity and the latter is precisely the enjoyment of becoming aware of the incongruity, that is, of noticing 'something which clashes with our mental patterns and expectations' (Morreall 1989: 1).

There are different classifications of types of humor. Schmitz (2002) organizes humorous discourse into three groups: (1) universal or reality-based humor, (2) culture-based humor, and (3) linguistic or word-based humor. The present study focuses on linguistic or word-based humor, a recurrent type of humor and, more often than not, one that is difficult for second language speakers to comprehend, even when their proficiency in the language is high. The difficulty in understanding this type of humor usually lies in the use of a word or expression referred to as 'the semantic script-switch trigger' (Raskin 1985) or simply 'the trigger' (Nash 1985). The *semantic-trigger*, as we call it in this study, is the key element to understanding the language and humor at play because it is the 'centre of energy, some word or phrase in which the whole matter of the joke is fused, and from which its powers radiates' (Nash 1985: 7).

The use and understanding of second language humor constitute two major challenges for second language learners as they require sophisticated linguistic, social and cultural competence (Bell 2002). For many learners of English, both the forms and functions of humor differ from those of their first language and culture, making the understanding and use of humor all the more problematic for them. Second language humor has therefore earned the reputation of being 'unteachable' (and even unnecessary and frivolous), prompting second language teachers to shun its inclusion in the curriculum. Yet, as we have seen, life is imbued with humor and students are bound to encounter it.

Method

The research site

The data were collected in an ESL non-credit eight-week course of the English Conversation Program of a North American university. The focus of the English Conversation Program lies primarily in developing fluency and accuracy in oral English communication. A new course within the English Conversation Program, entitled Understanding English Culture and Humor had the purpose of achieving this goal through a humor-based curriculum. The course was designed and taught by the first author of this chapter. Just like all the courses, this new course took place for two hours each week.

The students who enrolled in the course were international graduate students seeking opportunities to speak English outside their current academic environments and therefore who volunteered to participate in the study. The proficiency levels varied and their backgrounds and interests were also different. Table 6.1 presents some background information about the students in the present study. During the research, all students in the course (nine students) worked together in self-selected pairs/trios, as well as engaged in whole-class activities. All tests were done individually.

Research questions

Two research questions are addressed in this study:

1 When asked to solve riddles and/or puns (pieces of language play) collaboratively, do students
'language' about language form and meaning?
2 Is their languaging a source of second language learning?

Data collection procedure

This research involved two cycles of data collection, which took place sequentially during the whole course, as shown in Table 6.2. All students participated in both cycles though not with the same partner(s). Additionally, at the beginning of the course a background questionnaire was administered, and an interview and survey was administered at the end of cycle 1. Also, two weeks after the course ended, a dyad-specific post-test was administered which consisted of the post-tests from cycle 1 and cycle 2. A basic cycle consisted of the administration of the following stages:

Stage 1 a pre-test, which was the same for all student dyads, was administered. It included the semantic triggers that were key to understanding all the language play pieces, i.e. riddles and puns that were used in the study.

Stage 2 a language play task in which the dyads worked on their own set of language play pieces. Completion of Stage 2 meant that dyads (or trios where applicable) had discussed and tried to understand all language play pieces in the set that they were given. Even though each language play set had different language play pieces for each pair/trio, sets were similar in terms of the nature of the semantic triggers as well as the number of pieces. Dyads were allowed to use the *The Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* as a reference tool to help them solve the language play pieces. All dyads were video- and audio-taped in order to (a) identify dyad-specific items to include in the post-tests, (b) conduct a stimulated recall session with each pair of students (to gain introspective data of the students on-task), (c) transcribe and analyze the students' on-task talk.

	Don	Kim	Tom	John	Eric
TOEFL score**	563	N/A	500	633	647
Degree of study	MA Medicine	Visiting Student	BS Computing	MA Engineering	MA Engineering
Nationality	Russian	Korean	Chinese	Chinese	Chinese
L1	Russian	Korean	Mandarin	Cantonese	Cantonese
Other languages	—	—	—	—	—
Residence in Canada	8 months	1 year	1 year	1.5 year	2 months
Residence in other L2 countries	—	—	—	—	2 months in USA
ESL instruction in Canada	—	—	3 months	—	—
EFL instruction at home	7 years	No instruction	8 years	15 years	10 years

* All names are pseudonyms. ** These are self-reported scores.

