

# Laughter as an Acknowledgement Token in Classroom Interaction

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## Abstract

本論文では、会話分析の手法を用いて、教室内的での相互作用における笑い声やユーモアを分析する。笑い声は日常会話での通常の現象であり、冗談の後に発生することが一般的である。ただし、教室内のような制度的な場面において参加者は、学習や教育という供の目標に向かって作用しているので冗談を言う機会は限れているが、そのような制度的な性質にもかかわらず、笑い声がよく観察できる。先行研究で教室内の笑い声やユーモアがいかに教育目標に関係しているかを調査しましたが、冗談を言うことが少ないのにどのように笑い声が発生するのかについては、詳細な研究が必要である。この問題に対処するため、本論文では笑い声が発生している教室内の会話の実例の分析に焦点を当て、参加者自らの視点からデータの分析を行った。分析の結果、笑い声が発生する二つの現象が明らかになった。それらは、真面目ではない話に反応する笑い声と参加者は厄介な状況と対面したときにそれらを解決するときの笑い声だった。いずれも教師が開始する笑い声や生徒が開始する笑い声の双方の実例を分析した。本研究の結果は、教室の一般的な相互作用とともに目標達成のために発する相互作用の性質を理解するに役立つことが示唆される。

## Introduction

Laughter is one of the most common activities of daily life. There are different kinds of utterances in talk-in-interaction that provoke laughter. In principle, it is the telling of a joke that urges the participants to laugh. However, a joke does not always provoke laughter. The other participants sometimes reject the occurrence of a joke. Whether the participants accept a joke or not is based on the participants' following activity – whether they choose to laugh or not. Sacks (1972) describes the production of laughter in joke-telling sequences as the participants' acceptance of the joke. In a detailed observation of a joke telling, he finds the participants laughing to display their acceptance of the preceding joke. Also, by orienting to the joke-telling sequences, the participants demonstrate their alignment with the speaker's action of joke-telling (Sacks, 1972). Additionally, laughter is also observed as a way of pursuing intimacy. For example, Jefferson (1979) observes a series of laughter-provoking utterances and analyzes the participants' ways of inviting the other participant to laugh if they do not choose to. However, laughter is not merely limited to a response to jokes in

mundane conversation. A huge number of instances where the participants produce laughter or smiles equally occur in other types of institutional talks. For example, in classroom talk, several studies have focused on what functions laughter, humor, and language play and how they are related to pedagogical focus (Garland, 2010; Lehtimaja, 2011; Pomerantz & Bell, 2011; Van Dam, 2002; Waring, 2013; 2015).

Using conversation analysis as a methodological framework, this paper analyzes the occurrence of humorous talk and laughter in classroom talk. The analysis focuses on the initiation of laughter and the participant's interpretation of it in their local sequential context. The detailed analysis focuses on two phenomena of laughter: (a) laughter in responding to non-serious talk, and (b) laughter in resolving an awkward situation. To exemplify these phenomena, both teacher-initiated and student-initiated laughter will be discussed.

## Background

Researchers in conversation analysis have focused on studying laughter as an effective strategy in communication instead of merely viewing it as a non-speech phenomenon. In her study, Jefferson (1979; 1984; 1985) showcased how laughter is used in accomplishing various social actions so that it can be understood as an interactional mechanism that shapes actions in talk-in-interaction. Similarly, Jefferson, Sacks, and Schegloff (1987) demonstrated the systematic production and social organization of laughter. Some other conversation analytic studies of laughter suggested that laughter appears in interactional environments where there is celebration or trouble (Gleen & Holt, 2013). The researchers suggested that participants in talk-in-interaction laugh upon receiving a joke or resolving some problematic aspects of the talk. In addition, Norrick (1994) suggested that participants produce humorous laughter in responding to the non-serious nature of the talk. More recent research (e.g., Hakana, 2010) has defined laughter as highly context-sensitive and understanding of which should be made from the perspective of the participants in the occurrence of their local contexts.

Emerging from the context of mundane interaction, the study of laughter has gained immense interest in institutional interactions, too. For example, in recent years, there has been a growing body of research that focuses on systemically analyzing the functions of laughter and smiles in pedagogical settings.

