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The Effects of Humor in the Language Classroom. The Case of Master Students of English at Adrar University

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Dedication

To my beloved parents Fuzia and Ahmed

To my brothers and sisters

To my friends

To you

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All praises to God alone who guides, helps, and gives me the capacity for doing
this work

This work bears my name on the cover, but it was only possible thanks to the
support and help of some specific people

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questionnaire

I am also thankful to all my teachers and my friends.

Abstract

Recently, much data across disciplines have defended the use of humor as a helpful pedagogical tool in creating a healthy classroom atmosphere that would be conducive to learning and teaching. The current descriptive study is mainly devoted at investigating the effects of the use of such a tool in classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular, it highlights a plethora of beneficial areas about the use of humor such as its importance in providing an emotional feedback that motivates learners to take part in the learning process, establishing a better relationship between teachers and students, reducing stress and anxiety, presenting the subject matter more efficiently, promoting attention and memory, as well as enhancing creativity and critical thinking. Whereas, any misuse or overuse of humor can lead to a devastating effects. In order to reach our aim, an experiment is conducted on a group of 54 master students and 12 teachers from the department of English at Adrar University. A questionnaire is designed for both samples consisting of 12 items for teachers and 10 for students. The results obtained were analyzed in terms of number of participants who opted for each response and the percentage each response was chosen. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of teachers and students reported agreeing with the positive effects of the use of humor in the classroom.

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ABBREVIATIONS

FL : Foreign Language

EFL : English as a Foreign Language

SL : Second Language

ESL : English as a Second Language

L1 : First Language

L2 : Second Language

ELT: English Language Teaching

SLA : Second Language Acquisition

n.d : No date

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1. Statement of the problem

It is generally accepted these days that the educational process is surrounded by numerous obstacles, ranging from the probable outside social stressors such as poverty, divorce of parents, and many other social weeds where students may carry them to their classrooms, to the inside everyday classroom issues that might be related to the curriculum or the possible difficulties that may accompany the processes of teaching and learning. Yet, for sure there is a little which can be done by teachers about the outside sources that exert their influence on the students; however, they can have some control over the sources within our own classrooms.

Based on that, the classroom is very important for teachers and students alike. It is a teacher's sacred place where he practices his teaching skills and can inspire generations of learners, and it ought to be the learner's second home where he spends a considerable time in learning and aspiring for better future. Thus, creating a wholesome and healthy learning environment where everyone is a teacher and a student can make the classroom an enjoyable experience to live for both of them. Similarly, and in the context of language teaching and learning, fostering such an atmosphere of peace, joy, tranquility and bonding among students and teachers would simply affect positively those learning attitudes and behaviors, which can lead to a preferable academic outcomes. Meanwhile, it is quite clear that challenges such as boredom, depression, anxiety, lack of motivation and difficulties in comprehension and retention of materials can all result from a poor classroom atmosphere. Hence, a negative climate proved to be dysfunctional for students learning. Whereas, the establishment of a warm emotional climate in the classroom proved to have a sort of positive correlations with students achievement.

The current study attempts at presenting humor as a helpful strategy in generating such a healthy classroom atmosphere that would be conducive to learning in general and language learning in particular. Since what is going inside the classroom is purely humanistic, humor can bridge the gap between teachers and students which offers more alternative options to decrease those negative feelings that may impede students when learning a language.

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2. Aim of the Study

The main focus of this study is to investigate the perceptions of some university teachers and students of English toward the effects of the use of humor inside their classrooms. In other words, the extent to which they think that humor is effective in creating a positive classroom climate that can lead to better academic achievement.

3. Research Questions

To achieve our aim, the study is trying to answer the following questions:

- How do University teachers and students of English perceive the use of humor inside the classroom?
- Does humor have positive effects on the learning environment?
- What are the negative forms of humor that should not be integrated in the classroom?

4. Research Hypothesis

We hypothesize that if appropriately presented, humor can bring about numerous positive psychological, physical, cognitive and sociological benefits to classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular, which facilitates teaching and learning and can lead to preferable academic outcomes.

5. Methodology Design

a. Choice of the Method

In order to draw attention to a wide range of perceptions and attitudes about the effects of using humor in classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular, which can affect positively the learning and teaching processes, we opted for the use of the descriptive method, which will permit us to identify these effects and moreover to collect the needed data about the subject under investigation. So, it is also the most suitable for the population that we selected taking into account time-limitations. The process goes after describing the theoretical part of the subject matter then analyzing the responses and results that we will collect from the questionnaires given to both teachers and students.

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b. Population

It is noteworthy to mention that both master students', and teachers', of the department of English at Adrar University, attitudes toward the subject under investigation are of paramount importance to this study, that is why we will deal with both populations:

Teachers concerned by our research are in charge of teaching different modules at the level of the department of English at Adrar University. Whereas, students concerned by our research are students of Master one (literature and civilization), as well as Master one and two (Linguistics and Didactics) enrolled for the academic year 2014-2015. Their exact number is about 115 students(information obtained from the administration).

c. Data Collecting Tool

In order to obtain the attitudes and perception of the students and the teachers, a questionnaire is designed for both populations, with little difference in some of the questions as well as some changes in terms of vocabulary. The questionnaire is chosen as a tool for data collection for the study and seems the most appropriate for many considerations like: the large number of the population under study, the respect of the respondents' anonymity, and the short period of time if compared to the interview for instance.

6. Structure of the Study

The current study is divided into two main chapters:

The first chapter, a theoretical chapter, is mainly devoted to the review of the literature related to the topic of humor. It mainly highlights the most important elements related to the topic such as a brief history and definitions of humor, its theories, function, its various types and forms , and its effects on the classroom environment, as well as the benefits of its integration in the FL classroom.

The second chapter is essentially concerned with the practical side of the current research. Thus, it deals with the analysis and explanation of the data collected from both questionnaires, and ends with some recommendations based on the research findings.

Chapter One

Review of Literature

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Chapter One: Review of Literature

Introduction

"Classrooms in which laughter is welcome help bring learning to life."
(Dickinson.(n.d) as quoted in Chaisson, 2002:p,1).

Much of the literature acknowledges the fact that humor has been an essential component of humankind and societies throughout history. It is a universal communication phenomenon that occupies such an integral part of the whole experience of life (Askildson, 2005). Essentially, humor is one of the fundamental elements of human psychology since its presence in everyday life is very important, as to be considered as capable of improving the emotional and physical wellbeing of human beings (Morreall, 2009). Hence, it is almost everywhere; we often find it in speeches , in television, at work, at home, etc.

In the realm of education, however, humor has long been perceived as a non-serious matter that may result in a state of distraction, waste of time and loose of control, which could turn everything in classrooms upside down. Yet, recently a considerable body of research across various disciplines suggests that the appropriate use of humor can yield a plethora of benefits to classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular, which may help generate a healthy climate that would be conducive to the student's engagement in the learning process. This further strengthens the belief that humor is not just a way of entertaining students for the sake of entertainment, rather it has the ability to convert what is HAHA into AHA! (Garner, 2006). However, it is generally accepted that any misuse or overuse of humor by taking it as a way of making an individual or group of students a subject of ridicule or disparagement inside the classroom can deconstruct all what those pedagogical benefits can construct, if not worse.

The current review of literature examines the effects of humor in classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to give a better understanding of humor as a complex phenomenon, both in general terms, and as regards to the scope of the investigation of this study. Areas of attention include a brief history of humor and some of its various definitions, its theories, function, types and forms , its positive and probable negative effects when applied to classroom setting, and it ends with some guidelines to using humor appropriately in the classroom which may lead to better academic results.

Chapter One: Review of Literature

1.1. Humor; a Brief History and Definition

There exist ample evidence in the literature that seems to support the belief that no one knows exactly when the first human smiled. What is documented in history is the origin of the word 'Humor' which is derived from Latin *umor*, refers to the four fluids 'Liquid', 'fluid', or 'moist'(Cornett, 1986). During the 1600s, physicians determined that four liquids called 'humors' can keep the mind and the body in a healthy balance (Morisson, 2008). However, any excess in one of the 'fluids' may result in the production of moods; a sanguine humor is considered as cheerful and associated with blood, a phlegmatic humor was thought to be apathetic or sluggish and associated with the oversupply of phlegm, a choleric humor was seen as angry and related to bile, and melancholic humor was looked at as depressed and associated with black bile. As time went on, humorist tended to refer to the person who has a sort of excess in one of 'the fluids'. By the 18th century, the term humorist extended to refer to the skilled person in the artistic or literary use of humor. So, everything from wit to buffoonery had to be included in humor (Cornett, 1986). From the 19th century until current, humor has become a literary concept which is concerned with the entertainment of people on literary, social or cultural occasions (Ashipaoloye, 2013).

As it is composed of different aspects and it can be found in different contexts, humor does not lend itself easily to be defined. As a concept, it is multidimensional and complex, as it is difficult to measure (Washington, 2008). Ask the majority of people to define what humor and fun are, and they will face great difficulty. It is basically due in part that fun and humor are seen as essential parts of human nature, thus, we take them for granted (Smith, 1990 as cited in Furman, 2001). So, our attempt in analyzing humor may no longer make it that sort of comical and amusing state that characterizes human beings, according to Gobel, (2011) "Analyzing humor is like dissecting a frog. Few people are interested and the frog dies of it"(1). Yet, the pursuit of unraveling what is humor has kept attracting scholars of all types.

At the social level, Bergson, (1900) stressed the social nature of humor and laughter, arguing that our process in understanding them must take into account the social terms if they are to be understood clearly (as cited in Porteous, 1989). Essentially, humor can be found in different forms within the same group, as well as in a variety of social

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groups. Thus, it is both the product of a society and an activity with social functions (Obrdlik, 1942).

On the communicative level, Romero and Cruthirds, (2006) define humor as: “An amusing communication that produce positive emotions and cognitions in the individual, or into the group”(59). To communicate this humor implies that Humans use this to deflect negative feelings and to enhance positive emotions. However, according to psychologists, humor is simply defined as a surprising incongruity that educes laughter regardless of whether humor is oppressive, positive, negative or neutral in relation to its target (Goebel, 2011).

Whereas, at the intercultural level, humor is perceived from a different angle, i.e. it differs from one individual to another within the same culture, as well as from one community and culture to another. What may seem comical or humorous in one culture may not be perceived in the same way in other cultures (Gonzalez & Wiseman, 2005).

Humor is often connected with optimism, play and creativity, as observed by Doni, (2002), “Humor is openness, optimism —a sort of yes-saying to life. Humor is creativity. Humor is, above all, play. Humor, creativity, and play are the same thing because they all involve the same act: Finding new connections between things” (9-10).

Taking into account the therapeutic characteristics of humor to address health problems, The Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH) defines humor as “Any intervention that promotes health and wellness by stimulating a playful discovery, expression or appreciation of the absurdity or incongruity of life’s situations. This intervention may enhance health or be used as a complementary treatment of illness to facilitate healing or coping, whether physical, emotional, cognitive, social, or spiritual” (Morisson, 2008:14). Hence, laughter or humor is the best medicine for whatever ails one.

For the purposes of this study, we will look at the effects of humor from a pedagogic standpoint, and is identified as a teaching technique that can assist in a positive learning environments (Kher et al,1999 as cited in Syafiq & Saleh, 2012). Thus, it is that aspect of humor which helps teachers and students to establish positive, effective and understanding relationships with each other (Corey, 1994). Similarly, and in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT), humor is defined as “Any physical action or spoken

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statement intentionally or otherwise that causes students to react by laughing, giggling, smiling, etc.” (Baleghizadeh & Ghoreishi, 2014). Whereas, a standard definition can be taken into account; humor as that quality of something that characterizes it as amusing or funny (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Furthermore, humor has also been described as a sense, since it could not exist if it were not for the so called sense of humor. Martin (1998), sees a sense of humor as one demonstrating "habitual individual differences in all sorts of behaviors, experiences, affects, attitudes, and abilities relating to amusement, laughter, jocularity, and so on"(as quoted in Martin, 2001:505). Hence, it is associated with individual differences, a sense of humor as with any sense, differs within the same person, let alone from one person to another. It may depend on each one's mood because it is a matter of personal tastes.

Humor, however, is not the same as laughter although the two concepts are connected, the latter refers to the physical activity that is caused by the feelings of a pleasant psychological shift (Gordon, 2014). These definitions and others elucidate the comic, therapeutic, playful and amusing side of humor which can result in good outcomes if managed well, or in bad results if abused. The current study attempts to shed light on its effects when applied to classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular.

As mentioned earlier, humor varies widely depending on how one approaches it. So, these definitions, although take into account some fundamental aspects and characteristics of humor, they are still considered unsatisfactory and superficial to achieve a unified definition that would be able to cover all styles and types of humor. Yet, in order to understand more about the nature of humor it would be better to cast an eye over its different theories, and to know how they may affect the educational context.

1.2. Humor Major Theories

The study of humor does not rely exclusively on its identification, rather one of the main aspects in conducting such a study involves understanding its composition by answering questions such as: Why we laugh? What for? etc. For this purpose, a plethora of theories have been created in an attempt of explaining the fascinating nature of this phenomenon. Yet, it is believed that no single humor theory has been considered as a completely satisfactory because of the diverse nature of humor itself (Polimeni & Reiss,

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2006). According to Chapman and Foot, (1976) a literature theory about humor would be far from clear to achieve a ‘general theory’. However, three main theories have often been observed in the majority of humor studies: The incongruity theory, the superiority theory, and the relief theory (as cited in Lynch,2002).

1.2.1. Humor as an Interpretation of Incongruity (Incongruity Theory)

This theory was first introduced by Aristotle who alluded to the Rhetoric that humor is based on incongruity or surprise which is the fundamental cause of laughter, and it occurs as soon as a speech takes an unexpected turn. However, the first philosopher to link the word ‘incongruity’ with the analysis of humor was James Beattie, a contemporary of Immanuel Kant though Kant did not use the term ‘incongruity’ as it is used now (Morreall,2014).

According to Kant, (1790):

“In everything that is to excite a lively convulsive laugh there must be something absurd (in which the understanding, therefore, can find no satisfaction). Laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of as trained expectation into nothing. This transformation, which is certainly not enjoyable to the understanding, yet indirectly gives it very active enjoyment for a moment. Therefore its cause must consist in the influence of the representation upon the body, and the reflex effect of this upon the mind.” (as quoted in Morreall, 2009:11)

The incongruity is mainly a cognitive-based theory that sees humor as a result of unexpected connections (Cornett,1986), those unexpected connections take place when we anticipate one thing and suddenly encounter another (Shade,1996). According to Berger, (1976); Deckers and Divine, (1981); McGhee, (1979) what is surprising, unexpected, or odd in a nonthreatening way, can become a source of people’s laughter (as cited in Meyer,2000). This theory is perhaps one of the most tackled by experts, it proposes that humor happens as soon as the listener finds any incongruity, or inconsistency, in the story or joke. So, the listener might get shocked or surprised by an unexpected outcome and as a result they find this situation humorous simply because it has gone against the listener’s previous experience (expectation) with the situation (Jarvis, 2012).

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In the educational context, it is believed that there is a relation between the incongruity theory and cognition (Teslow, 1995). Humor which is intended to deal with incongruous themes benefits learners through enhancing their interest and arousal in the forms of attention, curiosity, and motivation (Keller, 1983 as cited in Teslow, (1995). Moreover, the relations between incongruity, problem solving, and creativity help to enhance higher-order cognition (Teslow, 1995).

In the language classroom application, the receiver of the joke might not understand the humor in it if he or she cannot succeed in finding any sort of connection between the two elements in a joke. For example: Someone who cannot find the name 'Tiny' humorous until he discovers that he is a six foot tall basketball player. Thus, it is the reaction when finding that two incongruous terms are actually related (Suls, 1983 as cited in Ziyaeemehr & Vijay, 2011). This theory might be helpful for language teachers when applying humor in classrooms, however the students' level of competency in a second language must be taken into account (Ziyaeemehr & Vijay, 2011).

1.2.2. Humor as an Expression of Superiority (Superiority Theory)

Mark Twain was reported to have said, "Everything is funny as long as it's happening to someone else." (as quoted in Cornett, 1986:27).

This theory could be traced back to the writings of Thomas Hobbes (Meyer, 2002) who advocates the idea that laughter comes from a sort of superiority of the laugher towards some object or what is commonly referred to as the 'butt of the joke' (Attardo, 1994). In other words, laughter comes from a sudden bragging from perceiving the weaknesses of other people. Because generally, Human beings enjoy the mistakes and misfortune of others since it makes them look better as individuals. This theory points out that inferior individuals would become a subject of humor and laughter by people as it makes them feel more important and superior to them. Those inferior individuals subject to this theory are made to look ridiculous and silly (Jarvis, 2012).

In conjunction with the above ideas, it is quite clear that among the aspects that play an important role in humor, aggression is classified among the first, since it manifests itself perpetually, either explicitly or implicitly. This theory presents the negative side of humor, in other words, how those negative and hostile attitudes can be expressed through humor which can serve as a way of mocking others for the sake of humiliating or showing

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how important the person is if compared to others (Morreall, 2009). As an example, women might receive a sort of sexist jokes from men which may humiliate them and allow men to feel more superior to them, thus a sense of enjoyment originates from a feeling of superiority (Teo, 2014).

Therefore, humor in the classroom in this context differs from out-of-class, real world humor. Instructors are not normally supposed to make their students a subject of ridicule or fun because of their failure or mistakes; rather they are normally expected to leave some space for students to err and learn (Ziyaeemehr & Vijay, 2011).

1.2.3. Humor as a Tension Relief (Relief Theory)

One of the most important theories of humor is the one of relief, which states that humor has a function of liberation. The findings of this theory go back to the eighteenth century, it describes humor as ‘a pressure valve’ (Morreall, 2009). This theory was popularized by Freud’s writing in which he expresses that people have a sort of a burning animal core (sexual desires) that have been repressed by society for the sake of correcting such unacceptable behaviors. Hence, this process creates an accumulation of energy that is released abruptly, through laughter, leading to a feeling of relief in an acceptable and tolerated manner (Klassen, 2014).

Moreover, Berlyne, (1972); Morreall, (1983), suggest that people tend to experience humor and laughter because their feelings of stress have been reduced in a certain way (as cited in Meyer, 2000). Therefore, this theory considers humor as way of decreasing stress and tension. Researcher Gamble, (2001) sees that “laughter and smiling then serve to decrease this arousal (humor). This helps in lowering the blood pressure, increasing the oxygen proportion in the lungs and blood through increased exhalation, causing the release of endorphins, facilitating digestion, and activating many different muscle systems, which results in relaxation” (as quoted in Jarvis, 2012:5-6). Thus, this theory approaches humor from a physiological perspective that it can work as a sort of relief for uneasy energy and tension which may lead to the improvement of one’s life.