Table 6.1 Information on the participants of the Understanding English Humour and Culture course

	Harry	Will	Lisa	Helen*
TOEFL score**	587	647	647	637
Degree of study	MA Computing	MA Business	Special student	MA Genetics
Nationality	Iranian	Chinese	Swedish	Chinese
L1	Persian	Mandarin	Swedish	Cantonese
Other languages	—	—	Danish/French/ German	—
Residence in Canada	1.6 years	1.5 years	7 months	1.5 years
Residence in other L2 countries	—	—	—	—
ESL instruction in Canada	1 month	—	—	1.5 years
EFL instruction at home	4 years	8 years	10 years	15 years +

Table 6.1 (continued)

Stage 3 a language play post-test, which was dyad-specific (tailor-made), was administered two to four days after the students completed the set of language play pieces. This post-test included items consisting of the semantic triggers of the language play set of the dyad plus any other words/expressions that the students talked about during the language play task that helped them understand the language at play.

Stage 4 a stimulated recall session occurred two to four days after doing the language play task. During the stimulated recall, the student dyads watched the tape of themselves doing their language play set. We stopped the video at relevant features in their language production so that the students could explain their thoughts about why they stopped at, discussed, explained and/or repeated such features. The stimulated recall interviews were audio-taped and the dialogues that took place were transcribed for analysis.

Stage 5 a class activity, which was intended to engage the entire class in real-life playful and humorous joke-telling. Each dyad told and explained their language play pieces to the class in whatever order they chose.

Stage 6 a class activity post-test, which was equivalent to the pre-test but only included those semantic triggers which were discussed in the class activity in order to analyze the learning that happened during class. There had not been enough time for students to tell and explain all their language play pieces during the class activity.

The design of the tests

To establish whether the languaging about the language play pieces was a source of second language learning, and thus address the second research question, a pre-test/post-test/delayed post-test design was adopted. Due to the nature of the language play pieces, much of the languaging was centered around the meanings of the semantic triggers. For this reason, we chose Wesche and Paribakht's (1996) Vocabulary Knowledge Scale as the testing instrument. The Vocabulary Knowledge Scale was designed to assess levels of familiarity with given words by eliciting both self-reported and demonstrated knowledge of individual words in a written mode. 'The scale ratings range from complete unfamiliarity, through recognition of the word or some idea of its meaning, to the ability to use the word with grammatical and semantic accuracy in a sentence' (Wesche and Paribakht 1996: 29).

Wesche and Paribakht acknowledge that the Vocabulary Knowledge Scale does not tap knowledge of *different* meanings of the same word and call for an extension of the scale to explore this aspect of lexical knowledge (1996: 33). For this study we therefore provided this extension because puns and riddles entail different meanings of the same word. We adjusted the test to incorporate knowledge about more than one meaning of the target word and thus the scale was extended by repeating lines 3 and 4 of the original scale. This repetition allowed students to define and/or illustrate in a sentence another meaning of the semantic trigger in question (if applicable). Table **6.3**

presents the adaptation of the original Vocabulary Knowledge Scale used in the present study.

Cycle 1

Week 1 Feb. 21	**Week 2** Feb. 28	**2–4 days later**	**Week 3** March 7	**Week 4** March 14
Class time • Introduction to the course • Background questionnaire • Other activities • Pre-test (20 min.)	*Class time* • LP task • LP task survey	*Outside class time* • LP post-test • Stimulated recall	*Class time* • Class activity (2 hours) • Class activity survey	*Class time* • **CA post-test** • Other activities *Outside class time* • Interviews

Cycle 2

Week 5 March 21	**Week 6** March 28	**2–4 days later**	**Week 7** April 4	**Week 8** April 11	**Week 9**	**Week 10** April 25
Outside class time • Interviews Class time Other activities Pre-test (20 min.)	*Class time* • LP task	*Outside class time* • LP post-test • Stimulated recall	*Class time* • Class activity (2 hours)	*Class time* CA post-test • Other activities • Conclusion to the course		*Outside class time* • Delayed post-test

LP Task: Language Play Task CA: Class Activity

Table 6.2 Research design and data collection schedule

Self-report categories
a I don't remember having seen this word before
b I have seen this word before, but I don't remember what it means
c I know this word. It means _____(synonym and/or definition)
d I can use this word in a sentence _____
If applicable also complete sections e and f
e I know this word also means _____
f I can use this word in a sentence _____

Table 6.3 Vocabulary Knowledge Scale: self-report categories (adapted from Wesche and Paribakht, 1996)

The contents of each of the tests varied as outlined in the data collection procedure section above. Furthermore, some tests were the same for the whole class and some were dyad-specific depending on the stages of data-collection. (See Data Collection Procedure above.)

