

## **THE USE OF VERBAL HUMOUR IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KLANG VALLEY**

**MOHD ZAHRUL BAHARIN,**  
Kolej University Poly-Tech MARA  
[zahrulbaharin@kuptm.edu.my](mailto:zahrulbaharin@kuptm.edu.my)

**SORAYA SHARIFUDDIN,**  
Kolej University Poly-Tech MARA  
[soraya@kuptm.edu.my](mailto:soraya@kuptm.edu.my)

**ONALIZA SATIMIN,**  
Kolej University Poly-Tech MARA  
[onaliza@kuptm.edu.my](mailto:onaliza@kuptm.edu.my)

**NUR ANISAH TAHIR,**  
Kolej University Poly-Tech MARA  
[nuranisah@kuptm.edu.my](mailto:nuranisah@kuptm.edu.my)

**FAIRUZ UMIRA AZMI,**  
Kolej University Poly-Tech MARA  
[fairuz.umira@kuptm.edu.my](mailto:fairuz.umira@kuptm.edu.my)

### ***ABSTRACT***

The uses of verbal humour in teaching language has change the face of education. Over the years, types of humour used evolve as it delivers different impacts towards learners' comprehension. In developing countries like Malaysia, little researches were done to investigate the learners' preference on the usage of verbal humours as they revealed to be influencing factors to the process of learning second language. The research analyses quantitative and qualitative data with theoretical analysis of scholarly sources in determining the impacts of verbal humour in education. The findings indicate that humour increases cultural awareness and language comprehension while learning language although teacher needs to be wary with the types of humour chosen as it may obstruct the learning process if used insensitively. The funding of the research is mainly from MARA research fund administered by Research and Innovation Centre (RICE) of Kolej University Poly-Tech MARA Kuala Lumpur (KUPTMKL). This paper investigates the use of verbal humour in teaching English as a second language among secondary schools in Klang Valley.

*Keywords: VERBAL HUMOUR; language; second language acquisition; cultural awareness; perception.*

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

English is a global language used for different purposes. Malaysia is one of the Asian countries that officialized the use of bilingual systems in education. In the new era of language teaching, the scene of the classroom has changed as majority of teachers are adapting to styles such as Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Community Language Learning (CLL) to suit

the needs of new generation students. Based on Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013 - 2025 report, Malaysian students' English language proficiency falls significantly below the 70% of proficiency target.

*"Only 28% of students achieve at least a Credit benchmarked to Cambridge 1119 in English language SPM. While performance in English language also varies by ethnicity, all three major ethnic groups fall significantly short of the 70% proficiency target. Only 23% Bumiputera, 42% Chinese, and 35% of Indian students achieve at least a Credit benchmarked to Cambridge 1119 (Exhibit 4-6). English language results are also the lowest of the core subjects at UPSR, PMR, and SPM level".*

*(Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2013 - 2025)*

According to Lee (2015), previously the method of chalk and talk is applicable but these days it is no longer impactful. One of the most formidable and strategic skills that teachers can employ to facilitate L2 instruction and to intensify the learners' communicative competence in the second language is through the use of humour.

Humour is referred to as the teacher-initiated attempts to stimulate laughter or amusement, which can be implemented in the materials, teaching and learning process which may result in students to laugh and feel amused (Petraki & Nguyen, 2016). Humours have been beneficial and proven to give good effects in helping learners feel relaxed and acquire knowledge easily (Askildson, 2005; Kaplan & Pascoe, 1977; Maurice, 1988) though more empirical studies are required to further strengthen the claims. In the context of second language learning, effective use of humour by the teachers able to assist teaching learning processes as it can be communicated through language and utilised in the four main language skills. Verbal humour such as funny stories, puns, wordplays and related jokes play a vital role the development of sociolinguistic and sociocultural competence (Ziyaeemehr & Kumar, 2014).

For instance in the context of communication, humour may be used to outline the class golden rules such as *"You may miss the class for emergency purposes, but if your grandmother dies multiple times, I may begin to smell something fishy"*, able to give an impactful reminder towards the students. Although lack of research was done in a sense of humour and language teaching, the majority of students welcomed humours, jokes and funny stories in the classroom. Humour does not function only to make people laugh, but based on the previous studies, the use of humour has been mostly connected with issues of teaching effectiveness, students' learning, classroom environment, students' motivation and the evaluation of teachers by students (Wagner & Urios-Aparisi, 2011). Humour in L2 learning on the other hand, able to promote a better classroom environment and creating a more conducive classroom and reduce nervousness among students (Chiasson, 2002).

In the view of non-native speaking country like Malaysia, teacher with a humorous attitude and friendly vibe may suggest a more positive outcome in language learning situation for students. Nonetheless, one of the greatest challenges of teachers nowadays is to be able to adapt to new ways of teaching, so it remains relevant to students. Relevant in the way that is interactive, thought-provoking, and also humorously-engaging to further increase students' self-directed learning and also students' autonomy in the learning process.

Researchers viewed the roles of humour in educational settings from different perspectives which range from the function in informal social interactions to formal social interactions.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This paper focuses on the use of humours in teaching English as second language. It makes intuitive sense that humours has the potential of creating a more relaxed classroom atmosphere which in turn could cause students to experience lower anxiety and to be more motivated (for humour as a way of “furthering emotional intelligence In the world language classroom, where students often suffer higher levels of anxiety due to the discrepancy between their cognitive abilities and their linguistic skills, lowering student anxiety would be even more beneficial.

With regard to empirical research carried out in world language classrooms, Schmitz (2002: 96) writes:

*“There is, without any doubt, a need for research on the use of humour in language classrooms, but until there are sufficient studies based on experiments with humour in different teaching situations, with different levels of proficiency, different target and source languages, in different countries, most of the proposals and recommendations will perforce be based on practical experience with humour and classroom teaching. (Schmitz, 2002)”*

Previous researches also have shown a number of countries with non-native speakers practically use humours in classroom to enable a more efficient and beneficial situation for language learning.

Specifically, in Malaysia, a research on humour and non-humour usage in classroom resulting in the validation of claims that avoiding humour in second language classroom may limit learners’ access to L2 linguistic and cultural resources that are naturally inherited through the use of humours. Jokes, funny comments and idioms such as “*I’m just pulling your leg*”, and “*You see, your jaw dropped [laughter]*”, are all necessary resources accounted for “humour competence” as a part of communicative competence.

In a nutshell, the above examples show learning activities that are clearly in usage of humour create opportunities in L2 acquisition. The usage of jokes and funny wit to assist learning process offers many advantages in the field of education but there are also challenges in implementing it. Thus, this paper intends to investigate the use of humours in teaching English as second language.

## 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

The rapid advancement in the competencies of teachers has brought upon both positive and negative effects to the students, especially in relation to education. The evolution took place in a blink of an eye that researchers have not had enough time to understand what type of humour can best be a benefit for learning.

In addition, learners’ perception about foreign language also is becoming an issue of attention in recent time (Ayman, 2012; Masoumeh. 2012). The relationship between the use of humour in teaching English language and its connection between the cultures of the students reflected the competence of language acquisition. Some students may view humour differently based on their different acceptance on cultural value. If humours in class are not implemented with care, it might possibly demotivate students to learn the second language.

By studying which type of humours that are more preferred by the students, teachers can identify potential humours related to the attitude of students’ attainment of language.

## **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The research objectives of this research are as follows:

- RO1 – To investigate types of verbal humour frequently used by an ESL teacher.
- RO2 – To examine the impacts of verbal humour towards ESL learners' comprehension.
- RO3 – To discover ESL learners' preference on the use of verbal humour in ESL classroom.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research questions of this research are as follows:

- RQ1 – What is the type of verbal humour frequently used by an ESL teacher in a classroom?
- RQ2 – What are the impacts of verbal humour towards ESL learners' comprehension?
- RQ3 – What are ESL learners' preference on the use of verbal humour in ESL classroom?

## **1.6 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS**

The definitions used in this study are as follows:

**Humour:** Humour originally derived from Latin word referring to one of the four fluids of the body (blood, phlegm, choler, and black bile), a balance of which was thought to determine one's health. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language (Humour, 2014) defined humour as the quality that makes something laughable or amusing; funniness, that which is intended to induce laughter or amusement and the ability to perceive, enjoy, or express what is amusing, comical, incongruous, or absurd.

## **1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The reader should bear in mind that the study is only based on a particular group of respondents and is very limited to a specific population only. Therefore, this study does not engage with the greater population than the one being researched for. This limitation however shall not be seen as a major obstacle to investigate the usage of humour among teachers in language class generally. Although it may be easy to make an assumption whether the students of Malaysia preferred humours in a second language classroom or not, deciding on such important matters based on data from smaller scale of respondents is inadequate.

Another potential problem is that the scope of this research may be too small to represent a large number of students that uses humours in aiding their learning process. Hence, the data gathered and the result being analysed may be representative of the said area and for said population only. The decision of choosing to limit the study to undergraduates only was decisively made to ensure that participants are coming from rural areas, to make sure that selected respondents had little exposure to English language.

## **1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

This study may provide new insights into the spectre of new-age pedagogy as the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MoE) viewed humours in ESL classrooms as moving impetus to the exponential growth of learning opportunities especially to schools, teachers and students from rural area of Malaysia.

