

CHAPTER II

THEORITICAL REVIEW

A. Humour

1. The Definition of Humour

Many theories of humour are being explained by experts, but none of them describe exactly the same as the others, moreover the definition of humour as a whole. However, the most common sense of humour is something funny. The word humour often refers to anything that people say or do is perceived as funny and tends to make others laugh. It also has a high influential as a way of establishing friendships.¹ One of the most well-known theories comes from Victor Raskin as he states that humour is a form to communicate.² This mean, humour as a human social communication acts which being proved widely and intuitively grasped. This also may well have intrinsic worth as a subject of academic study.

Moreover, Louise Mullany defined humour as instances where participant(s) signal amusement to one another. These samples can be classified as either successful or unsuccessful depending to addressees' reactions. Humour can be a result of either intentional or unintentional humorous behaviour from

¹ Rufaidah Kamal Abdulmajeed and Sarab Khalil Hameed, "Using a Linguistic Theory of Humour in Teaching English Grammar", *English Language Teaching*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (January 2017), p. 42. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n2p40>.

² Victor Raskin, *SEMANTIC MECHANISMS OF HUMOR*, 1st Ed (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1985), p. 58. file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/victor raskin book full text.pdf.

participants.³ Based on this definition, it can be clearly seen that humour is subjective and according to the interlocutor's understanding to receive the reactions.

Another theory by Mabel Victoria states the term "verbalizations that elicit or are meant to elicit laughter" is sometimes been conceptualized to describe humour.⁴ The verbal situation usually happened when people are gathering, whether in the crowded places or formal places, including classroom. Bilokcuoglu and Debreli define humour as an undeniable aspect of the classroom; it is a necessary personal and interpersonal interaction that can influence the process of learning a language.⁵

As many experts put a huge concern to humour, more and more writers are emphasizing the importance of humour in daily life, believing that it is a powerful tool for forming social bonds. John Morreall says that people feel more comfortable with the ideas of others when these are presented with humour.⁶ The pleasant will come naturally when people able to minimize the pressure in social life communications.

Generally, the acknowledged classification of humour is comprised by three major theories:

³ Louise Mullany, "Gender, Politeness and Institutional Power Roles: Humour as a Tactic to Gain Compliance in Workplace Business Meetings", *Multilingua*, Vol. 23, (January 2004), p. 21. <https://doi.org/10.1515/mult.2004.002>.

⁴ Mabel Victoria, "The Use of Humour in the Off-Task Spaces of the Language Classroom", *ELT Journal*, Vol. 73, (February 2019), p. 2. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccy054>.

⁵ Hasan Bilokcuoglu and Emre Debreli, "Use of Humour in Language Classes: An Effective 'Filter' or Affective Filter?", *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, Vol. 14, (August 2018), p. 347. <http://www.jlls.org/index.php/jlls/article/view/4/5>.

⁶ John Morreall, "Humor and Work", *Humor*, Vol. 4, (1991), p. 359. <https://doi.org/10.1515/humr.1991.4.3-4.359>.

1) Superiority Theory

Superiority theory, which dates back to Plato and Aristotle's writings, proposes that laughter comes from a sense of superiority gained from belittling others. The instance is to tease, laugh at, or joke about (someone) in a mocking or unkind manner and experience laughter.⁷ This theory, also known as the disparagement/criticism/hostility theory⁸ or social-behavioural theory⁹, claims that humour, which includes laughter as a component, is fundamentally negative and aggressive, i.e., "derisive," because it is used to expose unfavourable attitudes toward the target of the humorous text. The superiority theory is built on the foundation of mockery. Ridicule, is the false and erroneous belief that one has more wisdom than others. Therefore, humour will only be successful when the ones criticised are enemies of those receiving humour, and vice versa.

2) Incongruity Theory

Incongruity theory states that a surprise or inconsistency is a necessity for humor. Conforming to this theory, people are able to understand humor because of their ability to resolve the inconsistency.¹⁰ Victor Raskin puts incongruity (or inconsistency/contradiction/bisociation) theories under the unifying name of cognitive-perceptual theory. The approach was developed in the 18th century as the response to the Superiority Theory.

⁷ Brandon M. Savage et al., "Humor, Laughter, Learning, and Health! A Brief Review", *Advances in Physiology Education*, Vol. 41, (March 2017), p. 344. <https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00030.2017>.

⁸ Arvo Krikmann, "Comtemporary Linguistic Theories of Humor", *Folklore-Electronic Journal of Folklore*, Vol. 33, (2006), p. 27. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/1875/c0451d135530f74f309b01d4d29de32d3782.pdf?_ga=2.5070131.1874205915.1615969215-948252167.1612489110.

⁹ Raskin, *SEMANTIC MECHANISMS OF HUMOR*, p. 31.

¹⁰ Savage et al., "Humor, Laughter, Learning, and Health! A Brief Review", p. 344.

The “incongruity theory” sees humor as arising out of violations of normal mental patterns, schemas, and scripts and expectations.¹¹ Incongruity is manifested through the collision of two distinct lines of thought, or planes of content (in more recent discourse referred to as frames, schemas, scripts, etc). It is where humor should initially be in line with the hearer (reader) thinking (in one scheme), then unexpectedly arrives at the second script that contradicts with their previous expectations. This is when certain cognitive processes take on their role, allowing the hearer to unravel the apparent contradiction and find a plausible hidden interpretation. The sense of surprise and satisfaction generated by the reconsideration (renewal, modification, etc.) of the initial understanding thus result in humorous effect and laughter.¹² From this elucidation, it can be concluded that incongruity theory relies on what is unexpected positioned within the boundaries of what is expected by the audience.