Most of the research has primarily focused on what functions student smiles and laughter accomplished in the talk (e.g. Degoumois et al., 2017; Hasegawa, 2018; Jacknick, 2013; Lehtimaja, 2011; Matsumoto, 2018; Sert and Jacknick, 2015). The major aspect previous studies have focused was on exploring the occurrence of laughter when humor or playful language is used by the participants (Hasegawa, 2018; Liang, 2015; Reddington & Waring, 2015).

Some other studies tried to investigate the relationship between humor and laughter in language learning as well as student interactional competence in the target language (e.g.,

Hasewaga, 2018; Matsumoto, 2014). In classroom interaction, laughter is not only caused by some sort of celebration or trouble as Gleen and Holt (2013) have proposed, it may also occur to overcome a great deal of other interactional problems. For example, when the normative value of classroom, where the teacher is in higher epistemic status, is challenged because of student actions, teachers may produce smiles and laughter to overcome the situation.

Researchers have also believed that laughter and language play have facilitated language acquisition as well, both first-language acquisition (Garvey, 1977; Weir, 1962) and second-language acquisition (Peck, 1980; Lantolf, 1997; Cook, 1997, 2000). Lantolf (1997) described language play and humor as private speech instead of speech to entertain or communicate. In contrast to Lantolf (1997), Cook (2000) argued that language play and humorous talk take a variety of forms such as, semantic, linguistic, and pragmatic; and have different actions depending on the context. Consequently, as Cook (2000) suggested, humor and language play facilitate language learning by providing opportunities for the learners to notice the linguistic, semantic, and pragmatic features of the language. In addition, even though humorous language and play language in classroom purpose “not primarily to transmit information, but rather to entertain” (Tarone, 200, p. 32), they help elevate learning by minimizing anxiety among learners, delivering the language in a more memorable way, and presenting arena for learners to testify various language varieties and voices.

Thus, laughter may serve as a resource for both teachers and students to minimize interactional troubles. As laughter and smiles endeavor as a great resource in classroom talk, it needs further scrutiny. In line with researchers attempting to understand how teachers and students utilize and comprehend laughter and their functions, this paper aims to explore how and why laughter occurs in classroom and how they affect the sequential context they appear.

## Data and methodology

The examples presented in the this paper come from a larger corpus of data set of about 25 hours of video-recorded lessons in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. For each lesson, the class timing ranges from 40 minutes to 45 minutes in different high schools. In the data set, the student participants range from 14 to 17 years of age while the teacher participants’ age and experiences vary. Some of the lessons were recorded by the teachers themselves, and some other lessons were recorded by the researcher upon receiving written consent from the teachers, the students, and the school management.

This study adopts the methodological approach of conversation analysis which focuses on analyzing data without any prior perspectives. The video-recorded data is carefully observed with an unmotivated looking point of view (Sacks, 1984) to avoid prior knowledge of the participants and the environment. Researchers in conversation apply the method of unmotivated looking so that the data could be observed from the participants’ perspectives and could be analyzed as the interaction happens in the data. After observation and making

a collection of target phenomena, the data is transcribed using the common transcription convention proposed by Jefferson (Atkinson & Heritage, 1984).

## Laughter in responding to the non-serious or humorous talk

This section focuses on analyzing how participants in talk-in-interaction laugh to suggest that their cohort's previous action was not serious. In naturally occurring mundane interaction, responding to humorous and playful language with laughter is a common phenomenon because all the participants have equal rights to produce a turn at talk. On the other hand, the turn-taking mechanism in a classroom is somewhat restricted as the teacher has apparent control in allocating a turn and selecting a speaker. However, observation of classroom data showcased that laughter naturally follows when there is an occurrence of playful or humorous talk, despite the restriction of turn-taking. Some examples where such laughter takes place are presented and analyzed below.

Extract 1 below comes from a Japanese high-school English language lesson where the participants are in a discussion of a charity project. Prior to the excerpt presented below, the teacher has assigned pair-work where the students would ask their partners about what they would do if they have limited money and they are asked to make a donation. After the pair-work discussion, the teacher nominates one student, Take, to report their partner's donation plan.