The results of this research should also make an important contribution to the field of teaching and learning second language as the stakeholders (referred to educators and students) can benefit from this research as it may assist in increasing the momentum of teaching and learning in a new angle. The incorporation of humours in language teaching and learning may also open up a new window for language education. As jokes spark easily approachable persona, and is a global attraction to all sorts of age, humours will be seen as motivation and stepping stone to unlock students and educators hidden potential in education.

Therefore, this study makes a major contribution to the teachers and learners of second languages in Malaysia and the world. The administrators of schools and educational institutions will gain advantages from this research because there will be room for improvement to facilities related with the implementation of humours.

## **2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Humour is the trait of being amusing to convey a message or speech. In the education field, humour does play a crucial part in maintaining a positive atmosphere and mood in the classroom. According to (Abad, 2017) the sense of humour that is used in the classroom is able to increase the effectiveness of learning sessions and develop students' self- confidence. This is due to the calmness transfers that the teacher expressed in the classroom.

Among the earliest definitions of humour was translated Latin word from "humere", and humid in English back in 1813 B.C. (Cambridge, 2019). The definition refers to the amusing things that people say as their humour, or the ability to find things funny, the way in which people see that some things are funny. Humour plays an important part in daily life. People all over the world in all sorts of ages and cultures respond to humour and they respond differently. To experience humour is to be psychologically affected by the words spoken, or comments made either positively or negatively (Raymond, 2017).

However, the difference of Humour Oriented (HO) among students, will create a diverse interpretation. Humour Oriented (HO) is the level of appreciation towards humour that a person received. Students that have high HO will be comfortable with humour from teachers that also have high HO. Failure in understanding the jokes by using inappropriate jokes will lead to the offended feeling and touch sensitive issues. Therefore, as a teacher it is proper to be concerned with the use of humour in the classroom. According to (Banas, Dunbar, Rodriguez, & Liu, 2011) if the Humour Oriented (HO) of the students is able to comprehend teacher's jokes, it generates a close relationship among teacher and learners as the learners feel comfortable to share their problems and difficulties.

## **2.2 HUMOUR IN EDUCATION FIELD**

According to (Bakar, 2019), teachers that use appropriate humour in the classroom will be perceived by students as someone who is not only dedicated but also creative and passionate. In order for a teacher to insert some jokes during the lesson, the teacher should know about how the students interpret and connect it with the lesson. Based on the research written by Truett, B. A. (2011) entitled "Humour and Students' Perceptions of Learning", it stated that when teachers used more humour in the classroom, students felt comfortable and motivated to know more about the lesson. According to (Al-Duleimi & Aziz , 2016), the frequent use of humour, gives positive impact to the learners since it promotes conducive learning and make the class interesting.

Furthermore, according to (Sambrani, Mani, Almeida, & Jakubovski, 2014) the use of humour in education settings makes the content of teaching less boring and interesting compare to the non-humorous education settings. This is because the humour makes the classroom atmosphere pleasant and calm. Another study by (Kavandi & Kavandi, 2016) stated that learners become enthusiastic to join the class and be participative. This is due to the positive attitude and enjoyable impression that the learners feel when they found the classroom is in stress-free environment.

One of the studies of humour by (Frymier, Wanzer, & Wojtaszczyk, 2008), stated that students' preference of humour refers to the skilfulness of teacher's communication. If the teacher is skilfully able to use the humour with good techniques, the content of humour can be perceived as appropriate. Delivering the humour needs Communicative Competence, teaching second language does not focusing only on grammatical rules; it brings the students to the broad concept linguistically. In which, teachers have to be prepared and consider in terms of knowing social settings and what types of situation that is suitable with the culture values of both native and target language (Pujiastuti, 2009).

## **2.2 TYPES OF VERBAL HUMOUR**

Appropriate use of humour refers to the usage of humour that is related to the situation. For example, teachers use funny jokes or stories that are related to the topic and understandable by the students. According to (Goodboy, Bolkan, & Griffin, 2018), Appropriate humour like creating funny stories and content-related able to influence students' learning, as the students are being attentive. It also leads to the process of elaborating the instructional message from the teacher. If the teacher integrates the humour with the topic that they are learning, it enables the students to use their cognitive skill. Hence, effective's jokes make the lesson stay in their mind, whenever the students look at the topic, it reminds them of the jokes delivered by the teacher.

Teachers that are aware with current issues that related to students' life or situation tends to insert some meaningful information in the content of jokes, and this will generate to students' involvement towards the lesson as the students able to associate the current issues that they face with the jokes. This is also supported by (Masek, Hashim, & Ismail, 2018) relevant jokes or jokes that can closely be related to students' background or situation will increase students participation during the learning session, as they feel relax when they want to express their thoughts. While exaggeration jokes or hyperbolic are used in teaching like showing over acting expression, storyline, tones and emotion (based on the reality of the situation) to instill some visual perspective towards students' thinking, as they will visualize the story funnier and ridicule at the same time. According to (Ocon, 2015), the benefit of using exaggeration or hyperbolic jokes is, it creates students imagination and interest during the learning process. Through this, students or learners tend to be attentive and put more effort in listening in the classroom. Other types of humour is spontaneous humour it is also known as unplanned humour or unintentional humour, delivered by teacher in the classroom, according to (Poirier & Willhelm, 2014) humour that is natural and unplanned are the best way to facilitate learning. This is because the spontaneous act deliver by the teacher especially in connecting the content with the humour lead to surprise mode that triggered students' curiosity to understand the jokes and relate it with teacher's content.

Another types of humour is self-effacing humour, where the teacher comfortably makes mistakes and shares the experience with the students, this somehow generates the contented interactions between teacher and students (Savage, Lujan, Thipparthi, & DiCarlo, 2017). Meanwhile inappropriate humour refers to the humour that is not suitable to be used in the

classroom, like self- disparaging humour, offensive humour and targeting humour which will be perceived as offensive or insensitive. As mentioned by (Wanzer, Frymier, Wojtaszczyk, & Smith, 2006), teachers that used disparaging humour are likely to be viewed as unpleasant. Students will easily get demotivated to participate in the classroom due to the feeling of mistrust and embarrassed through degrading and humiliating. This is also supported by (Jeder, Implications of using humour in the classroom, 2014), about some inappropriate humour used by teachers in the classroom. For example, the use of ironic humour which often refers to show teacher's arrogance and sense of authority. This leads to awkwardness, shame and suffers. Besides, the use of humour like sarcasm, for instance providing malicious comments, pointing mistakes and being disrespectful towards students' background will allow rude interpretation among students.

## **2.4 LEARNERS PREFERENCE ON THE USE OF HUMOUR**

Students refer teachers to use humour that is compatible with their own culture and context. As second language learners or L2 learners, it is easier for the learners to interpret the context of the language that is correlated with their own culture and background. According to (Fadel & Al-Bargi, 2018) , L2 learners perceived the jokes or humours, depends on the relation of linguistic proficiency and their own understanding towards the culture background.

However, students get more exposure to target language culture by listening to the jokes from teacher. This is important for L2 learners to appreciate the value of target language during the process of learning. According to (Ziyaeemehr, 2011), the use of appropriate verbal humour, able to expand L2 learners knowledge of linguistic and culture resources in discovering the target language. Since L2 learners rarely use the second language outside of their classroom, it is possible for the teacher to come up with reliable jokes or humour of second language.

Learning does require a serious environment with less humour. The L2 learners need to absorb the target language with resilient exercises and activities in order for them to master the language. According to research conducted by Irnawati (2017) entitled "Humour As One of The Teacher Communication Strategies to Enhance Students' Interest In EFL classroom", too much humour delivered by a teacher, could be very disturbing and unnecessary for them during the lesson.

According to (Halula, 2009) , the use of humour break the teachers and students boundaries in classroom, which students feels safe and facing positive learning environment in the classroom. Based on the study conducted by Erwin Corwin Westgate (2010) entitled "A Rocky Issue: The Effects of Humour on Learning and Interest in an Educational Context", learners found the lesson become more pleasant when teacher use humour in classroom. Through this students will have motivation and bravery to ask questions and response to teachers' lesson.

## **2.5 IMPACTS OF HUMOUR**

One of the positive psychological benefit of humour is, it can reduce students' stress and anxiety during learning session, as humour able to bring up the positive atmosphere or mood in the classroom ( Darweesh Al-Duleimi & Aziz, 2016). Students tends to be confident when there is no tensed during the learning process. As stated by (Jeder, Implications of using humour in the classroom, 2015), instead of humour is generating the relax atmosphere, the ability of the teacher to know the value of the humour is also crucial; if the teacher relates the funny jokes to the topic that the students learn, it enables the students to be attentive in the classroom. The students will also practice their critical thinking skills to get better understanding from the jokes or humour. Humour give impact in cognitive function, in the

sense that it helps learners to memorize and understand better by processing lexical items in language, which most teachers use as language play (Gönülallı, 2018).

In the other aspect of applying jokes or humour in teaching is, it encourages full participation from the students as they engaged with the lesson, while a teacher uses creativity and critical thinking to come up with something that efficiently effective for students' memory to remember the mistakes or the notes that they have learnt (Ahmad, Mohamed, Hassan, Ali, & Ahmad Fuad, 2018). This is also supported by (Abdalmajeed & Hameed, 2017) when there is a healthy environment in classroom, it creates the cooperation and participation among teachers and learners during the learning session which leads to a meaningful learning.

