

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF HUMOUR USED BY TEACHERS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TOWARDS SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS (SLL)

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**Abstract:** *This paper discusses the effectiveness of humour used by teachers in teaching English towards second language learners (SLL). In addition, it also explores the use of definitions and classifications of humour generally and in-depth which is suggested to be implemented by teachers towards second language learners in implementing the teaching and learning process. The purpose of the study is to review the previous researchers regarding humour used in many factors. Data was gathered based on past studies. The review found that humour is one of the strategies needed to be used by teachers in learning, and the methodologies are adopted vary across studies. The implication of the study is for future researchers to examine more in-depth the humour should be used in teaching especially in the Malaysian context.*

**Keywords:** *Humour in Teaching English, Humour in Education, Malaysian Context Classroom, Second Language Learners' (SLL)*

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### Introduction

#### *The Importance of English*

English proficiency level of Malaysian students is far from satisfactory. In 1957, after Malaysia gained its independence, the English language is seen to be significant when the Government came up with three concrete plans for the nation's future development. Thus, the English Language has played the role of the nation's official language. These plans are the development of Malaysia into an industrialised nation in line with vision 2020, the establishment of the multimedia super corridor (MSC) and the establishment of Malaysia as a regional centre of education. The plans have implications for a change in the language policy since Malaysia needs an English proficient population and needs to allow English to play a

more dominant role (Awang Had Salleh, 1994; Asmah, 1997; Mansor, 1997). English is placed as the second language in Malaysia (Gill 2002) and in line with the education policy; English is taught as a second language. Studies have shown that Malaysian students realise the importance of English for their future endeavours (Ainol Madziah & Isarji, 2009; Chitravelu, Sithamparam & Teh, 1995; Samsiah, Kamaruzaman, Nurazila, Musdiana & Taniza, 2009; Thang, 2004).

English has become the global language and has been introduced in Malaysia since the British colonization era by the British Empire. Back then, English was beneficial as it was used as communication tools for the progression of economy and education (Venugopal, 2000). Besides, after independence, Bahasa Malaysia was introduced as the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools replacing English when nationalistic sentiments arouse in 1970. After a while, the advancement in science and technology in Malaysia has made English regain back its lost status. English has been rendered as a second language status and the capability to use the language fluently and proficiently is very much beneficial (Gill, 2005). Consequently, English language has been used in teaching in both primary and secondary schools and even used to teach in Science and Mathematics subject too. Besides, according to (Modiano & Marko 2009) stated that English language is beneficial and important in job entry requirement and tertiary educations are also growing.

English education is crucial in order to prepare an individual especially students in the real world to face challenges. In Malaysian context, students who scored the highest mark neither in class nor the graduated students will not able them to be good and proficient in English language because communication skills is the ones that will help one fits into the world. However, Hiew (2012) points out that, students after completed 11 to 12 years of education (primary and secondary school in Malaysia) are still not proficient in using English. This issue has also been the source of worry by many Malaysian employers. Besides, according to Harjander and Santa Singh in year 2014 mentioned that education is not only important for the development of nation, but it is also important to the nation economic growth; moreover, today's competitive global economy, a nation had mark a success that depends mainly on one person's skill and knowledge. Therefore, to add on from the same researcher stated that, it is no surprise when people with higher level of education tend to enjoy more economic prosperity then.

Hence, The Malaysia Education Blueprint (2013-2025), states that education is able to give the citizens more opportunity to have a better living that will lead to a better future and become a better person. Thus, this will lead Malaysian people to have a good communication among a wide range of people from different backgrounds, religions, and ethnicity so that Malaysian education has become the center of attraction. Through this, it gives high expectations towards the parents who expect their children to perform well and excel both in school and in workplace because the quality of local graduates from university are not able to perform as they are not fully prepared mentally and physically to face the real world even with good grades (Harjander, K.A. and Santa Singh, P, 2014).