Unlike the original Vocabulary Knowledge Scale, the scoring of the adapted scale in the present study includes 'no answer' and 'wrong answer' as possible scores. (See Table 6.4.) For Wesche and Paribakht (1996), a category (c) may lead to a score of 2 even if the synonym and/or definition are wrong. In our scoring scheme the synonym or definition had to be correct. Also, in the Wesche and Paribakht scoring scheme, if knowledge of the meaning of the word is shown in category (d) but the word is not appropriately used in a sentence, a score of 3 (instead of 4) is given. In our scoring scheme, however, category (d) responses had to be semantically and grammatically accurate (but only with respect to the word or expression at issue). Thus, once a wrong answer was given (no matter at what stage), the item was counted as wrong and thus learning (or lack of it) could be accurately traced. Therefore, logically, in our scheme, categories (c) and (d) had to be correct to get full points. For example, in our scoring scheme, a score of 4 was given for Eric's 'The door was ajar so the thief come* in' where 'ajar' was the semantic trigger.

Possible Score	Meaning of Scores
0	No answer
✗	Wrong answer
1	The word is not familiar at all
2	The word is familiar but the meaning is unknown
3	A correct synonym and/or definition is given
4	The word is used with semantic appropriateness and grammatical accuracy in a sentence.

Table 6.4 Vocabulary Knowledge Scale scoring categories: meaning of scores

Unit of analysis: language related episodes

The students' languaging from stages 2, 4 and 5 was transcribed and coded for language-related episodes (LREs). As defined by Swain and Lapkin (2001), an LRE is any part of the dialogue where learners talk about the language they are producing or produced, question or reflect on their language use (and/or knowledge), or correct themselves or others. For this research, the following LREs have been distinguished in order to capture different types of talk prompted by the puns or riddles and their impact on language learning:

a *Meaning LREs*
Students focus on understanding words or expressions (many of which were semantic triggers) they do not know, or understanding new meaning(s) of a word/expression they already knew.

b *Form LREs*
Students focus on formal features of the semantic triggers or other linguistic items (for example, suffix, prefix, spelling, etc.).

c *Metatalk LREs*
Students use metalinguistic terms (for example, noun, adjective, verb, etc.) to understand and/or explain the reasoning behind the pun or riddle.

Data analysis and findings

Quantitative analyses: impact on learning

As noted previously, this study encompassed two cycles of data collection which were methodologically equivalent. Thus the study allows for a comparison of learning across cycles that the use of language play activities had throughout the stages of data collection. Table 6.5 describes the specifics for each cycle in terms of: (a) the number of language play pieces in each set, (b) the average number of linguistic items about which languaging occurred per set, (c) the average number of minutes per language play set, (d) the average number of words spoken per language play piece, and (e) the average number of turns taken per LP piece.

Cycle specifics						
		# LP pieces	# language items focused on	# minutes per set	# words spoken per LP piece	# turns per LP piece
Cycle 1						
9 students	Mean	7	14	28	454	41
	SD	0	2	8	293	26
Cycle 2						
8 students*	Mean	9	16	39	535	44
	SD	0	3	10	297	25

*One student, who missed some of the most important stages of data collection, is not counted in Cycle 2.

LP: Language play

Table 6.5 Cycle 1 and Cycle 2: Information about the language play tasks

As shown in Table 6.5, in the first cycle students took about half an hour on average to complete their language play sets of seven pieces, and in the second cycle they took about ten minutes more on average to complete nine pieces. In each set, students focussed on an average of between 14 and 16 linguistic items (including the semantic triggers), which accounted for much of the peer–peer interaction. When the students began to try to understand each language play piece, they often found the humor incomprehensible. Through languaging of an average length of 41 to 44 turns per piece, students came to understand the language and humor involved by providing feedback to each other and reflecting on and discussing the language used to solve the linguistic puzzle at

hand. This focus on, and discussion about, language was operationalized by all three types of LREs. In each stage of data collection, LREs were identified for both qualitative and quantitative purposes. As indicated in Table 6.6, meaning-based LREs were the most frequent in every stage of data collection. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the source of the humor lay in the use of different meanings of the ST. Overall, the two cycles were similar suggesting the non-uniqueness of the patterns displayed in Tables 6.5 and 6.6.

	Stages of data collection											
	LP set				**Stimulated tecall**				**Class activity**			
	Type of LRE (percentage)				Type of LRE (percentage)				Type of LRE (percentage)			
	n	Form	Mean	Meta-talk	n	Form	Mean	Meta-talk	n	Form	Mean	Meta-talk
Cycle 1												
Mean	29	12	68	20	21	12	68	21	37	28	52	20
SD	10	6	10	12	4	8	22	15	6	8	10	10
Cycle 2												
Mean	57	21	60	19	33	11	57	32	32	19	50	32
SD	16	7	12	5	16	8	7	7	9	12	13	7

Table 6.6 LRE count across stages of data collection

Tables 6.7 and 6.8 show the pre-test and post-test results for each participant for cycles 1 and 2 respectively. For each test item, a student response was considered correct if they could do (c) and/or (d) in the adapted Vocabulary Knowledge Scale, that is, define another meaning of the semantic trigger and/or illustrate it in a sentence. (See Table 6.3 above.) If they knew the second meaning for a word, this was treated as a separate item and was considered correct if they could do (e) and/or (f). For each student, a percentage correct was calculated by dividing the number of correct items by their total number of items. Recall that each dyad's post-tests were specific to the dyad. (See description of stages 3 and 6 under data collection procedures.)

