

UDC 159.923:316.613.4

PSYCHOLOGICAL PECULIARITIES OF USING HUMOUR BY TEACHERS

Maryna KLIMANS'KA

*Ivan Franko National University of Lviv,
Universytets'ka Str. 1, Lviv,
e-mail: marina.klimanska@gmail.com*

The article presents the results of empiric research of peculiarities of using humour by teachers. It is revealed that coping humour is little used by teachers, however, among humour styles its constructive forms prevail: affiliative and self-enhancing ones. It means that humour is used as a means to build relationship with others and as a personal resource to cope with stress. It is empirically proved that there are reciprocal relations between humour styles and general social and psychological characteristics of teacher's personality: peculiarities of coping strategies and emotional burnout characteristics. There were practically no relations identified between peculiarities of using humour and pedagogical style. Empirical explanation is provided to the classification of respondents depending on the peculiarities of using different styles of humour and characterized psychological peculiarities of each type.

Key words: sense of humour, affiliative humour, aggressive humour, self-enhancing humour, self-defeating humour.

Problem statement. Talking about our own school experience everyone will have some favourite teachers and teachers s/he was afraid of or was trying to avoid. With the majority of schoolchildren the attitude to teachers was extrapolated onto the attitude to the subjects they taught which reminds the quotation by Socrates: "Nobody can learn anything from a person he/she does not like". Traditional explanation from the viewpoint of psychology is emotional burnout caused by peculiarities of professional pedagogical activity of a teacher and unfavourable social circumstances in modern Ukrainian society that led to unattractive social status of a teacher. Whatever the reasons are in each specific case, scientifically topical are the researches that, on the one hand, focus on actualization of internal resources of a personality, and on the other hand, search for the ways of improving interrelationship between teachers and pupils. Traditionally one of such resources is a sense of humour that helps distance from the problem, makes it easier to perceive certain life circumstances and get support from other people.

Description of the latest researches and publications. Humour-related studies are an object of many classical and modern psychological researches. Humor as an object of research is present in the works by S. Freud [11], O. Luca [6], A. Bergson [2]. Among modern works of particular attention is the work "Psychology of Humour" [7] by the Canadian psychologist R. Martin where he summed up the majority of scientific researches of humour and substantiated his own concept of humour as stress coping resource, elaborated some

tools to identify peculiarities of the usage of humour: “The Coping Humor Scale” (CHS) and Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) which is a methodology that allows us to differentiate between potentially useful (affiliative and self-supportive) and harmful (aggressive and self-defeating) humour styles. Ukrainian psychologists S.Skvortsov and O.Zaiva adapted these methodologies in Ukraine [5; 10].

Peculiarities of using humour in pedagogical activity are of interest for both teachers and psychologists. In their works they stress positive influence of humour at all the levels of school learning starting from primary school and up to high school [1; 4; 9; 12]. The importance of humour is emphasized not only by the experts, but also by the pupils. For examples, the findings of the research of the Russian psychologist O.Riabov, where the participants were the pupils of 3-11 grades, once again confirmed that the basis for building relationship between pupils and teachers is an emotional aspect of interaction and only later evaluation of a teacher as an expert in his/her field. Among the qualities mentioned by the pupils as important were fairness, sense of humour, ability to understand another person, love to one's subject, etc. [8]. At the same time, according to some psychological researches, peculiarities of the teaching profession in combination with excessive didacticism contribute to suppression of the sense of humour [3].

Analysis of the role of humour in pedagogical activity shows that its importance is mainly stressed in two fields: to improve interpersonal interaction between a teacher and a pupil or between a teacher and a class (a group of pupils) and as pedagogical means. American researchers J.Powell and L.Andersen stress the point that humour can be used in pedagogical activity to better understand the material and maintain the necessary level of attention, creation of positive atmosphere among pupils, improving the level of engagement of pupils into academic process, as an additional means of control over undesirable behavior, etc. At the same time they also stress the significant negative potential present in humour. Due to the difference in status and considerable level of stress teachers tend to choose the negative, aggressive forms of humor that contributes to their distancing from pupils or students [13]. Consequently, correlation of different forms of humour in the activity of modern Ukrainian teacher poses scientific interest. Thus, **the aim** of this research is to identify style peculiarities of humour used by teachers.

