The Role of Humour in Motivating EFL University Students in Sulaimani City

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Abstract

A substantial body of research has been conducted on increasing EFL students' motivation in EFL classes. Different pedagogical techniques have been defined, and humour is undoubtedly one of them. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom, various methods have been found effective, and humour is also one of the effective techniques to

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help the learning process in EFL classrooms. This paper is an extraction from the Ph.D. dissertation of the author, entitled "'Investigating the Use of Humour in Teaching Kurdish EFL University Students in Sulaimani City', in which it was attempted to investigate the role of humour on EFL students in Sulaimani City universities. The current article is based on the hypothesis that humour is a highly effective technique that motivates students and helps them in learning in EFL classrooms. The role of humour in EFL classrooms with Kurdish backgrounds needs more investigation. The current paper emphasizes the role of humour on motivation from the perspectives of EFL first-year students from Sulaimani Polytechnic University (SPU). A quantitative method was employed in which 100 students were given a 30-item questionnaire to explore their perspectives on the use of humour. The study finds that a considerably high number of the students were in favour of humour to be used by their teachers during their classes as they find it very helpful and motivational, which helps them in the language learning process.

دور الفكاهة في تحفيز طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مدينة السليمانية.

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الـمستخلـص

تم إجراء مجموعة كبيرة من الأبحاث حول زيادة تحفيز طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في فصـول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. تم تحديد تقنيات تربوية مختلفة ، والفكاهة هي بلا شـك واحدة منها. بالنسبة للفصل الدراسي للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، تم العثور على طرق مختلفة فعالة ، كما أن الفكاهة هي أيضًا إحدى التقنيات الفعالة للمسـاعدة في عملية التعلم في فصـول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. هذه الاطروحه ملخصـه من بحث الدكتوراه للكاتب بعنوان "التحقيق في استخدام الفكاهة في تدريس طلاب جامعة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في مدينة الســـليمانية" ، حاول فيها الباحث التحقق من دور تقنيه الفكاهه على طلاب اللغه الانجليزيه كلغه اجنبيه في جامعات مدينه السليمانيه. تعتمد المقالة الحالية على فرضــية أن الفكاهة هي تقنية فعالة للغاية تحفز الطلاب وتســـاعدهم في

التعلم في فصـــول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية. يحتاج دور الفكاهة في الفصـــول الدراسـية للغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ذات الخلفيات الكردية إلى مزيد من البحث. تؤكد الورقة الحالية على دور الفكاهة في التحفيز من وجهة نظر طلاب السـنة الأولى من اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية من جامعة السليمانية بوليتكنيك (SPU). في هذا البحث تم استخدام طريقه تم فيها اعطاء ١٠٠ طالب استبيان مكون من ٣٠ عنصـرا لاسـتكشـاف وجهات نظرهم حول اسـتخدام الفكاهه. وجدت الدراسـة أن عددًا كبيرًا من الطلاب يفضـــلون الفكاهة لاسـتخدامها من قبل معلميهم خلال فصـــولهم الدراسـية لأنهم يجدونها مفيدة ومحفزة للغاية ، مما يساعدهم في عملية تعلم اللغة.

الكلمات الدالة: الفكاهة، التحفيز، اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، اللغة الثاني، FL، الفصـــل، تعليم وتعلم اللغة الإنجليزية.

1. Introduction

The roles and purposes of humour in Second Language (L2) classrooms have drawn more attention in recent years as a study issue. The possible advantages of humour such as, boosting motivation, attracting attention, lowering anxiety, and enhancing retention appear prominently in an increasing number of research studies in a range of learning situations (Petraki & Nguyen 2016; Askildson 2005; Forman 2011). Due to the fact that conventional teacher-oriented foreign language instruction is thought to be still prevalent in Sulaimani city universities, the question of whether humour may well have comparable effects in Sulaimani city university contexts emerges. EFL students could assign various purposes to classroom humour in such a teacher-centered atmosphere, or they might not think of EFL classrooms as a place where humour can be effective to be used. Thus, this study attempts to investigate the use of humour in teaching Kurdish EFL university students in Sulaimani city so that EFL teachers would be able to recognise and value the humour's many benefits.