- (1) Charity
- 01 T: okay. Takecha:n.  
 02 would you be a reporter.  
 03 S3: eh:: (0.5) Iwamoto::=  
**04 T: =mis[ter (Iwamoto.)**  
**05 Ss: [hhhhhhhhhhhhhh**  
 06 T: yes  
 07 S3: put (.) hi:s one hundred twenty yen  
 08 T: uhm.  
 09 S3: i:n (.) the charity box

As the students finish the previously assigned pair-work activity, the teacher asks S3 to report what their partner would do in a hypothetical situation where they must choose between whether to buy juice or donate the money to charity. Receiving the teacher's selection, S3 takes his turn to speak and begins his response as "eh:: (0.5) Iwamoto::=" in line 3. At this point, the teacher intervenes and corrects S3's utterance to "=mis[ter (Iwamoto.)" in line 4. It could be said that the teacher's correction aims at making the student utterance more formal as the student is being a reporter now. However, the other students in the class

find the teacher's correction laughable and produce a long laughter in line 5. In producing a burst of laughter in unison, the students treat the utterance "mis[ter (Iwamoto).]" as non-serious as they have not been in the practice where they would utter their friend's name with formal address terms. In addition, the students manipulate the sequence organization (Reddington & Waring, 2015) as the laughter in unison occurs as an inserted utterance which influences the Initiation-Response-Feedback sequence (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975) being carried out between the teacher and one single student, S3.

The above example showcases a non-serious type of talk in teacher-student interaction. Because of the non-serious nature, it creates laughter among the participants. In other words, the participants demonstrate their understanding of the non-serious nature by producing laughter.

Extract 2 below also documents a similar phenomenon where the interactants acknowledge the previous utterance as humorous and receive that with laughter. The following interaction occurs in an English language lesson in a high school in Nepal where the teacher is teaching the grammar point of using "modals" for permission and obligations.

(2) Rules

01 T: can you tell (.) some of the rules and regulations  
 02 of this classroom  
 03 (2.0)  
 04 Ss: °students are°  
 05 S1: students are not allowed to make noise °inside the classroom°  
 06 T: students are not allowed to make noise::: (.)  
 07 S1: inside the clas[sroom  
 08 T: [inside the classroom  
 09 T: ((writes the model sentence on the board))  
 10 T: \$really?\$(  
 11 Ss: =HHH.hhhh

After a brief explanation of the grammar rules for expressing permission and obligations using models, the teacher asks the students to make sample sentences to talk about the rules and regulations of their classroom. After a 2-second silence, some students start producing a response in unison but in a very quiet voice. Then, S1 volunteers a turn in line 5 and says, "students are not allowed to make noise °inside the classroom°". The teacher receipts through repetition in lines 6-8 and demonstrates the acceptance of the response by writing it on the blackboard. His action of writing the student response, a sample response in this case, also makes the response available for the whole class for public scrutiny. When the teacher finishes writing the sample sentence on the blackboard, he says, "\$really?\$( with a smiley voice as indicated by the dollar symbol. In producing the utterance with a smile, the teacher

suggests that the talk is produced as humor, thus inviting laughter from the recipients in the upcoming turn (Jefferson, 1979). Teachers also produce this type of utterances to mark their talk is non-serious, and as a collective response, invites laughter (Hazel & Mortensen, 2017; Lehtimaja, 2011). On the other hand, the students also treat the utterance as non-serious talk as they collectively respond with loud laughter. Upon responding to the teacher's smiley tone with explicit laughter, the students demonstrate their sequential and multimodal alignment to the teacher's utterance (Mondada, 2019). They sequentially align with the teacher utterance as the students appropriately produce a laughter in responding a laughter-provoking non-serious nature of talk. In addition to aligning, the laughter also demonstrates the students' pertinent comprehension of the teacher's utterance.

