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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

*My beloved parents Lounis and Yamina who encourage me
a lot*

My dear brothers Moumene and Djaffar

*My beloved sisters Djoudja and Hanane with her husband
Menad*

*My cousins, Wissem, Fifi, Chanez, Ghiles and Sabah with her
son Ramdane*

My uncle Belaid and my aunt djamila

*The memory of my beloved grand-mothers yaya
Tahemoucht and yaya Ladjouhar*

My aunt Roza and all my uncles

*All my friends especially djidji, Nora, manel, lilia and
soraya*

To my sweet binomial Safia

Kahina Ouazzi

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

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me a lot*

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Abstract

The core of our research is the investigation of one of the main technique in teaching EFL which is the use of humor in the classroom. The aim of this research study is to identify the students' attitudes towards learning through humor and its role in developing the students' motivation in the classroom when learning English as a Foreign Language. The study is conducted at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou using Cornett's and Martin's theories on humor in the classroom. This study, in fact, is based on mixed method research. It combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Therefore, two different research instruments are taken into account. First, the questionnaire is addressed to first year master students at the Department of English to obtain insights about the use of humor by their teachers in the classroom, their attitudes and preferences towards it. Second, the classroom observation is used to check the usefulness of using humor as a teaching technique to better know about its role in the classroom. The conclusion to be drawn from this study is that humor can help students in their learning process when it is used appropriately by their teachers, as it can be used in the classroom to facilitate learning by increasing motivation. So, by using this teaching tool in the classroom, students will be interested in their lessons.

List of Abbreviations

- **EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- **FL:** Foreign Language
- **LP:** Language Proficiency
- **MMUTO:** Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou
- **QCA :** Qualitative Content Analysis
- **SPSS:** Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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1. General Introduction :

1.1.Statement of The Problem:

Motivated students are surely the result of a good style of teaching in the classroom. In this case a teacher can be considered a facilitator, a guide, open minded, also motivator. Different techniques are used in order to attract students' attention to the lessons. One of the most important is the use of humor that serves as a powerful means of gaining liking and establishing a rapport with students. If teachers use humor in their classroom they often do so to reduce tension and convey good will. Humorous teachers can be the reason of motivated learners. The more humor is used in classroom, the more enjoyable the learning will be. Considering that teaching is psychological rather than pedagogical, students' psychology should be positively influenced to trigger their desire for learning.

By using such a technique, students can feel at ease, secure, more closed to their teachers which assures a good learning environment, then students will get ready to receive information also participate by exchanging their understanding with one another. Humor is considered a link between effective teaching and successful learning. It promotes the non-threatening learning environment and breaks all the obstacles that can be found in classroom during the teaching learning process. Humor helps to enjoy learning in a good atmosphere. This dissertation will focus on the important role that humor can play as a teaching-learning technique. In more precise terms, it will put stress on the role of humor in classroom even its influence on the students' attitudes.

1.2. Research questions and hypotheses:

In the light of this study, the following research questions are suggested:

- To what extent can humor influence positively on the students' attitudes if it is used in the classroom?

This question can lead to the following sub-questions:

- Is the use of humor in the classroom necessary or not?
- How do teachers use humor in the classroom?
- How do students react towards this use?
- Does humor represent an effective tool when learning a foreign language?

Around the above research questions, this work attempts to test the following hypotheses:

- If learning in classroom happens through humor, students will be more active and motivated in a comfortable learning environment.
- Yes, the use of humor is necessary in the classroom.
- No, the use of humor is not necessary in the classroom.
- Teachers use humor in relation to its nature, forms and types.
- Students find humor as a helpful teaching tool.
- Yes, humor represents an effective tool when learning a foreign language.
- No, humor does not represent an effective tool when learning a foreign language.

1.3. Aims and significance of the study:

The overall aim of our investigation is to answer our research questions which focus on the students' attitudes towards the use of humor in classroom and to what extent it influences the teaching-learning process. In order to test the hypotheses of this study, we have conducted

this research at the department of English by investigating the case of first year master students, to check whether learning through humor is effective and helps them to be more motivated in a comfortable environment. So, we aim at showing the role of humor in the teaching-learning process.

1.4. Research techniques and methodology:

Investigating such a topic needs to follow the appropriate research techniques and procedures to achieve the aim of this research study. For this reason, considering the role of humor and the students' attitudes, a mixed-methods approach is a suitable technique which includes both the analysis of meaning and statistical data. The population selected for this study is embodied by the first year master students at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of TIZI OUZOU, to notice whether students are motivated when teaching through humor. Classroom observation and a questionnaire for students are the instruments used in the present study. Classroom observation is necessary to gather data concerning the students' attitudes towards the use of humor and how it is used in the classroom. Then a questionnaire is addressed to students to better know their point of view concerning the use of humor by their teachers even their impressions towards learning through humor.

1.5. Structure of the dissertation:

This dissertation contains a general introduction, four chapters and a general conclusion. The first chapter is called "the literature review". It presents the definition of humor, its main concepts and origins. The second chapter is concerned with "research design and methodology", used to conduct this research. It presents the procedures and techniques followed to reach the objectives of this study. The third chapter, entitled "presentation of the findings" presents the data gathered from the questionnaire and the classroom observation. To

finish with the last chapter is “the discussion of the findings”, where the results are discussed.

The general conclusion provides a summary of the research.

Introduction:

This chapter aims at providing the reader with different concepts of the research. First, it includes some definitions in relation to humor in the classroom. After that, it explains the nature of humor and its different types and forms in the classroom. Also, it summarizes some principles of humor that refer to: content, communication, and guidelines to follow during the learning process. In addition to these, it presents some positive outcomes derived from the use of humor that benefit both teachers and students during their interactions in the classroom, as to create a comfortable learning environment, increase students' motivation even their creativity, and to build a good rapport between students and their teacher. At the end of this chapter, our theoretical framework is provided relying on the theory of humor explained and presented by Claudia Cornett (1986) in her book entitled "*learning through laughter: humor in classroom*". And Martin's theory (2003).

1. Definition of Humor:

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2008), humor takes the following definition: "*the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing; the ability to laugh at things that are amusing*". This means, all what make things amusing and enjoyable. Humor in the classroom is defined as "*an act performed through linguistic and non-linguistic means by any of the participants*", i.e. students or teacher (Wagner and Urios-Aparisi 2011: 400). Cornett (1986: 7) says: "*humor is a significant part of our lives*". In other words, humor is an essential element in life; no one can live without laughing. Abaudan (2009: 7) also describes humor as: "*A simple humoristic remarks that naturally occur in the communicative teaching of second language*". From this definition, humor is perceived as the simple expression used spontaneously while teaching a second language. In his part, Harmer (1998:1) says that: "*Humor is a pedagogical effective strategy that can be used to avoid the*

negative impact of the negative character of teachers, since students enjoy being entertained and is amused". The idea presented in the definition above refers to humor as an effective pedagogical strategy by which students feel amused. Besides that, Gatt (2000:17) says that:

It is the breathing-out of the soul when the pupils only listen to the teacher, who may be teaching in the same tone, then it is as if they only breathe in and have no opportunity to breathe out. They need humor, which the teacher can find in very different places. Therefore, the teacher must bring in humor during his lessons and this should result from vitality and momentum of the lesson.

With this submission, it is clear that one of the ways of creating interest on the part of both the students and teachers is through humor in the teaching of English as a foreign language. It is also observable that the effect of humor is two-way or double sided, that is; it has benefits for both the teachers and the students.

2. The nature of humor:

2.1. The physical aspects of humor:

Berk (2003:64) notes that: *"humor can create an unforgettable image if it is accompanied by the use of your words plus your physical expressiveness in your eyes, face, arms, and the rest of your body."* In other words, some gestures, manners, or physical expressions of humor are necessary when using humor with students, because they remember their tasks and lessons by just remembering these manners. In this case, Koestler (1964:30) adds: *"humor is the only domain where a stimulus on a high level of complexity produces a massive and sharply defined response on the level of physiological reflexes."* (cited in Claudia Cornett,1986:26). According to the quotation above, humor is considered as a creative activity which produces active responses in the level of physical aspects.

Also as cited in Morrison (2008:2): *"emotions are considered as the stimulus of learning, they attract the attention which is required to learn."* That is to say, emotions can be

presented by humor when it is used in classroom. For that, students become enthusiastic to attend the class and feel interested in what is being said.

2.2. The superiority theory of humor:

Claudia Cornett (1986:26) argues that: *“the superiority theory of humor asserts that humans derive pleasure from seeing themselves as better off than others.”* It means that, in this nature of humor or its superiority theory people derive pleasure by seeing themselves better than the others, for example: producing jokes about students’ mistakes in the classroom. Also, Hill (1988:40) says: *“we laugh at people who have an inferior moral character or at people who are uglier or destroyed than ourselves.”* In this quotation, Hill explains the superiority nature of humor according to people who possess superior knowledge over the others, for instance: when a teacher laughs at students’ weaknesses in the classroom.

This nature of humor raises inequality in the classroom. Differences in ages, status, and the level of thinking cause the feeling of superiority. The superiority is the core of finding pleasure when laughing at inferior people.

2.3. The incongruity theory of humor:

The incongruity theory of humor is perceived as the literal representation of idioms (Cornett, 1986). For example: teachers in the classroom use certain humorous expressions or idioms to better explain lessons. Kerr (2001:2) notes that: *“having a sense of humor is about having a sense of balance, perspective and proportion. A sense of humor is the ability to recognize the incongruity and absurdities that confront us on a daily basis.”* In other words, a sense of humor in the level of this theory is the ability to look at the same things as everyone else and see something just a little different.

As cited in Shade (1996:11): *“the basis of this theory is that humor is created when we expect one thing and is suddenly presented with another. Humor, then, is the result of these unexpected connections.”* That is to say, this theory is the result of the combination of ideas and things in an unexpected and humorous way. For example, in the classroom when a teacher explains something, and without paying attention, he refers to other things by making reference to some idioms and expressions which bring entertainment into the classroom.

3. Forms of humor in the classroom:

Humor in the classroom can take different forms. It can be classified as jokes, puns, or riddles.

3.1. Jokes:

The term “joke” emerged in the late seventeenth century. Joke is something to say or to do to make people laugh. It is originally slang, it derives from Latin “jocus” which means “wordplay” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2008). It is seen by (Morrison, 2001:160) as: *“a short story or short series of words spoken or communicated with the intent of being laughed at or found humorous by the listener or reader”*. It means all what is spoken as humorous comments with the aim of being laughed by the listener or reader. Also, to be perceived laughable, jokes need comprehending the multiple meaning of words, idioms, and metaphors; then discovering ambiguity (Shade, 1996:3). In addition to all these, although humor can appear in various forms within the field of humor research, the joke is deemed to be the primary object of study (Wagner and Urios-Aparisi 2011: 400 and Schmitz 2002: 91).

3.2. Puns:

A pun is the clever or humorous use of a word that has more than one meaning, or

words that have different meanings but sound the same (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). It is described by Partington (2006:110) as: "*creative use of language.*" He argues that a pun never plays with merely one word but with a group of words. He clarifies that puns can be categorized into homonymy puns and homophony puns. Homonymy puns means words alike in sound and spelling. For example 'club' refers to two homonyms: 'association of people' and 'heavy weapon'. Whereas, homophony puns are words alike in sounds only. For instance, 'leek' and 'leak'. The pleasure takes place when one meaning is reinterpreted by the other meaning.

3.3. riddles:

A riddle is a question that is difficult to understand, and that has a surprising answer, by which you ask somebody as a game. It derives from the old English "radels". It is related to Dutch "*raadsel*" and German "*ratsel*" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2008). It is a word game, an enigma, a puzzling fact. It is similar in nature to a joke but with a question-answer format. For example: *imagine that you are in a boat, in the middle of the sea. Suddenly you are surrounded by hungry sharks, just waiting to feed on you. How can you put an end to this?* (The answer is: *stop imagining*). Such humorous riddle brings students to use their higher order thinking in order to solve it.

4. Types of Humor:

The humor styles were developed by Rod.A.Martin in 2003. He attempted to capture the differences in how individuals typically use or express humor and whether these uses are beneficial for well-being. Martin distinguishes between four different humor styles:

4.1. Affiliative humor:

This type of humor involves all what makes life funny. The goal of this type is to bring humor

in the daily life. Martin (2003:211) says that:

Affiliative humor refers to the tendency to say funny things, to tell jokes, and to engage in spontaneous witty banter, in order to amuse others, to facilitate relationships, and to reduce interpersonal tensions (e.g., “I enjoy making people laugh”). This is hypothesized to be an essentially nonhostile, tolerant use of humor that is affirming of self and others and presumably enhances interpersonal cohesiveness

As mentioned in this quotation, the use of this type of humor in the classroom helps teachers to build a good rapport with their students and allow them to feel closer to each other, then to bring happiness into the classroom.

4.2. Self-enhancing humor:

This type of humor is positive, healthy, and adaptive. It consists to laugh at your -self, such as making a joke when something has happened to you in order to bring humor in every day situation. Individuals tend to be humorous to keep themselves from getting depressed when facing certain situations, so they try by themselves to think about funny things in the past in order to relax and reduce boredom (Martin, 2003).

4.3. Aggressive Humor:

It refers to sarcastic and hostile uses of humor in which the self is enhanced by excessively teasing or ridiculing others. It does not refer to cohesiveness in a group. Aggressive humor instead focuses on humor that meant to bettle others under the guise play full fun (Martin, 2003). Teachers, who use this form of humor, play jokes of the students to make fun in classroom.

In this case, humor is seen as the tendency to criticize or manipulate students in classroom (Beebe,2007). As a result, aggressive humor is a negative style of humor. It is unhealthy and teachers should avoid it in the classroom, since it dehumanizes and hurts students.

4.4. Self-defeating Humor:

This type of humor is used more frequently by individuals who show characteristics of an insecure attachment style and those with damaged self-esteem. But this type is not always considered to be negative. As Berk (1998: 6) notes that: "*self-defeating humor in the form of self-downs is not only an acceptable form but a highly desirable one to break down barriers in the classroom*". From the quotation above, this kind of humor is considered as a preferable tool for learners in the classroom.

5. Principles of using Humor in classroom:

In this part, the focus will be on the situations in which humor can be introduced in the classroom by the teacher, or the relation between humor and lessons. In addition to this, how humor is used while communicating with students and its principles.

5.1. Humor and content:

A poor classroom managing is the result of using an irrelevant humor to the subject matter (Sullivan, 1992:56). So, using humor with no relation to lessons can destroy the class and bring disorder. Humor should always serve a specific purpose; it should not be aimless (Bryant and Zillman, 1988). That is to say, using humor in classroom with students should always bring something valuable. Teachers should use humor to solve discipline problems and to enrich the curriculum (Cornett, 1986). In other words, humor in classroom should always serve students' program during the period of study. Also, Kerr (2001:201) notes: "*humor is most effective when it speaks to something everyone can relate to.*" In other words, the effectiveness of humor consists on its relevance to the subject matter.

In addition, it is suggested that teachers should refrain from using humor unless they are certain that students have the faculties and knowledge to understand it (Bryant and

Zillman, 1983). It can be even expressed the idea that teachers' sense of humor should be understandable and available to students.

5.2. Humor and communication in the classroom:

Hill (1998:10) says: "*when teachers have a sense of humor and are not afraid to use it, students relax and become listeners*". In this case, humor is one method by which teachers can make their relationship with students closer.

There are many differences between teachers and students such as position, status, age, that create natural barriers to communication and learning that must be broken down by teachers if they are to be effective (Berk, 1998). Obstacles like age, and status can be broken down by the use of humor in classroom.

5.3. Guidelines to use humor in classroom:

Claudia Cornett (1986) has prepared a list of 49 practical teaching ideas that can help teachers in classroom while using humor with their students. For instance, as she (1986: 36) says to teachers: "*start your lessons with something fun so students will look forward to coming to school.*" Teachers should start their lessons by something humorous in order that students attend the class. She adds: "*use humorous sentences during spelling tests.*" (ibid). Thus, it is important for teachers to use humorous sentences during tests.

6. Benefits of humor:

This part discusses the positive outcomes of humor in the classroom:

6.1. Humor and Creativity:

Morrison (2008: 3) says: “*Humor and creativity are great companions, the creative process flourishes when accompanied by a sense of humor*”. This quotation shows that creativity and humor work hand in hand. Munoz (2005:24) argues that: “*humor is closely related to memory as it is easier to recall an experience that occurred in a humorous context....*” That is to say, a lesson that is given through humor is better understood and remembered. It is important to encourage students to use puns and humorous comments which require higher level thinking skills, thus challenging students to think (Sullivan, 1992). In other terms, students are better engaged in the process of thinking while laughing.

Also, scientific researchers find that humor stimulates both sides of the brain to enhance learning. A good laugh improves a blood flow, increases oxygen in the blood, exercises lungs, even face muscles. Besides that, humor in the learning process is shown to develop higher-order thinking skills and create modes of thinking that are investigative, grasping, and filled with trial and error (Nilsen,1987), then, converting a “*Ha-Ha*” into “*Aha!*” in classroom (Herbert, 1991).

6.2. Humor and motivation:

When teachers use humor effectively in the classroom, students are more willing to participate and to be motivated during the lessons (Zillman and Cominsky, 1980). It means that students are active when their lessons are presented by an effective use of humor in the classroom. In addition, humor increases motivation, as Gore (2004:76) says: “*most of the students enjoy a lecture more if humor is incorporated, fun is motivating*”. Hidi (2002:173) adds to this idea: “*even if the subject matter is of little interest to the learners, humor leads students to attend the classes very constantly and focus on a task.*” The two quotations above refer to humor as a motivated factor in the classroom. Also, the more relevant to the subject

matter humor is, the more motivated students will be (Gore, 2004). In addition, Humor is viewed as *“an important resource for increasing student motivation”* (Deneire, 1995: 402).

6.3. Humor and good rapport in the classroom:

Humor is the best strategy used in classroom which helps to build rapport between students and teachers. Students are less intimidated and less inhibited about asking questions or making comments (Hill, 1998). Besides that, humor establishes students-teacher rapport. While enhancing the general classroom, humor serves as -an immediacy behavior that decreases the psychological distance between teacher and students (Shade, 1996). Besides that, Chabeli (2008: 55) who studies the perceptions of humor as a pedagogical tool to facilitate learning, reports that: *“the students believe that humor strengthens social relationships among learners and teachers, and is able to reduce the authoritarian position of the teacher”*. That is to say, humor helps to build a good rapport in the classroom between students and teacher. It helps also to reduce teacher’s authority.

6.4. Humor and the comfortable environment:

Humor is a pedagogically effective strategy that can be used to avoid the negative impact of the negative characters of teachers since students enjoy being entertained and amused (Harmer, 1998). In other words, the happier about learning students feel; the more successful they will be. Cornett (1986:16) says: *“A class that has opportunities for sharing humor will have a more positive atmosphere, the students and teacher in it will even look better, smiling improves your appearance.”* It means that, a positive learning environment is the result of using humor and funny things in the classroom. Besides that, Cornett (1986:15) adds: *“Teachers who use their sense of humor to maintain a positive classroom atmosphere know how to reverse the direction of negative energy.”* This means that, teachers who use humor with their students bring a positive atmosphere to the classroom with a positive energy.