It is important to note that there is an increasing number of studies on humour in the academia. However, only a few investigations have been undertaken to address students' views on using humour in the classroom while teaching English as a foreign language. This research aims to better comprehend humour from the viewpoints of students. A further gap to be filled is that, to the best of the present researcher's knowledge, there has been a few investigations on the impacts of humour and its link with motivation among EFL university students, especially in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

Brandl (2008) and Arnold & Douglas Brown (1999) state that EFL learners may have higher levels of stress and anxiety and lower levels of motivation in EFL classes than in other class subjects because they must use a Foreign Language (FL), and they have a low chance of demonstrating all of their abilities while also being at a high risk of harming their self-image when they make mistakes. According to the current researcher's teaching experience, most EFL university students in Sulaimani City (where the research is being conducted) are generally thought to be not sufficiently motivated during their classes, which causes them to experience an 'affective filter' (Krashen, 1982) in their language

learning process. Hence, this study aims to determine if the use of humour had a significant effect on the motivation of EFL university students in Sulaimani City.

The purpose of this research is to determine whether or not the use of humour has a significant impact on the motivation of EFL university students in Sulaimani City. The results will help educators refine lesson plans and classroom procedures to better meet their students' needs as they learn English. Currently, it is to be noted that the Bologna system are being applied in most of the universities in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. This system requires university EFL instructors to ensure that their classes are more learner-centred than teacher-centred, in which the contemporary teaching methods such as communicative language teaching (CLT), which requires learner-centeredness, are more expected to be employed. Such teaching methods need more motivated students to be actively engaging in their classes, and the applicability of humour can be an effective tool for enhancing EFL students' motivation. Furthermore, the results of this study can have implications for researchers, ESL/EFL educators and students, and curriculum developers.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Background

A great deal of research studies has been conducted on the role of using humour in helping EFL students to be more motivated in the process of language learning. For instance, Makewa et al. (2011) found that students rated teachers who used humour to be more effective at motivating their students, designing interesting lessons, and lowering their anxieties. This suggests that teachers who employ humour in the classroom are more effective from the perspectives of their students. In addition, Pham (2014) explored how EFL instructors at Vietnamese universities see the function of humour in the classroom, how they actually use humour in the classroom, and how their students react to this use of humour. Most university EFL instructors and students surveyed had a favourable impression of using humour in the classroom and agreed that it may improve students' emotional and intellectual well-being as well as the rapport between teachers and students. Balta (2016) argues that the impact of humour on students' education makes it imperative to uncover their perspectives and attitudes on the usage of humour in the classroom. Therefore, this research is thought to contribute to the broad use of humour in teaching. The purpose of this study is to uncover students' perspectives on the role of humour and its effect on their motivation in the EFL teaching and learning process.

2.1 Definitions of Humour

Around 500 different definitions, concepts, notions, or interpretations exist for humour and laughter (R. A. Berk & Nanda, 2006). Numerous factors are considered when defining humour, including the devices used by individuals to amuse others and make them laugh, such as jokes, amusing anecdotes, amusing puns, and comments (Willibald & Amy,1998, p. 38). Additionally, while defining humour, characteristics, traits, individual uniqueness, and the capability to recognize and enjoy humour are considered (ibid).

After reviewing many definitions of humour, the following explanation was used in this study for the objectives of the study. There are discrepancies and similarities in the descriptions of humour used by researchers. Friedman et al. (2002, p. 23) defines humour as follows:

> *"humour is a teaching technique that may be utilized to engage students... and stimulate concept development"*

This definition encompasses the broad notion of humour that the use of humour can be engaging and motivating for students. Other scholars expand on this concept by addressing another critical feature, namely the goal or purpose of humour (Fadel & Al-Bargi, 2018, p. 16); for example, they describe humour as "everything that the teacher and/or students find entertaining or humorous". Similarly, Rizzo (1999, p. 42) states that humour "involves nonverbal and verbal interactions that elicit a favorable cognitive or emotive response from listeners."

Additionally, humour has been defined as a method of communication characterized by many incongruous meanings that are humorous. Humour's fundamental characteristics are its lack of seriousness, its incorporation of both verbal and non-verbal communication, and its ability to elicit a positive response by laughing.

Considering all of these definitions, humour is employed in this research to discuss teacher-initiated incidents that generate laughter in the class, which can be motivative and engaging for students. As this study examines how instructors use humour in the classroom, individual attempts at humour started by the teacher are considered. For this study, laughter is a critical sign of humour. Laughter can be elicited through jokes, puzzles, witticisms, humorous stories, visual humour, and even physical comedy (Bryant et al., 1980, p. 5). A teacher's or a student's laughter is regarded as an instance of humour.