In the educational context, this theory has proven to be a beneficial strategy as a tension reliever. Laughter in the classroom can open avenues of communication, releases fixed situations, which allows students and teachers to perceive normal information in an extraordinary manner (Teslow, 1995).

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Simultaneously, implementing the relief theory in second language classrooms might be helpful in explaining how negative emotions such as frustration and anxiety have originated from learners' unfamiliarity with L2 rules, which can be released through the use of instructor humor (Ziyaeemehr & Vijay, 2011).

In conclusion, the three theories "characterize the complex phenomenon of humor from very different angles and do not at all contradict each other – rather they seem to supplement each other quite nicely" (Morreal, 2009:7). So, each of the previous theories contributes in one way or another in clarifying the overall understanding of humor as a multidimensional concept.

1.3. Functions of Humor

The theories of humor origin mentioned above contribute in understanding its function in relation to different situations. The relief humor is mainly for relaxing tensions during communication, incongruity humor for presenting new perspectives and viewpoints, and superiority humor for criticizing opposition or unifying a group (Meyer, 2000).

Based on researchers approach to the functionality of humor, various angles ranging from its role in informal social interactions to more formal situations such as educational contexts have been identified. In social interactions, humor serves as a strategy to develop and reinforce camaraderie with the audience. Moreover, many theorists such as Hay, & Bippus, (2000); Martin, (2007), describe humor as a coping mechanism, a supporting tool of communication, a way to ease and alleviate stress and tension, as well as a way to reduce the effects of stressful tasks and to maintain relationships (as cited in Ziyaeemehr & Vijay, 2014). Thus, the function of humor can be summed up in a variety of positive effects, such as increasing group cohesion and coping with stress. The negative aspects appear to have negative social functions when humor is used in order to disparage and criticize others. In this respect, humor can serve as a means of control, a mocking nonconforming behavior which can reinforce as well as promote power and status differences and sometimes suppress undesired actions (Martin, 2007).

In educational settings, however, the role of humor is thought to increase instructional effectiveness, create a more enjoyable and conducive learning environment, encourage student attention, increase student motivation, control frustration and clarify course material. Other studies suggest that the judicious use of humor can also enhance student acquisition/learning and retention of content (Ziyaeemehr & Vijay, 2014).

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1.4. Styles of Humor in the Classroom

The use of humor may differ from one person to another, thus, one's interpersonal style might affect his/her use of humor. Humor can be used in many ways; to demean people, whereas some might use it to enhance an interpersonal relationship, and there are others who might use it just for the sake of being accepted by other people (Martin, 2007). Furthermore, Martin, (2007) developed The Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ), which is designed basically to differentiate between two humor dimensions; beneficial and detrimental or harmful, thus the different combinations of these two dimensions create the four humor styles: Affiliative and self enhancing humor were considered to be relatively healthy or adaptive, and the aggressive and self-defeating humor characterized as unhealthy and potentially detrimental. Thus, humor can fit into either of the two following styles; hostile or non-hostile. In hostile humor, a person or thing is ridiculed or belittled. Whereas non-hostile is classified as benign and healthy. In classrooms however, the derision could be targeted at the teacher (self), the student, or other persons and things (Wandersee, 1982).

The first dimension in this model is confined to the use of humor to enhance the self, or to enhance one's relationships (affiliative humor) with others.

1.4.1. Self-enhancing

The use of humor to enhance the self is mainly linked to Hobbes's famous description of laughter as "the sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminence in ourselves..." (Martin et al, 2003:51). Moreover, Martin, (2007) defines self-enhancing humor as that tendency to uphold a humorous standpoint even when encountering some difficult conditions such as stress and frustration. It is the ability to use humor in order to preserve a sort of humorous outlook in the face of life challenges even when one is alone. Thus, humor is used as a method of coping with stress and depression.

1.4.2. Affiliative Humor

This style "relates to the use of humor to raise the morale of group members, enhance group cohesiveness and identity, create an atmosphere of enjoyment, reinforce group norms, and so on" (Martin et al, 2003:52). It can be used to improve one's relationships with others. Thus, it "oils the wheels of communication and permits the establishment of social relations with a minimum of conflict" (Ziv,1984 as quoted in

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Martin et al, 2003:52). This style is mainly used to improve relationships with others. It is usually expressed in a positive and benevolent way through the use of those funny comments and jokes. People tend to use this style in a spontaneous manner for the sake of participating in funny situations, in order to laugh and rejoice with others with the aim of facilitating and lubricating relations.

The second dimensions of the model is associated with the use of humor to belittle others, or to belittle one's own self in order to appease others.

1.4.3. Aggressive Humor

The main purpose of this type of humor is to enhance one's self at the expense of the relationships with others. Martin, (2007) stated that "It is the tendency to use humor for the purpose of criticizing or manipulating others, as in sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision, or disparagement humor, as well as the use of potentially offensive(e.g., racist or sexist) forms of humor.." (211). Thus, it refers to the more hostile uses of humor that could be harmful to some important relationships with others, such as friends, family members, and colleagues, although it can sometimes seem funny and playful, the basic intent is to harm or belittle others (Martin et al, 2003).

1.4.4. Self-defeating Humor

This style is used when trying to enhance our relationships with others by making fun of or ridiculing one's own self. According to Kubie, (1971) this style of humor" refers to excessively self-disparaging humor, or attempts to ingratiate oneself or gain the approval of others by doing or saying funny things at one's own expense. This also involves the use of humor as a form of defensive denial, or engaging in humorous behavior as a means of repressing one's underlying feelings, in order to maintain the acceptance of others" (as quoted in Martin et al , 2003:52). In other words, to make fun of the person's own self for the sake of amusing others in order to appease them and gain their acceptance. In contrast to the previous mentioned styles, aggressive and self-defeating styles of humor are often seen as maladaptive. However, Romero and Cruthirds, (2006) included a fifth style in their model of humor, which is the mild aggressive style.

1.4.5. Mild Aggressive Humor

In mild aggressive humor, the message is delivered in a playful way so that it permits the individual to express conflicts and differences without any kind of negative

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effects (Romero, Cruthirds, 2006). Thus, this style of humor can result in a sort of positive outcome in a way that the person can express disagreement and conflict without expecting to affect other people negatively, since the message has already been delivered in such a playful manner. Martineau, (1972); Meyer, (1997) argue that “when manifested as satire or teasing, mild aggressive humor can communicate a forceful reprimanding message but with a humorous and positive tone” (as quoted in Romero & Cruthirds, 2006:60).

Finally, the distinctions between the previous styles of humor are noteworthy in order to differentiate between those good styles of humor (Affiliative, self-enhancing), and those hostile styles of humor (Aggressive, self-defeating). It is also important to know where and how to use the appropriate style.

1.5. Forms of Humor in the Classroom

Throughout our daily life, humor takes different forms which can be communicated by different means, and can be used for different purposes. We can find it everywhere; in speeches, television, humorous advertisements, newspaper, cartoons, comedy movies, humorous books, and it is also used by teachers (Martin, 2007). Moreover, Martin, (2007) further suggests three forms of humor: (1) jokes, which are planned and often transmitted from one to another; (2) spontaneous conversational humor, which is the product of the social interaction between individuals and happens intentionally, and can be either verbal or nonverbal; and (3); accidental or unintentional humor which is divided into accidental physical humor that includes certain funny events that happen in an unexpected and incongruous way such as a person slipping on something, and accidental linguistic humor such as misspellings, mispronunciations, and errors in logic. Whereas, humor in teaching according to Hativa, (2001), can be divided into two forms: spontaneous or planned.

1.5.1. Spontaneous Conversational Humor Vs Planned Humor

We experience most of our daily life humor in conversations. Spontaneous humor, whether natural or created, depends more on the situation or the context rather than prepared or planned humor, which is already arranged without any kind of dependency to the current situation (Martin, 2007).

In teaching, spontaneous humor is frequently used, as those humorous incidents are not preplanned like in planned humor, rather they come spontaneously and are often derived from existing humorous shapes of funny comments and witty remarks. For

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instructional purposes, the teacher holds the students' attention to elements in the lesson in such a surprising way that differs from what they expected at the first place. This form of humor seems easy but in fact it requires that sort of teacher who is able to create a proper classroom environment that would be suitable to accepting humor. Moreover, what it is also necessary in spontaneous humor is a degree of originality and creativity. Whereas planned humor costs a lot, since it requires making considerable efforts, as well as it takes too much time in its preparation and performance (Hativa, 2001).

1.6. Types of Humor in the Classroom

What makes the study of humor difficult is the fact that it contains abundant types. It can aim at anything that a teacher could use in the classroom (Wanzer et al, 2006). However, in a study conducted by Bryant et al, (1979), six types of teacher humor were identified: jokes, riddles, puns, funny stories, funny comments, and others (as cited in Wanzer et al,2006). Based on that, Hativa, (2001) provided a comprehensive classification of humor in teaching. She classified humor in three main categories. The first category is verbal humor that consists of jokes, anecdotes, language play, etc. The second one is nonverbal humor such as cartoon, caricature, photon. The last one is combined verbal and non verbal humor that consists of impersonation, parody, satire, monologue and skit.

1.6.1. Verbal Types

- **Jokes (canned, prepared)**

A canned joke is a form of verbal humor produced orally or published in collections which does not depend solely on the contextual factors during conversations (Attrado, 1994). It contains of a setup which includes the whole portion of the dialogue or the narrative without the last sentence. Whereas the punch line is the last sentence that carries the unexpected that often leads to the non-serious and the humorous absurdity (Martin, 2007). Since a joke contains of: setting, incongruence, and surprise, it is considered to be one of the most common ways of using humor in teaching (Hativa, 2001).

- **Anecdotes**

Anecdotes are told as jokes, they contain a funny twist. They are funny stories that teach a lesson, often used with personal references (Oxford English Dictionary, 2010).

- **Language Play**

Weiss, (1993) stated that "Having fun with language develops critical thinking skills and helps readers and writers to expand their means of communication. So it is

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helpful to begin with a series of activities that involve students in language usage” (42). Thus, Language play is considered to be another type of verbal humor structure that teachers can exploit.

- **Puns-"word play"**

A pun is a humorous statement that is designed to play on the multiple meanings of a word. The unusual or unexpected twist in meaning may come as a result of the use or misuse of two words that sound similar but differ in meaning (homonyms), or of words that have similar meaning (synonyms), or by the mispronunciation of words. To illustrate: Deaf penalty (instead of death penalty).

- **Ironic definitions**

Give words an abstract meaning which goes beyond the standard dictionary definition. For example, Deadwood is anyone in your department who is more senior than you are.

- **Using opposite, contradictory, impossible terms:** Someone is a ‘successful failure,’ or a ‘rich pauper,’

- **Taking something to the absurd:**

Which often causes a sort of clash in terms of logic. To illustrate: Let us be happy and live within our means, even if we have to borrow the money to do it with.

- **Stating the obvious:** To illustrate: Rich people have all the money. What color is the red bus?

- **Humorous riddle:** An information-seeking question that does not seem to have a logical answer, and that provides a clever answer in a humorous punch line.

- **Limerick:** A nonsense poem of five anapestic lines.

- **Comic verse:** A humorous poem that is metered and rhymed.

- **Humorous comment:** A short statement that contains a humorous element.

- **Understatement:** A statement that is disproportionately weak or moderate

1.6.2. Non-verbal Types

- **Cartoon:** A drawing, often accompanied by captions or dialogue, depicting a humorous situation.

- **Caricature:** A drawing, ludicrously exaggerating the properties of a person or thing.

- **Photon:** A photograph accompanied by a humorous caption or dialogue statement.

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1.6.3. Combined Verbal and Nonverbal Humor

Teacher acting-based humor can include:

- **Impersonation:** An imitation that exaggerates a person's most outstanding features, often for the purpose of ridicule.
- **Parody:** Imitating a serious work for expression in a humorous way.
- **Satire:** An attack on a person's follies and foibles using irony and sarcasm.
- **Monologue:** An entertaining series of comic situations related by a single speaker.
- **Skit:** A comic theatrical sketch.

1.7. Positive Effects of Using Humor in the Classroom

McGhee, (1979) considered humor as a mood or state of mind. Thus, it is part of our life and should be part of our classrooms as well (as cited in Syafiq, Saleh, 2012). Recently, much of the literature stressed the usefulness of humor as a classroom technique in education. Data across disciplines suggests that the appropriate use of humor can lead to a considerable positive, psychological, physical, cognitive and sociological outcomes.

1.7.1. Psychological Effects

According to Kline, (1907) the psychological importance of humor lies in the sense that it can be used "to detach us from our world of good and evil, of loss and gain, and enable us to see it in proper perspective. It frees us from vanity on the one hand and from pessimism on the other by keeping us larger than what we do and greater than what can happen to us" (as quoted in Berk, 2002:40).

Berk, (2002) further stated that humor consists of three components: (1) the problem stimulus, which is the external stressor or any communication that intended to provoke laughter or smiling (e.g. a joke), (2) the humor response, which is the cognitive change that leads to a mental detachment of the problem, and (3) the emotional response, which is the resulted feeling of that detachment which can be interpreted in the amount of laughter or smiling observed in a situation. Based on that, the appropriate use of humor in the classroom can be beneficial for teachers and students alike. From a psychological standpoint, the effects of humor and laughter may consist of: Reducing anxiety, decreasing stress, enhancing self-esteem, and increasing self-motivation (Garner, 2006).

1.7.1.1. Improved Motivation

Motivation is highly praised by most of researchers and educators as one of the most important factors that affect learners' input in learning another language. It has a great impact on the way individuals accomplish their long-term goals (Ni, 2012). So, motivation according to Brown, (2001) is "the extent to which you make choices about goals to pursue and the effort you will devote to that pursuit" (as quoted in Ni, 2012:1509). Similarly, Gardner, (1985) sees motivation to learn a language as "the extent to which the individual works or strives to learn the language because of a desire to do so and the satisfaction experienced in this activity" (as quoted in Du, 2009:162). Thus, it is that inner drive that pushes the individual to pursue a course of action. Moreover, motivation is crucial in the effective teacher's management of learning and behavior in the classroom. Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs clarifies the different sets of requirements that affect individual motivation. According to Maslow, in providing the lower-level needs such as safety, the higher-level needs such as self-actualization become more reachable. Whereas, if any interruption occurred at the level of the lower needs the fulfillment of the upper needs in the hierarchy would be more intricate if not impossible. His model of hierarchy of needs brought a different look at education and learning, endorsing the learner's needs which may result in an encouraging learning environment more than the content of the materials (Harris, 1999).

In conjunction with the above ideas, Kashan, (1982) developed what has to become known as the affective filter hypothesis. He believed that the affective filter constitutes a sort of psychological obstacle that inhibits language learners from understanding those presented information. Thus, it can determine the amount of language learners input and intake. So, teaching language effectively depends on how lower the filter should be; language learners with low filters can have high motivation, self-confidence and a low level of anxiety, which in turn can help attaining more input. However, learners with high filters can have low motivation, little self-confidence and a high level of anxiety which gave them little input. Thus, teachers' feedback and support in a more confident and comfortable learning climate can lead to better outcomes (as cited in Ni, 2012).

Based on what has been suggested above, humor is one of the effective means of enhancing students' motivation to study through lowering the affective filter influence.

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Hence, reducing anxiety in the class, and encouraging students' desire to take part in what is presented by the teacher (Ketabi & Simin, 2009). Moreover, instructional humor stimulates those positive emotions that impact learning positively, thus, students obtain more positive attitudes towards education, which in turn enhance their motivation to learn. It can also result in a sort of improvement of the overall academic performance (Martin, 2007).

Similarly, the teachers' sense of humor can affect students' intrinsic motivation, since a good sense of humor in the class can result in a close relationship between teachers and students, which in turn can intrinsically motivate students to do what the teacher wants them to do. Such relationships in classes can make students feel free and relaxed to express their ideas and discuss the lessons which can result in preferable learning outcomes (Motlagh et al, 2014).

1.7.1.2 Anxiety and Stress Reduction

Generating a relaxed, fun, and playful, but also intellectually exciting environment advantageous to learning is one of humor's most significant benefits. All this can be obtained through reducing anxiety, tension, and stress (Berk, 2002).

According to Ellis, (1994) anxiety can be divided into three types, trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. Much emphasis has been given to the study of situational anxiety in SLA research, since language anxiety as a type of situation-specific anxiety is associated with the challenges that may take place in learning and communicating through L2. It often happens to Second language learners when they feel a lack of proficiency in comparing themselves with other learners in the class or when receive questions and feedbacks from their teachers (as cited in Ni, 2012). Furthermore, Gardner & Macintyre, (1993) see that language anxiety is "the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of a second language with which the individual is not fully proficient" (as quoted in Du, 2009:163)

As suggested above, those students who have anxiety during classes will not feel at ease and they often tend to be nervous and afraid to cooperate with teachers, which in turn will result in a lack of concentration on the learning points and tasks (Ni, 2012). Whereas humor according to Deneire, (1995) can serve as a tension-reducing capacity that can yield many beneficial effects for the language classroom since the foreign/second language classroom has been viewed as a place full of high levels of tension and anxiety for the

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student. The learner does not only try to communicate in a new and unfamiliar language that differs from his own language, but also to do so in front of his/her classmates which may posit a highly tense/anxious learning environment if compared with general educational settings (as cited in Askildson, 2005).

Similarly, Oxford, (1999) pointed out that “ anxiety damages language learners’ achievement indirectly through worry and self-doubt and directly by reducing participation and creating overt avoidance of the language” (as quoted in Nadeem, 2012:90). Whereas humor can be beneficial in the sense that it provides a source of enjoyment for students and teachers. Those humorous situations can let students express themselves freely without fear of ridicule and criticism because anxiety and stress have been reduced and students are more encouraged to take risks in practicing the second language (Chaisson, 2002).

Moreover, a recent study about the use of humor as a pedagogical utility in classrooms suggests that humor can be helpful in reducing many types of anxiety such as the anxiety that often accompanies the learning process. It facilitates creativity in the classroom through reducing students' anxiety levels as well as helping students to maintain their attention and decrease the overall anxiety (Shade, 1996).

On the other hand, stress is part of any classroom environment. Teachers can have the stress when they try to collect and present materials to be taught in the classroom, and students have the stress of studying and understanding the material, and it is found also during tests, and etc. (Edwards & Gibboney, 1992 as cited in Jonas, 2010). It is evident that those anxious people are likely to release stress hormones that may affect them negatively, whereas laughter may have the opposite effect of stress (Jonas, 2010). Thus, humor can pave the way for more cognitive alternatives in response to those stressful situations through reducing the negative affective consequences of either real or perceived threat (Abel, 2002). Based on that, humor can serve as an effective therapeutic tool in breaking down the barriers between students and teachers through reducing such negative emotions like anxiety and stress in the classroom setting, which can help the students to take part in their learning process.