Deneire (1995: 285) observes that: “*humor has been [...] shown to have a positive effect on the learning environment, to initiate, maintain, and enhance learner interest, and to facilitate retention.*” This means that, the use of humor in classroom facilitates and enhances learning in the classroom. Thus, the experiencing of humor involves both the processes of comprehension and appreciation, the latter of which is often linked to a feeling of amusement, mirthful laughter and enjoyment (Özdoğru and McMorris 2013).

7. Theoretical framework:

The investigation of this work is based on the theory proposed by Claudia. E Cornett in her book entitled “*learning through laughter: humor in classroom*” (1986). Claudia Cornett is an associate professor in the education department at Wittenberg University. She makes presentations on all aspects of the learning process, including motivation, comprehension, and mainly the use of humor in the classroom. Her publications include articles and books for teachers as well as for students.

In her book “*learning through laughter: humor in classroom*”, she explains how humor can function in the ways that help to achieve educational goals, as she (1986: 9) says: “*humor can function in ways that help achieve the educational goals*”. Cornett gives the reasons why teachers should get serious about incorporating humor in their lessons. She states that humor attracts attention and provokes thought, for example when students pay attention, teachers try to keep this attention by promoting their sense of humor until they get the answer, then students smile slightly or laugh loudly. Also, she claims that humor liberates creative capacities. It helps to gain friends because it serves the social functions of promoting group membership. The use of humor in the classroom improves communication between teachers and students which make them closer to each other.

Besides that, humorous teachers are more able to deal with the difficulties which they encounter during teaching. Humor develops a positive attitude and self-image because teachers who use their sense of humor in the classroom maintain a positive classroom atmosphere. In addition to all this, humor motivates and energizes: when teachers start a lesson with a humorous story, joke, or riddle, students are more motivated and with an active mental state. In the classroom, humor helps to solve problems. It can help to solve problems in two main ways. First, it helps both students and teachers to cope with seemingly insoluble problems by enabling them to separate themselves from the problem at least temporarily. Second, for students with behavioral disorders, humor is a means of helping them cope with hostile and aggressive feelings. Because joking with students about problems is a means of reducing tension during the learning process (cornett,1986).

In addition, Cornett (1986:24) focuses on the nature of humor in the classroom by citing three levels. First, "*physical aspects of humor*", in which states three main stages in the classroom: the first one is to indicate the humorous situations in which teachers perform humorous manners and using jokes in order to attract their attention. Once this stage has occurred and seen by students, the second stage concerns the problem-solving begins with the thinking process, then finally to move from this thinking process into the students' reaction. In few words, the physical aspects of humor concern first the teachers' effective stimulus which requires then the students' response. Second, "*the superiority theory of humor*" in which we find humor in the defects of persons who usually accord great dignity or respect. Also according to this theory, seeing defects in others is humorous to us only when the defect is perceived as not being painful to the victim. For instance: laughing about students' mistakes in the classroom, and making jokes with students' name as it is confirmed by Cornett who says (1986:27): "*everything is funny as long as it's happening to someone else*". At the end, "*the incongruity theory*" as a part of the nature of humor which concerns the

unexpected connections of ideas in the classroom by making reference to some expressions and idiom. As defined by Cornett (1986:29) “*is the literal representation of idiom*”, which needs a high level of thinking to be understood by the students, then to get their positive reactions in the classroom.

In short terms, Cornett summarizes her essential points (1986:30) by saying that: “*somewhere, somehow, students must learn to use humor appropriately so they can enjoy its many benefits*”. Teachers with a sense of humor bring joy to themselves and show students a side of being human. Teachers that share humorous personal anecdotes, read humorous literature aloud, and laugh at students' jokes demonstrate to their students that they are capable of a range of other emotions which will withstand the stress of those bad days.

Another theory which is developed by Rod A.Martin (2003) completes Cornett's theory and attempts to capture the differences in how individuals typically use or express humor. Martin's model distinguishes between four different humor types: 1. Affiliative humor which is characterized by using humor to foster group cohesion, telling jokes and making fun at things that everybody can laugh at. 2. Self-enhancing humor that refers to how a person uses humor on an individual level, a tendency to be amused by various things in one's life, also when faced with difficult or stressful situations. 3. Aggressive humor which is related to using humor to disparage, manipulate or threat others, it is destructive for group cohesion and can lead to in-group divisions and suffering of certain individuals. 4. Self-defeating humor that could, in turn, be applied by the poor ginger kid to intend the effects of the aggressive humor, the self-defeating humor style involves allowing others to make jokes at one's cost and pretending that one's having fun along the way (Martin,2003).

Conclusion:

As it is mentioned above, this chapter concerns the literature review. It includes certain definitions of the concept of humor, then its different forms and types which we consider helpful to the understanding of our research. In addition, it states some of the positive outcomes that humor leads to in the classroom, such as: students' motivation and creativity, good rapport between students and their teachers in a comfortable atmosphere. A theoretical framework of this present study is explained at the end of this chapter. Some positive outcomes of humor are cited according to Claudia Cornett which helps achieve the educational goals. Then, we have highlighted the nature of humor by citing its three levels. In addition, Martin's theory (2003) is explained, in which the types of humor are developed and complete Cornett's theory (1986).

Introduction:

This chapter deals with the research design of the study that helps to carry out our theme of investigation, in order to answer the questions asked in the general introduction. It explains the techniques used and the procedures followed. It describes also the participants included in this study.

The two techniques that are used consist of: a questionnaire addressed to first year master students at the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of TIZI OUZOU, and classroom observation. Indeed, a mixed method approach which includes both qualitative and quantitative methods is adopted to analyze the data collected from the techniques used in this study.

1. The setting of the study:

Our study aims to check whether learning through humor is effective and can help students to be more motivated in a comfortable environment. To achieve this aim, we have conducted our research at the Department of English in Mouloud Mammeri University of TIZI OUZOU.

2. The participants:

The subjects of this study concern the first year master students, during the academic year 2015/2016. They are randomly selected; their ages and sex are not taken into account. These participants are asked to answer the questionnaire concerning their opinions about learning through humor. Their attitudes are also observed during their process of learning with humorous teachers.

I. Procedures of data collection:

In order to collect data that support our theme of investigation which is the role of humor in the learning process, we have adopted two different kinds of data collection procedures: a questionnaire to students and classroom observation.

a) The questionnaire:

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting a survey, information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher (Wilson and Mc Lean, 1974). It means that, a questionnaire is one of the most common tools for gathering information. A questionnaire generally includes two types of items: closed and open-ended. In the first type, the researcher generally suggests possible answers that can be chosen by the respondents. In the second type, the respondents answer in a less oriented way in which they express their ideas by using their own style. The questionnaire which is intended as part of this research is addressed to first year master students at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of TIZI OUZOU.

Students' questionnaire:

For the sake of gathering information about students' opinions and their attitudes concerning the role of humor in their learning process, a questionnaire is addressed to fifty (50) students selected randomly from the participants of this study. This questionnaire contains sixteen (16) questions including both close-ended in which the participants choose one of the pre-determined answers and open-ended questions which are accompanied with

follow-up questions that demand explanation or justification for certain choices. Besides that, the questionnaire is divided into four sections: the first section consists of humor and teaching, the second one concerns humor and learning and the third section includes the attitudes of learners towards the use of humor in the classroom. The last one is concerned with humor and the learning environment.

b) classroom observation:

Classroom observation is a technique that can reveal characteristics of groups or individuals which would have been impossible to discover by other means, it is a very important instrument and the only one that helps to collect information about what really happens inside the classrooms.

For this study, first year master students are observed in the classroom during some of their lessons. The observation concerns both linguistic and literature classes to collect a considerable amount of information concerning the classroom environment during the learning process through humor. The data are collected through a series of attendances to these classes which are randomly chosen from the first year master level by taking written notes and comments. These observations have taken place from 01/05 to 17/05/2016. Our focus is on how teachers use humor in the classroom and the students' attitudes towards this use.

II. Procedures of data analysis:

This part includes the procedures of data analysis. It presents the statistical and qualitative content analysis (QCA) methods used to analyze the data gathered from the students' questionnaire and the classroom observation. Our corpus is analyzed according to the mixed method approach which combines both qualitative and quantitative procedures.

a) Description of the statistical method:

This method is considered to have as its main purpose the quantification of data. This allows generalizations of results from a sample to an entire population of interest and the measurement of the incidence of various views and opinions in a given sample. By using this method in this present study, the responses collected from the questionnaire are calculated and then compared. In order to obtain the statistical results we have relied on a computer program named the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This computer program is used in social sciences helping in the description of statistical analysis. It is one of the most advanced statistical packages that are able to perform highly complex data treatment and analysis with simple instructions. The outcomes are shown in tables, pie charts and graphs.

b) Description of the qualitative content analysis:

This method is non-statistical. Its methodological approach is primarily guided by the concrete material at hand. It is considered to be particularly suitable for gaining an in-depth understanding of underlying attitudes and behaviors. It provides insights into the setting of a problem.

In this research study, this procedure is used to analyze both the explanations provided to certain questions in our questionnaire and the notes obtained from the classroom observation.

Conclusion:

This chapter deals with the research design of this study. It presents the procedures of data collection which contains the setting of the study and its participants. Then, it provides a description of data collection instruments explaining how the data are gathered by using a students' questionnaire and classroom observation. Furthermore, it supplies the methods of data analysis which concern the mixed method approach that combines the qualitative and quantitative procedures.

Introduction:

This chapter deals with the presentation of the findings. Unlike the two previous chapters, this present one is concerned with something more practical. It aims at presenting the results obtained from our corpus of the first year master students' questionnaire about the role of humor and the observation of their attitudes in the classroom, through the use of numbers, percentages, and notes, then presenting them by using pie chart and tables.

I. The analysis of the students' questionnaire:

In this part, all the responses collected from the questionnaires will be analyzed through tables, diagrams, and pie charts by showing all the numbers and percentages. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the questionnaire is addressed to 50 students, but we have received only 45 of them. So our study is conducted on the number of the questionnaires received or 45 questionnaires which represent 100% in this study.

Q1. Do your teachers use humor in classroom?

- Yes
- No

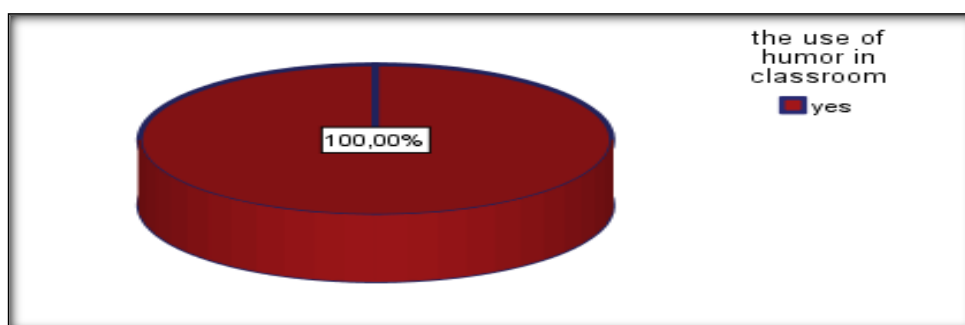


Diagram 01: The use of humor by teachers in the classroom

The results above confirm that all the participants (45) who represent 100% say that humor is used in the classroom.

Q2. If yes, how many teachers use humor?

- Some of them
- All of them

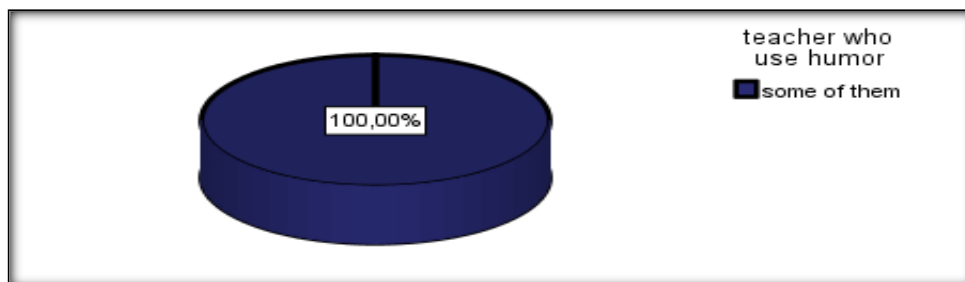


Diagram 02: Teaches' use of humor:

As displayed in these results, all the participants (100%) confirm that only some of the teachers use humor in the classroom.

Q3. Do you think that teaching through humor is?

- Very necessary
- necessary
- not necessary

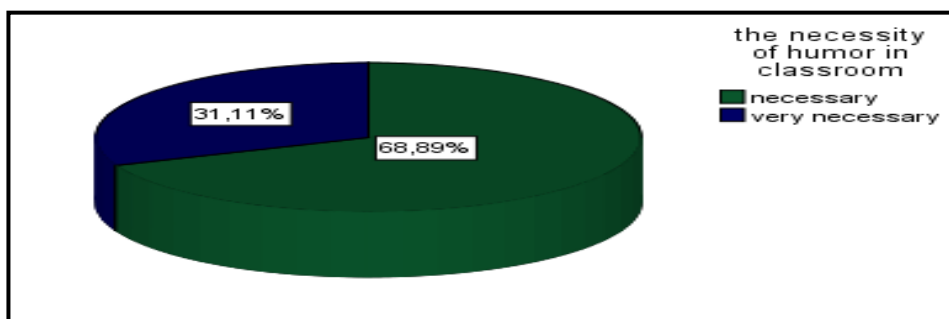


Diagram 03: The necessity of humor in the classroom

The results in the table above show that most of the participants confirm the necessity of humor. (68,89%) say that humor is necessary in the classroom, 31,11% of them see it very necessary which makes the total (100%) of positive responses.

Q4. Do you consider the use of humor in the classroom?

- **helpful teaching tool**
- **bothersome teaching tool**
- **non-essential teaching tool**

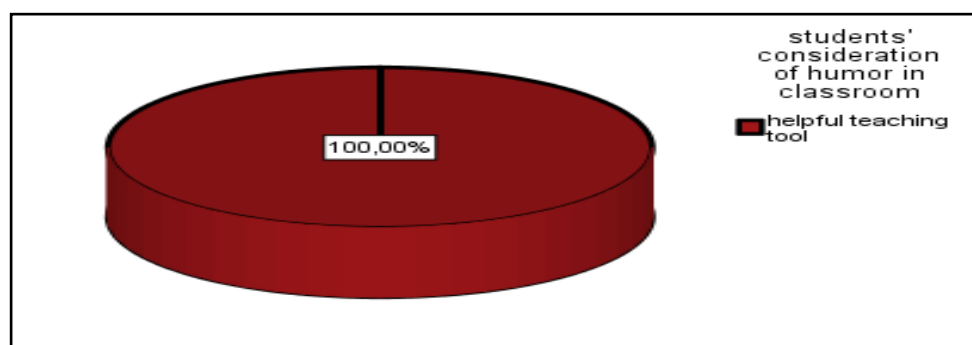


Diagram 04: Students' consideration of humor in the classroom

According to all the students (100%) as shown above, humor is considered as a helpful teaching tool.

Students have justify this by saying that humor helps them in their learning process, this is due to the fact that the lessons which are accompanied by humor are easily understood.

Q5. How is humor used by your teachers in relation to the topic?

- **Always related to the topic**
- **Sometimes related to the topic**
- **Never related to the topic**

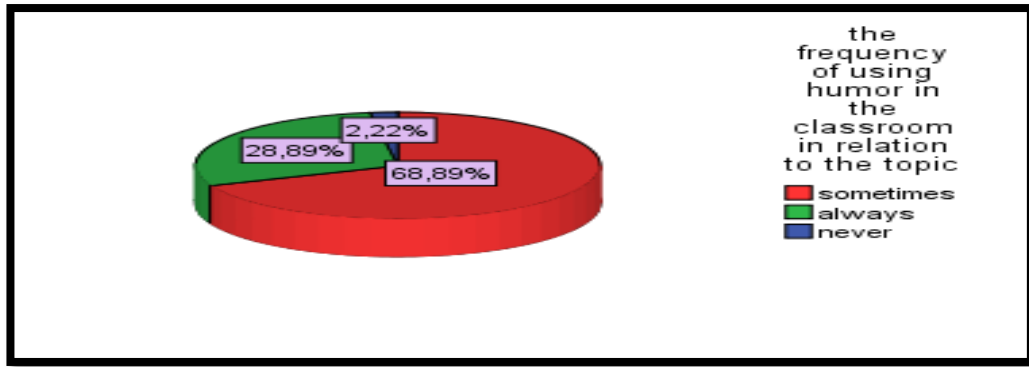


Diagram 05: The frequency of using humor in relation to the topic

The results above show that the majority of the participants or 31 out of 45 (68,89%) confirm that teachers' use of humor is sometimes related to the topic. A minority of them (28,89%) sees that humor is always related to the topic. Only one participant says that humor is never related to the topic in classroom.

Q6. How do your teachers use humor in the classroom?

- Spontaneously
- planned

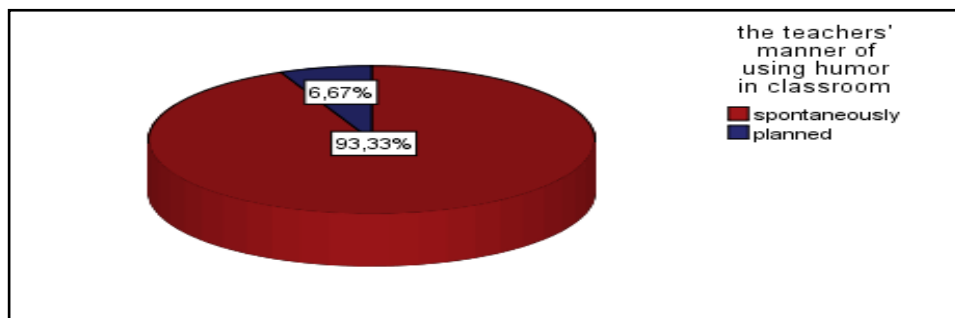


Diagram06: The teachers' manner of using humor in the classroom

According to the participants above, most of them say that teachers use humor in a spontaneous way (95,56), whereas only 4,44% of them see that humor is used in a prepared way.

Q7. Are you allowed to use humor during lessons?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- never

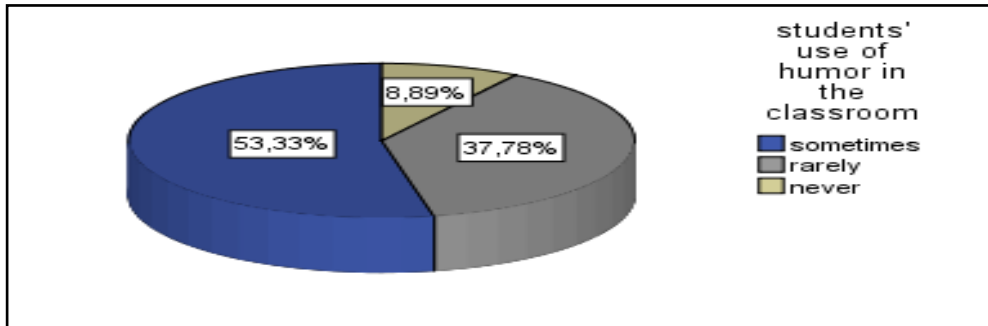


Diagram07: Students' use of humor in the classroom

As displayed in the diagram above, the participants that represent 53,33% confirm that the students are sometimes allowed to use humor in the classroom. 37,78% of them see that students are rarely allowed. Only 8,89% or 4 participants out of 45 say that students are never allowed to use humor in the classroom.