*“The education system has become majored progress the moment Malaysia got independence since 1957 and even half of the population had no formal education and the children in Malaysia had education till secondary level is only about 6% (Malaysian Blue Print 2013- 2025). This could also be seen through the Malaysia National Education Blueprint (2013-2025), which emphasizes on the students' self-advancement in mastering English through the second shift (Malaysia Education*

*Blueprint 2013-2025). Besides, it has been an aspiration for the Malaysian government for the students to achieve success not only in education but also in language as well”.*

Thus, this has been issued in Malaysia Education Blue Print 2013- 2025 as below:

“Malaysian children will be automatically proficient in Malay language as it is the national language, meanwhile, English as a second language and considers as an International language of communication. It means, upon leaving school, the students should be able to work in both a Bahasa Malaysia and English language environment” (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013- 2025. p.16). This shows that students’ who are not good in English will not be able to secure a high-paying job in the future. This is why the Malaysian government is taking this matter seriously. Besides, all students’ in Malaysia should be good in both languages which are Malay and English and not only in Malay language because it is an international language of communication (Malaysia National Education Blueprint, 2013-2025).

### ***Learning English in Malaysian Context Classroom***

Lee in year 2015 stated that the study that conducted on second language (L2) teaching approach and methodologies used are the focus in recent years. (Lee, 2015). Back then, the method of learning through chalk-and-talk is applicable but these days it is no longer acceptable towards current generation. However, there are many new styles of teaching and methods that have been exposed to and are free for teachers to explore in the future that can be used in their classroom.

In Malaysia, it is well-known to have many different races and most of the classrooms are having students coming from different preferences, backgrounds, capability and level of proficiency (Lee, 2015). Hence, this is why the teacher decided to play safe and only teaching the middle or intermediate classes (Lee ,2015), and hoping that weaker students are able to follow-up on their own while the advance learners tend to slow down in their learning pace. In this case, by neglecting the needs of the minority group in the classroom either good or bad in language proficiency will only demotivate these students. Thus, it led the students to only feeling bored and ended up to feel frustrated towards the learning process in the class when they could not understand on what have been taught by their teachers especially in English subject .Additionally, this will decrease their interest in the context of language proficiency and feel demotivate and frustration on learning the language. Furthermore, the ministry of education has decided to focus on the outcome by integrating the use of technologies and innovating them into the classroom learning context as one of the ways to enhance the students for better learning experience (MOE, 2015).

In an online newspaper, The Star (2013) by Leanne Goh stated that, the SPM students might do well in Bahasa Malaysia compared to English language. Goh (2013) continued to state that based on the previous year of SPM results, 23% of SPM candidates failed their English paper and were not be able to obtain their final qualifications paper after 11 years of schooling. Therefore, in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, under the fourth shift ‘Endure every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English language and their courage to learn an additional language’ the government has made English as a compulsory passing subject (Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2025, p.15). Thus, this affects the teachers who are under pressure in educating the students especially the SPM candidates in order to make them passing their English subject. In the “*Memartabatkan Bahasa Malaysia Memperkukuh Bahasa Inggeris*” or translated as “Uphold the Malay language Strengthens the English

language” (MBMMBI 2014) reported that, the government encourages the teachers to teach Bahasa Malaysia by inserting and implementing a fun method in the learning process in order to enhance and help the students to enjoy and learn Bahasa Malaysia.

It can be said that, as overall, students are generally aware of the importance of English language, but they are lacking in motivation and making improvement on their English language acquisition (Ainol Madziah & Israji 2009; Chitravelu Sithamparam & The 1995; Samsiah, Kamaruzaman, Nurazila, Musdiana & Taniza 2009; Thang, 2004). In addition, Ahmed (2015) believes that, among the factors that affect students’ attitude is their past experiences as second language learners. According to him, if students experienced success then, they are expected as successful now but if they experienced failure now, they may be or might be predisposed to failure now. Therefore, it is important for students to have positive attitude and a high motivation towards their journey in learning English language. Besides, the teachers should find ways to ensure students learn the English language effectively and at the same time encourage them not to give up in learning English. Hence, it is important for students to be able to at least communicate in English in order to overcome challenges and contribute in the development of Malaysia.

The aim of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of humour used by teachers in teaching English towards second language learners (SLL). The research questions that this research paper aims are to investigate:

1. What are the effects of humour used by teachers in teaching English towards second language learners (SLL)?
2. What are the effects of humour used by teachers in teaching English towards second language learners based on students’ interest?

### ***Past Related Studies***

Based on previous researchers, teachers are able to cater to a wide range of students by using different teaching methods and approaches based on students learning style. This will be effective in making their lesson to be more interesting, and at the same time maximized each student learning potential (Lee, 2015)

To quote from the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025, tertiary education can only be good if the quality among the academic community especially teachers are at their prime when teaching (MOE 2015). Furthermore, the one-size-fits-all teaching methodology is no longer applicable in this millennium (Albraini Abdullah 2006; Amato 2004; Khademi et al.2013; Rosinah 2003; Uygun 2013; Xiao 2006).