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1.7.1.3 Self-Esteem Enhancement

Self-esteem has been considered as one of the affective factors that has a noteworthy role in learning a foreign language. According to Habrat, (2013) self-esteem reflects a personal, overall emotional evaluation of oneself, thus, to feel of self-worth and self-acceptance. It is very important in learning a language in the sense that a confident person will simply try new learning and take risks in order to be successful. Additionally, a successful language learning depends more on the environment that is mingled with confidence and joy, where learners do not feel afraid in using their target language, whereas the teachers' role can be summed up in providing certain conditions that can help strengthening the students self-confidence.

Essentially, the context of Second Language Acquisition often accompanies situations where one's sense of self-worth could be in danger. Such situations may result from some obstacles in expressing oneself appropriately in the target language which may cause communication nervousness especially to learners who have a low level of self-esteem. Hence, the fear from the teachers' evaluation or other students' laughter may lead to hesitancy and reluctance in practicing the language in the class. Consequently, those foreign language classrooms coupled with low self-esteem will experience more repulsive effects than those with high self-esteem (Ni, 2012).

In contrast, the appropriate use of humor and those shared humorous experiences can play an integral part in fostering a positive classroom environment where learners' self-esteem can be enhanced greatly. This in turn can result in a more positive attitudes for both teachers and students. The use of humor gives students the freedom to explore, play, and take risks, make mistakes and errors which will pave the way to more positive things to taking place, with increased enthusiasm and creativity, etc (Askildson,2005). Welker, (1977) stressed the point that humor can serve as a means for dealing with errors in a humane and compassionate manner, since accusing and blaming students in committing such errors will directly affect their self-esteem negatively. He further states that, "to err is human, but also, to err is humorous" (as cited in Askildson, 2005:48). Finally, it is believed that people laugh longer and louder when in large groups. Humor can increase the feeling of group membership which in turn results in enhancing the learner's self-confidence (Shade,1996).

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1.7.2. Physical Effects

Henry Ward Beecher was reported to have said that “The effect of laughter upon the mind not only brings relaxation with it, so far as mental tension is concerned, but makes it also less prone to dreads and less solicitous about the future. This favorable effect on the mind Influences various functions of the body and makes them healthier than would otherwise be the case” (as quoted in Cornett, 1986:30).

Based on what has been suggested above, the curative characteristics of laughter attracted many people among those in the field of medical science, since it has the power to move some parts of the human structure that are not used in any other physical or mental activity (Weiss, 1993). Therefore, a myriad of physical benefits can be obtained from humor and laughter. Laughter includes four mechanisms which can have positive effects on our physical health. Firstly, it can cause physiological changes at the level of the body such as relaxing muscles, improving respiration, and enhancing circulation, increasing production of endorphins, and decreasing production of stress-related hormones. Secondly, it can result in a sort of a positive emotional state which in turn may increase pain tolerance, enhance immunity, and loosen probable cardiovascular outcomes of negative emotions. Thirdly, the use of humor as a coping strategy might be beneficial for health through the maximization of those undesirable effects of stress and anxiety. Finally, humor can be helpful in increasing one's level of social support (Martin,2004 as cited in Butler, 2005).

In the classroom context, humor provides students with some sort of mental sharpness, as it physiologically helps connecting the left-brain activities with the right-brain creative side. Therefore, this helps students to assimilate the information presented (Garner, 2005 as cited in Role, Genga, 2011). For this reason, when students laugh it becomes easy to deliver those important points in teaching and presenting lessons. It is simply because in the middle of intense learning, students need some time to relax their minds. In contrast, if they have not been given such an opportunity, their minds will not process appropriately, so they will end up pretending to listen while in fact they are not (Role & Genga, 2011). Studies have also provided a physiological explanation for the pleasurable phenomenon of laughter as a source of producing a chemical substance called catecholamine, which can help increase attentiveness and alertness. So, teachers can apply this chemical explanation by using the appropriate type and amount of humor in their

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classes in order to keep students motivated and interested, as well as to hook their attention throughout the lesson (Shade, 1996).

1.7.3. Cognitive Effects

Much research on humor has revealed benefits on creative and divergent thinking as well as its ability to help learning and retaining information.

1.7.3.1. Enhancing Critical-Creative Thinking

According to Cornett, (1986) “Engaging in humor can free up or increase the amount and quality of a person's creative capacities”. Thus, those latent creative capacities can be enhanced once stimulated by the use of the appropriate type of humor inside the classroom. More specifically, there are three factors that teachers can use in order to encourage students’ creativity: environment, attitude, and teaching behaviors. Thus, humor is considered to be one aspect of classroom environment that teachers often neglect. It is an effective tool in fostering a precious learning environment where students find themselves in a positive state of mind and a cheerful mood which can help produce more creative works (Mary, 1987). According to Ibsen, (1978) “positive models influence creativity by changing the way cognitive material is organized...Being happy may cue you into a large and richer cognitive content, and that could significantly affect your creativity” (as quoted in Mary, 1987:8).

Moreover, Koestler, (1964) discovered that there is a relationship between creativity and humor, suggesting that both humor and creativity are based on dissociation, which is the establishment of a new meaning or original link between two situations (as cited in Teslow, 1995). So, it helps students to structure and restructure those newly presented classroom materials in an exceptional manner in order to make necessary links among ideas (Shade, 1996).

Types of humor such as: word play, puns, stories, jokes, and riddles involve the use of the language in a sort of creative manner. Thus, creativity is defined as the ability of the brain to gather varied ideas which in turn will produce the thinking necessary for complex problem solving. The creation of an atmosphere that permits risk taking and expressing ideas freely is helpful in igniting and enlarging imagination. Humor and creativity complete each other in nourishing thinking (Morrison, 2008).

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Along the same line, Screven and Heffernan, (1998) see that humor can contribute a great deal especially in enhancing critical thinking. According to the authors, “When people are laughing, their brains seem to operate more efficiently and symmetrically. Humor seems to facilitate a more balanced cerebral activity that leads to creative thinking. This creative thinking produces different solutions to problems than the individual or group might otherwise generate” (as quoted in Jonas, 2010:81). Simultaneously, a study conducted by Ziv, (1983) revealed that a humorous atmosphere considerably amplifies divergent thinking. It is simply because the use of the appropriate type of humor that has a relation with the curriculum and can create the needed meaningfulness in order to facilitate effective learning. By providing such an appropriate environment into which diverse things can be stocked and organized, humor can improve the storage capacity and the consequent retrieval of information. It really has the power to increase the ability to solve those intricate problems (as cited in Morisson, 2008).

1.7.3.2. Enhancing Comprehension and Retention

“The job of the teacher is to get students laughing, and when their mouths are open, to give them something on which to chew” (Tom Davis. (n.d) as quoted in Chaisson, 2002).

According to Len, (2002) humor can create a positive emotional and social environment which can be helpful for the individual’s engagement in the learning process where defenses are decreased and students can focus on the information being presented (as cited in Garner,2006). Studies have revealed that attention and interest in a topic can be increased through injecting humor; the use of incongruity in the rational world creates illogical, disjointed, and unexpected images that learners can easily memorize because of their detailed strangeness and oddity. The effectiveness of those funny images in lessons on learners appear clearly when they are relevant to the message content, in other words, the more relevant humor is, the better effects will take place on the process of comprehension and retention of materials by students (Kaplan, Pascoe, 1977). Thus, those individuals placed in a positive mood are more likely to recall things better during retrieval time than those in a negative mood (Cline & Kellaris, 2007). Similarly, Robinson, (1983) acknowledged that those materials learned with laughter are deliberately learned well (as in Teslow, 1995), because students’ retention of material illustrated through humorous examples is noticeable, especially when these examples have relation with the material

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being presented. Thus, humor positively affects levels of attention and interest. It is a way to keep students engaged and involved with the course material because those humor items that are based on humorous examples help students to recall better (Ziv, 1988). Humorous materials such as cartoons can be applied in a way that can help generate the recall of a great deal of material, as the saying says ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’. It also can be helpful in the comprehension of more complex material by asking students to individually or collectively analyze a joke or cartoon which is related to the subject matter. Thus, humor, both verbal and figuratively can have a great contribution in the process of recalling information (Shade, 1996). Along the same lines, Medgyes, (2002) stated that laughter can be an effective aide-mémoire, since people tend to recollect the details of what made them laugh at the first place. For this purpose, language learners can easily recall those materials learned through funny presentation.

Black, (2006) suggested an Information Transfer model where a source (normally the professor) creates a humorous message so that a receiver (normally the students) can understand and react to the same message and thus produce some fruit.

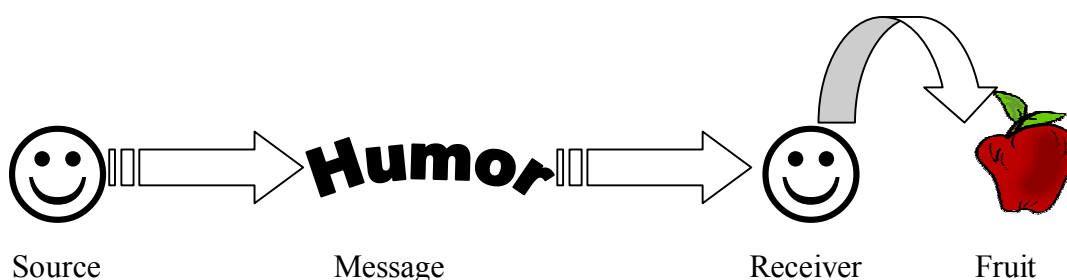


Figure 1: An Information Transfer Model of Communication (Black, 2006:6).

Moreover, and in a study done by Aboudan, (2009) on female students studying English as a second language at the UAE university, regarding the effects of humor on learning, attention and concentration in ESL classes, the results were astonishing; 71% of UAE students pointed out that humor helped them learn difficult material. Ninety-nine percent indicated that jokes help them pay more attention during class time and increased their level of concentration. And, 75% were in favor of using humor periodically. In comparison, only 1% of UAE female students believed that jokes do not have any effect on increasing concentration levels in the classroom. Meanwhile, a mere 5% claimed that humor does not help in learning a second language. Thus, this study strengthens the belief

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that humor affects students' cognitive variables positively, which in turn helps them comprehend difficult materials, as well as recall them effectively.

Likewise, the use of instructional humor can be beneficial for students to learn vocabulary, increase critical thinking, practice semantics, and remember more information. Additionally, it can bridge the gap between teachers and students as well as it can help ignite students' enthusiasm and interest in order to eliminate boredom, that sometimes accompanies dry content and helps students stay engaged throughout the lesson (Hackathon et al, 2011).

1.7.4.The Sociological Effects

One possible explanation for the existence of humor as a pure human capacity concerns its ability to promote social bonding and cohesion. Regardless of the context, humor is an important form of communication with a variety of uses.

In the classroom context, communication is often seen at the heart of all processes, since effective teaching and learning takes place only through interpersonal communication between teachers and students, as well as students with their classmates. Effective communication is one of the central issues of effective teaching that has to occur in a context where the relationships between teachers and students are neither fixed nor predetermined, rather it has to be flexible enough to build upon negotiation as they act and react through verbal and nonverbal behaviors. A well-built and positive management of classroom communication in all its forms and situations can result in an effective teaching as well as efficient student learning. Therefore, the open and interactive form of communication is considered to be the most effective and helpful in facilitating successful learning, fostering a positive classroom atmosphere and enhancing relationships between teachers and students on the basis of reciprocal trust and respect. So, this kind of interactive communication can be enhanced by incorporating a degree of appropriate humor which has been found to be a crucial aspect of any effective teaching and learning (Haris, 1999).

In conjunction with the above mentioned concepts, the place of humor as a helpful social tool in classrooms is unquestionable, since much research has shown its effectiveness in building harmonious relationships between teachers and students

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(Ashipaoloye, 2013). The process of teaching and learning is normally a humanistic mission where students prefer to see the real human side of their teachers and instructors. In this respect, a sense of humor can humanize this endeavor by bridging the gap between instructors and students, as well as joining them in the quest for knowledge. It serves as a helpful tool of communication in establishing those qualified relationships by breaking the ice, decreasing the amount of fear and tension, hence, promoting humanness. Since humor can be efficient in building such a rapport inside the classroom, it will simply result in establishing a sense of trust which is a must in any effective education (Lei et al, 2010).

Therefore, humor serves as a vehicle in which the immediate behavior decreases the psychological distance between teachers and students which in turn results in positive effects on both cognitive and affective learning (Shade, 1996). According to Andersen, (1979) “The value of humor in the classroom may be particularly related to its role in promoting a sense of immediacy. Immediacy is an educational concept referring to the degree to which a teacher makes a close personal connection with students, as opposed to remaining distant and aloof“ (as quoted in Martin, 2007:353). Thus, humor and immediacy behaviors can involve smiling, exaggerated facial expressions and body movements, and changes in rate, pitch, and volume of one's voice, which can be perceived positively and viewed as highly immediate by students (Wanzer & Frymier, 1999).

Along the same method, humor has proven to be an effective technique that can help generate a climate conducive to both instructing and learning, wherein everyone is considered a teacher and student, which can lead to respect and acceptance among all. Such a healthy climate can be fruitful with the integration of some funny activities, where students can have fun and work with one another and with the teacher, often resulting in some difficulties, experiencing some interpersonal problems that will further strengthen relationships between students and their classmates, as well as with their teachers. It is that feeling of safety that promotes a positive social climate, simply because play and humor encourage students to be more open with their teachers, and it also gives them the opportunity to go to the teacher when confronted with a problem without being afraid or threatened. Thus, students will learn a great deal about interpersonal communication because developing such an interpersonal skills and competence in dealing with peers and teachers can be crucial for students' academic growth, as well as their social success and adjustment (Hashem, 1994). Moreover, those individuals with a sense of humor tend to

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adapt to various people and situations more effectively during communication than others. It is because those humor oriented individuals can positively make others feel at ease through bringing forth laughter and smiles (Wanzer & Frymier, 1999). Yet, according to Goleman, (1998) humor is important in building and maintaining such positive relationships as long as it is measured in an effective way in order to promote emotional intelligence and to influence one's own and other people's emotions (as cited in Morrisson, 2008).

1.8. The Benefits of Integrating Humor in FL Classroom

Humor occupies a central part in any language, since it has a great impact on the way languages are acquired or learned (Ziyaeemehr & Vijay, 2014). Additionally, Deneire (1995), acknowledges that the advantage of humor lies in its harmonious integration with any language teaching approach or method (as cited in Nadeem, 2012).

Moreover, much research advocates the idea that a myriad of improvements to both teaching and learning processes in second language education can be obtained through the proficient use of humor by teachers. Since it is communicated through language and can be integrated in instruction of all four main language skills, humor is useful in teaching a second language. Learners can develop a sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence in L2 through the use of verbal humor such as wordplays, funny stories, puns, and content related jokes (Ziyaeemehr & Vijay, 2011). More specifically, and according to Deneire, (1995), humor can serve as a powerful tool in arising students' awareness about the phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic differences between their L1 and the target language (as cited in Alksidon, 2005). As suggested by Deneire, the following examples illustrate well the effective application of humor in learning another language:

1. Phonology

An American in a British hospital asks the nurse: "Did I come here to die?"

The nurse answers, "No, it was yesterdie."

2. Morphology

John Kennedy's famous blunder in Berlin: Ich bin ein Berliner(I am jelly doughnut), instead of Ich bin Berliner [I am a Berliner]

3. Lexicon

A: "Waiter, do you serve crabs here?" asks a customer.

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B: “We serve everybody. Just have a seat at this table, sir.”

4. Syntax

Student 1: The dean announced that he is going to stop drinking on campus.”

Student 2: “No kidding! Next thing you know he’ll want us to stop drinking too.”

5. Syntax + Lexicon

Q: How do you make a horse fast?

A: Don’t give him anything for a while (as cited in Alksidon,2005:50).

All of the above mentioned jokes can hold the student’s attention as well as reinforce some important elements associated with the language: The phonology example highlights some differences in pronunciation between British and American English. The morphology example illustrates the significance of certain morphemes in the process of conveying meanings properly. Whereas, the lexical item shows that there are some words that can bear dual meanings such as the word crab (i.e. a cranky person or a marine dwelling crustacean). Meanwhile, the syntax example demonstrates the structural vagueness of the initial sentence since it does not seem clear whether the dean himself is the one who has to stop drinking, or he wants to stop his students from drinking. Finally, the mixed example of syntax and lexicon presents the ambiguity of the two meanings for fast in the sense that it can be employed as a verb or adjective (Alksidon, 2005).

Furthermore, the application of humor can facilitate the acquirement of vocabulary as well as it can help learners differentiate between figurative and literal meaning. Humor also helps enrich and develop visual memory as well as enhances the capacity to solve linguistic problems. There are many procedures that can be used to add humor to language classrooms varying from idiomatic expressions, riddles, or proverbs, pronunciation, games, comics, and typical grammatical errors (Olajoke,2013). Humor can make the process of correcting errors a funny game also where students can improve their level of performance. As an example studying common errors through some humorous activities or revising a list of typical mistakes can be very helpful (Muñoz, 2005).

This same thought as suggested by Medgyes, (2002), who proposes that the use of funny games, stories, jokes, puzzles, pictures, sketches, and dialogues can be beneficial for all levels of L2 learners. Also, activities like recording different types of laughs and providing students with a list of adjectives (bitter, nervous, polite, hearty, hysterical) to

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match with each laugh, suggests that these activities can help the learner better understand that humor can be a helpful tool for instruction and not just a laughing matter.

Along the same line, those humorous materials such as gesticulations, anecdotes or jokes can be beneficial in language class, since they provide a sort of relief for learners from tension and boredom which may take place during the learning process. However, the teacher should plan the use of those humorous items in a cautious manner in order to build learners' language skills. Consequently, he has to act in a clever way that should give learners the impression of being spontaneous (Stroud, 2013).

In a recent study conducted by Ziyaeemehr and Vijay, (2011) on the role of verbal humor in ESL classrooms, pointed out that instructor humor serves two basic functions in the language classroom: (1) It foregrounds and reinforces linguistic knowledge and (2) highlights cultural dissimilarities among L1 and L2. Whereas, Muñoz, (2005) summed up some benefits of incorporating humor in ESL classrooms by stating that "There are many benefits to complementing humor in the classroom, it creates a cooperative atmosphere helping students to better relate to one another and it focuses them more effectively. It adds a cultural frame to language by presenting a tone, expression and context to the materials, thus increasing cultural knowledge" (42).

Similarly, the use humor in EFL has been discussed as a helpful way to create a more comfortable, productive classroom environment in language learning, thus plenty of positive effects of humor in language classrooms can be noticed among of which are; enhancing motivation, removing anxiety and stress, and creating a comfortable environment for foreign language learners. It can be considered as a tool of reinforcement for students in order to leave ample space for them to remember what they should know about the traditions and beliefs of the target culture (Stroud, 2013).