Humour stimulates multiple physiological systems that decrease levels of stress hormones. Self-effacing humour illustrates to students that the teacher is comfortable making mistakes and sharing these experiences with the classroom. In this brief review, we discuss the history and relationship between humour, laughing, learning, and health with an emphasis on the powerful, universal language of laughter. (Sidnei Borges et al., *Advances in Physiology Education*, 2014). According to (Makewa, Role, & Genga, 2011), teachers that use humour in his or her lesson, have a significant way to engage the students in the lesson. This is due to the fact the learners or students are able to feel relaxed before they are focusing on serious points in their learning session.

Social connection imparted when humour is delivered in an English class is also proven to be one of the keys in long term education as it may establish instant rapport and students able to focus and attend to information presented. Pollio and Humpreys (2014) reported that social connections made through humour are useful in teaching subjects that are difficult to students. Since teachers and students have a strong bond in the classroom, students will see teachers as more approachable and do not feel intimidated during the lesson. Students become comfortable in asking questions regarding the difficult topic that they are learning.

## **2.6 NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF HUMOUR**

One of the negative impacts will be humour can be the prior ending of the lesson, which the students tend to be not focused towards the lesson that they are going through. The jokes may distract the learners or students' focus. According to (Askildson, 2005), good teacher use less humour to balance the learning, it has to be appropriate and give benefits to students' understanding. Besides, the teacher will go out of content when it comes to delivering the lesson successfully. This is also supported by (Shahreza, 2018), where the use of humour will influence L2 learners to be preoccupied with the jokes, and both teaching and learning objectives will hardly be achieved by teacher and students.

Next, will be the interpretation of the jokes itself, if the students have good proficiency (in terms of language), they will easily interpret the jokes, however weak proficiency students will not be able to comprehend the jokes as the good proficiency students. According to (Dinn & Harris, 2017) the linguistic boundaries and comprehension failures occurred when there is a use of unknown or unfamiliar vocabularies, which contribute to failures in pragmatic understanding, for example difficulty to interpret irony and failing to spot the humorous frame. It does occurred when there is ineffective delivery and the lack of contextual understanding. This is also mentioned by (Neff & Rucynski, 2016) there are differences in teacher and students cultural background, which this could lead to confusion for students who have limited proficiency in foreign or second language when they heard the jokes.

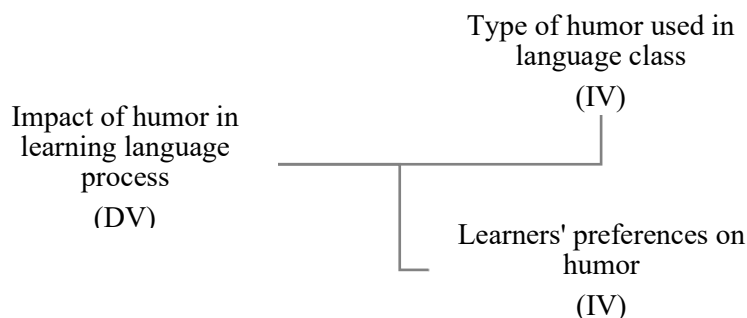
The misunderstanding of jokes will decrease students' motivation to learn, according to (Wimolmas, 2013) motivation encourages learners to go stay put in the process of learning. It is crucial for the learners to be positive in acquiring the knowledge without feeling inferior or confused.

## 2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study is designed to test the variables and it is shown in Figure 2.1. The image shows the relationship of the variables and how they were used to proof the degree of the usage of humour and the teachers' teaching performance.

According to Miles & Hubberman (1994 in Jabareen, 2009), in a paraphrased version, a conceptual framework is an image of purposeful key factors, and the relationship among important variables.

**Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework**



As shown in Figure 2.1, the usage of humour in teaching English are determined in three factors. These factors will affect the students' language learning process in either positive or negative ways. Preference of humour in English class and the type of humours preferred are the independent variables that will determine its impact in a language class as its dependent variable. All of these factors will affect students' attitude in learning language, ultimately finding out whether humour can serve as a tool to help them or to demotivate them. Thus, this study intends to see whether humour can be a decisive factor in increasing language comprehension and focus in a second language class.

## 2.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

One of the theories that is related to this research is Communicative competence, from applied linguist (Canale & Swain, 1980) recognized that communicative competence connects to a person knowledge and ability that needed in communication; this covers the knowledge of the language usage which includes the understanding of grammar, social context and utterances that give impact towards discourse principles.

### 2.7.1 Communicative Competence Theory

Communicative competence is crucial to be acquired by a teacher in order to use humour in teaching session. This is due to the consequence that will affect students or learners understanding towards humour delivered by the teacher. Mislead in discourse interpretation will give negative impact, however if the teacher knows how to collaborate language and jokes by using appropriate or relevant humour that close to their schemata or social context, it will contribute to the sense of appreciation among students. According to (Dutaa, Panisoaraa, & Panisora, 2015), teacher that have good communication skill will motivate the learners to learn due to the interest and attitude that the learners obtained in a positive atmosphere provided by the teacher. Hence, this promotes meaningful teaching and learning.

### **2.7.2 Incongruity Theory**

Next is Incongruity theory, the first phase of incongruity theory is when the message delivered directly able to bring familiarity to the one who listened. For instance, listeners or audience will expect the jokes when they heard and know that the stimulus is not in suitable place. As for the second phrase, when the jokes come up in ridiculous matter, it will be the audience own interpretation to identify the jokes or message given to be funny and make sense based on their compatible thoughts and emotion. Incongruity theory needs teacher awareness towards knowing the background of the students or learners, according to (Ming & Husin, 2019) in order for the teacher to come up with the jokes or sense of humour, teacher should know the appropriate jokes to be delivered to the students, as the humour itself might give affection towards students or learners understanding.

### **2.7.3 Social Learning Theory (SLT)**

Social Learning Theory (SLT) by Bandura (1977), social learning theory is something that we learn through interaction in the same social context; it happens based on observation towards other people behaviour and resulting consequences to similar behaviour. For instance, if teacher utilize self-effacing humour in learning session; through sharing their mistakes and experiences, it gives motivation towards students to produce something better and be positive with their mistakes. According to (Edinyang & David, 2016) SLT able to influence observers in enduring emotions reaction, attitude and behavioural inclination by following the example or models that they observed.

### **2.7.4 The Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)**

The content and language Integrated Learning is known as "*Umbrella Term*" which parallel with purposes such as to assist learners or students to learn the second language, through all forms of using language as a medium of instruction. This approach was introduced by David Marsh and Anne Maljers in 1994. According to (Šulistová, 2013), the used of Content and Language Integrated learning has various advantages, for instances, students were able to expand competencies through real life situation, exploring different cultural background, participate collaborative learning, communicate actively and avoiding their fear in travelling to other countries.

Simultaneously, when a language teacher uses culture related content that contains jokes, it taps on the learners' curiosity and enables the learner to understand the foreign language better. In the sense of cultural context, these give an exposure in terms of perspectives and understanding that encourages the learners to sharpened their awareness towards the target language. Therefore, the students do not only learn the linguistic needs of target language, but also able to get to know the culture. According to (Cendoya & Adibin, 2010) "*CLIL*" promotes meaningful learning as they able to improve their linguistic competency and expand the understanding towards content of target language naturally. This approach is also applicable to any subjects like mathematics, history, science, economic and etc.

## **3.1 METHODOLOGY**

This chapter extensively conferred subtopics including Research Design, Population and Sample, Instrumentation, Data Collection and the Analysis of Data Plan.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

Surveys, simply defined, are a series of questions used to gain information (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002; Fowler, 2002; Jobe & Mingay, 1991). This is a mixed-method research. This research employs a survey which has to be constructed to probe into the usage of humour in teaching English. The researcher uses surveys as the particular reasons for this circumstances is that the most familiar mechanism for data-gathering, and is a simple method to administer. The primary purpose of surveys is to describe the self-reported characteristics of a population (Baxter & Babbie, 2004; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Besides ideal for information that is to be used for current projects, the survey also reflects current public opinion. The design is meant to assess the effectiveness of humour in English classrooms.

### **3.3 POPULATION & SAMPLE**

The population for this study is the students of selected secondary schools in Klang valley, Malaysia. The number of students representing the population is around 200 students. According to Krejcie & Morgan (1980), in their table for determining sample size for known populations, the researcher needs a proportion (P) of 30% (0.3) from the population to validate the research. A sample is a finite part of a statistical population whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole (Webster, 1985). As explained by Krejcie & Morgan, the sample size for this study is 138 students (N = 138) who enrol in the various programmes offered in the institution.

In this study, the researcher uses the method of purposive sampling technique. According to Oliver (2013), purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling method in which the decisions rely on the researcher's own judgment in choosing members of the population which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research. The populations are chosen from various socio-economic status, focusing on the schools in the Klang Valley area.

### **3.4 INSTRUMENTATION**

The term instrumentation refers to the entire process of collecting data in a research investigation (Arleck & Settle, 2004). The instrument used for the data collection in this research study is a set of questionnaire. The questionnaire is a combination of adapted sources such as online survey and previous research done related to the field of humour in education. Half of the statements from the questionnaire are specifically created by researcher to help the researcher with the findings and the result of this research. The questionnaire includes close-ended statements require respondents to respond to 4-points and 5-points Likert Scale ranging from "*Strongly Disagree*" to "*Strongly Agree*" and "*Always*" to "*Never*". The questionnaire is divided into four sections; namely Section A (Demographic Profiles), Section B (Perceptions of Humour), Section C (Type of Humour Preferred) and Section D (Effectiveness of Humour in Teaching Performance) respectively.