In light of what has been discussed thus far, what starts humour in university classrooms may be significantly more complicated than initially believed. This is since humour encompasses not only what and how instructors employ humour but also what students consider humorous, motivative, and instructive.

2.2 Understanding Humour and its Application:

To aid learners in their focus, retention of information, and language acquisition, most communicative techniques, such as communicative language teaching (CLT) and task-based language teaching (TBLT), entail generating a relaxed learning atmosphere and decreasing the emotional filter (Brandl, 2008). The use of humour by EFL instructors is considered to create a highly encouraging and relaxed atmosphere for EFL learners which, in the long term, supports learners' motivation throughout the length of an English language lesson (Hismanoglu et al., 2018).

Humour is an original Latin terminology for one of the four liquids (blood, choler, phlegm, and black bile), the balance of which was supposed to be indicative of one's physical well-being. A person who has a good sense of balance, i.e., who is in excellent health, was referred to as "in good humour." Then, throughout the Renaissance era, humour was used to describe someone insane. Until the 18th century, the change in the concept of humour related to regular human behavior rather than a humorous situation. According to Merriam

Webster's dictionary, humour is a trait that evokes a feeling of the ridiculous or wildly incongruous: a hilarious or humorous quality. Humour is a biological trait everyone possesses; hence it is not a new phenomenon (Polimeni & Reiss, 2006). Numerous theories have attempted to explain humour and its uses since ancient Greece, including social, anthropological, psychological, philosophical, and linguistic aspects (Dynel, 2009). There are diverse types of humour like puns, jokes, storytelling, irony, memes, etc.

There is a less studied role of humour in pedagogical techniques. However, it is a common observation that students enjoy it more when a teacher is being funny in the class. There is less research on how humour affects the pedagogical techniques and helps students maintain superior performance throughout the course of their language learning process.

2.3 Humour and Motivation Considering Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis:

The notion suggested by Krashen similarly applies to the revision and reevaluation of EFL literature. Krashen (1982) argues that the emotional state of the learner is intimately connected to their performance in their language learning, as proposed by the affective filter theory. The success of a language learner learning another language might hinge on factors like the student's motivation to participate in class and the teacher's ability to instill confidence in the learner. This author of this research paper concludes that EFL teachers at Sulaimani universities should incorporate humour techniques such as telling stories, integrating extra materials, songs, and films into their lessons based on an underlying argument of Krashen's hypothesis and some key emotional factors influencing student's learning of languages acknowledged by several researchers (e.g., Pennington, 1996; Dodson, 2000). In other words, this article makes the case that, in order to attempt increasing learners' motivation to study and learn English, it is necessary to use contemporary pedagogies such as student-centred methods in line with Krashen's views.

Prior literature-based EFL instruction utilized objective elements such as test results as the measuring point for success. However, the affective filter hypothesis considers the emotive aspects of language education. Based on the affective filter theory, Lou (2016) examines the emotional variables that impact the English teaching and learning experiences of EFL University students. The findings revealed that the students' emotional factors significantly impacted the Language learning process, and the students' personalities, anxiety, and attitude all had different impacts on their ability to learn English. Dulay and Burt (1977) initially proposed the emotion hypothesis, followed by Krashen; he reintroduced it and included it into his five-input theory. Krashen emphasized that learning a second language is contingent on a person's aptitude to lower their affective filters and accept the basic understandable data. The many affective components mentioned by the theory's proponents include anxiety, self-confidence, and disposition. As stated by Lou (2016), Krashen's main ideologies leading the affective concept are that first language acquisition is unaffected by affective elements, affective filters are accountable for singular differences in second language acquirement, persons with lower affective filters obtain and come across more thoughtful input, and an advanced affective filter restricts the quantity of logical input that extends the language acquisition centers.

Emotional filters and second language acquisition correlate. There is a greater possibility that a learner will not receive comprehensible input if they are experiencing a mental block. Affective filters impede the attainment of a different language, as demonstrated by students, unduly fear of failure, lack of self-confidence, and lack of motivation. Reducing emotion filters promotes an environment conducive to acquiring a second language since students express less anxiety and participate more in the team thought and activities (ibid). It is essential to develop teaching techniques based on the preferences and tastes of EFL students. According to Rygiel (2016, p. 48), the Krashen Natural Approach notion implies that the less worried a learner is, it is simpler for him/her to acquire a different language. The suggestion is that when an EFL learner is put in a favorable setting, the likelihood of improved EFL consequences rises. Therefore, teachers are expected to develop lesson plans that fit the needs and preferences of students concerning learning. In addition, because classes with humour have a distinct ambiance from regular English lessons, there is an opportunity to introduce a more relaxed environment and teaching standards. Educators can utilize film and music to help students escape into another world.