1.9. Negative Effects of Humor

As stated by Sam and Ervin, (1982) in their article, *Humor Wise and Otherwise*, "Like freedom, humor can be abused. It is sometimes caustic" (154). An opinion to which Shade, (1996) concurred by further acknowledging that using instructional humor in a purposeful way in the classroom can bring plentiful benefits. However, like other things in life, the benefits are usually accompanied by negative things, and humor is no exception.

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In the light of what is suggested above, it is evident that there are concerns that must be taken into account when one attempts to use humor in the classroom. It is worth mentioning to consider these concerns because abusing humor in the classroom once may be more devastating than the advantages gained by creating an open environment. It is also important to mention that damaging humor can occur even after an open climate has been created through the use of humor (Scott G, 1994). According to Wandersee, (1982) “humor is like a stick of dynamite. In an expert's hands it can blast away obstructions between subject matter and student. But in a novice's grasp, it may destroy a lesson just as easily” (212). Hence, it can be used for constructive, as well as for deconstructive purposes. The difference is that laughing with someone differs completely from laughing at him, which further means that there are boundaries and criteria that determine what and who is funny, such as the suitability and type of humor used, style and method of humorous presentation, etc. Telling jokes and gags, does not always mean that the audience laughs or learns. Forms such as ridicule, satire, cynicism, and others of negative ‘put down’ humor are not usually supportive in case they contain meanness, or feelings of superiority and disdain. Teachers or students who may find themselves as an object of ridicule or mockery can easily take it personally which can exacerbate the situation inside the classroom. So, humor presented in such manner and in such cases can be the result of negative feelings (Morreall,1983 in Korobkin, 1988).

Additionally, Shade, (1996) proposed a list of forewarnings about using humor in the classroom that contains the list of humor types below which can have devastating effects on students, as well as the overall classroom environment. According to Shade these categories of humor are normally perceived as inappropriate in any classroom environment because they often tend to reflect bad taste and judgment which generally can lead to many negative consequences.

1) Distractions- Is the use of humor which has no direct relation to the content, thus it is often results in distraction and deviation from the learning goal (Shade, 1996). In a study conducted by Wanzer et al, (2006) details unrelated humor by instructors who employ humor in the classroom, resulting in distraction. Students identified nine subcategories of this distracting type of humor which may include the following: stories, jokes, critical/cynical humor, teasing students, college life stereotypes, teacher performance, creative language use, current events/political, and media/external objects.

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- **Stories**-Teacher uses humorous stories that were not related to the class material.
 - **Jokes**-Teacher uses jokes that were not related to the course material.
 - **Critical/Cynical**-Teacher uses critical or cynical humor that has no relation to the course material.
 - **Directed Towards Student/Teasing**- Teacher humor attempts that were not related to the course material and involved teasing or making fun of a student.
 - **College Life Stereotypes**-Teacher uses humorous stereotypical college behaviors that do not bear any relation to the course material.
 - **Teacher Performance**-Teacher uses humorous animated performance that has no relation to class material.
 - **Creative Language Usage**-Teachers uses creative language such as word play in a humorous manner which has no relation to the course material.
 - **Current Events/Political**-Teachers comments on the current events or political events in humorous way that were not related to the course material.
 - **Using Media or External Objects**- The use of different types of media that involves humor that were not related to the course material.
- 2) **Hostile Humor**-The use of humor may lead to non-productive and punishing outcomes to all involved. The hostile forms of humor are often associated with feelings of superiority that is to make someone an object of fun and ridicule or feeling good at the expense of another.
- 3) **Ridicule**- the use of humor for the sake of belittling others, it is the same with the modern notion of 'put-downs'. It may consist of words and actions, such as derisive or disdainful laughter. Its goal is often mean and malicious, and may include sarcasm comments (Berk, 2002). This has been used in the past by teachers for educational corrective purposes but it has proven to be ineffective. Although there is an immediate behavioral change that might occur, the long-term negative effects to the individual's self-esteem may be more devastating.
- 4) **Satire**- Is a comic device that is used to criticize and ridicule. Satire, irony, and puns are sometimes seen as "higher" forms of humor since all of them involve symbolism, and require advanced forms of language abilities and comprehension. Hence, if teachers do not know their students well enough, they may get them unintentionally hurt.
- 5) **Cynicism**- Is based on the belief that self-interest governs all mankind's behaviors.

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Thus, no goodness in the world. It may result in demotivating learners.

- 6) **Sarcasm-** Is defined by Heiman, (1998) as “the speaker’s actual contempt, indifference, or hostility toward his or her target” (Berk, 2002:16). It is often brutal, the word itself has a Greek origin (sarkasmos) that means to tear flesh. It can lead to dangerous effects among of which is the destruction of self-esteem. It is often used to humiliate, mock, and make fun of others, thus, leading to poor attitudes and profound resentments (Shade, 1996). In the classroom, professors use it to criticize, scold, ridicule, and push students to perform. Elms, (2001) stated that what makes sarcasm such a dangerous device is that it is spontaneous. So, it is extremely risky in the sense that no one can control the positivity or negativity of the comment. It can result in unpredictable, negative and long term consequences on the individual student (as in Berk, 2002).
- 7) **Ethnic/Racial-** Jokes in which a particular ethnic group is demeaned, ridiculed, made fun of.
- 8) **Religious-Jokes-** Making fun of religions.
- 9) **Hostile-Jokes-** Their purpose is to attack the person's dignity.
- 10) **Demeaning to Men/Women-** The use of humor where males/females are often disgraced by the opposite sex.
- 11) **Sick-Jokes-** Making fun of death, deformity, disease, or handicapping conditions. (shade, 1996).

Furthermore, Sullivan, (1992) suggested other cautions where the use of humor is seen as inappropriate : (1) Students are normally taught by a professional, and not a clown;(2) teachers should never joke about a student's name because of the possible damage that may happen to the student's self-esteem; (3) teachers should keep their humor associated with the instruction or the content because using inappropriate humor and joking may waist valuable class time and may lead to sexist and racist humor which can create problems in the classroom(as quoted in Stephen,1993:10).

In conjunction with the previous ideas, Terry and Woods, Downs et al, (1988) discovered that the use of too much humor can result in negative effects. Their study of humor usage by ‘award winning’ and ‘ordinary’ teachers pointed out that award winning teachers used humor less frequently than did ordinary teachers. Hence, this according to the researchers supports the belief that the use of too much humor or self-disclosure is inappropriate and can stimulate negative affect (as cited in Askildson, 2005). In addition,

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Berk, (2002) suggested that offensive humor is often based on an individual, and subjective interpretation since people tend to joke more easily at the expense of others because they care much more about their own dignity and comfort rather than that of others. Thus, drawing boundaries is very essential to consider ‘offensiveness’ in the professor-student context. The diversity of backgrounds, values and moral principles of the students are considered to be the most sensitive issues that can be violated easily by the use of the inappropriate type of humor. Berk further suggested the following negative effects of what may offend students inside the classroom.

- Tightening up
- Withdrawal
- Resentment
- Anger
- Tension
- Anxiety
- Turning off/tuning out

Berk goes on to conclude that the above list shares a common denominator which is to “disconnect”. It may destroy students’ motivation or their spirit to learn. He further stated that “a single offensive joke can irreparably damage your relationship with the student. In other words, you quite possibly could lose that student for the entire semester” (14). It is simply because a joke that is meant to be at the expense of a group or individual can result in a variety of negative consequences in the classroom, which in turn can turn students away from an entire field of study.

Physiologically speaking, regardless of all the benefits that laughter may yield on the human body, there are still probable risks that can affect some people who suffer from serious medical conditions (Berk,2002). According to Fry, (1992) there are some risks that may occur as a result of laughing, that have a relation with the central nervous, muscular, respiratory, circulatory, and cardiovascular systems. For example, those people who have experienced neurological reactions to laughter, including seizures and cataplectic and narcoleptic attacks, they can receive large increases in abdominal and thoracic pressure which may hurt them badly (as cited in Berk,2002).

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1.10. Guidelines to Using Humor in the Classroom

Although, it is almost intricate to find exact guidelines which may govern the use of humor in the classroom, some important considerations do exist. It is generally accepted that the use of too much humor is not appropriate, and has to be avoided. Thus, the question that need to be asked here is ‘how to use humor effectively in the classroom without reducing the teacher’s credibility, and to avoid any kind of offence to any member of the class?’, to answer this important question Scott G, (1993) suggested the following guidelines:

- Presentational skills are to be taken into account when planning the use of humor in the classroom, since humor contains a vast array of different types as well as many different ways and styles to deliver.
- Determining the type of the target audience is crucial when using humor. Because using humor varies widely; a homogeneous group is totally different from a heterogeneous group where only part of the group may appreciate the use of humor in a certain way, while others might perceive it as inappropriate or offensive.
- In the process of planning humor, the degree of relevancy to the course material is very crucial, since its effectiveness involves the use of those types (jokes, puns, ,etc.) in a judicious way that must be related to the course material, any humor usage that is not relevant to the topic can result in reducing credibility. In contrast, the use of humor that is tied to the course material can increase students’ retention.
- The practice of using humor appropriately is preferred because some humor may not appear offensive to the teacher where it can be offensive to members of the class. As an example the use of sick- jokes which has proven to bear negative evaluations and is considered "childish" humor by college students. Thus, it would be better to know that some humor may offend someone before using it.
- Finally, the use of humorous items are not normally have to occur at the expense of certain individuals or groups of people for the sake of disparaging, rather there has to be a cautious integration of such items. According to Korobkin, (1988):

”The integration of humorous activities and comments into the instructional sequence can be a slow and cautious process that requires a lot of trial and revision, much like a comedy routine. Instructors need to examine the subject matter, their own personal

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brand of humor, their presentational skills, and their audiences needs in order to develop planned humor use and occasional spontaneity” (14).

Conclusion

Throughout the course of this study, and the review of the literature, we attempted to shed light on the effects of using humor in classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular. So, it is evident that much of the literature seems to advocate the idea that the judicious use of humor can result in a surfeit of psychological, physical, cognitive and sociological benefits that may lead to a greater interest, satisfaction and enjoyment for both teachers and students. Therefore, humor or at least a healthy dose of humor, can lead to the establishment of a healthy supportive climate that can affect individuals positively in every aspect of the teaching and learning processes.

Chapter Two

Field Work

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Introduction

The aforementioned corpus of literature dealt solely with the theoretical side of the present study, by highlighting the most important elements associated with the topic of humor and its effects in the classroom context. However, this chapter is devoted to the practical side of the study for the sake of assessing the gathered data that will prove what has already been mentioned in the review of literature.

Teachers and students are chosen to be the source of the current study, since they are the main components of any classroom setting. Hence, their opinions and views are very critical to test our hypothesis and research questions. The questionnaire was designed as a tool for gathering information from both, teachers, and students of Master one (Literature and Civilization), as well as Master one and two (Linguistics and Didactics) at the level of the department of English, Adrar university. The goal is to obtain perceptions from a considerable number of respondents about the topic under investigation.

2.1. The Teachers' Questionnaire

2.1.1. The Participants

The teachers' questionnaire was handed out to (12) teachers who are in charge of teaching different modules at the Department of English at University of Adrar. Although we tried to include all the teachers of the department in order to supplement the study with different attitudes and opinions, we were not able to fulfill this since it depended on the availability of the teachers during the period of distributing the questionnaire. The population was selected taking into consideration that teachers who teach different modules will enrich the study results, since modules differ in terms of contents and level of difficulty, as well as classroom environments.

2.1.2. The Aim of the Questionnaire

Since teachers fulfill a crucial role in the classroom setting and the educational process as a whole, they are concerned with this research. So, creating a healthy atmosphere through the use of humor as a technique depends totally on teachers. Hence, their attitudes about the effects of such a technique inside the classroom are absolutely of significance to the authenticity of the current research.

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2.1.3. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is an adapted version from Alksidon, (2005); Morisson, (2008). This type of questionnaire is chosen mainly due to teachers' commitment to their duties, so they were restricted by time, besides that there were many other studies at the same department. The questionnaire is composed of 12 close ended questions, with the majority being prepared questions. The participants were asked to circle one of the pre determined choices. There are two(the first one, and the last one) of the questions that are accompanied by follow-up questions that require a sort of justification or explanation for selecting these choices. The first one deals with the role of humor in the classroom. Whereas, the other one, which is the last one tackles the probable negative effects of humor in the classroom. The questionnaire includes also three multiple choice questions that revolve around teachers' opinion concerning the manner, amount and effects of the use of humor in the classroom. However, The majority of the questions were in the form of agreement scale that consists of numbers one through three, with one being agree , two not sure and three disagree. This scale was designed mainly to investigate the positive effects of humor in the classroom. We preferred to use such type of questions as they are easy to read , complete, easy to collect data with, as well as easy to analyze.

The results were collected in table format, a percentage for each selection of each responses and questions were calculated in order to determine the percentage of each response. Furthermore, the questionnaire was divided into sections as follows:

- **Section One: Humor in teaching (From Question 1 to 3)**

The questions of this part are mainly devoted to investigate the teachers' attitudes towards the use of humor in the classroom, the extent to which their humor usage is relevant to the subject matter , and their perceptions concerning the appropriate amount of humor they think is needed in the classroom.

- **Section Two: Teachers' Perception about the Psychological Effects of Humor on Students in the Classroom (From 4 to 6)**

In this section, the researcher tries to investigate whether the teachers agree or disagree about the psychological effects of the use of humor on students in the classroom. A multiple choice question is included which is the fifth one. This question seeks to

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determine the extent to which teachers believe the use of humor inside the classroom can make students feel relaxed.

- **Section Three: Teachers' Perception about the Cognitive Effects of Humor on Students in the Classroom (From 7 to 9)**

In this sector, the researcher seeks to determine whether the teachers agree or disagree about the positive effects of the use of humor on students' cognitive side in the classroom.

- **Section Four: Teachers' Perceptions about the Sociological Effects of Humor in the Classroom Atmosphere(from 10 to 11)**

The questions of this sector seek to determine whether the teachers agree or disagree about the positive sociological effects of humor on the classroom climate such as enhancing communication and relationships between them and their students.

- **Section Five : The Teachers' Perception about the Negative Effects of Humor in the Classroom (Question 12)**

This part includes one question that deals with the teachers' opinion concerning whether humor has negative effects in the classroom or not .

2.2. Data Analysis; Interpretation of the Teachers' Questionnaire

Section one: Humor and Teaching

Q1.What role can humor play in the classroom?

Choices	A supporting teaching tool	A non sense tool	A disturbing tool
Number	11	01	00
Percentage	91.92 %	08.8 %	00 %

Table.1.The Role of Humor in the Classroom

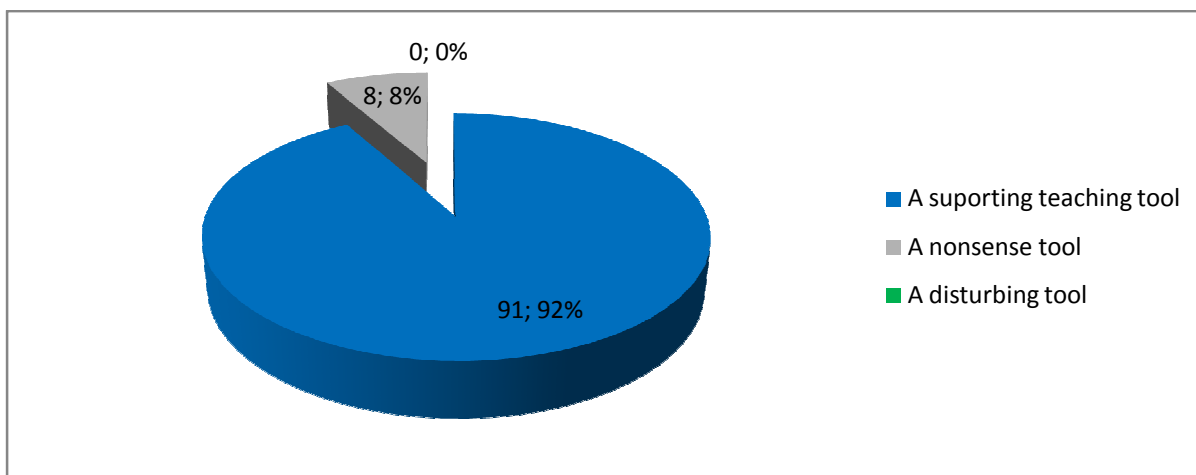


Figure.2. The Role of Humor in the Classroom

This question is considered to be at the heart of the study, since it determines whether the teachers believe that humor can have a role inside the classroom or not. Thus, it is crystal clear from the table and the graph above that the overwhelming majority of teachers (91%) advocated the belief that humor can serve as a supporting teaching tool inside the classroom. However, only (8%) i.e. one respondent thinks that it has no role at all. So, the opinion of the majority of the teachers concurs with much of what has been mentioned in the review of literature regarding the benefits of humor inside the classroom. Furthermore, they explained the reason behind selecting such an answer ‘a supporting teaching tool’ in different ways. Most of them fall into the same rubric, which is praising the role of humor in creating a healthy atmosphere where distances are decreased between teachers and students. Hence, this creates a more enjoyable and affable classroom environment. For instance, one teacher stated that “ It is very beneficial to study in a relaxed environment; besides, humor helps break the ice between teacher and learner”. Even though teachers supported the idea of the use of humor completely, still some of the justifications contended a quantity of reasonable fears such as the manner and types of integrating humor in classroom arguing that it has to be measured and well administered if it is to function well.

Q2.How much of the humor that you use is relevant to classroom subject matter?

Choices	All	Most	About half	A little	Not at all
Number	00	05	01	05	01
Percentage	00%	41.66%	8.33%	41.66%	8.33%

Table.2. Humor and Classroom Subject Matter Relatedness

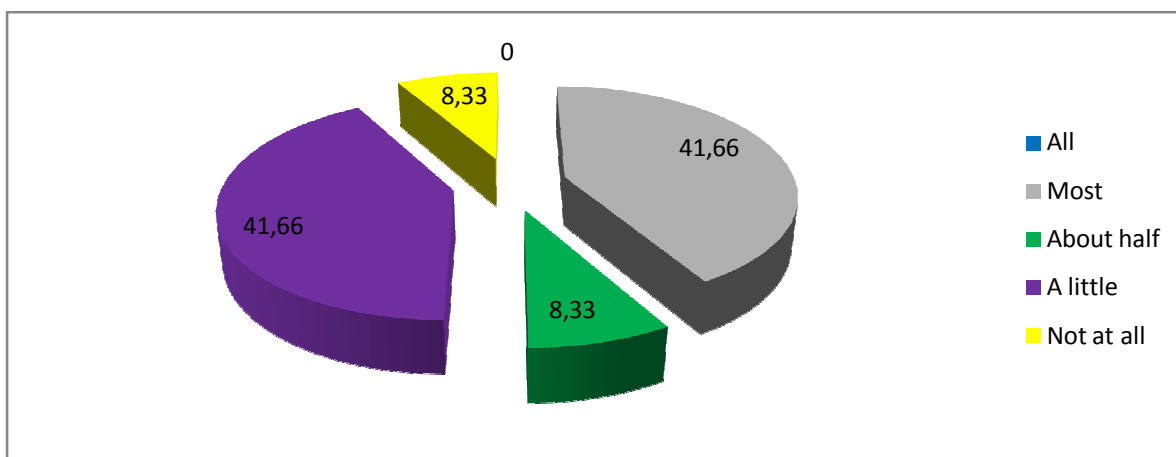


Figure.3. Humor and Classroom Subject Matter Relatedness

One of the most necessary conditions in using humor effectively inside the classroom is a degree of relatedness to the subject matter, since irrelevant humor can often result in a state of distraction, waste of time and sometimes hurtful outcomes.