3) Relief Theory

This theory also referred as the release/relaxation theory.¹³

Julija Korostenskiene, who cites Sigmund Freud as the most prominent proponent of this theory, this type of theory focuses primarily on the recipient of humour, or more specifically, on the psychological effects humour generates in the recipient. Humour, according to Freud, is one of the so-called substitution mechanisms that allow one to transform one's socially tabooed aggressive impulses into appropriate and tolerable ones. Internal inhibitions are what Sigmund Freud refers to such restraints.¹⁴

¹¹ Robert V. Bullough Jr., “LIGHT AND DARK HUMOR AND THE INNER DRAMA OF TEACHING”, *Advances in Research on Teaching*, Vol. 32 (February 2019), p. 147. <https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/S1479-368720190000032014/full/html>.

¹² Krikmann, “Comtemporary Linguistic Theories of Humor”, p. 27.

¹³ *Ibid*, p. 28.

¹⁴ Korostenskiene and Lieponyte, “Funny as It May Be: Humour in the American Sitcoms *I Love Lucy* and *Modern Family*”, p. 59.

As a result, humour functions as a mechanism of substitution, allowing suppressed, and often violent, stimuli to be released and replaced with a more appropriate form of laughter.

From the three main theories, two additional theories have emerged to help explain why educational strategies that use adequate humour can encourage learning and retention, as mentioned by Savage, et.al:¹⁵

a) Incongruity-resolution Theory

The incongruity-resolution theory, derived from the incongruity theory, explains how "humorous messages are cognitively processed." For a joke to be accepted as funny, the receiver must first recognize and then precisely understand the perceived incongruity or inconsistency in the humorous message. This theory assumes that people come into social situations with a predetermined set of expectations for appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

In order for a message to be viewed as funny, the recipient must be able to recognize an incident that is out of line with his or her expectations for that particular moment. The perceived inconsistency may be regarded as amusing; however, if the inconsistency is difficult to comprehend, the humour will be misunderstood or overlooked entirely. As a result, the first step in understanding how humor is processed is to recognize or acknowledge the inconsistency of the stimulus. According to this theory, simply recognizing the amusing stimulus is insufficient: it must also be settled and comprehended. As a result, there are three possible issues when a lecturer uses humour. First of all, the students do not

¹⁵ Savage et al., "Humor, Laughter, Learning, and Health! A Brief Review", pp. 344-345.

understand the incongruity, hence they are unaware of any humor. Another possibility is that the inconsistency is acknowledged, but the student fails to decode or resolve it properly. Students are often perplexed in this situation because they know that a joke has been made but do not understand it. In the final scenario, the amusing content is resolved and makes sense to the student, and thus is deemed amusing.

b) Disposition Theory

“Affective elements of humorous messages” are addressed by the disposition theory, which is derived from superiority theory. The disposition theory explains how humorous messages can affect human being's moods, emotions, and attitudes. This theory believed that the humour's "target" is crucial. Depending on whether the targeted subject is associated with them personally or not, people will characterize the humour as appropriate and potentially funny or inappropriate.

For instance, Frymier and colleagues proposed that students distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate humour based on whether they understood the humour, whether the incongruity was accepted and resolved, and whether the "target" is someone or something they are familiar with.¹⁶ Disposition theory helps to explain why students regard attempts at humour that attack personal cluster or clans (religions, fraternities, etc.) as inappropriate, but humour that ridicules course material or the lecturer as appropriate.

¹⁶ Frymier AB, Wanzer MB, Wojtaszczyk AM, “Assessing students’ perceptions of inappropriate and appropriate teacher humor”, *Communication Education*, Vol. 57, No. 2, (April 2008), pp. 266-288., in *Ibid*, pp. 344-345.

2. Humour Categories

In social aspect, it is essential to use acceptable humour that is not derogatory to others. It is categorized into dark and light humour. According to Bullough, dark humour is prone to fixation. Dark humour, ridicule, satire (such as narrative, ceremonies, and stage performances), and irony, on the other hand, may inspire resistance, and sometimes can resisting anger.¹⁷ In Indigenous humour, teasing is a big component.¹⁸ This type of pedagogical humour treated as emergent, situational, or observational by taking advantages of the present moment to make funny of circumstances and one another.

The challenges of education provide plenty of opportunities for the play of humour, but less if the dark humour dominates. Sometimes, dark humour appears because of driven by neediness, especially by feelings of vulnerability and sometimes of superiority.¹⁹ Dark humour serves the social function of creating and maintaining within-group status as it strengthens established social boundaries, helping form and then preserve in- and out-groups, even within faculties. In dark humour, the kind of truth that dark humour speaks to must be problematized in order to identify particular points of contention and principled points of action. As a "serious play," humour can help uncover problems, but problems must then be turned into issues.

¹⁷ Jr., "LIGHT AND DARK HUMOR AND THE INNER DRAMA OF TEACHING", p. 156.

¹⁸ Shannon Leddy, "In a Good Way: Reflecting on Humour in Indigenous Education", *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies (JCACS)*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (2018), p. 16.

¹⁹ Jr., "LIGHT AND DARK HUMOR AND THE INNER DRAMA OF TEACHING", p. 150.

Inappropriate humour, or humour that was not relevant to class material, had a negative impact on student learning. In contrast, humour improved learning of the lecture material up to 6 week after the material was taught when the humour used was relevant to the lecture topic.²⁰ Bullough specified four elements as the "basic pattern" of light humour involving incongruity:²¹

- 1) A cognitive shift occurs when our perceptions or emotions change rapidly.
- 2) Situationally in a play mode, not a serious mode, and disengaged from conceptual and practical issues.
- 3) We enjoy the cognitive shift instead of reacting with shock, uncertainty, puzzlement, worry, annoyance, or other negative feelings.
- 4) Our delight at the cognitive shift manifests itself in laughter, signaling to others that they, too, can join enjoyably and play.