Q8. Does humor help you as student to learn more?

- Yes
- No

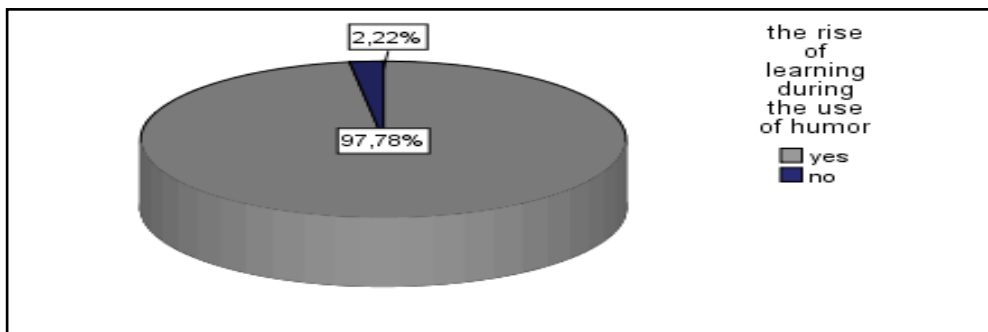


Diagram08: The rise of learning during the use of humor

As shown in these results, the majority of the participants (97,78%) confirm that humor increases learning in classroom, whereas one of them (2,22%) says that humor does not increase learning.

Q9. Does humor encourage teaching-learning process?

- Agree
- Disagree
- neutral

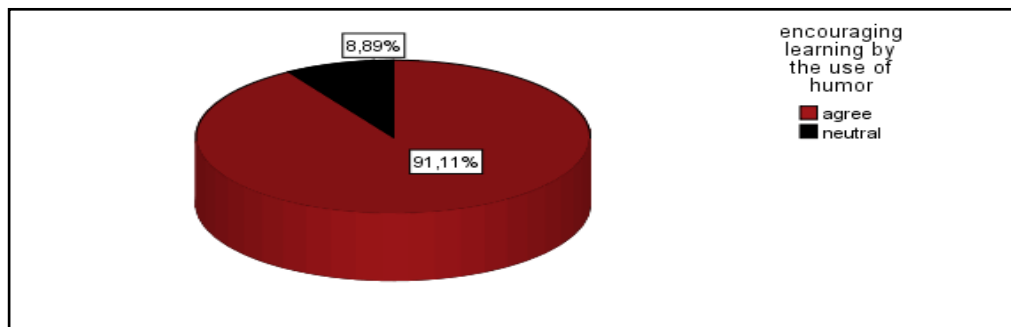
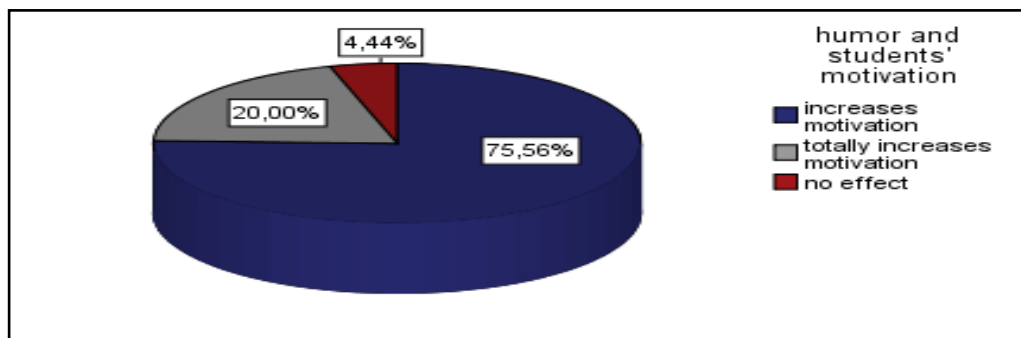


Diagram09: Encouraging learning by the use of humor

As shown above, 41 participants (91,11%) respond that humor encourages learning in the classroom, and the rest of them or 8,89% have not responded (they are neutral).

Q10. To what extent does humor increase your motivation?

- Totally increases motivation
- Increases motivation
- No effect



Digram10: Humor and students' motivation:

According to the results above, most of the participants (75,56%) confirm that humor increases students' motivation in the classroom. 20% of them say that students' motivation is totally increased by humor. Only two participants (4,44%) respond with no effect.

Q11. Do you feel that you are more creative when using humor in classroom?

- Yes
- No

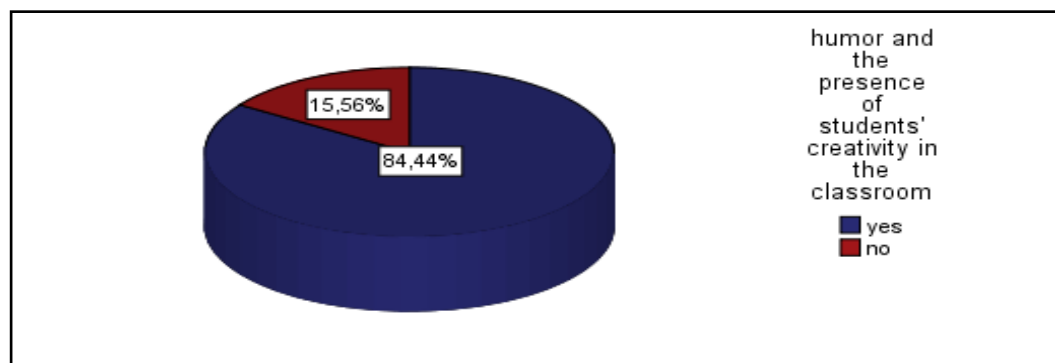


Diagram11: Humor and the presence of students' creativity in the classroom

The majority of the participants above (84,44%) confirm that humor makes students creative. Only 15,56% of them say that the students are not creative while learning through humor.

This is explained by the students who are creative in the classroom that humor pushes them to create new ideas that help them during their interactions. However, the others who consider that humor does not increase creativity say that humor has no effect on their creativity.

Q12. Does humor reduce boredom in the classroom?

- Yes
- No

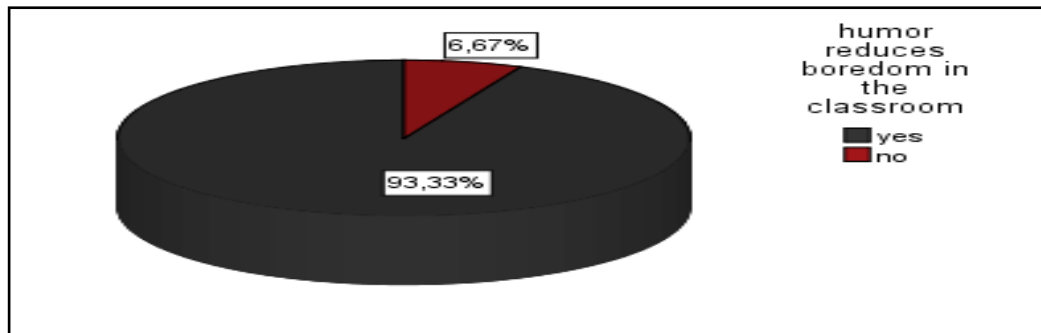


Diagram12: Humor reduces boredom in classroom

As shown in the results of the figure above, 42 participants (93,33%) see that humor reduces boredom in classroom. Besides that, 6,67% of them say that humor doesn't reduce boredom in classroom.

Q13. Does the use of humor create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neutral

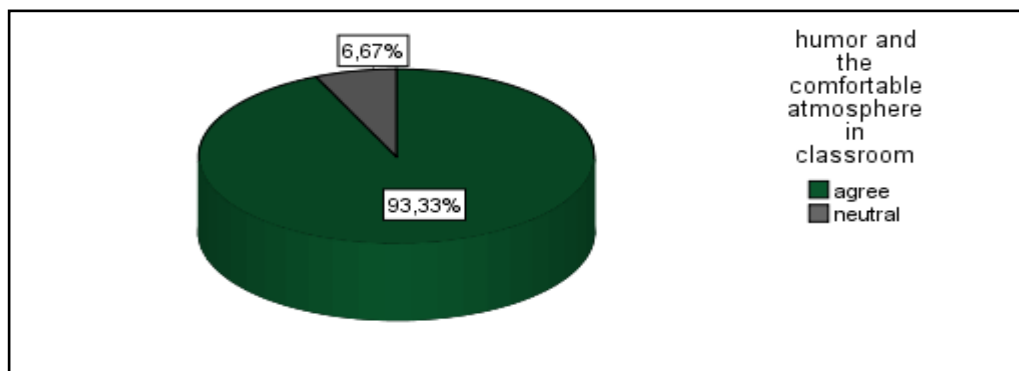


Diagram13: Humor and the comfortable atmosphere in the classroom

The statistics above show that the majority of the participants (93,33%) agree that humor creates a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. The others or only 6,67% are neutral.

Q14. How do you find humor as a learning technique in classroom?

- Enjoyable learning tool
- Boring learning tool

- Waste of time

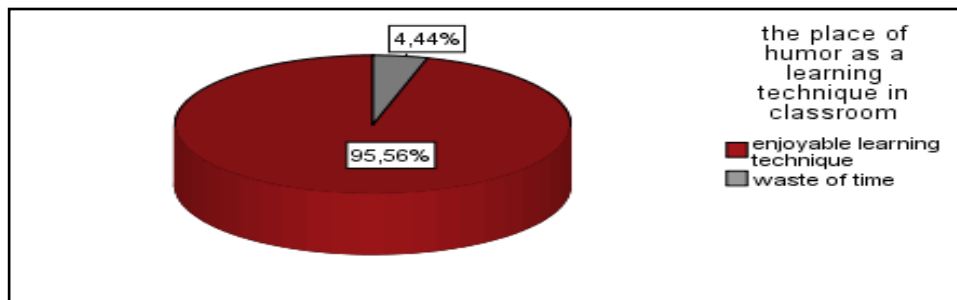


Diagram14: The place of humor as a learning technique in classroom

The results above about the place of humor as a learning technique show by most of the participants (95,56%) that humor is an enjoyable learning tool. The rest of these participants (4,44%) or two participants only consider humor a waste of time.

Q15. Do you feel at ease when using humor in the classroom?

- Yes
- No

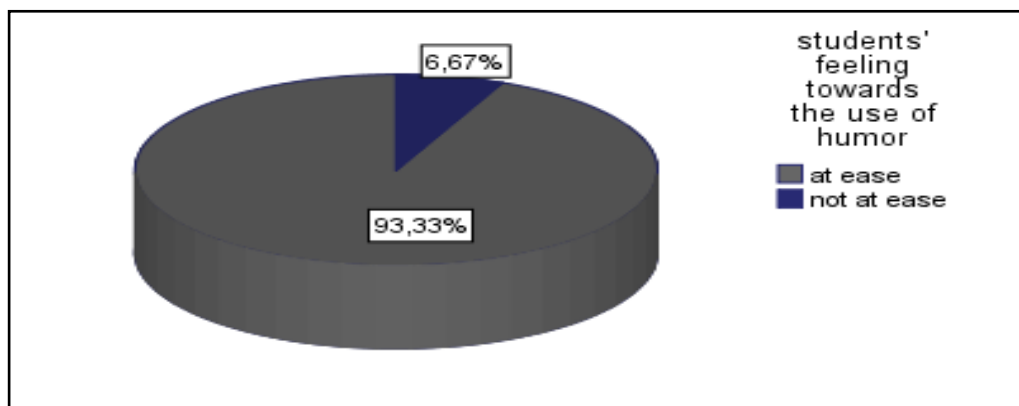


Diagram15: Students' feeling towards the use of humor

According to the diagram above, 93,33% confirm that students feel at ease in the classroom when learning through humor. 6,67% only of them say that students are not at ease when using humor in the classroom.

Students supported their point of view by saying that humor makes them comfortable in the classroom by being more relaxed when they express themselves.

Q16. Does humor reinforce the teacher-students relationship in the classroom?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neutral

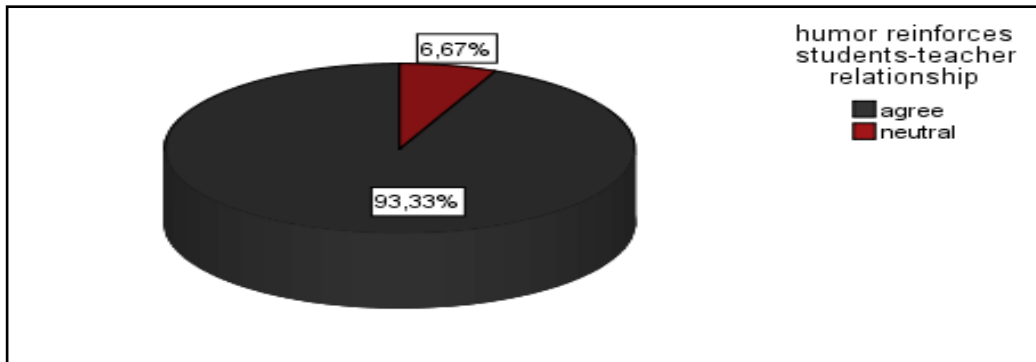


Diagram16: Humor reinforces students-teacher relationship

From the statistics above, it is clear that the majority of the participants (93,33%) or 42 out of 45 see that humor reinforces students-teacher relationship. Three participants only are neutral.

Students’ evidence about this is that humor creates a good rapport with their teachers in the classroom because using humor during interactions makes students and teachers more closed to each other.

II. The analysis of the classroom observation:

1. Teachers’ role to embody humor in the classroom:

	yes	no
Teachers use the physical aspects of humor	✓	

Teachers use the superiority theory of humor		✓
Teachers use the incongruity theory of humor	✓	
Teachers use the affiliative humor	✓	
teachers use self-enhancing humor	✓	
Teachers use self-defeating humor	✓	
Teachers use aggressive humor		✓
Teachers use jokes	✓	
Teachers use riddles	✓	
Teachers use puns	✓	

Table 01

2. Students' reactions during the use of humor in the classroom:

	always	sometimes	never
Students are motivated	✓		
Students are creative		✓	

Students are at ease and enjoy learning	✓		
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Table 02

3. The classroom atmosphere during the use of humor:

	yes	no
Humor reduces boredom in classroom	✓	
humor reinforces students-teacher relationship	✓	

Table 03

Conclusion:

This chapter provides statistics and notes concerning the students’ attitudes towards learning through humor and its benefits in the classroom. As it is observed through this chapter, also noticed by the majority of the participants, humor is a helpful learning tool. The results have been presented in terms of pie chart, and tables. The coming chapter will discuss all these findings.

Introduction:

The last chapter in this research study concerns the discussion of the findings obtained through the students' questionnaire and the classroom observation. The results are interpreted and discussed in relation to the review of literature presented in chapter one and they aim at answering the research questions and confirming or refuting the hypotheses proposed in the general introduction.

This chapter comprises three major parts. Each part seeks to provide an answer to the research questions. The first part discusses the use of humor in the classroom and its necessity. The second one looks into how teachers use humor in the classroom and how students react to it. Then, the third part discusses the benefits and the effectiveness of the use of humor as a teaching strategy when learning a foreign language.

1. The use of humor and its necessity:

From the results displayed in the previous chapter, it appears that teachers at the department of English use humor when they teach, this is confirmed by the students' responses in which (100%) of students say that humor is used in the classroom (see diagram 01. p24). Leonard (1968) asserts that the best environment for learning is the interactive environment by using humor, where students participate rather than being merely receptive. That is to say, humor is used as a teaching strategy in the classroom because students pay more attention to their teachers when humor is involved. As concerns the necessity of using humor in the classroom, the findings state clearly that the use of humor is necessary in the classroom (see diagram 03. p25), that is said by most of the students (68,89%) and the others (31,11%) who consider it very necessary, which lead to (100%) of positive answers, whereas, none of them considers it as an unnecessary teaching tool (0%). In other terms, most of the

students understand the importance of humor in the learning process and its necessity. Possible reasons related to the students' views on the essential role of humor in the classroom, who consider it as a fundamental strategy that is seen as an integral part by creating active students in a communicative environment. As declared by Cornett (1986:8) who says: *"Humor can be one of our most powerful instructional resources. As I shall attempt to show, we really can learn through humor"*. In other words, as shown by Cornett, students can learn more with humorous teachers rather than with the others who do not use humor during the process of learning in the classroom. For her humor is an important strategy which brings more instructions to the lessons that help students in their learning process.

2. Teachers' role and the students' reactions in the classroom:

2.1. The teachers' role to embody humor in the classroom:

As shown in the previous chapter (see table 01. p33), according to the results of the classroom observation, teachers use the physical aspects of humor as mentioned in the Cornett's theory (1986). This means that, teachers perform some physical expressions by using their eyes, arms and faces: for instance, to explain lessons by smiling to better attract students. As supported by Cornett (1986:25) who says: *"who has not responded to laughing eyes and a broad pearly smile?"*. The physical aspects of humor are a set of gestures, emotions and manners that create an unforgettable image on the students. They will remember their lessons better if they are accompanied by these physical expressions. Moreover, students according to Cornett (1986) in the above quotation are more attracted by their teachers who laugh and smile. What we have noticed concerning this theory is that teachers explain lessons by performing all what can really attract their students. For this reason, they make reference to the physical aspects of humor as known in the Cornett's theory (1986). That is to say, all what is related to the human body, especially face, eyes and arms that attract more easily the

students' attention rather than the words. These physical aspects are very essential because they create on students the teacher's image which helps them to better understand and to be more motivated and active learners.

Moreover, as shown in the table (01. p33) and observed in the classroom, teachers use the incongruity theory of humor rather than its superiority theory. That is to say, teachers in the classroom refer to some literal and humorous expressions, metaphors and idioms in order to explain more, which refer to the incongruity theory of humor in which the sense of humor is seen as the ability to recognize the incongruities and absurdities that confront us on a daily basis. In other words, it is the ability to look at the same thing as everyone else and see something just a little different, to look at things differently by the combination of ideas in an unexpected and humorous way. This result is supported by Cornett (1986:29) who states that: *"Humor resulting from unexpected connections is explained by the incongruity theory."* In this quotation, humor is a result of a sudden connection of expressions which lead students to more understand their lessons. As we have shown in table (01. p33), the superiority theory of humor is not incorporated in the classroom because of its degrading role. Concerning this theory of humor, Monro (1988) asserts that humor is derisive, pleasure derives from feeling superior at those who have *"failing"* or *"defect"*, laughter always looks down at whatever we laugh at.

Furthermore, teachers use some types of humor as developed in Martin's theory (2003). As it is clearly displayed in table (01. p33), affiliative humor is used in the classroom to bring humor in the daily life and engage in a spontaneous way with students. In other words, affiliative humor is used in the classroom in order to make lessons funny, facilitate the students-teacher interactions during the learning process and to allow partners to feel much closer to each other. Role (2011) has conducted a study to know which style of humor is used the most in the classroom, and to what extent it helps teachers to be effective. The results

reveal that most teachers who use affiliative humor are often able to make most people laugh with the jokes that they crack.