Thus, it is obvious from the table and the graph above that the majority of the teachers' opinions (82%) are divided between two choices; most of humor use (41%) is relevant to subject matter, and the use of the little of it as content-related (41%). We can conclude that the first half of teachers acknowledges the presence of humor as a helpful teaching tool, whereas the other half still has some reservations concerning the incorporation of such a tool. However, almost all the teachers indicated their agreement about the usefulness of humor as a supporting teaching tool in the first question. Meanwhile, only (8%) i.e. just one respondent chose the use about half content-related humor and the remaining (8%) selected "not at all". Whereas none of the participants indicated the use of "All" humor as content-related.

Q3.How much humor (jokes, puns, stories, etc.) can be used inside the classroom?

Choices	Very much	Much	Little	Very little	Not at all
Number	00	05	01	05	00
Percentage	00%	33.33%	58.59%	08.8%	00%

Table. 3.The Advisable Amount of Humor in the Classroom.

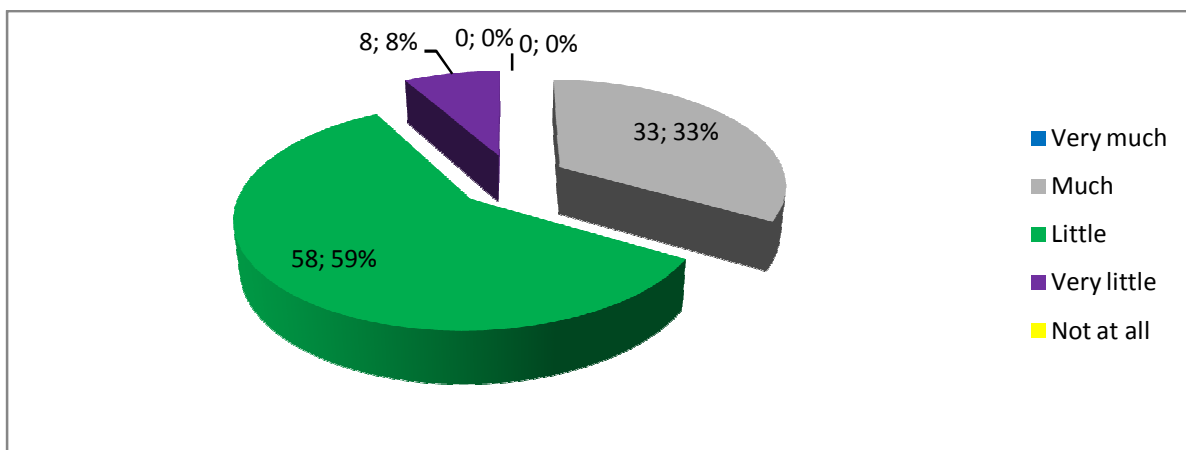


Figure .4. The Advisable Amount of Humor in the Classroom

A key element in incorporating humor in the classroom is the appropriate amount that should be used. In order to function as it should be, the use of humor has to be judiciously measured. Since the use of too much humor can dilute seriousness and might lead to other non wanted types such as offensive humor, the use of little humor can often result in a state of boredom and lack of interest in topics. The table and the graph above show that no teacher opted for the use of humor “very much” or “not all” which means that most of them prefer the cautious use of those humorous items inside the classroom. To reinforce such an opinion, more than half of the respondents (58%) advocates the use of just a little amount of humor which implies that there still some fears concerning the integration of such items may be because teachers do not want to lose control or they are afraid of deviating from the subject matter. However, a considerable number of respondents (33%) supported the idea of using much humor in the classroom may be because they prefer teaching in an enjoyable classroom that would be conducive to students learning. This supports the information mentioned throughout the theoretical chapter.

Section 2: Teachers’ Perception of the Psychological Effects of Humor on students in the Classroom.

Q4. Do you think that student’s motivation can be enhanced through injecting humor in the classroom ?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	11	01	00
Percentage	91.92 %	08.8 %	00 %

Table.4. Humor and Motivation

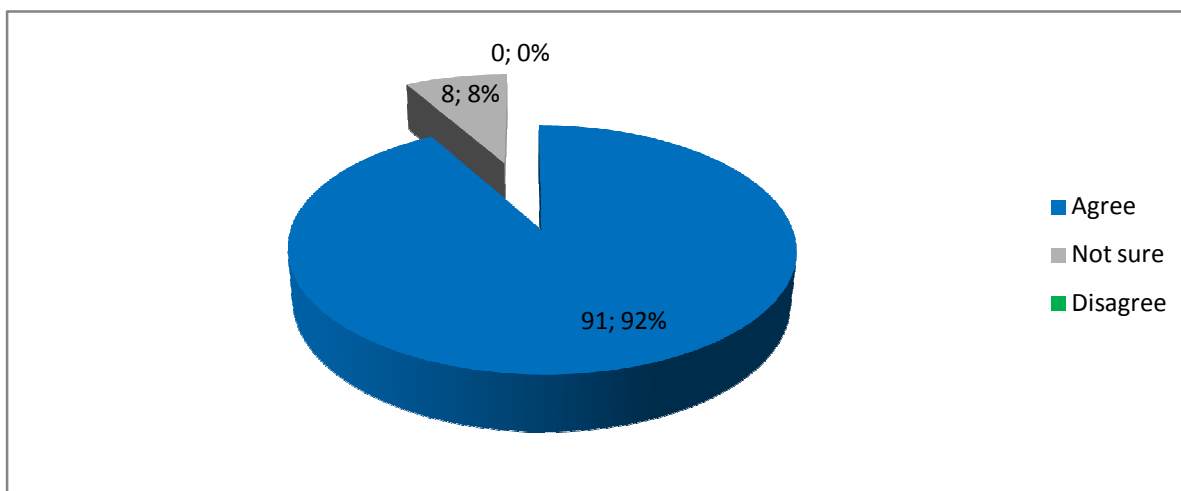


Figure.5. Humor and Motivation

Motivation has always been perceived as the essential driving force to any learning experience. Thus, it plays such an integral part in learning languages. Teachers always try to look for new strategies that may help motivate their students to learn. So, the question above was given to the teachers for the sake of investigating whether they think that students' motivation can be enhanced through injecting humor into the classroom or not. From the graph above, it is self evident that the great majority of teachers (91%) supported the idea that humor can improve students' motivation . In contrast, only (08 %) i.e. one respondent opted for not sure choice. Whereas, none of the respondents indicated his/her disagreement.

Based on these results, we can see that the teachers themselves are motivated to implement such a strategy (humor) in their classrooms. This may come from the belief that teachers are enjoying their teaching process and they are willing to work in a more pleasurable atmosphere that can keep students' interest alive, as well as help enhance their motivation to those materials presented with the help of some appropriate humorous items.

Q5. To what extent do you think that humor can make your students feel more relaxed(i.e. less anxious, less stressed) in the classroom?

Choices	Very relaxed	Relaxed	Slightly relaxed	No effect	Increasing Anxiety
Number	06	05	01	00	00
Percentage	50.51%	41.41%	8.8%	00%	00%

Table.5. Humor as a Stress and Anxiety Reducer

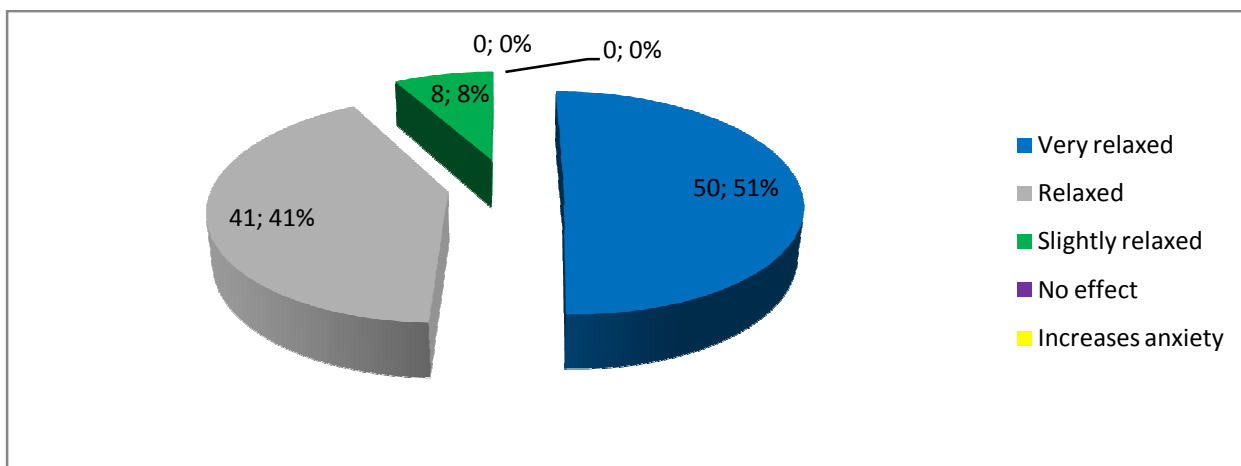


Figure.6. Humor as a Stress and Anxiety Reducer

Learning problems significantly interfere with academic achievement. Thus, anxiety and those stressful situations may hinder students from learning another language. In overcoming such a phenomenon, we propose the use of humor as a coping strategy.

When the teachers were asked about whether or not humor can reduce anxiety and stress and create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom, half of the of respondents, which represents (50%) of the population opted for “very relaxed” option, and another considerable percentage(41%) advocates that humor can make students feel relaxed. Hence, the vast majority (91%) opted for the benefits of humor as a stress and anxiety reducer. Whereas only (8%) think that humor can slightly make students feel relaxed. Additionally, no respondent selected any of the two choices left “No effect” and “increasing anxiety”, which further reinforces the fact that teachers are acknowledgeable about the curative aspects of humor to such negative feelings inside the classroom.

Q6. Do you think that humor can enhance student’s self esteem?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	07	05	00
Percentage	58.59 %	41.41 %	00 %

Table.6. Humor and Self esteem

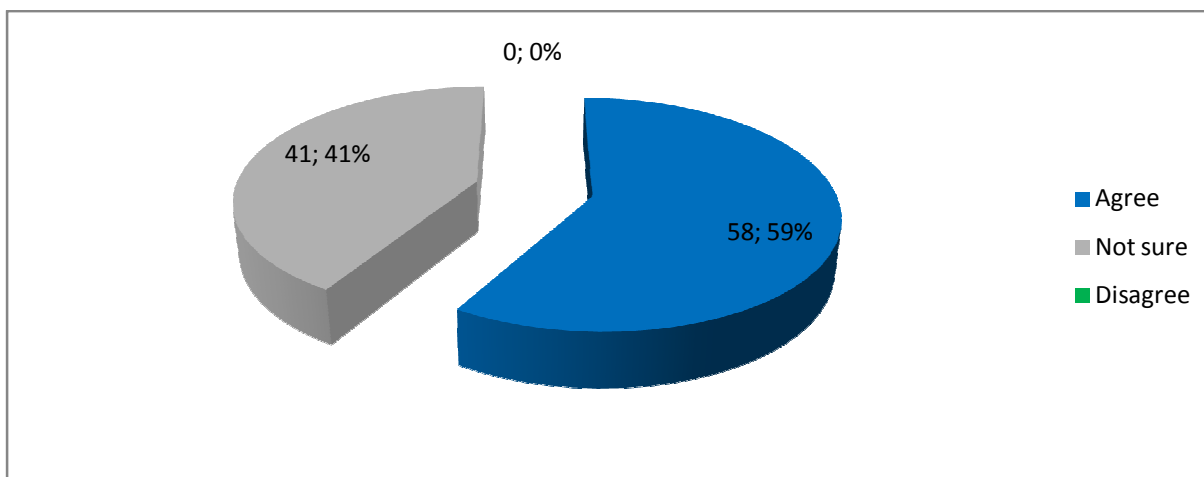


Figure .7. Humor and Self esteem

How can a learner learn in an atmosphere where he does not feel confident? Especially in the context of studying another language students often find themselves unable to speak and participate in their classrooms because of the fear of being criticized by the teacher or laughed at by their classmates. So, when the teachers were asked whether humor can enhance the student’s self esteem, a sizeable number of the teachers .i.e. (58 %) opted for “Agree” option. Additionally, no teacher opted for “disagree” option. Hence, all of this strengthens what has been mentioned in the theoretical chapter about the direct impact of humor in creating a welcoming environment where students can take risks to participate in the learning process. However, a considerable number of respondents (41 %) selected “not sure” slot, meaning that there is also a significant number of teachers who is not sure about the fact that there is a direct impact of humor on student’s self esteem.

Section 3. The Effects of Humor on Students’ Cognitive side in the Classroom.

Q 7. According to you, can humor enhance students’ comprehension?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	09	03	00
Percentage	75 %	25 %	00 %

Table.7. Humor and Comprehension

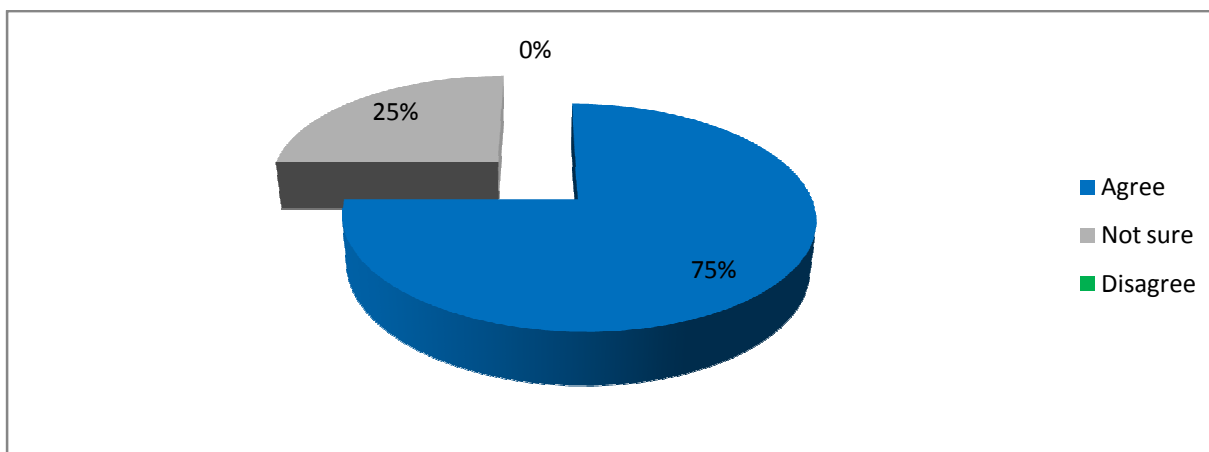


Figure.8. Humor and Comprehension

Much of the literature seems to support the belief that humor attracts attention to materials presented by teachers, which facilitates understanding. The results obtained from asking the teachers whether they think that humor can enhance students' comprehension were outstanding, (75 %) of respondents which represents the great majority of the respondents supported the idea and opted for "agree" category. Whereas, only (25 %) of the participants advocate a neutral position by selecting "not sure" option. Yet, no respondent adopted a disagreement position concerning this idea.

Based on that, the teachers do not think that humor is just a non-serious matter that often used to entertain students for the sake of entertainment, rather they are aware of the key role that humor plays on the cognitive side of their students. In other words, humor can function as a channel to deliver information in a sort of humorous way, which in turn can be received by students effortlessly. Consequently, results in a better learning excellence.

Q.8. Do you think that lessons taught in humorous way are better recalled by students than those with non humorous way?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	11	01	00
Percentage	91.92 %	08.8 %	00 %

Table.8.Humor and Retention

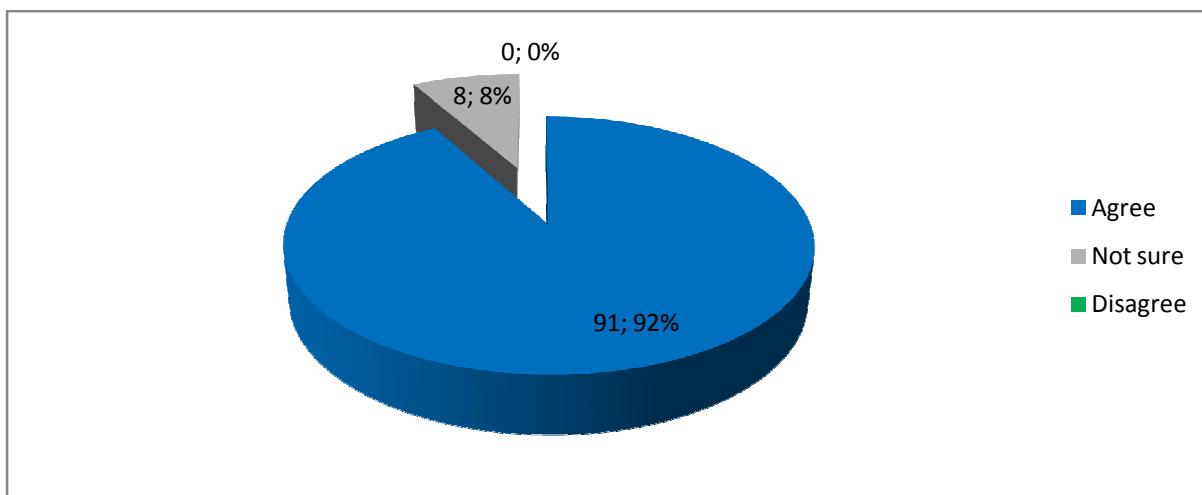


Figure.9. Humor and Retention

Throughout the first chapter, we dealt with much of the literature that advocates the idea that students are more likely to recall those lectures interjected with humorous items and presentations, especially when they are relevant to the topics being taught. Thus, what is learnt through laughter is learnt well.

Based on that, the teachers were asked whether humor can help facilitate recalling lessons in the classroom. The responses were astonishing; (91%) opted for “agree” category, whereas, only (08%) i.e. one respondent selected “not sure” option. Yet no teacher selected “disagree” category.

So, the results reveal that the teachers agreed upon the importance of those humorous items integrated into lessons may be because they think that they are helpful in the process of recalling information. This attracts the students’ attention throughout the lesson, hence students are willing to recall easily what made them laugh in the first place.