From the patterns above, light humour is obtained and accepted by an individual when there is no situational pressure felt by the obtainer. When the light humour accepted, it can be helpful for gaining understanding of how educational problems are, reframing, and ultimately resolving, living with, or getting over them. Also, good humour can help sustain both the cognitive and the relational conditions needed for getting outside of expected definitions and easy problem solutions as well as for locating and attacking internal and external

²⁰ Savage et al., "Humor, Laughter, Learning, and Health! A Brief Review", p. 343.

²¹ Jr., "LIGHT AND DARK HUMOR AND THE INNER DRAMA OF TEACHING". p. 147.

impediments to improvement.²² Good humour is also crucial for forming and maintaining educational allies as well as coping with unfavourable circumstances, particularly when the condition seemed impermeable to change when all one can do is wait, work, and sometimes bitterly laugh.

3. The Advantages of Humour

Experts have conducted numerous studies to determine the positive effects of humour, and the majority of them believe that the physiological benefits will assist students in learning. The following three categories of benefits are thought to be associated with laughter and/or humour:

1) Physiological Benefits Expressed and Considerable

In psychological term, Shannon Leddy states that humour can relieve tension and encourages the release of the right chemicals, endorphins and such.²³ This means humour is a calming process, by helping individual's body to decrease the blood pressure and set themselves free of negative emotions. Another positive physiological effect also mentioned by Savage et al., humour can decrease stress hormones like epinephrine and cortisol, and increase the activation of the mesolimbic dopaminergic reward system.²⁴ Therefore, humour is able to help individual cope with stress especially those who see the problems in an amusing way.

²² Jr, ... p. 156.

²³ Leddy, "In a Good Way: Reflecting on Humour in Indigenous Education", p. 17.

²⁴ Savage et al., "Humor, Laughter, Learning, and Health! A Brief Review", p. 341.

Using humour in education will make it a little healthier. Reduced anxiety and stress (prior to or during an examination), increased self-esteem, and increased student self-motivation to focus on the material are just a few of the psychological benefits.²⁵ Humour can also help to create more productive and inspiring work environment, which has a positive impact on interpersonal relationships. It has the potential to help universities reduce staff turnover and increase productivity.

2) Pedagogical Benefits

Pedagogically, Jan Legény asserted that humour can create more positive learning milieu by reducing pre-existing barriers to communication between the teacher and the students, which are also barriers to learning.²⁶ Humour can also indicate affection and acceptance.²⁷ It aids the teacher in gaining the trust of the students and improving their attitudes toward the subject and the instructor. Students will be braver and confident to ask questions and give statements, resulting in increased participation in class and increased student spontaneity. It serves as a conversation starter.

Humour helps students to remember material for longer periods of time, and the reduction of student negativism or intolerance toward potentially confrontational issues. Sheinowitz states that 2-3 humorous interludes per hour of

²⁵ Ján Legény and Robert Špaček, "Humour as a Device in Architectural Education," *Global Journal of Engineering Education*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 2019), p. 8. file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/Ján Legény2019.pdf.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

²⁷ Leddy, "In a Good Way: Reflecting on Humour in Indigenous Education", p. 15.

studies is optimum since students still need to be able to take notes.²⁸ Humour must be valid, easy, efficient, and relevant to the audience and material in order to be successful. As a result, modern pedagogy justifies edutainment as a distinct type of instruction.

3) Cognitive Benefits

This humour advantage is closely linked to the psychology of cognitive processes. A teacher who effectively prepares and uses humour within education shows to students that they can be creative, can deal with the issues in unusual ways of thinking or that a mistake is also a valid part of cognition (unplanned humour).²⁹ Humour encourages constructive debate on issues, reinforces the teacher-student bond, and expands and deepens understanding, which is one of education's primary goals.

B. English Language Teaching

1. The Definition of English Language Teaching

English is one of the languages that have been internationally influencing people in all around the world. According to Christine Kenneally in her book "The First Word", English is the single most dominant that world's

²⁸ Sheinowitz, M., Humour and Education (1996), 24 October 2018, www.mop-old.ort.org.il/ortmain/e_publish/ep9_1011.htm in Ján Legény and Robert Špaček, "Humour as a Device in Architectural Education," Global Journal of Engineering Education, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January 2019), p. 8.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 8.

population speaks from about 6,000 languages that exist.³⁰ In the term of teaching this language, it has been started since the middle age up to present day.

Teaching can be defined generally as a process of knowledge transferring from one to another. According to Johnson, Teaching is a reflection of the teacher's individual system that acts professionally, while learning is the student's reflections of their individual system that shows attitude linked to the assignment given.³¹ From this perspective, teaching and learning are two aspects that cannot be separated.

Teaching is represented as encouraging someone in learning how to do something in order that he or she can comprehend it well. In higher education, improving teaching effectiveness is a constant challenge. To handle this issue, Blum identified twelve characteristics as follows:³²

- a. Instruction is guided by a preplanned curriculum
- b. There are high expectations for student learning
- c. Students are carefully oriented to lessons
- d. Instruction is clear and focused
- e. Learning progress is monitored closely
- f. When students do not understand, they are retaught

³⁰ Kenneally, Christine. *The First Word*. Viking Penguin, 2007, New York, in Richard Nordquist, *English Language: History, Definition, and Examples*, January 2020. Accessed on March 31st 2021 from <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-the-english-language-1690652>.