Most importantly, students appreciate affiliative humor since it builds up rapport between teachers and students. It aims also at entertaining others by playing jokes with friends, telling humorous stories, or by telling various odd and funny things. This type involves the use of certain forms of humor (see table 01. p33) which are mentioned in Cornett's theory (1986), as jokes, puns and riddles.

First, jokes are part of the charm that belongs to any language. Learning to understand jokes in a new language is both a cause, and a consequence, of language proficiency (LP) (Cook,2000). For instance, in the classroom a teacher explains a lesson by using a humorous story in order that the students remember it for a long period of time. Then by understanding jokes students will be able to make a relation to their lessons. Besides that, it is clearly noticed from the classroom observation that there are different kinds of jokes, as shown by Schmitz (2002:93) who says: "*jokes can be classified into three classes: universal jokes, culture jokes, and linguistic jokes*". According to this quotation, jokes can be classified into three different parts: universal jokes, cultural jokes, and linguistic jokes, during the classroom observation, only the cultural and linguistic jokes which are involved. This is due to the reference made to the intellectual level in the classroom which needs a considerable amount of knowledge to be understood. For example, *teacher: What animal can jump higher than a house. Student: Any animal. Houses can't jump*. In this example, it is important to know how certain words share the same characteristics but differ in the level of their meanings. Second, puns also are a special form of humor based on a double meaning. For example in the classroom, to understand puns, students recognize first the meaning of the original word or phrase. Then, to figure out what the other word sounds like, at the end they need to pull together the two possible meanings of the word and compare them in the context of the sentence. When all

these steps are complete, there is a moment where the two meanings come together, and it's time to laugh. Puns are said to be the creative use of language (Partington, 2006), because they need some reflection to be understood by students and the pleasure takes place when one meaning is reinterpreted by the other. As used in the classroom, a teacher says to students "*four candles*", they hear it "*fork handles*". Then, the teacher writes it on the board and students start to make a relation between what is written and what is heard. After that, students realize that they are confusing between meanings. A riddle, another form of humor, is a question that is difficult to understand and it is used in the classroom in order to give an opportunity to students to find an answer. For instance: "*how do you keep fish from smelling*", in this case students start to suggest their answers. At the end, a teacher says: "*to keep fish from smelling, you need to cut off their noses*". Then, students laugh because it is a surprising and unexpected answer. Additionally, such humorous riddle may aim to teach vocabulary, spelling, even phonology.

As shown in the results of the classroom observation (see table 01. p33), another type of humor known as self-enhancing humor is used in the classroom. In this type of humor, teachers laugh at their own experience, like sharing something humorous which happens to them with their students in order to better explain and bring humor into the classroom. For example, we have noticed that teachers tell their students about the humorous stories that happen to them. Self-enhancing maintains high moral, strengthens optimistic mood and reduces negative emotions. It leads also to obtain self- efficacy and self- control in the classroom (McGhee, 2010). Therefore, students who use self-enhancing humor are less depressed, less anxious, and higher in self-esteem, their friends and teachers are likely to note to tell jokes and have an amused attitude (Earleywine, 2010). In other terms, self-enhancing humor makes students comfortable and creates a suitable climate for learning, students with this kind of humor have an amused behavior with their teachers and friends.

A third type of humor or self-defeating humor is used by the teachers as displayed in table (01. p33). This type of humor increases levels of depression and anxiety in the classroom and teachers try to make their students think better when facing difficult moment. For example, in the classroom when teachers ask difficult questions, students cannot respond and in this case they feel themselves weak, and incapable. For this reason, teachers help them by giving indications in a humorous way. Then, students forget their weaknesses and participate by suggesting answers. Kerr (2001) insists that this style of humor is positive, supportive, and safe. He states (2001:199): *"Learning to love your bloopers is one of the easiest ways to start laughing more often. It fosters a climate of creativity by encouraging students to take risks without fear of embarrassment. So forgive yourself, forgive others and laugh more often"*. According to this quotation, this type of humor encourages students to express their points of views and participate in the classroom without being feared or stressed.

Regarding the forth type which concerns the aggressive humor (see table 01. p33) it is not used by teachers since is considered to be negative and decreases the students' self-esteem. Aggressive humor includes the compulsive expression of humor even when it is socially inappropriate. This type of humor is viewed as a means of enhancing the self at the expense of one's relationships with others (Martin, 2007). As a result, aggressive humor is a negative style of humor; it is unhealthy. It should be avoided in the classroom since it dehumanizes students.

2.2. Students' reactions and attitudes towards the use of humor:

As shown in the previous results, the use of humor in the classroom is considered as a helpful teaching tool which is confirmed by all the students (see diagram 04. p26), which means that using humor helps students in their learning process as stated by Hidi (2002:173) who says: *"humor leads students to attend the classes very constantly and focus on a task"*.

In the above quotation, it is stated that by the use of humor students attend their classes regularly and pay attention to the subject matter. Humor captures students' attention, it has the potential to hold students' attention and keep them interested in the material presented, and this is by the beginning of the learning process (Deiter, 2000). So, in order to attract students' attention, lectures should be interesting, accompanied by suspense and examples that are vivid and fascinating. Especially when it is related to their lessons as shown in the diagram (05. p27), in which (68,89%) of the students say that their teachers sometimes use humor in relation to their lessons. While, (28,89%) of them respond that teachers always relate humor to the lessons. Teachers in relation to this idea consider humor as a suitable tool to facilitate the explanation of lessons and the transmission of the message to their students. This means that the use of humor in relation to the topic helps students to learn better. The idea is supported by Sullivan (1992) in which he claims that if humor is irrelevant to the subject matter, valuable class time may be wasted and the class may become unruly. Then, by contributing to bad classroom managing, it is also declared that effective humor is content-related. Chiasson (2002) asserts that the use of humor will depend on the content you are teaching and the availability of appropriate humorous material. It must be comprehensible, with themes that students can relate to. Whereas, (2,22%) of the students have a negative view in which they say that teachers never relate humor to the lessons. This may be interpreted that the use of humor in relation to lessons leads to the lack of concentration and destroy the climate of the learning process.

Additionally, teachers should use humor in a spontaneous way with their students as it is shown in diagram (06. p27). Most of the students (95,56%) confirm that their teachers use humor spontaneously. That is to say, it is better to use humor in a spontaneous way since it facilitates interactions between students and their teacher. Kerr (2001:193) consolidates this idea by saying: *"Everyone is allowed to be themselves. There is no line drawn between our*

work and personal lives. Students are happier, more fun and more creative when they are free to be who they really are, and humor produced spontaneously is funnier than prepared humor, it is the simplest way to add more fun into your work day". That is to say, everything which is direct and spontaneous is the most effective. It is better to say things as they are in their real state in order to trigger more the students' attention to the lessons. So, teachers are much closer to their students when they are spontaneous which leads to enjoyable moments in the classroom between students and their teachers rather than with prepared humor.

As displayed in diagram (07. p28), the majority of the students (91,11%) as a whole (53,33%+37,78%) confirm that they are allowed to use humor when participating in the classroom in their learning process. It explained that the teachers' reaction to their students non- reaction may be the most amusing part so that they should not ignore humor but instead make it part of their everyday classroom learning (Provine,2000). Humor also helps students to learn more as mentioned in the diagram (08. p28) in which (97,78%) of students declare that humor increases learning in the classroom. it is clear that humor presents a helpful learning tool that leads students to learn better by participating and giving their opinions. Furthermore, (91,11%) of the students say that humor encourages their learning process as displayed in diagram (09. p29). This means that humor not only helps students in their learning process but also it encourages them to better learn. This idea is better explained by Proctor (1994) who asserts that whenever teaching is coupled with humor, the classroom environment for language learning is welcoming. It is no longer threatening or intimidating (Proctor,1994). Humor can be of a service to manage the classroom without teacher's authority and embarrassing in the class. So, using humor cannot be considered as misbehavior, but as a classroom management strategy through which students collaborate with each other and with their teacher to progress learning.

Besides, students find humor an enjoyable learning technique with (95,56%) as displayed in diagram (14. p32). This result is supported by Cornett (1986:11) who says: *“laugher is pleasurable; in fact, people do laugh louder and larger when in larger groups.”* The above quotation takes clearly the importance of humor into account by considering it pleasurable and enjoyable.

3. The benefits of humor in the classroom:

3.1. Benefits of humor in relation to students:

As shown in the previous findings, The results obtained from the first year master students at the department of English demonstrate that (75,56%) of the students assert that their humorous teachers increase their motivation. (20%) of them say that humor totally increases motivation which results to (95,56%) as a whole of positive answers (see diagram10. p29), while, just a minority (4,44%) of students say that humor has no effect on their motivation. It can be said that motivation is substantially the heart of language learning. Brown (2000:160) says that: *“Motivation is probably the most frequently used term for explaining the success or failure of virtually and complex task. It is easy to assume that success in any task is due simply to the fact that someone is motivated”*. This means that, the success or the failure of students depends on their amount of motivation. For this, humor can be adopted as a pedagogical strategy in order to obtain more successful outcomes in the language classroom as supported by Jonas (2010) who reports that the teacher’s enthusiasm maintains students’ interest in subject matter.

Working in an environment built on humor can develop teacher’s moral, motivation, and job satisfaction so that automatically students are kept motivated. When students are more motivated, teachers can spend more time on other aspects of learning instead of consuming time to motivate them, because the unmotivated students pose a huge challenge for teachers.

Also, Gilbertson (2006) considers that the best way to motivate and stimulate the students' interest in a topic is to use humor.

Besides that, humor not only enables learning, but demonstrates a correlation between the developments of sense of humor and motivation to learn, mastery of cognitive material and positive response to instructional stimuli (Klein,1985).

As concerns students' creativity, a high frequency of students (84,44%) say that the use of humor in the classroom increases creativity during the learning process and respond by "yes", while, only (15,56%) of the students respond negatively and say that humor does not increase their creativity (see diagram 11. P30). According to Morrison (2008:3):

Creativity is the ability of the brain to bring together diverse ideas that will generate the thinking necessary for complex problem solving. Humor and creativity are great companions, each a perfect complement for the other in nourishing thinking. Risk-taking is the nucleus of creativity and of humor; the freedom to express wild ideas activates spirited conversation and sparks the imagination. The creative process flourishes when accompanied by a sense of humor.

As mentioned in this quotation, creativity goes hand in hand with humor and each one completes the other. Also in this case, Cornett (1986:11) adds her point of view by saying: "*incorporating humor into students' lessons liberates creative capacities*". This means that, the lessons that are accompanied with a sense of humor help the students to create more and to express themselves. The use of humor in the classroom increases instructional effectiveness and students' motivation, that is also noticed during the classroom observation (see table 02. p34), in which we have noticed that the students' creativity increases during lessons which incorporate humor.

With regard to whether humor makes students at ease or not during their process of learning, table (02. p34) shows clearly that a considerable proportion of the students feel that they are at ease and enjoy learning through humor. This is also confirmed in the diagram (15. p32), which indicates clearly that (93,33%) of the students respond positively by declaring

their comfort with humorous teachers, while only (6,67%) which represents a little amount of the students that are not at ease when using humor. This is due to their views that consider humor as a waste of time. Quina (1989:27) declares: *“if students are comfortable and enjoy the learning process, they are more likely to remember more of the material presented”*. That is to say, students who learn through humor and enjoy their learning remember more the lessons. Concerning this result, Gore (2004:75) says: *“most of the students enjoy a lecture more if humor is incorporated”*. So, humor is the preferable tool which helps to enjoy more the lessons.

3.2. Benefits of humor in relation to the classroom atmosphere:

According to the result as shown in diagram (12. p31), the majority of the students (93,33%) see that humor reduces boredom in the classroom comparing to the others (6,67%) who respond negatively and say “no”, that is also noticed during the classroom observation (see table 03. p35). That is to say, using humor in the classroom reduces boredom and brings a comfortable atmosphere into the classroom, because the environment plays a significant role in the learning process, as declared by Chaisson that the nature of positive humor is to find a positive atmosphere that triggers students’ desire to participate in classroom interaction by decreasing anxiety and stress (Chaisson,2002).

Besides that, diagram (16. p33) shows clearly that (93,33%) of the students say that humor reinforces student-teacher relationship, which is also confirmed during the classroom observation (see table 03. p35). In other words, the use of humor during the teaching-learning process help students to be much closer to their teachers, as supported by Emerson and Watson (1988:89) who state:

When humor is used as part of the teaching strategy, a caring environment is established, there is an attitude of flexibility and communication between students and teacher is that of freedom and openness, the tone is set allowing

for humor error with freedom to explore alternatives in the learning situation. This reduces the authoritarian position of the teacher, allowing the teacher to be a facilitator of the learning process, fear and anxiety, only natural in a new and unknown situation, becomes less of a threat, as a partnership between student and instructor develops.

Further, as concerns the students' views towards a comfortable environment, it has been noticed that the majority of the participants (93,33%) agree with the significant role that humor plays in creating a comfortable environment, whereas (6,67%) of students do not have any answer, and no one of them disagree concerning whether humor creates a comfortable environment (see diagram 13. p31). The environment plays an important role in the learning process, for this teachers always try to create a comfortable atmosphere that fits the learners' needs. This is clearly confirmed by Chaisson (2002) who explains that the nature of positive humor is to find a positive atmosphere that triggers students' desire to participate in classroom interaction by decreasing anxiety and stress. In addition to that, during the classroom observation we have noticed that the teaching process which is accompanied by humor helps more to learn in a comfortable environment. To support this idea, Hashem (1994) demonstrates that humor improves the classroom atmosphere and can avoid negative situations. It means that, humor creates a warm climate where the students have a good relation between them and with their teachers. It leads then to establish a good rapport. So, using humor can be considered as a classroom management tool through which teachers increase learning.

Conclusion:

This chapter has discussed the results obtained from the two research instruments used in the current study. We have conducted the research study to validate the research questions and the research hypotheses. The obtained results from the study reveal that the students

consider humor as a helpful learning technique a pedagogical strategy which reduces boredom and creates a good atmosphere for the learning process. Moreover, the students of first year master students at the department of English have a positive view towards associating humor in their classes and they have a good rapport with their humorous teachers. Some of the hypotheses presented in the general introduction are confirmed and the others are refuted at the department of English with the first master students. Considering all what is gathered as positive views, humor can be classified as a useful and a good pedagogical learning strategy.

This dissertation has investigated the students' attitudes towards learning through humor and its role in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (FL) in the department of English at the University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi Ouzou. This topic is conducted in order to know the real impact of humor on students in the classroom during their learning process, the investigation of this topic is important by referring to Cornett's theory of the use of humor in the classroom (1986) and Martin's one (2003) which develops the types of humor and completes the first theory. This research study assigns three major parts, starting by investigating the use of humor by teachers in the classroom, then the students' reactions. At the end, this study aims to prove the benefits of humor and its positive outcomes on the students' progress.

In order to answer the questions asked in the general introduction and to test the hypotheses of the study, a mixed method approach combining the quantitative and qualitative research methods is used for data collection and data analysis. These data, indeed, are collected through two distinctive research instruments. Fifty (50) master one students, from different specialties language and communication, drama and comparative literature are randomly chosen from the department of English at the University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi Ouzou to respond to the questionnaire. As well, a classroom observation is also used in order to obtain information about the role of humor in the learning process. For quantitative data analysis, a computer program known as SPSS is used for the evaluation of statistical data. In addition to the statistical method, the qualitative content analysis (QCA) is used to interpret the data gathered from the open-ended questions and the classroom observation.

Relying on the data analysis, the discussion of the outcomes of the questionnaire and those of the classroom observation has provided answers to the research questions advanced in the investigation. The results collected from the questionnaire show that humor is a helpful

teaching tool which is enjoyed by students, it is also confirmed that the use of this technique helps to bring a comfortable atmosphere into the classroom. According to students, humor is an interesting strategy that teachers use to raise their motivation during lessons. As concerns the analysis of the data collected from the classroom observation, it has been shown that teachers use humor in relation to its types and nature to facilitate the teaching-learning process. It has been also noticed that humor plays an important role in the classroom, regarding the good rapport between teachers and students. As a result, humor reduces boredom and makes students at ease by creating a good atmosphere.

Relying on the framework mentioned in the literature review of the study, Cornett's (1986) and Martin's (2003) theories (see chapter one) that concern humor in the classroom and its types, the following conclusion is drawn: although the constant debates about whether humor is a helpful or bothersome teaching tool for the students' development, one true and clear fact is that humor is an important and interesting component and technique in the teaching-learning process. Because humor makes students at ease, they enjoy their lessons. Thanks to this technique, students pay attention to everything which happens in the classroom that is why students remember easily their lessons. Humor is beneficial if students and teachers are aware of its usefulness and explore it appropriately, teachers in their turn should also accept the students' sense of humor in order to share its benefits in the classroom and to achieve the general goal which is the rise of the learning process.

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Appendix

Students' questionnaire

Section one: Humor and teaching:

- Do your teachers use humor in classroom?

Yes No

- If yes, how many teachers use humor?

Some of them All of them

- Do you think that teaching through humor is:

Necessary Very necessary Not necessary

- Do you consider the use of humor in classroom:

Helpful teaching tool Bothersome teaching tool Non-essential teaching tool

Why?

- How is humor used by your teachers in relation to the topic?

Always related to the topic Never related to the topic Sometimes related to the topic

- How do your teachers use humor in the classroom?

Spontaneously Planned/prepared

Section two: humor and learning

- Are you allowed to use humor during lessons?

Never Rarely Sometimes Always

- Does humor help you as student to learn more?

Yes No

- Does humor encourage teaching-learning process?

Agree Disagree Neutra

Section three: attitudes of learners towards the use of humor in classroom

- To what extent does humor increase your motivation?

Increases motivation Totally increases motivation No effect

- Do you feel that you are more creative when using humor in classroom?

Yes No

Justify?

- Does humor reduce boredom in the classroom?

Yes No

Section four: humor and the learning environment

- Does the use of humor create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom?

Agree Disagree Neutral

- How do you find humor as a learning technique in classroom?

Enjoyable learning technique Boring learning technique Waste of time

What is your argument for this?

- Do you feel at ease when using humor in the classroom?

Yes No

Why?

- Does humor reinforce the teacher-students relationship in the classroom?

Agree Disagree Neutral

What is your evidence about this?

Checklist of the classroom observation:

4. Teachers' role to embody humor in the classroom:

- Do teachers use the physical aspects of humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use the superiority theory of humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use the incongruity theory of humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use the affiliative humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use self-enhancing humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use self-defeating humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use aggressive humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use jokes?

Yes No

- Do teachers use riddles?

Yes No

- Do teachers use puns?

Yes No

5. Students' reactions during the use of humor in the classroom:

- Are students motivated?

Always Sometimes Never

- Are students creative?

Always Sometimes Never

- Are students at ease and enjoy learning?

Always Sometimes Never

6. The classroom atmosphere during the use of humor:

- Does humor reduces boredom in classroom?

Yes No

- Does humor reinforce students-teacher relationship?