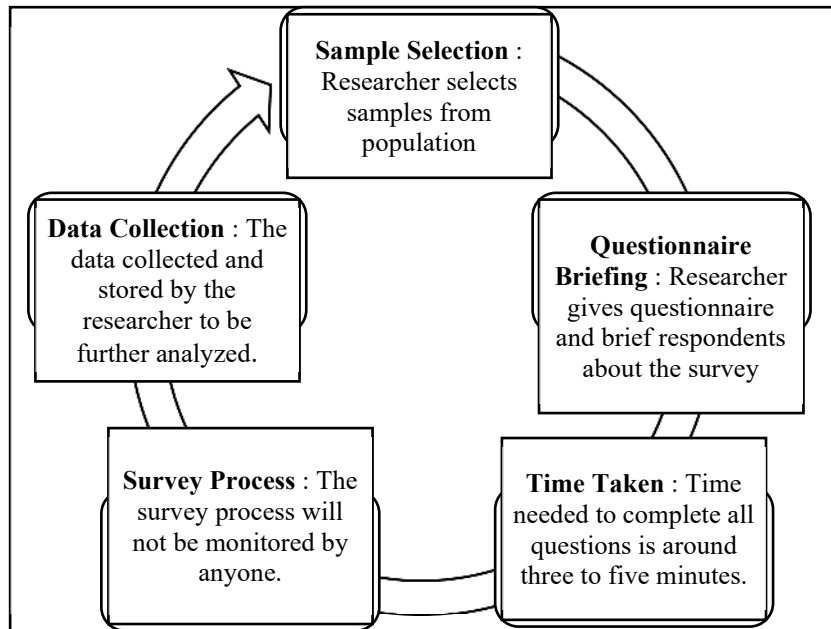
These elements were selected in order to shape the focus of the findings and ultimately to find out about the inclination towards humours among respondents. In the end, the researcher analysed the data and came to a conclusion. Further detail of data analysis is in Chapter 4.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION**

The respondents are students from various secondary schools in Klang valley, Malaysia. Before the respondents began to respond to the questionnaire, the researcher gave short enlightenment about the project and the procedure of the survey. Each questionnaire consumed around three

to five minutes to complete. The survey process is not monitor by anyone and it is collected afterwards. The flow of the data collection is as follow.

**Figure 3.0: Summary of the Data Collection Procedure**



### 3.6 ANALYSIS OF DATA

After the data collection completed, the researcher used software to analyse the data. The analysis process is helped by the use of software called SPSS version 22. SPSS stands for Data Statistical Package for the Social Science and is usually used to help analysing data significantly for quantitative type of research. All the data gathered from the questionnaire were collected and analysed to provide answers to the three research questions for the study. Using the software, the data was keyed-in and few functions such as descriptive statistics, mean comparison, recode value and frequency statistics are used in order to analyse and interpret data and findings. The summary of the data analysis is as follow.

To sum up everything, by using the software called SPSS version 22.0, a descriptive statistics regarding essential items were then analysed and executed. All the data and result gathered were discussed and explained further through the use of non-linear text such as tables, graphs, and different types of charts. The result of the findings is be explained further on the next chapter.

## 4.1 FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from both Qualitative and Quantitative methodology. The findings are analysed and presented in different sections, following the categories of Research Questions it aims to answer.

### 4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS OF RESPONDENTS

**Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	90	51.7	51.7	51.7
	Female	84	48.3	48.3	100.0
	Total	174	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.1 depicted the gender of the respondents. From the total of 174 respondents, 90 respondents are male (51.7%) and another 84 respondents are female students (48.3%).

**Figure 4.2: Class of Respondents**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Class	Form 1 Sapphire	44	25.3	25.3	25.3
	Form 1 Pearl	36	20.7	20.7	46.0
	Form 1 Diamond	35	20.1	20.1	66.1
	Form 2 Jade	32	18.4	18.4	84.5
	Form 2 Sapphire	1	.6	.6	85.1
	Form 2 Pearl	26	14.9	14.9	100.0
	Total	174	100.0	100.0	

Figure 4.2 illustrates the respondents' class. Based on the table above, majority of the respondents are students of Form 1 (age 13 years-old) which represent 66% of the total respectively from Form 1 Sapphire with 44 students (25.3%), Form 1 Pearl with 36 students (20.7%), and Form 1 Diamond with 35 students (20.1%). To note, the rest of the respondents are students of Form 2 (age 14 years-old) which represents 34% of everyone. Total number of respondents that participated for this research is 174 students.

To further analyse the score, researchers used SPSS application to run several tests on descriptive analysis, compute variable and comparing of mean score for the following research questions to answer research objectives.

#### **4.3 TYPES OF VERBAL HUMOUR USED BY TEACHER**

This section presents the findings of qualitative methodology. Findings from the semi-structured interview are thoroughly reported in order to answer Research Question 1. The data collected are divided into several themes and sub-themes with regards to the Research Questions. The first part of the interview consists of ice-breaking questions between researcher and the respondents which mainly deal with general questions with regard to teaching background, followed by Part B 5 which specifically designed to elicit answers for this study. The details of the findings will be discussed according to the themes and sub-themes that emerged based on the answers given by the trainee teachers. In discussing the findings, the respondents were coded as shown in the table below;

**Table 4.2.1: Codes for Respondents**

Respondents	Codes
Teacher 1	T1
Teacher 2	T2

The findings collected are divided into four themes, namely spontaneous humour, content-related humour, story-related humour and current jokes. The four humour-related

themes are further discussed using cross referral analysis with the excerpts from the interviewees below;

#### **4.2.1 Spontaneous Humour**

The first theme established is spontaneous humour. The responses gathered from the interview reveal that one of the types of humour frequently used by ESL school teacher is spontaneous humour.

Firstly, the responses revealed that “spontaneous humour” is type of humour that the respondent frequently used while teaching English as a second language in school. This actively demonstrates that, the respondent used unplanned humour, and never prepared to make the humour beforehand. According to Teacher 2 (T2), making spontaneous humour is possible whenever the students look bored and started to lose focus and attention in class;

*“...Ok, so basically my humour usually spontaneous. Whenever I have the idea to make humour, I will straight away make humour regardless whether they are bored, or sleepy, or drowsy. So, whatever comes to my mind, or whatever based from the learning, or situation I’m teaching them, whenever it pops out in my mind about humour, I will try to make, give them some humour to make the class...” (T2)*

In addition, another response given by the other respondent, T1 who believed it never came out in her mind to plan what kind of humour that the respondent want to make while teaching English in class;

*“...No, it’s not like that. Hahaha....” (T1)*

This shows that spontaneous humour is frequently used by ESL teacher rather than planned or scheduled humour, and there is no materials needed to prepare before the respondent tried to make any jokes in ESL classroom.

#### **4.2.2 Content-related Humour**

Secondly, another sub-theme emerged under the types of verbal humour frequently used by ESL school teacher is “content-related humour” in which the respondents mentioned that whatever humour or jokes they tried to make, they will make sure it is related to the content of lesson that they are delivering;

*“...I think, usually, it’s the mix of, one – topical, I mean related to my content, the other one is probably I make the jokes, you know, by using the current jokes, you know, that is happening outside of the classroom, so...ahh, I think I have used both....” (T1)*

This excerpt explained that content-related humour is another type of verbal humour frequently used by ESL teacher in classroom, where the teacher tried to deliver any topics or contents that they are teaching in a humorous way.

#### **4.2.3 Story-related Humour**

Next, the third theme established is “story-related humour”. The responses gathered from the interview revealed that one of the types of humour frequently used by ESL school teacher is story-related humour.

Findings from the interview implied that the respondent included humorous elements while telling stories and anecdotes to their ESL students during language classes. Furthermore, according to Teacher 2 (T2), the respondent stated that he also took one example from any story of the materials used in his English classroom, and tried to induce humour in the story;

*“I like to use anecdotes, and other than that, stories. Example like this eh, I tried to teach Form 1 students, they need to make a plot twist to a fairy tale story, so the students do not know how to make it a plot twist, consider they are very young and consider they are only 13 years old, so I tried to take one example from the story....” (T2)*

This finding further depicted that story-related humour is another important type of verbal humour frequently used by ESL teacher in classroom, in a situation where the ESL teacher delivered stories and anecdotes in more entertaining and funny ways.

#### 4.2.4 Current Jokes

The fourth theme established is the use of “current jokes” as a humour. The responses gathered from the interview reveal that one of the types of humour frequently used by ESL school teacher is humour that is related to current issues that is happening at the moment, up-to-date and in trend news.

The respondent also stated that the other type of verbal humour frequently used by ESL school teacher is current jokes, where the responses from the respondents revealed that the jokes used in ESL classroom are current, and fit with the present situation;

*“I use jokes that are current, that are in trend, so they fell like, haa the teacher is cool, she knows this, she knows that, haa ya..but, but if it is related to the content, I will try to adjust it, according to class, overall.” (T1)*

The finding shows that current joke is another oral literature which are commonly used by ESL school teacher in teaching English to ESL students. This proves that, the respondents agreed that they commonly use humour which deals with current issues which are happening at the moment.