2.4 Affective Influences on Second Language Acquisition

Four factors impact second-language acquisition: 1) motivation, 2) attitude, 3) anxiety, and 4) self-confidence. Aiming at the association between second language attainment and five approach/inspiration variables, Khatib & Hossein (2012) found that the association between attainment and inspiration is higher than between attainment and integration. On the other hand, this association is lesser than that between attainment and approaches toward the learning situation.

These four characteristics should be incorporated into coaching literary works in EFL contexts, as outlined in the subsequent section.

2.4.1 Motivation

It is a further crucial factor in language acquisition. Even talented students will suffer if they lack motivation. The educational theory depends on Krashen's (1981) description of motivation, which is the degree to which a learner employs energy and effort and struggles to acquire a new language since they want to and enjoy the experience of the learning process. Therefore, EFL students' motivation to learn English is both their impulse and desire. Gardner & Lambert (1972) classify motivation into two subgroups: instrumental and integrative. With instrumental motivation, an EFL student is pushed by the desire to pass a test, use the test to gain admission to an international higher education institution or receive a promotion. Integrative motivation, on the other hand, emphasizes an EFL student's focus on learning English for everyday usage while enhancing their social connection. These distinct types of motivation can have detrimental and beneficial effects on English learning.

2.4.2 Attitude

Attitude refers to a person's feelings or thoughts about something. Psychological theorists describe Attitude as the evaluative or emotional reaction to an attitudinal entity. These responses may manifest as behavior, cognition, or emotion (Abu- Snoubar, 2017). With an optimistic attitude, EFL students have a stress-free time learning an SL and make earlier

development. In contrast, those with a destructive attitude acquire the vocabulary and grammar of an SL more slowly. It is also essential to recognize that one's mindset affects their level of dedication. EFL Learners who routinely respond passively to English classes perform less well than those actively engaged in their studies. As a result of an improved attitude leading the greater dedication, class involvement increases.

Khatib & Hossein (2012, p. 37) formulated a social psychology notion for students. They propose a model that stresses "cognitive elements like language abilities and intellect, in addition to affective factors like attitudes and motivation". In addition, they noted that the "amount to which students acquire a second language depends on ethnocentric trends, approaches toward the other culture, orientation toward language attainment, and motivation" (ibid, p. 38).

2.4.3 Anxiety
According to (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 28), Anxiety language learning is ""a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviour related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process". This definition of FL anxiety was used in the current study since Horwitz et al. (1986) were the first to emphasise the significance of seeing FL anxiety as a unique kind of anxiety. He adds that Anxiety is marked by "self-deprecating thoughts, emotions of fear, and physiological responses such as an elevated heart rate."

When examining the function of Anxiety, it is easy to see how one's attitude may also impact performance. The performance of EFL students can be measured by their fear of receiving a poor grade, test anxiety, and worry over comprehension (ibid). The dread of earning a poor grade is an anxiety disorder that leads to inaction because of the fear of being criticized or receiving unfavorable feedback from others. According to (ibid), students who panic about evaluations, avoid situations others evaluate because they fear receiving unfavorable feedback. This type of anxiety results in "freezing," in which a student is hesitant to engage in social interactions because he or she is uncertain of the impression he or she is creating. These apprehensions foster unfavorable attitudes regarding language acquisition and encourage learners to pursue English instruction solely for work chances or instrumental incentives. However, relying solely on this drive hurts EFL learning.

Test anxiety is the other negative input in the process of English language learning. When taking examinations or in other circumstances that need evaluation, learners can become immobilized, similar to when they receive a negative mark. Such Anxiety can lead to deficient performance and, as a result, diminish instrumental motivation (Mashayekh & Hashemi, 2011). Students who wish to utilize the English certification as a requirement for a university degree or a job application may refuse to take the exams. If they do, they are more likely to fail. Thus, the instrumental purpose for enrolling in an English course could be the reason for failure.

The final type of worry is communication anxiety. According to McCroskey (1977, p. 78), it is the "individual amount of fear or anxiety linked with actual or expected communication with another person or people." This fear is one of the worst since it undermines the core objective of EFL study. Students with particular characteristics, such as shyness and silence, are sensitive to communication anxiety. Even if an individual is motivated to

participate in the class conversation, the inability to express responses inhibits language acquisition. This communication barrier would also undermine the impact of learning English via reading novels, watching films, or using subtitles (Kim, 2008).