³¹ Elaine B. Johnson, *Contextual Teaching and Learning* (Thousand Oaks, California: Corwin Press Inc, 2002), p. 19. [https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=2HRoigMMdqMC&oi=fnd&pg=PA9&dq=+Elaine+B.+Johnson,+Contextual+Teaching+and+Learning,++\(California:+Corwin+Press+Inc,+2002\),+p.+19&ots=sWiRXMFsPN&sig=A4JOV8u_Ck1r5N-cCm07gv3arrY&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false](https://books.google.co.id/books?hl=id&lr=&id=2HRoigMMdqMC&oi=fnd&pg=PA9&dq=+Elaine+B.+Johnson,+Contextual+Teaching+and+Learning,++(California:+Corwin+Press+Inc,+2002),+p.+19&ots=sWiRXMFsPN&sig=A4JOV8u_Ck1r5N-cCm07gv3arrY&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q&f=false).

³² Jack C. Richards and Willy A. Renandya, *METHODOLOGY IN LANGUAGE TEACHING: An Anthology of Current Practice*, (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 21.

- g. Class time is used for learning
- h. There are smooth and efficient classroom routines
- i. Instructional groups formed in the classroom fit instructional needs
- j. Standards for classroom behavior are high
- k. Personal interactions between teachers and students are positive
- l. Incentives and rewards for students are used to promote excellence.

There are various theories regarding language and language teaching. According to Richards and Rodgers, at least there are three different views of the nature of language, namely: the structural view, the functional view (or notional view) and the interactional view.³³ The structural view sees language can be thought of as a set of structurally related elements. The functional view considers language to be a means of expressing functional meaning, either grammar, topics or concepts that language learners must communicate about is needed. The third view is the interactional view, the view that language is a tool for communicating interpersonal relationships and social interactions between people. People will have different ideas of what language is as a consequence of the three different perceptions of the nature of language, which will contribute to different language teaching methods.

English is learned in Indonesia by talking about the grammatical rules of English and errors are always corrected.³⁴ Indonesia basically learn English at school and people do not use it in their daily interactions. This is why Indonesia

³³ Ag. Bambang Setiyadi, *TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE*, 2nd Ed (Yogyakarta: GRAHA ILMU, 2020), p. 7. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131726709338061>.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

more focus on the accuracy rather than in case to be spoken. Whereas language learners in Malaysia learning English more as acquisition, since English is a second language in that country.

Teaching an English Language that taught as a foreign language in Indonesia is pretty challenging, since Indonesia is a multilingual country. Yet, as same as teaching another language, teaching English also focused on the two main skills, which are receptive skill (listening and reading) and productive skill (writing and speaking). Teaching can be achieved through a syllabus that is structured from a grammatical perspective.

Language syllabus will guide language teachers to decide what to teach (selection), the order in which it is taught (gradation), how meaning or forms are conveyed (presentation), and what to be done to master a language (repetition).³⁵ It requires selection because we cannot teach all elements of language; we must pick and choose which sections to teach. It includes gradation because we can't teach anything we have chosen all at once; we have to do it one by one. It also requires presentation because we cannot teach a language without sharing it with others; we must show what we have chosen to others. Finally, repetition is necessary because we cannot expect anyone to learn a language without having them repeat the materials they are learning; we must teach language skills by practice; all skills depend on practice.

³⁵ Setiyadi, ... p. 12.

2. English Language Teaching Methods

Method is the plan of language teaching which is consistent with the theories, and techniques carry out a method.³⁶ Differences in language theories may influence the content used in the classroom, and differences in learning theories may influence the methods used in the classroom. A method based on the assumption that we learn another language in the same way that we learn our native language (L1) would be different from one based on the assumption that learning a foreign language is not the same as learning our mother tongue. The way English is taught in Indonesia can vary from how English is taught in Malaysia or how English is taught in the United States of America.

In its development, there are several language teaching methods that can be applied in the classroom:³⁷

1) Grammar Translation Method

Principally, the GTM focuses on translating grammatical forms, memorizing vocabulary, learning rules, and studying conjugations. The ability to read literature written in the target language is a main focus of GTM-based language instruction. This goal can be achieved by researching the target language's grammar rules and vocabulary. Studying a foreign language is often thought to provide students with valuable mental exercise, which assists in the growth of their minds.

³⁶ Setiyadi, ... p. 6.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 25-135.

2) Direct Method

In DM, grammar is taught by situation and through inductive process, the syllabus used is based on situations and related to everyday vocabulary and structure. As it called direct, the grammar and vocabulary is taught orally so that the concrete meanings are made clear by presenting physical objects and abstract ones through association of ideas, not through translation.

3) Audio-Lingual Method

The aims of the method include some aspects of language learning, such as; language learners are able to comprehend the foreign language when it is spoken at normal speed and concerned with ordinary matters, language learners are able to speak in acceptable pronunciation and grammatical correctness, language learners have no difficulties in comprehending printed materials, and language learners are able to write with acceptable standards of correctness on topics within their experience.

Since the primary goal is to improve communication skills, language learners and their language teachers should always use the target language. From the first day of language class, the language teacher should greet the students in the target language. Their mother tongue is only used when absolutely needed, and translation into their mother tongue is strictly forbidden.

4) Silent Way

Learning a foreign language in a silent way is considered to help language learners develop their personalities when learning the language.

Language learners are expected to be considerate of other learners and to try to learn the target language from one another in this process.

Language learners must learn the target language from both other students and their instructor, since other students' utterances will serve as templates for the target language. Learners of foreign languages are used to thought before speaking. Before they say something, they must grasp the idea of what they are going to say. "Understanding first, speaking later" is the motto in this method.