In addition to the examples presented above, students' collective laughter occurs when the teacher, in providing feedback to student utterances, adds some elements of playful or humorous language. For example, in extract 3 below, the teacher receipts student utterance and treats the utterance as playful. As a result, the teacher's reception of the student response invites collective laughter. Let us consider this example:

- (3) Juice
- 01 S1: I would- I wou::ld buy juice
- 02 T: yeah.
- 03 S1: but I am kind
- 04 T: uh hhh \$you are kind\$**
- 05 S1: ye (hh) s**
- 06 Ss: HHH hhhh**
- 07 T: yes,

This portion of talk occurs later in the interaction presented in extract 1 above where the teacher has assigned the students, in a pair-work activity, to find out their partner's probable action in a hypothetical situation of whether to donate their limited money for charity or to use it for their personal use. As the teacher asks what S1 would do in that case, S1 first says he would buy juice and would go home to get extra money to donate because he is kind (whole interaction not shown in the transcript above). In the interaction, first he says "I would- I wou::ld buy juice" in line 1. The teacher produces a minimal turn "yeah." in line 2 which S1 takes as a continuation marker and adds in his utterance and says, "but I am kind". Upon hearing "but I am kind", the teacher first produces a small laughter and says \$you are kind\$ with a smiley voice. The teacher's production of laughter and smiley voice suggests that the student utterance of self-praise is somewhat sarcastic (Hazel and Mortensen, 2017; Lehtimaja, 2011; Piirainen-Marsh, 2011), and the teacher playfully teases that action (Jakonen, 2016; Looney and Kim, 2018). Other students in the class also comprehend the teacher's sarcastic production and respond with a loud and explicit laughter in line 6.

The above extract explicated how a student's self-praising utterance is taken by the other participants as laughter-provoking. Similarly, students in classroom also interpret teacher's self-praising utterances as laughter-provoking despite the asymmetric nature of turn-taking and different epistemic stance. In classroom, the turn-taking mechanism becomes asymmetrical as the teachers have complete control in turn allocation. In addition, unlike mundane interaction, participants in classroom have different epistemic status as the teachers are supposed to be in higher knowledge position and the students are in lower knowledge (Heritage, 2010). Extract 4 below demonstrates how a teacher's self-praising talk is treated by the students as a non-serious turn and thus responded with an explicit laughter.

Extract 4 comes from an English language lesson in a Nepalese high school where the teacher is teaching the meaning of a poem that is included in the textbook. The theme of the poem suggests that life becomes beautiful if people focus on their duties and responsibilities.

(4) Duty-Beauty

- 01 Ss: A duty  
 02 T: nowadays, remix sentence- a kind of  
 03 remix (.) phrase is also there.  
 04 a remix idiom is also there. you know what is that,  
 05 a dutiful man (.) like Pradeep sir. makes his wife beautiful  
**06 Ss: hhhhhh**  
 07 T: how? (0.5) because if I am dutiful, if I come here everyday.  
 08 If I fulfill my duty  
 09 then I earn what say?  
 10 Ss: mo[ney  
 11 T: [money. that she spends in the beauty parlor  
**12 Ss: hhhhhh**  
 13 T: thus becomes what say  
 14 Ss: be[autiful  
 15 T: [beautiful

In this interaction, the teacher begins his playful language by slightly modifying the theme of the poem he is teaching. He verbally explains the modification he is to incorporate in lines 2 to 4 saying "nowadays, remix sentence- a kind of remix (.) phrase is also there. a remix idiom is also there. you know what is that," and then produces the playful modification of the teaching goal, the theme of the poem, in line 5 while referring to his own lifestyle, "a dutiful man (.) like Pradeep sir. makes his wife beautiful." This utterance includes two elements that provoke laughter in the following sequences – the modification of the message, and the inclusion of the teacher's name. After the teacher produces this utterance, the students produce a laughter at line 6 thus displaying their understanding of the laughter-provoking utterance and treating

the previous utterance as a playful language. Once, the students display their understanding of his prior utterance through the laughter, the teacher further moves to explain the modified utterance in lines 7 to 11. When he says if he earns money, that she spends in the beauty parlor, the students again laugh at line 12. At this time, the students take the production of “that she spends in the beauty parlor” as a non-serious talk as that would be an explicitly not related element in the classroom context where the target is to understand the theme of the poem.