Q.9 Do you think that humor can increase students’ creativity and critical thinking?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	07	04	01
Percentage	58.59 %	33.33 %	08.8 %

Table.9. Humor, Creativity and Critical Thinking

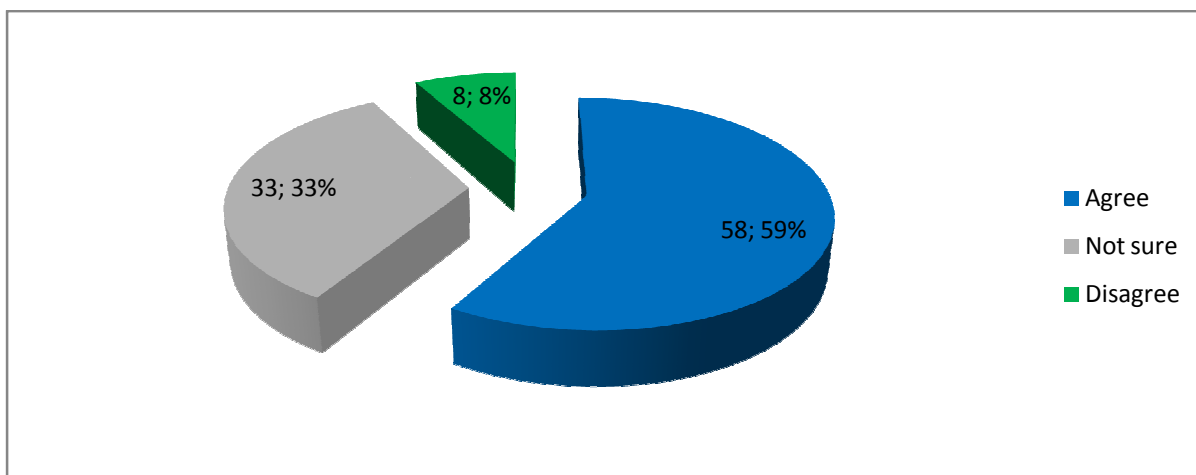


Figure.10. Humor, Creativity and Critical thinking

In the classroom context, teaching is more than a mere transmission of facts and instructions to students, rather there has to be some space devoted for students' imagination in order to open their minds to new ideas and perspectives. This in turn can help them think critically and creatively. When the teachers were asked whether humor can be adopted as a helping strategy to increase students' critical and creative capacities, the majority (58 %) supported the idea by opting for "agree" category. Whereas, a substantial number (33 %) was not sure about the fact that humor can enhance students' creativity and critical thinking. Meanwhile, only one respondent i.e. (08%) rejected the idea completely by indicating his/her disagreement.

Based on these results, it is clear that most of the teachers are aware about the fact that humor is more than telling funny stories and jokes, rather it can be used as a useful means since it can impact positively those creative and critical thinking variables. Therefore, this attitude goes hand in hand with what has been discussed in the first chapter.

Section 4. The Sociological Effects of humor in the Classroom Setting.

Q.10 Do you think that the use humor of humor can help foster a positive classroom environment?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	11	01	00
Percentage	91.92 %	08.8 %	00 %

Table.10.Humor and Classroom Environment

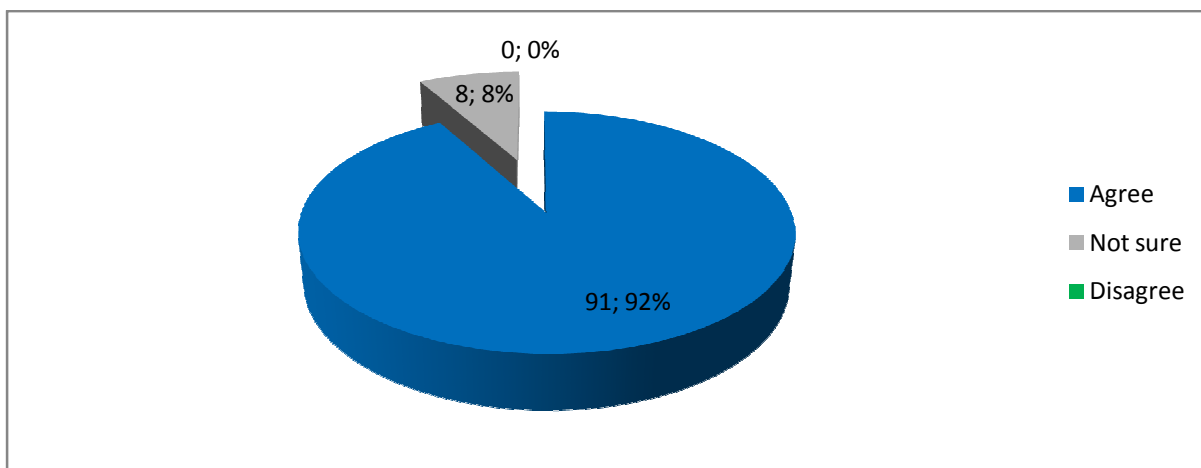


Figure.11. Humor and Classroom Environment

Teachers have a great contribution in creating a healthy classroom atmosphere where interpersonal communications are at the front of all processes. We suggest that humor can play an integral role in fostering such an atmosphere that would be conducive to students' engagement in the learning process without any difficulties. So, when the teachers were asked about their opinion concerning the use of humor in order to promote learning in an open environment, the results were surprising. The overwhelming majority that constitutes (91 %) of the whole population opted for "agree" option. Whereas, (08 %) i.e. one respondent was not sure about the effectiveness of such a strategy(humor). Yet none of the participants opted for "disagree" category .

We can therefore conclude from the analysis above, it is quite clear that nearly all teachers perceive humor as a useful and effective factor in generating a welcoming and supportive environment to the learning process.

Q.11 Do you think that the teacher/student relationship can be enhanced by a degree of humor in the classroom?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	10	02	00
Percentage	83.84 %	16.16 %	00 %

Table.11.Humor and the Student / Teacher Relationship

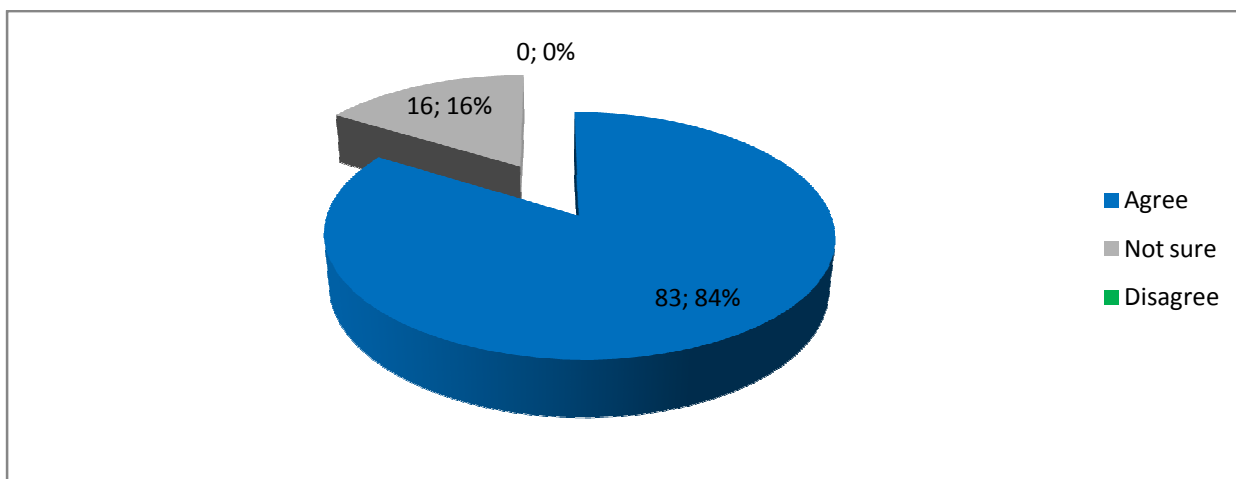


Figure.12. Humor and the Student / Teacher Relationship

Much of the literature tend to support the idea that the more reduced distance between the teacher and the student is , the better relationship will be. This in turn can result in a healthy environment that can affect positively students’ academic achievement. Thus, teachers are able to open avenues of communication inside the classroom through verbal and nonverbal immediacy. For that purpose, we propose humor as a means of bridging the gap between teachers and students. Responses to the above question reinforce what has been said so far. The majority of the teachers(83 %) agreed upon the fact that the use of humor can enhance the teacher/ student relationship. Whereas, (16 %) i.e. two respondents opted for “not sure” category as they may have some reservations about the effects of such proposal. However, none of the respondents indicated his/her disagreement.

Based on the statistics above, it is clear that the attitude of most teachers reveals that they are open and supportive at the same time towards using humor as a strategy to break the ice between them and students inside the classroom.

Section 5. The Negative Effects of Humor in the Classroom.

Q.12 Do you think that humor might have negative effects in the classroom? If yes ,what kind of effects?

Choices	Yes	No
Number	07	05
Percentage	58.59%	41.41%

Table.12.Humor and Negative Effects

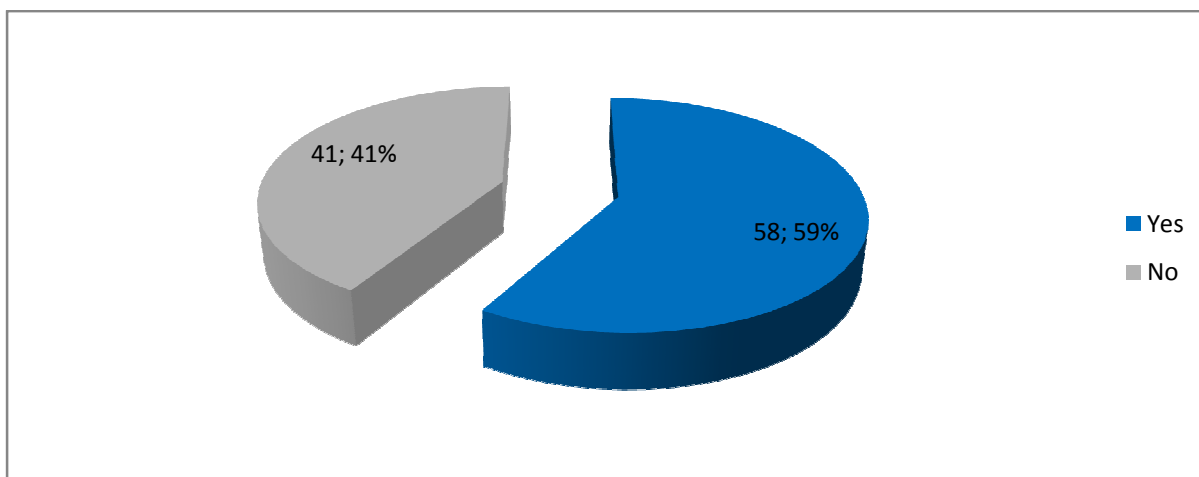


Figure.13. Humor and Negative Effects

As previously mentioned, much has been said about the powerful effects of humor in the classroom setting. Yet, like any other things in life, humor can have negative effects if abused or overused. The teachers were asked about whether they think that humor can have negative effects in the classroom, the responses were not surprising since more than half of the respondents which represents (58%) of the population opted for “yes” indicating their agreement. Whereas also a considerable percentage of (41%) i.e. five (05) teachers opted for” no” category claiming that the use of humor inside the classroom does not have any negative effects.

Additionally, the teachers who opted for “yes” category were asked to further illustrate what kind of negative effects they think they may accompany the use of humor inside the classroom. We found that most of them indicated some reservations concerning many issues related to the integration of humor in the classroom. According to the teachers, some of these fears may arise from cultural mosaics, as well as the different backgrounds that students come from. Hence, what may seem humorous to some students would not be perceived in the same way by certain others. One teacher said that “humor can have negative effects because students are not from the same background, thus, what is perceived as humorous to the teacher or certain group may seem a sort of insult to other students”. A position held by another teacher stated that “ humor is very important, however, if it exceeds the limits or misused, it would result in a state of distraction which can deviate the use of humor from its real purpose”. Similarly, other teachers indicated their concerns about the real amount of humor that should be used inside the classroom. According to them, too much humor often “dilute seriousness, hence, giving wrong impressions to students” said one teacher. Another teacher claimed that “too much humor

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can distract students, which in turn can decrease the teacher's credibility and respect inside the classroom".

2.2.1. General Discussion of the Teachers Questionnaire

Throughout the teachers' questionnaire, we noticed that teachers have agreed by an overwhelming majority, sometimes (91%), upon most of the questions that tackle the effects of humor in the classroom. For instance questions number 4 ,5,7,8,10,11 deal with the effects of humor on motivation , stress and anxiety, comprehension and retention, classroom environment and the teacher student relationship. Teachers opted for positive responses for each question. It is noteworthy also to mention that none of the teachers opted for disagree option which lends support to the fact that teachers think that the use of humor can yield numerous positive effects such as enhancing students' motivation, generating a relaxed atmosphere free from those negative emotions(anxiety, stress), enhancing students' understanding and recall of information, and improving relationships between teachers and students, etc. Therefore, these opinions reinforce the idea that using humor appropriately in the classroom can maximize students learning.

2.3. The Students' Questionnaire

2.3.1. The Participants

We addressed the questionnaire randomly to (65) students studying Master one (Literature and Civilization), as well as Master one and two (Linguistics and Didactics) at the department of English, University of Adrar. However, only (54) handed back the questionnaires.

While distributing the questionnaire, we took into account that many of master students of English have already finished a minimum three years studying English at the university. Thus, they have been taught various modules of the language by different teachers in different manners and have experienced different learning atmospheres where they might felt bored, anxious, stressed and happy. Moreover, they already acquired a background in English language which can help them understand and answer the proposed questions effectively.

2.3.2. The Aim of the Questionnaire

This questionnaire was designed to identify the effects of the use of humor on the students in the classroom setting, since students are considered to be at the heart of any

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classroom environment as well as any educational process. Thus, their attitudes and perspectives are noteworthy for the success of the present study.

2.3.3. Description of the Questionnaire

The current questionnaire was an adapted version of, Morisson, (2008) and Alksidon (2005). The questions were related to the effects of humor in the classroom environment. The questionnaire contained ten ended up questions to be read and responded by the subjects through circling the appropriate response. Among the ten questions there were two multiple choice questions, the first related the extent to which humor can facilitate learning, where as the second dealt with the extent to which humor can make students feel relaxed. Meanwhile, we included a yes, no question that tackled the negative effects of humor in the classroom, and is accompanied by a follow up question that demanded a sort of illustration. Whereas, the majority of questions were in the form of agreement scale with numbers one through three, with one being agree, two not sure, and three disagree. They are associated with the positive effects of humor on students in the classroom.

The results obtained from the process of calculating the responses chosen by the respondents for each item were combined and collected in table format, and accompanied by the percentage of each choice.

Furthermore, the questionnaire is divided into sections just like the teachers' one.

- **Humor and learning (question number one).**

This section includes one questions that seeks to investigate the students' perceptions about the extent to what they think that humor can facilitate their learning.

- **The Students' Perception of the Psychological Effects of Humor inside the Classroom(from question 2 to 5).**

The questions in this section are mainly designed to examine the psychological effects of the use of humor on the students such as enhancing motivation and self esteem, as well as elevate negative emotions like stress and anxiety.

- **The Students' Perception of the Cognitive Effects of Humor (questions 6 , 7) .**

In this part, the questions seek to examine the students' attitudes towards the positive effects of the use of humor on their cognitive variables such as , enhancing creativity and critical thinking, as well as comprehension and retention of materials.

- **The Students' Perception of The Sociological Effects of Humor in the Classroom Atmosphere(from 08 to 09).**

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The questions of this part seek to examine whether the students agree or disagree about the sociological effects of humor on the classroom climate such as enhancing communication and relationships between them and their teachers.

- **The Students' Perception of the Negative Effects of Humor (Question 10).**

This sector includes one question that deals with the students' opinions concerning the probable negative effects that humor might have in the classroom.

2.4.Data Analysis; Interpretation of the Student' Questionnaire.

Section one: Humor and Learning.

Q.1 Do you think that the use of humor inside the classroom by the teacher can facilitate learning?

Choices	Totally facilitates	Facilitates	Slightly facilitates	No effect	Hinders learning
Number	16	23	12	02	01
Percentage	29.62%	42.59%	22.22%	3.70%	1.85%

Table.13.Humor and Learning

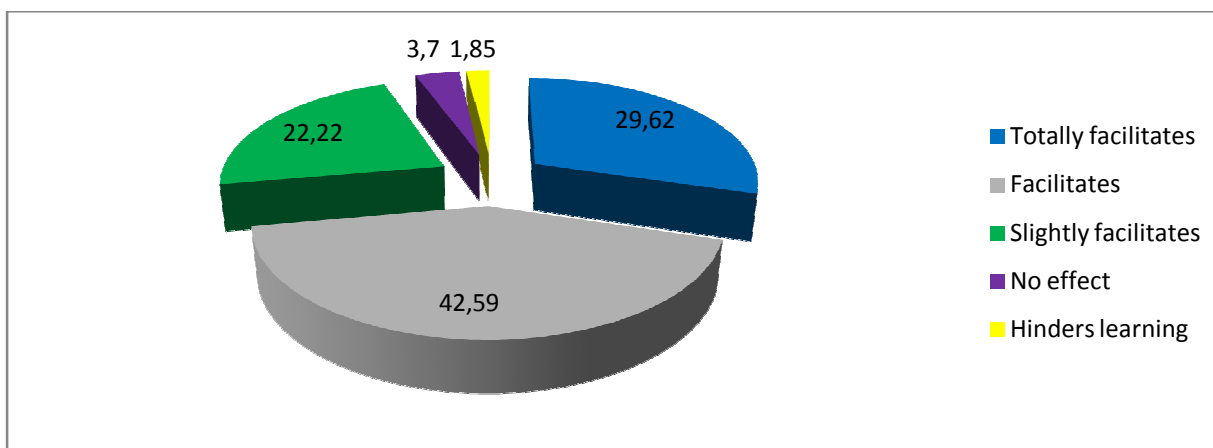


Figure.14. Humor and Learning

Students are often encountered by a wide range of difficulties that may hinder their abilities to learn better. Thus, the classroom atmosphere plays an integral role in facilitating the learning process in a way that the more welcoming the classroom is, the easier students' engage in the learning process. So, when the students were asked whether the use of humor by the teacher can facilitate their learning, 29%, i.e. 16 students opted for totally facilitates option. Whereas, (42%) i.e. 23 students selected facilitates category.

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Thus, the majority that represents 71 % of the whole population advocated the idea. Meanwhile, (22%) i.e. 12 students thought that humor slightly facilitates learning. Conversely, (3%) i.e. only two students perceived that it has no effect at all. Yet, only one student indicated that humor hinders learning.