Yes No

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

*My beloved parents Lounis and Yamina who encourage me
a lot*

My dear brothers Moumene and Djaffar

*My beloved sisters Djoudja and Hanane with her husband
Menad*

*My cousins, Wissem, Fifi, Chanez, Ghiles and Sabah with her
son Ramdane*

My uncle Belaid and my aunt djamila

*The memory of my beloved grand-mothers yaya
Tahemoucht and yaya Ladjouhar*

My aunt Roza and all my uncles

*All my friends especially djidji, Nora, manel, lilia and
soraya*

To my sweet binomial Safia

Kahina Ouazzi

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

*My beloved parents Slimane and Louiza who encourage
me a lot*

My dear brothers Hakim, Nordine, Lyes, and Belkacem

My beloved sisters Fazia, Karima, Farida, and Kahina

*All my beloved friends Lynda, Ryma, Manel, Soraya, Lilia,
and Hadjila*

To my cute binomial Kahina

Safia Tabti

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Abstract

The core of our research is the investigation of one of the techniques used in teaching English as a Foreign Language, which is the use of humor in the classroom. The aim of this research study is to identify the students' attitudes towards learning through humor and its role in developing the students' motivation in the classroom when learning English as a Foreign Language. The study is conducted at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou using Cornett's (1986) and Martin's (2003) theories on humor in the classroom. This study, in fact, is based on mixed method research. It combines quantitative and qualitative methods. Therefore, two different research instruments are taken into account. First, a questionnaire is addressed to first year master students at the Department of English to obtain insights about the use of humor by their teachers in the classroom, their attitudes and preferences towards it. Second, classroom observation is used to check the usefulness of using humor as a teaching technique to better know about its role in the classroom. The conclusion to be drawn from this study is that humor can help students in their learning process when it is used appropriately by their teachers, as it can be used in the classroom to facilitate learning by increasing motivation.

List of Abbreviations

- **EFL:** English as a Foreign Language
- **FL:** Foreign Language
- **LP:** Language Proficiency
- **QCA :** Qualitative Content Analysis
- **SPSS:** Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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1. General Introduction

1.1.Statement of The Problem

Motivated students are surely the result of a good style of teaching in the classroom. In this case a teacher can be considered a facilitator, a guide, and motivator. Different techniques are used in order to attract students' attention to the lessons. One of these techniques is the use of humor that serves as a powerful means of gaining liking and establishing a rapport with students. If teachers use humor in their classroom they often do so to reduce tension and convey good will. Humorous teachers can be the reason of motivated learners. The more humor is used in classroom, the more enjoyable the learning will be. Considering that teaching is psychological rather than pedagogical, students' psychology should be positively influenced to trigger their desire for learning.

By using such a technique, students can feel at ease, secure, more closed to their teacher who ensures a good learning environment. Then, students will get ready to receive information and to participate by exchanging their understanding with one another. Humor is considered a link between effective teaching and successful learning. It promotes the non-threatening learning environment and breaks all the obstacles that can be found in the classroom during the teaching learning process. Humor helps to enjoy learning in a good atmosphere. This dissertation focuses on the important role that humor can play as a teaching-learning technique. In more precise terms, it puts stress on the role of humor in the classroom even its influence on the students' attitudes.

1.2. Research questions and hypotheses

In the light of this study, the following research questions are suggested:

- To what extent can humor influence positively on the students' attitudes if it is used in the classroom?

This question can lead to the following sub-questions:

- Is the use of humor in the classroom necessary or not?
- How do teachers use humor in the classroom?
- How do students react towards this use?

Around the above research questions, this work attempts to test the following hypotheses:

- If learning in classroom happens through humor, students will be more active and motivated in a comfortable learning environment.
- The use of humor is necessary in the classroom.
- The use of humor is not necessary in the classroom.
- Teachers use humor in relation to its nature, forms and types.
- Students find humor as a helpful teaching tool.

1.3. Aims and significance of the study

The overall aim of our investigation is to answer our research questions which focus on the students' attitudes towards the use of humor in the classroom and the extent to which it influences the teaching-learning process. In order to test the hypotheses of this study, we have conducted this research in the department of English by investigating the case of first year master students, to check whether learning through humor is effective and helps them to be

more motivated in a comfortable environment. Another aim is to show the role of humor in the teaching-learning process.

1.4. Research Techniques and Methodology

Investigating such a topic needs to follow the appropriate research techniques and procedures to achieve the aim of this research study. For this reason, considering the role of humor and the students' attitudes, a mixed-methods approach is a suitable technique which includes both the analysis of meaning and statistical data. The population selected for this study is embodied by the first year master students at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of TIZI OUZOU, to notice whether students are motivated when teaching through humor. Classroom observation and a questionnaire for students are the instruments used in the present study. Classroom observation is necessary to gather data concerning the students' attitudes towards the use of humor and how it is used in the classroom. Then a questionnaire is addressed to students to better know their views concerning the use of humor by their teachers even their impressions towards learning through humor.

1.5. Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation contains a General Introduction containing Statement of The Problem, Research questions and hypotheses, Aims and significance of the study and research techniques and methodology, four chapters and a general conclusion. The first chapter is called "The Literature Review". It presents the definition of humor, its main concepts and origins. The second chapter is concerned with "Research Design and Methodology", used to conduct this research. It presents the procedures and techniques followed to reach the objectives of this study. The third chapter, entitled "Presentation of the Findings" presents the data gathered from the questionnaire and the classroom observation. To finish with the last

chapter is “The Discussion of the Findings”, where the results are discussed. The General Conclusion provides a summary of the research.

Introduction

This chapter aims at providing the reader with different concepts of the research. First, it includes some definitions in relation to humor in the classroom. After that, it explains the nature of humor and its different types and forms in the classroom. Also, it summarizes some principles of humor that refer to: content, communication, and guidelines to follow during the learning process. In addition, it presents some positive outcomes derived from the use of humor that benefit both teachers and students during their interactions in the classroom, as to create a comfortable learning environment, increase students' motivation and their creativity, and to build a good rapport between students and their teacher. At the end of this chapter, our theoretical framework is provided relying on the theory of humor explained and presented by Claudia Cornett (1986) in her book entitled "*learning through laughter: humor in classroom*", and Martin's theory (2003).

1. Definition of Humor

According to the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary (2008), humor takes the following definition: "*the quality in something that makes it funny or amusing; the ability to laugh at things that are amusing*". This means, all what make things amusing and enjoyable. Humor in the classroom is defined as "*an act performed through linguistic and non-linguistic means by any of the participants*", i.e. students or teacher (Wagner and Urios-Aparisi 2011: 400). Cornett (1986: 7) says: "*humor is a significant part of our lives*". In other words, humor is an essential element in life; no one can live without laughing. Abaudan (2009: 7) also describes humor as: "*A simple humoristic remarks that naturally occur in the communicative teaching of second language*". From this definition, humor is perceived as the simple expression used spontaneously while teaching a second language. In his part, Harmer (1998:1) says that: "*Humor is a pedagogical effective strategy that can be used to avoid the*

negative impact of the negative character of teachers, since students enjoy being entertained and is amused". The idea presented in the definition above refers to humor as an effective pedagogical strategy by which students feel amused. Besides that, Gatt (2000:17) says that:

It is the breathing-out of the soul when the pupils only listen to the teacher, who may be teaching in the same tone, then it is as if they only breathe in and have no opportunity to breathe out. They need humor, which the teacher can find in very different places. Therefore, the teacher must bring in humor during his lessons and this should result from vitality and momentum of the lesson.

It is clear that one of the ways of creating interest on the part of both the students and teachers is through humor in the teaching of English as a foreign language. It is also observable that the effect of humor is two-way or double sided, that is; it has benefits for both the teachers and the students.

2. The nature of humor

In this part, the nature of humor is explained by Cornett by referring to its three theories:

2.1. The physical aspects of humor

Berk (2003:64) notes that: *"humor can create an unforgettable image if it is accompanied by the use of your words plus your physical expressiveness in your eyes, face, arms, and the rest of your body."* In other words, some gestures, manners, or physical expressions of humor are necessary when using humor with students, because they remember their tasks and lessons by just remembering these manners. In this case, Koestler (1964:30) adds: *"humor is the only domain where a stimulus on a high level of complexity produces a massive and sharply defined response on the level of physiological reflexes."* (cited in Claudia Cornett,1986:26). Humor is considered as a creative activity which produces active responses at the level of physical aspects.

Also as Morrison (2008:2) says: *“emotions are considered as the stimulus of learning, they attract the attention which is required to learn.”* That is to say, emotions can be presented by humor when it is used in classroom. For that, students become enthusiastic to attend the class and feel interested in what is being said.

2.2. The superiority theory of humor

Claudia Cornett (1986:26) argues that: *“the superiority theory of humor asserts that humans derive pleasure from seeing themselves as better off than others.”* It means that, in this nature of humor or its superiority theory people derive pleasure by seeing themselves better than the others, for example: producing jokes about students’ mistakes in the classroom. Also, Hill (1988:40) says: *“we laugh at people who have an inferior moral character or at people who are uglier or destroyed than ourselves.”* Hill explains the superiority nature of humor according to people who possess superior knowledge over the others, for instance: when a teacher laughs at students’ weaknesses in the classroom.

This nature of humor raises inequality in the classroom. Differences in ages, status, and the level of thinking cause the feeling of superiority. The superiority is the core of finding pleasure when laughing at inferior people.

2.3. The incongruity theory of humor

The incongruity theory of humor is perceived as the literal representation of idioms (Cornett, 1986). For example: teachers in the classroom use certain humorous expressions or idioms to better explain lessons. Kerr (2001:2) notes that: *“having a sense of humor is about having a sense of balance, perspective and proportion. A sense of humor is the ability to recognize the incongruity and absurdities that confront us on a daily basis.”* In other words, a

sense of humor in the level of this theory is the ability to look at the same things as everyone else and see something just a little different.

As cited in Shade (1996:11): *“the basis of this theory is that humor is created when we expect one thing and is suddenly presented with another. Humor, then, is the result of these unexpected connections.”* That is to say, this theory is the result of the combination of ideas and things in an unexpected and humorous way. For example, in the classroom when a teacher explains something, and without paying attention, he refers to other things by making reference to some idioms and expressions which bring entertainment into the classroom.

3. Forms of humor in the classroom

Humor in the classroom can take different forms. It can be classified as jokes, puns, or riddles.

3.1. Jokes

The term “joke” emerged in the late seventeenth century. Joke is something to say or to do to make people laugh. It is originally slang, it derives from Latin “jocus” which means “wordplay” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary, 2008). It is seen by (Morrison, 2001:160) as: *“a short story or short series of words spoken or communicated with the intent of being laughed at or found humorous by the listener or reader”*. It means all what is spoken as humorous comments with the aim of being laughed by the listener or reader. Also, to be perceived laughable, jokes need comprehending the multiple meaning of words, idioms, and metaphors; then discovering ambiguity (Shade, 1996:3). In addition to all these, although humor can appear in various forms within the field of humor research, the joke is deemed to be the primary object of study (Wagner and Urios-Aparisi 2011: 400 and Schmitz 2002: 91).

3.2. Puns

A pun is the clever or humorous use of a word that has more than one meaning, or words that have different meanings but sound the same (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). It is described by Partington (2006:110) as: "*creative use of language.*" He argues that a pun never plays with merely one word but with a group of words. He clarifies that puns can be categorized into homonymy puns and homophony puns. Homonymy puns means words alike in sound and spelling. For example 'club' refers to two homonyms: 'association of people' and 'heavy weapon'. Whereas, homophony puns are words alike in sounds only. For instance, 'leek' and 'leak'. The pleasure takes place when one meaning is reinterpreted by the other meaning.

3.3. riddles

A riddle is a question that is difficult to understand, and that has a surprising answer, by which you ask somebody as a game. It derives from the old English "radels". It is related to Dutch "*raadsel*" and German "*ratsel*" (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2008). It is a word game, an enigma, a puzzling fact. It is similar in nature to a joke but with a question-answer format. For example: *imagine that you are in a boat, in the middle of the sea. Suddenly you are surrounded by hungry sharks, just waiting to feed on you. How can you put an end to this?* (The answer is: *stop imagining*). Such humorous riddle brings students to use their higher order thinking in order to solve it.

4. Types of Humor

The humor styles were developed by Rod.A.Martin in 2003. He attempted to capture the differences in how individuals typically use or express humor and whether these uses are beneficial for well-being. Martin distinguishes between four different humor styles:

4.1. Affiliative humor

This type of humor involves all that makes life funny. The goal of this type is to bring humor in the daily life. Martin (2003:211) says that:

Affiliative humor refers to the tendency to say funny things, to tell jokes, and to engage in spontaneous witty banter, in order to amuse others, to facilitate relationships, and to reduce interpersonal tensions (e.g., "I enjoy making people laugh"). This is hypothesized to be an essentially nonhostile, tolerant use of humor that is affirming of self and others and presumably enhances interpersonal cohesiveness

As mentioned in this quotation, the use of this type of humor in the classroom helps teachers to build a good rapport with their students and allow them to feel closer to each other, then to bring happiness into the classroom.

4.2. Self-enhancing humor

This type of humor is positive, healthy, and adaptive. It consists to laugh at your -self, such as making a joke when something has happened to you in order to bring humor in every day situation. Individuals tend to be humorous to keep themselves from getting depressed when facing certain situations, so they try by themselves to think about funny things in the past in order to relax and reduce boredom (Martin, 2003).

4.3. Aggressive Humor

It refers to sarcastic and hostile uses of humor in which the self is enhanced by excessively teasing or ridiculing others. It does not refer to cohesiveness in a group. Aggressive humor instead focuses on humor that meant to bettle others under the guise play full fun (Martin, 2003). Teachers, who use this form of humor, play jokes of the students to make fun in classroom.

In this case, humor is seen as the tendency to criticize or manipulate students in classroom (Beebe,2007). As a result, aggressive humor is a negative style of humor. It is

unhealthy and teachers should avoid it in the classroom, since it dehumanizes and hurts students.

4.4. Self-defeating Humor

This type of humor is used more frequently by individuals who show characteristics of an insecure attachment style and those with damaged self-esteem. But this type is not always considered to be negative. As Berk (1998: 6) notes that: *“self-defeating humor in the form of self-downs is not only an acceptable form but a highly desirable one to break down barriers in the classroom”*. From this quotation, this kind of humor is considered as a preferable tool for learners in the classroom.

5. Principles of using Humor in classroom

In this part, the focus will be on the situations in which humor can be introduced in the classroom by the teacher, or the relation between humor and lessons. In addition, how humor is used while communicating with students and its principles.

5.1. Humor and content

A poor classroom managing is the result of using an irrelevant humor to the subject matter (Sullivan, 1992:56). So, using humor with no relation to lessons can destroy the class and bring disorder. Humor should always serve a specific purpose; it should not be aimless (Bryant and Zillman, 1988). That is to say, using humor in classroom with students should always bring something valuable. Teachers should use humor to solve discipline problems and to enrich the curriculum (Cornett, 1986). In other words, humor in classroom should always serve students' program during the period of study. Also, Kerr (2001:201) notes:

"humor is most effective when it speaks to something everyone can relate to." In other words, the effectiveness of humor consists on its relevance to the subject matter.

In addition, it is suggested that teachers should refrain from using humor unless they are certain that students have the faculties and knowledge to understand it (Bryant and Zillman, 1983). It can be even expressed the idea that teachers' sense of humor should be understandable and available to students.

5.2. Humor and communication in classroom

Hill (1998:10) says: *"when teachers have a sense of humor and are not afraid to use it, students relax and become listeners"*. In this case, humor is one method by which teachers can make their relationship with students closer.

There are many differences between teachers and students such as position, status, age, that create natural barriers to communication and learning that must be broken down by teachers if they are to be effective (Berk, 1998). Obstacles like age and status can be broken down by the use of humor in classroom.

5.3. Guidelines to use humor in classroom

Claudia Cornett (1986) has prepared a list of 49 practical teaching ideas that can help teachers in classroom while using humor with their students. For instance, as she (1986: 36) says to teachers: *"start your lessons with something fun so students will look forward to coming to school."* Teachers should start their lessons by something humorous in order that students attend the class. She adds: *"use humorous sentences during spelling tests."* (ibid). Thus, it is important for teachers to use humorous sentences during tests.

6. Benefits of humor

This part discusses the positive outcomes of humor in the classroom:

6.1. Humor and Creativity

Morrison (2008: 3) says: *“Humor and creativity are great companions, the creative process flourishes when accompanied by a sense of humor”*. This quotation shows that creativity and humor work hand in hand. Munoz (2005:24) argues that: *“humor is closely related to memory as it is easier to recall an experience that occurred in a humorous context....”* That is to say, a lesson that is given through humor is better understood and remembered. It is important to encourage students to use puns and humorous comments which require higher level thinking skills, thus challenging students to think (Sullivan, 1992). In other terms, students are better engaged in the process of thinking while laughing.

Also, scientific researchers find that humor stimulates both sides of the brain to enhance learning. A good laugh improves a blood flow, increases oxygen in the blood, exercises lungs, even face muscles. Besides that, humor in the learning process is shown to develop higher-order thinking skills and create modes of thinking that are investigative, grasping, and filled with trial and error (Nilsen,1987), then, converting a *“Ha-Ha”* into *“Aha!”* in classroom (Herbert, 1991).

6.2. Humor and motivation

When teachers use humor effectively in the classroom, students are more willing to participate and to be motivated during the lessons (Zillman and Cominsky, 1980). It means that students are active when their lessons are presented by an effective use of humor in the classroom. In addition, humor increases motivation, as Gore (2004:76) says: *“most of the*

students enjoy a lecture more if humor is incorporated, fun is motivating". Hidi (2002:173) adds to this idea: *"even if the subject matter is of little interest to the learners, humor leads students to attend the classes very constantly and focus on a task."* The two quotations refer to humor as a motivated factor in the classroom. Also, the more relevant to the subject matter humor is, the more motivated students will be (Gore, 2004). In addition, Humor is viewed as *"an important resource for increasing student motivation"* (Deneire, 1995: 402).

6.3. Humor and good rapport in the classroom

Humor is the best strategy used in classroom which helps to build rapport between students and teachers. Students are less intimidated and less inhibited about asking questions or making comments (Hill, 1998). Besides that, humor establishes students-teacher rapport. While enhancing the general classroom, humor serves as -an immediacy behavior that decreases the psychological distance between teacher and students (Shade, 1996). Besides that, Chabeli (2008: 55) who studies the perceptions of humor as a pedagogical tool to facilitate learning, reports that: *"the students believe that humor strengthens social relationships among learners and teachers, and is able to reduce the authoritarian position of the teacher"*. That is to say, humor helps to build a good rapport in the classroom between students and teacher. It helps also to reduce teacher's authority.

6.4. Humor and the comfortable environment

Humor is a pedagogically effective strategy that can be used to avoid the negative impact of the negative characters of teachers since students enjoy being entertained and amused (Harmer, 1998). In other words, the happier about learning students feel; the more successful they will be. Cornett (1986:16) says: *"A class that has opportunities for sharing humor will have a more positive atmosphere, the students and teacher in it will even look better, smiling improves your appearance."* It means that, a positive learning environment is the result of

using humor and funny things in the classroom. Besides that, Cornett (1986:15) adds: *“Teachers who use their sense of humor to maintain a positive classroom atmosphere know how to reverse the direction of negative energy.”* This means that, teachers who use humor with their students bring a positive atmosphere to the classroom with a positive energy.