5) Community Language Learning

The aim of CLL method is to make students learn how to use the target language communicatively. In addition, students will learn through their own learning process, to take increasing responsibility for it, and to learn how to learn from one another.³⁸ Students in a beginner class typically have a dialog in their native language. The instructor guides them in expressing themselves by providing them with bits of target language translation. These sections are recorded, and when played back, they sound like a fairly fluid conversation. A transcript of the conversation is revealed later, with native language equivalents written underneath the target language terms. Students work with the transcription of the conversation as a "script." Various activities are undertaken to enable students to further explore the language they have learned (for example, examining a grammar point, working on pronunciation of a specific expression, or constructing new sentences with words from the transcript).

³⁸ Diane Larsen-Freeman and Marti Anderson, *Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching*, 3rd Ed (Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 127. file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/techniques-in-language-teaching (1).pdf.

6) Suggestopedia

The ideas illustrated in the suggestopedic lesson can be implemented in many kinds of techniques. This approach usually aims to eliminate psychological obstacles that learners carry into the classroom by establishing a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere. The students are seated in cushioned armchairs arranged in a semicircle facing the front of the room, with soft music playing in the background. On the walls are several posters, some of which contain grammatical material.

7) Total Physical Response

A principle of the method is that having fun makes language learners want to learn the foreign language. Other approaches include the principle that learning a foreign language would be more successful if it is enjoyable. The TPR varies in that it offers entertainment through physical exercises.

TPR supporters agree that before speaking, language learners should understand the target language. They can comprehend the language they are learning by watching and doing acts. Making connections between the utterances they hear and the acts they observe can help people understand the meaning of words. By performing the acts in accordance with the orders, they will internalize the meanings of words they might guess.

8) Communicative Language Teaching

The aim of CLT is not only the ability to compose correct sentences but also the ability to communicate.³⁹ The focus is to make students to be able to

³⁹ Setiyadi, *TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE*, p. 118.

communicate in the target language. Students would need to be familiar with linguistic forms, concepts, and roles in order to do so.

The most noticeable feature of CLT is that nearly all is done with a communicative purpose. Via communicative practices such as games, role-plays, and problem-solving activities, students use the language extensively. In the classroom, the teacher encourages interaction, serving as an instructor during the events, answering students' questions and keeping track of their progress.

9) Content-Based Instruction⁴⁰

The central concept of CBI is that it is not strictly a language curriculum, but rather combines language learning with the study of other subjects. It is not a new thing to incorporate lessons from other fields into language classes. For years, content related to a specific profession or academic discipline has been treated in specialized language courses. A language course for airline pilots, for example, is not the same as one for computer technicians. This is most often associated with teaching a language for a particular reason. It is often referred to as "teaching language for academic purposes" in an academic context.

Teachers in a CBI class want students to be able to master both language and content. It could be topics of general interest to students, such as latest news or interests, or it could be an academic subject that offers natural material for language study. Teachers do not want students' academic or language studies to be delayed, so they encourage the teaching way to build up both at the same time.

⁴⁰ Diane Larsen-Freeman and Marti Anderson, *Techniques & Principles in Language Teaching*, pp. 174-181.

C. Humour in Teaching and Learning

Teaching is not just about content; it is also about being a performer. The content must do more than educate; it must also entertain, because teaching is a performance art. Baughman already remarked that “one of the greatest sins in teaching is to be boring.”⁴¹ In the classroom, the teacher is expected to be able to build communication, educate students, and entertain them. In this context, numerous scientific studies conducted over the past half-century have documented that humor and laughter promote learning by reducing stress, anxiety, and tension, while increasing self-esteem, alertness, creativity, and memory.⁴²

Humour is an important component of the teaching and learning process because it enhances a comfortable environment in the classroom. Teacher’s joke was a mediating tool to emotionally and intellectually engage learners, whereas laughter was learners’ expression of how they felt about the humour (e.g., agreement and amusement).⁴³ In field, humour may not only come from the teacher, but also from the game, the students themselves, or even the interactions among them.

The use of humour has been recommended for virtually every grade level from preschool to university, and for various subjects—including language arts,

⁴¹ Baughman, M. D. (1979). ‘Teaching with humour: a performing art’. *Contemporary Education* 51, pp. 26-30 in Jannie Pretorius, Mariëtte Koen, and Robert Schall, “Using Intentional Humour in a Higher Education Classroom: Connecting with, and Building on Lovorn and Holaway (2015),” *The European Journal of Humour Research*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (July 2020), p. 148. <https://doi.org/10.7592/EJHR2020.8.2.PRETORIUS>.

⁴² Savage et al., "Humor, Laughter, Learning, and Health! A Brief Review", p. 434.

⁴³ Beaumie Kim and Wing Ho, “Emergent Social Practices of Singapore Students: The Role of Laughter and Humour in Educational Gameplay,” *International Journal of Child-Computer Interaction*, Vol. 16, (January 2018), p. 2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcci.2018.01.001>.

reading, math, statistics, science, and psychology.⁴⁴ In the classroom, where humour could be used to establish more comfortable learning climates, children are more likely to learn and retain knowledge if they are happy and feel safe rather than threatened or nervous. Funny stories, canned jokes, and teasing with accompanying laughter tend to be clustered in specific phases of the class.⁴⁵ The time could be at the beginning of a lecture, changes between tasks, and before or after rest breaks.

As stated by Savage et al., teaching is about relationships, and humour builds bonds as well as brains, by strengthening the relationship between student and teacher. This effect may increase interactions with student and teacher, as well as student and peers, and draw out more introverted students.⁴⁶ The improvement in relationship between teacher and students is needed since the moment teacher walk to the front of the room, realizing many gaps between teacher and student age, title, and educational level. This is an important consideration because educators put a lot of explicit messages about the kind of environment they want to create in the classroom. By setting out the stage for teaching and learning, through the body language and overall attitude when building connection with their students.