Based on the statistics and the graph above, it is clear that a considerable number of students perceive that humor can facilitate their learning. This is due in part because they feel safe and relaxed in a healthy atmosphere wherein the teacher is a facilitator and a contributor in creating such an environment through the use of those humorous items which can set free their abilities and help them engage in the learning process.

Section two. Perceptions of the Psychological Effects of the Use of Humor inside the Classroom.

Q.2 Do you think that the use of humor by the teacher can help hold your attention and keep the class interesting?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	45	09	00
Percentage	83.84 %	16.16 %	00 %

Table.14. Humor and Attention

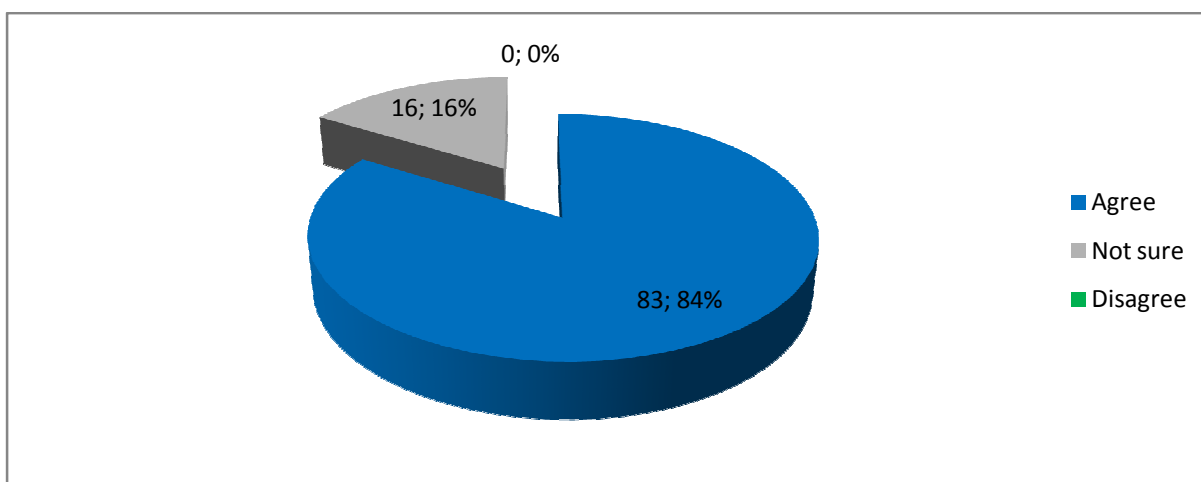


Figure.15. Humor and Attention

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One of the biggest problems students may face in their learning is boredom. It may arise from difficulties in subjects, the length of curriculum or teachers way of explaining lessons, etc. When the students were asked about their opinion concerning the use of humor by the teacher as a strategy to hold their attention, the results were surprising. The overwhelming majority (83%) i.e. 45 students indicated their agreement, whereas 16 % i.e. 9 students opted for not sure category. However, none of the respondents indicated his/her disagreement.

Based on the statistics above, there is a resounding positive agreement that most of the students advocate the idea that humor holds attention and keeps them concentrated, since the oddity and the incongruousness in those humorous items attract any learner effortlessly. Thus, perceiving normal information in an extraordinary manner.

Q.3Do you think that the use of humor by the teacher can motivate you?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	44	07	03
Percentage	81.83 %	12.12 %	05.5 %

Table.15. Humor and Motivation

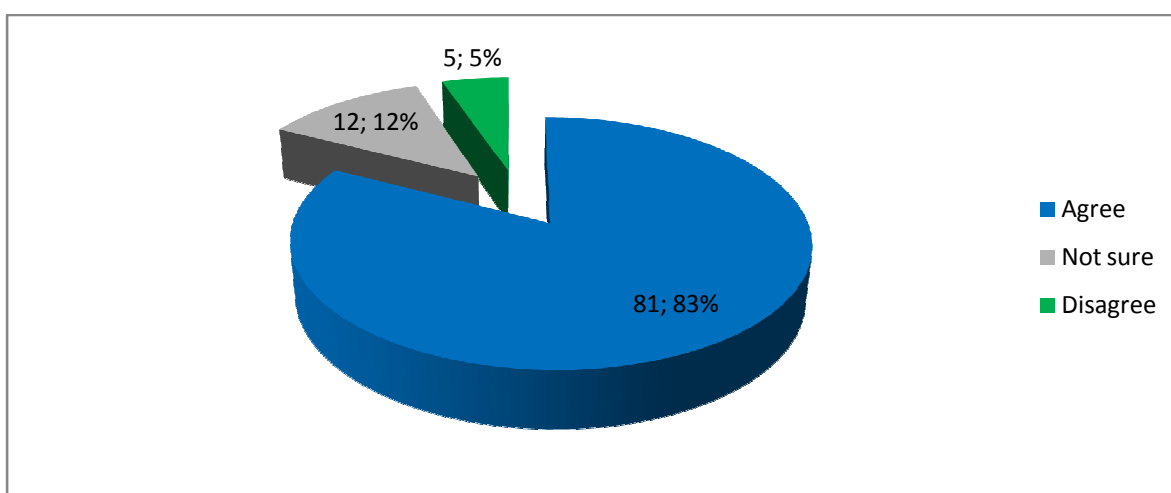


Figure.16. Humor and Motivation

As mentioned earlier in the teachers' questionnaire, motivation is perceived as what pushes the individual to perform a certain task. Hence, we propose that humor can be used as a helpful tool in motivating learners to learn another language. So, when the students

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were asked whether the use of humor by the teacher can motivate them to learn, the vast majority (81%) opted for “agree” category, whereas, (12 %) which represents seven 7 students selected ‘not sure’ option. On the contrary, just (05 %) i.e. three students indicated their disagreement concerning such an idea.

Based on the above statistics, it is obvious that most of the students agree, as do their teachers, that humor motivates them to learn, which makes the classroom an enjoyable place.

Q4. To what extent do you think that humor can make you feel more relaxed(i.e. less anxious, less stressed) in the classroom?

Choices	Very relaxed	Relaxed	Slightly relaxed	No effect	Increasing Anxiety
Number	17	26	08	03	00
Percentage	31.32%	48.49%	14.14%	05.5%	00%

Table.16. Humor as an Anxiety and Stress Reducer

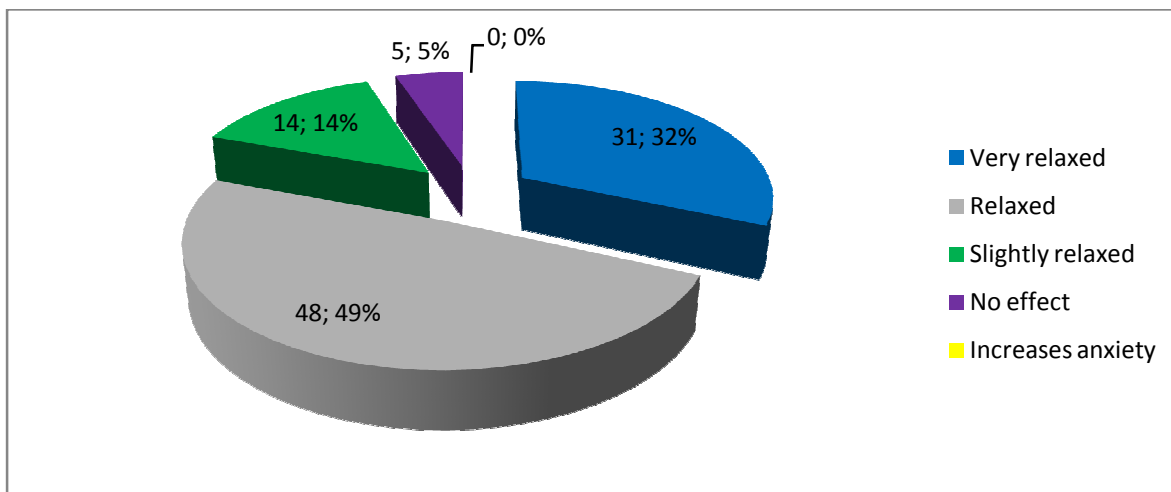


Figure.17. Humor as an Anxiety and Stress Reducer.

The language classroom is often perceived as a tense place due to many reasons such as the students’ unfamiliarity with the language being taught, and the difficulty in practicing that language in front of the whole class. However, we present humor as a relief from such classroom stressors. So, when the students were asked whether humor can lower

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their anxiety and stress levels toward the learning experience, 17 students who represent (31%) of the whole population indicated that the use of humor makes them feel very relaxed. Similarly, a considerable number of 26 students i.e. (48%) pointed out that humor makes them feel relaxed. Hence, the great majority of the students(79%) are favorable to our suggestion and opted for either ‘very relaxed’ or ‘relaxed’ categories. Whereas, a minority of eight students that represents 14% of the whole population indicated that humor makes them feel slightly relaxed. Meanwhile 05% i.e. three students selected no effect option, which means that they think that humor has no effect on them. Yet, none of the participants opted for ‘increasing anxiety’ option.

Based on the statistics and the graph, most of the students support the idea that the use of humor can reduce their stress and anxiety in the classroom, thus encourages them to take part in their learning. Students who feel at ill at ease, will laugh during tense learning moments.

Q.5 Do you think that the use of humor inside the classroom can enhance your self esteem?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	30	18	06
Percentage	55.56 %	33.33 %	11.11 %

Table.17. Humor and Self esteem

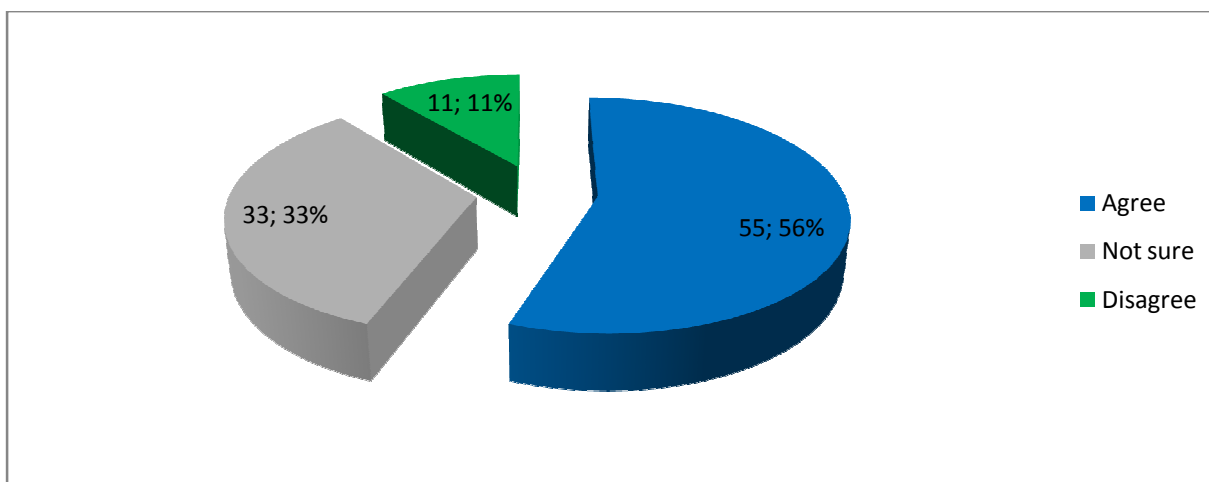


Figure.18. Humor and Self esteem.

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Self-esteem is very important in learning a language, since a confident learner will simply try new learning and take risks in order to be successful, and that depends more on the environment. Thus, when the students were asked whether they agree that humor can play a role in enhancing their self-esteem in the classroom, a considerable percentage of (55 %) opted for agree category. Whereas, (33%) of the respondents indicated that they are not sure about such a suggestion. However, only (11%) i.e. 06 respondents indicated their disagreement.

Based on this analysis, it is clear that many of the students advocate the idea that the use of humor inside the classroom enhances their self-esteem. It is mainly due in part to the fact that they feel at ease when humor unchains them from shyness and fear that often accompany any language learning environment. Thus, it allows them to take risks and participate effectively in the classroom.

Section three. The Students' Perception of the Cognitive Effects of Humor.

Q3.6 In your opinion, can humor help you understand and retain lessons?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	38	12	04
Percentage	70.71%	22.22 %	07.7 %

Table.18. Humor , Comprehension and Retention

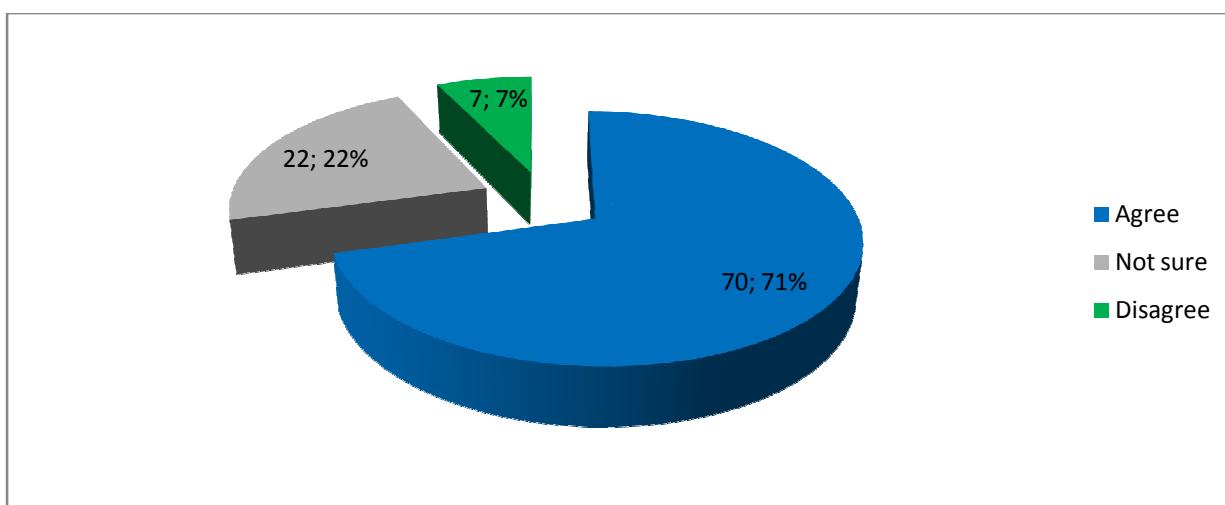


Figure.19. Humor , Comprehension and Retention.

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Studies have proven the positive effects of humor and humorous examples on the comprehension and retention of lecture material. Thus, when the students were asked whether humor can help them understand and retain lessons better, the great majority (70%) approved that by opting for agree category. Whereas, (22 %) indicated that they are not sure concerning this idea. Meanwhile, only (07%) i.e. four students did not agree and opted for ‘disagree’ category.

From these results, we can see that most of the students are favorable to the idea that humor affects their cognitive variables positively. Therefore, it helps them comprehend and recall lessons easily. This lends support to the fact that humorous items attract attention to the material presented in a way that language learners retain easily what made them laugh at the first place.

Q.7 Can humor help increase your creativity and critical thinking?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	34	17	03
Percentage	62.63%	31.32 %	05.5 %

Table.19. Humor, Creativity and Critical Thinking

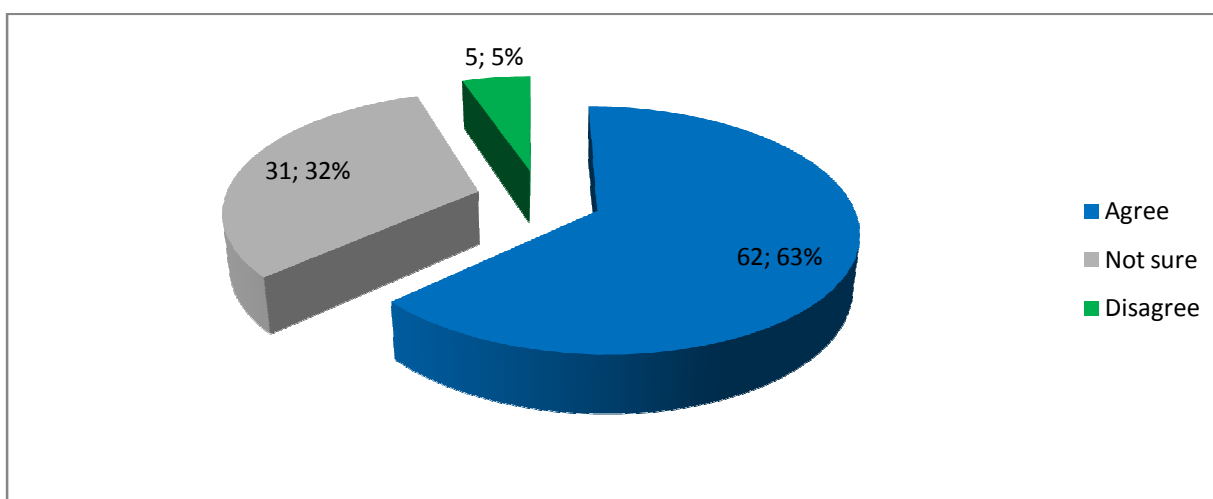


Figure.20. Humor, Creativity and Critical Thinking

Since it is communicated through language and based on language play , humor can affect students’ imagination. This can have a great impact on students’ inspiration which

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will lead them to see different perspectives. Thus, When the students were asked whether or not the use of humor inside the classroom can increase their creativity and critical thinking, a considerable number of 34 students i.e.(62%) advocated this idea by indicating their agreement. Whereas, (31%) i.e. 17 students opted for 'not sure' category, meaning they preferred to take a neutral position. Meanwhile, only three students which represents (05%) of the whole population stated their disagreement concerning this suggestion.

This reveals that a significant number of the students supported the idea that humor affects their cognitive abilities positively. Hence, it enhances their creative and critical thinking. Humorous items such as jokes, riddles, etc. contain a sort of incongruity that comes from the oddity in those humorous types which often goes against the students' expectations. It is that surprise that can help them think differently.

Section four. Students' Perceptions about the Sociological Effects of Humor inside the Classroom.