The material of the research. The participants of the research were 53 teachers (43 females and 10 males aged 31-60 years old). The student of the Department of Psychology of the Ivan Franko National University in Lviv Liubov Diakiv participated in data collection and primary processing of the results. The research was conducted by means of questionnaire survey with the help of “Humour Styles Questionnaire” (R.Martin, adapted by S.Skvortsov, O.Zaiva), “The Coping Humor Scale” (R.Martin, adapted by S.Skvortsov, O.Zaiva) (hereinafter CHS), methodology “Strategic Approach to Coping Scale (SACS)” (adapted by N.Vodopianova, E.Starchenkova), methodology “Individual Style of Pedagogical Activity” (by A.Markova, A.Nikonova), methodology of emotional burnout level diagnostics by V.Boyko, Cattell's 16 Personality Factors Test.

The results of the conducted research have shown that teachers tend to have low level of understanding the role of humour as coping resource ($M=17,5$ from total 28, which according

to some other researches [5] means a low level of understanding the role of humour in stress situations). Analysis of humour styles hierarchy preferred by teachers has revealed prevalence of constructive forms of humour. Thus, most common in pedagogical activity of teachers is affiliative style of humour ($M=32,2$), which is mainly used to establish relationships and reducing tension in interpersonal communication. The second place in terms of usage is occupied by self-enhancing humour ($M=29,3$) which helps maintain optimistic view of life and reduce tension in stressful situations. Using aggressive humour, i.e. tendency to use humour to criticise others or to manipulate people is at the third place ($M=26,0$). The teachers are least inclined to use self-defeating humour ($M=20,8$) which is mainly aimed at entertaining others at the expense of one's reputation which is absolutely logical taking into account peculiarities of the job of a teacher. There were no statistically reliable differences in the level of using humor as a mean of coping with stress or humour styles depending on the gender of the respondent or professional experience.

Correlational analysis of data (Person correlation coefficient) made it possible to identify important relations between peculiarities of using humour and other indicators. Thus, the relation was found between the level of using humour as a coping resource and indicators of emotional burnout (the level of emotional detachment ($r=0,29$, $p<0,05$), level of anxiety and depression ($r=-0,31$, $p<0,05$) that supports the function of humour as a means of distancing from the problem and its role in enhancing general emotional tone. The relation was also found between CHS and avoidance of aggressive actions ($r=-0,30$, при $p<0,05$) under stress shows that humour can be used as an alternative way to settle a conflict.

Affiliative humour is related to avoidance of thinking-related and improvising style of pedagogical activity ($r=-0,31$, $p<0,05$). As there were no other relations identified between peculiarities of using humour and style of professional activity, it is necessary to focus on this aspect in details. Thinking-related and improvising style suggests slow activities at the lesson, routine teaching methods and few group discussions. Correspondingly, the relations obtained indirectly shows avoidance of this style and better psychological atmosphere in the class under conditions of using affiliative humour.

Apart from the fact that the level of self-enhancing humour usage is evidently related to the Coping Humour Scale ($r=0,31$, $p<0,05$), it is also related to the level of emotional detachment ($r=0,33$, $p<0,05$) and preference of resorting to assertive actions ($r=0,29$, $p<0,05$) in stressful situations.

The level of aggressive humor usage is related to prevalence of asocial coping which means growth of tendency to asocial actions ($r=0,46$, $p<0,05$) and avoidance of social contacts ($r=-0,32$, $p<0,05$). Of interest is the identified interrelation between the tendency of aggressive humour usage and M Factor "Practicality-Abstractedness" of Cattell's questionnaire ($r=-0,32$, $p<0,05$) that demonstrates interdependence between practicality, excessive reality and aggression level.

Usage of non-constructive self-defeating humour is related to the usage of non-constructive coping strategies: with aggressive actions ($r=0,33$, $p<0,05$) and avoidance ($r=0,32$, $p<0,05$). It is also identified that giving preference to this style of humour shows tendency to subordination (E factor of Cattell's questionnaire "Subordination-Dominance", $r=-0,36$,

$p < 0,05$) and emotional insensitivity (Factor I “Roughness-Sensitivity” ($r = -0,34$, $p < 0,05$)). It is interesting that according to R.Martin’s data this type of humour is significantly negatively related to the indicators of psychic health [7, c.321]. At the same time this relationship can be neutral, for instance, in case of low vulnerability level.