#### 4.4 IMPACTS OF VERBAL HUMOUR

For this section, researchers have listed out statements that relate to the impact of learning to learners’ comprehension in class especially during a language class.

There are 6 statements under the category that determine the positive or negative impact of humour if used in a language class. The statements are then analysed using Descriptive Analysis using SPSS and the result of the findings are as follow:

**Figure 4.3.1: Impacts of Humour on ESL Learners**  
**Comparison of Mean Score of Impacts of Humour to ESL Learners**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Humour is important in learning English.	174	2.00	5.00	4.4598	.89707
2. I learn better when my English teacher uses humour.	174	1.00	5.00	4.3621	.83351
3. Humour makes English language teacher more approachable.	174	1.00	9.00	4.3161	.81749

4. Humour helps me to concentrate better on the lesson.	174	1.00	9.00	4.1954	1.07885
5. Humour makes me feel more relaxed (i.e. less anxious) in my language classroom.	174	2.00	5.00	4.1092	.84294
6. Humour in English language increases my interest in learning that language.	173	2.00	9.00	4.0983	.97447

---

**Note:** Indicator 0.0 – 1.67 (Low), 1.68 – 3.33 (Medium), 3.34 – 5.0 (High) (USAID, 2016)

---

Based on the Figure 4.3.1, respondents believe that humour is very important in class and it provides huge impact to their comprehension in class. This can be seen from statement 1 “*Humour is important in learning English.*” which respondents scored highest mean (Mean = 4.45, SD = .897), statement 2 “*I learn better when my English teacher uses humour.*” which also scored high mean over 5.00 (Mean = 4.36, SD = .833).

From the two statements above the researcher able to analyse that humour does provide positive impacts to respondents as they believe that humour is important and they also think that they learn better if the teacher uses humour in their lessons.

Next is statement 3, “*Humour makes English language teacher more approachable.*” indicates that humour also able to make teacher become friendlier and being a less threat to the teaching sessions or to students whom learning the language. The statement scored high (Mean = 4.31, SD = .817) together with statement 4 which is related to concentration of respondents “*Humour helps me to concentrate better on the lesson.*” (Mean = 4.19, SD = 1.07). This statement dictates that students believe verbal humour able to make them improve their concentration in class and on the lesson at hand. Thus, it can be concluded that humorous lesson provide positive impacts to students in terms of their performance and concentration.

On the last two statements, the researcher asked whether humour in class able to make students feel more relaxed and less anxious with statement 5 “*Humour makes me feel more relaxed (i.e. less anxious) in my language classroom.*” which scored above average from the total score of 5.00 (Mean = 4.10, SD = .842). The statement reflects the respondents feeling when they are learning under teacher who uses humour in their lesson – more relaxed and less anxious.

Finally, to find out the impact of verbal humour to ESL Learners, researchers set to ask respondents whether the use of verbal humour in a language class able to increase their interest to the lesson or not. To top the list, statement 6 shows high score value from respondents “*Humour in English language increases my interest in learning that language.*” (Mean = 4.09, SD = .974).

In summary, for this particular section, researchers able to find out that majority of the respondents believe that if a verbal humour is used in a language classes, there are many positive impacts to learners as well as to the teacher. It is found out that the teacher becomes more approachable if the teacher is funny and easy going in his or her class. Moreover, the students of language class that utilizes humour also able to benefit from good effects such as students believe they learn better under funny and easily approachable teacher, help them

concentrate better on the lesson, making students less worry about the subject and finally increase students' interests towards the particular lesson.

#### 4.5 ATTITUDE TOWARDS HUMOUR

In this research, besides intent to find out the impact of verbal humour to language class, the researchers also aim to find out the level of attitude of students towards the use of humour in class. Therefore, researchers have list out several negative statements of humour to respondents, to see whether the wrong use of humour in class deteriorates the values of language lesson or otherwise.

To see how importance students see the learning process under the humorous situation, researcher asked respondents about the connection of learning (which considered effective under serious circumstances) and humour. The figure below displays that respondents believe even though humour is helpful in learning, it is still important that the learning process is carried out under serious circumstances – albeit a little break for humour spices the lesson much better.

**Figure 4.3.2: Humorous vs Serious working environment for learning**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
7. While humour is important, learning requires a serious work environment with little time for humour.	174	1.00	5.00	4.2816	.91614

**Note: Indicator 0.0 – 1.67 (Low), 1.68 – 3.33 (Medium), 3.34 – 5.0 (High) (USAID, 2016)**

From the figure above, it can be concluded that, although respondents have high tendency and positive attitudes towards the use of verbal humour in language class, they also prefer that the learning session should be conducted under serious circumstances. Statement 7 “*While humour is important, learning requires a serious work environment with little time for humour.*”, scored quite high in the continuum of the mean score of 5.00 (Mean = 4.28, SD = .916).

Next, researchers proceed with finding out respondents' general and negative attitude towards the use of verbal humour in a lesson. Figure 4.5 below clearly illustrates the score:

**Figure 4.3.3: Negative Attitude of Learners towards Humour**

Comparison of Mean Score of Negative Attitude of Learners towards Humour					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
8. A teacher is not professional if they apply a lot of humour in teaching.	174	1.00	9.00	2.1322	1.16787
9. The use of humour during a lesson is distracting.	174	1.00	9.00	2.0057	1.09912

10. Humour is a waste of learning time in the classroom.	174	1.00	5.00	1.9540	1.12674
--	-----	------	------	--------	---------

*Note: Indicator 0.0 – 1.67 (Low), 1.68 – 3.33 (Medium), 3.34 – 5.0 (High) (USAID, 2016)*

Figure 4.3.3 depicts the attitude of learners towards the uses of verbal humour during lesson. For this particular section, researchers laid out 3 negative statements to participants of the survey and they have to response in continuum of value of 1 = Strongly Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Based on the score received, the results indicated that respondents have high and positive attitude towards the use of verbal humour in language class.

This can be analyzed from statement 8, “*A teacher is not professional if they apply a lot of humour in teaching.*”, which asks respondents whether they consider their teacher are less professional when using many humours in his or her lessons. The score is rated lower than medium (Mean = 2.13, SD = 1.16) which shows that students actually against the statement.

To further support the analysis of this section, researcher questions all participants whether humour are actually a distraction to the language lesson and the result is lower than medium which can be seen from statement 9, “*The use of humour during a lesson is distracting.*”, (Mean = 2.00, SD = 1.09) which scored below average of the mean score. This signals that all participants of this research believe that humorous teacher and lesson are not an indicator of distraction to the lesson.

In addition, another negative statement is added into the survey and further asked to participants. The statement 10 “*Humour is a waste of learning time in the classroom.*” also manage to score below average than the mean score value (Mean = 1.95, SD = 1.12). The score depicts that the majority of the respondents of this research believe that humour is not a waste of time in the classroom.

All in all, Figure 4.3.3 illustrates that all negative statements that reflect the low attitude and negative implications of humour to lesson received from low to medium score. This concludes that respondents do not think that humour is a waste of time, is also not a distraction to the class and the teacher does not considered unprofessional if he or she uses humour to pepper his or her lesson in class.

#### 4.6 LEARNERS’ PREFERENCES ON THE USE OF VERBAL HUMOUR

Malaysia is a country that considers English as its second language. There are many situations and circumstances where Malaysian uses English as the main medium of communication. This situations are generally applied to schools and universities as well. Majority of educational administrators in Malaysia have instructed their fellow teachers and lecturers to use English as the medium of language especially in language class.

Therefore, it is not weird for English teachers in Malaysia to utilize code-mixing and code-switching in their language lesson. Thus, it is not foreign to say that teaching a second language lesson in Malaysia requires teacher to be unique and creative to capture students’ attention.

To start analyzing the users’ preferences of the use of verbal humour, researchers first asked respondents about their preferred language of humour used by their teacher. The choices are between Malay-based language humour and English-based language humour. The table below shows the comparison of mean score;

*Figure 4.4.1: Learners’ Preference on the language of humour*

**Comparison of Mean of Learners' Preference on the Language of Humour**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
11. I would like my teacher to use <b>Malaysian humour</b> in my English class.	174	1.00	5.00	3.8276	1.20890
12. I would like my teacher to use <b>English humour</b> in my English class.	174	1.00	5.00	3.4770	1.08433

*Note: Indicator 0.0 – 1.67 (Low), 1.68 – 3.33 (Medium), 3.34 – 5.0 (High) (USAID, 2016)*

Based on the figure above, it can be seen that respondents of this survey scored high when the teacher uses Malaysian humour in their English class (Mean = 3.82, SD = 1.20) compared to when the teacher uses English humour in English class (Mean = 3.47, SD = 1.08). Since all of the respondents of this research are Malaysian, it is not a surprise that these students prefer to hear “Malay” jokes even though they are learning an English lesson. This depicts that Malaysian students prefer Malaysian humour in a second-language class since it is ‘close’ to their native language and the comprehension of the humour and jokes is higher compared to English jokes. This brings us the reflection how effective the humour in native language is in helping learners learning the second language in the country that treat English as their second language.