2.4.4 Self-Confidence

Confidence is a crucial attribute for language learning, and it may be boosted through various instructional techniques, which are discussed in greater depth later in this article. Researchers agree that students with strong self-esteem are likelier to excel in EFL than those with low self-esteem (Tunçel, 1988). Self-esteem boosts learners' readiness to speak a second language despite their lack of proficiency and willingness to learn from their mistakes. In contrast, students with poor self-esteem will avoid situations demanding to speak or expose their limited skills. This, according to Tunçel (1988), might result in psychological issues such as insecurity, fear, worry, and antisocial behavior. As a result, students with low self-esteem may be disadvantaged in the process of English language learning.

3 Methodology
3.1 Research Design
A quantitative method strategy was utilized in the current study to gather the data. In this research paper, a large sample size including both male and female EFL students was required to determine how they felt about their teachers' use of humour in the classroom. Therefore, a 30-item questionnaire was utilized to collect the quantitative data from 100 students because it was a cost-effective option to get input from many participants (Cohen et al., 2011).

This article attempts to answer one of the research questions from the Ph.D. dissertation:

- Is there a relationship between the use of humour and motivation of EFL university students at Sulaimani City? How? Why?

The following hypothesis is developed in accordance with the study research questions from the Ph.D. dissertation:

- If EFL teachers use humour in their classes effectively, then students are more motivated and more successful in the language learning process.

3.2 Sample Selection
All the students who participated in the study were from Sulaimani Polytechnic University, belonging to the college of technical informatics, and were enrolled in the first year of the English Language foundation course (2021-2022), which was run by IELC of SPU. That

year, the students were divided into seven groups in seven different classrooms. For a variety of reasons, this study only included first-year students who were taking English classes in the English Language Foundation Course in order to standardize the population as much as feasible. Firstly, the aim of the study is to investigate the use of humour in EFL context and the students were all considered EFL students since they were studying English as a foreign language. Secondly, the researcher was already teaching one of the classes and was in contact with teaching staff. Thus, he asked the instructors to support the research by informing the students about the study before the data collection process began. Last but not least, the number of the students were above 100 which was considered sufficient for the purpose of data collection procedure. Overall, 100 students participated in the study, and the questionnaires were filled out in hard sheets. The completed questionnaires were considered and then converted into digital data through SPSS.

3.3 Data Analysis
The study used a concurrent form of analysis (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007), beginning with an initial data analysis quantitative database. The researcher then fully analysed the datasets with offering a "comprehensive picture" (ibid, 136).

Using SPSS (Connolly, 2007), the results of the surveys were entered and processed to generate percentages for each item. The quantitative data analysis was descriptive (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The percentage of the students' answers shaped the discussion around teachers' use of humour in the classroom.

4 Results and Findings
4.1 Students' Data from Questionnaires
The students were provided with the questionnaires. These were conducted to gather the data regarding their opinions about the relationship between the use of humour and motivation, and their perceptions and attitudes on the role of humour in the process of EFL learning.

One hundred students were provided with the given questionnaires and asked to answer thirty items including statements and questions. These questionnaires were provided in rigid sheets, responses were collected, then data was entered into the SPSS manually, and the Reliability of the data was checked.

4.2 Reliability of Data
Reliability in data refers to the degree to which information is comprehensive and accurate. It is essential in laying the groundwork for developing confidence in data. Data integrity efforts are utilized not only to maintain data security, data quality, and regulatory compliance but also to ensure that data dependability is preserved as one of the primary goals of the projects.

To put it another way, *research dependability* may be defined as the extent to which a research process generates steady and consistent outcomes. When applying a certain measuring technique several times to the same thing being measured and obtaining the same findings each time, the technique is referred to as being dependable.

The value of Cronbach's Alpha measures the Reliability of data. Cronbach's alpha is a statistic that determines how internally consistent a set of things is or how intricately linked they are. It is considered a measurement of the dependability of the scale. The values above 0.7 for Cronbach's Alpha are considered significant for data. The value of Cronbach's Alpha for the data set collected from the students is 0.745, which means that the data is significant and dependable.

Table 1 Case Processing Summary

Case Processing Summary		N	%
Cases	Valid	100	100.0
	Excluded	0	.0
	Total	100	100.0
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			

Table 2 Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.754	30

4.3 Descriptive Statistics of Students' Data

Descriptive statistics were applied to students' data, and questionnaires results were inferred.