Hence, the government has taken the initiative to send educators from different levels for training that only focuses on unexplored or less frequent area of teaching approaches in order to cater towards the diversity of students in Malaysia. This is to ensure the quality of education towards students has been highlighted in the latest national education blueprint will be met (Lee 2015).

Past researchers have suggested that humour approach is able to increase instructional effectiveness (Wanzer, 2002; Deiter, (2000); Kher et al. 1999). Humour is able to increase lesson persuasiveness, (Booth-Butterfield and Wanzer, 2010), build an enjoyable and relaxed classroom environment (Kheret al., 1999; Neuliep, 1991), able to build students motivation (McCroskey, et al., 2006; Gorham and Christophel, 1992), learning (Baringer and

McCroskey 2000; Gorham and Christophel 1990), and use as clarifying subjects' materials (Downs Javidi, and Nussbaum 1998).

As mention above, with the pressure faced by the students in passing their grading in English language during exam, students might have negative pressure to perform well. Berk (2001) believes that humour is found to be associated with improvement in performance, increase positive emotions and reduce the feeling of sadness and isolation. Similarly, Hassed(2011) stated that humour produces positive influence to improved creativity, performance and teamwork. However, despite the many significance and scope on humour, humour is still rarely employed or implement by the most teachers in the classroom on a conscious level towards students in Malaysia education in classroom. The aim of this study is to investigate on the effects on humour use in teaching of English language as the second language (ESL) towards second language learners.

Moreover, past study had addressed that study in language learning has underline the importance of student- centered learning in the classroom, benefits of support among teachers and students, and creating a psychologically safe classroom environment for student (Benson 2012). With this, there has been a growing attention to research on language play, as it has been recognized as a creative approach for students, communication and create an enjoyment for students and will increase on student confidence and motivation with the implementation of humour in teaching (Bell 2011, 2012; Carter & McCarthy 2004; Cook 2000).

Language play in this study is classified as humour used in the classroom by teachers when teaching the second language. According to Gorham & Christophel, (1990) and Gorham (1988), humour in teaching that has been connected with both cognitive and affective benefits, it can also help promote students independence and confidence. Despite emerging research on the benefits of humour, language play and joking are still consider 'disruptive' and humour still received doubtful looks from those who content that humour does not contribute to language learning (Pomerantz & Bell 2011). Therefore, this chapter hopes to give the definition of humour.

Besides, there are few research studies conducted that are focusing on humour in second language class, even with Medgyes's (2002) statement mentioned that "the English lesson is an ideal arena to trigger laughter.... Far more than any other lesson" and same with Dornyei's (2001) statement on humour as a motivational teaching strategy. Thus, a teacher that employs humour must take note of its relevance or appropriateness, but also whether it is suitable for students proficiency level in English so that they can enjoy it (Hong, P.N. H. and Petraki, E., 2016). Thus, the benefits of humour can be seen in literature reports. Schmidt (1994) and Schmidt and Williams (2001) conducted a test on the effectiveness of humour on language learner's memory. They present the participants with humorous and non-humour sentences and comic strips. As the result on both studies shows that the students recalled a higher proportion of words and sentences from humour items rather than non-humour items. Thus, according to (Blyth & Ohyama, 2011; Tocalli= Beller & Swain, 2007), similar results were recorded about the effectiveness of using puns and riddles in second language classroom shows the result of pre and post group under control and treatment group showed an improvement in English learning from pre and post. In Tocalli- Beller's and Swain's research (2007), through students interviews it was revealed that students shows positive attitude when discussing puns and riddles. They noted that when engaging with wordplay it forced them to "operate within two linguistic worlds at once, the normal and the abnormal, trading them off against each other to understand the language and appreciate the humour involved in its

playful use” .Thus, Blyth and Ohyama (2011) reported that students improve their vocabulary knowledge, increase their vocabulary confidence and increased the appreciation of humour among students.