As Table 6.7 and Table 6.8 indicate, results from both cycles indicate that considerable learning took place between the pre-test and the language play post-test. The language play post-test was followed by two other stages, the stimulated recall and the class activity, both of which allowed for further languaging and learning. The results from the delayed post-test which took place two weeks after the end of the course indicate that the learning which had taken place earlier was sustained. Note that for cycle 1, the delayed post-test results are based on languaging that took place at least six weeks prior to the administration of the test.

Students	N*	Week 1	Week 2	2–4 days later		Week 3	Week 4	—	Week 10
	STs and other items	Pre-test	LP task	LP Post-test	SR	CA	CA Post-test	—	Delayed Post-test
Lisa	12	67		100			100		92
Helen		50		100			100		100
Harry	15	27		100			93		100
Will		13		73			87		80
Don	15	33		100			100		100
Tim	12	27		80			80		93
Kim		33		80			n.a.		67
Eric		53		93			100		100
John		53		93			100		100
Mean		**40**		**88**			**95**		**92**
SD		**17**		**15**			**8**		**12**

* N is the total of semantic triggers (ST) plus those words/expressions that were also discussed in the language play task and were repeated in the discussions of the stimulated recall (SR) and the class activity (CA).

Note that Kim was absent for the class activity and class activity post-test

Table 6.7 Cycle 1 Pre-test and post-test results (in percentages) across all stages

Qualitative analyses: microgenetic analyses of learning

In this section, we present two examples of how the learning unfolded over time for two dyads through a microgenetic analysis that illustrates the patterns described above. The characteristics of the two examples are summarized in Table 6.9. So as to be maximally illustrative of the whole data set, an example from each cycle of data collection is given (a pun and a riddle respectively). We show students whose expertise in relation to their partner's is different (i.e. expert + novice; novice + novice) in order to see the learning that can take place for students with different proficiency levels and language knowledge. Expertise is defined as having knowledge about the semantic trigger of the language play piece. One of the semantic triggers (lean) was homonymous/polysemous and thus two different meanings were at play as indicated below the semantic trigger in column D of Table 6.9. If one of the students knew the meaning (or one of the meanings of the semantic trigger), it is represented in column E as (+1). If s/he did not know the meaning, it is represented by (-1). Column F summarizes the type and number of language

Students	N*	Week 5	Week 6	2–4 days later		Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10
	STs and other items	Pre-test	LP task	LP Post-test	SR	CA	CA Post-test	—	Delayed Post-test
Don	13	15		77			100		100
Eric		31		92			100		92
Tim	7	29		57			100		100
Lisa		71		100			100		100
Harry	6	67		100			100		100
John		67		100			100		100
Helen	9	22		89			100		100
Kim		22		67			89		100
Mean		**41**		**85**			**98**		**99**
SD		**24**		**17**			**4**		**3**

*N is the total of semantic triggers (ST) plus those words/expressions that were also discussed in the language play task and were repeated in the discussions of the stimulated recall (SR) and the class activity (CA).

Table 6.8 Cycle 2 Pre-test and post-test results (in percentages) across all stages

A	B	C	D	E	F			
Example	Type of LP	Cycle	Semantic trigger + # of meanings at play	Pairs of students + expertise distribution	# of LRE*			
					Type of LRE	LP	SR	CA
1	Pun	1	lean 2	Helen & Lisa (+1) (+1)	Form	2	2	2
					Meaning			4
					Meta-talk			1
2	Riddle	2	ajar 1	Don & Eric (-1) (-1)	Form	1	1	1
					Meaning	1	2	4
					Meta-talk	1	2	1

LP: Language play; LRE: Language related episode; SR: Stimulated recall; CA: Class activity.

*These are the total number of LREs generated by the semantic trigger but for space reasons, not all of them are reproduced in Tables 6.10 and 6.12.

Table 6.9 Information about the two language play pieces selected for microgenetic analysis

related episodes that the dyad produced across the stages of data collection that relate to the semantic trigger.

Tables 6.10 and 6.12 provide a microgenetic presentation of the languaging that the two student pairs produced that relate to the semantic trigger. Due to space limitations only parts of their dialogue are presented. Missing lines are represented by (…) in the excerpts. The transcription conventions we used are shown in the Appendix. In our discussion of these tables, we refer the reader to the corresponding turns which are in bold-type for easy reference.

In Tables 6.10 through 6.13, the number of meanings known (3 on the vocabulary knowledge scale) and/or used correctly in a sentence (4 on the LREs Vocabulary Knowledge Scale) in the pre-test and post-tests is shown in bold type.