Deneire (1995: 285) observes that: *“humor has been [...] shown to have a positive effect on the learning environment, to initiate, maintain, and enhance learner interest, and to facilitate retention.”* This means that, the use of humor in classroom facilitates and enhances learning in the classroom. Thus, the experiencing of humor involves both the processes of comprehension and appreciation, the latter of which is often linked to a feeling of amusement, mirthful laughter and enjoyment (Özdoğru and McMorris 2013).

7. Theoretical framework

The investigation of this work is based on the theory proposed by Claudia. E Cornett in her book entitled *“learning through laughter: humor in classroom”* (1986). Claudia Cornett is an associate professor in the education department at Wittenberg University. She makes presentations on all aspects of the learning process, including motivation, comprehension, and mainly the use of humor in the classroom. Her publications include articles and books for teachers as well as students.

In her book *“learning through laughter: humor in classroom”*, she explains how humor can function in the ways that help to achieve educational goals, as she (1986: 9) says: *“humor can function in ways that help achieve the educational goals”*. Cornett gives the reasons why teachers should get serious about incorporating humor in their lessons. She states that humor attracts attention and provokes thought, for example when students pay attention, teachers try to keep this attention by promoting their sense of humor until they get the answer,

then students smile slightly or laugh loudly. Also, she claims that humor liberates creative capacities. It helps to gain friends because it serves the social functions of promoting group membership. The use of humor in the classroom improves communication between teachers and students which make them closer to each other.

Besides that, humorous teachers are more able to deal with the difficulties which they encounter during teaching. Humor develops a positive attitude and self-image because teachers who use their sense of humor in the classroom maintain a positive classroom atmosphere. In addition to all this, humor motivates and energizes: when teachers start a lesson with a humorous story, joke, or riddle, students are more motivated and with an active mental state. In the classroom, humor helps to solve problems. It can help to solve problems in two main ways. First, it helps both students and teachers to cope with seemingly insoluble problems by enabling them to separate themselves from the problem at least temporarily. Second, for students with behavioral disorders, humor is a means of helping them cope with hostile and aggressive feelings. Because joking with students about problems is a means of reducing tension during the learning process (cornett,1986).

In addition, Cornett (1986:24) focuses on the nature of humor in the classroom by citing three levels. First, *“physical aspects of humor”*, in which states three main stages in the classroom: the first one is to indicate the humorous situations in which teachers perform humorous manners and using jokes in order to attract their attention. Once this stage has occurred and seen by students, the second stage concerns the problem-solving begins with the thinking process, then finally to move from this thinking process into the students’ reaction. In few words, the physical aspects of humor concern first the teachers’ effective stimulus which requires then the students’ response. Second, *“the superiority theory of humor”* in which we find humor in the defects of persons who usually accord great dignity or respect.

Also according to this theory, seeing defects in others is humorous to us only when the defect is perceived as not being painful to the victim. For instance: laughing about students' mistakes in the classroom, and making jokes with students' name as it is confirmed by Cornett who says (1986:27): *"everything is funny as long as it's happening to someone else"*. At the end, *"the incongruity theory"* as a part of the nature of humor which concerns the unexpected connections of ideas in the classroom by making reference to some expressions and idiom. As defined by Cornett (1986:29) *"is the literal representation of idiom"*, which needs a high level of thinking to be understood by the students, then to get their positive reactions in the classroom.

In short terms, Cornett summarizes her essential points (1986:30) by saying that: *"somewhere, somehow, students must learn to use humor appropriately so they can enjoy its many benefits"*. Teachers with a sense of humor bring joy to themselves and show students a side of being human. Teachers that share humorous personal anecdotes, read humorous literature aloud, and laugh at students' jokes demonstrate to their students that they are capable of a range of other emotions which will withstand the stress of those bad days.

Another theory which is developed by Rod A.Martin (2003) completes Cornett's theory and attempts to capture the differences in how individuals typically use or express humor. Martin's model distinguishes between four different humor types: 1. Affiliative humor which is characterized by using humor to foster group cohesion, telling jokes and making fun at things that everybody can laugh at. 2. Self-enhancing humor that refers to how a person uses humor on an individual level, a tendency to be amused by various things in one's life, also when faced with difficult or stressful situations. 3. Aggressive humor which is related to using humor to disparage, manipulate or threat others, it is destructive for group cohesion and can lead to in-group divisions and suffering of certain individuals. 4. Self-defeating humor

that could, in turn, be applied by the poor ginger kid to intend the effects of the aggressive humor, the self-defeating humor style involves allowing others to make jokes at one's cost and pretending that one's having fun along the way (Martin,2003).

Conclusion

This chapter concerns the literature review. It includes certain definitions of the concept of humor, then its different forms and types which we consider helpful to the understanding of our research. In addition, it states some of the positive outcomes that humor leads to in the classroom, such as: students' motivation and creativity, good rapport between students and their teachers in a comfortable atmosphere. A theoretical framework of this present study is explained at the end of this chapter. Some positive outcomes of humor are cited according to Claudia Cornett which helps achieve the educational goals. Then, we have highlighted the nature of humor by citing its three levels. In addition, Martin's theory (2003) is explained, in which the types of humor are developed and complete Cornett's theory (1986).

Introduction

This chapter deals with the research design of the study that helps to carry out our theme of investigation, in order to answer the questions asked in the general introduction. It explains the techniques used and the procedures followed. It describes also the participants included in this study.

The two techniques that are used consist of: a questionnaire addressed to first year master students at the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of TIZI OUZOU, and classroom observation. Indeed, a mixed method approach which includes both qualitative and quantitative methods is adopted to analyze the data collected from the techniques used in this study.

1. The setting and the context of the study

Our study aims to check whether learning through humor is effective and can help students to be more motivated in a comfortable environment. To achieve this aim, we have conducted our research at the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of TIZI OUZOU, during the academic year 2015/2016.

2. The participants

The subjects of this study concern the first year master students, during the academic year 2015/2016. They are randomly selected; their ages and sex are not taken into account. These participants are asked to answer the questionnaire concerning their opinions about learning through humor. Their attitudes are also observed during their process of learning with humorous teachers.

I. Data collection instruments

In order to collect data that support our theme of investigation which is the role of humor in the learning process, we have adopted two different kinds of data collection instruments: a questionnaire to students and classroom observation.

a) The questionnaire

The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher (Wilson and Mc Lean, 1974). It means that, a questionnaire is one of the most common tool for gathering information. A questionnaire includes two types of items: closed and open-ended. In the first type, the researcher generally suggests possible answers that can be chosen by the respondents. In the second type, the respondents answer in a less oriented way in which they express their ideas by using their own style. The questionnaire which is intended as part of this research is addressed to first year master students at the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of TIZI OUZOU.

Students' questionnaire

For the sake of gathering information about students' opinions and their attitudes concerning the role of humor in their learning process, a questionnaire is addressed to fifty (50) students selected randomly from the participants of this study. This questionnaire contains sixteen (16) questions including both close-ended in which the participants choose one of the pre-determined answers and open-ended questions which are accompanied with follow-up questions that demand explanation or justification for certain choices. Besides that, the questionnaire is divided into four sections: the first section consists of humor and

teaching, the second one concerns humor and learning and the third section includes the attitudes of learners towards the use of humor in the classroom. The last one is concerned with humor and the learning environment.

b) classroom observation

Classroom observation is a technique that can reveal characteristics of groups or individuals which would have been impossible to discover by other means, it is a very important instrument and the only one that helps to collect information about what really happens inside the classrooms.

For this study, first year master students are observed in the classroom during some of their lessons. The observation concerns both linguistic and literature classes to collect a considerable amount of information concerning the classroom environment during the learning process through humor. The data are collected through a series of attendances to these classes which are randomly chosen from the first year master level by taking written notes and comments. These observations have taken place from 01/05 to 17/05/2016. Our focus is on how teachers use humor in the classroom and the students' attitudes towards this use.

II. Procedures of data analysis

This part includes the procedures of data analysis. It presents the statistical and qualitative content analysis (QCA) methods used to analyze the data gathered from the students' questionnaire and the classroom observation. Our corpus is analyzed according to the mixed method approach which combines both qualitative and quantitative procedures.

a) Description of the statistical method

This method is considered to have as its main purpose the quantification of data. This allows generalizations of results from a sample to an entire population of interest and the measurement of the incidence of various views and opinions in a given sample. By using this method in this present study, the responses collected from the questionnaire are calculated and then compared. In order to obtain the statistical results we have relied on a computer program named the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). This computer program is used in social sciences helping in the description of statistical analysis. It is one of the most advanced statistical packages that are able to perform highly complex data treatment and analysis with simple instructions. The outcomes are shown in tables, pie charts and graphs.

b) Description of the qualitative content analysis

This method is non-statistical. Its methodological approach is primarily guided by the concrete material at hand. It is considered to be particularly suitable for gaining an in-depth understanding of underlying attitudes and behaviors. It provides insights into the setting of a problem.

In this research study, this procedure is used to analyze the explanations provided to certain questions in our questionnaire.

Conclusion

This chapter deals with the research design of this study. It presents the procedures of data collection which contains the setting of the study and its participants. Then, it provides a description of data collection instruments explaining how the data are gathered by using a

students' questionnaire and classroom observation. Furthermore, it supplies the methods of data analysis which concern the mixed method approach that combines the qualitative and quantitative procedures.

Introduction

This chapter deals with the presentation of the findings. Unlike the two previous chapters, this present one is concerned with something more practical. It aims at presenting the results obtained from our corpus of the first year master students' questionnaire about the role of humor and the observation of their attitudes in the classroom, through the use of numbers, percentages, and notes, then presenting them by using pie chart and tables.

I. The analysis of the students' questionnaire

In this part, all the responses collected from the questionnaires will be analyzed through tables, diagrams, and pie charts by showing all the numbers and percentages. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the questionnaire is addressed to 50 students, but we have received only 45 of them. So our study is conducted on the number of the questionnaires received or 45 questionnaires which represent 100% in this study.

Q1. Do your teachers use humor in classroom?

- Yes
- No

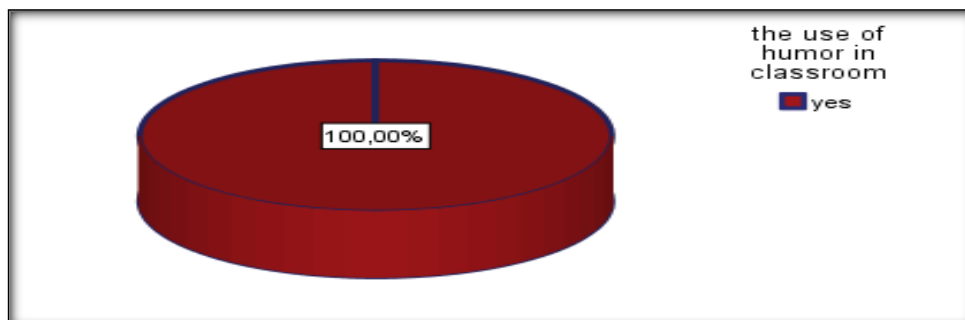


Diagram 01: The use of humor by teachers in the classroom

The results above confirm that all the participants (45) who represent 100% say that humor is used in the classroom.

Q2. If yes, how many teachers use humor?

- Some of them
- All of them

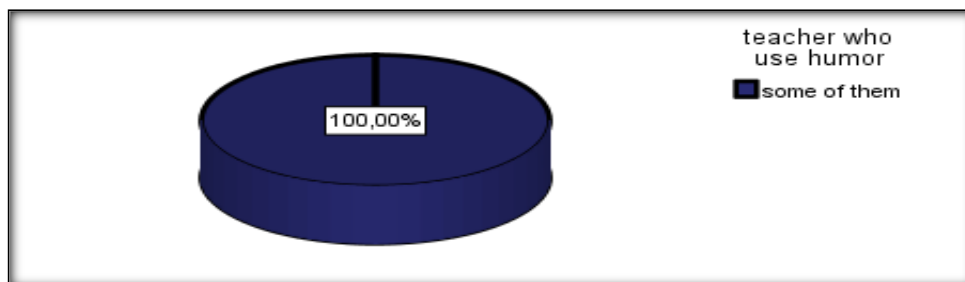


Diagram 02: Teaches' use of humor:

As displayed in these results, all the participants (100%) confirm that only some of the teachers use humor in the classroom.

Q3. Do you think that learning through humor is?

- Very necessary
- necessary
- not necessary

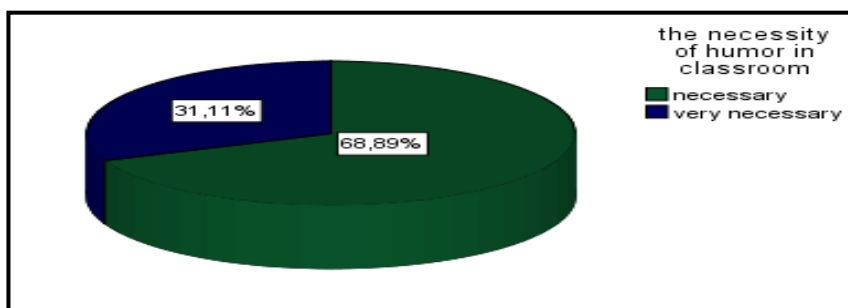


Diagram 03: The necessity of humor in the classroom

The results in the table above show that most of the participants confirm the necessity of humor. (68,89%) say that humor is necessary in the classroom, 31,11% of them see it very necessary which makes the total (100%) of positive responses.

Q4. Do you consider the use of humor in the classroom?

- helpful teaching tool
- bothersome teaching tool
- non-essential teaching tool

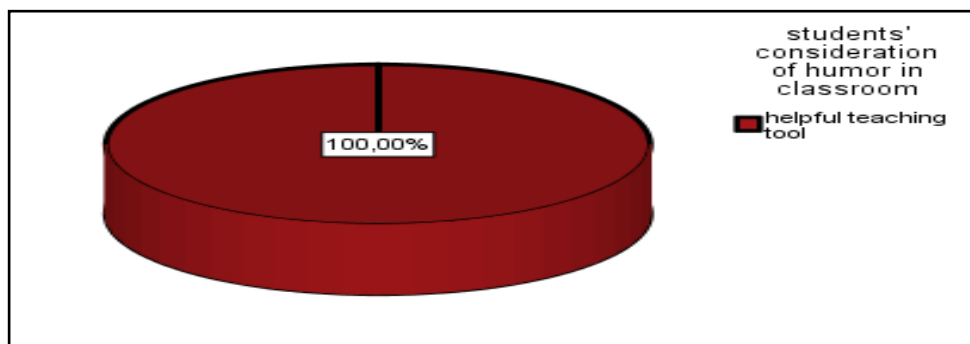


Diagram 04: Students' consideration of humor in the classroom

According to all the students (100%) as shown above, humor is considered as a helpful teaching tool.

Why?

Students have justified this by saying that humor helps them in their learning process, this is due to the fact that the lessons which are accompanied by humor are easily understood.

Q5. How is humor used by your teachers in relation to the topic?

- Always related to the topic
- Sometimes related to the topic
- Never related to the topic

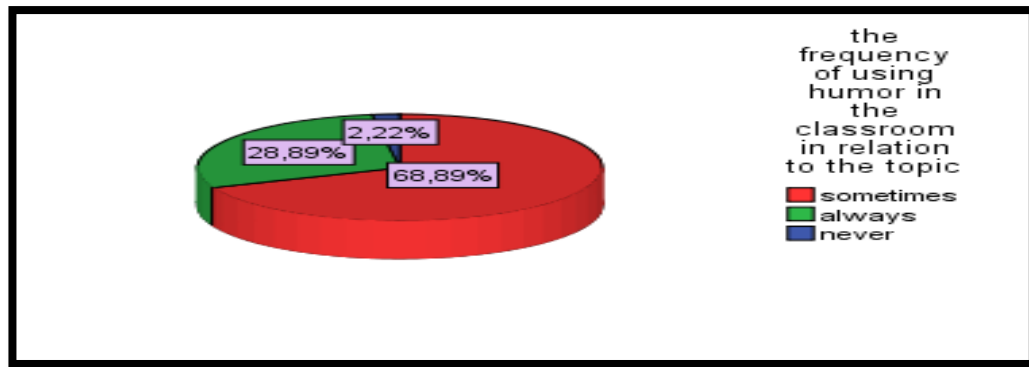


Diagram 05: The frequency of using humor in relation to the topic

The results above show that the majority of the participants or 31 out of 45 (68,89%) confirm that teachers' use of humor is sometimes related to the topic. The minority (28,89%) considers that humor is always related to the topic. Only one participant says that humor is never related to the topic in classroom.

Q6. How do your teachers use humor in the classroom?

- Spontaneously
- planned

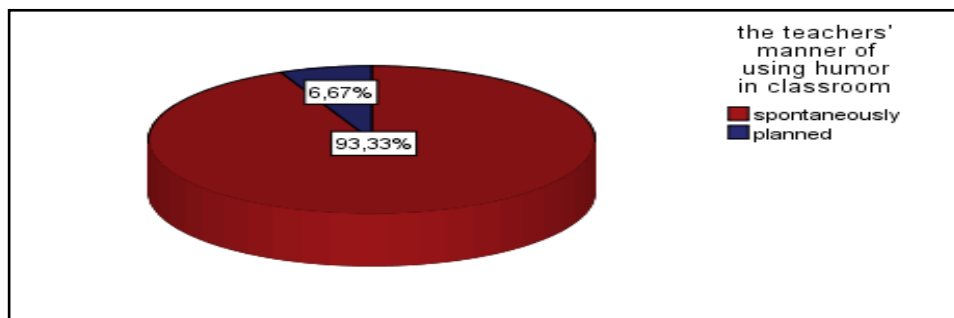


Diagram06: The teachers' manner of using humor in the classroom

According to the participants above, most of them say that teachers use humor in a spontaneous way (95,56), whereas only 4,44% of them see that humor is used in a prepared way.

Q7. Are you allowed to use humor during lessons?

- Always
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- never

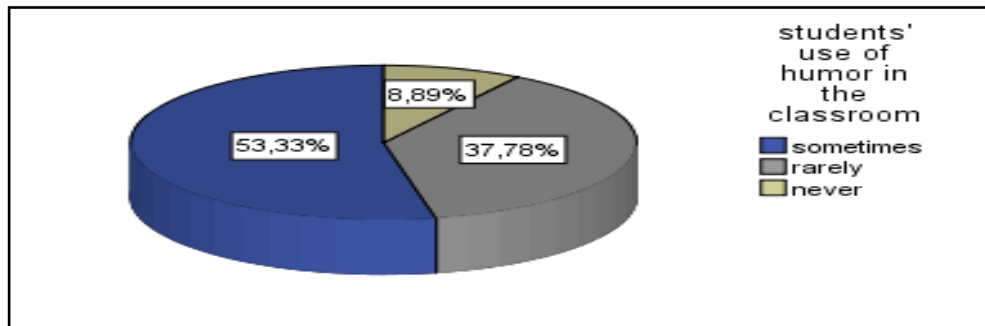


Diagram07: Students' use of humor in the classroom

As displayed in the diagram above, the participants that represent 53,33% confirm that the students are sometimes allowed to use humor in the classroom. 37,78% of them see that students are rarely allowed. Only 8,89% or 4 participants out of 45 say that students are never allowed to use humor in the classroom.