## Laughter in resolving an awkward situation

Even though laughter occurs in various situations of everyday language, the exact function it serves depends on the context it is produced. As Glenn and Holt (2013) described, laughter tends to showcase two broad categories of interactional situations: celebrations and trouble. However, it can be properly understood in its interactional and sequential phenomenon through a detailed analysis. In this section, this paper presents some examples of laughter that occur in mitigating probable troubles and analyzes them in their sequential environment.

The excerpt below comes in a classroom talk where the students are reporting to the teacher what they have discussed in a previously assigned pair-work activity. During the pair-work, the students were supposed to discuss where their partners would go on a vacation. As the talk in extract 5 begins, the teacher asks S1 about her partner’s plan.

(5) Kazuya

- 01 T:       okay. where you <wher:e did she want to go.  
 02 S1:       she want to go (.) London.  
 03 T:       to London. okay, did she say why.  
 04 S1:       becau:se she: likes (0.8) Kazuya Kamenashi.  
 05 T:       **(1.0) ((looks at the class with both hands open))**  
 06 Ss:       **hhh. [hhhh**  
 07 T:       **[uh hh hh. ukh hh hh. okay, I don't know (.) about that.**  
 08           **could you explain more.**

In the beginning, the teacher checks with S1 about where her partner wanted to go on vacation. Upon receiving her response, the teacher then pursues if there were any reasons for S1’s partner to go to London. In responding to the teacher’s query, S1 says “because she: likes (0.8) Kazuya Kamenashi.” in line 4. A considerably longer silence occurs after the student response and teacher-initiated feedback remains due. During the silence of one second, the teacher looks towards the students with her hands open to the sides indicating that she has no idea of what S1 is saying. The students respond to the teacher’s lack of knowledge



with laughter which the teacher accompanies in line 7. The teacher finds herself in a lower epistemic domain as her knowledge is challenged by the student utterance (Heritage, 1984; 2010). As a result, she starts laughing along with the students so that she can resolve the awkward situation. Once the laughter calms down, the teacher explicitly demonstrates her lack of knowledge by saying “okay, I don’t know (.) about that. could you explain more.” in lines 7 and 8. As reported in other studies (e.g., Heritage, 1984), teachers usually hold the rights to knowledge and overtly remain in the position of higher knowledge in classroom interaction. As a result, the knowledge displayed by the teacher is rarely challenged. However, when the classroom talk takes some form of open discussion, the higher knowledgeable epistemic position of teachers is frequently challenged by student knowledge (Bhatta, 2014). Consequently, the teachers tend to resolve the awkward situation with laughter and then pursue more information so that they could grasp the information correctly. In the extract above, the teacher first joins in with the laughter students have initiated and requests the students to explain more on the topic. In this way, upon receiving a student explanation, she could move from a less knowledgeable position (K-) to a more knowledgeable position (K+) (Heritage, 2010).

As documented by the example and explanation above, when teachers found themselves in awkward situations, they first initiate laughter to resolve the awkward situation and continue to pursue more knowledge from the students. In consequence, when the students provide more information, they usually demonstrate the receipt of the knowledge with a change of state token (Heritage, 1984). For example, the following extract demonstrates how a teacher initiates laughter to deal with the epistemic problem caused by student response and how she exhibits her change of state upon resolving the problem.

Extract 6 below also showcases how the participants resolve an awkward situation by producing laughter. Interaction in the following example is a continuation of the example presented in extract 5 above. Once the teacher comprehends the name of the character from student talk, she moves to ask more about the person reference.

(6) KAT-TUN

- 01 T: Kazuya. who is he.  
 02 S: he is member of KAT-TUN.  
 03 T: **okay, I know KAT-TUN.**  
 04 S: **o:h.=**  
 05 T: **=\$o:h\$ hhh[h**  
 06 Ss: **[hhhh**  
 07 T: oh:, a:nd, he’s going to London,  
 08 S: a:h no. he (.) wants to visit London.  
 09 T: ah↑ that’s why you want (s) to visit too.  
 10 S: yes.