Microgenetic analysis of 'lean': Lisa and Helen

As shown in Table 6.10, in Cycle 1 Lisa and Helen discussed a pun that featured two meanings of the word 'lean'. Lisa knew one meaning and Helen knew the other. This knowledge of different meanings marked separate expertises at the outset of the task and therefore each person in the pair was able to help the other one learn another meaning for the same word.

During the LP task, Lisa and Helen explained one meaning to each other (turns 11–18). They then checked the dictionary which corroborated what they had said. Because each of them knew one meaning for 'lean' and both meanings needed to be understood in order to understand the pun, they were careful to explain the meaning the other needed to understand. This is a clear example of how expertise shifts in peer–peer learning.

Four days later, Lisa and Helen completed the language play post-test making sure that the new meanings they had learnt were included and illustrated with a sentence. At the time of the stimulated recall four days later, Helen enthusiastically pointed out how Lisa's explanation made her understand the new meaning and thus the overall joke (turn 15). Lisa had already stated that she liked and found useful the role of 'the expert' and repeats this in turn 17 in response to the researcher's question. She said that she found it useful for herself because she needed to search for English words and explain them. Thus exposure to the trigger and the opportunity provided in the stimulated recall to talk about it again was another source of learning and helped to sustain the meaning learnt (Swain 2006).

Lisa and Helen's learning proved to be sustained over the longer term. Seven weeks after the whole class activity, when they last discussed the meanings of 'lean', they still remembered the new meanings discussed initially in the language play task.

By the time of the class activity three days after the stimulated recall, both Lisa and Helen were the 'experts' for that joke and as such, they helped their classmates understand the meanings of 'lean' that were at play in the pun. Interestingly, each of them explained the one meaning they did not know

ST	'lean'	
Pair	**Lisa**	**Helen**
Pre-test **Week 1**	No fat. The girl was very lean. (+1)	Stand against. He leans on against the wall. (+1)
LP piece	Waiter, I'd like a corned beef sandwich, and make it lean. Yes, sir! In which direction?	
LP task **Week 2**	11 **H** *I don't understand what is lean.* 12 **L** *Uh... lean can mean uh not fat, not fatty.* 13 **H** *Oh. And also uh... you lean on something. That direction or that direction.* 14 **L** *Oh, lean against the wall?* 15 **H** *Yeah. And lean is not fat?* 16 **L** *Yeah.* 17 **H** *There is no fat in the meat.* 18 **L** *Yes, I think so [they check the dictionary]* 19 **H** xx 20 **L** Yes. 21 **H** Lean *meat does not have much fat on it. OK, I got it!*	
LP **Post-test** **4 days later**	'Not fat at all. I want some lean meat in my sandwich. To bend over. When I lean on a wall, I don't stand entirely on my feet. (+2)	Meat without fat. Stand against. He is sick, so he leans against the wall. (+2)
SR **4 days later**	9 **H** I didn't know the other meaning of lean. 10 **R** Which meaning did you know? 11 **H** I just know to stand against. Not the other meaning of it. 12 **R** Um-hum. And what was the other meaning? 13 **H** It means without fat. 14 **R** OK. Excellent. And that's something that Lisa explained very well. Did it help to get that explanation? 15 **H** Yeah, yeah! [laughs]. 16 **R** [to L] And you said that it also helped to explain things? 17 **L** Yes, it does because I need to search my mind to English words and explain it.	
Class Activity **Week 3**	538 **Helen** The lean is l-e-a-n. 539 **Eric** Oh, make it 'lean'. 540 **Harry** Oh, the same joke in Persian (...) 550 **Helen** *Lean. One meaning means that it's x, I mean, that is not fat. Is not fat. (...)* 553 **Eric** And what's the other meaning for lean? 554 **Tim** Lean is, you know ... 555 **Eric** Lean the first meaning is 556 **Lisa** *Leaning against the wall.* 557 **Tim** Yeah, yeah. 558 **Harry** Yeah. 559 **Eric** OH, yeah! Leaning against the wall. OK. 560 **Tim** Another is, another is - 561 **Eric** -without fat. Without fat. 562 **Tim** Without fat? 563 **Eric** Yeah. 564 **Helen** Yeah. 565 **Don** It means without fat.	
CA **Post-test** **Week 4**	*Not fatty (food).* *The meat on the sandwich must be lean.* *To take support on a wall.* *The man was leaning at the wall, waiting.* (+2)	Not fat. *Stand against.* (+2)
Delayed post-test **Week 10**	*Not fat.* *Not standing straight.* (+2)	*Without fat.* *To be against.* (+2)

See appendix for transcription conventions.