Q8. Does humor help you as student to learn more?

- Yes
- No

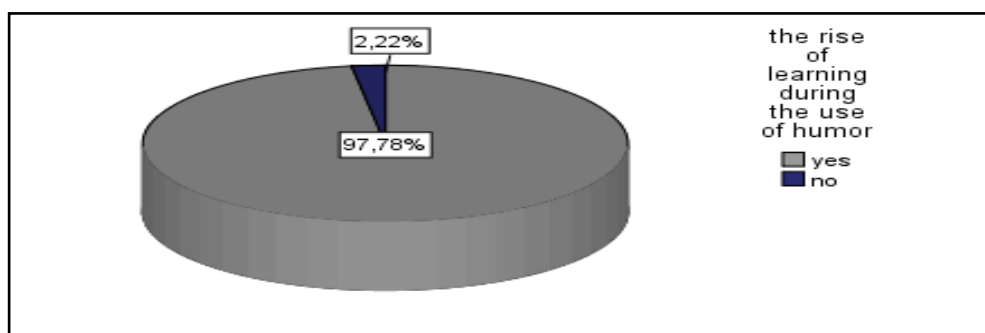


Diagram08: The rise of learning during the use of humor

As shown in these results, the majority of the participants (97,78%) confirm that humor increases learning in classroom, whereas one of them (2,22%) says that humor does not increase learning.

Q9. Does humor encourage teaching-learning process?

- Agree
- Disagree
- neutral

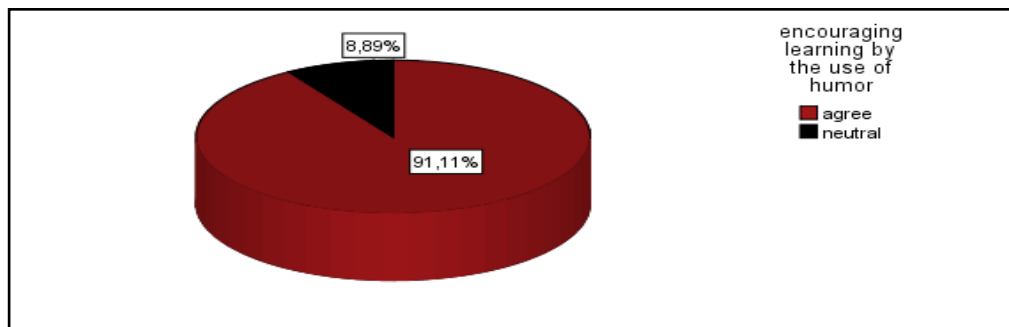
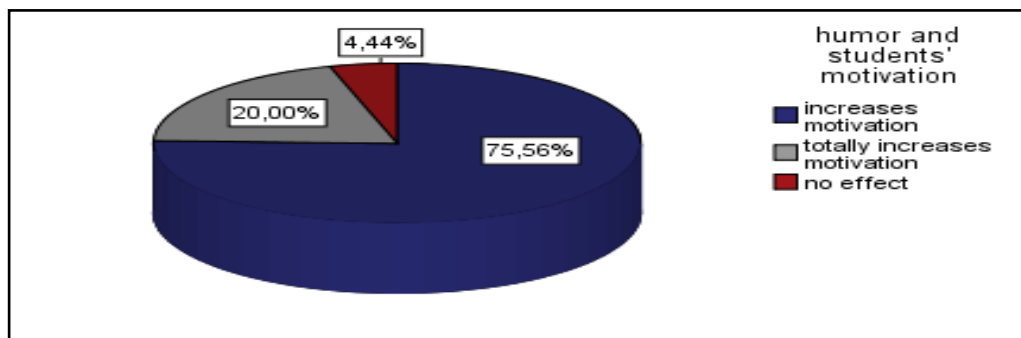


Diagram09: Encouraging learning by the use of humor

As shown above, 41 participants (91,11%) respond that humor encourages learning in the classroom, and the rest of them or 8,89% have not responded (they are neutral).

Q10. To what extent does humor increase your motivation?

- Totally increases motivation
- Increases motivation
- No effect



Digram10: Humor and students' motivation:

According to the results above, most of the participants (75,56%) confirm that humor increases students' motivation in the classroom. 20% of them say that students' motivation is totally increased by humor. Only two participants (4,44%) respond with no effect.

Q11. Do you feel that you are more creative when using humor in classroom?

- Yes
- No

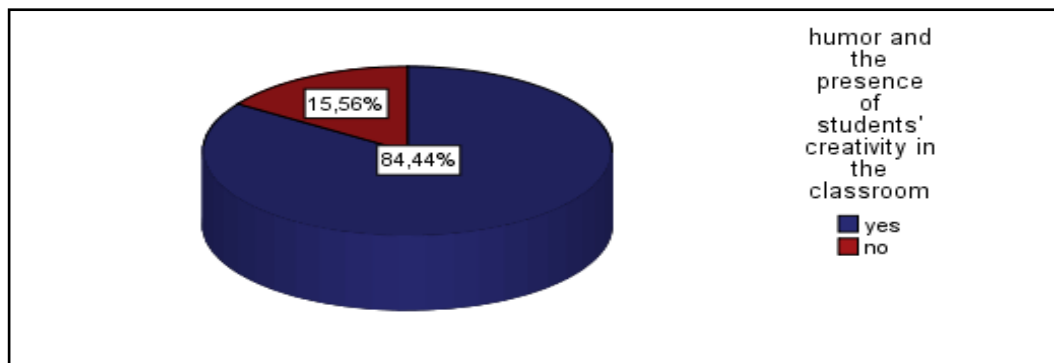


Diagram11: Humor and the presence of students' creativity in the classroom

The majority of the participants above (84,44%) confirm that humor makes students creative. Only 15,56% of them say that the students are not creative while learning through humor.

Justify?

This is explained by the students who are creative in the classroom that humor pushes them to create new ideas that help them during their interactions. However, the others who consider that humor does not increase creativity say that humor has no effect on their creativity.

Q12. Does humor reduce boredom in the classroom?

- Yes
- No

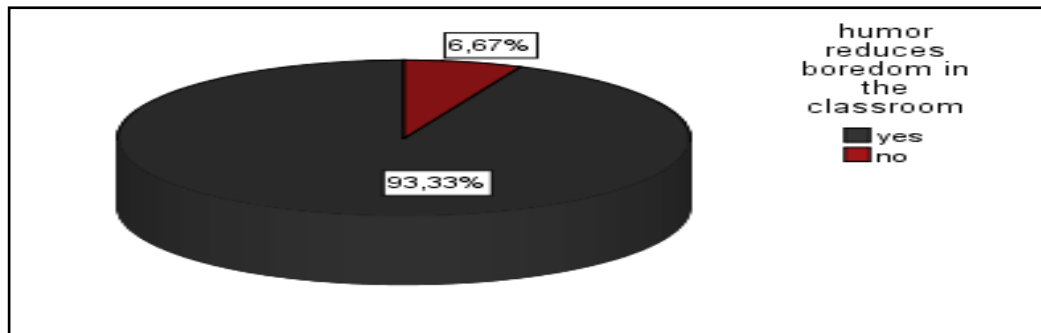


Diagram12: Humor reduces boredom in classroom

As shown in the results of the figure above, 42 participants (93,33%) see that humor reduces boredom in the classroom, while only (6,67%) of them say that humor doesn't reduce boredom in classroom.

Q13. Does the use of humor create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neutral

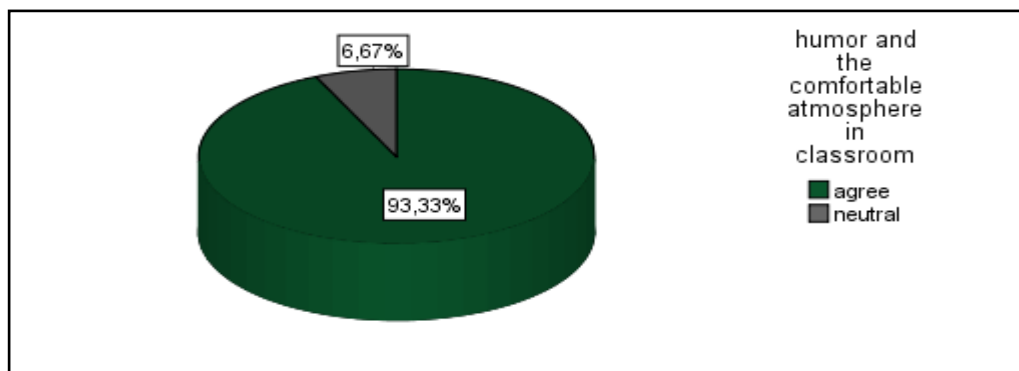


Diagram13: Humor and the comfortable atmosphere in the classroom

The statistics above show that the majority of the participants (93,33%) agree that humor creates a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom. The others, who are only (6,67%) are neutral.

Q14. How do you find humor as a learning technique in classroom?

- Enjoyable learning tool

- Boring learning tool
- Waste of time

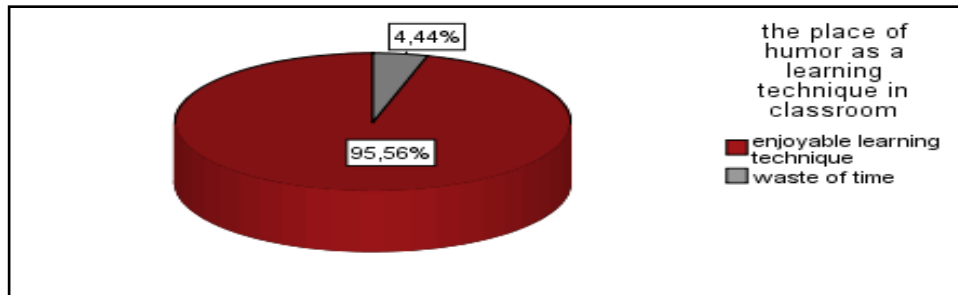


Diagram14: The place of humor as a learning technique in classroom

The results above about the place of humor as a learning technique show most of the participants (95,56%) that humor is an enjoyable learning tool. The rest of these participants (4,44%) or two participants only consider humor a waste of time.

What is your argument for this?

Students have argued that humor is an enjoyable learning technique, they have supported their point of view by saying that the use of humor during their sessions adds a charm and grace to the classroom. Humor enables students not only to create an effective or positive environment but it is also a source of enjoyment and pleasure.

Q15. Do you feel at ease when using humor in the classroom?

- Yes
- No

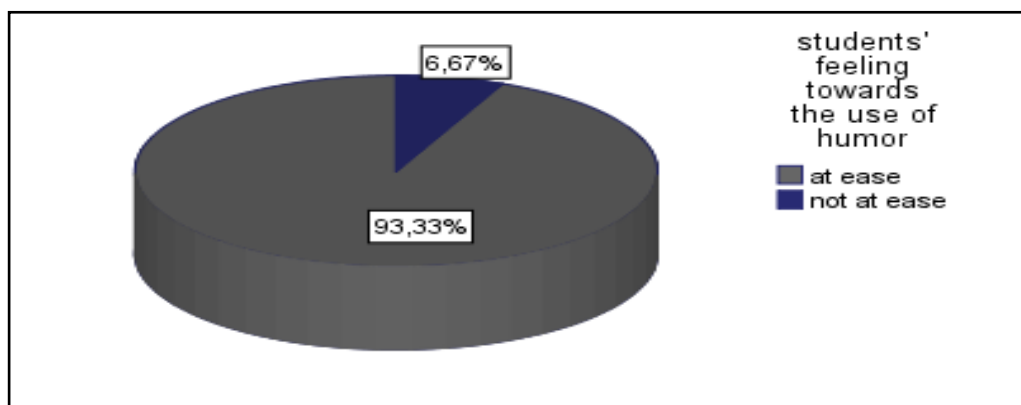


Diagram15: Students’ feeling towards the use of humor

According to the diagram above, 93,33% confirm that students feel at ease in the classroom when learning through humor. 6,67% only of them say that students are not at ease when using humor in the classroom.

Why?

Students have supported their point of view by saying that humor makes them comfortable in the classroom by being more relaxed when they express themselves.

Q16. Does humor reinforce the teacher-students relationship in the classroom?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neutral

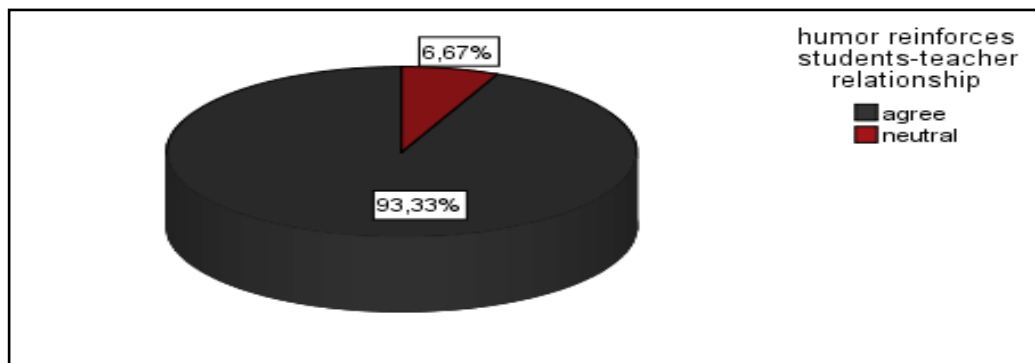


Diagram16: Humor reinforces students-teacher relationship

From the statistics above, it is clear that the majority of the participants (93,33%) or 42 out of 45 see that humor reinforces students-teacher relationship. Three participants only are neutral.

What is your evidence about this?

Students’ evidence about this is that humor creates a good rapport with their teachers in the classroom because using humor during interactions makes students and teachers more closed to each other.

II. The analysis of the classroom observation:

1. Teachers' role to embody humor in the classroom:

	yes	no
Teachers use the physical aspects of humor	✓	
Teachers use the superiority theory of humor		✓
Teachers use the incongruity theory of humor	✓	
Teachers use the affiliative humor	✓	
teachers use self-enhancing humor	✓	
Teachers use self-defeating humor	✓	
Teachers use aggressive humor		✓
Teachers use jokes	✓	
Teachers use riddles	✓	
Teachers use puns	✓	

Table 01

2. Students' reactions during the use of humor in the classroom

	always	sometimes	never
Students are motivated	✓		
Students are creative		✓	
Students are at ease and enjoy learning	✓		

Table 02

3. The classroom atmosphere during the use of humor

	yes	no
Humor reduces boredom in classroom	✓	
humor reinforces students-teacher relationship	✓	

Table 03

Conclusion

This chapter provides statistics and notes concerning the students' attitudes towards learning through humor and its benefits in the classroom. As it is observed through this chapter, also noticed by the majority of the participants, humor is a helpful learning tool. The results have been presented in terms of pie chart, and tables. The coming chapter will discuss all these findings.

Introduction

The last chapter in this research study concerns the discussion of the findings obtained through the students' questionnaire and the classroom observation. The results are interpreted and discussed in relation to the review of the literature presented in chapter one and they aim at answering the research questions and confirming or refuting the hypotheses proposed in the general introduction.

This chapter comprises three major parts. Each part seeks to provide an answer to the research questions. The first part discusses the use of humor in the classroom and its necessity. The second one looks into how teachers use humor in the classroom and how students react to it. Then, the third part discusses the benefits and the effectiveness of the use of humor as a teaching strategy when learning a foreign language.

1. The use of humor and its necessity

From the results displayed in the previous chapter, it appears that teachers at the department of English use humor when they teach, this is confirmed by the students' responses in which (100%) of students say that humor is used in the classroom (see diagram 01. p24). Leonard (1968) asserts that the best environment for learning is the interactive environment by using humor, where students participate rather than being merely receptive. That is to say, humor is used as a teaching strategy in the classroom because students pay more attention to their teachers when humor is involved. As concerns the necessity of using humor in the classroom, the findings state clearly that the use of humor is necessary in the classroom (see diagram 03. p25), that is said by most of the students (68,89%) and the others (31,11%) who consider it very necessary, which lead to (100%) of positive answers, whereas, none of them considers it as an unnecessary teaching tool (0%). In other terms, most of the students understand the importance of humor in the learning process and its necessity.

Possible reasons are related to the students' views on the essential role of humor in the classroom, who consider it as a fundamental strategy that is seen as an integral part by creating active students in a communicative environment. As declared by Cornett (1986:8) who says: *"Humor can be one of our most powerful instructional resources. As I shall attempt to show, we really can learn through humor"*. In other words, as shown by Cornett, students can learn more with humorous teachers rather than with the others who do not use humor during the process of learning in the classroom. For her, humor is an important strategy which brings more instructions to the lessons that help students in their learning process.

2. Teachers' role and the students' reactions in the classroom

2.1. The teachers' role to embody humor in the classroom

As shown in the previous chapter (see table 01. p33), according to the results of the classroom observation, teachers use the physical aspects of humor as mentioned in the Cornett's theory (1986). This means that, teachers perform some physical expressions by using their eyes, arms and faces: for instance, to explain lessons by smiling to better attract students. As supported by Cornett (1986:25) who says: *"who has not responded to laughing eyes and a broad pearly smile?"*. The physical aspects of humor are a set of gestures, emotions and manners that create an unforgettable image on the students. They will remember their lessons better if they are accompanied by these physical expressions. Moreover, students according to Cornett (1986) in the above quotation are more attracted by their teachers who laugh and smile. What we have noticed concerning this theory is that teachers explain lessons by performing all that can really attract their students. For this reason, they make reference to the physical aspects of humor as known in the Cornett's theory (1986). That is to say, all what is related to the human body, especially face, eyes and arms that attract more easily the

students' attention rather than the words. These physical aspects are very essential because they create on students the teacher's image which helps them to better understand and to be more motivated and active learners.

Moreover, as shown in the table (01. p33) and observed in the classroom, teachers use the incongruity theory of humor rather than its superiority theory. That is to say, teachers in the classroom refer to some literal and humorous expressions, metaphors and idioms in order to explain more, which refer to the incongruity theory of humor in which the sense of humor is seen as the ability to recognize the incongruities and absurdities that confront us on a daily basis. In other words, it is the ability to look at the same thing as everyone else and see something just a little different, to look at things differently by the combination of ideas in an unexpected and humorous way. This result is supported by Cornett (1986:29) who states that: *"Humor resulting from unexpected connections is explained by the incongruity theory."* In this quotation, humor is a result of a sudden connection of expressions which lead students to more understand their lessons. As we have shown in table (01. p33), the superiority theory of humor is not incorporated in the classroom because of its degrading role. Concerning this theory of humor, Monro (1988) asserts that humor is derisive, pleasure derives from feeling superior at those who have *"failing"* or *"defect"*, laughter always looks down at whatever we laugh at.

Furthermore, teachers use some types of humor as developed in Martin's theory (2003). As it is clearly displayed in table (01. p33), affiliative humor is used in the classroom to bring humor in the daily life and engage in a spontaneous way with students. In other words, affiliative humor is used in the classroom in order to make lessons funny, facilitate the students-teacher interactions during the learning process and to allow partners to feel much closer to each other. Role (2011) has conducted a study to know which style of humor is used the most in the classroom, and to what extent it helps teachers to be effective. The results

reveal that most teachers who use affiliative humor are often able to make most people laugh with the jokes that they crack.