4.4 Students' answers on the relationship between the use of humour and motivation:

The students (respondents) were asked a number of the questionnaire statements and questions to express themselves and give their ideas about how much humour use motivated them. As far as the results are concerned, the majority of the students reported

that the use of humour by EFL teachers is thought to generate a very encouraging and relaxing atmosphere for EFL students, which, overall, enhances learners' motivation throughout the entirety of an English language class.

The questions and statements in the questionnaire that were related to the use of humour and motivation:

- Are you punctual to the class whose instructor is funny?
- Do you better understand things when the teacher tells jokes while teaching the class?
- Do you feel that humour builds an important bridge of communication between a teacher and a student?
- Do you believe that humour motivates students?
- Does humour make you confident in the class?
- Humour makes the classes more engaging and interesting.
- Do you counter-participate in jokes when the teacher makes a funny comment?
- In the EFL classroom, to what extend does the use of humour help you feel calmer (less anxious)?

4.4.1 Are you punctual to the class whose instructor is funny?
The third question was if the students enjoyed and if they were punctual to the class taught by a funny instructor? And most of the students like 85 % of the students agreed that they are on time in the class when the instructor is funny and uses humour in his/ her daily classes, while 12% of the students gave a neutral response while 2 % of the students disagreed with the statement that they were punctual to the class where the teacher is humorous.

Table 3: I am punctual and I enjoy attending the class whose instructor is humourous.

I am punctual and I enjoy attending the class whose instructor is humourous.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly Agree	49	49.0	49.0	49.0
	Agree	36	36.0	36.0	85.0
	Neutral	12	12.0	12.0	97.0
	Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	99.0
	strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.4.2 Do you better understand things when the teacher tells jokes while teaching the class?
The fourth item of the questionnaire was a statement regarding the understanding of the class when humour is applied as a pedagogy tool; students were asked that do they better understand the class when the teacher tells jokes while teaching the class?

79% percent of the students agreed that they understand better when the teacher is using humour while delivering the class, while 16% of the students were neutral in their response, and 5% of students disagreed that they understand better when humour is used in class during the class.

Table 4: I better understand things when the instructor tells jokes while teaching the class.

I better understand things when the instructor makes jokes while teaching the class.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly Agree	45	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Agree	34	34.0	34.0	79.0
	Neutral	16	16.0	16.0	95.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	99.0
	strongly Disagree	1	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.4.3 Do you feel that humour builds an important bridge of communication between a teacher and a student?

The sixth question of the survey was regarding communication between students and teachers. If they feel that humour plays a role as a bridge of communication between the instructor and /her pupils?

Seventy-nine percent of the students felt that humour is an important bridge between a teacher and a student, while 15 % gave a neutral answer, and 6% of the students disagreed with the statement.

Table 5: I feel that humour builds an important bridge of communication between a teacher and a student.

I feel that humour builds an important bridge of communication between a teacher and a student.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly Agree	39	39.0	39.0	39.0
	Agree	40	40.0	40.0	79.0
	Neutral	15	15.0	15.0	94.0
	Disagree	6	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.4.4. Do you believe that humour motivates students?

The eighth question was regarding motivation, and students were asked if they believe that humour motivates them to study?

65 % of the students agreed to this, and 11% disagreed, while 23 % of the students gave a neutral response.

Table 6: I believe that humour motivates students to study.

I believe that humour motivates students to study.				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	strongly Agree	24	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Agree	41	41.0	41.0	65.0
	Neutral	23	23.0	23.0	88.0
	Disagree	9	9.0	9.0	97.0
	strongly Disagree	3	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.4.5 Does humour make you confident in the class?

The 17th question was about confidence, and students were asked if the humour made them confident in the class?

Thirty-four percent of the students said that it made them much more confident during the class and 35% of the students said that it made them somewhat confident and 26% of the students said that the humour made them least confident, and five students answered that jokes made their confidence down during the class.

Table 7: Does humour make you confident in the class?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Much Confident	34	34.0	34.0	34.0
	Confident	35	35.0	35.0	69.0
	Least confident	26	26.0	26.0	95.0
	Jokes make my morale down	5	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.4.6 Humour makes the classes more engaging and interesting

Students were asked if the humour makes the classes more engaging and alleviates the boredom.

Thirty-one percent of the students strongly agreed with the statement, while 47% of the students agreed with it, 16% of the students gave a neutral answer, and 6% of the students disagreed with the statement.