Table 6.10 Microgenetic analysis for 'lean'

before the language play task (turns 550 and 556). Their explanations mediated the learning of the rest of the class as shown in Table 6.11. Except for John, the students initially knew either one meaning for 'lean' or none at all. However, after Lisa and Helen explained the joke to the other students in the class during the whole class activity, all students learnt a new meaning and were able to demonstrate this knowledge on the post-test given seven days later in week 4 (stage 6).

	Week 1 Pre-test	**Week 3**	**Week 4 CA Post-test**
Don	I have seen this word but I don't know what it means. (–2)	Class Activity: Lisa and Helen's explanation.	a *Lie down against.* *Could you lean it in this way?* b *Without fat. Please, may I have the lean part?* (+2)
Eric	*The beef is so lean that* *I like to taste.* (+1)		a *The singer leaned against the wall and sang.* b *The beef is lean.* (+2)
Harry	*Not straight.* *The tree is leaning back.* (+1)		a *Bend. He falls asleep when he leans back.* b *Thin, less fat. I prefer lean meat.* (+2)
John	a *Thin. He is quite lean.* b *You in support from sthg.* *He leans against the wall.* (+2)		a *Thin. I like lean meat.* b *Depend against. He is leaning against the wall.* (+2)
Kim	*A part of boy*		N/A (Absent from CA).
Tim	I have seen this word but I don't know what it means. (–2)		a *Free of fat.* b *Bend.* (+2)
Will	*Thin. I just help them implement lean manufacturing.* (+1)		a *Non-fat.* b *Turn, bend.* (+2)

See appendix for transcription conventions.

Table 6.11 'Lean': pre-test and post-test results for the class

Microgenetic analysis of 'ajar': Don and Eric

In Cycle 2, Don and Eric worked on a riddle that helped them learn the meaning of the word 'ajar', a word they had never seen before as they indicated on the pre-test. When Don and Eric read the answer to the riddle (a-jar) they focused on the word 'jar'. In the following turns (244–248), they first defined this word and said:

244. **E** Jar. Jar means what? Jar is a bar, right? [takes the dictionary]
245. **D** No, no. 'When it's a-jar'.
246. **E** I think is bar. You can see here [reads from the dictionary] 'A round glass container'.
Oh, no, no, no. It's a bottle.
247. **D** A round glass…? [Pause. They both read the entry] It's container, right?
248. **E** Yeah. Container.

Once they understood the word jar, they began to wonder what the connection with door was (turns 254–257) as Table 6.12 shows. Since they indicated being 'stuck' (turn 260) and did not seem to notice the hyphen in the riddle script of 'a-jar' as a hint, the teacher pointed this out (turns 258–262). This help, the only instance of teacher support in the language play pieces of Cycle 2, offered Don and Eric a solution, and through their further languaging, we are able to see learning 'take flight'.

With the help of the dictionary definition (turn 264) and the discussion they had in which they contrasted ajar to open (turns 281–282), Eric and John reached an understanding collaboratively of the word and demonstrated their newly acquired knowledge in the language play post-test three days after working on their set.

In the stimulated recall, three days after the language play post-test, Don and Eric made it clear that originally they had not understood the word ajar:

457. **E** This [riddle] is a very difficult one because the -
458. **D** - we didn't know the word ajar.

Eric pointed to an actual door in the classroom that was actually ajar (turn 467). Later on, in their own meta-interlanguage, they were able to point out how 'ajar', if divided, becomes an article (a) and a noun (jar) and means something different (turns 473–477). The learning of this new word proved to be long-term for Don and Eric as in the delayed post-test, 3 weeks after they discussed it for the last time, they were able to illustrate 'ajar' in two good examples.

In the whole class activity, Don and Eric engaged their classmates in a useful discussion: there was an explicit focus on form (turn 944), a sentence that illustrated the meaning of ajar clearly (turn 947) and an attempt to transfer knowledge (turns 968–973). In this latter instance of languaging they made it clear that ajar is only used for door. All students included door in their examples for the class activity post-test demonstrating that learning had taken place during the peer–peer discussions of the class activity (Table 6.13).