Unfortunately, Olajoke (2013) also conducted a research on students’ perception on the use of humour in teaching English as a Second Language but in Nigeria. The research was conducted through questionnaire and shows that student’s expectations towards the use of humour are based on the teacher’s perception. Thus, Ziyaeemhr, Kumar and Faiz Abdullah (2011) conducted a research on use and non-use of humour in academic ESL classroom and the results shows that humour has positive benefits in language learning environment. But later, Ziyaeemhr and Kumar (2014) conducted another research on the relationship between instructor humour orientation and students’ report on Second Language learning. They use the Humour Orientation (HO) scale which was developed by S. Booth- Butterfield and M. Booth- Butterfield (1991). The finding also shows students positives on learning towards instructors that are perceived as humorous. Based on these researches, it can be concluded that humour is able to help students in their English Language lessons.

## Literature Review

### *What is Humour?*

Humour is the three related theories that are used which are Incongruity Theory, Superiority Theory and the Relief Theory which are to frame a form of understanding towards how the students cognitively and affectively process the teachers’ humour.

Firstly, Incongruity Theory (La Fava, Hadded and Maesen, 1996) stated that for humour to be evaluated and processed as a funny thing, the receiver must initially relate an occurrence that is the same as their expectations. Secondly, Superiority Theory (Zillmann and Cantor, 1996) it refers to humour that is considered funny when targeted to people that a person does not like and the opposite when targeted towards people that is well liked. Lastly, the Relief Theory (Billing, 2005) is not the same as the incongruity theory because it is dominant, and it’s still cannot count as for all incidents that cause laughter and humour. For instance, is there a person’s will laugh after solving a puzzle? There is no incongruity theory in this situation. This theory holds that laughter comes out from the nervous energy that occurred in that situation.

Thus, this is the type of humour used (adapted from Bryant, Comisky, Crane & Zillmann, 1980) which consists of seven elements namely, **Joke** (a short prose build-up followed by a punch line), **Riddle** (a message presented in the form of an information question with an answer provided in a humorous punch line), **Pun** (it is structurally similar phrases or words that consists of two or more meanings which are used simultaneously play on their multiple meanings), **Funny story** (situation when the teacher relates some actions or activities happened as a tale), **Humorous comment** (a brief statement consists of humorous element), **Visual humour** (cartoons, pictures, comic strips and etc. that contains humorous messages), **Physical humour** (exaggerated facial expressions, pronunciations, gestures and etc).

Besides, there are many variations that show how they define humour. Humour is defined as ‘anything that amusing in learning second language especially English language and the teacher or the students find funny’ (Wanzer, Frymier, Wojtaszczyk and Smith, 2006). However, it is difficult to determine something is ‘funny’ and ‘amusing’ since there are no indications such as laughter mentioned. The definition given above could also suggest that

humour might only come from either the teacher or students only, but excites by one party only. However, Leung (2004) defines humour as ‘the capable in expressing what is amusing’, to understand and enjoy (Leung, 2004). This definition focuses not on ‘creation’ but focus on the ‘reception’ of humour continuum. Unfortunately, Wanzer et al.’s (2006) stated that the definition of humour, is more connected to ‘humans’ than ‘things. Tuncay (2007) from a view point of a foreign language teacher, defined humour as ‘an understanding that is not only focusing on the words and language but in their meaning, it uses, the underlying culture, subtle nuances, implications and unwritten message’. The term understanding here means the understanding of the language for successful acquisition, while ‘underlying culture’ means complication will arise when mother tongue is involved during the communication. Humour has also been defined as a coping mechanism (Wanzer, 2005), a communication support tool (Bippus, 2000), and a means to increase patient compliance, satisfaction and physician credibility (Wrench and Booth- Butterfield 2003).

In the education setting, implementation of humour is one of the strategies in increasing instructional effectiveness (Wanzer, 2002), builds an enjoyable (Neuliep 1991) and conducive learning environment (Davis 2004; Wanzer, 2006), encourages students attention (Schmits 2002), increases students’ motivation (McCroskey 2006), controls frustration (Yoon et al. 2012) and clarifies lessons material (Downs et al. 1988). According to Clabby (1979), humour helps to facilitate meaningful learning among learners. Guegan- Fisher (1975) believes that students are able to remember a culture’s beliefs, manners and institutions through humour. Meanwhile, Watson and Emerson (1988) assert, when humour is used in a classroom it produced an atmosphere of freedom between teacher and students and can also strengthen the relationship between students and teachers. This is because, students will feel close to their teacher since their teacher is trying to please them and trying to understand the students’ interest by implementing humour in the learning process. The teachers became facilitators in students’ learning and built a partnership among students. This reduces fear and anxiety in new and unknown situation (Watson and Emerson 1988: p.89).