When the teacher tries to build the connection by using humour, the same frequent sense of humour between teacher and students is essentially needed. In English Language Teaching Journal authored by Rufaidah Kamal Abdulmajeed, it

⁴⁴ Linda L. Ivy, "Using Humor in the Classroom", *The Journal of Adventist Education*, (February/March 2013), p. 39. <http://circle.adventist.org/files/jae/en/jae201375033905.pdf>.

⁴⁵ Victoria, "The Use of Humour in the Off-Task Spaces of the Language Classroom", p. 1.

⁴⁶ Savage et al., "Humor, Laughter, Learning, and Health! A Brief Review", p. 341.

stated that instructional humour plays an important role in facilitating learning but its effectiveness depends on the students' ability to perceive and then resolve the incongruity in a humorous instruction.⁴⁷ They will not understand and respond back correctly if they do not recognize the incongruity. In this case, the humorous message would be a misunderstanding. This means when the students recognize teacher's humor, their focus and recall is improved, and learning if two essential factors are taken into account:⁴⁸

the relevance (relationship between humour and the course content which may increase the students' motivation and their ability to comprehend the contents) and the appropriateness (the appropriateness of humour influences the effective response of the students), "appropriate forms of humour create positive affect while inappropriate forms create negative affect".

Teaching and learning, of course, is filled with moments of incongruity and is embedded in deep and persistent paradox and contradiction sometimes experienced as overwhelming and threatening, other times as delightfully surprising, wonderfully expansive, very funny, and energizing.⁴⁹ Therefore, teaching process that combined with an appropriate humour can give a positive outcome such as improving motivation and experiencing joy in teaching and learning, as well as increasing retention of complex subject matter.

Based on Michael Lovorn, humour offers an opportunity to create a positive learning environment that is conducive to learning, enrich and broaden learning by establishing a predictably welcoming environment wherein students are

⁴⁷ Serkan Unsal, Reyhan Agcam, and Mikail Aydemir, "Humour-Based Learning: From the Lens of Adolescents", *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 8, No. 1, (February 2018), p. 31. <https://doi.org/10.17583/remie.2018.3169>.

⁴⁸ Abdulmajeed and Hameed, "Using a Linguistic Theory of Humour in Teaching English Grammar", p. 44.

⁴⁹ Jr., "LIGHT AND DARK HUMOR AND THE INNER DRAMA OF TEACHING", p. 152.

enabled to interact and grow socially and academically.⁵⁰ That means humour can help students feel more relaxed and engaged in the classroom, which will help them achieve academic and behavioural success. As research also indicates humour can be an effective teaching and classroom management tool, fostering engagement, academic development, and confidence-building among students of all ages.⁵¹ Hence, age-appropriate, organized humour teaching and well planned interaction techniques will encourage students to think more critically, be more creative, and have a deeper understanding of subject matter.

Basically, humour and laughter do not directly trigger learning, they do build an atmosphere that encourages it. Evidence documents that appropriate humour, and humour that relates to course material, attracts and sustains attention and produces a more relaxed and productive learning environment.⁵² When used correctly, laughter allows for a greater level of comfortability, resulting in a more accommodating yet mentally stimulating learning environment.

According to David Crystal, humour is a major psychological tool that enhances intellectual health by lessening tension and stress in the classroom.⁵³ Laughter is a stimulant, which leads to physical, psychological, social and cognitive benefits. A humorous lecture can potentially increase the release of endorphins and also reduce muscle tension and anxiety.⁵⁴ This mechanism has a

⁵⁰ Michael Lovorn and Calli Holaway, "Teachers' Perceptions of Humour as a Classroom Teaching, Interaction, and Management Tool", *European Journal of Humour Research*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (2015), p. 26. <https://doi.org/10.7592/ejhr2015.3.4.lovorn>.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

⁵² Savage et al., "Humor, Laughter, Learning, and Health! A Brief Review", p. 341.

⁵³ David Crystal, "Language", *Britannica*, 2020, p. 5. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/language>.

⁵⁴ Pretorius, Koen, and Schall, "Using Intentional Humour in a Higher Education Classroom: Connecting with, and Building on Lovorn and Holaway (2015)", p. 147.

psychological benefit in that it improves students' feelings of well-being, self-image, and self-confidence while also promoting risk-taking. Making dull subjects and challenging courses more memorable, the students' interest and motivation, improving problem solving, attracting and retaining students' attention, and developing successful retention are some of the possible cognitive benefits. Humour also seems to encourage students to explore, ask difficult questions, learn from their mistakes, and gain trust in their ability to solve problems. Humour may also serve a social function by fostering a comfortable learning environment and a supportive learning atmosphere, improving lecturer-student rapport, increasing social cohesion, and promoting trust. Students who are socially, physically, and emotionally comfortable are more motivated to learn and more receptive to the teacher, her instruction, and expectations.⁵⁵

As mentioned by Jannie Pretorius, when students are asked to describe good lecturers, humour is a quality to which they refer.⁵⁶ This mean, humour has a strong correlation with student assessments. Specifically, Bryant and colleagues found that when teachers used humour, they earned higher ratings and were viewed as having a better delivery and being more efficient from the students.⁵⁷ It is also well documented that a sense of humour is one of the most desired qualities for students from instructors. In overall view, student perceptions of the

⁵⁵ Lovorn and Holaway, "Teachers' Perceptions of Humour as a Classroom Teaching, Interaction, and Management Tool", p. 26.