ST	'ajar'	
Pair	**Don**	**Eric**
Pre-test **Week 5**	'I don't remember having seen this word before.' (-1)	'I don't remember having seen this word before.' (-1)
LP piece	'When is a door not a door? When it is ajar.'	
LP task **Week 6**	254. **E** *Jar means a container. But this has something to do with door?* 255. **D** *Jar. So what's the second meaning? Jar.* 256. **E** x-x. 257. **D** [whispers something] [reading from the dictionary but it's indecipherable speech]. 258. **T** *Is everything OK here?* 259. **E** [not very convincingly] *Yes.* 260. **D** *Yeah. We are stuck here. [as T points out at ajar as one word] Ajar!* 260. **T** *This is one word, right?* 262. **E** *Ah!!* 263. **D** *Wow!* [they start laughing] 264. **E** [checks the dictionary] *It's here. 'A door that is ajar is slightly open'. See here!* 265. **D** *Ajar.* 266. **E** *'See picture at open'* [looks it up] *I see!* 267. **D** *So what's?* 268. **E** *Ajar is open.* 269. **D** *An open x like this.* (…) 277. **D** *So this is not a door. This is a jar* 278. **E** *Because if it is widely open, if it is xx. If it is a small opening, it is called ajar.* 279. **D** *Ajar.* 280. **E** *Ajar.* 281. **D** *If it's open what is it? If it is whole open?* 282. **E** *If it is whole open it is just open*.	
LP **Post-test** **3 days later**	'A door which is opened a little bit It's ajar here.' (+1)	'The door was ajar at night so the thief come in.' (+1)
SR **3 days later**	267. **E** **[pointing to the door]** *Can I say that now the door is ajar?* 268. **R** Excellent. It is ajar! (…) 269. **E** *A jar means a, one jar.* [he moves his hands to show that they are different words] 270. **D** *One jar.* 271. **E** *Yes, one jar.* 272. **D** *One jar.* 273. **E** *Yes, one jar. So if it is connect it has only one meaning, right? It's half open*.	
Class Activity **Week 7**	944. **Don** A-j-a-r. Like a little bit open. [H and L start laughing] **945. Tim** What's ajar? Means open a little a bit. **946. Don** Open. A little bit open. **947. Eric** *Yeah. In a sentence: At night and because the door is ajar so the thieves coming and take the money.* **948. Tim** Oh, yeah. Ah-ha.(…) **968. Harry** *And can you leave the window ajar?* **969. Helen** Yes, I think. **970. Eric** *No. Ajar is for the door.* **971. Lisa** *So something to be ajar needs to be hung here and be able to go like this* [swings her hand] **972. Eric** *No ajar is only used for* **973. Tim & Helen** *Door*.	
CA **Post-test** **Week 8**	'Not well closed door. Please leave it ajar.' (+1)	'I leave the door ajar.' (+1)
Delayed **post-test** **Week 10**	A door than not quite close. Don't' close! Please leave it ajar! (+1)	The door is ajar so the child won't be afraid during sleep. (+1)

See appendix for transcription conventions.

Table 6.12 Microgenetic analysis for 'ajar'

	Week 5 Pre-test	Week 7	Week 8 CA Post-test
Harry	I have seen this word before but I don't know what it means. (–1)	Don and Eric's explanation	*Half open/half close. Please let the door ajar.* (+1)
Helen	I have seen this word before but I don't know what it means. (-1)		*Open slightly. The door is ajar.* (+1)
John	I have seen this word before but I don't know what it means. (–1)		*Door slight open. Keep door ajar.* (+1)
Kim	I have seen this word before but I don't know what it means. (–1)		*Open a door slightly.* (+1)
Lisa	I have seen this word before but I don't know what it means. (–1)		*A door slightly open. Leave the door ajar, please. I want to see the light.* (+1)
Tim	I have seen this word before but I don't know what it means. (–1)		*A door open a lit bit.* (+1)

See appendix for transcription conventions.

Table 6.11 'Ajar': pre-test and post-test results for the class

In summary, peer–peer interaction as a site for learning was the focus of this study. The learners' languaging, when analyzed at the micro-level demonstrated how the peer–peer talk allowed students to move from no comprehension to comprehension and production. As shown in each microgenetic analysis of learning, even when expertise varied among students, the students' languaging constructed new knowledge. In these data we see that the source of learning was interaction mediated by the students' languaging. The post-tests were done individually, demonstrating that learning had taken place. Languaging mediated the comprehension of both the humor and the language involved in the language play. We believe this study negates the criticism of sociocultural theory-based studies made by R. Ellis (2003) and Mitchell and Myles (1998) that researchers have not shown evidence of learning, especially in the long term (R. Ellis and Barkhuizen 2005).

To understand instances of language play, the students needed to discover the incongruity involved. To do this they had to understand 'the normal' and the deviation from it—what Crystal (1998: 1) refers to as 'bending and breaking' the rules. Students needed to operate within two linguistic worlds at once, the normal and the abnormal, trading them off against each other to understand the language and appreciate the humor involved in its playful use. Languaging mediated this cognitively complex process.

Once the students reached this understanding, they usually laughed and said things such as 'I got it!', 'Oh, yeah!', 'Ah-ha!'. The fact that laughter occurred may signal other phenomena besides having a 'fun' time and interpreting the activity as ludic. Though laughter can signal embarrassment at not knowing something, shyness, and avoidance, etc. (see Markee 2000: 290 for descriptions on laughter tokens in actual conversations), in this study laughter was also a sign of release at solving a kind of mental conflict. The language play pieces represented 'a kind of puzzle which when solved enables learners to discover for themselves how a linguistic feature works' (R. Ellis 2003: 163).