Then, researchers asked respondents about whether the students learn more about the culture behind the humour used. It is natural to say that humour is a form of language that is massively related to the culture of the language itself. This is for the preparation and spontaneity of the humour are based on the comprehension and creative utilization of the said language.

**Figure 4.4.2: Cultural awareness through Humour**  
**Mean Score of Cultural Awareness through Humour**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
13. I learn more about the culture of English language by being exposed to native humour of that language and culture.	174	2.00	5.00	4.2069	.82781

*Note: Indicator 0.0 – 1.67 (Low), 1.68 – 3.33 (Medium), 3.34 – 5.0 (High) (USAID, 2016)*

In the paragraph above, specifically on Figure 4.4.2, the mean score tells us that these respondents prefer to hear Malaysian based humour in English class. The score on Figure 4.6, however, is not in line with the score of Figure 4.7, which asks respondents on their awareness about learning new culture through exposure of the language of the humour. On statement 13 “*I learn more about the culture of English language by being exposed to native humour of that language and culture.*”, tells us that respondents agree that they learn more about English culture through English humour, despite the fact that they prefer Malaysian humour (Mean = 4.20, SD = .827).

These opposite statements (Statement 11, 12 and 13) articulate that although these students prefer to hear Malaysian jokes, they also agree that they learn more foreign culture through English jokes. Therefore it is not far fetch to say that humour improve curiosity of

respondents towards learning new culture. This instance provide an inspiration for researchers to study more about the acceptance of humour in first language and its effects in second language acquisition.

In this preference section too, researchers also asked respondents about overall effectiveness of a teacher when using humour in teaching English. To note, statement no. 15 asks respondents to rate their teacher in the continuum of 1.00 to 5.00 (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree), and the score of the statement is displayed on the figure below;

**Figure 4.4.3: Mean Score of Overall Effectiveness of English Teacher when using Humour**  
**Overall Effectiveness of Teacher**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
15. How would you rate your teacher in terms of overall effectiveness as an English teacher?	174	3.00	5.00	4.1724	.61215

*Note: Indicator 0.0 – 1.67 (Low), 1.68 – 3.33 (Medium), 3.34 – 5.0 (High) (USAID, 2016)*

Based on the figure above, respondents believe that teachers are mostly more effective when using humour as an English teacher (Mean = 4.17, SD = .612). The high value in mean score indicated that students prefer when their teacher uses humour in class, during the process of second language acquisition. This is due to the other factors that contributed to this such as statement 1 and statement 2 where students feel that humour is important and it can improve their concentration in class.

Next, to further understand how effective a teacher can become when integrating humour in language lesson, the researcher asked the number of times humours are used in a language class. The frequency of the humours will help researchers determine the acceptance of students of second language towards their teacher during language lesson. The figure below explains about number of times (on average) that these students encounter humours used by their teacher in class.

**Table 4.4.1: Table of Frequency on how often teacher uses humour during English class**  
**How often does your teacher use humour during each English class (on average)?**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No humour at all	30	17.2	17.2	17.2
1 - 5 times	118	67.8	67.8	85.1
6 - 10 times	15	8.6	8.6	93.7
11 - 15 times	9	5.2	5.2	98.9
15 times and more	2	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	174	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.4.1 articulates the number of frequency that humours are used in each English class (on average). From the table we can summarized that majority of the respondents said that their teacher uses at least 1 – 5 times of humour during one English class (67.8%) represented by 118 students. 30 respondents said that their teacher do not use humour at all in each English class (17.2%), 15 respondents said their encounter of humour in each English class is in between 11 to 15 times (8.2%), 9 students said 11 – 15 times (5.2%) and 2 students said 15 times and more (1.1%) respectively. The result from the table depicts that majority of the students believe that their teacher uses humour in his or her regular teaching session.

To sum it all up, in order to answer the research question, researchers combined all statements related to impacts of verbal humour to respondents, and the result of the computed variable are then tabulated into a descriptive analysis of mean score and the figures explained in the table below;

#### 4.6.1 Summary of Mean Score for Impact of Humour towards ESL learners' comprehension

After analysing all statements related to the impact of humour to respondents' comprehension, researchers manage to tabulate the mean score of all impact-related statements and produce one score valued from 1.00 to 5.00 from the mean score.

**RO2** – *To examine the impacts of verbal humour towards ESL learners' comprehension.*

To answer the research question above, the table below depicts the overall value of Impact of humour to students' learning comprehension;

**Figure 4.5.1: Mean Score for Overall Impact of Humour to ESL Learners' Comprehension**

Impact of Humour to ESL Learners' Comprehension					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall Impact	173	2.14	5.57	4.2601	.65714

*Note: Indicator 0.0 – 1.67 (Low), 1.68 – 3.33 (Medium), 3.34 – 5.0 (High) (USAID, 2016)*

Figure above illustrates that the overall impacts of humour are high (Mean = 4.26, SD = .657), rated high on the indicator level by USAID 2016. The scores are tabulated from statement 1 to statement 6 based on its respective ranks as in the table below;

**Table 4.2: Statements representing the impact of humour in ESL Learners' Comprehension**

1. Humour is important in learning English.
2. I learn better when my English teacher uses humour.
3. Humour makes English language teacher more approachable.
4. Humour helps me to concentrate better on the lesson.
5. Humour in English language increases my interest in learning that language.
6. Humour makes me feel more relaxed (i.e. less anxious) in my language classroom.

As shown in Table 4.2, the statements representing the impact of humours that were tabulated into Figure 4.9, it is clearly seen that humour does bring good impact to learners' comprehension of the topic. Respondents believe that humour is important in the learning process, they also admitted that they learn better if their English teacher uses humour which resulting in positive impact of humour to a class.

Other than that, humorous teachers are more easily approachable and appear friendlier, giving students less threat and less worry if they want to talk or consult with the teacher. Plus, humour help students concentrate better on the lesson and making participants more relaxed. Finally, respondents of this study believe that humour brings good impact to them as it increases the appetite for learning the language, promoting curiosity and arouse their inner motivation to learn language.

#### 4.6.2 Summary of Mean Score for Negative Learners Attitude on Teachers who uses Humour

Next, the researchers tabulate statement 7 to 10 and produce a computed variables and analyze the overall mean score for the 4 statements and the score are explained below;

**Figure 4.6.1: Mean Score for Negative Learners Attitude on Teachers who use Humour**

Negative Learners Attitude					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attitude	174	1.00	4.25	2.2529	.85341

*Note: Indicator 0.0 – 1.67 (Low), 1.68 – 3.33 (Medium), 3.34 – 5.0 (High) (USAID, 2016)*

Figure 4.6.1 proves that the negative attitude of learners when the teacher use humour in class is medium to low (Mean = 2.25, SD = .853). This indicates that respondents of this research believe that teacher who uses humour in their language lesson provided positive attitude in the learning process. However, since the scored is indicated medium, the researchers believe a bigger scope and further recommendation is to be done in order to find out more about learners' attitude towards humour. Nonetheless, to explain more of the score, the statements under this category are as follow;

**Table 4.3: Statements representing the Negative Attitude of Learners**

8. Humour is a waste of learning time in the classroom.
9. A teacher is not professional if they apply a lot of humour in teaching.
10. The use of humour during a lesson is distracting.
11. I find it difficult to understand English humour in the classroom.

Table 4.3 lists out the statement under the negative leaners attitude. Overall, the score from Figure 4.6.1 indicate low value signalling that respondents have a positive attitude towards teachers who uses humour in his or her daily lesson. As we can see from above, respondents believe humour is not a waste of learning time in the classroom.

Moreover, a teacher is not viewed as not professional if they apply a lot of humour in teaching. Some of the respondents also believe that humour are not a distractions to class, and some do not think so. For statement 11, some of the students believe it is difficult to understand English humour in the classroom, and some believe it is not difficult to understand. This is because the score for this particular section is indicated at medium (Mean = 2.25, SD = .853) at 5.00 mean score value, thus the researchers cannot deny the possibility that, to answer whether students have positive or negative attitude towards the teachers who uses humour in his or her class, this question is still remain unanswered.

#### 4.6.3 Summary of Mean Score for Learners Preferences on the use of Verbal humour in ESL Classroom

For the final section, the researchers try to answer the research question below, trying to find out the respondents' preference on the use of verbal humour in ESL classroom. 5 statements were tabulated and computed, the analysis of descriptive were run, and the score is explained in the following figure;

### RQ3 – What are learners’ preference on the use of verbal humour in ESL classroom?

**Figure 4.7.1: Mean Score for Learners’ Preference on the use of Verbal Humour in ESL Classroom**

Learners’ Preference					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Learners’ Preference	174	2.80	4.60	3.9931	.41246

*Note: Indicator 0.0 – 1.67 (Low), 1.68 – 3.33 (Medium), 3.34 – 5.0 (High) (USAID, 2016)*

Based on figure 4.7.1, researchers found out that the respondents scored high on the indicator (Mean = 3.99, SD = .412) in terms of their preferences on the use of verbal humour in language classroom. This is further supported by the individual score for statements such as the overall effectiveness of teacher and the language used during the jokes. The table below provided the list of statements under this category;

**Table 4.4: Statements representing Learners’ Preferences on the use of Verbal Humour in ESL Classroom**

Statements	Mean
7. While humour is important, learning requires a serious work environment with little time for humour.	4.2816
12. I would like my teacher to use Malaysian humour in my English class.	3.8276
13. I would like my teacher to use English humour in my English class.	3.4770
14. I learn more about the culture of English language by being exposed to native humour of that language and culture.	4.2069
15. How would you rate your teacher in terms of overall effectiveness as an English teacher?	4.1724

Table 4.4 illustrates the details of score from Figure 4.11, indicating high preference of learners on the use of verbal humour in ESL class. As seen above, on statement 7, although majority of the respondents agree that humour is important, they also do not deny the fact that learning requires serious environment with a little time for humour.