Moreover, Kristmanson (2000) also states that learners need an environment where they are comfortable to speak the language learned. However, Crivikly (1986) indicated that humour in a classroom does not happen if teachers do not build a supportive relationship with the students.

### ***Reviewing The Links Between Humour and Education***

Humour plays as an important tool in conveying multiple forms of messages. Hence, in the field of education, humour is meaningful as a tool in enhancing students’ learning in the classroom. Some researchers claimed that, humour acts as the powerful psychological tool in the classroom (Garner 2006; Tziatis 2012; Seidman & Brown 2013). However, Seidman and Brown believed that the humour also gives the calmness and relaxed learning environments that support interactions among students (Garner, 2006). According to Hurren (2005, 2006), the implementation of humour in the classroom will encourage more social interaction between students and also attention from students during learning session. Furthermore, humour would be a good entry pointed in today’s classrooms to engage in discussions of social justice issues such as race (Both Lindo, 2010). Hence, philosophers of education need to stop neglecting the use of humour and embrace its potential in education (Gordon, 2011).

There are numerous articles emphasize on humour as a tool for the development of critical consciousness and social awareness. But, what it means by social awareness and critical consciousness as mentioned before? As for this case, we can choose media comedy as an

example. One interesting example that links between performance and humour as a tool to elicit an understanding regarding critical consciousness that presents in the Taylor Mali's show. In this show, a former middle school teacher turned to slam poet and humourist. Mali has portrayed the importance of good teaching is not just following the present in time and in education only, but the entire public sphere that seeks to judge pedagogy through the outputs of his humorous and approaches to poetry. Mali has also given attention towards the teachers to always live in "What teachers wanted to make" (Mali, 2002c) and stressed the need to pay attention to language in "The importance of learning" (Mali 2002a) and "Totally, like, whatever, you know?" (Mali 2002b). Therefore, what Mali offers is not just social awareness but the critical consciousness that needed to reply to the social discourses, ideologies or frames that create the "commonsense" of today.

### ***Humour In ESL Classroom***

In English language classroom, teachers who are sufficient using humour can produce effective teaching and learning (Ziyaemehr, Kumar and Faiz Abdullah, 2011). Ziyaemehr, Kumar and Faiz Abdullah (2011) further explained that humour can be used as one of the teachings aid as it involves communication throughout English language and touches on all four language skills when incorporate together with instructions. Besides, according to Muqun & Lu (2006) mentioned that humour helps students understand the social- cultural context of the language. To support Partington in year (2006) stated that humour 'contributes to linguistic construction of meaning through both cognitive and interactional processes' (Partington, 2006: pp.287-8).

Besides, humour in second language instruction enable students to become aware of the phonological, morphological, lexical, and syntactic changes between students' L1 and English language (Deneire, 1995). Therefore, Cook (2002) suggested that humour is an essential part in learning the second language. Furthermore, another researcher explains that the role of humour in second language learning through stories, puzzles, funny games, pictures, sketches, dialogues and so on can be effective teaching tools towards the second language learning (Medgyes, 2002). Olajoke (2013) said, there is a difference between a comedian or clown and a humorous teacher. Hence, she also stated that a clown's job is to entertain without imparting knowledge, but a teacher uses humour to make a lesson more interesting and effective.

### ***Benefits of Humour***

#### ***Psychological Benefits Of Humour***

Among health practitioners and professionals, it is believed that humour can be used as a means of coping with pain, illness and/or stress (Alston, 2007; Boyle & Joss-Reid, 2004; Cousins 1979). Besides, humour has been proven able to decrease anxiety and stress (Cann, Holt & Calhoun, 1999; Lehman, Burke, Martin, Sultan & Czech 2001), reduce tension and depression (Wooten, 1996; Deaner & McConatha 1993), improve self-esteem (Frecknall 1994), and increase motivation (Cornett 1986). These effects are obviously in need toward people who are facing much pressure and wishing to keep a mental balance (e.g. teachers), as well as to the learning process of students in general. It is obvious that learning activities always cause a certain level of tension and anxiety in learners. After all, learners are taking in new knowledge or practising new skills, which might be difficult to them, and hence the chance of failure. To learn effectively in such circumstances, motivation is needed. Humour may provide motivation in that learners find the learning process fun and enjoyable, rather than a dead boring business (Berk 1996; Kher, Molstad & Donahue 1999). Even when failure



does occur during the learning process, the employment of humour will lessen the seriousness of its impact, help learners to regain a sense of security and control over the situation and provide the “mental distance” (Morreall 1997) needed for learners to accept the failure and reduce the stress it may cause.