So, analysis of the results has shown relationship between humour styles and general social and psychological characteristics of the personality of a teacher: peculiarities of coping strategies and characteristics of emotional burnout. Practically there was no relationship found between peculiarities of humour usage and the style of pedagogical activity.

To reveal peculiarities of teachers with different levels of using humour as coping strategy within the group of respondents were singled out subgroups with low and high level of humour usage (on the basis of identification of the boundary between the high and low quartiles). Consequently, individuals with the score 21 and higher were considered as individuals with high level of using humour as a coping strategy, while those with the score 13 and less were considered as those with low level of using humour to cope with stress. Average values of these subgroups according to the Humour Style Questionnaire by R. Martin are shown in Figure 1.

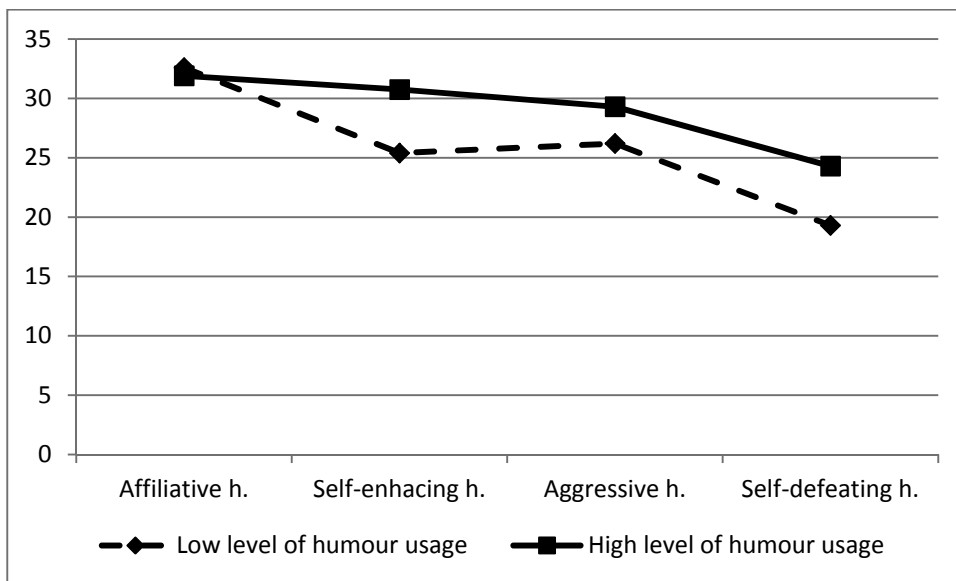


Fig. 1. Graphs of average values of humour styles in subgroups with different level of using humour as a resource to cope with stress

Thus, teachers with relatively high level of using humour as a coping strategy can be characterized with higher indicators regarding all the humour styles (self-enhancing ($M_B = 30,75$, $M_H = 25,4$), aggressive ($M_B = 29,3$, $M_H = 26,2$) and self-defeating ($M_B = 24,3$, $M_H = 19,3$), except for affiliative ($M_B = 31,9$, $M_H = 32,6$). Comparative analysis of the results with the help of Mann-Whitney criterion has revealed statistically reliable differences between the subgroups

with regard to the level of usage of self-defeating humour ($p < 0,05$). There were no statistically reliable differences for other scales between individuals with low and high level of using humour as a coping strategy.

Considering the results obtained it seemed reasonable to divide the respondents into the subgroups depending on their preference of certain humour styles. Division was done with the help of cluster analysis of data with application of clusterization tree and method of k-mean. According to the analysis results, there were three groups of teachers that prefer different combinations of humour styles (Fig. 2). According to the data of variance analysis clusters show statistically significant difference from each other, which means that values of test scales are classification criteria.