Statement 12 and 13 shows comparison of mean score between the uses of Malaysian jokes and English jokes in an English classes. The score indicates that students prefer Malaysian jokes in an English class. This is due to the nature of the students of second language who feel more related to understand the joke in their native language. The respondents also believe that they prefer if the teacher use humour in the language class as it would improve the overall effectiveness of the teacher.

## 5.1 CONCLUSION

This chapter discusses the analysis of the data that were presented in Chapter four. This chapter then continues to discuss on the implication of the study, and also provide some recommendations which are necessary for future studies.

## 5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study was conducted to investigate the use of verbal humour in teaching English as a second language. A classroom will be more comfortable and students have more motivation to learn when humour is inserted in class (Truett, 2011). For that reason, this study aims to

investigate the type of verbal humour frequently used by an ESL teacher, the impacts of verbal humour towards ESL learners' comprehension and finally the learners' preference on the use of verbal humour in ESL classroom. The summary of findings is presented in the following sections as below;

**RQ 1:** What is the type of verbal humour frequently used by an ESL teacher?

The findings of this study answered research question one in which there are four (4) types of humour identified that are frequently used by ESL teacher. The types are spontaneous humour, content-related humour, story-related humour, and current jokes.

**RQ 2:** What are the impacts of verbal humour towards ESL learners' comprehension?

Research question two on the other hand presented the findings on the impacts of verbal humour towards ESL learners' comprehension. The results show that the impacts are above average with a high mean score. This shows that there are positive impacts when humour is used in an ESL classroom. The findings also show that negative attitudes towards humour is average with a low mean score in which translate to the positive acceptance towards humour in class.

**RQ 3:** What are the learners' preference on the use of verbal humour in ESL classroom?

The findings from research question three indicate that learners' preference on the use of verbal humour in EL classroom is average with high mean score. The findings also lead to the learners' preference on the effectiveness of lesson when the teacher use humour in class.

### **5.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

There are always challenges that presented themselves to the process of teaching and learning of a second language. Educators are continuously incorporating current and proven teaching methods to improve the process of teaching and learning. This study focuses on the usage of humour in ESL classroom and how it affects the process of teaching and learning especially in the context of language lesson. According to Bakar (2019), teachers that use appropriate humour in the classroom will be perceived by students as someone who is not only dedicated but also creative and passionate. In general, the usage of humour provides positive implications to ESL classroom.

Therefore, the following sections will discuss the the findings and discussions from the three research questions which discuss the type of verbal humour used, the impacts of verbal humour, and the preference on the use of verbal humour in ESL classroom.

### **5.3.1 Types of Verbal Humour Used By ESL Teacher**

Teachers need to be selective in integrating humour in ESL lessons as the main objective is to enhance the quality of the lesson rather than decreasing them. In order for a teacher to insert some jokes during the lesson, the teacher should know about how the students interpret and connect it with the lesson (Bakar, 2019). The first type of humour that is going to be discussed is spontaneous humour. Based on the interviews that were conducted with two ESL teachers, it indicates that both participants are proficient in the content and medium of interaction as well as comfortable with their students that they are able to use spontaneous humour during their lessons. This indicates that some novice teachers or teachers who do not know their students well enough might be able to achieve the objective using spontaneous humour as it might not resonate well with the students. It is also important to note that the use of humour that seems forced could turn the environment awkward therefore could hinder the process of teaching and learning.

The second and third type of humour that were identified is content-related and story-related humour. T1 relates that the inclusion of jokes must be related to the content of the lesson. As presented by the excerpt below:

*“...I think, usually, it’s the mix of, one – topical, I mean related to my content...” (T1)*

Only one of the two participants included story as part of verbal humour in their class. The participant delivers the stories and anecdotes in a more entertaining and joking ways. Appropriate humour like creating funny stories and content-related able to influence students' learning, as the students are being attentive. This is important as to attract students with the concepts that are presented in class. This is supported by the response from the interviews that was conducted. T2 commented below:

*“...the students do not know how to make it a plot twist, consider they are very young and consider they are only 13 years old, so I tried to take one example from the story....” (T2)*

This is an example how integrating humour in the form of storytelling or using story to create examples in a funnier way will benefit the process of giving instructions in which teachers can elaborate more and provide ample examples during their instructions (Goodboy, Bolkan, & Griffin, 2018).

The final type is jokes that are current, up-to-date and in trend. This type of humour is usually interjected by the teacher to achieve common ground with their students. This actually create positive atmosphere in the classroom and helps to reduce the gap as well as tension that might exist between the teacher and students. If the students are able to understand the jokes and humour by the teacher, they could develop a closer relationship thus helping students and teacher to be more comfortable with each other (Banas, Dunbar, Rodriguez, & Liu, 2011). However, it is important to incorporate jokes that are related to the content of the lesson. This is to ensure the jokes would not get in the way of the students to understand the lesson as per response from the participant. T1 commented below:

*“I use jokes that are current, that are in trend ...but if it is related to the content, I will try to adjust it, according to class, overall.” (T1)*

The four types of humour that are discussed in this chapter point towards the choice of humour must be related to the content even when it is spontaneous and current.

### **5.3.2 Impacts of Verbal Humour towards ESL Learners' Comprehension**

In a healthy environment in classroom, cooperation and participation among teachers and learners during the learning session which leads to a meaningful learning (Abdulmajeed & Hameed, 2017). Therefore, humour can help in providing and facilitating a positive and safe environment where students feel safe to participate and engage with the lesson. From the findings, it can be seen that students perceive humour as important in learning English; that they learn better with humour, and they feel less anxious and have the opinion that teachers seem to be more approachable when humour is used.

From this discussion, it illustrates that providing correct atmosphere for lesson is as important as the content of lesson. This is part of classroom management in ensuring the students stay focus and interested in the lesson. This is supported as well by Pollio and Humpreys (2014) in which the social connections made within the classroom will be beneficial to the students and teacher. For instance, students will not feel uncomfortable or scared when they have questions or opinions and want to share them with the rest of the class.

The findings also notes that with humour, students are able to concentrate better on the lesson. The reason behind this is when students are confident and are not tensed in the classroom, they can concentrate better and thus able to be more attentive to the lesson. Students also have to practice higher cognitive skills such as critical thinking in order to understand the humour and to relate them to the lesson that is going on. This is supported by Gönülal (2018) where it was reported that humour gives impact in cognitive function especially in language learning as learners need to process the lexical items in the humour.

However, teachers need to make sure that they incorporate appropriate humour that will help to facilitate the learning and not hinder the learning process. This is consistent with the findings where the participants are aware that learning requires a serious and effective environment. Therefore the use of humour must be balanced so that learners can focus on the lessons not just the humour only (Shahreza, 2018). This is why, even if the humour is current and in trend, teachers still need to relate them to the content of the lesson. The use of humour in exeggeration or hyperbole especially in storytelling will help provide visualisation thus will help with the students' understanding.

### **5.3.3 Learners' Preference on the Use of Verbal Humour in ESL Classroom**

The last findings of this research answer the learners' preference on the use of verbal humour in ESL classroom. Malaysian humour in ESL class has the higher mean than English humour. This is because learning a second language has its own challenges. The lack of awareness on the technical aspects of the language makes it a hindrance to the students. Therefore, students would feel more comfortable and have a more open mind to accept a new language when it is presented in the environment that they are most comfortable with. The nuance of humour based on a different culture might sometime be lost in translation. According to (Fadel & Al-Bargi, 2018) , second language learners perceived the jokes or humours depend on the relation of linguistic proficiency and their own understanding towards the culture background.

However, it is also important to note that learning should not only occur in the classroom. Teachers need to encourage students to apply and use the knowledge that they have acquired from the classroom in real life thus applying them outside and benefit from that. Language learning also should happen in a natural environment for the students be able to appreciate the learning process as well as the importance of language. Thus by exposing students to the targeted language culture, it will provide a better understanding to the students.

## 5.4 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

To sum up everything that has been analysed so far, the researchers concluded that teachers' effectiveness are increasing as they demonstrate the uses of verbal humour in their language teaching process ( $m = 4.11$ ). Moreover, it is found that verbal humour improves concentration between teacher and students as students expand on their cultural awareness ( $m = 4.20$ ). Thus, these verdicts lead to a general conclusion that verbal humour does provide positive impact towards learning a second language as long as the humour is used appropriately.

However, researchers do not deny the possibilities that, due to some of the limitations discussed previously, some recommendation should be noted in order to give room for improvements in future study. Previously, the limitations discussed before include the population size, and the instrumentation used which only include the use of interviews and survey.