### ***Social Benefits Of Humour***

It is a widely known fact that humorous people are often perceived to be more cheerful and more popular (Billig, 2005; Morrison 2008). As Victor Borge put it, “A smile is the shortest distance between two people”, humorous individuals project a friendly, benign and cooperative image of themselves. A smile or laugh is normally the first sign of acceptance we may give to another person in our first meeting. When humour is shared among a group, the group cohesion is more likely to improve (Senior 2001) and group members may be more tolerant and open to others’ ideas (Morreall 1997; Tamblyn 2003). Laughing together is an enjoyable experience; and since emotions are often associated with human experiences, sharing humour will leave members of a group with positive emotions towards fellow members and towards the group itself. People with a sense of humour are also imaginative and flexible in their outlook, which makes them more open to different views and suggestions. Humour can also diffuse tense situations or help express criticism in a less serious and threatening way (Axtell 1998; Morreall 1997). Morreall (1997) also listed various situations in which humour may provide a helping hand: announcing bad news, apologising, handling unreasonable complaints, commanding and warning, evaluating and criticising, handling conflicts, and much more.

### ***Indirect Benefits of Humour***

#### ***Indirect Benefits In Classroom***

The greater part of research into humour in education concerns its indirect benefits. Researchers following this direction have found that humour can: increase teacher immediacy and lessen psychological distance between teachers and students (Gorham, 1988; Gorham & Christophel, 1990), lower students’ affective filters (Ageli, n.d.; Maurice, 1988), create a safer, more open classroom environment (Askildson, 2005; MacAulay, 2009; Neuliep, 1991; Senior, 2001; White, 2001; Ziv, 1979), and lead to better ratings of teachers or teaching (Bryant, Crane, Comisky & Zillmann, 1980; Brown, Tomlin & Fortson, 1996; Garner, 2006; Lowman, 1994; Tamborini & Zillmann, 1981; Ziv, 1979). These studies have mainly used rating or frequency scales and questionnaires completed by students to assess the effects of humour in classroom settings.

White (2001) studied how university teachers used humour and how students perceived such use of humour by mailing questionnaires to 128 university teachers and 206 university students. Teachers were asked to indicate their levels of agreement to statements about the purposes of a teacher’s use of humour in class. Students were asked to do the same, plus to give one example of how a teacher used humour effectively. The results showed that most teachers employed humour to relieve stress, to gain attention, and to create a healthy learning environment. Students also agreed that these were the most frequent purposes of humour used by their teachers. Less agreement was reported between teachers and students on the uses of humour to motivate, provoke thinking or reinforce knowledge. These uses were perceived or widely intended by teachers, but the percentage of students who had the same perceptions was significantly lower than that of teachers. The out-of-bound uses of humour, indicated by both teachers and students, were to embarrass or intimidate students, and to retaliate against students.

Also considering the effects of teachers' use of humour in the classroom, Gorham (1988) and Gorham & Christophel (1990) found that a number of teachers' immediacy behaviours (with the use of humour being a verbal one) could significantly lessen the teacher-student psychological distance, making teachers appear more approachable and "human" to students, and thus leading to conditions more conducive to learning. Gorham (1988) asked 387 undergraduate students to complete a questionnaire to describe the frequency of their teacher's behaviours. These were called 'immediacy behaviour items' and included both verbal items (e.g. 'addresses students by name' or 'criticises or points out faults in students' work, action or comments') and nonverbal items (e.g. 'sits behind desk while teaching' or 'has a very relaxed body position while talking to the class'). These items were considered to be either immediate, i.e. making teachers appear closer to students, or nonimmediate, i.e. broadening the gap between teachers and students. The results indicated substantial relationships between immediacy and learning (both affective learning and perceptions of cognitive learning).