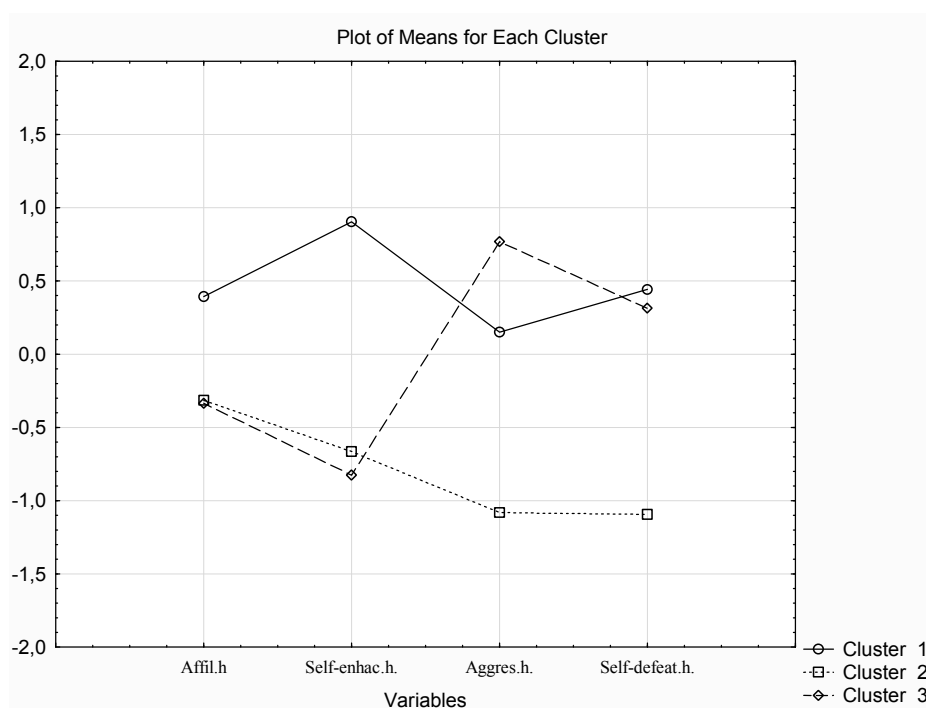


Fig. 2. Group of respondents with different style peculiarities of using humour

The first cluster included 24 teachers (44%) who can be characterized by flexibility in using all types of humour. The indicator of using humour as a coping strategy in this cluster is also the highest ($M=18,4$). Conditionally this cluster can be called “teachers who tend to use humour as a resource to cope with stress”.

The second cluster has 14 teachers (26%) that have low indicators in all the scales of the questionnaire. In this cluster the indicator of humour usage is lower ($M=16,85$), that means these are “teachers who generally do not tend to use humour”.

The third cluster is represented by 15 teachers (30%) who prefer, according to R. Martin’s

terminology, unhealthy and potentially harmful styles of humour (“teachers who tend to use non-constructive forms of humour”): to a greater extent they use aggressive humour, and to a lesser extent – self-defeating humour. The indicator for coping humour in this subgroup is the lowest ($M=16,6$) that is logical as in this case humour is the means for attacking either surrounding people or oneself.

Comparison of clusters for other indicators (one-factor dispersion analysis, Scheffe’s test) has not revealed any discrepancies between the subgroups as to the style of pedagogical activity. The differences revealed were related to certain symptoms of emotional burnout (discrepancies between the first and the third cluster with regards to the level of emotional detachment ($p=0,03$) and peculiarities of coping-strategies (discrepancies between the first and the third cluster with regards to the level of inclination to the use of assertive ($p=0,03$) and asocial actions ($p=0,006$), between the second and the third cluster with regards to the level of inclination to asocial action ($p=0,003$) (Fig. 3).