Therefore, it is recommended that bigger sample size should be used in future study. With larger sample size, the researcher will get larger and variety of responses of many categories and themes. If there had been more time for both the researcher and the respondents, the findings would have been more thorough and more reflective on their thoughts. The population size should also be more specific and include respondents from different socio-economic status, place, and level of proficiency. It would be better if the researcher has already segregated the number of variables of the respondents. It will give a thorough and a more holistic approach on the usage of verbal humour in ESL classroom.

Lastly, the next recommendation to highlight is on the instrumentation used. For future study, it is recommended that the researcher employed the use of other instrumentations such as observation. This is highly recommended as researcher can observe and analyse the current situation in the classroom themselves and therefore provide a more comprehensive findings and analysis.

## REFERENCES

- Abad, F. A. (2017). The Effects of Teacher' Sense of Humour on Students' Learning. *Journal of Social Sciences, Literature and Languages, 2017 JSSLL Journal*. Vol. 2(1), pp. 9-11, 30 April, 2017.
- Abdulmajeed, R. K., & Hameed, S. K. (2017). Using a Linguistic Theory of Humour in Teaching English Grammar. *English Language Teaching*; Vol. 10, No. 2; 2017 ISSN 1916-4742 E-ISSN 1916-4750.
- Aboudan, R. (2009). Laugh and Learn: Humour and Learning a Second Language. *International Journal of Arts and Sciences*, 3(3): 90-99.
- Al-Duleimi, A., & Aziz, R. (2016). Humour as EFL Learning- Teaching Strategy. *Journal of Education and Practice* ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.7, No.10.
- Ahmad, N., Mohamed, S., Hassan, K., Ali, N., & Ahmad Fuad, F. (2018). The Use of Teacher's Joke Increases Students' Involvement inside Classroom. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention* 5(10): 5039-5046, 2018.
- An, Y. J, Sim, C. Y, Kueh, H. T (2015). Literature review : is humour innate or learned? Nanyang Technological University.
- Askildson, L. (2005). Effects Of Humour In The Language Classroom: Humour As A Pedagogical Tool In Theory And Practice. *Arizona Working Papers in SLAT – Vol. 12*.
- Ann, D. S. (2006). Professional Nurse's attitudes towards humour. *Nurse Education Today*, 10.1016/j.nedt.2006.05.008, 27, 4, (286-292).
- Bakar, F. (2019). Appropriate and relevant humour in the university classroom: insights from teachers and students. *European Journal of Humour Research* 7 (4) 137–152.

Ganas, J. A., Dunbar, N., Rodriguez, D., & Liu, S.-J. (2011). A Review of Humour in Educational Settings: Four Decades of Research. *Bergen, D. (1992). Teaching strategies: Using humour to facilitate learning. Childhood Education, 69(2), 105-106.*

Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). *Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches To Second Language Teaching and Testing.* Oxford University Press.

Darweesh Al-Duleimi, P., & Aziz, R. (2016). Humour as EFL Learning- Teaching Strategy. *Journal of Education and Practice ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.7, No.10, 2016.*

Dinn, A., & Harris, C. (2017). Are Jokes Funnier in One's Native Language? Humour - International Journal of Humour Research 31(1) DOI: 10.1515/humour-2017-0112.

Dutaa, N., Panisoaraa, G., & Panisora, I. O. (2015). The Effective Communication in Teaching. Diagnostic study regarding the academic learning motivation to students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 186 ( 2015 ) 1007 – 1012.*

Edinyang, & David, S. (2016). The Significance Of Social Learning Theories In The Teaching Of Social Studies Education. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research Vol. 2, No.1, pp.40-45, August 2016.*

Fadel, S., & Al-Bargi, A. (2018). Study, The Use of Humour in EFL Classrooms: Comparative Conversational Analysis Case. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ) Volume 9. Number 2. June 2018 Pp. 262 -282.*

Frymier, A. B., Wanzer, M. B., & Wojtaszczyk, A. M. (2008). Assessing Students' Perceptions of Inappropriate and Appropriate Teacher Humour.

Garner, R. L. (2006). Humour in pedagogy: How ha-ha can lead to Aha! *College Teaching, 54(1), 177-180.*

Goodboy, A. K., Bolkan, S., & Griffin, D. J. (2018). Humour in the Classroom: The effects of Integrated Humour on Students learning. *ISSN: 0363-4523 (Print) 1479-5795 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rced20>.*

Goodboy, A. K., Bolkan, S., & Griffin, D. J. (2018). Humour in the Classroom: The effects of Integrated Humour on Students learning. *ISSN: 0363-4523 (Print) 1479-5795 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rced20>.*

Gönülallı, T. (2018). Laughing Matters: ELLs' Comprehension and Perceptions of Humour. *Cumhuriyet International Journal of Education – Cumhuriyet Uluslararası Eğitim Dergisi e-ISSN: 2147-1606.*

Halula, S. P. (2009). What Role Does Humour in the Higher Education Classroom Play in Student-Perceived Instructor Effectiveness? *Marquette University e-Publication @ Marquette.*

Hill, D. (1998). *School Days, Fun Days: Creative Ways to Teach Humour Skills in the Classroom.* Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher.

Israil, I. (2017). Humour As One of The Teacher Communication Strategies to Enhance Students' Interest In EFL Classroom. *State university of Makassar.*

Jeder, D. (2014). Implications of using humour in the classroom. *The 6th International Conference Edu World 2014 "Education Facing Contemporary World Issues", 7th - 9th November 2014.*

Jeder, D. (2015). Implications of using humour in the classroom. *The 6th International Conference Edu World 2014 "Education Facing Contemporary World.*

Kavandi, E., & Kavandi, R. (2016). The Effect of Using Humour on High School Students' Grammar Performance and Motivation. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, Vol. 6, No. 7, pp. 1466-1475, July 2016 ISSN 1799-2591.*

Kent Truett, B. A. (2011). *Humour and Students' Perceptions of Learning.* A Thesis, Texas Tech University.

Loomans, D., & Kolberg, K. (1993). *The Laughing Classroom: Everyone's Guide to Teaching with Humour and Play*. Tiburon, CA: H. J. Kramer, Inc.

Makewa, L. N., Role, E., & Genga, J. A. (2011). Teachers' Use of Humour in Teaching and Students' Rating of Their Effectiveness. *International Journal of Education ISSN 1948-5476 2011, Vol. 3, No. 2: E8*.

Masek, A., Hashim, S., & Ismail, A. (2018). Integration of the humour approach with student's engagement in teaching and learning sessions. ISSN: 0260-7476 (Print) 1360-0540 (Online) Journal homepage: <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjet20>.

Mellisa, B. W, Ann B. F, Ann. M. W, Tony, S. (2006) Appropriate and Inappropriate Uses of Humour by Teachers. *Communication Education*, Vol-55, No. 2, April 2006, pp. 178 – 196.

Ming, S. K., & Husin, M. (2019). The Implementation of Humourous Practices in the Teaching and Learning of Malay Language Literature Component. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v8-i4/6905> DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v8-i4/6905.

Morreall, J. (1986). *The Philosophy of Laughter and Humour (SUNY Series in Philosophy)*. SUNY Press.

Neff, P., & Rucynski, J. (2016). Japanese perceptions of humour in the English language classroom. DOI 10.1515/humour-2016-0066 Humour 2017; aop.

Ocon, R. (2015). Using Humour to Create a Positive Learning Environment. 122nd ASEE Annual Conference and Exposition June 14-17, 2015, Seattle, WA. American Society for Engineering Education.

Poirier, T., & Willhelm, M. (2014). Use of Humour to Enhance Learning: Bull's Eye or Off the Mark. *Journal ListAm J Pharm Educv.78(2); 2014 Mar 12PMC3965135*.

Pujiastuti, A. (2009). A Spark Of Humour in English Classroom: Contribution and Consideration . *Journal of English and Education*, Vol 3 No 2 December 2009.

Sambrani, T., Mani, S., Almeida, M., & Jakubovski, E. (2014). The Effect of Humour on Learning in an Educational Setting. *International Journal of Education and Psychological Research (IJEPR)* Volume 3, Issue 3, September 2014.

Savage, B. M., Lujan, H. L., Thipparthi, R. R., & DiCarlo, S. E. (2017). Humour, laughter, learning, and health! A brief review. *Adv Physiol Educ 41: 341–347, 2017;doi:10.1152/advan.00030.2017*.

Shahreza, M. H. (2018). A cross-sectional analysis of teacher-initiated verbal humour and ludic language play in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context. *Cogent Education* (2018), 5: 1430474.

Stephen. P. H. (2013) What Role does Humour in the Higher Education Classroom Play in Student Perceived Instructor Effectiveness. Wisconsin.

Wanzer, M. B., Frymier, A. B., Wojtaszczyk, A. M., & Smith, T. (2006). Appropriate and Inappropriate Uses of Humour by Teacher.

Westgate, E. C. (2010). A Rocky Issue: The Effects of Humour on Learning and Interest in an Educational Context. The Division of Philosophy, Religion, Psychology and Linguistics Reed College.

Wimolmas, R. (2013). A Survey Study of Motivation in English Language Learning of First Year Undergraduate Students at Sirindhorn International Institute of Technology (SIIT), Thammasat University. Thammasat University, Thailand.

Ziyaemehr, A. (2011). Use and Non-use of Humour in Academic ESL Classrooms. [www.ccsenet.org/elt](http://www.ccsenet.org/elt) English Language Teaching Vol. 4, No. 3; September 2011.