⁵⁶ Pretorius, Koen, and Schall, "Using Intentional Humour in a Higher Education Classroom: Connecting with, and Building on Lovorn and Holaway (2015)", p. 147.

⁵⁷ Jennings Bryant, Paul Comisky, and Dolf Zillmann, "Teachers' Humor in the College Classroom", *Communication Education*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (1979), p. 118. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03634527909378339>.

course and the instructor indicate that humour is a powerful tool for enhancing student-teacher relationships and improving the overall classroom atmosphere.

However, using a competent humour in the classroom is a complex thing to do. Not all teachers are able to give a relevance and appropriate humour that easily being understood by the students. It is a skill that must be acquired by an expert and a professional teacher. Teachers with long teaching experience tend to be more humorous than those who have less experience because they know how to use and relate humour to the course significantly and effectively.⁵⁸

Many factors made the complexity in humour, such as the cultural background. Teslow states the fact that “styles of humour are culture-dependent”.⁵⁹ As different cultures have different sources of humour, humour can be understood differently in each insight. This entirely means what is humorous in one place can not be humorous in another. In other words, this aspect must be considered in order to ensure that humour is effective in the classroom.

1. The Example of Humour in the Classroom

According to Abu Bakar Farhana's thesis, teacher usually used humour to connect lecture content to students' lives, illustrate lecture content, or provide an example of lecture content. So that, teachers' perceptions toward humor are divided into two categories; a relevant humour with the material will associate the

⁵⁸ Abdulmajeed and Hameed, “Using a Linguistic Theory of Humour in Teaching English Grammar”, p. 44.

⁵⁹ James L. Teslow,(1995). “Humor me: A call for research”, Educational Technology Research and Development, Vol. 43, No. 3, (1995), p. 8. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02300453> in Abdulmajeed and Hameed.

learning process easily, besides, humour that was unrelated to the lecture material, was linked to keep students' attentions in the classroom. Thus, the functions of humour can be categorised into two broad functions; to facilitate student learning and to engage students' attention in the classroom. The table below illustrates these functions:⁶⁰

Table 2.1 Functions of Humour

Functions of Humour	
To facilitate student learning	To engage students' attention
1) to relate the lecture content to students' lives, explain lecture content or give an example of the lecture content 2) to reinforce key ideas of the lecture content 3) to provide additional information	1) to capture students' attention 2) to refocus students' attention 3) to make students feel comfortable or at ease 4) to elicit laughter

Some of the humorous example that being used by the teachers to facilitate students learning are:

- 1) Using humour to relate the lecture content to students' lives, to explain lecture content or to give an example of the lecture content

⁶⁰ Bakar, "The Use of Humour in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education", pp. 92-100.

One of the teachers said:

Philip: ... and lastly, down the bottom, there is *Tribolium Castaneum*. Does anyone know *Tribolium Castaneum*? Anyone? That is odd because you probably ate it for breakfast this morning. *Tribolium Castaneum* is the red flour beetle. The pests that stored flour and most base of flour contains no less than point zero than about point zero zero one percent (0.001%) insect parts which are *tribolium castaneum*. Those of you that are vegetarians have a problem.

Students: [Laughing]

Philip was describing the definition of *Tribolium Castaneum* and where it came from, in the example above. He then applied it to the students, explicitly vegetarians, and the students burst out laughing. Philip was attempting to create a connection between the lecture material and a real-life example in this excerpt, and he intended to make the situation funny.

2) Using humour to reinforce key ideas of the lecture content

Teachers have used humor to emphasize key points in the lecture material or to repeat and reinforce facts to the students. For instance:

Alejandro: Do you still have your legislation up with you? You do not know that you have to bring it with you? But do you have it anyway? It is a great idea to keep this on hand at any time. It is great for cocktail parties, on the bus just reading the legislation supplement, basically the accessories of all time. I

love carrying my legislation supplement around, who would not? I said no one would not want it.

Students: [Giggle]

Alejandro explained that his intention of using humor was to emphasize the importance of students taking their legislation paper to class. Instead of expressing his displeasure with the students, Alejandro used a lighthearted approach to remind them of the importance of getting prepared for class.

3) Using humour to provide additional information

Liam conducted experiment on an M&M chocolate where he burnt the chocolate with a Bunsen burner and subsequently created a cloud of smoke:

Liam: You saw how much energy there was in that one M&M. Now, oh yeah sorry about that smoke. Those of you from Auckland, you are quite familiar with the smoke from those big diesel four-wheel drives...

Students: [Laughing]

Liam: ... they are all spilling out that particular carbon so you will feel quite at home.

Students: [Laughing]

Liam used ad-lib comedy to deliver details about the lecture material in a humorous way. After seeing a cloud of smoke arising from the experiment he did in university, Liam's use of humour was spontaneous. He said, "This is just a bit of chemistry information. A particular carbon in the atmosphere, dangerous

and it comes from vehicles... I am just trying to explain why I ended up with a cloud of smoke". Liam used humour to provide general knowledge about Chemistry, despite the fact that it was not part of the formal lecture material. He made the knowledge more appealing to students by doing it in a humorous manner.

Furthermore, some of the humorous example that being used by the teachers to engage students' attention are:

1) Using humour to capture students' attention

One of the teacher named Alejandro from Farhana Abu Bakar's thesis mentioned that he played a Shania Twain song from the YouTube website before starting his lecture. After the song ended, he started his lecture by asking students a general question about the song then telling a comment that made the students laugh.

Alejandro said: "They (students) are all restless at the start of the lecture, and it takes, often a lot of time for them to sort of settle down and focus, so I want to get their attention". Despite the fact that Alejandro's reference to the song had nothing to do with the lecture material, it was meant to get students' attention and keep them engaged right from the start.