Table 8: Humour makes the classes more engaging and interesting.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	strongly Agree	31	31.0	31.0	31.0
	Agree	47	47.0	47.0	78.0
	Neutral	16	16.0	16.0	94.0
	Disagree	4	4.0	4.0	98.0
	strongly Disagree	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.4.7 Do you counter-participate in jokes when the teacher makes a funny comment?

Students were asked if they counter-participated in-jokes if their teacher made funny remarks in the class.

Sixty-one percent of the pupils said they sometimes participated, and 23% said they did not participate at all, while 16% of the students said that they participated in the humour when the teacher made a funny remark in the session.

Table 9: Do you counter-participate in jokes when the teacher makes a funny comment?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	I participate Most of the time	16	16.0	16.0	16.0
	Sometimes I participate	61	61.0	61.0	77.0
	I do not participate at all	23	23.0	23.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

4.4.8: In the EFL classroom, to what extend does the use of humour help you feel calmer (less anxious)?

Students were asked about that how much the humour used in class helped them feel calmer and relaxed? 91 % of the students answered it positively, and only 9% of the students felt that the humour made them feel anxious.

Table 3 In the EFL classroom, to what degree does humour help your pupils feel calmer (i.e., less anxious)?

In the EFL classroom, to what extend does the use of humour help you feel calmer (less anxious)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	It makes them relaxed all the time	47	47.0	47.0	47.0
	It is relaxing	44	44.0	44.0	91.0
	It makes them anxious	9	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	100	100.0	100.0	

5 Discussion

As far as the results are concerned, the majority of the students reported that the use of humour by EFL teachers is thought to generate a very encouraging and relaxing atmosphere for EFL students, which, overall, enhances learners' motivation throughout the entirety of an English language class. In the current study, students especially answered that humour effectively motivates them in class, increases class attendance, and they feel relaxed when the spirit is applied in the class. Particularly interesting finding from the current research (gained from students' questionnaires) is that 91 % of the students answered that the use of humour in the classroom helped them feel calmer, relaxed, and less anxious. These results corroborate those of previous research (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2015; Schmitz, 2002; Makewa et al., 2011; Garner, 2006; Banas et al., 2011; Torok et al., 2004; Blackmore, 2011; Berk, 1996; Pham, 2014; Stuart & Rosenfield, 1994; Davenport, 2015; Munoz, 2005; Hismanoglu, et al., 2018; Abdulmajeed & Hameed, 2017), showing that using humour in the classroom improves students' engagement, motivation, and performance. Another finding is that most of the students, 85 % of them, agreed that they are on time in the class when the instructor is funny and uses humour in his/ her daily classes. This finding corroborates with Neuliep´s (1991, p. 354) findings that "teachers use humour as a way of putting students at ease, as an attention-getter, as a way of showing that the teacher is human, as a way to keep the class less formal, and to make learning more fun". This shows that humour is necessary for a pleasant classroom climate.

79% percent of the students agreed that they understand better when the teacher is using humour while delivering the class. This result serves the idea that as long as the teacher utilises humour in their classes, the students feel more motivated and less anxious. For example, Swierzbin (2000) acknowledges the influence that humour may have on lessening the degree of anxiety that is associated with learning a foreign language. He believes that humour has the capacity to lower the emotive filters that learners use. In addition to this, he emphasises the effect that humour has on students' cognitive abilities by drawing a connection between humour and the facilitation of the process of learning the new language. Tarone draws the conclusion that students are able to practice on numerous voices and linguistic varieties when they are exposed to humour. In a research study that is quite similar to this one, Forman (2011) investigates the use of humour by instructors in lower-level English as a Foreign Language classes in Thai universities. He recognises two purposes of humour in EFL classes, the first of which is to reduce the social gap between the students and the instructor, and the second of which is to create solidarity and motivation among the students. In spite of the low levels of skill possessed by the students, he asserts that the presence of humour in the classroom encourages more engagement and helps students concentrate better on correct form.

Lehtimaja (2011) supports EFL classroom humour. The researcher examines humour in seven Finnish secondary schools. This paper focuses on students rather than instructor humour. The study illustrates how students deliberately divert from the teacher's serious tone and add humour. The study finds that playfulness does not jeopardise the teacher's instructional aim, even when students dislike the teacher's speaking. Teachers may work hard and interact with students in order for students to be active and motivated participants in the classroom. The conclusion confirms the hypothesis suggested in the current research study that instructors will always have their own choices of humour and they are free to decide when and how long to employ homour in the classroom so that it can be a source of motivation during the language learning process. It also proves that EFL/ESL courses may employ humour.