In conclusion humour alone in a lesson will not be effective and too much humour in a lesson will against the lesson and disrupt the teacher's lesson plan (Masoud Azizinezhad and Masoud Hashemi, 2011). Therefore, teachers must be well prepared in the used of humour according to the situations. Thus, the lack of research on humour in language classes may contribute to the void of humorous materials for language courses. Although Harmer (2007) and Cook (2000) acknowledge that play is an important factor in language learning, the fact remains that, compared with 40 or 50 years ago, the fun element is virtually absent from English course especially in books today (Medgyes, 2001).

### **Research on Humour in Learning and Second Language Teaching**

Interestingly, there are a few research studies conducted that are emphasizing on humour in second language class, like Medgyes's (2002) statement that 'an English lesson is an ideal arena to trigger laughter.... Far more than any other lesson' as well as Dornyei's (2003) asserted that, humour as a motivational teaching strategy. Thus, a teacher that employs humour must take note of its relevance or appropriateness, but also whether it is suitable for student's proficiency level in English so that they can enjoy it (Hong, P.N. H. and Petraki, E., 2016).

Schmidt (1994) and Schmidt and Williams (2001) conducted a test on the effectiveness of humour on language learners' memory. They present the participants with non humour and humorous sentences and comic strips. As a result, both study showed that most students recalled a higher proportion of words and sentences from humour items rather than non humour items. Thus, according to (Blyth & Ohyama, 2011; Tocalli-Beller & Swain, 2007), similar results were recorded about the effectiveness of using puns and riddles in the second language classroom. In Tocalli- Beller's and Swain's research (2007), through students' interviews, it was revealed that students showed positive attitude when discussing about puns and riddles. They noted that when engaging with wordplay it forced them to 'operate within two linguistic worlds at once, the normal and the abnormal, trading them off against each other to understand the language and appreciate the humour involved in its playful use' (p. 164). Thus, Blyth and Ohyama (2011) reported that students has improved their vocabulary knowledge, increased their vocabulary confidence and increased appreciation of humour among students.

Other researcher such as Forman (2011) conducted a research in Asia where he observed one EFL class of 31 students in Thailand taught by an Anglo- Australian teacher. The teacher

implemented the use of humour managed to create ‘a warm, responsive atmosphere in this lesson, with considerable smiling and laughter in evidence’ (p. 560). Thus, Forman (2011) admitted that the use of language play and humour are not normally used in an Asian classroom.

Besides, Olajoke (2013) also conducted a research on students’ perception on the use of humour in teaching English as a second language in Nigeria. The research was conducted through questionnaire and showed that students’ expectations towards the use of humour are based on the teacher’s perception. Thus, Ziyaeemhr, Kumar and Faiz Abdullah (2014) conducted a research on use and non-use of humour in academic ESL classroom and the results showed that humour has positive benefits in language learning environment. Additionally, Ziyaeemhr and Kumar (2014) conducted another research on the relationship between instructor’s humour orientation and students’ report on second language learning. They use the Humour Orientation (HO) scale which was developed by S. Booth- Butterfield and M. Booth- Butterfield (1991). The finding also showed that students have positive attitude on learning towards instructors that are perceived as humorous. Based on these, it can be concluded that humour is able to help students in their English Language lessons.

### **Conclusion**

The schools will get more benefits by developing the sense of humor and nurturing it among the students and teachers. Humour also will provide the necessary tools to create and maintain wellness, positive emotions so that the students will not learn forcefully especially during English class. Moreover, humour also is a great way in pulling students’ attention especially during class activities and getting them to participate willingly. Humour also becomes the connection for every single individual in classroom to stay connected with each other during learning session including the teacher too. Upon whole discussion regarding humour, we can say that humour can help the students to cooperate and their teachers. This is because, once the students feel close and connected with their teacher, they will behave themselves in class. Overall, humour has portrayed solidarity which can be said as the positive effects. The discussion above in literature reviews revealed that humour is very popular and is used and implemented among teachers and students so that the teachers will have confidence in their teaching when using humour so that it will be effective towards students in learning ESL. Moreover, the students are welcoming the teachers to use humour and they preferred humorous teachers. It is also believed that with the help of humour as one of the beneficial tools that gave the ability and the needs for an individual to laugh and enjoy in ESL classroom learning with favorable environment is much needed for better results in future. Moreover, by implementing humour in learning process can enhance the students to overcome their nervousness and stress and will spread the positive vibes among the teachers and students. Humour also is a powerful tool that makes the teachers be more skillful while teaching ESL for all levels and will contribute good responds from students.

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