11 T: thank you. good, good. excellent.

After the teacher demonstrates her reception of the name the student has produced as a person reference in her talk, she asks who the person is in line 1. Then, the student responds with “he is member of KAT-TUN” to let the teacher know the person the student was referring to is a member of a musical group called KAT-TUN. Upon hearing the name of the group, the teacher demonstrates her familiarity with the group and says “okay, I know KAT-TUN.” On the other hand, the student takes this information as surprising as suggested by her utterance “o:h.=” in line 4. The student’s production of a token of surprise works as feedback to the teacher’s utterance. At this moment, the mechanism of turn-taking in classroom interaction takes a different form from what usually appears in the classroom. In classroom talk, the general practice in interaction takes the form of a teacher initiating an action (I), followed by student response (R), and concluded with a teacher evaluation (E) which is commonly referred to as Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) (Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975). The teacher finds the student’s utterance challenging for her epistemic status, as it is produced in the evaluative turn of IRE sequence. As a result, she repeats the student turn with an embedded smile followed by laughter and attempts to gain control over the turn-taking. This exhibits that the teacher finds herself in an awkward situation as she was supposed to be in higher knowledge level in classroom talk. Despite the asymmetrical level of knowledge in classroom, because of her unfamiliarity with the topic of the talk, her epistemic status is challenged. As a result, she produces her turns in faint smiles and with laughter so that she could soften the student-initiated challenge (Jacknick, 2013) and settle the awkward situation.

After she resolves the awkward situation, the teacher makes an assertion with “oh; and, he’s going to London.” and connects that why the student’s friend wants to go to London. However, S1 explicitly negates the teacher’s assumption and makes a correction with “ah no. he (.) wants to visit London.” After receiving the information, the teacher now demonstrates her understanding with a change of state token “ah ↑ ” and her final understanding of what the student is reporting “that’s why you want (s) to visit too.” As the student responds with a positive note, the teacher acknowledges the response with explicit positive feedback “thank you. good, good. excellent.” The whole interaction shows how the teacher’s status of knowledge changes from a not knowing to a knowing participant. During the interaction, the student’s higher level of knowledge appears to be challenging to the teacher and she finds herself in an awkward situation. She interactionally manages to resolve that situation with the production of smiles and laughter before she reaches the status of having knowledge.

Extract 7 also exhibits how a teacher uses laughter to come out of an awkward situation. This interaction comes from an English lesson at a Japanese high school and the teacher is asking students to report what they see in a photograph displayed on the screen. The photograph represents a glass tunnel of an aquarium and is related to a reading assignment

the students have completed.

(7) Honorific

01 T: what can the visitors see in the tunnel.

02 S? ( )

03 T: what can (.) they see in the tunnel.

04 Shun chan please (1.0)

05 .hhh.hh \$Shun chan tte ichyatta\$ (.) Shun please.

I said Shun-chan.

06 (0.6)

07 S1: we can s- we can see: (.) the penguins moving around

08 in all directions.

After showing a picture and connecting that with the reading assignment the students have previously completed, the teacher starts comprehension check activities. Upon hearing the question, many students produce inaudible responses in overlaps. Then, the teacher redoes the question, replacing “visitors” with the pronoun “they” this time, and selects a student as the next speaker. In selecting the next speaker, she uses the student’s name “Shun” and an honorific term in Japanese “chan”. While the selected student is preparing to provide a response during the one-second silence, the teacher notices her use of the Japanese honorific term “chan” and produces laughter. After the laughter, she says “\$Shun chan tte ichyatta\$” in Japanese and exhibits that she unknowingly used a Japanese honorific instead of an English version of such one. In doing so, she finds herself in an awkward situation as she was meaning to use the English honorific instead of Japanese. As she interprets her code-switching into Japanese to produce the honorific as an inappropriate action and makes a correction saying, she resolves the awkwardness by laughing, smiling, and redoing the speaker selection with a new version of the address term “Shun please.”