Most importantly, students appreciate affiliative humor since it builds up rapport between teachers and students. It aims also at entertaining others by playing jokes with friends, telling humorous stories, or by telling various odd and funny things. This type involves the use of certain forms of humor (see table 01. p33) which are mentioned in Cornett's theory (1986), as jokes, puns and riddles.

First, jokes are part of the charm that belongs to any language. Learning to understand jokes in a new language is both a cause and a consequence of language proficiency (LP) (Cook,2000). For instance, in the classroom a teacher explains a lesson by using a humorous story in order that the students remember it for a long period of time. Then by understanding jokes students will be able to make a relation to their lessons. Besides, it is clearly noticed from the classroom observation that there are different kinds of jokes, as shown by Schmitz (2002:93) who says: "*jokes can be classified into three classes: universal jokes, culture jokes, and linguistic jokes*". According to this quotation, jokes can be classified into three different parts: universal jokes, cultural jokes, and linguistic jokes. During the classroom observation, only the cultural and linguistic jokes are involved. This is due to the reference made to the intellectual level in the classroom which needs a considerable amount of knowledge to be understood. For example, *teacher: What animal can jump higher than a house. Student: Any animal. Houses can't jump*. In this example, it is important to know how certain words share the same characteristics but differ in the level of their meanings. Second, puns also are a special form of humor based on a double meaning. For example in the classroom, to understand puns, students recognize first the meaning of the original word or phrase. Then, to figure out what the other word sounds like, at the end they need to pull together the two possible meanings of the word and compare them in the context of the sentence. When all

these steps are complete, there is a moment where the two meanings come together, and it's time to laugh. Puns are said to be the creative use of language (Partington, 2006), because they need some reflection to be understood by students and the pleasure takes place when one meaning is reinterpreted by the other. As used in the classroom, a teacher says to students "*four candles*", they hear it "*fork handles*". Then, the teacher writes it on the board and students start to make a relation between what is written and what is heard. After that, students realize that they are confusing between meanings. A riddle, another form of humor, is a question that is difficult to understand and it is used in the classroom in order to give an opportunity to students to find an answer. For instance, "*how do you keep fish from smelling*", in this case students start to suggest their answers. At the end, a teacher says: "*to keep fish from smelling, you need to cut off their noses*". Then, students laugh because it is a surprising and unexpected answer. Additionally, such humorous riddle may aim to teach vocabulary, spelling, even phonology.

As shown in the results of the classroom observation (see table 01. p33), another type of humor known as self-enhancing humor is used in the classroom. In this type of humor, teachers laugh at their own experience, like sharing something humorous which happens to them with their students in order to better explain and bring humor into the classroom. For example, we have noticed that teachers tell their students about the humorous stories that happen to them. Self-enhancing maintains high moral, strengthens optimistic mood and reduces negative emotions. It leads also to obtain self- efficacy and self- control in the classroom (McGhee, 2010). Therefore, students who use self-enhancing humor are less depressed, less anxious, and higher in self-esteem, their friends and teachers are likely to note to tell jokes and have an amused attitude (Earleywine, 2010). In other terms, self-enhancing humor makes students comfortable and creates a suitable climate for learning, students with this kind of humor have an amused behavior with their teachers and friends.

A third type of humor or self-defeating humor is used by the teachers as displayed in table (01. p33). This type of humor increases levels of depression and anxiety in the classroom and teachers try to make their students think better when facing difficult moment. For example, in the classroom when teachers ask difficult questions, students cannot respond and in this case they feel themselves weak, and incapable. For this reason, teachers help them by giving indications in a humorous way. Then, students forget their weaknesses and participate by suggesting answers. Kerr (2001) insists that this style of humor is positive, supportive, and safe. He states (2001:199): *"Learning to love your bloopers is one of the easiest ways to start laughing more often. It fosters a climate of creativity by encouraging students to take risks without fear of embarrassment. So forgive yourself, forgive others and laugh more often"*. According to this quotation, this type of humor encourages students to express their points of views and participate in the classroom without being feared or stressed.

Regarding the fourth type which concerns the aggressive humor (see table 01. p33) it is not used by teachers since it is considered to be negative and decreases the students' self-esteem. Aggressive humor includes the compulsive expression of humor even when it is socially inappropriate. This type of humor is viewed as a means of enhancing the self at the expense of one's relationships with others (Martin, 2007). As a result, aggressive humor is a negative style of humor; it is unhealthy. It should be avoided in the classroom since it dehumanizes students.

2.2. Students' reactions and attitudes towards the use of humor

As shown in the previous results, the use of humor in the classroom is considered as a helpful teaching tool which is confirmed by all the students (see diagram 04. p26), which means that using humor helps students in their learning process as stated by Hidi (2002:173) who says: *"humor leads students to attend the classes very constantly and focus on a task"*.

In this quotation, it is stated that by the use of humor students attend their classes regularly and pay attention to the subject matter. Humor captures students' attention, it has the potential to hold students' attention and keep them interested in the material presented, and this is by the beginning of the learning process (Deiter, 2000). So, in order to attract students' attention, lectures should be accompanied by suspense and examples that are vivid and fascinating. Especially when it is related to their lessons as shown in diagram (05. p27), in which (68,89%) of the students say that their teachers sometimes use humor in relation to their lessons, while (28,89%) of them respond that teachers always relate humor to the lessons. Teachers in relation to this idea consider humor as a suitable tool to facilitate the explanation of lessons and the transmission of the message to their students.

This means that the use of humor in relation to the topic helps students to learn better. The idea is supported by Sullivan (1992) in which he claims that if humor is irrelevant to the subject matter, valuable class time may be wasted and the class may become unruly. Then, by contributing to bad classroom management, it is also declared that effective humor is content-related. Chiasson (2002) asserts that the use of humor depends on the content are teaching and the availability of appropriate humorous material. It must be comprehensible, with themes that students can relate to. Whereas, (2,22%) of the students have a negative view in which they say that teachers never relate humor to the lessons, this may be interpreted that the use of humor in relation to lessons leads to the lack of concentration and destroys the climate of the learning process.

Additionally, teachers should use humor in a spontaneous way with their students as it is shown in diagram (06. p27). Most of the students (95,56%) confirm that their teachers use humor spontaneously. That is to say, it is better to use humor in a spontaneous way since it facilitates interactions between students and their teacher. Kerr (2001:193) consolidates this idea by saying: *"Everyone is allowed to be themselves. There is no line drawn between our*

work and personal lives. Students are happier, more fun and more creative when they are free to be who they really are, and humor produced spontaneously is funnier than prepared humor, it is the simplest way to add more fun into your work day". That is to say, everything which is direct and spontaneous is the most effective. It is better to say things as they are in their real state in order to trigger more the students' attention to the lessons. So, teachers are much closer to their students when they are spontaneous which leads to enjoyable moments in the classroom between students and their teachers rather than with prepared humor.

As displayed in diagram (07. p28), the majority of the students (91,11%) as a whole (53,33%+37,78%) confirm that they are allowed to use humor when participating in the classroom in their learning process. It explained that the teachers' reaction to their students non- reaction may be the most amusing part so that they should not ignore humor but instead make it part of their everyday classroom learning (Provine,2000). Humor also helps students to learn more as mentioned in the diagram (08. p28) in which (97,78%) of students declare that humor increases learning in the classroom. it is clear that humor presents a helpful learning tool that leads students to learn better by participating and giving their opinions. Furthermore, (91,11%) of the students say that humor encourages their learning process as displayed in diagram (09. p29). This means that humor not only helps students in their learning process but also it encourages them to better learn. This idea is better explained by Proctor (1994) who asserts that whenever teaching is coupled with humor, the classroom environment for language learning is welcoming. It is no longer threatening or intimidating (Proctor,1994). Humor can be of a service to manage the classroom without teacher's authority and embarrassing in the class. So, using humor cannot be considered as misbehavior, but as a classroom management strategy through which students collaborate with each other and with their teacher to enhance learning.

Besides, students find humor an enjoyable learning technique with (95,56%) as displayed in diagram (14. p32). This result is supported by Cornett (1986:11) who says: *“laugher is pleasurable; in fact, people do laugh louder and larger when in larger groups.”* The above quotation takes clearly the importance of humor into account by considering it pleasurable and enjoyable.

3. The benefits of humor in the classroom

3.1. Benefits of humor in relation to students

As shown in the previous findings, The results obtained from the first year master students at the department of English demonstrate that (75,56%) of the students assert that their humorous teachers increase their motivation. (20%) of them say that humor totally increases motivation which results to (95,56%) as a whole of positive answers (see diagram10. p29), while, just a minority (4,44%) of students say that humor has no effect on their motivation. It can be said that motivation is substantially the heart of language learning. Brown (2000:160) says that: *“Motivation is probably the most frequently used term for explaining the success or failure of virtually and complex task. It is easy to assume that success in any task is due simply to the fact that someone is motivated”*. This means that, the success or the failure of students depends on their amount of motivation. For this, humor can be adopted as a pedagogical strategy in order to obtain more successful outcomes in the language classroom as supported by Jonas (2010) who reports that the teacher’s enthusiasm maintains students’ interest in subject matter.

Working in an environment built on humor can develop teacher’s moral, motivation, and job satisfaction so that automatically students are kept motivated. When students are more motivated, teachers can spend more time on other aspects of learning instead of consuming time to motivate them, because the unmotivated students pose a huge challenge for teachers.

Also, Gilbertson (2006) considers that the best way to motivate and stimulate the students' interest in a topic is to use humor.

Besides, humor not only enables learning, but demonstrates a correlation between the developments of sense of humor and motivation to learn, mastery of cognitive material and positive response to instructional stimuli (Klein,1985).

As concerns students' creativity, a high frequency of students (84,44%) say that the use of humor in the classroom increases creativity during the learning process and respond by "yes", while, only (15,56%) of the students respond negatively and say that humor does not increase their creativity (see diagram 11. P30). According to Morrison (2008:3):

Creativity is the ability of the brain to bring together diverse ideas that will generate the thinking necessary for complex problem solving. Humor and creativity are great companions, each a perfect complement for the other in nourishing thinking. Risk-taking is the nucleus of creativity and of humor; the freedom to express wild ideas activates spirited conversation and sparks the imagination. The creative process flourishes when accompanied by a sense of humor.

As mentioned in this quotation, creativity goes hand in hand with humor and each one completes the other. Also in this case, Cornett (1986:11) adds her point of view by saying: *"incorporating humor into students' lessons liberates creative capacities"*. This means that, the lessons that are accompanied with a sense of humor help the students to create more and to express themselves. The use of humor in the classroom increases instructional effectiveness and students' motivation, that is also noticed during the classroom observation (see table 02. p34), in which we have noticed that the students' creativity increases during lessons which incorporate humor.

With regard to whether humor makes students at ease or not during their process of learning, table (02. p34) shows clearly that a considerable proportion of the students feel that they are at ease and enjoy learning through humor. This is also confirmed in diagram (15. p32), which indicates clearly that (93,33%) of the students respond positively by declaring

their comfort with humorous teachers, while only (6,67%) which represents a little amount of the students that are not at ease when using humor. This is due to their views that consider humor as a waste of time. Quina (1989:27) declares: *“if students are comfortable and enjoy the learning process, they are more likely to remember more of the material presented”*. That is to say, students who learn through humor and enjoy their learning remember more the lessons. Concerning this result, Gore (2004:75) says: *“most of the students enjoy a lecture more if humor is incorporated”*. So, humor is the preferable tool which helps to enjoy more the lessons.

3.2. Benefits of humor in relation to the classroom atmosphere

According to the result shown in diagram (12. p31), the majority of the students (93,33%) see that humor reduces boredom in the classroom compared to the others (6,67%) who respond negatively and say “no”, that is also noticed during the classroom observation (see table 03. p35). That is to say, using humor in the classroom reduces boredom and brings a comfortable atmosphere into the classroom, because the environment plays a significant role in the learning process, as declared by Chaisson that the nature of positive humor is to find a positive atmosphere that triggers students’ desire to participate in classroom interaction by decreasing anxiety and stress (Chaisson,2002).

Besides, diagram (16. p33) shows clearly that (93,33%) of the students say that humor reinforces student-teacher relationship, which is also confirmed during the classroom observation (see table 03. p35). In other words, the use of humor during the teaching-learning process help students to be much closer to their teachers, as supported by Emerson and Watson (1988:89) who state:

When humor is used as part of the teaching strategy, a caring environment is established, there is an attitude of flexibility and communication between students and teacher is that of freedom and openness, the tone is set allowing

for humor error with freedom to explore alternatives in the learning situation. This reduces the authoritarian position of the teacher, allowing the teacher to be a facilitator of the learning process, fear and anxiety, only natural in a new and unknown situation, becomes less of a threat, as a partnership between student and instructor develops.

As concerns the students' views towards a comfortable environment, it has been noticed that the majority of the participants (93,33%) agree with the significant role that humor plays in creating a comfortable environment, whereas (6,67%) of students do not have any answer, and no one of them disagree concerning whether humor creates a comfortable environment (see diagram 13. p31). The environment plays an important role in the learning process, for this teachers always try to create a comfortable atmosphere that fits the learners' needs. This is clearly confirmed by Chaisson (2002) who explains that the nature of positive humor is to find a positive atmosphere that triggers students' desire to participate in classroom interaction by decreasing anxiety and stress. In addition to that, during the classroom observation we have noticed that the teaching process which is accompanied by humor helps more to learn in a comfortable environment. To support this idea, Hashem (1994) demonstrates that humor improves the classroom atmosphere and can avoid negative situations. It means that, humor creates a warm climate where the students have a good relation between them and with their teachers. It leads then to establish a good rapport. So, using humor can be considered as a classroom management tool through which teachers increase learning.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results obtained from the two research instruments used in the current study. We have conducted the research study to validate the research questions and the research hypotheses. The obtained results from the study reveal that the students consider humor as a helpful learning technique a pedagogical strategy which reduces boredom and creates a good atmosphere for the learning process. Moreover, the students of first year

master students at the department of English have a positive view towards associating humor in their classes and they have a good rapport with their humorous teachers. Some of the hypotheses presented in the General Introduction are confirmed and the others are refuted at the department of English with the first master students. Considering all that is gathered as positive views, humor can be classified as a useful and a good pedagogical learning strategy.

This dissertation has investigated the students' attitudes towards learning through humor and its role in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (FL) in the department of English at the University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi Ouzou. This topic is conducted in order to know the real impact of humor on students in the classroom during their learning process. The investigation of this topic is achieved by referring to Cornett's theory (1986) of the use of humor in the classroom and Martin's one (2003) which develops the types of humor and completes the first theory. This research study assigns three major parts, starting by investigating the use of humor by teachers in the classroom, then the students' reactions. At the end, this study aims to prove the benefits of humor and its positive outcomes on the students' progress.

In order to answer the questions asked in the General Introduction and to test the hypotheses of the study, a mixed method approach combining the quantitative and qualitative research methods is used for data collection and data analysis. These data, indeed, are collected through two distinctive research instruments. Fifty (50) master one students, from different specialties language and communication, drama and comparative literature are randomly chosen from the department of English at the University of Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi Ouzou to respond to the questionnaire. Classroom observation is also used in order to obtain information about the role of humor in the learning process. For quantitative data analysis, a computer program known as SPSS is used for the evaluation of statistical data. In addition to the statistical method, the qualitative content analysis (QCA) is used to interpret the data gathered from the open-ended questions and the classroom observation.

Relying on the data analysis, the discussion of the outcomes of the questionnaire and those of the classroom observation has provided answers to the research questions advanced in the investigation. The results collected from the questionnaire show that humor is a helpful teaching tool which is enjoyed by students, it is also confirmed that the use of this technique

helps to bring a comfortable atmosphere into the classroom. According to students, humor is an interesting strategy that teachers use to raise their motivation during lessons. As concerns the analysis of the data collected from the classroom observation, it has been shown that teachers use humor in relation to its types and nature to facilitate the teaching-learning process. It has been also noticed that humor plays an important role in the classroom, regarding the good rapport between teachers and students. As a result, humor reduces boredom and makes students at ease by creating a good atmosphere.

Relying on the framework mentioned in the literature review of the study, Cornett's (1986) and Martin's (2003) theories (see chapter one) that concern humor in the classroom and its types, the following conclusion is drawn: although the constant debates about whether humor is a helpful or bothersome teaching tool for the students' development, one true and clear fact is that humor is an important and interesting component and technique in the teaching-learning process. Because humor makes students at ease, they enjoy their lessons. Thanks to this technique, students pay attention to everything which happens in the classroom that is why students remember easily their lessons. Humor is beneficial if students and teachers are aware of its usefulness and explore it appropriately, teachers in their turn should also accept the students' sense of humor in order to share its benefits in the classroom and to achieve the general goal which is the rise of the learning process.

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Appendix 1

Students' questionnaire

Section one: Humor and teaching

1. Do your teachers use humor in classroom?

Yes No

2. If yes, how many teachers use humor?

Some of them All of them

3. Do you think that teaching through humor is:

Necessary Very necessary Not necessary

4. Do you consider the use of humor in classroom:

Helpful teaching tool Bothersome teaching tool Non-essential teaching tool

Why?

5. How is humor used by your teachers in relation to the topic?

Always related to the topic Never related to the topic
Sometimes related to the topic

6. How do your teachers use humor in the classroom?

Spontaneously Planned/prepared

Section two: humor and learning

7. Are you allowed to use humor during lessons?

Never Rarely Sometimes Always

8. Does humor help you as student to learn more?

Yes No

9. Does humor encourage teaching-learning process?

Agree Disagree Neutral

Section three: attitudes of learners towards the use of humor in classroom

10. To what extent does humor increase your motivation?

Increases motivation totally increases motivation No effect

11. Do you feel that you are more creative when using humor in classroom?

Yes No

Justify?

12. Does humor reduce boredom in the classroom?

Yes No

Section four: humor and the learning environment

13. Does the use of humor create a comfortable atmosphere in the classroom?

Agree Disagree Neutral

14. How do you find humor as a learning technique in classroom?

Enjoyable learning technique Boring learning technique Waste of time

What is your argument for this?

15. Do you feel at ease when using humor in the classroom?

Yes No

Why?

16. Does humor reinforce the teacher-students relationship in the classroom?

Agree Disagree Neutral

What is your evidence about this?

Appendix 2

Checklist for the classroom observation

1. Teachers' role to embody humor in the classroom

- Do teachers use the physical aspects of humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use the superiority theory of humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use the incongruity theory of humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use the affiliative humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use self-enhancing humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use self-defeating humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use aggressive humor?

Yes No

- Do teachers use jokes?

Yes No

- Do teachers use riddles?

Yes No

- Do teachers use puns?

Yes No

2. Students' reactions during the use of humor in the classroom:

- Are students motivated?
Always Sometimes Never

- Are students creative?
Always Sometimes Never

- Are students at ease and enjoy learning?
Always Sometimes Never

3. The classroom atmosphere during the use of humor

- Does humor reduce boredom in classroom?
Yes No

- Does humor reinforce students-teacher relationship?
Yes No