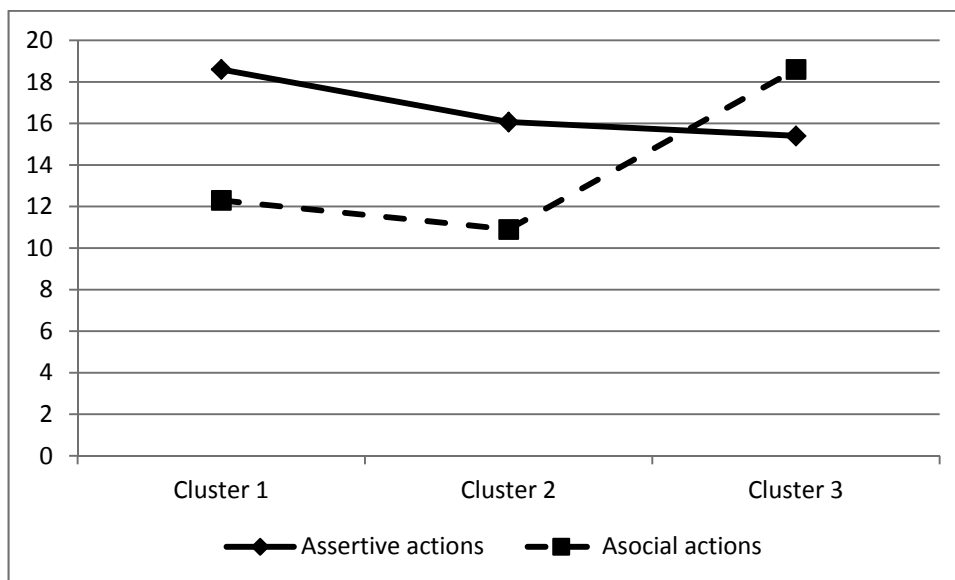


Fig. 3. Differences between clusters as to the peculiarities of using coping-strategy

Teachers who tend to use humour are more emotionally detached ($M=4,79$) in comparison with teachers who do not tend to use humour in stressful situations and with teachers who use unconstructive humour styles. It is also accompanied by high level of assertion ($M=18,6$) as manifestation of active coping-strategy and low level of aggression ($M=12,3$). Teachers who tend to use non-constructive forms of humour (aggressive and self-defeating) are characterized by lower level of emotional detachment in professional activity ($M=2,73$). In its turn it is accompanied by higher tendency, in comparison with two other clusters, to resort to asocial actions in stressful situations ($M=18,6$) and lower level of assertion ($M=15,4$). The assumption has been made that giving preference to asocial actions is a reaction of the

still unformed system of emotional protection in professional activity and can depend on professional experience. However, the hypothesis about interdependency of these values has not been substantiated (the average employment term of different clusters representatives is 22, 20 and 23 years respectively and these differences do not have statistical significance).

Conclusions. The results of empiric research have shown that humour as a resource to cope with stress is seldom used by teachers. There is almost no interrelationships between the style of pedagogical activity and styles of humour, however, it was confirmed that using humour is a resource to maintain psychic health, prevent emotional burnout of teachers and a way to use more active and constructive types of coping strategy. Logically, an interesting direction of applied research can be inclusion of a humour-related ingredient into the system of traditional emotional burnout prevention mechanisms. The toolbox of this research was not aimed at identification of the influence of humour on the academic process efficiency which may also become a prospective research.

REFERENCES

1. *Амонашвили Ш.* Здравствуйте, дети! / Ш. Амонашвили. – Москва : Просвещение, 1983. – 207 с.
2. *Бергсон А.* Смех / А. Бергсон // Психология эмоций. Тексты / под ред. В. Вилюнаса, Ю. Гиппенрейтер. – Москва : Изд-во Моск. ун-та, 1989. – С. 186–191.
3. *Виноградова Г.* О деформации личности педагога профессией / Г. Виноградова // Ананьевские чтения – 2001: Тезисы научно-практической конференции. – Санкт-Петербург, 2001. – С. 248–249.
4. *Дудник Н.* Гумор як педагогічна проблема / Н. Дудник // Психолого-педагогічні проблеми сільської школи. – 2008. – Вип. 24. – С. 95–100.
5. *Зайва О.* Особливості використання почуття гумору як ресурсу психологічного подолання : автореф. дис. на здобуття наукового ступеня канд. психол. наук / О. Зайва. – Харків, 2006. – 20 с.
6. *Лук А.* О чувстве юмора и остроумии / А. Лук. – Москва : Искусство, 1968. – 191 с.
7. *Мартин Р.* Психология юмора / Р. Мартин ; пер. с англ. / под. ред. Л. В. Куликова. – Санкт-Петербург : Питер, 2009. – 480 с.
8. *Рябов А.* Учитель – глазами учеников, и ученик – глазами учителя [Электронный ресурс] / А.Рябов // Директор школы. – 2002. – № 1. – С. 50–62. – Режим доступа : <http://ecsosman.hse.ru/text/16634861/> (дата обращения 29.03.2018).
9. *Сергеева О.* Функции юмора в педагогической деятельности [Электронный ресурс] // Ярославский педагогический вестник. – 2006. – № 2. – Режим доступа : http://vestnik.usru.org/releases/pedagoka_i_psichologiy/31_4/ (дата обращения 29.03.2018).
10. *Скворцов С.* Методика дослідження стилів гумору (HSQ) та Шкала використання гумору як ресурсу стресоподолання (CHS): опис, адаптація, застосування / С. Скворцов, О. Зайва // Вісник Дніпропетровського університету. Педагогіка та психологія. – 2005. – №11. – С. 91–95.
11. *Фрейд З.* Остроумие и его отношение к бессознательному / З. Фрейд. – Санкт-Петербург : Азбука-классика, 2006. – 288 с.
12. *Харченко І. А.* Сила педагогічного гумору / І. А. Харченко // Рідна школа. – 1992. – № 2. – С. 41–45.
13. *Powell J.* (1985) Humour and teaching in higher education / J. Powell, L. Andresen // *Studies in Higher Education*. – 1985. – Vol. 10. – № 1. – P. 79–90.