Pedagogical implications: the importance of being humorous

As the students themselves reported in the interviews, they would not have been able to understand the humor and language involved were it not for the help of a partner and the discussion they had. Therefore, these problem-solving and knowledge-building dialogues (i.e. the students' languaging), became sites for learning as shown in the comparison between the pre-test and post-test results.

Tim provided a reason why language play and humor were conducive to long-term learning. In the interview he said that a good joke is 'inspiration to remember. Because you think of it and you can remember it forever. If you think a lot about this word, you will remember it forever'. The language play activities presented an intellectual challenge to the students, who were pushed to think about language on two different levels: the normal level, and the abnormal or playful level in which words and expressions do things that they do not normally do. The playful context and the need to resolve the inherent incongruity of the humor pushed students to think about language and notice gaps in their knowledge which had to be filled if the pun or riddle were to make sense. This problem-solving process, mediated by language, helped students to make new connections. As John explained:

> I think that is a common problem with the international students because we speak our own languages. We have connections between our language and English. But we don't have connection with the English word and the English word. Or even with the two meanings of the same word but we never connect them together, you know. They have a bridge English to Chinese and then Chinese to English. You have a direct connection. That's why for something like that we know both meanings but we never think 'Oh, you can put together to make fun with that'.

Furthermore, Kim said that she had 'learnt more English. (…) And I understand the deep meaning of the same word'. Learning the 'deep meaning' (i.e. understanding the different meanings of a word and/or its possible grammatical functions) was something that Don and John also pointed out was a result of their struggle with understanding puns and riddles:

> You know, now I think in clear words and something much more deeper. (Don)

> Now I know 'stuffed' has two meanings for, you know, the kind of food. Another 'stuffed' is like toy. Like stuffed bear or something like that. But I have never connected these two meanings together. (John)

We have argued that a comprehensive view of second language communicative performance should include the ludic/playful and humorous functions of language. Making jokes and being witty and creative with language presupposes a reasonably high level of second language performance. Yet, many second language learners, despite their high proficiency, do not feel comfortable and/or capable of understanding and using the genres of language play and humor. Such students, like the ones in this study, had received L2 instruction, but the genres of language play and humor were neglected in the L2 curriculum. This is likely because, as Block (2003: 73–4) argues, many second language acquisition researchers and teachers following the input–interaction–output model:

> have managed to get themselves in a quandary: they want a conceptualisation of what people do with language that is grounded in the real world, but they do not seem willing to take on the fact that in the real world, there is play as well as work.

Moreover, when there is work there is also the establishment, maintenance, and strengthening of social ties. Such social processes have, as argued by Carter and McCarthy (2004), many instances of linguistic creativity in the form of language play and humor. It follows then that allowing students to only participate in tasks that will evoke transactional communication and information exchange, will not equip them completely for socialization and participation in the second language community. Furthermore, one of the students in an earlier pilot study, Mark, reported: 'I told the jock [joke] to my fellow student and he laughed so I think that I am not so bad jocks [jokes] teller', a quote which shows that he is confident about the use of L2 in actual social interaction and that he felt pleased with himself for being able to engage in real-life humorous discourse.

In light of the findings of this study, it can be said that the examination of language-based aspects of humor is a rewarding area of study for second language learners and researchers. By investigating linguistic humor, students not only understand examples of humor, but they also learn new language and can gain insights into how the second language and culture work, and become equipped to tell jokes, riddles or puns to others if they wish to do so. The students gained the opportunity to participate in the play as well as the work of their second language. The inclusion of humor in the L2 curriculum can be a daunting and intimidating task for both second language teachers and students. However, as noted above, much humor is deeply embedded in language, which prompts Medgyes (2002: 5) to suggest that '[w]e can use the

language to make humor accessible for students and, conversely, use humor to make language accessible'. Furthermore, teachers can explain culturally appropriate responses to puns and riddles.

The greatest pedagogical challenge lies in finding material exemplifying language play that suits the specific needs of the students. The data from this study suggest that it may also be a question of allowing students time for playful manipulation of language, and providing discussion time with peers to work out the 'linguistic puzzle' by themselves.

Appendix

Transcription conventions

Layout	Turns are numbered consecutively. Indented turn: overlapping speech
-	Incomplete utterances
.	Turn completed.
?!	Interrogative or exclamatory intention
CAPS	Emphasis
italics	acquired knowledge
underlying	Overlapping speech
[ ]	Comments/clarification and/or descriptions of relevant behaviour
[=]	Glossary
‘ ’	Utterances read from text.
xx	Indecipherable speech.
( )	Unclear speech but which is most likely what is written inside the brackets
R	Researcher
Other initials	Students