Q4.8According to you, can the use of humor help foster a positive classroom environment?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	41	11	02
Percentage	75.77%	20.20 %	03.3 %

Table.20.Humor and the Classroom Environment

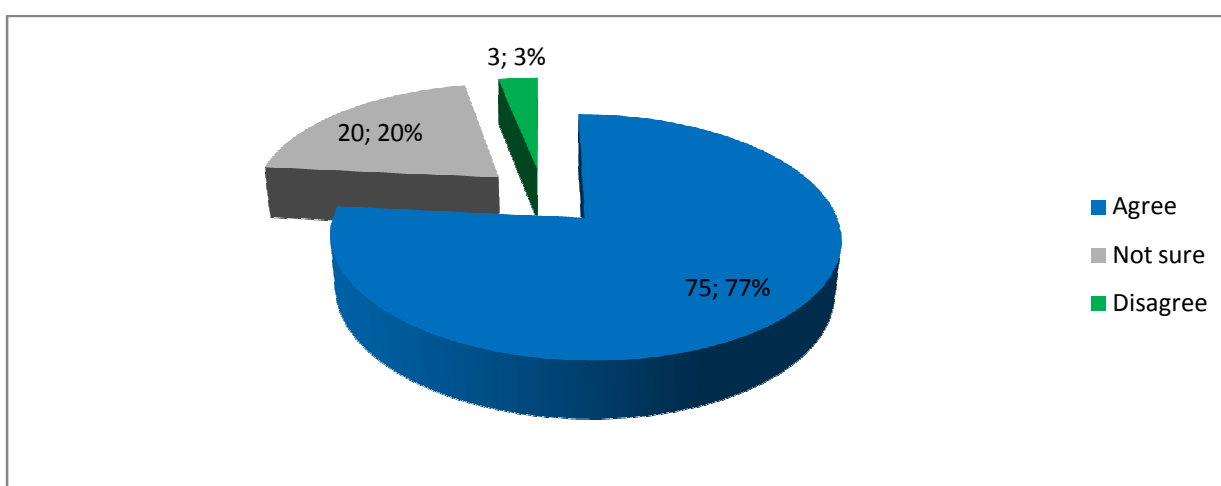


Figure.21.Humor and Classroom Environment

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Learning another language is often difficult to accomplish successfully in a tense and stressful circumstances and situations. Yet, a comfortable and positive surrounding may serve to facilitate this undertaking. The students were asked whether or not they think that humor can be helpful in fostering a positive classroom environment. The responses were surprising, since the majority(75%) i.e. 41 students opted for 'agree' category indicating their agreement. Whereas, (20%) selected 'not sure' option, pointing out their state of neutrality to such a suggestion. Meanwhile, only (03%) i.e. just two students opted for disagree category.

Based on these statistics, most of the students advocate the idea that humor can generate a positive classroom atmosphere. In general, students feel safe and relaxed in an enjoyable climate where they can engage easily in the learning process.

Q.9 Do you think that teacher/student relationship is enhanced by a degree of humor in the classroom?

Choices	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
Number	37	16	01
Percentage	68.51%	29.62 %	01.85 %

Table.21. Humor and Teacher/Student Relationship

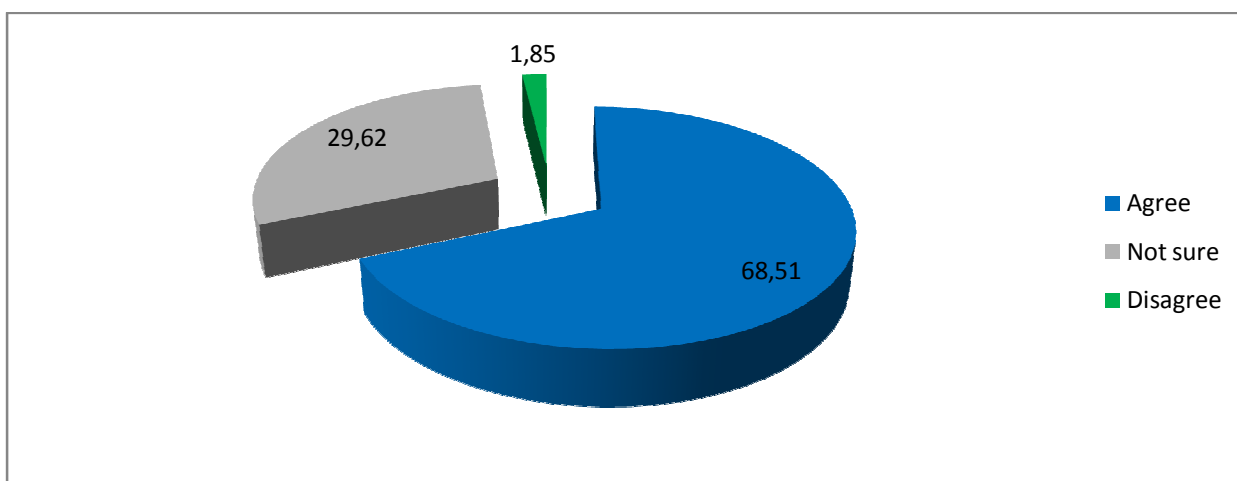


Figure.22. Humor and Teacher/Student Relationship.

In the teachers' questionnaire, most of teachers agreed upon the benefits of humor in establishing relationships between teachers and students. This increases the teacher's

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immediacy, there by breaking the ice, and reducing the amount of fear and tension. When the students were asked the same question about whether or not humor can be used to enhance relationships with their teachers, the greater part which represents (68%) of the whole population opted for 'agree' category. Whereas, (29%) i.e. 16 respondents advocated a neutral position by selecting 'not sure' option. Meanwhile, only one participant indicated his/her disagreement concerning this idea.

From these responses, it is quite clear that most of the students and their teachers support the idea of the usefulness of humor in enhancing relationships within the classroom. Being able to enjoy learning in a safe environment where distances are minimized, can impact their learning positively . Such an environment where in the teacher; a collaborator whose main job is to facilitate the learning experience.

Section. Five. Humor and Negative Effects

Q.10 Do you think that humor might have negative effects in the classroom? If yes what kind of effects?

Choices	Yes	No
Number	35	19
Percentage	64.65%	35.35%

Table.22. Humor and Negative Effects

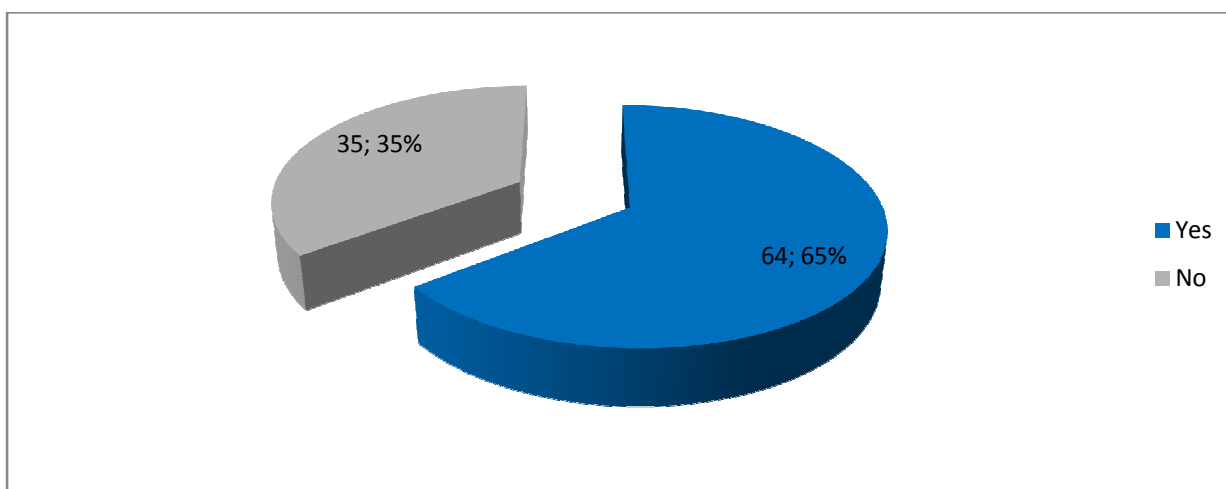


Figure.23. Humor and Negative Effects

Humor is effective as long as it is well administered and relevant to the topic. However, any kind of misuse or overuse can simply deconstruct all what has been said concerning the myriad benefits humor can bring to the classroom. Thus, responses to the

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above question were not surprising , since the majority of the students which represents (64%) of the whole population demonstrate their approval to such a suggestion by selecting ‘yes’ option. In contrast, (35%) i.e. nineteen 19 students opted for ‘no’ category arguing that humor does not have any negative effects.

On the basis of these illustrations, it is clear that most of the students are acknowledgeable about the fact that not all humor is positive, especially when there are situations where the use of humor can have negative effects. When they were asked to explain what kind of negative effects, most of the students agreed on the inappropriateness of making certain individuals or groups a subject of mockery and ridicule. For instance, one student stated that “ it is negative when the teacher tells a joke to make fun of one student in order to let his classmates laugh at him”. Another student said that” Sometimes students and teachers exaggerate when they try to be funny. They may hurt somebody’s feeling without paying attention”. Whereas, other students showed some reservations concerning the use of too much humor , which may lead to disrespect and lose of control on the part of teachers. Hence, it is going to result in “a waste of time and lack of seriousness” said one student. Another student pointed out that “teachers can lose control on their classes when they use too much of humor”.

2.4.1. General Discussion of the Students’ Questionnaire

The results obtained from the students’ questionnaire reveal that their opinions concur in a way or another with their teachers’ counterparts. The first question is crucial to the current study, since it seeks to investigate the extent to which the students think that the use of humor can facilitate their learning. The vast majority responded positively to such a suggestion by selecting either ‘ totally facilitates’ or ‘facilitates’ categories.

Moreover, the questions that demand students’ agreement (2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9), and deal directly with the psychological, cognitive and sociological effects of humor on students inside the classroom received the lion’s share of the positive answers by opting for ‘agree’ category.

All of the previous statistics and analyses mentioned in the students’ questionnaire lend support to the fact that humor, according to the students, affects them positively. Therefore, the literature review strengthens the notion that humor is effective in reducing stress and tension, enhancing motivation, improving self-esteem, enhancing

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comprehension and retention of materials which thereby increases creative and critical thinking. This helps to foster a positive classroom environment through softening the communication between teachers and students. It is noteworthy to mention that students supported the idea that humor, or at least certain types of humor can lead to negative effects in the classroom, which means that they are fully aware of the fact that not all humor is helpful.

2.5. Recommendations

We suggest the following recommendations on the basis of some findings of the present study.

- Teaching is more than explaining lessons and giving tasks, rather teachers have to deal with both dimensions of their students; the cognitive or intellectual and the affective or emotional. In addition to transmitting ideas and knowledge, teachers should not overlook the humanistic aspect in their classrooms. “The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.”(William Arthur Ward.(n.d) as quoted in Tamblyn, 2003:2).
- The goal of education is to facilitate change and learning. Thus, to be real , genuine, and open minded without pretending to be superior and omniscient are among teachers’ characteristics as facilitators. According to Malcolm S. Forbes. (n.d) “Education’s purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one” (as quoted in Tamblyn, 2003:9). In this respect, infusing humor with teaching can change many learner’ perspectives about the whole process of education and turn it to a sort of an enjoyable experience.
- As being facilitators, teachers should generate a climate of acceptance and trust because it is only in such an atmosphere students feel comfortable to express themselves and participate in the learning process. Thus, those humorous items can add a sort of flavor to language classrooms , and serve as a supporting teaching tools in creating this wholesome atmosphere. According to Gilliland and Mauritsen, (1971) “teachers, as cooks, need spice to keep their hungry customers coming, expecting to be nourished from an exciting menu. Humor can be that necessary spice”(753).
- In incorporating humor into classrooms, teachers do not necessarily have to be comedians in order to push their learners to laugh, rather sometimes all what it takes is a bit of humor at the appropriate time that can help engage students, draw their attention, and

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offer inspiration. According to Guo, (2012) “A teacher’s single simple sincere smile is to win back thirty; forty ...even hundreds from his/her students.” (444).

- Humor in the language classroom must not be related to a specific teaching or learning theory, rather it has to be a crucial component of any theory or method.
- If it is to function well, a degree of relevancy must be accompanied with any humor usage. Because irrelevant humor often ends in distraction and waste of valuable time. Thus, according to Hativa, (2001), in the process of integrating humor in their lessons, teachers must take into account the following principles: (a) learn to know the main types of humor that can be used in the classroom; (b) build a database of humorous items; (c) adjust particular items from this database to their particular needs; and (d) learn how to present humorous material to others.
- As a fundamental rule, humor should convey positive functions. In this respect, it has to contribute in the creation of a good therapeutic relationship, because only through this, teachers will be able to stimulate and facilitate communication while fostering a favorable learning relationship between them and their students.
- It is noteworthy to mention that the use of humor must not occur at the expense of certain individuals or groups, because certain types, such as sarcasm and ridicule often intend to belittle certain individuals or groups on the basis of cultural, racial, religious, etc. differences which could mar the students’ self-confidence, turning their classrooms to their worst nightmares.
- Finally, based on what has been mentioned in the review of literature, the general consensus agrees with the results obtained from the practical chapter regarding the enormous benefits that humor can provide to classrooms. It is about time to include humor into our curriculums, and in our teacher preparation programs in order to make the learning process a more enjoyable experience inside the classroom.

2.6. Limitations of the Study

We have tried to engulf the maximum points associated with the subject under investigation, however, along our endeavor we will be limited by some obstacles and difficulties. The first obstacle is mainly related to the nature of the topic per se, which is too vast and covers many variables. Second, we are restricted by time, and it is almost difficult to tackle all these variables in such a short period of time. More specifically, and as far as our study is concerned, the size of the sample of the teachers was considerably

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small (12). Thus, the results might not be sufficient for any generalization, so, we may need further studies with larger sample sizes to support or disconfirm what has been found thus far.

The questionnaire has been chosen as a procedure for the collection of data from both the teachers and the students since we were limited by time. Whereas, the observation as a procedure might be helpful for more accuracy in such topics, it permits the researcher to devote more time to watch thoroughly what is going on in the classroom as well as to pay closer attention to the sudden changes that may take place at any time during lessons.

Moreover, the results obtained from the student's questionnaire remain restricted to a certain group of master students of English at Adrar University. For this reason and if we want to reach to a more generalizable findings, we may need other studies with an extended sample size to include other students studying various languages.

Conclusion

Throughout this practical chapter, we adopted the use of the questionnaire as a procedure for collecting the needed data from both the teachers and the students. The premise behind this procedure was that the greatest percentage of respondents opting for positive responses, the greater support for the research hypothesis and questions. Furthermore, the analysis of the data collected has been presented in the form of statistical tables and graphs that show percentages for better clarification. After that, the results were explained and discussed in order to come up with answers for the research questions. Hence, it is clear that the results obtained from both samples strengthen our hypothesis that stated that the use of humor in the classroom can result in myriad of positive psychological, physical, cognitive and sociological outcomes. Moreover, and from the processing and integration of research results which were gathered in this research, the chapter ends with a set of recommendations that might be helpful for the process of integrating humor inside classrooms appropriately. Furthermore, we mentioned some of the limitations that we have been faced by throughout the accomplishment of the goals of the current study.

General Conclusion

If incorporated appropriately, the potential benefits of humor are endless, since it can maximize learning through bringing enthusiasm, positive feelings, and optimism to classrooms. In the context of language teaching and learning, much literature stressed the importance of humor in establishing such a healthy climate where boredom, anxiety and stress can be reduced and students are encouraged to take more risks in participating, and practicing their target language without being afraid of the teacher whose main task is to facilitate students' engagement in the learning process. Those humorous items such as jokes, puns, anecdotes, etc can add a variety to language classrooms if a degree of spontaneity and creativity are taken into consideration. Meanwhile, and if they are to function well, such humorous items must be integrated in a cautious way, since distraction and offence might be the ultimate result of any uncalculated attempts.

For that purpose, this study is designed to identify some teachers' and master students' of English perceptions towards the effects of the use of humor inside the classroom. For the accomplishment of such an endeavor, we preferred to select a qualitative research design which is based on the analysis of the questionnaire as a procedure in order to supplement the study with a wide range of different attitudes and perceptions from both teachers and students.

When looking at the data analysis it is quite clear that teachers' responses perfectly correspond to the students' ones in the sense that most of them reported agreeing with all the questions that revolve around the positive effects of humor in the classroom setting. Thus, these results demonstrate their belief in the effectiveness of humor in generating such a healthy atmosphere as well as their willingness to adopt such a technique. However, in the process of integrating it as a part of their lessons, some teachers revealed some reservations concerning this suggestion, may be because they still consider that humor can waist valuable time and may lead to a sort of mayhem inside classrooms.

Finally, humor as a general term that encompasses all facets, requires a thorough investigation from a variety of angles. The existing research was an attempt to shed some light on its benefits, and expected negative effects when applied to classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular. So, we hope that we have succeeded to reach our objectives, and provide enough valid information.

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Appendices

Dear teacher,

This questionnaire is designed to investigate the effects of the use of humor in classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular. Your replies will better help understand the topic. So, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions on both sides:

Please circle the number that corresponds to your choice.

1. According to you, what role can humor play in the classroom?

A supporting teaching tool	A nonsense tool	A disturbing tool
1	2	3

why?:.....
.....
.....

2. How much of the humor that you use is relevant to classroom subject matter?

All	Most	About half	A little	Not all
1	2	3	4	5

3. According to you, how much humor (i.e. jokes, puns, funny stories, etc.) can be used inside the classroom?

Very much	Much	Little	very little	Not at all
1	2	3	4	5

4. Do you think that student's motivation can be enhanced through injecting humor in the classroom ?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

5. To what extent do you think that humor can make your students feel more relaxed (i.e. less anxious, less stressed) in the classroom?

Very relaxed	Relaxed	Slightly relaxed	No effect	Increases anxiety
1	2	3	4	5

6. Do you think that humor can enhance student's self esteem?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

7. According to you, can humor enhance students' comprehension?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

8. Do you think that lessons taught in humorous way are better recalled by students than those with non humorous way?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

9. Do you think that humor can increase students' creativity and critical thinking?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

10. Do you think that the use of humor can help foster a positive classroom environment?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

11. Do you think that the teacher/student relationship can be enhanced by a degree of humor in the classroom?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

12. Do you think that humor might have negative effects in the classroom? If yes, what kind of effects?

Yes	No
1	2

What kind of effects?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time and insight 😊.

Dear Student,

This questionnaire is designed to investigate the effects of the use of humor in classrooms in general and language classrooms in particular. Your replies will better help understand the topic. So, you are kindly requested to answer the following questions on both sides as truthfully as you can:

Please circle the number that corresponds to your choice.

1. Do you think that the use of humor in the classroom can facilitate learning?

Totally facilitates	Facilitates	No effect	Slightly facilitates	Hinders learning
1	2	3	4	5

2. Do you think that the use of humor by the teacher can help hold your attention and keep the class interesting?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

3. Do you think that the use of humor in the classroom by the teacher can motivate you ?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

4. To what extent do you think that humor can make you feel more relaxed (i.e. less anxious, less stressed) in the classroom?

Very relaxed	Relaxed	Slightly relaxed	No effect	Increases anxiety
1	2	3	4	5

5. Do you think that the use of humor inside the classroom can enhance your self esteem(self confidence)?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

6. In your opinion ,can humor help you understand and retain lessons?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

7. Can humor help increase your creativity and critical thinking?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

8. According to you, can the use of humor help foster(create) a positive classroom environment?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

9. Do you think that teacher/student relationship is enhanced by a degree of humor in the classroom?

Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1	2	3

10. Do you think that humor might have negative effects in the classroom? If yes what kind of effects?

Yes	No
1	2

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time and insight 😊.