Стаття надійшла до редколегії 15.04.2018
Прийнята до друку 06.05.2018

ПСИХОЛОГІЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ВИКОРИСТАННЯ ГУМОРУ ВЧИТЕЛЯМИ

Марина КЛІМАНСЬКА

*Львівський національний університет імені Івана Франка,
вул. Університетська, 1, м. Львів, Україна, 79000,
e-mail: marina.klimanska@gmail.com*

Подано результати емпіричного дослідження особливостей використання гумору вчителями. Виявлено, що гумор як ресурс подолання стресу мало використовують педагоги, проте серед стилів гумору загалом переважають його конструктивні форми: афіліативний і самопідтримувальний, тобто гумор використовують як засіб налагодження стосунків з іншими та як особистий ресурс в ситуації стресу. Емпірично доведено наявність взаємозв'язку між стилями гумору та загальними соціально-психологічними характеристиками особистості вчителя: особливостями копінг-стратегій та характеристиками емоційного вигорання. Практично не виявлено зв'язку між особливостями використання гумору та стилем педагогічної діяльності.

За допомогою кластерного аналізу емпірично виявлено три групи педагогів, які відрізняються за характером використання різних стилів гумору. До першого кластера увійшли педагоги, для яких характерне гнучке використання всіх видів гумору і вони схильні використовувати гумор, як ресурс подолання стресу. До другого кластера увійшли вчителі, які взагалі не схильні до використання гумору. Представниками третього кластера були вчителі, які схильні надавати перевагу нездоровим і потенційно шкідливим стилям гумору: в більшій мірі агресивному, в меншій – самопринизливому. Показник використання гумору як ресурсу подолання стресу в цій підгрупі був найнижчим, тобто гумор був засобом нападу або на навколишніх, або на себе.

Порівняння кластерів за іншими показниками допомогло виявити відмінності в рівні емоційної відстороненості й особливостей використання копінг-стратегій. Вчителі, які схильні до використання гумору, більш емоційно відсторонені, порівняно з вчителями, які не схильні до використання гумору в стресових ситуаціях та з вчителями, які використовують неконструктивні стилі гумору. Це супроводжується також високим рівнем асертивності як виявлення активної копінг-стратегії та низьким рівнем агресивності. Для вчителів, які схильні до використання неконструктивних форм гумору (агресивного та самопринизливого), характерний нижчий рівень емоційної відстороненості в професійній діяльності. Це супроводжується вищим, порівняно з двома іншими кластерами, рівнем схильності до здійснення асоціальних дій у стресовій ситуації та нижчим рівнем асертивності.

Враховуючи низький рівень використання гумору як ресурсу подолання стресу серед педагогів та водночас позитивний вплив конструктивних форм гумору на збереження психічного здоров'я, запобігання розвитку емоційного вигорання, важливим напрямом прикладних майбутніх досліджень могло б бути включення до системи традиційних профілактичних заходів щодо емоційного вигорання складової, яка пов'язана з використанням гумору. Інструментарій запропонованого дослідження не передбачав визначення впливу гумору на ефективність навчального процесу, що також вбачається перспективним напрямом наукових пошуків.

Ключові слова: почуття гумору, афіліативний гумор, агресивний гумор, самопідтримувальний гумор, самопринизливий гумор.