## Concluding Discussion

The extracts presented in the analysis section above represented the features of laughter that appeared in classroom interaction and the participants’ interpretation of the laughter in their sequential context. Among them, extracts 1, 2, 3, and 4 documented how participants produce laughter in response to non-serious talk. In addition, by producing laughter, they orient to the fact that the previous turn is laughter-provoking. For example, extract 1 demonstrated how a teacher’s correction of a student utterance was treated as non-serious talk. The participants took the talk as non-serious as they did not have a practice of calling their colleagues’ names with honorific address terms. Furthermore, extracts 2, 3, and 4 showcased how the teacher’s turn is treated by students as humorous and responded

with laughter. In addition to treating the previous action as non-serious or playful language, laughter occurred as a method to resolve interactional trouble. For example, extracts 5, 6, and 7 documented how participants manage to handle awkward situations through laughter. In extracts 5 and 6, the teacher finds herself in a challenging situation because of the lack of epistemic primacy about the topic students have initiated. As a result, she produces laughter and smiles in different contexts before reaching the same knowledge level as the students. In addition, the teacher finds the situation awkward because of the nature of classroom interaction. As with other varieties of institutional talk, the participation framework and epistemic status in classroom interaction are highly constrained. Despite the constraints in turn-taking and knowledge level, the talk demonstrated that the topic students initiated positioned the teacher in awkward situations. As the extracts exhibited, the teacher uses laughter to resolve such awkwardness. Furthermore, extract 7 exhibited how the teacher treated her own utterance produced in a different language than the target language, English in this case, developed awkwardness in the interaction. As a result, she repaired her utterance and resolved the situation with laughter before continuing with the course of teaching.

Adopting the conversation analytical approach, this paper, with various examples of laughter, focused on two main aspects of laughter in classroom interaction and the participants' use of laughter in managing the interactional cohesion of the conversation. First, it demonstrated the occurrence of non-serious talk in classroom interaction and the participants' response to it. The analysis revealed that when non-serious talk occurs, the participants do not merely orient to the goal of the interactional context. In other words, the teachers do not orient to 'being a teacher' and the students do not orient to 'being a student'. Rather, both parties collaboratively manage to demonstrate their understanding of the non-serious talk. Furthermore, the analysis unveiled how the participants relaxed the situation when there is an awkward movement in the interaction. When either of the participants find themselves in an awkward situation, they tended to produce smiles and laughter. Once a smile or laughter is produced, the other participants also demonstrated their alignment with the initiated action and collaborate to resolve the awkward situation. To do so, the other participants also accompany the production of laughter so that the situation can be eased.

Though this paper revealed two phenomena of laughter observed in the language classrooms and how they helped in managing the interaction, the relation of laughter to pedagogical goals needs further examination. Future research could focus on how laughter contributes to learning and how they are related to the institutional goal of classroom interaction.

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## Appendix: Transcription Conventions

Convention	Explanation	Indication
[text]	square brackets	start and end of overlap
=	equal sign	latched utterances
(0.5)	timed pause	indicates pause in tenths of a second
(.)	period in parenthesis	shows a micropause (less than 1 second)
(hh)		audible laughter within a talk
hhh		audible exhalation
.hhh		audible inhalation
okay	underline	stress or emphasized talk
okay?	question mark	rising intonation, continuing intonation
okay,	comma	low-rising intonation
okay.	period	falling intonation
OKAY	capitalized text	increased loudness
\$word\$	dollar symbols	smiley voice
*okay*	degree symbol	decreased volume
>okay<	greater than symbols	faster than the surrounding speech
<okay>	less than symbols	slower than the surrounding speech
oka::y	colon (s)	prolongation of sound or syllable (more colons indicate more prolongation)
oka-	hyphen	cut-off of the ongoing talk
((text))	text in double parentheses	non-verbal behavior / transcriber's comment
( )	blank parentheses	inaudible talk
(text)	text in parentheses	uncertain transcription
[		indicates beginning of overlapping talk
]		indicates ending of overlapping talk
↑		talk higher in pitch
↓		talk lower in pitch
<b>bold</b>	text in bold	indicates the target utterances in the transcript