2) Using humour to refocus students' attention

Humour not only can be used at the beginning of the class, teacher also able to use it to refocus students' attention or keep them engaged in the classroom. For example, during the quiz session, while waiting for the students to

answer it, the teacher tried to keep students' attention by making fun of things that he found lying in front of the class.

Liam: It is amazing stuff that people left it here; we have some keys,
a pair of glasses.

Students: [Giggle]

Liam: ...why do people leave these stuff behind? It is like leaving
your laptop behind.

Students: [Giggle]

Liam: ...oh, it fell off my backpack.

Students: [Laughing]

He intended to make the situation fun in order to keep the students' attention. Although the humor used in this instance caught the students' attention and made them laugh, it had nothing to do with the lecture material.

3) Using humour to make students feel comfortable or at ease

An example identified from her observation is:

Bryan: There are couple of things you can do to kind of stay
'evolved', the inevitable fact that your muscle is going to
waste over the time. What a depressing lecture, I am sorry
about that.

Students: [Laughing]

Bryan's statement about the material of his lecture made the students laugh. Perhaps the connection between the subject and the possibility that life will come to an end made his statement humorous. This could not have been

something that students might usually have felt comfortable listening to. As a result, a lighthearted joke about the subject was used to reduce the students' discomfort.

4) Using humour to elicit laughter

Still with the same teacher as an example above, Bryan intended that his students enjoy their time in his class. He also decided to make the content more engaging and appealing to the students.

In Bryan's class, during a quiz time, questions were shown on slides.

Question 10 (last quiz question):

What is the muscle labelled by X of your favourite lecturer?

Muscle labelled by X was pointed on a photo of Bryan's face edited on a muscular body.

From the example above, Bryan's purpose in using humour was clearly can be seen to make the students enjoy learning a potentially boring topic.

2. The Impact of Humour in the Classroom

Humour that being used in the classroom can give several impacts for the students. Abu Bakar Farhana had done a research related to the effects of humour in the classroom, her study showed that humour contributed into two main aspects in the learning process; on student learning and on classroom environment.⁶¹

⁶¹ Bakar, ... pp. 105-115.

1) Humor Humour helps students to focus

In the classroom, sometimes technology can distract students. By using humour, the teacher can get the attention of all class members. As one of the students said,

“He is holding the whole room’s attention on him. Nobody wants to examine their laptop screens and read the newsfeed on Facebook or anything when Liam is up the front cracking a joke every couple of lines. Not that it is a bad thing that he is cracking a joke every a couple of lines. I want to be listening to what this guy is saying”.

In her research, she discovered that using humor in the classroom kept students engaged and concentrated on the lecture rather than allowing their attention to turn into their electronic devices. Benjelloun (2009), Korobkin (1988), Lei et al. (2010), Powell and Andresen (1985), and Ziyaemehr et al. (2009) have all found that humor has an impact on students' attention (2011). Their research showed that using humor in the classroom helped students concentrate and pay attention to the teacher and / or what the teacher was saying.

2) Humour helps students to remember and recall lecture content

In this case, she also receive a fact from her study when her students said,

“When I go through my notes and I have written down ‘ha ha’. Like ‘something, something, something, ha ha’ because it was funny when he said it. Sometimes I write things in capital letters because he really stresses them”.

This mean, the student scribbled laughing expressions on the notes. This assisted the student in remembering the amusing incidents and, finally, the lecture material. Humour, according to the student, helped to recall particular

moments in the classroom when there were humorous incidents, and thus remember the material relevant to the humour.

3) Humour helps students to understand lecture content

By linking knowledge to students' everyday life experiences, humour helped them understand the lecture material. As described by one of the students:

“He was going through enzyme and substrates complexes and then he would start to talk about things in real life that are funny but simulate the same thing, such as when a substrate binds to an enzyme complex and what goes through with that and he would kind of dance and this is when a girl goes into the club and she is kind of shy and starts getting a lot of energy, so he made it relatable to our age and what we see around”.

In this case, the student explained how the lecture material was related to funny anecdotes by the teacher. The student clearly recalled the incident and was able to explain what she had learned in the lecture. She was also tend to create correlations between the content of the lecture and the teacher's humour.

4) Humour fosters students' thinking by helping them to connect with the lecture content

Students' way of thinking to the lecture material were also influenced by humor. As the student explained:

“Humour really just makes me think about what he (Alejandro) is saying and kind of processing it, which I hopefully learn because of that. I know I am processing everything he is saying, not just a little bit here and then getting bored because he is constantly coming out with things. It forces my brain to process everything he says”.

According to that student, the teachers' use of humour encouraged them to engage in problem-solving tasks and provided justifications and alternatives to their interpretation of the lecture material.

5) Humour helps to build teacher–student rapport in the classroom

Regarding to Abu Bakar Farhana’s thesis, she found that most of the students expressed a sense that teachers who used humour were approachable, “I feel like I want to listen because she just comes across as like a nicer person”. This shows that teachers who enjoy using humour help students feel more comfortable in the classroom and thereby lead to a positive learning atmosphere.

6) Humour helps to develop positive attitudes and emotions towards the subject

In order to boost students' learning in the classroom, teachers must be able to educate learners to have a good attitudes and emotions toward the subject. One of the students spoke about how humour helped him emotionally to learn Chemistry. He noted, “The point of the jokes is to slowly calm us and keep our attention on him through the lecture while still making sure that the focus of the lecture is on chemistry”. His feeling of tension and anxiety about studying chemistry was lowered by the teacher's use of humour. Since his teacher's humour made him feel like the topic was less complicated, he focused better on learning the material. As a result, his focus increased.