According to Oruc (2006), humour contributes to better learning by attracting the attention of students, making learning fun, lowering anxiety in the learning environment, increasing teacher-student interaction, and contributing to improved social connections among students. This specific opinion is backed with the current findings of our study taking into consideration the answers of the students, such as the utilisation of humour in education brings the instructor and the students closer together and raises interest and drive to learn.

According to Blackmore's (2011) findings, a sense of humour plays a crucial part in the creation of effective learning environments. Taking everything into consideration, the findings that were presented in the prior research as well as the current study have proved that humour has academic, psychological, and social advantages for students when they are participating in the educational process. It is possible that this is due to the power that

it possesses to make teachers more approachable and likeable, to enhance attentiveness and creativity, to promote comprehension, to boost attentiveness, to increase social relationships (Lei et al., 2010, p. 326), and to foster a positive social environment amongst students (Leslie, 2015).

Students might usually get demotivated for various factors related to inside or outside the classroom, and so that they tend to be bored and lose interest in the class subjects. The use of humour has been an effective tool to motivate and engage the students in the class subjects and bring excitement to the class. Along the same lines, Topcuoglu (2007) believes that it is due to the fact that humour induces a state of emotional and physiological relaxation in students, which in turn accelerates and solidifies the learning process, as well as enhances students' interest in and attention to class. Since the students who took part in the current research were first-year EFL university students who were required to attend their intensive four-hour English lessons within the English foundation programme in SPU, it is possible that the use of humour may be advised as a good strategy in the classroom for the purpose of avoiding boredom.

55% of the students responded that they were not frightened to raise the question in class when the instructor was funny and 56% of them agreed with the statement that are not scared to make mistakes when humour is constantly used in class. This finding is corroborated by the findings of 's Van Dam (2002), who related humour to an increasing degree of student involvement. Van Dam contends that the high degree of involvement that is linked with humour in EFL courses might at least partially be related to face work. He makes this argument in one of his articles. According to van Dam, strong participation rates are not the product of a single day's worth of effort on the side of the instructor. In point of fact, participation is often achieved over a period of time until humour becomes the standard operating procedure. The conclusion of the study is that humour in educational settings contributes to the development of an atmosphere that is free from fear and in which students are not embarrassed by the possibility of making mistakes. In addition to that, because students are so worried about what their peers will think of them, expressing their ideas in class can be challenging, as demonstrated by the examples provided by Degoumois et al (2017). The researchers single out two methods via which the students voice their thoughts and opinions. The first point they make is that students frequently resort to humorous summaries when wrapping up serious arguments. They discuss the issue while cracking jokes. They downgrade either before or after presenting their thoughts to meet the sequential expectations deriving from the teachers' request to give an opinion and to avoid being held accountable for their opinions.

It is crucial to remember that many students claimed that when humour was used in class, they tended to take greater chances in class, especially when speaking with their instructor or peers. One explanation for this intriguing result could be that humour has a calming effect on students and creates a relaxed environment in the classroom, both of which

increase learners' confidence in speaking the target language in class. Regarding weather the employment of humour makes students confident in the class, it was found that 34% of the students were much confident in class and 35% of them were somewhat confident. 55% of the students agreed with the statement that the utilisation of every kind of humour may have a positive effect on them in the classroom. Interestingly, 65 % of the students agreed with the statement that the use of humour in their classes motivates them to study. The class is also more creative and fun when the teacher uses humorous elements during the class time. 78% of the students agreed that humour makes the classes more engaging and alleviates the boredom. Hence, the students feel motivated and attentive to the class.

6. Conclusion:

Since the function of humour in language teaching is complex, it needs to be studied from different angles. The impact of humour on students' motivation in an EFL classroom has been the subject of extensive studies. In spite of some debates over humour's efficacy in the classroom, the overwhelming majority of relevant literature and testing data supports the idea that it can be used effectively in EFL classrooms, and it can motivate EFL students throughout the course of the classes. The current study's findings provide strong support for this reported advantage. It has been found that the use of humour in EFL learning is efficient and it does not waste precious learning time. It motivates the students to be more attentive and engaged in the class. Contrary to the popular belief that humour can take the EFL classes to a wrong way, it has been found that EFL students can benefit greatly from and actually enjoy using humour as a teaching tool. The use of humour in the classroom helps keep everyone relaxed, open, and motivated. Therefore, EFL teachers ought to consider making the use of humour as an effective pedagogical tool so that their EFL students are more into the language learning process.

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